

STATE OF ABORIGINAL LEARNING  
Background Paper for the  
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## ***STATE OF ABORIGINAL LEARNING IN CANADA***

### **Part A: Background and Purpose**

This report responds to a call from the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) to support the developmental work of the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre. The Canadian Council on Learning is a national, independent, non-profit organization whose mandate is to establish a pan-Canadian learning architecture that will address information and knowledge gaps and provide evidence-based information to support all stages of learning, from early childhood through to the workplace and beyond.

Funded by the federal government through Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, CCL is currently in the process of planning and creating five Knowledge Centres to be located in five regions across Canada. Each Knowledge Centre will focus on a specific learning domain. The CCL will engage in activity in three areas: research and knowledge mobilization; monitoring and reporting; knowledge and information exchange. The Knowledge Centres will support each of these components, focusing on a specific learning domain, as follows:

- Adult Learning in Atlantic Canada
- Early Childhood Learning in Quebec
- Work and Learning in Ontario
- Aboriginal Learning in the Prairies, Northwest Territories and Nunavut
- Health and Learning in British Columbia and the Yukon

Each centre must be national in scope and thus must include all the regions of Canada in their focused activities. Each Knowledge Centre located in a particular geographic region will constitute a national network of excellence. This pan-Canadian mandate will be reflected in the organization, governance, objectives, and operations of each Knowledge Centre.

### **The Aboriginal Knowledge Centre**

The Aboriginal Knowledge Centre is the final centre to be created, delayed to ensure that Aboriginal people have maximum opportunity to become apprised of the Centre, to express interest in future collaborations, dialogues and research partnerships, as well as to ensure that the participation of Aboriginal peoples is suitably and effectively achieved.

As a first step in this process, CCL's CEO Paul Cappon invited a small group (list attached) of people active in Aboriginal learning to advise CCL in getting started with its pan-Canadian Aboriginal Knowledge Centre. Meeting participants included

accomplished Aboriginal scholars, leaders, and advisors who represented a cross section of Canada, regions and nations. In his letter of invitation to the individuals, CEO Paul Cappon wrote, “We hope to encourage a collaborative approach in the establishment of this Knowledge Centre. To that end, we have formulated a meeting that relies very heavily on the active engagement of all participants in an exploration of the possibilities of this innovative approach. Through dialogue, we hope to establish a conversational tone of inquiry and exchange.”

At this meeting, the group discussed processes to establish successfully a Knowledge Centre. It was agreed that hosting a developmental conference in the fall would allow stakeholders from various perspectives – community groups, learners, government and NGO’s – to identify collectively issues, exemplary practices and priorities for an Aboriginal learning knowledge centre.

To help contextualize the discussion at this developmental conference, it was decided that the CCL would commission a report to identify central issues, gaps, learning initiatives, and success stories. Given the extent of pre-existing findings, rather than undertake new research, it was agreed that this report would review and synthesize some of the many research documents produced over the past decade. This report would help to clarify the directions and gaps of Aboriginal learning and enable future decision-makers to draw on the rich research base already conducted by and among Aboriginal peoples.

Recognizing that there are learning issues unique to each of the three Aboriginal groups of Canada - First Nations, Inuit and Métis - this report is an amalgamation of three separate research activities undertaken by key writers and researchers who are acknowledged as respected leaders in their field and represent each of the three Aboriginal groups of Canada. During the summer of 2005 the researchers drew on published public documents that had community-based discussions, interviews, roundtables, focused groups, and/or other qualitative data collections conducted in the past decade or more as their primary research method. These three research reports are provided in the Appendix A, B, and C of this report.

## **Report Structure**

Part A of this report provides the context for the CCL Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre. Part B outlines the principles established to guide the CCL in developing its Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre. Part C summarizes the respective learning contexts of each of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Included in this section is a table synthesizing the major learning themes derived from the three above-mentioned reports. Finally, Part D identifies potential priorities and directions for an Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre.

## **Part B: Foundational Principles for Aboriginal Learning and Education**

A synthesis of the reports and literature on FN, Inuit and Métis learning and education has resulted in a number of core foundational principles for learning and education. These principles have surfaced frequently and consistently throughout the reports although they should be read as belonging to a whole and not sequentially or linearly in terms of importance:

- Aboriginal peoples view education as a vital area for holistic and lifelong learning and for transformation of their economic livelihood.
- Learning is acknowledged as a lifelong process that requires both formal and informal opportunities for learning for all ages.
- Land, the knowledge and skills in and from place, language and culture are integral parts of the learning and education process among Aboriginal people.
- Aboriginal learning must be integrally linked to elders and community and opportunities realized to build upon these connections and their language, knowledge and culture.
- Learning development must focus on Aboriginal individuals in a holistic manner based on their spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical selves and acknowledge and foster their gifts and abilities.
- Selecting and legitimating curricular knowledge are issues based on power, voice, and agency that require Aboriginal people to be participating in all aspects of curriculum development, deciding on the knowledge to be included in the curriculum, and in what languages the curriculum is to be delivered. This requires new skills and knowledge to bring Aboriginal people into these participatory realms as well as power changes to systems in policy making.
- The participation and involvement of parents and community is essential to building a successful learning continuum and healthy resilient communities.
- The legitimate right of Aboriginal peoples across Canada to develop and control all aspects of their own education must be recognized, resourced, and realized.
- Inequalities in educational funding create uneven capacities for Aboriginal people and require immediate fiscal and applied solutions.

- The development of any learning and research activities with and for Aboriginal peoples must be developed within ethical principles of research involving Aboriginal communities and leadership. These are to ensure that Aboriginal peoples are invited as participants and owners of research, as well as researchers, who are involved in all aspects of the research, the analysis and conclusions, identifying the solutions and recommendations that they will benefit their nations and communities.

## **Part C: Summary of Learning Context**

### **First Nations (FN) Learning Context**

First Nations across Canada represent a rich and diverse character of Canada, speaking some 72 languages in over 600 reserve communities. They also are a young growing population with growing populations in urban areas who leave reserves for schooling, employment, and other services. Colonization of First Nations has seriously affected their lives, and the people feel the oppressive nature of prejudice and racism in Canadian society. Very early colonists justified land seizure; removed First Nations from their homelands and put them on isolated and under resourced reserves; imposed residential and federal day schools and compulsory English colonial education; subjected them to overt, covert and systemic racism; imposed disempowering policies, practices and attitudes that have continued to the present, restricting their movement, livelihood, and survival. As a result, it is understandable but tragic that First Nations youth have the highest school departures before graduation, the highest suicide rates, highest incarceration rates, and perform far below the achievement and employment rates of average Canadians. They continue to have the highest rates of infant mortality and family social problems. These facts are often repeated in Canada, but little is known about First Nations learning, development, knowledge and language for much of the research has focused on their ‘incapacity’ and little on their potential for influencing positive transformations in their own and in Canadian society in general. In fact, Canada and its provincial curricula has continued to marginalize or be indifferent to First Nations peoples, since their political legacies has divided their interests and the created hegemonic power relations evident in colonization, racism and domination which continue to effect First Nations present and future. With the future of Canada soon to be dependent on a large Canadian Aboriginal population, the learning issues, gaps, and challenges must be addressed.

### **Inuit Learning Context**

Inuit in Canada live in the most northerly settlements within 6 distinctive regions: Inuvialuit (Northwest Territories); Kitikmeot (Nunavut); Kivalliq (Nunavut); Qikiqtaaluk (Nunavut); Nunavik (Northern Quebec); and Nunatsiavut (Labrador). Inuit share

cultural, linguistic and traditional values which are unique, but distinct within Inuit communities and regions. The improvement of housing, education, health, and other social and economic conditions are common issues among Inuit. These concerns are prioritized depending on available resources and community/regional goals.

An Inuit specific approach to education is necessary to identify solutions to the following dynamics: history; rapid social changes in the past decades; social and economic conditions; geographical isolation and other facts associated with Inuit life. Inuit education must incorporate Inuktitut/Inuvialuktun, cultural values and ways, as well as Inuit history. An Inuit specific approach to education would ensure higher success rates than the current mainstream curriculum being offered in the majority of Inuit communities today.

Learning requires strength. This is an Inuit value in which an Elder illustrated to the Department of Education of the Government of Nunavut, “Sometimes the polar bears are vicious and you have to be careful.” This is described as emotional strength, a reality required to persevere in education and life. There are staggering facts in Inuit communities that have negative affects on the conditions of Inuit learning. For example, according to Health Canada, Inuit suicide rates are 135 out of 100,000 people. In comparison, First Nations suicide rates are 23.9 per 100,000, and the mainstream population is 11.8 per 100,000 people. Another overwhelming statistic from the 2001 Census states the unemployment rate of Inuit are 3 times higher than the general population at 22.2% compared to 7.4%. In summary, Inuit need to be empowered to gain control of their emotional strength and to overcome learning barriers; an Inuit-specific approach to education will address Inuit learning requirements and improve Inuit education as a whole.

### **Métis Learning Context**

The Métis is a distinct society among the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada. Located throughout Canada but in particular in the Prairies in heritage communities and urban areas, the Métis have a common political will, consciousness, language, culture, history, and homeland. Recognized in the Constitution of Canada in 1982 as one of the distinct Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, they have both unique and similar experiences with First Nations and Inuit peoples. Uniquely, they are seeking a national approach that would provide the representation and authority to advance the implementation of self-government and thus enable their control and regulation of all programming for Métis Nation. Without the federal status of First Nations, they have no funds for education and other services guaranteed to First Nations through treaties. Their unique political history of dispossession and resistance to land seizure and exclusion from Canadian settlements stands as a symbol of the tenacity of the people and their determination to remain a distinct part of Canada’s identity. They also face similar issues as First Nations from the lack of control over their present and future, a lack of education and employment and training, high levels of poverty, and many of the same healing issues surrounding residential schools and racism in Canada.

**Synthesis of Major Learning Themes:**

<b>First Nations</b>	<b>Inuit</b>	<b>Métis</b>
<p><b>Context of First Nations (FN) Learning</b>            Growing FN youth population            Colonization assimilation, residential schools            Damage to individuals and families            Loss of self-knowledge and self-sufficiency            Loss and erosion of FN language            Poverty and high unemployment            Eroded family bonds and culture            Families and students in stress            Cognitive dissonance, suicide, social ills</p> <p><b>Contemporary Education</b>            FN have hope in education            Racism and general ignorance of Canadian population            Nationalistic Canada curricula            Cognitive and cultural dissonance            Schools lack participation of FN people/leaders/elders</p> <p>Lack incentives to remain in school            Few learning skills related to career, health, recreation, and artistic expression            High drop out rate            High stress for students            Low English skills            Females more likely to graduate            Females have lower employment            Low literacy skills in English and FN languages            FN schools have uneven capacities and resources</p>	<p><b>Historical Context of Inuit Learning</b>            Rapid social change            Assimilation            Residential Schools            Federal schools            Resettlement            Eroded families bonds and roles            Language and culture exclusion            Lack of transference of parenting skills</p> <p><b>Contemporary Context of Inuit Learning</b>            High unemployment            High cost of living in the North (3-5 times higher living expenses)            Poverty            Climate change            High suicide rates            Family violence            Overcrowded housing            Maintaining language and culture            Isolation and need to travel to obtain services            Importance of Elders involvement in the school system on all levels            Inuit total median income is \$18,118 and non-Aboriginal median income is \$30,023 (Statistics Canada, 2001- <i>A Profile of Canada's Inuit Population</i> ages 25-54 years)            Schools use southern Canadian curriculum            Lack of Inuit teachers            High stress for students            Lack of incentives (extra curriculum activities) to remain in school            Few learning skills related to career, health, recreation, and artistic expression            High drop out rate            Females more likely to graduate high school than males</p>	<p><b>Context of Métis Learning</b>            Colonization and racism            Historic exclusions in Canada            Some attended residential schools            Large Métis populations in prairies            Small remote communities elsewhere            More urban than rural population            Tradition living on the land remains in some northern areas            No recognized land base, except AB            Weakened cultural base            Disconnection with land and languages</p> <p><b>Contemporary Education</b>            Education is seen be a foundation for promotion and preservation of Métis Nation            Rich with possibilities            No Métis schools            Provincially controlled education            Lack of Métis specific curriculum makes a Canadian public unaware of Métis            Lack participation of people/elders            Children streamed into areas not parent choices            Support for families needed            Incomplete high school completion- 52%            Need infrastructure/local capacity bldg            Long term strategy needed</p>

<p><b>Learning needs in Early Childhood Education (ECE)</b>  ECE for young children necessary  Prenatal health learning needed  Language immersion and Head Start  Mother and child programming  Extended family rearing  Life skills-nutrition, health, home management, parenting, cultural economic and cultural renewal  Resource rural areas</p>	<p>Low literacy skills  Low life expectancy  Some health concerns: TB, cancer, drugs, alcohol  Environmental pollution  Need for more culture and language curriculum</p> <p><b>Learning needs in Early Childhood Education</b>  ECE needed beyond daycare  Care of women and prenatal health  Expanding parenting skills  Extended family rearing  Develop readiness for students at different levels  Building resilient healthy communities  Adequate learning facilities and funding  Special needs services  Inuit specific curriculum development  Inuktitut as first language  Training for ECE workers</p>	<p><b>Learning needs in ECE</b>  ECE necessary for lifelong learning  Learning starts at home  Forming identity needs strong Métis education and family participation  Unify family and reconnect to Métis heritage  Exemplary models under Métis control: Gabriel Dumont Institute and Louis Riel Institute  Aboriginal Head Start needed  ECE provincial responsibility without Métis jurisdiction—devolution to Métis needed  Métis control of ECE  Public education be accountable for outcomes to Métis</p>
<p><b>Primary and Secondary Schooling</b>  Priority to bring back early leavers  Develop transitions from one institution to another  Understand student dissonance and disenchantment  Address racism in schools and society  Support connections to traditional life, history, culture, elders, and parents.  Build healthy communities  Engage students in decision-making  Create bridging and access programs  Train and develop counselors and mentors  Develop readiness for students at different levels  Address Canadian ignorance of FN  Accommodate language and cultures  Build new learning environments built on the traditional cultural skills and activities of the communities  Create new curricula, FN Control, community involvement  Share curricula and resources  Develop new climate of inclusion in schools for parents  Ensure parents have the same rights as other Canadian parents in the control, management, and direction of schools</p>	<p><b>Primary and Secondary Schooling</b>  Work with Inuit using their expertise and leadership  Improve local learning programs  Build capacity for counseling for personal, academic and career mentoring  Increase training for teachers and administrators  Improved Inuit curriculum in language and culture  Develop clearinghouse for sharing knowledge &amp; curricula  Readiness support for students at different levels  Improve infrastructures for learning opportunities  Ensure Inuktitut/Inuvialuktun is available in the schools  Provide solutions to decrease the drop-out rate  Providing opportunities to gain Inuit traditional knowledge  Increase arts and recreational activities in the schools by including traditional Inuit games, drumming, songs and throat singing  Provide more career awareness in the schools</p>	<p><b>Primary and Secondary Schooling</b>  Provincial education provides unregulated and irregular framework for addressing education  Need to allocate funds and authority to Métis to educate children  No consistent approach to Métis governance implementation  Unacceptable results of current and past education  Need holistic approach  Métis education begins from the land and the language  Need separate Métis School Board authority  Immersion opportunities  Curriculum to value and include Métis culture, history, and language  Human right to be Métis  Promote role of Métis Elders  Increase number of and cultural competencies of teachers  Develop Métis specific educational institutions, where numbers warrant  Provide research and development of curriculum, program design and educational programming</p> <p>Profession development to develop needed expertise in Métis specific</p>

<p><b>Postsecondary Education (PSE)</b>  Assimilation and academic preparation for the future has been assumed as PSE  Need uninterrupted education  Extend care for families and learners in PSE  Ensure role models are encouraged and supported  Develop skills based programming includes language building, connections to culture and cultural capital  Counseling, mentors, support, funding  Teacher Preparation  Train and hire FN teachers  Educate all teachers to FN learning, knowledge, culture  FN teachers are needed  Exemplary programs for FN teachers are available in the Teacher Education Programs TEPs  FN teachers need methodologies for language instruction and curriculum development  Need to address racism in schools among Canadian public and teachers</p> <p><b>Culture and Language</b>  Recognize the complexities and richness of knowledge in language  Ensure the culture helps to build youth as citizens of their communities  Life long learning includes critical learning, environmental learning, knowledge of traditional and contemporary protocols, conflict management, spirituality, artistic expression, language skills of the community.  Holistic education for the whole child and community  Place education into culture not just culture into education  Recognize role of racism in losses to</p>	<p>Increase student’s ability to enter into post-secondary school  Reduce the need for travel for training by providing training opportunities within Inuit communities  62% of rural Inuit (the North) have less than completed high school and 37% urban Inuit have less than completed high school (Statistics Canada, 2001- <i>A Profile of Canada’s Inuit Population</i> ages 20-24 years)</p> <p><b>Postsecondary Education</b>  Develop transition programs to ensure post-secondary readiness  Need for more post-secondary institutions in Inuit regions  Increase Inuit professors  Provide cultural awareness and sensitivity training to post-secondary institutions  Increase support services within the post-secondary institution in the south for Inuit to reduce culture shock and homesickness  Increase Inuit support services within the urban community (this reduces homesickness and culture shock, and increases the likelihood of success in post-secondary education)  Urban Inuit need improved access to post-secondary funds  Funding for urban Inuit must flow through Inuit organizations or Institutes (often they have to apply to a First Nations Band)  1% of Inuit in the North have received a university degree in comparison to 7% urban Inuit (Statistics Canada, 2001- <i>A Profile of Canada’s Inuit Population</i> ages 25-34 years)</p> <p><i>Examples of Successful Programs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kativik School Board-McGill University: Inuit Teacher Training Programme (to increase Inuit teachers and administrators by having an Inuit specific program adapted to their needs)</li> <li>- Nunavuk Sivuniksavut (To prepare Inuit youth for their educational training and career goals by providing knowledge</li> </ul>	<p>curriculum areas</p> <p><b>Postsecondary Education</b>  Lack PSE funding for Métis  More diverse training beyond Aboriginal Human Resource Development Strategy  Poverty and low income make PSE difficult for families  Increase bursaries and scholarships  Develop educational indicators for success for Métis  Need data and national registry collected to identify report card for Canadian Métis children  SUNTEP model of teacher training  Professional development of teachers</p> <p><b>Culture and Language</b>  Méchif is at risk, as number of speakers decrease  Métis heritage is connected to First Nations and many speak the Cree, Dakota and Dene languages  Need to protect all languages, to increase access to them, to develop materials in them  Governance structures and Métis aspirations must be considered  Protect and recover languages as well as celebration  Protect heritage/traditional skills</p>
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<p>language and culture</p> <p><b>Adult Education and Skills</b>          FN adults have added family and economic responsibilities          Low-income families need support while adults are in school/training          Work place learning needs to include opportunities to develop traditional and contemporary skills, knowledge          Upgrading of skills          Education that connects to FN lives more successful in communities          Need adult FN learning theory</p> <p><b>Areas needing to be developed</b>          Traditional FN knowledge &amp; skills among the youth/adults          Language and culture need support          Holistic learning          Learning of FN history, contexts, colonization, racism in Canada          Transformations envisioned in healing and in FN control of education and learning          Reconnecting with Elders in schools</p> <p><b>Literacy</b>          Create relevant holistic literacy-learning programs based with cultures          Recognize the multiple literacies that are part of students' culture          Reframe curriculum materials to reflect FN people in positive light          Recognize the intergenerational effects of literacy that include all learners in the culture</p>	<p>relevant to future careers in Nunavut)</p> <p>- Labrador Inuit Association Post Secondary Student Support Program (providing support to ensure their success in post-secondary education that goes beyond financial support)</p> <p><b>Culture and Language</b>          Language rights legislation          Ongoing connection with the land and its resources          Inuit Elders have a high importance in Inuit life because they pass down Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit (IQ) or Inuit Traditional Knowledge. For example; values, beliefs, customs, language, stories, songs, games, hunting techniques and other traditional ways of life          Language is eroding with TV and modern pop culture          Learning through language and culture          Need more language/cultural teachers certified and employed          Opportunities to promote Inuit traditional games, drumming, songs and throat singing          Providing traditional skills in sewing and hunting          Learning from other Inuit best practices: For example; Greenland</p> <p><b>Adult Education and Skills</b>          Many exemplary models are successful when attached to language and culture          High dropout among youth requires adult education, holistic and literacy related to culture and environment.          Low literacy skills in English          Improve literacy skills in Inuktitut/Inuvialuktun          Improve life skills-nutrition, health, home management, parenting          Knowledge of family and human rights          Need for trades and skills training          Training opportunities in Inuktitut/Inuvialuktun          Integrating essential traditional skills in the workforce          Support additional trained counselors and mentors</p>	<p><b>Adult Education and Skills</b>          Need programs that develop from Métis perspective, governance and support financially families and individuals attending programs          Inadequate crowded housing and associated chronic health conditions          Lone parent in urban areas more likely          All education tied to life long learning          Métis specific implementation          Infrastructure/institutional building</p> <p><b>Areas needing to be developed</b>          Cultural survival dependent on self-government/preservation of the nation          Federal and provincial jurisdictional conflicts over responsibility for funding          Desire for recognition of rights as a people beyond protection of Section 35 (1)          Métis control of capacity building of communities, education, employment, training          Transformations envisioned in healing          Rewrite Canadian history to include and correct Métis history and national identity of Métis          Capacity building to benefit Métis Nations</p> <p><b>Literacy</b>          Literacy attached to Métis culture, heritage, history          Literacy and life long learning</p> <p><b>Desirable features of learning:</b>          Provide immersion like opportunities</p>
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<p>Increase adult literacy resources and programming</p> <p><b>Gender</b>  Employ gender analysis in all program generations  Increase opportunities for males to succeed  Investigate and equalize opportunities for females to be employed  Ensure gender equity in employment, training, schooling, and professional development  Consult/engage women in all decision making re policy and program implementation</p> <p><b>ICT</b>  Technology is rich resource to connect people to culture, language and heritage  Parents concerned about youth embracing new technologies but are increasing being alienated from FN heritage because  Eurocentric/Anglocentric values and priorities for materialism, pop culture, and English language saturation.  Traditional knowledge is at risk of being appropriated and misused.  Appropriate protocols to be developed to access IK  Technology must include FN to ensure that traditional culture and heritage is appropriately acquired and used.  Rural areas least able to connect with fewer resources to acquire hardware</p> <p><b>Learning Pedagogy: Exemplary Practices</b>  Respects knowledge/perspectives of FN people  Builds relationships founded on trust and respect  Develops a <i>sui generis</i> education, ‘one of a kind’ that is empowering, holistic, spiritual, and environmental, harmonious, respectful and caring.  Supports resilient learners so they can believe in themselves</p>	<p><b>Areas need to be developed</b>  Ensure longevity of Inuit culture  Traditional skills of families and communities in camp life  Expanding Elders and Youth programs  Language and culture in the schools  Curriculum development to include Inuit history and land claims  Curriculum development for mainstream education on Inuit issues and history  Traditional knowledge and developmental learning skills  School retention  Increasing numbers of Inuit graduates from post-secondary institutions  Improving the social, economic and health conditions which affect the ability of Inuit to learn on all levels</p> <p><b>Literacy</b>  Inuktitut/Inuvialuktun as first language in the North  English/French as second languages  Maintain the strength of Inuktitut/Inuvialuktun languages  Importance of first language literacy training in the student’s dialect  Improve literacy in Inuktitut, English and French  Training in English as a Second language in the North  Creation of Inuit specific literacy documents  Creation of adequate facilities, learning aids and increasing the number of literacy instructors</p>	<p>Recognize Métis control  Include contributions of Métis  Promote distinct history, culture and languages  Ensure protection of human right to be Métis  Promote Métis specific teacher education  Develop Métis curriculum</p>
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<p>Includes students in decision making within schools, classrooms, and programs</p> <p>Acknowledges multiple intelligences and abilities that lead to increased capacities</p> <p>Supports the whole person and help to find their gifts and talents</p> <p>Uses variety of pedagogical approaches, holistic approaches</p> <p>Uses multiple media literacy, visual arts, industrial arts, physical education, and music</p> <p>Develops practical and applied learning</p>		
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**Part D: Conclusions and Next Steps:**

**Potential Conditions and Directions for an Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre**

This report offers a summary of three reports of First Nations, Inuit and Métis. These shared insights emerged from discussions with and among Aboriginal peoples of Canada. What is known is largely about the effects of colonial relations that have created conditions in communities that Aboriginal peoples are dealing with. The major gaps in understanding are about what Aboriginal peoples consider important and desire in future learning opportunities and is about their languages, cultures, knowledge, relationships, socio-cultural, political and economic survival. The ‘what is’ then is not ‘what ought to be’, nor are the exemplary practices all that can be. Decisions about the future are still to be localized to the many First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nations to consider as they have repeatedly urged that their voices be heard, their participation be respected in any policies and programs that affect them, and decisions be based on the contexts in which they live, on their languages, and on their cultures, world views, knowledge foundations, and diverse ways of knowing and learning.

How then can CCL benefit from the partial knowledge produced in these reports from communities and nations of Aboriginal peoples? In particular, how does this report fit in terms of the mandate of CCL? The following areas then offer some questions raised by this research and the considerations of those directions in the areas so named as the functional areas of the Aboriginal Learning Centre. It should be remembered that the reports do not shed light on monitoring issues, or even dissemination of knowledge issues, as these have not been raised in the reports as significant local issues. Rather what is happening or not happening is what was found significant.

## 1. MONITORING AND REPORTING:

- What kinds of monitoring can be shared effectively across diverse jurisdictions to offer better analyses of the state of learning among Aboriginal peoples?
- What kinds of monitoring are missing so that education planners can make better learning and educational programming?
- How can diverse jurisdictions, provincial, territorial, and First Nations schools benefit from shared monitoring of students literacy and achievements?
- How can research methodologies structured toward reductionist analyses offer insight to holistic learning?

Building a case for sharing monitoring schemes and reporting mechanisms among and across diverse governmental and institutional jurisdictions is sensitive business. While all Federal, Provincial, Territorial, First Nations, Inuit and Métis jurisdictions have some monitoring going on, these have not been shared widely with each other for various reasons, although one might infer the implications of monitoring is as much about learning, scrutiny and criticism all occurring simultaneously in the monitoring business. Governments, institutions and groups monitor for their own purposes, and use their data for resolving many issues dealing with their local resourcing, curriculum changes, professional development of their staff, teacher resourcing, students enrollments and how to resource them effectively. Monitoring has evaluative consequences, which carries the possibility that the effects of monitoring will be used to critique the jurisdictions, their schools, and teachers, or perhaps the learners themselves. Hence, decisions need to be made about what kind of monitoring of Aboriginal students, schools, programs, funds, and other output measures can be seen as an effective use of time, money, and resources. This raises the problematic issue of governance of research involving Aboriginal peoples, wherein ethics, frameworks, roles and responsibilities, and processes must be considered.

## 2. KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

- How can Indigenous knowledge be effectively translated into educational developmental theory and practice?
- How can Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy and Aboriginal languages and learning inform contemporary institutional curricula and pedagogy?
- How can the knowledge and current scholarship of racism, antiracism, critical multiculturalism, and postcolonial education be shared to inform new directions in provincial and public education in Aboriginal education?
- What lessons can be learned from exemplary program practices and how can these be most effectively shared?
- How can technology be used appropriately and more effectively to share and communicate across diverse groups and from rural areas?
- How can current research, literature on learning be made available in an appropriate way for lifelong learning?

Knowledge exchange is intended to expand current available knowledge and the sharing of that knowledge. In a growing knowledge economy the local and particular have value for human dignity, identity and citizenship and in maximizing the human potential. How can knowledge among First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples effectively be engaged in education, not just for Aboriginal peoples but also for the Canadian public as a whole? How can the particular histories and knowledge be a source of understanding and inspiration for the future, and not played out as narratives of difference, so localized that Canadians can not see themselves in them nor accept the colonial narratives of the past as being part of their own history? These are challenges presented by knowledge exchange, for in the past such knowledge exchange has been a one-way street. Rather the challenge is to create a respectful conversation with Aboriginal peoples from which hope and inspiration can be found and explored through the diversity of experiences, political entities, languages, and cultures they represent.

The reports and the research demonstrate similarities of themes across each of the groups. CCL can help track and identify successes in learning and encourage demonstration projects that animate these features. In addition, such information sharing can offer so much more about how learning occurs and what features can be strengthened as they are continually supported, not just studied.

Current discourses about the value of Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous peoples is finding new ground, and many new Indigenous scholars are finding the inspiration and hope for themselves and the education for the future in their own articulation of localized knowledge. In them they find stories of the people, the resonances of relationships with each other and with the spirit of place, and a new way of learning that arises from those relationships with spirit. These are evident in their languages and in their discourses, and that which was once lost or dismissed is finding space and legitimacy in all areas of scholarship. But these discourses are not evolving to a cumulative social change or transformation, but rather to the trial and error convergence toward best practices. These many best practices have not had much of an effect on institutional change. In addition, the understanding of Indigenous knowledge and its implications for contemporary education much longer course to follow. In this regard, CCL can provide a larger space for Indigenous knowledge to be explored and a developmental sequence of learning formulated.

### 3. RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

- How can research be ethically developed with Aboriginal communities, schools, and students?
- What kinds of research methods most appropriately engage communities in local research and help develop local capacity for doing their own research?
- Why does diversity matter in a knowledge economy?
- Evidence gaps: What types of knowledge and information are needed to help improve outcomes in the area of Aboriginal learning?

Research and Knowledge Mobilization has to do with research, finding answers to new questions, testing or identifying enriched programs and innovations and taking them to new levels of policy and reform. However, research still does not reverberate in Aboriginal communities with trust and acceptance. Many Aboriginal people have been the objects of research and have been placed under western research gaze that has left scars because of the ill treatment of researchers, the abuse of relationships, the marginalization of the peoples, their capacity, and their knowledge and the inadequacy of the research interpretations. CCL must ensure that research undertaken among Aboriginal peoples of Canada be ethically conducted, based on Aboriginal principles of respect, relationship building, participation of the people in the decisions of research conducted in their areas, access to the processes of research, control of their knowledge, and benefits accruing from research going back to the people. Several documents and literature offer much larger discussions of research principles and guidelines that must be considered for this area.

Research then done in collaboration and in consultation with Aboriginal peoples may then help resolve some of the key areas outlined in this research as follows:

1. Understanding developmental learning in and through language, culture, and knowledge or understanding how distinctive locations create conditions for learning among First Nations, Inuit and Métis
2. Identifying appropriate and effective learning environments and programming at multiple ages and stages through life
3. Comprehending obstacles to learning among Aboriginal peoples
4. Funding demonstration projects that involve appropriate levels of cultural engagement and skill building among diverse learners.
5. Discussions, dialogues, interpretation and translations of IK into school learning environments, curricula, and practical pedagogical understandings.
6. Developing effective transitions from school to work to develop the full human being
7. Filling gaps of literacy to maximize life long learning, using both the cultural competencies and connections to communities and health and work related competencies.
8. Engaging Aboriginal learners in the identification of their own learning strengths.
9. Public education in antiracist education and value of diversity in Canada

**APPENDIX A: FIRST NATIONS LEARNING** (see attached)

**APPENDIX B: INUIT LEARNING** (see attached)

**APPENDIX C: MÉTIS LEARNING** (see attached)