Multiliteracies Pedagogy in Language Teaching: An Example from an Innu Community in Quebec

Constance Lavoie
Université du Québec à Chicoutimi

Mela Sarkar
McGill University

Marie-Paul Mark
Tshishenniu Mishen Preschool, Olamen Shipu

Brigitte Jenniss
Tshishenniu Mishen Preschool, Olamen Shipu

The use of multiliteracies pedagogy is one approach that we consider well-suited to Canadian Indigenous contexts where language teaching must be responsive to local realities and driven by local needs. Multiliteracies pedagogy includes a multiplicity of discourses, forms of text (oral, written, digital), language registers, and languages, reflecting the diverse societies in which learners live. Curriculum is jointly negotiated by teachers and learners. We illustrate the potential of this pedagogical approach with examples from an Indigenous community in Quebec. The Innu community of Olamen Shipu furnishes an example of Indigenous knowledge underpinning and informing grassroots-built multiliteracies pedagogy. Although multiliteracies pedagogy was developed and theorized outside the Indigenous context, we show it to be completely compatible with and, in many respects, identical to traditional Indigenous pedagogies.

Introduction

Canada's Aboriginal peoples have been long deprived of access to adequate, culturally appropriate educational opportunities at all levels, from preschool through the later lifespan. The dismayingly low proportion of Indigenous youth who obtain a high school diploma and proceed to higher education (Chagnon, Arseneau, & Auclair, 2007) is, in great part, the result of centuries of colonialist approaches to the education of Indigenous peoples (Sterzuk, 2010, 2011), including, but by no means restricted to, the abuses of the residential school era (Knockwood, 2001). While other injustices and social problems also play a part, the failure to provide education in a way that respects traditional Indigenous languages and lifestyles has been a major historic factor in the growth of massive disillusionment with the government-imposed educational systems in many, if not most, Aboriginal communities.

A great part of what has been lacking in Indigenous education has been an awareness of the role played by Indigenous languages, literacies, and knowledge in the continuation of cultural coherence, and the maintenance of individual as well as of community well-being (Institut Culturel et Éducatif Montagnais, 2007; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). A too-hasty, often overtly assimilative push to make Indigenous youth fluent in the language of power—English or French, depending on the geographical situation—has meant that the ancestral language too often has been rejected, poorly learned, or simply never learned (Littlebear, 1999). Indigenous historical and cultural knowledge and practices have also been excluded too often from curriculum considerations (Bell, 2004). A large number of younger Indigenous Canadians either do not master their ancestral language well (if at all) or are at risk of failing to develop it after they begin formal schooling and reach the stage of early literacy acquisition, for which the colonial language will be prioritized above all (Drapeau & Moar, 1996).

There is currently a general consensus that Indigenous languages, literacies, and knowledge need to be better integrated into the landscape of Indigenous education in Canada. This is necessary if Indigenous Canadians are to be given the same opportunities as non-Indigenous Canadians to develop as multicultural citizens with strong roots in their ancestral cultures (Cazden, Cope, Fairclough, Gee, Kalantzis, Kress, Luke, Luke, Michaels, & Nakata, 1996). They should also be able to participate in "mainstream" Canadian society to their full potential, if they so wish (Norris, 2007). Without adequate access to appropriate education, this is not possible.

In this article, we propose that an understanding of Indigenous knowledge practices can complement and extend our understanding of multiliteracies pedagogy. Furthermore, consciously adopting multiliteracies pedagogy in schools can help educators bring Indigenous practices of transmitting and renewing knowledge back into classrooms, as this would foster links with mainstream educators that might make useful resources more available in Indigenous classrooms, with little or no need for complex and costly adaptations. Aspects of the approaches and materials that have been developed for multiliteracies pedagogy and, we envision, aspects of teacher education, could be used in Indigenous classrooms in a way that is completely congruent with Indigenous pedagogies. The teachers we work with would be glad of the chance to access additional resources and we suspect that this may be the case for other Indigenous educators as well.

We will first place the term *multiliteracies pedagogy* in its theoretical context. We will then illustrate how teachers use this approach to teaching. Using an example from the Innu community of Olamen Shipu, we will see how the four phases of multiliteracies pedagogy can be put into practice in a Kindergarten to Grade 5 (K-5) setting. A brief presentation of the com-

munity in which we are conducting this research will be included. For the discussion, we have chosen to analyse the relation between multiliteracies pedagogy and Indigenous knowledge practices.

What is Multiliteracies Pedagogy (MP)?

In September 1994, ten scholars in London, England, consisting of Court-ney Cazden, Bill Cope, Norman Fairclough, Jim Gee, Mary Kalantzis, Gunter Kress, Allan Luke, Carmen Luke, Sarah Michaels, and Martin Nakata and also known as the New London Group, began a dialogue that has transformed the way pedagogy is now viewed. They coined the term *multiliteracies pedagogy* (MP) (Cazden et al., 1996). This began a movement in several subfields of applied linguistics and education to expand and redefine the term *literacy* using a plural form, *multiliteracies*. According to the New London Group, our society has seen many changes in the last several decades and this change requires a shift in the way we perceive education (Cazden et al., 1996). One of these changes is the fact that the Internet is permitting our private lives to be more public and the media is also entering into peoples' lives. The different spheres of our lives are merging and becoming more complex. The New London Group point out that this merging and complexity of lifeworlds is also true in our public life. Our communities are more diverse and more globally connected. The New London Group developed the concept *multiliteracies pedagogy* to acknowledge the societal changes needed if schools are to form skilled students who can participate and acquire more interconnected ways of communicating. The New London Group (Cazden et al., 1996) concluded that multiliteracies pedagogy (MP) offers the opportunity to supplement pedagogy with a multitude of new technologies, of languages, of cultures, and of subjective realities, for the benefit of all students.

As communities change, the teaching and learning process needs to be enriched by the multiplicity of cultures and linguistic backgrounds that learners bring into the classroom. The notion of multiliteracies acknowledges the existence of multiple and diverse forms of texts as well as asserting the multiple channels and media of communication (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Lotherington, 2007). MP diverges from restrictive page-bound learning and expands learning to a more complex array of intersecting modes of meaning (linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial) (Cazden et al., 1996; Cloonan, 2004a; Giampapa, 2010; Mills, 2006). Meaning is made through multimodal media of communication.

In MP, the idea that schools need to meet the challenge of preparing students to be rooted in their local environment and, at the same time, to be aware about their interconnectivity with the world, is central. This idea is aptly illustrated by Bhabha's (1994, 2001) concept of *vernacular cosmopolitanism*. Bhabha's concept can be demonstrated metaphorically using the example of learners in Olamen Shipu, despite its geographical situation far

from any city. Learners here are rooted in the culture of their local community and in Innu culture. At the same time, they belong to First Nations cultures. Their culture is influenced by the dominant cultures by which they are surrounded (Quebec culture, North American culture, Canadian culture). Also, by being exposed to the Internet and television, Olamen Shipu youth are influenced by dominant cultures worldwide, such as hip-hop and American culture. Therefore, Innu cultural identities are complex and influenced by dominant cultures. Hamers and Blanc (2000) frame the same idea in their concept of hybrid identity. Other authors explain that minority cultural groups have shifting, "negotiated" identities because they are confronted with dominant cultural discourses (Cummins, 2001; Kim, 2003; Kramsch, 2008; May, 2001; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Pennycook, 1998). This hybridity or negotiation is also seen in the linguistic landscape. Not only is there a plurality of languages, but there are fragmentations within the same language. Gingell (2010) highlights the fact that Creenglish and code switching is an expression of the hybrid identity that has exemplified the oral tradition and the contemporary life in Cree territories. This reality is not unique to the Cree. Battiste, Kovach, and Balzer (2010, p. 7) affirm that, "In Aboriginal communities across Canada, hybrid Englishes flourish as Inuktitut, Cree, Anishnabe, Mi'kmaq, Salish, and a host of other Aboriginal languages fuse with English to create new languages of community". Increasingly, Aboriginal professionals are on hand to help children in their communities make the transition between Indigenous and mainstream cultures and develop consciously bilingual/bicultural strategies for learning and languaging (Peltier, 2011). According to McCarty (2005), literacy policies may work toward social justice and inclusionary practices, but groups who do not express themselves in the national standard English still experience exclusion (Sterzuk, 2011). If the goal of equity is to be met, the future for speakers of Indigenous languages in Canada will most likely be a bi/multilingual future.

Like identity, MP or multiliteracies pedagogy is a dynamic and active concept. MP is closely related to the idea of redesigning the curriculum (Cazden et al., 1996; Mills, 2006) to recognize the plurality of students' cultural identities by reaffirming the place of a community-based cultural identity in pedagogy. For Nigerian-origin scholar Omoniyi (2003), multiliteracies is thus conceptualized as a counterforce tool to facilitate greater African contribution to global knowledge production. It can start to redress the existing hegemony between northern producers and southern consumers, while at the same time exploring the potential to help African languages grow and become equipped to disseminate knowledge to large numbers of African peoples. In essence, one is advocating a sort of liberation literacy. Omoniyi's (2003) idea of "liberation literacy" resonates with the concept of literacy for liberation and empowerment found in the work

of Paulo Freire and Donaldo Macedo (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Macedo, 2006). This concept encourages educators to fight against homogenization, standardization, and the alienation of knowledge from its social ethos and material base. The learner and the teacher take the resources that are available. They then interpret them and redesign or transform them into something new. MP allows the use of a specific metalanguage, a language that permits the combination of many forms of design (Cazden et al., 1996; Mills, 2006). In the work of MP experts (Cazden et al., 1996; Cloonan, 2004a; Cummins, 2009b; Giampapa, 2010; Mills, 2006), four phases of classroom implementation are conceptualized. They are: (1) situated practice; (2) overt instruction; (3) critical framing; and (4) transformed practice. This is shown graphically in Figure 1. Each of these phases will be explained and illustrated in the "Findings" section of our article.

In summary, the concept of MP is rooted in present interconnected reality; it promotes the inclusion of different forms of knowledge, modes of communication, cultures, and languages for respecting learners' hybrid identities and aiming for more equitable educational settings.

Methodology and Context for Research

As non-Indigenous researchers who work closely with Indigenous communities around language issues, we strive to be aware of Indigenous epistemologies (Wilson, 2003) and methodologies (Absalon & Willett, 2004;
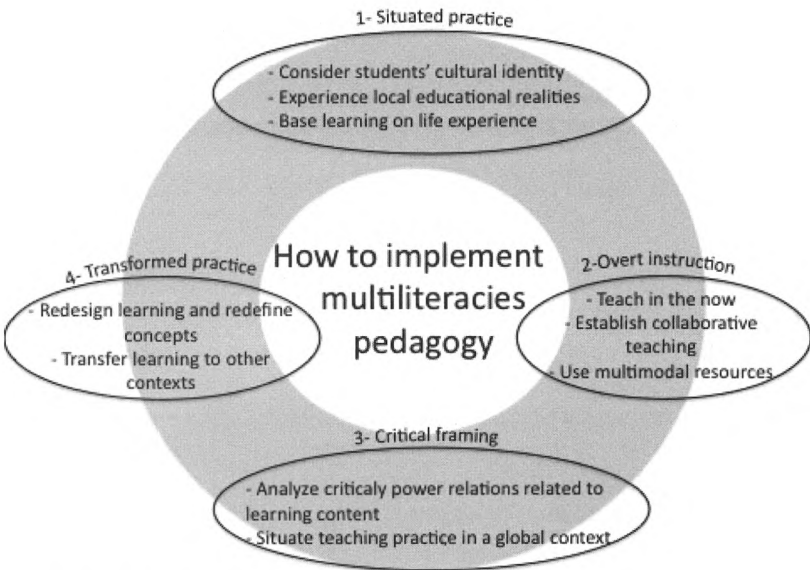

Figure 1. The Four Phases of Multiliteracies Pedagogy
Note. Figure 1 is an adaptation of Rhonda (2007)

Smith, 2003; Stocek & Mark, 2009) and to make our work participatory and community-driven, with the outside researchers taking a back seat (Jordan, 2007). A basic tenet of this work is that the perspectives of Indigenous educators must be the main driving force behind both the pedagogical initiatives and our always-emergent research methodologies (Smith, 2003). Indigenous researchers agree that Indigenous paradigms for conducting research are distinct from Western paradigms (Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003; Metallic, 2009; Smith, 2003; Wilson, 2001, 2003). In our way of conducting research, we try to come as close as we can to the criteria outlined by Hall (1981) in an early description of Participatory Action Research (PAR). In this research project, four components of PAR as described by Hall (1981) were used, whereby:

1. the focus is on oppressed groups; here, addressing the suppression of language through colonization
2. the research strengthens people's awareness of their own capabilities; here, learning from the Indigenous teachers' practices
3. the people themselves are researchers, along with specialized outsiders; here, the teachers have chosen to be co-authors; they decided to be named in all publications and to acknowledge their work and their community
4. the outside specialists are committed to working for change; here, by including elements of Indigenous knowledge in university-level teacher education.

While it is not always possible for us, as non-Indigenous researchers working in mainstream university contexts and subject to the rules of non-Indigenous institutions and granting bodies, to ensure complete community control over all phases of the research and dissemination, we think we have succeeded in establishing mutually satisfactory working relationships based on trust and openness on both sides. In this research, in contrast to more typical contexts for PAR, the community did not initiate the project. All the teachers of the school received a letter explaining the project and the principles of multiliteracies pedagogy, asking them if they wanted to show some of their practice related to these principles. Only some decided to welcome the researcher into their classrooms. Before the researcher entered the classroom, the teachers met the researcher individually to explain why they decided to welcome her, when she would be observing, where she would sit, what she would observe, and for how long. After each classroom observation, the teacher explained the activity that had been conducted in detail, as well as the rationale of this activity according to multiliteracies pedagogy. The teachers decided if the researcher could take notes and/or cite their work. All of them agreed and asked to be named, as well as to have their community identified in all publications and conferences where their work would be shared. The teachers were proud to share their experience for the benefit of future

teachers and researchers interested in multiliteracies. Some teachers invited the researcher for a second classroom observation because they wanted to show more of their practice.

Based on classroom observation, as well as many informal conversations with Indigenous educators, we therefore have learned from community-based teachers how to conceptualize multiliteracies in a way that respects language and culture (Armand, Dagenais, & Nicollin, 2008; Garcia, Skutnabb-Kangas, & Torres-Guzman, 2006; Hélot & de Mejía, 2008; Hornberger, 2003). We will discuss our experiences of working in Indigenous context in ways that try to enable equal participation of all parties concerned, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, with the goal of allowing several languages and cultures to flourish.

We turn now to a consideration of the Indigenous community where we have been working with local educators who are applying MP in their classrooms. Olamen Shipu is in Quebec. The ancestral language is Innu, a language belonging to the Algonquian family (which also includes Cree and Ojibwe or Anishnabeemowin). Olamen Shipu is a remote northern community inaccessible by road. The traditional language is the main language of the community and the challenge for educators is to ensure that children acquire French well enough to have access to education outside the community if they wish it. The research projects we discuss here are with young children. Multiliteracies pedagogy, implemented intuitively by gifted local teachers, demonstrates a new and creative approach to language teaching that has imbued speakers with confidence and has shown that fluency in the colonial language and a strong grasp of the traditional community language can coexist and be developed in tandem. We will first show how this is being done in Olamen Shipu, then move to a discussion on the relationship between multiliteracies pedagogy and Indigenous knowledge practice.

Findings: Implementing Multiliteracies Pedagogy in Olamen Shipu

Olamen Shipu, Quebec, with a population of 1,016 (Statistique Canada, 2012), is in the Quebec interior, north of the northeastern coast of the St. Lawrence River, and 400 km northeast of Sept-Îles or 100 km northwest of Natashquan. This community is only accessible by plane, boat, or snowmobile. It is therefore very isolated compared to some other First Nations communities. The community is named after the river Olamen (river is *shipu* in Innu), that merges into the St. Lawrence River at this location. Families of this community use the river Olamen to access their traditional hunting territory during the winter. The Innu have traditionally lived across large parts of what is now the north coast of the St. Lawrence River in Quebec and southern Labrador. Officially, the spelling of their tribal name is Innu (singular)/Innuat (plural). In this article, we will use the English form to mark the plural (i.e., Innu/Innus). The meaning of Innu is *the people*. The

Figure 2. Olamen Shipu Community

French colonizers called this nation *Montagnais* because they were well known as people who hiked long distances in mountainous areas.

In Olamen Shipu, the language of communication is Innu. Bourque and Larose (2000, p. 256) in their study with 45 teenagers from Olamen Shipu, found that 72.7% speak only Innu with their friends, 12.3% speak Innu and French with their friends, and 0% speak only in French with their friends or their family. The community is situated beside a French-speaking village of 150 people. This village, La Romaine or Gethsemani, has its own elementary and secondary school. In the Kindergarten class of Olamen Shipu community, half the day is taught in Innu and the other half in French, which requires two different teachers. From Grade One to Grade Six, French is the language of instruction. Innu is taught on a weekly basis as a subject for two to three class periods of 45 minutes each. However, in high school the Innu language is not taught at all.

We will use the example of two Kindergarten teachers from Tshishenniu Mishen preschool to illustrate how MP can be put into practice in a classroom. Marie-Paul Mark and Brigitte Jenniss are the two certified K-5 teachers. Marie-Paul is an Innu from the Olamen Shipu community; she has 21 years of teaching experience. Brigitte is from the francophone village of LaRomaine and has Métis status from the Maliseet community of Cacouna; she has been teaching at the Innu school for 27 years. Both Marie-Paul and Brigitte implement MP intuitively without knowing the literature

on the subject. Through Marie-Paul and Brigitte's project, *Tieku mak Innuat*, we will show one way MP can be implemented in an Indigenous educational setting. We will illustrate the four phases of MP theory (situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice) with the Indigenous knowledge of these two educators.

Situated Practice
The first phase of MP is situated practice. To access this first phase, teachers need to acknowledge the cultural identity of students and the educational resources available in their environment (Cloonan, 2004b). Giampapa (2010) explains that situated practice can be carried out through identity investment, which is the inclusion of knowledge from members of the society, such as Elders, parents, or someone that has a particular field of expertise. In an Indigenous milieu, Elders are the knowledge keepers (Lopez-Gopar, 2007). Ortiz (2009) gives the example of hiring a Mapuche traditional Indigenous sage as a teacher in a intercultural bilingual education program in Chile as counter-hegemonic resistance and culturally relevant pedagogical practice. The presence of Indigenous teachers and Elders in formal schooling embodies Bhabha's concept of a third space, by enabling students to validate their cultural space (Bhabha, 2001). Other studies show the benefits of incorporating Indigenous epistemologies in order to enable culturally relevant pedagogy (Bell, 2004; Castano & Brayboy, 2008; McCarty, 2005; Sarkar & Metallic, 2009).

Another principle rooted in situated practice is that of experiencing. Teachers need to experience local educational realities for a certain length of time. By gaining community-based knowledge, teachers can conceptualize their practice. As an Innu from Olamen Shipu who lives in the community, Marie-Paul easily is able to situate her practice in a relevant way. Her colleague Brigitte, although not Innu, has been teaching in the community for 27 years and has developed observation, listening, and experiencing skills that help her to situate her practice. Being from the community or teaching there for many years helps but does not necessarily mean that practice is fully situated. Situated practice also respects the principle that learning has to be based on life experiences.

Throughout their *Tieku mak Innuat* project, we see how Marie-Paul and Brigitte integrated the principles of situated practice (identity investment and experiencing). At the beginning of the year, they asked the students to choose a character, a person, an animal, or an object that would represent their group throughout the year. After a group discussion, the students decided that the television characters Dora and Diego would represent the girls and boys respectively in Marie-Paul's group. Brigitte's group chose Winnie-the-Pooh to represent all the children. Marie-Paul and Brigitte respected the children's choices because they represent their hybrid identities as young Innus who are nevertheless

influenced by popular culture. At the same time, both teachers are inspired by local cultural and environmental experiences throughout the year to build their curriculum. For example, the idea of the *Tieku mak Innuat* project emerged from the students' excitement about the return of the Canada geese to their village. This project consists of sharing Innu traditional hunting practices with Diego (Tieku), a popular character from American mainstream children's television programming, by using bilingual and bicultural modes of communication. The aims of this project were to increase communicative skills in French and in Innu, to value the children's traditional knowledge, and to develop their artistic sense. At the beginning of Spring, Marie-Paul and Brigitte had to allow some time for regular group discussions on the Canada geese so children could share their families' hunting stories. Hearing their interest for this traditional activity, the teachers drew on students' lifeworld experiences to redesign the learning activities of the month. This is an excellent example of a situated practice that takes into account students' negotiated identities and experiences.

Overt Instruction

To apply MP, the second phase is overt instruction. Overt instruction is the use of instructions by the teacher in a way that allows a greater amount of interaction between the students and the teacher. Teachers who are overtly instructing are teaching in the *now,* as Marie-Paul and Brigitte did when they decided to redesign their learning activities around the children's interests. By doing so, meaning is emergent and built in a collaborative way. Overt instruction proposes that teachers participate in the creation of a community of learners. According to Mills (2006, p. 17), a community of learning "provides the students with opportunities for collaborative designing of texts that are sufficiently scaffolded by experts such as peers, adults, or computer software and books". In a community of learners, both learner and teacher are learning and teaching as they become involved in this process of meaning-making, each trying to understand the other's viewpoint or interpretation of the topic (Davenport, 2004). The teacher may not always be the same person. According to the subject taught, the teacher can be a guest, an Elder, nature, another child, and so forth.

In addition to bringing in the idea of a community of learners, the concept of overt instruction suggests helping a student accomplish a task that might be too complex for them to do on their own while allowing the student to interpret the task as well. The teacher brings in new concepts and words when the children are ready. A term used by Cummins (2009a) and Mills (2006) to describe the teachers' support and assistance to their students is *scaffolding meaning.* To scaffold meaning is to provide temporary support, allowing learners to perform more complex tasks than they could unassisted. We can relate this concept to Vygotsky's zone of proximal

development (Vygotsky, 1934/1997). In other words, in overt instruction, teachers are providing learning content gradually and with support according to the different needs of the learners.

Another principle embedded in overt instruction is the use of multi-modal and multilingual resources to facilitate the expression of pluralistic learners' cultural imaginations. This principle is closely related to an eco-logical perspective on language learning (Kramsch, 2008). Kramsch (2006) emphasizes that multiliteracies (multilingual and multimodal) instruction develops students' symbolic competence. Symbolic competence is the abil-ity to play with various linguistic codes and with various spatial and temporal resonances of these codes. Moreover, in Cummins and Early's (2011) research on "identity texts", we understand the importance of mul-timodality and multilingualism for literacy engagement and for valuing multilingual identities in a positive and constructive way.

Marie-Paul and Brigitte overtly instructed during their project by using talking circles (Foy, 2009) to discuss the hunting of Canada geese. Marie-Paul also shared her hunting story during the talking circles. Dur-ing these sharing activities, she taught new words in Innu related to this traditional activity. For example, she explained the origin of the word *tshi-nashkumitin* (I give you a goose). This word was translated by the French colonizers as *thank you*, because Innu, rather than baldly expressing a sen-timent of gratitude, offered a goose as a symbol of their appreciation and satisfaction. In the second half of the same day, Brigitte encouraged the students to tell the same hunting story to her in French. She taught them some French vocabulary related to the topic. By sharing, students and teacher learned from each other. Marie-Paul and Brigitte also proposed to their students to turn their stories into a mural. The ongoing mural was posted in the corridor between Marie-Paul and Brigitte's classrooms. Through this project, they learned communicative competencies (to express themselves in a group of peers and with Elders, to use technolo-gies to include images, etc.), spiritual knowledge (rituals related to hunting), and values (sharing material, space, tenacity). This visual rep-resentation helped the children to remember what they had learned and to keep them motivated for the ongoing talking circles about the Canada geese. The mural and the talking circles in French and Innu were, simul-taneously, learning and conceptualizing occasions and multimodal learning resources.

Critical Framing

The third phase for implementing MP is critical framing. For achieving this phase, teachers help the students to analyse critically what they are learn-ing. Teachers assist them to understand the source from which the information came, as opposed to just viewing the information out of con-text. As Cummins (2009b, p. 43) explains:

Transformative pedagogy uses collaborative critical inquiry to enable students to analyze and understand the social realities of their own lives and of their communities. In other words, transformative pedagogy enables students to scrutinize and actively challenge patterns of power relations in the broader society.

Marie-Paul and Brigitte also used critical framing with their five-year-old students. For example, during their project, they raised awareness of students' limits by asking some questions such as: "For how many years have Innus been hunting Canada geese?"; "Do you know why community members say that Canada geese carry other birds on their wings?"; and "How do you remove feathers?" Marie-Paul encouraged the students to consult their Elders. In the talking circle that followed, children shared the answers they received from the Elders in the village. The consultation with the Elders was part of the analysis phase. At the same time, it valued their traditional knowledge and their oral history. To situate their practice in a global context, Marie-Paul and Brigitte symbolically invited Diego into the centre of the talking circle. By doing this, children positioned themselves as *experts*, realizing that Diego did not know about hunting. They glued Diego into the middle of the mural right beside the Elders as a symbol of knowledge transmission and to value their local knowledge and skills. They named their project *Tieku mak Innuat/Diego visite les Innus*[1].

Transformed Practice
The fourth and last phase, transformed practice, occurs when students create new meaning with existing meaning by using it in their own context or cultural situation. In other words, it is putting what was learned into practice but in a new situation. For Marie-Paul and Brigitte's students, the transfer happened every time that they had to visually represent their idea on the mural and when they had to continue the story in their second language. They had also planned to turn the mural into a book. By looking at the mural, students would have to remember collectively what they had learned about hunting Canada geese and tell the story of *Tieku mak Innuat* and *Diego visite les Innus*. Teachers could write it down in both languages. The bilingual book would be an opportunity to build on their storytelling skills and to transfer them to pre-reading abilities. Also, they could remember the stories learned from their Elders. Stories have the power to protect, to educate, and to connect the children with their loved ones (Archibald, 2008; Silko, 1981). Reapplying what they learned in a new context is a way to sustain learning and to Indigenize the curriculum.

Discussion

In the discussion section, we will push our understanding of multiliteracies pedagogy theory further and align it with our learning about Indigenous teaching practices and literature. The MP concept can be easily matched with Indigenous knowledge practices because many principles are shared. The notion of multiliteracies pedagogy, like that of Indigenous knowledge

practices, recognizes orality as part of the foundation of literacy (Archibald, 2008). In an Indigenous context, being literate involves being able to move from the ability to read and write to include different forms of knowledge (intergenerational, school, the natural world, etc.), modes of communication (drumming, dancing, storytelling, chatting, etc.), and media of communication (Indigenous language, colonial language, international language) (Archibald, 2008; Battiste et al., 2010; Castano & Brayboy, 2008; Thomas & Paynter, 2010). As Sable and Francis (2012, p. 56) have said in writing about traditional Mi'kmaq ways of knowing, "[t]the use of many sensory channels allows for information to be received in a holistic and comprehensible way". An example of how multimodal communication plays out for one Indigenous group in Brazil at the present time, using traditional visual forms of communication in combination with Western forms of literacy, can be found in the work of Menezes de Souza (2005). Postcolonial scholars (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Jhingran, 2009; King & Benson, 2004; Panda & Mohanty, 2009; Omoniyi, 2003) from different continents have written that using multiliteracies pedagogy is a counterforce tool to decolonize and to pluralize schools. This idea is also present in the Indigenous literature (Battiste, 1998; Battiste et al., 2010).

The project carried out by Marie-Paul Mark and Brigitte Jenniss that we have described here shows that Indigenous pedagogy is intuitively also multiliteracies pedagogy. The examples cited in the findings section (e.g., children asking Elders questions, sharing circles, making meaning from stories, using the environment, local language practices) are also cited in the Indigenous knowledge literature as Indigenous practices (Archibald, 2008; Battiste et al., 2010; Bell, 2004; Castano & Brayboy, 2008; Kirkness, 1998). Therefore, it seems to us that these practices, initiated through Indigenous knowledge, stem from the same roots as the practices included by the New London Group (Cazden et al., 1996) as key elements of multiliteracies pedagogy.

By sharing their Indigenous knowledge with the university-based researchers, the teachers on this team pushed MP theory further. They show that lifelong learning principles need to be acknowledged when using MP in Indigenous settings. The notion of lifelong learning is central to Indigenous literature (Canadian Council of Learning, 2007). Instead of seeing learning as a series of linear zones of proximal development in a Vygotskyan way (Vygotsky, 1934/1997), Indigenous educators see learning as circular. It can occur in formal and informal settings alike, throughout the life span. In that sense, overt instruction is lifelong and supported by different guides to learning. When we consider this principle, the report card at the end of a school year seems meaningless because it does not take into account the holistic and cumulative vision of learning in Indigenous educational settings. Lifelong learning principles have to be added to the overt instruction phase when applying MP in Indigenous contexts.

Indigenous educators have shared with us their difficulty in integrating new technologies to their MP practice because they don't use them often in their personal lives. They know that new technologies, the media of communication, are important for their student generation; however, including all aspects of MP in one project is challenging. They rely on other opportunities to include this learning sphere in students' lives. Before being teachers, they are people, who bring their limits, strengths, and values into their classroom.

Conclusion

We have seen that the theory and practice of multiliteracies pedagogy can be applied directly to First Nations contexts. Marie-Paul Mark and Brigitte Jenniss provide living models of MP, furnishing an authentic rather than a theoretical basis for understanding this concept in the Aboriginal context. MP allows the teachers with whom we work to situate their practice by drawing on the local environment, Elders, images, language practices, and stories as educational resources. Working with learners as young as preschool level, practitioners of MP can aim to create a community of learning in which the power relationship, between teachers as knowledge givers and students as receivers, is deconstructed in favour of a circular conception of human relationships. Through the construction of a respectful and equitable relationship with the learners, the MP process sets out to critically analyse learning content and has the potential to gradually transform the curriculum to suit the learners, whether they are Innu or any other group. MP is not restricted to language teaching; it is a pedagogical approach that can be used in many different areas. MP seems to us to be a useful and flexible conceptual lens through which to view best practices and, furthermore, one that respects Indigenous knowledge, culture, and teaching and learning traditions.

Notes

[1] Diego visits the Innus.

References

Absalon, K., & Willett, C. (2004). Aboriginal research: Berry picking and hunting in the 21st century. *First Peoples Child and Family Review, 1*(1), 5-17.

Archibald, J.-A. (2008). *Indigenous storywork: Educating the heart, mind, body, and spirit.* Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Armand, F., Dagenais, D., & Nicollin, L. (2008). La dimension linguistique des enjeux interculturels: De l'éveil aux langues à l'éducation plurilingue. *Éducation et Francophonie, 36*(1), 44-64.

Battiste, M. (1998). Enabling the autumn seed: Toward a decolonized approach to Aboriginal knowledge, language, and education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 22*(1), 16-27.

Battiste, M., Kovach, M., & Balzer, G. (2010). Celebrating the local, negotiating the school: Language and literacy in Aboriginal communities. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 32*(Suppl.), 4-12.

Bell, D. (2004). *Sharing our success: Ten case studies in Aboriginal schooling*. Kelowna, BC: Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education.

Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. New York, NY Routledge.

Bhabha, H. K. (2001). Unsatisfied: Notes on vernacular cosmopolitanism. In G. Castle (Ed.), *Postcolonial discourses: An anthology* (pp. 38-52). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Bourque, J., & Larose, F. (2000). Évaluation du dispositif d'enseignement des mathématiques au secondaire dans une école innue. *Cahiers de la Recherche en Éducation, 7*(2), 247-268.

Canadian Council of Learning. (2007). First Nations holistic lifelong learning model. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Council on Learning. Retrieved from http://www.ccl-cca.ca/pdfs/RedefiningSuccess/CCL_Learning_Model_FN.pdf

Castano, A. E., & Brayboy, B. M. J. (2008). Culturally responsive schooling for Indigenous youth: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research, 78*(4), 941-993.

Cazden, C., Cope, B., Fairclough, N., Gee, J., Kalantzis, M., Kress, G., Luke, A., Luke, C., Michaels, S., & Nakata, M. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review, 66*(1), 60-92.

Chagnon, J., Arseneau, M., & Auclair, V. (2007). *La réussite scolaire des enfants autochtones*. Ville de Québec, QC: Secrétariat des Commissions de l'Assemblée Nationale du Québec.

Cloonan, A. (2004a). Multiliteracies in the early years: Filming and professional learning. *Australian Screen Education, 35*(Winter 2004), 43-46.

Cloonan, A. (2004b). Multiliteracies: The story so far. *Australian Screen Education, 35*(Winter 2004), 47-51.

Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (Eds.).(2000). *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures*. London, UK: Routledge.

Cummins, J. (2001). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society*. Los Angeles, CA: California Association for Bilingual Education.

Cummins, J. (2009a). Fundamental psycholinguistic and sociological principles underlying educational success for linguistic minority students. In T. Skutnabb-Kangas, R. Phillipson, A. K. Mohanty, & M. Panda (Eds.), *Social justice through multilingual education* (pp. 19-35). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Cummins, J. (2009b). Transformative multiliteracies pedagogy: School-based strategies for closing the achievement gap. *Multiple Voices for Ethnically Diverse Exceptional Learners, 11*(2), 38-56.

Cummins, J., & Early, M. (Eds.). (2011). *Identity texts: The collaborative creation of power in multilingual schools*. Oakhill, UK: Trentham Books.

Davenport, A. (2004). Project based learning: Progress report 1, Best of Australian flexible learning community. Canberra, AU: Australian Flexible Learning Framework. Retrieved from http://community.flexiblelearning.net.au/TeachingTrainingLearners/content/article_6298.htm

Drapeau, L., & Moar, L. R. (1996). La situation de la langue montagnaise à Mashteuiatsh. *Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec, 26*(1), 33-42.

Foy, J. (2009). Incorporating talk story into the classroom. *First Nations Perspectives, 2*(1), 25-33.

Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the word and the world*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.

Garcia, O., Skutnabb-Kangas, T., & Torres-Guzmán, M. E. (Eds.). (2006). *Imagining multilingual schools: Languages in education and glocalization*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Giampapa, F. (2010). Multiliteracies, pedagogy and identities: Teacher and student voices from a Toronto elementary school. *Canadian Journal of Education, 33*(2), 407-431.

Gingell, S. (2010). Lips' inking: Cree and Cree-Métis authors' writings of the oral and what they might tell educators. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 32*(Suppl.), 35-61.

Hall, B. L. (1981). Participatory research, popular knowledge and power: A personal reflection. *Convergence: An International Journal of Adult Education, 14*(3), 6-19.

Hamers, J. F., & Blanc, M. H. A. (2000). Social psychological aspects of binguality: Culture and identity. In M. H. A. Blanc & J. F. Hamers (Eds.), *Binguality and bingualism* (2nd ed., pp. 209-228). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Hélot, C., & de Mejía, A.-M. (2008). *Forging multilingual spaces: Integrated perspectives on majority and minority bilingual education.* Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Hornberger, N. H. (2003). Continua of biliteracy. In N. Hornberger (Ed.), *Continua of biliteracy: An ecological framework for educational policy, research, and practice in multilingual settings* (pp. 3-33). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Institut Culturel et Éducatif Montagnais (ICEM). (2007). *"Uauitetau innu-aimun, aimuatamutau mamu": Parlons de la langue innue, discutons-en ensemble.* Sept-Îles, QC: Author.

Jhingran, D. (2009). Hundreds of home languages in the country and many in most classrooms: Coping with diversity in primary education in India. In T. Skutnabb-Kangas, R. Phillipson, A. K. Mohanty, & M. Panda (Eds.), *Social justice through multilingual education* (pp. 263-282). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Jordan, S. (2007). Participatory action research (PAR). In L. M. Given (Ed.),*The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (Vol. 2, pp. 602-604). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kim, L. S. (2003). Multiple identities in a multicultural world: A Malaysian perspective. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education, 2*(3), 137-158.

King, K. A., & Benson, C. (2004). Indigenous language education in Bolivia and Ecuador: Contexts, changes, and challenges. In J. W. Tollefson & A. B. M. Tsui (Eds.), *Medium of instruction policies: Which agenda? Whose agenda?* (pp. 241-262). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Kirkness, V. J. (1998). Our peoples' education: Cut the shackles; cut the crap; cut the mustard. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 22*(1), 10-15.

Knockwood, I. (2001). *Out of the depths: The experiences of Mi'kmaw children at the Indian residential school at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia.* Lockeport, NS: Roseway Publishers.

Kramsch, C. (2006). From communicative competence to symbolic competence. *The Modern Language Journal, 90*(2), 249-252.

Kramsch, C. (2008). Ecological perspectives on foreign language education. *Language Teaching, 41*(3), 389-408.

Littlebear, R. (1999). Some rare and radical ideas for keeping Indigenous languages alive. In J. Reyhner, G. Cantoni, R. N. St. Clair, & E. P. Yazzie (Eds.), *Revitalizing Indigenous languages* (pp. 1-5). Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University.

Lopez-Gopar, M. E. (2007). Beyond the alienating alphabetic literacy: Multiliteracies in Indigenous education in Mexico. *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education, 1*(3), 159-174.

Lotherington, H. (2007). Rewriting traditional tales as multilingual narratives at elementary school: Problems and progress. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 10*(2), 241-256.

Macedo, D. (2006). *Literacies of power: What Americans are not allowed to know.* Boston, MA: Westview.

Martin, K., & Mirraboopa, B. (2003). Ways of knowing, being and doing: A theoretical framework and methods for Indigenous and Indigenist re-search. *Journal of Australian Studies, 27*(76), 203-214.

May, S. (2001). Culture and identity. In S. May (Ed.), *Language and minority rights: Ethnicity, nationalism and the politics of language* (pp. 128-165). Harlow, UK: Pearson Education.

McCarty, T. L. (2005). *Language, literacy, and power in schooling.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Menezes de Souza, L. M. T. (2005). The ecology of writing among the Kashinawá: Indigenous multimodality in Brazil. In A. S. Canagarajah (Ed.), *Reclaiming the local in langue policy and practice* (pp. 73-95). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Metallic, J. (2009). Exploring Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing in developing a cross-cultural science curriculum. In J. Langdon (Ed.), *Indigenous knowledges, development and education* (pp. 97-108). Rotterdam, NL: Sense Publishers.

Mills, K. A. (2006). "We've been wastin' a whole million watchin' her doin' her shoes": Situated practice within a pedagogy of multiliteracies. *The Australian Educational Researcher, 33*(3), 13-33.

Norris, M. J. (2007). Aboriginal languages in Canada: Emerging trends and perspectives on second language acquisition. *Statistics Canada, 11*(008), 19-27.

Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and educational change.* New York, NY: Longman.

Omoniyi, T. (2003). Local policies and global forces: Multiliteracy and Africa's Indigenous languages. *Language Policy, 2*(2), 133-152.

Ortiz, P. R. (2009). Indigenous knowledge and language: Decolonizing culturally relevant pedagogy in a Mapuche intercultural bilingual education program in Chile. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 32*(1), 93-114.

Panda, M., & Mohanty, A. K. (2009). Language matters, so does culture: Beyond the rhetoric of culture in multilingual education. In T. Skutnabb-Kangas, R. Phillipson, A. K. Mohanty, & M. Panda (Eds.), *Social justice through multilingual education* (pp. 301-319). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Pavlenko, A., & Blackledge, A. (2004). Introduction: New theoretical approaches to the study of negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts. In A. Pavlenko & A. Blackledge (Eds.), *Negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts* (pp. 1-33). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Peltier, S. (2011). Providing culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate services: An insider construct. *Canadian Journal of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, 35*(2), 126-134.

Pennycook, A. (1998). *English and the discourses of colonialism.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). (1996). *The report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Gathering strength* (Vol. 3). Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services.

Sable, T., & Francis, B. (2012). The language of this land, Mi'kma'ki. Sydney, NS: Cape Breton University Press.

Sarkar, M., & Metallic, M. A. (2009). Indigenizing the structural syllabus: The challenge of revitalizing Mi'gmaq in Listuguj. *The Canadian Modern Language Review, 66*(1), 49-71.

Silko, L. M. (1981). *Storyteller.* New York, NY: Seaver Books.

Smith, L. T. (2003). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples.* New York, NY: Zed Books.

Statistique Canada. (2012). La Romaine, Québec (Code 2498804) et Québec (Code 24) (tableau). Profil du recensement, Recensement de 2011, produit no. 98-316-XWF au catalogue de Statistique Canada. Retrieved from http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=F

Sterzuk, A. (2010). Indigenous English and standard language ideology: Toward a postcolonial view of English in teacher education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 32*(Suppl.), 100-113.

Sterzuk, A. (2011). *The struggle for legitimacy: Indigenized Englishes in settler schools.* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Stocek, C., & Mark, R. (2009). Indigenous research and decolonizing methodologies: Possibilities and opportunities. In J. Langdon (Ed.), *Indigenous knowledges, development and education* (pp. 73-96). Rotterdam, NL: Sense Publishers.

Thomas, A., & Paynter, F. (2010). The significance of creating First Nation traditional names maps. *First Nations Perspectives, 3*(1), 48-64.

Vygotsky, L. (1934/1997). *Pensée et langage.* Paris, FR: La Dispute.

Wilson, S. (2001). What is an Indigenous research methodology? *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 25*(2), 175-179.

Wilson, S. (2003). Progressing toward an Indigenous research paradigm in Canada and Australia. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 27*(2), 161-178.