

Teaching Tradition Teaches Us

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Teaching of Indigenous traditions in the context of an Aboriginal counselling program located in a Eurocentric university context can be viewed as both exemplary and contradictory. This article documents how we at the First Nations and Aboriginal Degree Program (FNAC) are challenged to excel at revitalizing traditional healing and teaching strategies while acknowledging the domination of Western theories and practices. Contradictions that have arisen in our daily lived experience of bringing tradition into a modern context are posed as lessons to learn from. Resolving these controversies on an ongoing basis evidences the struggles and successes of FNAC as a model of exemplary Indigenous education.

Exemplary Indigenous education today

requires words thoughtfully spoken/written.

Sacred teachings of Our Ancestors, Our Elders,

once deeply sung in to our souls in Ceremony

now are being spoken from our academic lips

flowing from our ever critical minds

entering anonymous eyes

from the pages of a book.

“Ever since words and sounds were reduced to written symbols and have been stripped of their mystery and magic, the regard for them has diminished in tribal life” (Johnston, 1992, p. 10).

“To write is often still suspect in our tribal communities ... yet to speak well in our communities in whatever form is still respected” (Harjo & Bird, 1997, p. 20).

I offer these words

in this alternative form

to be a spark

to fuel your desires for change

to transform us and our lives together.

I offer Images of our efforts to educate Aboriginal people

to integrate Traditional and Western teaching/healing practices

to inspire renaissance of Sacredness

to manifest our will to Resist now dominant forms.

Sacredness and Resistance

are both integral to life work as Aboriginal educators

reinventing in academic terrains.

Indigenous peoples have Resisted

“it is natural to resist extermination, to survive” (Means, 1980, p. 30).

Honor is owed to the Ancestors for

keeping the Traditions Strong

throughout the Persecutions.

We will continue to Resist Acculturation

Assimilation

Extinction

in whatever forms

including written ones.

“Reinventing’ in the colonizer’s tongue and turning those images around to mirror an image of the colonized to the colonizers as a process of decolonisation indicates that something is happening, something is emerging and coming into focus that will politicise as well as transform” (Harjo & Bird, 1997, p. 22).

Embrace Resistance as Sacred

Cultural Renaissance

Revitalizing

Reclaiming Gifts of our Ancestors.

Retelling our Stories of struggle and success

Hear us speak Stories of Survival

Resistance

Tradition.

Aboriginal people have experienced theft of land

early childhood separation through residential schools

loss of family members through violent deaths

denigration of pride and dignity as Indigenous persons

appropriation of language and cultural practices.

These acts of genocide have resulted in breakdown

of Traditional strengths

healthy individuals

extended families

cohesive communities.

Recent health transfer agreements mean Aboriginal communities are expected

to take more and more responsibility

for the care and well being of their own members

(Medical Services Branch, 1991; Hylton, 1999).

Aboriginal counsellors

working in their communities

are facing serious multigenerational patterns of distress

are having unrealistic expectations placed on them

need more training, more backup

need healing for their own issues in order to help others

(Kirkness & McCormick, 1995).

First Nations and Aboriginal Counselling Degree (FNAC)

a new and innovative program

responding to a community identified need¹ for qualified counsellors

trained to meet the needs of Aboriginal peoples.

Curriculum is creative

interdisciplinary

blend of Traditional Aboriginal teachings

Western counselling theories and skills

interwoven with historical

contemporary

political issues.

Aboriginal Elders, community members, students and academics

evolve
design
deliver
govern.

A multilevel entry system means
admissions from high school
transfers from other Universities or Colleges program
Prior Learning credit² for life
work
workshop
ceremonial experience.

Transforming educational contexts requires
daring thoughts
challenging what we know
thought we knew
need to know to face the dawning of a new day.

If people can be acculturated to hold dominant views
people can also be un-acculturated
reculturated to Traditional views.

Exemplary Indigenous education
requires walking our talk
around the Medicine Wheel
learning and teaching lessons about balance
interconnectedness
mental
spiritual
emotional
physical dimensions.

Requires living/working to revitalize Spirit
every day
in every place.
Spirit is the
“first standard of Indian education”
says Hampton (1995, p. 19).

Requires bridging old ways and new challenges
being open to change
within and without
a change of heart
a change of form.

Requires heart
“courage, commitment, belief, and intuitive understanding ...
involves the total person as he or she operates in her deepest sense”
(Katz & St. Denis, 1991, p. 28).

In Circle³ we speak our Truths
words shoot like flames out of our mouths
jump as if from their own will
out into the Universe.

Deeply felt emotional declarations
vibrate as drum beats within
pierce complacency
create openings for change.

Sharing our stories in Circle
intensifies our connections to our authentic selves
to others.

Tears shed
laughter shared
powerful feelings are a gift.
We need to feel connected to others
Friendship
Family
Community.

Our Elders teach
we are all In-Relation
all of Creation.
Beings thrive
when there is a web of interrelatedness
between Individual
Community
Mother Earth.
Culture Camp “re-enchanted(s) the students towards Nature”
allows them to “perceive the innate worth of perpetuating the
environmental Traditions” in their lives” (Cajete, 1997, p. 114).⁴

Through Traditional teachings and ceremonies⁵
we learn and teach about building relationships
within diverse Communities.
Lessons can be learned
from past History
present struggles
future Visions
of Elders
those actively involved in
Traditional Ceremonial practices.

Within FNAC
we work to value
to teach
from people’s experience
to try to change attitudes of counsellors
so that they will do their work in a different light.
We want students and faculty to
“create counselling practice models that revitalize Indigenous holistic
world-views ... utilize knowledge of situations, systems and culture to
identify and mediate potential and actual impacts of oppressive
socio-political circumstances ... be open to multiple ways of knowing in
order to describe and assess the limitations of western counselling theories
within Aboriginal cultural contexts” (FNAC, 2001).⁶

Exemplary Indigenous education prepares individuals
“for self-actualizing themselves, fulfilling their human potentials, enlivening their
creative spirit, and finding their personal meaning, power and what in earlier times
Indian people called medicine” (Cajete, 1997, p. 190).
Knowing one’s Medicine
Healing oneself is a prerequisite to helping others.⁷

We want students and faculty to
 “enliven their creative spirit in order to attain and maintain balance between
 physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of being ... be a positive
 role model in the community by demonstrating commitment to an ongoing
 self-care process” (FNAC, 2001)

“Only be looking inward and healing ourselves first can we ever have the strength
 and understanding to slowly reach out to others and share in their healing and
 growth” (Supernault, 1995, p. 6).

“We can only facilitate a healing journey to the degree that we as healers have had
 the courage to journey on our own ... The healer’s openness to change is a key
 element in the healing process” (Absolon, 1994, p. 14).

We ask: What do you feel in your heart?

What is right for you?

Who decides what is right for other people?

“Individuals are able to reach completeness by learning how to
 trust their natural instincts ... (to) recognize and honour the
 teachers of the spirit within themselves and the natural world”
 (Cajete, 1997, p. 227).

How can we heal ourselves?

McCormick’s (1994) list includes:

- participation in ceremony
- expression of emotion
- learning from a role model
- establishing a connection with nature
- involvement in challenging activities
- establishing social connection
- gaining an understanding of the problem
- establishing a spiritual connection
- obtaining help/support from others
- self-care
- anchoring self in tradition
- helping others

We work to incorporate all these elements.

Working for healing of individuals

- requires supports from family
- community
- nation (Morrisseau, 1998).

McCormick (1994) offers categories of a healing process

- separating from an unhealthy life
- obtaining social support and services
- experiencing a healthy life
- living a healthy life.

Counsellors need support to take these essential steps
 to healing self and assist others.

We invite the community to be involved in our program⁸

We cannot build and grow healers
 healthy communities on our own.

Our Elders say

- more voices can give the same message.
- Repetition
 - one story will empower somebody
 - another story will inspire somebody else
 - daily experiences recurring
 - reemphasizing

reeducating

“Placing students in situations in which they constantly have to examine assumptions and confront preconceived notions is a regular practice of Indigenous teachers” (Cajete, 1997, p. 224).

To us exemplary teaching is life

life-changing

bigger than one life, our lives together.

“Indigenous teaching is planted like a seed, then nurtured and cultivated through the relationship of teacher and student until it bears fruit” (Cajete, 1997, p. 224).

Requires being in touch with our human powers

our senses

our gifts to see

hear

smell

taste

touch.

“We write—think and feel—[with] our entire bodies rather than only [with] our minds or hearts. It is a perversion to consider thought the product of one specialized organ, the brain, and feelings, that of the heart” (Minh-ha, 1989, p. 36).

We use our bodies to learn.

Learning/healing through methods more rooted in the body

Art

Ceremony

Meditation

Smudge

Circle

Crystals

Feathers

Drumming

Singing

Dancing

Feasting

“Altering the classroom environment, moving from linear rows to Circle, smudging with herbs and using music, drama, poetry, meditation, ritual and feasting are ways to materially challenge the dominant institutional atmosphere” (Graveline, 1998, p. 187).

“Indigenous practices such as creative dreaming, art, ritual, and ceremony help the student externalise inner thoughts and qualities for examination” (Cajete, 1997, p. 225).

Elders say we know

we learn

through direct experience

observation

face-to-face with the event

person

life force

we experience its Essence.

We learn what we need to know

what we each need to know

what we are open to
depending on our life path.

True knowledge is gained through reflection on our experiences
in the classroom
in the world
on the land.

“You don’t ask questions when you grow up. You watch and listen and wait, and the answer will come to you. It is yours then, not like learning in school” (Larry Bird, quoted in Beck & Walters, 1977, p. 51).

Daily lived experiences are re-storied
for others to learn.

“An ultimate value of oral tradition was to recreate a situation for someone who had not lived through it so that the listener could benefit directly from the narrator’s experience” (Cruikshank, 1992, p. 339).

Elders’ stories are
“statements of cultural identity” (Cruikshank, 1992, p.12)
Annie Ned, Tlingit Elder says,

“Old-style works are just like school!”
(Cruikshank, 1992, p. 267)

Storytelling is a form of healing (Buffalo, 1990)
and teaching⁹

Teaching a form of storytelling.

How we tell a story
interacts with who will hear it
what meaning they will take from it.

“But to speak, at whatever the cost, is to become empowered rather than victimized by destruction. In our tribal cultures the power of language to heal, to regenerate, and to create is understood” (Harjo & Bird, 1997, pp. 21-22).

Exemplary Indigenous education requires us to
activate all people to take up the challenge of personal change
sociocultural revitalization
in any and all contexts.¹⁰

“You can talk about something or think about it all day, but to make it real you must do it. You must move and act” (Medicine Eagle, 1991).

“One cannot learn second hand in an authentic way about change and social movement. Merely associating with those who struggle is not enough. One must ‘get in there and help’ to realize and learn participatory alignment” (Howse & Stalwick, 1990, p. 106).

“The everyday actions of healthy individuals contribute to the socio-political objective of self-determination and self-government” (Warry, 1998, p. 221).

Ripples move through the water once the stone is tossed
Elders say.

FNAC is a Trickster tale
an inside-out lesson (Medicine Eagle, 1990).

Contradictions
risks

are revealed as lessons to learn from

“contradiction and incoherence are inevitable and indispensable to successful transformation” (Battiste & Barman, 1995, p. xiv).

Relocating
Reinventing
Adapting

Aboriginal egalitarian practices
in Eurocentric (Blaut, 1993) hierarchical settings
requires Warriors.

“A warrior is the fighting part of our spirit and the connected part of our soul” (Cunningham in Supernault, 1995, p. 17).

All education is political

“educators that do their work uncritically just to preserve their jobs have not yet grasped the political nature of education” (Freire, 1985, p.180)

Classrooms remain contested terrains

Rows ... linear arrangements

force us to crane our necks to see who is speaking
except for the teacher ... the focal point, the Expert
“use everything, especially the physical space of the classroom to illustrate the effects of the environment on consciousness” (Russell, 1985, p. 163).

Why does Eurocentric monocultural reality
guide all expected norms
in all classrooms
including those of Aboriginal scholars?

Why should Indigenous educators be required
to return classrooms to rows?

Why are we expected to teach in boxes?

We can ask for And receive
culturally sensitive teaching spaces
where chairs will remain in Circle
Sacred fire will burn in the center
of our round ceremonial room.
Soon.¹¹

Hierarchy ... Grades

“the institutional authority as evaluator is embedded in the need to produce the relevant grade, so true equality is unattainable” (Graveline, 1998, p. 219)

How can we live up to the teachings of egalitarianism and give grades?¹²

Teacher as Expert

We teach ... you learn

Theories in head

Severed from Heart

from our Will
our subjectivity
ourselves.

“People are not allowed to be Indians and cannot become whites. They have been educated ... to think with their heads instead of their hearts” (Deloria, 1994, p. 242).

Indigenous Traditional teachers

share life stories as lessons to learn from.

Divulging “personal” stories in a heartfelt manner
is not an expected practice of teachers
in Eurocentric settings.

“Once personal but political stories are told, the authority that is invested in the ‘aura’ of teacher is demystified.... Being open with your own evolving subjectivity, particularly in a context that

- does not revere female, Aboriginal, the personal or 'mistakes,'
can be demoralizing" (Graveline, 1998, p. 218).
- What is a good blend of traditional and Western world views?
- Is it impossible to avoid
reinforcing already dominant Western ideologies
privileging existing Eurocentric scholars?¹³
- Is it possible to assimilate Western knowledge
into an Aboriginal world view?¹⁴
- Honoring Elders as Experts (Medicine, 1987) is essential.
When are we tokenizing or objectifying them?¹⁵
- Ceremony as pedagogy
a gift or stolen treasure?
Repressive laws¹⁶ once persecuted Elders
destroyed Bundles
criminalized ceremonies
(Pettipas, 1994; Irwin, 1997).
- How can Tradition now be respectfully taught
in Eurocentric environments?
- What about students or colleagues that wish to learn
to become "instant shamans of the New Age" (Todd, 1992)?
What is teachable in these circumstances?¹⁷
We learned that if you ask for input
you will receive it
it may not be what you want to hear.
- Can community be built across diversity?
Does sharing Ceremony build community in the classroom?¹⁸
Some Aboriginal people too have been indoctrinated
through missionization (Knockwood, 1992; Milloy, 1999)
to fear
feel discomfort
if asked to participate in Ceremony.
- How can those colonized to be against Tradition
be mobilized to embrace cultural renaissance
for themselves and others?¹⁹
"True learning and gaining significant knowledge does not
come without sacrifice and at times a deep wound ... as long
as the wound or the repercussions of an event are used to
symbolize something deeply important to know and
understand, they provide a powerful source for renewal,
insight, and the expansion of individual consciousness"
(Cajete, 1994, p. 227).
- How can we expect White bureaucracies to be invested
in challenging Eurocentric hegemony?
In revitalizing Tradition?
Governance issues continue to arise.
Is Indigenous self-government possible
within university contexts?²⁰
- "The culturalization of racism, whereby minorities are seen as culturally
inferior, makes any foray into cultural difference risky" (Razak, 1998, p.
83).
- Enacting change
being an activist
always has risks. (Graveline, 1999)

“You think of it as a little piece when you first start taking it on, but then you get embroiled in the detail of what’s going on with it, and you get emotionally hooked into what’s going on, and then you start taking personal responsibility for what’s happening, and then your little bit that you thought you were going to take on all of a sudden becomes something personal part of your psyche, or your own will. Part of what you feel you need to do. And then sometimes you get locked and you can’t really [en]vision how this is just a little bit, and how this little bit is just one more thing! And it’s not really you, and it’s not really the world, it’s just one piece of the world that you’re trying to change, and maybe it’s not the end of the world”
 (Graveline, 1998, p. 272).

Eurocentric hegemony plays a role in deactivating cultural political activism.

As Traditional teachers

continual challenges by students
 community members
 colleagues
 administration are experienced.

Questions are frequently asked about
 Smudge burning (Graveline, 2001)
 in classrooms
 in offices.

Why do many “rational” scholars
 human rights activists
 union stewards
 school boards
 “concerned” parents
 equate Smudge
 with the “right” to do prayer
 smoke
 in educational settings?

Why do some authorities
 enforce regulations
 against Smudge burning
 because of health and safety concerns.
 (O’Hallarn, 1999)

“We have to keep our vision strong for what it is that we start with, and who we are in it, because one of the things that happens often is that when you’re involved in a struggle, when people want this struggle to end, or they don’t want it brought forward, then sometimes they use personal assassination to stop it. So to not take that seriously, to take it as backlash, to take it as. ... A political thing. It’s hard to not feel personal when people are saying things about you, and to keep seeing it as part of the overall picture” (Graveline, 1998, p. 272).

How do we sustain the struggling force?

Keep focus on the politics behind the attacks
 remain part of the struggle
 support others as the way for change
 hold on to our Visions.

Revitalizing Tradition throughout FNAC

is part of a larger national
worldwide

Indigenous healing movement.

Rebuilding and restoring Indigenous consciousness
helps us to discover

“we [can] not be the cure if we [are] the disease” (Battiste, 2000, p. xviii).

We Vision to transform

to actively create more potent lives for ourselves
for our children.

Through visioning

we can tap into Strength

Traditions of our Ancestors

Energy of our Earth Mother.

Exemplary Indigenous education

requires change for ourselves

for our families

for our communities

in our relationship to Earth Mother.

We want change in the systems

in educational models currently in place

We want to change the world.

How can our Visions become a reality?

Recognize that teaching and learning is a process
a transformational cycle.

An exemplary Indigenous educational practice

is also a Healing one.

Power with Not power over

Revitalization Not acculturation

will help us move

into a more hopeful Future

will create

a greater Circle of Interconnectedness.

Will contribute

to a healthier

happier future for us All.

Megwetch.

Notes

¹The program was the result of an extensive lobby effort by Aboriginal groups and in particular MAECA (Manitoba Aboriginal Education Counsellors Association) and MIEA (Manitoba Indian Education Association).

²The Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process is an integral component of FNAC, including a required course to assist students in portfolio development. Several students have received credits for between one and 11 courses.

³Talking Circle, Sharing Circle, and Healing Circle are common “pedagogies” for FNAC courses, are facilitated by Elders for students and faculty healing, and are used to process political and critical governance issues when required. See Graveline (1998) for a description and discussion of Talking Circle as pedagogy.

⁴Students and their families join with Elders and faculty for four days and four nights to participate in ceremonies and cultural teachings. Last year we were blessed by hot days and

cold nights, including one day of high winds, rain, hail, and a double rainbow over our lodge as we entered our final ceremony of the day.

⁵We offer three core courses in Traditional Teachings: Traditional Spirituality One (in class with field trips); Traditional Spirituality Two (in camp); and Indigenous Counselling Systems (in class with field trips). Contemporary Issues in Native Spirituality is required as an academic critique of current issues, offered through the Native Studies Department.

⁶In order to critique Western theories it is important to understand them. To facilitate this process students are required to take 18 credit hours of course work in health studies, specifically in the psychiatric nursing program. This includes courses in interpersonal communications, developmental transitions, individual counselling, family counselling, integrated case analysis, and persistent mental health challenges. These courses explore standard Western counselling theories and methods and are taught by either Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal faculty. Students are also required to take introductory and general psychology in order to be able to understand and translate basic psychological terminology.

⁷Two self-care courses are required as part of the program, one in the first year to look at what life lessons have been learned so far that can be applied to work as a counsellor, and one in the graduating year to look at taking care of self as a helper or service provider.

⁸Community members come into class as speakers, are invited to community workshops sponsored by students and faculty, and sit as members on the Steering Committee, which acts as Faculty Council in making governance decisions for the program. Steering is a member group, consisting of three deans, four university faculty representatives, two FNAC faculty, First Nations Coordinator for Campus, two Elders, two FNAC students, and seven Aboriginal community representatives from designated interest groups. Aboriginal people are always the majority.

⁹Students have several opportunities to reformulate their own life stories and healing journey in self-care courses, in traditional teachings courses, and in professional portfolio preparation for prior learning assessment. They also have many opportunities to learn from the life stories of their peers, faculty, community members, and Elders.

¹⁰Close to 1,000 hours of practicum gives students ample opportunity to apply skills directly in agency and community situations. Expectations built into each level of practicum for students to be integrating traditional Aboriginal and Western frameworks often creates opportunities to be a change agent in mainstream agencies. Courses in administration and program development require completion of actual needs assessments and program proposals, which students are then encouraged to implement with communities as appropriate.

¹¹In fall 2003 we will be hosting our open house for our new building, currently under construction. We will have much expanded office space, a round ceremonial room with fire pit, rooms set in circle formation for classrooms, a large common lounge area, Elders' consultation rooms, all of which will have proper ventilation and opening windows for smudging purposes.

¹²Controversy erupted when students felt they were going to be graded based on whether they attended ceremonies at Cultural Camp. As a result the program moved to create a pass-fail system for Camp and to clarify that attendance at Camp was required, not attendance at ceremonies.

¹³Our curriculum is interdisciplinary. This means some of the arts-based requirements are taught on campus by non-Aboriginal instructors. Separate slots/instructors for some of our courses in some disciplines, for example, health studies, have been negotiated. In other courses FNAC students are part of a larger classroom environment, meaning the standard Eurocentric content and pedagogies. Some students are pleased to be assured that they are getting a "real" education and simultaneously critical when content appears culturally

irrelevant. Being philosophically committed to a blend of traditional and Western curriculum results in an imbalance toward Western content given the context.

¹⁴We have taken over some health studies courses and offer our own Aboriginal version of these core Western counselling courses. An example of this would be Interpersonal Communications Skills, which has shifted from being a standard Eurocentric communications course to a course that explores the differences in communications styles between Aboriginal and Western peoples in community and societal contexts. Another example would be Integrated Case Analysis, which is organized in a holistic framework using the Medicine Wheel as the central guiding form, yet incorporates the DSM4 as a commonly used diagnostic tool in psychiatric settings.

¹⁵We have built relationships with Elders from the Dakota, Cree, Ojibway, and Métis communities that work in the program as consultants, teachers, and counsellors. Although this has functioned in a satisfactory way to cover particular topics, building ongoing relationships with Elders is more difficult when contact is occasional rather than daily. The University is a complex context, and Elders need to be familiarized with policies and procedures in order for them to make significant contributions to decision-making in the program. This topic was heatedly discussed at Steering several times as we strategized how Elders could be respected rather than tokenized on the committee. Elders are now first on the agenda to bring greetings and concerns, and time is taken to consult them for contributions before voting on motions. We now have Elders with whom we work weekly who also sit on the Steering committee. We are fundraising to move toward an Elders-in-residence program combined with visiting Elders.

¹⁶Repressive laws were introduced and approved by the Canadian legislature in 1884, 1895, 1914, and 1933 (Pettipas, 1994; Irwin, 1997).

¹⁷Some discomfort was experienced when accusations of certifying “medicine people” or teaching medicine were levelled at the program. One course in particular that originally had the word *medicine* in its title was targeted by local Elders as problematic. After meetings were held with the concerned Elders, the content and title of the course were altered. Some students continued to be dissatisfied, wanting us to offer the original content, which included healing with herbs. We wondered, how can the botany department regularly offer a course on Aboriginal healing herbs with no questions or controversies erupting from the community? Differences in Tribal norms and personal predilections about sharing of traditions and in particular ceremonies like the Pipe or the Sweatlodge have resulted in some small storms in the program and the community. Whose tradition are we following? Although we occupy traditional Sioux and Métis territory, our students come from many tribes. We remain committed to honoring tribal diversity and to finding room for the differences between Elders and teachings, but not all are open-minded or open-hearted.

¹⁸Differences in tribal affiliation, combined with levels of acculturation and Christianization, create opportunities for growth and challenge for faculty and students. Controversy erupts whenever Christian students who have not yet opened themselves to traditional practices feel that their world view is being challenged. Examples include times when Elders or other community guests have been particularly vocal about their residential school experiences, when students have attempted to do traditional assignments from a Christian viewpoint, when Elders’ stories about differences in spirituality have been translated from a punitive perspective, and most dramatically when students have felt that they are being forced to participate in ceremony.

¹⁹Each of these issues has surfaced and been resolved in a positive matter. At closing Circle for Camp the students most vocally against Camp spoke strongly and positively about how their experience had strengthened both their belief in themselves and their spiritual beliefs.

²⁰In the original agreements between Aboriginal organizations and the University, FNAC was designated as a stand-alone program to ensure a high level of Aboriginal control over

governance. Our Steering Committee acts as Faculty Council rather than being governed by an existing faculty council. As some University members find this problematic, we have withstood several challenges in Senate to this "independent" status and are currently in abeyance for two years until the matter will resurface for debate.

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Appendix

First Nations and Aboriginal Counselling Brochure Content, May 2000

This program has been developed using Aboriginal holistic approaches to counselling, healing and community.

The Curriculum is designed to be a creative, innovative and interdisciplinary blend of Traditional Aboriginal teachings and Western counselling theories and skills. Understanding of Traditional philosophies and spiritual practices is taught through classroom discussions with Elders and by participation in cultural ceremonies. Personal growth and development as Counsellors is recognized as an ongoing journey throughout the program.

Students of all ethnic and national backgrounds are welcome and encouraged to benefit from this program. It is of special interest to persons who hope to work as Counsellors with the First Nations and Aboriginal clients.

The FNAC Steering Committee involves a broad cross section of academics, Counsellors, Elders and representatives from First Nations and Aboriginal Communities and professional associations.

This program has received enthusiastic support from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Red River Community College, Assiniboine Community College, Yellow Quill Community College, the University of Manitoba School of Social Work, the University of Manitoba Aboriginal Access Programs, the Manitoba Aboriginal

Education Counselling Association, the Manitoba Indian Education Association and the Provincial Prior Learning Assessment Centre.

First Nations and Aboriginal Counselling Degree Course Descriptions

All those with an * are offered by or have separate slots/instructors for FNAC, all others are offered through the respective Departments in the University.

Aboriginal Education Seminar (Education/Native Studies)

An analysis of the various educational programs for Aboriginal peoples. Discussions of the effects of various models: missionary schools, boarding schools, government operated schools and band operated schools.

**Administrative Skills for Counsellors*

This course focuses on the administrative skills counsellors require to function either independently or as part of a larger system. The emphasis is on developing practical competencies in office management, scheduling, record-keeping, clinical and ethical decision-making as well as communicating with supervisors, supervisees, and colleagues. In the experiential part of this course, students will learn to plan, implement and evaluate a healing and helping service as preparation for beginning their own professional careers. A focus on developing skills in grant applications and/or position papers will also be addressed.

**Foundations of First Nations and Aboriginal Counselling*

This course will provide an overview of three areas of importance to First Nations Counselling which will be dealt with in more detail throughout the degree program:

- 1) An understanding of the perspectives, methods, and legal obligation of western counselling; an introductory level of understanding of the world views.
- 2) Perspectives of First Nations traditional healing and ceremonies.
- 3) An awareness of the history and impact of oppressions.

Health Promotion: Developmental Transitions Throughout the Lifespan (Health Studies)

This course provides an overview of patterns of the whole life cycle and basic elements of genetics. The student will explore selected features of growth and development. Major theories in the field will be discussed.

**Indigenous Community and Social Challenges*

This course will focus on the challenges confronting Indigenous communities in Manitoba from a contemporary context. Community and group dynamics will be examined through an analysis of issues inherent in the current community systems. Field trips and assessment of community needs will be an integral part of this course. The nature and role of the community in the Self-Government era will be emphasized.

**Indigenous Counselling Systems*

This course is an analysis of world views and their impact on healing and helping systems. The primary focus will be on traditional indigenous methodologies in relation to healing and helping and healing practices; notably the Cree, Ojibway and Dakota peoples. A secondary focus will be directed to the healing/healing and helping practices of other cultural groups.

**Indigenous Program Development*

This course is designed to familiarize students with Inuit, Métis and First Nations program development. The course begins by looking at the differences between

programs developed in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. The course will then review contemporary program development within Aboriginal communities with an emphasis on what programs have worked and why they have worked. Other issues covered in the course are funding mechanisms, program ethics, partnerships and consultants.

**Integrative Case Analysis*

This course will focus on the demonstration of theory application to specific cases drawn from Aboriginal casework. Students will be challenged to apply knowledge from first year courses in an integrated manner. Cultural intentionality in regard to assessment and case management will be stressed. Four perspectives (Western, Traditional, Spiritual, Medical (DSM-IV) /Medicine Wheel, and Community /Political) will provide the framework upon which critical case management skills will evolve.

**Introduction to Interpersonal Communication*

Effective interpersonal communication is the means by which a successful helping relationship is established and maintained. This course examines the components of effective interpersonal communication and discusses their importance to the helping process.

**Introduction to Multicultural Counselling*

The course will introduce the students to universal and specific approaches to multicultural counselling. The course will provide an in-depth analysis of the cosmology of different cultures, will examine the impact of cultural practices and beliefs on healing and therapeutic practices, and will include a personal study and reflection of one's own biases.

Introduction to Psychology & General Psychology (Psychology)

An examination of the field of Psychology noting particularly areas such as learning, development, social, intelligence and personality. An attempt will be made to give the student an insight into the breadth and scope of Psychology. Learning, motivation, neuropsychology, perception and personality will be given a major emphasis.

Introduction to Sociology (Sociology)

A systematic examination of the central concepts, perspectives, and methods which sociology applies to the study of human behaviour and society. The topics include: social organization, culture, social structure, socialization, groups, deviance and social control, social stratification.

Issues in Contemporary Native American Spirituality (Native Studies)

This course is designed to introduce students to contemporary issues in Native American spirituality. This course begins by looking at Native American resistance to assimilation through the persistence of traditional religious practices. Ceremonies and oral narrative are examined in the context of Native American spirituality in Aboriginal communities. Contemporary issues such as repatriation of sacred objects from museums, the role of the Elder, and the hobbyist movement in Europe will be covered.

**Legal Issues in Counselling*

This course will examine the Canada Public Health and Mental Health Acts and the Child and Family Services Act. Legal and ethical considerations involved in the provision of healing and helping services will be examined in relation to these acts.

This focus will be applied to varied clinical/legal cases and issues (life endangering clients, forensic service delivery, child mental health, aboriginal and youth justice issues, rights related to treatment refusal, communicable diseases, child protection, addictions and pregnancy). The roles and responsibilities of the counsellor with regard to these issues will be outlined.

**Modern Indigenous Identities*

This course will examine the personal and group identity of today's Indigenous people. The focus will be on building a positive sense of self-esteem and pride in identifying as an Indigenous person. The culture and values of Indigenous people that may have positive or negative implications for individual and group identity will be explored. This course will also examine media portrayals of Indigenous peoples, and the effects that this may have upon identity. Examples will be drawn from other cultures and international Indigenous peoples in their success in dealing with issues of racism and identity formation. Throughout the course students will be expected to explore their own identity and factors that may have influenced their views of Indigenous people. This course will emphasize how maintaining a strong Indigenous identity is possible while achieving success in the mainstream society.

**Native Health Issues*

The health and disease and medical practices of Aboriginal peoples. A survey of the health and health care of Aboriginal people from pre-contact times to the present. Special attention will be paid to issues surrounding traditional concepts of health and healing in the contemporary society. The purpose of this course is to enable the student to consider issues of Aboriginal health in a more holistic way, with perspectives from history, medical practitioners, and Aboriginal peoples themselves.

Native Human Services I & II (Native Studies)

The study of the Human Service agencies which serve Native Communities and individuals. The course will examine the objectives, functions and governmental relations of these organizations. The study of the role, task demands, and skills required of the human service worker in Native communities, the resources available to him. Interviewing: styles, strategies and goals. Models of crisis, crisis intervention and coping. Inter-cultural healing and helping. The para-professional model. Helping people in need: e.g., acute bereavement, suicidal gestures, alcoholism, unemployment, and family problems.

Native Studies I & II (Native Studies)

Native Studies I covers the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian Government, including Treaties, the Indian Act, Reserve systems, political and constitutional questions, family issues, education, health care, economic development, the justice system and land claims. Native Studies II is an overview of modern Aboriginal writing, drama, art, film making, philosophy and cosmologies.

**Peer Counselling & Self-Care I & II*

This course will focus on self-care for Counselling professionals. Identification and resolution of personal issues from students' lives which will influence their development as Counsellors will be the primary focus. Peer Counselling will be introduced as a method of self care. Peer Counselling is seen as a form of self care and can be utilized by professionals and para-professionals in creating support net-

works and healing environments to work in. Self awareness is recognized as the first step toward self re-emergence. Becoming conscious of ones' needs and distresses is necessary to begin development as an effective Counsellor. Peer Counselling & Self-Care II will focus on the discussion and evaluation of methods that professionals utilize to cope with the stressors related to their work. Mentorship and the importance of continued supervision as a pathway to continued therapist growth will be examined. Peer Counselling and in particular peer support groups will be utilized and analyzed as a method of ongoing professional development.

**Principles of Family Counselling*

Various therapeutic approaches to family care will be considered including the role of family therapy in psychiatric treatment. The relationships and communication complexities in diverse forms of families will be examined. Methods for family assessment and healing and helping which promote, maintain, and restore mental health will be applied. Family case management will be discussed. The family healing and helping role in relation to collaboration, consultation, advocacy and referral processes will be featured.

**Principles of Individual Counselling*

This course will provide the historical and theoretical foundations of counselling from a Western perspective. This will provide the framework for developing the professional therapeutic skills of the student. The concepts and phases of the counselling process including the impact of personal values and therapeutic alliance will be studied.

**Professional Portfolios: Preparation and Presentations*

This course is intended to prepare students for the successful presentation of their knowledge and skills in healing and helping. This will be done through the preparation of professional portfolios and through presentations.

Seminar on Aboriginal Family Life (Native Studies)

A Cross-Cultural examination of Aboriginal family structures and the social sciences of family relationships among Aboriginal peoples in Canada and around the world. The course will consider traditional patterns of family life as well as contemporary issues in the study of Aboriginal families.

**Severe and Persistent Mental Health Challenges for First Nations*

The student will apply concepts and principles of long term care for individuals and families with chronic, complex mental health problems and/or developmental needs. Areas of focus feature rehabilitative, habilitative and palliative care, psychogeriatrics and forensics. The problems studied will include, but not be limited to, organic illness and genetic mental disability, psychotic and neurotic conditions, and personality disorders.

**Traditional Spiritual Teachings of Indigenous Peoples I & II*

This first course will study Traditional Elders' Teachings focused on indigenous concepts of well being. This course presents the traditional belief systems of selected Indigenous peoples of North America, notably Dakota, Ojibway and Cree. The second course builds on the teachings of Traditional Spiritual Teachings of Indigenous Peoples I through personal experience with an in-depth analysis of traditional ceremonies and healing practices, under the leadership and teachings of Elders. This course will have a significant in-class practicum component.

Seven electives of the student's choice, two in fine arts are recommended.