First Nations Partnership Programs Generative Curriculum Model

Program Evaluation Report

This report was written by Dr. Jessica Ball, principal investigator of the Documentation and Evaluation Project and Co-coordinator, with Dr. Alan Pence, of the First Nations Partnership Programs at the School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria. The report highlights findings of a program evaluation conducted in 1998-2000.

$\mathcal{C}$ontents

Executive Summary

Strengthening community capacity to meet the developmental needs of young children in culturally congruent ways was the focus of seven unique partnerships in education between First Nations communities and the University of Victoria from 1989 to 1999. These First Nations Partnership Programs were the focus of the evaluation research reported here. Like many indigenous people around the globe, First Nations in Canada have linked strengthened capacity to support optimal child development to the reconstruction of cultural identity and revitalization of intergenerational transmission of knowledge and language. Their goal is to create new, community-operated programs of caring for children and youth that embody and reproduce culturally distinctive values and forms of interaction.

At the request of a First Nations tribal council in 1989, members of the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria became partners in a unique approach to community-based training initiatives. The role of the university-based team, and other post-secondary institutions that joined in this experiment, was to respond to the desire of cultural communities to engage in a co-construction of training curriculum in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD). Each community aimed to create their own curriculum by combining course work provided by the university-based team with culturally specific knowledge and practice provided by community resource people, especially by Elders. The post-secondary partners supported communities in their desire to deliver the program in their own settings in order to maximize community involvement and cultural input. The result of these initiatives was a program of diploma-level course work in Early Childhood Care and Development using a new model of partnership and curriculum design, called the 'Generative Curriculum Model.'

The evaluation research reported here documents the unprecedented high rates of First Nations student retention, program completion, application of training to vocational practice and delivery of new programs for children and families in First Nations communities. Most importantly, from the perspectives of community participants, the evaluation research documents the personal and community transformations that resulted from the way the program was delivered and the culturally healing and sustaining effects of grounding the training curriculum in the cultural wisdom of the Elders.

Listening intently to the perceptions and 'implicit' theories of over 200 community and institution-based participants, and reflecting upon a decade of experiences as institutional partners, yielded fresh insights about causal links among specific antecedent conditions, program processes, and outcomes. The core message is that capacity building initiatives must be anchored deeply in the community's context, existing strengths, potential for cultural reconstruction, and ability to push forward their own agenda towards self-identified goals. The findings of this evaluation can be used as a template for initiatives that engender social cohesion, social inclusion, and cultural revitalization while strengthening community capacity to support positive child development outcomes.

The reach of this effective capacity building approach can be extended in a number of ways, including new approaches to program delivery combining face-to-face training and seminars

Capacity building initiatives must be anchored deeply in the community's context, existing strengths, potential for cultural reconstruction, and ability to push forward their own agenda towards self-identified goals.

with computer-mediated course delivery and teleconferencing to meet the needs of remote communities. Many communities in Canada and internationally have identified the need for short 'pre-training' courses that support local initiatives exploring the potential and feasibility of community-driven, culturally sustaining child care and development strategies. At the request of First Nations communities, new specialist courses are currently being developed to extend the Generative Curriculum Model to prenatal care, infant care and development, and caring for children with special needs. Under the leadership of Alan Pence, a masters degree program is under development to strengthen leadership in ECCD in Canada and abroad. This program will be suitable for classroom-based and virtual learning communities.

A primary requirement for sustaining and extending the partnership programs is to secure annualized institutional financial support. Perhaps because partnership development and maintenance are not readily measurable, and the training programs are delivered in rural communities where they are not visible on campuses and to potential funders, prospective First Nations communities and post-secondary institutional partners are disadvantaged when advocating for funding. Despite the demonstrated efficacy of the approach, and despite popular rhetoric about extending educational access and cultural relevance, mechanisms for communities and post-secondary institutions to secure dedicated funding for delivering this capacity-building program remain obscure.

Rather than marking the end of the story, the program evaluation provides an informative and compelling rationale for indigenous communities and for those involved in policy, program development, training, and service delivery to re-envision and revise approaches to addressing the needs of children and families in cultural communities.

Jessica Ball

Introduction

First Nations[1] Partnership Programs originated in 1989 when the Meadow Lake Tribal Council in northern Saskatchewan asked Alan Pence to collaborate in developing community-based, bicultural curriculum that would prepare Cree and Dene people to deliver effective, culturally relevant, child care programs both on and off reserve lands. Tribal Council executive director Ray Ahenakew envisioned practitioner training and children's programs in which "the richness of knowledge in our communities can be fully considered." This vision became the springboard for evolving a 'Generative Curriculum Model.'

The Generative Curriculum Model brings people together in cultural communities to explore and debate varying constructions of child development and care. The goal of the model is to strengthen values, concepts, and approaches to supporting children's well-being that are grounded in the culture of the community, and to strengthen community involvement in child-focused programs. By 1999, the Generative Curriculum Model had guided seven First Nations Partnership Programs. The programs have transformed First Nations students, communities, and university-based partners in many positive ways. Currently, a team in the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria is active with additional First Nations Partnership Programs and other initiatives that promote community-driven, culturally sustaining approaches to child care and development. The team is composed of First Nations and non-First Nations partners, coordinated by Dr. Jessica Ball and Dr. Alan Pence.

Seven First Nations Partnership Programs completed between 1989 and 1999 were the focus of the evaluation research reported here. This report begins with a brief description of the context, evolution, principles, and key features of the capacity building initiative using the Generative Curriculum Model. The evaluation framework, which emphasized community participants' perspectives and explanations of program impacts, is then briefly outlined. This section is followed by key findings:

I. Achieving individual goals.

II. Achieving community goals.

III. Enabling conditions for program success.

The report concludes with a view towards next steps for building upon what has been learned from breaking out of traditional training models and exploring new ways of combining the strengths of cultural communities and post-secondary institutions.

This report conveys the central message of program participants: namely, that academic and vocational outcomes are important indicators of success, but the true measures of program effectiveness are the ways in which students and their communities experienced education in Early Childhood Care and Development as a transforming, culturally revitalizing, capacity-building process.

Children are precious gifts. They are the future strength of our communities. We see them as a responsibility of the whole community, not just of parents. So when we delivered this program to develop our child care capacities, it made sense that it was an open classroom, where many people from the community were allowed entry into the education process and asked to contribute. The whole community enjoyed it, and the whole community benefited.

Marie McCallum,
Administrator, Meadow Lake Tribal Council

[1] First Nations are among Canadian aboriginal peoples, who also include Inuit, Aleut, and Metis. There are approximately 500,000 status (registered) First Nations people living on reserve lands in Canada. There are an additional estimated 750,000 status and non-status First Nations and Metis people living off reserves, in both urban and rural communities. Groups of First Nations are often organized for administrative purposes into band councils or tribal councils representing several communities that are usually clustered together geographically.

First Nations *P*artnership Programs 1989-1999

Canada

USA

British Columbia

Treaty 8

Tl'azt'en

Alberta

Meadow Lake

Mount Currie

Onion Lake

Nzen'man'

Cowichan

Saskatchewan

University of Victoria

Meadow Lake Tribal Council
Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan;
University of Victoria
(1989-1993)

Cowichan Tribes
Duncan, British Columbia;
Malaspina University College, and
University of Victoria
(1993-1995)

Nzen'man' Child and Family Services
Lytton, British Columbia;
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology,
and University of Victoria
(1995-1997)

Onion Lake First Nation
Onion Lake, Saskatchewan;
Saskatchewan Indian Institute of
Technology, and University of Victoria
(1996-1998)

Tl'azt'en Nation
Tache, British Columbia;
University of Victoria
(1996-1999)

Treaty 8 Tribal Association
Fort St. John, British Columbia;
University of Victoria
(1997-1999)

Mount Currie First Nation
Mount Currie, British Columbia;
University of Victoria
(1997-1999)

ECOCULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

The partnering First Nations communities were small, ranging from 500 to 1700 people, and remote, located not less than 300 kilometres from a major urban centre, with one exception. Cowichan Tribes was the largest community partner, with a population of 3456 people, and the only partner located in a small urban setting. Five of the seven partnerships involved groupings of several neighbouring villages represented by an administrative council or steering committee that initiated and coordinated the partnership with the University of Victoria. Four of these groupings combined people with somewhat different First Nations cultures. Thus, there were partnerings at the community level embedded within the broader community-institution partnerships.

Situating child care training within broad First Nations' agendas

Many First Nations in Canada have linked improvement of developmental conditions for children to the reconstruction of their cultural identity, revitalization of intergenerational transmission of culture and traditional language, and reproduction of culturally distinctive values and practices in programs for children and youth. Like many indigenous people around the globe, the First Nations involved in the partnership programs were seeking to strengthen capacity among community members to plan, operate, and monitor programs for children and youth that are consistent with cultural values and that enhance positive cultural and community identity.

In many aboriginal communities, generations of people do not know their own culture of origin or their traditional language, and their identities as members of a cultural community have been fragmented. Reams of poignant testimony have been collected in many different venues across Canada describing the suffering of First Nations parents, children and communities as a result of enforced residential schooling, child welfare practices, and other 'helping' services deemed by government and non-government organizations, at the time, to be in the 'best interests' of Canada's aboriginal people. Although the long era of enforced residential schooling for aboriginal children in Canada is now over, its negative impacts on self-concept, parenting, social cohesion, and the intergenerational transmission of traditional language and culture remains. The First Nations Partnership Programs were created, at the initiative of the community partners, in the context of bringing together the worlds of university-accredited knowledge and indigenous knowledge. But it was also anticipated that the program initiative would be part of a healing journey intended to bring about positive changes within the communities.

Our recommendations emphasize the importance of protecting children through culturally-appropriate services, by attending to maternal and child health, by providing appropriate early childhood education, and by making high quality child care available, all with the objective of complementing the family's role in nurturing young children.

Canadian Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Vol. 5, Ch. 1, s4.1.

We realized that if we wanted to develop economically, we first had to develop our human resources, because development must come from the inside, not the outside.

Vern Bachiu, Programs and Policy Director, Meadow Lake Tribal Council

Many First Nations in Canada are actively moving towards a vision of economic development, positive community health, and social development that includes a substantial measure of control through their own agency and actions. Strengthening capacity to mount and operate accessible, safe, culturally consistent, care for children and youth in their communities was prioritized by most partnering First Nations as part of larger social agendas. Shared goals identified by administrators of partnering communities are noted below:

- Providing out-of-home care for children would enable parents to pursue education, training, and employment.
- Creating child and youth care programs on reserves would provide job opportunities for community members.
- Ensuring culture and traditional language learning in child care programs would promote cultural revitalization and pride and preservation of traditional language in the youngest generation of community members.
- Providing developmentally stimulating, culturally reinforcing programs of care for the youngest generation would secure the well-being of the community by promoting optimal outcomes among future parents, cultural leaders, and work force.
- Involving Elders in child care training and program delivery would help to ensure that their memories, wisdom, and cultural skills would be preserved for generations to come.
- University-accredited training in child and youth care would provide an education re-entry opportunity for community members that would be a foundation for a variety of career development pursuits.

A history of disappointments with education and training

All of the First Nations that sought to take part in the partnership programs had made many previous attempts to build capacity among community members through education and training. Like the experiences of many aboriginal people, they had found neither cultural relevance in training curriculum nor cultural safety on mainstream campuses. Although the number of aboriginal students enrolled at Canadian universities has increased significantly over the past two decades, student retention and completion rates remain low. First Nations people in Canada are seven times less likely to graduate from university as are members of the general population.[2] Most importantly, First Nations people in rural areas, particularly those on reserves, have not benefited from mainstream post-secondary education.

The First Nations of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council believe that a child care program developed, administered, and operated by their own people is a vital component to their vision of sustainable growth and development. It impacts every sector of their long term plans as they enter the twenty-first century. It will be the children who inherit the struggle to retain and enhance the people's culture, language, and history, who continue the quest for economic progress for a better quality of life, and who move forward with a strengthened resolve to plan their own destiny.

Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Vision Statement, 1989.

2 R. Armstrong, J. Kennedy, & P.R. Oberle (1990). University education and economic well-being: Indian achievement and prospects. Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

Community development programs imported from white middle class urban centres, even when these have been made accessible through 'community-based' delivery, have been found to be equally unsatisfactory, because they lack resonance and applicability to the culture, rural circumstances, strained socio-economic conditions, unique goals and resources of indigenous communities.

Programs offering pan-aboriginal curriculum content in an effort to be culturally sensitive are regarded as flawed by First Nations partners, because they fail to appreciate the heterogeneity of over 500 different First Nations in Canada, each with their own particular history, language, culture, and social organization.

EVOLUTION OF THE 'GENERATIVE CURRICULUM MODEL'

The 'space between.' At the outset of the First Nations Partnership Programs, community representatives and the university-based team agreed that what mainstream educational institutions had deemed 'best' for aboriginal students had not been nearly good enough. Dialogue with the Meadow Lake Tribal Council led to agreement to use the 'space between' First Nations and Euro-Western cultures as a place to meet, hear, debate and engage in constructivist practitioner training in child care and development. A 'both/and' approach characterized the presentation of ideas in the training program, where imported knowledge and practices were considered alongside program participants' understandings of the needs of children and families in their own community.

Focus on strengths. A distinguishing feature of all seven partnerships was a conscious focus on the strengths of First Nations communities. This contrasts with the focus on deficits that has shaped the historical relationships between native and non-native Canadians and that shapes most contemporary social program initiatives.

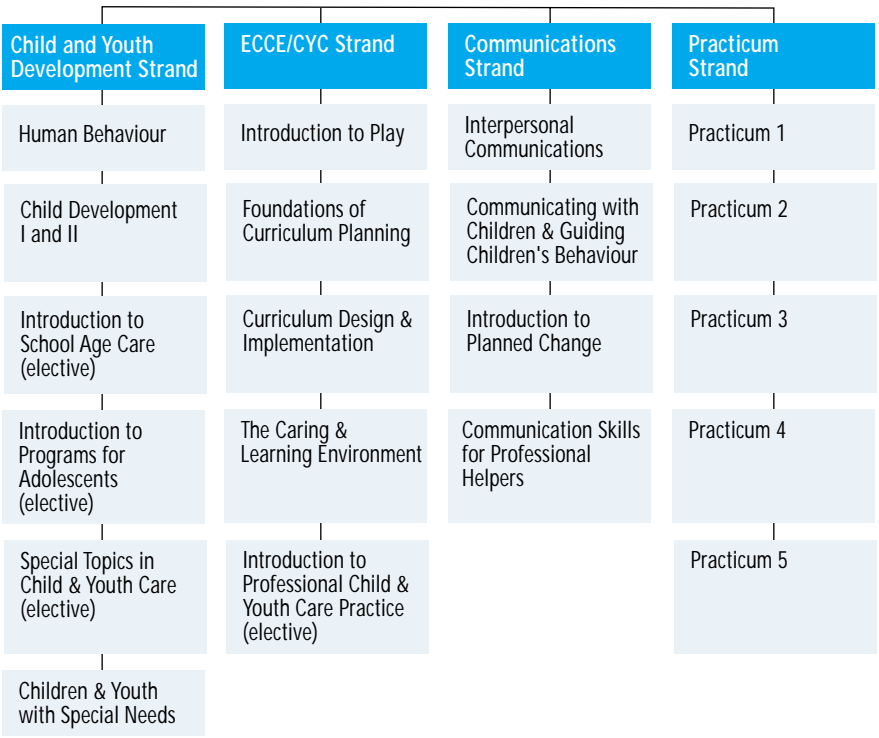| *G*enerative Curriculum Model: Guiding Principles	
	Support community initiative in a community-based setting
	Promote respect "all ways" (multicultural inputs)
	Draw upon community and individual strengths
	Ensure a broad ecological perspective (awareness of the child in the context of family and community)
	Provide education and career laddering for students, such that credit for this coursework will be fully applicable to future study and practice
	Engage in co-construction of a bicultural curriculum, in which Elders and other community resource people figure prominently

AN EDUCATION 'CAREER LADDER'

Career laddering in the First Nations Partnership Programs enables students to "step off" the program of study after one year, with a certificate in Early Childhood Education, or after two years, with a diploma in Child and Youth Care. In Canada, these credentials enable them to pursue employment in a range of human service fields including: child care, learning assistance, supportive care for special needs, respite, recreation, and health services coordination. If they choose, students can "step on" the career ladder again, continuing third and fourth-year studies, either through distance education or on-campus courses, leading to a degree in Child and Youth Care.

Diploma program (2 years)

- ■ five terms of full time study
- ■ four 'strands' or themes
    - ■ ECCE/CYC (Early Childhood Care and Education / Child and Youth Care)
    - ■ Communications
    - ■ Child and Youth Development
    - ■ Practica
- ■ 20 courses, including 5 practica courses

Generative Curriculum in Early Childhood Care and Development

Child and Youth Development Strand	ECCE/CYC Strand	Communications Strand	Practicum Strand
Human Behaviour	Introduction to Play	Interpersonal Communications	Practicum 1
Child Development I and II	Foundations of Curriculum Planning	Communicating with Children & Guiding Children's Behaviour	Practicum 2
Introduction to School Age Care (elective)	Curriculum Design & Implementation	Introduction to Planned Change	Practicum 3
Introduction to Programs for Adolescents (elective)	The Caring & Learning Environment	Communication Skills for Professional Helpers	Practicum 4
Special Topics in Child & Youth Care (elective)	Introduction to Professional Child & Youth Care Practice (elective)		Practicum 5
Children & Youth with Special Needs			

Program *E*valuation Research

Over a two-year period from 1998-2000, data were gathered and analysed to capture the experiences of representative groups of people involved in each of the partnership programs between 1989 and 1999. A social participatory approach was used.

- Each partner community contributed questions that would yield feedback of interest to their agenda
- Collaborators were recruited from each community to participate in aspects of data collection, analysis, written reporting, and conference presentations
- Extensive commentary was invited from a broad spectrum of community members who had been involved in and/or affected by the program
- The impacts of the training program across groups of program participants were uncovered by an ecologically comprehensive research methodology that included qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis strategies
  - Semi-structured individual and group interviews
  - Structured questionnaires
  - Focus groups of program administrators
  - Participant observations in partnering communities and post-secondary institutions
  - Community forums
  - Two forums bringing together professionals involved in training Early Childhood Education in rural First Nations
  - Review of records of seven partnership programs.

PROCEDURES

Data collection and analysis were carried out in two phases, as indicated in the diagram below:

PHASE 1 DATA COLLECTION
Individual participant interviews.

PHASE 1 DATA ANALYSIS
Derivation of tentative hypotheses about causal links between pre-conditions, processes and outcomes.

Design of questionnaires and 'confirmatory' interview and forum strategies based on analysis of transcribed accounts.

PHASE 2 DATA COLLECTION
Questionnaires.
Confirmatory interviews and group forums.
Records review.
Discussion of tentative findings and eliciting community input.

PHASE 2 DATA ANALYSIS
Statistical analysis of quantitative data. Formulation of conceptual framework grounded in analysis of accounts and quantitative data.

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW AND QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

Qualitative data analysis. This report focuses on key findings of analysis of transcribed participants' interviews evaluating their program experiences. The findings reported here are those for which there was high agreement among five data analysts who coded key themes and identified causal linkages in participants' accounts about the program (reliabilities ranged from .78 to .97 using Cronbach's alpha).

Evaluation Participants
(total 247 individuals)

Count	Participant group
103	program graduates
4	early program leavers
19	instructors
38	Elders
4	Intergenerational Coordinators
3	student spouses
23	partnering community administrators
11	partnering post-secondary institution administrators
12	practicum supervisors
7	funding agency representatives
19	comparison program instructors & administrators
4	comparison program First Nations students

The recurrence of descriptive statements across participants' transcribed interviews led to the identification of key themes about program processes and program outcomes summarized in Section I and Section II of this report. In the interviews, participants offered explanations about why the program had various effects. Commonalities across participants' interviews in the explanations they offered led to the formulation of hypothetical causal linkages summarized in Section III of the report on program findings.

Quantitative data analysis. Frequency analyses of educational, vocational, and community outcomes yielded descriptive information about program impacts. Because nearly all participants gave overwhelmingly high ratings across questionnaire dimensions, statistical analysis of questionnaire data yielded few insights about the correlation of specific program elements to specific program outcomes.
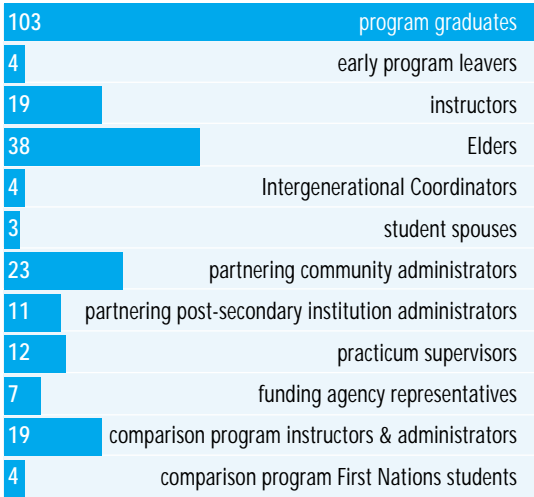
CROSS-PROGRAM COMPARISONS

The evaluation design incorporated information gathering to enable comparisons of the First Nations Partnership Programs with other programs, including:

■ obtaining information about other post-secondary training programs serving the same geographic regions: 19 administrators and instructors were interviewed.
■ interviewing First Nations students who had attended these programs: it was possible to contact and interview only 4 students.
■ convening a forum of 30 Early Childhood Education instructors involved in training of rural First Nations members in Western Canada.

This report provides a brief overview of key findings. More detailed reports on various aspects of the partnership programs, the evaluation research framework, and evaluation findings have been published elsewhere (see Publications). In addition, the evaluation project generated four video documentaries, program training manuals and informational materials (see Contact Information). The evaluation research built on formative evaluations[3] which assessed the first two partnership programs.

[3] D.I. Jette (1993). Meadow Lake Tribal Council Indian Child Care Program Evaluation. Unpublished manuscript. Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Saskatchewan;

P. Cook (1993). Curriculum evaluation for the MLTC/SCYC career ladder project. Unpublished manuscript. School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria;

R. Regan & A. Kimble (1994). The Cowichan Tribes Early Childhood Education/Child and Youth Care Career Ladder Project. Unpublished report. Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development, Victoria;

A. Pence & M. McCallum (1994). Towards an inclusionary approach in defining quality. In P. Moss & A. Pence (Eds.). Valuing quality in early childhood services: New approaches to defining quality. London: Paul Chapman.

Program *E*valuation Findings

The evaluation yielded descriptive findings about partnering and program delivery in each community. These findings are presented first, including participants' recommendations about aspects of the First Nations Partnership Programs that could be improved. The evaluation also yielded descriptive findings about outcomes for individuals and for the partnering communities and institutions overall. These are presented next. Finally, the evaluation yielded a conceptual framework, suggested in participants' accounts of why the program worked to generate enhanced capacity. Their understandings pointed to the importance of certain enabling conditions that created a socially inclusive, culturally safe 'ecology' in which the program and the student cohort could become nested, and in which the co-construction of a bicultural curriculum could flourish. The framework of enabling conditions is presented last in this section.
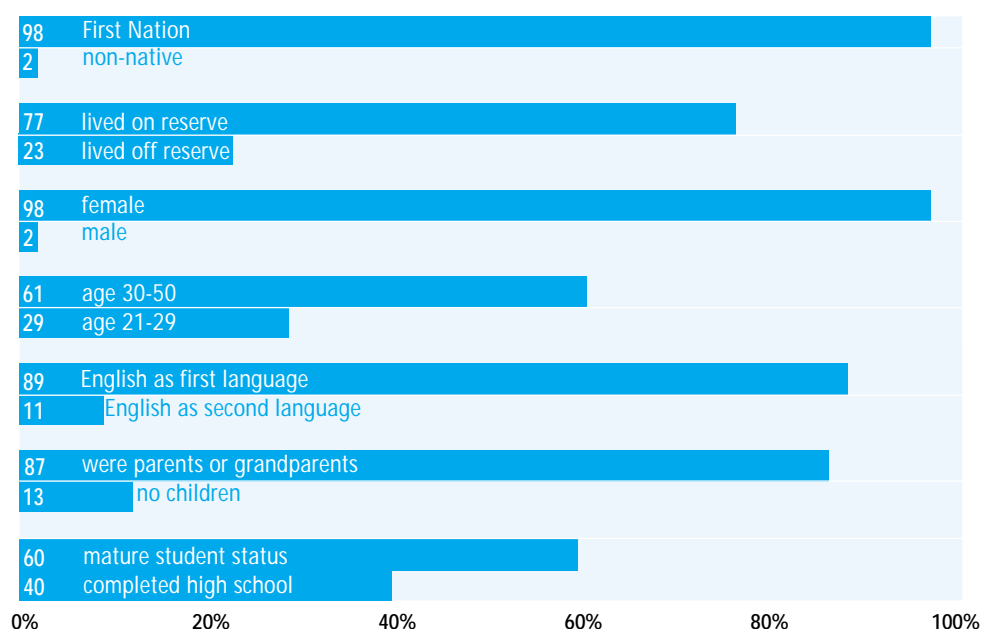
A   PROGRAM DELIVERY PROCESSES

Program participants

Students

Profile of Students Enrolled in First Nations Partnership Programs

118 students (data shown as percentage)

	Percentage
First Nation	98
non-native	2
lived on reserve	77
lived off reserve	23
female	98
male	2
age 30-50	61
age 21-29	29
English as first language	89
English as second language	11
were parents or grandparents	87
no children	13
mature student status	60
completed high school	40

A total of 118 community members enrolled in the partnership programs across seven communities: 102 of these students were involved for one or more years of study, representing 86.4% student retention at the end of the first year.

A special, 'mature student' admissions procedure was arranged with each partnering post-secondary institution in which flexible prior learning criteria were used and students were admitted as a cohort. Across partnership programs, the cohorts ranged from 10 to 22 students. Students were between 21 and 50 years of age. The average time since they had been in full-time studies, typically at the secondary school level, was 11 years. A few had been out of school for as long as 25 years, while two had graduated from high school just three years before enrolling in the program.

The First Nations communities conducted their own application and preparatory programs for students, based on locally established criteria and assessment procedures. Common student selection criteria included:

- A level of academic preparedness that suggested high probability of program completion
- Fluency in written and spoken English
- Personal health and stability
- Positive relationships with children through work and/or family
- Strong interest in Early Childhood Care and Development as a career.

Instructors

A total of 20 instructors were involved across the seven partnership programs. Qualified instructors were recruited and contracted by each partnering First Nations community. Instructors were then approved by the academic institution. Four of the seven partnerships had at least one First Nations course instructor; Mount Currie First Nation had the exceptional capacity to recruit instructors exclusively from their own community. While some communities would have preferred to have more First Nations instructors, there is a shortage of available, qualified First Nations educators in all professional training areas in Western Canada. Some instructors were recruited from within the vicinity of the community, while others were recruited from further away (e.g., one instructor was recruited from Quebec to B.C. through a nation-wide First Nations newspaper). Relocation costs were an additional expense borne by communities. In each partnership program at least one instructor was a certified specialist in Early Childhood Education.

The program required the equivalent of two full-time instructors over five terms. Often three or more people taught different course strands or subject areas. Retention of instructors who relocated to the partner community was a serious challenge in the two most remote partnerships. Instructors emphasized several needed supports:

- Program of orientation to community conditions and cultural forms interaction
- Formal introductions to key community members, especially Elders, band chief and council members, and other educators involved in the community (e.g., staff of independent schools on reserve, tutors involved in Open University course delivery)
- Financial incentives including relocation and transportation allowances
- Ongoing communication and supports from the university as well as the community, for both academic purposes and morale.

Elders

Elders were recruited from communities represented by members of the student cohort. Most community partners recruited an 'Intergenerational Facilitator' who asked Elders to participate in the program. Elders joined in the teaching process either in the classroom setting or by allowing students to visit them in their homes to discuss topics that were part of each course. Across the seven programs, the number of Elders who participated ranged from 3 to 40. Each community had a slightly different way of identifying who was an Elder. Generally, Elders were older adults who had demonstrated to community members that they had knowledge and a wise perspective on the cultural identity and history of the community.

Community-based administrators

On average, a core group of approximately five community members emerged early in each partnership to move into place the elements that were needed to enable program delivery. This steering committee typically responded to input and feedback from a larger group within the community, such as an education society, daycare society, employment and training board, or Band chief and councillors. Each community had one or two individuals who were the primary liaisons with a university-based liaison. Throughout all partnership phases, the relationship between primary liaisons was crucial. In the evaluation, these individuals emphasized the need for mutual respect, patience, tolerance of shortcomings, and constructive responsiveness to both positive and negative feedback.

Practicum supervisors

The community identified suitable, accessible practicum sites for students to develop applied competencies. Practicum supervisors at these sites were recruited by First Nations community administrators. The supervisors were important not only because successful practica were required by government in order to quality for certification in Early Childhood Education, but also because the students depended upon them to provide a non-discriminatory, safe atmosphere for developing new skills. Practicum supervisors ranged in their receptivity to distinctive cultural viewpoints and approaches that the First Nations students often brought to the practicum setting. More than half of the students depicted their own previous experiences as young children in formal education settings as very destructive of their concept of themselves as worthy and capable learners. They recalled many incidents involving racism. In the evaluation, program graduates often described the role of the practicum supervisors as pivotal in their ability to cope emotionally and function effectively as trainees.

Institution-based team members

The University of Victoria team generally consisted of three part-time staff. Most staff were involved in curriculum writing, revision, updating and resourcing. One specific role was liaison with the community. One team member undertook administrative requirements such as student registrations, submission of grades, requests for academic concessions, and communications required to maintain operations.

Partnership Arrangements

Two- and Three-Way Partnerships

Four of the seven programs were three-way partnerships, involving:

1   The First Nations community, which implemented and directed the program in their own setting;
2   The University of Victoria, which provided the Generative Curriculum Model and the curriculum resources;
3   A community college that had pre-existing ties with the community and which directly supported program implementation in the community. In one program, classes took place at Malaspina University-College, which is located on Cowichan Tribes reserve land. Instructors were recruited from among existing college faculty, as were library and computer resources and counselling supports. Two of the post-secondary partners were specifically indigenous institutions: Nicola Valley Institute of Technology and Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology.
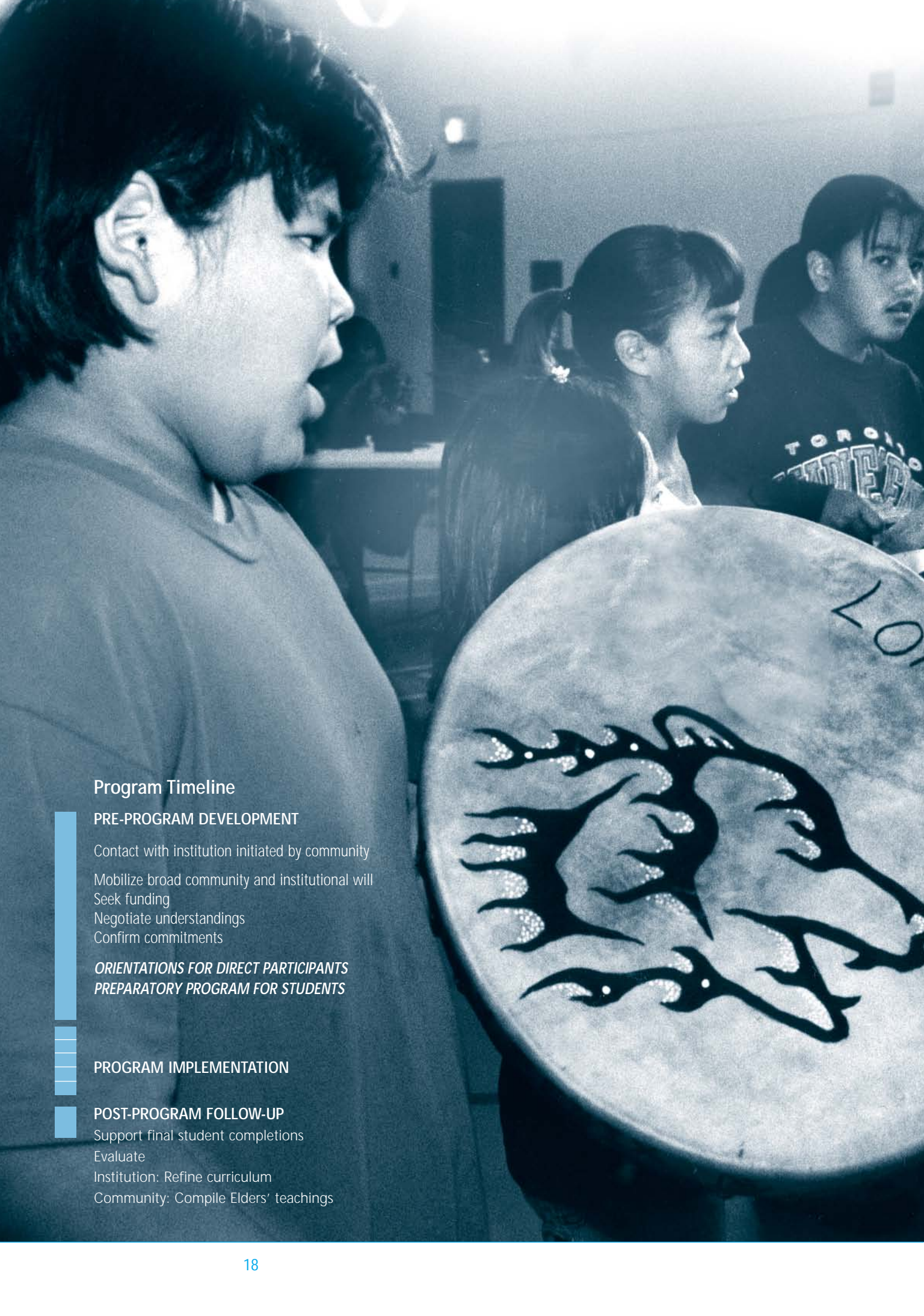
In the three-way partnerships, transcripts showing courses taken and diplomas for program completion were awarded by the community college. One exception was the partnership with Nzen'man' Child and Family Services, where disruptions in administration of the college resulted in students requesting a transition to a two-way partnership for the final term of the program. Students' transcripts and diplomas were issued by the University of Victoria.

Three-way partnerships were more complex and required more communication to clarify purposes and procedures. However, they forged a broader network of mutually supportive parties for the capacity-building endeavour, and extended the reach of new learning about how to partner effectively. This was especially important for the post-secondary institutions, where many program arrangements guided by the Generative Curriculum Model, such as a cohort-driven approach and co-constructing curriculum with Elders, broke new ground.

The first partnership, involving Meadow Lake Tribal Council, and the three most recent programs among the seven studied in this evaluation were two-way partnerships. This had several advantages:

- fewer individuals who needed to develop working relationships
- streamlined communications
- increased 'transparency' of the institutional partner, easing the complexity of liaison by community administrators.

Program Timeline

PRE-PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Contact with institution initiated by community

Mobilize broad community and institutional will
Seek funding
Negotiate understandings
Confirm commitments

ORIENTATIONS FOR DIRECT PARTICIPANTS
PREPARATORY PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

POST-PROGRAM FOLLOW-UP

Support final student completions
Evaluate
Institution: Refine curriculum
Community: Compile Elders' teachings

Partnership Roles and Responsibilities

University of Victoria

- ✔ Ensure academic accreditation (course work and education career ladder)
- ✔ Liaison with program administrators ("point of entry" for third partner)
- ✔ Appoint instructors
- ✔ Register student cohort
- ✔ Provide curriculum resources using Generative Curriculum Model
- ✔ Co-construct bicultural ECCD curriculum
- ✔ Design & conduct program evaluation
- ✔ Prepare and disseminate information on partnership programs

First Nations Communities

- ✔ Initiate partnership based on needs and objectives of community members
- ✔ Secure program funding
- ✔ Administer preparatory programs and full training program
- ✔ Recruit student cohort and instructors
- ✔ Employ instructors and intergenerational facilitator
- ✔ Co-construct bicultural ECCD curriculum
- ✔ Deliver program (classrooms/practica)
- ✔ Provide ongoing supports for students
- ✔ Participate in documentation/evaluation

Pre-program development phase

Timeline. Across the seven programs, there was a pre-program phase ranging from 1 to 5 years during which the community and institutional representatives were in contact. Within the time frame of the whole partnership, this phase was the most variable. Several factors affected the length of the pre-program phase:

- ■ Level of prior knowledge among community leaders about possible training models, affecting time required for program selection and mobilization
- ■ Community organization and availability of leaders to become involved
- ■ Accessibility of funding needed by the community to mount the program
- ■ Number of competing interests or initiatives in the community
- ■ Frequency and severity of disruptive events in the community affecting the pace and focus of pre-program preparation.

Setting the stage for program implementation. The critical nature of activities and the many challenges of the pre-program phase were emphasized by administrators both in communities and in post-secondary institutions.

- Personal relationships of trust, reciprocity, and mutual assistance developed during this time that affect whether a program comes to fruition.
- Accessing funding. Administrators in some communities approached up to 30 different potential sponsors.
- Informing community members about the proposed program and mobilizing a broad base of community interest and support.
- Establishing a shared vision of the 'mission' of the partnership and the specific goals to be achieved.
- Clarifying and confirming agreements about core features of the program model and content. In the First Nations Partnership Programs, this clarity was achieved through an interactive process stimulated by discussion of a proposed Memorandum of Understanding, which included guiding principles of the Generative Curriculum Model, the courses that would be offered, and the credentials that would be attainable.
- Clarifying partner roles and responsibilities.
- Obtaining approvals from administrative representatives of the partnering post-secondary institution(s).

In addition to co-constructing a supportive ecology and aspects of the broad framework for program delivery, all of the concrete elements that would enable program implementation were moved into place during the pre-program phase, for example:

- selection of student cohort
- recruitment of intergenerational facilitators, instructors, Elders and practicum supervisors
- establishment of the program funding and budget.

Most community-based administrators had never been directly involved in delivering a post-secondary program on site. Many recounted the tremendous amount of work leading up to formalization of the partnership and program start-up. Establishing community agency in implementing program delivery in their own setting and involving as many community members as possible was essential during this early stage of engagement. Institutional partners could support the steps taken by community administrators. However, they avoided taking the initiative or offering assistance when non-action and patience was likely to be more productive of community self-direction and, ultimately, community-wide rallying to support the initiative.

Tolerance of uncertainties. During the critical period before the program was actually implemented, the conditions that would enable effective program delivery were established. Administrators in the communities and at the post-secondary institutions frequently remarked on the large number of 'unknowns' characterizing this initial phase, describing this phase as the most "stressful" and "challenging."

Orientation and preparation. The evaluation underscored the importance of orientation and preparation for participants who would become directly involved in the program. Typically, the institutional partners visited the community partners several times prior to program start-up, and provided a range of information and anecdotal reports from other program experiences in response to questions from prospective participants. However, the research underlined the need for a more comprehensive and systematic approach to prepare communities and instructors for a highly participatory program in which cultural knowledge contributed by community members is highly valued.

Specific recommendations about the kinds of preparatory activities that would be helpful focused on:

- assessment of community needs and goals for supporting children's well-being
- exploration of cultural concepts about child care and development
- mobilization of community participation and resources to enable strategic actions, including fund raising for programs and development of partnerships.

Although local training institutions and consultants are available to provide introductory workshops on needs assessment, child care, and proposal writing, they typically recapitulate the shortcomings of mainstream post-secondary training for First Nations. They tend to be problem-focused rather than oriented towards identifying and drawing upon strengths of the community, and they assume uniformity across cultural groups about what communities want for their children and how to achieve these goals. Rather than being useful preliminary steps, these preparatory programs may actually undermine the culturally grounded, community-involving orientation that needs to be brought out and amplified in capacity-building initiatives using the Generative Curriculum Model.

Instructor orientation.
All of the instructors identified the extensive curriculum materials provided by the university-based team as an indispensable asset in preparing and supporting them with a range of options for covering course material and involving Elders. Most of the instructors who had relocated to the community to teach in the program emphasized social challenges early in the program that they thought could be eased by pre-program orientation and assistance with becoming integrated into the community. Challenges that instructors faced included:

- cross-cultural communication and adaptation to cultural forms of interaction
- safety concerns
- becoming sufficiently accepted by the community to be able to work with Elders and other community resource people in the co-constructive curriculum process.

Elders and practicum supervisors – orientation needs.
There was no systematic approach to soliciting involvement of Elders or practitioners in children's services who could potentially serve as supervisors of the five practica that students would undertake. Instead, these individuals were approached largely on an as-needed basis by individual instructors or students, once the program was already in progress. Interviews with Elders, supervisors, and instructors identified the need to involve these essential participants as early as possible in program planning, and to have program print materials and orientation meetings targeted for each of these groups.

Student preparation.
Every community provided some preparatory programs for students, including upgrading academic skills and introductions to Early Childhood Education. Preparatory programs ranged from two weeks to one year across the seven programs. Nevertheless, some program graduates compared their first weeks in the program to being pushed into a cold lake! All program graduates had been out of formal schooling for at least three years – some as many as 25 years. Students had experienced variable success in previous schooling. Those who had attempted post-secondary programs had often had disappointing experiences that had eroded self-confidence. First Nations cultures are often described as 'oral cultures' and students needed to become more adept with reading and writing in order to succeed in post-secondary education.

Community participants emphasized the need for preparatory programs developed according to the principles of the Generative Curriculum Model and delivered by the institutional partners as part of building relationships and establishing the community-involving approach to the education program.

The long-term benefits of offering a training program that takes the strengths, knowledge, and skills of individuals, so that they begin to feel good about themselves, is worth the dollar value.

Marie McCallum, Administrator, Meadow Lake Tribal Council

Program implementation

The program implementation phase ranged from 19 to 42 months. Variability depended upon the expressed needs of the community partner. In the shortest program, with Treaty 8 Tribal Association, students were in class longer each day and took fewer, shorter breaks between terms. This approach to program implementation was motivated by the uncertainty of continued funding, and the fact that students had moved away from their villages, and sometimes their families, into a nearby town. They were eager to return home. The longest program was with Tl'azt'en Nation, where students began the program gradually, combining a reduced course load with ongoing preparatory work in basic academic and study skills and personal life skills. Subsequently, when students were ready to assume a full course load, a series of tragic events necessitated several temporary cessations of the program. During this program, every student experienced the death of one or more relatives. The pace of the partnership program at Tl'azt'en Nation was also affected by frequent instructor turnovers, and the difficulty of recruiting replacements.

Another factor that sometimes affected the pace of program activities was the difficulty that students' husbands had with their wives being fully occupied outside the home and with the prospect of their becoming more confident, independent, and employed. Finally, because many families depended upon seasonal hunting, fishing, and berry picking, the program accommodated time off for students to pursue these important sustenance activities.

Post-program follow-up phase

No partnership ended on the day delivery of all the courses was completed. In order to support students to successfully complete all the program requirements for the diploma, the partnership continued actively throughout a post-program phase ranging from six to twelve months. Across partnerships, an average of 70% of the students had small but necessary steps in the program to complete, typically a final round of supervised practicum training or final assignments for one or two courses. The most prevalent challenge to completion of the full diploma program was the required university-level English course which communities accessed through local colleges or through Open University distance education. A majority of community-based program administrators affirmed the value of students becoming more proficient in writing, reading, and speaking. However, students reported low confidence in their ability to succeed and a mismatch between their perceived needs as practitioners and the content and teaching model of the English courses that were available to them. Participants recommended development of a new English course that would be:

- taught on site
- sensitive to First Nations needs and encompassing positive First Nations literature
- tailored to the communication task demands of practitioners in early childhood and youth services.

Costs

Average costs per student ranged from $4,000 to $5,000 per term, which was slightly higher than the full cost per student in other post-secondary programs providing training in Early Childhood Education. The program was more cost-effective when there were more students in the cohort. However, costs varied considerably across programs due to other factors as well, especially transportation requirements and availability of community resource people to serve in instructor roles. For example, the two programs that had the highest cost were the most remote. In the Treaty 8 partnership in northern British Columbia, students from six disparate villages moved to a location central to all of them. Some students moved their children with them. This strategy reduced the costs and hazards of extensive daily travelling during dangerous winter weather, but increased the cost of rental accommodation and transportation of Elders from villages to the centralized classroom. The living allowance component of program funding was higher than for any other program, approximating the support costs for students who move away from home to attend universities and colleges in Western Canada. In the Tl'azt'en Nation partnership, students moved on three occasions to the closest urban centre for periods of up to two weeks in order to access suitable practicum sites. Also, more remote program locations were more costly for institution-based partners to visit. Variability in program costs was not attributable to whether there was a two-way or a three-way partnership.

In each partnership, at least 80% of the expenditures for the program remained within the community. The communities delivered the program in their own facilities, provided their own administrative and support services, and contracted with instructors who were either community members or were recruited to the community for the duration of the program.
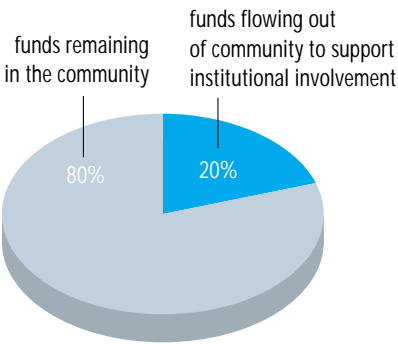
Approximately 20% of the costs were for: institutional liaison and support; provision of the university-based curriculum materials that were combined with community-generated course content; registration and recording of students' progress in the program as required for credentialing; pre-program and post-program liaison costs.
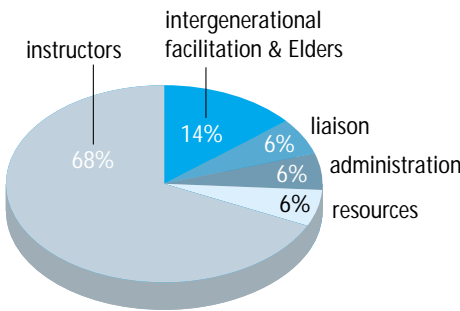
Funding challenges

The communities raised all of the funding both for community-based program implementation and for institution-based program support. While this contributed to the community's sense of agency and control in the partnership, and their pride in successful implementation, it also placed an inordinate financial burden on them and accounted for the relatively high overall cost per student per term. The most serious challenge for the partnerships was the absence of a base of operational funds, independent of funds raised by the community, to support the involvement of the university-based team. The institution-based team required funding for development of new course materials, updating existing curriculum, travel to communities, liaison, and participation in community-initiated fund raising activities.

A challenge for both the institution-based team and the partner communities was a lack of funding to support involvement during the critical pre-program period and during post-program follow-up. Funding for education and training is typically tied specifically to the period when courses are being delivered. Also, funding is often based on a narrow conception of what is involved in education and training. Thus, several of the community partners had particular difficulty obtaining sufficient external funds to support Elder involvement; the Intergenerational Facilitator's role; students' travel to and from practica; and community events to elicit broad social participation in the program. For the institutional
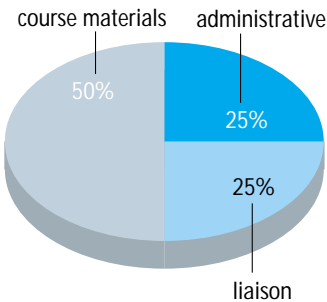
Distribution of funds

funds remaining in the community 80%

funds flowing out of community to support institutional involvement 20%

Typical allocation of community expenditures

instructors 68%

intergenerational facilitation & Elders 14%

liaison 6%

administration 6%

resources 6%

Note: On the community side, there were variable amounts for student travel and accommodation for practica, student support, and facilities.

Typical allocation of institution-based expenditures

course materials 50%

administrative 25%

liaison 25%

Note: On the institution side, there were variable amounts for liaison travel.

partners, inadequate funding seriously curtailed the capacity to reach out to prospective community partners; to travel to communities; to build relationships in communities; to support community efforts to mobilize resources; and to help create conditions that would enable program delivery.

Cost-benefit perspective

Evaluation participants underscored the benefits of the partnership program to the community as a whole. Most participants contrasted this investment in education and training with other training and employment programs that have benefited students themselves but have had little or no impact on other community members. Distinctive features of the First Nations Partnership Programs that they pointed to were:

- the unprecedented high rates of student retention and completion
- the application of relevant training to community service development
- the far reaching ripple effects of the partnership programs.

All the community-based administrators described in the interviews how they had considered both social and economic goals of the community when making the decision to search for funding to implement the training program. These administrators reported high levels of satisfaction with the extent to which the program had furthered those goals.

Two partner communities offered financial data as a way of comparing the benefits of the First Nations Partnership Programs. Both communities reported providing $17,000 per single student per year when community members moved away to attend university or college. These communities pointed out that their expenditures were often higher than this, because students move their children and sometimes their partners with them. They reported that no more than 30% of community members who have gone away for education have completed the training (reflecting national rates of First Nations student retention in post-secondary programs). Further, many students who have completed their training have not returned to the community. (The post-secondary administrator in one community noted that there recently appears to be a gradual trend towards more graduates returning home.) Thus, the return on investment of post-secondary funds in terms of capacity built to achieve community development goals was nearly 100% superior in the First Nations Partnership Programs compared to the conventional practice of supporting First Nations students to go away for post-secondary training.

Cross-program comparisons

Several unanticipated hindrances prevented detailed comparisons of First Nations Partnership Programs with other post-secondary programs.

- Post-secondary institutions in Canada cannot require students to identify their race or ethnicity, making it impossible to obtain a reliable count of the number of First Nations students.
- The criteria for identification of individuals as 'First Nations' is itself problematic and controversial, contributing to difficulties in obtaining reliable comparison information.
- There was no uniformity in how post-secondary programs broke out their budgets or in what they included as part of program delivery and what was supplementary or outside the budget but nevertheless essential for students to complete the program. Also, there was a reluctance to reveal cost information for purposes of program comparisons.
- We were able to identify and contact very few First Nations students in Early Childhood Education who had been enrolled in Early Childhood Education and, with the exception of one program, most had not succeeded and were not eager to discuss their experiences.

The picture that vividly emerged from the evaluation was of a tapestry of interwoven program elements and processes embedded in an actively supported, community-driven agenda. These features most clearly distinguished the First Nations Partnership Programs from other programs of professional training.
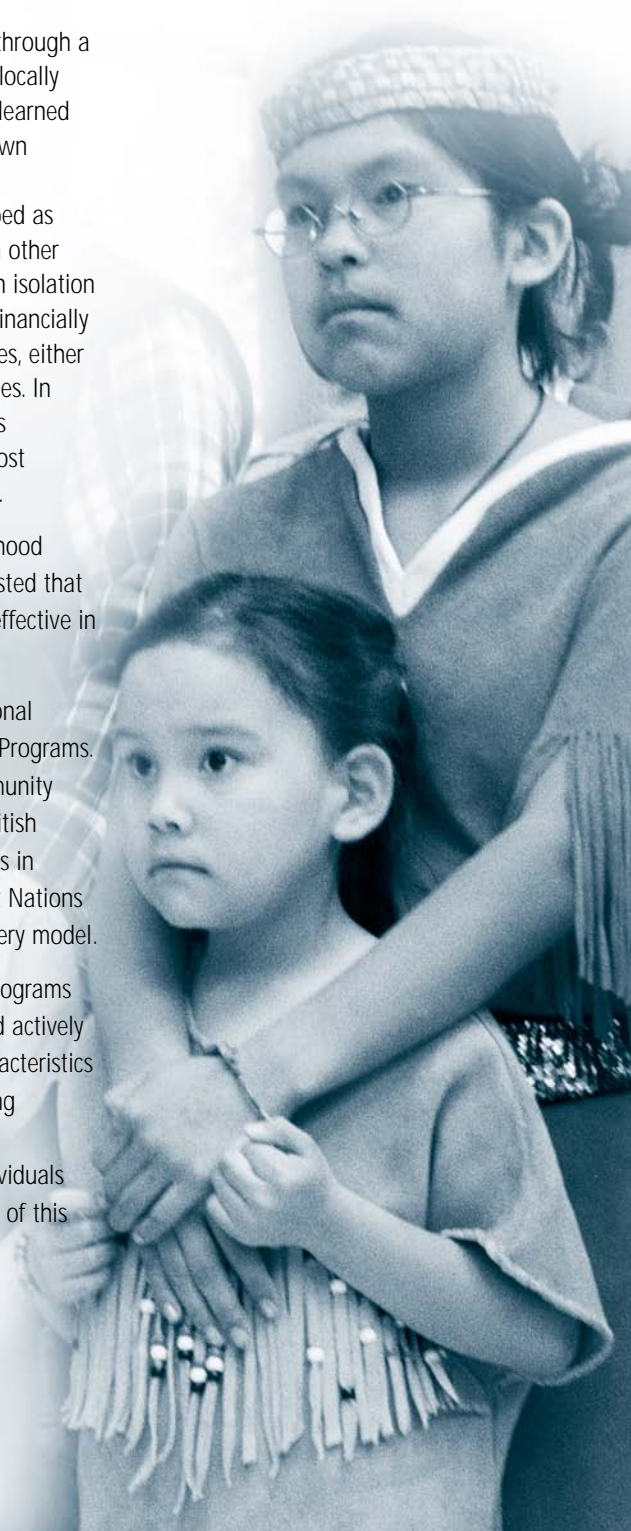
The evaluation yielded largely anecdotal evidence of how the First Nations Partnership Programs compared to other post-secondary training programs in Early Childhood Education in terms of costs and benefits. Participants' accounts and available information about other programs enabled a few comparisons, as follows:

■ The First Nations Partnership Programs were slightly more costly and lengthy than other programs.

■ The First Nations Partnership Programs were unique in enabling students to achieve university credit for courses culminating in a two-year diploma that laddered into a degree program.

■ The First Nations Partnership Programs were unique in Canada with regard to the extent of community involvement in program delivery.

■ No other programs provided opportunities to develop locally relevant capacity through a generated curriculum in which cultural knowledge, community conditions, and locally articulated goals for children's development figured centrally in what students learned and how they were prepared to take on professional roles as leaders in their own communities.

■ First Nations Partnership Programs outcomes ran against the tide, often described as 'brain drain', which has been abetted by other program delivery approaches. In other programs, students are often required to leave their communities, or to study in isolation from their communities while enrolled in a local program. When communities financially support students to study in programs that remove them from their communities, either geographically or socially or both, they rarely return to work in their communities. In contrast, 95% of students who completed one or two years in the First Nations Partnership Programs remained in their communities after the program, and most assumed roles in community-based child and family serving program initiatives.

Overall, the lack of visible First Nations people practicing in the field of Early Childhood Education and in other areas of child and youth services in Western Canada suggested that mainstream post-secondary training programs have been largely inaccessible or ineffective in supporting the growth of capacity in First Nations.

At the same time, a few positive program efforts were observed among some regional post-secondary institutions who were not involved in the First Nations Partnership Programs. In British Columbia, College of New Caledonia is exploring ways of involving community administrators in community-based program delivery. The University of Northern British Columbia is making strides towards involving Elders and other community members in curriculum decisions. Northern Lights College is delivering programs in or near First Nations communities, using a combination of telelearning, tutors, and a cohort-driven delivery model.

The picture that vividly emerged from the evaluation of First Nations Partnership Programs was of a tapestry of interwoven program elements and processes embedded in and actively supported by a community-driven agenda. These mutually enhancing program characteristics and the embeddedness of the program in communities were the most distinguishing features of the First Nations Partnership Programs, compared to other programs of professional training. The impacts of the partnership programs, beginning with individuals and rippling out to the First Nations communities, are the focus of the next section of this report.

B   PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The program evaluation showed that in all seven partnership programs to date, the Generative Curriculum Model of providing university-accredited training in students' own communities led to unprecedented educational outcomes and vocational outcomes, as well as to personal and community transformations reaching far beyond the classroom.

I   ACHIEVING INDIVIDUAL GOALS

$\mathcal{E}$ducational outcomes

Among 118 students who enrolled in the program across seven partnerships, 86.4% (102) students completed one year of full-time, university-accredited study. For students in British Columbia, this resulted in eligibility for Early Childhood Education (ECE) basic certification by the Ministry of Health.

- **77.3% (91) of initial enrollees completed a full two years to achieve a Diploma in Child and Youth Care, compared with a national completion rate of 40% and below among First Nations students in other post-secondary programs.**
- **95% (97) of program graduates (students completing one or more years) remained in their own communities.**
- **65% (66) of graduates introduced new programs for children, youth and families.**
- **13% (13) of graduates joined the staff of existing services.**
- **11% (11) of graduates continued on the education career ladder, working towards a university degree.**

Sixteen community members who were originally enrolled in the program terminated their studies before completing one year of coursework. Fourteen of these left in the first few weeks of the program. Among the 16 early leavers, four students withdrew due to lack of family support for their involvement in full-time studies; eight students withdrew due to academic challenges; two students withdrew due to pregnancy; and two withdrew due to critical events precipitating their sudden departure from the community.

A recurrent theme emerging in the program evaluation was the congruence that program graduates experienced in a training program that focused on their cultural and geographic community — its goals for the well-being of children and families, socio-economic circumstances, readiness and strategies for responding to the needs of children and youth. Many students contrasted this with previous experiences in mainstream educational institutions, which they described variously as "totally white," "impractical," "culturally contradictory," "spiritually bankrupt" and "foreign." Because the Generative Curriculum Model adopts a 'both/and' approach that presents Euro-Western theories and research alongside traditions, values and practices of the students' own culture, the curriculum resonated with the realities of their daily lives.

Student transformations.

Positive psychosocial development among students, including those who did not complete the whole two-year program, was one way that participants gauged program effectiveness.

Parenting effectiveness. Over 80% of program graduates reported that their parenting and grandparenting had improved significantly. Eleven reported sharing new knowledge and skills about child development and their own culture with their adult children, who were now raising their own children. This program impact has particular importance for the partnering First Nations. The communities involved in the four most recent partnerships had a total population of 5,100. A total of 53 students were parents or grandparents to 186 children. Enhanced transmission of knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm about child development and parenting represents a substantial impact on the future of the community as a whole.

A healing journey. Significant psychosocial healing was reported by 92% of the students across the seven programs. Evaluation interviews revealed the extent to which many students had previously internalized negative stereotypes of themselves and their cultural heritage, as well as the extent to which they experienced the First Nations Partnership Programs as a healing journey for themselves and their communities. Many students described feeling more positive about their potential to take control of their own lives and to make valued contributions in their families and communities.

Working through trauma experienced through residential schools was a recurrent theme in the interviews with members of all seven community partners. Many graduates talked about having missed the foundational experiences of being parented effectively. Some had been forced to attend residential schools off-reserve as children; others were raised by parents who had attended residential schools. Many program graduates recounted the re-emergence of painful memories in reflections and group discussions about their own experiences of childhood and of parenting, and in hearing the stories of the Elders. Participants linked the availability of social support within the student cohort, within a 'culturally safe' classroom environment created by the instructors and Elders, and within their own community as an important factor enabling them to make constructive use of recalling childhood traumas in their program of professional development.

Dimensions of positive change

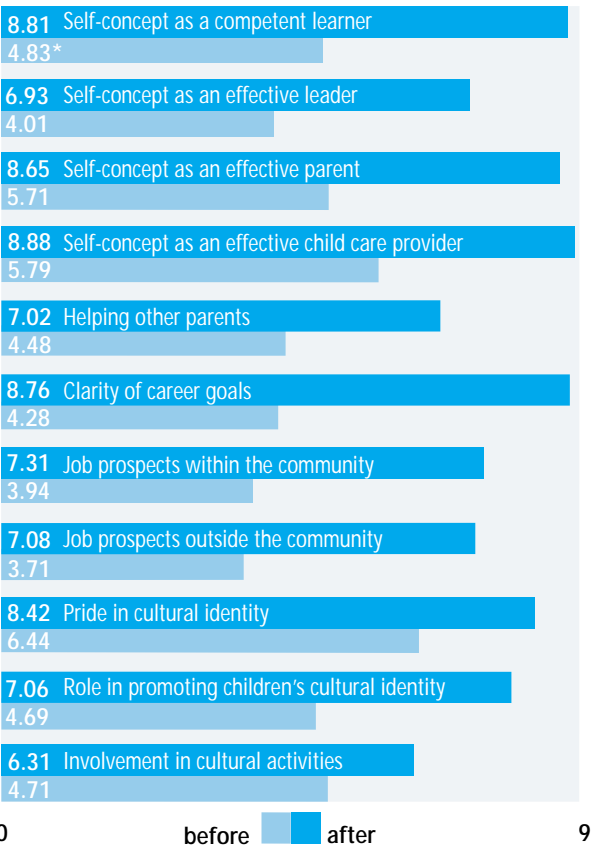| Dimension	%
Enhanced self-confidence	93.2%
Better communication skills	92%
Feeling respected by others	88.9%
Effective advising of others on child rearing	88.7%
More effective as a parent	87%
More clarity on cultural identity	87%
Better family life	86.7%
Healthier lifestyle	75.5%
More connection with community	71%
More participation in cultural activities	68%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

Interview data.
The table shows the percentage of graduates who spontaneously described dimensions of positive change which they attributed to program participation.

Students' perceptions of change:
Pre- and Post-Program
Mean ratings on a nine point scale

Dimension	before	after
Self-concept as a competent learner	4.83*	8.81
Self-concept as an effective leader	4.01	6.93
Self-concept as an effective parent	5.71	8.65
Self-concept as an effective child care provider	5.79	8.88
Helping other parents	4.48	7.02
Clarity of career goals	4.28	8.76
Job prospects within the community	3.94	7.31
Job prospects outside the community	3.71	7.08
Pride in cultural identity	6.44	8.42
Role in promoting children's cultural identity	4.69	7.06
Involvement in cultural activities	4.71	6.31

0   before   after   9

Questionnaire data.
Students' ratings of themselves along 11 provided dimensions (before and after the two-year training program) showed significant changes in psychosocial self-concept and vocational preparedness.

II   ACHIEVING COMMUNITY GOALS

Vocational outcomes.

Certificates and diplomas were not the only or the ultimate criteria that First Nations evaluation participants used to measure program effectiveness. Across all seven programs, they expanded valued program outcomes to include a range of personal and community transformations, described below.

Most important was the fact that 95% of program graduates remained in their communities, thereby strengthening community capacity to provide culturally appropriate services for children and families. As many evaluation participants noted, there are few, if any, benefits to the community when students either go away to attend university and do not return — or come back, in the words of an Elder, "as strangers with alien ideas."

Expanded services for children.

*C*hildren's programs initiated or staffed by program graduates (within 1 year of program completion)	Out-of-home, centre-based daycares
	In-home family daycares
	Aboriginal Head Start
	Infant development programs
	Home-school liaison programs
	Parent support programs
	Individualized supported child care for special needs
	Language enhancement programs
	Youth services
	School-based teacher assistance/learning support
	After-school care programs
	Children's programs in women's safe houses

First Nations Partnership Programs supported community-identified goals for expanded service delivery.

As a group, community-based administrators across the seven First Nations Partnership Programs prioritized three service objectives:

- to provide safe, developmentally supportive care for children
- to enable parents to pursue education and employment
- to ensure the reproduction and reconstruction of culture through programs for children and families.

Vocational Outcomes

graduates
remaining in
the community

graduates
who left the
community

95%

5%

staffing new
or existing
programs

unemployed

82%

18%

serving children
6+ years old

serving
children 0-6
years old

20%

80%

Community Capacity Building.

Tl'azt'en Nation

Midway through the Tl'azt'en Nation partnership, students became involved in planning the Nation's first child care centre. They were involved in negotiating contracts with a carpentry training program on reserve to create furniture and toys for the facility. They worked together to develop operational policies and procedures. They created curriculum activities to teach young children their traditional Carrier language and to promote positive identity as Tl'azt'enne people. They named the centre Sumyaz (meaning 'Little Star'). Students completed their final practicum at this new centre in their community. All of the program graduates became staff at the centre and also at the Aboriginal Head Start program in an additional facility that they had helped to initiate and implement.

Mount Currie First Nation

The training program ended just one day prior to the official opening of a multiplex that houses two new programs: the Tsipalin (meaning 'Baby Basket') program for infants and toddlers, and the Sqwalx (meaning 'Young Eagle') pre-school program. These services are staffed almost entirely by program graduates who have created opportunities for young children to learn the traditional Lil'wat language, songs, games, dances, drumming and ways of telling and listening to stories of their people and their natural environment.

Meadow Lake Tribal Council

In the five Cree and four Dene communities represented by the Tribal Council, graduates started daycares and other child and family services at their home reserves in remote parts of northern Saskatchewan. Some took up leadership roles in Health and Social Development planning within the offices of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council. One joined the staff of a safe home for women where she introduced programming for children.
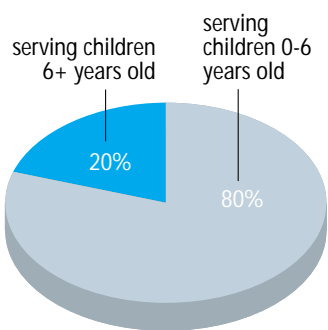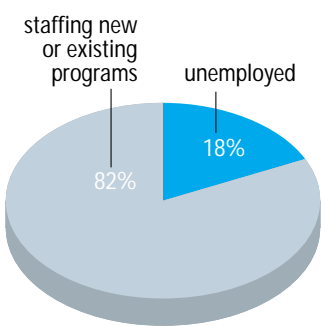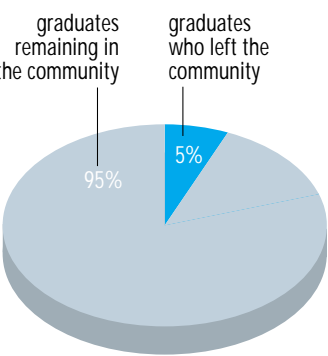
Cowichan Tribes

This partnership occurred in a semi-urban environment and was the only program where classes were held on a college campus on reserve land. Graduates applied their training in a variety of locations, including child care and parent support programs, probation services, and college student services. Eight of the original 22 students laddered on to third and fourth years of university study towards a degree, usually in education.

Onion Lake First Nation

Half of the 17 program graduates in this community of 1700 people were hired as staff at child care programs in their villages or as assistants at the community school. One graduate started a new daycare in the main community on reserve at Onion Lake. Ten program graduates continued with First Nations Partnership Programs in a pilot project enabling them to take third and fourth year courses in Child and Youth Care while remaining in their community. Six of these students are expected to achieve a Bachelor of Arts degree within months of the present report. Combining distance learning and face-to-face meetings in classrooms on reserve using the Generative Curriculum Model, these students blazed a new trail for students in other partner communities who may wish to 'ladder' on to the next rung in their career development.

Nzen'man' Child and Family Services

Program graduates are involved in a variety of centre-based and in-home child care programs, and after-school care. Also, in this sparsely populated rural area, graduates are serving First Nations children and families through mobile outreach programs.

Treaty 8 Tribal Association

A range of new daycare and other child- and family-centred programs were started and staffed by graduates from the six villages that comprised the partnership. Included among them is the 'Cree-ative Daycare' at Salteau reserve, emphasizing Cree language and cultural learning in the early years. Continuing the bicultural values underlying the training program, some graduates are involved in English literacy programs to help parents prepare their children for school.

From training to practice.

A question of central interest in the evaluation was how the strong cultural component of the training experience influenced the programs that graduates have created. Observations in centre-based care programs in the communities provided many examples.

- Children's books created in the training program about families in their community, and in their traditional language. ("If you lived in Onion Lake, you would know...")
- The colours and teachings of the Medicine Wheel
- Masks and legends
- Labels in traditional language and in English
- Child-sized drums and group drumming songs
- Traditional crafts such as the making of button blankets, miniature teepees, moccasins, basketry and bead work, including the use of traditional tools and materials
- 'Clan houses' decorated with symbolic animals in the playground
- An emphasis on nature
- An infusion of native spirituality - in stories, art, and ways of describing people and events
- Cradle boards for infants
- Traditional foods, such as bannock, smoked fish, and dried meat
- Organization of children into traditional 'clans' for small group activities
- Creation and use of the traditional talking stick for structuring talking circle time
- The use of 'healing circle talk' to provide for support in response to distressing events
- The use of 'time in' (rather than 'time out') in response to children's challenging behaviours
- Preparing for traditional community events such as powwows
- Learning traditional sustenance activities such as gathering berries, reeds for baskets, and mushrooms, preparing fish, fruits, meats, and leather, following the seasons and rhythms of the community.

The Medicine Wheel teaches us about balance. When you do mainstream education in isolation from the community and without much personal connection to your own experiences and who you are, then you are only developing within the thinking / intellectual quadrant of the Medicine Wheel. This is out of balance. The wheel of development does not turn smoothly.

When you involve your whole self, especially your spirituality, in learning, growth and development, and strengthen your connection with your community, especially the Elders and their spirituality, then you develop in all quadrants of the Medicine Wheel. Then you have balance. This program in child and youth care, using the Generative Curriculum Model, will enable us to get the wheel turning again in our community.

Intergenerational Facilitator

Distinctive characteristics in the ways that program graduates approached care giving were frequently noted by practicum supervisors and the evaluation team.

- Flexibility in programming (e.g., in response to the needs of individual parents, children, or caregivers, seasonal variations, unanticipated opportunities)
- Acceptance of a wide range of individual differences among both children and their parents, including a reluctance to label children (e.g., as having 'special needs' or disabilities)
- Non-authoritarian, child-centred approaches to directing children's behaviour in program activities
- Involvement of Elders and parents meaningfully in the life of the centre.

The fluid boundary between the training program and the community meant that when program graduates assumed roles as leaders in child care initiatives, community members such as Elders, parents, and other resource people expected and readily agreed to become actively involved. Eliciting community involvement, and knowing how to integrate community members meaningfully into children's programs are frequently reported challenges for practitioners. These challenges are amplified when the practitioner is not a member of the community, or has completed training away from the community.

Embedding child care practices in community contexts

There was considerable variability across communities in designs for serving children and youth because every community was culturally different. Each community was embedded in a host of varying socio-economic and geographic conditions. The open architecture of the Generative Curriculum Model is intended to accommodate and respond to new input from each partnering group. The curriculum generated in one partnership program is not passed along to subsequent partnerships. This would result in the evolution of the kind of pan-aboriginal approach which the instigators of the partnership program at Meadow Lake Tribal Council critiqued as fundamentally misguided. Rather than viewing culturally and contextually appropriate programming as a product, it was experienced in the partnerships as a process in which the particular cultural concepts and forms of each First Nations partner community were elaborated and applied to child and youth care.

Program graduates showed that they were committed to transmitting and sustaining the culture of their community in their practices and responding flexibly to the rhythms and demands of community life. The 'generated concepts and practices' flowing from each training program have not been held up to other communities as "best practice" models or the only ways to ground child care approaches in culture.

Expanded definitions of program success: 'Generative capacity building'

The term 'generative capacity building' captures the way that participants in the First Nations Partnership Programs experienced the education program as a process that led to reverberating "ripple effects." The partnerships were reported to have created:

- new interpersonal relationships
- new ways of relating between cultural communities and mainstream institutions
- new ways of teaching and learning
- new knowledge
- new or syncretic models for supporting the well-being of children and families.

Community mobilization and organization to improve conditions for children and families was an important dimension of program effectiveness identified by evaluation participants. Similarly, program graduates viewed 'success' not only in terms of their academic achievements, but also in terms of their emerging roles as community advocates and respected resources for family members and friends. Community administrators reported that the approach of First Nations Partnership Programs supported self-determination in their communities and the quest for renewed capacity at the community level to provide quality child care and development programs that embody First Nations cultural traditions, values and practices.

Community impacts reported by community administrators and intergenerational facilitators (N = 42)

Cultural revitalization through new, culturally grounded services introduced by program graduates. (95%)

Enhanced community-wide advocacy for child well-being initiatives. (86%)

Community empowerment arising from the community's sense of ownership and involvement in all stages of the training program. (76%)

Community level program impacts reported by instructors (N=20)

Development of cohort of skilled community leaders. (95%)
• Attributed to cultural safety in classes engendered by community-based delivery and participatory teaching and learning strategies

Social cohesion, especially among students and Elders. (90%)
• Attributed to cohort delivery and Elder participation

Cultural revitalization. (90%)
• Attributed to generative curriculum / Elder participation

Cultural healing / recovery of pride in cultural heritage and identity. (80%)
• Attributed to generative curriculum in which cultural knowledge of the community was valued

Rather than viewing culturally and contextually appropriate programming as a product, it was experienced in the partnerships as a process in which the particular cultural concepts and forms of each First Nations partner community were elaborated and applied to child and youth care.

A template for social change.

The evaluation research illuminated several crosscutting themes, interrelated program elements and participatory processes in the First Nations Partnership Programs. 'Social cohesion' and 'social inclusion' were two constructs that emerged from the data analysis and from a decade of experience as critical for describing and explaining much about the processes and outcomes of the training initiatives.

Social cohesion

'Social cohesion' encompasses the many facets of community involvement in administering the training programs, the participation of students in cohorts, and bringing together multiple generations to support the development of the community's children and families. Participants' accounts of community transformations that they attributed to the program highlighted enhanced willingness and capacity of individuals to participate in ways that:

- built trust and reciprocity
- met their shared needs
- mobilized new knowledge and resources in programs of action
- built upon organizational strengths
- increased community stability.

Social cohesion is offered here as a critical 'wrap-around' concept that represents:

- a characteristic of the community partners that enabled them to enter effectively into partnership with the university
- a characteristic of the process of community involvement in program delivery
- a dimension of community life that was enhanced as a result of program delivery.

Social inclusion

'Social inclusion' describes the links that were strengthened between individuals and groups, including groups external to the community. The impact of the First Nations Partnership Programs upon social inclusion was vividly illustrated when several program graduates took active roles in two province-wide conferences on Early Childhood Education and on Aboriginal Child Care. Graduates spoke out on issues of funding for child care and training, and presented a range of ideas for responding to cultural diversity in child care programs. As an outcome, social inclusion refers to recognition and participation of community members and of university partners in each other's venues and in the society at large. Creating professional networks and building upon mutual learning relationships were seen by evaluation participants as an important part of capacity building.

Effects on partnering post-secondary institutions.

Representatives of the four partnering post-secondary institutions identified varying effects of program participation on institutional structures and/or practices.

Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology

We educators have to be visionaries, and when we talk curriculum, there has to be a view to what our communities are envisioning – what their goals are. The Generative Curriculum Model contains a larger vision of how to bring these two different visions together – the one that academics see and the one that guides people out there in the communities. So we've learned a new approach to making what we do here [in this institution] meaningful and effective for all parties. People are just starting to understand what this is all about.

Dennis Esperanz, Administrator, SIIT

Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology (SIIT) had a long-standing relationship with the Meadow Lake Tribal Council. SIIT was involved in the delivery of the first year of the Early Childhood Care and Development program after the first demonstration partnership program was concluded. As well, SIIT was involved in the subsequent three-way partnership with Onion Lake First Nation. SIIT gained a new program offering, as well as a new approach to serving their First Nations constituencies. Collaboration between SIIT and the First Nations Partnership Programs team at the University of Victoria has continued over a decade through sharing new and updated course materials and program outreach strategies.

Malaspina University College

This program was the very first time we had Elder teachings going into Malaspina classrooms. And now we have about two hundred resource people from Cowichan and various other First Nations. We have developed an open dialogue with the community – the doors are open both ways. And we have the Child and Youth Care program, resulting from the first partnership. So there is a real community feel about that program, with Elders and resource people coming and going and students going out to the community, which after all is the way it should be – a huge circle of learning and teaching and support.

Louise Underwood, Elder-in-Residence, MUC

Similarly, Malaspina University College (MUC) gained a new program offering in Child and Youth Care, which it has subsequently adapted to the unique circumstances of being located on Cowichan Tribes reserve lands. The program at this institution is offered on campus to students who can choose to enroll without being part of a community cohort. Individual students and Elders participate regularly in class meetings. As well, the First Nations Partnership Programs team at the University of Victoria has entered into agreements with MUC to work with other First Nations communities in the region. In the evaluation, administrators at MUC attributed the experience of partnership program delivery using the Generative Curriculum Model to new understandings among their faculty and administrators about how to incorporate culture in course work and how to involve Elders in course design and delivery. As a result of the partnership program, MUC instituted a new position, that of Elder-in-Residence, filled by a senior member of Cowichan Tribes, as a full-time, ongoing staff position.

When the community is allowed entry into the education process and invited to play meaningful roles, the impacts of the training do not end inside the classroom; community members carried the training program with them into the broad ecology of children's lives.

Nicola Valley Institute of Technology

This institute is just getting started on bringing the indigenous voice to the fore in designing and delivering curriculum. The Generative Curriculum Model provided real inspiration for a very effective way – not to develop the indigenous voice, because the students and their communities already have that – but to validate it as important and worthy of time and attention in formal course work. Demonstrating the power of doing curriculum this way – the empowering effects of it – has been the biggest contribution of the partnerships to NVIT.

Lisa Sterling, Former Administrator, NVIT

Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) entered into a three-way partnership with Nzen'man' Child and Family Services and the University of Victoria, in part to explore the feasibility of instituting an Early Childhood Care and Development program at this new indigenous college. Midway through the three-way partnership, an upheaval within the administration of NVIT resulted in students requesting program completion through a two-way partnership between the University of Victoria and the community-based Nzen'man' Child and Family Services that had instigated program delivery. Thus, the impacts of the program on practices at NVIT were difficult to assess. Nevertheless, NVIT administrators commented on their involvement in the partnership as an instructive experience for this evolving institution. In particular, they emphasized recognizing the need for accreditation of training modules, the importance of procedures that ensure quality in program delivery, and the value of involving Elders as a strategy for ensuring cultural relevance in curriculum development.
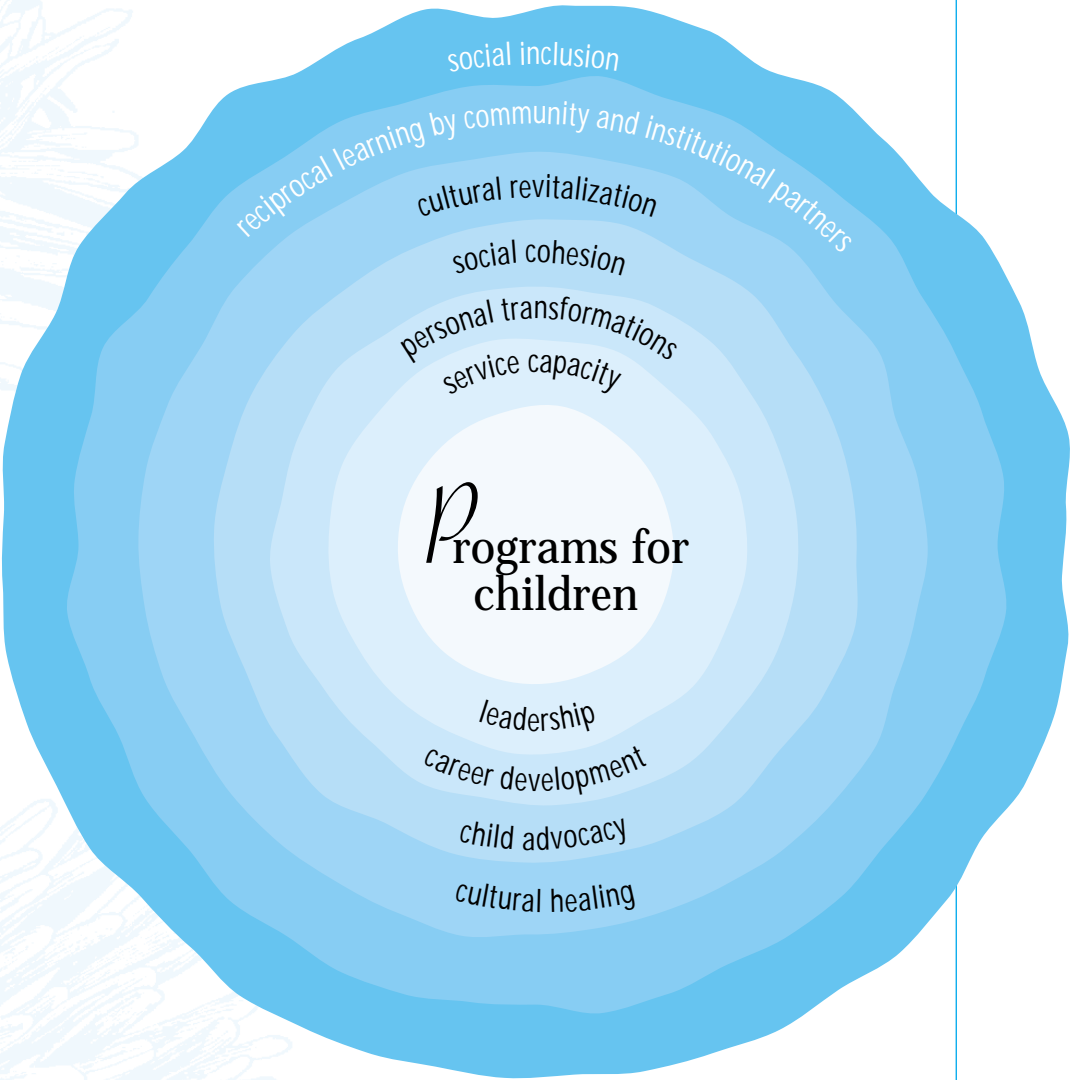
University of Victoria

These partnerships have been very exciting for us. They have not always been easy, but always worth the investment of time and energies that have gone into them. The partnerships have demonstrated a new kind of outreach from the university to communities, especially remote communities, and they have been very effective. Do I think there are challenges that remain? Absolutely! There is the matter of making the successes of these partnerships more visible, and therefore more likely to be supported and expanded. There are funding issues and questions of the applicability of this type of partnership program, and this type of curriculum model, to other fields of professional training. Overall, though, I think the School of Child and Youth Care and the university have benefited tremendously from the opportunities to partner with First Nations in this way.

Valerie Kuehne, Associate Vice-President Academic, University of Victoria

The partnerships, and especially the Generative Curriculum Model which evolved from them, broke new ground for the University of Victoria. Although community-based programs were not new to the university, the co-construction of curriculum by community members as well as a university-based team was a new approach. The university gained credibility with many First Nations as an approachable and responsive institution, and is proud to have supported an unprecedented number of First Nations students in completing a program of studies that led to Ministry of Health certification and increases in First Nations labour force participation.

Ongoing challenges are faced by the First Nations Partnership Programs team in gaining university financial support for the program that would signal true adoption of the Generative Curriculum Model and its capacity-building intent. From the perspective of the evaluation team, the greatest obstacle seems to be the lack of visibility of students in remote communities. There is no on-campus 'residency' requirement in the program. Although some student groups have chosen to visit the campus, there is no necessity for them to do so. The lack of University of Victoria base funding for the program notwithstanding, the First Nations Partnership Programs have added to the growing recognition by some faculty and administrators of the need for flexible schedules and procedures in order to accommodate community-based students, and the rewards of partnerships with First Nations communities.

Program Outcomes and New Beginnings

social inclusion

reciprocal learning by community and institutional partners

cultural revitalization

social cohesion

personal transformations

service capacity

*P*rograms for children

leadership

career development

child advocacy

cultural healing

III   ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR PROGRAM SUCCESS

Analysis of participants' accounts revealed that certain antecedent conditions enabled teaching and learning processes that led to program outcomes. The conditions identified most frequently as having a causal link to program outcomes are summarized in this part of the report as follows:

1 Partnership, especially the reciprocal guided participation of willing community and institutional partners.
2 Community-based delivery that enabled community inclusion in all phases of program planning, delivery, and refinement.
3 Student cohort involvement in professional development.
4 Open architecture of curriculum that depended upon community input.
5 Facilitation of cultural input in curriculum.

These causal linkages, shown on the chart on page 39, were recurring themes in the accounts of participants in all seven programs. (Some 'between program' differences in perceptions of the causality of program outcomes did emerge in comparative analyses of participants' accounts. These will be reported elsewhere.) Participants' accounts suggested that it was the *combined* effects of these antecedent conditions that account for the success of the partnerships. Together, these conditions enabled the cultural 'fit' and social inclusiveness of the training process and curriculum content. In turn, the training program resulted in outcomes that were consistent with community goals.

ENABLING CONDITIONS, PROCESSES, AND OUTCOMES

Causal links identified in participants' accounts

Enabling/Prerequisite Conditions	Process Elements	Outcomes/New Beginnings
Partnership Community will Institutional will	■ Readiness to fulfill roles & responsibilities (open attitude, resources) ■ Reciprocal guided participation (guiding principles)	■ Community agency/control ■ Clarity regarding children's care and development ■ Reciprocal learning ■ Social inclusion ■ Community infrastructure development
Community-based delivery	■ Community leadership & involvement at all stages ■ Supports for students (formal & informal)	■ Community revitalization ■ Community transformations ■ Social cohesion
Student cohort	■ Peer support ■ Team building ■ Dialogical constructivism	■ Personal transformations ■ Psychosocial healing ■ Academic achievement ■ Social cohesion
'Open architecture curriculum'	■ Participatory teaching & learning ■ Co-construction of bicultural course work	■ Leadership development ■ Cultural revitalization ■ Extended ecological context for supporting children ■ New concepts and designs
Facilitation of cultural input (Intergenerational Facilitator)	■ Intergenerational teaching & learning ■ Elder participation	■ Restoration of traditional beliefs, values & practices ■ New structures for transmission of indigenous knowledge ■ New or rekindled inter-generational relationships

New programs and improved developmental conditions for children

1 PARTNERSHIP

Community will.

The seven First Nations partners shared certain characteristics that favoured successful partnership:

- a pre-existing identification of quality of life for children and families as a priority for community development
- a commitment to preserving the wisdom of Elders and revitalizing culturally-based strengths through policies and programs
- an openness to bicultural or multicultural approaches
- a prior commitment to strengthening capacity to promote well-being among children, youth and families in the community
- geographic proximity to other First Nations communities and willingness to collaborate with them to recruit at least 10 prospective students to form a cohort
- effective community leadership and infrastructure to manage community-based delivery of the program.

It is difficult to gauge how many of the over 500 First Nations in Canada share the characteristics of the seven program partners. First Nations in Canada vary with respect to their priorities for community development and their receptivity to bicultural initiatives. It is reasonable to assume that not all cultural communities want this type of partnership program or are prepared to take it on.

Some First Nations spokespeople have argued for exclusively indigenous curriculum content, constructed and delivered by indigenous institutions, in order to avoid the culturally diluting, assimilationist effects of many policies and programs delivered by non-First Nations institutions.

From 1989 to 1999, the First Nations Partnership Programs received over 40 inquiries from representatives of First Nations across Canada wanting to explore the feasibility of partnering to deliver the program in their communities. A review of available records of these inquiries identified two factors that accounted for most decisions by these representatives not to pursue a partnership:

- a small population base yielding insufficient numbers of prospective students to make community-based program delivery cost-effective, combined with geographic isolation, making a joint venture with other First Nations groups impractical
- lack of access to funding.

New approaches are needed to support the capacity-building objectives of very small, isolated cultural communities in Canada. Several community representatives have suggested a similar alternative format, including:

- face-to-face class time in the community, including Elders' participation
- sending students out of the community for practicum training
- use of telelearning
- ongoing mentoring and circles of social support provided to students in the community throughout the program.

This suggested format would involve instructors coming and going from the community intermittently throughout the program, rather than taking up residence for the program duration.

Everybody walks a lot taller because of this program. The partnership was a true partnership, and I can't think of a better way, as far as an institution to a First Nations community.

Brian Opikokew, Administrator, Meadow Lake Tribal Council

In the seven partnering communities, community will to invest in training in Early Childhood Care and Development and to subscribe to a partnership model involving community-based delivery typically took time to evolve. Community administrators described how the momentum for initiating a partnership emerged over a period of years before contact was made with the university-based team. During the initial, pre-program phase of the partnership, community administrators worked hard to inform the community-at-large about the nature and purpose of the program, and to rally support for it while also recruiting eligible community members, Elders and instructors. The seven partnering communities showed that some First Nations have the public will and the social cohesion to take the driver's seat in a program initiative that depends on community participation and a long-term investment.

Institutional will.

Evaluation participants partly attributed successful partnership experiences to a clearly and consistently demonstrated intention on the part of the post-secondary institution to maintain the partnership – referred to here as 'institutional will.' Participants identified the following contributions of institutional partners:

- willingness to make changes in policy and procedures in order to accommodate the First Nation. This included:
  - flexible admission criteria, course registration dates, fees, and procedures
  - flexible scheduling of terms to accommodate seasonal community activities including hunting, fishing, and gathering
  - flexible course content
  - flexible assignment/evaluation procedures
- inclusion of community members in key planning and delivery decisions
- promotion of relations of reciprocity between the institutions and the community
- recognition that First Nations people offer unique and valuable contributions to curriculum development and that no university-based team could effectively contribute this knowledge.

At the outset of the First Nations Partnership Programs, it was understood by the university-based team and the communities that the approach taken by most post-secondary institutions has been flawed by modernist assumptions, including the universal applicability of research-based knowledge about child development and program evaluations showing 'best practices' without sufficient regard to ecocultural contexts. In contrast, a fundamental strength, as well as a challenge, of the First Nations Partnership Programs was the willingness to suspend judgment – to be willing to not know – both about community values, beliefs and perspectives, and about certain features of the engagement that would evolve or be discovered over time, including:

- the way each partnership would develop
- precisely what shape the program would take in each partnership
- what the content and teaching methods of the program should encompass with regards to culturally specific input.

First Nations communities are linked by certain historical events and current political objectives. Yet they encompass many different realities that reflect tribal ancestry, geographic location, and a host of varying socio-economic conditions. The destinations envisioned by partnering bands and tribal councils in the First Nations Partnership Programs were not identical, and no two programs looked exactly alike. Flexibility on the part of the partnering institutions supported each community's vision of how to use the program to pursue their own goals.

Each partnership program was seen as a new process of coming together as a 'generative community' in which all participants were in some ways teachers and all were learners.

Strategic focal point of engagement.

In all seven programs, the partners mobilized around the specific, agreed-upon goal of strengthening community capacity to meet the needs of children and families. The institutional partners were not engaged in addressing all the goals and challenges of First Nations community development. Agreement at the outset on a common purpose that was limited in scope was one of the enabling conditions and defining characteristics of the partnerships. Paradoxically, a strategically limited scope of activity may account, in part, for the far-reaching effects of the program. The partnerships demonstrated that when communities are invited into program delivery and into the classroom, education can be a powerful community development tool.

Community of learners.

A salient characteristic of all the partnerships was that no partner assumed they had a more legitimate claim to 'truths' or 'best practices' regarding effective child and youth care. In their accounts, community members frequently expressed their appreciation that the university-based partners did not behave as ultimate authorities on what should be learned or present themselves as 'experts' on child care and development within the context of the partnering communities. Participants' descriptions of the partnerships emphasized trust, teamwork, reciprocity, and mutual learning. Each training program was seen as a new process of coming together as a 'generative community' or a 'community of learners' made up largely of cultural community members, but including the institution-based partners as well. All participants in each generative community were in some ways teachers and all were learners.

Reciprocally guided participation.

In earlier, formative evaluations, the stance of the partners at the outset of the first two partnership programs was described as 'all-ways respectful.' The current evaluation research yielded rich descriptions of how this mutual respect grew and was manifested. Adapting a term used in socio-cultural analyses of child development, the partnerships can be said to have grown through an ongoing process of reciprocally guided participation in a mutually valued, socio-cultural activity.[5] For the institution-based teams, there were new learnings with each new partnership about how to act in ways that would support each community's identified goals for capacity building. Similarly, each community had unique requirements and styles of partnering, as well as different ways of understanding the institution's roles and resources. Accountability in the partnerships was as much about the process of engagement as it was about the content of the training curriculum.

Accountability in the partnerships was as much about the process of engagement as it was about the content of the training curriculum.

[5] B. Rogoff (1995). Observing socio-cultural activity on three planes: Participatory appropriation, guided participation, apprenticeship. In A. Alvarez, P. del Rio, & J.V. Wertsch (Eds.), Socio-cultural studies of mind. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

2   COMMUNITY-BASED DELIVERY

Accessibility: Narrowing the distance between education and community.

Community participants explained that for many people in rural settings, 'distance education' is really the opposite of how it is conventionally defined by educators. In rural communities, 'distance education' occurs when students have to leave their families and the sources of knowledge in their communities – travelling distances in order to access generic education and training programs that often have little applicability to the migrant student's realities back home. Using the Generative Curriculum Model, education is both spatially and socially 'closer to home', keeping students in close proximity to cultural knowledge and support in their own ecologies.

'Community-based' education: What's in a name?

Community-based delivery enabled extensive community involvement and other program processes that combined to distinguish the Generative Curriculum Model from 'good, constructivist, participatory pedagogy.' Instructors at mainstream campuses who were asked to comment on the model and compare it to their own teaching experiences pointed to the difficulty of 'doing' generative curriculum in programs where students are at a distance from their home communities. When capacity-building initiatives through education and training are arranged so that the community is excluded from participating, the potential for community-wide transformations that could sustain and magnify the capacity that is built is seriously attenuated.

A comparative view of varying educational terrains came sharply into focus through the evaluation project. The absence of community in traditional university education, and the exclusion of community even in some programs that are physically located in the community, create major challenges for making professional training relevant. Students are not practicing with and receiving input and feedback from the people who they are training to serve. In the partnership programs, many program graduates explained the positive impacts of the training on their own parenting with reference to the fact that they did not need to leave their families in order to participate in the program, enabling ongoing opportunities for practice, feedback, and reflection on their child care practices in family and community contexts.

As shown in the chart on page 39, many participants in the evaluation research pointed explicitly to the links generated by community-located program delivery, which enabled community inclusion in the education process, which led to community-wide "ripple effects." When the community is allowed entry into the education process and invited to play meaningful roles, the impacts of the training do not end inside the classroom; community members carried the training program with them into the broad ecology of children's lives.

The challenge to be 'seen.'

The greatest challenge arising from basing a university-accredited program in communities was that the activity was not visible to the on-campus teaching, learning and administrative community in the partnering institution. First Nations student participation in the two-year program of course work represented a large proportion of the First Nations students enrolled at the University of Victoria. However, their absence from the on-campus community appears to have been more salient than their presence as members of the university community beyond the walls of traditional classrooms.

When capacity-building initiatives through education and training are arranged so that the community is excluded from participating, the potential for community-wide transformations that could sustain and magnify the capacity that is built is seriously attenuated.

3 STUDENT COHORT INVOLVEMENT IN TRAINING

Many program graduates identified the high level of personal support that they experienced throughout the program as an enabling condition for persevering with full-time studies to program completion. They also accounted for their personal and professional development largely with reference to the support they experienced as they underwent significant change. Regular meetings of a group of students moving through the program together, alongside instructors-in-residence and Elders, led to essential characteristics of the learning environment, including:

■ a climate of cultural safety for self-exploration and open debate about concepts of child care
■ reliable support for students as they worked through memories of childhood stresses and loss of cultural identity and ventured out into practica
■ sustainable social and professional networks.

Students, instructors, and Elders became the centre of a community of learners that was characterized and enhanced by familiarity, proximity, and shared experiences. Among program graduates, classmates were the most frequently identified sources of support, followed by instructors and intergenerational facilitators. In one community, the intergenerational facilitator twice intervened with a 'time out' from regular classes and assignments so that students, Elders and instructors could hold healing circles and sweat lodge ceremonies to promote recovery from residential school trauma and other personal and interpersonal difficulties. Students and instructors frequently compared the cohort to a 'family.' In all seven partnerships, social cohesion was significantly enhanced as a result of cohort involvement in a co-constructed, community-focused experience of personal and social transformation and professional development.

Challenges associated with one-time delivery.

One-time delivery of the program meant that all students needed to succeed and move through the program together. While this had a motivating effect overall, when a student failed a particular course, it was a challenge to find ways for the student to meet the course requirement at a later date. This situation was resolved using a 'learning contract' negotiated by the student, instructor, and university or college-based team, and carried out during the program follow-up phase.

A question of distance.

One of the partnership programs offered an example of the challenges to incorporating cultural content and maintaining students' social connections in their communities when students are removed from their community for studying. The Treaty 8 Tribal Association is comprised of a consortium of six culturally and linguistically diverse First Nations groups that are separated by one to six hours of driving time. The consortium was formed for administrative, financial, and representational purposes. The cooperative delivery of the Early Childhood Care and Development program was one example of its function. Each of the six communities was invited to recruit and finance up to three students. Because of the driving time on winter weather roads, students moved into a central location where classes were held in a building owned by the Treaty 8 Tribal Association.

This solution to recruiting sufficient student numbers to financially support the program gave rise to other challenges, however. Elders and other members from each of the students' home communities were no longer within geographic reach of the day-to-day life of the

program. The key instructor worked with students to identify and invite Elders in each of their communities. These Elders travelled to the central location for several days of engagement with students. This approach brought cultural content into the curriculum. But the highly circumscribed participation of Elders and other community resource people did not yield the same degree of involvement of community members in dialogical construction of concepts of childhood and culturally congruent child care as occurred in the other partnership programs. In addition, students travelled back to their home communities frequently to meet ongoing obligations and to receive social support. The costs of travel and accommodation for students and Elders drove the overall costs of this program higher than the other six partnership programs.

4 'OPEN ARCHITECTURE' CURRICULUM

Co-constructing Curriculum with Cultural Communities.

The pivotal process that generated curriculum could be termed 'dialogical constructivism.' The precise content of each training program was purposefully indeterminate to allow for co-construction of curriculum that had cultural relevance and resonance for the particular partners. Partnerships did not start with a blank slate, but instructors and students were also not encouraged to adopt wholesale the scripted materials and resources provided by the university-based team. They were encouraged both to consider the provided curriculum, and to go beyond it. Students, Elders and instructors critiqued it, contributed to it, and reconceptualized it from their own cultural vantage points.

Co-construction of course content

No texts existed that could provide community-specific information, and few texts or materials provided culturally-specific information. So the initial design of the Generative Curriculum Model was not seen as radical, but necessary and sensible.

Course content in the first two partnerships adopted a spiral structure, with the idea that material generated through student–instructor interaction and through Elders' contributions would be incorporated into successive course offerings. Through feedback yielded by formative program evaluations, it became apparent that the spiral model for curriculum development focused too narrowly on knowledge creation as an output. Also, it risked leading to the same kind of pan-aboriginal representations which had been rejected by the initial partners in the Meadow Lake Tribal communities. Finally, every First Nations partner group expressed reluctance to pass on their own cultural knowledge to other groups or to the university.

The model confirmed by the evaluation research was more iterative: each partnership yielded a curriculum that was conceived through interaction among community members about their own culture and about the ideas presented in the course materials provided by the university-based team. Many participants observed that the process of constructing the curriculum had more impact and value for the community than the product. As one instructor remarked: "It was a lived curriculum." Nonetheless, cultural knowledge that was reconstructed and elaborated through the participatory curriculum development process was preserved through journals, books, audio- and video-tapes for purposes internal to each community.

Both the knowledge held in the university and the knowledge held in the community informed course design and delivery in each partnership program, bringing multiple perspectives into the field of Early Childhood Education and Youth Care. This model for co-constructed bicultural curriculum captures the bridging dimensions of 'social inclusion' in many different ways. In practice, the socio-cultural distance between partnering institutions and First Nations communities was greatly reduced: the universities and colleges moved over, taking the passenger seat and serving as guides when needed, while the First Nations partner took the driver's seat. Instructors agreed not to replicate the 'expert-driven' framework of most mainstream training and development assistance programs, nor to preordain exactly where the journey of generating curriculum would lead.

I believe that if I had taken these 17 students and offered the program off reserve, we would have had a success rate of 20 or 25 percent. So what is the difference? Is it because we offered it here? That's one reason, but I think it is mainly due to the generative curriculum. What that implies to me is more than just a book curriculum, much more than academia. I think it is a total involvement of the community in ways such as bringing in Elders, making the community part of this. The way it was offered was unique.

Jenny Whitstone,
Post-secondary Coordinator,
Onion Lake First Nation

Participatory teaching and learning

Accounts given by 19 instructors, each of whom had taught in one of the seven partnership programs, underscored how their teaching had differed in fundamental ways from prevailing teaching approaches in universities and professional training programs. As a way to capture these differences, the instructors were asked to formulate 'advice' for future instructors using the Generative Curriculum Model, based on their reflections on what was effective in their own teaching practices in the partnership programs. Recurring themes are noted below.

Teaching using the Generative Curriculum Model

- respect the cultural and historical experience of community members as valuable sources of knowledge, rather than elevating the authority of Euro-Western theories and research on child and youth care and development
- assert the power of 'not knowing' where an informed discussion might lead, rather than maintaining the colonialist presumption of 'knowing' what's true and best for all people
- ground teaching and learning in consideration of many voices, rather than relying principally on the modernist approach of 'universal' truths and 'best practices' for children and families
- encourage participatory processes at every stage of program design and delivery, rather than offering pre-packaged curricula developed by 'experts'
- work consciously to promote social inclusion in capacity building, rather than accepting the exclusivity that has often been imposed by professional 'gate-keeping' organizations and by 'dominant' cultures on 'minority' cultures

The illustration on the following page shows the many elements and perspectives that are brought into the teaching and learning process, and which contribute to the co-construction of curriculum. In the centre is an indeterminate space where curriculum content and training activities emerge as a result of ongoing interactions among the elements within the ecology of the partnership. No one individual or group has ultimate authority over what 'belongs' in this space. In the Generative Curriculum Model, this is the space provided for emergent constructions of culturally appropriate child care and development.

An ecological systems model

An ecological systems model is useful for characterizing the interactive context in which the training program emerged and which the training program, in turn, impacted. The two inner circles represent the **microsystem** of participants directly involved in the training program. Participants in the microsystem reported three major types of engagement:

1 High levels of interaction among themselves – primarily involving dialogue about course content and learning assignments, but also involving mutual support about personal and academic challenges
2 Individual reflection and journal writing about the meaning of childhood in their community and goals for community initiatives aimed at supporting the development of children and families
3 Practical action in relationships with young children in students' families and the community as a whole.

This program didn't 'give' students their indigenous voice. They already had that. What it gave them was an opportunity to use that voice and, as a group of indigenous people, to hear each other and to learn together. To evaluate Western ideas and explore indigenous values and what those could mean for child care practice. And then to decide and create for themselves how to bring their indigenous viewpoint into models that combined many viewpoints on how to promote children's development and cultural identity.

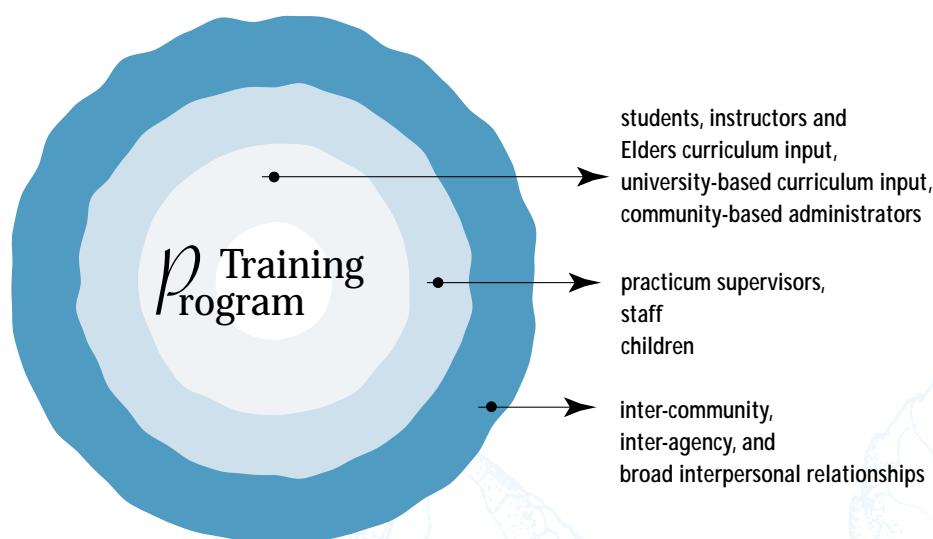Lisa Sterling, Instructor, Nzen'man' Child and Family Services

The circle reverberating further out from the centre represents the **exosystem,** including structures within the First Nations community, within neighbouring communities that provide practicum opportunities, and within the partnering post-secondary institutions. Evaluation participants described frequent, ongoing, mutual engagement between training program participants and individuals representing various supporting social-organizational structures. According to participants, these interactions tended to focus on practical arrangements for sustaining the training program, and plans for implementing new programs for children and families. Participants' accounts of these interactions pointed to their recursive effects:

1 Changing and clarifying roles for people and organizations within the community

2 Enhancing social cohesion within the community.

The circle reverberating furthest out from the centre represents the **macrosystem,** including the multicultural milieu of professional organizations, inter-agency structures, regional and federal funding policies and programs, and the socio-political position and status of First Nations individuals and communities within a broad societal matrix.

Several participants commented that the ripple effects of the program strengthened First Nations labour force participation, social acceptance, and professional membership, as well as increased awareness among non-First Nations people about the capabilities and distinctive characteristics of First Nations people with regard to child care and development.

The ecology of interacting elements in First Nations Partnership Programs

*P*rogram Training

students, instructors and
Elders curriculum input,
university-based curriculum input,
community-based administrators

practicum supervisors,
staff
children

inter-community,
inter-agency, and
broad interpersonal relationships

5 FACILITATION OF CULTURAL INPUT

Bridging the worlds of academe and indigenous knowledge: Elder involvement.

Instructors cited Elders' participation in curriculum development and teaching as the catalyst both for new and rekindled intergenerational relationships and for reinstatement of traditional social structures that ensure cultural transmission. In First Nations communities, Elders are typically the main source of knowledge of traditional ways of supporting children and families. In all seven First Nations Partnership Programs, Elders contributed portions of the content of each course. At the same time, they modeled ways of story telling, listening, and learning that are themselves expressions of First Nations culture.

Instructors reported staying alert in every course for opportunities to:

- involve Elders in teaching activities
- integrate teachings gleaned from Elders into the course work
- encourage students to reflect on Elders' words throughout their discussions, assignments, and practicum activities.

Students attributed several program experiences to the central role of Elders, including:

- developing a personal relationship with an Elder, often for the first time
- receiving emotional support and practical guidance from Elders
- acquiring knowledge from Elders about their culture of origin, traditional language, and socio-historical roots.

Variations in Elders' availability and cultural knowledge

- *"We have no healthy community members over 50 years old."*

- *"Our old people all attended residential school and as a result they don't know the culture and have forgotten the language."*

- *"The Elders here were all converted to Christianity and that is what they are likely to want to teach us."*

These concerns were voiced by members of two community partners during their exploration of the 'goodness of fit' between the Generative Curriculum Model and their own community goals and resources. While representatives of these two communities were convinced that mainstream training programs were not culturally sensitive or applicable to their communities, they were initially at a loss as to where community-specific, traditional cultural input for the curriculum could come from.

The university-based team also had doubts about whether a co-constructive process, intended to embody elements of the traditional culture of the partner communities, was feasible in these cases. However, agreements were negotiated to deliver the program, and to begin by bringing in guest speakers from beyond the communities, including First Nations authors and Elders who were well known in the region. Eventually, students suggested inviting their elderly relatives, and gradually other Elders in the community began to offer workshops on traditional crafts, language, and ceremonies. By the time these programs ended, graduation halls were filled with community members, including many Elders, who had participated in the programs.

Thus, the partnership programs varied with regard to the extent of Elders' involvement. Analysis of participants' accounts suggested that high levels of Elders' involvement in the program were primarily associated with greater pre-program social cohesion within the community as well as greater community awareness and organization for supporting the partnership program. However, communities with initially low Elder participation grew in social cohesion and cultural pride as a result of their efforts to revitalize active roles for Elders in program activities.

Cultural diversity within student cohorts

In three partnership programs, low cohesion among students at the beginning of the program seemed to be associated with low Elder involvement and more dissatisfaction with what Elders contributed. Initially low student cohesion occurred when there was greater diversity among students with regards to their First Nations culture of origin. In these programs, where students came from several different cultural and language communities, it became clear that Elders must be recruited from each of these different First Nations groups. It was also essential that students developed positive rapport with each other, so that learning about each others' First Nations culture became important to them.

Intergenerational facilitation

The passing of wisdom from one generation to another — even in a First Nations context where this is a tradition — does not happen automatically. The program evaluation revealed the pivotal role played by an Intergenerational Facilitator for enabling 'generative curriculum', promoting reinstatement of traditional teaching and learning roles, and stimulating social cohesion. This role was filled by someone who was well situated to elicit

the active involvement of a broad network of Elders to participate in the program. In two partnership programs, this individual was an Elder themselves, and was widely respected as knowledgeable about the culture with regards to child care and development. In addition to liaising with Elders who participated in the program, and contributing knowledge themselves, this individual played an important role in helping some students (and in two instances, instructors) to overcome their initial resistance to the unfamiliar practice of putting indigenous knowledge at the core of curriculum development.

Some students reported that they were receptive and welcoming of Elders as co-constructors of the curriculum. But others reported that they had strong doubts about whether the 'old ways' could have any value or relevance to themselves, their families, or their future careers in child and youth care. Many students and instructors described the importance of being able to discuss Elders' contributions with the Intergenerational Facilitator, who was especially adept at helping students to tolerate ambiguities in the Elders' often indirect method of teaching through story telling.

The Intergenerational Facilitator served as a kind of socio-cultural informant for instructors who were not from the community, and helped to introduce instructors and Elders to one another. The evaluation suggested that an Intergenerational Facilitator role could be an effective innovation in other community-inclusive training initiatives that seek to bridge the worlds of mainstream academe and indigenous communities.

A strong and stable cultural identity and positive self-esteem are important foundations for working effectively with children and youth. The evaluation research showed how the involvement of Elders, with the support of the Intergenerational Facilitators, brought all students, even the most disenchanted, into a circle of belonging to a healing cultural community.

The circle has been broken for so long, our ancestral traditions have been put aside for so long, that the students need time, especially in the beginning. Time to recover who they are. Time to see that they are being asked and being given an opportunity to inherit all the accumulated wisdom of all the generations of people in our Nation who have gone before them. Time to grow into being the leaders in our community that they will become.

Louise Underwood,
Intergenerational Facilitator,
Cowichan Tribes

Extending the *P*rogram Reach

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What can be done to sustain and extend this kind of socially-inclusive, generative approach to strengthening child and youth care capacity and development in cultural communities? How can the collective experience of the First Nations Partnership Programs stimulate systemic change?

The program evaluation, based on participants' commentaries, yielded findings that were overwhelmingly positive, both about the process and the impacts of the program. Yet, as this report has already identified, challenges arose in every partnership. Challenges ranged from initial difficulties recruiting a sufficient number of students and initial skepticism about the feasibility and value of involving Elders in classes, to extreme initial difficulties securing funding to mount the program. There is much to be learned from how challenges were addressed in each partnership. Recommendations for future steps are discussed in this part of the report. These recommendations are derived from the evaluation of the seven partnerships as well as from consideration of documented inquiries from over 40 First Nations groups across Canada who investigated the possibility of partnerships but ultimately did not pursue a partnership program. The challenges and limitations as well as proven successes described in this report, can provide impetus for the next steps needed to extend the reach of the Generative Curriculum Model.

PROGRAM DELIVERY APPROACH

It is likely that the Generative Curriculum Model is applicable to a range of cultural communities across Canada and internationally. There are, however, limitations to the applicability of the program in its present form. In particular, the program cannot be mounted in very small and isolated communities where student numbers do not make the investment financially feasible and where students have no local access to practicum settings with skilled supervision. The cost-effectiveness of the program, in its current form, depends upon having at least 10 students enroll in the program. Many communities that have inquired about implementing the program have been too small to recruit, support, and eventually employ this number of students.

One solution demonstrated effectively by four First Nations was to recruit students from neighbouring bands and to amalgamate post-secondary funding. We believe that to support capacity building that will benefit children in very small and geographically or culturally isolated communities requires a different program delivery approach. Participants in this evaluation, along with community representatives who have not found it feasible to enter into partnership agreements, have strongly encouraged the development of courses using multi-method delivery strategies.

Recommended: Combine direct and distance education while retaining the guiding framework of the Generative Curriculum Model, including co-constructed curriculum and community-identified training goals, to provide multi-method strategies for delivering ECCD programs in partnership.

PROGRAM SCOPE

Four former First Nations partners have initiated discussion with the university-based team to explore the development and delivery of advanced training, particularly in the areas of infancy and special needs. Further training would take the communities a step closer to self-sufficiency and social inclusion in supporting the diverse needs of children and families.

Recommended: Expand the scope of partnership programs to further strengthen community capacity building.

INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT

The most serious challenge facing this program approach is that it remains at the margins of mainstream university and government priorities. It has yet to attract programmatic support from major First Nations and/or non-First Nations funding agencies, with the exception of the sponsors of the documentation and evaluation project. This challenge persists despite a decade of documented successes and appeals from both First Nations communities wishing to mount the program and post-secondary institutions wishing to respond to these communities through partnerships.

A specific financial challenge for both communities and partnering institutions is the length of time needed to develop community and institutional will, establish a partnership relationship and negotiate formal agreements,   deliver the program, and provide follow-up support for program participants. As community and institutional administrators underscored in this evaluation, the importance of the pre-program delivery phase cannot be underestimated.   Yet, funding for education and employment training is typically available only for the period of formal program delivery when students are enrolled in courses. Across partnerships, the program lasts approximately 23 months. This represents no more than one-half of the time invariably needed to bring a successful partnership program to fruition.

The evaluation findings are only as useful as there are willing "users" who are positioned to make a difference in how we think about the lives of children and families in communities. It is not First Nations communities who have most to learn from the insights yielded by the evaluation research, but the educational and development assistance institutions, policy-making bodies and agencies – both First Nations and non-First Nations – which are involved in establishing and enforcing criteria for funding and delivering training and services for children.

Being responsive to indigenous communities means more than letting community members voice their concerns or preferences, more than acknowledging diversity, and more than arranging a welcoming environment on mainstream campuses to accommodate indigenous students who are able to come to them.

Recommended: Open up the foundations of how training programs are conceived and delivered by post-secondary institutions, how optimal child care and development is defined, and how communities can play leading roles in capacity-building initiatives.

What does it take to be a responsive partner?

Administrative coordinators of the First Nations Partnership Programs who were based at the University of Victoria and at the three other post-secondary institutions were already pre-disposed to take certain risks and to press for flexibility within their institutions (e.g., in course scheduling, admissions criteria) in order to accommodate and support community partners.   As part of the evaluation, these administrators were asked to give advice about how other institutions considering this type of initiative would need to be similarly prepared.

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Institutional partners and community leaders themselves must be scrupulous about not being pre-emptive and not overwhelming the community with imported 'goods and services' from outside their own context and out of step with their own internal rhythm and pace.

What does it take to work in partnership?

Administrators addressed a set of attitudes and forms of interpersonal engagement.

- Tolerate high levels of uncertainty and shared control of the program.
- Clarify and confirm informally, and later formally, agreement about the 'mission' of the partnership and the core elements of the program.
- Make a long-term commitment and persevere.
- Respond to expressions of community needs regarding program implementation with a high level of flexibility. Post-secondary partners need to be self-critical and willing to jettison the 'excess baggage' of their institutions and work around some of the constraints of their institutions.
- Become familiar with the priorities, practices, and circumstances of the community, without becoming involved in them. (In the First Nations Partnership Programs, the post-secondary partners did not seek or presume to become experts or insiders of the cultures or social life of the community partners.)
- Assume an encouraging, non-directive stance while waiting.
- Avoid 'doing' when non-action would be more productive of community agency and, ultimately, capacity building.
- Be receptive to what the community brings to the project, although these contributions may come in unfamiliar forms and at unexpected times.

The First Nations Partnership Programs effectively broke new ground with the open architecture of the Generative Curriculum Model. The four video documentaries produced as part of the evaluation research, along with participants' accounts, provide compelling testimony about the potential for learning and development through the partnerships. They show how universities and colleges can reach beyond the walls of on-campus structures and respond flexibly to communities that recognize education as an important tool for social and economic development. The challenge remaining is how to go beyond the open architecture of the Generative Curriculum Model to an open architecture in the pedagogical and administrative structures comprising post-secondary institutions as a whole. One way institutions could start to manifest a new vision would be to show substantial support for off-campus programs that are receptive to community initiative and inclusion in program delivery and curriculum design.

The program evaluation revealed many expected and unexpected positive outcomes when Early Childhood Care and Development training is seen as a tool for:

- capacity building
- personal healing and transformation
- cultural revitalization
- community development
- institutional change.

Despite considerable differences among the First Nations partners in terms of their infrastructure, location, culture, economic status, and existing services for children and families, all of the partnerships yielded unprecedented successes for students, for the communities, and for the institution-based teams. The evaluation shows that post-secondary education can be delivered in communities as small and distant from the partnering university as Tl'azt'en Nation, with an on-reserve population of about 600 people in three villages nestled in wilderness. And it worked as well, though differently, in the larger, semi-urban setting of the Cowichan Tribes, co-located with one university-college partner and within an hour of the other university partner.

First Nations Partnership Programs demonstrates the benefits that can flow when partners recognize the need to anchor capacity-building initiatives deeply within the context of the local people, their existing social organization and cultural strengths, their potential for transformation, and their will to move forward on internally articulated agendas. Many human service and development assistance initiatives at both individual and community levels proceed on the basis of the assumption that the more chronically oppressed or needy a group of people seems to be, the more one must bring to the situation in order to be helpful. The record of First Nations Partnership Programs shows the opposite.

To be supportive of community efforts to strengthen capacity, institutional partners and community leaders themselves must be scrupulous about not being pre-emptive and not overwhelming the community with imported 'goods and services' from outside their own context and out of step with their own internal rhythm and pace. Rather than evoking the potential in any community for passive receptivity and eventual dependency, capacity-building initiatives must capitalize upon the community's agency.

Institutions, investigators, and program planners can contribute to capacity building and cultural sustainability by collaborating with community leaders and groups to build 'social capital' from within the ranks of the youngest to the oldest generations. 'All-ways' respectful social networks based on trust, reciprocity, and the will to act on behalf of community well-being are fundamental to healthy, sustainable, social ecologies in which children and families can thrive.

Being responsive to indigenous communities means more than letting community members voice their concerns or preferences, more than acknowledging diversity, and more than arranging a welcoming environment on mainstream campuses to accommodate indigenous students who are able to come to them.

The evaluation research underscored the need for institutions to open up the foundations of how training programs are conceived and delivered, how optimal child care and development is defined, and how communities can play leading roles in capacity-building initiatives.

LOOKING FORWARD

Program participants recommended extensions of the Generative Curriculum Model at both pre-program and post-program ends of the spectrum. The university-based team and supporters of their initiatives identified the need for a comprehensive presentation of the potential for education to serve community-identified goals for capacity building and sustaining culture. Next steps indicated by the program evaluation are described in this final section of the report.

1   Pre-university modules for community development in Early Childhood Care and Development

Three pre-university modules are being developed in collaboration with First Nations community resource people. These modules will be intended to increase community involvement in promoting children's well-being and undertaking new initiatives to benefit children and families. The modules will be useful to communities wishing to identify and recruit community members who may be suitable for specialized training. The modules address:

- constructions of childhood and child care, internal and external to the community
- assessment of conditions, needs, and goals for children within the context of families and communities
- enhancement of indigenous practices that support positive developmental outcomes.

2 Professional development module

Many aboriginal graduates in Canada have difficulty successfully transferring the knowledge and skills acquired in a mainstream program to the cultures and conditions in their communities. One module is planned to support community members' transition from mainstream training to implementation of programs in Early Childhood Care and Development in cultural communities.

3 Extension of curricula using the Generative Curriculum Model

First Nations community partners and other communities have identified a need for co-constructed course work that would lead to advanced certification and capacity to operate programs in their communities. New course development is planned in three areas:

a. early childhood specialization in caring for infants and toddlers;

b. early childhood specialization in children with special needs;

c. advanced child and youth care, culminating in a degree.

This evaluation and a recent pilot project with Onion Lake First Nation underscore the need to conceptualize post-secondary education in ECCD and Youth Care as part of a larger, community development agenda in which the community necessarily plays significant roles. The pilot project with Onion Lake First Nation began with a traditional distance education approach to delivery of third and fourth year university course work. Early in this project it became clear that this approach would not provide the supports that had worked so successfully for students during their earlier, diploma-level program and would not ensure that the knowledge and skills that students were learning would be culturally relevant or would enjoy broad community acceptance and subscription. Because the program had been conceptualized as a pilot project based on established distance education materials in

the School of Child and Youth Care, there was insufficient funding to make significant changes in the structure of the program. While the earlier two-year diploma program had enjoyed a completion rate of 100%, the completion rate for the 'standard' distance education program was 55%. Much was learned from the Onion Lake degree pilot program, reinforcing the understandings of the First Nations Partnership Programs team that a Generative Curriculum Model has a significantly greater likelihood to be effective in meeting community-identified training goals than established post-secondary distance education approaches.

4 'Generative Communities Project'

There is a need to assess and understand the sustainability of effects brought about by the First Nations Partnership Programs. Support for a participatory program of research is currently being sought, to build on evaluation results to date by documenting the legacy and potential of a 'generative' approach to community development using practice-oriented education as a tool. This analysis will illuminate the socio-cultural circumstances and processes that generate public will and community involvement in child well-being initiatives.

Funding is currently being sought to support preparation of a volume that would provide a full account of the conceptual framework and research evidence supporting a 'generative' approach to capacity building.

5 ECCD leadership development graduate program[6]

The principles of the Generative Curriculum Model and the findings of this evaluation of seven First Nations Partnership Programs are currently being applied to an innovative capacity-building initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa. This initiative is creating a full, masters degree curriculum in ECCD that is grounded in culturally contextualized understandings of child care and development. Program delivery combines face-to-face seminars and electronically networked interactions among members of a geographically dispersed student cohort and instructors who are leaders in ECCD from around the world. This graduate program will be available for adaptation in First Nations and other cultural communities seeking to strengthen leadership in community-focused ECCD.

[6] The Early Childhood Development Virtual University (www.ECDVU.org)

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(chronological order from most recent)

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*Publications prior to 1998 reflect an earlier, 'spiral model' conceptualization of the curriculum that has evolved over time to reflect a more 'iterative model.'