

# Indian Control of Indian Education: The Path of the Upper Nicola Band

*Opal Charters-Voght*

*Douglas Lake, British Columbia*

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*This article examines how one band, the Upper Nicola Band, came to terms with Indian Control of Indian Education. An overview of the history of the education of these people and the Indian Control of Indian Education Policy provide some background as to why it is important for the Band to strive for local control of its education. The writer of this paper, who was to become the principal of the new band school, led a structured experiences workshop on May 15, 16, and 17, 1990 in which band members were encouraged to participate in thinking about where they had been, where they are now, and where they wanted to be. Through structured activities, band members developed their own educational philosophy, goals, and action plans. The workshop is described in detail in this article. Where appropriate, the data provided by the participants are analyzed in light of the Indian Control of Indian Education Policy. The outcomes of the workshop on education at the band school during the subsequent year are highlighted.*

## *Introduction*

But why do we educate? For what purpose? Is education just a means to satisfy inquisitiveness: To strive for an improved status in society? To get rich? Is education a tool for social control, an instrument for domination? (Burgess, 1997, p. 1)

The Indian Control movement began in 1972 with the National Indian Brotherhood's (NIB) declaration of Indian peoples' right to educate their own children. This was in response to the failure of existing school systems to provide an education that would contribute to the success of First Nations students. Rather than subject their children to continued failure, many bands have accepted the challenge of educating their own children.

In the process, many First Nations people have raised questions similar to those raised by Burgess (1987). The purpose of this article is to describe the process through which one band, the Upper Nicola Band, defined its philosophy, goals, and objectives at a two-and-a-half-day workshop, which I led using the structured experiences approach of Pfeiffer and Jones (1979).

## *Background*

The education system of the Upper Nicola Band, situated in Douglas Lake, British Columbia, has seen many changes in the past 200 years. "It has moved from traditional, community-based education to 'segregated' schooling in residential schools, through 'assimilated' public day schools, and finally to band-operated community-based education" in 1968

(Haynes, 1988, p. a-1). It now accommodates all levels from kindergarten to high school.

The children of the Upper Nicola Band have been through several systems and a multitude of educational programs, with different philosophical emphases. Although most of the stakeholders, including the band council, band membership, parents, teachers, Elders, and students agree on a holistic philosophy that embraces the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical needs of the students, they differ in their priorities. For example, the "Resource Tech" program for high school students, introduced in 1984 to integrate theoretical learning with technical and vocational projects in the "real world," was viewed by some stakeholders as too radical. Although this program had a positive impact on the students' self-concept and motivation, some wanted to shift toward the more academic provincial high school model. When this was attempted, some of those resistant to the shift to the provincial system began to attend school irregularly and to manifest disruptive behavior.

How to keep the holistic philosophy in balance was the challenge facing the Upper Nicola Band. When one area is out of balance it can cause students to become dysfunctional. The Upper Nicola educational board and the Upper Nicola community could not allow the enrollment to drop since a new school was scheduled to open the following September. I presented a workshop where the people could review where they had been, where they are now, and where they want to be in the future in order to begin the process of developing their own educational philosophy, goals, and objectives, and to clarify the meaning of Indian Control of Indian Education for their community.

#### *The Structured Experiences Model*

According to Pfeiffer and Jones (1979), the structured experiences model is an "inductive rather than a deductive process: the participant discovers for himself the learning being offered by the experiential process" (p. 3). Conducting a workshop using this approach allows the participants to determine and validate their own learning from their participation in an activity. The Upper Nicola stakeholders developed their own philosophy, goals, and objectives by going through the following steps: (1) experiencing, (2) publishing, (3) processing, (4) generalizing, and (5) applying. These five steps are explained by Kirkness:

During the "experiencing" step, participants do, perform, observe, see or say something. "Publishing" requires participants to explain what they did, report their findings or share reactions. "Processing" allows the participants to internalize, integrate, evaluate or explain information. "Generalizing" allows them to reflect on information and made generalizations, "truths" or "principles." "Applying" means that participants reflect on how information affects them in real life, in other words they use the information in a "real" way. (1987b, p. 27)

The N'Kwala Education Workshop used the structured experiences approach, which allowed for the type of community input recommended by the NIB (1972) and subsequently by the Assembly of First Nations (1988). These two organizations stress the importance of training community members for local control and the importance of parent participation in "providing input into the development of the curriculum, setting of goals for the school, or in any other area relating to the formal structure, organization or operation of the school" (p. 72).

*An Overview of Education for First Nations People in the Upper Nicola Valley* First Nations people have been denied the right to control their own education ever since they came into contact with the Europeans. They have been through many educational systems with differing policies: (1) traditional education; (2) education provided by the missionaries and the federal government; (3) provincial government education through a policy of integration; and, (4) local control.

Gardner (1984) states that First Nations education was traditionally holistic, whereby the children were taught the spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical norms of their society. The purpose of education was to transmit an "oral culture" (Ing, 1990). Blondin describes the important role that Elders played in the transmission of knowledge and culture:

Elders are libraries ... their knowledge, their skills, attitudes and their experiences constitute the record of knowledge and the wisdom of the people. Their memories serve as the collective knowledge and wisdom. Education is the process of communicating this knowledge and wisdom through oral language, actions and behavior. (Ing, 1990, p. 22)

According to Gardner (1984), the traditional form of education prepared a child to be a functional and contributing member of society. The children were taught the skills that would ensure their survival as a nation of people and ensured a stable society.

By the 17th century, missionaries had established schools to "civilize" and remove the Indians from outside influences (Kirkness, 1987a). Children from the Upper Nicola Band attended the Roman Catholic schools in Kamloops or Mission, BC where emphasis was placed on moral and religious training (Gardner, 1984). Academic courses consisted of reading, writing, and arithmetic, and students were also taught industrial subjects such as shoemaking, carpentry, and farming for the boys. The girls were taught domestic skills. The school programs were offered on a half-day plan for academic subjects and industrial arts.

According to Kirkness (1987a), generations were removed from their homes and denied a normal childhood and their own cultural upbringing. Ing (1990) states further that the present generation of children still suffer from their parents' and grandparents' wounds and bitter memories of the residential school experience. She concludes, "generations of breaking up Native families have severely undermined the role of the extended family

and kinship networks" (p. 6). McPeck (1988) retells the story of an Ojibway Elder's experience with separation from his parents:

The timing of this separation could not have been worse. Right during the time from ages six to twelve, when we were shaping our values and our conscience and really needed them, our parents were not there to support us. I also was very bitter towards my mother for sending us off to the government school and for the manner in which she did it. I resented the schools, the teachers, the government ... I am sure that all this rage gave rise to my growing desire to be a bombardier. It was the only way I could strike back at the world for all the hurts I had suffered (pp. 10, 12).

The next educational phase in the federal program for First Nations children were the on-reserve schools. There were two day schools constructed in the Upper Nicola Band, one situated in Quilchena and the other at Douglas Lake. In 1956 the day school in Douglas Lake taught grades 1-7, and the high school students had to attend the residential school in either Kamloops or Mission. In 1960 the Quilchena day school taught grades 1-7, and again the high school students had to attend the residential schools. The curriculum in the day schools consisted of the three Rs—reading, writing, and arithmetic. One teacher taught all the grades. According to Ing (1990), the government's educational policy was "assimilation of the Native people into the dominant society.... The task was the systematic, formalized transmission of the dominant society's values, skills, culture, religion, and language" (pp. 4, 5).

Gardner (1984) marks 1948 as the start of the next phase of First Nations education, when a special joint committee initiated the move toward the integration of the First Nations people into the public school system. Like the residential school policy, the integration movement called for the assimilation of First Nations people into the dominant culture. The students from the Upper Nicola band attended the provincial schools in the Merritt area. The integration movement was not always a positive experience for First Nations children because, according to Gardner, it was implemented without preparation. Children were removed from regular classrooms and placed in special and remedial programs. An Upper Nicola Band parent recalls, "In the public school the teachers told my son he belonged in a special class because he was retarded.... My nephew became labeled due to his physical handicap and was recommended to a special class" (N'Kwala Education Workshop, 1990).

Parents found that the public school did not have time for their children. The students were not allowed to progress at their own pace, and were expected to conform to the mandated curriculum:

We pulled our kids out of the provincial school system because of this very word called curriculum. I went back to the school board time and time again to ask for things ... Curriculum should be an individual thing. In the provincial school you were a success or a failure—there was no in-between. I told the school board many times, "I am not a can of sardines." (Parent: N'Kwala School Workshop 1990)

It was this sort of dissatisfaction with the provincial school system that led the Upper Nicola Band to seek local control. According to Hamilton (1986),

The possibilities for educational integration had not been fully realized by 1972 when the National Indian Brotherhood issued a position paper calling for Indian control over Indian Education. The effect of this eloquent document ... was to stop the integration movement in its tracks and to set in motion a process of devolution in Indian Education. Through this process, in the 1980's, control of the schools is rapidly passing to the Indian bands themselves. (p. 13)

The move toward local control was initiated when the public health nurse, who was from the Upper Nicola Band, encouraged one of the band members to offer a kindergarten program on the reserve in 1970. Grades 1 and 2 were added in 1983. The Resource Tech high school program started a year later. The elementary levels kept expanding each year to complete the kindergarten to grade 12 programs. During each phase only a few band members shouldered the responsibilities of local control. Without the persistence of these few band members, the new school building that is evidence of the Upper Nicola Band's commitment to educating their own children would not exist today.

#### *An Overview of the Policy: Indian Control of Indian Education*

As First Nations people and others strive to gain a better understanding of Indian Control, it might be useful to review the Indian Control of Indian Education literature in light of the following three questions.

1. What is Indian Control of Indian education?
2. Why do Indian people want to control their own education system?
3. How will the goal of local control become a reality?

The first question is important because First Nations people and others must have a clear understanding of Indian Control before they can realize it at the local level. The second question is important because First Nations educators must have a clear understanding of their mission as educators. The third question is important because it emphasizes how local control can be implemented.

#### *What is Indian Control of Indian Education?*

In 1972 the National Indian Brotherhood developed a policy statement on Indian Control. The policy declared the right of First Nations people over their own education and represented the "transfer of education authority from the federal government to local bands to replace the past practice in which bands acted only as an advisory body with limited influence in defining their own educational system." According to the Assembly of First Nations (AFN, 1988), Indian Control was not mere "participation and administration of previously developed federal educational programs" (p. 13). The NIB (1972) defined Indian Control as the freedom to choose

among options and alternatives, and to make decisions “only in the context of local control of education” (p. 4).

Kirkness (1986) states that the Indian Control policy placed the responsibility of Indian education where it rightfully belonged—with the Indian people. The AFN (1988) stated that this policy paper “firmly laid out the principles of ‘control’ and ‘parental responsibility’ as the bases for First Nations jurisdiction over education” (p. 12). It provided guidelines for changes in four major areas: responsibility, programs, teachers, and facilities and services. Archibald (1984) maintains that the policy provided “a solid philosophical direction” (p. 35) for Indian educators serving as a broad framework for First Nations educators to refer to when they come to terms with their own definition of control. The Indian Control policy affirms the right of First Nations people to educate their own children. The Indian Control policy will serve as a useful guide for those seeking local control.

#### *Why Do Indian People Want to Control Their Own Education?*

First Nations educators view themselves as being the best judges of the educational needs of First Nations children. There are many reasons why First Nations people want control of their own education. In this section I discuss: (1) existing educational policies have failed to meet First Nations needs; (2) local control will allow First Nations people to create a school environment more relevant and conducive to learning; and (3) local control can help to address First Nations’ social, economic, and political problems.

#### *Failure of Existing Policies*

Although the federal government accepts local control in principle, current federal government policies are failing to meet First Nations’ needs. Kirkness (1987a) cites the following reasons why Indian Control is being hindered. First, bands are only operating their schools; control is still attached to the federal government. Second, the Department of Indian Affairs still controls the funds for educational programs. Third, there is no legislation to recognize the legal transfer of authority to the bands. According to Kirkness, until such legislation is passed bands will continue to operate as civil servants to the federal bureaucracy. This view is supported by the Assembly of First Nations.

The AFN (1988) suggests “deficiencies in legislation, policies, and administrative practices must be amended or changed to be consistent with the goals of First Nations people” (p. 82). Presently, local bands do not have complete control but must operate under “delegated authority.” The AFN states that First Nations education authorities “must comply with federal directives or be subject to reprisal or loss of resources” (p. 13). In turn, the loss of resources can lead to the instability of First Nations schools, weakening parental support and resulting in the transfer of chil-

dren to the provincial public school systems. The AFN concludes that present funding policies keep the First Nations schools underresourced and consequently shift the responsibility for First Nations education "away from the federal government to the provincial and territorial systems" (p. 13).

The relationship between the federal government and band schools is discussed in light of the Upper Nicola Band's relations with the federal government. When the Upper Nicola Band submitted their first proposal for the new school it was rejected because the enrollment projections were low. The Department of Indian Affairs based its decision on the current enrollment figures of the existing educational facility, which could not accommodate many more students. The Band could not guarantee that the whole community would send their children to the new school. On that basis the Department of Indian Affairs rejected the proposal for a larger school that the Band anticipated would meet the future needs of the community. The decision was made to build a smaller school without a gym, which was in the initial plan. Now the student enrollment is on the rise and it is expected that the student population will outgrow the present facility in the very near future.

To date a housing shortage is affecting the enrollment figures. The federal government restricts the number of homes that can be built each year. Many families have said they would send their children to the Band school if they lived in the area. These families are forced to send their children to the provincial schools because of a federal policy that funds only students who are living on the reserve. So the option of bussing off-reserve students is out because there are no funds available. To offer a service to the off-reserve students on the existing budget would greatly affect the quality of services rendered. Sometimes the federal policies hinder the process of self-sufficiency.

### *Creating a Relevant Education*

Local control allows First Nations educators to create an education that is relevant to First Nations children. According to the NIB the prime goal of local control is to:

make education relevant to the philosophy and needs of Indian people. We want education to give our children a strong sense of identity with confidence in their personal worth and ability. We believe in education:

- as a preparation for total living,
- as a means of free choice of where to live and work,
- as a means of enabling us to participate fully in our own social, economic, political and educational advancement. (p. 3)

### *Addressing Social, Economic, and Political Problems*

According to the AFN (1988) report, First Nations people view education as a vehicle for addressing major social, economic, and political problems that are affecting their communities. Some of these are recorded in the

## AFN's citation of the statistics from the Special Committee on Indian Self-government:

**Child Welfare:** The proportion of First Nations children in care has risen to more than five times the national rate.

**Education:** Only 20 percent of First Nations children complete secondary school compared to the national rate.

**Housing:** Housing is so scarce that 40 percent of First Nations families must share their homes with other families. Many homes lack running water, sewage disposal or indoor plumbing facilities.

**Income:** The average income of First Nations people is one half to two thirds the national average.

**Prisoners:** First Nations people are over represented in proportion to their population in federal penitentiaries. In Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and the North, First Nations people represent 40 percent of the prison population. The proportion of First Nations juveniles who are considered delinquent is three times the national rate. (p. 10)

These statistics are a grim illustration of where many First Nations people are today. Indian self-government is one way to counter these statistics.

How does a band begin to articulate Indian control of Indian education? According to Gardner (1986), the Indian Control policy paper provided broad directions that bands could use and adapt as they developed their own policies. How Indian Control can be implemented is the focus of the next section.

### *How Will the Goal of Local Control Become a Reality?*

For many bands, a crisis situation led to their assumption of "control" of their own education. Many found themselves "leapfrogged" into their roles as administrators of their own educational systems. Often there was no time to prepare for local control. Such was the case for the Upper Nicola Band. Some Band members were dissatisfied with the provincial school in Merritt and opted out. As a result, a Band school was started at the elementary and secondary levels. Upon making their decision, the Upper Nicola Band was faced with many responsibilities, some foreseen and some unforeseen.

The National Indian Brotherhood's policy paper and the Assembly of First Nations' guidelines are referred to in exploring how the goal of local control can be attained. The National Indian Brotherhood's policy proposes that the Federal government transfer authority and funds to the local educational authorities. The NIB (1972) states that local control becomes a reality when the local education authorities assume the following responsibilities:

- budgeting, spending and establishing priorities;
- determining the types of school facilities required to meet local needs: e.g., day school residence, group homes, nursery, kindergarten, high school;
- administering the physical plant;
- developing adult education and upgrading courses;
- negotiating agreements with provincial/territorial or separate school jurisdictions for the kinds of services necessary for local requirements;

- cooperation and evaluation of education programs both on and off reserve. (p. 6)

Preparation for carrying out these responsibilities can be done in a number of ways, including training, community involvement, basing curriculum on Indian values, long-term planning, and ongoing evaluation of programs. The NIB recommended that the federal government provide training for bands desiring local control, including every aspect of educational administration. This view is later supported by the AFN (1988) suggesting "local educators receive training in educational administration and personnel management" (p. 26). The AFN also suggests that this training could occur in the local communities or at institutions of higher education and that such training would "prepare F.N. education personnel for their responsibilities" (p. 38). The AFN recommends that, in addition to training for Band members, direct control be planned and implemented by parents, Elders, and local school authorities. As stated above, it also stresses the importance of parental participation in establishing the philosophy and goals for the educational programs.

The NIB (1972) policy recommends that curriculum design be based on Indian values and provides the following rationale for local educators to consider as they establish their own curriculum:

Unless a child learns about the forces which shape him: the history of his people, their values and customs, their language, he will never really know himself or his potential as a human being ... The Indian child who learns about his heritage will be proud of it. The lessons he learns in school ... should reinforce and contribute to the image he has of himself as an Indian. (p. 9)

Finally, the AFN (1988) stressed the importance of long-term planning and ongoing evaluations of programs and materials as keys to success for those bands striving for local control.

Bands are at different stages in assuming control of their own education and have probably asked themselves the question posed by Kirkness (1979), "How can we be sure that 'Indian Control of Indian Education' is the direction we should take?" According to Kirkness,

We can't be sure but we have no alternative. We have been subjects of experimentation for many years. We have never before had the opportunity to decide our own destiny. We have witnessed years of failure in Canadian schools. We cannot allow it to go on. Our chances of success are great if we unite our efforts, seek counsel from Elders and strive forward in the face of adversity. (p. 10)

Many systems have been tried and failed. As Kirkness (1979) suggests, First Nations educators should not continue to subject their children to failure, but should look for answers from within. It is hoped that this background review will encourage local bands to keep striving for a better education for their children, and others will gain a better understanding as to why it is imperative that First Nations people assume responsibility for educating their own children.

### *The Workshop*

The Upper Nicola Band participated in a two-and-a-half-day workshop, held on May 15th, 16th, and 17th, 1990 in the Upper Nicola Community hall, which addressed four questions: (1) Where have we been? (2) Where are we now? (3) Where do we want to be? (4) How will we get there? These questions provided a framework for reflecting on the educational situation of the Upper Nicola community.

In preparation for the workshop where I was to be the facilitator, I visited the community to enlist support for the workshop from the school board and community. Key people were informed of the purpose of the workshop and they in turn informed others. Some responsibilities were delegated, such as advertising, transportation, and preparing meals. Certain documents were collected to help determine which issues might usefully be addressed at the workshop. Certain stakeholders were asked to share their views as to what issues were important. Every effort was made to get representation of stakeholders at all levels: the Elders, Chief and council, school board members, teaching staff, parents, students, and other interested band members.

The Upper Nicola Band has been expanding its educational system since 1964. The community consented to do the N'Kwala Education Workshop as a means of establishing the collective support of all stakeholders toward a common goal for the N'Kwala School. As a result of having participated in this workshop, the stakeholders have done an informal evaluation of their situation and appreciate the strides that have been made despite their philosophical differences. This workshop is significant to me because I will be assuming the principal's position at the new school. The information collected from this workshop will serve as an entry plan for the community and the future principal. The structured experience process may serve as a useful guide for other bands as they strive to create their own philosophy, goals, and objectives. It was successful in gaining input from all stakeholders, which gave each stakeholder a sense of ownership of the philosophy, goals, and objectives developed at the workshop, and also instilled a sense of commitment to the new school. This commitment is crucial to the success of the N'Kwala School. Finally, the success of the workshop may instill an appreciation in others as to the advantages of Indian Control of Indian Education.

### *Day One*

After weeks of preparation, the date for delivering the workshop finally arrived. As I reviewed the outline and practiced the delivery of the first session in the presence of an Elder, there were fleeting moments of uncertainty as I wondered if all the participants would show up; I hoped that no fewer than 25 participants would arrive on the first evening. I had prepared a tight agenda for the first evening and there was concern about whether people would arrive on time. An evening meal was prepared for

the participants to encourage them to arrive earlier. The evening's schedule ended up being about an hour behind. Participant turnout was beyond the expected 25, which started the workshop on a positive note.

All meals were provided for the duration of the workshop. This allowed for informal discussion of workshop proceedings. It also promoted continuity: people remained close to the workshop site, thereby improving the chances of starting on time. The participants lived in two separate communities, and if they had had to go home for their meals the schedule would have been delayed and some participants might have decided not to return to the sessions. Continued participation was critical to the success of the workshop.

Participants were encouraged to wear nametags so that the advisors, visitors, and community members could get acquainted before the workshop started. Sharing the meal also provided an opportunity for all participants to become comfortable with each other.

Five activities were scheduled for the first evening of the workshop. Pertinent data from each activity are discussed in this section.

### *Opening*

For the opening, an Elder gave a prayer and sang in her own language. According to the Elder, it was a healing song that was given to one of our ancestors at a time when our people were dying of influenza. This song, which saved her people from dying of the disease that claimed so many lives, was appropriate since First Nations are in need of much healing.

Another Elder presented the biographical background of the great Chief N'Kwala after whom the new school is named. The Elder stated that whoever named the school after Chief N'Kwala could not have made a better choice. He was one of the few chiefs who could travel at will in any of the surrounding territories because he had the respect of all the tribes in the area. He was one of the few chiefs with authority over such a large territory. Whenever Chief N'Kwala traveled he had no fewer than 200 people with him. It was he who kept the Interior Nations from going to war with the first settlers. This historical sketch instilled in the participants a sense of pride in their Okanagan heritage and a desire to live up to the name of the great Chief N'Kwala.

Visitors and faculty advisors were introduced. The time and effort invested in the workshop by both advisors was acknowledged and appreciated by the community. Both advisors invested considerable time with me to ensure that all details of the workshop were worked out.

### *Warm-up Activity*

The lemon game allowed the participants to get comfortable with each other before they started serious discussions together. Participants studied their lemons and noted unique features carefully because they would be asked to distinguish their lemon from the rest later on. Small groups were

formed, and each member was asked to put his or her lemon in a pile in the middle of the floor. Participants were asked to reclaim their lemons as they were passed around the circle. The participants were asked to debrief this experience with the whole group. In this round the participants mentioned that they were able to identify their lemons with ease. This session was brief because there was not much apprehension on the part of the participants about their ability to reclaim their lemons. However, when they were asked to put their lemons together as a whole group, some of the participants were apprehensive.

One participant mentioned that she feared that her lemon would be removed from the pile. Another stated that since there were not enough lemons and one group had oranges, this caused the group to feel alienated. One participant did not reclaim her lemon and the lemon that was circulating around was not hers. When the facilitator asked the group who had the wrong lemon, many participants clutched their lemons and assured her that they had their own lemon. One commented that the lemons seemed to resemble the people who owned them.

This activity allowed the participants to interact with different people. As a result, barriers between individuals were brought down because they were able to interact in an enjoyable way. There was much humor and laughter throughout the entire activity. Any differences were put aside as the group prepared to go on to the formal part of the workshop. The success of the workshop was dependent on the complete participation and interaction of all participants. The significance of the lemons was to illustrate to the participants that they too were unique and had special qualities to offer the rest of the group. The workshop was off to a good start.

### *Overview*

The overview, which was a summary of the entire workshop, was presented by one of the advisors who had considerable experience in the delivery of structured-experience workshops. The speaker mentioned her strong belief in Indian Control of Indian Education. She stated further that First Nations educators would not have the education they wanted unless they had complete control. She expressed her support for the community and suggested that the answers for N'Kwala School must come from them. The speaker explained that the structured-experiences workshop style was a fun way for dealing with the following questions (1) Where have you been? (2) Where are you now? (3) Where do you want to go? (4) How will you get there? (5) How will you know when you are there? She reminded the participants that the answers to these questions were within the community. It was suggested that by the third day the community should have identified problems and drafted goals and objectives to address them. A brief statement was made about each structured experience and how it would address one of the five questions. From this overview the participants learned what was expected of them. It was an opportunity

to clarify the objectives of the workshop and how the objectives would be met. By being informed the participants could appreciate the importance of their attendance for the entire workshop. Again, the success of the workshop was dependent on the total commitment of participants from start to finish. This session reassured the participants that everyone's contribution was valid despite the differences that might exist. Input from all the participants was important because the purpose of the workshop was to reflect the philosophy, goals, and objectives of the community, not just the views of a select few.

#### *Expectations Check*

This activity provided participants with an opportunity to reflect on their worst or best expectations of the workshop. Participants would review their expectations at the end of the workshop to see if they had been met. It was unfortunate that these responses were not photocopied for analysis. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to debrief whether or not expectations were met. This activity also provided me insight into some of the issues that were of concern to the participants, such as: (1) discipline, (2) the need for qualified staff, (3) the need for curriculum planning, (4) the need for evaluations, (5) the lack of a gym, and (6) the closing of the school.

#### *Opinionnaire*

The opinionnaire allowed the participants to reflect on the present situation in general before they launched into more specific plans for the future. It was an exercise that was useful in setting the tone for the entire workshop.

*Statement One.* The discussion of the first opinionnaire statement, "I am satisfied with my own education," had a powerful impact on the participants. One Elder indicated that she was very dissatisfied with her own education because she had been deprived of furthering her education beyond grade 6. Another Elder rated her education as a 10 even though her formal instruction did not go beyond grade 6. Her limited formal education did not prevent her from seeking further training to upgrade herself. She excelled despite obstacles and gave the community another perspective of success. For some it was an opportunity to reflect on their accomplishments, which had a positive impact on their self-identity and self-worth. This discussion also allowed community members to see others in a new light. Focusing on the accomplishments of others developed a respect and a new relatedness to each other.

The results of the scale seemed to indicate that about half of the people were generally satisfied with their own education. The range of satisfaction was evenly distributed, and therefore it could not be concluded that the participants were entirely dissatisfied with their education. These results indicate that though some elements of education caused some dissatisfaction, other elements are worth preserving to ensure the con-

tinued success of the community. This first round of discussion was successful in promoting the kind of input required for the other structured experiences. It empowered some participants who might otherwise be reluctant to participate because the discussions were carried out in a nonthreatening way.

*Statement Two.* The second round of discussion addressed the following statement: "I am satisfied with the education at N'Kwala School." The results of the scale indicated that about 15 respondents were generally dissatisfied with the education at N'Kwala School. Four people marked "5," who indicated they were neutral—they were neither completely satisfied nor dissatisfied. Those who indicated some degree of satisfaction were closer to being neutral as well. The results seemed to indicate that the majority of the community was not entirely satisfied with the education at the N'Kwala School, and that there was room for improvement in certain areas. But at the same time, the community was satisfied with certain aspects of education.

Several reasons were given for dissatisfaction in the community. The education director cited lack of community support and lack of short- and long-term goal setting. One parent emphasized the importance of including students in setting goals as a means of giving them a sense of direction, as well as the importance of parental support. Another voiced concerns about the school programs, which were not meeting grade requirements. One of the teachers spoke of the "kids being cheated" due to lack of direction from the community. A statement from a school board member countered this view by stating that the school had been very active in 1980 and that policy directions were in place. This statement seems to indicate a lapse in the implementation of existing policies, goals, and objectives. Lack of community support is further evidenced by the declining enrollment as parents transfer their children to the public school system. A school board member suggested that parents "should send their children to the band school." It cannot be discerned if this comment was suggesting mandated attendance of band schools. One parent stated the need to have a better understanding of each other and to work together for the sake of the students' learning. This statement seems to indicate a need for better communication among the stakeholders for addressing issues like discipline.

A number of the stakeholders pointed out the strengths of the school. A school board member noted, "We are working together as a group and a community." She noted that the students were engaged in learning even though they did not have all the resources. Another positive aspect was the ability of students to work at their own pace. This statement was supported by a student who indicated that his parents were considering taking him out of class because he did not seem to be accomplishing much, but he appreciated that he was allowed to do what he was capable of. He also stated that many of the high school students were like him and

needed more time to do their work. A grandparent noted that her grandson was doing very well in the band school.

The exchange of differing views balanced the perspective of the situation at the N'Kwala School. Raising critical issues will provide direction in improving the delivery of educational programs. The highlight of the school's strengths will enlighten those who were not aware of the progress that is being made. Often the positive strides are obscured by criticisms. The community is more aware of the long hours of volunteer work put in by the school board trustees. The illustration of the commitment of the school board will probably improve the school and community relations. It is likely that the community will have a better appreciation of the strides that have been made in terms of policy development, short- and long-term planning, and of the problems the board faces. This type of open discussion will probably pave the way for better communication in the future. The stakeholders expressed their differing views in a rational and non-threatening manner. People need to continue to express their concerns openly to prevent a crisis such as declining enrollment. The exchange of differing views was a bonus for both sides in providing a clearer picture of the situation at the N'Kwala School.

Due to time constraints, it was not possible to complete the discussion of all five statements on the first evening as was planned, so it was decided to continue the discussions the following day. Even though the workshop started behind schedule, it was decided not to short-circuit any of the items on the program because each of the workshop activities served a purpose in establishing rapport among the stakeholders. Open communication was essential to the success of the workshop, especially as the group would be addressing critical issues together.

These two discussions also had a powerful impact on the participants. The small-group discussions gave all participants an opportunity to contribute, which gave them a sense that their views were valid. Participants were encouraged to take turns expressing their views and to refrain from carrying on a two-way dialogue over a particular issue. Such a debate prevents input from all participants and highlights the views of only a few people. As a result, people looked forward to having input into the rest of the workshop. I derived this assumption from some the comments made to me as participants left the first session. They spoke of how pleased they were about how the discussions went. In observing the discussions it was evident that the workshop was starting off in the right direction. People were carrying on discussions despite their differences.

My lack of experience in monitoring the time for each activity was partly to blame for the shortage of time. Setting a time limit for each would have speeded the discussions up a bit. Also, I regretted not making notes of the types of comments made during the discussions; only the comments made on the debriefing sessions were recorded. The comments made during the discussions would have provided insight into the views of

members who are not usually as vocal as others. I should have sat in and listened to one round of discussion. Such participation would have enriched the data that were recorded in the debriefing session. The discussion for the next three statements of the opinionnaire was rescheduled for Day Two of the workshop schedule.

Statement One of the questionnaire gave the participants an opportunity to reflect on their own education, whether it was a positive or negative experience. This discussion set the stage for determining what type of education they wanted for their children based on their own experience. They had an opportunity to reflect on what worked or did not work for them. The second statement gave the participants an opportunity to reflect on their present educational system in terms of its successes and trials. These discussions identified some of the issues that face the N'Kwala School, issues that were dealt with later in the workshop. The differing views illustrated the need to address the issues that were causing dissension. These discussions also reminded the participants of why they chose to educate their own children.

### *Day Two*

#### *Opening*

A statement from the Chief of the Upper Nicola Band opened the second day. The Chief welcomed everyone and stressed the importance of education within the community. The presence of the Chief and his council at the workshop illustrated the council's commitment to education. Student participation in the opening exercise reminded the participants that the workshop was for the benefit of the students.

#### *Video*

The video *Tradition, Change and Survival* gave the community a view of the general educational philosophy of indigenous people around the world. It stimulates reflection on why First Nations people are striving to provide their own education. This video emphasizes the importance of education into culture as opposed to culture into education. Culture into education means that the culture is slotted into the educational system rather than the culture being the central focus of the curriculum. Having a strong foundation in their cultural heritage will instill a sense of pride and dignity within the students. This video highlights some of the issues that face First Nations educators as they come to terms with a First Nations philosophy of education. It paved the way for the participants to write their own educational philosophy and also stressed the importance of the language and how the younger generation are those who will revive it.

#### *Opinionnaire*

*Statement Three.* The participants rated the following statement: "I am satisfied with the curriculum and material being used at N'Kwala school." Eight participants rated 3 and the rest of the ratings were distributed fairly

evenly across the scale. By using 5 as the cut-off point, 14 respondents were generally dissatisfied and 10 respondents were generally satisfied.

Concerns and praise were raised in the discussions. The acting principal indicated that a lot of effort was being put into curriculum development and that efforts were not being acknowledged. This comment seems to suggest that the teachers need validation of whether they are on the right track and that there is a lack of communication between the teaching staff and community in establishing curriculum goals. One school board member commented that the number of graduates from the band school seems to suggest that the curriculum is adequate. A student who said that he was happy with what was being offered to him further supported this view. An Elder commented that she was impressed that the children were learning about their cultural heritage and their language. These comments suggest that some strides have been made in the area of curriculum development. However, some concerns were raised that could provide some insight into areas needing improvement.

Comments from a school board member suggested the need for a curriculum development team that would include resource people from the community. Another suggested that there was a wealth of resource people in the community for teaching cooking, sewing, art, and the Okanagan language. The Chief added that there was a need for outside resource people such as curriculum writers who could write or adapt curriculum based on the needs of the school. His comments indicate that much work needs to be done in the area of curriculum, especially since the long term goal is to develop curriculum to accommodate kindergarten to grade 12, postsecondary education, and school accreditation. However, the student counselor cautioned the community to think about their definition of curriculum. To her, curriculum is individualized. Her comments suggest that curriculum has been the cause of dissention in the past. She stated that the community pulled their children out of the provincial schools because the curriculum did not meet the individualized needs of First Nations students. She also reminded the community that answers were within them; that the strength of the community came from their culture even though attempts were made to destroy it. Strong cultural identity comes from the language. Her comment about feeling hopelessness seems to be referring to the pride in one's heritage, without which there is no hope.

This discussion raised several issues dealing with curriculum. There was dissention in the past because of different views on curriculum. The teacher's comment seems to indicate a need for more input from the community. Other comments from the participants seem to emphasize the importance of local resource people. Overall the comments seem to suggest that curriculum is a shared responsibility that needs to be promoted more. The community acknowledged that there was much work to be done in this area.

*Statement Four.* The participants rated the following statement: "I think that community-school relations are generally good." Responses from 17 participants ranged from 0 to 4. Only eight responses ranged from 6 to 10 on the scale. Three respondents were neutral at 5. The results indicate that community-school relations are generally not very good. In the debriefing no supporters indicated that community-school relations were good. The comments of a band councillor suggested that one of the reasons that community-school relations are generally poor is due to the removal of responsibility in the past. Parental responsibility was stripped from them, and parents are slowly reclaiming responsibility to educate their own children. The results indicate that parental responsibilities are not being realized to their potential. It could not be discerned whether the community thought the school was meeting its responsibility toward good relations.

*Statement Five.* Participants rated the following statement: "I think that N'Kwala school is generally well administered." The responses of 17 participants ranged from 0 to 4. Three respondents were neutral at 5. Responses from eight participants ranged from 6 to 9. These results seem to indicate a general dissatisfaction with the overall administration of the school.

Statement Three was directed at curriculum and resources. Opinions differed as to whether the curriculum needs of the students were being met. A teacher suggested that curriculum development was taking place, while another participant questioned whether grade requirements were being met. The differences indicate a need for an in-depth study of curriculum needs. Statement Four was directed at community-school relations. The results seem to indicate a lack of parental input into the schools. Statement Five focused on administration. It was generally felt that the community was dissatisfied with the administration. The opinionnaire gave a broad overview of the community's position on education, curriculum, community relations, and administration. This activity set the framework for discussions pertinent to these areas.

#### *River/Path—Historical Review of Education*

The River/path activity required the participants to illustrate the various phases of education that the Upper Nicola Band has gone through, using symbols, diagrams, and single words only. The participants were also directed to confine their drawing to either a river or a path and illustrate the "rough periods" as either rapids or rocky sections. Each group was required to make an oral presentation of its findings. Data from this structured experience are analyzed in light of three questions: Where have we been? Where are we now? Where do we want to be? The analysis will also discuss the "smooth" and "rough" areas in education.

*Where have we been? Where are we now?* In the time of pre-contact with the Europeans education reflected the subsistence way of life. Education

was passed on through storytelling and was part of everyday life. In the past the Upper Nicola Okanagan Nation were hunters and gatherers who had their own educational, political, and economic systems. The type of education is reflected in the following statement of one of the respondents: "In the first phase we did hide tanning, sweats and there were lots of berries and fish. There were no roads and 'rocks' in this phase. It was great in those days."

The responses seem to reflect this phase of education in a positive light. During this time people had a strong cultural identity. People had smiling faces.

According to one participant, the residential school phase started in 1890, and the policy was to assimilate the people by taking away their culture and language. The hunting and gathering way of life was replaced by teaching the people to farm. This respondent added that during this time the Okanagan people experienced loss of their language, culture, extended family units, and land. One Elder perceived the situation as going downhill when the people attended residential schools. She concluded that it was a time when the Okanagan people lost everything. One participant concluded, "At this stage there were rough and unseen rocks which illustrate the start of our problems." The drawings illustrate bumpy paths, an unhappy person holding a broken feather, and another person in the rapids shouting "Help!"

The responses of the participants illustrate a negative view of the residential schools that were viewed as the start of the problems that exist today. The broken feather is symbolic of a broken people who have almost lost their cultural identity. The losses illustrate the challenges that face the educators today in reviving a pride in the Okanagan heritage.

According to one respondent, in 1956 the children began to attend day schools on the reserve. These day schools taught grades 1-7. Another day school was started at Quilchena in 1960. Students from these schools had to attend residential schools in Kamloops or Mission to receive their high school education. The respondents did not state whether the day schools were a positive experience.

*Where are we now?* The next phase was the integration of students into the provincial school system. The participants did not expand on their experiences with the provincial schools during this structured experience, as much of their dissention with the provincial schools was brought up during the discussion of statement two of the opinionnaire, "I am satisfied with the education at N'Kwala school." Much of the discussion focused on the positive aspects of the band schools.

The participants view band schools positively. Their drawings illustrate smiling children. According to one participant they are smiling because Elders are working with the children. Students are also smiling because they experienced success at the high school level in the Resource Tech program. Another participant commented that the new education

promoted traditional education and stressed the importance of maintaining the cultural traditions in the curriculum. Although the majority of the participants viewed this phase in a positive light, they realize that there are areas that still need smoothing out. An Elder stated, "We have had our own rough times in our community school." The Chief commented that today we are responsible for our own education, which wasn't the case in the past. The road leading to local education is not without its bumps, but it is viewed as heading in the right direction.

*Where do we want to be?* One respondent emphasized the importance of maintaining cultural traditions in the present curriculum. Another hoped that the community would be in control of its own education, economic, and political systems again. One participant described this phase as "getting smoother." Another stated that the Upper Nicola Band School has had its rough times. The Upper Nicola Band acknowledges its accomplishments, but also realizes that there is room for improvement.

The band school seemed to be viewed favorably in light of curriculum relevance. Participation on the part of Elders in the schools is another factor that contributes to a positive experience. The comments seem to indicate that the community believes that a band school is one way to address some of the problems that face the community. The community values its Okanagan heritage and views it as a means of instilling pride in its people.

The River/Path depiction gave the participants an opportunity to reflect on their education in light of their positive and negative experiences. It gave them an opportunity to reflect on the goals of education at each phase and whether they were being met. The traditional phase was viewed as the ideal education; the residential and provincial school phases were viewed as "rocky"; and the band schools were viewed as striving for the traditional values again. The activity paved the way for further discussion on what an "ideal" education is for First Nations peoples, to be explained further in the Fantasy exercise.

#### *Boundaries Activity—Situational Review*

For this activity the participants were required to list all the factors that either helped or hindered the local educational system. The analysis of the data from this structured experience is confined to four areas based on the Indian Control of Indian Education Policy (1972): (1) responsibility, (2) programs, (3) teachers, and (4) facilities and services.

*Responsibility.* The Native Indian Brotherhood (1972) defined local responsibility as follows:

- budgeting, spending and establishing priorities;
- determining the types of facilities required to meet local needs;
- directing staff hiring and curriculum development with special concern for Indian languages and culture;
- administering the physical plant;
- developing adult education and upgrading courses;

- negotiating agreements with provincial/ territorial or separate school jurisdictions for the kind of services necessary for local requirements;
- cooperation and evaluation of education programs both on and off reserve.
- providing counselling services. (p. 7)

The list of helping factors stressed parental and Elder input. Evaluations have been done and the band is managing its funds. Also they considered it a helping factor to have their own policies to guide them. Based on the NIB's guidelines, the Upper Nicola Band is upholding most of its responsibilities.

The positive comments about community involvement seem to suggest that although it is not what it should be, it is an improvement over community involvement in the provincial schools. The comments seem to suggest that more work needs to be done in the areas of evaluation and policy development.

*Programs.* The participants indicated that teaching the language and culture and spirituality were helping factors. One commented that the individualized programs were an asset. Respondents viewed lack of accreditation and lack of student discipline as hindering education programs. One stakeholder mentioned the conflict of industrial and traditional values as another hindering factor. One participant mentioned that the language requirement for postsecondary education was not being met. The comments seem to imply the need to focus on the high school programs. The comment about the conflict of technical and traditional values suggests differences in priorities in regard to program emphasis. The high student turnover seems to suggest dissatisfaction with school programs. This might be due to another observation, that there are inconsistent academic standards and a lack of career choice and goal setting.

*Teachers.* A number of factors related to the teaching staff that is helping the education system were stated. One stakeholder expressed satisfaction with the teachers, a view that was supported by a comment that the students have a desire to learn. Another person noted that there were lots of role models. Availability of resource people was also mentioned. With regard to hindering factors one participant expressed a concern over the high staff turnover, and another over the need to do human resource planning. These comments suggest that the problem is not with the personnel who are being hired, but with keeping the teachers once they are hired.

*Facilities and services.* Helping factors are the construction of a new school and the accessibility of the Merritt School District 31 gym facilities and the resource center.

The list of hindering factors in terms of facilities and services rendered included lack of equipment and supplies due to restricted funding. Because of lack of funds, no gym was built in the new school. One stakeholder commented on the need for better communication between

the school and the community. Another participant noted that there was a shortage of housing, which in turn has an impact on enrollment figures.

Overall, the discussions seem to indicate that there are a lot more hindering factors than helping factors. This discussion is useful in establishing which issues must be addressed to improve the delivery of services rendered.

The Boundaries activity helped participants to reflect on their current situation in terms of helpful and hindering factors and identified issues that could be addressed in the action-planning phase of the workshop.

#### *Fantasy Exercise—Ideal Education*

This exercise helped the participants further address the question: Where do we want to go? Participants were asked to reflect on what their ideal education would be and to disregard any constraints such as funding. The participants formed small groups and made a collage that represented all the important components of an ideal education. This activity took about two hours instead of the scheduled 45 minutes. This was an important exercise because an educational philosophy would be derived from it. Each group reported its findings. From this discussion the group was to draft a philosophy statement, but at this point in the day they were exhausted. Therefore, once the group had listed the common elements that should be included in the philosophy statement, it was decided that a small group would translate the information from the fantasy activity into a philosophy statement.

Upon analyzing the reports on ideal education, four major themes emerged: (1) the importance of both traditional and technological knowledge, (2) a holistic education, (3) parental and community involvement, (4) the importance of the environment and resources. Pertinent details of this discussion are the focus of the next section.

*Traditional and technological knowledge.* One stakeholder commented that there is “a generation gap between our traditional way of living and the new generation of the computer age.” This participant illustrated a forest to represent the past way of life in which the people were totally dependent on the forest for food, shelter, and clothing. This view was supported by another who illustrated a computer with an Indian hair ornament to indicate that it is possible to “live in a technological world and retain your culture at the same time.” According to another person, “We know we can still find a way that we can retain our traditional lifestyle and take on a new technology ensuring that the salmon and animals return.” One participant emphasized the importance of Native history and knowledge of different parts of the world. One group used an airplane with many flags on it to represent the need to learn local history as well as to learn about the rest of the world so that people will know how they fit into that world. One person cautioned people about their notion of success. She displayed several cars piled on top of each other and stated

this was not the only way to measure success; it can also be measured in terms of a tight family unit. Another stated, "Your ideal education is the best of both worlds."

*Holistic philosophy.* The discussions emphasized the importance of the holistic philosophy in which the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical needs of the student are of equal importance. The discussion on academic needs focused on various courses, career choices, and practical knowledge.

Participants emphasized the importance of science, local and global history, and computer technology. Some made reference to the importance of career counseling.

Several respondents emphasized practical knowledge whereby the academic skills are applied in the real world. It was suggested that scientific knowledge could be used to solve problems within the community. For example, students could solve the problem of a particular campsite that lacks electricity by building a windmill to create electricity. Other practical uses of knowledge included a salmon enhancement program, and sewing and cooking classes. Several discussions stressed the importance of emotional and spiritual needs. One stakeholder noted that the people had a choice between Christian and cultural spirituality. Emotional stability could be acquired through family support or one-to-one counseling. It was also suggested that the way students viewed themselves determined whether they would succeed.

A few people commented on the importance of the physical needs of the students, such as health and nutrition. Physical activity via sports and recreation was identified as important. One participant emphasized the need for a gym to meet the physical needs of the students. One group illustrated the "hanging" of alcoholism to emphasize the importance of drug and alcohol counseling.

*Parental and community involvement.* A number of stakeholders emphasized the importance of community involvement. Comments included the idea that more opportunities are possible because the Native people are promoting education, and that an ideal education is based on the foundation of a peaceful community, the commitment of the parents, and the support of the community and the leaders. According to one stakeholder, education involves the Elders, adults, and children—they are not separate. The community is brought into the classroom.

*Environment and resources.* Based on some of the comments, people are viewed as valuable resources. Children are the future foundation of the Upper Nicola Band. One person commented that an ideal education ensures that there is a future generation. Another stressed the importance of the environment and the natural resources. An Elder warned "the environment is not looked after and that is what makes us sick because it affects the animals and the birds."

This activity allowed different stakeholders to work together. Groups worked cooperatively. The groups seemed to enjoy the creative approach for reflecting on ideal education. The collages were impressive, evidence that a lot of thought and planning was put forth. One participant commented that it was an effective way to get everyone focused on an educational philosophy. This activity resulted in a larger number of community members becoming well versed in the educational philosophy of the N'-Kwala School. The discussions led to the following philosophy statement.

We the Spahomin First Nation are committed through education to maintain and enhance our cultural and traditional values, specifically, the family, the "Nsilxcn" (language), spirituality and our natural resources. At the same time we recognize the importance in excelling in academic and technical areas. We seek to attain a balance in the intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual well being of each individual ("Sqilxw"). We are bound together in a common goal to achieve self-esteem for each individual and self-determination for the community.

Developing this statement was not an easy task. The group that wrote the statement comprised a school board member, a band councillor, a band member, and one of the advisors. When the community reviewed the statement the following day they accepted it.

### *Day Three*

There was not adequate time to complete the schedule for Day Two, so it was decided to postpone the Round Robin Activity to Day Three. The group was so exhausted that they felt they would not be able to devote the time and energy needed for such an important task as writing educational goals and objectives.

### *Round Robin—Educational Goals*

For this exercise the whole group was divided into affinity groups: (1) parents and students, (2) Elders, (3) principal, teachers, support staff, and (4) band council and school board. One of the advisors gave a mini-lecture on goals and objectives to ensure that the participants understood their task for the next exercise.

It was assumed that each group would have a certain emphasis in creating goals and objectives. Four main goals were agreed on in the follow-up discussion: (1) to have supportive community and school relations, (2) to have quality instructional programs and quality resources, (3) to have qualified teaching staff, and (4) to have efficient administration of the school. Each group drafted objectives for each goal, which are discussed in the next section.

*To have supportive school and community relations.* Suggestions for improving community-school relations included more functions to bring the community and school together and planning activities specifically geared toward parental involvement and support. Some suggestions were directed toward promoting community awareness of school functions.

*To have quality instructional programs and quality resources.* Discussions emphasized the core curriculum, which was to include basics in reading, writing, and arithmetic as well as traditional learning and values. It was suggested that the high school program should provide a strong base for postsecondary education. One objective was to implement more electives such as cooking, woodwork, sewing, mechanics, and outdoor education. Another was for support services such as outside resource people to offer courses such as life skills, problem solving, and communications counseling.

*To have qualified teaching staff.* It was suggested that qualified Native teachers be hired. The community stated the need to hire qualified teachers who: (1) can teach multigrades and do some individualized teaching, (2) are resourceful and creative, (3) can meet community needs, (4) are flexible, (5) are able to start projects on their own, (6) are emotionally stable, and (7) are good role models. Suggestions for teaching support services included hiring qualified tutors and teacher aides. It was suggested that class size be limited to 12-15 students.

*To have efficient administration of the school.* This goal was not brought up in this round of discussions. Because it is essential to the effective operation of the school it was included in the next structured experience.

#### *Cybernetic Session*

During this session the participants were again required to break up into the same affinity groups. Each group went to five stations and wrote action plans for each of the following goals: (1) to have supportive school and community relations, (2) to have quality instructional programs and quality resources, (3) to have quality teaching staff, and (4) to have efficient administration of the school. The Cybernetic session determined the future direction for the Upper Nicola community. It was during this session that they developed long- and short-range plans.

*To have supportive school/community relations.* Suggestions for improving community-school relations included an awards night, and Elders' day, an educational fair, dramatizing Okanagan legends, co-ed sports events, and fundraising for a community gym. Detailed plans were worked out for three of these projects as discussed below.

Plans were made for an awards night, which, it was suggested, be scheduled at the end of each school year. Plans are to be initiated by the education coordinator who will contact teachers for information on student progress. Other responsibilities include drafting a program of events, preparation of certificates and selection of small gifts for each student, presentation of awards for the following categories: academic, athletic, attendance, and most improved student. It was suggested that a selection committee work on this event throughout the year.

Plans were made for an annual Elders' day to be scheduled in late September or October, this event to be initiated by the student body. Plans

included a potluck supper and a gift presentation to recognize the Elders in the community.

Plans for an education fair were scheduled for December and April. Resource people for this event included the principal of the school, band staff, entrepreneurs, education coordinators, Band manager, and Stockmen's committee (an organization comprised of local ranchers). Duties of those involved included scheduling planning sessions and advertising the event via posters, flyers, and moccasin telegraph.

*To have quality instructional programs and quality resources.* Specific plans were made to accommodate the core curriculum. In the area of science it was suggested to offer courses in biology, chemistry, physics, and earth science via the Open Learning Institute, correspondence courses, and the use of resource centers. Resource people included teachers, community members, and outside resource people. Planning was scheduled to start in August 1990, so that some of the courses could be implemented in September. Suggestions for math curriculum development included the use of the BC curriculum guide as well as Math Their Way. Resource people were the same as those suggested for the science curriculum. Plans were scheduled to begin in August 1990 and to be implemented in September 1990.

It was suggested that reading, spelling, and writing should be emphasized, but no specific plans were made at this time. The responsibility was left to the teaching staff.

It was planned to develop a list of people to teach outdoor education, physical education, home economics, Native arts and crafts, Okanagan history, natural resources, rehabilitation education, and other electives. The list was to be compiled by using surveys and by conducting interviews. Resource people for this project included the education board, chief and council, and Elders.

There were suggestions for resource people to teach survival skills in the outdoor education program, all local people. Survival skills such as hunting and gathering were to be taught throughout the seasons.

Plans for teaching Okanagan history included the formation of a record and information bank to record the traditional social and economic life skills. Certain community people from all levels were recognized as possible resource people. This project would start in September 1990. Plans for teaching traditional arts included a list of people to teach Okanagan games, songs, dances, arts, and crafts. Other plans included hiring teachers to teach lessons in piano, flute, guitar, drums, beading, hide tanning, painting, and sketching. Possible resource people were a qualified music teacher, Elders, a drum group, local artists, and craftspeople who could teach the students throughout the school year. Plans for teaching natural resources included field trips to local industries in forestry, agriculture, fisheries, and wild life conservation. Resource people from the different industries could be contacted throughout the school year.

*To have qualified teaching staff.* Plans were for hiring qualified teachers by means of advertising through the media, employment centers, and universities. There were suggestions for advertising positions in various newspapers such as *Kahtou*, the *Ubysey*, the *Province*, and the *Sun*. Resource people for implementing these plans included representation from all levels-band council, the community, school board, parents, teacher, and the principal. These plans had to be implemented in the immediate future. Plans specific to hiring procedures included application screening, preparation of interview questions, interview schedules, reference and police record checks, and preparation of a contract offer. Participants also stressed the importance of hiring teachers capable of multigrade and individualized teaching, qualified language teachers, and hiring qualified teacher aides. There were suggestions to develop a salary scale competitive with other school districts, and to develop incentives to encourage staff members to stay longer than two years. Resource people for these tasks were to come from the various levels mentioned above.

*To have efficient administration of the school.* Plans for improving the administration of the school included drafting policies and guidelines specific to student discipline, finances, and personnel by holding workshops pertinent to these areas. It was further suggested to incorporate traditional laws into administration. Those undertaking these tasks were to consult with the Elders, band council, an advisory council, and the student council. An administrative support system would be developed. Support could be gained by giving the school board more power to make decisions, by forming an Elders' council and a parents' association to encourage parental input into the decision-making. Support could be gained by holding administrative workshops for all levels. Parenting workshops that involved social services, parents, and teachers were also deemed important. The band has done some evaluations and has expressed the need for more.

Both the NIB and AFN expressed the need to train people to prepare bands for local control. The Upper Nicola Band has sponsored me to enter into the UBC Ts'kel program, which is a master's program in education administration. I will return to my community and assume the role as principal of the new school.

#### *Workshop Evaluation*

Before they completed the evaluation form, participants were asked to bring up any issues that had not been raised during the workshop. Activities were planned for the wrap-up activity, but there was not sufficient time to carry it through. No issues were brought up at this time. The next section focuses on the evaluation details.

*N'Kwala School Workshop evaluation results.* The participants were asked to rate the workshop on a scale of 0-10. The results were as follows:

1. On a scale of 0 to 10, how would you rate this workshop? The responses were: 0-6: no one; 7: 7; 8: 7; 9: 4; and 10: 5. The average was 8.3.
2. The participants were asked to describe the workshop in one word. The responses were: awesome; xast-good; rewarding; fantastic; right on; good; interesting; excellent; real good hopeful; great; refreshing; interesting; stimulating; uplifting; OK; exciting; connectedness; fruitful; very good.
3. To what degree did the workshop meet your expectations? The responses were: Beyond=5; Right on=24; Not quite=1; Not at all=0; Other=0.
4. What activity did you find most useful? The responses were: the ideal education=3; goals and objectives=10; historical overview=1; opinionnaire=2; all of them=3; action plans=7.
5. Additional comments included:

I think our band should have more workshops like this one, it was excellent. We should do this twice a year. I enjoyed hearing other people's views on the various situations. I hope we continue with this much participation. Next time stretch to 3 full days.

Good work. You brought us some lovely ladies as visitors.

Thank you all. We had a great time.

This workshop was really good. I wasn't sure where the new school was today. But after this workshop, I know this school is going somewhere.

Very interesting. The food was great.

This workshop should be ended by appointing an "action planning committee" to get things rolling.

I appreciate the technique, it was nonthreatening.

There should be a follow-up workshop to this one for the benefit of the community and/or evaluation.

Really enjoyable, lots of participation. Got to know more about some people. Now let's do it.

I really enjoyed this workshop.

We got better community involvement and we will have to work hard on our goals.

I liked the community support.

We should do this every year to see where we are, what we have done and where we are going. Thanks.

I thought the workshop was really well planned and well executed.

The use of humor and pacing set a relaxed tone. Variety of groupings gave everyone a chance to hear and meet many others.

The workshop was well put together.

The Upper Nicola stakeholders developed and articulated their educational philosophy, goals, and objectives by going through the following processes through structured experiences: experiencing, publishing,

processing, generalizing, and applying. The opinionnaire gave the participants an opportunity to state their opinion about the educational system in a nonthreatening way. These discussions paved the way for more in-depth discussions of specific issues later on. The river/path activity provided an opportunity for the publishing process. During this process the participants reported their explanation of the various smooth and rough phases of education for the Upper Nicola Band. The fantasy activity required the participants to reflect on an ideal education that allowed for "processing" whereby they internalize what an ideal education should be. Each person had to make a personal interpretation and then reflect on their information and make generalizations. Generalizing required the participants to reflect on the information and make truths or principles to guide them for the next step, applying. The participants reflected on common themes that would guide them as they developed a philosophy statement for their school. Through the structured-experiences approach the participants became personally involved in the development of the community's philosophy, goals, and objectives.

This approach enabled the community to participate in a complete planning cycle although many had little or no experience in this area. This process had an empowering effect on the participants and it also instilled a strong sense of commitment to the philosophy, goals, and objectives of the school. This was a beginning for promoting community input into the band school. Based on the comments on the evaluations forms, the structured-experiences workshop was a success in that it met the following workshop objectives: (1) to review education in the Upper Nicola Band; (2) to identify educational issues in the community; (3) to develop educational goals and objectives; and (4) to develop short and long term action plans. The real success of the workshop will be determined by the realization of the goals and action plans in the near future.

### *Closing*

Everyone formed a large circle and joined hands as one of the Elders said a closing prayer. Each participant was presented with a certificate by another band member who made a positive statement about the participant before making the presentation. This activity was an opportunity for the participants to reflect on the positive qualities of its Band members. The group of women who provided the meals was applauded for their fine hospitality. One of the Elders presented the faculty advisors from UBC with a buckskin medicine pouch and some mountain tea. Both expressed gratitude for the fine hospitality and acknowledged the perseverance and commitment of the community. I wondered if I would get the support of the people to address some of the issues that concerned me as the future principal of the new school. All doubts were put aside when one of the Elders presented me with an Eagle Feather, which was presented to announce to the people that another band member had

“grown up.” To be presented with an Eagle Feather by an Elder was the greatest honor I have ever received and demonstrated the support of the people.

### *Outcomes, Implications, and Conclusion*

The purpose of this article is to provide a framework for the Upper Nicola Band as they came to terms with their definition of Indian control of Indian education for their community. The framework was the structured-experiences workshop, which empowered the Upper Nicola Band to state their philosophy of education, their goals, and action plans. Information from the structured experiences was compiled into a working paper that can be used as an entry plan for the Upper Nicola Band.

I assumed that there would be some philosophical differences that could be the source of dissension in the community. I assumed that the workshop would be one means of allowing the different stakeholders to come to terms with their differences in educational philosophy. The differences would give a broader view of all the important components that should be incorporated within the Upper Nicola Band's educational system. As anticipated throughout the workshop there were defendants for each of the four areas of development: the intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual. The philosophical differences illustrated the importance of balancing the four areas of development.

The National Indian Brotherhood (1972) identified four areas that require attention for those wanting to assume control of their own education: responsibility, programs, teachers, and facilities. In comparison, the N'Kwala School Education Workshop identified the following areas: community and school relations, resources and instructional programs, teachers, and administration of the school. Many similarities in terms of recommendations were put forth by the NIB and those brought up at the N'Kwala Education Workshop. For example, the NIB recommended that each band prepare for the responsibility of educating their own children through training, community involvement, basing curriculum on Indian values, long-term planning, and ongoing evaluation of the program or programs. The recommendations brought forward at the education workshop emphasized the need for more community involvement in curricular and extracurricular activities, as well as the need to balance the values of traditional way of life with those of the technical world. The similarities suggest that the Upper Nicola Band stakeholders are on track in terms of identifying their responsibilities as educators of their own children.

The river/path structured experience identified the phases of education that were similar to those found in the literature review. The problems identified in the literature review were verified through several structured experiences. For example, the assimilation policy, according to Ing (1990), was a “systematic, formalized transmission of the dominant societies' values, skills, culture, religion and language” (pp. 4-5). This view was

reiterated by one of the participants during the river/path activity. He stated, "In 1890 our children went to residential schools whose policy was to assimilate us by taking the culture and language away." He further stated that the policy caused the loss of a culture, language, extended family units, and land. "The river/path activity gave the workshop participants an opportunity to reflect on the different policies that had an impact on their lives and to reflect on their future educational policies, which leads into the outcomes of the N'Kwala Education Workshop."

### *Outcomes*

The discussion of the outcomes of the N'Kwala Education Workshop is based on the following identified goals: (1) to have supportive school and community relations, (2) to have quality instructional programs and resources, (3) to have qualified teaching staff, and (4) to have efficient administration of the school. The recommendations were made during the education workshop held in April 1990. This discussion details the outcomes that have occurred from April 1990 to March 1991.

*To have supportive school and community relations.* Among the many recommendations for promoting school and community relations, it was recommended that an awards night be scheduled for the last week of school. This event did take place, coordinated by the education director. Suggestion that the school start an educational newsletter has been initiated by one of the support staff. The school also submits articles to the community newsletter. Suggestions that the community be invited to school performances, namely, short skits, band music, and drama, have been implemented. For the Christmas concert the different classes did short plays; intermediate grades put on their first musical recital with recorders and guitars. The turnout was excellent. The recommendation to initiate community fundraising events to link the school with the community has been carried out. Two major fundraising events were well supported by the community. The Octoberfest had fundraising activities such as a haunted house, a jail for those who did not wear a Hallowe'en costume, and a wet sponge throw, aimed at your favorite or least favorite person. At the Valentine's Dance there were several fundraising activities such as a concession, Valentine cake decorating contest, and cakewalks; but the highlight of the evening was the leg contest for males only. An Elder won the event hands down! These fundraising events generated much support for the school from all levels: Elders, council, parents, community members, and students from other schools.

The school holds a fundraising project every Friday. A craft fair is in the planning stages. This event is being held to raise funds for a school gymnasium. There is evidence of good community and school relations because all the events were well attended. Since the opening of the new school in September 1990 enrollment has been increasing. Students have

been transferring to the band school throughout the school year, which shows community-school relations are improving.

*To have quality instructional programs and quality resources.* It was recommended that more emphasis be placed on the sciences and math. Because of multilevels and grades it is a challenge to close some of the gaps in the areas of math and science. It is difficult for a teacher to individualize programs for students with such a wide range in abilities. It was suggested that programs be developed or brought in for teaching the senior sciences such as biology, chemistry, and physics. The high school teacher has limited time for developing programs for so many courses, grades, and levels. For this reason, the school has purchased a program called *Core Concepts Videodiscs in Math and Science*, which will give the students a foundation in earth science and chemistry. This will prepare the students for senior-level science courses, which could be attained through correspondence courses or the Open Learning Institute. The courses are presented on videodisc, and students are involved with different tasks after each new concept is introduced. The program is designed for active participation on the part of the students: they are not passive viewers. Student comprehension is checked throughout the lesson. This program relieves the teacher from having to prepare programs for each student. By equipping the students with the basic skills first, the teacher can then guide them through the senior level courses when they are ready. The program is designed so that the students can brush up on any of their skills at any time without having to wait for the school term to begin in September.

The same videodisc program offers various math courses in introductory algebra, geometry, fractions, decimals, and proportion, to cite a few examples. This program offers a foundation in basic math skills that are necessary for senior sciences and math courses. The program is not designed to replace the teachers, but supports teachers by arming them with teaching strategies to increase student retention of course content.

The process of core curriculum development in language arts has begun. A two-day workshop for training teachers to use the Sight-Sound Blend Reading Program has been scheduled. Curriculum materials for teaching this program will also be developed at the workshop. A writing skills program is in place, and when necessary the principal provides instructional leadership. The teaching staff has begun to develop or adapt materials for the language arts program. It was recommended that more electives be offered at the high school level. In the home economics program, sewing classes were introduced this year. The students have completed many projects, from quilting to aprons. A local resource person teaches the sewing classes, another recommendation brought up at the N'Kwala Education Workshop.

Other events have taken place since the N'Kwala Education Workshop. There was a one-week hunting trip for a number of students, for some

their first experience with hunting large game. A music program has been introduced at the intermediate level. Small steps have been taken in the art program; students will be taking beading lessons, and some are learning to sketch. Ceramics lessons for all grade levels are in the planning stages. An art program developed by the Kamloops school district that teaches various skills using a sequential approach might be introduced at all levels. Recommendations that have not been carried out yet are: (1) a human resources inventory, (2) a data bank for local history, (3) programs for teaching about local resources such as ranching, forestry, fisheries, and so forth. However, considerable progress is being made in addressing the goal of quality instructional programs and resources.

*To hire qualified teaching staff.* It was recommended that qualified First Nations teachers be hired. To date all of the 16 teachers and support staff are Band members. Three of the teachers have been trained through the Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP). It was stipulated that the teaching staff be capable of inter-grade and individualized teaching. Based on the evaluations done by the principal, the present teaching staff is meeting this criterion. All teaching and support staff are committed to the students as evidenced by the extracurricular activities initiated by the staff from time to time, such as a hot lunch program, a co-ed basketball team, school newsletter, dance and music lessons, and fundraising events.

It was recommended that incentives be devised to encourage teachers to stay longer than two years. Incentives include teacherages, a benefit package, and salaries that are comparable to or better than those in other school districts. The school board has expressed its satisfaction with the teaching staff on many occasions. The goal of acquiring qualified teaching staff is being realized.

Each teacher has an aide who is learning many skills on the job. The school is involved in a Work Opportunity Program to prepare individuals for the work force. This program is successful in that it influenced four people to become actively involved in the school, of whom one has expressed interest in pursuing a career in teaching. Most of the recommendations made at the N'Kwala Education Workshop regarding staff have been realized. Recommendations that still need to be addressed are: (1) the hiring of qualified tutors, (2) keep the student teacher ratio down to 12-15 students per teacher, (3) devise a support system for the teachers, and (4) hire qualified language teachers.

*To have an efficient administration.* It was recommended that a student discipline policy be developed. Specific policies have not been developed, but the principal is leading a course called Systematic Training for Effective Teaching designed to equip teachers with strategies to address certain misbehaviors. The goal is to promote a more democratic classroom, one that belongs to both the teacher and the students, not to one or the other. The program's goal is to encourage students to be responsible for their own education and for their behavior. Each week the teachers must apply

the skills they have learned and report their findings. The feedback has been positive: the teachers indicate they are seeing results in their students' behavior and in their own development as well.

Some work has been started in personnel policies, specifically, job descriptions, screening, and hiring personnel. Recommendations not carried out as yet are: (1) policies on financial expenditures, (2) workshop for drafting education by-laws, (3) incorporation of Indian law into administration, (4) seeking the advice of Elders, band council, an advisory council, and student council, and (5) developing hiring policies to screen personnel. Much work remains to be done in the area of policy development, but at least the process has been started.

It was recommended that the administration be given more support in addressing the discipline problem, that parents could assist, and that parenting workshops should be offered in the community. To date a parenting workshop has been held and resource people from the social services and counselling services have become involved; they could possibly be resource people for implementing a similar program in the community. Support services that have not yet come into play are: (1) an Elders' council, (2) parental input into decisions, (3) the directive to give the school board more power to make decisions and, (4) a parents' association. The development of support services has been limited, but it has been started.

The school principal presented an update on the goals that were set at the N'Kwala Education Workshop at the Upper Nicola Band Annual General Meeting held in February 1991. The report contains all the information discussed in this article. At the closing of the N'Kwala Education Workshop, one of the participants commented that he had attended many workshops and nothing was ever accomplished. It is, therefore, a pleasure to report that many of the recommendations have been realized.

#### *Implications*

As part of the literature review, I examined the rationale of Indian Control of Indian Education. The structured-experiences workshop provided a framework for one band to examine its rationale for educating its own children. They answered the following questions for themselves: (1) Where have we been? (2) Where are we now? (3) Where would we like to be? (4) How will we get there? These are important questions for any band seeking local control of their own education. The structured-experiences workshop details how one band answered the questions, which resulted in the development of their philosophy statement, educational goals, and action plans for bringing the goals to life.

One of the goals of local control is community involvement. The structured experiences approach promoted input from all levels, including the Elders, council, band members, parents, teachers, and students. Everyone was given an opportunity to contribute. This had a powerful impact on

participants in terms of their commitment to the recommendations. The structured-experiences approach empowered many individuals because their contributions were acknowledged and they realized that their input made a difference. Many believed that the education of children should be left to the "experts," and the structured experiences contradicted this belief. When the answers come from the experts, they leave when the experts leave, but when answers come from the people they stay in the community.

The structured-experiences workshop served several purposes. It reviewed the education of the Upper Nicola Band. It identified educational issues in the community. It resulted in educational goals being developed based on community needs. Finally, the community developed short- and long-term action plans that were doable. It was a success in that the above workshop objectives were met.

All the recommendations that came out of the workshop served as an entry plan for the new principal of the new school, which role I have now assumed. Prior to the workshop I was concerned about the issues responsible for lack of community support. Examples were the decrease in student enrollment, high turnover of staff, and conflicting views on educational philosophy, goals and objectives. I realized I could not begin to address these issues on my own and sought community support by conducting the structured-experiences workshop. This is a useful process that any principal might use to gain a better understanding of the situation in a new community.

### *Conclusion*

Does the Upper Nicola Band believe that local control is worth striving for? According to one Band member, the children are the link to future generations and are worth the investment of time and effort. According to one Elder, time is running out for the Elders who are the first teachers of the Okanagan history, language, and customs; with the passing of each Elder, an important link to the past is gone. The challenge is to link the past with the future if First Nations children are to succeed in both worlds, their own and that of the dominant society.

The challenge facing the Upper Nicola Band is to prepare their children to survive in two worlds. Burgess (1987) reminds educators that, "Indigenous education of our children, in our own traditional values, in our own language, to aspire to our own goals, is our primary source of strength for retaining our culture" (p. 6). To keep themselves focused as they strive for "local" control of their own education, the Upper Nicola Band might from time to time stop and reflect on questions posed by Burgess (1987) at the beginning of this article: Why do we educate? For what purpose?

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