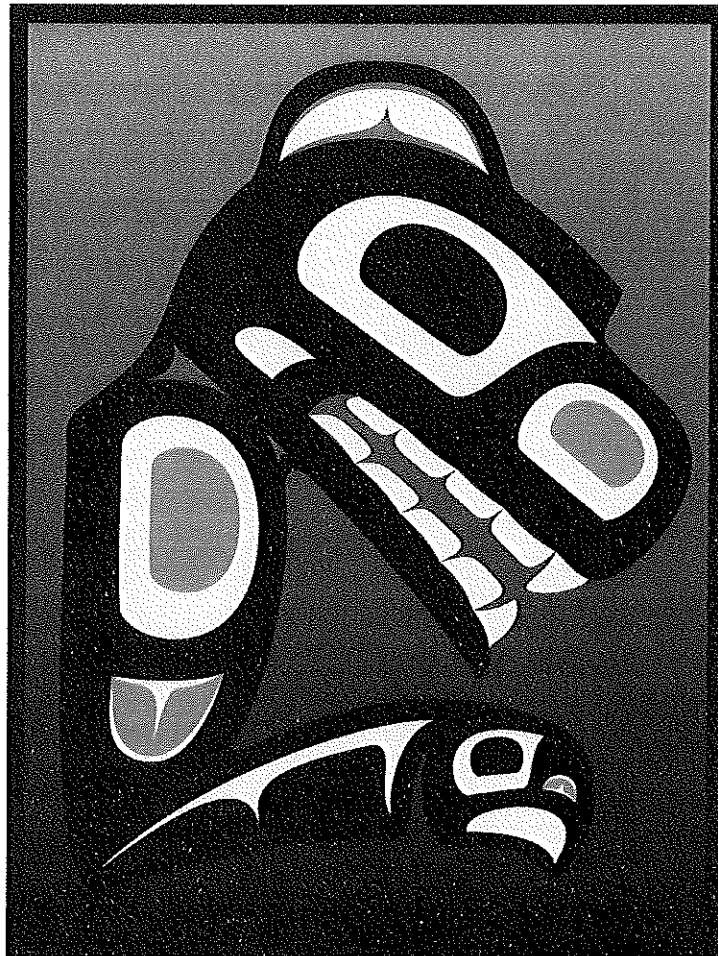


Kwakwaka'wakw Students Thriving Research Proposal

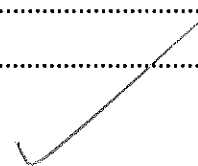


Kwakwaka'wakw artist Jamin Zuroski

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Indigenous Research Methodology
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December 16, 2009

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Abstract

Canada needs educated people to ensure economic stability of the country and to have the potential to be very prosperous country. Education assists with foundations of security, pride and self-sustainment. Ensuring Aboriginal people have tools and strategies to have a solid educational foundation is beneficial not only to those Aboriginal communities but to the whole of Canada in achieving prosperity.

Research has not uncovered the unheard voices of those Kwakwaka'wakw students commonly from rural and remote places who did not enter the college and university classroom whose numbers are seen in staggering school non-completion rates. What processes need to be in place for Kwakwaka'wakw students who are transitioning from rural and remote traditional communities to education institutions that would assist with achieving academic success?

The philosophy of honor will guide the research. A triangulation of research methods will be used including survey, non-reactive and field research. All willing Kwakwaka'wakw people will be connected with when collecting relevant information and data. As a community, data will be examined to uncover the voice and message the data was saying. Oral tradition will be employed to report the findings and share of the innovative and unique transition processes that will be implemented. The implications of this research are increased sustainability both individually but the community and the country benefit from the potential of increased graduation and school completion rates of the Kwakwaka'wakw.

Research Problem

Current research exists showing the disparity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal student academic success rates in high school, college and university. Action research has been done on what can be implemented to close the gap between these two groups. In response to these research findings, innovative programs, techniques, resources and instructional methods have been developed and implemented in the education institution classrooms which have demonstrated success for Aboriginal students who remain in the education institution. Aboriginal academic counselors, Aboriginal teacher assistant supports, courses created and implemented specifically and only for Aboriginal students and many other examples all exist in the classroom of supporting Aboriginal students to achieve academic success.

Missing from existing research is the voices of Aboriginal students who never get to the classroom to benefit from the supports that are currently in place. There are several reasons why students never venture to the classroom. It has been identified from previous research that students who are from rural and remote communities face different challenges than urban Aboriginal students from entering the higher education system. However, little research was further done to identify what could be in place for these rural students to successfully transition to higher learning institutions to have a chance at academic success.

Existing research of academic success in school stating the success or failure statistics would include students of Kwakwaka'wakw background. However, research has not uncovered the unheard voices of those Kwakwaka'wakw students who did not enter the college and university classroom. Most students from Kwakwaka'wakw traditional communities live in rural and remote places and transition supports need to be in place for these students to succeed.

Research Question

What processes need to be in place for Kwakwaka'wakw students who are transitioning from rural and remote traditional communities to education institutions that would assist with achieving academic success?

Thesis

Kwakwaka'wakw bands and education institutions near Kwakwaka'wakw traditional territory need to identify transition processes for their students to cope and thrive with the transition of leaving their community to the education institution. Academic success for rural and remote Kwakwaka'wakw Aboriginal students can improve and increase with innovative and unique processes. Some suggestions or examples are college class for a couple weeks in the community, campus tours hosted by current Aboriginal students, video conferencing of meeting key people of the education institution, book club for a review of a college textbook, student bingo researching the education institution location features, dinners hosted by the band education coordinator, Facebook communication with students from all support people involved or longer semesters for students. There needs to be a linkage between the band, school and community with ongoing dialogue that is part of the transition process.

Goals

- For Kwakwaka'wakw people succeed in educational endeavors.
- For Kwakwaka'wakw people to feel safe that this research proposal is a tool for us to move forward and is not like previous non-Aboriginal research ethics.
- For Kwakwaka'wakw people to be able to balance educational endeavors while maintain their ties to the village and culture when attending school.

Objectives

- To meet with Kwakwaka'wakw band education coordinators to identify people to interview and to identify people to fill out a questionnaire.
- To meet with Kwakwaka'wakw hereditary chiefs and elected chiefs to coordinate community meetings and discussions.
- To identify the education institutions in near the Kwakwaka'wakw traditional territory and to identify education supports in these institutions.
- To live in the various villages in the Kwakwaka'wakw traditional territory to conduct field research and observations for a few months in each location.

Limitations

It could be a challenge to share the Indigenous Research paradigm with the community. The

Kwakwaka'wakw are one of the most anthropologized cultures in Canada. All previous research have

used conventional methods and reasoning which do not compliment Kwakwaka'wakw beliefs and

values. There is much resistance to research in our communities that it will take a while to explain the

fundamental differences in the approaches to research for the community to understand that

Indigenous Research is not the "new, improved" version of conventional research but a whole different

way of conducting research that is more similar to our beliefs and values.

It could take a very long time for relationships to form for community members to feel safe in

participating in the project due to previous unethical research conducted with the villages that affect all

future research proposals. Consensus on the validity and importance of the proposal may take some

time due to the large volume of Kwakwaka'wakw people.

Language will be a barrier as some elders who may be interviewed do not speak English and the true

meaning of their words can only be understood using their native language, Kwakwala and translation

may be weakened in the English language.

Limitations could also include the education institutions and if they are unwilling to partake in the

strategies that come forward as a result of this research. There could be a myriad of reasons why the

institution would not involve themselves as part of a solution but the hope is that they would be willing

partners.

Finally, limiting the research may be that as Kwakwaka'wakw person, I do not know all the values, beliefs and traditional protocols. It may be needed to do field research on a personal level to come a place where I am comfortable in proceeding with the research project having a firmer understanding on my own culture. There is no book available to read about my cultures beliefs, values and traditional protocols, there is no class I can take and any easy way to obtain this information other than living it so that I learn bits at a time. During this time, the worldview will present itself with each day I spend in my home community. Again, time would be a factor for coming to a place to respect and honor my cultures beliefs, values and traditional protocols so that I can utilize Indigenous Research paradigms could be a limitation since this process could take years!

Major Concepts

Aboriginal

Aboriginal is referencing the people of Canada who are identified as Status Indians, Non-status Indians, Metis and Inuit. Aboriginal is a broad encompassing term embracing many cultures who ancestral roots and ties are to various parts of the land called Canada. Most Aboriginal groups will have their own name their native language that would distinguish themselves and their preference is to be called by their native language name. Just as there are many children in the world, we do not call them all "child" but by their given name.

The term Aboriginal is more commonly used to be as encompassing of all cultures within Canada; other terms used include Indian, Native, First Nations, Indigenous and the french word "aughtone".

Kwakwaka'wakw

The Kwakwaka'wakw are an Aboriginal group whose traditional territory is northern Vancouver Island and some parts of the British Columbia coast across the Salish Sea (Georgia Straight) from northern Vancouver Island. The Kwakwaka'wakw have also been called Kwagwiltl or Kwakwiltl, both are incorrect terms coined at colonization by settlers in the late 1700's. Several groups, more specifically villages, are under the name Kwakwaka'wakw umbrella. Kwakwaka'wakw translated into English is "Kwakwala speaking people"; Kwakwala is the common language uniting the villages. Each village and their descendants identify themselves by their Kwakwala village name.

Literature Review

- 1) The journal article *Getting Them Through the College Pipeline: Critical Elements of Instruction Influencing School Success Among Native Canadian High School Students*, the author identifies strategies of instruction to assist Aboriginal students complete high school. This article connects with my research question as it affirms that much research has been done on processes to assist Aboriginal students with academic success in high school to help with the transition to post-secondary school. My research project would more processes to help students to get to college so this article's findings can be useful to the rural/remote community student.
- 2) The journal article *Successes and Challenges in Higher Education Transitions* connects with my research question because it affirmed that transition to education institutions is difficult and that the transition process for Aboriginal students not only affects themselves but their family and even the community. My research project would add to this existing knowledge by specifying a particular group of Aboriginal students – rural and remote community students.
- 3) The journal article *Transition and Native American Youth: A Follow-up Study of School Leavers on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation* connected to my research question in the area of difficulties rural and remote Aboriginals face leaving their community. The article provides information on why community members would prefer to stay home and not venture out of the community to be a student. My research project would further this research in providing solutions to this article's findings of why students do not leave the community.

- 4) The newspaper article *University offers supports for Aboriginal Learners* connects with my research question as it affirms that existing processes are in place to help Aboriginal learners succeed in education institutions. My research project would add to this existing findings by putting forth more processes to assist in having rural and remote community students get to the door of university to venture forth and benefit from the existing processes in place.

References

Lee, T. S. (2007). Successes and Challenges in Higher Education Transitions . *Tribal College Journal*, 19(1), 30-35.

Kanu, Y. (2006). Them Through the College Pipeline: Critical Elements of Instruction influencing School Success Among Native Canadian High School Students. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 18(1), 116-145.

Kruger, L. F. (2007, July). University offers supports for Aboriginal learners. *Windspeaker*. 24-25.

Shafer, M. S., & Rangasamy, R. (1995). Transition and Native American Youth: A Follow-up Study of School Leavers on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation . *Journal of Rehabilitation*, 61(1), 60-65.

An excellent approach to literature review. A good application of Shuman Wilson's conceptualization of literature review for Indigenous Research Methodology.

Consequently, the references belong to 9 sections at the end of the proposal, just before the appendix section.

Methodology

The guiding philosophy of this research project will reflect the creation stories of the Kwakwaka'wakw.

The creation stories are unique and individual to each village but common to all stories is honor. Honor will provide the framework for the project.

Research methods/design

Methods employed will be a triangulation of survey, non-reactive and field research. Field research will be the primary method with survey and non-reactive methods playing a smaller role.

Survey method will be used as gateway tool to the youth of the community. Youth of a rural and remote community will not openly embrace a "city slicker" even if from the same village; the fact that a member has left the community disconnects that person from those who remained. To rebuild the relationship, a survey will be used as a method for the youth to have an opportunity to "open up".

Engaging a youth with conversation will be unlikely whereas answering a survey provides an opportunity for the youth to have their voice and honor their authority on a matter. Using the survey to gain acceptance and build a relationship, the research would then turn to field research.

All stories have a past, present and future. To honor the past, non-reactive method must be done to find out how the past relates to the current research question. Non-reactive method will assist in understanding field research because actions today will have its roots in the past. Knowing that

Residential School had such a devastating effect on the Kwakwaka'wakw people, knowing this story with its related data and research methods used will certainly assist in answering the research question.

Techniques

Praying will be a primary technique used for research methodology. Praying will honor the Kwakwaka'wakw belief system and will provide calm and guidance while conducting research.

Dreams will be another technique used for research methodology. While the mind is in restful state, much like praying, guidance will come from dreams. Visions would be a gift that is unseekable but a welcome method if blessed to have such honor bestowed while conducting research.

Listening to nature and the guidance offered from Mother Earth will be used as a research technique. Guidance come from nature when the person is listening with their spirit and allowing that spirit to emerge from our ego self is a gift.

Concrete techniques that do not belong to the Spirit or Undersea World (cosmos) would be survey method and questionnaires technique. The questionnaire will ask the participant about thoughts of school, previous extended visits away from the community, and rank importance of suggested support resources for education institutions. Another survey method used will be interviews; interviews will be guided by a few general questions but will let the participant to talk about whatever they feel is relevant to them at that time.

what specific information, what
relationships & transitions would
the
for collecting changes help



Non-reactive method techniques would include content analysis. This would include "books, newspapers, films, television, art, music, videotapes of human interactions, transcripts of conversations..."(Leedy, 2010) relating to residential school. Other print methods including journals, diaries, written stories, and government documents would be included.

Field research techniques include fieldwork and participant observation. It is important to capture the essence of the whole community and culture. Field research is the best technique to use when doing Aboriginal research because it honors the core of the community, one must be part of a community to understand to the context of issues to help build relationships and solutions to troubling matters.

Discussions is a technique that is very time consuming as they happen with chance encounters and are not planned or previously thought out. However, discussions will be a vital technique as it honors the people in the community because it affirms their knowledge.

Information and data collection

A triangulation of survey, non-reactive and field research methods will be used and therefore both

✓ qualitative and quantitative approaches will be used.

Who has the information required for this research proposal? Kwakwaka'wakw community members

✓ have existing knowledge on the research question directly or indirectly; their knowledge is valid whether

that person is an elder or a child, has been to school or dropped out, has left the community for leisure

or have stayed in the community their whole life. All community members are affected when a member

✓ leaves the community and therefore all willing members need to be included when soliciting for

interviews, questionnaires, discussions, and meetings.

and solicit further ideas on

Community meetings will be set up to explain the research proposal and project and the techniques we

will use for information collecting.

Analyzing and Interpreting Data

✓ Data analysis and the interpretation of data will involve all willing community members. No major words or concepts will be used in when analyzing the data, all words or concepts will be broken down, deconstructed so all members will have relatively the same foundation of what the data words or ✓ concepts literally mean so we can hear the voice of the data and the message that is coming forth. For example, when using the word "Aboriginal counselor" when referring to the academic advisor at the college, the words are broken down and deconstructed so all members know this is who is being referenced and not a "counselor" who is Aboriginal who assists a person on a healing journey.

✓ Using prayer while analyzing the data will assist the community in asking the Spirit and Undersea Worlds (cosmos) to assist with uncovering the voice to the data.

✓ Community meetings will be help to review and look at the data as a whole. This would repeat itself many times for all voices to be heard to hear what themes and patterns they see in the information collected. Food would be a must at these gatherings as this process could be very lengthy ensuring all have their voices heard.

✓ Interpreting data will require the community to give meaning to the voice that uncovered itself when analyzing it. Again, community meetings would be held to uncover the meaning.

Reporting

✓ Reporting the findings of the research will be to the community first that will be reflective of

Kwakwaka'wakw oral tradition. In reclaiming and revitalizing traditions and customs, we acknowledge

✓ that our ways were to give honor to the individual speaking at any given time. It is with respect that we

cease all our activities both physical and mental to "tune in" with our mind and spirit to "listen" to what

✓ the speaker is presenting. The oral presentation will be a community gathering and reflective of

traditions that "guests never leave hungry" therefore, food will be provided at the oral presentation.

why? ✓ Written work will also be presented in another presentation at a different time once the oral

presentation is completed. Further, prayer and cleansing songs will be conducted to give honor to the

Spirit and Undersea World.

✓ Any funding agencies and education institutions will also be given an oral presentation with written

reporting at a later date once the oral presentation has been able to "marinate" with the agency people.

Action Plan

✓ This will explain the implementation strategies, targets and the rationale of why these are important to be acted upon and who will benefit from these strategies/targets.

Much Eurocentric morally deficit research has already conducted on our communities with little more to show for than the static information. As a result of this research initiative, action must occur that is acting on the results of the voices and messages heard from the data analysis and interpretation.

✓ Projected strategies indicated in the research thesis included college class for a couple weeks in the community, campus tours hosted by current Aboriginal students, video conferencing of meeting key people of the education institution, book club for a review of a college textbook, student bingo researching the education institution location features, dinners hosted by the band education coordinator, facebook communication with students from all support people involved or longer semesters for students.

✓ The target of these strategies will be the students who are considering attending school outside of the community and would help those students who are already in school. How these strategies will be implemented will require the support of the community and key members from the education institution. Key people will play more significant parts in the strategy implementation and those people would be band education coordinators, student parents and siblings, and education institution academic advisors, instructors and staff of the Aboriginal Education department if the institution has such a department.

The rationale for implementing the strategies for the students considering attending school and for those already in school is to increase our community education base. To have more students attend school and be successful would increase the statistics for successful completion of school. This is important as Aboriginal people need educated people to contribute to our prosperity. The more educated people we have in our community gives us the ability to indigenize ways of life that have been blanketed with European worldviews. The rationale to implement strategies to ensure academic success is to move forward with sustainability within our resources. With higher learning comes deeper understanding and this is reflective of not only traditional knowledge but with academia.

The beneficiaries of the strategies would be the community. As mentioned before, when a student leaves the community, the whole community is affected. Students who succeed in the education institution give back to the community even if they don't physically return to the community. I don't think I could say that one particular group would benefit more than another group even though it seems obvious that students would most benefit from these strategies. All those who the student interacts with along their education journey are somehow impacted from that interaction and how can these meaningful interactions be measured.

Ethics

The protocol of the research project will reflect the Kwakwaka'wakw traditions of rights and responsibilities. The right to be given this honor to do this research must be given from the community and the community includes those who are living in the village, those who live in the city and those who are from the Spirit and Undersea World.

Responsibility will be to my family and ensuring that I act with honor during this project. Responsibility will be to the community will be done to ensure I carry out the research so it will honor our people.

Responsibility will be to the people and creatures of the Spirit and Undersea World to honor their beginnings and the creation of my people today.

why? // Non Kwakwaka'wakw ethics and protocols will also be used. Ownership of the research will belong to the people. Permission both verbal and written will be obtained from community members that *why?* outlines why permission is being given and what it will be used for. If community members would like pseudonyms used in publication, their privacy will be respected.

It is not with intention that we impose harm but it is acknowledged that this research may pose a emotional and spiritual harm on some participants. Some participants may not have healed from their traumas from residential school and talking about education may upset these memories. In anticipation of this, a counselor specializing in residential school healing will be available to participants.

Funding and Expenses

✓ Funding for this research proposal will be proposed to all the bands of the Kwakwaka'wakw, education institutions located near traditional Kwakwaka'wakw villages, the British Columbia government (Ministry of Advanced Education) and the Canadian federal government (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada).

✓ Costs of this research proposal will be approximately \$150 000 and are detailed in Appendix E.

Connect this to the \$150,000.

Benefits of this research include higher success rates for Kwakwaka'wak people in education institutions. This success rate will reflect in the existing data demonstrating low graduation and completion rates among Aboriginal students. The education institutions will benefit from having more students as even the education institutions have an economy revenue need. Benefits of this research would be the raised self-esteem and pride of Kwakwaka'wakw people who may venture into new fields previously not thought of due to lack of world exposure.

As you did not provide fine-lines for the proposal. why?

References

V. G. 50d
I believe references go beyond acknowledging information accessed specifically for this project. I believe acknowledgement must be extended to key people who assisted me to get to the place of where I am today to present this proposal. Everything I am right now that led me to have tools to create this proposal is because of people and experiences that uncovered these tools. I honor these people and my Kwakwaka'wakw family with my heart and spirit.

The following is references specifically used for this proposal.

People

Nella Nelson, Francis Adu-Febiri, Janice Simcoe, Rocky Desjarlais, Suzanne Bate, Jamin Zuroski, Faye Martin.

Written work

Lee, T. S. (2007). Successes and Challenges in Higher Education Transitions . *Tribal College Journal*, 19(1), 30-35.

Leedy, P.D., & Ormond, J.E. (2010). *Practical research 9th edition*. Merrill, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson.

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Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony indigenous research methods*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Fernwood Publishing.

Appendices

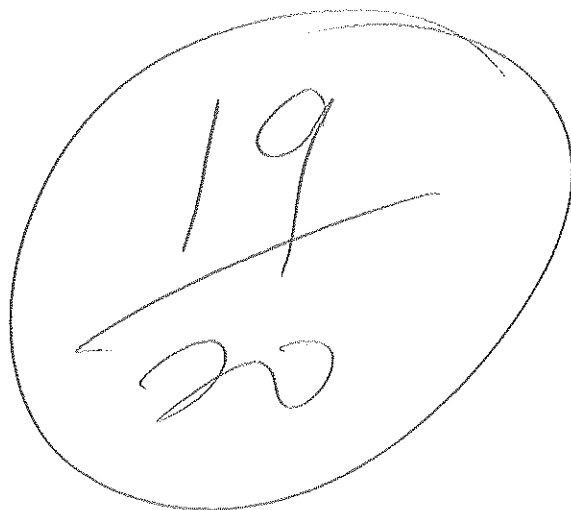
Appendix A: Map of Kwakwaka'wakw traditional territory ✓

Appendix B: Map of Kwakwaka'wakw village sites ✓

Appendix C: Questionnaire ✓

Appendix D: Interview Questions ✓

Appendix E: Budget ✓



you have demonstrated
a deep understanding
of Indigenous research
methodology & proposal
congratulations!!!