VALUING CHILDREN'S STORYTELLING
FROM AN ANISHINAABE ORALITY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Aboriginal children do not have the same degree of academic success as non-Native students. My cultural membership as an Anishinaabe person and my professional experience providing speech and language pathology services in First Nation communities, fuel my commitment to facilitating positive change. Educational outcomes can be improved with understanding First Nation children's distinct speech and language characteristics, communicative contexts and usage patterns, and the development of more effective approaches for these children.

This research supports a paradigm shift. It has examined Anishinaabek children's narrative structure and content through an emically derived investigation, that is, an exploration from within the students' own culture, language, and community. Such an approach is effective in curbing the application of inappropriate etically derived procedures, those borrowed from the well-established clinical body of knowledge and recommended assessment procedures based on Western perspectives.

This investigative process reveals features of Anishinaabek children's stories and narrative components that are highly valued by Elders, who are teachers of language in the First Nation community. The Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT) software program provides analysis of the story transcripts. The Elder components are assigned codes used for hand-coding and for comparison, the Narrative Structure Score (NSS) grammar is applied using SALT.

A protocol for "revaluating" Anishinaabek children's stories has emerged for educators and speech language practitioners. Oral language supports literacy development and this research supports teachers to increase opportunities for oral

storytelling in the classroom, thus enhancing educational and social experiences of

Aboriginal children and *all* learners in the classroom.

Acknowledgments

I am thankful to the children of Nipissing First Nation who openly shared about their life experiences and recounted family stories. Also I want to say, "Miigwech, parents for your trust and support in the process". The stories are beautiful and it is such a special gift to be able to see the world through the eyes of a child once again. The children are: Angel Armstrong, Cyril Commanda-Stevens, Jamie Commanda, Amber Fryer, Lillian George, Mickey George, Summer Shabogesic-McLeod, and Melissa Stevens

To the Elders who demonstrated the kind and thoughtful ways of Anishinaabe people, I say "Miigwech for engaging with me on this journey of relationship-building and learning". I was honoured to see how each of you portray a balance of humility and courage, an awesome blending and expression of wisdom developed along life's journey. The Elders are: Henry Anishinabie, Jerry Goulais, Linda Goulais, and Mary Ann Howards.

My family has provided me with the impetus to pursue personal development and learning. The words of my late father, Irvin J. Douglas, "Keep going to school", urged me on when I felt overwhelmed. I feel blessed by the love and companionship of my husband Stan, and sons Douglas and Vincent. The writing process is very often an isolating experience for me and I cherish your patience and belief in me. Although this portion of my formal education is complete, lifelong learning lies ahead – It's not over yet!

I gratefully acknowledge the guidance and support from my friends and academic mentors Dr. Jessica Ball and Dr. Judith Johnston, my thesis supervisor

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

This chapter will introduce the research problem, provide an overview of current research and explain the terms used in this study.

Introduction

We must change the current situation whereby Aboriginal children do not have the same degree of academic success as non-Native students. It is imperative that new approaches be developed emically–that is, from inside the students' own culture, language and community–in order to understand and enhance First Nation children's speech and language outcomes and maximize their overall educational attainment. For this reason, the oral narratives of Aboriginal children–in this case Anishinaabek children– are an important area for scholarly investigation. It is time to create emically derived measurement protocols, that is, assessment procedures and normative data created from the perspective of pertinent cultural and linguistic factors of the Aboriginal people themselves. We can then diminish or abandon the application of inappropriate etically derived procedures, those borrowed from the well-established clinical body of knowledge and recommended assessment procedures based on Western perspectives.

The Research Problem

The main research problem that forms the basis of this study is: When Anishinaabek children tell stories with their peers, using the English language, do their stories exemplify features of Anishinaabe orality? Ancilliary questions that will be explored are:

1. How do ratings by Anishinaabek Elders contribute to our understanding of culturally specific Anishinaabe story structure and content in the narratives of English-speaking Anishinaabe children?

2. What are some of the emically derived structural elements that describe features of Anishinaabe children's storytelling?

3. How do these features compare to those used in conventional clinical/Western perspective storytelling analysis?

<div align="center">Justification of the Study</div>

The achievement gap that exists between Aboriginal students and other Canadian students is measured by assessment protocols in the schools that are not sensitive to Aboriginal cultural and linguistic differences and are not valid and reliable. Speech and language professionals and educators rely on etically derived assessment standards and interventions based on Western literacy traditions that do not acknowledge First Nations orality and narrative styles. There is a need to move toward a more inclusive narrative assessment and intervention in the speech and language pathology protocols used with Aboriginal students in order to minimize the disadvantages that Aboriginal children encounter at school.

No studies have been found where Aboriginal narratives were evaluated from an Aboriginal orality perspective. Aboriginal orality is an important bridge to literacy and academic success, as well as community participation. Language and the way we use it are passed down through previous generations within our respective cultural communities. First Nations dialect is an integral component of an individual's identity and represents a culturally relevant link to the home community and land base. First

Nations English dialect is an important and valid aspect of language, and educators are embarking on a shift in how they perceive and respond to First Nations English dialects.

Success in school requires vast experience and proficiency in oral language. Educators of Aboriginal students can accommodate the students' cultural and community contexts within the classroom learning environment to support their learning by engaging in activities that build on existing knowledge, skills, and backgrounds in a learning environment where language errors are accepted as a normal part of the language-learning process. A positive outcome of the educational experience for such language learners is that the individual will develop and master code-switching for "home talk" and "school talk" and feel good about their communication skills.

An emically derived narrative protocol is needed to support our understanding of Aboriginal children's narratives so that we increase sensitivity and appreciation of their oral language in the classroom. This research project presents an Anishinaabek narrative protocol for young children for use by teachers to support the process.

Overview of the Current Research

The brief overview will address seven aspects of the research problem: the achievement gap, socioeconomic factors, cultural and linguistic factors, native learning styles, speech and language pathology for Aboriginal students, the importance of Aboriginal orality, and an Annishinaabe perspective.

The Achievement Gap

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (2008b) documents a disturbing achievement gap, using Aboriginal demographic data from the 2006 census.

The Aboriginal population aged 25-64 lags behind in educational attainment with 34% having less than high school (50% on reserve) compared with 15% of non-Aboriginals of the same age. The Aboriginal population aged 25-64 with a university degree has increased slightly since 2001 (from 6% to 8%). However, they still lag far behind the non-Aboriginal population (23%) and the gap between the two populations continued to widen between 2001 and 2006. (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2008b, Sect. 2)

Socioeconomic Factors

Educational difficulties faced by Aboriginal children have been linked to socioeconomic factors. Ball (2006) describes disadvantage and exclusion of Aboriginal students from fully participating in the formal education system as being due to "racism, discrimination and poverty… [which results in] low levels of attainment in specific areas of development including speech, language, and literacy." (p.19)

Kanu (2002) explains that "economic status affects the influence of culture on cognition and learning" (p.102). The author's study included students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and this factor was identified as supporting a "mismatch between their cognitive and learning experiences and the content and processes of the formal school system" (p. 102).

Ball (2008) reports that

studies conducted in high-, middle-, and low-income countries have demonstrated that low socio-economic status and associated social exclusions contribute more than any other factor to low quality of life and reduced opportunities for optimal development with-in populations of children (p. 30).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (2008a) report employment facts from the 2006 census.

> Since 2001, the employment rate for Aboriginal people aged 25-64 has increased (from 58% to 63%) but it still remains much lower than for non-Aboriginals (76%). Despite an important decline since 2001, the unemployment rate for Aboriginal people aged 25-64 remains almost three times the rate for non-Aboriginals in 2006 (13% vs. 5%). It exceeds the national rate in every region. (Sect. 3)

Cultural and Linguistic Factors

Many cultural and linguistic factors impact on Aboriginal children's success in school, and educators' sensitivity to these factors can positively influence outcomes. Kanu (2002) studied First Nations students in a Winnipeg high school and found that Aboriginal children may be marginalized in a school or program setting that places high value on verbal explanations and oral participation. The author identified ways for teachers to accommodate the students' cultural and community contexts within the classroom learning environment to support their learning.

Kanu (2002) recommended that teachers utilize traditional Aboriginal approaches to learning such as storytelling and learning through observation and imitation, with an emphasis on visually based instruction. Differences in Aboriginal patterns of oral interaction were illustrated, and the teachers' use of fast-paced talk led to verbal saturation and hindered Aboriginal students' learning. The author recommended that teachers communicate directions and expectations for learning tasks clearly and avoid indirect statements.

Aboriginal students' notions of self as constructed in Aboriginal culture are related to terms of interdependence, communality, and social relationships. The Aboriginal cultural model of learning is grounded by cultural values such as co-operation, collaboration, group effort, and group rewards. Kanu recommended that teachers utilize co-operative, collaborative, or group work learning opportunities in the classroom.

Aboriginal students perceive the teacher as a role model who earns authority through effort and personal characteristics. An authoritative role of teacher with overt power may not be automatically acknowledged. The author states that respect is the most important dimension of the teacher's interpersonal style, and students expressed that they want to have a personal relationship with their teacher, feeling valued and understood as a person and treated with emotional warmth (Kanu, 2002).

Curriculum relevance was identified by Kanu as important for increasing motivation for learning among Aboriginal students. Curriculum materials and classroom teaching-learning processes that are infused with Aboriginal perspectives, histories, cultures, and successes were recommended, rather than the once-in-a-while or add-on approach (Kanu, 2002).

Aboriginal children's struggles in the educational system are also linked to cultural and linguistic differences between the home and school. First Nations English dialect is a relatively new area of study in Canada, and professional education and specialist practices are ill informed. Use of First Nations English dialects is an important area of socialization for Anishinaabe children in First Nations families and communities.

Upon school entry, Anishinaabe students use a different variety of English than the Standard English expected in the formal education system.

Edward T. Hall, an anthropologist who studied the Navajo and Hopi, described "high context" communications, where much of the meaning is not explicitly stated. With Algonquian languages like Ojibwa and Cree it may be assumed that the listener can provide context or meaning; jokes may not translate very well. In contrast, much mainstream North American communication is "low context," meaning that it is highly detailed; most of the message is explicitly contained in the conversation (Hall, 1976).

Mary Black, drawing on the work of anthropologist A. Irving Hallowell, has written about Ojibwa "percept ambiguity," a kind of reluctance to categorize with finality (Black, 1977). Writing as Mary Black-Rogers, she has described the kind of culturally appropriate "respectful talk" that may appear to constrain communication with someone perceived to be a powerful person; silence, for example, is a way of showing respect (Black-Rogers, 1988). Roger Spielmann illustrated the respectful ways of making requests and rejecting requests in Algonquin (Spielmann, 1986). Similarly, Richard J. Preston has described the reticence or quiet behavior in the presence of strangers that is appropriate among the Cree, and not simply being "shy" (Preston, 1976). Mohawk psychiatrist Clare Brant described a widespread indigenous ethic of respectful noninterference (Brant, 1979).

Burnaby (1982), in her book exploring Native language education in Canada, reported that "languages and cultures have many rules which govern language behaviour

and these rules differ from language to language and from culture to culture" (p. 33). She states that differences can lead to serious misunderstandings between teacher and student.

> From a majority culture teacher's point of view, a child may seem lazy, sullen, non-verbal, and shy … But, in the case of children from non-majority culture backgrounds, these evaluations can often be explained in terms of the kinds of verbal responses children have learned to use in their home environment – responses which are perfectly acceptable in their cultural context (p. 33).

Native Learning Styles

Sawyer (1983) explored Native learning styles and identified helpful instructional adaptations for educators. The author identifies the tendency for Aboriginal students to be less verbal in the classroom due to the cultural incongruity between home and school approaches to learning, called "interference." The way students process information, or learning styles, and the things instructors do (and don't do) to accommodate students' backgrounds, behaviours, and culturally based communication patterns, or teaching styles, are discussed. It is suggested that rather than assuming that all Aboriginal students have a visual learning preference from child-rearing practices in the home that place emphasis on observation and imitation, it is more helpful for teachers to investigate and share teaching accommodations that are proven to help Native students succeed in the context of the classroom. As instructors understand the "cultural context" they are working in and how to accommodate it, they will investigate further the "possible differences in communication patterns, world view, ways of processing information, and relating to one another" which must be verified (Sawyer, p.104). Sawyer highlights beneficial practices of shared social control in the classroom between teacher and

students, a warm and personal style of teaching, responding with sensitivity to nonverbal cues, avoiding singling students out for praise, criticism, or recitation, acceptance of silence, using more small group instruction, and expecting excellence.

Speech and Language Pathology for Aboriginal Students

Linguists, Native language teachers, and Aboriginal educators have documented the different speech sound systems of the Cree and Ojibway languages. In the early 1980s, the Native Language Teacher Program at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, and the Native Classroom Assistant Program at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario (and now at Nipissing University) provided opportunity for discussions and focus on this topic.

Although a sound system chart comparing the English sound system to Cree/Ojibway phonology was produced and used widely by Native language teachers, this information did not inform practice in the field of speech and language pathology. As an Aboriginal Speech and Language Pathologist working in the Great Lakes Region of Ontario, this information became available to me only through the "moccasin telegraph," the informal, grassroots communication network in First Nation communities. This helped me to understand that the Aboriginal children on my caseload who learned English as their second language had a different articulation developmental sequence from what was depicted on the speech development chart routinely used in clinical practice.

Anishinaabe children do not have the "f, v, th, r, l" sounds in their phonetic repertoire when they start school, and they take longer to acquire these sounds during primary school years as compared to their non-Aboriginal, English-speaking peers.

These sounds enter their phonetic repertoire over a number of years as they are exposed to standard English in the classroom. The vowel repertoire of standard English is much larger than that of the Ojibway language, and this impacts pronunciation and spelling of words such as "tape" versus "top", "kite" versus "kit", and "soon" versus "sun." I shifted my professional practice away from routinely recommending speech therapy for such children and adopted a "wait-and-see" approach. Service delivery options expanded to include components such as consultation, monitoring, and follow-up intervention as needed.

Only three North American studies have evaluated the narrative abilities of Aboriginal children. Two are Canadian studies (Pesco,1994; Cronin, 1982), and one is an American study (Bird & Vetter, 1994). In all of these instances, the Western clinical perspective prevailed in the analysis. No studies have been found where Aboriginal narratives were evaluated from an Aboriginal orality perspective. As we might expect, English narrative developmental sequences in non-Aboriginal populations are described from the perspective of Western literacy traditions, analytically dissecting the stories' structure and meaning. Speech and language professionals and educators working with First Nations populations routinely rely on these etically derived assessment standards and interventions that do not acknowledge First Nations orality and narrative styles.

In February and December 2004, I was invited to participate in forums held in British Columbia to investigate the significance of First Nations English dialects for First Nations children's education and to identify research directions. Ball & Bernhardt (2005) reported on the proceedings where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal speech and language pathologists, child care and development specialists, linguists, and Aboriginal community

members gathered. Distinguishing features warranting consideration in practice such as differences in speech sounds, grammar, pronouns, vocabulary, narrative, and interaction patterns were identified. The problematic use of language assessment tools based on norms for standard English was highlighted. The misidentification of Aboriginal children with language impairment was perceived to result from a cultural mismatch between what the tools were assessing as compared to what life experiences the Aboriginal children, especially those from remote and rural communities, presented with. New directions for assessment were recommended such as language sample analysis and dynamic assessment. Research was called for to identify First Nations English dialects regionally, since variability was present across Canada (Ball & Bernhardt, 2005).

The Importance of Aboriginal Orality

The Aboriginal languages of the Great Lakes region of Ontario, referred to as "Anishnaabemowin", or Ojibway, were only relatively recently transcribed into written form by missionaries. It was originally recorded using the syllabics orthography which the missionary James Evans later applied to Cree. This writing system was used widely by Cree and Ojibway speakers, and in the 19th century missionaries created dictionaries and translated the Bible using other orthographic systems (Sugarhead, 1996). In the Great Lakes area of Ontario the syllabics system is not used. Ojibway-speakers here prefer to use the Roman orthography, which uses the English alphabet.

Few people actually read and write Ojibway, for it is an oral language. Storytelling is culturally relevant to every First Nations community and is an important life skill valued by the community's traditional practice of an oral history and oral language. By gathering information about the components and aspects of Aboriginal

children's narratives, we can gain insight into Aboriginal orality. It is through Aboriginal languages and their tradition of orality that the "Indian mind" or Aboriginal worldview is expressed.

Bruner (1975) led the way for theoretical discussions regarding the nature of language and thought. From this, linguists have debated and explored how language shapes thought. This has relevance to the impact that culture and language play regarding perception and worldview. Today, linguists agree that language shapes the way people perceive the world as well as how people describe it (Nevins, 2004).

An Anishinaabe Perspective: Situating Myself in the Study

My own clinical experience and observations over the past 20 years serve as the basis for the following profile of communicative behaviors associated with First Nations English dialect differences in the Anishinaabek communities of the Lake Huron region of Ontario. Analysis of children's English grammar (syntax and morphology) consistently shows the omission of the regular past tense verb marker "ed" and some instances of dialect variation (e.g., "jamp" for jumped). The substitution of pronouns (e.g., "he"/she, "her"/him) is common, since the Ojibway language does not include gender markers the way that the English language does; the Ojibway language makes a distinction between animate and inanimate or power features. Substitution of the word "there" or "here" for a preposition may also be evident. Aboriginal people tend not to state the obvious unless the situation calls for such elaboration, and it is uncommon for a speaker to describe exactly where an object is. Such linguistic and culturally socialized ways of talking tend to be misconstrued by educators and speech language pathologists as communication problems.

When I attended the 2006 British Columbia Association of Speech and Language Pathologists and Audiologists Annual Conference in Victoria, British Columbia, presenters shed light on the reality that First Nations English dialects will soon be the only remaining vestige of some Aboriginal languages. Aboriginal languages are disappearing at an alarming rate, and the outcomes of current First Nations efforts to revitalize their Aboriginal language remain to be seen. Dr. Pat Shaw of the University of British Columbia documented the persistence of a First Nations English dialect for three to six generations following loss of the Aboriginal mother tongue. First Nations children whose parents do not speak the Aboriginal language nevertheless use a First Nations English dialect stemming from their First Nation home and community context where the dialect is actively used and perpetuated. First Nations English dialect differences are observable and measurable not only with respect to articulation but also with regards to features of language. Shaw's research echoed and confirmed my Anishinaabe perspective and emphasized the implications for speech and language pathology services for Aboriginal children.

<div style="text-align:center">Definition of Terms</div>

Aboriginal: belonging to North American Indian, Métis, or Inuit groups of peoples.

Achievement gap: According to 2006 census data, Aboriginal people in Canada aged 25 to 64 years lag behind the educational achievement of the non-Aboriginal population of the same age; 15% living off reserve and 50% residing on reserve have less than a high school diploma as compared to 34% of the non-Aboriginal population; only 8% of Aboriginal people age 25 to 64 have a postsecondary degree versus 23% of the non-Aboriginal population.

Algonquin: a language considered by its speakers to be distinct from Ojibway but

     classified by linguists as a northern dialect of the Ojibway language.

Anishinaabe: the term used by an Ojibway or Algonquin person to refer to themself.

     Elder and spiritual leader Eddie Benton-Banai explains that the term refers to

     Original Man in the Creation Story.

Anishinaabek: referring to the group of Anishinaabe people from 43 First Nation

     communities around the Lake Superior and Lake Huron regions of Ontario.

Anishinaabemowin - the Aboriginal languages of the Anishinaabek people, spoken by the

     Algonquin, Chippewa, Delaware, Mississauga, Odawa, Ojibway, and

     Pottawatomi tribes.

Culture: patterned actions and beliefs, rules for understanding and generating forms of

     action and perceiving the world and deciding what we should do.

Elder: someone highly regarded in the Aboriginal community as possessing knowledge

     and wisdom to be passed down to future generations (for the purpose of this

     study, the Elders have limited formal education and their first language is

     Anishinaabe, framing perceptions and orality of the "Indian mind").

Emic: description of a group's reality and experience from the insider's point of view,

     culture, and language.

Etic: description of a group's reality and experience from an outsider's point of view and

     experience, sometimes imposed without regard for relevance and meaning.

First Nations community - North American Indian reserves, of which there are more than

     600 in Canada.

First Nations people: North American Indians who are status or nonstatus and reside on

      or off reserve, are registered under the Indian Act, and referred to as *Indians* in

      the Canadian Constitution. Members across Canada speak 56 languages and have

      unique cultures, languages, political and spiritual traditions, forms of government,

      and histories of contact with colonial settlers. Their contemporary relations with

      federal and provincial governments are varied.

Inuit: the Indigenous people of Canada's Arctic, who live primarily in Inuit Nunaat

      (includes Nunavut, the Inuvialuit region in the Northwest Territories, Nunatsiavut

      in Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nunavik in Quebec.

Mainstream: the majority, dominant Canadian society. Aboriginal people interpret this to

      mean those who hold political, social, economic, religious, or academic power in

      Canada's institutions.

Métis: people of mixed Aboriginal and European ancestry who identify themselves as

      Métis.

Native: in the context of this paper, this term refers to the Aboriginal population (original

      inhabitants of this continent).

Study Overview

      Existing narrative assessment protocols are based on Western literacy traditions

and a Western clinical perspective (etically derived standards). The approach used in this

study presents an alternative view, derived from an emically derived perspective. This

study highlights specific narrative elements valued by Anishinaabe Elders and

demonstrated in the stories of Anishinaabe children. The study compares Anishinaabe

narrative elements with those of conventional clinical/Western perspective protocols and

encourages the use of a culturally sensitive lens and approach when evaluating Aboriginal students.

Reduced classroom participation and engagement of Aboriginal children contribute to an achievement gap and social exclusion within the school culture that Aboriginal students experience. There is a mismatch between the cognitive and learning processes that Aboriginal students bring to the classroom and the academic content and assessment process in the formal school system.

The fact that many Anishinaabek students do not actively engage at school and some choose not to speak in the classroom is disconcerting to me in my work as a facilitator of communication. School places a high value on verbal explanations and oral participation, and through this study I hope to encourage teachers and speech language clinicians to place a higher value on oral storytelling as a means of providing Aboriginal students with more opportunity to speak in class.

This study of Anishinaabe children's storytelling will present stories demonstrating specific themes and experiences that exemplify these students' background knowledge and ways of understanding. By better understanding their students' storytelling legacy, teachers and speech language clinicians may see the value of storytelling circles as one means of building relationships within the classroom. I hope that the Anishinaabek children who participated in the oral storytelling for this research will continue to feel valued and understood in the school system. I also hope that their teachers will feel eager to experience this kind of connection with their Aboriginal students, especially those students who are not yet engaged in the learning environment at school.

Teachers have told me that their knowledge of Aboriginal worldview, history, and culture is limited by a lack of exposure to Aboriginal peoples and issues in their personal schooling and community experience. The Anishinaabek children's narratives, and the values which Elders find in these narratives, will assist teachers in understanding their students.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has acknowledged the achievement gap (with regard to completion of formal schooling) that exists between Aboriginal students and other Canadian students, and some of the factors which explain this gap. Educators of Aboriginal students need to be aware of the importance of Aboriginal orality as a bridge to literacy and academic success, community participation, as well as Aboriginal student engagement. There is a need to move toward a more inclusive narrative assessment and intervention in the speech and language pathology protocols used with Aboriginal students, in order to minimize the disadvantages that Aboriginal children encounter at school.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter, a review of the research literature, is organized under 11 topics: general challenges in Aboriginal education; local control versus provincial jurisdiction; storytelling and academic success; narrative style and culture; Aboriginal narrative style; mainstream approaches to narrative evaluation; Algonquian narrative assessment; characteristics of Anishinaabemowin; the relationship of language and culture regarding "the Indian Mind"; English as a second language and Indian English; and recent developments regarding Aboriginal learning and standard English.

General Challenges in Aboriginal Education

The field of education research has provided many research studies, education policy reports, and program evaluations concerning the education of Aboriginal students. The *State of Learning in Canada: No Time For Complacency. Report on Learning in Canada 2007* highlights the interconnectedness of literacy with all aspects of economic, social, and cultural life and makes recommendations for governments, employers, laborunions, social institutions, and nongovernmental organizations, educators, and individuals to raise the overall literacy skills of adults in Canada. The document includes an examination of Aboriginal learning which encompasses a healthy balance between the spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual aspects of an individual. The report states that "today, many Aboriginal people face economic, social and systemic barriers to full participation in lifelong learning … [education] research overlooks the important

contributions that informal and traditional knowledge bring to Aboriginal learners."
(Canadian Council on Learning, 2007, p. 120.) It suggests that the definition of learning
success for Aboriginal peoples be broadened to reflect Aboriginal priorities, values, and
experiences and to support Aboriginal languages and preserve them from extinction.

   Educators are aware that Aboriginal children do not have the same degree of
academic success as non-Native students, and recently there has been a focus on
improving their literacy and numeracy skills in particular. In 2007, the Ontario Ministry
of Education (2007c) announced a focus on literacy instruction in its *Ontario First
Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework*, which acknowledged the need to
improve the academic outcomes for Aboriginal children. Since mainstream approaches
have clearly not resulted in success for Aboriginal students, it seems prudent for
educators, early childhood language practitioners, and speech language pathologists to
understand Aboriginal learning styles and curriculum approaches that will support
Aboriginal student literacy and success.

   Provincial education authorities and school districts have developed some
Aboriginal-specific content and themes as an add-on to subject matter. The Ontario
Ministry of Education (2008) released a teacher's toolkit from the Aboriginal Education
Office for use in elementary and secondary schools. These are add-on lessons in history,
language, social studies, geography, civics, English, business, and Canadian and world
studies. This curriculum development initiative was launched at the same time that the
Ontario Ministry of Education mandated cultural awareness training regarding First
Nations peoples for all educators. These developments arose from the *Ontario First
Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (Ontario Ministry of Education,

2007c). Aboriginal scholars and educators have expressed that schooling does not incorporate Aboriginal methods for transmitting knowledge and learning and dismisses Aboriginal worldview perspectives and consciousness. The mismatch of the school culture and the home and community Aboriginal culture contributes to further marginalization of Aboriginal students.

Friesen and Friesen (2005) illustrate the need for new curriculum approaches that integrate elements of traditional and contemporary First Nations culture and validate Aboriginal cultures and languages as central to the curriculum. The authors state that

> Native-originated curricula may serve to reduce the cultural gap for First Nations students between school and home community. It may help them feel more comfortable in school and possibly reduce the tension that may occur when the two cultures of nonnative and Native (teacher and student) meet (Friesen & Friesen, p. 188).

> Native teacher educator Robert Leavitt explored Native language and Native culture in the school curriculum. He asserted that when teachers base education programs on the adaptation of traditional Native educational practices, there is an opportunity to take advantage of what both the Native and non-Native cultures have to offer. Leavitt suggested that

> Teachers must distinguish between what is creative and helps students inquire into and build upon their own experience and what is assimilative and consequently destructive. They must consider whether they are encouraging students to take English and use it appropriately within their own culture. Only as they develop an understanding of students' needs and knowledge of students'

communities will teachers be able to find this ideal cultural balance in their work

(Leavitt, 1995, p. 136).

Leavitt critiqued Native as a second language (NSL) programs in the schools and noted

that students were learning how to speak their Aboriginal language only "in English" or

in the academic context. Learning how to use the Aboriginal language in meaningful

situations and to carry ideas of interest in a cultural context and with deeper

understanding of the community are not addressed by NSL programs. The author stated

that the overall goal for Aboriginal language instruction in the school should be for

students to have the capacity to achieve fluency. Facilitating thinking in the native

language and recognition among Aboriginal students that the language has value and

power creates enthusiasm and pride in learning. A heightened sense of place (e.g.,

perception of time as sequential rather than concrete, large-scale and small-scale study of

familiar places, working from what is familiar to the student, narrative expression of the

oral tradition where meanings are expressed regarding animals and people in the context

of everyday life, mythology and legend, use of classifier-rich verbs to describe attributes

of people and self, and building of new words and ideas) and understanding the ways that

talk facilitates knowing in the classroom and connection with elders are facilitated as the

Aboriginal language is used in teaching rather than as a stand-alone class. (Leavitt, 1987)

<p align="center">Local Control Versus Provincial Jurisdiction</p>

Relatively few First Nation communities have established elementary and

secondary schools on reserve in Canada since this became an option in 1982. Indian and

Northern Affairs Canada (2008b) reported from the 2006 census that the Aboriginal

population reached 1,172,785 in 2006 (2008b, Sect. 1). The Elementary Secondary

Education Program of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada funds First Nation band councils and education authorities for the schooling of children who attend schools on reserves (First Nation schools) or in provincially run schools off reserve (tuition agreements). In the 2006-2007 school year, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's Elementary Secondary Education Program supported approximately 120,000 students– 60% of First Nations students attended schools on reserve and 40% attended off reserve (Indian and Northern Affairs, 2008a)

Although First Nation controlled schools have led the way to transforming the curriculum and schooling of Aboriginal children, the process has been met with resistance from within and externally. The on reserve schools have limited resources for curriculum development and, for the most part, deliver the provincial curriculum. A number of First Nation schools offer Aboriginal first language instruction and Native Second Language courses and employ Aboriginal teachers and Elders as teachers. Where Aboriginal-specific curriculum is utilized and grounded in the values, history, and traditions of Aboriginal ways, community "buy-in" and support can sometimes be limited. Anderson (2002) explains a lack of community confidence that not only undermines local First Nation schools but also interrupts the transformation and improvement of curricular approaches for Aboriginal students in the provincial schools. The author's statement illustrates this phenomenon. "Aboriginal parents, teachers, and educators have learned well the lessons of the non-Aboriginal ways of School" (Anderson, p. 297).

First Nation communities negotiate tuition agreements with provincial school boards in situations where students attend school off reserve. Aboriginal people want to

see changes in the schooling of their children that not only include content regarding

culture and language but also improvements in the way the children are taught that is

more in tune with Aboriginal ways of learning. Schools and school administrators tend

to feel that multicultural education fits the bill and do not understand the problem when

such approaches to education are not seen as meeting the needs of the Aboriginal, tuition-

paying students. Ratna Ghosh (2002), who wrote a book about multicultural education,

succinctly explains the problem:

> As the original people of this land, Canada's Native people date back thousands
>
> of years. Some of them . . . can be traced back 9000 years . . . Canada's First
>
> Nations consist of over 550 Indian, Inuit, and Métis groups . . . The Natives lost
>
> control of their sociopolitical structures, as colonial strategies effectively eroded
>
> the majority of their institutions . . .
>
> Aboriginal peoples of Canada do not want to be part of "ethnic Canada"
>
> because they are not immigrants; nor do they consider themselves to be visible
>
> minorities. One of the major reasons for the reluctance of First Nations to
>
> become part of the federal multicultural policy is that, due to the settlement
>
> policies of successive governments, there has been a clash of interests between
>
> the Aboriginal and immigrant communities. It was in fact First Nations' land on
>
> which a number of immigrant settlements were authorized, thus bringing the
>
> Natives in direct economic as well as ideological conflict with the immigrant
>
> communities . . . To these groups, any association with ethnic or cultural minority
>
> status would mean giving up their claims and position on issues of sovereignty,
>
> land and rights, as well as their treaty obligations . . .

Another part of plural society, they assert that they are "citizens plus" and that their rights supersede all subsequent rights granted to other groups. Any real and long-term change will require education [policies and curricula] to be more reflective of and responsive to Aboriginal interests (Ghosh, 2002, p. 32).

<div style="text-align:center">Storytelling and Academic Success</div>

Narrative skills are important for social and academic success. Children who do not develop narrative structure typical for their age encounter compromised relationships with peers, adults, educators, and practitioners (Bliss & McCabe, 2008).

Oral storytelling is a relevant area to investigate since reading, writing, and spelling rely on an oral language basis. J. Johnston (2007) states that "a child's narrative performance in the primary years is a key index of language proficiency" (2007, p. 142). J. Johnston (2008) describes the important practical application of narratives in school. "Personal event narratives . . . allow us to build and renew bonds of common experience . . . a powerful social tool . . . and important forum for the practice of active listening" (p. 96). The author states that the paramount goal of the primary grades is literacy, and oral language development is important during these early years. "We have evidence of important links between oral language skill and reading success . . . [thus] . . . oral language facilitates literacy" (2008, p. 97).

Success in school requires vast experience and proficiency in oral language. "Comprehension of language and expression of knowledge through language are required for much of academic performance" (Hughes, McGillivray, & Schmidek, 1997, p. 7).

A report by Ball (2007) summarizes what is known about language and literacy development of Aboriginal children under the age of 6 in Canada. It includes the views

of Aboriginal leaders, parents, Elders, early childhood educators, and speech-language pathologists with experience providing services to Aboriginal children. With regards to literacy, the author concludes that "most researchers view reading and writing, including spelling, as reliant on oral language skills" (p. 6). The important relationship between language, culture, and the expression of thought is explored as this relates to Aboriginal children and Aboriginal languages. "Language, thought, and culture are inextricably bound. Language and the way we use it are passed down through previous generations within our respective cultural communities" (Ball, p. 7).

Researchers have linked success in school with proficiency in oral language, and early intervention programs have targeted language proficiency to increase later success in school. Campbell and Ramey (1994) studied the effects of early intervention on the intellectual and academic performance of children from low-income families. The authors illustrated various positive effects, most notably improvements in verbal IQ scores. Hart and Risley (1995) followed up on children who received early intervention programming in the community and conducted a long-term study of parent interactions with young children in their homes. The authors concluded that "early intervention programs that provide enriched experience *do* improve the lives of children" in that fewer were later placed in a special education program or failed a grade, more completed high school, and gained employment (Hart & Risley, p. 209). Early language learning was linked to achievement of levels of intellectual performance requisite for success later in life. The researchers identified five quality indicators of enriched experience in the home (e.g., vocabulary, sentence structure, number of choices given to the children, responsiveness to the child's speech, emotional quality of the interactions) that positively

impacted children's vocabulary growth, vocabulary use, and IQ scores at age 3 with predictability to age 9 years. Interaction and language input were identified as the most crucial environmental and parenting factors.

Burnaby (1982) explored Native language programs in Canada and reported on effective literacy approaches for Aboriginal children. She states that Aboriginal children who speak their Native language are not able to predict well when reading in English. Burnaby recommends that when introducing young Native students to reading in English, with the aim of promoting success in their early experiences with reading,

> it is important that they first receive enough training in the oral language and that they be familiar with the language forms they are expected to read . . . it is equally important that they be given materials to read which use language forms and ideas that they are acquainted with. What often happens . . . is that teachers attempt to teach English *through* reading (Burnaby, 1982, p. 34).

The author explains that this approach produces lack of success in both acquisition of English language and reading skills.

Leap (1993) explored "Indian English" in the United States and illustrated the approach in some schools where the language arts curriculum focused on developing Indian English fluency as a foundation for standard English skill acquisition. Restoring and strengthening speaker fluency in the ancestral language of the tribe was seen as important in the acquisition of literacy skills (p. 4).

Aboriginal scholar Delores Van der Wey illustrated the impact of experiential learning and life experience in a First Nations community in British Columbia with regards to the facilitation of learning in the Aboriginal students she taught in the

classroom. She noted that "although experience may well be the foundation of learning, it does not in itself lead to it; there must be active critical engagement with it" (Van der Wey, 2001, p. 64). The author explains that by engaging in a dialogue with our experiences and sharing with others, deeper understanding and knowledge are created. Her approach to teaching included the sharing of personal event stories about culturally relevant field trips, and this was found to create opportunities for profound understanding among her students. Such a process is described as important for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students by the author:

> We must be open to the limitless possibilities of significant experiences and develop a reflective practice that allows us to weave these experiences and identities together into a meaningful whole. I think that with ample opportunities for experiential learning, combined with the analytical component, rich, meaningful learning can take place with our students . . . They too may look out onto the world from different perspectives in the light of their own, personal histories and view that world uniquely. (Van der Wey, p. 65)

Storytelling activities are relevant for Aboriginal children as a means for the teacher and the students' peers to better understand the individual who is sharing the story. Children typically offer personal event narratives in conversation and during social interactions. Van der Wey (2001) lends support to the use of storytelling and to personal event stories in particular, as these create a window of opportunity in the classroom for increased understanding and creation of shared knowledge. "The telling of personal experience is incorporated into classrooms in ways that deepen discussion and promote further enquiry" (Van der Wey, p. 57).

Kanu (2002) interviewed Aboriginal students in an inner-city high school to learn about traditional Aboriginal approaches to learning as these relate to patterns of oral interaction, concepts of self, curriculum relevance, and the teacher's interpersonal style. The study was based on the sociocultural theory of cognition which links the development of a child's thinking, communication, learning, and motivation with the culture into which the child is socialized. Kanu explains that Aboriginal students are comfortable with "oral instructional methods such as storytelling [which] are an important cultural approach to learning for these students" (p. 108). Stories are shared with the expectation that listeners will make their own meaning. Each story challenges the individual listener to learn something, and layers of meaning are decoded according to each listener's readiness. Students favoured teachers with a concise communication style that provides direct guidance. The researcher illustrates that less concise styles were problematic: "The verbal saturation that characterizes much of school instruction, especially when this instruction is fast-paced and delivered in a different language, is not conducive to academic success for [Aboriginal students]" (Kanu, p.108). Aboriginal cultures are typically based on the value of noninterference, where direct criticism of an individual is avoided. The students who are highly verbal are almost always favored in the formal school setting. Aboriginal students in the study reported that they were most uncomfortable when called on to make an oral presentation in front of the class because this method of learning always resulted in direct criticism. Students did not know and trust the people in their classroom, and so they chose silence as the best defense mechanism against criticism.

Chambers Erasmus (1989) notes that educators usually miss the opportunity to use the personal experience narrative as a valuable communicative tool for Aboriginal students. "In most formal learning situations, such as the public school classroom . . . personal experience stories are rarely considered legitimate sources of knowledge" (p. 268).

Narrative Style and Culture

J. Johnston's book (2007) illustrates the importance of investigating children's narratives with a view to the fact that the definition of a "good story" can differ from culture to culture. "In mainstream North American cultures, a good story is likely to be one that is problem centered; includes attempts and outcomes; and comments about the characters' feelings, motives, and plans" (p. 145). There is a tendency to expect the child to include

> one episode with all of its components: setting, problem or initiating event, plan, attempt, outcome, response, and ending . . . Keep in mind, however, that this particular version of story grammar is drawn from the Western European cultures and that children from other culture groups may be using a different story scheme. (Johnston, p.150)

In a study involving Indo-Canadian mothers of preschool children, Johnston (2007) engaged cultural informants to understand survey results regarding parent-child interaction patterns. Misjudgements from mainstream clinical perspective were minimized when the social context and interaction patterns of the community and culture were considered. "Answers to many of the survey questions were clearly different for

mothers in the Western and non-Western cultures, and these differences invite us to rethink our advice to families" (Johnston, p. 264).

The importance of creating culturally sensitive and relevant intervention approaches by speech-language clinicians and early childhood educators is coming to light in the face of the growing diversity of urban society. A study of Chinese and Western mothers of preschool children by J. Johnston and Wong (2002) led to the conclusion that books per se are not relevant in the language facilitation contexts of Chinese families, while family photo albums and oral story telling activities are. The authors call for "speech-language pathologists and early childhood educators to build on cultural strengths or to offer functional equivalents when Western models run counter to cultural biases [when working] with other culture groups" (Johnston and Wong, p. 923).

A review of a study of Central American and European American mothers telling stories with their preschool aged child by Melzi (2000) adds relevant information to the idea of using shared personal event stories with peers. Melzi found that when story events were shared by the storyteller and listener, the mother/listener tended to prompt the child to share feelings and opinions about the event rather than factual retelling of information in common.

Gutierrez-Clellen and Quinn (1993) reviewed the assessment practices traditionally utilized by clinicians to examine children's discourse skills and recommended dynamic assessment as a nondiscriminatory alternative. The authors state that

> most of the analytical frameworks . . . used to evaluate narratives suggest that the
> structure of stories is universal and that we may apply the same approach to assess

any narrative produced by a speaker in any context . . . [This practice is

problematic because] individual differences in children's narrative performance

may reflect differences in experience with listening and telling stories, general

world knowledge, and assumptions about audience involvement in narrative

interactions. Narrative tasks used in assessment do not uncover knowledge of

story structure but, rather, familiarity with the discourse rules of the dominant

cultural group. (p. 2)

The authors compare two of the main approaches, known as high point analysis

and story grammar, typically used by clinicians when analyzing children's narratives

(Gutierrez-Clellen & Quinn, 1993). *High point* analysis includes an *abstract* or

introducer at the beginning of the story which serves to give an overview of the event and

get the listener's attention. The *orientation* provides background and setting information.

The *complicating action* gives actions leading up to and including the high point. The

evaluation gives evaluative or emotional comments about the high point and is critical for

high point analysis because it provides the point of the narrative–why it was told, what

the narrative was getting at, what to think about the person, place, or event. The

resolution caps the event and resolves any complications. The *coda* closes the story and

bridges the end of the story to the present context.

Story grammar analysis includes the *setting* or a reference to time and place,

usually including introduction of one or more characters. The *initiating event* is

sometimes called "complication" and sets the events of the story in motion, including a

problem that requires a solution–it functions to make the protagonist want to achieve a

goal or change of state. The *internal response* is a statement of how the character feels in

response to the initiating event and usually contains an emotion word–it motivates the protagonist to act. The *internal plan* is a statement of an idea that might fix the problem and may be considered to be part of the internal response. The *attempt* is some action taken by the main character meant to solve the problem–there may be several attempts without a statement of consequences before the end of a story. The *consequence* includes the event(s) following the attempt and causally linked to it, whether successful or not (there can be several consequences to an attempt). The *reaction* is the final state or situation triggered by the initiating event that does not cause or lead to other actions or states.

The two approaches are summarized in Table 1.

The storyteller's perspective on the purpose and context of the storytelling also influences what is told. "Much of what one considers relevant to be told, emphasized, or explained is dependent upon cultural assumptions about the reportability of narrative information and the assumed role of the audience in deriving unstated meanings. Thus, an analysis of narratives based on discrete informational units or story constituents may not be a useful indicator of narrative ability across cultural/linguistic groups" (Gutierrez-Clellen & Quinn, 1993, p. 4).

The importance of accommodating cultural differences in understanding narratives is explored, and dynamic assessment as a relevant tool is supported by Gutierrez-Clellen, Peña, and Quinn (1995). The expectations regarding narrative performance during elicitation influences the storyteller's production and may not provide opportunity for the child to demonstrate how their storytelling has been normalized through socialization within their own culture. A dynamic assessment

Table 1: Units of High Point versus Story Grammar Analysis*

High Point	Story Grammar
Abstract (a short summary)	
Orientation (place, time, characters)	Setting
Complicating Action	Initiating Event
Evaluation (e.g., "It was a bad experience.")	Internal Response (e.g., "He was angry.")
	Plan (strategy for achieving goal)
Resolution	Attempt (actions to obtain goal)
Coda (e.g., "the end")	Consequence (success or failure of actions)
	Reaction

(Gutierrez-Clellen & Quinn, 1993)

procedure was recommended as a means to "both assess narrative learning in the classroom and modify narrative performance to widen children's narrative repertoire" (Gutierrez-Clellen et al., p. 55). The authors illustrate limitations with applying normative data or "static" assessment procedures to children's narratives, since comparison to norms assumes cultural homogeneity and the evaluator applies the illusion that the subject matches by "cultural membership."

> Narrative socialization takes place in the context of culturally based values and beliefs, which determine appropriate social roles for children and familiar adults . . . Children with limited narrative socialization experiences in these contexts [classroom] may not have the opportunity to demonstrate their true language-learning potential. (Gutierrez-Clellen et al., p. 58).

Spanish-English bilingual and Mexican children in Head Start classrooms in southwest Texas were observed by the researchers. The narrative interactions showed great variation of teacher mediation and variability in the opportunity for narrative development. An assessment process that includes ethnographic information regarding types of narrative contexts, participant structures, and teacher mediation strategies was recommended to enhance learning classroom narrative applications without penalty for different narrative background from mainstream children. The test-teach-retest format of dynamic assessment focused teachers on interventions and instruction to help children learn strategies, internalize them, and apply them independently in new situations.

Pena et al. (2006) studied the use of dynamic assessment to identify children with language impairment. The researchers used transcriptions of children's narratives from audiotape and the Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT) software

program for analysis. The dynamic assessment of narrative protocol described by L. Miller et al. (2001) was applied along with productivity measures (mean length of utterance, clauses, number of different words, number of words) using the SALT analysis. Results showed that children who have normal language learning abilities (language difference) and have varied experiences on tasks such as storytelling with different expectations, perform below the normal range when evaluated with Miller's protocol. "Dynamic assessment follow-up with children who perform below expectations can help clinicians differentiate between children's language difference and language impairment" (Pena, et al., p. 1050).

Bliss and McCabe (2008) described personal narrative examinations of macrostructure (high point analysis) and content/manner features, illustrating the impact of cultural differences on these European North American-based evaluations. The authors recommend that clinicians "need to understand the cultural backgrounds and home discourse styles of their clients and their families before they make clinical decisions" (p. 173). Since age, language abilities, and culture affect the manner in which personal narratives are related, it is important that teachers provide instruction to *all* children regarding comprehension and oral telling of classically structured narratives.

Michaels (1981) investigated "sharing time" in an ethnically mixed grade 1 classroom in the United States. As children were observed giving an account of a past event to the class, the teacher used questions and comments to structure and focus their discourse. The researcher describes characteristics of the children's narrative styles and cultural background, showing that children of differing backgrounds present at school with different narrative strategies and presentation styles. The children in the classroom

whose discourse style matched the teacher's own literate style and expectations gained informal practice to develop a literate discourse style. The children of other cultural backgrounds, however, were observed to start out with the absence of shared discourse conventions and interpretive strategies, and this denied them access to experiences for practice. In such cases the teacher's "lack of a sense of topic, differing narrative schemata, and apparent misreading of prosodic cues resulted in asynchronous pacing of teacher/child exchanges, fragmentation of the topic, and misevaluation of intent" (Michaels, p. 440). This hindered the teacher from facilitating the development of a lexically and grammatically elaborated account during sharing time.   These "mismatches in conversational style" contributed to adverse educational experiences and outcomes.

<div align="center">Aboriginal Narrative Style</div>

"Storytelling is a social event governed by cultural norms and values. These extralinguistic rules dictate appropriate narrative behavior" (Gutierrez-Clellen & Quinn, 1993, p. 4). Storytelling is culturally relevant to the First Nations community and is an important life skill valued by the community's traditional practice of an oral history and oral language. By gathering information about the components and aspects of narratives in Aboriginal children, we can gain insight to Aboriginal orality. This knowledge can guide educators in creating culturally sensitive and appropriate bridges between storytelling and literacy areas of the language arts curriculum.

Narrative and the storytelling process for Athabascan (Dené language group) people is described by Chambers Erasmus (1989) to show differences in the manner of presentation that are culturally related to life experience and purpose of storytelling. A mismatch between the discourse styles of Aboriginal people and what is expected in the

classroom is described by the author. Teachers value the stories that children bring to school as linguistic and cognitive precursors to literate narrative forms exemplified in literature. In the primary grades, teachers promote opportunities for oral language development as a means to achieving success at literacy. Because Aboriginal learners use unfamiliar manners of narrative presentation such as rhetorical style, teachers do not hear the logic in the telling . Chambers Erasmus summarizes:

> People from the dominant English-speaking culture often perceive the discourse of nonmainstream speakers to be incoherent, disconnected, rambling, illogical, and untruthful. When a person's discourse is devalued, so too are the meanings, experiences, and knowledge to which that discourse refers . . . Thus, the "ways with words" which are part of the aboriginal child's lived cultural experience become an impediment to achievement in schools. (p. 273)

The author calls for teachers to truly listen as Aboriginal children disclose who they are through their stories in order to extend, rather than limit, the possibilities that these children bring to school. This will reduce alienation and teachers floundering in response to aboriginal children in the classroom.

> We, as teachers must confirm and validate the experiences and knowledge of aboriginal learners as well as the cultural context in which those experiences live and that knowledge is situated. To do this, we must listen to their stories and hear who they are. We must learn to listen and listen to learn. (Chambers Erasmus, p. 274)

Researchers in Canada and the United States have identified narrative developmental sequences for non-Aboriginal populations from the perspective of

Western literacy traditions utilizing analytical dissection of the story structure and meaning. A few Aboriginal scholars have written about the nature of Aboriginal narrative and the important context that the listener(s) bring to the storytelling situation. These descriptions are pertinent to a specific geographic region and tribal area, and so it will be interesting to see if similarities exist in this particular locale.

Writings by researchers interested in the social and cultural implications of storytelling have raised awareness of the need to understand First Nations' orality and create discourse to accommodate Aboriginal narratives within an academic framework. Archibald (1997) investigated storytelling in a coastal Salish community in British Columbia. Four years spent with the Elders revealed ways to blend cultural values of respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy within stories. The utility of storytelling activities for educational purposes was apparent since stories "help people think, feel, and be" (p. 212).

Simpson (2000) shared her cultural knowledge as an Anishinaabe person and her relationship with Elders in Manitoba and Ontario. Oral tradition, a method for transmitting knowledge and learning among Anishinaabek people, effectively uses storytelling in teaching and learning. This tradition is based on the Anishinaabe worldview. The author describes Anishinaabe stories and suggests ways for educators and researchers to understand them.

> Traditional stories provide us with a lens to see the past and with a context to
> interpret that experience. It is therefore vital to be aware of the cultural "rules"
> regulating the oral tradition. These rules must be practiced when interpreting the
> stories. (Storytelling section, para.3)

Simpson (2000) identified two types of stories: anecdotes or narratives about exceptional experiences; and sacred stories. She describes the foundation of Indigenous knowledge and the process of coming to know as spiritual in nature. This is problematic in applications to the academy and research paradigms where the reliability or validity of spiritually derived knowledge is questioned. Simpson acknowledges that spiritual knowledge provides the foundation of her studies. Opportunity for decolonizing research and education processes presents itself in the current trend in Aboriginal communities where the people are taking more control over research in the community. Simpson sees potential for application of various methods and processes (Western scientific, Indigenous) in a collaborative and participatory approach for research in First Nations contexts where diversity of methods best meets the local community needs in research. This study has led me to think about how to "set the stage" for storytelling among the children when I meet with them to gather narratives.

The work of Piquemal (2003a) examines the dichotomy between First Nations orality and Western literacy and use in education. I found this very thought provoking and it helped me to see practical outcomes for my own study. If we can better understand the intellectual and social aspects of First Nations oral storytelling, we can feel confident in our ability to appreciate and evaluate the process sensitively and fairly. We can see from Piquemal's paper that storytelling is a suitable bridge for First Nations students from orality to literacy. First Nations' worldviews and models of discourse are legitimate ways of knowing and learning. Piquemal describes the circular structure of the traditional tribal narrative (e.g., events within events and meaning piled on meaning) as a story is unfolded. The form and structure are unlike those of Western fiction in that they

are not tied to any particular time line, main character, or event. Rather than a good

versus evil order, these stories focus on a concern for balance and harmony. Meanings

arise from the story as a whole in a holistic context, and a moral may not be stated

explicitly-the listener constructs meaning over time, after the storytelling event.

Narratives are shaped by the interaction of the storyteller and the listener/s and therefore

are subject to change when being retold–"each telling corresponds to a unique situation"

(Piquemal, Western Literacy versus Oral Tradition section, para. 12).

Mader (1996) studied the stories of 7 traditional educators in a northern Alberta

Cree community, and her extensive work is reported in a doctoral dissertation. Her

teachers were community Elders. She described them as being respected for their

wisdom and she explained that they are not necessarily old to gain the honour. Elders

freely offer their wisdom to living generations of their people in order to connect them

harmoniously with their past, present, and future and sharing with newcomers. Mader

illustrates the learning process in a First Nation learning context and shares insights

gained. She explains that asking a direct question does not guarantee a verbal response

and, in verbal stories, time is circular. The storyteller described life events but often not

in chronological order since a timeline in a story is not important. Each retelling of a

story is valid. The elder picked and chose stories of her life to facilitate the author's

learning.

Howard (1999) describes the stories and oral tradition of the Lakota people and

shares the value, meaning, and understanding of Elders. Oral storytelling provides an

opportunity for the storyteller to share a message that reinforces important cultural

values. "Non-Indians should resist making judgments about stories of off-color jokes

told by Indian people, because the function such tales serve in the Indian community is complex and vital . . . retaining the values and social relations of traditional society" (Howard, p. 49). The author illustrates that this problem stems from the "mainstream American culture," or MAC, which does not share cultural background and experience in Indian ways, so that the story's significance is misunderstood.

Howard provides examples of some characteristics of oral stories set in current times that include a mythical character from traditional stories. This exemplifies the flexibility of the Lakota oral tradition that encourages individuality and creativity and where

> the storyteller's ability to shape the story to fit his or her audience allows for the successful transmission of cultural values embedded within the story . . . and . . . the performative aspect voice pitch and tone, pauses, gestures, the use of a drum – greatly add to the experience" (Howard, 1999, p. 51).

Howard urges "outsiders" to

> take the time and effort to look below the surface, to see . . . the truth and the heart of meaning [or] non-Indian understanding of native cultures and storytelling will be at best superficial, at worst, completely wrong (Howard, 1999, p. 52).

Accounts of stories passed down from a Dakota grandmother to her granddaughter are shared by Cavender (1996) to illustrate the important role of oral history and narrative. Dakota oral tradition includes oral history and ensures each generation understands its own history and responsibilities to future generations. Story repetition is an important acquired skill arising from rigorous and extensive training in

Dakota life. The storyteller's connection to the land and place is solidified with each

telling of a story.

> Dakota stories are not written, and Dakota people are responsible for their

repetition.

> These are not merely interesting stories or even the simple dissemination of
>
> historical facts. They are, more importantly, transmissions of culture upon which
>
> our survival as a people depends . . . The learning of these stories is a lifelong
>
> process and, likewise, the rewards of that process last a lifetime (Cavender, p.
>
> 13).

The author concludes that stories help the young people, the children, and grandchildren

of the elders and storytellers, gain an understanding of where they came from, who they

are, and what is expected of them.

Mainstream Approaches to Evaluating Children's Narratives

A number of researchers have described the components of meaning and structure

they find within children's narratives. These studies illustrate the features considered

important from the perspective of Western literacy, which holds the elements of classic

Western literature as learning and mastery targets for children.

McCabe and Peterson (1984) gathered 288 personal narratives of 3- to 9-year-olds

in Ohio. University undergraduate students and faculty members from Memorial

University, Newfoundland scored the samples on a 6-point scale to identify the "good"

stories, and the researcher analyzed each story according to story grammar/episodic

structure (problem-solving), Labov's high point analysis (emotional crisis), and Deese's

dependency analysis (linguistic complexity or propositions). Results indicated that no

one story analysis system was efficient for story evaluation on its own and "good" stories contained two out of three story elements.

A large study was carried out in Edmonton, Alberta in 2006 by Schneider, Hayward, and Dubé. This study produced normative data for story grammar unit development in children ages 4 to 9 years. The Codes for Human Analysis of Transcripts (CHAT) story coding and Child Language Analysis (CLAN) software were used to analyze the stories according to story grammar units and structural patterns. Picture sequences were used to elicit the stories, and these depicted an elephant and a giraffe in urban settings such as a public swimming pool. Results showed that language impairment could not be determined by a child's performance on the narrative tasks; however narrative analysis was found to be a useful component in a speech and language assessment. The researchers encouraged others to use the protocol to obtain local norms for narrative content and structure.

Stein and Glenn (1982) researched kindergarten, grade 2, grade 3, and grade 6 students' narratives in upper middle class schools in Missouri and Pennsylvania to see how story grammars could be applied to assess the type and degree of story knowledge acquired and to find out if elementary school children had acquired the necessary knowledge and ordering skills to construct story sequences. The authors reported that older children have acquired more knowledge of stories from exposure in school, and younger children tend to assume that the listener has the same background knowledge and therefore tend not to elaborate. The investigation concludes that "as children reach the age of 10 or 11 . . . they may become much more aware of the structure of stories and

more sensitive to the effects of different text variations . . . [due to] time and experience with texts" (p. 279).

Studies have also investigated the storytelling abilities of learning disabled children compared to nondisabled children. In Ohio, Ripich and Griffith sampled stories retold and elicited by picture sequences in 1988. Twenty-four children, aged 7 to 12 years, 11 months were given a story-elicitation protocol, and scores for story events correct, story structures, propositions, and cohesive devices were compared to vocabulary age scores on a standardized test. Results showed a developmental progression for story grammar acquisition across all ages. Learning disabled students recalled as much information as nondisabled children, included as much information in self-generated narratives, and the same level of story grammar organization. When pictures were used to elicit stories, the amount of story content was reduced and this was felt to be due to storyteller's assumptions about listener's knowledge provided by the visual props.

J. Johnston (1982) reviews four perspectives on narrative structure from the literature and illustrates how these perspectives provide insight into clinical narrative analysis. The general story grammar approach of Stein and Glenn (1979) provides a description of the setting unit and episode structure with a definition of the components of each. The basic story recipe is outlined as follows: Story = Setting + Episode Structure. The detailed formula for an episode is: Episode = Initiating Event + Internal Response + Plan + Attempt + Consequence + Reaction. "Not all stories follow the Stein and Glenn model precisely . . . but this general descriptive framework has proven surprisingly useful in investigations of narrative processing" (J. Johnston, p. 145).

The script aspect of narrative content is described as consisting "of an individual's expectations about particular sorts of event sequences . . . derived from prior experience [and is] . . . an organizing scheme to interpret stories" (J. Johnston, 1982, p. 148). Texts are described by Johnston as linguistic tools which the speaker uses to link individual sentences, such as conjunctions, articles, and pronouns, that serve a binding function and build cohesive ties between sentences. Communication acts are explained as important to the function of the narrative by facilitating listener comprehension with an appropriate flow of information. Planning on the part of the storyteller is important as he/she provides sufficient factual information and elaborates unfamiliar aspects of the scripts. "The speaker must estimate the degree of common knowledge prior to relating the tale" (J. Johnston, p. 152). Shared information and common perspective on an event lead to understanding of clear motives and outcomes in a narrative. Suggestions for narrative remediation for older language-disordered children are offered by the author, such as assessing the listener's needs, using story grammars, and planning effective communication acts.

Petersen, Laing Gillam, and Gillam (2008) reviewed norm-referenced and criterion-referenced narrative assessment tools. The paucity of norm-referenced instruments where a child's individual scores are compared to a standardization sample was described. Criterion-referenced tools were explored that describe the child's knowledge and skill regarding particular abilities and are applied to set a standard for mastery or proficiency. The authors introduced a criterion-referenced tool called the Index of Narrative Complexity. This story coding system was found to be a reliable measure of students' narrative production before and after intervention (p. 128).

Research using mainstream narrative analysis tools is rooted in the perspective of Western literacy. Classic elements of Western literature are identified as markers of learning and mastery targets for children. These approaches are familiar to North American speech and language pathologists, linguists, and education practitioners and promote further investigation of narrative structure and content in children as a means of determining language competency. Recently the practice of dynamic assessment procedures regarding narrative has arisen in Canada, and eventually this approach may replace the current practices. Sadly, from my own Anishinaabe perspective, it is anticipated that ongoing use of narrative assessment tools based on the dominant viewpoints will continue to be administered for a number of years, framed by misinterpretation of Aboriginal children's story abilities as an outcome of valuation from hegemony.

<center>Assessing Aboriginal Children's Narratives</center>

Relatively little is known about the nature of Aboriginal storytelling and its applications to learning. I searched the ERIC and EBSCO host databases to examine research supporting the acknowledgment of the Aboriginal ways of knowing and learning and relationship to narrative structure, content, and use. A few studies of Aboriginal narratives have been surveyed, and these provide details regarding the social and cultural aspects of storytelling that are important considerations.

Pesco (1994) gathered "shared experience narratives" from 18 Algonquin children, aged 10 to 13 years, in Rapid Lake, Quebec. High point analysis revealed similar findings regarding inclusion of narrative elements as in studies of non-Aboriginal children. With regards to story structure, complete or complex episodes were present;

however internal response and internal plan were typically absent. Pesco concluded that emphasis on goal-directed behavior was not suited to Algonquin children's narratives. Half of the stories ended at the high point without resolution (A resolution or "problem-solved" status is typically expected in mainstream stories.) The key factor revealed from Pesco's study is that of teller-listener relationship. Algonquin children's narratives placed equal value for relating to each other as relating events during the storytelling interactions with peers. This is a very interesting phenomenon which leads us to understand that the storytelling context is of high importance when sampling Aboriginal children's narratives, and it has implications for storytelling curriculum activities as well.

The type of story grammar analysis carried out in Pesco's (1994) study is limited for application to understanding Aboriginal narrative. J. Johnston (2007) illustrates this point:

> [An] episode with all of its components: setting, problem or initiating event, plan, attempt, outcome, response, ending . . . is a particular version of story grammar drawn from the Western European cultures and . . . children from other culture groups may be using a different story scheme" (p. 150).

Cronin (1982) studied 16 grade 6 Cree and Métis children in the subboreal, Cree Woods community of Lac La Biche, Alberta and illustrated the importance of teaching Cree story structure in schools. The students were read a traditional Cree narrative and a Euro-American folktale in English and were asked to recall. The children had better recall for the conventional European structure. The Cree narrative was described as deviating from the ideal structure used in the school system. The study showed that the students seemed to comprehend traditional Cree narratives better than non-Native

children, but they already had a well-established Euro-American story schema after 6 years of attendance at a large integrated school. They lacked significant knowledge of a traditional Cree story structure. The authors acknowledge that use of narrative structure can facilitate learning in many subject areas (e.g., social studies) and recommended that they "re-learn the appreciation of their traditional narrative as a means of ensuring cultural continuity within the dominant society" within the "broader context of cultural reorientation" (Cronin, p. 14).

Bird and Vetter (1994) further illustrate this point in their study of Chippewa-Cree children on the Rocky Boy Reservation in Montana. They gathered three stories from 40 normally developing children in kindergarten, grade 1, grade 3, and grade 5, evaluated the story content and structure using the typical perspective of clinical practice, and analyzed the stories using the SALT software. The researchers compared the structure and content of narratives from traditional versus nontraditional students and found a diversity of story structures used within this cultural group. They concluded that episodic structure is an appropriate means of analyzing Aboriginal narratives, and older children told stories that included complete episodes, obstacles, elaborated endings, and multiple, causally connected episodes more than did younger children. Frequency of intrapersonal obstacle use was found to be a more sensitive measure for Chippewa-Cree children than what has been seen in applications to mainstream populations. These researchers felt that use of emically derived structural accounts would have differed from the etically derived or clinical analysis that they employed and would have revealed a better description of the stories of Chippewa-Cree children. They recommended future research to contrast etic measures with emic accounts of the same stories from Aboriginal children.

Characteristics of Anishnaabemowin

Anishinaabe, and its plural form Anishinaabek, refer to the Ojibway and Algonquin people, while Anishnaabemowin refers to their Aboriginal language. Others sometimes refer to it as Ojibway, or what linguist Rhodes (1993) calls the Eastern dialect, spoken along the eastern shore of Georgian Bay and throughout the east to Quebec (where it meets the Algonquin dialect). Rhodes distinguishes two groups of Ojibwa dialects. The northern grouping is comprised of the Severn Ojibwa dialect spoken in northern Ontario (and also known by those speakers as Cree) and the Algonquin dialect of southwestern Quebec. The southern grouping includes all others, including the Eastern, Southwestern and Ottawa dialects. The Eastern dialect shares with the Ottawa dialect the same distinctive feature of lost unstressed vowels, a process that occurred over the past 50 years (Rhodes, p. x).

Anishinaabe scholar Cecilia Sugarhead recorded Ojibway stories from northwestern Ontario and provided this explanation of the language usage and dialects. "The Ojibwe language is spoken throughout Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and northwestern Quebec, as well as Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Within the Ojibwe language, there is a wide range of dialect variation" (Sugarhead, 1996, p. ix). She refers to the Severn Ojibway dialect, also known as Oji-Cree, being the northernmost Ojibwe dialect spoken in Ontario and reflecting a high degree of Cree linguistic and cultural influence. Her collection of stories distinguishes between two types of Ojibway stories. There is the "legend . . . understood to refer to true stories about a mythical past. These stories may refer to a time before the earth and the humans on it were fully formed, and when creatures which no longer exist were present" (p. xii). There is also the "story .

. . category [that] covers a wide variety of types, including historical and personal accounts, amusing stories, and others" (p. xii).

Valentine (1995) is a linguistic anthropologist who studied the Algonquin people in northwestern Ontario. She provides detailed descriptions of the Severn Ojibway language and its use in the context of the local culture. The two basic narrative categories are *tipaacimowinan* or stories of historical and personal importance, and *aatisoohkaanan* or legend-myths (Valentine, p. 171).

 Burnaby reminds us that "among Native languages in Canada, there are eleven different language families [or] groups of languages . . . some of these language families are represented by only one language while others contain a number of distinct languages" (1982, p. 4). She explains that

> there is no firm evidence that any of North America's Native language had a
> writing system which precisely represented spoken language before the arrival of
> the Europeans . . . Writing systems based on the Roman alphabet were developed
> and used . . . for a range of purposes from jotting down names and words to
> writing political and religious texts. In the past two centuries . . . the syllabic
> writing system for Algonquin, Inuit, and Athapaskan languages . . . [and in the
> 19th century] Roman alphabet-based systems have been developed for virtually all
> Native languages in Canada (Burnaby, p. 10)

Sugarhead provides a review of "the syllabic orthography which has been established in northern Ontario for over one hundred years . . . although the extent of literacy in the syllabic orthography varies widely in Ojibwe-speaking communities" (Sugarhead, 1996, p. xiii). The author uses the Roman writing system which is a version

from the linguistic transcription used by Bloomfield in 1958 and mentions that the same writing system was used in 1988 when the New Testament was published in this written form of Ojibwe.

Sugarhead observes that "the syllabic writing system, commonly referred to as "syllabics", or "Cree syllabics" was introduced to speakers of Cree in 1839 by the missionary James Evans . . . [and] was disseminated and widely used among speakers of both Cree and Ojibwe" (1996, p. xiii). She notes the absence of a consistent writing system for Ojibwe when she states, "there is a considerable amount of orthographic variation from community to community, even within communities" (p. xix).

Valentine (1995) describes use of the Cree syllabic system for writing Severn Ojibwe. Although the system makes decoding and comprehension a challenge, the author states that high levels of literacy in Ojibwe have been achieved (p. 12).

Anishinaabe scholar Basil Johnston compiled an Ojibway language dictionary for beginners. He explained that previous works in print and use "were written by missionaries for missionaries" (B. Johnston, 1978, p. 3). The author presents a lexicon and explains that there are more than 300 prefixes and probably more than 100 suffixes which can be combined to form new terms and change meanings of words. He describes "the character and nature of the Ojibway language [as] different from that of English" and also emphasizes that "its purpose is different from other lexicons in scope and direction" (p. 3). The author describes how prefixes and suffixes make the language versatile to incorporate new terms and to compose new ones (e.g., the words for "dryer," "washer," "water sprinkler").

Spielmann (1998) studied the "language-in-use" discourse patterns and features of Anishinaabe people to gain insight regarding how the people think and do things through talk. He states an underlying principle that

> the maintaining of one's Native language is tantamount to maintaining one's culture . . . language is the heart and soul of a culture. If a person loses his or her language, lost also are the ideas and culture-specific ways of relating to each other. Aboriginal peoples need their languages to preserve thoughts and ideas that can only best be expressed in their language of origin" (Spielmann, p. 238).

The author stressed the role of Aboriginal language in accessing the knowledge and wisdom of the Elders, prevention of assimilation, and preservation of tradition-specific ways of relating to others. He states that "the philosophy, world view, spirituality, and culture-specific ways of thinking and doing things of a people are built right into the very structure of their language" (p. 239).

Leavitt (1995) explored language and cultural content in Native education and illustrated important differences between Aboriginal languages and English to show how Native "ways of knowing, ways of interacting, and ways of using language are not normally exploited in formal school" (p. 125). The author highlights the dominance of verbs in Native languages, which is consistent with Aboriginal "awareness of happening, eventuating, change, flow, interrelationship" (Leavitt, p. 133).

Aboriginal children's eyes and ears typically attend to what is happening *now*, notes Leavitt, in contrast to the school situation where attention is on the *goal*. Size, color, and shapes are not labeled as abstract entities. Similarly parts of a whole, such as

"face," are described in relation to an object with that particular shape, size, or color or the expression or state of that particular face. Leavitt gives these examples to show some

fundamental differences in the thinking of people who speak different languages

. . . deeper differences in the nature of knowledge itself, approaches to reasoning,

and in the creation of new ideas. Speakers of North American Native languages

do not necessarily organize reasoning according to a linear sequence of cause-

and-effect, or axioms-theorems-corollaries, as do speakers of European

languages" (Leavitt, 1995, p. 131).

Nevins (2004), a linguist and anthropologist, lived and worked in an Apache community in eastern Arizona for 3 years and studied the sociocultural dynamics pertaining to Apache language programs in the schools and Apache ways of speaking and authority within Apache pedagogical practices. The author found that the language preservation programs legitimized within Western education institutions were privileged over the locally derived standards of communicative competence and authority of Elders as teachers in community contexts. Apache language programs in the schools were described as concentrating on developing literacy-based language curricula using principles of pedagogy adopted from those used for English. This educational discourse approach lacked acknowledgement of the relations involved in speaking and listening that is a cornerstone of local discourse. "Apache family-centered pedagogy teaches language by cultivating a child's awareness of the social world in which speaking is possible" (Nevins, p. 278).

Apache language-learning was not achieved through explicit rules of what to do or say but "by being in the home, participating in what is happening there in everyday

life, and being aware of and involved with family members" to create "self-conscious awareness of relations to others" (Nevins, 2004, p. 279). Central to Apache discourse was an emphasis on awareness and participation in activities sustaining family life and understanding that listening within the family acknowledges the more knowledgeable generation of Elders as language authorities. School-based language programs shift children's attention away from the family as a primary site of learning and lead to Elders being "dispossessed of the authority to teach it . . . losing their pedagogical relationship to successive generations" (Nevins, p. 282). Apache language classes at school do not reflect the way that a good speaker uses Apache in actual situations.

Nevins illustrates the Apache worldview as exemplified in the language. The Apache language spoken by knowledgeable and fluent speakers maintains subtle intellectual distinctions in the use of the language. "A fluent Apache speaker would generally not make explicit reference to things that would already be in awareness," (p. 283) while an English speaker does. Teachers think about the spelling of *shash* ("bear"), while a fluent Apache speaker thinks *shash* and sees a vital presence moving up there in the mountains. The "school-based pedagogical practices are criticized by some as severing the word from its creative power- its existence with and effect on what it evokes" (Nevins, 2004, p. 283).

The Apache language affords the speaker with a means to make "important distinctions between terms that describe qualities independent of individual intentions or agency, and terms that describe qualities with particular reference to the intentions and agency of individuals," such as saying someone is doing a good job by characterizing the job performed as being done well (e.g., in fixing a car) or to talk about the mechanic as a

man and saying that he is a good, knowledgeable mechanic (e.g., it is the man himself and his ability that are good).

<div align="center">Indian English</div>

Researchers in the field of linguistics have relatively recently documented the features of First Nations English dialects. Dr. William Leap (1993) found wide variability in "Indian English" in the United States, with strong links to each community's ancestral language and cultural traditions. "Indian English fluency . . . [is] . . . a highly valued social skill, and the nonstandard features of the Indian English conversation have an even greater cultural significance for their speakers" (Leap, p. 3). In his extensive studies, Leap found that "the ancestral language sound systems may or may not predict the characteristic features of pronunciation for a community's Indian English codes" (p. 45).

> Leap conducted his research in a Ute community in Utah, where
> in some cases, only the elders in the household are speakers of Ute. In others,
> persons at all generations are Ute language proficient, with or without the
> presence of elders in the home. And in others, no one of any age speaks Ute . . .
> There are many Ute varieties of English [in contrast to] what the locals term
> 'Basin English' and with the more standardized forms of English found
> throughout the region" (Leap, 1993, p. 38).

In this Ute community, he described the different sound systems of Indian English (including vowels, consonants, pitch, and tone), grammatical structure details (such as plurals, articles and demonstratives, pronouns, verb tenses), highlights semantic characteristics (such as naming, slang terms, the conceptual terms for sacred items and strategies for explaining nature and social life), and examined pragmatic features (such as

silence and hedging in novel situations, asking questions, and other rules of discourse).

He calls for research that not only describes the sounds and grammatical structures but

"detailed analysis of situation and function" to reveal the true usage patterns and diversity

of Indian English. Leap describes Indian English as a "language of socialization" and a

"preferred linguistic code" for Aboriginal people (1993, p. 179).

Recent Developments Addressing Aboriginal Learning of Standard English

Epstein and Xu (2003) reviewed Canadian, American, Australian, and British

literature to promote helpful approaches for teaching English as a second dialect to

Aboriginal students. The authors illustrate how a bidialectal approach to education that

accepts the nonstandard dialect of English in a systematic and explicit methodology to

teaching Standard English, is effective. Teachers provide explicit comparison of oral

language differences as compared to formal, written English and the academic language

of the classroom. English as a second language (ESL) is described as an inappropriate

approach for Aboriginal students since it is founded on the goal of quick assimilation into

mainstream culture and language for immigrant populations.

In Ontario, the Ministry of Education (2007a) launched an "English Language

Learners" policy and procedures document in 2007 which acknowledges not only those

Aboriginal students who speak English as a second language but also those students

whose first language is a variety of English with different pronunciation, vocabulary, and

sentence structure. This has endorsed the development of appropriately focused

educational supports led by educators and speech and language pathologists to assist

these students. Opportunity to accelerate student acquisition of standard English

language and literacy skills has arisen as we step away from the viewpoint of a special

needs/deficit paradigm and adopt the perception that these children are following a normal developmental sequence for standard English acquisition.

The above-mentioned Ontario Ministry of Education's (2007b) companion document provides practical guidelines for educators to support English language learners in the classroom. Some strategies and activities include practicing verb forms (singular, plural, and past tense) in the context of explaining art creations, introducing and using the language of directions (e.g., ordinal concepts like north, south and prepositions like through, across from, beside). The kinesthetic learning style is highlighted, and the manipulation of props and puppets is suggested to expand vocabulary and to make comparisons and develop story structure. The provision of "frequent opportunities to converse in [standard] English to stimulate the students' development of listening and speaking skills, giving students a broad sense of the English language and its construction and help English Language Learners connect with their peers and develop self-confidence," is suggested (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007b, p.19).

The document encourages teachers to appeal to the student interests by engaging in activities that build on existing knowledge, skills, and backgrounds in a learning environment where language errors are accepted as a normal part of the language-learning process. Caution is advised regarding the fact that "constantly correcting the English Language Learner may actually limit his or her development, increase anxiety, and discourage participation" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007b, p. 20). It is suggested that the teacher give priority to errors that interfere with communication the most and that feedback be given on only one error when responding to the student.

Ball et al, (2005) illustrate that dialect is an important and valid aspect of language.   The authors' statement supports a shift in how we perceive and respond to First Nations English dialects: "Accommodations in a linguistically diverse society should not always be in the direction of colonial norms and preferences" (p. 12).

Since First Nations dialect is an integral component of an individual's identity and represents a culturally relevant link to the home community and land base, it is important to uphold and protect the dialect.   A positive outcome of the educational experience for such language learners is that the individual will develop and master code-switching for "home talk" and "school talk" and feel good about his/her communication skills.

It behooves speech and language pathologists engaged with service provision to Aboriginal children to put on the right lens and actively look at the child's presenting profile of speech and language behaviors to identify dialect issues versus speech and language impairment. Professional practice guidelines concerning clinicians working in multilingual and multicultural contexts in Canada recommend that the speech and language pathologist work in collaboration with people in the community who are proficient in the language or dialect and who are from the same cultural background as the child. Such practice supports effective and culturally appropriate services (Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists [CASLPA], 2002).

Theoretical Framework

Learning assessments utilized in the schools are not sensitive to Aboriginal cultural and linguistic differences and are not valid and reliable. Specialists and teachers in the school system operate from the "deficit-based" perspective of the Western educational assessment and intervention model, which is incongruent with Aboriginal

perspectives and values concerning an individual's abilities. Mainstream approaches to educational assessment often focus on the learning deficits of Aboriginal people and ignore positive outcomes (Cappon, 2008, p. 61).

I am an Anishinaabe speech and language pathologist with 20 years experience as a service provider with Aboriginal people in Ontario, Canada. Much of my professional work has focused on improving the communication abilities of children and their families. The conventional theoretical approaches and clinical applications associated with the provision of speech and language pathology are based on a Western perspective. I discovered that the established tools and techniques of the profession that I brought to the field had to be modified and adjusted as I applied assessment, intervention, consultation, and training areas of program delivery to an Aboriginal context.

Much of my work has focused on facilitating a positive school experience by mediating a match between the language demands of the classroom and the speech, language, hearing, and literacy skills of the Aboriginal student. I have gradually moved away from administering standardized assessment protocols with these children and have explored informal evaluations of their speech and language skills through narrative and language sampling.

This experience, along with readings about recent developments and dialogue with colleagues and experts in the field, has helped me to gain increased understanding of Aboriginal children's unique speech and language dialect differences and a heightened sense that opportunities for them to fully participate in the schooling process are limited by cultural and linguistic differences, even when English is their first language.

Within the past decade much attention has been given towards understanding the speech, language, and literacy development of Aboriginal children in Canada and the United States.   Ball (2006) reported the outcomes and implications from a national survey which included professional service providers (e.g., speech-language pathologists) in the First Nations context. The development of culturally relevant and sensitive assessment and intervention procedures for Aboriginal populations was recommended. The author summarized the rationale with the following: "There is a growing perception among Aboriginal parents and practitioners that assessments and interventions that have been developed and validated with a European-heritage orientation are generally not appropriate or helpful for Aboriginal children" (Ball, p. 17). The need for additional research to differentiate between speech-language disorders and socio-linguistically normative characteristics of communication among Aboriginal families and communities is apparent.

This research has arisen from the need to gather data about Aboriginal children's narrative skills as a means to promoting increased knowledge and awareness among educators, early childhood language practitioners, and speech-language pathologists. As knowledge is gained by educators, approaches to teaching literacy and schooling in general will be better suited to enhance the learning experience, participation, and academic success of Aboriginal children. The data will provide impetus for speech and language pathologists to evaluate First Nations children's storytelling under a different lens. Much information about children's communicative competency and socialization can be gleaned from sampling their stories and engaging in meaning-making with them.

Professionals can utilize storytelling activities that naturally lead to rapport-building, mutual engagement, and literacy skill-building.

My professional experience as a speech-language pathologist in the schools has led me to see firsthand the negative consequences when language and literacy assessment protocols based on Eurocentric values and normative data are applied to Aboriginal students. A disproportional number of the Aboriginal elementary school students are on the speech and language caseload, and Aboriginal students are identified more often than non-Aboriginal students in the Special Education process.

It is extremely disconcerting for me to see how the discourse and interaction patterns of the Aboriginal individual are misunderstood by practitioners and educators.   I vividly remember reading a psycho-educational assessment report that described a young Aboriginal boy's lack of eye contact with the psychologist over the course of the 2-hour assessment. A recommendation was made for the student to have a pediatric consultation regarding autism.

Teachers of Aboriginal elementary school students almost always note on the report card that participation in classroom discussion "needs improvement." It is not uncommon for Aboriginal students to stop speaking altogether at school. Such is the case with three Anishinaabe students who were referred to me for speech and language services last year.

Aboriginal orality, for me, is an obvious bridge to literacy, academic success, and community participation. Teachers and practitioners can explore the benefits of oral storytelling, such as establishing links to the Aboriginal community and legitimizing Aboriginal ways of knowing into the classroom. From here, educators' and practitioners'

acknowledgement of the value of oral storytelling in the school setting will be supported, and impetus to pursue worthwhile applications will increase.

Information gained from this study will support a move toward inclusion of narrative assessment and intervention in the speech and language pathology protocols concerning Aboriginal students. Culturally relevant storytelling activities will lead to linkages with curriculum goals and objectives in the area of oral language usage that is appropriate for Aboriginal students.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the research literature to investigate general challenges in Aboriginal education; local control versus provincial jurisdiction; storytelling and academic success; narrative style and culture; Aboriginal narrative style; mainstream approaches to narrative evaluation; Aboriginal narrative assessment; characteristics of Anishinaabemowin; the relationship of language and culture regarding "the Indian Mind"; English as a second language and Indian English; and recent developments regarding Aboriginal learning and standard English.

There is a need for increased understanding of Aboriginal children's unique speech and language dialect differences and more opportunity for them to fully participate in the schooling process so that they are not perceived by educators and clinicians as deficient communicators and learners. As knowledge is gained, approaches to improving communication and literacy skills will be better suited to enhance the learning experience, participation, and academic success of Aboriginal children.

Increased Aboriginal community engagement in the schools is an additional positive outcome as relationships are built and community confidence in the schooling process grows

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The following section outlines the process used to identify features of Aboriginal orality in the narrative stories of Anishinaabek children from Nipissing First Nation, Ontario. The research project design addressed the absence of local data regarding the key elements of Anishinaabek narratives. Elders in the First Nation community have been an untapped resource, and these key community members were engaged to assist in defining Anishinaabe storytelling features and understanding the importance of the teller-listener relationship in the relevancy of the story. The analysis of Anishinaabek children's stories and gathering of information from Elders enhances understanding of the Anishinaabe orality perspective and supports appreciation of personal event narratives as told by young children.

This chapter includes the following sections: role of the researcher, ethics approval, storytelling circles, Elder ratings, study population, sampling, recruitment of participants, recruitment of Elders, data collection, and data analysis.

Role of the Researcher

My position as a researcher in such an ethnographic study was supported by my personal membership in the Anishnaabe Nation, my proven track record with regards to completion of a Speech and Language Needs Assessment in Nipissing First Nation in 2005, and my familiarity as a Band employee. I am regarded as a member of the group who understands community dynamics and has life experience in a First Nation community. Working linkages were already established with the Nipissing First Nation Education Committee and the community leadership (e.g., Nipissing First Nation Chief

 and Council).

I was familiar to some of the students who participated, family members, and Elders through my work in the community and schools.   I approached Elders with respect and was cognizant of the need to visit the Elders on a regular basis. This created opportunity for us to develop a relationship by socializing, sharing personal anecdotes, and developing mutual understanding and trust. Aboriginal people value and emphasize relationships in every aspect of community life.

Belanger (2003) emphasizes the importance of time spent by a researcher in a First Nation community to develop relationships and trust:

> Researchers must remember that our presence is only one event, yet an event that can have profound consequences. Perhaps the issue of relationship will foster a new approach forcing the reevaluation of current motivations as academics seek the most plausible way of conducting research at the community level that is not harmful but also fulfills a community need as expressed by the people themselves. (p. 219)

I was privileged be able to conduct this research study concerning the children of the Nipissing First Nation community. My life experience as an Aboriginal person and as a service provider within the context of First Nations communities served me well to be the lead researcher in an ethnographic study such as this. I had been employed by Nipissing First Nation, Education Department for 4 ½ years and was known to the families and leadership of the target community. An established trust relationship and my respectful attitude supported my role as being responsible, protecting participants and community from any potential harm. In order to undermine any perception from a

participant (e.g. the family, Elder, or child) that placed me in a position of authority over them, I approached them in a respectful way and made it clear that their participation was voluntary.

Since the Aboriginal community values family and community involvement in decision-making, I approached the leadership via the Nipissing First Nation Education Committee several months prior to initiating the research project. I attended a Committee meeting to present information about the research project, the people involved, and the potentially positive outcomes. This led to approval of the research study by the Education Committee and sanctioning of the research study by the Chief and Council (Appendix A) when they reviewed the recommendation of the Education Committee.

Ethics Approval

The Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS) on-line ethics tutorial, which I completed on 11 March 2008, was very helpful in guiding my work as an ethical researcher. Section 6, Research Involving Aboriginal Peoples, was especially pertinent.

Chief Marianna Couchie, on behalf of the Chief and Council of Nipissing First Nation, granted approval by letter dated 3 September 2008 (Appendix A). I completed an application for research involving identified participants, submitted it to the Nipissing University Research Ethics Board on 30 September 2008, received notice of approval on 5 November 2008 (Appendix B).

This research study addressed several ethical concerns. Since I was employed by Nipissing First Nation as a speech language pathologist and the children who were research participants were recruited from Nipissing First Nation's nominal roll, the 11 children from Nipissing First Nation who were on my caseload were excluded from the

sample. This was done to avoid any perception that children, or their parents, who declined to participate in the study might in any way be penalized (e.g., by a decrease in service provided by me).

I acknowledged that there was a risk, however minimal, that one of the children might feel embarrassed while telling a story or that one of the Elders might feel embarrassed when asked to assess a story. This risk was no greater, however, than the risk that occurs for each of us on any normal day.

A list of the children (with age, grade, and contact information) and their parents' signed permission forms were kept in a file folder in a locked file cabinet in my office, along with a list of the Elders and their phone numbers. While writing this thesis, the data were kept on a password-protected computer in my locked office.

I acknowledged that despite these safeguards, some people in such a small closely knit community might be able to guess the identities of the child narrators (e.g., from the content of their stories) or the Elders.

These minimal risks were declared to the children's parents and to the Elders in their respective information letters, allowing them to give or withhold their informed consent. Participants were informed of their rights to be in the study or not, to withdraw at any time without consequence, and to refuse to answer any question (and still remain in the study). I also committed myself to destroying all audiotaped or written records from this research at the conclusion of the study.

If participants had any questions or concerns about my research they were directed to two individuals: Nipissing First Nation Director of Education Fran Couchie, and my thesis supervisor.

Storytelling Circles

Consideration of the research conducted by Ripich and Griffith (1988) led me to avoid using picture sequences to elicit stories in this study. I was concerned that the shared context provided by the pictures could lead to reduced descriptive language and explanation by the storyteller. Instead, peer storytelling circles, described by Pesco (1994), were used as the narrative elicitation context in this study. Circles are a more culturally relevant eliciting context than pictures, which may or may not be related directly to the Aboriginal students' life experience.

Schneider et al. (2006) investigated picture-elicited stories of children and applied a Western-based computer software analysis to produce normative data for story grammar unit development and structural patterns. Rather than using pictures that lack suitability and relevancy to First Nations populations and applying an analysis based on Western clinical perspectives, I chose to investigate the components of Aboriginal children's narrative development through alternate elicitation and analysis means. In this study, I chose an analysis that relates to components and patterns of Aboriginal narrative schemes.

Since the elicitation methods impact the information presented in stories, a familiar setting with known participants was chosen by the researcher. This provided children with freedom to share stories in a circle with peers. This approach is supported in a study where different means of assessing narratives with various ethnic groups of children was explored, and the authors recommend that "the examiner should consider

the 'naturalness' or cultural relevancy of the methods used to elicit the children's stories"

(Gutierrez-Clellen & Quinn, 1993, p. 4).

In the research of Melzi (2000), sharing of personal event stories provided the

opportunity for children to share their feelings and opinions instead of simply retelling

factual information. I decided to invite children to share personal event stories in this

study.

The culturally relevant context of a storytelling circle with peers was selected to

elicit personal event narratives. A circle is a culturally relevant setting conducive to

storytelling, and circle protocol ensured that each individual's story was listened to by

everyone in the circle. Recounts of personal events were the primary type of narrative

shared. Wilde (2003), describing storytelling as a research methodology, says that "each

of us, as storytellers, must tell our stories, in our own way, from our own experience" (p.

191). There was no expectation that an individual's story would be scrutinized by peers

or by the facilitator in the circle. Each participant was instructed to take what they can

from each sharing and to leave the rest. This supported the Aboriginal values of

noninterference and personal holistic processing and learning involving the mental,

physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Familiar peers participated in the circle, and

this contributed to a child's feelings of trust and comfort with sharing.

Elder Ratings

I am motivated by Piquemal's research (2003a), which examined the dichotomy

between First Nations' orality and the use of Western literacy in education. Piquemal

stressed the importance of understanding the intellectual and social aspects of First

Nations storytelling in order to evaluate it sensitively and fairly. Piquemal shows that

storytelling is a suitable bridge for First Nations students from orality to literacy, that First Nations' worldviews and models of discourse are legitimate ways of knowing and learning. I decided to employ a method of study that involved the coding and analysis of the stories using a protocol different from the ones used in conventional clinical narrative studies. In my study, Elders were asked to rate the audiotaped children's stories and, through further discussion with them, a coding protocol unfolded. This formed the basis for story analysis and the definition of "good" Anishinaabe narratives.

This research took the form of an ethnographic study with opportunity to understand the research participants in their own context and explore the culturally-specific meaning behind the data. Crago and Cole (1991) explore the benefits of using an ethnographic approach to better understand the communicative process of minority children. The language socialization perspective was born from collaboration between anthropology and linguistic investigative practice. The ethnographic researcher is interested in the sociocultural context of the use of language and the specific relationship between language and the local systems of knowledge and society. This methodology aims to link microanalysis of discourse with more encompassing cultural and societal factors. Consideration of the wider social context means that particularly informative findings regarding a small number of people are obtained. The authors stress that overgeneralization to other subgroups of the population cannot be assumed (Crago & Cole, p. 111). Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered to fully explore the subject as this afforded credibility from multiple data sources.

I wanted to use Elder ratings of the children's stories, indicating their preference for stories that exude features of Anishinaabe narrative and their perspective and

comments supporting the creation of a relevant story analysis protocol. This emically derived protocol was then applied to analyze the narratives of the Anishinaabek children, identifying story schemes, structure, and content relative to the Anishinaabe worldview. The development of such a unique analysis protocol was crucial to creating a culturally relevant lens, rather than applying inappropriate codes for Western or clinical concepts and themes. According to Rubin and Rubin (2005), such an approach provides opportunities for original insights from the research data, avoiding "testing someone else's theory rather than building one of your own" (p. 209).

Reflecting on groupings of concepts and themes gleaned from the Elders afforded me the opportunity to imply novel meanings. Coded elements from the emically-derived narrative analysis protocol were tallied, and story components were illustrated. This research supports an increase in educators' and practitioners' understanding of Anishinaabe orality perspectives, shifting valuation to reduce marginalization in the school culture. The appreciation of narrative as a powerful oral language and cultural awareness tool supports applications in the classroom.

<div align="center">Study Population</div>

The following is a description of the research community of Nipissing First Nation, an Anishinaabe community located on the northern shore of lake Nipissing in north-central Ontario. Its seven constituent communities span a 30-mile area east of Sturgeon Falls and west of North Bay. The community of Garden Village is located on the west side of Nipissing First Nation and is populated by 51% of the on-reserve membership. The communities of Duchesnay Village, Yellek, and Serenity Lane are located on the east side, near North Bay, and make up about 38% of the on-reserve

population. The other communities include Beaucage Village and Lower Beaucage, Meadowside, and the Veterans' Landing Site Crossing.

The population of Nipissing First Nation is 1,413. The Aboriginal on-reserve population is 905, and this represents 64% of the on-reserve population. There are an additional 510 non-Aboriginal residents (Statistics Canada, 2008).

The First Nation's economy is comprised of a service sector (both government and nongovernment services), manufacturing, transportation, communications and other utilities, trade industries, forestry, mining, fishing, construction, and tourism commercial activities (Levesque, 2008, p. 191).

Nipissing First Nation's mother tongue is Anishinaabemowin. The Nipissing First Nation dialect is a recognized local variant of the spoken Ojibway language. The community's language is described as: 67% English; 12% Ojibway; 4% both; and 17% French and other (Levesque, 2008, p. 191). Anishinaabemowin usage is described by recent national census data: 15.5% of the Aboriginal population on Nipissing First Nation have knowledge of Aboriginal languages; 12.7% of the Aboriginal population have an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue; and 1.7% of the Aboriginal population speak an Aboriginal language most often at home (Statistics Canada, 2008).

<div align="center">Sampling</div>

Purposeful sampling methods were employed within the specific First Nation community of Nipissing First Nation, as this afforded an authentic and familiar group of Elders, students, and community members with interest in this topic. Crago and Cole describe this process as it pertains to an ethnographic study (1991, p. 112). I selected the participants through a process of "informed" rather than random selection. Children aged

8 through 10 years of age were identified within the target community of Nipissing First Nation, and the Elders represented a prototype within that target population.

Recruitment of Participants

The sample of student participants in the storytelling circles was drawn from the Nipissing First Nation Nominal Roll, a list which confirms the students who are Nipissing First Nation band members residing on the First Nation territory.

Five children on the researcher's speech and language caseload were excluded from the selected sample in order to ensure voluntary participation. There was potential for the parents of these children to perceive pressure to participate in the study or to anticipate repercussions in the way of a reduction in speech and language services if they declined to support the study. Twenty-six children within the age range of 8, 9, and 10 years were selected from grades 3, 4, and 5. All children were English-speaking and none were bilingual.

Following approval of the research study by the Nipissing University Research Ethics Board, a letter explaining general information about the project and extending an invitation to participate was mailed home to parents of the 26 children. Also included was an informed consent form for participation in the study, requiring a parent's signature (Appendix C). Two weeks later, the researcher contacted the parents by telephone to follow up on the mailing. This resulted in 13 parents expressing agreement for their child to participate on the proposed dates. Some signed consent forms were received by mail, and the researcher picked up the others at the parents' homes. Nine signed forms were received, and 8 children attended the scheduled storytelling circles.

Two storytelling circles were held in Duchesnay, at the high school, and two circles were held at the Band Office in Garden Village, for participants who lived closer to one location or the other.

Eight children participated in four storytelling circles, each lasting an hour and a half, at two locations (Duchesnay and Garden Village) on Nipissing First Nation. The children's assent for me to audio-record them was obtained verbally at the first storytelling circle in which they participated. Each child told more than one story; altogether, 36 stories were gathered. The total length of the audio record of narrative data was no longer than one and a half hours. This meant that the imposition on the Elders' time for rating and discussion of the stories was reasonable.

<div align="center">Recruitment of Elders</div>

Elders were purposefully selected based on two criteria: Their first language is Anishinaabe; and they did not attend formal schooling beyond elementary or high school. These criteria were established by the researcher because these individuals are known as "keepers of the Ojibway language," meaning that the Anishinaabe language frames their perceptions and orality and they possess an "Indian mind" or Anishinaabe worldview. The Aboriginal language frames one's perceptual and cognitive processes, and a reduced number of years in formal education minimizes the impact of acculturation to Western perspectives. This criterion is especially relevant so that Elder ratings may depict preference for children's stories that exude features of Aboriginal language or narrative style rather than those of the Western or clinical perspective that is upheld in the formal school setting. The researcher's Elders selection criteria made for a small sample

selection, since those who met the selection criteria were very few in number and elderly.

Three Elders known to the researcher were initially approached to understand the project and to gain support, and these Elders referred to others of similar backgrounds. Eight Elders were visited a few times over a 6 month period in order to establish rapport and a level of trust with the researcher. From the outset, it was explained to each Elder that the researcher planned to carry out a research project about children's storytelling in the community. They would be asked whether or not they would like to participate at a future time, as the project drew closer. Four Elders subsequently declined to participate in the project.

Each of four remaining Elders was approached individually for consent to participate in the study, in accordance with approval by the Nipissing University Research Ethics Board. I provided a verbal explanation of how their information would be collected and used, and they were assured of anonymity if so desired. Each Elder was presented with the option of giving free and informed consent verbally and having this tape-recorded, or providing consent in written form (Appendix D). Informed consent included a verbal and written description of the purpose for the study, background information about me and my role as researcher, and benefits to participants and the community. I explained that there was no risk of harm to participants. The Elders were informed that the written report, specifically their contributions, would be shared with them for their feedback prior to submission of the report to Nipissing University. This would provide them with an opportunity for revisions and ensure that their words and opinions were accurately reflected in written form. A presentation of the final report to

the community would follow completion of the research project, respecting confidentiality and participants' anonymity if so requested. The Elders were given the option of voluntary participation.

The presentation of tobacco is in fact a culturally appropriate way to show respect and to ask for help. Two Elders chose to receive a tobacco offering from the researcher as informed consent was explained and requested. In these cases, the researcher followed a script (Appendix D) to ensure that all aspects of free and informed consent to participate were included. The other two Elders chose to have the researcher simply read the information to them, outlining their role and the request for their free and informed consent. All four Elders voluntarily signed the informed consent to participate in research form that was provided.

Data Collection

The following explains the process for data collection and includes use of an interpreter, how recording and playback was completed, children's storytelling circles procedures, the first Elder's session process, and second Elder's panel procedures.

Interpreter

An Ojibway language interpreter, who signed an oath of confidentiality, was present at the Elders panel discussion session. This provided each Elder with the option of expressing why they liked a story in Anishinaabemowin. This was meant to facilitate their expression of opinions and ideas in the absence of English translation efforts.

Recording and Playback

During the storytelling circles, a digital tape recorder with a built-in microphone, sensitive to voice, was utilized. The device was small and nonobtrusive and was placed

in the centre of the circle of children who were seated on the floor. Positioning of the microphone and children was set up this way to minimize distance and potential for competing noise. A two-gigabyte data card was used for recording the data, and this was readily downloaded onto a computer after each recording session for later reference and analysis.

External speakers with a volume control were used to play each recorded story from a laptop computer at the Elders panel discussion. This meant that the recordings were audible for the Elders.

Children's Storytelling Circles

The storytelling circles took place on February 4, 10, 11, and 17, 2009. I opened each storytelling circle by explaining the traditional circle protocol to the children who were seated on the floor. A "talking stone" (a round, smooth rock) was introduced, and I explained that the stone would help each person to listen respectfully, remember, and share openly from the heart, telling a story about something that happened to them or something as told to them by a family member. The person holding the stone is the speaker, and when finished, he or she hands the stone over to the person on the left. (Thus the circle flows in a clock-wise direction, following the route of the sun as perceived by Anishinaabek people.) The option of passing the stone on to the next person without sharing a personal event narrative was provided, and in a few instances this option was used. The passing of the stone to the next person signaled that the person was finished telling the story, and this precluded the need for prompting the child to say more or to verbally indicate when the story was complete.

I emphasized the importance of not interrupting or correcting a storyteller and, in the situation where a personal experience had been shared by two or more members of the circle, the option to recount the story from one's own perspective was welcomed when his or her turn arrived. I joined in the circle, and over the course of the storytelling circles I shared one story about a childhood experience and one story about a recent outing. I usually passed the stone to the next person without telling my own story, to minimize my influence on the children's storytelling process and to allow more time for their narration.

This method of study followed a suggestion by Simpson (2000). My role as the storytelling circle facilitator and opening up each circle by sharing a personal event narrative set the stage for sharing. Also, my working relationship with the Elders was supported by my acknowledgement of their expertise and acceptance that their life experiences and ways of knowing are spiritual in nature. The Elders' time and dedication to this project were respected and considered with reverence. The tobacco offering to Elders reflects the Anishinaabe understanding that life, and thus knowledge, originate with the Creator. Sharing of one's knowledge acknowledges spiritual connection.

Initially, 1 or 2 children were self-conscious about speaking while the tape recorder was on, and their comfort level increased when the reason for the tape recorder was explained. The children seemed to like the idea of having their stories listened to by community Elders, and they expressed anticipation that this would be an enjoyable experience for the panel.

The children who participated in the storytelling circles benefited from the experience gained and felt acknowledged and valued by me and by their peers. They

were given a small item as a token of respect and as a means of giving something back in return for what they had shared.

The First Elders Session

Four Elders participated in an Elders' panel gathering, held on February 25, 2009, to identify the most liked stories. The researcher was aware that traditional Aboriginal people believe that each child is whole and complete, bringing special and individualized gifts to the world from the Creator. Since such a belief system conflicts with the Elders' task of choosing or favoring one child's story over another, at the outset of the story rating session I explained to the Elders why it was important for them to choose one story over another in spite of the fact that this was perhaps uncomfortable for them.

A simple story rating scale was presented, and the Elders were asked if they wanted to use its proposed numerical rating scale and descriptors. The option of creating a different rating scale was offered, but everyone voiced his/her agreement to use the rating scale which I had presented. There was agreement to listen to one story, complete the rating scale, and then move on to the next story.

During this first Elders' Panel gathering, the audio recording of each story was played for the group and each Elder completed a story rating scale. Each story was identified numerically, and the identity of the storyteller was not disclosed. The Elders listened to and rated each of the 36 stories using the following binary scale: 1 (*Did not like the story very much*) or 2 (*Liked the story very much*). A rating of 2 meant that the Elder explicitly and definitely identified the story as "favorable or good" in contrast to those less favorable stories that received a rating of 1. This scale was used so that the stories receiving a score of 2 were easily sorted for further in-depth analysis. Such a

scale also created a means to compare and contrast the stories, which enriched the analysis.

The Elders completed a story rating scale in confidence for each story, and these sheets were handed back to the researcher for tallying. During the story rating session, the Elders were provided with a healthy snack and had a short break halfway through the 2-hour session. After each of the "preferred" stories was played for the group, the researcher/group facilitator asked questions to elicit discussion such as, "Why do you like this story?" or "Anything else that you like?"

It was anticipated that some of the Elders might prefer to speak in Anishinaabemowin, as their mother tongue is more conducive to providing detailed description and use of the English language might present a linguistic barrier to accurate expression of what they truly wanted to convey. An Ojibway language interpreter (the researcher's husband, Stan) was present during this Elders' Panel session to provide the option of responding in English or Anishnaabemowin. The interpreter used Anishnaabemowin a few times during the discussions, and the Elders always responded in English. During the 15-minute break, one of the Elders engaged in conversation with the interpreter in Anishnaabemowin. All Elders participated in the session and seemed to have no difficulty expressing themselves using the English language.

The Elders' comments and their responses to the children's stories were audio-recorded for future analysis. During the session, the researcher summed up their responses verbally and also wrote them on a flip chart. These strategies elicited further discussion and examples from the group. The total length of time for this Elders' Panel session was 2 ½ hours.

Over the course of the Elders' Panel sessions, a few stories were shared by the Elders. These stories were volunteered in response to hearing the children's stories, and the themes related to previously heard stories and exemplified Anishinaabe orality traditions from the Elders' perspective. Two of these stories were transcribed verbatim by the researcher, as they occurred during audio-recorded discussions about the story ratings). Notes were taken by the researcher from one story shared by an Elder during a session break.

I tallied the story rating scale sheets, revealing that 30 of the 36 stories had been assigned at least one rating of 2 (*Liked the story very much*). Of these 30, 18 were given a 2 rating by three of the four Elders. The researcher placed these 18 into the group of "preferred" stories. Six of the children's stories had been assigned a rating of 1 by four out of four Elders, and these were placed into the group of "not preferred" stories. I set aside the remaining 12 stories, which had received only one or two ratings of 2 by the Elders.

Second Elders' Panel

At the beginning of the second Elders' Panel session, held on March 4, 2009, I explained that from the ratings of 36 stories, 18 stories were liked the best. The Elders were in agreement with listening to each story again, discussing it as a group, and then going on to the next story.

I later analyzed the audio record of the Elders' discussion. I transcribed the Elders' comments regarding specific stories, and general group discussions that emerged as they reminisced about their life experiences related to the children's story themes were transcribed. From this, 21 Elder codes were identified by grouping similar comments

(see next chapter). These data are considered to provide an emically derived measure of Anishnaabe children's personal narratives.

Each Elder was approached and thanked according to community traditions and protocols. Each was provided with a small gift to acknowledge and thank them for participating in the research project.

The identities of three community members were disclosed by the storytellers in some of their personal experience narratives. Being a small community, the Elders, researcher, and Anishinaabemowin translater were able to identify these individuals. In retrospect, the story recordings could have been edited to protect the identity of these community members mentioned in the stories. Verbal consent was obtained from the researcher to include their names in the story transcripts for inclusion in the final research report.

<div align="center">Data Analysis</div>

Narrative assessment by linguists and speech and language pathologists employs computer-assisted transcript analysis. The Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT) software program provides an opportunity to use a narrative coding scheme called the Narrative Structure Score (NSS). The SALT also has the capability to apply additional analysis through a hand-coding system (Miller & Chapman, 2008).

I purchased the *SALT* computer software program (CD ROM and printed manual) from the language lab at www.SALTSoftware.com for a reasonable and moderate cost. The Elder codes were entered into the utterance analysis option for hand-coding using the SALT software program.

Each audio record of the "preferred" children's stories and of the "not preferred stories" was transcribed by the researcher, coded with the Elder codes, and also with the *SALT* software program (further described in the next chapter). The stories were transcribed verbatim from the audio records, and transcriptions include features for punctuation, dialogue, trailing off, and gestures.

Transcripts of three stories that contained the highest number of Elder codes were examined for the research findings. Examples of the story elements assigned to the Elder codes were compared with how the NSS would be used to mark story grammar features.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter summarizes the research findings, organized in the following seven sections: the Elders' narrative coding system; Anishinaabe views (three types of stories, each examined using the Elder codes); the SALT Narrative Scoring Scheme (NSS); Elder and NSS scores for the Elders' preferred and not preferred stories; comparing the scores; the persistence of Anishinaabe orality; and limitations of the study.

Elders' Narrative Coding System

The stories preferred by the Elders exemplified the following structural elements and features: flow of events and ideas without interruption; humor or amusement; seeing actions and objects in the mind's eye of the listener; a sense of adventure and excitement; statements or expression of emotion and feelings; insight into ways of thinking and stimulating the listener's interpretation of meaning; attention-grabbing or unexpected events; dialogue and storyteller animation (voice, face, body); reference to the extraordinary or unexplained; examples of good moral character and values; familiar settings and events that are memorable; distinguishing but accepting both positive or negative life events; shared experiences inducing distant memories; reference to relationships with family and community members; stories that are short or lengthy ones; explicit reference to the ending or nonexplicit drawing to a close; intergenerational stories passed down from family members.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, I analyzed the audio record of the Elders' discussions. I transcribed the Elders' comments regarding specific stories; as well, the more general group discussions that emerged as they reminisced about their life

experiences related to the children's story themes were transcribed. In all, I developed

21 codes from the Elders' comments, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The Elder Codes

Elders' comments	Code description	Code #
Sounded smooth, no interruptions or pauses, nice flow. The way they told the story right through. It just flowed without hesitation. Was a fast story. Did he take a breath when he was telling that story?	No pauses between utterances	1
It was quite humourous. The ending was funny. She thought it was funny about going to the dressing room and listening to that RAP music. It was a funny story because her friend was trying to skate and she kept having these incidents. She fell down and couldn't get up. She went over the boards and thought it was funny after awhile and did it again. She tried to redo her mistake. It is funny because he gave it (uncle's gift) away before it was wrapped. It was like the other story. The surprise was spoiled. She talked about her father spoiling the surprise and when her mom told her, she just said, "Oh." The cat died from too many hairballs–that's what he thinks!	Humour/Amusing	2
We can picture it. He described the things he was doing. The way he described his mother walked sideways so she wouldn't get poison ivy. They all seem to have a vivid memory. They are very descriptive about the circumstances of the story. It stayed in their mind. Descriptions of where she was and what they were doing. It kept it interesting. Hot day with nice, cold water.	See in your mind's eye	3
It was quite the adventure. Everybody was excited about going on the trip. Sounded like it was the first time she went to the city, and she was excited.	Adventure, Excitement	4

Elders' comments	Code description	Code #
He was afraid. They were excited to go to the party. His mother gets really sad when he loses his animals when they die on him. It had a happy ending for the bunny but sad for the boy because he had to give it up. Too bad the rabbit got away. Was quite a shock and surprise.	Feelings	5
He knew enough to stay in the car. He seems to be a thoughtful young man. He's thinking about "If we didn't drive our friend home, we would have got in the accident." He explains the names of his animals… their Ojibway names, and that's how he learns his Ojibway too. "Zii zii" means sugar. The cat died from too many hairballs–that's what he thinks! Was a story from way back. She hesitated for awhile until it come to her.	Way of thinking	6
Interesting. There's something happening and you expect something else.	Attention-grabbing	7
He remembered he ate the candies. Popcorn. The treat at the end. Hot dogs!	Savored treat	8
She was animated as she told the story. Her voice was rising up higher. The way their voice sounds. The story was about a little girl, and he tried to sound like one. She sounded excited and repeats herself.	Storyteller animation	9
I never found that when I was a kid. Nice for the kids to get out there. I never got to see a big hockey game yet. Was a good trip for them.	Extraordinary	10
Sounded like he really cared for them (his pets). The story belongs to the Spirit World and all this kinda stuff, and I guess that's why we liked it. You know I always like a little "Believe it or not" story. Sounds like he believes it.	Good character	11

Elders' comments	Code description	Code #
I liked it because maybe it's something that happened to me. I dropped popcorn (Lucky Elephant) and I picked it up slowly (as if savoring it). You can't throw that away!) The rink is right there. Garden Village is about a mile along the shore to Dokis. I like Fun Day…break your neck, sore knees, sore butt.	Recognizable and memorable	12
Nice for the kids to get out there. Was a good trip for them. Sounds like it was fun.	Pleasant childhood experience	13
Nobody else got hurt, and that's a good thing. His mother gets really sad when he loses his animals when they die on him.	Unpleasant childhood experience.	14
Story about the wild bunny stimulated Henry to reminisce about his pet rabbit who ran away with a wild rabbit. Stimulated Linda's recall of the time her daughter had a bunny. Someone threw me off the dock. It brings you back, way back…having a good time on the ice…sliding…sore elbow.	Induced memories	15
He thinks his father is like a hero to him 'cause he's doing service to this man by helping him stay conscious until the ambulance comes. About him and his mother taking care of the dog. They're washing it in the sink. At least the family is together. Sounds like they had a satisfying day. A lot of people aren't doing that kind of thing anymore.	Family relationship	16
A nice and short story. Not too long, and told it pretty fast.	Not Lengthy	17
It was so good I fell asleep (lengthy).	Lengthy	18
Some just stop but others tell you when they're done.	Ending stated	19
Some just stop,, but others tell you when they're done.	Ending not stated	20
Relating a story that was told to her by her grandfather. The way she tells it she owns the story. She's very into it.	Intergenerational story	21

Anishinaabe Views

Anishinaabe Elders applied their insider "way of thinking." They preferred stories that gave insight into the storyteller's or character's thinking process and, also, stories that caused the listener to engage in further thought or interpretation in response to the story. These are important aspects of Anishinaabe orality, as they serve as learning tools. The listener engages in active thinking and, as stories are remembered and revisited over the life span, new learnings unfold for the individual.

The storyteller usually narrated as an observer or coparticipant in activities with family or friends. A number of stories had an element of surprise or suspense, especially stories about the unexpected (e.g., The bear at the dump) and the unexplained (e.g., How I received my Clan). A sense of humility is evident as the child is usually not the main character and is not described as being superior to others; some stories involve taking pleasure from being tricked or fooled or behaving in a naive or childish way. Three of the "preferred stories" were assigned Elder code 21 (Intergenerational story). This code was applied to stories containing the following elements: Grandpa's story about finding a puffball; how the storyteller's clan was discovered before he was born; mom's story about how her cousin ruined her dress.

The preferred stories with the highest number of Elder Codes assigned to them do not exemplify every Elder code. Table 3 shows how the 21 codes were distributed among all 18 preferred stories and the 6 stories (Stories 19 through 24) which were not preferred. Some of the "preferred stories" were assigned the Elder code 17 (Not lengthy), which the Elders applied to stories of less than 2 minutes duration. In Table 3, 11 (61%) of the

Table 3: Elder Codes for the Preferred and Not Preferred Stories

Story	Elder Code																				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1	●	●	●				●		●	●							●		●		●
2	●	●	●				●		●			●	●			●	●			●	
3	●	●	●		●		●		●							●	●		●		
4	●	●	●	●		●	●		●			●	●			●	●		●		
5	●	●	●		●	●			●			●				●	●				
6	●	●	●		●	●	●		●								●		●		
7	●		●	●	●	●	●				●			●		●			●		
8	●	●	●		●	●	●							●		●			●		
9	●		●	●	●	●	●									●			●		
10	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●		
11	●	●	●			●	●	●	●			●				●			●		
12	●	●	●		●	●	●		●		●	●		●	●	●			●		
13	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●		●		●	●				●	
14	●	●	●		●		●					●	●		●		●			●	
15	●	●				●			●							●	●		●		
16	●		●			●	●			●			●			●	●			●	●
17		●	●		●	●	●		●							●	●				●
18	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●						●	●			●	
19	●		●		●		●										●		●		
20	●						●					●		●		●	●			●	
21			●		●		●									●	●		●		
22	●		●		●							●	●			●	●			●	
23	●			●		●								●		●	●			●	
24			●			●			●							●	●			●	●

stories were of less than 2 minutes duration and were assigned the 17 Elder code. Thus, short stories are also valued by Elders.

I will illustrate four of the Elders' categories in detail: Pleasant childhood experience (Elder code 13), Unpleasant childhood experience (Elder code 14), Humour (Elder code 2), and Intergenerational story (Elder code 21). These four Elder categories are especially relevant to this ethnographic study and are presented to illustrate the important culturally specific meaning behind the data.

Childhood Experiences

I examined both "preferred" and "not preferred" stories, constructing Table 4 to indicate whether or not the story was coded as a pleasant childhood experience or an unpleasant childhood experience. Pleasant life experience stories included elements of family harmony and fun, while unpleasant life experience stories were about accidents, brushes with death, and unhappy feelings.

Table 4 shows that, when compared with the not preferred stories, more of the preferred stories had pleasant childhood themes and fewer unpleasant childhood elements. Six of the "preferred" stories (33%) were coded as pleasant childhood experiences while 4 (22%) were coded as unpleasant. Eight of the "preferred" stories were coded as neither pleasant childhood experiences nor unpleasant, since both codes were applicable. In the "not preferred" stories, 1 (17%) was coded as pleasant and 3 (50%) were coded as unpleasant. Two of the "not preferred" stories were coded as neither pleasant nor unpleasant, since both codes were applicable.

Nevertheless, the Elders preferred some stories about pleasant childhood experience as well as some stories that were an unpleasant experience for the storyteller.

Table 4: Pleasant and Unpleasant Childhood Experiences

Preferred story	Not preferred Story	Topic/theme	Elder code #13 Pleasant	Elder code #14 Unpleasant
1 Amber		Grandpa's story about a stink bomb		
2 Amber		Skating at the outdoor rink	●	
3 Amber		Driving the 4-wheeler in the garden		
4 Amber		Skating to Dokis Point with Auntie	●	
5 Angel		Trip to the hockey game in Sudbury		
6 Angel		My friend tricked me		
7 Cyril		Accident on the highway		●
8 Cyril		My broken arm		●
9 Cyril		The bear at the dump		
10 Cyril		My pets Ziizii, Nimosh, and Speck	●	●
11 Cyril		The leech at the beach		
12 Cyril		My pet wild bunny		●
13 Lilly		Family Day at Trout Lake	●	
14 Lilly		Water day at summer camp	●	
15 Mickey		Spoiling grandpa's surprise		
16 Mickey		How I received my Clan	●	
17 Summer		Mom's story about Melanie's ruined dress		
18 Summer		Trip to Senators' game in Ottawa		
	19 Amber	Last day of day camp		
	20 Angel	Accident at Gibralter		●
	21 Cole	My bad luck day		●
	22 Jamie	My dog, Ben.	●	
	23 Lilly	My cousin's dog, Mugsy died at Christmas		●
	24 Mickey	Dad's story about the wood-cutting accident		

This accords with traditional Anishinaabe values concerning life experience. It is natural that a person experiences both hardships and enjoyable times in the circle of life. It is believed that wisdom is gained from both positive and negative life experiences and that the Creator never subjects a person to something that he or she is not ready for along his or her learning path. It can be said that someone who has experienced and learned from both positive and negative events has an old Spirit and will become a Spirit Guide to support other younger Spirits in their life journeys on the Earth.

Humour

Non-Anishinaabe readers may be surprised that some of the events listed in Table 4, for example the stink bomb, were not considered by the Elders to be unpleasant childhood experiences. Anishinaabe Elders would categorize such elements as humourous.

Humour plays a large role in Anishinaabe storytelling, as evidenced by these transcripts of stories spontaneously narrated by the Elders during our sessions. For the children, the storytelling circle process facilitated subsequent storytellers to choose to share a story driven by similar experiences. Mutually shared notions of interesting topics among the peer group was an important motivating factor. When the Elders listened to the children's stories, their memories of similar life experiences were stirred, and they too offered stories with similar topics or themes. In doing so, they recalled how storytelling was a significant pastime for them in their youth in years gone by. The two stories transcribed below illustrate humour, one aspect of Aboriginal oral tradition, specifically Anishinaabe orality.

Elder Story A: "Story About Old Albert"

Narrator: Henry

Transcript

In my mind I forget about when I used to listen to stories.

Old Albert Beaucage used to tell stories for hours and hours.

A couple hours, 3 hours (laughs) . . .

Way back a long time ago.

Of the Kings and what not.

You know.

What happened.

I remember him telling a story about one that was the old tiger that passed

through here one time a long time ago.

Everybody was all freaked.

The tiger went by here. (laughs).

Elder Story B: "Story About My Daughter's Pet Bunny"

Narrator: Linda

Transcript

My daughter had a bunny.

She found it on the road, so she brought it home.

It was a tame bunny.

She was always bringing animals home (laughs).

Anyway she tried to keep it, and we didn't have a cage for it, so we put it on top

of the deck.

And it would chew all the wood around the deck, cause we didn't wanna have it in the house, cause we had one before and they used to eat the electrical cords (laughs).

So finally it jumped off the deck and left.

The Elder storyteller frequently expressed his or her amusement while telling a story, and the listeners frequently responded with laughter; this is imperfectly captured in the transcript, where the humour is not always evident to a non-Anishinaabe. The Anishinaabe sense of humour is culturally based, and Anishinaabek are socialized differently than people from other cultures, backgrounds, and experiences.

Intergenerational Story

Three of the "preferred stories" from Table 3 (Stories 1, 16, 17) were assigned the Elder rating 21. The Anishinaabe child/storyteller received the story from a family member as can be seen from the story topic/theme in Table 4. This factor is especially relevant to the Aboriginal culture and socialization practice. The community holds up those who relate stories from the past to support an oral history and connection to place/land/family.

Applying the Elder Codes to Story 1

"Story About My Pets"

Narrator: Cyril (Age 9 years, 1 month)

Total time: 13:03

Transcript

Once I had a dog and his name was Ziizii and that's Ojibway for sugar I think. [1]

And we got him my dad in Blind River he bought him 'cause this woman at her house she had 15 little puppies.

My dad bought one and he took him and we were gonna take good care of him.

My dad came to . . . he usually comes over for the weekends and he usually comes on Friday.

So then he would come and I would . . . I was only 5.

And uhm I my he would be . . . the dog would be . . . the puppy would be in this little uhm in this little box with holes.

And you could see it would be all wet on the bottom because he would be peeing all the way on the ride home.

And so my dad had to always had to pick him up and was holding onto his fur cause he didn't have a collar yet.

So when he had to go to the washroom outside he'd go and he'd pee and my dad would have to hold him by the fur.

Pick him up in the truck again.

So then my dad would put him in a box.

There's like a trunk and he would put him in that box and the box in the trunk would be holes at the top.

And my dog would always be laying down the way there.

'Cause my dad he didn't want the dog to pee on the couch.

So then he finally got to North Bay.

He parked in the parking in our driveway.

So then I was sitting down inside in the living room watching tv as usually.

Then I was like, "Oh."

And my mom told me you should go watch for your dad.

And then I kept looking and looking for an hour and finally I saw his truck come and parked.

And then I was getting all happy and jumping up and down. [5]

And then my dad fi . . . he came in and I would see this big box with uhm with holes in the top.

Three holes.

And then I was like, "What's in there dad?"

And my dad would say, "It starts with a p."

And then I would say, "Is it a dog?" [9]

And I was like, "It starts with a p."

And then I was like, "It's a puppy!"

And I started getting all all uhm fun stuff.

And uhm "My very own puppy!"

And and uhm I also I already had this other dog, Nimosh [dog].

It's the best dog ever. [13]

It would do anything that you say.

Then uhm but he was living with my dad and my brother, he was usually came.

So then uhm we since he wasn't already potty trained or anything uhm we had to ah get him put him in the in this box where there would be two rooms.

He would have to crawl under the small door that my dad made with these two boxes together.

One would have a little bed for my dog to sleep in and it had water to drink.

The other one would be his tiny little washroom and he could pee.

And there would be like old newspapers in there.

That one.

Then my dad would get the old newspapers and hold them like that (gestured as is holding something with thumb and index finger with outstretched arm and face turned away) and then throw it out.

And put some new ones in.

And then my dad would take and he would have Nimosh and I would have Ziizii which means "dog" in Ojibway.

Then uhm I would be playing with Ziizii.

I would be picking him up but my mom told me to put him back in 'cause he pees a lot.

So then 'cause he couldn't control it.

When you have a puppy it can't control it's ah pee and so then put him back in and I'd always be petting him in there when he's asleep.

And when he's asleep be petting him more.

So then he finally got asleep.

And then I went to a uhm we went to this ice show or something skating place. [4]

And uhm then it was like they put a mat over it and you could see these horses uhm and these people doing stunts on them. [10]

Then I got tired and I wanted to see Ziizii so we went home after the fifth horse.

So then but my mom my dad went there and he stayed I think.

And then uhm we it was at night and my mom we saw Ziizii.

We saw him running around everywhere in the house.

He could dig his little sharp claws into the box and get up and over.

It was almost a meter high!

And he would jump out and he would land on his back all the time with a real little bark [3].

And then he would be running around inside and you could see like uhm ah ah when you first walk in he knows not to pee on what floor and stuff.

So he would go over to the ah mat in the front.

Well actually he went to the floor this time in the kitchen and he peed right on the floor.

So then like we were gone to the show for an hour, took 20 minutes for us to get back home.

We finally we got home and we could see Ziizii running around everywhere in the house especially in the kitchen.

And then he would always be jumping over this liquid.

Then he would then he would go on the couch and he would be laying down.

Well actually my mom would chase him and get him and I would take off my uhm my boots and put them away.

And then uhm I went in my bedroom.

Then my mom she had her socks on and she wanted to go into the kitchen and get something outta the fridge.

And uhm the fridge was right by the wall and mom went over and she uhm ah stepped right in the dog pee and she felt it all over her foot.

And she went she took a step back and felt it and then she felt like a whole bunch like a lot of pee on her uhm foot.

So then she would go over, change her socks.

Then she would get a big uhm I would pick up the dog though and I would put him in the box.

And then uhm my mom would get the ah would get like a whole bunch a towels and a mop, clean it up.

And each time we got home there would always be a big mess on the floor!

Finally uhm and afer that day we we ah he was so small uhm only this big and so we would be washing him in the kitchen sink. [11]

Not the kitchen sink I mean the ah washroom sink.

And then we would be washing him up, take him out.

Sometimes you had to do it in the kitchen sink.

And then but sometimes he would squirm around the chicken ah the kitchen sink laughing and then he would sometimes he could jump off.

And he would he would don't get hurt but he would be so happy just running around freely all the time.

But the sad part happened after we only had him for a week.

Then on Sunday something very sad happened. [7]

Uhm my mom told me to put him in this garbage can in it though no garbage bag and we put him in there and we put him on my small *Fisher Price* wagon.

And I would be pullig him, my dog.

And then this lady next door took a picture of me and him and it was the last picture of me and him together.

Then turned around and then I then I then I saw my dog he was poking his head out the garbage can and he pushed it over and he started running towards the highway.

And I didn't I turned around and I looked and then I saw it was empty.

And then I saw my dog a glimpse of him run out to the highway.

And then he got way over to the hill [looks in the direction of the highway] and he got smacked by a ah car. [12]

And then the next day we my mom I told my mom on the night then my mom got really really sad.

And then we went to sleep and she knew we couldn't do anything now uhm after.

But my dad.

And then uhm my uncle M. he fixes cars and he was in his black truck and he saw this this ah something that got ran over and it had brown fur and it looked like a puppy. [16]

And then then uhm I was uhm throwing I wa uhm then he took it back and then he took it to us.

And then we buried him eventually in our yard.

Then we would bury him and then the same thing happened to Nimosh except we didn't have to bury him becuse he died of old age because my dog Nimosh he got too old.

It was like 5 years and that's well some dogs only live that long.

Then my dog he, Nimosh, he got he got a he was old so then I think he fell in something and and he started barking and barking and crying and stuff.

So we brung him to the vet and the vet took an Xray of him.

You could hear uhm my dog screaming in the by the Xray machine.

Then my then he finally got out.

Picked him up.

So we had to carefully pick him up so he wouldn't be crying.

There's this little bump at the back of the spine.

It was too small so it would always be pushing against the skin and would always be hurting.

So then uhm we brung him back to the house and knew we couldn't do anything else.

So we just kept him laying down.

So then I forgot all about that he was hurt and I brung him outside.

And he was walking and stuff.

My mom was like gardening I think.

Pulling out the weeds in the back yard.

And then I let my dog go for one minute and then and then I uhm I looked behind me and I didn't see him.

And he ran away because he didn't want us to cry too much.

So then and then even before that when I was only 2 months old I think.

We had this cat named Speck.

But she got she uhm died 'cause she spitted out too much hairballs.

And uhm we my mom my cat she was trained.

She knew to go over to this little bowl that my mom would put out.

And if she had a fur ball it would pop out in the bowl. [2]

And you take it out and put it in the sink and wash it down.

And then uhm ah and then after about a year uhm ah second year I saw a cat but something funny happened before that in the first year.

I I saw the cat and my mom's friend, College friend M., she came over.

And uhm I has holding my arms like this stubborn for some reason and the cat jumped over on me and her claws got stuck in my shirt. [6]

And I kept and I went to walk and then she was stuck in it.

And I felt her claws pinching me so I letted go of her and then she tried get out and I didn't know what to do.

And if I pulled it was pulling on my skin.

So then my mom would grab the cat and just pull it.

But then it came on to the shirt and there was holes in my shirt.

And then in the second year my cat died because she had spitted out too much hair balls during the first year in the summer.

Yeah I really didn't like it when my dogs and cat died. [14]

And that's the end of my story. [18] [19]

A total of 16 Elder codes were assigned. When Elder codes were applied to individual utterances or to elements of the story as a whole, this story received a score of 34. The applicable Elder codes for this story are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Elder Codes for "Story About My Pets"

Elder code	Code description	Example of relevant elements in the story.
1	No pauses	This story is told without hesitation or interruption. It has three stories within one, and each part flows into the next.
2	Humor/Amusing	"And if she had a fur ball it would pop out in the bowl."
3	See it in your mind's eye	"And he would jump out and he would land on his back all the time with a real little bark."
4	Adventure, excitement, travel	"And then I went to this ice show or something…skating place."
5	Feelings, emotion	"And then I was getting all happy and jumping up and down."
6	Way of thinking	"And I was holding my arms like this stubborn for some reason…"
7	Attention-grabbing	"Then on Sunday something very sad happened."
9	Storyteller animation, dialogue	"And then I would say, "Is it a dog?""
10	Extraordinary	"They put a mat over it (the ice) and you could see these horses and these people doing stunts on them."
11	Good character	"He was so small – only this big and so we would be washing him in the kitchen sink."
12	Recognizable and memorable	"He got way over to the hill [gestures with chin in the direction of the highway] and he got smacked by a car."
13	Pleasant childhood experience	"It's the best dog ever."
14	Unpleasant childhood Experience	"I really didn't like it when my dogs and cat died."
16	Family relationship	"My uncle, M.…"
18	Lengthy	It took 13 minutes, 3 seconds to tell this story.
19	Ending stated	"And that's the end of my story."

"Story About My Pet Wild Rabbit"

Narrator: Cyril (Age 9 years 1 month)

Total Time - 3:35

Transcript:

When I was 6 years old and I got… my dad he was shovelling in the back yard because he was like well he was tryin to move the uhm logs and ah firewood. [1] [16] And uhm uhm he he stepped on this little bunny and cause he heard a screech like, "Eeee!" [3]

He quickly moved up his leg and luckily the bunny wasn't hurt.

It was just a little one.

And then he picked it up and he found a little box that we're not using, filled it with grass from the back yard and then he put it in. [11]

And he put some carrots in for it.

Then the bunny started eating the carrots.

And eventually I got home from school.

And I saw and then I'm like and then I'm ah like dad, "What's in the box?" [9]

And I then I looked in and 'cause dad said, "Take a look for yourself."

I was like, "A bunny!"

And I uhm said, "Dad can I take him out?"

And my dad said, "No, because he needs to rest."

"I found him and I stepped on him just a few hours ago."

So I put him back in and uhm.

Uhm ah the next day I would take him out and then our old hamster cage it wa . . . we didn't use it so we put him in there once.

And for the rest of the time because once we got back from the theatre or something and he was he got outside and he got well not outside but he got outta the box and he was curled up by the heater.

And then carefully I didn't wanna burn my hands so I picked him up carefully like this. [6] (gestured as if holding something in cupped palms)

He likes being holded like in a cup or something.

So I put him in the box again.

The next time we came back he was outside again, he was outta the box again. [2]

Curled up by the heater.

Got him again.

This time my mom finally found something that he couldn't escape. [7]

Put him in the uhm in the hamster box in the hamster cage.

Finally ah finally we uhm it was Saturday night and usually I sleep on the pull out couch.

 I went to sleep.

I woke up and I looked in the cage.

And I said, "Where's the bunny dad?"

My dad was I mean my mom was looking saw the bunny.

She was playing with him under the pillow.

And then I woke up.

And I saw him and I kept playing with him for like an hour.

And I was watching my Saturday morning tv shows.

Then after uhm that after a couple a weeks my rabbit my little rabbit he he started squirming around because he 'cause usually rabbits they don't like to be kept inside and it was a wild rabbit. [12] [15]

So it wanted to stay outside and there was too much heat in the room.

So eventually we had to put him outside. [14]

My mom got sad and then after and that's the end of my story. [5] [19]

A total of 13 Elder codes were assigned. When Elder codes were applied to individual utterances or to elements of the story as a whole, this story received a score of 33. The applicable Elder codes for this story are shown in Table 6.

Applying the Elder Codes to Story 3

"Story About Family Day"

Narrator: Lilly (Age 8 years, 2 months)Total Time: 2:33

Transcript:

On Family Day I went to uhm Trout Lake uhm with uh my friend's mom, J., and B. [1] [4] And that was hard because ah for J- because there's big bumps and she was just walking really slow just to get over the bumps.

And I skated with J- too.

We skated on the Trout Lake and it was fun 'cause we played tag ah freeze tag and I didn't get in only once. [5] [13]

I only got froze once.

There's still long way cause B. and J. and I was just sittin there waiting for J- and

Table 6: Elder Codes for "Story About My Pet Wild Rabbit"

Elder code	Code description	Example of relevant elements in the story
1	No pauses	This story is told without hesitation or interruption.
2	Humor/Amusing	"The next time we came back he was outside again he was outta the box again!"
3	See it in your mind's eye	"He stepped on this little bunny and 'cause he heard a screech like, "EEEE"!
5	Feelings, emotion	"My mom got sad."
6	Way of thinking	"Then carefully, I didn't wanna burn my hands so I picked him up carefully like this [cupped both hands]."
7	Attention-grabbing	"This time my mom finally found something that he couldn't escape."
9	Storyteller animation, dialogue	"And then I'm like, "Dad, what's in the box?"
11	Good character	"And then he picked it up and he found a little box that we're not using, filled it with grass from the back yard and then he put it [the bunny] in."
12	Recognizable and memorable	"Then after a couple weeks my rabbit he started squirming around because usually rabbits they don't like to be kept inside and it was a wild rabbit."
14	Unpleasant childhood experience	"So eventually we had to put him outside."[set him free]
15	Induced memories (listener)	After listening to this story, Linda recounted a story about when her daughter found a rabbit.
16	Family relationship	"my dad…"
19	Ending stated	"That's the end of my story."

she's way over here.

You could barely see her. [3]

She's just just taking little steps at a time.

Then after we started playing tag.

So like uhm so uhm J. was "it" first I think and she uhm ah as soon as she got "it"

she just started touching everybody. [6]

And I keep on going around her and touching everybody.

Til I got "it" once I was following around her and she touched me like that

(gestured touching with index finger) and I got frozen.

And B. she turned around and got B. and J. she got froze.

So and then we went back and we went sliding. [15]

And there was this big hill.

You just go down like that. (showed a steep hill with her arm)

I would turn because I was on a tube and I would turn backwards. [2]

I would go "thump! Thump!" just keep on going backwards.

Then after I came back up went on this real bumpy side. [7]

I go down like there's big little bumps there and there's a big bump.

You go up and then you just sometimes uhm you can land backwards like I did.

And uhm then I after I landed on my arm because I was backwards.

And I landed on my side on my arm.

And then we went to *M*AC's to get treats and I went home to have a family

dinner. [8] [11] [20] [16]

A total of 13 Elder codes were assigned. When Elder codes were applied to individual utterances or to elements of the story as a whole, this story also received a score of 33. The applicable Elder codes for this story are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Elder Codes for "Story About Family Day"

Elder code	Code description	Example of relevant elements in the story
1	No pauses	This story is told without hesitation or interruption.
2	Humour/Amusing	"I would turn because I was on a tube and I would turn backwards."
3	See it in your mind's eye	"You could barely see her [far away on the ice]."
4	Adventure, excitement, travel	"I went to Trout Lake with my friend's mom…"
5	Feelings, emotion	"it was fun cause we played tag."
6	Way of thinking	So like J- was "it" first, I think, and as soon as she got "it" she just started touching everybody."
7	Attention-grabbing	"Then after I came back up went on this real bumpy side."
8	Savored treat	"Then we went to Mac's [store] to get treats."
11	Good character	"I went home to have a family dinner." The Elders commented on how this is an important family activity that reflects good values.
13	Pleasant childhood experience	"We skated on the Trout Lake and it was fun 'cause we played tag–freeze tag and I didn't get in, only once."
15	Induced memories (listener)	After listening to this story, Henry reminisced about sliding on the ice long ago.
16	Family relationship	"family dinner."
20	Ending not stated	The activity ends and the story is not explicitly closed.

The SALT Narrative Scoring Scheme

The Narrative Scoring Scheme (NSS) of the SALT software program was utilized to provide an analysis of the stories based on Western clinical perspectives. Such an analysis is a subjective index of a child's ability to produce a coherent narrative. This informal measurement tool has been developed by professionals following the work of Stein and Glenn (1982) to create a more objective narrative structure scoring system by providing explicit examples of scoring criteria for story grammar categories. Speech and language pathologists who include narrative analysis in their assessment of children's language skills may use this western-based clinical tool, and the narrative scheme elements are familiar to educational practitioners.

The NSS evaluates seven narrative characteristics: introduction–setting and characters; character development–main character(s) and supporting character(s) with first person character voice dialogue; mental states–frequency and vocabulary diversity of emotions and thought processes; referencing–clear antecedents to pronouns and references; conflict resolution–thorough description to advance the story; cohesion–logical sequencing with smooth transitions; and conclusion–final event concludes and story is wrapped up. The story rater applies a 5-point scaled score (0–*minimal/ immature*, 3–*emerging*, and 5–*proficient characteristic*) to arrive at an NSS total score.

The Anishinaabe storytellers were judged to have: *emerging* to *proficient* application of story introduction features such as setting and characters; *proficient* application of character development elements; *proficient application* of mental state references; *proficient* use of antecedents to pronouns and clear referents; *proficient* application of conflict resolution; *emergent* to *proficient* application of cohesion where

events follow a logical order and less emphasis is placed on minor events; *emergent* to *proficient* application of conclusion where the story is clearly wrapped up and the final event is ended.

A number of features of Anishinaabe story structure and content are the same as, or similar to, many of the components considered to be relevant in conventional clinical or Western-perspective storytelling analysis, such as the Narrative Scoring Scheme. Examining the same three "preferred" stories using the NSS will illustrate these similarities.

Applying the NSS to Story 1

Cyril's "Story About My Pets," referred to as Story 1, received the following Narrative Story Scheme codes: Introduction (5); Character Development (5); Mental States (5); Referencing (5); Conflict Resolution (5); Cohesion (4); Conclusion (5). Cyril's Story 1 received a total NSS Score of 34. All narrative characteristics indicate proficiency (a score of 5) except for "cohesion" (which received a score of 4). This narrative skill would be assessed as emerging and approaching proficiency.

If analysis of Cyril's performance on other standardized tests indicated a language disorder, his NSS score would provide direction for clinical narrative intervention targeting "logical sequencing of events," with reduced emphasis on what are considered to be minor events and inclusion of smoother transitions between events.

Applying the NSS to Story 2

Cyril's "Story About My Pet Wild Rabbit," referred to as Story 2, received these Narrative Scoring Scheme codes: Introduction (4); Character Development (5); Mental States (5); Referencing (5); Conflict Resolution (5); Cohesion (5); Conclusion (4). Cyril's

Story 2 received a total NSS score of 33. The narrative characteristics of character development, mental states, referencing, conflict resolution, and cohesion indicate proficiency (scores of 5). Introduction and conclusion characteristics are considered to be emerging and approaching proficiency (scores of 4).

If analysis of Cyril's performance on other standardized tests had indicated a language disorder, his NSS score would provide direction for clinical narrative intervention targeting "Introduction," which consists of "setting" (stating place and reference to time at an appropriate place in the story), and "characters" (introduction with description and detail) and inclusion of a clear "concluding statement" to wrap up the story.

Applying the NSS to Story 3

The following section illustrates how the NSS was applied to Lilly's "Story About Family Day," referred to as Story 3. Narrative Scoring Scheme codes: Introduction (5); Character Development (5); Mental States (5); Referencing (5); Conflict Resolution (5); Cohesion (4); Conclusion (4). Lily's Story 3 received a total NSS score of 33. The narrative characteristics of introduction, character development, mental states, referencing, and conflict resolution indicate proficiency (scores of 5). Cohesion and conclusion characteristics are considered to be emerging and approaching proficiency (scores of 4).

If analysis of Lilly's performance on other standardized language tests revealed language delay, her NSS score would provide direction for narrative intervention targeting "logical sequencing of events" (reduced emphasis on what are considered to be

minor events and inclusion of smooth transitions between events), and inclusion of a clear concluding statement to wrap up the story.

Scores from Elder Codes Versus NSS Scores for "Preferred" Stories

Table 8 shows data from analysis of all of the stories that were "preferred" by the Elders. (Three of the four Elders rated each of these stories with a 2, *liked the story very much*). Each story's Elder code score, NSS score, and story length are indicated.

Scores from Elder Codes Versus NSS Scores for "Not Preferred" Stories

Table 9 shows data from analysis of all of the stories that were "not preferred" by the Elders–four of the four Elders assigned a rating of 1–*did not like the story very much*. Each Elder code that was evident in the story is indicated according to the Elder code number, and SALT program hand-coding was used in the process to determine the Elder Code Total for each story. The Elder code total shows the number of Elder codes that applied to the story. The NSS total score was arrived at by utilizing the SALT to determine the NSS scores that applied to each story. The story length is indicated from the audio transcript.

Comparison of Scores from Elder Codes with NSS Scores

As shown in Table 10, three of the Elders' preferred stories (10, 12, and 13) had the highest number of Elder codes, and one of these three (10) had the highest NSS total.

Story 10 has the highest number of Elder codes (Elder code total:16) and also has the highest N Stories 12 and 13, with the second highest Elder code ratings, each had a total of 13 Elder codes. These stories did not quite receive the second highest NSS totals, each scoring 33.SS score (43). This was the longest story of all, so perhaps story length accounts for the congruence.

Table 8: Overall Scores and Story Length for Preferred Stories

Story	Elder code total	NSS total	Story length (min:sec)
1	9	30	1:09
2	10	31	1:35
3	9	33	1:27
4	12	32	1:23
5	9	33	1:52
6	9	34	1:44
7	10	31	2:20
8	9	35	3:17
9	8	34	2:38
10	16	34	13:03
11	10	34	3:25
12	13	33	3:35
13	13	33	2:33
14	10	26	1:09
15	7	34	:53
16	10	29	1:07
17	9	30	1:23
18	12	31	1:53

Table 9: Elder Code and NSS Overall Scores Plus Story Length for Not Preferred Stories

Story	Elder code total	NSS total	Story length (min:sec)
19	6	30	0:58
20	7	23	0:50
21	6	31	1:38
22	8	30	1:11
23	7	34	1:28
24	7	31	0:42

Table 10: Preferred Stories With the Three Highest Elder Code and NSS Scores

Story transcript number	Elder code total	NSS total	Story length (min:sec)
8	9	35	3:17
10	16	43	13:03
12	13	33	3:35
13	13	33	2:33

Story 8, which had the second highest NSS Total (35), had a comparatively low Elder code total (9).

This incongruence of scoring codes is further illustrated in one of the "not preferred" stories, in Table 11. Story 23, one of the stories that the Elders considered "not preferred," with an Elder code of 7, had a comparatively high NSS total score of 34– slightly higher than the NSS score for the Elders' "preferred stories" 12 and 13. These data show that narrative analysis derived from a Western based perspective, such as the NSS, is not always congruent with a narrative analysis based on the Anishinaabe perspective. The application of an emic narrative evaluation scheme sometimes yields different results than an etic or Western clinical tool.

<center>The Importance of Storytelling Circles</center>

The circle format for storytelling was nonthreatening, and the children sat quietly and listened. More often than not, when it was their turn, they shared a story about a personal experience. The circle provided an environment conducive to self-expression, in the absence of criticism or competition. On occasion a previously told story influenced the next storyteller to tell a story with the same theme. This created a nice flow among storytellers in the group. At times a story also stirred the memory of the Elders and they reminisced about times gone by, sharing a personal experience narrative with the same theme.

In primary grade classrooms, teachers frequently engage children in a circle setting such as story time or show and tell. A circle setting for sharing of personal event narratives can readily be applied in the classroom, and it may be helpful to introduce a relevant theme to create focus for the group, especially for Anishinaabe students. Since a

Table 11: Not Preferred Story with The Highest NSS Total

Story transcript number	Elder code total	NSS score	Story length (min:sec)
23	7	34	1:08

storytelling circle is appropriate for bringing together children and Elders, some teachers may wish to approach an Anishinaabe Elder from the children's community to join the c ircle. With the involvement of an Elder, the traditional circle protocol and use of a talking stick or stone would be appropriate.

A child's emotional state and sense of well-being are important factors that facilitate memory and learning. Classrooms that nurture children and exude pleasant surroundings are more conducive to child learning than impersonal, anxiety-ridden environments.

Many of the "preferred stories" were about shared activities with family members and friends, and a number of stories took place on the land. These themes exude the importance of Anishinaabe kinship relations and grounding of an individual as one develops a relationship with Mother Earth and nature. When children are given the opportunity to share such stories in the classroom, information is gained by teachers and peers about the child's cultural background, interests, family, and community. This can support cultural understanding, and such shared knowledge can facilitate relationship development within the school.

<div align="center">The Persistence of Anishinaabe Orality</div>

Traditional Aboriginal parenting roles and responsibilities are not taken lightly, and Anishinaabe family members assume responsibility for nurturing and teaching their children before they are even born. Great care is taken of expectant mothers, and it is common practice for grandparents and midwives to protect women from stressful or unpleasant situations during pregnancy. Children are considered a sacred gift from the

Creator, and they are cared for in a respectful way. In this way, the child grows and learns in the absence of negative influences that impede his/her development.

It is apparent from reviewing the "preferred" story transcripts that most of the children retained vivid memories of events from their early childhood. For example, one story was recalled from a time prior to the child/storyteller being able to talk, another from age 2 years, and two stories were recalled from preschool years.

In this study, narratives told by 8-, 9-, and 10-year-old English-speaking Anishinaabe children during storytelling circles with peers in their home community were shown to exemplify features of Anishinaabe orality. This was evident from examination of the transcripts, using story features that were identified by a panel of Elders with an Anishinaabe worldview and an appreciation for Aboriginal orality. Story features and elements central or unique to Anishinaabe orality include: an Aboriginal sense of humor that does not lend itself to literal interpretation; lack of expectation for storyteller to explicitly "wrap up" or state the story's ending; story subjects and themes regarding relationships with family, friends, and the land and naturally occurring events, both positive and negative; storyteller animation using dialogue, voice, and nonverbal expression; listeners respond by invoking memory or an interpretation to derive personal meaning and learning; elements of the unexpected or unexplained are valued; and there may be a reference to moral character and traditional values such as humility and spirituality.

<div align="center">Limitations of the Study</div>

The nature of an ethnographic study is such that the study sample is small. This places a limitation on the applicability of the findings to other environments such as

classrooms. The relatively small sample of Anishinaabe children's narratives sampled (36) means that normative data for the age-group of 8-,9-, and 10-year-olds remains nonexistent for this community. It does, however, provide a starting point for further investigation and data collection.

The application of a Western-based narrative analysis tool also has limitations in that it places a somewhat different emphasis on what is valued, and these evaluations may not match up with Anishinaabe orality values and perspectives. The data presented from applying the NSS scores and the Elder coding system show a number of incongruencies.

This ethnographic study presents stories from a particularly small sample of Anishinaabe children and reveals culturally relevant preferences for components of their narratives based on the perceptions of a few individuals (Elders) who value Aboriginal orality. The data have limited use, as they cannot be generalized to all Aboriginal populations. Additional studies are necessary to illustrate common threads and patterns from other Anishinaabe communities with similar belief systems, political and economic histories, and cultural patterns of communication.

The children's narratives and Elders' discussions were audiotaped, and this did not provide enough information to investigate speech patterns from a speech language pathology perspective. If videotaping had been employed, specific details such as movement of the mouth, tongue, and lips for sound production, body language such as facial expression, eye contact, physical proximity, and gestures could have been analyzed to shed light on First Nations English dialect features and discourse patterns exhibited by the subjects.

Chapter Summary

The story ratings of Anishinaabek Elders have contributed to our understanding of culturally specific Anishinaabe story structure and content in the narratives of English-speaking Anishinaabe children. Binary story ratings were readily accepted by a panel of Elders. They identified a "preferred" story when 75 to 100% of them gave the story a rating of 2 (*Liked the story very much*). Elders' story ratings also identified a "not preferred" story when 100% of them assigned the story a rating of 1 (*Did not like the story very much*). The binary ratings allowed closer examination of the stories valued by the Anishinaabek Elders and comparison with stories that were less valued. Comparison of NSS data regarding "preferred" and "not preferred" stories showed that although the Anishinaabe orality perspective supports inclusion of Western story grammar components in the stories, the valuation of children's stories by Anishinaabe Elders is different from the Western clinical perspective. The story with the highest NSS score was, in fact, not "preferred" by any of the Elders. This demonstrates the importance of acknowledging, in the formal education setting, the impact of cultural differences and the important role that socialization plays in determining culturally relevant features of children's stories

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter will revisit the research questions and literature, address the implications of the study, offer conclusions, make suggestions for further research, and speak to the circle of research.

Revisiting the Research Questions

Prior to this study, Anishinaabe orality features were undefined in the context of Anishinaabek children's storytelling. The main research problem that formed the basis of this study was: When Anishinaabek children tell stories with their peers, using the English language, do their stories exemplify features of Anishinaabe orality? This investigation of stories shared by 8- to 10-year-old Anishinaabek children with peers in a storytelling circle exemplifies story components and aspects of Anishinaabe orality. An emically derived protocol was used to analyze and evaluate 21 aspects of the children's stories.

The following ancillary research question was addressed: How do ratings by Anishinaabek Elders contribute to our understanding of culturally specific Anishinaabe story structure and content in the narratives of English-speaking Anishinaabe children? An emically derived protocol for evaluation of children's oral stories was created by presenting Elders with the opportunity to identify their favourite stories and the culturally valued story structure and components. The Elders were given opportunity to identify their favourite stories using a basic rating scale (1-*not preferred*, 2-*preferred*) and the

the Elders' listened to the preferred stories and described the valued components of the stories. These features formed the emically derived protocol, a list of 21 Elder codes used to evaluate each of the stories.

The dearth of research describing the features of Anishinaabe orality has been addressed by the following question: What are some of the emically derived structural elements that describe features of Anishinaabe children's storytelling? Not only were structural elements identified in the process, but also other information about features of Anishinaabe children's storytelling came to light. The list of features that were illustrated in the stories is presented here in three categories to demonstrate the features of Anishinaabe children's oral stories and important connections with the sociocultural aspects of Anishinaabe orality. The following story structure elements were identified: story length (lengthy or short) and story ending (stated or not stated). Several features relating to story meaning or content were exemplified in the children's oral stories: sense of adventure, feelings, savoured treat, extraordinary event, positive character traits, pleasant or unpleasant experience, family relationships, and intergenerational story. The following components were related to culture-specific oral discourse rules and listener reaction: fluent oral presentation, speaker animation, humour, creates visualization, insight to character motivation/thoughts, familiar context, attention-grabbing, and memory-provoking. The resulting emically derived protocol increases our knowledge of some of the main story elements contained in Anishinaabe children's oral stories.

The research literature is filled with story analysis based on conventional Euro-American story schema such as episodic structure analysis and story grammar evaluation. Research into the stories of Aboriginal children is lacking. Three studies from the field of speech and language pathology were reviewed where researchers used an etically derived assessment standard to evaluate Aboriginal children's stories, breaking down the stories into structure and meaning components.

This research aimed to understand: How do the features of an emically derived standard compare to those used in conventional clinical/Western perspective analysis? In this research, an emically derived standard was used to evaluate and better understand Anishinaabe children's oral stories. An etically derived assessment protocol (*SALT* computer software and Narrative Scoring Scheme, or NSS) was also applied in order to make a comparison. The story features investigated with a conventional story analysis protocol included the following story characteristics: introduction; character development; mental states, referencing; conflict resolution; cohesion; conclusion, and each characteristic received a subjective scaled score from 0 to 5. The end result was a total NSS score for each story. The emically derived protocol of 21 features was applied to each story, and a total elder code score was obtained for each story.

A comparison was made as each standard (etic and emic) was applied to evaluate the stories, and the data showed that narrative analysis derived from a Western-based perspective, such as the NSS, is not always congruent with a narrative analysis based on

the Anishinaabe perspective. The application of an emic narrative evaluation scheme sometimes yields different results than an etic or Western clinical tool.

All posed research questions were answered in this investigation. Children's storytelling from an Anishinaabe orality perspective is now better understood.

Revisiting the Literature

This research presents positive implications for addressing the achievement gap of Aboriginal learners. The 2006 Canadian Census data regarding Aboriginal peoples from Statistics Canada (2008) showed lower educational attainment levels for Aboriginal peoples as compared to non-Aboriginal populations. Research from Ball (2006, 2008) and Kanu (2002) related socioeconomic factors to social disadvantage and exclusion from full participation in school and identified a mismatch between cognitive and learning experiences of the student with the academic content and processes of the formal school system. The Canadian Council on Learning's *State of Learning in Canada 2007* report highlighted the interconnectedness of literacy with the economic, social, and cultural life of an individual. An examination of Aboriginal learning revealed that a healthy balance of spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual aspects of a person supports them throughout life. The document called for removal of barriers to participation in school through acknowledgement of informal and traditional knowledge that Aboriginal learners bring to the classroom. In 2007 the Ontario Ministry of Education (2007c) launched an *Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Policy Framework* aimed at developing educators' understanding of Aboriginal learning styles and

curriculum approaches that support Aboriginal student literacy and success. Friesen and Friesen (2005), Leavitt (1995), Anderson (2002), and Ghosh (2002) identified the need for a curriculum that integrates elements of traditional and contemporary First Nations culture and validates Aboriginal cultures and languages as central to the curriculum. This approach would not only reduce racial tension and make Aboriginal students feel more comfortable in the classroom but would also better meet the needs of tuition-paying Aboriginal students in provincial schools and create a heightened sense of place or connection to community/land and facilitate involvement of Elders and community members in the schools.

This research has shown that oral storytelling circles are indeed a viable option for classroom teachers to engage their Aboriginal students and better understand their cultural and social background from the stories they share. As Aboriginal students feel valued and gain experience as active participants in the classroom, their sense of self-worth grows, and this contributes to retention in school. Relationships are fostered and strengthened as students and educators learn about each other, and this supports the creation of a classroom environment that is sensitive to various communication practices and learning styles.

Historically, Aboriginal children's narratives have been evaluated with protocols that are not sensitive to cultural and linguistic factors. Investigators such as Cronin (1982), Pesco (1994), and Bird and Vetter (1994) described Aboriginal narratives from the perspective of Western literacy traditions (structure and meaning). Speech and

language pathologists have adopted this etically derived perspective as well when evaluating the narratives of Aboriginal children. Gutierrez-Clellen and Quinn (1993) illustrated the problematic nature of using such a lens. High point analysis (macrostructure emphasis) and story grammar analysis (focus on content and manner features) evaluate a student's familiarity with the discourse rules of the dominant culture and are not sensitive to the individual's experience with listening, telling stories, general world knowledge, and audience involvement/interactions with the storyteller. Such a Western approach does not identify useful indicators across other cultural groups.

Gutierrez-Clellan et al. (1995) show the negative influence of applying a foreign elicitation method and expectations around narratives on a storyteller's production. Children of varied cultural backgrounds have limited narrative socialization in the classroom context and are at a disadvantage when they are evaluated. The Western approach to evaluation does not provide them with opportunity to even demonstrate their true language-learning potential. The authors suggest that the test-teach-retest model of dynamic assessment of narratives helps a teacher focus on interventions and instructions relevant to Western literature and provides opportunity for students to learn strategies, internalize them, and apply them to oral storytelling. Pena et al. (2006) demonstrated how dynamic assessment helps educators and clinicians identify students who in actuality have language impairment. Bliss and McCabe (2008) recommended that, since the long-term goal is academic success, all students should be taught to comprehend and orally tell classically structured narratives. Michaels (1981) observed classroom situations where

the teacher's differing schemata (literate style expectations) led to misevaluation and questioning during oral sharing time that undermined lexical and grammatical elaboration. In 2002, J. Johnston and Wong found that Western models of oral language run counter to cultural biases of other groups. J. Johnston (2007) researched the narratives of children from non-Western cultures and found that a definition of a "good story" differs from culture to culture. She cautioned educational practitioners to rethink the advice that they give to families. Ball et al. (2005) echoed concerns regarding the use of etically derived assessment tools in the evaluation of Aboriginal children's communication skills. Language assessment tools based on standard English were felt to misidentify Aboriginal children with language impairment (overidentification).

Researchers in the fields of speech and language pathology and linguistics have identified characteristics of Anishnabemowin and Aboriginal discourse practices including storytelling. Based on his work with the Navajo and Hopi, Hall (1976) observed a low emphasis in the Aboriginal home on oral directions and parental expectations. The author described these Aboriginal languages as using "high context communication" (where meaning is not explicitly stated but is assumed) as compared to North American communication that is "low context" (highly detailed and explicitly contained in conversation). This difference is exemplified in Aboriginal humour in particular. Van der Wey (2001) proposed that although experience is the foundation of learning, engagement in dialogue about experiences and sharing with others deepens understanding and knowledge. Personal event narratives create such a window of

opportunity for students to become involved in deeper discussions and further enquiry.

Chambers Erasmus (1989) described the learning process of oral storytelling as providing

opportunity for the listeners to make their own meaning, and as stories are experienced

on future occasions, layers of meaning are decoded according to the listener's readiness.

The author described oral presentation expectations in the classroom as an opportunity

for student criticism and linked this to Aboriginal student silence.

Oral storytelling circles circumvent this situation. Archibald (1997) investigated

the storytelling of a coastal Salish community. A blending of cultural values within

stories was seen to help a person think, feel, and "be." Valentine (1995) immersed

herself within an Algonquin community in northeastern Ontario and identified two

categories of narrative: tipaccimowinan (historical and personal significance, amusement

factor) and aatisoohkaanan (legend-myths or true stories about a mythical past–how the

earth was prior to modern man). Mary Black (1977) identified "percept ambiguity" which

meant that Aboriginal people were reluctant to categorize with finality. In 1988, Mary

Black-Rogers explained "respectful talk" where the Aboriginal person used silence in the

presence of someone perceived to be a powerful person, and Preston (1976) described the

silent behaviour of Cree people in the presence of strangers. Spielmann (1986) described

ways of making requests and rejecting requests in the discourse of Ojibway people. Brant

(1979) illustrated the unspoken discourse rule of "noninterference" among Aboriginal

people.

The results of this research present a novel, emically-derived perspective for evaluating the oral stories of Anishinaabe children. The resulting list of 21 emically derived story features is now available to educators and speech language clinicians. This can increase understanding and appreciation of Anishinaabe orality perspectives and provide a culturally sensitive lens for evaluation. The ethnographic approach used in this study has been shown to be a valuable tool for investigating cultural and social factors that impact on students' language and literacy in the classroom. This research can serve as a springboard for further inquiry.

Implications

This study has illustrated the importance of gaining a broader understanding of Anishinaabe children's narratives through ethnographic investigation. By putting on a culturally sensitive lens and observing children telling stories in a familiar setting that is naturally conducive to storytelling, stories that are representative of the population can be elicited.

By gathering information about the components and aspects of Aboriginal children's narratives, we can gain insights into Aboriginal orality. I hope that such knowledge will create opportunities for Anishinaabek and non-Anishinaabek to truly appreciate and accept Aboriginal children's different narrative styles. In particular, I hope that educators and speech and language pathologists will embrace culturally sensitive opportunities for oral storytelling in the classroom and in other educational or clinical settings. Oral storytelling activities present Aboriginal children with culturally sensitive

and appropriate bridges to literacy in the language arts curriculum. When all students feel comfortable engaging in storytelling, there will be an increase in shared background knowledge in the classroom; this will help to build relationships by supporting feelings of equivalence and inclusion (belonging) within the group. The Anishinaabe community and home will be validated when oral storytelling occurs regularly and storytelling activities present a bridge to true appreciation and acknowledgement of the oral tradition of the Aboriginal community.

Oral language development precedes mastery of literate forms of English. Oral storytelling activities in the classroom provide the teacher with an opportunity to appreciate the strengths that the Aboriginal student brings to the classroom–rather than focusing on the Aboriginal learners' implied language deficits.

As teachers engage with Aboriginal students in oral storytelling circles, their perceptions and response to the students will shift towards acceptance and validation of First Nations English dialects. Speech and language differences will become acceptable as part of the normal learning process for standard English. Frequent opportunities to speak and listen to peers in class will demonstrate the broad sense of English language construction. Students will connect with peers and develop self-confidence as speakers.

<div align="center">Conclusions</div>

Speech and language pathologists, teachers, and educational practitioners can benefit from awareness of the features of Anishinaabe stories. It is important that professionals investigate the oral stories of Aboriginal children as part of their

assessments and interventions, especially since the group is by no means homogeneous. Data collection from story transcripts, using culturally specific Elder codes, will help shed light on the features and components of Aboriginal children's narratives.

The following information gained from this research project is meant to be used as a reference by educators and speech language pathologists to facilitate appreciation and value of Anishinaabe children's stories. This list addresses components and elements of Anishinaabe orality that, once understood, serve an important function in oral storytelling activities:

1. A storytelling circle is a naturally facilitative setting for getting children together (with the teacher included) to listen and share stories in a respectful way without scrutiny. It is important for the teacher or circle facilitator to introduce the parameters of the storytelling circle, such as the rules for engagement and the topic or type of story to be told.

2. Aboriginal children may not explicitly introduce or end their story, as these features may seem obvious from shared experience among the group. It is appropriate for the teacher to ask "Is there more?" or "Have you finished?" to clarify.

3. Young children may feel more comfortable if they initially share stories about familiar places and activities with family and friends. Once they are comfortable in a storytelling activity, it is appropriate to introduce topics or themes related to the classroom or course of study.

4. Aboriginal storytellers may express a variety of emotions and topics that could seem inappropriate to non-Aboriginal listeners, for example, tragic events or expressions of spiritual understandings. A circle based on respect and trust is crucial, in order that the child has freedom of expression; this will promote mutual understanding and cultural awareness of Aboriginal values, worldview, and perspectives about life. Such openness will also minimize the anxiety experienced by the Aboriginal child when non-Aboriginal expectations for verbal participation occur. It is crucial that the child's First Nation English dialect not be corrected during storytelling; samples of oral language grammar and pronunciation differences can be gathered by the teacher for later reference when engaging in writing lessons or providing structured oral language practice of standard English.

5. The Aboriginal child's own concepts, and his or her favorite or familiar activities, will come to light through the stories he or she shares; reference can be made to these in the classroom by way of storyboards, displays, and invited speakers from the Aboriginal community. Such linkages are important bridges to literacy.

6. Features of Anishinaabe children's storytelling illustrated in their oral stories include the following: story structure elements—story length (lengthy or short) and story ending (stated or not stated); story meaning or content elements—sense of adventure, feelings, savoured treat, extraordinary event, positive character traits, pleasant or unpleasant experience, family relationships, and intergenerational story; components related to culture-specific oral discourse rules and listener participation—fluent oral

presentation, speaker animation, humour, creates visualization, insight to character motivation/thoughts, familiar context, attention-grabbing, and memory-provoking. These features comprise an emically derived protocol that increases our knowledge of some of the main story elements contained in Anishinaabe children's oral stories.

Suggestions for Further Research

Much needs to be learned to identify activities that appropriately engage Aboriginal students in the classroom. Researchers in the field of education may seek to investigate relevancy of specific themes and experiences to Anishinaabe orality and worldview and apply these in classroom settings to identify best practices.

Speech and language pathologists, linguists, and anthropologists are well equipped to investigate Anishinaabe orality in other First Nation locales in order to identify common threads and patterns of children's oral narratives. It may be possible to identify characteristics that are evident in substantial samples so that information is authentic enough to be generalizable.

Speech and language pathologists have expressed the research need for regional data to define the speech and language characteristics of Aboriginal English dialect. These data are of particular relevance to speech assessment and intervention. Oral storytelling tasks are now considered an appropriate activity for research with Aboriginal children, and investigation may be extended to include important culturally relevant discourse aspects.

The Circle of Research

It is important that research participants are provided with an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of the data collected from them. Piquemal (2003b) recognized this as a key component in a culturally sensitive and ethical framework for conducting research in First Nation communities. Piquemal described free and informed consent as an ongoing process based on notions of authority and collectiveness of knowledge and on the principal of confirmation.

> When the researcher submits the research findings to the group in question to verify their accuracy, consent is confirmed once more . . . Recurrent confirmation ensures that consent is ongoing. This process follows a circle so that each person's voice is not only accurately but also ethically represented (Piquemal, p. 209).

I have treated the stories shared by the children in the storytelling circles with reverence, for they are extremely special, offering insights into how each Anishinaabe child perceives the world, his or her relationships with family members and the First Nation community, and the land. The Elders have honored me by sharing their time and talk. Our relationship with the Elders is important for increasing our understandings and efforts to nurture Anishinaabe children and respect for one another.

I developed a coding system based on information from the Elders regarding pertinent narrative elements. I intend to present my research findings, with specific reference to the Elders coding scheme, to the Elders in order to provide them with an

opportunity for clarification and confirmation that this does, in fact, represent what they described and to facilitate the formation of an emically derived coding protocol for narratives.

Once this thesis has been successfully defended, I will share the results of this research with the Nipissing First Nation community in a presentation to the students, and their families, Elders, the leadership, the Education Department, and Education Committee, as well as other community members. Copies of the thesis will be provided to Education Committee members and to the Chief and Council. Participants' family members will have access to the thesis at the First Nation office.

It is important to give back to the community. I anticipate that the findings of this study will be used to shape speech and language intervention for Nipissing First Nation children. I hope that oral narrative storytelling circles will become a component in speech and language interventions and that community members and Elders will be invited to serve as storytelling circle facilitators.

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APPENDIX A: Approval by Nipissing First Nation

NIPISSING
FIRST NATION

the Land, the People, the Futu

HEAD OFFICE
36 Semo Road
Garden Village, ON
P2B 3K2

Administration
Employment & Training
Finance
Library
Tel: (705) 753-2050
Fax: (705) 753 0207

Economic Development
Tel: (705) 753-6985
Fax: (705) 753-0207

Housing Department
Tel: (705) 753-6973
Fax: (705) 753-6986

Lands Department
Fisheries/Forestry
Tel: (705) 753-2922
Fax: (705) 753-5762

Native Child Welfare
Tel: (705) 753-2691
Fax: (705) 753-2527

Ontario Works
Tel: (705) 753-2058
Fax: (705) 753-5841

Food Bank
Tel: (705) 753-6972

Public Works
Tel: (705) 753-4167
Fax: (705) 753-6703

September 3, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

This will serve to confirm that Chief and Council of Nipissing First Nation has given permission for Sharla Peltier to conduct a survey titled "Valuing Anishinabe Storytelling from a First Nations Orality Perspective" on our First.

I want to take this opportunity to wish Sharla the best as she obtains her Masters in Education.

Sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Marianna Couchie
Chief

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APPENDIX B: Ethics Approval

NIPISSING
UNIVERSITY

November 5, 2008

Sharla Peltier
7 Van Horne Crescent
North Bay, ON P1A 1G1

Dear Sharla:

Re: REB File # *08-10-02* (Please quote on all correspondence)
        Project Entitled: <u>Valuing Children's Storytelling from an Anishinaabe Orality</u>

It is our pleasure to advise you that the Research Ethics Board at Nipissing University has
granted ethical approval for your research project entitled <u>Valuing Children's Storytelling
from an Anishinaabe Orality</u> for the period of *11/05/08* to *11/05/09*. Ethics approval is
valid for one year from project approval.

*Tri-Council Policy Statement requires you to submit an annual/final progress report
annually and upon completion of your project.*

If there are any changes to the project you are required to submit a Request to
Renew/Revise an Approved Research Protocol to the Research Office at
ethic@nipissingu.ca.

At any time during your research should any participant(s) suffer adversely you are
required to advise the Research Ethics Board at Nipissing University, (705) 474-3461 ext.
4198 within 24 hours of the event.

We wish you all the success in completion of your project.

Sincerely yours,

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Dr. Dana Murphy, Vice-Chair
Research Ethics Board

cc: Martee Morin, REB Coordinator
        Janice Vaillancourt, MEd Secretary

100 College Drive, Box 5002, North Bay, ON P1B 8L7
tel: (705) 474-3450 • fax: (705) 474-1947 • tty: (705) 474-8797

APPENDIX C: Parent/Guardian Consent

Participant's Parental/Guardian Information Letter & Consent Form

<u>**Title of Study: Valuing Children's Storytelling From an Anishinaabe Orality Perspective**</u>

Your child/ward is asked to participate in a research study conducted by Sharla Peltier from the M.Ed. program of the Education Faculty at Nipissing University. The results of this study will contribute to a Master of Education Thesis.
If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Dr. John Long, Nipissing University (Phone: 474-3450 Extension 4130, email: johnlo@community.nipissingu.ca) or Fran Couchie, Director of Education, Nipissing First Nation (Phone: 497-1201, email: franc@nfn.ca.
The purpose of this study is to gather children's stories about everyday life experiences, and the study is designed to assess what local Elders value as elements of a "good story."

Participation Procedures

If your child/ward volunteers to participate in this study, s/he will be asked to:

- Attend storytelling circles with other children from Nipissing First Nation. Your child will be asked to listen to the stories told by other children and to share their own stories about life events. All stories will be tape recorded using a small tape recorder so that a panel of Elders can listen to the stories and the researcher can write down the stories.
- The storytelling gatherings will be 2 hours in length and <u>may</u> occur on 3 occasions. The circles will be held at the Nipissing First Nation Band Office and Nbisiing Education Centre. The circles wil be held during the months of January, February, March 2009 in the evening or on weekends.
- A panel of local Elders will listen to the taped stories at a later time and will not be provided with the name or identity of your child. There is a possibility that an Elder will recognize the child's voice or story and indirectly know your child's identity. Elders will discuss and describe the features of "good stories." This information will be made available to educators and speech language practitioners so that Anishinaabe children's storytelling is better understood, valued and promoted.
- In future (after this research project) you may be contacted to provide permission for your child's story to be compiled in a booklet and shared in the community and schools. It will be your decision whether or not to agree to this, and whether or not to include your child's name.

- As researcher, I will present the results of the study at a community gathering in May, 2009. Parents, children, Elders and community members will be invited to attend.
- In May, 2009 a copy of the thesis will be provided to the Nipissing First Nation Education Committee members, Chief and Council.
- There are no known potential risks of physical or emotional harm or discomfort for your child by participating. Every effort will be made to protect your child's privacy and information regarding the identity of the child will be protected by the researcher should you wish their participation in the research to remain private. Your child's name, age, grade and contact information will be kept in a file with the signed consent form to participate in the research. The file will be locked in a file cabinet in the researcher's office but there is a very small chance that another person may read this information. Also, other community members may be aware of the researcher's activities in the community and when they observe your child attending a storytelling circle, they may make the connection on their own and understand that your child is participating. At the storytelling circles, you child will be invited to take a turn by telling a story and will not be forced to participate or to tell a story of a prescribed length. They will not be subjected to any judgment from listeners regarding the value or acceptance of their story. Your child's assent will be invited at the beginning of each storytelling circle to give them an opportunity to voluntarily participate.
- There are a number of potential benefits to your child and to society. Your child's participation in this study will help provide information to speech and language practitioners and educators that will enhance the engagement of Anishinaabe students in programming that includes culturally relevant storytelling activities that will support academic success. Your child will have fun and have a positive experience where his/her stories are listened to and acknowledged and he/she will enjoy listening to the stories from their peers.
- Your child will be offered healthy snacks at the storytelling circles. He/she will be gifted with a small present to acknowledge his/her contributions at the end of the project.

Confidentiality Process

Any information obtained in connection with this study, and that can be identified with your child/ward, will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission.

- When listening to the tape recordings of your child's stories, the Elders will not be told of the identity of your child. There is a possibility that an Elder

may identify your child by familiarity with their voice or story. Your child's name and age will be recorded on transcripts of his/her stories but only I (the researcher) will have access to this identifying information.

- The written transcripts of stories with identifying information (your child's name and age, date of story) will be kept in a secure file cabinet in my office at the Nipissing First Nation Education Department for one year after the research project. At that time, the written records will be destroyed. This will allow time after this research project to create a material resource for future use with teachers and to provide a keep-sake of your child's story. Should a project to compile the children's stories with illustrations/artwork into a booklet for the children and educators be possible, I will contact you for your written consent at that time. In any case, the written transcripts of your child's stories will be destroyed one year after the end of this research project.
- The audio recordings of your child's stories will be will remain in my custody and will be kept in a secure location. All audio files will be kept for editing purposes in a secure computer. All audio recordings will be erased/destroyed at the end of this research study unless you give your signed consent to include them in the resource materials mentioned above.
- The thesis will not include identifying information of your child unless you provide written consent to have your child identified with his/her stories and your child also assents.
- No information will be released to any other party except for when I provide the thesis to Nipissing University.

You can choose whether your child/ward is to be in this study or not. If your child/ward volunteers to be in this study, s/he may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. S/he may also refuse to answer and questions s/he doesn't want to answer and still remain in the study.

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue your child/ward's participation without penalty.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Nipissing University's Research Ethics Board.

If you have questions regarding your child/ward's rights as a research subject, contact:
Research Services   Telephone: 705-474-3461 Extension 4198
Nipissing University
North Bay, ON P1B 8L7

Parental/Guardian Informed Consent to Participate in Research

As Parent/Legal Representative of the Research Subject, I understand the information provided for the study "Valuing Children's Storytelling From an Anishinaabe Orality Perspective" and described in the participant information letter. My questions have been answered to may satisfaction, and I agree to have my child/ward _____(name) participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____(Name – Print)

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Date)

Consent for Disclosure

If you are willing to have your child/ward, _____
                                                                           Name

_____ identified with the stories he/she shares,
      Date of Birth

please indicate your agreement. You are being provided with a copy of this form.

_____
      Name (print)

_____ _____
             Signature   Date
                               Meegwech!

APPENDIX D: Elders Consent

Script used for Participant Information & Consent

"Ahneen [Elder's name]. As you know, my name is Sharla Peltier. My Anishinaabe
name is Msko Binesiikwe.   I am a student in the Master of Education program at
Nipissing University and part of the work that is required for me to complete the degree
includes research. I am going to be looking at Anishinaabe children's stories about
everyday life experiences and will be finding out what Elders value in a good story.
[Elder's name], I have some semah (tobacco) here that I want to offer to you. I am
interested in having you participate by sharing your knowledge about what makes a good
story. Before you decide if you will volunteer to participate in this study, I will talk
about the project, how I want you to help, what I will do with the information you give
me, and how your privacy will be respected.

You are an Elder and I humbly ask you to help me with my learning. I am asking you to
attend and participate in what I call "Elders' panel gatherings" at Nbisiing Education
Centre where you will meet with four other Elders to listen to tape recordings of children
telling stories and give each story a rating of "1" to show that you "did not like the story
very much" or a "2" to show that you "liked the story very much". You will rate each
story on a paper ballot and you will not be asked to put your name on each rating scale
sheet. You will not be told who the storyteller is but you may figure out the child's
identity from their voice or story. [Elder's name], I want to be respectful of your time

and I realize that this may be hard work. I do not want to tire you out or make you feel

like I am taking advantage of you. I will not ask you to be at Elders' panel gatherings

any longer than 2 hours. I may ask you to return at another time so that we can finish the

work.

At another Elders' panel gathering, we will listen to all of the stories that the Elders rated

with a "2" and you will be asked to talk about what you liked about the story. An

Ojibway language speaker, (Stanley Peltier), will be there to interpret for you in case you

want to speak in Anishinaabemowin. Stanley will be required to sign an oath of

confidentiality, attesting that he will not reveal your identity without your consent. As

you know, Stanley is my husband and I have complete trust in his objectivity and good

judgment.

I will make notes on a flip chart and I will tape record the sessions so that I can be careful

and correct when I report what you said. This gathering will not be longer than 2 hours

and you may be asked to come back to continue. Now and then I will have you listen to a

story that was rated with a "1" so that you have a chance to think about why some stories

are not as good as others. This may help you to talk more and help me to understand

better.

You will be asked to participate in Elders' panel gatherings and meetings with me during

the months of February and March, 2009. Before I hand in the thesis to the University, I

will meet with you to share what I have written. [Elder's name], I understand that

sometimes what a person says and means does not come out the same when it is written

down in English and so I want to give you a chance to make changes. I want you to add more detail so the writing shows your meaning and I want you have a chance to take away anything that you are not comfortable with.

 In June, 2009, I will present the results of this study at a community gathering. You will be invited along with parents, children, other community members and leadership. The thesis will be given to the Nipissing First Nation Education Committee members, Chief and Council. If you want to see the report, you can get a copy there.

The thesis will be available for teachers and speech language practitioners to help them understand and appreciate the stories Anishinaabe children tell. Also, the thesis will help them encourage our children to tell more stories at school.

Formal Consent Form

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you, is part of the process of informed consent. It explains what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you want to know more, please feel free to ask. It is important that you read this carefully or have me explain it to you so that you understand.

Today's date is _____. The title of the thesis is "Valuing Children's Storytelling From an Anishinaabe Orality Perspective.'' I am going to be looking at Anishinaabe children's stories about everyday life experiences and I will be finding out what Elders value in a good story.

[Elder's name], I do not know of any major risks of harm or discomfort to you if you participate in this research. There is a minimal risk that your privacy may not be protected should you wish your participation in the research to be kept confidential. I will do everything I can to protect your privacy and identity should you not wish your name to be shared. I will have your name and phone number in a file folder and I will lock this away in a file cabinet at my office. The notes and audio recordings from the Elder's panel gatherings will also be locked away in a file cabinet at my office. I will destroy the written notes and audio recordings after the thesis is completed. There is a small chance that someone could read or listen to the information and find out that you have participated. Also, other community members know that I am doing research on children's stories here, and they may see me visiting you or may see you attending Elders' panel gatherings. This is a small community and so it is possible that other community members may know that you are participating. I will not disclose that you are participating in the research to anyone unless you choose to have your identity known.

Your help with this research will help speech and language practitioners and teachers understand that our Anishinaabe children enjoy and are interested in telling stories, especially when they are given a chance to talk about their home and life on the reserve. This information will mean that our children may talk more in school by telling stories and this may help teachers understand our children better.

I will make sure that you are treated with respect for sharing your knowledge and at no time will anyone criticize or judge you for your opinions. I will offer you healthy snacks during the Elders' panel gatherings and I plan to present you with a special gift after the research project to say "Meegwech" for your help. [Elder's name], I believe that you will enjoy hearing the children's stories and you will feel proud of our future generation and potential leaders of tomorrow.

This tobacco offering represents my intention to conduct myself and the activities of this research project with reverence and honesty. I respect you as an Elder and ask you to help me with my learning.

Should you accept this tobacco offering, it signifies your important role in such a relationship and your commitment to this research project. If you prefer, I will tape record your response should you wish to volunteer to participate. Alternatively, you can choose to sign this form below.

[Elder's name], your identity as a participating Elder will not be disclosed by me in the thesis unless you give your permission. The story rating ballot sheets that you fill out for each story will not have your name on them so that your rating will be anonymous. This means that no one will know how you score each story. The audio recordings of what you say at Elders' panel gatherings and my written notes will be kept in a locked file cabinet in my office. Audio recordings will be kept locked up and computer files will be kept in a password protected computer in the office of the Nipissing First Nation Education Department. There is a small chance that someone else will access the files,

however the risk is minimal that anyone else will know your identity as a participant

Elder in this way. The audio files and written records will be destroyed in May, 2009 at

the end of this research project unless you are asked again for permission to keep them

longer.

The thesis will not include any of your identifying information and your identity as a

participant will be protected unless you provide your consent to disclose your identity.

This means that no information will be released to anyone except for the information

contained in the thesis that I provide to the University. None of the data obtained from

you and the other Elders will be used in any future research studies unless you give your

permission at a later date.

[Elder's name], you can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be

in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may

also refuse to answer any questions or add to discussions if you wish and still remain in

the study.

You may withdraw your consent at any time and stop participating without any penalty.

The Nipissing University's Research Ethics Board has reviewed this study and it has

received ethics clearance. The Nipissing First Nation Chief and Council have granted

permission for me to conduct this research.

Voluntary Consent:

Today's date is [day, month, year]. If you accept the tobacco now, you are showing that you understand the information and you are giving your consent to participate. If you decline to accept the tobacco, you are indicating that you do not wish to participate.

In no way does your consent waive your legal rights nor release me as researcher or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation in this research.

Consent to participate received verbally and audio taped □ or

Consent to participate received in writing:

_____   _____

             Participant's Signature   Date

Consent for Disclosure

If you are willing to have yourself identified with the information you share, please indicate your agreement:

Consent to include Elder's identity received verbally and audio taped □ or

Consent to include Elder's identity received in writing:

_____   _____

             Participant's Signature   Date

The title of the thesis is "Valuing Children's Storytelling from an Anishinaabe Orality Perspective". My supervisor for the research is Dr. John Long and you can contact him at Nipissing University. His phone number is 474-3450, extension 4130. Fran Couchie, Direct of Education here at Nipissing First Nation is also overseeing my research in the community and she can be contacted at 497-1201. I am giving you a copy of this information to keep, in case you have any questions or concerns about the research that you want to talk with them about.

Here is my contact information: Sharla Peltier, Phone: ▮▮▮▮▮▮ Email: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Meegwech