

Métis Post-Secondary Education Systems: Literature Review

Animation Theme Bundle:
Pedagogy of Professions and
Practice and Aboriginal Learning

ABORIGINAL LEARNING

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Introduction

The goals and objectives of the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre are to provide a collaborative national forum to support the development of effective solutions for the challenges faced by First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners. Examining how post-secondary education systems affect Métis learners is one way of serving this objective. The experiences of Métis learners and identifying best practices provide opportunities to improve the quality of decisions identifying where changes may be needed to enhance Métis post-secondary education delivery and ultimately enhance growth, development and responsiveness to Métis learners. This paper aims to provide a literature review on the current state of knowledge of Métis post-secondary education systems and to identify promising practices and some principles that could be further explored or new directions for policy developments while reflecting Métis cultural traditions and continuity.

Methodology

This paper focuses on the perspectives of Métis learners and a review of existing Métis post-secondary institutions. This literature review is complex in its examination of the Métis specific documents available although it is limited by having a very short timeframe to conduct the review. Computer searches were undertaken on Aboriginal post-secondary education, Métis post-secondary and Métis education in various meta search engines and specialized subject search engines. Challenges arose when general terms such as Aboriginal and education provided massive amounts of material while Métis specific searches resulted in a sparse return. In keeping with the goals of the project, documents were scanned for relevance to Métis specific issues on post-secondary education issues.

By focusing on Métis specific issues, this paper does not assume that findings from other studies or institutions are not relevant. Instead, a snapshot of select non-Métis specific learning institutions that provide for, recruit, and promote the inclusion of Aboriginal people, provide a framework for the papers analysis. The focus, however, remains on the perspectives of Métis learners and accordingly, the views and analysis of Métis peoples have been relied on as much as possible. The objectives of this literature review are:

- a) To conduct a cross-country scan literature review on Métis post-secondary educational systems;
- b) To synthesize information found in the literature review specific to the Métis;
- c) To explore current promising practices across Métis post-secondary educational systems;
- d) To provide recommendations for consideration for future growth and development and responsiveness to Métis learners.

A fundamental premise of this paper is the central role that post-secondary education has played and continues to affect the lives of Métis people. Yet, the role of education and its long term impacts have not been restricted to the lives of Métis people. Educational policies, consequences and concerns extend far beyond the lives of individuals to all Canadian society. Education systems that do not serve the needs of Métis learners have lasting impact on socio-economic developments of all of Canada. Employment rates, recruitment and retention initiatives, community issues of being at risk or in crisis, suicide rates, poverty, health and justice are just a few of the issues intertwined with education development. This is why statistics on the well-being of Métis people in Canada are manifestations of Métis experiences in post-secondary education. Unfortunately, studies of socio-economic statistics consistently show large disparities remain between Aboriginal peoples and the general Canadian population.ⁱ

1. Determinants of Educational Attainment for Métis Post-secondary Education

In order to understand the determinants of educational attainment for Métis people at the post-secondary level, the identification of who is a Métis can and is often a part of the struggle for post-secondary education institutions. In the 1800s the term Métis defined people of mixed Aboriginal blood and European blood and in particular with French Roman Catholic background. Currently the definition of who is Métis has changed and been redefined. For example, the *Métis Settlements Act* defines a Métis as a person of Aboriginal ancestry that identifies with Métis history and culture.ⁱⁱ The Métis National Council defines Métis as constitutionally protected peoples within the Métis homeland in western Canada that have a shared history, common culture, a unique language (Michif), kinship connections from Ontario westward, a distinct way of life, a traditional territory and a collective consciousness.ⁱⁱⁱ They

outline four criteria: Métis means a person who self-identifies as Métis; is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry; is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, and is accepted by the Métis nation.^{iv} The Labrador Métis nation believes that the constitutional definition of Métis include the descendants of European men and primarily Inuit women who are geographically confined to the Labrador territory.^v The Confederacy of Nova Scotia Métis and La Nation Métis au Québec define their Métis as people with mixed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal background that reside in their province.^{vi}

In *R. v. Powley*,^{vii} the Supreme Court of Canada established for the first time a legal definition of who the Métis are through its consideration of a hunting case in Ontario. They were asked to provide a definition of Métis citizenship, identity and membership. Although Métis are included within s. 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, there was disagreement on which Métis were included and the scope of the constitutionally protected rights. The Court in shaping the 10 part test in determining Métis rights under s. 35, stated rights bearing Métis required membership in the contemporary Métis community. In determining this, there must be an objective verifiable process to identify members of the community based on reasonable principles and historical fact that can be documented. The Court did not set out a comprehensive definition of Métis for all purposes; however, it set out three components to guide the identification of Métis rights-holders:

- 1) Demonstrate an ancestral connection to the historic Métis community;
- 2) Self- identification as Métis; and,
- 3) Are accepted by the Métis community.

The Court also recognized that there might be others who legitimately claim Métis status but do not have a genealogical connection to the historic Métis community.^{viii}

i) Métis Population

In the 2006 Census 389,785 people identified themselves as Métis. Although this is a 91 per cent increase in growth from the last Census in 1996,^{ix} many of the Métis organizations submit this is conservative.^x Based on their own communal understandings of memberships, the population is said to be much larger^{xi} although the Métis nation of Ontario found the Statistics Canada population as being consistent with their own recorded population of 73, 605 as reflected by the

Métis Nation of Ontario Registry of Métis Citizens.^{xii} From Statistics Canada data, Métis population accounts for more than one-third (34%) of the Aboriginal population^{xiii} and are generally young with the population concentrated in the west.^{xiv} Chart 1, identifies the age distribution and Chart 2 identifies the location of the Métis in Canada.

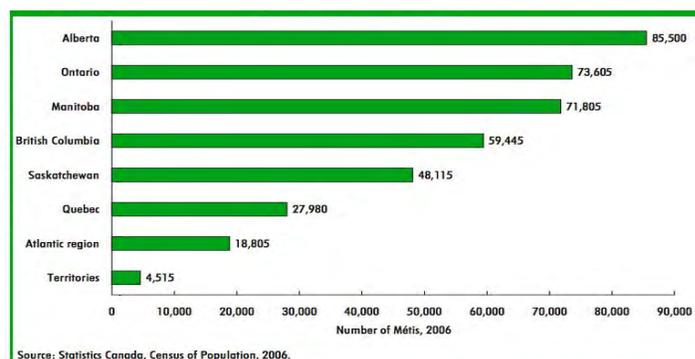
Chart 1: The Age of the Métis:

Table 3: Age Distribution of the Population, per cent, 2006

	Total Population		Working Age Population (15+)	
	Non-Aboriginal	Métis	Non-Aboriginal	Métis
0 to 19 years	24.1	35.1	8.1	13.2
Under 5 years	5.3	7.4	-	-
5 to 9 years	5.6	8.3	-	-
10 to 14 years	6.5	9.5	-	-
15 to 19 years	6.7	9.9	8.1	13.2
20 to 44 years	34.7	37.5	42.0	50.2
20 to 24 years	6.6	8.4	8.0	11.2
25 to 34 years	12.7	14.0	15.4	18.8
35 to 44 years	15.4	15.1	18.6	20.1
Above 45 years	41.2	27.4	49.9	36.6
45 to 54 years	16.0	14.2	19.4	19.0
55 to 64 years	11.9	8.0	14.4	10.7
65 to 74 years	7.4	3.6	8.9	4.8
75 years and over	6.0	1.5	7.3	2.0
Working Age (15+)	82.6	74.7	100.0	100.0
Total	100.0	100.0	-	-

Source: Census 2006 Tabulations

Chart 2 shows where the Métis are living:



Where Métis are living may also affect post-secondary educational attainment as over two-thirds of Métis live in an urban area (69 per cent) and the majority of those live in a central

metropolitan area^{xv} (59 per cent) with the largest population in Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon and Ottawa-Gatineau.^{xvi} The concentration of population in the larger cities suggest that relocation for post-secondary studies may not be as problematic for the Métis compared to First Nation or Inuit that are more likely from rural locations.^{xvii}

ii) Métis Employment Rates

Between 2001 and 2006, the employment rates for Métis aged 25 to 54 years increased by 4 per cent to approximately 75 per cent but consistently remain lower than that of the non-Aboriginal population at approximately 82 per cent. The differences were widest in New Brunswick (18 percentage points) with both Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan at 14 percentage points. Métis men were employed at a higher rate than women by approximately 10 per cent,^{xviii} although women were more likely to be employed in parts of the country with small Métis populations such as Newfoundland, New Brunswick, the Yukon and Nunavut.^{xix}

National unemployment rates of people who are looking for work showed that the unemployment rates of Métis adults were higher than those in the non-Aboriginal population rising from 5.2 percent to 8.4 percent in 2006.^{xx} The unemployment rate for Métis women was comparable to that for Métis men, at 8.2% compared with 8.6% in 2006.^{xxi} This, however, is an overall decrease specific to the Métis when looking at the general trend between 2001 and 2006 with the unemployment rates for Métis decreasing by 4 percent from 12.5 percent to 8.4 percent.^{xxii}

iii) Métis Income Levels

In 2005, the median income of the Métis in Canada was lower than that of the non-Aboriginal population by approximately \$26,000. The median income of Métis increased by about \$2,600 over a five-year period, which was over three times faster than the less than \$1,000 increase for the non-Aboriginal population. The median income between the Métis and the non-Aboriginal population was widest in Alberta with approximately \$6,000 less than non-Aboriginal population income of approximately \$30,000. The territories had an even larger gap in median income between the Métis and non-Aboriginal population. In most regions, the median income of Métis women was approximately \$9,000 less than that of Métis men (\$26,466). At the regional level, the gap was widest in Alberta and Nova Scotia. Métis women in Alberta made about \$14,000

less than Métis men (\$31,869) while Métis women in Nova Scotia made about \$10,200 less than their male counterparts (\$25,329).^{xxiii}

Chart 3 shows average income levels by work activity for Métis

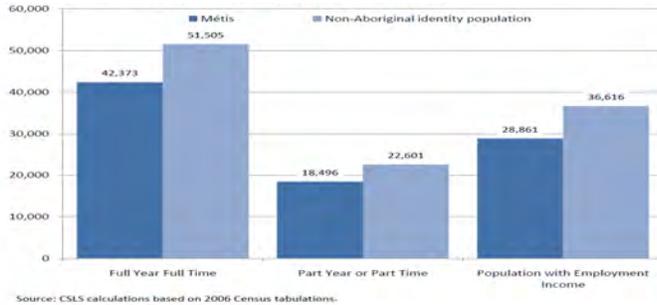
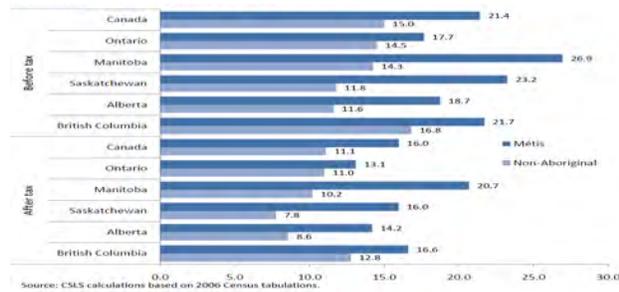


Chart 4 shows the prevalence of Métis with low incomes in private households:



iv) Métis Educational Attainment

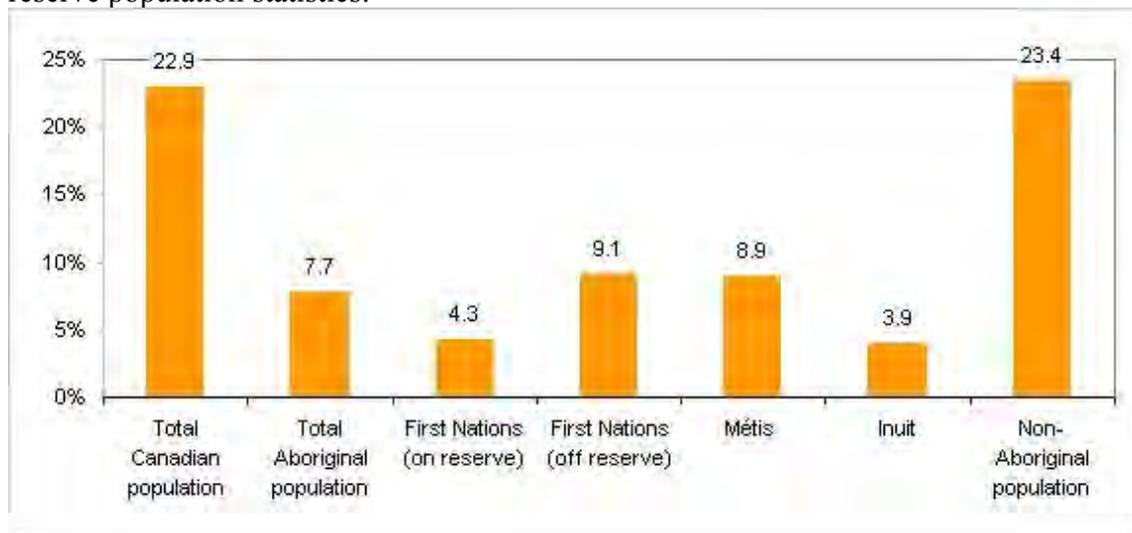
The following set of charts illustrates a complete picture of the status of Métis educational attainment gleaned from the 2006 Statistics Canada Report. Chart 5 below shows that Métis people still fall behind non-Aboriginal people in attaining post-secondary education in that 50% of all Métis people have completed some type of post-secondary education whereas 61% of non-Aboriginal people have also completed some type of post-secondary education. Additionally, Métis women are slightly ahead of Métis men in attaining education.

Chart 5: COLLEGE EDUCATION OF METIS ADULTS AGE 25 TO 64, 2006

	Métis	Non-Aboriginal	Women	Men
Complete post sec. Education	50%	61%	51%	48%
Diploma	21%		25%	17%
Trade	16%		12%	21%
Degree	9%	23%	10%	8%

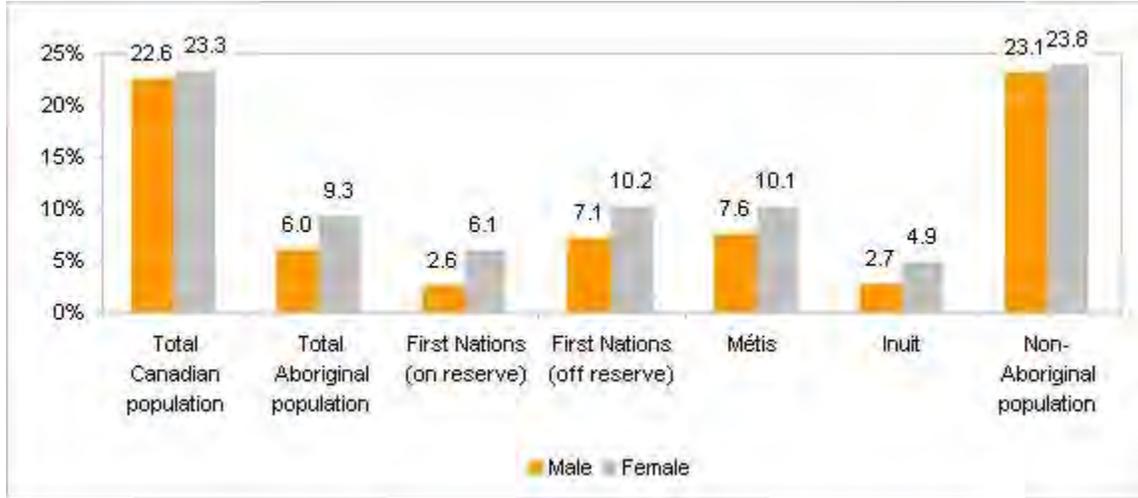
Source page 26 Canadian Social Trends Statistics Canada – Cat. No. 11-008

Chart 6: The following chart shows the proportion of Aboriginal people aged 25–64 who have completed a university program in 2006. Note that in comparison to the non-Aboriginal population, Métis people statistics are very low, but are comparable to the First Nation, off reserve population statistics:



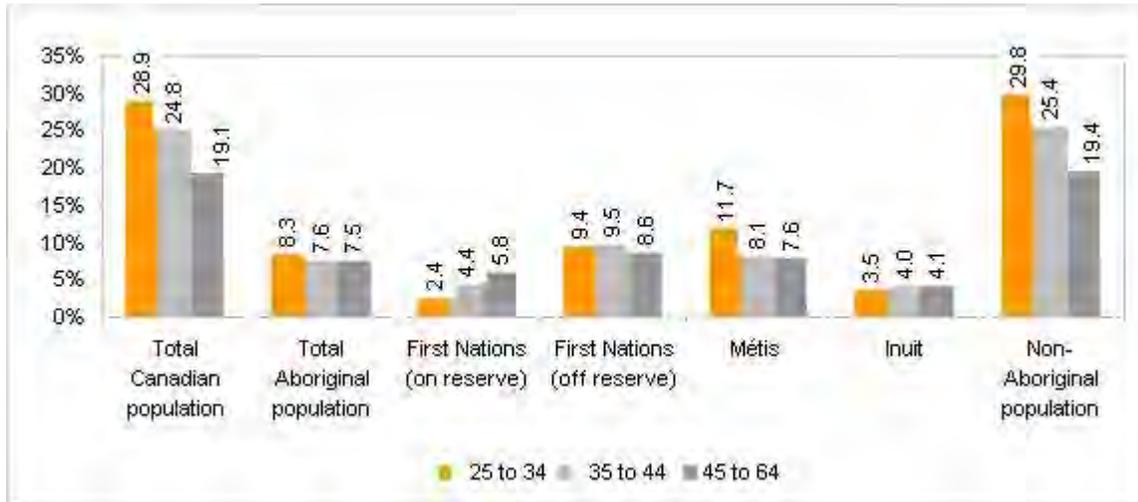
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2006. Catalogue No. 97-560- XCB2006031

Chart 7: This chart shows the proportion of Aboriginal people aged 25–64 who have completed a university program, by gender:



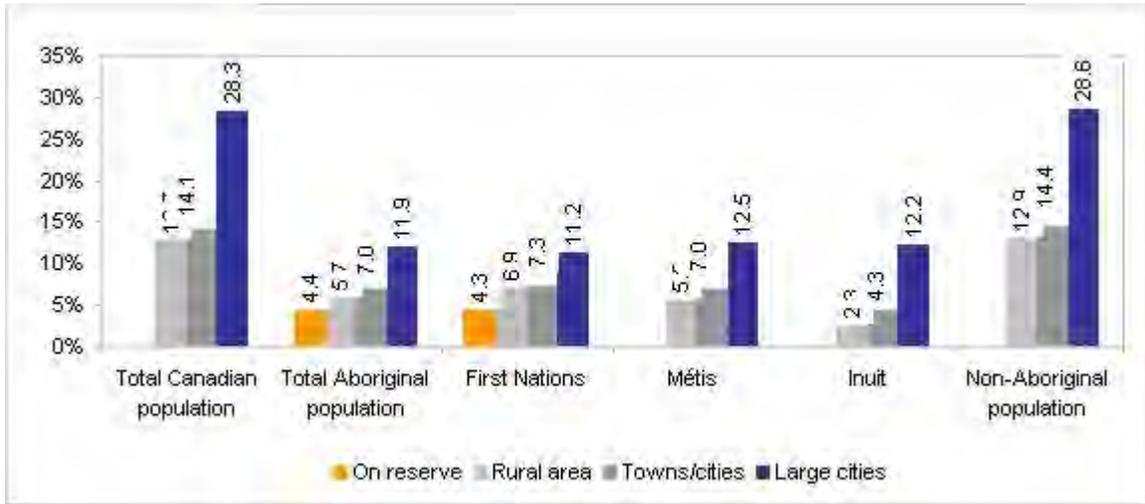
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2006. Catalogue No. 97-560-XCB2006031

Chart 8: This chart shows the proportion of Aboriginal people aged 25–64 who have completed a university program, by age in 2006:



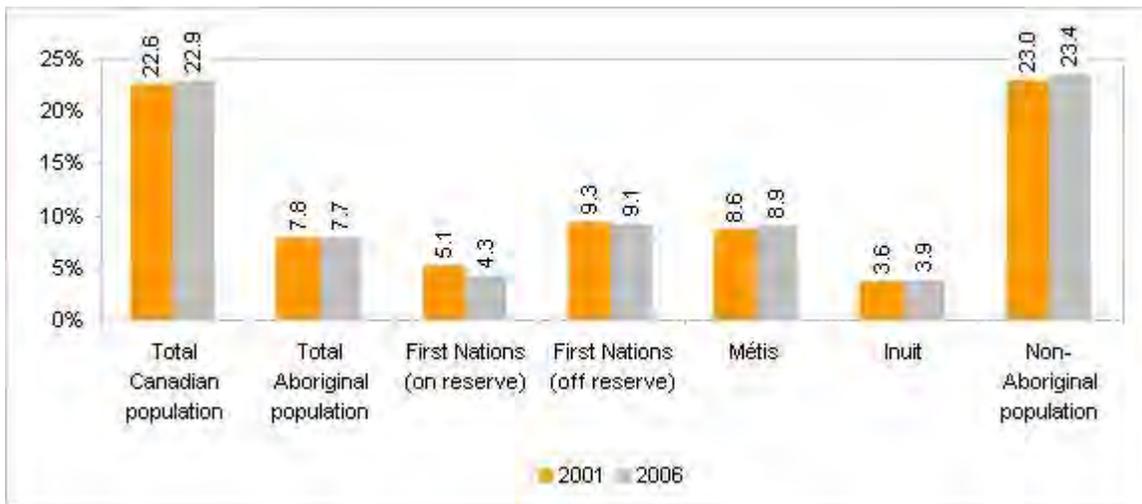
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2006. Catalogue No. 97-560-XCB2006031

Chart 9: This chart shows the proportion of Aboriginal people aged 25–64 who have completed a university program, by area of residence.



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2006. Catalogue No. 97-560-XCB2006031

Chart 10: This chart shows the proportion of Aboriginal people aged 25–64 who have completed a university program in 2001 and 2006:

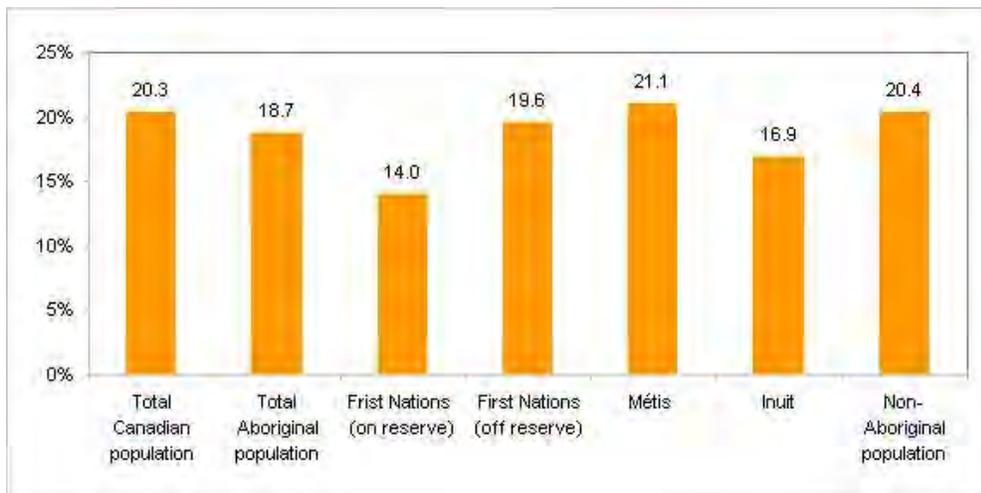


Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2006. Catalogue No. 97-560-XCB2006031

Chart 11: Of the 50% of Métis between ages 25 to 64 pursuing a post-secondary education, college education is more common and more Métis women than Métis men are pursuing post-secondary educations as shown in Chart 11 below: ^{xxiv}

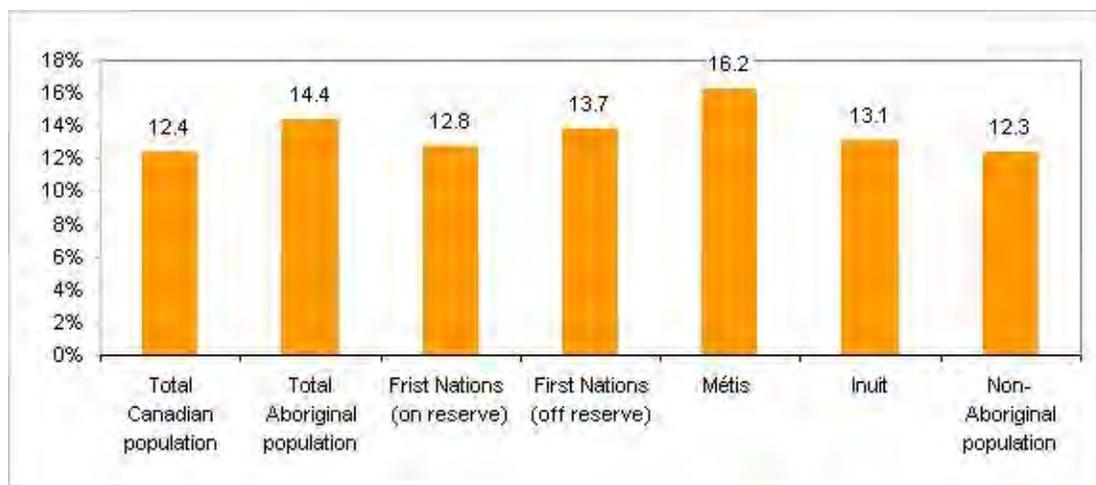
	Métis men and women		Métis Women	Métis Men
Post-secondary Ed., Age 25 to 64	50%	Post-secondary education	51%	48%
College-diploma	21%	College diploma	25%	17%
College-Trade	16%	Trade Certificate	21%	12%
University degree - 2006	9%	University Degree	10%	8%

Chart 12: This chart indicates the proportion of Aboriginal people aged 25–64 who have completed a college diploma or certificate, according to Statistics Canada's Census.



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2006. Catalogue No. 97-560-XCB2006031

Chart 13: This shows the proportion of Aboriginal people aged 25–64 who have completed a trade diploma or certificate, according to Statistics Canada's Census.



Across the country and over the years, Métis people have been making inroads in increasing their population, employment rates and median income levels. These statistics are consistent with the increased population of Métis who have completed a post-secondary education as 50% of all Métis people have completed some type of post-secondary education. Compared with the 61% of non-Aboriginal people who have also completed some type of post-secondary education, these statistics for the Métis remain low. Specifically, in university education in comparison to the non-Aboriginal population, Métis people statistics are very low, but are comparable to the First Nation, off reserve population statistics, similarly so for university educated Métis women and First Nations women off reserve. The data also shows that young Métis age 25 to 34 are completing university and often live in urban centres. Métis lead in completed college diplomas or certificate at 21.1 whereas Canadian population is only 20.3 – the statistics are similar for trade diplomas. Even with these small but important positive movements in the well being of Métis people, there remain large gaps relational to other peoples of Canada in the overall categories of education, employment and income.

2. History of Métis in Education

Euro-Canadian colonial concepts in education continue to play an important role in defining and making assumptions on learning, values and relations. The colonial education system was one

marked by legally sanctioned racialized stereotypes used for the express purpose of excluding the Métis from accessing provincial education systems. As the legal sanctions varied, so did the education systems approach vary whereby selected students were placed in residential schools across Canada.^{xxv} In contrast, traditional Métis education was grounded within relational communal priorities. Many Métis children in the early days were educated in survival skills rather than through bricks and mortar schools. Survival skills included trading, hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering skills. Men raised their sons to be buffalo hunters while women raised their daughters to hone skills in sewing, bead and quill work, healing arts and anything that was essential to assist the mothers with a large family.^{xxvi} The Gabriel Dumont Institute notes:

In traditional Métis society, education was informal and was passed down to youth from the Elders or the “Old People”. This form of education centred on resource extraction and how to make a living off of the land. Since bison were at the centre of the Métis economy during the golden age of the Métis Nation (1816-1869), this hardy animal is a fitting symbol of traditional Métis education. Métis youth would have learned from their Elders the many useful and lifesaving applications, which this one animal provided to their entire society.^{xxvii}

The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples also commented on early Métis education:

From early contact, education for Métis people emphasized religious studies, with some basic arithmetic and writing. Métis people in some areas attended residential schools, and in the northwest, the sons of affluent Métis received the formal education of the privileged, often being sent to eastern Canada or England for higher education. Missionaries provided limited instruction to the children of Métis people who followed the migration of the buffalo.^{xxviii}

If parents wanted their children to be taught in a school (to increase their employment opportunities), they sent them to a mission, boarding or a day school.^{xxix} However, the children who lived in or near the fur trading communities were educated in by the missionaries in the mission schools. Once the numbered treaties were signed and following the Battle of Batoche in 1885,^{xxx} formal education for Métis children became difficult in that neither the federal nor provincial governments claimed responsibility for the education of Métis children. These children were caught in a jurisdictional void.^{xxxi} Noting this void, in 1879, author and politician, Nicholas Flood Davin unsuccessfully advocated for the inclusion of the Métis in federal schools in his “Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-breeds.” By 1910, the federal

government excluded Métis and non-status Indian children from their schools and limited their responsibility to the education of status Indians. The provincial government also refused to accept responsibility for their education. *The Report of the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples* notes that in Alberta:

Increasing immigration and development consumed their historical lands at a distressing rate. Increasingly restrictive hunting laws, with which they were required to comply despite their Aboriginal heritage, made it more and more difficult to follow traditional pursuits. While they were never well off, Indian people at least had their reserves and benefited from various social services provided by the government of Canada. Not so the Métis. In the early twentieth century, the circumstances of the Alberta Métis were "especially grim in the central and north-central regions....Game was scarce, prohibitively expensive fishing licences were required, and white settlement was spreading remorselessly. The majority of the Métis were reduced to squatting on the fringes of Indian reserves and white settlements and on road allowances". The 'independent ones,' who had been the diplomats and brokers of the entire northwest were now being referred to as the 'road allowance people'.^{xxxii}

In reality, for Alberta's Métis, the children in rural and northern areas had little access to more than primary school until the 1950s. In 1934, a Royal Commission, known as the Ewing Commission, was established in Alberta to examine the conditions of the Métis people of Alberta. According to the Report, 80 per cent of Métis children in the province had no schooling at all.^{xxxiii}

Similarly, in Saskatchewan any education for Métis children was sporadic and in some locations in northern Saskatchewan it was virtually non-existent.^{xxxiv} Although not legislated, some residential schools did place many Métis children in their school systems^{xxxv} to promote assimilation goals of historic education policies toward Aboriginal peoples.

In the attempt to colonize First Nation peoples, residential schools assumed complete control over the education of Indian children. Starvation, disease, physical, mental and sexual abuses were rampant in the residential schools.^{xxxvi} The long-term effects of the residential school experience on Aboriginal peoples have been devastating. Aboriginal peoples were severed from traditional practices, including medicinal practices, as well as the caring and nurturing environment of extended families.^{xxxvii} Although generally called Indian Residential Schools, not

only were Métis children included in the scheme but a similar approach was used in the mid-20th Century with Inuit children in the North.^{xxxviii}

Prior to the mass displacement of children into residential schools, in 1938, it was estimated that many Aboriginal children were unable to attend school. The Métis were refused access to education because the provinces and federal government would not agree on Métis education jurisdictional issues. The 1939 Reid report on education in northern Saskatchewan and the 1944 Piercy report painted a grim picture of Métis education. Author and native studies professor Laurie Barron's examination of the CCF and development of Métis colonies comments:

At the most fundamental level, racism operated as a structural barrier ... Nowhere was this more evident than in the systematic debarment of Métis children from local schools. Superintendents' reports were replete with references to the fact that Métis people were not welcome and that Native parents had been discouraged from sending their children to schools. The excuse commonly cited was that Native children represented a health hazard, a fact under-scored in a 1943 school report:

These children are not wanted in Tipperary School, Kenlis School and Pheasant Plains School. Some parents even threaten to take their children out of school if more of the Métis attend. ...

In reality, the health issue was little more than a smoke-screen for racial and class prejudice. ... and that if the Department of Education allowed them to remain in school the other children would walk out.^{xxxix}

It was not until 1944 that Métis children were allowed to attend provincial schools. The decades of poverty and neglect were difficult to overcome and historically it was only a very few Métis that graduated from high school, attended university, or participated in other post-secondary training.^{xl} By 1974, only two schools in northern Saskatchewan offered Grade 12. While northern Métis have seen an increase in educational autonomy, Métis living in central and southern Saskatchewan participate in the provincial system with slowly increasing success.^{xli}

3. Literature Review on Métis Post-secondary Educational Systems

A body of literature is growing on the historical context of education and its impact on Aboriginal peoples. Much of it provides recognition of the history of harm of the residential

school systems. As well, research has been growing on Aboriginal learning and institutional best practices as a framework for setting out principles and possible models for developing future policies. Most importantly, the literature examined offers a context that can focus efforts in encouraging and building upon positive approaches, thereby reducing the pressures that push far too many Aboriginal learners away from pursuing post-secondary studies. However, there remains a large gap in the research of specific Métis studies for post-secondary education initiatives. Of course, a review of this nature continually develops. More people and agencies are taking positive steps every day toward transforming the old educational ways to be more receptive and welcoming to Aboriginal learners.

3.1 Circumstances for Métis Post-secondary Education Institutions

Steps toward decolonization help all Aboriginal learners resist factors that trigger educational crisis and withdrawals. When educational crisis arise (at recruitment or retention stages), the response must be framed by an understanding of the Métis learning context: the culture, the history, colonization, the nationhood of the people, and how their ways have been misinterpreted. Policy and decision makers need to understand this context if they hope to work together to develop initiatives that will actually strengthen Métis post-secondary education systems.

Colonialism is a process of domination that has proven destructive to the many colonized people of the world. For Aboriginal peoples in Canada, the effect was a colonial regime applying pressure against their cultures, practices and traditions. In naming colonialism as a major and central source of harm, it is not intended to individualize the blame-doer but rather, it is critical to understand it is the systemic structures of colonialism, prejudice and racism that operate in ways that are antithetical to Aboriginal knowledge, teachings and ways of life and are dismissive of any other cultural learning contexts. By recognizing and naming colonialism as operating within the post-secondary educational systems, it creates opportunities to move toward decolonization methodologies and strategies. The current realities that Métis learners face cannot be appropriately understood, much less constructively addressed, unless these root causes in colonialism are named. Our purpose in stating the full extent of harm that colonialism has caused, therefore, is not to widen the gap between peoples working toward remedying these

issues, but to assess the situation with sufficient accuracy so that models of success can be created, together, through sustainable relationships. Anything less will keep the same power structures in place and maintain the status quo dysfunctions. Mi'kmaw educator Dr. Marie Battiste states:

Education can either maintain domination or it can liberate. It can sustain colonization in neocolonial ways or it can decolonize. Every school is either a site of reproduction or a site of change. We must decolonize existing education laws, policy, and structures based on racial or cultural superiority. This decolonized education is not just for Indigenous students, not just about Indigenous students, but for all students.

Decolonizing education requires that we [b]ecome aware of Anglocentric, colonial bias and its values and its effects on everyone (conscientisation); Develop educational systems based on Indigenous humanities, thought, knowledge, worldviews; Generate reflective and meaningful transformations of theory and practice to heal present and past.^{xliii}

The educational, social assistance, child welfare, and numerous other systems have normalized Eurocentric colonial categories as cognitive frameworks and processes and inculcated colonial behaviours to the detriment of Aboriginal peoples in general. Even to be aware of colonialism—to notice it when before it was unnoticed—represents a huge step toward transformation. For some, there is no resistance or objection to the colonial regime as they assume their advancements came through their own hard work and perseverance, a system of meritocracy that has assumed whiteness plays no role in progress in schools and employment.^{xliii} In fact, many do work hard in attaining their education and career goals; however, for others, colonialism and racism are experienced each day in attaining their goals and they are not comfortable with the assumption that their suffering is due to their presumed lack of industriousness, hard work and good sense. For one thing, many work as hard if not much harder than those whom the system privileges. Many Aboriginal learners struggle to preserve who they are in the face of education that denies a person core values.^{xliv}

From the current literature, it becomes clear that education initiatives require building relationships of respect with first steps: refusing to accept the status quo and colonial perspectives in the educational systems. The challenge is to find paths from where we are to where we want to be. The Canadian Council on Learning (CCL), the Aboriginal Learning

Knowledge Centre, and First Nations, Inuit and Métis organizations have collaborated in articulating and creating holistic models for lifelong learning that captures the visions and iconic nature of the learning process within a cultural context. This initiative has led to further investigation into the tools and a framework that measures learning progress through the three Holistic Lifelong Learning Models for First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. These models are considered starting points that can be adapted for the best use in the communities. The Métis Model encompasses a “stylized graphic to convey the dynamic processes and relationships that characterize Métis communities. The image attests to the cyclical, regenerative power of holistic lifelong learning and its relationship to community well-being.”^{xlv} The Métis Model illustrates the relationships of learning within a cultural and ecological context, using the cyclical and natural processes of growth of a tree to illustrate the complex living entities – requiring certain conditions and nutrients for optimal growth and thus ultimate well being of Métis peoples. The regenerative natural cycle of the tree is compared with the cycles of Métis learning comparing the health of the root system with the forest of Métis learners. Viewing the learning processes in this way focuses on the interconnectness of all relationships, thereby sustaining and maintaining balance and harmony.^{xlvi}

The literature reviewed suggest four major approaches are needed to shape post-secondary educational initiatives. Although they are not exclusive to each other, and are, in fact, intertwined within each other, for this paper’s purpose, the categories help refine the findings. For instance, some of the research identifies Métis self-determination, educational control and jurisdictional issues as most pressing. Other authors focus on pragmatic issues tied to academic development and others build upon cultural revitalization in prescribing policy directions. The last approach focuses on financial capacities, accountabilities and delivery.

Approach 1 Métis Self-Determination, Control and Jurisdiction

In recent years, the Métis political organizations at the local, regional, provincial and national level have been working to promote Métis education initiatives. At the national level in 2009, the Métis National Council report on Métis Education found the most pressing issue for Métis education is jurisdiction. It has been the single most important impediment to “progress in developing a modern set of institutions, programs and services to meet the needs of the Métis.”^{xlvii} The Métis firmly believe that the federal government has jurisdiction over the Métis

and with this jurisdiction comes an obligation to act and in particular to act in matters of education.^{xlvi}

In reference to Métis controlled institutions, the Métis National Council advances criteria needed to help establish effective solutions to increasing educational levels in their community. As such, a foundational principle is the increased capacity to facilitate the specific educational needs of Métis post-secondary students. They believe that the immediate development of a national strategy to address the current gaps in Métis education is a critical and pressing step.^{xlix} Included in this plan must be a) adequate and meaningful consultations on educational initiatives; b) resources to provide support and resources to build capacity; c) be an active participant in policy making, program development and delivery; d) adequate means of accountability “to answer to the abysmal results [for Métis] achieved by mainstream systems. Accountability to the Métis community is an important aspect of any policy [d]irection.”¹

To achieve successful and sustainable developments in post-secondary education systems, there must be positive relationships between all involved in the initiatives and Métis leaders to eliminate jurisdictional barriers. The need for Métis participation in post-secondary institution developments can not be over emphasized. As author Kathy Hodgson-Smith highlights, in 2001, there were extremely high rates of incomplete secondary schooling of Métis and accordingly:

The Métis Nation is clearly facing significant challenges in urban and rural Canada in addressing the gap between Métis and non-Aboriginal Canadians. The Métis Nation has a unique and special history in Canada, one that is tied to northern and remote areas but one that is also tied to the urban settlement. ... Within this urban context, self-government becomes significantly more difficult but equally more important.^{li}

The educators of the Métis Nation require sweeping changes to the policies of post-secondary education systems that are based on a principled approach:

The Métis Nation wants to ensure that all processes and policies linked to life long learning and education for existing and future generations promote the preservation of the Métis Nation. This is the foundation for the success of the Métis people in all contexts of life, including the full continuum of life long learning from cradle to grave.^{lii}

The inclusion of the Métis Nation in processes and education developments with the federal and provincial governments are in various Métis Nation agreements and discussed in education gatherings. Specifically, the Métis Nation submits that:

The Métis Nation must develop the capacity/authorities to govern these educational/other institutions and to secure the necessary relationships of benefit to the Métis Nation.

The right of the Métis Nation to self-determination and to govern itself and ensure that future policy/processes address issues of racism and assimilation must be protected.

Jurisdictional wrangling continues to be a core issue in finding solutions to the problems of Métis education. The imposition of provincial boundaries over the traditional territories of the Métis Nation means an unregulated and irregular framework for these and other issues. The Métis seek resolution to the question of jurisdictional responsibility.^{liii}

Approach 2 Métis Academic Support

Authors Dorion and Yang commented that Métis specific post-secondary education should be community based and that their institutions should be self governed and owned by the Métis community. The Métis institutions should be governed by a Métis education board through specific legislation (*Métis Education Act*). They must promote good communication with their Métis constituents and the parents and Elders.^{liv} The education that Métis receive must be of the highest quality and on par with mainstream educational system in academic standards; Métis studies must be included in the curriculum; orientation and preparatory training should be included as well as the affiliation of Métis specific institutions should be explored.^{lv}

Dorion and Young believe the appropriate approach for much of the Métis education should be focused on vocations with an analysis of the labour market done in collaboration. This approach focuses attention on partnerships with industries and Métis employment needs should look to job oriented education programs with co-operative education. Personal and career counselling is important along with training and education in broad areas that show a changing economy.^{lvi}

Approach 3 Métis Cultural Revitalization

The Métis Nation is currently involved in post-secondary education through the existence of Métis-specific institutional development, such as the Gabriel Dumont Institute in Saskatchewan and through the Louis Riel Institute in Manitoba. The success of these two institutions cannot be matched by any other institution in Canada, in terms of addressing Métis-specific educational issues. ^{lvii}

In Manitoba, the Manitoba Métis Federation has stated that the interests of Métis students have not been served by the current public school system as the Métis lag behind in terms of educational achievement, cultural awareness, and economic development. They state that “[b]y taking greater interests and control of our educational and cultural interests, we hope to do something constructive about our people's current concerns and circumstances.”^{lviii} In seeking to achieve these goals, the Louis Riel Institute was incorporated in 1988 and located in Winnipeg Manitoba. It has established its own Métis specific internal structure to govern the Institute.

The Mission Statements sums their position:

The institute believes in the unique identity of Métis people and works to serve Métis people in order to promote the advancement of the Métis Nation. ^{lix}

The objectives of the Louis Riel Institute are to “promote the renewal and development of Métis culture^{lx} through research, material development and dissemination of cultural material, to design, develop and deliver quality educational and cultural programs and services and to provide educational opportunities that are uniquely suited to the aspirations of the Métis people.”^{lxi}

The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) is a Métis-operated post-secondary institution that was incorporated in 1980 as a non-profit corporation with the purpose of serving the educational and cultural needs of the Saskatchewan Métis and non-status Indian community. GDI offers a variety of accredited educational, vocational and skills training opportunities for the province's Métis in partnership with the University of Regina, the University of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, the province's various regional colleges and the Métis Employment and Training of Saskatchewan Inc. ^{lxii}

GDI has been “instrumental in the development of technical infrastructure and the education of professional personnel for the Métis Nation”^{lxiii} The institute has established a four-year teacher education program. The first and, perhaps the best known of these efforts, was the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP). In essence, SUNTEP trains Métis and First Nations teachers to meet the needs of Saskatchewan’s Aboriginal students in the K-12 system.^{lxiv}

Most impressively, GDI has also succeeded in developing and delivering culturally relevant training and education programs in Métis communities throughout Saskatchewan. Business administration, law enforcement, human justice, health care, resource technology and management, recreation and early childhood education, and housing administration are some of the programs.^{lxv} Evaluations have shown that “institute programs greatly enhance the employability and income of Métis students”^{lxvi}

The success of Aboriginal learners when provided with opportunities to learn in viable, sustainable and positive long term education initiatives grounded within their own cultural wisdom cannot be overstressed. As highlighted by Henderson, Battiste and Métis scholar Rita Bouvier in the *Responsive Learning Systems in Aboriginal Learning: A Synthesis Paper*:

When Indigenous knowledge was systemically and holistically included into schools (Cadwallader 2004) and curriculum, practices, and programs (Pattniak, 2005) student achievement improved. ... when the curriculum reflects both Eurocentric and Indigenous knowledge success for all students is improved. Education systems need to discard the deficit model of Indigenous education, in which Indigenous students and communities are often blamed for educational failure.^{lxvii}

Approach 4 Métis Financial Capacities

The Métis seek greater capacity in post-secondary educational systems that include equitable funding resources to help develop appropriate culturally-relevant, Métis specific programming.^{lxviii} the enhancement of established scholarship and bursary endowments will be sure to facilitate greater post-secondary access and completion.^{lxix} Because of the high tuition costs and the fact that generally the income level of most Métis is lower than that of other non-Aboriginal Canadians, the Métis have lower success rates in completing post-secondary

education. The lack of viable and sustainable access to post-secondary funding combined with onerous funding requirements with Canada Students Loans program and other financial institutions create an inhospitable environment for many potential Métis post-secondary learners.

The dire need for financial support for Métis learners is echoed by author Kathy Hodgson-Smiths:

Beyond skills training funding, there is no post-secondary funding for educational opportunities or for program support beyond 52 weeks. The Métis learner is required to borrow from student loan programs, assuming they do not have “poor” or “absent” credit ratings, designed as supplementary loans. The assumption that the student, through their families, brings financial contributions of up to 33% of their annual cost of living, tuition and books to their education program, is an assumption which is clearly not reflective of the economic profile of the Métis. Further, the low income subsidies which used to offset student costs directly for single parent mothers and low income students have now been done away with in replacement by the Millennium Scholarship process. There is no indication of the number of Métis students who have accessed this fund, leaving lingering questions ... The investment in university education and higher skills and knowledge areas, ... demand a contribution toward post-secondary education costs for the Métis student.^{lxx}

Anishenabe scholar, Cecil King in his research study outlines financial hardships that Métis students faced in 1991:

The evidence shows that the Métis person who graduates as a teacher in Saskatchewan in 1991 will be less well off economically than if they had stayed on welfare.

...
... the expenditures of the graduate teacher would exceed the teacher's income while the expenses and income of the welfare recipient and the person on minimum wage equal out. Income levels and expenditures of the graduate Métis teacher do not equalize until the sixth year of teaching according to the Institute's [GDI] calculations. This is in contrast to an Indian teacher graduating at the same time, who because of sponsorship is never in a deficit position during schooling and becomes a self-sufficient contributing professional in the first year of teaching.^{lxxi}

The fact that the Métis student must incur large debts has debilitating effects on access to education at a post-secondary institute and many are prevented from going on to longer programs such as engineering, medicine, or postgraduate because of the prohibitive costs.

Métis people have been caught up in a jurisdictional void between the federal government and provincial governments that has undoubtedly historically failed Métis people. Cecil King comments on the government quagmire that Métis students face:

Various levels of government complicate the debt issue because rules are set by the federal government for Canada Student Loans which impact on Métis students while at the same time policies and regulations are set at the provincial level which are layered on top of the federal framework. Métis involvement in decision-making at both these administrative levels is minimal. Programs, which on the surface are meant to provide easier access to Métis students, have become so complex that they now are a disincentive to access to education.^{lxxii}

Métis students receive little funding for post-secondary education which is a significant economic barrier since most students are often left with a \$30,000 to \$50,000 student loan debt upon completion of a four-year degree.^{lxxiii} These loans are prohibitive for many if not most Métis students. In today's society, Métis university students that obtain university degrees can exit the system with extreme debt loads and financial repayment burdens of \$750 or more per month for 10 years. This has a chilling effect on other members of their community from following the same educational pathway.

Some recognition of the financial issues has been recognized through the development of programs, awards and bursaries. For example, since 2005 the Métis Human Resources Development Agreements in Canada have differed slightly from those of other AHRDA holders, through the use of an agreement template specific to Métis. The key difference is the addition of a clause providing support for eligible clients (not full-time students) for post-secondary education, and the possibility of contributing to an endowment fund for bursaries for post-secondary programs of a length of up to 64 weeks at or below the undergraduate level.^{lxxiv}

Since 1985 the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, through its education program has awarded more than \$32 million in scholarships and bursaries to more than 8400 First Nations, Inuit and Métis students nationwide.^{lxxv} More recently, the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation awarded an unprecedented \$1 million through a special Métis health career bursary to over 170 Métis students.^{lxxvi} In 2007, Health Canada announced 10 million dollars in funding to increase the number of Métis students in health careers. This four-year national initiative funded by Health Canada is intended to support and increase the number of Métis health care

professionals across the country.^{lxxvii} However, even with these important initiatives,^{lxxviii} there remain far too many Métis students relying on student loans or personal credit lines – if available to them. As noted in the 2009 Métis Education Report:

There are a number of significant factors influencing the lack of involvement of Métis people in university education and those levels of skill development set out in Canada's Knowledge and Skills agenda. Lack of access to post-secondary funding, and conflicting or lack of funding arrangements and underlying assumptions of the Canada Students Loans program are two core issues.^{lxxix}

4. Looking Ahead: Recommendations for future growth and development and responsiveness to Métis learners

Recommendations for development of post-secondary education models require, at first glance, a further inquiry into Métis identity and its applications in post-secondary contexts to help develop Métis specific policies and initiatives. Examinations on processes and criteria requirements of not only post-secondary institutions but also funding bodies including National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation and others could provide a framework for post-secondary institutions. Clearly, examinations of this nature must be grounded within a decolonization framework that promotes and enhances Métis culture and knowledge. From this framework, the following recommendations have been gleaned from the literature.

Recommendation 1: Métis Self-determination; Educational Control and Jurisdictional Issues

The literature suggests a principled approach to Métis post-secondary initiatives which includes the following:

- Métis need to define their own terminology which captures their *sui generis* cultural perspectives and understandings;
- Initiatives must be consistent and supportive toward Métis inherent right to self-determination;

- Mutual respect must take into account different interests, perspectives, cultures, understandings, and concerns of educational stakeholders;
- All processes considered should be inclusive, gender sensitive, and linked to Métis culture and traditions (Ensure a balanced approach is engaged which reflects gender stability);
- Consideration of the balancing of educational individual and collective rights that are consistent with Métis laws and Canadian laws;
- Métis specific processes should be developed that provide for community leadership, input, application, and an appeal processes (this may vary depending upon the characterization and roles);
- All processes and procedures are to be grounded within principles of openness and transparency;
- Priority is to be given for adequate and meaningful consultation processes with Métis individually and collectively and where appropriate, accommodate community based/led initiatives;and
- It is important that adequate and meaningful communications be implemented so that everyone is aware of what is going on in their community. A communications strategy is important. Positive relationships between all involved in the initiatives and with Métis leaders to eliminate jurisdictional barriers.

There should be an immediate development of a national strategy to address the current gaps in Métis education as a critical and pressing step. Included in this plan must be a) adequate and meaningful consultations on educational initiatives; b) resources to provide support and resources to build capacity; c) the Métis as active participants in policy making, program development and delivery; and, d) adequate means of accountability to the Métis community.

Educational Control - Engaging the Circle Process – The Circle Model

The ancient indigenous model of a Circle offers a unique perspective for inclusiveness among diverse groups and the more divergent the views, the greater the possibilities are for truly innovative and unprecedented outcomes. A Circle is not about amplifying sameness but rather it can offer a decision making and delivery model that provides a shift from a decision making

framework of power over to inclusiveness (stepping toward decolonization). It reflects the commitment to doing things in a different way and working through challenges that post-secondary education institutions could rely upon to do things differently in a holistic way, share information, enhance capacities and be open to transformations.

Circles shift the mindset of both planners (program delivery personal, agencies and governments) and communities. By offering a new vision, the Circle Model invites a philosophical shift in how planners and communities can approach everyday educational issues. Circles stimulate and shape the discussions within the community and allows for collective decisions and actions. It helps the communities achieve their vision for the community.

Values: The Link between Educational Planning and the Circle Model

Embedded in a philosophy of Circles is an emphasis on values and common concerns. This emphasis guides communities in concrete ways to form better relationships and to improve performances in educational planning and dealing with issues. The Circle Model value-based approach helps:

- To access strengths in participants to resolve very difficult problems;
- To bridge differences between cultures, ages, genders, geographies, status, etc., since the core values of the Circle are widely understood and shared across these differences;
- To engage people on spiritual or meaningful levels as well as on mental, physical and emotional levels;
- To promote creativity;
- To reinforce healthy relationships;
- To build community to prevent misunderstandings and disputes;
- To energize a commitment to the shared vision of the project;
- To provide a way to guide and assess performance without becoming prescriptive;
- To form a unifying force across disciplines and circumstances; and
- To allow local autonomy while holding a common vision.

Today, most post-secondary institutions recognize the need for engaging the public, particularly in educational planning for Aboriginal peoples. This trend has been building over decades. The Circle Model is a recognized body of technical and political knowledge. The Circle Model offers the communities and profession a new tool for engaging in conversations. It is not a one-way process in either direction. Instead, Circles create safe and equal opportunities for everyone to participate. Everyone in the Circle shares responsibility for the dialogue and for building strategies for change. Circles can be used either as one-time, stand-alone events or in concert with other strategies for engaging when in crisis or at-risk. Certainly, whenever there is a need to develop relationships and build understanding, a Circle is a good choice.

Suggested Methodology

- Make contact with leaders of the community and education committee, discuss what educational processes are already in place that could be built upon.
- Look at it as a process, not a singular event and the participants may want to use one large circle or a series of smaller circles.
- Look at the purpose of the circle – is it going to be used to address community educational issues– do you want a large public circle, a series of private circles followed by a large circle?
- As noted above, the core values and the principles remain unchanged for the Circle Model. The process can be adapted to the changing circumstances of the event(s) and changed while the process is occurring to adapt to new issues as they are revealed.
- Through the Circle Model develop partnerships with existing colleges, universities, technical institutes, governments and communities.
- Determine visions and mission statements for post-secondary institutions.
- Who are the leaders of the developments? Ensure that these people are capable to lead the process and will ensure follow up.

Recommendation 2: Academic Development

The education that Métis receive must be of the highest quality in academic standards and include approaches that are meaningful and adequate for Métis people. Education should include learning models that are dynamic processes and relationships that characterize Métis communities. They should include the following:

- Métis studies must be included in the curriculum; orientation and preparatory training should be included as well as the affiliation of Métis specific institutions should be explored.
- Métis scholars and knowledge holders are to be valued by inclusion in developments and curriculum delivery.
- Métis academic support services to be provided. Special needs of families must be considered.
- Métis curriculum is to be relevant, timely, Métis focused and respectful of community needs.
- Develop research and models on Métis specific learning models and pedagogy.

Holistic Lifelong Learning Models

- These models are considered starting points that can be adapted for the best use in the communities. There is a stylized graphic to convey the dynamic processes and relationships that characterize Métis communities. The image attests to the cyclical, regenerative power of holistic lifelong learning and its relationship to community well-being.
- The development of collaborative relationships must occur to respond to educational issues. Dedicated human and financial resources are required in order to facilitate the education, awareness and the development of community communication plans. Relationship building must be integrated into the funding formula as a funded line item in order to support collaborations between Métis and post-secondary education institutions.
- A true partnership works, therefore on transparency of the parties. It is important that there are designates from each partnership that have the requisite knowledge to actively participate in the project.

Suggested Methodology

- Build community trust and comfort on an ongoing basis through a good communication plan and dialogue with those who your actions will affect and be affected by.
 - Good relationships are based on ethical and honest behaviour.
 - Look at the education project plan with other stakeholders and garner their support by engagement.
 - Develop Agreements in Principle, Memorandums of Understanding/Intent, Letters of

Recommendation 3: Cultural Revitalization

Agreement to work together. Terms of References are useful for outlining responsibilities of the parties.

Many Métis want to ensure that processes and policies linked to lifelong learning and education for existing and future generations promote the preservation of the Métis culture, traditions and practices. This is the foundation for the success of the Métis people in all contexts of life. Capital funds are needed to develop community infrastructure that is capable of supporting community guided approaches to educational issues in cultural revitalization. Enhancing capacities for Métis to develop culturally based educational materials is crucial.

Métis people require post-secondary education that builds upon and enhances their strengths, customs, identity, language and traditions. Métis identity is a unique and distinct rights bearing concept that must be a foundational aspect of educational initiatives.

Suggested Methodology

- Using the suggested methods of garnering funding for the community - a Métis community education centre could be seen as one way to create an infrastructure that could house programs to deal with educational issues in Métis cultural revitalization. There should be some type of infrastructure in place to have the capacity to respond to further education in a culturally sensitive manner and to act as the centre hub for civic, social, cultural, and educational activities.

- For some Métis, the use of co-operatives has proven successful as a midway point between community run projects and private enterprise for economic development. In the context of responding to educational issues, a co-operative of certain people with the adequate educational expertise could be utilized that could be the leaders (using this model as a precedent).
- Cultural revitalization relies upon Métis teachings, Elders, and customs. Support for and development of policies and programs that enhance Métis culture is a step toward transformation of educational post-secondary systems.
- Establish cultural training for both Métis and non-Métis educators.
- Establish cultural role model programs.

Recommendation 4: Financial Capacities, Accountabilities and Delivery

Because of the high tuition costs and the fact that generally the income level of most Métis is lower than that of other non-Aboriginal Canadians, the access that Métis have to educational opportunities and the chances of successful completion are lower. An option to help counteract these issues is to develop a financially accountable, Métis developed and governed, charitable foundation that can provide tax receipts for donations, both corporate and individual. The purpose of the foundation will be to act as a clearinghouse for Métis Post-Graduate University Studies. It will operate a Métis multi-media research library; host seminars and conferences featuring national and international Indigenous scholars; publish and distribute Métis development literature; publish and distribute a quarterly Métis Studies news magazine and provide scholarships to Métis post-graduate students at universities. It may be instituted provincially or regionally or possibly nationally (or a combination of one or more locations).

Another option might be to continue and copy the success of the 2007, Health Canada initiative that provided 10 million dollars in funding to increase the number of Métis students in health careers. To date over 1 million dollars in funding was distributed by the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation in the form of bursaries for Métis students in health careers. For community based educational projects the following methodology may be helpful.

Suggested Methodology

- There are several types of funding that could be pursued in assisting Métis learners such as (but not limited to): federal government and provincial government sources; Aboriginal organizations – locally, regionally or nationally; private sources or industry sources. Creation of post-secondary funding sources as described above specifically designed for Métis post-secondary learners would be worthwhile and ensuring student loan programs are made more accessible.
- Expansion and examination of Métis Human Resources Development Agreements in Canada funding criteria including the time limitation of 64 weeks or less.
- Provide dedicated education dollars for Métis post-secondary learners in addition to scholarships, bursaries, loans etc.
- Develop mechanisms and data resources to share best practices in Métis specific post-secondary accountability and delivery.
- Focus research on potential expansion upon existing best practices of Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program, Gabriel Dumont College, Dumont Technical Institute and Louis Riel Institute.
- Develop a specific Métis Post-secondary Research Foundation
- Develop a specific Métis Women’s PSE Research Institute to examine the challenges Métis women face in obtaining post-secondary education. This could include a review of funding for Métis women, debt load effects, learning and academic needs, income and employment levels and other facets of life unique to Métis women learners.

Conclusion

This paper has examined how post-secondary education systems have affected Métis learners through a literature review on the current state of knowledge of Métis post-secondary education systems. It has identified promising practices and some principles to provide recommendations that could be further explored or new directions for policy developments while reflecting Métis cultural traditions and continuity.

APPENDIX A: List of Métis Post-secondary Education Resources

***Note:** There are various post-secondary institutions that provide resources to Aboriginal students and are inclusive of Métis learners. The following, however, is a list of resources specific to the Métis.

Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP)	Since 1980, over 650 educators have received a four-year Bachelor of Education degree from the program, which is offered in Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina. http://www.gdins.org/GDIProgramsandServices.shtml
Gabriel Dumont College (GDC):	Delivers the first two years of a Bachelor of Arts and Science degree to both Métis and non-Métis and is offered in Saskatoon and in Prince Albert. http://www.gdins.org/AboutGDI.shtml
Dumont Technical Institute (DTI):	Is GDI's largest component and is responsible for the design, development and delivery of Adult Basic Education, skills training, vocational and cultural programs. DTI's main office is in Saskatoon, with programming province-wide. http://www.gdins.org/AboutGDI.shtml
Louis Riel Institute:	The Institute was created by an Act of the Manitoba Legislature and promotes the educational and cultural advancement of Métis People. The Louis Riel Institute is also responsible for promoting awareness of the values, culture, heritage and history of the Métis people in Manitoba. The Mission of the Louis Riel Institute states "The institute believes in the unique identity of Métis people and works to serve Métis people in order to promote the advancement of the Métis Nation." http://www.louisrielinstitute.com/

Endnotes

ⁱSee Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Gathering Strength* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1996) [RCAP].

ⁱⁱ C. Bell, *Contemporary Métis Justice: The Settlement Way* (Saskatoon: Native Law Centre, 1999); see also: “Métis Constitutional Rights in Section 35(1)” (1997) 36(1) Alta. L.R. 180-217, reprinted in J. Borrows & L. Rotman, eds., *Aboriginal Legal Issues Cases and Materials* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1998) at 489; see also: “Who are the Métis in Section 35(2)” (1991) 29 Alta. L.R. 351, reprinted in J. Borrows & L. Rotman, eds., *Aboriginal Legal Issues Cases and Materials* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1998) at 467.

ⁱⁱⁱ Métis National Council, “Who are the Métis? Definition of Métis”, online:

<<http://www.metisnation.ca/who/index.html>> and <<http://www.metisnation.ca/who/definition.html>> (accessed March 9, 2009) [MNC Definition].

^{iv} MNC Definition, *ibid.*

^v Newfoundland Heritage, “Aboriginal Peoples: The Métis, Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage” online:

<<http://www.heritage.nf.ca/aboriginal/metis.html>> (accessed March 9, 2009).

^{vi} Thomas Isaac, *Métis Rights: Contemporary Themes in Aboriginal Law* (Saskatoon: Native Law Centre, 2008) at 6.

^{vii} *R. v. Powley*, [2003] 2 S.C.R. 207, 4 C.N.L.R. 321 [Powley]. See also: Larry Chartrand, “A Commentary on Métis Identity and Citizenship from an International Law Perspective” *Justice as Healing*, 2001 Vol. 6., No.2 (Saskatoon, Native Law Centre); For *Powley* and the history of Métis case law development see: Jean Teillet, “Métis Law Summary” online: <http://www.metisnation.org/Harvesting/Powley_Case/assets/docs/MLS-2004.pdf> (accessed March 3, 2009).

^{viii} Métis Nation of Ontario, “Harvesting” online:

http://www.metisnation.org/harvesting/Powley_Case/legal02.html (accessed June 29, 2009). As discussed later in this paper, further research on Métis identity and its application in post-secondary contexts is needed to understand and develop Métis specific policies and initiatives.

^{ix} Statistics Canada, *Métis in Canada: Selected findings of the 2006 Census*, Cat. No. 11-008-X, Canadian Social Trends, Jan. 20, 2009 found: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2009001/article/10769-eng.htm#a5> (accessed 20 June 2009) [Stats Can].

^x Statistics Canada definition of Métis refers to people who identify as Métis on the Census. This definition differs from that adopted by the Métis National Council (MNC), whereby: “Métis means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis nation ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples and is accepted by the Métis Nation.” According to the MNC, Métis ancestry derives, in part, from a person having ancestry from the historic Métis nation homeland, an area in west central North America. Because the definition of Métis in this article is broader in scope than the MNC’s definition, the information about the Métis population presented here may vary from that provided by the MNC’s national registry.

^{xi} Métis National Council, “Economic Opportunities Policy Paper” (December 2004), online:

http://www.metisnation.ca/pres_pubs/MNC_Economic_Opportunities.pdf (accessed June 25, 2009).

In September 2002, the Métis Nation adopted a national definition for citizenship where

“Métis means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of Historic Métis Nation ancestry, and it accepted by the Métis Nation.” Based on this definition, the MNC estimates there are approximately 350,000 to 400,000 Métis Nation citizens in Canada.

See also, Métis Nation of Ontario, “The Voyageur - CENSUS: Métis report biggest increase of Aboriginal Populations in Ontario” online: http://www.metisnation.org/voyageur/articles/national/08_jan_StatsCan.html (accessed June 25, 2009) [MNO pop.].

^{xii} *Ibid.*

^{xiii} *Stats Can*, *supra* note 9.

^{xiv} *Ibid.*

^{xv} *Ibid.* at 24. Statistics Canada defines Census metropolitan area (CMA) as: an area consisting of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core.

^{xvi} *Ibid.*

^{xvii} Canadian Council on Learning Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre, *Post-secondary Education: In Support of First Nations and Inuit Students: A Survey* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 2008) at 21. See also, The Aboriginal Education Research Centre, 2007, online: <http://www.aerc.usask.ca/index.html> (accessed July 5, 2009).

^{xviii} According to Statistics Canada data, Métis men had higher employment rates than women (79.2% compared with

70.4%). See *Stats Can*, *supra* note 9.

^{xix} *Ibid.*

^{xx} *Ibid.*

^{xxi} *Ibid.*

^{xxii} *Ibid.*

^{xxiii} *Ibid.*

^{xxiv} *Ibid.*

^{xxv} Chartrand, Larry N., Logan, Tricia E., Daniels, Judy D., *Métis History and Experience and Residential Schools in Canada* (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2006) [Chartrand]. See also: Tricia Elizabeth Logan, *We Were Outsiders: The Métis and Residential Schools Thesis* (Winnipeg: Univ. of Manitoba, 2007).

^{xxvi} Sherry Farrell Racette in the *Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, Métis Education*, online: http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/metis_education.html (accessed June 26, 2009) [Racette].

^{xxvii} The Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research, *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture*, online: <http://www.metismuseum.ca/exhibits/resources/> (accessed June 26, 2009).

^{xxviii} Alberta, *Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Investigate the Conditions of the Half-Breed Population of Alberta* (Edmonton: Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta, 1936) at 7 in Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Gathering Strength*. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1996. Vol. 3, Ch. 5 “Gathering Strength, Education,” online: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/webarchives/20071211053231/http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/si42_e.html> (accessed June 5, 2009) [Alberta].

^{xxix} Racette, *supra* note 26.

^{xxx} [Louis Riel](#) surrendered himself on [May 15](#), 1885 and was hung on Nov. 16, 1885.

^{xxxi} The Métis National Council cites unresolved issues of jurisdiction and control as continuing “to be at the heart of the breakdown in Métis education in Canada. It is the long held position of the Métis Nation that the federal government has primary responsibility for Métis under s.91 (24) of the Constitution Act, 1867, and that both federal and provincial levels of government can and should be using their spending powers to address the education needs of Métis Nation citizens. Years of jurisdictional wrangling, however, have meant that Métis concerns have not been dealt with effectively by either level”. See, Métis National Council, *A Special Report on Métis Education Prepared by the Métis National Council for the Summit on Aboriginal Education* (February 25, 2009), online: <<http://www.metisnation.ca/pdf-0715208/Ka%20tipaymishoyak%20Metis%20Education%20Report%20Feb%2020%202009.pdf>> (accessed June 26, 2009) [MNC Ed].

^{xxxii} T.C. Pocklington, “The Government and Politics of the Alberta Métis Settlements” (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1991), at 7 in Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Gathering Strength*. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1996. Vol. 4, Ch. 5 “The Métis Nation, The History,” online: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/webarchives/20071211055926/http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sj22_e.html> (accessed June 5, 2009).

^{xxxiii} Alberta, *supra* note 28.

^{xxxiv} Racette, *supra* note 26.

The first schools in Saskatchewan were the result of missionary activity. [Henry Budd](#), an ordained minister of Cree descent, established an Anglican mission and school at Cumberland House in 1840. In 1847, a Catholic mission and school were established at Ile-à-la-Crosse. In 1860 three members of the Order of the Grey Nuns were sent from Montreal to assist in education and health care; [Sara Riel](#) (Sister Marguerite-Marie) worked at the mission school from 1871 until her death in 1883. Other early mission schools that served Métis communities were the Qu’Appelle mission, established in 1866 on Lake Katepwa, and Bishop Ovide Charlebois’s small Catholic school built at Cumberland House in 1890.

^{xxxv} The Aboriginal Healing Foundation in its report prepared by Chartrand, *supra* note 25 at 33 comments:

Many half-breeds, particularly those residing on or near reserves, attended industrial and boarding schools until 1910. A new agreement was then negotiated between the churches and the Department of Indian Affairs. The agreement specified that only children belonging to Indian bands could attend residential schools and management was to disallow “the entrance of half-breed children into the Boarding Schools unless Indian children could not be obtained” (19). The Department of Indian Affairs stipulated that it would not pay a grant nor any part of the maintenance or education costs of any half-breed children admitted to the schools. As a result, those Métis allowed to enter the schools did so as objects of charity of the churches because few parents were able to pay the fees. Some Métis were in

attendance in almost every school.

A similar situation existed in day schools located on reserves. Those Métis who lived on reserves or on the outskirts of the reserves could send their children if there was room in the schools. Half-breed children would be allowed to attend for one term, but could not be assured there would be room later in the year. Education of Métis children was sporadic since they could not afford their own schools (19).

^{xxxvi} *Ibid.*

^{xxxvii} *Ibid.*

^{xxxviii} See for instance, CBC Archives, “An Inuit Education: Honouring a Past, Creating a Future,” online: <http://archives.cbc.ca/society/education/topics/529-2678/>.

While Inuit parents were being moved from igloos to houses in the 1950s, their children were being assimilated into the Canadian education system. In the worst cases, children were taken from their families, harshly disciplined and stripped of their culture. Only over the past 25 years have the Inuit been permitted a voice to speak out about how their children are educated. After so many years of feeling marginalized by formal education, the Inuit today are a people trying to correct the damage.

^{xxxix} F. Laurie Barron, “The CCF and the Development of Métis Colonies in Southern Saskatchewan During the Premiership of T.C. Douglas, 1944-1961” (1999) 10 *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 243 at 246. See also Cathy Littlejohn, *A Historical Background of the Indian and Northern Education Program* (Ph.D. diss. Thesis, University of Calgary, 1983).

^{xl} *Racette, supra* note 26.

^{xli} *Racette, ibid.* The Ile-a-la-Crosse School has a northern controlled board that supports the delivery of Métis values, history and culture as integral parts of the curriculum from K to G12. Michif is also taught as a language credit. See also, Linda Cree, *First Nations, Inuit and Métis Learning Institutes: Literature Review for the National Aboriginal Health Organization* (Jan. 2006), unpublished. See also, The Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF), *Metis Education Policy, The Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Roundtable*, online: <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/cms-filesystem-action?file=pdfs/conferences/2007/mb-metis-federation.pdf> (accessed June 30, 2009) and Women of the Métis Nation, *Education Policy Paper*, online: <http://www.laa.gov.nl.ca/laa/naws/pdf/WMNEducationPaper.pdf> (accessed June 30, 2009)

^{xlii} Marie Battiste, *Discourses of Difference: Cognitive Imperialism, Culturalism and Diversity*, online: <http://www.usask.ca/education/people/battistem/pdf/diversity.pdf> (accessed June 30, 2009).

^{xliii} C. Schick, v. St. Denis, (2005). “Troubling National discourses in Anti-racist Curricular Planning” (2005) 28(3) *Canadian Journal of Education* 295 – 317.

^{xliv} Dr. Marie Battiste, James Sa’ke’j Youngblood Henderson, Prof. Isobel Findlay and other scholars have referred to this as the “split head”. One side of the brain is animated and enriched with Aboriginal culture, traditions and perspectives. The other side of the brain is being forced to follow the colonial regime of learning. This creates a “split head” for those students that walk the path of both worlds. See: Dr. Isobel M. Findlay, “Mapping Co-operative Studies in the New Millennium: A Joint Congress of the International Co-operative Alliance Research Committee and the Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operatives” (University of Victoria, May 2003)” at [Re-imagining Co-operative Research Futures](#). In physical terms “Cranioschisis” literally means a split head, a condition where the two sides of the brain are not connected. See: Medcyclopaedia, online: http://www.medcyclopaedia.com/library/topics/volume_vii/c/cranioschisis.aspx (accessed June 30, 2009).

^{xlv} Canadian Council on Learning, *Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning*, online: <http://cli.ccl-cca.ca/Metis/index.php?q=about> (accessed June 26, 2009).

^{xlvi} *Ibid.*

^{xlvii} *MNC Ed, supra* note 31.

^{xlviii} *Ibid.*

^{xlix} *Ibid* at 7.

^l *Ibid* at 9, 10.

^{li} Kathy Hodgson-Smith, Infinity Research Inc., *State of Métis Nation Learning* (Sept. 2005) at 7, online: <http://74.125.47.132/search?q=cache:rWh8p1dY-uwJ:www.ccl-cca.ca/NR/rdonlyres/A2038E75-907C-4D14-889D-AB138F138D2E/0/StateOfMetisNationLearning.pdf+state+of+metis+nation+learning+%26+kathy+hodgson&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&client=safari> (accessed June 4, 2009) [*Hodgson-Smith*].

^{lii} *Ibid.*

^{liii} *Ibid*

- ^{liv} John Dorion and Kwan R. Yang, “Métis Post-Secondary Education: A Case Study of the Gabriel Dumont Institute” in M. Brant Castellano, L. Davis, L. Lahache, eds., *Aboriginal Education: Fulfilling the Promise*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2001) [Dorion, Yang].
- ^{lv} *Ibid.*
- ^{lvi} *Ibid.*
- ^{lvii} *MNC Ed, supra* note 31.
- ^{lviii} Louis Riel Institute, online: <http://www.louisrielinstitute.com/lri/background.php> (accessed June 29, 2009) [LRI]
- ^{lix} *Ibid.*
- ^{lx} *Ibid.*
- ^{lxi} *ibid.*
- ^{lxii} Gabriel Dumont Institute, Overview, online: <http://www.gdins.org/AboutGDI.shtml#overviewofgdi> (accessed June 29, 2009) [GDI].
- ^{lxiii} *Dorion, Yang supra* note 54 at 180.
- ^{lxiv} *GDI, supra* note 62.
- ^{lxv} *Dorion, Yang supra* note 54 at 180.
- ^{lxvi} *Ibid* at 184.
- ^{lxvii} J. Henderson, M. Battiste, R. Bouvier, Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre *Responsive Learning Systems in Aboriginal Learning: A Synthesis Paper* at 12 [unpublished, archived at ALKC] [*Synthesis*].
- ^{lxviii} *Dorion, Yang supra* note 54 at 180
- ^{lxix} *MNC Ed, supra* note 31.
- ^{lxx} *Hodgson-Smith, supra* note 51.
- ^{lxxi} King, C. “The State of Aboriginal Education in Southern Canada: Research Report” (1993) Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in CD ROM: *For Seven Generations: An information legacy of the RCAP* (Ottawa: Libraxus in National Aboriginal Health Organization, *First Nations, Inuit & Métis Education History from a Health Human Resources Perspective* (Ottawa, 2008) at 41 [King].
- ^{lxxii} *Ibid* at 42.
- ^{lxxiii} *Dorion & Yang, supra* note 54 at 186.
- ^{lxxiv} Centre for the Study of Living Standards, “A Review of the Potential Impacts of the Métis Human Resources Development Agreements in Canada”, May 2009 prepared for the Métis Nation Council by Jean-François Arsenault and Andrew Sharpe, online: <http://www.csls.ca/reports/csls2009-1.pdf> (accessed July 6, 2009) at 23 and 25.
- ^{lxxv} National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, “About NAAF”, online: http://www.naaf.ca/html/about_e.html (accessed July 6, 2009).
- ^{lxxvi} National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, “National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation awards over \$1-million towards Métis Health Careers” April 2009, online: http://www.naaf.ca/html/metisbursary_e.html (accessed June 29, 2009) [NAAF].
- ^{lxxvii} Canada, Health Canada, “Canada’s New Government Announces Health Human Resources Initiative with the Métis Nation” February 2007, online: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/nr-cp/_2007/2007_12-eng.php (accessed June 29, 2009).
- ^{lxxviii} *MNC Ed, supra* note 31 at 14 and 15.
- ^{lxxix} *Ibid.* at 14.