



## Honoring What They Say

### Part V: Reflections and Recommendations

---

*I could write a book about how my experience at NITEP and Ts'Kel has influenced my life. It has been great! What I have gained I am able to return. That's the beauty of it. The expression I like that describes the feeling is: "My Heart Soars."*

---

#### Introduction

In Part I of this report, we stated a point of view that we felt to be vital:

As people concerned with First Nations education and research, we seek respectful ways to bring First Nations contexts and research together. We must question our methods, approaches, and practices. We must consider whether our motives and our methods honor and respect First Nations ways.

Throughout the body of this report, we attempt to carry out such an examination. In this section we briefly discuss the process model, and then offer comments on two areas. The first is a discussion on participation in the research from the Native Education Centre's point of view. The second reflection contains two subsections: a discussion of racism and analysis of one particular incident. Recommendations follow.

#### Reflections

---

On "coming home":

*"One of the very first times I was introduced to the drum was at university ... in my community nobody used it ... and I remember, those button blankets and ... the dance and I was just in awe, you know ... it was like coming home ... it opened the door."*

---

#### The Process Model

It appears that the process model, as first conceptualized at UBC and adapted by the Native Education Centre, has the potential both for reveal-

ing information about substantive interests and for transfer or adaptation by other postsecondary institutions interested in their First Nations students. It also appears, with regard to the applicability or the process model, that the model itself is sufficiently adaptable to be of use to a postsecondary institution as different in its goals and student population as the NEC. However, a number of limitations became clear and are discussed in the body of this report. They included the problem of low return rates and the need for frequent personal contact to ensure returns; the possibility of socially desirable responses rather than honest ones; differences in the flow of focus groups; issues of the rules of ethical conduct within a First Nations context; and the teaching of the process model to others.

---

*On a limitation of the research methodology:*

*"I find [it] difficult ... to talk about the weaknesses of NITEP ... it's ... like saying something bad about your mother."*

---

When examined in the context of the impact assessment approach, it appears that the process model reveals the extent to which intended outcomes occurred and in addition allows for a loose estimate of the magnitude of the effects (on employment and on personal development, much greater than was generally expected). The process model allowed the revelation of some unintended outcomes—personal growth and empowerment, and strengthening of First Nations identity. As far as can be seen at the present time, it is very unlikely that most of the effects of postsecondary education noted in the body of the report were due to extraneous factors (e.g., widespread social change). In this context, however, it is interesting to note that, on an anecdotal level, it appears that for some respondents or participants the act of sharing their experiences has a healing effect. This possibility should be systematically investigated in future adaptations of the process model, as should the "extraneous variable" factor and the "social desirability" factor.

Other limitations are pointed out in the recommendations below.

#### *Portability of the Process Model: Going to Other Institutions*

One aspect of the research project, which was largely implicit, was that by sharing the project and its results with any interested party we were attempting to humanize and demystify the act of doing research. But there were other important aspects as well. A discussion of three of these from the point of view of the Native Education Centre is presented below.

The decision by the Native Education Centre to participate in the research involved some risks, which deserve comment. The areas of uncertainty follow.

*Adoption or adaptation of a new model.* The research model developed by the University of British Columbia research team attempted to define an

approach to research that was (a) untested beyond their own research agenda, and (b) established to gather data related to somewhat different research questions than were of interest to the NEC.

Thus the first risk was in the application (and adaptation) of a model for which no information with respect to generalization or transferability was available. Indeed, the work done by NEC was largely a test of that transferability. At the same time it was understood that the results of the research would necessarily be entered into the public domain, together with the results of the UBC research.

The results of the research are gratifying in that they are indicative, if not yet definitive, of the importance and role of First Nations institutions. The model appears to have the potential for adaptation to more definitive research agendas. The model was successfully transferred from a well established university setting where it was utilized to collect data on the in-school and postgraduation of past students to a small learning centre with the mandate and goal of providing quality academic programs combined with cultural validation. In this latter setting the model was applied to survey similar questions to those at UBC, but expanded to explore pre-NEC experience and role of the institution.

The results indicate, at least from the learners' point of view, that the institution met needs and provided confidence and commitment the graduates had not found in previous academic exposure.

In part the results also provide indicators important to funders of both the research and the smaller centre. It was this "political" context that provided the other major risk of the research.

---

*On benefit to the whole person:*

*"It's given me the confidence to know that I can, you know, that I can learn ... when I was here I was amazed that I could do so well ... there must have been needed healing from past experiences in school ... I have the ability to attain knowledge."*

---

*Political context of the research.* The emerging network of First Nations educational institutions exists and develops in what is largely a policy vacuum. Because the research reported here occurred in the context of both (a) a research agenda that was at least in part motivated by policy development needs residing outside the centre's community of origin, and (b) the relative absence of previous formal, rigid research examination, the risk taken was that the application of the model might yield results that challenged some of the basic precepts underlying the emergence of the network, for reasons that might more directly reflect inadequacies of the model rather than inadequacies of conceptualization, operation, and academic principles of the institution. And it is worth emphasizing that it was known that the research result was bound for the public domain, whether

favorable to the cause and concepts of the need for First Nations-controlled education or not. That the results are generally favorable in this respect is gratifying, but there is yet no guarantee that the policy impact will be felt to the same degree as might be expected if the results had been otherwise.

The last area of concern is related to all the above and relates to the scope of the necessarily restricted research agenda.

*Further research.* The present research focused on a restricted set of questions designed to explore aspects of the operation, development, and planning of one centre in a way that respected important policy questions inherent in the research. And, as mentioned above, the probing involved only past learners (graduates) of the centre.

Given that the First Nations institutions must also be responsive and responsible to their communities of origin, an important component of further research must be the inclusion of those communities of origin in the research process.

#### *Racism: A Pervasive Barrier*

---

*On the effect of educational success on assertiveness and self-esteem:*  
"A lot of things went on during high school or grade school like a lot of prejudice against me, and I didn't understand it ... now [my experience at the NEC], it's turned me into a good argumentative person! ... taught me to be more proud of who I am ... like a more whole person."

---

This subsection consists of two parts: a position statement on racism and a description and analysis of a particular incident told by one of the graduates, which we felt would foster understanding of this complex, destructive, phenomenon.

*Racism: A position statement.* Our Elder, Floy Pepper, prepared this statement on racism, a central barrier confronting First Nations students.

#### *Racism*

Racist policies and practices are heavily laden with assumptions and emotions. What exactly does this mean? And why should it be discussed in the Graduate Study Project of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada? The experiences students have going through the program will shape them significantly for the rest of their lives. They are part of a program that represents a new effort of Native Canadians to educate Native people in a setting run by those who have been seen to practice racist policies with impunity in the past. It is important that students learn what racism is, both from others and from themselves, and learn how to relate constructively within the program, not to be caught up and hurt by this issue.

*Racism* involves the prejudicial idea that groups are biologically superior or inferior to one another. Along with this is a pattern of behavior with arrangements or power practices benefiting the supposedly superior group at the expense of the inferior group. Racism can be aphoristically defined as the combination of prejudice and power. "Institutional" racism involves practices within social institutions favoring one ethnic group over another. Racist practices may develop with deliberate intent (as in former segregationist policies) or without conscious racist intent (as with educational differences based on economic disparities).

One of the most difficult aspects of racism is that there may be racism that is almost unconscious, as if the deficiency of a group were "given in nature," but in which there is no conscious link between ideas and action, ideology and action. This appears to be residual from more deliberate practices of the past. Sometimes blatant racist actions based in ignorance and fear may occur. But more commonly, and much harder to deal with, it may be subtle and implicit in assumptions that different looks or background mean different goals. Such differences may be addressed in racist ways unless better understandings develop.

But wait! Isn't racism where people with power say you're different and no good, and use that to keep you down? Shouldn't they be set straight about how to think? These questions oversimplify the situation in understandably biased ways. Their "obvious" answers may actually lead to promoting more racism, particularly in cases of more subtle racism, unless there is a broader understanding of what is involved.

Some distinctions are important. The acknowledgement of actual differences is not racism. Just as each individual is unique within his or her cultural group, so is the group they represent different from other groups. This is the principle of *diversity*. Through diversity comes broader understanding and a wider range of views and resources brought to bear on problems. Through diversity there can be greater strength. But diversity differs from *divergence*. The former necessitates a common goal where the latter pulls in different directions that can be quite opposite. The greater the divergence, the less shared are the goals. Where diversity is obtained through the exclusion of similarities and rejection of acculturation or assimilation with attendant deficits of information and mutual respect, racist divergence begins.

Where differences are not resolved, and processes become destructive, racism can come to be seen to offer tools to resolve conflicts of divergence. Resolution of conflict (e.g., land possession) begins to rely on power with each side seeking to invoke their strongest resources. For some it may be weapons or money and whatever can be obtained in this way. For others power of moral superiority may be seen to come from spiritual, divine, God-is-on-our-side arguments. For still others the role of the victim, with its power of weakness, is assumed. At this point prejudice enters. In order to carry out the sometimes heinous actions needed to achieve our goal at

the expense of them, it is necessary to validate the prejudicial assumption of favored status for us and less favored, or inferior, status for them. If we don't believe that we're morally, biologically, or divinely better than they are, it is not possible to rationalize the actions we need to take to win. This, then, is the function of racism: to provide a rationalization for acts to resolve conflicts where there is a lack of shared goals. Note: the same goal—for example, economic success—is not necessarily a shared goal when success for one is seen to occur at the expense of another.

The social dynamics of racism cannot be separated from the psychological and emotional dynamics of racism, but we do not know much about those areas in a formal way, because it does not appear to be a process based on rationality or logical relationships. We do know that racism is intimately tied to self-image in several ways. The individual identifies with a group and takes some aspects of self-image from that group identity. A person who is systematically "put down" may suffer in terms of self-esteem. By the same token, self-esteem is the area in which the psychological and emotional effects of racism can be rendered less damaging through coping.

Coping with racism involves the development of a number of skills. First, it is important to adjust expectations regarding racism. Racism, intended or not, can be expected to occur. If it is expected, though not pleasant, it need not be shocking so that one is only able to cope by giving up or fighting back. It is important to recognize racism at the subtle as well as obvious levels. But it is very important to resolve to not take it personally. This sounds like a tall order. Effective resolution of this conflict over shared goals depends on not becoming defensive. Neither fight nor give in. Become prepared to provide information where ignorance exists. Factual information constructively presented by one who respects himself or herself gains the respect of the listener. Mutual respect can be earned between individuals who are quite different from each other. People do not need to like each other in order to respect each other.

The most difficult strategy is the development of shared goals. Often people hold the "zero-sum" assumption: your gain is my loss. The response to this is that if people work together there is more for all through the synergy of their efforts. If a professor, someone in a position of power, provides seemingly racist, spurious information in class, it may be useful to think of a shared goal of expanding knowledge from different points of view. A thoughtful, well researched paper addressing the knowledge deficit, presented with an attitude of mutual respect, may go far to winning respect and reducing racially related barriers of prejudice. Expect that not all people will give up prejudices easily as they may be too threatened. But attitudes that have been in place for centuries change slowly, one success at a time.

Faculty may be uncertain how to conduct discussions of racial topics. Both faculty and students may be afraid that their remarks or their silence



will be construed as racist in nature. There are, however, a number of ways to break higher education's long silence on racial issues as outlined by John F. Noonan, Director for Improving Teaching Effectiveness, the Program in Community College Education, *Innovation Abstracts* February 4, 1983, Vol. V, No. 3, The University of Texas at Austin, EDB 348, Austin, Texas 78712, pp. 40-41, published by the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development.

1. Communicate your uncertainty to students and invite them to convey theirs.
2. Acknowledge your ambivalence about raising provocative issues. (Left unacknowledged, the conflict between not wanting to upset others and wanting to pursue truth can silence students and faculty.)
3. Listen without judging.
4. Create zones of silence where students can compose their own thoughts.
5. Invite students to evaluate underlying assumptions in their statements. (Without consistent emphasis on assumptions, discussions about race quickly become stalemated.)
6. Maintain as top priority the examination of differing viewpoints. (Taking all statements seriously enough to examine them is a good way to teach students to take responsibility for what they say.)
7. Reduce the fear majority culture people have of being seen as racists (We want to discover the ways racism affects all of us.)
8. Acknowledge the legitimacy of anger. (Racism is an upsetting subject. It is appropriate to be upset by it.)
9. Examine the belief that only minorities are hurt by racism.
10. Help students recognize the unique strengths minorities have developed in America by correcting the tendency to equate "minority" with "problems." (Many minority students bring an awareness of the contradictions in the American economic and political systems: Instructors who tap into this resource enable all students to learn.)

Professors who want to facilitate discussion of racial topics must work to create an atmosphere supportive enough for students to speak and listen, yet challenging enough to enable them to discover the hidden assumptions and consequences of their thoughts. Students and faculty may resist such discussions because they threaten their world view. The assumption has been that maintaining silence is the best way to face the subject. Faculty and students must break that silence before it deafens us.

*A complex incident.* It is sometimes difficult for majority culture people to understand just why "racism" is such a pervasive barrier. The stereotyped incidents (e.g., refusal of an apartment) fail to capture the complexity and pervasive nature of the problem. The incident highlighted below is taken from the Vancouver focus group. Discussion follows.

As we stated above, racism is complex. The racist core interacts with a number of other factors. In this incident, one of these factors is sexism;

Transcripts can make dull reading.

It is hard, when reading the written words below, to visualize the woman speaking softly, head bent, tears flowing unimpeded.

It is hard to hear the silences when she pauses, to regain a semblance of control or to find the words she needs to say.

It is hard to feel the pain that vibrates through the room as she speaks, to appreciate the love and empathy that flows from the others who are witnessing her pain.

*I was in this one class ... I guess the two worst ones ... this Anthropology instructor ... was ... lived in the community and he just came to the university ... and he said he got his doctorate from living ... working with the ... people up North and ... he hated being questioned and would get really nasty and ... but ... he was always putting down ... and he'd ... he'd do things like ... he considered private parts as being almost like a monster and ... he'd say because of the taboos ... around hunting and not having intercourse with their wives ... that ... Indian women would always perform oral sex on their husbands and ... oh ... oh there were always First Nations students at the back and ... and all these white people ... especially white men ... would turn around and ... and would look at us ... and he'd just belittle everyone.*

This brave woman kept coming to class. She brought the incident to the department's attention and received a vague letter in reply.

another is the question of power and authority in the classroom setting. Some of the factors, which we felt were the most important, are presented below.

*The substantive.* Within this factor are a number of aspects. Two are outlined here. First, the instructor stated, "Indian women" performed—all Indian women in the community? A statement of this sort, which is almost certainly an overgeneralization, is racist in that it implies that all members of the group behave (and perhaps are) alike, indistinguishable from one another. Second, the instructor seems to have failed to place this material in its proper context. Spiritual preparation for hunting (or, perhaps more correctly, preparation by the people so that the animals can allow themselves to be killed) for many indigenous peoples involves a state in which "sexual purity" is not the chief focus. What is central is the state of the whole person; intimate matters are only one aspect of this. A more contextual view would have been considerably more respectful and less amenable to corruption. Racism is involved here, in part through the lack of respect, but also perhaps through the apparent acceptance of superficialities. The academic world is dedicated to looking beneath the surface—did racism blind the instructor in this instance?



*Depersonalization.* The instructor is treating the people he is discussing as objects, not as people with human qualities. Further, this same attitude is clearly present in his ignoring the sensibilities of the First Nations students in the class. Depersonalization is a frequent part of racism—denying the “other” the qualities that you yourself possess in abundance. Power relationships compound this aspect as well.

*Sexual harassment.* This sensitive material was clearly not presented in a careful and well-thought-out manner. The instructor was a Caucasian male; the students who “turned to look” at the First Nations women were also Caucasian males. There is clear sexual harassment here, which is embedded in the voyeuristic way the instructor presented this material and in his failure to provide an appropriate context for discussion. Sexual harassment and racism often interact.

*Classroom control.* Every instructor should be aware of the need to monitor and guide student response to any unusual or “taboo” material. Talk of sex in many contexts is a source of embarrassment and discomfort for students. In this particular context, the First Nations students are likely to have been seen by the white students as belonging to the group being talked about. Did the instructor fail to control class response because racism blinded him to the responses of the class?

*Institutional response.* The student received nothing but a “vague letter” in reply to her report of this incident. Administrators should be aware that it takes courage to make a complaint of this sort and it must be investigated, as the Department in fact reported that they did. Yet it is apparent that the student felt that her experience and the resulting psychological pain were not taken seriously. Such perceived failures can seriously affect scholastic achievement and constitute racist acts.

It is also important to note that the student quoted above gave permission for the inclusion of this passage and verified both the description of the incident and the analysis included above. She felt that reporting this incident was a part of the healing process, both for herself and for others. We are honoring her wishes and her words in including it here.

### *Recommendations*

*From the Project Team*

---

*On motivation to seek postsecondary education:*

*“I hadn’t really thought of what I wanted to do then, our children ... who is out there for our children? ... you don’t hear of too many day cares on Native [reserves] ... so, I took my ECE [early childhood education].”*

---

In a general way we feel that many of the findings of this research project speak for themselves. In this section we highlight the areas that we feel are the most important, and the major recommendations that we feel arise from the findings of the study.

With regard to the *research project and process model*, there are a number of positive recommendations and, at the same time, a number of recommendations for change. First, it is evident that *the consensual team approach to the project worked well and was fully consistent with First Nations principles. It should be continued.* Not only did it work in planning and carrying out the various tasks, but informal communication with the Native Education Centre associates revealed that one of the factors that helped them decide to participate was in fact the relationship among the team members and the atmosphere of sharing and mutual respect. Because the main purpose of conceptualizing and testing the process model was its future use by other postsecondary institutions, this factor is important.

A second recommendation is focused on the structure of the research team and its general orientation. *The inclusion of Elders and students in the project, and the atmosphere of spirituality in which meetings and discussions were often framed, worked well and was, again, consistent with First Nations principles; both should be continued.* They allowed the presence of a broad range of views in a milieu where all personal experiences and views were honored; this recommendation leads to another, that when community-based First Nations postsecondary institutions are applying the process model, local community members be included at every stage of the research.

The third recommendation is concerned with the process model: *the basic components of the process model proved to be useful and adaptable; they should be retained.* These components were those we initially derived from the general research process and from our reflections on the impact assessment approach. However, during the two tests of the process model a number of limitations were revealed, which lead to the subrecommendations:

- Because the use of mailed questionnaires proved to be costly relative to benefit (due to a complex of factors, some of which related to First Nations' experiences with surveys and research), *the use of mailed questionnaires should be replaced with an alternative method, such as the telephone or personal interview.* Such interviews have additional potential advantages (e.g., tailored interviews of different lengths; potential for probes for, for instance, how barriers were overcome).
- The construction of an interview or survey is a complex task, as is coming to understand the facets of a complex area. *Additional focus groups, held before interviewing or surveying, would allow more precision in the final instrument; held at other times, they would allow more variety in questions asked and information received.* Groups held before a survey or interview have a different purpose than those held afterward; both should be utilized.
- The formality of the cover letters and permission forms may have discouraged some graduates from participating. Consequently, *institutional screening committees should allow more flexibility in defining*

*the elements of informed consent to allow for cultural differences and expectations.*

- The use of research techniques by professionals who are substantively informed but not methodologically informed is often problematic. Consequently, more work should go into clarifying the stages in the process model, its flexibility and its approach; more work should also go into developing ways in which the model and its variations can be clearly and usefully communicated to other institutional personnel. This would include developing manuals, examples, and other learning devices and should include allowance for such traditional First Nations learning-teaching techniques as witnessing, modeling, and guided practice when the learner feels ready to do so.

With regard to *substantive areas* of interest to the Ministry, it is evident that, first, the relationship between postsecondary education and employment is a close one, for the First Nations graduates from two very different institutions (i.e., UBC and NEC). Not only are virtually all graduates either employed or pursuing further education in the same field, over two thirds are working with First Nations peoples in positions of greater responsibility over time. Other important outcomes include the development of an increased understanding and strength of First Nations identity and a stronger sense of personal power and efficacy, the result of marked personal growth in a caring, accepting atmosphere (which in turn allows natural talents to blossom). *Because the uses to which First Nations graduates are putting their education are so clearly related to what they learned and to increases in such variables as self-esteem and strength of First Nations identity, the programs for First Nations students are clearly worth the moneys put into them. It is important that they be supported. Institutional commitment is needed, as well as commitment at other levels.*

---

*On the “strengthening” effect of postsecondary education:*

*“It gave me confidence in ... meeting ... a major challenge in my life and ... I beat that challenge.”*

*“I really found my identity and I know who I am ... I’m true to that person ... all of that came from university.”*

---

Major success factors include the presence of a First Nations support system (both institutional and more broadly social); other success factors include an adequate level of academic preparation before entering the institution, a strong First Nations identity, and ongoing support from caring staff and instructors. Major barriers include both the lack and the inadequacy of funding, perceptions of the institutional climate as cold and impersonal, contextual factors (e.g., relocation difficulties), personal problems, and the central problem of racism (dealt with at length below).

*Because the major success factors and barriers were so clearly delineated by the participants, recommendations arising from them are equally clear:*

1. encourage and fund First Nations support systems in postsecondary institutions; and enhance levels of support for those already operating, whether in First Nations controlled or in other institutions;
2. work at preentry levels to ensure good preparation, especially the secondary school level;
3. do everything possible to foster strong traditional First Nations culture, both inside postsecondary facilities and in the larger society;
4. ensure the presence of adequate numbers of skilled, caring staff (especially important is a strong First Nations presence), including counselors to help students overcome the effects of past and present discrimination and racism);
5. work to alleviate personal funding difficulties;
6. foster change in the wider institutional climate so that the institutional climate is welcoming and humane (this factor is especially important in non-First Nations-controlled institutions); and
7. work systematically to eradicate racism at all levels.

*From the Participants: What to do About Racism*

The consensual statement that was derived from the Vancouver focus group's initial statements read with regard to dealing with racism:

We should prepare First Nations students (a) to deal with the face-to-face discrediting that occurs; and (b) to deal with the systematic discrediting, the unilateral definition of First Nations issues, that is found in texts, examinations, lectures, and policies. We affirm that support, explanation, healing, is found in the First Nations community both on and off campus.

Racism is related to the issue of relevance to academic orthodoxy in several disciplines (e.g., anthropology, health services, science, English), which either implicitly or explicitly challenge First Nations perspectives or define that perspective as irrelevant, even when "applications" of theory are manifestly oriented toward a First Nations population.

A First Nations perspective challenges us to create a superordinate theoretical approach to social issues that will include both First Nations and "others," and to look for applications of that theory in practice. Part of that involves the recognition of how to operationalize "respect." A First Nations perspective can be valuable for others; our communities can make a contribution in learned discourses, if "power" to define discourse is not exercised to discredit First Nations perspectives.

First Nations people have a responsibility to attempt to change systemic racism.

They followed this implicit, consensual statement by generating the following list. It includes a number of *useful recommendations*:

- Appoint more First Nations teachers to teach all kinds of children; a latent policy of assignment of First Nations teachers predominantly in First Nations venues should be examined and changed.
- Decolonize the mentality, the mind set, of governments that make policies based on assimilation.

- Break down the fear, horror, or complete ignorance that many people seem to have of “First Nations thinking.”
- Promote existing courses in systemic racism and antiracist pedagogy: consider making them compulsory.
- Empower people to confront racist situations in a peacemaking way.
- Build self-esteem to deal with racism; tell students that they are going to encounter it in class; acknowledge it; build skills to deal with it.
- Institutions should create a policy about dealing with racism, to give notice that it is preventing some people from learning; to make professors consciously aware of it.

This list stands on its own, and the items were put forward as recommendations by the focus group the participants. As a group they addressed all the major arenas where racism is found and provide cogent solutions. We honor their suggestions.

Finally, we would like to emphasize one participant’s recommendation, who pointed out that racism can go both ways and often begins in the home: “Racism should be ... addressed at the community level ... the Native people first have to focus on ... how racist we are toward other groups and from there ... how other groups are racist to us ... at my school you hear a lot of racist remarks ... it comes right from the home.”

#### *From the Participants: The Last Word*

In keeping with the First Nations principle of honoring the individual and of seeing each individual’s point of view as something precious, something to be respected, cherished, and fostered, we have given the responding graduates a voice throughout this report, as well as in this section. Most of the statements we selected are found throughout the text; they are cogent and pithy, rich with images, and stand as eloquent statements of the roles played by postsecondary education in the world of First Nations peoples today, of the factors important for success and the barriers that challenge.

But the world of today is a continuation of the world of the ancestors, the world of tradition. *We do not preserve traditions; our traditions preserve us. It is important that we let this process happen.* Postsecondary education in a First Nations context, like research projects of this sort, are part of the process of allowing tradition to preserve present and future generations of students. First Nations programs and research are effective because they spring from tradition; traditions are the bountiful source and inspiration for every aspect of life, including the academic.

In conclusion, we leave the reader with statements from four graduates. They give us an inspiring view of the effects of postsecondary education for First Nations people that extends far beyond the intended outcomes, flowing into and enriching the graduates’ lives. The effects, as described in the graduates’ own words, are themselves the strongest possible argument for generous support of such programs: The statements

remind us of the reasons for education—the major outcomes—in addition to the important effects on the individual of personal growth and empowerment. These statements tell us something about people who are fulfilling their potentials as individuals and as citizens, both of their First Nations and of the Canadian context in general.

---

*"[Before UBC] I was curled up, not feeling too good about who I was ... also I didn't quite feel I knew who I was ... and after attending the NITEP program and working, it was like the rose has bloomed ... that's what it was like for me."*

---

---

*"Just the experience of being here has given me a clearer vision of exactly what I want to do—it's narrowed down to where I have a target in my mind which is always my dream ... it given me the direction of where I'm going."*

---

---

*"In a broader sense ... the experience ... was really the greatest help to me ... to round out my life ... it made me a more complete person ... helped me cope with ... being an equal citizen ... an equal member of the human race."*

---

---

*"I'm living a dream ... I'm living my dream ... like something I dreamed about and I don't need to struggle any more ... I'm living it now."*

---

ekose