## Final Report

# *A narrative inquiry into the experiences of urban Aboriginal youth and their families outside of school places*

# *UAKN Prairie Regional Research Centre*

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**Collaborating Friendship Centre and/or other urban Aboriginal organization:**
File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council, Kitchener Community School, North Central Family Centre and Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations

**Research Start-up Summary**

We proposed to explore through narrative inquiry research methodology Aboriginal youths' and their families' experiences of education, including their schooling experiences within provincially-funded urban schools and as they move between home, community and school. The word *we* represents many individuals and organizations in different roles, students, educators, non-profit organizations, undergraduate students, graduate students, traditional knowledge holders, scholars, and administrators. We are also parents, family and community members living in diverse places and social contexts. We share an intention to hear youths', families' and communities' stories of experiences of education specifically outside of school as institution, to inquire into lives and to look for themes/threads across storied experiences embedded within broader social, cultural, linguistic and institutional contexts. We recognized significant gaps in the literature and wondered how the experiences of urban Aboriginal youth and their families outside of school places might inform practices and pedagogy within school places.

This proposed study's focus is to develop knowledge and awareness of what Aboriginal people, and particularly urban Aboriginal youth and families of Saskatchewan do and could contribute to provincially-funded school systems' policies and practices. The study proposes to build relationships with urban Aboriginal youth and their families through an afterschool program (www.growingyoungmovers.com) conceptualized around wellness to come to understand their educational experiences at home, in communities, and in schools. It is our hope that by narratively inquiring into the experiences of urban Aboriginal youth and their families, we will be able to offer perspectives of Aboriginal peoples to school systems and policy makers.

It has been our experience that Aboriginal peoples (and especially youth and their families) are often not included in the developmental process of school system policies, curriculum and practices. Recently, there has been increased activity in provincially-funded school systems to develop policies and implement practices aimed at retention, transition and achievement amongst a growing Aboriginal youth population. Non-Aboriginal peoples bring their own understandings of Aboriginal people into the policy-making conversations to develop these policies and practices often times without consultation from Aboriginal youth or their families for whom the policies and practices are designed. Our work seeks to develop a new way to consider the policy-making conversations by starting with the life (educational) experiences of urban Aboriginal youth and their families and then by examining current policies and practices to suggest new policies and practices that will better meet the needs of the youth and their families.

We are interested in how the inclusion and response to urban aboriginal voice, and community voice in program development and implementation may help in the co-composing of a program that is more meaningful and culturally responsive to urban aboriginal youth and their families. We are interested how research conversations/interviews with students, families, elders and community members may help us to better understand what wellness or the language around well-being, being well or living well means to them. While this process of coming to understand the experiences of youth and their families will be based on an after school program, we are also interested in how this co-composition of curriculum may shape policy and provide a model for future curriculum development in Saskatchewan.

We propose to inquire into the experiences of urban Aboriginal youth and their families as they help us to imagine what wellness might mean to them in their lives; this approach honours the stories of the participants. As researchers involved in narrative inquiry, we intend to continue to build relationships with participants and together co-create research texts where we can learn alongside each other. The use of narrative inquiry will expand the use of the methodology to research with urban Aboriginal youth and their families. Others (Caine, 2007; Clandinin et al., 2009; Young, 2005, Lessard, 2012) have illustrated the ways in which narrative inquiry might be used with Aboriginal teachers, Aboriginal elementary school children, Aboriginal women, Aboriginal post-secondary students, youth who've left school, and youth and their families. Narrative inquirers adopt an ontological stance of being in relation with their participants the sharing of knowledge in this way honours the experiences temporally as we acknowledge the past within the present telling.

Through collaboration with community members, Elders, traditional knowledge keepers, high school students, elementary school students, families and the research team we will continue to engage in ethical and respectful ways that honour relationship and indigenous ways of knowing and living within contextual places. Not only will the proposed study develop capacity within graduate and post-graduate students, it will also develop capacity within Aboriginal youth (in grades 3, 4, & 5, 10, 11, 12) and families who participate in this inquiry. From a mentorship perspective we also propose to include up to six urban aboriginal high school students, and two aboriginal university students as co-designers and facilitators of programming.

We anticipate that the results of this study will be shared and used in a variety of ways. In addition to the publication of research papers, books, and presentations at research and professional conferences, we believe that the study will impact practices in provincially-funded school systems and community-based organizations. We anticipate that there will be a direct link with the transition and retention of urban aboriginal high school youth participating in the Growing Young Movers afterschool program.

Additionally we will look for ways to share the educational experiences of the youth, their families, as well as teachers, through websites, social media, program exhibits and more creative exhibits to disseminate research texts in innovative and diverse ways, reflective of both traditional and contemporary processes of sharing and learning.

**Name of Principal Investigators:**

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**Collaborating Friendship Centre and/or other urban Aboriginal organization:**

File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council
Kitchener Community School

North Central Family Centre
Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (letter of support)

## Objectives:

This research study proposes to explore the possibilities within the idea(s) of educative as opposed to miseducative experience (Dewey, 1938). The philosophical ideology of educative experiences that are rich and contextual and that differ from school experiences offers possibilities for policy makers in education, health and justice as we begin to understand the importance of knowledge that is nested within community contexts-intergenerational and embodied in this case urban aboriginal experience as both educative and informative.

- The research offers both personal and social justifications in its potential to shape pedagogy, curriculum, engagement and policy discussion around retention and completion within urban school systems.
- We seek to animate urban aboriginal youth's lives through research texts particularly focused on outside of school experiences that are rich and nested within aboriginal youth and their families, and that are shaped by the urban context in which they find themselves located within. (Specifically North Central Regina)
- We intend to explore the importance of knowledge systems outside the institutional framework thereby providing policy makers, educators and programmers opportunities to further understand the complexities and diversity within urban aboriginal youth and their families experiences.

## Authors and Affiliation

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## Abstract

We proposed to explore Aboriginal youths' and their families' experiences of education, including their schooling experiences as they negotiate provincially-funded urban schools and as they move between home, community and school. The word *we* represents many individuals and organizations in different roles, students, educators, non-profit organizations, undergraduate students, graduate students, traditional knowledge holders, scholars, and administrators. We are also parents, family and community members living in diverse places and social contexts. We share an intention to hear youths', families' and communities' stories of experiences of education specifically outside of school as an institution, to inquire into lives and to look for threads across storied experiences embedded within broader social, cultural, linguistic and institutional contexts. We recognized significant gaps in the literature and wondered how the experiences of urban Aboriginal youth and their families outside of school places might inform the practices and pedagogy within school places?

## Literature Review/Conceptual Framework

"The purpose of policy and policy research is surely to foster the conditions that will allow Aboriginal youth to find purpose and assume responsibility that are at the core of identity and empowerment. The policy challenges for the next decade are to dismantle the barriers that continue to block the realization of those possibilities" (Brant Castello, 2008).

**Justification**

Statistically more than half of the Canadian Aboriginal population is under the age of 25.  In addition 3.8% of Canada's population is First Nation, Métis or Inuit ancestry with 54% of the population residing in urban settings (Canadian Census, 2011).  Specific to this study Saskatchewan's self-identified Aboriginal population is approximately 16% with 8.3% of the population residing in the urban centre of Regina, Saskatchewan (Sasktrendsmonitor, 2014).

Though Canadian census data appears to indicate an improvement in the number of Aboriginal students completing high school, from 22% in 1996 to 52% in 2001 (Sharpe, Arsenault, & Lapointe, 2007), these figures reveal that almost half of the Aboriginal school-aged population is still not completing high school. Specifically, in the province of Saskatchewan, with 15% of its population being Aboriginal, merely 25% to 30% of Aboriginal students complete high school within the typical three years it takes to move from grade 10 through grade 12.  In comparison, non-Aboriginal students' graduation rates are 25% to 30% higher than those of Aboriginal learners (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2009).  Calls to action within the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions of Canada (2015) call for a strategy to "eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians" (p. 2).  The data in this way locates our research at a time where the population of Aboriginal people in Canada is rising, it is also evident that the population trends identify a young and emerging urban population.  The research within this current context suggests a need to collaboratively inquire into the experiences of Aboriginal children, youth and their families, in this case outside the institutional place of school and within an urban setting.

We wonder in this way as to how the data calls us to respond not only on a personal level but also on a social level as the implications for policy are far reaching when considering the complexity within diverse urban Aboriginal populations.  Issues around transition from rural to urban settings and what this might mean in regards to identity also shapes the research that we are considering.  Furthermore, the practical applications of the research around wellness, movement and physical activity are possibilities that can have far reaching policy impacts on several levels.  We see this research as an interdisciplinary opportunity to collaborate alongside urban Aboriginal children, youth, families and their ideas of what community might mean to them.

In addition, a comprehensive review of the literature informs this work around after-school programs for urban Aboriginal youth.  The albeit limited literature around Aboriginal youth came from what may be considered dominant research paradigms, bringing forth an opportunity to pose wonders about how thinking narratively opens possibilities to pose different questions, and to engage in ethical research alongside Aboriginal youth and their families.  We are reminded of Thomas King and the notion of creating spaces that might potentially tell a different story (2003).

The literature in this way is filled with gaps as much of the studies with urban aboriginal youth are both prescriptive in nature and fall in the areas of intervention studies of youth health, wellness, justice and education. Much of the literature positions aboriginal youth as "at-risk" or "on the margins" in many ways beginning the research with prescribed labels of deficit and monolithic conjecture, thereby circumventing perhaps evading, but most definitely dismissing the possibilities within urban aboriginal youth experience. The complexity and multiplicity within the definitions of urban aboriginal youth and their communities continues to inform the ways in which we are considering our research questions.

**Conceptual Framework**

To be more specific we learned alongside community members, parents, service providers and traditional knowledge keepers asking them to help us understand the most responsive way of engaging within this particular urban context. We wondered how would we come to understand urban aboriginal youth experiences outside of school in a safe and respectful way. It is through this relational and ethical commitment that we as researchers were invited into the community to co-create a safe space within the confines of a neighbourhood gymnasium. We would come to engage with both youth and families in pragmatic ways around physical activity, wellness, movement and play. It is within the physical composition of a gymnasium that a research space emerged twice a week through the school year that met the needs of the community, but also helped us as researchers to "move-slow" in relationship and learn through this process of coming alongside. In this way the research philosophically worked on both researcher and participant in the commitment to experience alongside one another as a transactional process of coming to understand lived experience.

Our approach as researchers to ethically "move-slow" in relationship and co-create a research space alongside urban aboriginal youth, families and their communities is in direct response to the gaps in the literature and the approaches to research that are dominant and reflective of larger grand narratives of ways in which research is taken up within community contexts and with urban aboriginal populations. One way we can continue to unpack the experiences within the literature is to examine key terms that are often cited as synonymous with urban aboriginal youth populations. For example, school disengagement is one of the most complex, perennial and protracted social and educational problems, but is also the least understood in the Aboriginal population (Hallet et al., 2008). Together with culture, education is recognized as an instrumental social determinant to the health of Aboriginal peoples (NAHO, 2007). We will not repeat empirical data that portrays the experiences and achievements and more often, the lack of achievements. Instead we intend to focus on ways to make spaces for Aboriginal youth and families' experiences and to engage in telling more complex stories to ensure the voices of Aboriginal youths and their families have a place within Canadian education, beyond pictures in books, and school policies that far too often reflect a colonial curriculum (Battiste, 2000; Canadian Council on Learning, 2007).

The cumulative effects of colonization, residential schools and the Indian Act changed traditional ways of life significantly and this adds to the complexity of Aboriginal youths' experiences in provincially-funded schools. "Public education provides a rich site for contestation and struggle especially for those whose backgrounds and aspirations are positioned outside those of mainstream society" (Ricken et al., 2006, p. 266). Ricken et al. (2006) identified students' self affirmation

through engagement in the research process resolved into self pride and showed that the "strength of Aboriginal people is derived from their sense of identity, of knowing who they are and where they come from. A sense of pride provides a resistance to assimilation" (p. 280). Yet, we also understand it is not helpful to create dichotomous groups of those whose identities are nested within traditional authentic ways of being and those who are seen as socially assimilated; we see greater diversity and understand that culture is continuously evolving; traditional ways are dynamic (Brass, 2009; Hollands, 2004). We also know Aboriginal youth "live in a complex world of multiple loyalties – a world that challenges, sustains, and sometime destroys them but seldom removes their Indianness" (LaFromboise, Trimble & Mohatt, 1990, p. 637). While the in-depth stories of the youth will be expressions of the social, cultural and institutional narratives in which their lives are embedded, we will hear stories threaded around plotlines of entitlement, resilience, resistance and hope.

Giroux (1998) calls for young people to narrate themselves, but we also recognize that the experiences of Aboriginal youths are embedded within place, family and community (Kirkmayer, Tait, & Simpson, 2009; Restoule, 2008). While our partners have recognized this, little research considers the intergenerational impact of family stories on youths' past experiences, their present and forward looking stories, as well as the longitudinal impact of school engagement on youths' experiences (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996), as well as youth's voices themselves (Friedel, 2008). We wonder about understandings and transformations over time in response to the complexities of Aboriginal people's lives. Youth's school experiences are only part of educational journeys of multiple generations, journeys that are neither smooth, nor void of obligations, and responsibilities. We aim to understand the critical intersections between traditional knowledge, educational and school stories, as well as between generations. We anticipate while some youths and their families will describe experiences of colonization and assimilation, we will also hear stories of resistance and pride, all of which will help us theorize around identity, culture and generation, theoretical notions not well developed for and with Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal children and youth, as part of school, spend much time away from their families. We recognize we need to focus on the process of schooling and education, rather than solely on its outcome, achievements or failures. In this process we "must engage the whole community to take ownership of what it is to be in Aboriginal education in the 21st century. Together with teachers, the school authority, they must decide what they want for their children both now and in the future. They must adhere to the philosophy and principles they set in place. Only then can we /they realize […] to see Aboriginal education is a holistic and cultural phenomenon" (Kirkness, 1999, np).

While evidence about the detrimental consequences of school disengagement exists, little is known about the strength, resiliencies, aspirations and hopes of Aboriginal youths and families (Friedel, 1999; Hampton, 1995).


**Methodology**

Narrative inquiry is attentive to experience over time and in diverse places, beginning from, and unfolding through, relationships (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Our study is shaped by attending to each other's lives and reflecting on our experiences with Aboriginal youth and families and

how we might work together. Different from some research in which "researchers" study "subjects," narrative inquiry positions people alongside one another, sharing stories of experiences, listening to, learning from, and inquiring into, how our lived and told stories help us to understand ourselves, the places where we are/have been, and people and situations within past and present contexts.

Narrative inquiry is both a way of understanding experience and a methodology that is designed to understand people's storied experiences as embedded within social, cultural, institutional, linguistic, and familial narratives. Our research design enables the formation of intensive relationships with each youth and her/his family to hear how their educational (home/school/community) stories unfolded over their lives. Narrative inquiry consists of writing field texts and, through a collaborative process of interpretation and analysis, research texts.

Diverse field texts (data) will be composed in order to inquire alongside participants as we attend to the temporal unfolding of their lived and told stories of experiences. Diverse forms of field texts invite participants into the research in ways that enable them to actively document their unfolding lives so that the complex connections between their experiences in particular times and places can be more deeply understood. Field notes include photographs, artifacts, field notes on events or activities to which researchers are invited, researcher journals, participant journals, work samples, one on one conversations, and table conversations where, participants engage in audio-taped conversations (Huber & Clandinin, 2002; Huber & Whelan, 2000; Young, 2005). Data collection methods will be negotiated with participants as field texts are created by participants and researchers to represent experiences. Moving from field to field texts and then to research texts are critical processes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Field texts will be interpreted alongside participants from within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Caine, 2008), with attention to temporality, the personal and social contexts, and place.

**Research Protocols:**

Narrative inquiry, as with story work, works with the seven principles for using First Nation's stories and storytelling for educational purposes: respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy (Archibald, 2008). As narrative inquirers we live alongside our participants as we inquire into their experiences, as we compose field and interim research texts and as we find ways to share the final research texts. While we are bound by University Ethics protocols, we will be guided by cultural and community protocols and relational responsibilities (Piquemal, 2006; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008). Methods of Indigenous knowledge generation and application are participatory, communal and experiential, and reflective of local geography (Smylie et al., 2003).

Making spaces for urban Aboriginal youth and families means creating spaces in which they can explore and represent life experiences, a risky and sometimes difficult process. Through the engagement of Traditional Knowledge Holders, Elders and community leaders, we will attend to these challenges in ethical, respectful and culturally appropriate ways.

**Research Findings**

While our analysis continues to evolve through research conversations/interviews with participants several important considerations are evident.

**Conceptualizing a narrative inquiry research space philosophically and pragmatically**

*We travel to the gymnasium from multiple locations throughout the city. At different times we converge on this connecting space, a gymnasium filled with young people. The entrance to the gymnasium is marked by stairs...through the long dimly lit hallway step by step doors pushed open we enter into the gymnasium attached to a school. It is a place that we have come to know over time.* (field notes, June 2015)

Arriving from the attached school, the parking lot, a bike ride, or the closest bus stop, each of us arrives to the research program from different locations bringing diverse experiences that have shaped who we are and who we are becoming. We not only consider where we all come from, we begin to think about the knowledge we arrive with and how this shapes our stories to live by, an ongoing identity making process that is unfolding each week.

Entering the gymnasium in many ways, physically, socially, culturally and geographically, the youth find themselves with markings etched from past experiences some more visible than others. Their bodies in many ways carry stories of experiences as students from the institutional landscape of school. What about the other landscapes which are part of their identity, their stories to live by, which they continue to carry within them as they arrive at the program each week. We must consider not only the institutional narrative but also the cultural, social, familial, linguistic narratives within which lives have been composed (Clandinin, 2010). What knowledge do the youth bring from other landscapes that contribute to their conceptualization of health, wellness, and physical activity? We consider the following field text as we continue to dwell on the youth's personal knowledge landscapes.

*Water stains on the ceiling mark the physical space over time...drip by drip. In many ways the gymnasium is a metaphoric space. It is an appendage of the physical structure of school. It is a place that is connected but disconnected.* (field notes, June 2015)

Throughout the designated school day, the gymnasium is an extension of the school landscape. Day after day youth engage in lessons designed by teachers as they collectively work towards achieving curricular outcomes. In essence, the teacher gives the knowledge to the youth. As the story goes, *teachers teach and students learn*. A concept such as wellness would be defined from a school curriculum perspective, passing down to the youth what it means to be well. What happens when the school bell rings at the end of the day and the after-school research program begins? Though the physical structure remains the same, the gymnasium becomes disconnected, no longer an extension of the school landscape. The gymnasium structure is now an out-of-school research space designed around narrative conceptions of knowing. The structure has shifted to a space in which the knowledge of youth is integral to us all gaining a better understanding of wellness. What does it mean to be well in their personal knowledge landscapes? Furthermore, what do these personal landscapes look like?

**Familial Curriculum Making**

Huber, Murphy, & Clandinin (2011) look across several narrative inquiries with children and youth.  In their conceptualization they recognize that children have two worlds of curriculum making.  It is here where Huber et al. (2011) elaborate on this notion suggesting that children's lives and curriculum making also occur in meaningful ways outside of the institutional place of school. It is in this world that they describe a familial curriculum-making world shaped by diverse linguistic, social, familial and cultural narratives.  We are awakened to the complexity of co-composing a curriculum of lives (Huber et al., 2011); co-composing that includes the curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) that children and families and others engage in their familial curriculum making worlds as well as the curriculum making that children and teachers do in their school curriculum making worlds (Huber et al., 2011).

The narrative concept of familial curriculum-making helps the researchers to think of the youth who enter the gymnasium each week to engage in an after-school program centered on wellness. The knowledge each youth bring to the program is the product of two curriculum-making worlds.  How the youth have come to conceptualize wellness is the by-product of knowledge acquired in both a school curriculum-making world as well as a familial curriculum-making world. Often times in regards to curriculum we are only concerned with school curriculum.  For many, the school curriculum is the knowledge that counts.  We have come to know there is a wealth of knowledge gained outside the landscape of school that counts as well.  How do we ethically engage with youth to learn about their lives outside of school?  How do we begin to understand their personal knowledge?

**Conversational Spaces**

This process of coming to know participants in relational ways through the development of a connecting space in a community, is not one that is entirely unfamiliar to us as we considered Clandinin and Connelly's notions of conversational spaces for telling and retelling life stories specific to teachers, identity, and within the institution of school. Conversational spaces were at first theorized in relation to teacher identities, specifically teacher identities within institutional settings.  The negotiation of teacher identities within dominant institutional narratives opened up spaces to consider conversational spaces in schools and what this might look like.  Although this concept derived from studies involving teachers, it has been a grounding theoretical concept that has shaped and continues to shape narrative inquiry research studies alongside youth (Clandinin, Steeves, & Caine, 2013; Lessard, 2015; Lessard, Caine, & Clandinin, 2015).

Conversational spaces are central to the relational and ontological commitments in narrative inquiry research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).  A narrative inquiry proceeds from an ontological commitment to experience, with an interest of how people are living and the elements of their experience.  To engage deeply with experience, an ontological commitment is, then, a relational commitment (Caine, Estefan, & Clandinin, 2013).  Conversational spaces theoretically and pragmatically provide opportunities to see big rather than small (Greene, 1995), to reshape the dominant structures that limit conversational relationships both in and outside of schools.  Much of the literature reviewed, provided statistical data in the form of numbers to

describe the effectiveness of an *intervention*. We wonder how conversational spaces open opportunities to see big, seeing beyond the numbers, but also seeing youth filled with knowledge rather than in need of intervention. "One must see from the point of view of the participant in the midst of what is happening if one is to be privy to the plans people make, the initiatives they take, the uncertainties they face" (Greene, 1995, p.10).

*A gymnasium attached to a school, it is a place we have come to know over time. Located in a neighbourhood that is rich in trees...full of growth. The gymnasium is a circular brick building connected but separate from the cathedral style school, a reminder of architectural builds at this time.* (Field notes, June 2015)

Looking back to the field note, we are again reminded that a community and a building can be seen in many different ways. *Located in a neighbourhood that is rich in trees...full of growth,* we see opportunities to further inquire into the experiences of youth and families lives perhaps through the notion of being intentional around creating conversational spaces. These conversational spaces will help us as researchers to understand the perspectives of the youth, helping us to gain an understanding of their curriculum-making worlds-of their lives.

**'World'-travelling**

*The gymnasium is broken down in many ways...paint chipped off the walls...broken basketball hoops hanging... an out-dated, wooden scoreboard on the wall.* (Field notes, June 2015)

Physically, the gymnasium is a place in need of fixing one may suggest. Dissimilar to many of the gymnasiums we have worked and played in, it would be easy to dismiss this gymnasium as a place of need, a place of hardship, viewed only from the surface as needing to be 'fixed'. We wonder as we (researchers and youth participants) physically travel to the program each week, how our perceptions may shift over time.

Concepts such as conversational spaces are important delineations as we are intentional in the research design process with participants in narrative inquiries. It is through the possibilities within the conversational spaces that we are also able to travel with more ease to the children and youths worlds of experiences as conceptualized by Maria Lugones (1987). Lugones describes 'worlds' as constructions of society and that 'worlds' can be both big and small (Greene, 1995), part or whole. Her description of 'worlds' comes through her narrative experiences of an indigenous woman and the stories of her family, in particular her mother. Her 'worlds' include the necessary travel that she makes both physically and metaphorically through the perceptions of who she is and who she is becoming, and who she is perceived as in multiple worlds or constructions. Lugones found it necessary to animate this description as she too also is described and perceived as she moved back and forth in multiple forms thus speaking to an identity that is fluid and able to move between worlds. This work and how she eloquently describes it resonates within this proposed research as the research team also wonders about the importance of travel and how one is able to travel with more ease not imbued with dis/ease. Perhaps through this travel, we may better understand the knowledge landscapes of the youth within the research program.

The ability to 'world'-travel to worlds that are different than our own is a difficult negotiation for both researcher and participants. Lugones speaks of this difficult negotiation in her work as she addresses the ideas around "arrogant perception"(Frye, 1983) and "loving perception". As we 'world' travel, we do so perceiving what that world may be. To travel with arrogant perception, one sees others "worlds" as classifiable (Lugones, 1987, p. 18), predicated on social constructs. Lugones acknowledges the importance of perceiving lovingly as opposed to arrogantly to truly begin to understand others 'worlds'. She explains, "I come to characterize as playful "world" travelling. To the extent that we learn to perceive others arrogantly or come to see them only as products of arrogant perception and continue to perceive them that way, we fail to identify with them-fail to love them-in this particular deep way"(Lugones, 1987, p. 4). We wonder as we engage in research how this shapes us, are we arrogantly perceiving the children and youth that we are coming to know? How do we continue to shift our perceptions and travel to a 'world' that is imbued with loving perception? The necessity to "world travel" within our proposed research study helps us stay awake (Greene, 1995) to our perceptions and to the possibilities within what we may not be able to see at first within the lives of children and youth.

*The gymnasium is broken down in many ways...paint chipped off the walls...broken basketball hoops hanging...* The gymnasium is a space where we come to know the children and youth and where they quite literally take us home to their experiences outside of school. 'World'-travelling with loving perception continues to be a theoretical concept that I dwell within, helping me to pay attention and move beyond the physical structures of a school building, moving beyond the inner desire to "fix" or rebuild the physical space. Dwelling within this concept opens up spaces to examine our perceptions; perceptions that are shaping influences that impact the ability to potentially and/or possibly travel to a 'world' beyond our own in hopes of understanding youth experiences and the worlds in which they live.

How do we come to know? As discussed throughout this paper, the answer to this question comes after taking the time to think narratively. As I consider narrative conceptions of knowing, all of which connect back to Dewey's pragmatic ontology of experience (1938), we are able to theoretically frame the research. Thinking with Dewey's notion of continuity and interaction, we situated ourselves as researchers within the study, acknowledging how our experiences from multiple landscapes have impacted our stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999) and how we come to know. It was through this self-situating we were able to recognize that youth also have experiences on personal landscapes that impact their identities, shaping how they come to know. This led the research team to consider multiple curriculum-making worlds conceptualized as familial curriculum-making (Huber et al., 2011) which in turn brought us to consider the narrative concepts of conversational spaces (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and 'world'-travelling (Lugones, 1987). Through thinking narratively about how we come to know, we have theoretically framed the research providing a strong foundation moving forward and methodological findings that are both philosophical and pragmatic in nature.

**Knowledge Mobilization Activities**

As a research team we have participated in international, national and provincial speaking and sharing events. We have been recognized individually as well as a research team in terms of

programming (www.growingyoungmovers.com) and our innovative research platform including international and national publication awards.  We have participated in over 150 keynote lectures on the research program that was established in conjunction with UAKN funding.  Several newspaper and media outlets continue to publish articles on our research and programming as national best practice.  Locally the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner honoured Dr. Sean Lessard for being named the Pat Clifford Early Career Research Award Winner for Canada.


**Publications**

Clandinin, D.J., Caine, V., Lessard, S., & Huber, J. *Narrative inquiries with children and youth*. San Francisco: Left Coast Press.


Lessard, S., & Schaefer, L., Huber, J., Clandinin, &  D.J., Murphy, S. (2015).  Learning to live in teacher education as narrative inquirers.  In Craig, C., & Orland-Barak, L. (Eds). *International Teacher Education: Promising Pedagogies*

Schaefer, L., Lessard, S., Panko, S., & Polsfut, N. The temporal turn to narrative inquiry:  Bumping places and beyond. In Baguley, M,. Jasman, A., & Findlay, Y. (Eds). *Meanings For In and Of Education Research*. New York: Routledge.


Lessard, S., Caine, V. & Clandinin, D.,  (2015) *A narrative inquiry into familial and school curriculum making: attending to multiple worlds of Aboriginal youth and families*, Journal of Youth Studies, 18(2):  197-214 DOI:10.1080/13676261.2014.944121


**International Presentations**

Lessard, S. (with Schaefer, L., & Lewis, B.,). (2015, April).  *Ontological commitments to relational ethics:  Moving slowly.* Paper presented at the 2015 AERA Annual Meeting (Narrative SIG). Chicago, Illinois.

Lessard, S. (with Huber, J., Schaefer, L., Li, Y., Murphy, S., Steeves, P., Caine, V., & Clandinin, J.,). (2015) Narrative Inquiry as Pedagogy.  Paper presented at 2015 AERA Annual Meeting (Invisible College Narrative SIG). Chicago, Illinois.


**National Presentations**

Lessard, S (2015, October) Agency Tribal Chiefs, Invited Keynote Speaker, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Lessard, S (2015, August) File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council, Invited Keynote Speaker, Regina, Saskatchewan.

Lessard, S (2015, June) Yorkton Tribal Council, *Invited Keynote Speaker,* Yorkton, Saskatchewan.

Lessard, S (2015, June) Athabasca Tribal Council, *Invited Keynote Speaker,* Ft. Chipewyan, Alberta

Lessard, S (2015, April) *Woodland Cree Gathering, Invited Keynote Speaker,* Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

Lessard, S (2015, April) *Grande Yellowhead Indigenous Education Teacher Camp, Invited Keynote Speaker and Facilitator,* Jasper, Alberta.

Lessard, S (2015, April) *PHE Canada National Conference, Invited Guest Speaker,* Banff, Alberta.

Lessard, S (2015, April) *Thunder Bay Educational Authority, Invited Keynote Speaker,* Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Lessard, S (2015, April) *Saskatoon Contact Conference, Keynote Speaker,* Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Lessard, S (2015, March) *Athabasca Tribal Council, Invited Speaker,* Ft. McMurray, Alberta.

Lessard, S (2015, March) *Athabasca Tribal Council, Invited Speaker,* Ft. Chipewyan, Alberta.

Lessard, S (2015, January) *Prince Albert Grand Council, Invited Speaker,* Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

Lessard, S (2014, November) *Indspire National Educators Gathering Invited Speaker*, Toronto, Ontario.

Lessard, S (2014, November) *Toronto and District School Board Keynote Speaker*, Toronto, Ontario.

Lessard, S (2014, October) *Prince Albert Grand Council, Invited Speaker*, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

Lessard, S (2014, October) *Let us Learn Together, Invited Keynote Speaker*, Grande Prairie, Alberta.

Lessard, S (2014, October) *Saskatchewan Industry and Education Council, Keynote Address*, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Lessard, S (2014, October) *Saskatoon Tribal Council Keynote Address*, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Lessard, S. (2014, September) *Yorkton Tribal Council Reclaiming Youth Invited Speaker*, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Lessard, S. (2014, July) *Mahatma Gandhi Summer Institute Public Lecture Invited Speaker,* Edmonton, Alberta.

Lessard, S. (2014, June) *Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility through Movement Invited Speaker,* Chicago, Illinois.

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