LEARNING ABORIGINAL HEALTH PROMOTION: SIX LIFE STORIES.

A Thesis Submitted to College of Graduate Studies and Research University of Saskatchewan in Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of Masters of Adult and Continuing Education in the Department of Educational Foundations University of Saskatchewan Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

By

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ABSTRACT

This inquiry answered the questions: What is the most culturally respectful method for a cross-cultural researcher to discover how northern Aboriginal people learn and make decisions about their health? What will be the common patterns of learning among northern Saskatchewan Aboriginal people who have altered their life path? And what strategies will any common patterns suggest for the development of health promotion and community development programs specific to the cultures and people of northern Saskatchewan? Six Aboriginal people, whom I call my teachers, were selected because they had turned their lives around to more closely approximate a Cree idea of health called mithwayawin or the Dene idea of health called hate zgehenai. A literature search and consultations with my teachers suggested that a respectful form of cross-cultural inquiry was possible in northern Saskatchewan communities. Furthermore, there were common themes suggesting a foundation of wellness and resilience indicating that similar resiliency factors exist in northern cultures as exist in other cultures. As well, common patterns suggested a lateral thinking and learning style or creative problem solving that is different from vertical or linear thinking common to the scientific-industrial cultures. Moreover, other themes suggested that the teachers had a preference for accumulating experience over abstract analysis indicating the desirability of active participation by community members in defining health challenges, arriving at solutions and planning and implementing changes. Furthermore, other themes suggested that the teachers life long learning occurred in a holistic context indicating that health promotion strategies could provide rich social, physical, spiritual and mental contexts within which Northerners can learn. As well, other themes suggested that the teachers used an Aboriginal ecological learning process indicating that health promotion efforts could consider working to revitalize the cultural beliefs, values and practices and could provide a rich environment of spiritual, physical and social activities so that the people would have the opportunity to fully develop their brain, mind, body, memory continuum and thereby achieve balance. The findings further implied that increasing general health knowledge among Northerners and using a community health development process in northern communities are strategies that northern health promotion and community development workers could consider employing in their work. More detailed and specific strategies are suggested.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In this chapter I have introduced the reasons why I considered doing this study, the significance and purposes of the study and the setting of the study. As well, I have described my relationship to the study and my assumptions about the research. I have also described how I have delimited the study, the limits of the findings and the ethical considerations of the study.

Introduction

In 1980 my family and I moved to northern Saskatchewan so that I might pursue a dream of teaching in a progressive school system. The Lac La Ronge Indian Band had transferred its education system to Band control and was beginning, in a new school, to teach their children with locally developed curriculum and with age-grouped, individualized methods.

We were lucky to move into a teacher residence next door to Mary Cook, a grandmother who had returned to school to get her teaching certificate. Mary took me under her wing and began with humour and patience to teach me about the ways of her people, the Woodland or Rocky Cree. Mary had grown up in Pelican Narrows, as member of another Band, where she had been trained as a herbalist and mid-wife by her grandmother. She never hesitated to teach me whatever she knew. It was through Mary and my students that I began to dimly grasp that I was not only living in a completely different culture but that the language that grew out of that culture was structured completely differently from my own English.

As our class would wander in the bush, scrape moose hides or pull fish nets in the winter, Mary would tell us stories of her childhood and share what she knew about healing plants that were found along the way. These stories always reminded me of my own maternal grandmother, Sadie Sully. She had homesteaded as a young bride with my grandfather Cecil in the Peace River country of northern Alberta around 1905. As a young bride she was separated from her own extended family and came to rely on the Cree women in the area when her children were sick or when she needed advice on how to store her garden produce and manage other household problems. Granny had shared many of these stories with me when I was very young.
Following my first year of teaching I was able to use some of this knowledge from Mary. My family and I were on our way to the Folk Festival in Winnipeg, Manitoba. My daughter, Tao, was 14 months old at the time and suffered from food allergies that caused chronic infections in her ears. We were camped for the night in Moose Mountain National Park and discovered we had no acetaminophen to relieve Tao's suffering during the onset of a new infection. I was getting quite concerned because we were a long way from any emergency help and she was in obvious pain. As I sat and smoked and tried to decide what to do, I remembered Mary telling us that the inner bark of the red willow, when boiled, was good for a pain reliever. I had also read somewhere that the inner bark was rich in acetylsalicylic acid. As I gathered the bark, I prayed to my version of God, to express my gratitude for the medicine and to ask for healing for my daughter. Mary had explained to me that the medicine would not work unless I was appropriately grateful and humble. I boiled up some tea, let it cool, and put some in Tao’s bottle. It was only a few minutes until she showed relief and was soon asleep. She slept for 14 hours straight.

Early in my first fall of teaching one student went to spend time on the trapline harvesting wild rice with his family. He was gone for several weeks and I had dutifully prepared a trapline package of homework for him to work on in the evening. On his return Donald came to visit at our home. Over supper I began to quiz him about his experiences while on trapline. He assured me that they had shot lots of ducks. I asked what kind of ducks, thinking as a scientist might, and expecting a named type or species. I had learned my species names before the age of eight, hunting with my grandfather. Donald was completely still, with a puzzled look on his face, for at least a minute. Finally, the puzzled look left his face and he said with complete confidence in his answer, "fat ones".

I learned eventually that the Cree language has very few nouns and is in fact a verb based language that identifies processes and relationships rather than things. Cree hunters can identify ducks by how they live and their relationship to their environment rather than by species names.

Similarly, my wife would attempt to shoo the children who were visiting home at supper time. She would say things like, "We are going to eat now" which in our experience was a broad hint that it was time to leave. Instead the children would go and wash their hands and sit down. We eventually learned that "we are going to eat now" in Cree, was an invitation to join us.

It was encounters such as these that helped me begin to appreciate that I could not teach my students as I had been taught to do in university. I began to search for
other teaching methods and talk to my Aboriginal colleagues about how I could become a better teacher for my students. I learned about the benefits of relating new learning to the students' previous experience and about the differences between their first language and mine.

Those years that I worked for the Lac La Ronge Band were exciting and challenging. As a new teacher, I was given the opportunity to be involved in the development of curriculum. As I gained more cross-cultural experience, I was increasingly uneasy with this curriculum development process. It consisted primarily of reviewing innovative curricula developed elsewhere and patching together the best parts. Similarly, I sought and used textbooks that used experiential exercises, but they were textbooks conceived and written from within a different cultural context.

I was also increasingly concerned with the social conditions in which many of my students lived. It seemed that they often came to school hungry and tired. One of my tasks as a teacher for the Band was to take the students' report cards to the students home. I was expected to sit down with the parents in their own home and explain the students' progress. I learned from this that many of my students lived in crowded conditions and would have extreme difficulty doing homework. As well, none of the homes at that time had running water or sewage systems. I also knew that many of my students lived with alcohol abuse and violence in their home as they would come to "visit" at odd hours and say that they didn't want to go home yet, even when it was long past bed-time.

A great sense of hopelessness began to overwhelm me and my effectiveness as a teacher decreased. When the opportunity arose, I went to work for the Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission as a community educator and counsellor for people experiencing addiction problems. I was by then seven years sober and active in a self-help group. I thought that this was a job where I might make a difference sharing my own experience, strength and hope. I soon discovered, however, that although I was working with talented, dedicated colleagues, we were repeating my experience as a teacher. Even when we developed a localized community treatment program, we were borrowing a lot of program content from a different cultural context. I also was increasingly aware that people who live in poverty, with little hope of employment, will feel hopeless and often continue to drink for this reason.

Eventually, I went to work with my spouse as a community health development consultant. We were involved with several First Nations in their health transfer process. As consultants we often found ourselves in the position of cultural translators between the First Nations and the federal government. Often the federal bureaucrats could not
understand the First Nations peoples' desire to completely reorient their health system to a more culturally appropriate system. Similarly, the First Nations often struggled to understand the bureaucratic requirements in which the bureaucrats were forced to operate, as well as the cultural orientation of the medical/scientific community. I was forced at this point to ask many questions and to read whatever I could find about the histories of the First Nations for whom we worked. I found that elders and others were eager to share their experience, strength and hope when asked in a respectful fashion. I learned even more about the cultures in northern Saskatchewan in this fashion.

It was during this period, however, that I began to meet many individuals who had lived their lives in a fashion that was destructive to their health but who had succeeded in changing to a more health enhancing lifestyle. In many cases, as I came to know these people, I realized that they had also grown up in poverty, sometimes with alcohol and violence in the home. Some of these people appeared to have shifted their lifestyles without a great deal of intervention from the medical or helping professions. I had come to know, through stories of elders and others, that healthy living was a process of living well on the land before the introduction of alcohol and the displacement of traditional culture by Europeans. Similarly, I was able to witness first hand the changes that had occurred in families and communities. I, therefore, became very curious about how these individuals, who had changed to a more health enhancing lifestyle in the face of all the changes, were different from the many people I knew who appeared to have simply given up hope and continued down a health destructive life path.

**Background of the Researcher and His Relation to the Study**

I am 48 years old and I have been married for 25 years. I am a father of two children. I was raised in a small community of 100 people in northwestern Quebec, in country that was not dissimilar to La Ronge where I lived for fifteen years. My mother tongue is English and I speak French well enough to get by when I return home to visit. My father was a violent alcoholic, most of the violence was focused on my mother, but the four children were not exempt. My father abandoned the family when I was 12 and a great deal of the parenting of my younger siblings fell to me as my mother was working and in school. I developed an alcohol addiction in my early teens which did not affect my schooling until I dropped out of university after my first year. I was self-employed for several years and I eventually married and got sober after four years of marriage. I have been sober for 20 years. I have two undergraduate degrees, a Bachelor of Arts and Science with distinction and a specialty in social and cultural change and adaptation.
and a Bachelor of Elementary Education with specialties in science and French as a second language. I am currently self-employed and working on my Masters of Adult and Continuing Education. I have worked at least part time or seasonally since I was 12 years old. Most of my work in northern Saskatchewan has been as an elementary school teacher, community educator, addiction counsellor and community health development consultant. In all my years in the north, I have not achieved the level of fluency in Cree or Dene that I have in French.

My relationship to this study stems from my own life experience as an alcoholic and my education and interest in social and cultural change and adaptation. Sharing this experience and interest, over the years of our acquaintance with the friends and colleagues whom I interviewed allowed me to empathize with them and allowed them to develop trust in my personal integrity and professionalism.

The twenty years that I have spent recovering from my addiction have given me certain insights about how I reached my own turning point where I chose to alter my life course to a process of improved health and well-being. I have come to recognize similar epiphanies or milestones in the lives of northern people whom I have come to know. I grew progressively curious over the years about how these insights came to people and how these affected their decisions about their health and how they lived their life in general. A search of the literature on these topics convinced me that little academic work has been done.

Researcher's Assumptions

I began this study with a number of assumptions about northern Aboriginal people and their cultures:

- Northern Aboriginal people have ways of organizing their experiences in the world that is different from the dominant Euro-centric culture in the rest of the country.
- Many northern Aboriginal people are willing to share their experience, strength and hope through stories about their experiences so that others can learn from those experiences.
- Many northern Aboriginal people seek to enter a partnership of shared experience, wisdom and learning with those from the dominant Euro-centric culture who are willing and who demonstrate that willingness respectfully.
- An increasing number of people from the dominant Euro-centric culture are willing to listen with respect and honour the wisdom, experiences and learning of northern Aboriginal people.
Before the arrival of Europeans in Keewaytin, the area that was to be renamed northern Saskatchewan, by the division of Canada into provinces, the Aboriginal people had a vibrant political, social and economic life. Oral and written testimony suggests that most people were healthy, well nourished and free relatively of disability. This testimony does not suggest that people were completely disease free, but that there was a general knowledge in the population about how to achieve and maintain a process of wellness. Whole populations functioned together to achieve and maintain a level of wellness that has not existed since the arrival of the Europeans (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), 1996).

The signing of Treaty 6 in 1876 and the passing in Parliament of the Indian Act in the same year, as well as the signing of Treaties 8 and 10 in 1899 and 1906 respectively, began a process of colonialization that essentially displaced Aboriginal people in northern Saskatchewan, politically, socially, culturally and geographically. Metis populations were similarly displaced by "orders in council" decisions and the division of their communities by "land script" awards. Metis were also given the option at a later date of signing treaties with any First Nations who would agree to having them. A whole other segment of the northern population was left without any Aboriginal rights by treaty or otherwise. These "non-status" people had not signed Treaties 6, 8 or 10 for a variety of reasons. Some had not made the long journey to the signing area, some did not believe in the treaty process and some did not hear about the process because of their isolation. Others, mostly women, lost their status under the treaty for a variety of reasons.

Documents from the 1800's also reveal that the new colonial government felt that the best way to eliminate the "Indian problem" was to assimilate and "civilize" the Aboriginal populations. Intense activity by missionaries and government workers led to Aboriginal people moving closer to communities or missions to receive education, health services and social assistance. The Indian Act imposed rules for governance and social behavior that were completely foreign to most Northerners. The removal of children to the residential schools prohibited the passing of oral traditions, values and morals to the young. As well, Victorian male-dominated social hierarchies and values replaced the more equitable traditional social systems. All of these changes had profound effects on the people of northern Saskatchewan. The communities and nations suffered severe and rapid change in their social, political, health and economic systems (RCAP, 1996). The echoes of these effects can be felt in the North today.
Despite the fact that a shift to a medical-scientific model of health delivery, with annual increases in expenditures, has improved the health status of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, since the Second World War, there remain many contemporary challenges for Aboriginal people. Infectious diseases have been mostly brought under control; however, outbreaks continue to occur in many communities. Tuberculosis infection incidence is once more on the rise in Aboriginal communities across Canada and in northern Saskatchewan. As well, there has been a shift to new epidemics of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, obesity which were previously insignificant causes of mortality and morbidity in the earlier history of Aboriginal people. Similarly, there has been an alarming increase in injury, both intentional and unintentional, to Aboriginal people. Injury is the leading cause of mortality for Aboriginal people in Canada (Waldram, Herring & Young, 1995).

I worked for fifteen years in northern Saskatchewan as an educator and community development worker. During that time I was conscious that all the health programs and ideas that my colleagues and I used to encourage good health development and healthy changes in life path were imported from the dominant culture in the south of Canada and occasionally from the United States. It became clear to me, as a community developer, that these programs and ideas were not effective because they were developed without consulting with the people for whom they were intended. Similarly, the people would rarely benefit from programs developed within another cultural context and then laid over the northern cultures like a template.

However, through my experiences as a cross-cultural educator and community developer in northern Saskatchewan, I have come to know many individuals who changed their life course from a health destructive path to one that more closely approximates the Cree process of health, called mithwayawin or the Dene process of health called hoteZHgehni. In some of these cases the individuals accomplished these life altering changes with little or no intervention from the dominant culture medical or helping professions. There has been little effort by the medical-scientific community to find out how individuals such as these Aboriginal people make decisions about their lives and their health for the purposes of developing programs that would have meaning within the context of their cultures, communities and families.

No published literature exists on the subject of how Aboriginal individuals choose to follow a healthy life path or what process of learning is used by individuals to arrive at decisions to change their life path. Further, there are few ideas and health development programs that are designed in the North by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people. It is not surprising that no one has written about how Aboriginal people make health
decisions as this is a new concept that is only being recognized in the medical-scientific community (Evans, Barer & Marmor, 1994).

The Research Questions

Three main question questions guided the collection and interpretation of the data in this study:

• What is the most appropriate and culturally respectful method for a cross-cultural researcher to discover how northern Aboriginal people learn about and make decisions about their health?

• What will be the common patterns of learning and decision making among northern Saskatchewan Aboriginal people who have altered their life path to more closely approximate Aboriginal understandings of health?

• If common patterns of learning and decision making are identified, what strategies will they suggest for the development of health promotion and community development programs specific to the cultures and people of northern Saskatchewan?

Description of the Study

I approached six Aboriginal people, with whom I was either a friend or a colleague, often both, with a description of the study and asked them to participate as my teachers in the study. I asked them to be my teachers in the sense of traditional Aboriginal teachers who shared their experience and wisdom with others, in an oral tradition, as the means to reinforcing the traditional stories and adding new insights to the cultural knowledge of the population. Hereafter, I have referred to the participants in this study as “my teachers”. The study description included an explanation of the role I wished them to play as story teller and interpreter, and the role I was prepared to play as listener, recorder and interpreter (Appendix A). Only individuals who had shifted their life path from a health destructive lifestyle to one more closely approximating an Aboriginal process of health were requested to participate. As well, those who were approached had to be of an achieved level of identity development as described by Marcia (1966). I chose two individuals from each of the three cultural groups present in northern Saskatchewan. I had attempted to have a male and a female from each cultural group but was unsuccessful in finding a Metis female who fit the criteria and was willing to participate. There was one female and one male Cree teacher, one female and one male Dene teacher and two male Metis teachers. Due to the difficulties and cost that
can be experienced in northern travel, I gave each of my teachers the choice about where they wanted to be interviewed to decrease their personal cost and increase their comfort level. "John" chose to be interviewed in his home as did "Mary". "Francois" chose to be interviewed in a motel room I had rented in his home community. "Therese" chose to be interviewed in a motel room I had rented in a community she had travelled to for medical purposes. "Simon" chose to be interviewed in his office in a community about fifty kilometers from his home community.

Although I conducted no tests, my familiarity with my teachers led me to believe that all of them are achieved individuals, according to Marcia’s (1966) criteria. Achieved people have settled on a stable system of commitments following an active period of exploration and identity crisis (Marcia, 1966). Each of the people who agreed to participate was an individual who had settled on a stable system of commitments as spouses, parents, employees and active community members, following a period of identity crisis and exploration. This level of identity development led me to believe that these individuals would recall more personal memories. Because of the rapport that we had achieved, the trust we had established and the level of identity development, I decided that pre-interviewing and the use of co-respondents would not be necessary in this inquiry. I have described in more detail these decisions in chapter 3.

I conducted life story interviews with the six individuals in the location of their choice and with a minimum of direction from me by way of specific questions or guidelines about areas to be covered in the interviews. The only structure that I requested from my teachers was to cover their pre-school years, school years and adolescence and adult years. As well, I asked them to speak about significant people, places and events in those time frames. These requests were made with a series of open-ended questions that my teachers had in advance of their interviews. During the interviews, I interrupted as little as possible, asking only for clarification, and occasionally using probing questions. The interviews were recorded on videotape to capture all the voice of my teachers, including body language, laughter and weeping.

Once the interviews were complete, I copied the audio portion of the tapes onto audio tapes and had a professional typist transcribe the words, verbatim, to computer disk. I later added the body language and other non-verbal communication in brackets at the appropriate locations. I maintained my promise of confidentiality through this process by using a bonded typist, whom I trusted, and by keeping the video and audio tapes and the computer disks in a locked safety deposit box in a secure facility when not in use. I have also taken care not to allow anyone besides the typist, to see any of the
written results of the interviews. As well, each teacher saw only their transcripts and my interpretations of them.

I used a computer software program, called Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing (NUDIST) (Rylee Pty Ltd., 1992) to search the data for themes (Appendix C), index the themes, search for relationships between the themes (Appendix E), and search for relationships between theories of learning and well-being from the Aboriginal perspective and the dominant culture perspective (Appendix F). I strove in the searching, indexing and interpreting to avoid over laying the results with my own assumptions, values and beliefs. I did this by not altering the spoken word in the transcript, listening only to what my teachers said and avoiding making assumptions about they had not said. My fifteen years of experience in northern Saskatchewan helped me to know what local expressions meant, and allowed me to understand the local idioms.

Once all the themes that emerged were indexed and no new themes were apparent I compared each theme with all the others to discover relationships between the themes (Appendix E). This process yielded more patterns common to all six teachers.

Finally, to improve the external validity of the study results, I compared the themes with Aboriginal theories of the Medicine Wheel and an Aboriginal learning process, and the dominant culture theory of resilience (Appendix F).

Purposes of the Study

I designed this study to accomplish three main purposes. First, I was curious about whether there could be common patterns of life long learning among individuals who have changed their life path to one that more closely approximated Aboriginal ideas about health. And if there were common patterns in the life stories, they would provide suggestions for community development and health workers about how to develop health promotion programs specific to the cultures and conditions found in northern Saskatchewan.

Secondly, I sought to draw upon the knowledge and experience of northern Saskatchewan Aboriginal people so that they could be included in the development of health promotion and community programs in a manner that is not often available to Northerners. Northerners have made many proposals about the necessity of having Aboriginal, culturally-appropriate healing processes developed. There have been some efforts to develop locally appropriate healing processes. Healing lodges, like Mistahhey Musqua in the Meadow Lake Tribal Council and Sakwatamo Lodge in the Prince Albert
Grand Council, have struggled to accomplish this task. As well, Metis government agencies have participated in delivering mobile healing programs with Aboriginal content to individuals in several northern communities. Yet, for the most part these healing processes have drawn from the reductionist models of Euro-centric medicine and science. In other words, they have been programs that separate the human person into manageable parts, like mental and physical, and that tend to continue hierarchical power relationships between experts and people without access to the specialized knowledge. To date very few locally conceived, developed and operated health promotion programs exist or have been funded. I, therefore, suspected that if I found a culturally-appropriate and respectful method of describing the wisdom of people who have made health promoting changes in their lives, I would be able to provide a forum for northern Aboriginal people’s voice to be included in new health promotion strategies.

Third, I hoped to contribute to the growing sense of personal and community empowerment that is evident in some communities in northern Saskatchewan (Bird & Moore, 1990). Many communities across the North are in the process of developing new programs and new methods to deal with dependency, hopelessness and powerlessness, resulting from years of economic and social oppression and colonization. It is my hope and the hope of the six teachers that their teaching will be heard and considered in these new change processes, as well as providing inspiration to those involved in this difficult work.

Significance of the Study

Evans, Barer and Marmor (1994), who have worked primarily from a medical-scientific world-view, suggest that there is an increasing recognition and need for data that validate and record individual's self-reported information on their health-related problems, and the relation of those problems to their socio-economic and cultural situation. This type of data has rarely been collected and still more rarely linked to data bases containing information about the usual health determinants of mortality and morbidity (Evans, Barer, & Marmor, 1994).

Duran & Duran (1995), who have worked primarily from an Aboriginal world-view, agree with Evans, Barer and Marmor (1994). In a parallel statement, they have suggested that new knowledge about Aboriginal people must come from Aboriginal people so that the patina of the dominant culture is not inadvertently applied over the results. Further, they insist that new knowledge must be derived from within the
communities of First Nations because community members are most likely to be the ones who care most about the survival of those communities.

Aboriginal elders have long held that Aboriginal people tend to honour as their most esteemed elders those individuals who have experienced a humble but thorough joining of outer and inner knowledge. Outer knowledge comes from living in the world and interacting with other beings in the world. Inner knowledge comes from reflecting on the seen, heard, felt and acted reality of the world through prayer and meditation (Estes, 1992). The junction between knowledge and experience leads to truths that are likely to be intelligent, changing, and vivid all at the same time. This is the Aboriginal idea of wisdom (Knudtson & Suzuki, 1992). Ermine (1995) has said that Aboriginal languages and culture contain accumulated knowledge of Aboriginal ancestors and that Aboriginal people who seek to learn in traditional ways must look for the concepts in the language and culture to develop understandings of themselves in relation to their lived experience. In other words, one finds truth, knowledge and one’s Creator by examining one’s lived experience in relationship to all living things. One then shares this learning through stories (Erasmus, 1989). Thus for Aboriginal people, learning and wisdom come from reflection on the observed, felt, acted-in reality of everyday life.

This study, therefore, uses the life story method to listen to the collected wisdom and teaching of northern Aboriginal people from three cultural groups. It is hoped that their voices will provide a foundation of information for the study of northern peoples’ health determinants.

Further to the significance of the study, members of the Northern Medical Services Research and Development Committee, that includes representation from the two tribal councils of northern Saskatchewan and Metis communities, have agreed in a memorandum to me, that this inquiry is necessary and appropriate given the changing social and political contexts in northern Saskatchewan (J. Feather, personal communication, November 25, 1993) (Appendix A).

Delimitations

A number of delimitations guided the selection of my teachers and my behavior, as the researcher, during and after the interviews:

- The teachers must have spent all or most of their lives in northern Saskatchewan above the 54th parallel.
The teachers must have had a shift in their life path from an unhealthy lifestyle to one that more closely approximated a health enhancing lifestyle. The teachers must have reached an achieved level of identity development as described by Marcia (1966). The teachers would conduct their interviews in the manner and location they chose and cease to participate if or when they chose. The teachers would participate, individually, on three occasions, in the interpretation of the data, and have a veto over any quotes attributable to them in the final paper.

The researcher would respect the individuals as teachers with wisdom to share rather than as subjects to study. The researcher would allow my teachers to tell their story in any manner they chose and would only ask questions for language clarification and for more information on a topic or passage that he did not fully understand. The researcher would respect the confidentiality of my teachers by taking measures to protect the videotapes, audio tapes and transcripts from others.

Limitations

The reader needs to be aware when reading and using the results of this study that there are several limitations to the findings. I have described in the paragraphs below what I believe are the limitations of the study:

- My first language is English, and I am not functionally literate in Michif, Cree or Dene. The teachers were generous enough to allow me to interview them in English. This limited their ability to express themselves as fully as they may have in their own Aboriginal language.

- In order to complete an analysis of my teachers' life stories, it was necessary to divide the stories into descriptive themes. Most Aboriginal languages are verb-based and describe relationships among things rather than the things themselves. English is a noun-based language, and therefore, the divisions of my teachers' stories into themes limits the description of the world view of my teachers by imposing an alternate structure on their descriptions. Although I have compensated for this dilemma by describing relationships between themes, it remains a limitation of the study.

- Two people from each cultural group cannot begin to represent each cultural perspective. There will be people in each cultural group who may meet the sample
criteria but have radically different ways of approaching life and the world in general due to their own unique stories and experiences.

- As all my teachers are life long residents of northern Saskatchewan, use of the findings must be limited to populations in northern Saskatchewan. Any attempt to use the findings with other populations will be confounded by the life experiences and cultural differences in that population.

- As I am a male of European descent, and to some appear to be from the dominant culture, the women in the study may have limited what they shared with me, although both women were seemingly candid. Similarly, the men in the study may have embellished or limited their sharing depending on their level of comfort with me. Each of the men were also candid in their stories.

- There were tremendous quantities of data generated by the six life stories, and it was necessary to be selective about what was reported. Although I have consulted my teachers at each phase of the analysis, it is still likely that my world view has influenced the selection of the findings and the interpretation of the themes.

- My summary of the pre-displacement phase of the health history of Northerners is based on oral reports given to fur traders and is therefore coloured by the translation into English, and sometimes from the Aboriginal language to French and then into English. This process of translation means that the reports were interpreted and written through the lens of another cultural perspective.

- Likewise, my summary of the displacement period in northern Saskatchewan was coloured by the language and cultural perspectives of the fur traders and missionaries who first wrote about what was happening to Aboriginal people.

Ethical Considerations in the Study

There were several ethical issues that I had to address when I was considering this study. They had to do with power relationships, permission to use voice, intrusion into my teachers' lives, ownership of the stories, dissemination of the results and the effect of the research process on me the researcher. I have discussed each of these considerations in detail below.

The first issue of power that I had to address, before beginning this study, was finding a method of respectful inquiry that did not disempower my teachers by stealing their stories, distorting their narratives, and disassembling their stories into meaningless blocks of information, disconnected from the context and other relationships in their lives.
To accomplish this I did a comprehensive literature search and using the following distillation, from several authors, developed my own set of principles for the conduct of this inquiry. They are:

- Establish credibility and trust with my teachers by being seen to be able to operate in both cultures (Katz & Nunez-Molina, 1986; Perdersen, 1993; Stokes, 1985).
- Assure that my teachers understand the purpose of the research and the audience for whom it is intended and who owns the stories (Patai, 1987; Paterson & Bramadat, 1992).
- Acknowledge the history of my teachers, both socio-historical and personal (Perdersen, 1993).
- Assure teachers of confidentiality by specifying who will see stories, where tapes and transcripts will be stored and by negotiating the use of quotes attributable to them (Patai, 1987; Paterson & Bramadat, 1992).
- Negotiate time, place, and style of the interviews, who owns data, financial remuneration, obligations to my teachers, as well as, quotes attributable to my teachers (Kushner & Norris, 1981; Patai, 1987).
- Transcribe the stories accurately and seek validation from my teachers (Patai, 1987).
- Develop reciprocal relationships by encouraging collaboration on interpretation and theory building, seeking validation of the findings and providing accessibility to all parts of the research process (Katz & Nunez-Molina, 1986; Kushner & Norris, 1981; Lather, 1991).
- Develop theory in dialectical and dialogical relationships with my teachers (Lather, 1991).
- Ground theory in the everyday circumstances of my teachers so that it is useful to the people (Katz & Nunez-Molina, 1986; Lather, 1991; Stokes, 1985).
- Report the results of the research back to the people researched in understandable language (Patai, 1987; Stokes, 1985)
- Impress on my teachers the importance of their contribution, not to my academic career, but to the good of the people (Paterson & Bramadat, 1992).

Another power issue was that I am a male of European descent and I was interviewing Aboriginal people of both male and female genders. Many writers say that it is possible to erase the power relationships and hence the shifts in behaviour and
willingness to disclose that is caused by unequal gender relationships, colonial
displacement and income and education disparities (Alasuutari, 1995; Guba and
Lincoln, 1981; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990; Slim and Thompson, 1995; Stake,
1995). I, therefore, interviewed people who were familiar with my views, values, and
recovery issues, so that I could minimize any sense they may have had that an unequal
power relationship existed. Similarly, I listened with my full attention to their stories,
interrupting only when they shared something that I was not clear about (Katz & Nunez-

As well, I gave each of my teachers a letter, in advance, that outlined the
research process, guaranteed confidentiality and obtained their permission in writing
before beginning the interviews. I also asked my teachers, before I began the interviews,
whether they understood each facet of the research in which they were agreeing to
participate (Patai, 1987; Paterson & Bramadat, 1992).

These same authors also suggest that it is important to inform my teachers in this
type of research about the effects on their lives that they might experience as result of
thinking about and telling their stories to another person. The introductory letter and the
permission slip spoke to this issue and I was careful to ask my teachers about whether
they understood the risks.

The authors listed above also write about the importance of not distorting the
story teller’s voice through mis-interpretation. They all say that this can happen by the
researcher not being aware of his own cultural, values, beliefs, and biases and, therefore,
viewing the data through the filter of those same values, beliefs and biases. I chose to
conduct this study in northern Saskatchewan where I had worked and lived for many
years. During this time I was continually made aware of my own cultural perceptions and
made great efforts to learn about the cultures in which I was immersed. My familiarity
with the cultures, as well as the use of verbatim transcripts and seeking the comments of
my teachers’ about my interpretations, helped me to minimize the effect of my cultural
and Slim and Thompson (1995), helps to capture the cadence of the speech and the
total voice of my teachers without my inflections that would result from altering the
grammar and the flow of the language.

Another ethical issue described by the authors cited above is the need to be
clear with my teachers, before beginning the research, about who owns the stories
(Alasuutari, 1995; Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990; Slim &
Thompson, 1995; Stake, 1995). I agreed in my letter and in subsequent conversations with
my teachers that the stories would be owned by them and that I would only use the
information for the completion of this study. I was clear that the study would be published by the University of Saskatchewan and that copies would be available in the University's libraries. In my original letter, I also made it clear that if I chose to use the data in any other way, I would seek their permission first and share credit with them as well as earnings from published material. As well, I made sure that they had the right to veto the use of any material attributable to them.

Patton (1990) also suggests that it is important to report any illness or conditions that may have influenced the gathering of the stories. I used audio video tape to record the data and I transcribed the interviews verbatim. These procedures, combined with open ended questions and minimal interruption in the stories, would have eliminated most of the influence I may have had on the telling and the recording of the stories. I did not have any influence in the recording for example, as I might have if I was only taking field notes. As well, I tried to avoid the effects of travel, such as different food and sleeping arrangements as much a possible. I chose to get regular and sufficient amounts of sleep and to try to stay in places where my sleep would not be interrupted. Similarly, I avoided consuming excess caffeine and fast foods so that I would be able to concentrate well during the interviews. I also chose to use northern Aboriginal protocols by taking tobacco and cloth to each teacher to ask formally, before the interviews, for their participation. I have been taught to this by other northern Aboriginal teachers of mine, who have explained that this is a traditional means of reciprocity, or the exchange of something for the wisdom and experience of my teachers. As well, tobacco symbolizes the spiritual connection of all beings and the connection to Mother earth. Similarly, I have been taught that the smoke of tobacco carries prayers to the Grandparents and the Creator.

I have discussed the ethical issues in further detail, in chapter 3 as I discuss the research design decisions.

The Setting

I conducted this study in northern Saskatchewan in the area north of the communities of Cumberland House, Montreal Lake and Meadow Lake or approximately north of 54 degrees longitude. This is an area that encompasses approximately one half the land mass of Saskatchewan and about four percent of the population. There are large distances between communities because of the sparse population, and although the road conditions are much improved in the last twenty years, some communities still rely totally on air, water or ice-road transport into and out of the community.
In recent years northern Saskatchewan First Nations' governments have been transferring their health services from federal government to First Nations' control. First Nations' governments now manage all health services for First Nations' people living on reserve in northern Saskatchewan. The Metis Nation is now moving to try to assume control of its health services (Leach, 1990; Moore, 1986, 1990; Moore Chamberlin & Associates, 1991).

Northerners have written about the use of community development methods as a central part of all the health transfer development plans for healthier communities and individuals. People believe firmly that individuals and families can and will change their lifestyles when community members agree to, and drive, the process. Northerners have built their belief in the community development model around the locally generated understanding that providing information, and "doing for" is insufficient to cause people to change (Leach, 1990; Moore, 1986, 1990; Moore Chamberlin & Associates, 1991).

They believe that learning to do more for themselves to deal with determinants of health like poverty, crowding, unemployment and violence, will help individuals and their families become less dependent on the medical system. They have come to understand that they cannot solve the problems that they face through more technology, treatment, or solutions from outside the communities (Leach, 1990; Moore, 1986, 1990; Moore Chamberlin & Associates, 1991).

Health educator, Barbara K. Rimer (1990) confirms this belief by stating that: "One of the axioms of health education is that knowledge is necessary but not sufficient for behavior change. Information is necessary but not sufficient for knowledge" (p. 148). In other words, as community workers in northern Saskatchewan, we have been unsuccessful helping people to change by giving them more information. We have needed a new approach for some time.

The majority of the recommendations in all the studies and health development planning documents that were the result of this transfer process, deal with mobilizing a fundamental change in health awareness and behaviours, reorganizing the health delivery system, decentralizing policy and budget responsibilities, and educating Northerners to assume greater responsibility for their health maintenance and treatment needs (Bird & Moore, 1990; Meadow Lake Tribal Council, 1990; Montreal Lake Cree Nation, 1986; Moore Chamberlin & Associates, 1991).

When viewed from the historical and current perspective together, it is easy to understand why so many of the health development reports have recommended radical changes in governance, organization and service delivery. The best hopes for increasing awareness of the problems and motivating people to take action to change
their communities and themselves are to empower people through development and training programs and place services closer to the community level and under community control (Bird & Moore, 1990; Meadow Lake Tribal Council, 1990; Montreal Lake Cree Nation, 1986; Moore Chamberlin & Associates, 1991).

Northerners believe that one of the primary goals of community development is to increase the community's ability to act purposively. Underlying the ability to act purposefully is the idea of empowerment. Empowerment has been defined as the ability to choose, the increase of one's capacity to define, to analyze and act on one's problems (Leach, personal communication, 1991). In this way, the community development model addresses one of the central health change needs of Northerners. As people's belief in their power and capacity to make and sustain change increases, their skills and capacities to make change will increase (Montreal Lake Cree Nation, 1986). Many northern people are coming to see this as part of the spiritual healing that must occur for the conditions of life to improve.

Definition of Terms

In this section I have described terms used in the study that may not be familiar to the reader. I have not described the definitions of the themes that became apparent in the life stories as I have discussed these in chapter 5. Four main themes became apparent in the stories, Personal Data, Incremental Moments, Salient Moments and Life Long Learning.

Aboriginal, First Nations', Metis and Non-status

In this study I used the term Aboriginal to delineate those people who are part of groups or communities of people, with definite cultural and political identities, who are descended from the original peoples of North America. The term includes all those groups based on the old Eurocentric definitions of peoples based on the idea of "race". I have occasionally referred to sub-groups within this larger designation as First Nations, Metis and Non-status. First Nations' people, in this study, are those people, mostly but not all of whom live on reserves and who are registered under the Indian Act of Canada. Metis refers to those people who are of mixed European and Aboriginal descent and who have a definite cultural and political identity. Non-status are those people of Aboriginal descent, without an organized political identity, who did not sign treaties for various political or practical reasons. Similarly, the term non-status has also been used in
this study to delineate those people, mostly women, who lost their treaty status for various reasons.

Aboriginal Health

- The members of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band use the Cree (Th dialect) word mithwayawin to describe health. The word has a much broader definition of health, when translated into English, than simply the absence of disease. It is a holistic idea that includes all aspects of life without divisions into physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual parts, and has meanings of community and environment as well. In other words, a Lac LaRonge Band member cannot be healthy without personal, community and social, and environmental parts being in harmonious balance (Moore Chamberlin & Associates, 1991).

- In May 1996, as I taught a health class to northern teachers in the Northern Teacher Education Program, Saskatchewan, I expressed my understanding of the Woodland Cree process of mithwayawin; almost simultaneously, the Dene students in the class concluded that I was talking about a similar process in their culture called hote Zgehenai (west side Dene). The three students were Sophie Denedcheze, Irene Maynard and Sharon Montgrand. This suggests to me that the Dene culture has a similar understanding of the process of wellness.

- Other Aboriginal people think of health in a like manner. For example, Cree elders from the eastern James Bay region describe a process of healthiness in a similar fashion. Their word for the process of health is miyupimaatisiun that means, interpreted liberally, being alive well. A person with miyupimaatisiun is seen in a context that goes beyond the individual. It implies that you are whole and in harmony with the land and that the land is healthy, the animals are healthy, the people are healthy. It further implies that a person cannot be healthy alone. One must have a healthy social unit, and the social unit must belong to a healthy ecological system (Adelson, 1990).

Cajete's Learning Process

Cajete (1994) describes a process, or perhaps a shared philosophy from the Aboriginal perspective, of an ecology of learning behaviour. Cajete (1994) proposes that there are seven interconnected circles of learning behaviour that suggest a process of life long learning followed by some Aboriginal people. The seven circles are: asking,
seeking, making, having, sharing, celebrating and being. I have described these processes in more detail in chapter 3.

Cloth

Typically a square metre of cotton broad cloth exchanged in the Aboriginal tradition of reciprocity for a person's wisdom or story.

Elders

For the purposes of this study I have defined elders as those people in Aboriginal communities who are often, though not exclusively, the older members of the community. I respect the right of Aboriginal communities to choose their own elders. However, generally elders in Aboriginal communities are those individuals who have walked far enough along life's path to have accumulated great wisdom, who are sought by other members of the community for advice based on their knowledge of life, tradition and experience and who live that knowledge on a daily basis (RCAP, 1996).

Life Long Learning

I chose to use a definition of learning that was described as a life long learning process by a United Nations Commission (Faure et al., 1972). The International Commission on the Development of Education expressed the concept of life long learning this way: "Whether they do so consciously or not, human beings keep on learning and training themselves throughout their lives, above all through the influence of the surrounding environment and through experiences which mold their behaviours, their conceptions of life, and the content of their knowledge" (p. 142).

I choose this United Nations definition of Life Long Learning because it is very similar to traditional Aboriginal definitions that are found in many publications and that emphasizes looking, listening and learning (Miller, 1996).

Horizontal Search

This is the process of comparing the themes from my teachers life stories to each other in a matrix to determine if there were themes that overlapped and were therefore related to each other in terms of their context and content.
Tobacco

Typically loose shredded tobacco that is exchanged in the Aboriginal tradition of reciprocity for the gift of prayer or wisdom from an elder or spiritual person.

Medicine Wheel or Wheel of Life

A metaphor or a symbol used among Aboriginal people for teaching or reflecting Aboriginal concepts. Aboriginal people have used the Wheel to teach about the interrelated parts of life and the need for balance in learning and living. Among some of the teachings, using the Medicine Wheel, is the life cycle of human beings and their relationship to all of Creation. I have learned about my own life and how it has been balanced and unbalanced at various times when an elder had me examine various periods of my life by thinking about my spiritual wellness, my socio-emotional wellness, my physical wellness and my mental wellness during each of those periods. Although the Medicine Wheel can be divided into quadrants that express the content areas or domains of life long learning, the elders teach that each quadrant is a continuum and is interrelated and interconnected which each of the other quadrants. I have described these teachings in more detail in chapter 3.

Non-systematic Results

Those themes from my teachers' life stories that occurred in five or fewer of the stories.

Path Analysis

Another term used to describe the horizontal search procedure or the comparing of the themes from the life stories to other themes and to the medicine Wheel, the theory of resilience, and Cajete's (1995) Aboriginal process of life long learning.
Resilience

A theory gaining acceptance as a determinant of health. Mangham, McGrath, Reid and Stewart (1994) state that:

...Resilience is the ability of individuals and systems (families, groups and communities) to cope successfully in the face of significant adversity or risk. This ability develops and changes over time, is enhanced by protective factors within the individual/system and the environment, and contributes to the maintenance or enhancement of health (p. 5).

Systematic Results

Those themes from my teachers' life stories that were common to all six teachers.

Triangulation

A procedure that compares data from three different sources, interpretations, perspectives, results or theories.

Teachers

The individuals, in this study, who agreed to share their stories with me and others who would read this study, in the tradition of sharing experience so that others might learn from their lived experience. Hence, they are teachers in the traditional Aboriginal sense.

Vertical Search

The process of reading and re-reading the transcripts of my teachers' life stories to find identifiable themes.

Weight

The value assigned to various themes, in this study, by assessing the frequency of their occurrence in the stories, for the purpose of identifying those themes that are more dominant in the stories than others.
Chapter Summaries

In this chapter I have described the problem leading to the study, the contemporary setting of the study, an outline of the study, the significance of the study, the purposes of the study, the questions the study addresses, the researchers assumptions, the study's delimitations, limitations and a description of the researcher. As well, I have provided a list of definitions of terms used in the study.

In chapter 2 I have reviewed the literature to explore the social and historical context that has affected the well-being of northern Saskatchewan Aboriginal people. The review is divided into three sections, pre-displacement, displacement and contemporary, to highlight the rapid change in health status over the last 100 years.

In chapter 3, I have described my choices of method and procedure, based on a thorough literature review and my experience in northern Saskatchewan.

In chapter 4, I have summarized the stories of my teachers and provided quotations from those stories that illustrate certain decisions and learnings that occurred in my teachers lives.

In chapter 5, I have reported the major findings from my teachers' stories that are significant to the purposes of this study.

In chapter 6, I have synthesized the findings, drawn inferences and conclusions, and discussed the implications that the findings have to the theories of health promotion and community health development.

Following chapter 6, I have presented a bibliography of readings cited in the study. As well, following the Bibliography I have included Appendixes that provide figures and tables that add descriptive detail to the ideas discussed in the main body of the paper.
CHAPTER TWO: THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

In this chapter I have presented a summary of the social and historical information available that highlights the health status of Aboriginal people from before the arrival of Europeans until today. I have done this to set the context of the study firmly within a socio-historical context so that the results would draw attention to the history of oppression, manipulation, epidemics and neglect experienced by Aboriginal people since the Europeans' displacement of their way of life. I have divided the summary into three phases: pre-displacement, displacement and contemporary.

Pre-displacement Health and Social Context

The people of Northern Saskatchewan are Dene in the far North and Woodlands and Plains Cree in the southern Canadian Shield and parkland regions. They hunted and fished in the area before contact with European explorers. The Plains Cree are relatively recent arrivals in the North, moving into the area as the buffalo herds declined and settlers moved onto the prairies (Ray, 1974).

Fur-traders wrote in their journals that the people were strong and healthy, with little evidence of respiratory and infectious diseases. People ate well and exercised vigorously and this led to good bone and muscle development and heart health (Ray, 1974).

Comments recorded by the fur traders suggest that the people had an organized family and community system and were confident about their ability to live on the land. As well, people could rely on a health and social support network. Traditional healers, herbalists, midwives, spiritual advisors, and counselors were available to help people maintain a healthy lifestyle (Ray, 1974). Families and kinship groups looked after their own members and were largely independent. Large gatherings of many people occurred rarely and then only at break-up and freeze-up or in the far North, during the caribou hunt and during fishing season. The people celebrated weddings and other spiritual ceremonies at this time (H.B.C.A., 1822-4). In the southern parkland, bordering the plains, the Cree tended to live in larger groups year round as was their tradition during the buffalo hunting years (Ray, 1974).
Some infections must have existed, primarily zoonotic parasitic infestations as these are still in existence today. For example, Tularemia is a typhoid type of disease that can be contracted from eating rabbit, beaver and muskrat. Tularemia causes ulcers, fever, lymph infections and sore throat. It is likely that these infections would have been rare in the population due to generations of coexistence with, and adaptation to, the infecting agents (Dr. James Irvine, personal communication, September 1995).

At least two forms of Tuberculosis would have been present. The first is a type that causes lung infections and another that is rare today (and presumably rare in pre-displacement times) that infects the spine and bones and causes crippling in people who contract this disease. This type of Tuberculosis is caught from eating animals and is non-communicable (Dr. James Irvine, personal communication, September 1995). Keighley (1989) has noted that some Northerners limped from a permanently bent leg which he suspected was caused by this type of tuberculosis. He remarks that although the traders regularly shared tents with northern people, they never got this type of tuberculosis. This is probable considering that it is non-communicable. As well, other conditions like rickets and congenital hip displacement may have been the cause. Congenital and rickets malformations would likely have become more common with increasing dependence on trading post food for part of the year and food shortages caused by over hunting to supply game to the fur traders.

Trichinosis is a parasitic infection that causes swelling of the eyes, vomiting and muscle pain. It can be contracted from eating bear meat that is not well cooked. Brucillosis can be contracted from moose, bears, elk, wolves, caribou and foxes and can cause infection in the bones, swelling of the joints, fevers and abortions. Also, Echinococcus, causes cysts in the liver, and can be contracted from moose, caribou, deer and dogs (Dr. James Irvine, personal communication, September 1995).

It is likely that these diseases did not affect the population to a great extent. There likely was genetic adaptation of both the pathogens and the humans that allowed both to co-exist (Dr. James Irvine, personal communication, September 1995; RCAP, 1996).

It is, therefore, likely that while life was more difficult perhaps than life on a tropical island, and the average life expectancy was short due a harsh climate and periodic resource shortages, early and pre-displacement populations enjoyed a relatively healthy and vigorous existence. This is in stark contrast to what was to follow (Young, 1994).
Social and Health Consequences of Displacement

Following the arrival of Europeans in their communities, Aboriginal people experienced a general decline in health status and their natural resources and experienced difficulty following their traditional patterns of living. This decline in health status and increased dependency on European food and medicine can be divided into three phases which I have called coercion, paternalization and blaming the victim adapted from O’Neil (1988). In the next three subsections I have discussed each of these phases. In the final section I have discussed the gains in health status made subsequent to displacement.

Coercion

The most devastating health and social consequences of contact with Europeans were the epidemics of infectious diseases. Measles, small-pox and influenza were the most notable (Young, 1994). It is likely that not all the infectious out-breaks were caused from direct contact with Europeans. Indirect infection from other indigenous populations was also possible as the epidemics appeared to follow long established trading routes among Aboriginal peoples (Young, 1994). One of the first recorded epidemics was the small-pox epidemic of 1781 that was vividly described by David Thompson and Edward Umfreville (Young, 1979). This epidemic spread through the boreal forest west of Hudson Bay and across the Prairies to the Rocky Mountains (Young, 1979).

According to one source there was hardly a 50 year period without an epidemic of some description (Hurich, 1983). These rapidly succeeding epidemics allowed little time for population recovery. The epidemic impact on indigenous societies went far beyond demographic changes. As is characteristic of these epidemics in populations where epidemics did not occur before, a high proportion of adults in their prime years was lost. These individuals were the food procurers, were responsible for defense and procreation. It is likely that the Aboriginal belief structures and traditional healing systems could not cope with these widespread devastating infestations (Young, 1988).

The social disruption which followed each epidemic had to affect clan organization and kinship patterns, education of the young and the respect for the elders and traditional healers who were apparently impotent against these new diseases. This would have made the populations ripe for the introduction of Christianity and susceptible
to the attraction of technology and an alternate food source introduced by the traders (Young, 1988).

The problem of epidemics was compounded by periodic food shortages due not only to natural cycles and weakened condition of the hunters, but to the over hunting of game to supply the large trading posts. People living close to trading posts thus came to rely on relief rations and medicine borrowed against their future supply of fur (Hurlich, 1983). François (personal communication, March 1995) in his interview, remembers people in his community receiving a bag of beans, flour and lard as relief in the 1940's.

In this environment of reduced food supplies and epidemic cycles, illness and health became commodities that could be traded for conversion to Christianity and exclusive fur-trade rights. O'Neil's (1988) survey of the Hudson Bay Company archives provides clear evidence that traders responded to infectious disease epidemics and periods of starvation according to a policy that favoured only those Aboriginal people who traded exclusively with the Bay. This process resulted in Aboriginal people paying less attention to their interpersonal codes of social behaviour, like spiritual practice, diet, family and social obligations, and seasonal ritual obligations that regulated the prevention and cure of illness. Under these new secular and colonial conditions, people were no longer subject to the moral authority of elders and spiritual leaders in the community and no longer feared sickness as retribution for social and moral misconduct. The result was increased social disintegration (O'Neil, 1988).

Keighley (1989) provides a graphic illustration of this phenomenon of social disintegration, between 1937 and 1938, when he describes a priest in LaLoche beating an adult male Dene in public because he could not provide furs for the collection plate in church. My personal experience in Northern Saskatchewan suggests that this type of public humiliation and loss of face would not be tolerated by a healthy Dene male, or his friends and family, who are certain of their place in their cultural milieu.

Missions were established at the trading posts and schools were introduced to acculturate as much as educate the young. By the end of the 19th century, all but the most isolated Dene were at least nominally Christian (McMillan, 1988).

Until the explorers began to trade for furs, people lived exclusively off the land. Following the introduction of a cash and barter economy more and more families began to spend at least part of the year close to the trading post (Bird, 1992). Despite these disruptions in culture and world view, many Aboriginal Northerners continued to live in a fairly traditional manner. Keighley (1989) reports that the Cree at Montreal Lake, in 1920, were healthy and industrious with herbal medicine and adequate supplies of wild food. In her interview for this inquiry, Mary, my teacher, (personal communication, February,
1995), suggests that the Cree in her northeastern community also were healthy and still followed a traditional lifestyle closely in the 1950s, although her family was one of the few who still spent part of the year on trapline.

Jarvenpa and Brumbach (1984) report on the life of north-west Dene people through the stories of Sara Bell, as narrated by her grandson Moise McIntyre, a member of the English River First Nation. Large groups of Dene in 1870 would summer at Ile a la Crosse, Fort McMurray and Fort Chipewyan where they would socialize, stock up on whitefish and trade furs. In the winter these gatherings would break into smaller groups of five to six families who would spend the winter traveling in a large circle back to the summer ground before break-up. In her interview for this inquiry, Therese, my teacher, (personal communication, March 1995), reports that a similar process of seasonal movement, although with smaller groups of two to three families, still occurred in the 1950s in her north-east community. Francois, my teacher, (personal communication, March 1995) in his interview, reports cooperative fishing and hunting and resource preparations in his northwestern community in the 1940's.

I have found it more difficult to describe accurately what the Metis lifestyle was like during earlier times, in northern Saskatchewan. Evidence does exist to suggest that the Metis had comprehensive social, political and economic systems in place, that regulated everything from marriages to the buffalo hunt. This culture was complete with a distinctive mode of dress, cuisine, vehicles of transport, modes of celebration in music and dance, a democratic political system, a national flag and a bardic and folklore tradition. As well they had their own language, a mixture of French, English and Cree in northern Saskatchewan, called Michif (RCAP, 1996). It is likely that there was not a large population of Metis in the North until after the Riel Rebellion when large numbers of Metis retreated to places like Ile a la Crosse and Cumberland House (RCAP, 1996). It is also likely that more of the Metis lived permanently in their community and hunted and fished for their living around the community (Ray, 1974; Krech, 1984). Charles, my teacher, (personal communication, April 1995), in his interview, reported that his father was gone every winter to fish for wages at places like Lake Athabasca. He also reports that this was his grandfather's experience.

According to Van Kirk (1980) Indian women were highly prized, though poorly treated, by European fur traders for their interpretive skills and kinship linking qualities. Indian wives are mentioned in traders journals as early as 1810 in the Ile a la Crosse and Cumberland House areas. The mix-blood children of these marriages grew up to work for the fur companies as voyageurs and interpreters. The mix-blood women although highly valued for their cross-cultural skills were treated even more poorly by the European fur
company staff than their First Nations' mothers (Van Kirk, 1980). This conclusion of Van Kirk's (1980) suggests that although the Metis were important links between Aboriginal people and traders, they were considered third class citizens by the Europeans. This is likely due to the prevailing social attitudes of the Europeans that permitted the fur traders to marry Indian wives for "economic" and kinship links to the First Nations' people, but considered the offspring of these marriages less than desirable socially (RCAP, 1996).

**Paternalization**

Aboriginal and First Nations' people were well aware of the link between the arrival of the Europeans and the epidemics affecting their populations. The admiration for the robust health of the Aboriginal population by the Europeans quickly changed as the epidemics swept through the communities and added to the Government's growing dismay about the "Indian problem" (RCAP, 1996). Meanwhile Aboriginal leaders were seeking treaties in the hopes of getting assistance from the Government. Treaty 6, signed in 1876, Treaty 8, signed in 1899 and Treaty 10 signed in 1906 were intended to cover all the First Nations in northern Saskatchewan (RCAP, 1996). People did not signed a treaty fell through the cracks of what little efforts at rectification was offered by the Government.

The Metis were offered the choice of trying to find a First Nation who would accept them as members or they were offered "land script" to settle and farm for their living. No treaty negotiations occurred with the Metis. Decisions were made by bureaucrats' and Government Ministers' "orders-in-council" (RCAP, 1996). However, there is clear evidence that the Metis were given rights under order of the monarchy and Acts of Parliament. Some of these are: the Rupert's Land and North-Western Territory Order, 1869; The Manitoba Act, 1870; the Dominion Lands Act Amendment, 1879; and the Constitution Act, 1930. These Orders and Acts gave the Metis people legal rights to land claims, and to all the rights of their First Nations neighbours under the treaties. These rights and the obligation of the Government were over looked as the new colonial power tired to deal with the "Indian problem" (RCAP, 1996).

The Government was intent on putting the "Indian problem" to rest by assimilating the "red man" into the general population and opening the land to European settlers. First Nations' people in northern Saskatchewan, like First Nations in the rest of the country, were to be governed under the Indian Act which was proclaimed by Parliament the same year that Treaty 6 was signed (RCAP, 1996).
The Government efforts at assimilation included developing schools and compulsory schooling for the children, relocation of whole communities for the purposes of administrative ease and prosecution of individuals for practicing traditional ceremonies and rituals (RCAP, 1996). In northern Saskatchewan, however, because of the distances and the isolation of most communities the devastation of these policies took longer to have an affect. As late as the 1940's and 1950's many Aboriginal families in northern Saskatchewan were still living in fairly traditional ways. However, permanent communities were developing as early as 1920. These communities typically surrounded or were near established trading posts, as the trading posts were most often established on traditional seasonal gathering places.

The relocation programs were only moderately successful in northern Saskatchewan. It was not until the 1950's that most families began to move into permanent homes on reserves and into municipalities. However, the move to permanent communities brought problems as well as solutions. In the more dense populations disease was more easily spread. As well, sanitary problems became an issue for the first time for many families. Communities were often built on the Precambrian rock that covers much of the North. In Grandmother's Bay, as late as 1994 this posed serious health hazards. Pit toilets had no where to drain but into the lake or river. As there were no pure water systems in the communities except for the rivers or lakes, drinking and washing water soon became contaminated. As late as 1992 some communities had no organized system for disposal of waste. Piles of garbage attracted rodents and more disease. Residents in the communities knew of the dangers but could not convince authorities of the need for increased funding.

As well, the reallocations have caused severe stress for people who have become spiritually and practically separated from the land (RCAP, 1996). In the communities families have had to rely on Government assistance for at least part of the year. Mrs. Janet Fitz of La Ronge has shared with me that she is always nervous when she is in town because of all the people around her. In her eighties, she still prefers to remain on trapline as much as possible. Having to have a fence around her yard, to protect her garden from dogs and vandals, helps her to feel confined, as if she is in jail (personal communication, spring, 1992).

Residential schools were built at these locations by the Government, or by missionary orders, and children often spent the whole school year in the residence. Some of the schools that Aboriginal children were sent to from northern Saskatchewan included those at Prince Albert, La Ronge, Beauval, File Hills, Onion Lake, Duck Lake and Thunderchild (RCAP, 1996).
The circumstances varied for the children depending on the circumstances and the distances to where the family had their traditional grounds. The Roberts' children of Reindeer Lake left their trapline when they were six and did not return until they were seventeen (Joe Roberts, personal communication, spring, 1992). To this day Joe Roberts feels uncomfortable around his mother and has difficulty relating to her. The residence system most often left children in a void between cultures, neither able to relate to their families and relations or to the Eurocentric culture to which they were intended to become assimilated. As well, the children who have attended these schools did not have the opportunity to learn traditional social skills, values and language that would help them to function in their communities. For example, many elders today are distressed that their children and grandchildren can speak only “Baby Cree” or do not speak the language at all (Lionel Bird, personal communication, winter, 1991). The elders find it difficult or impossible to pass the stories and traditions to the young in English.

Not all the Government bureaucrats believed in the Government policies. Some worked tirelessly to improve the lot of the Aboriginal people, often in the face of ridicule by their colleagues. One such person, Dr. Peter Bryce, the first medical superintendent in Indian Affairs, worked very hard to raise the health standards for Aboriginal people. From his appointment in 1904 until about the 1950's, health care was provided by an assortment of semi-trained RCMP officers, missionaries and Government workers. Later nurses and doctors in full or part time employ of the Government provided the care (RCAP, 1996).

However, in the North, health care remained much as it had before the signing of the treaties. Mrs. Hannah Longjohn of Sturgeon Lake First Nation remembers that in the 1930s and 1940s the only outside medical care that northern people received was a yearly visit from a doctor who traveled with the treaty party from the federal government (personal communication, 1987). If the weather was unfavourable, the visit did not occur.

In the 1950s missionaries had begun to build hospitals in the North. Eventually there were hospitals at La Ronge, La Loche, Ile a la Crosse and Uranium City. A federal nursing service, stationed in Prince Albert, provided immunization and some public health information (Prince Albert Tribal Council, 1990). Joe Roberts of Stanley Mission, has told me stories of his early days as a Community Health Representative (CHR) for his First Nation, the Lac La Ronge Indian Band (personal communication, spring, 1992). In the fifties and early sixties the CHR's flew to isolated communities and to traplines, bringing emergency First Aid, health information and vaccinations, as well as removing ill people to hospital and other medical care.
With the hospitals and nursing stations came western style medicine, a hierarchical system with the experts, doctors and nurses, in charge of people's health. The message implicit with the new medicine was that the responsibility for decisions regarding the kind of treatment and its location was now in the hands of doctors and nurses. For example, for infectious diseases such as tuberculosis people were sent south to sanitariums. These decisions further exacerbated the social damage already caused by infectious disease and colonial control by separating tuberculosis survivors from their families and dependents (O'Neil, 1988). This demonstration of power and colonial intrusion into the lives of family members had far-reaching effects in shaping people's expectations. Instead of viewing illness as an event resulting from increased social and spiritual disharmony, people now responded with fear of death and became increasingly dependent on the doctor's wisdom and authority (O'Neil, 1988). As well, Northerners became increasingly dependent on the medical system to fix all their ills. Nurses have reported to me, during the 1980's, that it was not unusual for people to call the nurses into the nursing station, in the middle of the night, for aspirin or condoms.

**Blaming the Victim**

A new nursing paradigm introduced by nursing graduates from Canadian schools in the 1970s and 1980s emphasized self-help and public health prevention strategies. When attempting to return autonomy and decision-making authority to patients, the new nurses sometimes provoked patient suspicions that they were not receiving quality medical care from people not trained as well as doctors. The public health emphasis also prompted attitudes among health care providers that caused families to be labeled good or bad, depending on their level of personal hygiene. Good and bad families were labeled according to the nurses' medical culture definition of acceptable hygiene standards. Knowledge of personal and family history also became a bargaining tool when health care providers were in a power struggle with local politicians over health care programming (O'Neil, 1988). In other words, nurses began to take over more responsibility for providing health care that was traditionally provided by family members. For example, mothers were encouraged to bring sick babies to the clinics even for simple cold infections. The implication was that the mothers could not be trusted to provide proper care to their young.

Generally, the ability of the scientific-medical dominant culture to define and record health status of Aboriginal people has generated institutions with the power and authority to describe Aboriginal communities and people as disorganized, depressed,
and pathological. Similarly, the power to prescribe solutions and fund programs has come to rest in the dominant culture's hands (O'Neil, 1993). Duran and Duran (1995) assert that this situation is the direct result of the medical/scientific culture considering itself and the dominant culture as the norm and anyone else, with different values, beliefs, or methods to be not only different but pathological and in need of fixing.

Gains in Health Status of Northerners

Despite the problems created by colonization some gains in health status for Aboriginal people have been reported. Young (1988) reports that although the infectious disease rate has declined dramatically for Aboriginal people in Canada, it still remains higher than the national average. As well, the infant mortality rate has declined, although it is slightly higher than the national average as well. These gains are often used as the measures or determinants of health status for Aboriginal people (Young, 1988). In the following sections I have explained why these measures do not give a true picture of the health status of Aboriginal people in the north.

Health Challenges of Northerners

All the changes described above have occurred since contact with Europeans, mostly in the last hundred years. This is a rapid rate of change for any cultural group (Young, 1988). Many northern people have come to rely on the modern medical system to fix them when they become sick or injured. They have lost some of their abilities to care for themselves and their families as a result of this dependence on outside assistance. Similarly, very few Northerners work in the health care system (O'Neil, 1988).

As well, the past epidemics of infectious diseases have been replaced by the contemporary epidemics of heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, violence and injury (Waldram, Herring & Young, 1995). Although heart disease is the leading cause of death in the Canadian dominant culture, injury, both intentional and unintentional, is the leading cause of mortality among Aboriginal people (Waldram, Herring & Young, 1995). Duran and Duran (1995) assert many of these new epidemics are the result of colonization because once a group of people have been assaulted by stripping their personal power there are severe psychological results.

Hopelessness, helplessness, and despair lead Aboriginal people to internalize the power of their oppressors, reducing self-worth to the level of self-hatred. Self-hatred can be externalized, resulting in violence toward those with less power, like women and
children (Duran & Duran, 1995). In northern Saskatchewan, one-third of all deaths are due to violence (Feather, J., 1991). The homicide rate in the North, in the 15-24 year age range, is four times the rate for the general population (Feather, J., 1991). The inmate population in Saskatchewan has a disproportionate number of Aboriginal people who are more often serving time for crimes against persons than the non-Aboriginal population.

Self-hatred can also be internalized, resulting in efforts to dull the pain, as in chemical abuse, or in efforts to punish oneself, as in self-injury (Duran & Duran, 1995). For example, in the 15-34 age range in northern Saskatchewan, the suicide rate is nearly twice that as for the provincial population as a whole. It is important to note that some communities rarely experience the trauma of suicide, while others have very high rates. (Feather, J., 1991). As well, between 1988 and 1992, the number of Aboriginal clients in the provincial chemical abuse treatment system increased by 24%. It is difficult to determine the level of chemical abuse in the North compared to the rest of the province, but it is known that chemical abuse behaviours are pervasive, beginning often with gas and glue sniffing in the young and progressing to alcohol and drug abuse in young adults (Feather, J., 1991). Indirect evidence does exist to support this claim. In 1986, in the North, the overall rates for legal offenses, that were alcohol and drug related, were five times the provincial rate (Feather, J., 1991).

In the next three subsections I have discussed the contemporary health challenges for Aboriginal people in northern Saskatchewan and the shifting emphasis on data collection and health research that has influenced this inquiry.

Rethinking the Determinants of Health

For most of their histories the power institutions and disciplines of the medical/scientific health profession have focused on mortality and morbidity as the primary indicators of the health of populations. In the health field today many people know that poverty and social problems, size of families, young single parents, large numbers of overcrowded homes, and unemployment can have a salient impact on the social health of individuals and communities (Feather, 1991). Many health researchers and planners today are beginning to address these issues as determinants of health status as well as the standard measures of mortality and morbidity. Writers in the health field have begun to call this type of research population or social health research (Evans, Barer & Marmor, 1994). A large component of this current health promotion research focuses on one determinant, the idea of resilience, or the ability to achieve wellness in an
adverse social or physical environment (Mangham, McGrath, Reid & Stewart, 1994). Other determinants have been suggested as contributing to well-being. Some of these determinants are income and social status, social support networks, education, employment and working conditions, physical environments, biology and genetic endowment, personal health practices, coping skills and healthy child development (Mustard & Frank, 1991).

Joan Feather (1991) has completed a survey of the social health determinants of Aboriginal peoples in Northern Saskatchewan. In the following paragraphs I have summarized the highlights of her publication, as this is the only research of its kind on the social health status of Northern Saskatchewan Aboriginal people. I have not added this information to further blame the victim as I described in a previous section, but to document the conditions that most Northerners experience and to set the health and social scene that was common for my teachers in this study.

First, the Canadian Council on Social Development published a map in 1989 that lists Northern Saskatchewan as one of five areas in Canada that has more than one-third of the population living below the poverty line (Feather, 1991).

In northern Saskatchewan, the population structure is markedly different from southern Saskatchewan. For example, about one-half of the population in the North is under the age of 20, while only about one third is under age 20 in the South. As well, the rate of births to teen mothers, under age 20, is about two-thirds greater in the North than in the South. In the North one quarter of all families are single-parent families. This means that the largest proportion of the population is dependent on one or two people for their income, care and nurturing. Similarly, the number of households in the North with six people or more is 25% greater than in the South (Feather, 1991). Although, there are still large extended families in most northern communities, the structure of the social assistance and income programs makes it difficult to share the wealth as was the practice in more traditional days.

Similarly, the number of individuals, older than 15, with less than grade nine education is 25% greater in the North than in the South and the population of unemployed workers, 25 years or older, in the North, is approximately double what it is in the South (Feather, 1991).

I have described above the homicide and injury rates that indicate the dangerous social environment that most Northerners live within. As well, the number of years of life lost due to injury and disease for both males and females in the North is almost twice that experienced by the southern population. One-third of all deaths in the North are due to violence (Feather, 1991).
As for the physical environment, rates for waterborne diseases are greater than in the South. For example, rates for Shigella (a serious diarrhea-causing disease) are 43 times the southern rate. Giardia (Beaver Fever) is 2.8 times higher and Amebiasis (stomach and bowel upsets) is 5.7 times higher. Salmonella (food poisoning) is 1.8 times higher. Furthermore, a much higher rate of infectious diseases exists in the North than in the South, particularly lung conditions, tuberculosis, middle ear infections, skin infections and sexual diseases (Feather, 1991).

Most of these social health problems can be attributed to poverty, lack of employment opportunities, lack of infrastructure in the communities and social upheaval. Although pure water sources and sewage disposal systems are improving in the North, many homes are still without these basic needs (Feather, 1991). As noted previously, Duran and Duran (1995) have attributed the social upheaval to the post-traumatic effects of colonialization and cultural change.

**Shifting the Data Collection Emphasis**

As a result of these living challenges many northern Aboriginal people do not have healthy lifestyles, or face great difficulty being truly healthy in mind, body, heart and spirit. Yet, there are examples of individuals who have found a way to live a healthy life in this context. My experience and observations suggest that the modern medical and helping professions of the dominant culture had little to do with helping them to achieve this process of healthy living.

Evans, Barer and Marmor (1994) and Duran and Duran (1995) have suggested that there is an increasing need for data that validate and record individual's self-reported information on health. This type of data is rarely collected, still more rarely for Aboriginal people, and is also rarely linked to data bases containing information about the usual health determinants of morbidity and mortality (Evans, Barer & Marmor, 1994). It seemed reasonable to me that people who have achieved a healthy life process, in the northern context and with little or no help from the dominant helping professions, could tell me how they have learned to live that way. In the next chapter I have described the literature and the decision process that I used to arrive at a method to get northern people's self-reported information about how they learn about and make decisions about their health and well-being.
CHAPTER THREE: METHOD AND PROCEDURES

I designed this research to follow, within the limits of my resources, the recommendations by Patton (1990) and Guba and Lincoln (1981) for improved external and internal validity and reliability. As well, I followed as closely as possible recommendations by King, Keohane and Verba (1994) for improved descriptive and causal inferences. In the following sections I explain each design decision. The following sections describe how I arrived at decisions about the purpose of the study, the questions to be investigated, the definitions of health and life long learning to be used, the method used for data collection and improving objectivity and reliability.

Finding a Method

I knew from my cross-cultural work in northern Saskatchewan that stories, especially those based in personal experience, were considered by Northerners to be a valuable way to gain knowledge. A thorough review of the literature suggested that from both the academic perspective (Armstrong, 1987; Barman, 1989; Bramwell, 1984; Buchanan & Tollison, 1986; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Patton, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1988; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984) and the First Nations' perspective (Bird, 1992; Berger, 1988; Erasmus, 1989; Estes, 1992; Lacy, 1984; More, 1987; Slim & Thompson, 1995) life story research was a valid method of inquiry. I, therefore, chose to use the life stories of Northerners who had changed their life path to fit the process of health described by the Cree word mithwayawin or the Dene words hote zgehenai.

I chose a life story, narrative method for this research for two reasons. First, the life story method allowed me to share the stories of individuals as they experienced them, giving each teacher a share in the development of health promotion strategies that he or she might not otherwise have. Wallerstein (1992), Duran and Duran (1995) and others speak to the need to listen to the stories and experiences of oppressed people and use their ideas and wisdom in shifting the power balances in unjust systems. Wallerstein (1992) suggests that health promotion strategies will fail unless the people for whom they are intended can feel empowered by participating in identifying their lived
reality and their needs. The method also placed the individual teachers at the centre of the research as suggested by Slim and Thompson (1995).

Several interview methods exist for obtaining oral testimony. The most wide-ranging is the life story interview. It allows the person to narrate the whole story of his or her life, including personal, spiritual, social and economic dimensions (Slim & Thompson, 1995). Mann (1992) says that the life story must be distinguished from other biographical methods such as the life history, autobiography and biography because it is but one part of a life history, the part told to someone else. Mann (1992) proposes that the life story attempts to represent the experiential truth of the life lived and to give expression to the peoples' own story, as they tell it, of their lived experience. Thus, the life story approach involves the telling of a life by one person (narrator, teacher, storyteller) to another person (the learner, researcher).

In this life story inquiry, I wanted to be as respectful of the culture and the traditions as possible. I, therefore, assumed that the researcher realizes the teacher is more than a source of data; he or she is also a person. The researcher makes contact with the verbalized experiences of the teacher only when listening with his total being and the entirety of his personality and that the dialogue is between two persons of equal level without social or professional division (Colaizzi, 1978). I attempted to make the relationships as equal as possible by guaranteeing each teacher complete confidentiality, ownership of the stories and by consulting them at intervals about my interpretations. I also encouraged my teachers to tell their stories in any manner they wished, requesting only descriptions of certain periods in their lives and important relationships during those periods.

The Method of Agreement, as proposed by Mill (1904), offered the best method of achieving the rules of inference while using the life story approach to this inquiry. In this method the researcher finds two or more instances of the effect, in this case achieving mithwayawin or hoțe ăgehenai, and looks for cases where the history is divergent while the effect holds constant (Lipton, 1991). This method adheres to a rule of inductive inference, allowing generalization from an observed uniformity across the examined cases of a certain sort to one or more conclusions (Rescher, 1980). I attempted to avoid any distancing from my teachers that may have occurred due to this method by consulting regularly, on at least three occasions, with my teachers to have them validate my interpretations and offer suggestions about other perspectives in their stories that I may have missed or mis-interpreted.

To analyze and interpret the data I used a case study method proposed by Patton (1990). The following seven steps are included in this method:
• Collect the individual life stories of six northern Saskatchewan Aboriginal people on video tape using the open-ended questions and focusing on the four life periods of pre-school, school years, adolescence and adulthood. In some cases this required more than one interview session to make sure that the record was as complete as possible (Patton, 1990).

• Develop a descriptive presentation of the data by typing verbatim transcripts of the life stories (Patai, 1987; Slim and Thompson, 1995) as well as written descriptions of individuals' body language, changes in voice tone, and eye contact (Patton, 1990).

• Search the data of individual cases for experiential structures or themes of life long learning or patterns of learning that have occurred throughout the life span of my teachers.

• Search for common relationships between and among the themes that suggest social/emotional, physical, spiritual or mental aspects of the experiential learning.

• Contact each teacher to verify my interpretation of the learning themes discovered in the data of his or her life story (Patai, 1987). It was important on this visit to determine meanings of themes of reality. For example, what criteria determined a good relationship and what was the difference between a good relationship and a bad relationship (Patton, 1990).

• Complete the triangulation (Patton, 1990) of the data by assembling the six northern Aboriginal people whose life stories were recorded to discuss and verify the synthesis of the themes (Patton, 1990). Furthermore, I triangulated the data using the method of theory triangulation, as proposed by Patton (1990), by relating the themes to the metaphor of the Medicine Wheel (Bopp, Bopp & Lane, 1984), the process of the Ecology of Aboriginal Learning by Cajete (1994) and the theory of Resilience as investigated by Mangham, McGrath, Reid and Stewart (1994).

• Synthesize the lessons learned from life long learning themes in the life stories of six northern Saskatchewan Aboriginal people (Patton, 1990). As King, Keohane and Verba (1994) suggest: "... the best way to understand a particular event may be by using the methods of scientific inference also to study systematic patterns in similar parallel events" (p. 43).

I concluded that this method of analysis also allows for a process of negotiation essential in interpretive research (Smith, February 1994). The teachers were given the right to refuse to participate, to choose the location of the interviews, to alter any of my interpretations, to veto any quotes attributable to them and to withdraw from the inquiry at any time. The consequence of consulting at intervals with my teachers about the
process of interpretation was that conflicting interpretations and disagreements about meaning would arise (Kushner & Norris, 1981). Encouraging teachers to negotiate parts of the research process also allowed me to remain respectful of my teachers (Smith, S., February 1994). I chose to use this process of negotiation so that the conclusions drawn from the data will have greater relevance within the context of northern Saskatchewan Aboriginal communities. As well, the reliability and validity of the interpretations would be enhanced in this manner.

Objectivity and Reliability

Hodysh and McIntosh (1989) suggest that one must use proven methodologies to attain objectivity. Proven methodologies are those that have been tried in actual research inquiries, and shown to be a valid method of obtaining reliable results. The literature survey, in chapter 2, demonstrated that both the academic and the Aboriginal communities agree that life story research is a valid and proven methodology. The assumptions, values and principles of narrative research have been described and validated over a number of years. Furthermore, chapter 2, that deals with the context of the study, satisfies Hodysh and McIntosh’s (1989) and Perdersen’s (1993) requirement of presenting the conditions of existence during the period under investigation.

As for internal validity, my decision to interview Northerners whom I know as friends or colleagues addresses several factors related to external and internal validity or credibility as Guba and Lincoln (1981) prefer. First, my familiarity with my teachers reduced the likelihood that the data would be distorted due to a reluctance to tell the whole truth. Similarly, there has been an element of trust and open communication in these relationships that would further reduce distortion of the data (Katz & Nunez-Molina, 1986; Perdersen, 1993; Stokes, 1985). I also signed agreements with my teachers guaranteeing confidentiality (Patai, 1987; Paterson & Bramadat, 1992) (Appendix B). The agreements allowed, as well, for negotiation regarding any quotations that would be included in the final document (Kushner & Norris, 1981; Patai, 1987). My 15 years in Northern Saskatchewan gave me familiarity with communication patterns and the cultural context in which I was working (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Katz & Nunez-Molina, 1986; Patton, 1990; Perdersen, 1993; Speizman, 1981; Stokes, 1985).

Secondly, interviewing Northerners with whom I was either a friend or a colleague necessitated walking the thin line that may have led to distortions in the data due to being too close to my teachers (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). I, therefore, decided on three strategies to avoid this problem. I used verbatim transcripts without any attempt to alter
what my teachers had actually said. Next, I decided to use some of the principles of Participatory Action Research and encouraged my teachers to evaluate the themes of their transcripts as well as the synthesis of the common themes that emerged from all the transcripts (Patai, 1987; Smith, February, 1994). Finally, I used a process of internal triangulation as suggested by Kemp and Ellen (1984). Each teacher was contacted on at least three occasions (Patai, 1987). First, each told his or her life story, without interference, except for probing and clarifying questions and then reviewed the transcripts and had the opportunity to remove or add any segments that they either had second thoughts about or had forgotten initially. Secondly, each had the opportunity to comment on the themes that I found apparent in each story during the vertical search process. Thirdly, each had the opportunity to comment on the themes that I found apparent in each story during the horizontal search process. This approach satisfied Kemp and Ellen's (1984) requirement that the same data be elicited from my teachers in different ways.

Choosing to interview friends and colleagues improved my credibility (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Patai, 1987; Patton, 1990), as each teacher knew my work, my values, and professional ethics. Similarly, my credibility was enhanced when my teachers and I negotiated for parts of the research (Patai, 1987; Smith, February 1994).

First, my teachers had the opportunity to say whether or not they would participate. Secondly, my teachers negotiated certain aspects of the procedure, such as where and when the interviews would take place, how the interpretations were presented; and they got to veto usable data attributable to them (Kushner & Norris, 1981). Thirdly, my teachers had a role in determining the themes that emerged from their stories, as each was contacted a second and third time to provide a critique of the interpretations of the researcher (Patai, 1987). Lastly, my teachers were asked to contribute to the development of meanings within the themes (Katz & Nunez-Molina, 1986; Patai, 1987; Lather, 1991; Stokes, 1985). In this way I avoided the distortion of meaning that could have occurred due to second-language English speakers interpreting their world view in a foreign language (Kushner & Norris, 1981).

As for external validity, otherwise known as generalizability (Denzin, 1971) or fittingness (Guba and Lincoln, 1981), I met Denzin’s (1971) three criteria by choosing teachers who have lived all or most of their lives in a similar context, who have had similar living experiences and who are all adults within a 20 year age range.

Furthermore, I improved external validity by using the capabilities of the NUDIST software (Replee Pty Ltd., 1992) to conduct a path analysis which yielded a collection of related themes that were common to all teachers. I then searched the relations
obtained for instances of matches with the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel that many elders, in western Canada, teach are the interconnected spheres of life (Bopp, Bopp, Brown & Lane, 1989). Subsequently, I searched the related themes for incidences of the seven interconnected circles of learning behaviour, theorized by Cajete (1994) as being the learning processes of Aboriginal people. As well, I searched the related themes for instances of matches with the theory of resilience as proposed by Mangham, McGrath, Reid and Stewart (1994).

Using these three analytical approaches allowed me to triangulate the data. First, I found common patterns that cut across cultures, gender, age and geographic locales. Next, matching with the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel, I was able to describe the context of life long learning that elders teach (Appendix D). Additionally, by matching the common patterns with the interconnected circles of learning behaviour, I was able to describe the process of learning that Cajete (1994) speculates is a process common to all Aboriginals (Appendix F). Finally, by matching the common themes to the theory of resilience, I was able to determine that events and learnings in my teachers' lives led to an unusual ability to bounce back from adversity.

Another reason for using life story method was to achieve a better fit (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Life story method provides thick description as recommended by Guba and Lincoln (1981). Thick description is description that contains more detail and context than conventional empirical research and describes the conditions of living at any point in time.

Reliability or consistency (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Patton, 1990) was achieved by triangulating the interpretations using my theme interpretations, those evaluated and verified by my teachers, and the related common themes evaluated and verified by my teachers.

**Finding the Teachers**

I was confronted with three concerns as I began to look for teachers in the study. First, I was concerned that interviewing in my teachers' second language, namely English, would lead to distortions in the meaning of the life stories. Secondly, I needed to be certain that the respondents had achieved a level of maturity that would allow them to reflect on their lives without having unresolved issues and biases influence the telling of their stories. Thirdly, I needed to be certain that my teachers' memories were reliable. In the following two sections, I present the literature that guided my selection of my teachers.
Reliability of Teachers' Memory

Research using the test-retest method of experimental design has determined that psychiatric out-patients, a group whose level of mental confusion could be higher than average, can recall events from the last 12 months of their lives, with 86% accuracy (Saxena et al., 1983). Another, more recent, study demonstrates that respondents report life events and the date of the event with statistical reliability and consistency. A more recent study, however, found as well that sensitive events such as criminal activity, were the only events not reliably reported by either the respondent or the co-respondent (Kessler & Wethington, 1991).

Fitzgerald and Lawrence (1984) have concluded, again using an experimental design, stability and regularity in remembering patterns across the adolescence-to-adulthood age range, that is, age 11 to 75. Therefore, memory reliability has been demonstrated for past life-span events.

Although some research has suggested that life span memory is reliable, a cautionary note is advisable. Marcia (1966) advanced a theory of identity development that has sustained a body of empirical research for 25 years. Essentially the theory views identity development as progressing along two different continuums: commitment and crisis. He developed a framework that explained the theory. According to this framework four different identity states can develop, each reflecting the presence or absence of exploration and commitment. Diffuse people have not yet achieved identity development as they lack both successful completion of identity development tasks and any active process to accomplish them. In contrast, foreclosed people have prematurely co-opted available, often parental, value systems. Moratorium people on the other hand, are actively engaged in the search and the struggle to explore alternative beliefs but have not yet achieved identity commitment. Achieved people have settled on a stable system of commitments, following an active period of exploration and identity crisis.

Neimeyer and Rareshire (1991), using Marcia's (1966) framework of identity development, have completed an interesting study to examine, experimentally, the influence of identity development on personal memory recall. Their findings indicate that the number of personal memories recalled varied according to the level of identity development. People with more developed identities, that is, achieved and foreclosed, recalled more personal memories, while people with less developed identities, that is, diffuse and moratorium types, recalled fewer personal memories.
Furthermore, confirming earlier work, the study found that a greater number of memories recalled were consistent with the person’s current self-perception than memories that were incongruent. However, these results did not correlate with identify development status (Neimeyer & Rareshire, 1991).

Neimeyer and Rareshire (1991) caution that their work is preliminary and that more research is required that would further theories about memory recall. However, their findings support other research which suggests that levels of identity development are positively related to the accessibility of autobiographical memory and with a greater number of memories recalled that were congruent with present personal schema.

I, therefore, chose to interview people with whom I was familiar, friends and colleagues, thereby avoiding the necessity of pre-interviewing to determine their level of identity development (Paterson & Bramadat, 1992). All of my teachers chosen were people who had settled on a stable system of commitments, following an active period of exploration and experimentation. As well, careful probing and internal triangulation were used to examine issues and events that were not related in detail by the respondent.

Second Language Interviewing

The literature survey suggests that narrative research with English second-language speakers is valid as long as my teachers have a reasonable degree of communicative competence in English (Williams & Snipper, 1990), are allowed to speak freely (Slim & Thompson, 1995), and meanings are explored fully so that the researcher avoids overlaying his or her interpretations on the dialogue (Patton, 1990). My decision to encourage my teachers to tell their stories in any manner they chose addressed the issue of speaking freely (Slim & Thompson, 1995). Similarly, my decision to use a triangulated interpretation process addresses the issue of exploring meanings fully (Patton, 1990). I chose teachers whom I knew had a reasonable degree of communicative competence as they were all individuals with whom I had many conversations about complicated work issues and personal growth issues. Choosing these individuals also eliminated the necessity of pre-interviewing to determine the level of communicative competence or the previously mentioned level of identity development (Paterson & Bramadat, 1992).
Comments on the Teachers

Although no tests were conducted, my familiarity with my teachers, led me to believe that all of them were achieved individuals, according to Marcia’s (1966) criteria. Achieved people have settled on a stable system of commitments following an active period of exploration and identity crisis (Marcia, 1966). Each of the people that agreed to participate were individuals who had settled on a stable system of commitments as spouses, parents, employees and active community members, following a period of identity crisis and exploration. This level of identity development led me to believe that these individuals would recall more personal memories and because of the rapport that we had achieved, the trust we had established and the level of identity development, I decided that pre-interviewing and the use of co-respondents would not be necessary in this inquiry. I have commented in more detail on these decisions in the following section on procedure where I have discussed the method.

Summary

I have therefore chosen the life story method of inquiry for the following reasons:

1. Life story narrative is a culturally appropriate means of teaching and learning in Aboriginal communities.

2. Research using oral testimony or personal narrative and the assumptions inherent in these methods, will provide rich data that will allow my teachers from northern Saskatchewan to participate in the research process and will provide results that are culturally appropriate and meaningful in the northern social context.

3. Life story narrative will permit Northerners to share their experiences in a culturally appropriate manner that will minimize distortion of meaning caused by second-language difficulties.

4. Internal and external validity, or objectivity, can be achieved in narrative research by using rules of scientific inference and methods devised by qualitative researchers.

5. Memory reliability has been demonstrated by several studies using experimental design.

6. Second-language teachers in narrative research should have minimal difficulty in translating what they know in their first language into a second language when they have a reasonable degree of communicative competence in the second language.
7. A researcher who has lived and worked in the environment of the second-language speaker for a sustained period of time will be better able to participate in the semantic system of the second language speaker.

8. Narrative research conducted with teachers from northern Saskatchewan may be generalizable to the population of northern Saskatchewan exclusively.

Procedure

In the following section I have described the procedures that I used to obtain the life stories, transcribe the life stories and interpret and analyze the stories.

Interviewing

I proceeded with this investigation by videotaping individual's life stories who have made positive changes in health behaviour. Using this method, I examined the narrative life stories to find common patterns of lived experience and life long learning. I have used the videotape procedure to capture all the story, including the facial expressions and the body language.

Teachers were first contacted by telephone to determine whether they would consider participating. If they agreed to consider, they were mailed an information package that contained the original proposal, including the proposed open-ended questions, and a permission slip, to allow use of their stories, to sign and return (Appendix A). The teachers and I then negotiated an interview time and place. Before each interview began, I discussed with each teacher whether they understood what they had agreed to and answered any questions they had about the inquiry. At this time they were again asked whether they wanted to participate and were given the opportunity to reflect on their participation and refuse to participate if they were so inclined. I assured them that I had rented a large safety deposit box and once the transcripts were typed, both the transcripts and the recordings would be stored in the box.

To form the basis of the interview I used open-ended questions, that my teachers had for several weeks in advance. The usual probing and prompting questions were used to get more information about particular incidents in individuals' lives that were not addressed in the life story in detail. As well, precision questions were used to obtain factual information about dates and definitions of words. When the unexpected occurred in the interview, new leads and detours were followed. To get back to the
main topic or to follow up previous leads, return prompts were used. For example, "Earlier you were saying..." (Slim & Thompson, 1995). These types of questions met Speizman’s (1981) and Collingwood’s (1956) criteria for ensuring data credibility.

Each of the questions was intended as a conversation initiator and was open-ended without framing a teacher’s life story with my agenda (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Teachers were given their questions ahead of time and they started their stories anywhere or told their stories in any fashion they chose (Appendix B).

**Videotaping Procedure**

I recorded the life story of each of my teachers using audio-video recording equipment borrowed from the Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre at the University of Saskatchewan. In each situation I discussed the use of the equipment with the teacher prior to the interview or interviews and the reasons for the use of the equipment, as outlined in chapter 1 (Freudenthal, 1988). I sat facing the teacher, and I placed the equipment to the side and behind me. I attempted to keep the teacher’s attention focused on me by using active listening techniques of nodding and other body language cues and verbal acknowledgments (Freudenthal, 1988). For the most part, teachers appeared to be unaware of the equipment until a tape had to be changed or until we took a break to get tea or use the washroom.

**Analyzing the Life Stories**

To accomplish the analysis, I chose to use a software program called Non-numerical Data Indexing, Searching and Theorizing, otherwise known as NUDIST (Replee Pty Ltd. and La Trope University, 1992). This software gave me the ability to manage, explore and search the text of documents; manage and explore ideas about the data, link ideas and construct theories about the data, test theories about the data and generate reports, including statistical summaries. The life stories were analyzed using a six-step approach to analyzing and interpreting the data as recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994).
Organizing the Transcript Data

The first step was to transcribe verbatim the stories from the videotapes, with body language, facial expressions and displayed emotions recorded in brackets on the transcript. A professional, bonded typist was contracted to accomplish this step. We worked together so that interpretations of emotion and body language were accomplished by me, while her role was simply typing. The transcripts were recorded onto Macintosh computer disks. The transcripts were then loaded into the NUDIST (Replee Rty Ltd., 1992) software. Single lines of text were registered as text units in the software. A text unit is a single unit or datum recognized by the software.

Noting Themes in the Data

The second step was to search each of the transcripts for themes. Sub-sets of these themes as specified by Replee Rty Ltd. (1992) were refinements on the parent (Replee Rty Ltd., 1992) theme, adding more detail. I took the themes directly from the transcripts as patterns or themes became apparent upon reading and rereading the transcripts (Appendix C).

As themes became apparent from the data they were indexed using the software program. For example, I first indexed text units that described personal characteristics about my teachers. These themes included information on age, martial status, number of siblings and number of children. Later, I began to discover themes which indicated that my teachers were learning, practicing or studying skills. Following this reading and indexing, I realized that there were expressions of emotion and context that was shared by my teachers. When a theme was discovered in a transcript which had not been found in the previous transcript searches, the previous transcripts were searched again for that particular theme. Whether or not all the life stories contained a theme was not relevant as I was looking for themes that were common to all teachers and the NUDIST (Replee Rty Ltd., 1992) allowed me to ignore those not common to all teachers. After all the life stories were searched in this fashion, charts of the themes and the resulting trees were developed. (Appendix C).
Counting

When I had completed all the search for themes, I completed the third step in the vertical analysis. Reports were generated for each life story, using the software's capability, that included all the text units, from each story in particular themes. Each theme in each life story report was then compared with each theme in every other life story report to find any themes that were common to all teachers but had not immediately become apparent or were not apparent in the examination of the single transcripts. The results of this search were recorded and indexed as memoranda, at previously indexed themes in the software. This was possible using the capabilities of NUDIST (Repee Rty Ltd., 1992).

Guba and Lincoln (1981) and Patton (1990) have stated that one method of doing a content analysis, such as this one, is to count the themes. However, Guba and Lincoln (1981) offer the following caveats when using this method of doing content analysis within the naturalistic paradigm. First, the frequency of the assertion is not necessarily related to the importance of the assertion. Second, more meaningful inferences can be drawn from strictly qualitative methods and third, emphasis on the quantities of data often comes at the cost of problem significance.

As my original purpose in this inquiry was to identify common patterns or themes in the life stories of my six Aboriginal teachers, I chose to identify and count the common themes. Counting the themes that were common to all my teachers assisted my observations and descriptions in three ways. First, it allowed me to see the general distribution of the common patterns so that I was able to determine which I wanted to focus on in the description and interpretation. This would allow me to concentrate on drawing inferences based on the qualitative data contained in those themes. Secondly, counting allowed me to verify or discount hypotheses that I had been forming during the identification of themes. For example, early in the analysis I was convinced that one of the characteristics of all my teachers was an unusual curiosity about people and situations. However, counting the themes allowed me to see that not only was this characteristic not common to all my teachers but was of minor significance even for those who did demonstrate curiosity in their stories. Lastly, counting gave me numerical information that helped me to decide which themes were repeated more often in my teachers stories and therefore likely played a greater role in the life long learning of my teachers. This process completed the vertical search procedure. I reported the results in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 in Appendix D.
Clustering

I then undertook the fourth step in the analysis. Patton (1990) has stated that comparing themes in a matrix will provide richer descriptive interpretations of the qualitative data. For example, in this case I was looking to find patterns of relationships in the data that could suggest relationships between my teachers' expression of emotion and the described situation which would improve the description of the life long learning experienced by my teachers.

This step was a horizontal search procedure using a path analysis to find relations between the themes in individual life stories. This was done to find systematic patterns, as opposed to non-systematic patterns, in the data (King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994). The data from these reports were then organized into groups of 6 out of 6 relations, 5 out of 6 relations, and 4 out of 6 relations. That is, when the path analysis indicated that 6 of 6 of the individual life stories had themes that contained at least one common index reference to another common theme, these text units from each life story were organized into a matrix and reported.

Using the capabilities of the NUDIST (Replee Rty Ltd., 1992) software, matrices were generated that reported relations among the themes. This collating function of the software found all text units indexed by a given set of two or more themes, except that if a find of a text unit range contained index references from only one theme, it was rejected (Replee Rty Ltd., 1992).

Triangulation

To improve the objectivity and reliability of the data, I have used several test procedures to triangulate the data. They are source triangulation, analysts' triangulation and theory triangulation. In effect, I have thus triangulated the triangulations. Each of these procedures is recommended by several authors in the field of qualitative research (Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Miles and Huberman 1994; Patton, 1990; Stake, 1995). I believe strongly that because my teachers were Aboriginal people who agreed to share their stories for the benefit of others and because they were all achieved individuals by Marcia's (1966) criteria, the data should be consistent and reliable. Furthermore, involving my teachers in negotiating aspects of the interview process, the telling of their stories and the interpretation of the themes, and my long immersion in the culture would
increase the consistency. However, since the life story method has not yet been widely accepted as reliable in the medical-scientific culture, I have used these triangulation procedures to encourage a wider acceptance of the results in this academic community.

**Source triangulation.**

My first effort to triangulate the data involved interviewing two people from each of the three cultural groups that are represented in northern Saskatchewan. Hence, I interviewed two Metis, two Cree, Two Dene. In this fashion I obtained two life stories from each of three cultural perspectives. This procedure is described as source triangulation by the authors listed above. I used source triangulation to improve the generalizability of the conclusions to First Nations and Aboriginal people across northern Saskatchewan.

**Analysts triangulation.**

I next involved my teachers in interpreting the data. First, after the stories were transcribed, I sent each teacher's story to him or her. About two weeks later, I called each teacher on the telephone and asked he or she if the story was transcribed correctly and whether there was any parts that they wanted omitted and whether there were any parts of their story that they had remembered since the interview that they now wanted to include. Following my initial analysis and identification of themes, I sent the analysis to my teachers and discussed with each of them their parts of their stories that were coded under each theme, asking for their comments, suggestions and criticisms. Thirdly, after I had completed the horizontal search, I sent the findings for each teacher to them and asked each of them if they had any other interpretations of the relationships between the themes. As well, at this juncture, I asked if any of them wished to veto any of the quotes that were attributable to them. This method of analysis helped me to avoid the likelihood that my cultural perspectives, values and beliefs would influence my interpretation of the stories. Each time that I consulted with my teachers, I revised my interpretations and conclusions based on their comments.

**Theory triangulation.**

I also used theory triangulation as described by the above authors, in order to strengthen its lessons for use generally in all communities of northern Saskatchewan. As stated above in the section on the procedure of the study, I used the theory of resilience investigated by Mangham, McGrath, Reid and Stewart (1994), the metaphor of the Medicine Wheel (Bopp, Bopp, Brown & Lane, 1989), Cajete's (1994) seven
I have summarized each of these below.

I have summarized the metaphor or symbol of the Medicine Wheel from the teachings found in the Adult Education Series: Discussion Papers 1-9 (Bopp, Bopp and Lane, 1984) from Four Worlds Development Project at the University of Lethbridge. Many elders, spiritual leaders and educators, from all over North America, contributed to this shared wisdom and to honour their voice and their teachings I have listed their names below:

Harold Belmont  Rufus Good Stricker  Germaine Kinunwa
Mark Belmont    Woodrow Good Stricker  Phil Lane Sr.
Andy Black Water Ed Heavy Shields   Phil Lucas
Ed Calf Robe    Peter Heffeman       John Many Chiefs
Steve Corchene  Lionel Kinunwa        Sandy Many Chiefs
Ricki Devlon    Chuck Ross            Jon Metric
Tyrone Eagle Bear Jerry Saddle Back  Allan Murray
Perry Fontaine  Herman Sovka          Wilson Okeyma
Leonard George  Eric Tootoosis        Lee Piper
Cindy Ginnish   Mike White            Doreen Rabbit
George Good Stricker Rose Yellow Feet

I would like to make it clear that although the majority culture in North America still tends to view the teachings of the elders about the Medicine Wheel as a theory, I think of the Medicine Wheel teachings as wisdom accumulated through thousands of years of "living well on the land" as the elders of James Bay have stated (Adelson, 1990). Although the Medicine Wheel can be divided into quadrants that express the content areas or domains of life long learning, as well as stages of life and relationships to other beings, the elders teach that each quadrant is a continuum and is interrelated and interconnected which each of the other quadrants (Bopp, Bopp, Brown & Lane, 1989).

The quadrants of life long learning have been described by elders as physical, social/emotional, mental and spiritual areas or domains of life long learning and being. The physical quadrant includes learning about and respecting our bodies, our environment and developing physical skills that enable us to be active and safe. The social/emotional quadrant includes learning about our emotions and how they affect ourselves and others and practicing respect for ourselves and others. The mental quadrant includes developing our memory, problem solving abilities and skills. The
spiritual quadrant includes learning about and remaining connected to the spirit world through observation, prayer and ritual. A person seeking to "live well" must develop his or her potential in each quadrant and balance the learning in each (Bopp, Bopp, Brown & Lane, 1989). In this sense the elders are teaching about a life long process of learning that can only be achieved by living one's life according to the teachings.

Cajete (1994) describes seven steps or interconnected circles that Aboriginal people proceed through in their life journey. They are asking, seeking, making, having, sharing, celebrating and being. Asking is the first circle and it is the place of first insights, intuitions, encounters and experiences. Seeking is the second circle and is the actual process of questing or looking for what we yearn for or that part of ourselves that is missing. Making is the act of creating something new as a result of one's visioning. Having is the next circle where we learn what our vision and our creation mean and what our responsibilities are in relation to them. Sharing is the fifth circle through which our vision becomes a part of the life and spirit of the community. Celebrating is an individual and communal process that celebrates the mystery of life and the journey that each of us takes. Being is the seventh circle and is a process of being joyous, grateful and reflective of our gifts and vision.

Cajete (1994) has, therefore, described a process of Aboriginal life long learning. He suggests that this is not the only path to one's centre, or the knowledge and realization of a personal completeness and meaning to life, but his understanding based on his vision and learning as a Tewa male person.

Recent health promotion research has focused on the determinants of health of populations, rather than individuals (Evans, Barer & Marmor, 1994). Some of these determinants are income and social status, social support networks, education, employment and working conditions, physical environments, biology and genetic endowment, personal health practices, coping skills and healthy child development (Mustard & Frank, 1991). A large component of this current health promotion research focuses on one determinant, the idea of resilience (Mangham, McGrath, Reid & Stewart, 1994). The definition of resilience used by these authors is provided in the section on definitions in chapter 1.

Mangham, McGrath, Reid and Stewart (1994) have assumed in their definition that resiliency or at least some of the factors in resiliency can be enhanced, that resiliency is a dynamic and changing process, and that resiliency is a positive process which is conducive to health, although stress and adversity are an intimate part of resiliency.
Mangham, McGrath, Reid and Stewart's (1994) investigation has led them to claim that several protective factors lead to resilience in human beings. One group of protective factors is found in the individual and includes: a sense of responsibility, cognitive problem solving ability, positive self-esteem, a feeling of control over one's life, planning for future events, feelings of optimism and positive expectations for the future, a history of competence, social competence and interpersonal skills, experiencing a positive event before or after a stressor, becoming detached from conflict in the home, support seeking, positive relationship with an adult outside the home and spiritual practice. Another group of protective factors are found within the family of origin. They are: positive parent-child attachment, positive parent-child interaction, effective parenting, structure and rules within the home, responsibilities for all family members, parents expectations of a positive future, strong extended family network, supportive friendship network beyond family, participation in extra-curricular activities, positive school experiences, responsibilities outside the home, opening of opportunities and good family coping strategies.

**Summary**

To summarize, I have used a six step procedure to capture the life stories of the six northern Aboriginal people who agreed to participate in this inquiry. First, I recorded the life stories on video tape, at the time and place of my teachers choosing. I then copied the audio portion of the tape and had it transcribed by a bonded typist, and subsequently returned the transcripts to my teachers for their confirmation of the stories' accuracy and to request any additions or deletions. Second, I searched the stories for themes that were apparent upon reading and rereading the transcripts and I coded the themes using the specified software. Furthermore, I then used the software to find the themes that were common to all six teachers and then I counted the common themes to determine which occurred more frequently in the stories. As well, I then returned the common themes to my teachers and asked them to comment on the interpretations and sought agreement to use the quotes signifying the themes. Third, I used the software to find relationships between the common themes to determine whether there were any further patterns common to all six teachers and to determine how learning moments in their lives were expressed socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually. Next, I used the software to find relationships between the commonly related themes from the last step and the factors leading to resilience in individuals and their families and communities. Fifth, I again used the software to find relationships between the commonly related
themes, in step three, and the symbol or metaphor of the Medicine Wheel. Finally, I again used the software to find relationships between the commonly related themes, in step three, and the ecological and holistic process of Aboriginal life long learning described by Cajete (1994).

In the next chapter, I have introduced my teachers who shared their story with me, including brief quotations from their stories to illustrate various stages or decisions that they reached in their lives.
CHAPTER FOUR: MY TEACHERS

In this chapter I have presented the life stories of my teachers for this study. We decided that in order to maintain confidentiality it would best to use pseudonyms. As well, I wished to encourage the trust relationship that I had developed with my teachers by doing everything possible to protect their confidentiality. Each teacher has selected a pseudonym, in place of his or her real name. We agreed that this would be best as my teachers are well known in their communities and elsewhere in the North and have told their stories to others.

Charles told me the shortest story. Although rich in detail and complete from childhood to the present, it was only two hours long. Mary had the longest story at just under six hours. John, Francois, Therese and Simon told stories that were of a length between these two. I have, therefore, summarized the stories below of each of my teachers, as briefly as possible, to provide a glimpse of my teachers lives, while protecting confidentiality. At intersections in the life stories I have used quotes, from the stories, to illustrate my teachers' state of mind and thinking at that time.
John

John was the first teacher to tell me his story. I stayed at his house for the night before and he had a Pipe ceremony that night in which I participated. John was praying for help for all his people and strength and courage for me to complete the study. The next morning, after his kids had all gone to school and his spouse was in bed, after her night shift, I set up the recording equipment and presented John with tobacco and cloth. John then told me his story, breaking only to eat lunch. He took about four hours to tell me his story.

At the time of the interviews John was a male Metis who was 41 years of age. He speaks Cree (Th, Y), English and Michif. John’s early childhood was not a happy one. John’s father died when he was a baby. He was physically and emotionally abused by his step-father.: 

...cause he was really rough with me. Like rough, rough. Like when when we lived out in the bush when my mom used to go pick up uh wood, like I would be sitting on the floor I remember as a child and he’d spit on my face you see, and he’d say things, hurting things that would make me really angry. So that’s why I grew up that way.

Through much of John’s early years he was a very angry child. This anger caused difficulty for him at school and with his brothers and sisters:

So, I grew up with that anger. I also grew up looking at my friends, and uh a lot of them not realizing how lucky they’re to have a dad, because I didn’t have a dad. And the way they treated them got me angry too. You know, it was no good like it wasn’t a very good thing for them to do because then I uh I displaced my anger on other boys. Like I got into trouble lots, because of the anger inside of me. I didn’t know how to bring it out. Like uh every recess, I mean, my home was the Principal’s office. Like uh every recess I’d go beat up somebody you know. Like these guys are well off you know. They knew how to speak good English, I don’t know how to speak English. I mean I must be stupid, you know, I only how to know how to speak Cree. Full of resentment. . .And some of my sisters couldn’t like they didn’t want me to stay with them because I was too mean to their children. . .

John’s introduction to residential school added to his anger. He felt lost because he could not speak English. Furthermore, he was often left alone at the school in the summer at which time he was sexually abused by a priest:

...when I moved across and went into my home community, I still don’t know how to speak any English. Then, I got thrown in a boarding school right away. And uh it was lonely there, it was lonely. I, I still remember that day when I when I, when I had to go to the boarding school and it’s like a part of you has been stripped right from you. there was one summer there or or one or two summers I had to spend in a residence where everybody went home to their home communities and I stayed behind with a
Brother. And uh it wasn't good it wasn't good. Like he uh sexually abused me. I didn't want to tell my mom, because this was a my mom is a God fearing woman you know and this Brother is supposed to be a man of God. So I I assumed that she wouldn't believe me anyway. . like I was left there all summer. I had only had rubber boots on all summer. Nobody come and give me clothes. Nothing. Boy, I was angry. And I was really lonesome too.

However, John had some good things going for him as a child. First, of all there was an old couple that lived across the lake from John's community who would come and get him and take back to their cabin. When he was living with this old couple, he felt safe and loved and at peace:

And if I made a mistake with these old people, like they talked to me you know. Uh, what I mean by peace, is uh like animals are so plentiful eh like, like you could be sitting there in the evening and a deer would come right in front of the right in front of the house and you'd shoot him and you'd know you'd smoke the meat and life was so plentiful. Like wildlife. Sort of like heaven for me. And uh, I'd go snaring, he taught me how to snare, how to trap. All these little things. He he even let me go out all by myself, as young as I was back then. And I'd come you know I'd find my way back, like he sort of had believed in me you know. He didn't have to say very much. .you know a person loves you, you feel it he doesn't have to say anything to you you know. You feel the vibes. .not only with with I was so in tune with those old people but not only with them but also with nature you know look at the window I see birds, back in those days it was so beautiful there. Just short periods of time but I will never forget that time you know. That that old man taught me how to love. .How to how to love a human being. .and accept him as he is or she is. No matter what. That's one of the greatest that's one of the most important skills that I've learned when I was a child, from that old man---was to accept people as they are, accept them and not to judge.

John also had his music ability going for him. The enthusiastic response he got whenever he would sing helped to bolster his self-esteem and gave him a means to interact with others:

I had some good things about myself I was uh, I was I had a beautiful voice, I still have a beautiful voice. I sang a lot. Uh, I started singing in school and I used to go to church as an alter boy. Like all the time like the nuns would come to me or the priest and they'd say --John, I want you to sing this song and and through that I sort of gathered the a lot of uh you know strength and also to believe in myself a little bit. I knew that I knew that I had a beautiful voice.

There was also a white female teacher who helped John to think better of himself. She befriended him and would allow him to come and visit her at night to sing for her and keep her company:

. .because I the people that seemed to understand me were teachers. White female teachers in when I was in grade 1, grade 2. There was one, there was two of them each year it's like well you've heard of being a teachers pet. I, I you know that's the way it was for me in grade one and two. Boy this uh, this young lady came to our community and taught us for about 3-4 years and she' d take me home every every after school. . .And this teacher used to take me home and I'd sing songs for her and like, like I
didn't even want to leave her. I sometimes see her till midnight one o'clock and I wanted, like I felt so good around her.

John's musical ability also, paradoxically, led him into drinking and he spent several years of his life partying and singing and playing guitar. This seemed to be his primary occupation during his teenage years:

...it was that same brother-in-law that introduced me first introduced me to alcohol. Because uh when I go when I'd come home, uh uh on summer holidays, he knew that I was a good singer so I'd have to put on a show for him with all the people that were partying there at the time. Started off with just singing you know and I started to learn how to play guitar and uh to gather up enough strength I used to you know take a couple shots of rye. It was progressive. Then I started drinking heavy after that--at a very young age.

At one point during this drinking period an alcohol worker tried to get John sober by tricking him into going to an addiction program. John made his first attempt to stay sober after this time in rehabilitation:

Back in, uh back in 75 don't remember the year, 74-75 this one counsellor he phoned me and brought me 24 beer and I ended ended up in a rehab centre a rehab centre in Saskatoon. And what the hell am I doing here? Holy smokes, this guy fooled me, he got me kinda half cut, you know kinda feeling good you know, feeling no pain. Let's go for a ride, he said. And he left me there. And that was my first time I had ever been in a rehab you know. I didn't like it uh. So, but again, survival, you know free you know it was food and everything, you know the government paying for this you know, might as well make the best of it. So I sort of pretended that I was really involved. I did get involved but I uh after that but, even in that centre there but I you know then I then I moved to another community. Looking for a geographical escape, looking for answers you know--searching for answers. What can how can I straighten out my my problem as an alcoholic? Like I knew I was in the chronic stage you know. I'm a chronic alcoholic. So I so I came down to this community and uh after I came out of the rehab I I stayed sober for about three months and then I fell off.

A few years after this incident, John got married. He was pressured into the marriage because his girlfriend was pregnant. As well, he was thinking that it would be a good opportunity for a big party. Shortly after their marriage John went back to rehab with his wife. He was not intending to stay sober, but he had a kind of spiritual awakening and except for one slip at a relation's anniversary party, has been sober since:

...got married in uh 1978. And uh at that time too, you know now she she's is my ex now, she was already pregnant with my first child. Then about five, three, or four months later she we had this child. It was really, I dunno it's like I said it's good learning you know I learned from those kinda things. knowing that I was going to have a child, holy shit, I have to start being responsible for myself. I have to start being responsible for my child. And uh, you know that that's the kind of learning I meant you know I guess. I
better quit drinking you know . I better do something about my life...I'll pretend that I
you know I'm going to this program for myself. But lo and behold you know I I that's
where I really started to learn about me, about myself. I was gonna go there it was
jealousy that motivated me to go to that rehab, to go look after my ex-wife, but you
know I learned more I grasped more then than I ever did in my whole life. And, you know
like somebody, somehow got through to me. I was confronted by my you know the
things that I was doing, my habits my bad habits and stuff like that. It hurt, now that I
think back it was good medicine for me.

John's early sobriety was not easy for him. He still had a great deal of anger to
deal with and he was not able to feel comfortable in Alcoholic Anonymous meetings.
He felt that the meetings were too confrontational and this made him angry at the
people who were there. This period was a time of great searching for John. He
alternated between escaping behind his bedroom door and watching endless hockey
games and reading from the Bible. He was not able to feel comfortable in church either,
due to the abuse he experienced as a child. Reading the Bible was his way of searching
for answers. Eventually he discovered in Deuteronomy the answers he was looking for:

...in that one in that one place there it said uh it said something about how God
had given different people different ways to pray, because he's got twelve tribes you
know. All these things were being explained to me there in front of me. And uh, it also
said I have given people other people the moon and the stars. You know, and stuff like
that you know these these things I have given to the people. He was talking it was as if
He was talking to his people then the Israelis the Israelites whatever. He said, I have given
these to other people. And that that was my green light. Hey, I'm OK here, you know like
you know they like uh, I have given these to other people but he was talkin' to the
Israelites eh, saying I have given these to other people for them to worship. You know
more or less that's what it said. I have given them the moon, the stars, the sun and
everything. I have given these to other people to worship. And that was my answer right
there. Hey you know I mean I don't I'm not I'm still going to worship you Creator, but this
makes a lot of sense to me because I can relate with this. You know, the the moon is my
relative, the sun is my relative.

It was after this discovery that John began to seriously pursue his traditional ways.
He began traveling to Alberta to study with a traditional elder and learn about the old
teachings and the rituals around the Sweat Lodge and Pipe ceremonies. He eventually
built his own Sweat Lodge and began to hold Sweats for his friends and acquaintances.
John has spent many years learning his traditions and healing. During this time he has
also gotten divorced, been trained as a life skills coach, moved in with and eventually
married a non-Aboriginal person and continued to be a father to his three children. His
children remain very important to him. As well, he has worked as a corrections worker
where he has used his skills as a traditional healer to help the inmates. Currently he is
working for a northern health district as an addiction worker. He has recently been
awarded a Deputy Minister's Award for his service to the inmates and the Corrections
system, as well as, an associate professorship with the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan, where he teaches traditional healing and Aboriginal culture to new doctors. However, he considers his greatest reward the gift of a Sacred Pipe given to him by the Grandparents:

A year ago this month, you know after all these years of going to Sweat Lodges, attending Sweat Lodges going to ceremonies, Sundances uh there's almost 15-16 years almost and just last year I became a you know a like a full fledged Pipe Carrier. That's how long it takes. 'Cause it's up to the Creator, the Grandfathers, when they think they're ready. All these years I wasn't ready. There was too much anger inside of me, too much resentment. And uh you know all these things like jealousy, there's too much of that so they give you a healing period eh. It seems like the Creator gives you a healing period. Okay I want you to heal so much, Okay you're ready now. And uh, last year for me, that's when I got a Sacred Pipe from a well respected medicine man from Alberta, and who passed away. . . I dunno but some how his Sacred Bundle went to the States and it came back to northern Saskatchewan again to another medicine man, you see. And this medicine man calls me, he said "I have something here for you, but you have to come and fast for two days first before you can get it. So a year ago, I think it was this week in January last year, I went and fasted for two days and that's the sacred part that I carry now. The Sacred Pipe that I carry is uh comes from a well respected medicine man--his name is Albert Lightning. And uh, so that's how I got my pipe. All this time I had to sorta earn and you know I used was Tobacco in my Sweat. Now I have a pipe to pray with to the Creator. It is funny how the Creator works in mysterious ways you know. . .
Mary

Mary was the second person to tell me her story. I stayed the night at John's, in the same community and went first thing in the morning to Mary's before her kids left for school. Once her kids left for school I set up my equipment in her living room and presented her with tobacco and cloth and prayed for the interview to go well and that our mutual trust and respect would not be harmed by this study. Mary then spent the next six hours telling me her story. However, there was a technical problem with the equipment and the last two hours were not recorded. Mary and I were very disappointed but agreed to complete the interview another time. The second interview went without difficulty and Mary added something that she had not spoken about previously and I was able to remind her of some parts of her story she had left out from the previous attempt.

Mary is a Cree (Th) woman who was 31 years of age, at the time of the interviews. She speaks English and Cree. She was raised on the north east side of the province but had lived in a north central community for several years. During her early years she spent most of her time on trapline in close association with her extended family. She learned bush skills, like trapping and hunting and fishing. She also had a close relationship with parents, grandparents and cousins:

We spent a lot of time in the trapline and fish camp. At first my parent, my Mom didn’t think school was important, but as we got older that changed. But back then we’d live all year round on the trapline, except to come to get some groceries, and come clean the yard, and just to come and visit people...My Grandfather had a cabin, all his sons and their wives, you know we lived in the trapline, the fish camp, together. And each family had a cabin, on top a hill, on top of a hill of a big clearing by a river, a flowing river...Well around my grandparents, my grandfather and my grandmother’s kindness, I felt loved, safe. Knowing that they loved me, I’m sure they felt that way about all their grandchildren. The happiest times would be when we were up on the trapline away from the settlement. When we were small she was, five or maybe younger, she used to take care of us. Late at night when she was busy doing bead work, whether on the trapline or in the settlement, I remember I used to get up just to sit with her. And she would tell me about Wesakachak, how things were, most of the time she just talked about the good times. So when I was younger she took care of us, took care of our physical needs, made sure we were clothed, made sure we ate...I remember one summer I went fishing with checking the traps, no checking and putting the nets out with him, it was a calm day, I remember how blue the sky was. Its a good memory, its a happy memory...

Eventually, however, her father's drinking got worse and he began to leave the family for long periods to drink and have affairs. This caused many unhappy times in the home and Mary remembers her father abusing her mother. She even at one point tried to help her mother and was prepared to knife her father to do that:
My earliest memory of people drinking, I was still about six or five, maybe seven years old... My Father, how he used to be, how abusive he used to be, can you imagine living in a household with that many kids? I had two younger sisters at that time, but we would have to quiet so he doesn’t get mad or he doesn’t get more angry, but how hard my Mom used to try to please him, she didn’t do anything wrong she didn’t deserve the treatment she got from my Dad... When my Father would go drinking and he’d leave us weeks at a time, the nuns would give us food so that we didn’t go hungry, and a lot of times we’d be hungry when my Dad would be drinking... My Mother never drank when I was young. About five years before she died I heard that she had gotten drunk once. She didn’t say anything to me I heard it from a sister. I couldn’t believe, not my Mother... At home things were getting worse. My Dad was spending a lot of time at home. And the house used to seem so crowded. Not very much to eat and dirty too... When my grandfather passed away, his drinking seemed to get worse. He’d come home drunk, he didn’t care if, if we were there. He’d one time, he was beating up on my mom, I was, we were in the house. My older brother was defending my mom, and threw my dad out and how my mom got really mad at my brother for defending and protecting her. “That’s your father, no, that’s your father no”, and after my brother let my father go, he went outside, he was really, he was really mad. My mom had come went outside the house to get away from him (my father), but my father caught up with her, grabbed her threw her down. And I had a pocket knife, it wasn’t very big, I got it from hanging around my friend Betty. And my dad was on top my mom, choking her outside, and how he wouldn’t stop. I tried to pull him away, but he wouldn’t stop. And I don’t know what I was thinking, I know I was scared and how he might kill my mom if he doesn’t stop. I got this knife from my back pocket and my dad was I was down like this so I got behind him and I was gonna stab him, just to make him stop, but then I thought, I don’t know what I thought, it wasn’t right.

Mary did some of her studies in her home community and some of in a residential school. She was always unhappy in the residential school and tried at one point to leave. She and her sister and another girl were caught and beaten for their effort. When she was fourteen she heard that her sister had run away from home and was living with a man in another community. She felt that if her younger sister could be that independent she could too. She left the residence and went to join her sister. She became involved in a common law relationship in which she experienced her own physical abuse at the hands of a partner for the first time:

I remember getting knocked out. In the morning I woke up, oh! my head hurt. My eye, my eye was swollen and there was blood coming out, and I couldn’t walk straight, I was scared. Uhmm. I was scared but he wouldn’t let me go to the clinic. He was still a----my older sister used to say things to get him angry and blame things on me and I’d end up getting a licking.

After this incident she broke off her relationship with this man and returned to her home community. She eventually met her husband and got married when she was seventeen. She converted to Pentecostal, but she found that she was still ostracized by her husband’s family because she was Catholic. This caused much stress in the marriage. Her husband began to drink heavily and have many emotional problems, as well as, beating Mary on many occasions for what seemed like no reason to her. This made her
very angry and she eventually fought back, after a particularly severe beating, by threatening him with a rifle. She lost the rifle to her husband and was beaten with it and was charged and convicted of assault with a deadly weapon. The beatings got worse and so did other forms of mental and sexual abuse.

Mary spent much of this time isolated from her own family and her husband's family. She watched television and read True Romances where she began to learn about Women's Shelters and develop an understanding of the world that did not involve violence. At this time she remembered the words of a RCMP officer who had befriended her and suggested that she did not have to live like her parents. These things combined convinced her that she had to leave her husband for her own and her children's safety:

I'd wake up being hit. And the longer I stayed with him, the more normal I thought it was, because I seen my mom. I thought it was normal because I saw my mom being treated like that and then my sister and then my two other sisters who had married up in _____ Band, and when I almost married (another man) he would have treated me the same way, but I did I did see other people that were being treated like that, but I thought it was normal...As I began to more reading I started remembering more uh more of what the police officer used to say to me when he used to come pick up my my father and my brothers and I started dreaming again, but I wasn't dreaming for myself I was, (son) was a baby then. I was thinking about my kids and how I want do I want my kids growing up the way I did. When I thought about about Barry, that's the police officer, he um he, through the memories that I had of him, I could start dreaming again. He was something good and accepting no matter what. ...For six years I stayed married. I stayed with my husband. And when I got married, I thought it was forever, 'til death do us part, for richer for poorer, sickness and in heath, all that. And because I wanted something different for my kids and that meant. That last year was very hard mentally, because I had to decide what I was going to do...it was different for my kids. I had to look I had to look after the well-being of them. Did I want them growing up in this household or not? I wanted something different. Something where you didn't have to get hit in order for you in order for someone to love you...It wasn't until the morning of the morning of the day left, my husband asked me where I was going. Remember when we talked, I'd say that it's only a matter of time before I am leaving. When I do go I won't be coming back. He didn't say much. We didn't we didn't talk much then. He tried to be helpful. Carry my suitcase to the bus, to the van that was waiting. The kids were excited because I told them that we were gonna go visiting. I didn't help him, I didn't let him help me carry my suitcase. The kids took it to the van. Got into the van, started driving away.

Mary moved to a southern city and stayed at a women's and children shelter and then moved back to a different northern community where she had to live in an apartment for the first time in her life and be far away from family and friends. She eventually began to adjust and even began a relationship some years later with another man. She tried to return to the south to upgrade her education but found that the stress and fear of the unknown was too much to bear and she returned to the community she first lived in when she left the shelter. Since that time she has worked in a women's shelter and been raped by the friend of her brother-in-law, while staying in her sister's house.
She has raised her kids on very little money and come to terms with her life and herself. She sums up her learning in the following quote:

"I can laugh about it now, but back then you wouldn’t dare laugh because it would hurt too much. ...I tend to analyze. In the past, since I’ve left my husband, off and on I worked in the shelter on a casual basis. So I got to see what I got to see how other people were. They were dealing with their own lives. Um I got to see a lot of pain with a lot of kids, on the weekends. I got to see a lot of people from, coming from one relationship to the next. And I didn’t want that. So through other peoples through other peoples mistakes, through other, by looking at other people, my own family um, there’s things that I would. ...I would like and there are things that I would like to change--some behaviours. ...I teach my kids to pray and I try to be, from learning, I don’t believe everything I read or everything I hear, because when I used to believe everything I read or everything I heard I ended up getting hurt. And now, I take what I can I can make useful to me, uh in the best interest of my kids. I try to put my kids first. If I didn’t have my kids, I would, I don’t know where I’d be. ...So I try to live for, most of the time I try to live for today. How would I want people to treat me? Would I be kind and considerate to other people, in hopes that they would be that would to me? It’s not it doesn’t always like that, where you’re facing racism, prejudice. And some people try to use you for your generosity, for your kindness. Um, sometimes I keep making the same mistakes, but I try hard to try and learn from them. I can’t say that I will never go back to drinking. I can’t say that I wouldn’t, I won’t get mad at the kids, because negative behaviour is hard to hard to change. And I try not to set myself up for failure. I could of sat here and I could of not been honest and try to paint a picture of of just the bad things that have happen and how good my life is and how how things are working out and how wonderful I can deal with things and how I always call on a friend when I feel when I feel bad. It’s not like that. There was some there was some good and some bad in my life. I can’t change what has happened in the past. And but now I remember what my grandfather said to me that there is that there good and bad in order to survive in this world you have to go to school and get your education.

Since we completed her interview Mary has returned to her ex-husband’s community, so her children could be closer to their father. She is currently working in the health field for a First Nation. She has recently had another baby with her new partner.
Charles agreed to do his interview one evening when he was in Saskatoon for a meeting. We met in his hotel room and I repeated the process that I used for the other teachers, giving him tobacco and having him begin and tell his story any way he chose. Charles told me his story in about two hours.

Charles is a male Metis, who was 51 years old at the time of the interview, is married, and is the father of three children and one foster daughter. He speaks English, Cree (Th, N and perhaps Y dialect) as well as Michief. He was raised in a small community on the north-west side of the province but had lived in a small community on the north-east side for many years. He was raised Catholic, but he now follows a mixture of Catholic and traditional spiritual ways.

Charles was the third person that I interviewed. He spent most of youth feeling trapped by the rules that he had to live by. There were very strict rules at home and at school. He went to school in his home community but the scenes he describes sound very much like the kind of control and abuse that other people, whom I know, describe of their times in residential schools:

...as far as I can remember as I went along going to the school, things were very strict. Parents were strict and my parents were strict you know so the people uh the Grey Nuns that where teaching were very strict. And a lot of these uh things you couldn't do, you had to abide by rules. You had to go by uh regulations like you were told to do this and told to do that. The same thing at home. I couldn't really understand what I was going through and I didn't really understand what was happening around me, because the way I see things, the way I was taught at the school and the way I was taught at home. I didn't really know how to go about things. To really think about, to try and help myself and things like that because we couldn't do anything what we wanted to do. A lot of times uh we used to get uh a beating, like a strapping. A lot of times you didn't finish your work you have to stay in school and they used to make you uh they used to call them lines on the blackboard, they used to draw lines and they'd write a certain sentence on the board and I'd have to write that maybe two three hundred times then that was my penalty because I couldn't. I used to uh if I had something wrong or I didn't finish and he'd put the sister would put it on the board and this is the answer and I'd have to write there till I'm done...you were forced you had to them, you never had the choice, you never had a choice what you wanted to do and if I didn't do it then I'd get reported back to my parents and I knew what was going to happen if I did get reported. I can remember as a child growing up very, very angry and I can remember being a very angry at the Grey Nuns and be angry at the church and be angry at different things, but I wasn't given that opportunity ever to say no. I felt like I was in a ____ like I had no where to turn, I couldn't leave, like I was too young to leave home to run away from home but again if I ran away from home discipline got worse so I really was cornered and I could like I couldn't turn no where.
Charles had an uncle who used to provide him with relief. This uncle was completely different from his dad and allowed him freedom that he could not get anywhere else:

I used to have an uncle that was really happy, he used to live across the lake and uh I used to really like my uncle because uh he used to take me out in the trapline. I used to go, he never had dog or anything, he used to just pull a sleigh and I'd go with him to the trapline and there when I was out there I felt free and my uncle didn't say nothing you know, don't do this don't do that and I felt free and I felt like I wanted what I wanted to do you know as a child. . . And sometimes I uh I used to wonder you know why is doing this you know why is he doing that where's the discipline not there. Well apparently his life was totally different than my dad's, and then with the people that were teaching us so I can remember seeing totally different so that's who I kinda leaned on. . .

Charles started working at a very young age. He was entranced by the way people seemed to be able to let their troubles go and have a good time when they were drinking. He wanted to feel like that so he started working for a bootlegger to make money to drink. He also worked in a plant making fish boxes. He was always very enterprising and throughout his story appeared to have at least part time work:

I used to remember going to dances, you know, there was uh, at that age and about 12-14 around that area, and they used to have these big dance hall and big gas lamps hanging in there and people were drinking and outside you know, there's bottles and sealers and I stood out there watching these people dancing in there and it was quite valuable experience to see that you know and what made these people do all these things. . . they used to bootleg wine and uh a lot of times uh it was $2.50 a bottle for a bottle of wine and people used to order stuff by the gallons and uh I remember sometimes I used to go there and pick bottles people that broke them. And uh, I used to collect bottles and I used to sell bottles to these uh bootleggers, you know they'd clean em out good and they'd put that wine in there and that's how they sold it. . . I made fish boxes at the fish plant, and I used to go there after school and make fish boxes and also on the weekend. I used to make so many fish boxes and uh nail em together and everything, and you get so much, it was five cents I think a box. I used to make a whole bunch of boxes like that, used to be a whole bunch of us and we'd put our money together, you know and then we used to get this uh, this uh alcohol, get somebody to buy this wine for us. . .

Charles left home when he was very young. His father had given him the choice of going to work as a commercial fisherman when he was sixteen or finding some other place to live. Charles choose to leave:

I had to help my dad with fishing, but at that time uh, when you're sixteen when your dad thinks you're a man you can go out in 35 below weather in the winter time and fish, you know, that's the way it's gonna be. But I made that decision that I was not gonna go there. I made that choice I was not gonna go. So at the age of sixteen, my dad threw me out. He kicked me out of the house. He said your not gonna live here, you're not gonna bum here anymore, go out. And gradually I left because my freedom
had finally came after all these years. I didn’t look back, I didn’t say well I’m gonna stay, you know, I was more gladly to leave.

Charles then began to drift from town to town, finding work where he could and in the winter committing a crime to get room and board in a correctional centre. He ended up in Alberta and for a year or so made his living by buying booze for other Aboriginal people who were at that time not permitted to buy alcohol. During these times he credits the Grey Nuns for giving him the discipline to look after himself:

...all that was brought to me by Grey Nuns you know and everything. There’s something that was put to me, today I look at it sometimes like uh, I used to feel like a robot, you know uh, programmed. I felt, that’s the way I felt. That’s exactly what I was taught and that’s how I sort of try and put things together. Going to jail and like everything was timing...All I used to do is sit in the park in Lethbridge in the summer time and these people and the people started to know you, who you were, and you were getting a lot of customers. And for was it a year and a half, I think, I made a living out of that. I stayed in a hotel. I had a bed, you know, shower, there wasn’t a bath but, I bought myself clothes, I kinda avoided, used to go with them once in a while to go and drink, but I used to go to the room first and I used to put my money away, stash it away someplace and then I’d only take a few dollars and I’d go drink with them. So they never bothered me, like you know, they never bothered me like that, they never questioned me anything and that went on, that went on. It was uh, I think about it and I talk about it, just looking at it is the way of survival because I was so far out there, I can’t get in touch with my parents, I’d been out for so long... 

Charles had one issue that repeated itself for many years in his early life. He felt that if he could take the blame for any wrong doing that the authorities would then have to take him away from his childhood home and family. Unfortunately, he repeated this into his adulthood and it eventually drew him a long prison sentence:

I got into trouble again the guy stole a car and I got in the car. I was drinking as usual and uh at that time my record was pretty bad already, and right away that night we got picked up. Me and the guy got picked up. And I went to the room you know and the cops took me there and I went and picked up my stuff and uh I had about 175 bucks and the next thing I come back I was been charged for a car theft. And the guy I went with again, what I had done over here in my teen and they were questioning me who stole the car? I said, I did. I was the one that stole the car. It was me, I just got in the car and this guy I knew. So I covered up for the guy again. Then uh I got uh I spent a couple weeks there, two or three weeks in Alberta. Drumheller prison on remand. I went to court from there. Then he had to send for my uh, my record in Saskatchewan, then next following week he sentenced me and I was sentenced to three years in the PA Penitentiary for car theft. And I says what for, I asked. He says you got a pretty lengthy record here, I says this is the only way you’re gonna keep the peace is that I have to give you a longer sentence.

When Charles got out of prison he found work in construction and found a girl friend. After the construction job ended, they both moved to a southern city in
Saskatchewan where they both found jobs. During all this time Charles was drinking, but it was not out of control, so that he was able to stay employed and maintain a relationship. He and his wife to be eventually moved back north to her home community, got married and began to raise a family. At this point his drinking began to get out of control as he found that after a few months he was comfortable with people and could trust some of the community people. He also was struggling with flashbacks to his teen life as life in his wife’s community had many of the same patterns as his home. He was feeling trapped again but worked at making a home for his wife and kids:

So again I seen this vision, oh no, I says this is what I left. I'm getting back into it again, you know. We stayed with (wife's) parent's house there. And he was the same thing, he was gone. Their mother took care of the rest of the kids. He was gone for so many months and back again. What I seen over here and now I'm in the middle teens, I seen that again. You know, I thought I left it over here and now it appeared over here again, in a different community. So there was a, so I thought to myself, oh no, I hope it's not like this again. And for awhile there, when I got there, I didn't drink, cause I didn't know anybody eh. I didn't know the people. And especially when you experience life on the streets, you gotta know how to work your way into a new community so there was people living around. These were the only people I knew, but I didn't go out very much. I wanted to leave, and I wanted to stay with (wife) cause she was having a baby, you know, and I was excited and everything. I really got confused, I guess. I confused myself, and again I couldn't understand these things happening again with this dad you know. Oh, not again. And I figured, oh she must have lived the same kind of life that I was going through. So all these things I gradually I finally got used to it. Then some people I knew there asked me to go start drinking you know, and I had enough courage to go along and start drinking again.

Charles' drinking got worse and so did his wife's. They were often fighting. Charles was at one time charged with assault for threatening his wife with a knife. He eventually went to treatment and returned to do volunteer work in his community. Later he landed a job as an addiction worker and proceeded to become physical and emotionally ill trying to help everyone in his community. This eventually caused him to drink again and he lost everything, including his wife, who moved out:

...about five and a half years of my sobriety like I didn't spend time with my family. I'd go home for 10 minutes, I'd be back again on the street you know and, and I didn't even have time to say good-bye to my kids or kiss them or anything, nothing. I'd sit there and I'd have a sandwich or grab a piece of bannock and drink tea and I out the door I was out again. I was so too busy, too busy involved trying to help people you know, trying to get things going. Eventually, I collapsed, I burnt out. I burnt out and a started thinking, nobody wants to listen, nobody has to do anything. So when you get that kind of thinkin' you say to hell with it. I said, "to hell with it" because they don't wanna listen to me. You don't want to help yourselves, I might as well join you. Back again, after close to six years of sobriety and my wife didn't drink right away and then from there on, that's when uh, that's when hell broke loose, really, really broke loose in our family...
Charles, after several months of drinking, and while trying to commit suicide one night, had an experience where his friend's number kept popping into his head. He eventually called the number and his friend, who was sober, knew right away what was happening and went to help Charles. Charles has been sober since. He is once more working as an addiction worker, but he is spending more time caring for himself and his family and trying to heal all the old hurts from the drinking years:

...my life started to change you know, I had to work on my defects, I had to work on my anger. I had to work on my jealousy, and I had to take a ten day program on personal development. To develop myself, talk about my child, talk about right from everything to the day. I was there in there I went through an experience, like that talking about my childhood. And after I went through that, life then, my life was lighter, it was light. It was more easier. Because I have learned that let go. I kept working in that area, and I eventually started working in that area, working in that field and I begin to understand things you know, people can teach me things now, I don't have to teach them anything, I can learn from my white brothers, I can learn from my Native brothers, you know my sisters. Because at one time I never had an urge to work with white people, you know, I was so prejudice, I was so negative about them you know. And these are the things now, all these things now have been put in place, you know and, but I know down deep inside today that uh, the Creator, my Higher Power as I understand him today, has put these things in there. And all during my lifetime, when I went through my experiences, you know, and walking through all the rough times in my life, he was there all the time, I didn't realize that until I uh, I started to get more involved in different areas. So, today like uh, you know, we have trust in our family. But now I'm starting to see things again. When I was told over here after my dad sobered up what he told me. Now I am starting to experience that things, what I put my dad through, because of my two boys and I have two grandchildren now. I'm experiencing, I'm seeing what my dad seen, you know, and sometimes I have to take control of myself because, you know, I don't want to blame myself at times you know, I have to talk to my wife today, when I have something I talk out with her and I share things with her...
Simon

Simon was the fourth person that told me his story. I made an appointment to interview him after work one day in his office. I repeated the process that I had used with each of the other teachers, giving him tobacco and cloth and praying for our successful relationship to continue. Simon told me his story in about three hours.

Simon is a Cree male who was 41 years of age, at the time of the interview, and who speaks English and Cree (Th). He was married, and was the father of three children. His oldest child was from another relationship and did not live with him. He was raised Catholic, but he now follows traditional spiritual ways. He grew up in a violent home. Alcohol was always a factor in the violence but not a constant problem in the home.

Simons remembers his early years, before he started school, as being happy. He felt that he had a lot of freedom and many of the things that he did and saw from those years influence his behaviour today. He particularly believes that his father had an influence on who he has become:

I didn’t have any English when, before I went to school, and the times I remember of those years were uh, essentially really good. I, I like the idea of being alone at that time. And the, the family was um, relatively stable you know, I remember specific, especially my mother, very, very kind and supportive and my dad was a worker. Like he cut wood whatever, harvesting a field, but a lot of times too, I can identify with my father and a lot of things that he did, that I eventually did myself, so he definitely had an influence…those years prior to school probably had a bigger effect because what my, what my dad did, you know a lot of those things I, I end up doing, and I saw those things, not only, not only the um, the abuse that he did, you know, cause I did the same thing, but I recognized it for it what it was. I don’t blame my dad for it but you know, I, I saw this happen. And a lot of the work he did, for example um, he just love uh, the bush life. Those same things, you know, I like them, I like cutting wood he was a wood cutter. I like cutting wood. Uh, industrious, you know, I could be industrious…when I was small, when I was a loner, you know, I used to walk around and a lot of times when I was walking around I would, I would envision myself uh talking in public, you know, there was no body around, so I’d talk out loud, and its, I don’t what really I said, but uh sometimes I think about, you know those things, where children do have some kind of uh a vision so they can envision something into their future and how that translates, how it become reality. So, that you know, maybe something like that had an effect, and my love for nature again, comes from those times because a lot of it was out there by myself and it’s exploring. Now a days I still love doin’ that, you know exploring, even places I’ve been before. I—just walking around.

Simon was sent by train to residential school when he was six years old. He spoke only Cree and felt lonely and controlled in that environment after he had so much freedom at home:

I really seriously, you know if that was quite a negative experience, what came out of it, you know, what negative things do I have from there because we have
experience and maybe I fail to see them, you know. I dunno. Uh, there are, I wouldn't doubt there are some that stand out... those trips were memorable going, going, going there, especially the train rides after Christmas, I imagine they were 'cause they were winter time. Um, when I first went there, my brother was already there... I guess it was a very lonely experience. What I do remember are those big pipes in the dining room. Now when I see that dining room it's really small. At that time it was huge... Going to bed at night really lonely. There were a few good moments... when I could get together with him and others from the reserve, the other people I knew, those were good times. I felt more secure... we would eat the food that I'd been sent by my parents, so there was a box, had all kinds of goodies in there. Money, sometimes. Berries, whatever, bannock, food from home so, you know, you could feel the uh essence of home in that box... still things were harsh, I guess. And I know, where, where you know, difficulty, because at home I was very free, you know, I was in control. Like I, I could do what I want, when I wanted. Go out walking anywhere, anyway, there wasn't control in the family, like you know, when I started school at the residence, you know, there was a lot of control so, I see that as uh part of my problem... it was sort of a little bungalow, that's where we did grade two and it wasn't a bad experience. Good food. I remember the fields, potatoes, and crab apples and playing out in the yards...

Simon spent two years at the residential school and then a day school was built on his reserve. Simon remembers his schooling on the reserve as being a good experience and he particularly values the opportunity to live at home because of the lessons he received from his father:

But that period is what I remember, all of that is, is the uh, I don't want to say work ethic, but uh, my father showed me how to work. How, not how to be industrious, not, not that, that kind of ethic we, we kinda, you know associate uh, what Christians would teach for example, but he did, he showed me how to how to work independently. You know, maybe at first I remember that he used to tell me to wake up in the morning, you know, at six o'clock and then go out and feed the horses, you know. But and then, you know and do that in the mornings and every weekend, I'd have to clean the whole barn, spick and span. I, so you know, they made me do things like that. Uh, cut wood, saw wood, before I could go skating on Saturdays for example. I had to saw wood or do it the night before, but they gave me those responsibilities and, they weren't necessarily imposed, but when they told me to do it, do them, you know. They would give me those responsibilities and then that's what I did so, for that I you know, I had to thank my father for that... 

Simon went to grade 7 at the school in his home community and then dropped out in grade eight to help out at home. His father had sustained a small injury while hunting but Simon insisted he had to be at home to help. His parents did not interfere in his decision, as was their way, and he eventually got bored and returned to complete his grade 8. When he went off to high school, he found himself embroiled in a political fight for students to have the right to attend high school at the school of their choice. They won the fight and he eventually got expelled from the school of his choice. He then completed high school by boarding in a town near his home. After high school he went to a southern city to complete an Indian fine art degree. It was at this time that he began to get politicized and enjoyed the interaction with other students and all the
activities. However, a pattern of his that began to cause him serious problems also showed up at this time. His habit of quitting endeavours on the point of success is something that would take some years to realize and resolve:

...almost immediately started that Indian art program they had at the cultural centre. Indian art program, so I was there about two years, two and a half years in Saskatoon. We had camps and you know, the Indian studies, the whole, they had a whole trip at that time people were pretty militant. AIM was on the scene, not very many Native students in Saskatoon, so the bar scene, like the (bar), that was happening at that time. And, so after two and a half years, there, I went back to (home) uh, did some teaching in art for about a year. And then again I quit. See there's this theme here, quitting...

Simon next went on to complete a Renewable Resources Certificate and worked for a few years as a resource officer. Again he quit, this time because he could not resolve his Aboriginal beliefs about nature and the Government's beliefs about nature. Next he studied for his Education degree. He was doing very well and thought he had found what he was supposed to do. However, about half way through his practicum he quit. He got a lot of pressure from his spouse and from his teachers, but what sent him back to finish was reflecting on how his quitting would affect his children. He was afraid that he would pass on to them this trait as his father had passed on his industriousness to Simon:

So I started internship there in January. You know, the whole bit about interning, doing the work. And about a couple months into the program, it, it was slowly building up, you know the, the pressure I guess, starting to build, and it started, it started getting to me. Like, I, I have, I finally had this urge to quit, you know. And I told uh, told my wife that one day, after quite awhile, I told her one day, I think I'm gonna quit that, I'll do it next fall, you know, it will be a better time next fall. Tryin' to justify quitting. She told me don't quit, you know, stick with it. So, we had those little talks, kinda building up to that, and one day I told her sure, you know this was in the morning I went and woke her up. I'm staying home today, I'm just quitting. She was mad at me, not mad, but disgusted or something. And I, and I did, and I stayed home. I had talked with my supervisor before that night, and I told him that I was really havin' problems there and I'm gonna quit. So I quit for one day. I phoned that supervisor, and I told him the situation. I'd lay in bed and I'd look at my kids, and that's when it hit me, you know, this quitting. I sort of a track record of quitting. And here I am quitting again. And when I looked at my kids, it looked like they were sleeping. I said, "how in the hell this, how do I, how the parents transfer things, and so it really hit me there. I, I can't quit. If I really love that kid, then I'm gonna do that, I'm not gonna quit..."  

Simon has had to deal with the issue of authority in his life. He has struggled with other people having power over him. This has caused problems in his relationship and he has had to work toward finding a balance in power and responsibility in his relationships:
...and the nature of my work, the nature of my interests, and demands that I, I be alone. And so, sometimes because of that, because of my interests, I see myself as being very self-centered. And, and I can see, a lot of that stemming from my, my childhood, where um, I got those things, I wanted, I was such a, I was always given that kind of independence. If I didn't get something, you know, you cry and then you get it. So, it could be that you're spoiled or, it could be, I dunno, you can call it spoiled or being independent. So, I, I see that, you know, I try to see that for what it is and how it affects our relationship. I try not to be self-centered, you know, I really struggle with that, but I, I'm pretty, a lot of times it's, it's so strong that I have to be, be by myself. So, in terms of that, our relationship then, in trying to understand it, I, I sometimes, I, I dig into the culture and, I try to understand the man/woman relationship. Especially in my own culture, and, where, where the man had a certain role to play, and in fact had nothing to do with the household. Even the how to raise children. In fact um, it, it doesn't necessary tie into the culture but, I, I, I read it somewhere, where it says the man is a stranger to, you know, his children. So, it puts me in a situation where I have to think well, well you know, how much do you, how much can I, how much say to want in raising my children. Culture tells me otherwise, that I have no say. But yet I want to have a say in how they're brought up. And, and, and this whole idea of um, trying to get rid of this um, you get what you want feeling or whatever it is. You know, at the same time trying to get rid that, like, just cave in. Not get used to it but, you know, it's I see it where I have to change a few of the things I do in order to accommodate significant others you know, but on the other hand too, she, you know.

While Simon was working as a resource officer he described going to visit a priest, as if he was seeking something. When he returned home to his community his uncle began to invite him to Sweats, and he gradually began to understand, as he participated more and more that he was changing. He began to make some decisions about how he wanted to live and how he wanted his children to see him:

That whole process in 1980 to about 1985, that was sort of the turning point, I guess. That um, it, it changed my thinking, or maybe not I should say changed my thinking--it changed my essence, I guess is more of a word. I, I still drank after that. But it seemed, it, it, hindsight it kinda seems that uh, say at that point, you go on a road of uh, self-development or self-discovery or you know, awareness. And so initially, a lot of the self-awareness kind of thing wasn't really on track. It was still building up, you know, but the seed was there. And then at some point, it, it really digs in, and you know, you're sucked up into that, that kind of self, self-development uh, process. And a lot of things open up for you, and, and then your essence changes. And, and what triggered it, I you know I mentioned that my uncle. I see that as, as a catalyst, my awareness of cultural things were, before that, way before that in fact, probably. Uh, it's in my genes, if you look at it that way. Destiny, I dunno. But he was a catalyst so, he at some point you make uh, at least I, I made, not an outright commitment but, uh, something very similar, you know the process and you, you've committed yourself to a process, and that's what happened, from 85 around there in that time.

Simon went on to become a teacher and is now working for a university affiliate as a program coordinator. He places great store in experience as the best teacher and respects those who have gained wisdom from their experience:

I would bet my marbles on the one who has experienced. So, it', it's you know, anything in terms of in hindsight how I see everything that's happened to me most
significant things are those that I experienced, the ones I remember. Um, so, in theory, and I still try to practice that, in theory I can, I can know quite a bit about something. Even about culture, in theory you know. When I went to Saskatoon for those two and a half years, that's all it was, theory. With Indian studies, and art, a lot of it was theory. And I really believed in that theory, you know. You almost become radical because you really believe that, but, my actions my experience weren't congruent to that believe, you know, I could say all I want in front of people and say, "this sweat lodge is, is it, that is it, this is what you do in a Sweat Lodge", and I could talk for days on the sweat lodge and yet I've never been to a Sweat Lodge. It's, it's not congruent. So the experience part you know things in there, are really different from what theoretically you would say, or talk about theoretically. So those two are very different things. Or if I say I, I believe in, certain beliefs, you know if I say certain beliefs and I, and I don't practice them, then you know, they're not worth very much to me. I can, I can say them and that's, that's, that is just to make myself look good. That is just for my purposes to elevate my image, I can say all these things, but where, that the experience that I have, and the most significant experiences in terms of my growth my own personal, personality my own spirituality have been when I was alone. Have been, when, and at those times where it is almost too sacred to talk about those, yet those are the most powerful things that control who I am today...
Francois

Francois was the fifth person to tell me his story. I traveled to his community and rented a motel room and we held the interview in the motel room. I followed the same procedure with him, giving him tobacco and cloth. However, he had not returned his consent form like the other teachers so I made sure that he understood what we were about to do and then when I was certain that he understood, I asked whether he was willing to sign the consent form. We then proceeded. Francois told me his story in about two hours.

Francois is a male Dene (non-status until Bill C31), who was 52 years of age, at the time of the interview. He spoke Dene and English, was separated from his first spouse and lived in a common-law relationship with his current spouse. He is the father of eight children with full custody of his own five. He shares parenting for his own children and three of his common-law’s.

As a child Francois was violently abused and neglected by his step-father. His situation was similar to John’s in that he was not one of his step-father’s children. His real father hadn’t died, as John’s had, but rather he was born out of wed-lock. His step-father then married his mother when he was aged 1 or 2. As an adult, however, he was able to forgive his step-dad and helped him through his final illness:

And my dad step used to beat me up a lot a time. And I member I used to wake up in the morning; he used to wake me up about five o'clock in the morning in the winter time. And I used to go up the bush while it’s still dark. Getting some rabbit snares, and I remember I used to cry in the bush there, and when I was pickin up the rabbits and they were all froze up, and my hands were cold and you know 40 below, 50 below. And I used to do that, he make me used to do that, and he used to make me haul water, when I was small. Haul wood, I was always busy... And I forgave my dad, for treating me rough before he died, he, he died with cancer eh. And I gave him a treat; ‘cause I was working in the tower. And I gave him a treat, like uh, I used to pick him up, you know, in Meadow Lake bring him back home you know, and I kept him for about six months before he died. And, and he died in the hands of me, you know, and I told him I forgave him. And he forgave me too. . .

Francois also has vivid memories of how the people in his community worked together to help each other and the hard work that they had to do to keep food and shelter together:

And I remember when in the old day like uh, when I was little kid, my, like my parents were poor, I remember people, somebody shot a moose or something like that, eh, everybody goes out to get their little meat eh. Somebody shot it, like for instance, one of my uncle shot a moose and he comes home at night and tells the whole village. When the morning come, then everybody hitch up their dog, and they’ll all go, when they get to that moose, where the moose, where they shot the moose, and they used to
make a little, a big feast there, they make a fire, you know, all kinds of meat. Everybody
eats good, and then they used to share for each houses you know, little piece of meat.
Everybody gets a piece of meat. And they used to go home like that, we used to do
that. In the fall time, like in the fall time when the moose are running, everybody goes
hunting, with their whole family, miles and miles in the bush, eh. And if they shot a moose,
there, they shoot a moose there, then they make dry meat, you know. Pemmican, what
they call that. Everything, they used to make everything there. And they used to make a
little storage room, house, like a teepee and they used to store meat in there for the
winter time, and they close it up with trees you know. All around it. And they used to
pack meat in there and leave it there for the winter, and when they're doing trapping, I
used to remember they used to go pick some up, to have for the home, like you know.
So they used to have meat all winter, like you know. And also bears, like in fall time, we
used to pick berries, my mom used to pick berries. All kinds of berries, like uh, blueberries,
and cranberries, and raspberries, Saskatoon berries, and I used to do that, we used to
live in a log house. And the log house in the middle we used to have a big cellar, cellar
eh, and we used, they used to store vegetable, berries, and everything for the winter eh,
and that's how they survived. That's how they used to do that, every year. In the
spring time then we have to do your garden right away too. Stack up uh, plant
potatoes, and vegetables, and then you gotta work and look after that all summer. Then
in the fall time, same thing again. And I remember they used to, in the fall time before
they pull out the vegetables we used to go in the bush get some moss. Real nice moss
hang 'em up, dry 'em up real good in the sun. And then when the one, once they're dry
then we used to go there and pick it up and then bring 'em home. My dad would tear
kinda little cloth pieces all under in the cellar there, so nothing would freeze you know.
There all in the moss, dry moss. Use to keep them there all winter don't freeze...

Francois also gained a talent for running because his stepdad used to make him
run in front of the dogs every morning to break trail. From his despair at his treatment he
was able to build something that gave him great self-esteem:

And I used to run, my breath was really good you know I, when I started running, I
remember I used to wanted to run little faster and faster and faster all the way right to till
the end. And I was just, even not even breathing or nothing. And I made, I made about
five, I won about five dog race like that, running. Chasing dogs. (laughing). They had,
used to have that winter carnival in Buffalo. Everybody brings their dog there racing.
And I used to do that, I can run, you know, they know I can run, so I used to win dog
races...

However, the abuse caused Francois to leave home when he was twelve to find
work and support himself:

And I remember at the age of around 16, age of 13 year old, I took off from my
parents. I went South to Alberta and I lived there all summer, all summer long till winter, till
I came back after New Years. 'Cause uh, I was helping other farmers you know, doing
some thrashing and all this, stoking and everything, and I used to do that, and I used to
earn a little money and I started clothing myself. I started looking after myself. This is
what I wanted to do for a long time...

Francois never lived at home after his adventure in Alberta and he continued to
support himself until he married. Finding a women and getting married led to some
interesting challenges as boys and girls weren't allowed to talk to each other:
The only way we had to sneak to each other, that's the only way. (laughing). And I remember when I wanted to talk to her you know, I have to wait till everybody, everybody goes to bed. Then I would, during the day, if I pass her on the road or something, I'm gonna be there tonight. You know meet me there. Try and walk out of the house some how. And I would wait there and wait till you know, till all her parents would fall asleep then she would kinda walk out, go to the toilet or something. That's when I see her. And when she walks out right away the mother would scream come back in, come back. (laughing). ...Then finally, I found a woman, that I wanted to, you know, and we started going together and stuff like that. And then uh, we got married, I got married at the age of 19, and that was okay. Then I start workin' for my family earning a little money here and there but I was drinking, but I wasn't a heavy drinker I was just a sociable drinker at the time. But then I thought I was happy 'cause I found a woman that loves me and everything, but later on, like I was doing that and then fishing, trapping, I had uh, I had. I remember I had my own trapping and fishing everything motor skidoos, I had that. My woman is good, and I had, I started having kids, too like uh, had about three children, I remember, and then uh, I kept on doing that and I was living in (his home community) and then uh, I had five children and I build a house in (his community) by my own and then uh, I thought you know here I'm man now, I can drink do anything, so I started doing that you know, and then my wife started drinking with me, I remember, she never, she never used to drink but then I, told her come on lets, join me. So finally she joined me, and then, that's when things started falling apart.

Francois got a job as a fire ranger and lived in the bush all summer with his family. One time on a break in town he went to the bar with his wife. His wife wouldn't come back to the bush and so he took his kids and went back to work. Eventually he discovered through a friend that his wife had run off with a white man. One day he found his kids all crying because they missed their mom. He quit his job and moved back to his village and began to drink heavily. He lost his kids, his wife came and picked them up, and he lost his house and all his possessions. His drinking went on for several years like this until his sister arranged to get him into treatment for his addiction. On his return from the treatment centre he was picked up by an RCMP officer who offered him a job when he discovered that Francois was trying to stay sober. He guarded at the RCMP holding cells for a few months and then went to work for a treatment centre in another community. He remembers his first Christmas sober:

And I remember when I quit drinking, back years, 1976, when I quit drinking, that summer I quit drinking. In June, June the first, 1976, and that fall that Christmas came along, I was invited to uh, a Christmas dinner in Ile a La Crosse Treatment Centre. That's when I was working there, you know, and I was invited for that, you know, Christmas dinner there. When I got back there I walk in the house and here I, oh, the food was so beautiful. All decorated, you know, when I got to the table there I was crying, 'cause I look back last year what I had for Christmas, a little frozen jack fish, not decorated or anything. (laughing) And here I walk into a table all decorated with food, different kinds, and I thought, oh, that make a lot of change. It's best that I stay sober, so that's, that's was my turning point there in uh, you know, Christmas I think. My kids, and it was really hard for me at time, time, but uh, but I made it. I was a lonely person I think, that's what happened, when my wife left me, and I was lonely, and I never thought you know, I can't I couldn't get him off my mind like you know. The only way I could get her off my mind when I get drunk, black out, that's when I sleep. But when I wake up, she was still there, she was still there, my kids were there. And kept on for a long time and it really got me
sick. This other without drinking, I couldn't sleep. I could stay up all night till daybreak, and so all I had was in my mind, my kids, my wife, my kids, all going around, goin' around. For many years like that, and when I sober up, it didn't took to long, about a year, they were, she was out of my mind. And then I started lookin' for another future. . .

Francois went on to work several years for the Provincial Government as an addiction worker and he is currently working for his adopted First Nation as the addiction program coordinator.
Therese traveled to a southern town for a medical appointment. I traveled to join her there, rented a room, and set up for the interview. I followed the same procedure that I had used for the other teachers, presenting tobacco and cloth and praying for our relationship to continue as the result of this study. Therese took about three hours to tell her story and then I drove her back to her room.

Therese is a Dene (non-treaty until Bill C-31) woman, who was 36 years of age, at the time of the interview. She spoke Dene and English. She was married and a mother of 8 children. She was pregnant with her eighth during the interview for this research. She has a grade school education, none of it acquired in a residential setting, but at school in her home community, and she had other subsequent training. She went to school from age six to age ten, when her mother died. Until she was eight or nine Therese lived almost exclusively on trap-line with no alcohol in the home. She remembers these times as being peaceful and rewarding with close family interaction and close association with nature:

There’s alot a good things in there, that I remember as, when I was a kid. ‘Cause as I’m growing I kind of grew up out in a trapline. We usually go there, before it’s freeze you know, by a boat. And then we stay there till up to around Christmas, and a little bit before Christmas, we used to come back. But when we’re comin’ it by a, a dog team. And there’s lotta that is really joyful and peaceful in those days for me. ‘Cause we see alot a wildlife’s and, caribou things like that. And even though when we’re going up North with uh, other groups, but yet my my parents we used to stay in a different, a little bit distant from the other people we used to say in a different locate, just my younger sister, my dad and my mom. Even though we’re kind of only one family livin’ there but it was still alot a fun. Because my dad when we were out there he used to teach us how, how to go fishin’. Setting net and all those things like that. So out of that I was out uh, had experience in those...

Therese was raised Catholic in an alcoholic home once the family moved to the settlement. She still practices her maternal religion and is very devoted, traveling to Europe on at least three occasions for pilgrimages to sacred sites in France and Portugal.

When were livin’ out in the bush we usually for kids they usually go to bed around 8:00. And when we’re out there it’s kinda peaceful so, people, I noticed that people do prayer more. ‘Cause I take better from my mom, I still have that. ‘Cause it really helped me through all of life...
Drinking started in Therese's home when she was very young. She doesn't remember her father ever being violent with the kids, but he was violent toward her mom when he was drinking. Her mother drowned while drunk when she was 10 years old:

...later on, it hit us by alcohol. 'Cause I'm growing up, um, I myself kinda grew up in an alcoholic home. And violence too... No, my dad hit anything like that... No it was between my parent... So not only in my home, but kinda the whole community even though we're far distance from south to get, but still they used to get it. It became a big problem for our people. 'Cause no today when I look back, to me it seems like it's not as bad as those days. 'Cause when I was kid, when I, when I, say those things it was kinda worse. 'Cause they'd even, they even have to order a whole lot and bring it in the community...but later on, in some, in some uh camps, even there they used to, but at first there, there wasn't any. But later on it was started to...They still live in that community where we're at in, there's a little a bay, even in there there was three person who drowned by alcohol. And that includes my mom too... And every time my parents used to drink, me and my younger sister we'd don't we don't stay at home, we used to go somewhere to our sisters or. But that night it happened, I myself had went to where my mom was drinking. But it was kinda hard, even I ask her, I wanted to go home with her and she didn't want to. So that night, I spend the night at my sisters house and the next morning we went back to school, me and my sister, and about in the afternoon, I think, they had a, a news from what happened, we were at at the school that time... 

Therese was essentially homeless from that time until she married. She moved from house to house staying with relatives who emotionally and physically abused her:

...But since then, everything kind of went black for me. I kind of even, even though my mom had taught me how to, how to pray things like that, but when that happened it took everything away. That I can't even pray again, that I can remember. So I kinda got lost. And since then, I haven't went to school too, that I'd that I can't remember after I lost my mom. Since then, me and my younger sister we haven't stayed without my dad too. By all myself, after that I have to stay at one house to another, at my sisters. But even there it was kinda hard 'cause it wasn't the same as it used to. So that's why I kinda gone, grew up in a fear life at this time... I was afraid of, my brother and my sisters. 'Cause they really used to to abuse me, like saying things and hitting, hitting me. There's a lot of um, even now, it kinda hard for me, when I think about it. 'Cause after I became a teenager even there I didn't have you know uh, freedom. Kinda always running away from people... 

Therese developed her own addiction to alcohol as a young teenager. She had a violent relationship when she was 16 before marrying another man at 17 who was a violent alcoholic:

I became an alcoholic too... Around 11 or 12. At first it wasn't as bad, but in my teen years came it went really heavy. And I even started to get blackouts that I don't remember. And before I got married, I even got beat up by this guy... No, that was a different person. Even then I do have fear of him because he was so violent... One time I got drunk and he beat me up and I don't remember. I don't really know what happened that night. The only thing that I remember is that, when we were drinking, I was drinkin straight so, so he asked me to get some water. A cup of water. I got up and I went in the kitchen and that's the last thing I remember. It was in a, in the evening that time and it took me all night, black. And I don't really know exactly what time when he
beat me up and the next morning it was summer. Like kind of a spring coming? It was, the lake was open already at that time. And then, I guess my sisters found out that, I was missing, from where I was staying. So they went to look for me. And while I was in black out, laying there. I heard some voice saying, don’t touch her she probably is dead. And when I opened my eyes I couldn’t open them...

When Therese was sixteen she met a man who she could identify with because he had been mistreated as a child as well. She thought that marrying him would help her escape from the lonely, unhappy life she had been leading as a teenager:

My husband um, he a lot of time he says, he says that he kind of left out, in his family too, between his mom and dad, like his mom and dad are treaty the others any way they can they help them, but towards my husband they hardly don’t do that. That’s why sometimes it, it, it hurts him, and he talks to me about it. . .To me I understand deeply that what my husband is going through with his drinking. . .Both, both of us. It’s not only me but his sad story too, and he grew up in that he has a large family. He had um, they’re all boys too. . .And even though in his teen years he was really a heavy drinker too. That’s why I kinda reach out to him. And now he getting to understand why, ’cause I hopefully took him why, I even told him you know. We can work out things...

Therese’s wish to find happiness did not immediately occur because she got married. Her husband’s drinking got worse, as did hers and, when he drank, he used to beat her up severely:

At that time I had, I even had a little girl. When I had her I was 17. That was before I got married, but when I look at her, it, it got to be stronger that I had to quit, do something about my drinking after I had her. The reason why I got that way what I went through, by drinking. I didn’t want to, happen to my kids, but after I got married, for eight years, I live in darkness again of drinking. At first it was not as bad but it came deeper. . .At that time, then most of the night whenever my husband drinking, I used to, it was like a nightmare for me. I didn’t have enough sleep and I used to be afraid and I end up staying most of the time, waiting. As soon as I heard him coming, I used to be afraid, because, even though um, when I was sober, when I’m not drinking, you know, he used to beat me up and. . .Some nights even the whole night I couldn’t sleep. I used to go to one window to another and the sharp ear, listen, or you know, what will happen if my husband comes, what will he say. I used to live in fear...

Both she and her husband had become sober. Her husband went out to a treatment centre first and then later she went out as well. Therese has managed to stay sober, while her husband has had several relapses. She had been sober for 10 years when she told me her story. When she got sober, she decided to take her courage in hand and leave her full time job and apply for the addiction worker position in the nearby First Nation, where she eventually became a member. She worked hard and went out for training, sponsored by the local Tribal Council. She began to hold Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and decided that all those people, in her community, who had
been sober for years, needed to be rewarded. She started a tradition in her community of giving a sobriety medal to everyone who was sober for so many years:

I kinda thought in my mind that somehow, I'm gonna fight this thing, even though, no matter what. So, after a year, we became as violent as when we were drinking again, so that why I, you know, I end up to the bottle again. But after that it's more of me wanting to become sober instead of the way I'm living with alcohol. That's why after that I went, I went to a, I went to a treatment centre again myself...there was uh, a job opening but, like when he went to the treatment centre, like for myself I became sober first, that's why I started the AA meeting and there was just me and a priest that first uh priest that we had. It was just him and me and the other elder. There was three of us who start out and we, start out that meeting but we didn't have any place at first. By the time I was working in the store, that's the time the job was open with that NNADAP. And I thought about it, this is my chance maybe I can help the community and, you know, about drinkin' and, I thought of a lot of things at that time...But that that poster stayed up but nobody sign up or anything and then the time came for that poster to be down, when the Chief came back to it there was not names. So I went up to him and I told him who sign up and he said no one. So right away I told him I was thinkin' about it so he said, I'll give you call later, but I knew kinda, 'cause I was the only one, so I told the manager why I wanted to switch my job to, to the NNADAP worker. He he really understand it, 'cause I made clearly to him why...So I started this program. And at first I got involved with with helping people with uh, AA. That was what I did first, 'cause a lot of people didn't hardly understand about it so, that's why we we set up a group...And then after that my husband joined us, and it went okay for awhile and then we, we decided to have uh, a round up. First round up. 'Cause there's in a community there's some people who, who been sober for a long time. I have used that them for, for to show people so, we had this round up came up, so we give them a plaque and a medallion. First I talked to them about it and the reason why we have to work together and maybe something will come. So they agreed so that's why there was nine of them that were asked first of those things. And later on, after that it grew bigger. And, I even start havin' a program for young people and, why I went through about my life, I used to share a lot to young people and, even go to school and talk to kids about it...but there's some things that I have tried to improve and help people more. We used, I even used to do a fund-raiser for other communities to go to other communities and share what we're doing in our community...

Therese has struggled in her sobriety with her husband's returns to drinking. It seems to her that every time she has to go away her husband gets drunk. This still causes her to feel despair and she searches for reasons why he drinks when he knows the consequences of drinking so well:

But later on, there's some things that I don't understand about. Is that he helped me a long ways with this program but yet he went back to the bottle. The only time he does that is when I'm not around. I dunno. He doesn't wanna talk about so I don't wanna get in to about it too...But at first there too it was hard at first time after being sober for three years he started, it was hard on me...the first time he did it was when I went out for that last retreat. And while I was out he he did it. But when we're heading home when we got to (a town) that's the time that I heard that he started drinking again. And it really hit me that time. So that night I haven't stop, I just walk all night, where ever the camp was. But I didn't think about taking a drink even though it was so hard for me. So early in the morning we left, and I got home, sure enough it was true. He was laying in the bed, hanged over. I couldn't hold myself so I started to cry and there it hit us again. Between him and me, and my children, we were all crying. 'Cause something, you
know, someone died that was how I felt at that time. But, when I’m home he doesn’t do that so he, he stayed okay there... And the other time, after he sober up again, like he stayed sober for two years again. And when I went out for medical reason, the day I left he started again. There it was hardest there too that second... when I got home, he wasn’t home, just my kids, but when I walk into the house, I can picture how my home used to look when we were drinking, it was exactly how my house was. He went out in the lake with someone, one of his friends, he was in, he was sober when he went. It was that same day to my home, so I did everything again in that house. I clean up. And I talk to my kids, and I told them I was there to help them and I told them not to worry about me and tell them that how much I cared for them, that even though their dad is drinkin’ again but you know, I would help them anyway. So I went back to South again that same day, but I didn’t get out of what I was going through that time. ’Cause when I got back home it kind of more in me, in my mind, I can picture everything that I had left behind in the drinkin’ days came back. It just keep floating in my mind, at one by one, what we used to say to each other, do to each other, it was just a nightmare... 

Now Therese is a full-time homemaker and volunteer in her community. She had decided that her work was taking all her energy and she didn’t have time for her kids. Since the interview, Therese and her eldest daughter survived a plane crash while on a medical trip. Therese had few physical injuries but suffers emotional problems as a result of the accident. Her daughter was paralyzed from the accident while pregnant and has successfully delivered a healthy baby.
Postscript

As noted earlier, when all the stories were told, I had them transcribed, verbatim, by a bonded typist, again to maintain confidentiality. Once all the transcripts were prepared on disk, I made two copies of each and mailed each person's story to him or her. After about two weeks, depending on the mails to each community, I phoned each teacher and asked them what he or she thought of his or her story. First, I asked if the stories were accurate and if anything had been left out. Next, I asked if there was anything that they wanted to add to their stories. Furthermore, because they had told me some very personal information that they had never shared with anyone before, I asked if there was anything that they wanted to have removed from the stories. All my teachers agreed that the stories were written as told. Some of my teachers were distressed that they were typed verbatim, even though I had explained carefully what this meant and that this would be the case. They felt that their English was not good enough. We had to negotiate on the phone to leave the stories verbatim. I did this by again explaining the reasons for using verbatim stories and then had them look at my own questions in the transcript. My own English was colloquial at best and this seemed to satisfy them.

In the next chapter, I have presented the main teachings that I have learned about how my teachers think, learn and make decisions.
CHAPTER FIVE: MY LEARNING FROM THE RESULTS

My learning from my teachers life stories is the result of the literature search to find a respectful form of inquiry and the result of six separate analysis procedures. After listening carefully to the stories, I had already begun to recognize patterns in the stories. For example, all my teachers had a fairly strong association with nature in their pre-school and young school years. After having the stories transcribed and verified by my teachers, I read and reread the stories. Eventually, themes began to be apparent in the stories. I began recording the personal themes in the NUDIST (Replee Rty Ltd., 1992) software, such as, age at the interview, marital status, number of children, number of grandchildren and gender. Similarly, as I was reading the stories, I began to notice statements that I interpreted as beliefs and values held by my teachers. I coded these as sub-themes under the Personal Data main theme, as they were part of who my teachers were. That is, beliefs and values were part of their world view. Other sub-themes under this main theme were spiritual, mental, social or emotional skills.

Later, as I continued to read and reread the stories, I began to notice that there were often descriptions about ordinary daily activities that my teachers described followed by a description of something that they had learned from those activities. I coded these descriptions and learnings as Incremental Moments, as my teachers were describing repeated events and activities from which they had learned something. Some of the sub-themes that I found under Incremental Moments were social moments, emotional moments, spiritual moments and physical moments.

Similarly, there were descriptions of unusual events, like a teaching dream or vision, or for both men and women, times when they were victimized or brutalized by some one else. I coded these events or themes as Salient Moments, in my teachers' lives, because they were unusual and they often provided a spring board that helped them combine their incremental learning and that particular event to begin to recognize a pattern in their lives. This often then caused them to take action to change their lives, immediately or at some later point.
Next, because one of my objectives was to find common patterns of learning, I began to search for indications of how, when and why they learned. I discovered that there were two sub-themes under the Life Long Learning main theme. First, in a process that was related to the Incremental Moments theme, my teachers described accumulating experience over a long period of time. I coded this sub-theme Life Long Learning accumulated. My teachers were, therefore, accumulating their incremental learning until they arrived at point where something made sense and caused them to shift their behaviour, beliefs and thinking. Another, sub-theme under the Life Long Learning main theme was a process of reflecting on experience. This differed from the accumulation of experience, because it was often one event that began the reflection. Sometimes my teachers would also remember some of their accumulated experience and combine it with the reflection on the new event. Sub-themes that became apparent under these two primary sub-themes, Life Long Learning accumulated and Life Long Learning reflected, were accumulated events, institutions and people experiences and reflected on events, institutions and people.

As noted previously, once the vertical search process, or the reading and rereading and searching for themes, was complete, I returned the themes discovered in each teacher's story to them by mail, including the quotes from which the themes were determined. About two weeks later I telephoned each teacher and asked them whether they had any disagreements with my initial interpretations. Some of my teachers found the disassembled stories confusing, and I spent a fair amount of time on the phone explaining what I had done and why I had named each theme as I had. The most common response from my teachers was, "I trust you, that's why I told you my story, so go ahead."

Following my discussions with each of my teachers, I used the NUDIST (Replee Rty Ltd., 1992) software to find the relationships between the sub-themes that were common to all six teachers. The software did this by developing matrixes and reporting any overlap in the themes. The related themes clustered or grouped into several clusters. They were: Positive and Negative personal insight, Beliefs and Skills (from the Personal Data main theme); Life long Learning accumulated and Life Long Learning reflected (from the Life Long Learning main theme). By completing this procedure, I was looking for any further patterns in the life stories of my teachers. I called this procedure the horizontal search as the software searched horizontally across the stories to find the related themes.

My next analysis was to take the related or overlapped themes and compare them to the teachings of the Medicine Wheel and Cajete's (1994) ecological learning
process, as well as, the theory of resilience. In doing this, I was looking for and found two results. First, I found that there was a strong relationships between each theory and the commonly related themes, thereby giving the results greater external validity. Second, I found that the strong relationships to the three theories suggested context, content and process of my teachers learning.

Below, I have reported the umbrella themes or patterns that I have learned, from the systematic results, as the result of my analysis. There were five umbrella patterns in the stories of my teachers that suggested the style, process, content and context of their learning. They were a foundation of resilience factors or content in their lives and their families and communities, lateral or insight learning style, a preference for accumulated experiential learning, a holistic context, and a ecological learning process.

As well, following the reports of the my learning from the systematic results, I have discussed the non-systematic themes and my learning from each of them.

Foundations of Wellness/Resilience

Cross tabulation of the themes from my teachers' life stories with the theory of resilience demonstrated that the factors necessary for the development of resilience were present in the 'teachers' early lives. The factors leading to resilience in my teachers were present in each teacher, in their families and in their communities, despite rapid cultural, economic and political change. These factors also assisted my teachers to return to balance after periods of extreme stress and to seek healthier life styles. Stressors that the individuals in the study experienced were caused by rapidly changing communities, economic realities and access to information from a wider spectrum of people and cultures, as described in chapter 2.

There are thirteen protective factors that can be perceived in individuals. Each one is supported by research from a variety of authors. They are a sense of responsibility (Hetherington, 1989), cognitive problem solving and intelligence (Baldwin et al, 1993; Conrad & Hammen, 1993; Easterbrooks, Davison & Chazan, 1993, Werner, 1993), positive self-esteem and self-efficacy (Baldwin et al, 1993; Conrad & Hammen, 1993; Cicchetti et al, 1993; Werner, 1993), feelings of control over one's life (Baldwin et al, 1993; Werner, 1993), feelings of optimism and expectations for the future (Werner, 1993; Wyman, Cown, Work & Parker, 1993), a history of competence or success (Conrad & Hammen, 1993; Schissel, 1993), social competence and social or interpersonal skills (Mangham, McCrath, Reid & Stewart, 1994), experiencing a positive event before or after a stressor (Rutter, 1990), becoming detached from or leaving conflict within the
family or neighborhood (Cicchetti et al, 1993), support seeking (Mangham, McGrath, Reid & Stewart, 1994), positive relationship with an adult outside the home (Conrad & Hammen, 1993; Werner, 1993), spiritual practice (Werner, 1993). All of these factors were related to the related themes from the horizontal search.

There are fourteen factors that can be found in the families of origin of resilient people (Mangham, McGrath, Reid & Stewart, 1994). Each one is supported by research from a variety of authors. They are: positive parent child attachment (Easterbrookes, Davidson & Chazon, 1993), positive parent child interactions (Baldwin et al., 1993; Richters & Martinez, 1993; Werner, 1993), effective parenting (Easterbrookes, Davidson & Chazan, 1993; Richters & Martinez, 1993), structure and rules within the home (Baldwin et al., 1993; Easterbrookes, Davidson & Chazan, 1993; Richters & Martinez, 1993; Werner, 1993), responsibilities for all family members (Baldwin et al., 1993; Easterbrookes, Davidson & Chazan, 1993; Richters & Martinez, 1993; Werner, 1993), parent or caregivers expectations of a positive future for their children (Wyman, Cown, Work & Parker, 1991), becoming detached from conflict in the family of origin (Werner, 1993), strong extended family network (Mangham, McGrath, Reid & Stewart, 1994), supportive friendship network beyond the family (Mangham, McGrath, Reid & Stewart, 1994), participation in extracurricular activities (Mangham, McGrath, Reid & Stewart, 1994), positive school experiences (Mangham, McGrath, Reid & Stewart, 1994), responsibilities outside the home (Mangham, McGrath, Reid & Stewart, 1994), opening of opportunities (Mangham, McGrath, Reid & Stewart, 1994), good family coping strategies and hardiness (Ladewig, Jesse & Strickland, 1992). All of these factors were related to the related themes from the horizontal search.

### Dominant Factors Found in the Individual Teachers

Those resilience factors that were most dominant in my teachers' life stories were a sense of responsibility, a history of competence or success, spiritual practice, social competence and interpersonal skills, support seeking, positive self-esteem and self-efficacy, problem solving abilities, positive relationship with an adult outside the home and feelings of control over life.

### Sense of Responsibility

Sense of Responsibility was the individual's factor that was related most often to the themes from the horizontal search. I coded Sense Of Responsibility when my
teachers described their sense of responsibility for children, their own or other's, their sense of responsibility as family and community members, their sense of responsibility for providing for themselves and their families and their sense of responsibility as friends to unrelated people. Sense of Responsibility was related most often to Positive personal insight, second most often to Negative personal insight, third most often to Life Long Learning accumulated, fourth most often to Life Long Learning reflected and fifth most often to Beliefs. Sense of Responsibility was related so infrequently to the Skills sub-theme that the results are negligible for the purposes of this study.

These results suggested to me that a sense of responsibility and the living experiences that resulted from that sense has helped my teachers to understand themselves and their behaviour and to make decisions about who they wanted to be as people and how they wanted to behave. Furthermore, my teachers appeared to have incorporated these understandings into their life long learning, so that they were able to recall the experiences of other situations and also reflect on those experiences to make decisions in the present. Although Beliefs was related the least frequently to Sense of Responsibility, there was a strong enough relationship to suggest to me that a sense of responsibility was crucial in the development of the belief structure of my teachers.

Charles has provided an example of Positive personal insight related to Sense of Responsibility. In this example he has shared about his second attempt at sobriety, when he realized that he would not get well unless he sought help from others. The Positive personal insight was his realization that he could and did seek the help of others. The sense of responsibility was found in his willingness to seek the help of others for his own growth and for the benefit of his family and community:

...my life started to change you know, I had to work on my defects, I had to work on my anger. I had to work on my jealousy, and I had to take a ten day program on personal development. To develop myself, talk about my child; talk about right from everything to the day. I was there in there I went through an experience, like that talking about my childhood. And after I went through that, life then, my life was lighter, it was light. It was more easier. Because I have learned that let go. I kept working in that area, and I eventually started working in that area, working in that field and I begin to understand things you know, people can teach me things now, I don't have to teach them anything, I can learn from my white brothers, I can learn from my Native brothers, you know my sisters. Because at one time I never had and urge to work with white people, you know, I was so prejudice, I was so negative about them you know.

History of Competence or Success

A History of Competence or Success was the individual's factor that was related second most often to the themes from the horizontal search. I coded History of
Competence when ever my teachers described situations in their life stories where they felt that their actions or behaviour in that situation were successful or where they felt competent in a given situation. Skills was the related theme from the horizontal search related most frequently to History of Competence. Positive personal insight was related second most frequently, Negative personal insight and Life Long Learning accumulated were related equally in the third most related spot. Beliefs and Life Long Learning reflected were related so infrequently as to be negligible for the purposes of this study.

It seemed logical to me that History of Competence would be related most often to the Skills theme as I would suspect that my teachers would feel competent during the learning and practise of physical, emotional, social or spiritual skills. This result was verified by searching as my teachers described situations where they all had experienced learning skills in a relatively safe environment, without a lot of criticism, when they were young. Charles, John and Francois did not always have such an environment to learn their skills, but there were opportunities in their lives where they were able to be in such an environment. Similarly, the strong relationship of History of Competence to Positive and Negative personal insight suggested that my teachers not only learned new skills but also learned about themselves in the process of learning those new skills. The strong relationship to Life Long Learning accumulated also suggested to me that my teachers were able to build on the early skills by applying the lessons from their early years to situations later in their lives.

Simon has provided an example of History of Competence related to Skills from his life story. In this example he describes the process he went through to get his education and find his vocation, so that he had many opportunities to realize his competence at several jobs. He freely admitted that this process was not always a happy one, with a lot of false starts and unhappy realizations along the way. However, his history of success comes from his realization that he did complete his education and find a vocation, while accumulating many skills along the way, and that this was unusual for someone from his community and his generation:

Got kicked out of school, eventually, but I stayed, I, I stayed at Snowbird, I stayed, I, I, bordered, I lived in town. So I finished my school right at Duck Lake, the Snowbird High School. And then from there, uh, almost immediately started that Indian art program they had at the cultural centre. Indian art program, so I was there about two years, two and a half years in Saskatoon. We had camps and you know, the Indian studies, the whole, they had a whole trip at that time people were pretty militant. AIM was on the scene, not very many Native students in Saskatoon, so the bar scene, like the (a bar), that was happening at that time. And, so after two and a half years, there, I went back to (-----) uh, did some teaching in art for about a year. And then again I quit. See there's this theme here, quitting. (Laughing... And that's when I started uh, there was a job opportunity for renewable resources a technician in Meadow Lake, and I, I took that. I think it was about two years, there, I was there two years I did some
correspondence work with Sask. Ed, got my Geo. Trig. And so I was ready for Kelsey and this is where I met you. Where we ended up. So I worked uh, after that I went back to work in Meadow Lake, for another year, I think it was, and back to the reserve, and that's where I started from. Ya, I did, I got my uh, I guess its a diploma. I got my diploma at Kelsey. And so I worked in Meadow Lake and then sure enough again 1980, that's, that's when I quit. So I'm leading up to something here. That has been a sort of a sore point, which I never realized, but 1990, I went into SUNTEP here, oh before that I had some other classes with the U of R, and got that Counselors Certificate through the U of R. And then I took up uh, SUNTEP, another two, two and a half years or so, I got my degree in Education. And when I did my internship, it was very close to home, just outside of the reserve there's a school called Wild Rose School, that's where I did my internship.

**Spiritual Practice**

Spiritual Practice was the individual's factor that was third most frequently related to the related themes from the horizontal search. I coded Spiritual Practice whenever my teachers described doing some form of spiritual ritual, whether it was stopping during the day to communicate with their Creator, or something more formal, like attending a church service or a Sweat Lodge. The strong relationship of Spiritual Practice to the other themes, demonstrated to me the importance of spirituality in my teachers' lives. Their spirituality appeared to be not simply a blind following of ritual on a given day once a week, but something that they lived and experienced on a daily basis. Each of my teachers did describe times in their lives when they were not in conscious daily contact with their Creator, but for the most part this process has been an important part of their lives.

Spiritual Practice was related most often to Positive personal insight, second most frequently to Beliefs, third most frequently to Life Long Learning accumulated and fourth most frequently to Negative personal insight. These results suggested to me that a spiritual awareness and the practice of some form of spiritual ritual was an important part of the personal development process of all my teachers. As well, spirituality appeared to play an important role in the development of a belief structure for my teachers. Once again my teachers also demonstrated that their learning process consisted of the accumulation of information and experience, rather than reflection and analysis of isolated events in their lives.

Francois has provided an example of Spiritual Practice related to Positive personal insight by describing how he feels when he has been to a Sweat Lodge. In this instance his spiritual practice is the participation in the Sweat Lodge ceremony and his positive personal insight comes from his realization about how good he feels when he has participated in that ceremony:
Ya. Ya it kinda amazing and you know, part of a healing, I like I when I do my, when I go to the Sweat I feel, next day like I feel really healthy and alive you know. And I really kinda relax when I go to bed. Sleep good that whole night, in the morning you get up oh, I feel good, great you know. That's how I feel when I go to the Sweat, and I dunno, it makes me feel good anyway, and it helps me, like I, I prayed for myself, to give me more strength, more power to work with people, not to hurt people, but to work with people and I don't want nobody to hurt me, you know.

Social Competence or Success

Social Competence or Interpersonal Skills was the individual's factor that was the fourth most frequently related to the themes from horizontal search. I coded Social Competence when my teachers described times in their life stories where they were interacting with other people in a manner that got their needs met while avoiding hurting others. This strong relationship of the factor Social Competence to the other related themes from the horizontal search, suggested to me that all my teachers had strong social and interpersonal skills. Where these skills came from is not as clear. John, Francois and Charles did not have an early childhood that was conducive to them learning social skills as they were often abused physically and verbally during this time. Simon, although not abused, remembers spending a great deal of time alone as a young child. Only the women, Mary and Therese, have reported a relatively socially rich early childhood, in the company of extended family and friends, that would have suggested that they had plenty of opportunity to learn social and interpersonal skills. However, Taylor (1995) has suggested that Aboriginal cultures tend to be high context cultures, as described by Hall (1976). In high context cultures, people receive messages from each other via implied meanings that are inherent in the social context and so little verbal communication is necessary to exchange meaning. In such cultures it would be probable that individuals would learn at an early age, through observation and repetition, to become socially competent in that culture.

Social Competence was related most frequently to Positive personal insight, second most frequently to Skills, third most frequently to Beliefs and fourth most frequently to Life Long Learning accumulated. Negative personal insight and Life Long Learning reflected were related to Social Competence so infrequently that these results are inconsequential for the purposes of this study. These results suggested to me that my teachers' social competence and interpersonal skills contributed positively to the development of a healthy self-esteem and to the development of physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual skills. As well, my teachers' social competence and interpersonal skills are intimately linked to their incremental learning process. These
relationships suggested to me that interpersonal skills and healthy self-esteem are crucial to my teachers’ learning.

In her life story, Therese has provided an example of Social Competence related to Positive personal insight. In this example Therese describes the reasons for making her decision to apply for an addiction counsellor position with the local First Nation even though she was not a Band member and had no training. Her social competence is demonstrated by her ability to talk to the chief about her desire and to explain to her current employer her desire to change her job. Her Positive personal insight comes from her ability to help people in her counsellor position and her ability to convince her people to celebrate the sobriety of those in the community who were already sober for a long time:

By the time I was working in the store, that's the time the job was open with that NNADAP. And I thought about it, this is my chance maybe I can help the community and, you know, about drinkin' and, I thought of a lot of things at that time. But people didn't really know about that program and what alcoholics mean. So that was why I seen a lot of people making fun out of that. That notice which was up for that job, when it says that it was for alcohol and I when I see that, I used to think only if they know what alcohol is doing to our people, they wouldn't say those things I used to think that in my mind. But that that poster stayed up but nobody sign up or anything and then the time came for that poster to be down, when the Chief came back to it there was not names. So I went up to him and I told him who sign up and he said no one. So right away I told him I was thinkin' about it so he said, I'll give you call later, but I knew kinda, 'cause I was the only one, so I told the manager why I wanted to switch my job to, to the NNADAP worker. He he really understand it, 'cause I made clearly to him why...Ya, so later in the afternoon I had a phone call from the Chief and he told me to go to the Band Office so I did, and that's how I started this NNADAP Worker. And before me, there was um, a lady a older lady that who was working in that position. But she's, she can't um, gets sick a lot and things like that so, it was hard for her, so that's why she resigned. So I started this program. And at first I got involved with helping people with uh, AA. That was what I did first, 'cause a lot of people didn't hardly understand about it so, that's why we we set up a group. . I wanted to fight this thing. .Ya. And then after that my husband joined us, and it went OK for awhile and then we, we decided to have uh, a round up. First round up. 'Cause there's in a community there's some people who, who been sober for a long time. I have used that them for, for to show people so, we had this round up came up, so we give them a plaque and a medallion. First I talked to them about it and the reason why we have to work together and maybe something will come.

Support Seeking

Support Seeking was the individual's factor that was fifth most frequently related to the related themes from the horizontal search. I coded support seeking when my teachers described, in their life stories, that they were actively seeking support from family or friends during times of stress or when they were feeling lonely and isolated. This strong relationship suggested to me that my teachers frequently sought support and that
were willing to do so. It is not clear from the stories how they learned to seek the support of others.

Support Seeking was related to Life Long Learning accumulated most frequently, Positive personal insight and Negative personal insight second and third most frequently, respectively. Beliefs, Skills and Life Long Learning reflected were related to Support Seeking so infrequently that these results are inconsequential for the purposes of this study. These results suggested to me that my teachers learned from each encounter with the people from whom they sought support and that they developed better understandings of themselves as people from each encounter.

Mary has provided an example of Support Seeking related to Life Long Learning accumulated. In this example, from her life story, she describes how important the kindness and encouragement of an RCMP officer was to her developing dreams for herself. She apparently regularly spoke to this officer for a number of years and he listened and offered encouraging words. Thus, she sought his support and his kind words contributed to her life long learning as she began to think about and plan for her future to be different than her mother's:

There was this one particular police officer that I remember, he was different than all the rest, my teachers. He listened, I remember one time I was outside the house, and I was playing with the dogs and crying because, there was fighting in the house. And someone went to get the police. Before he went in he came to stand beside me and he knelt down. He asked me is this your dog. I said------, I responded, I don't know what I responded. It must be scary, it must be scary, your Dad, you know, your Dad drinking, and scaring you kids. I said yes. You know he says, it doesn't have to be this way, when you grow up, you make your own-------you can chose how you want your life to be. But you don't have to grow up getting married and having kids and staying here. There's all sorts of things you can do. And he said that and each time I'd see him he'd take the time to say hello, or wave and smile, and I remember, I remember that quite a bit, and throughout the years, except maybe for my teenage years, and I got a chance to meet him, about four years ago, four or five years ago, and he had such a--------I don't know because of the time that he took, just to listen to me, or maybe what he said. Because of that I began to have dreams of what I can, of what I knew, and what I wanted, what I can have.

Positive Self-Esteem or Self-Efficacy

Positive Self-Esteem or Self-Efficacy was the individual's factor that was sixth most often related to the related themes from the horizontal search. I coded Positive Self-Esteem when my teachers described moments in their life stories when they were feeling positive about themselves or their behaviour. Furthermore, I coded Self-Efficacy when my teachers described behaving in ways which demonstrated that they were seeking to change their behaviour toward behaviour that would enhance their well-being.
strong relationship, of Positive Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy to the other themes from the horizontal search, indicated to me that even though Negative personal insight was a theme that continues to be prominent in all the relationships thus far described, my teachers had a generally healthy and positive self-esteem. Furthermore, the strong relationship with Self-Efficacy indicated to me that my teachers sought throughout their lives to improve their behaviour so that their over all well-being would be enhanced.

Positive personal insight was the group of themes that were most often related to Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy, Beliefs was second most often related and Life Long Learning accumulated was third. Skills, Negative personal insight and Life Long Learning reflected were so infrequently related that these results are inconsequential for the purposes of this study. I had expected Positive personal insight to be strongly related to Positive Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy as the literature speaks strongly to self-esteem being tied to valuing oneself and feeling good about one's behaviour. I also expected Positive Self-esteem and Self-Efficacy to be related to Life Long Learning accumulated as it seems logical to me that the more one practiced behaving in ways that would improve or enhance one's well-being, the more one would learn that this behaviour felt good and hence the more one would behave in those ways. However, the fact that Beliefs was so strongly related to Positive Self-esteem and Self-Efficacy was somewhat of a surprise to me. And yet when I think about this and when I reread the stories of my teachers it was obvious that positive behaviour and the accompanying good feelings, led eventually to my teachers developing beliefs based on their experiences from the behaviour.

John, in his life story, has described making an effort to accept his new partner's children as his own. In this instance his self-efficacy comes from his behaviour in attempting to make his new blended family function as a unit with him as a parent to his partner's children. His positive personal insight and his positive self-esteem come when he realizes that his partner's children have accepted him and appreciate his efforts:

Like I having such a good life now you know, I wanna make the best of it with this lady that I'm with. My oldest son moved with moved in with me, she has two of her own. It's just an extended and blended family. And uh, you know they don't before they were kinda you know they were kinda leery, you know, moving in with this long, long, black haired dude you know. And uh, it's like I sensed it. But now it's just blending in. They don't they don't see the Indian in me or something and whatever, I sense that they see a human being. Kind, warm human being you know who's trying to make the best of what we have right now as a family. And I feel accepted by them. They respect me.
Problem Solving Ability and Intelligence

Problem Solving Ability and Intelligence was the individual's factor that was related seventh most often to the related themes from the horizontal search. I avoided trying to determine what constituted intelligence in my teachers' life stories, as this is, at best, a controversial topic and one that I did not feel competent to judge, especially since I was working cross-culturally. Instead, I coded Problem Solving Ability whenever my teachers described instances in their life stories when they successfully resolved problems in their lives. These problems could have been social and emotional in nature where they were in conflict with another, or they could have been physical in attempting to learn a new task, or they could have been spiritual in that they felt disconnected from their Creator or the Grandparents and were working at getting that connection back. To my mind, the ability to solve problems that one experiences in the process of living is really the basis of intelligence and all other measures are confounded by cultural bias.

Problem Solving was related most frequently to Positive personal insight, second most frequently to Life Long Learning accumulated and third most frequently to Negative personal insight. Beliefs, Skills and Life Long Learning reflected were related to Problem Solving so infrequently that these results are negligible for the purposes of this study. These results suggested to me that my teachers ability to solve problems contributed greatly to their understanding of themselves and to their life long learning. The life long learning most often related in this case was again Life Long Learning accumulated which suggested to me that my teachers once more used a process of accumulating experience, rather than a process of abstract analysis and finding solutions through analysis of unknown factors.

Mary has provided an example of Problem Solving related to Positive personal insight in her life story. In this case she describes wishing she could, planning to take and actually taking a canoe trip north from her home community to the trapping ground that belongs to her father’s family. The problem she solves is overcoming the fact that she is a single parent on very limited income. The positive personal insight came when she actually arrived at the site and had a profound feeling of connection to generations of her ancestors:

When we’d go to the trap line, the fish camp, we’d have, I don’t remember the log cabins but the foundation, I remember the foundation, its one of the traveled routes for the fur traders. My Grandfather had a cabin, all his sons and their wives, you know we lived in the trapline, the fish camp, together. And each family had a cabin, on top a hill, on top of a hill of a big clearing by a river, a flowing river. I went back there this summer, you could still some of the foundations(unknown word(s)), covered with the grass. There was a lot of kids running around playing, everybody was together...
so I can maybe put things to rest. It was like going back home when you’re traveling that route. Uh I think it’ll before they had canoes, I mean before they boats and motors and how they used to travel, how families used to be together and the the foundation where the cabins used to be. Um, well at, canoeing the route that my grandparents and their grandparents must have travelled and how it can never be that way, but not to be embarrassed, and to be proud for what the background that I have. Um, growing up I never realized, or I never appreciated what I had um until I got older. And now to to be able to go back and say “this is where I am from, this is some of the things that happened”, and just just a you know proud, ya proud from where I came from but not uh, how would you say it (Cree) um not in a mean way, like an an appreciation, not in a greedy proud way, but an appreciation. Do you understand? Can you understand?

**Positive Relationship with an Adult Outside the Home**

Positive Relationship with an Adult Outside the Home was the individual's factor that was the eighth most frequently related to the related themes from the horizontal search. I coded Positive relationship with an Adult Outside the Home when my teachers described visiting with, seeking guidance or shelter from an adult who was not a part of their immediate family. Mangham, McGrath, Reid and Stewart (1994) described this adult relationship as a non-family member, but I found that due to the characteristics of my teachers’ communities and the close association of family members, that in these cases this person outside the family was often related by kinship. For Charles and Simon, these people were uncles, for Francois it was his grandmother, for Mary her grandfather and an RCMP officer. Therese had an old women who used to come to visit in her parents home and a nurse who she befriended. However, John had three completely non-related people with whom he had a special relationship.

Positive personal insight was the only group of related themes from the horizontal search that had any significance for the purpose of this study. All the other groups of themes, Beliefs, Skills, Negative personal insight, Life Long Learning accumulated and Life Long Learning reflected, were so infrequently related as to be inconsequential for the purposes of this study. This suggests for me that these people were crucial for my teachers to develop a positive sense of themselves, given the turmoil that most of them grew up in as children.

Charles describes his relationship with his uncle, in his life story, and the positive personal insight he has about his need for freedom that his uncle supplied by taking him out of the home and away to trapline:

I used to remember that I used to have an uncle that was really, he used to be happy, he used to live across the lake and uh I used to really like my uncle because uh he used to take me out in the trapline. I used to go, he never had dog or anything, he used to just pull a sleigh and I’d go with him to the trapline and there when I was out there I felt free and my uncle didn’t say nothing you know, don’t do this don’t do that and
I felt free and I felt like I wanted what I wanted to do you know as a child what I wanted to do and that kept on for awhile until uh I went home again and then I think I was about seven I think, seven or eight, and uh after I went home again uh about six months after my uncle had passed away and that was the end of my uh my freedom again and think I'm sure that he seen what was happening but I know he cared and he was trying to tell me something or maybe show me something while he was still living. And sometimes I uh I used to wonder you know why is doing this you know why is he doing that where's the discipline not there. Well apparently his live was totally different than my dads, and then with the people that were teaching us so I can remember seeing totally different so that's who I kinda leaned on. I was really happy when he came to the house you know and I used to see him come in and I used to be happy because uh I expected him to ask me to go to go somewhere because my dad never took us no place like he didn't take us, he never had the time.

Feelings of Control Over One's Life

Feelings of Control over One's Life was the individual's factor that was ninth most frequently related to the groups of related themes from the horizontal search. I coded Feelings of Control Over One's Life when my teachers described a sense of being in control of situations and events in their life stories. The passages I coded could have described economic control in the sense that my teachers felt secure with enough income to support themselves and their families. Similarly, it could have been a sense of emotional security in the sense that they felt connected to others and that those relationships were healthy and strong. As well, I coded Feelings of Control when my teachers described being comfortable with their own behaviour in the sense that it matched their value system and beliefs. Therese has provided an example of how she comes to feel in control of her life. In this case Therese's example is related to another theme in her story, Positive personal insight:

...Somehow, it kinda get into my mind, that, I should do this, try this. And I don't keep it when I start thinking about something. I just go ahead, it's just like something telling me this is how you could do it. It comes into my mind. . . . I see, I see it life, in any through people. Like I see, it every day, day, daily life. When I see these things I think about it and then I share about it. This is how it would have been, perfect or try it, it will be easier, that's how l.

Feelings of Control Over One's Life was related most frequently to Positive personal insight, second most frequently to Negative personal insight and third most frequently to Life Long Learning accumulated. Beliefs and Skills were related to Feelings of Control Over One's Life so infrequently that the results were inconsequential for the purposes of this study. These results indicated to me that having a sense of control over one's life was important in gaining an understanding of oneself. As well, for my teachers, having a feeling of control over their lives seemed to be tied to their dominant process of
life long learning. This dominant process, as reported elsewhere, is that of accumulating information and experience, rather than reflecting on experience and weighting the odds that something would happen in a specific way.

I was somewhat surprised to find that Negative personal insight was the second most frequently related of all the groups of related themes from the horizontal search. In my mind having negative insights about myself usually leads me to question my behaviour and my thinking. It seems likely to me that a state of mind such as this would not be conducive to feeling in control of one's life. However, on reflection I can only assume that my teachers have used their dominant process of learning, that of accumulating information and experience in this scenario as well. It seems likely that they have woven the negative personal insights into the overall fabric of their lives so that the negative insights become simply another source of information to draw from.

All of the remaining individual's factors, Planning for Future Events, Feelings of Optimism or Positive Expectations for the Future, Experiencing a Positive Event Before or After a Stressor and Becoming Detached from or Leaving Conflict in the Family or Neighborhood, although all related to the groups of related themes from the horizontal search, were so infrequently related that they are inconsequential for the purposes of this study. In the next sub-sections I have reported the results of the search for relationships between the factors found in the family of origin and the groups of related themes from the horizontal search.

Dominant Factors Found in the Teachers' Families or Communities

Those factors that were dominant in the families and the communities of my teachers were opening of opportunities, strong extended family network, positive parent-child attachment and positive parent-child interactions. I have discussed each of these factors in detail below using quotations, as examples to illustrate each point, from the stories of my teachers.

Opening of Opportunities

Opening of Opportunities was the family factor that was related most often to the groups of related themes from the horizontal search. I coded Opening of Opportunities when my teachers described having opportunities become available to them. Occasionally this was meeting a new friend, or being able to go to live with a
relative. More often, however, it had something to do with schooling opportunities or employment opportunities.

Positive personal insight was most often related to Opening of Opportunities and Negative personal insight was second most often related. All of the other groups of related themes, Beliefs, Skills, Life Long Learning reflected and Life Long Learning accumulated, were also related to Opening of Opportunities, but were related in such small numbers as to be negligible for the purposes of this study. These results suggested to me that when my teachers had opportunities to test themselves in new situations they learned more about themselves. Sometimes this learning contributed to positive self-esteem and sometimes it contributed to my teachers learning things about themselves that they were not happy with. Both types of learning contributed to personal growth.

Simon has provided several examples of opportunities opening for him that are all related to Positive personal insight. First, he chose to stay home from school to do the chores when his father had a minor hunting accident, next he became involved in political action to allow the students from his First Nation to decide where they wanted to go to school. Finally, he described a series of post secondary training and that he was involved in. In each case he learned something positive about himself:

And about that time, my, my father went out, he was out with other people and did some squirrel hunting with 22's. And so, they came home and my father was bandaged up right here, had a bullet hole right through his hand. 22 ain't much of a hole. Missed everything didn't even hit a bone. So it wasn't really a serious injury, but I, I sure made it out to be. And he can't work anymore, he can't, you know he can't run this family anymore, so that's where, you know I kicked in, I was gonna do the work at home, we still had horses. I, I not sure, I don't think we had cattle by then, but we had cattle, chickens, whatever, back when I was younger. But I think at that time we didn't have any cattle, but we did have horses and we did have to have, wood for a stove, so my father was injured so I told my mom, I'm gonna drop school, I'm gonna work here. And again, it was my decision that was, they object of course, it wasn't uh, it wasn't forced. So I stayed home. I quit school. . .and we were told by Indian Affairs that we should go to school in Prince Albert. And a few of us uh, had heard about the student residences, you know, there was a lot of sports, sports. And we wanted to go there, at Duck Lake. Things had changed quite a bit and we wanted to go there. And we were told we couldn't go there so, for about a month we were bussed from (home reserve) to Prince Albert going to St. Mary's High School. And, I didn't like that idea, I just, I just couldn't fit into the school. And so at that time um, again, I wanna say again, again, but this is one significant thing too. I quit. And the same thing happened, people came to see me, uh, go back can't quit. So I still liked that idea, eh. People coming to see me for that. But we stuck to our guns and we told the committee that we're not going back there. We want to go to Duck Lake. And then they started agreeing and then there was eventually how it turned out to be a boycott and secrecy was there. So it turned into a national kind of thing. So this was back in around 1970. No before that. And so, it at that time, this whole issue of Indian control was already, I, I don't know if the politicians from, from my home saw that as an opportunity to impress their political agenda, you know, Indian control. It seemed to kind of fit in, so, they were on our side now and sure enough, not long after a boycott had lasted for about a week, we were allowed to go to the school at the residence where we wanted to go. . .So I finished my school right at Duck Lake, the Snowbird High School. And then from there, uh, almost immediately started that Indian art program.
they had at the cultural Centre. Indian art program, so I was there about two years, two and a half years in Saskatoon. We had camps and you know, the Indian studies, the whole, they had a whole trip at that time people were pretty militant. AIM was on the scene, not very many Native students in Saskatoon, so the bar scene, like the Baldwin, that was happening at that time. And, so after two and a half years, there, I went back to (home reserve) uh, did some teaching in art for about a year. ...And that’s when I started uh, there was a job opportunity for renewable resources a technician in Meadow Lake, and I, I took that. I think it was about two years, there, I was there two years I did some correspondence work with Sask. Ed, got my Geo. Trig. And so I was ready for Kelsey and this is where met you. Where we ended up. So I worked uh, after that I went back to work in Meadow Lake, for another year... 

**Strong Extended Family Network**

Strong Extended Family Network was the family’s factor that was second most frequently related to the groups of related themes from the horizontal search. I coded Strong Extended Family Network when my teachers described receiving support from relatives, visiting relatives when lonely, cooperative work efforts with relatives or when my teachers described living harmoniously in extended family groups such as on trapline.

Life Long Learning accumulated was related to Strong Extended Family Network most frequently, Positive personal insight was second most frequent and Negative personal insight was third. Beliefs, Skills and Life Long Learning reflected were related in such small numbers that their results were negligible for the purposes of this study. These results indicated to me that a strong extended family was a crucial part of my teachers accumulated experience and learning. Furthermore, the results suggested to me that a large part of the accumulated experience and learning resulted in my teachers gaining insight and understandings about who they were as people.

All of my teachers spoke of the importance of family, Simon and Charles less so than the others, but John perhaps best described how important his older sisters were for him until he got married himself. He still considers his sisters important, but now he thinks of them as sisters rather than extra mothers:

I had a I had a sister in this community that’s why I came here, so it was just like it was just like all my sisters had a piece of my mom in them eh. So that’s my mom, OK, I’ll go to my mom here you know. If I have trouble if I get into trouble I go to the other mom you know. I had a lot of moms you know. I was dominated by a lot of female in my family eh.

**Positive Parent-Child Attachment**

Positive Parent-Child Attachment was the family factor that was third most often related to the groups of related themes from the horizontal search. I coded Positive
Parent-Child Attachment when my teachers described times in their lives when they felt particularly close to a parent. These could be when the parent was demonstrating something like how to fish with a net, or when a parent took the time to tell the child stories, or when the parent was listening to some trouble that the child was feeling.

Positive personal insight was related most often to Positive Parent-Child Attachment and Negative personal insight was related second most often. Beliefs, Skills, Life Long Learning reflected and Life Long Learning accumulated were related in such small numbers that their results were negligible for the purposes of this study. These results suggested to me that parental influence, as long as it was positive, helped my teachers to learn about themselves. As much of this influence was recounted by my teachers as part of their early childhoods, it seemed likely that positive parental attachment and influence is most important during these early years.

Therese has described her positive attachment to her father, related to Positive personal insight, in her early years, even though the relationship became strained once her mother had died. Her positive personal insight comes as she remembers how happy and peaceful she felt during those early years when the whole family would be on trapline:

\begin{quote}
Was lot of memories in there, in the back years as I was growing, comparing to nowadays. There’s alot a good things in there, that I remember as, when I was a kid. ‘Cause as I’m growing I kind of grew up out in a trapline. We usually go there, before it’s freeze you know, by a boat. And then we stay there till up up to around Christmas, and a little bit before Christmas, we used to come back. But when we’re comin’ it by a, a dog team. And there’s lotta that is really joyful and peaceful in those days for me. ‘Cause we see alot a wildlife’s and, caribou things like that. And even though when we’re going up North with uh, other groups, but yet my my parents we used to stay in a different, a little bit distant from the other people we used to say in a different locate, just my younger sister, my dad and my mom. Even though we’re kind of only one family livin’ there but it was still alot a fun. Because my dad when we were out there he used to teach us how, how to go fishin’. Setting net and all those things like that. . .
\end{quote}

Positive Parent-Child Interactions

Positive parent-Child Interactions was the fourth most often related to the groups of related themes from the horizontal search. I coded Positive Parent-Child Interactions when my teachers described having learned something valuable from interactions with a parent. This valuable learning could be something like bush skills, or personal discipline gained by watching that parent. Some of my teachers spoke more frequently about a grandparent or an uncle or someone else who was a positive influence on them during times of conflict at home. I also coded these interactions as positive parent-child.
interactions because all of my teachers, except Simon, seemed to have at least one other close relative who often functioned as a parent.

Life Long Learning accumulated was the group of related themes most often related to Positive Parent-child Interactions and Skills was second most often related. Beliefs, Positive and Negative personal insight and Life Long Learning reflected were related to Positive Parent-Child Interactions that were inconsequential for the purposes of this study. These results suggested to me that positive interactions with a parent helped my teachers establish habits and values that served them well and contributed to their life long learning by helping them to establish awareness of patterns and their results.

Mary has described a last visit with her grandfather, who often functioned as her parent, when the old man was dying. For Mary these passages amount to Life Long Learning accumulated as she is often able to hear her grandfather’s words from that last visit when she is feeling alone and afraid. When she hears the words her grandfather spoke she is able to gather her courage and do what she has to do:

I noticed that he had tears. I thought he was hurting, physically hurting. So I went up to him and asked him, in Cree I asked him (-----) are you sick Grandfather? . . I don’t remember him crying at my Grandmother’s funeral. He had tears in his eyes and he said come sit beside me Noosim, my Granddaughter. I want to tell you some things he goes. . . but always remember where you come from no matter what happens, (-----------------) don’t ever forget our Creator, as you get older you’ll, you will go through many paths. . . you know I’ve made mistakes in my life that I regret and that have had a negative impact on my family. . . And he talked about his family, one aunt in particular that he was worried about, because she had a lot of anger and a lot sadness that she wasn’t able to talk about, and how that made him sad. . . So, and then he goes, you know in the future you’ll have to learn to survive in this world with what you have, what they are doing now (Cree word) people——the welfare, people getting on the assistance, they’re making people——how do you say it? (Cree word) expecting! One of these days in the future they will take that away. If you don’t go to school and get your education you will not survive. . . The white man wants everything, everything in the land. They took our land, there will come a time when they will also want our water, and then how are we supposed to survive. That is why education is important, in order to help Nitho, Indian people. . . But how right he was, you know at that time I didn’t understand what he was saying, and now as things start to happen, I don’t feel as scared because he had told me, it is just like he had warned me. And its such a good memory to have, because when I, now when I feel alone, when I feel sad, when I feel my family, my family doesn’t care, or how alone my kids are, I am never really alone because he knew it was going to be hard, and he told me, so when I remember that I don’t feel as alone. . .

Supportive Friendship Network Beyond the Family

Supportive Friendship Network Beyond the Family was the family’s factor that was fifth most often related to the groups of related themes from the horizontal search. I coded Supportive Friendship Networks Beyond the Family when my teachers described
having close friends that were not related to them. These friendships could have been
crud of friends that were not related to them. These friendships could have been
childhood friendships or friendships that were established in their teen years.

Positive personal insight was the group of related themes that was often related
to Supportive Friendship Networks Beyond the Family and Negative personal insight was
the second most often related. All the other groups of related themes, Beliefs, Skills, Life
Long Learning reflected, Life Long Learning accumulated, although also related to
Supportive Friendship Networks Beyond the Family, were related in such small numbers as
to be inconsequential for the purposes of this study. These results suggested to me that
friendships were important in helping my teachers develop understandings of
themselves, particularly in relation to other people besides their family.

Charles has shared that he had a group of friends when he was a young
teenager that were close in the sense that they hung around together and got into
trouble together. I am not certain that these are precisely the type of supportive
friendships that Mangham, McGrath, Reid & Stewart (1994) were thinking about, but
these individuals became important in Charles’ life. Charles describes how he was
always taking the blame whenever this group of friends was into trouble. Supportive
Friendship Network Beyond the Family was related to Positive personal insight, in this
passage from Charles, as he realizes that he is taking the blame in order to be taken
away from his childhood home. I have interpreted this as a positive insight because it
demonstrates that he was attempting to leave the conflict at home, even though his
method may not have been the best:

...about 11 and 12 and I started taking chances and you know and uh and I
started getting into trouble with the damaging stuff in the community and because uh at
that time I figured nobody cares and why should uh I wanted to be taken away that’s
what I was trying to do, be taken away from the community, be taken away from my
parents, and be taken away from everybody so I can be out there some place different
place, maybe life will be different is what I did so I started getting into trouble in them
years. The years that I got in there and uh we used to be a whole bunch of us there and
we used to do a lot of weird things in the community and you know damaging other
peoples’ property and you know you name it. ... It was me, it was me, go ahead you can
charge me, put me in jail, put me someplace, you know. I took a lot of that, I covered
up for a lot of my friends, like I wouldn’t, I wouldn’t tell that there was four or five other
people involved. I would say I done it alone, you know and, I didn’t myself and they
were questioning me the police, I said no, I say’s there was only me. I knew, I was hiding
these people over here and because I guess I was thinkin trying to get away from
everything, trying to run away. That freedom or get away from all these people you
know.
Good Family Coping Strategies and Hardiness

Good Family Coping and Hardiness was the family's factor that was sixth most frequently related to the groups of related themes from the horizontal search. I coded Good Family Coping and Hardiness when my teachers described how their families coped with life through hard times.

Positive personal insight was the group of related themes, from the horizontal search, that was most often related to Good Family Coping and Hardiness. Life Long Learning accumulated was the group of themes second most frequently related. Beliefs, Skills, Negative personal insight and Life Long Learning reflected were related to Good Family Coping and Hardiness so infrequently that these results are negligible for the purposes of this study. These results suggested to me that my teachers were able to recognize good points about themselves in the middle of coping with stress and they also were able to add the learning from those insights into the accumulated experience and learning that went with finding strategies to overcome times of stress.

All my teachers described times when they had to cope with various kinds of stress. Mary described how her family coped with her father's absence when he was on his drinking binges and the emotional tension in the family that followed a binge. Therese has described how she and her children coped with her husband's drinking, Simon described how his family coped when his mother would be abused by his father. Charles has described how his family coped with his father's drinking and the lack of money in the home. John has described how he and the old people who cared for him would cope with the abuse John experienced while in residence school.

Francois has given the most detailed description of how his family and even the other members of his community coped with poverty and continued to make sure everyone was fed and clothed. His speaks with pride about his family's hardiness and resourcefulness and hence the relationship to Positive personal insight:

And my dad was, he had nobody to help him. And that time there was no welfare, nothing and my dad had to survive through uh, hunting, fishing, trapping. And every fall time, like before Christmas, I remember everybody goes fishing, commercial fishing. That's where they, they find their little money... And my parents were really poor, they were really poor. In summer time I remember there was no welfare or nothing, and the only way we could survive was uh, vegetables, we grew vegetables in summer and my dad would do some hunting and fishing, how, that's how we survived between the summer time. And the Fall time it wasn't too bad, in the winter like uh, my dad would go trapping, you know, make a little extra money for food... And I remember when in the old day like uh, when I was little kid, my, like my parents were poor, I remember people, somebody shot a moose or something like that, eh, everybody goes out to get their little meat eh. Somebody shot it, like for instance, one of my uncle shot a moose and he comes home at night and tells the whole village. When the morning come, then
everybody hitch up their dog, and they'll all go, when they get to that moose, where the
moose, where they shot the moose, and they used to make a little, a big feast there,
they make a fire, you know, all kinds of meat. Everybody eats good, and then they used
to share for each houses you know, little piece of meat. Everybody gets a piece of
meat. And they used to go home like that, we used to do that. In the fall time, like in the
fall time when the moose are running, everybody goes hunting, with their whole family,
miles and miles in the bush, eh. And if they shot a moose, there, they shoot a moose
there, then they make dry meat, you know. Pemmican, what they call that. Everything,
they used to make everything there. And they used to make a little storage room, house,
like a teepee and they used to store meat in there for the winter time, and they close it
up with trees you know. All around it. And they used to pack meat in there and leave it
there for the winter, and when they're doing trapping, I used to remember they used to
go pick some up, to have for the house, like you know. So they used to have meat all
winter, like you know. And also berries, like in fall time, we used to pick berries, my mom
used to pick berries. All kinds of berries, like uh, blueberries, and cranberries, and
raspberries, Saskatoon berries, and I used to do that, we used to live in a log house. And
the log house in the middle we used to have a big cellar, cellar eh, and we used, they
used to store vegetable, berries, and everything for the winter eh, and that's how they
survived. That's how they used to do that, every every year. In the spring time then we
have to do your garden right away too. Stack up uh, plant potatoes, and vegetables,
and then you gotta work and look after that all summer. Then in the fall time, same thing
again. And I remember they used to, in the fall time before they pull out the vegetables
we used to go in the bush get some moss. Real nice moss hang 'em up, dry 'em up real
good in the sun. And then when the one, once they're dry then we used to go there and
pick it up and then bring 'em home. My dad would tear kinda little cloth pieces all under
in the cellar there, so nothing would freeze you know. There all in the moss, dry moss. Use
to keep them there all winter don't freeze... They used to be, used to have about six feet
down, something like that in the centre, used to have a little ladder going down there.
And little kinda, kinda make a little storage room in there eh, still in the sand but you
know, but that was covered. Berries and everything, eh, wow. They used to seal up,
sealer, they used to put it in a sealer. Boil it and put it in a sealer.

Discussion of the Findings in the Foundations of Wellness and Resilience Theme

Comparison of the themes from my teachers' life stories with the theory of resilence (Mangham, McGrath, Reid & Stewart, 1994) demonstrated that the factors
necessary for the development of resilience were present in the 'teachers' early lives. The
factors leading to resilience in my teachers were present in each teacher, in their families
and in their communities, despite rapid cultural, economic and political change, as
described in chapter 2. These factors also assisted my teachers to return to balance
after periods of extreme stress and to continually seek healthier life styles. Stressors that
the individuals in the study experienced were caused by rapidly changing communities,
economic realities and access to information from a wider spectrum of people and
cultures.

Factors that were found in each teacher included a sense of responsibility,
cognitive problem solving ability and intelligence, positive self-esteem and self-efficacy,
a feeling of control over one's life, planning for future events, feelings of optimism and
positive expectations for the future, a history of competence or success, social
competence and social or interpersonal skills, experiencing a positive event before or
after a stressor, becoming detached from or leaving conflict within the home or
neighborhood, support seeking, positive relationship with an adult outside the family and
spiritual practice.

Those resilience factors that were most dominant in my teachers' lives were a
sense of responsibility, a history of competence or success, spiritual practice, social
competence and interpersonal skills, support seeking, positive self-esteem and self-
efficacy, problem solving abilities, positive relationship with an adult outside the home
and feelings of control over life. These dominant resilience factors in my teachers' lives
were most frequently related to Positive personal insight, second most frequently to Life
Long Learning accumulated and Negative personal insight. Beliefs was related to the
dominant factors of resilience in the individuals' lives third most frequently and Skills was
related fourth most frequently. Life Long Learning reflected was related so infrequently
as to be inconsequential for the purposes of this research. These results indicated to me
that my teachers had many of the factors necessary for the development of resilience
and that they are therefore, similar to people from other cultures who also have these
factors of resilience. As well, these results suggested to me that the factors of resilience
were crucial to my teachers for development of understandings about themselves, development of their belief systems and to their life long learning process.

Factors that were found in each family and community included positive parent-
child attachment, positive parent-child interactions, effective parenting, structure and
rules within the home, responsibilities for all family members, parent or caregiver
expectations of a positive future for their children, becoming detached from conflict in
family of origin, strong extended family network, supportive friendship network beyond
the family, participation in extracurricular activities, positive school experiences,
responsibilities outside the home, opening of opportunities and good family coping
strategies and hardness.

Those factors that were dominant in the families and the communities of my
teachers were opening of opportunities, strong extended family network, positive parent
child attachment and positive parent-child interactions. These dominant factors were
related most frequently to Positive personal insight, second most frequently to Life Long
Learning accumulated and third most frequently to Negative personal insight. Beliefs,
Skills and Life Long Learning reflected were related to the dominant factors of resilience
in my teachers families and communities as to be inconsequential for the purposes of this
study. These results suggested to me that my teachers had in their families and in their
communities, many of the factors necessary for the development of resilience and that my teachers, their families and their communities, were at times similar to other families and communities that contain resilient individuals. Furthermore, these results indicated to me that these factors were crucial to my teachers for development of understandings about themselves and to their life long learning process.

Lateral Thinking and Learning Style

The Personal Insight sub-themes in the Personal Data main theme, as the most frequently coded theme of all the themes in the life stories, demonstrated a strong tendency by my teachers to use a form of thinking and learning variously called insight learning, discovery learning, or lateral thinking. I have reported the frequencies of the themes mentioned in the following sections in Table 1 in Appendix D.

Personal Data: Positive Personal Insight

Positive personal insight was the sub-theme that occurred most frequently as a theme common to all six teachers. Positive personal insight was coded when teachers stated that they had an insight about themselves or their behaviour that demonstrated to them that they were living in a manner that matched their belief and value systems. I found several variations of the theme Positive personal insights, and I have described them below with supporting evidence from the life stories of my teachers.

The insights could be something that my teachers have known about themselves for most of their lives and therefore contributed to their sense of self-worth. John has provided an example, from his life story, of a positive personal insight that he has known for most of his life:

... about myself I was uh, I was I had a beautiful voice, I still have a beautiful voice. I sang a lot. Uh, I started singing in school and I used to go to church as an altar boy... I knew that I knew that I had a beautiful voice. Uh, there were times where where uh they used to call this thing ACT CKBI Amateur Hour. It used to be all over north Saskatchewan they used to come all over and uh I I used to want to win first prize each time every, every it used to happen on Saturday nights. It's all over north, La Ronge, Wollaston, ...

In some of the cases sudden insight occurred when the person had been wondering about one of his or her behaviours and an incident sparked the insight. Simon has provided an example, from his life story, of sudden insight that motivated him to stay in school when he really felt like quitting:
...I thought about it, and I, I'd lay in bed and I'd look at my kids, and that's when it hit me, you know, this quitting. I had sort of a track record of quitting. And here I am quitting again. And when I looked at my kids, it looked like they were sleeping. I said, "how in the hell this, how do I, how are things transferred. If I quit now, she's gonna have to deal with that problem in her time", you know this idea of transferring eh, how you, how the parents transfer things, and so it really hit me there. I, I can't quit...  

The insights could also be sudden insights that were the result of an interaction with another person or during an event. Mary has provided an example, from her life story, of an insight about herself today based on a conversation with her Grandfather when she was a young girl:

...But how right he was, you know at that time I didn't understand what he was saying, and now as things start to happen, I don't feel as scared because he had told me, it is just like he had warned me. And it's such a good memory to have, because when I, now when I feel alone, when I feel sad, when I feel my family, my family doesn't care, or how alone my kids are, I am never really alone because he knew it was going to be hard, and he told me, so when I remember that I don't feel as alone...

Occasionally, the insight occurred in the form of a spiritual message through a dream or a vision. Charles has provided insight that occurred to him one night when he was in despair about his drinking and his behaviour, that motivated him to try to quit drinking:

...I can recall my dad said this is what alcohol is doing to you and this is what's happening. You put that aside nothing will happen. That flashback had came back like somebody said you drinking too much. You're losing control you know and you're not taking care of your family. It's just like looking at a video tape, and all these things came flashing back and uh, and that's when I started to try and quit drinking...

In some cases the insight was about how they learned and caused my teachers to repeat learning behaviour that led to more positive results in their lives. Therese has provided an example of a positive personal insight that causes her to repeat a learning behaviour because it continually rewards her with positive results in her life:

...I see, I see it life, in any through people. Like I see, it every day, day daily life. When I see these things I think about it and then I I share about it. This is how it would have been, perfect or try it, it will be easier, that's how I...

The positive personal insights did not all occur during moments when my teachers felt safe or secure. Some insights occurred during traumatic moments in my teachers' lives when they were able to look at their behaviour or thoughts and feel good about themselves. Francois has provided an example, from his life story, of a positive personal insight from a traumatic incident in his life where he asserted himself when he was sober and asked his wife and her party friends to leave his house and not come back:
... I'm sober now, I'm a AA member, and I can't keep you like that, keep on doing it. She kept on doing it, she kept bringing, you know when the drink, the way she treat me in Meadow Lake, she wanted to treat me the same way again when I sober up. I totally different person now. Well one night I get, I was waiting for them. I had her clothes all packed up. When night they came back, brought a lot of people, a lot of people and I told them I don't want no booze in here. Well, there was about 7 - 24's came in and I said out, I threw everyone of the, them out. My wife was the last one to go out, she, she I threw her out. Grabbed her threw her out, then I would, took the beer, threw everything out, and I phoned the RCMP. I was his guard, so they came along right away, and I took, I told them here's your clothes, and don't come back and bother me again. She never till today. (laughing). .

Personal Data: Negative Personal Insight

Negative personal insights was the second most frequent common theme in the life stories of my teachers. Negative personal insight was coded when my teachers stated that they had an insight about themselves or their behaviour which demonstrated that they were not living in a manner that matched their belief or value systems. I found several variations of the theme Negative personal insights in the life stories of my teachers. I have described each of them below with supporting evidence from the life stories of my teachers.

One of the variations of Negative personal insight was recognizing, as an adult, a trait in oneself as a child that affected one's behaviour and determined one's social relationships when one was a child. The teachers were not necessarily conscious of these traits as children but came to understand them and their effect on their lives after they had begun their healing. John, from his life story, gave us an example of how his anger complicated his life as a child:

... Bitter towards God, you know and I thinking you know why--why you how come you took my dad away? Like you know most of my friends here have dads, you know and why me you know? And it took a long time for me to take chances even in class or when you know I when I'm with other people, interacting with you know young boys my age because I stuttered a lot. I stuttered a lot. That was that too I was I was angry at God for, the way He made me, I stuttered so much. . . Full of resentment. And some of my sisters couldn't like they didn't want me to stay with them because I was too mean to their children. . .

Another variation of Negative personal insight occurred in the life stories when the teacher's cultural values came into conflict with situations that were not a regular part of the cultural milieu in which my teachers were raised. These situations and values were interpreted as negative insights because they led my teachers into situations that were unsafe or unhealthy. Mary described running away from residential school because she was lonely and unhappy. The conflict occurred because she trusted an older person. In the absence of a parent or an elder she placed her trust in an older girl at the school.
...Anyway we met another girl, from the same community we were from, she was a lot older, we thought, maybe she was older, maybe a year or two older than us and she had hitchhiked before. And she wanted, she knew we were lonesome, and she asked us if we wanted to go home, and we said yes, so we took the bus as if we were going to school, and when they dropped us off at school we took off, all three of us, in order to get to the main highway we had to walk across the railroad tracks, (laughter), it just, we wanted to get home and ever so slowly we walked on the train track across the river, we started to hitchhike, she was a big girl, she knew where she was going, we could trust her, she would take care of us, she wouldn't let anything happen to us, because she's done this before. (chuckles)...

A different variation of the Negative personal insight theme can be described as an insight that occurred in adulthood that was also a result of a conflict in cultural values. Francois, in his life story described his feelings of confusion and hurt and his subsequent loss of face that occurred when his wife's drinking continued to get worse:

...Everything looks good again, but she still drinking again. And then every night she brings in, after the bar close, she bring, she comes and brings in people. Party all night, here I gotta go to work in the morning, and it was really hard for me. And yet I wasn't a boss. I was, you know, just another person, I guess to her. And every time, if I say anything, then she yell at me or whatever and she'd kick me out. And I would walk the street every, all night long. Till everybody leaves and then my, my oldest daughter would open the door for me, walk in. That's what I usually do for, about six months, like that. Carry on like that. And finally, everybody was lookin' at me. You know everybody all my relatives come and visit me and they see what's happening and they didn't like it. What you're doing with your life like that? How can you live like this...

A variation of a Negative personal insight that occurred in adulthood was a recognition of a trait or characteristic that served the teacher well in childhood but is currently causing difficulties in the teacher's adult life. Simon shared a situation, from his life story, that he is currently struggling with:

...I, we, we both make efforts to try and understand each other. But, a lot of times too we can't, but uh the binding, the thing that binds us is children, are the children. You know, I know certainly that's, that's what binds me, like it's, it's for their sake. A lot of time it's, it's a power struggle between us and, and you know I, I take it upon myself that I, I, I don't have to, I don't wanna be a part of this power struggle. So, I'm just trying to get used to the idea of caving in. And, when I, when I think about um, when study that situation, in terms of power struggle, like I may 'cause a lot of it, because I'm, I'm so um, I'm still that loner, you know. And I, and, and the nature of my work, the nature of my interests, and demands that I, I be alone...

Charles, in his life story, described another variation of a trait or behaviour from his childhood that affected his life in childhood and well into his adulthood but which he has now dealt with through a healing process:
It was me, it was me, go ahead you can charge me, put me in jail, put me someplace, you know. I took a lot of that, I covered up for a lot of my friends, like I wouldn't, I wouldn't tell that there was four or five other people involved. I would say I done it alone, you know and, I didn't myself and they were questioning me the police, I said no, I say's there was only me... 

Therese, in her life story, describes yet another variation of Negative personal insight that occurred to her after reflecting on how she used to behave in the face of her husband's abuse. She described becoming someone that she didn't like and behaving in ways that she didn't like:

...I, at first I used to be afraid of him. I don't do nothing, I don't say nothing, but at the last part, I became anger, angry person. I'd fight back. I yell back. And I think that how he, he start learning, that I can defend myself and it kind of um, that kind of uh, helped him um, how do you say, he knows that I can defense myself, but before I, you know, I used to let him do, or let him say whatever he's going to say. 'Cause I was so afraid... 

Discussion of the Themes Contributing to Lateral Thinking and Learning

Positive personal insight and Negative personal insight were coded more often than any of the other sub-themes in this study. As well, they were related more often to other sub-themes than any other sub-themes. This suggested to me that my teachers primarily used a lateral thinking style in their efforts to learn about themselves and their relations to other people. Similarly, as these sub-themes were related more often to other sub-themes the findings suggested to me that the teacher's insights were the result of their total accumulated experience.

This style of thinking was first described by Gestalt theorists (Bode, 1929) and later by Cognitive theorists (Ausubel, 1963). These theorists suggested that learning necessitates the reorganization of experiences into systematic and meaningful patterns. Gestalt is a German word meaning "pattern" or "shape". Thus, Insight becomes a "shape" or pattern that has formed in memory from a reorganization of experience.

More recently de Bono (1990) has described this thinking style as lateral thinking. In this theory lateral thinking is an insight tool and as such is an important function of education. Lateral thinking is concerned with changing patterns, an attitude of open-mindedness and learned reasoning ability. For de Bono (1990) lateral thinking is different from logical or vertical thinking in several ways.

First, lateral thinking is concerned with changing patterns. De Bono (1990) defined a pattern as the rearrangement of information in the memory or a repeatable sequence of neural activity. He found that there is no limit to the size of a pattern, only
that a pattern should be repeatable, recognizable and usable. He defined this rearrangement of information into another pattern as insight restructuring, a process that seeks to find a better and more effective pattern. Second, lateral thinking, for de Bono (1990), is an attitude as well as a method of using information. De Bono (1990) suggested that lateral thinkers acknowledge the usefulness of a pattern but are not bound by the pattern as absolute. In other words, a lateral thinker's attitude is that what may be useful or convenient at the moment, may change at any time. Third, according to de Bono (1990), lateral thinking must be learned, as human brain circuitry are adapted to perpetuate learned and consciously recognized patterns. Examples of lateral thinking abound in scientific literature. Perhaps the most famous example is Darwin's ten year observations of patterns in nature and his subsequent theory of natural selection that revolutionized scientific thinking during his life time.

The teachers, in this study, have therefore learned to think laterally through some process or series of events and relationships that they experienced in their lives.

A Preference for Accumulated Experience

Life long learning accumulated was the most frequently coded sub-theme in the Life Long Learning main theme. As such it appeared to be my teachers preferred form of acquiring knowledge from the descriptions provided of their learning. I coded Life Long Learning accumulated when my teachers described a series of encounters with people, or events in their lives, or interactions with institutions that caused them to arrive at understandings about repeated patterns of behaviour in others or in themselves and repeated events and interactions with institutions. I have reported the frequencies of these sub-themes in the main themes mentioned in this section in Tables 2 and Table 7 in Appendix D.

I have provided examples from my teachers' life stories below that illustrate the process of accumulating experience. These quotations from the teacher's stories are necessarily longer than the quotations found in other sections of this study and indeed in other narrative studies. The quotations are a series of smaller quotations that have been joined together, in sequence from each story, to demonstrate the teacher's preferred process of accumulating experience throughout their lives.
Life Long Learning: People Accumulated

I coded People accumulated when my teachers revealed in their life stories that they had learned something from their interaction with other people that they then used to make changes in their own lives. These had to have come from repeated interactions with one or more people so that understandings resulted from the accumulation of the experiences. For example, some teachers were able to recognize behaviour in others that they had seen before and make comparisons with other behaviours in order to decide how they would behave in a given situation. This sub-theme was by far the sub-theme most frequently coded in the Life Long Learning main theme.

John described how the teachings of an old man who raised him as been woven throughout his life. He credits this old man with teaching him how to live and eventually helping him, through his teachings, to overcome his anger and live well. In this case I coded People accumulated because John's early interaction with the old man, combined with years of observation and learning from interaction with others solidified what John had learned when living with the old man:

...my step-father you see. You see 'cause he was really rough with me. Like rough, rough. Like when when we lived out in the bush when my mom used to go pick up uh wood, like I would be sitting on the floor I remember as a child and he'd spit on my face you see, and he'd say things hurting things that would make me really angry. So that's why I grew up that way... OK, oh. see well like I said, I'll, I'll always go back to my stepfather, he was a judgmental. I couldn't do anything right. Even though I was just a little boy, or just you know just learning about life. And if I made a mistake with these old people, like they talked to me you know. Uh, what I mean by peace, is uh like animals are so plentiful eh like, like, like you could be sitting there in the evening and a deer would come right in front of you in front of the house and you'd shoot him and you'd you know you'd smoke the meat and life was so plentiful. Like wildlife. Sort of like heaven for me. And uh, I'd go snaring, he taught me how to snare, how to trap. All these little things. He he even let me go out all by myself, as young as I was back then. And I'd come you know I'd find my way back, like he sort of had believed in me you know. He didn't have to say very much, because I you know like everything else you know, like even yourself, if you know a person loves you, you feel it he doesn't have to say anything to you you know. You feel the vibes. You know and just by you know the body posture, the body movement, behaviours—that's what I knew that these we were so in tuned. We were in tune with, not only with with I was so in tune with those old people but not only with them but also with nature you know look at the window I see birds, back in those days it was so beautiful there. Just short periods of time but I will never forget that time you know. That old man taught me how to love. How to express yourself. How to how to love a human being and not and not and accept him as he is or she is. No matter what. That's one of the greatest that's one of the most important skills that I've learned when I was a child, from that old man—was to accept people as they are, accept them and not to judge. Because I was living in a dysfunctional families you know and that I was thrown around. Some of my brother-in-laws were kind of dysfunctional you know so, I you know, sometimes I get caught up in maybe gossip and I the old man would say “Shh—stop it it's OK, you know just accept them as they are.” And that's why to me, that that old man to me he he was like a godsend you know. Like, like the God put him in my path for a purpose. And right to this day, you know I been sober now going on maybe sixteen years sobriety, going on sixteen years sobriety, that's the that's the
that's the value that he instilled in me to accept people as they are. To be kind to people. And uh, and I talk to him lots, and even when I'm praying I still try to communicate with him somehow.

Life Long Learning: Events Accumulated

I coded Events accumulated when my teachers experienced a number of events in their lives that contributed to their understandings of themselves, of others, and of how the world worked. Events accumulated was the third most frequently coded sub-theme in the Life Long Learning main theme. These events could have been repeated behaviours by others or themselves, situations in which they found themselves repeatedly or situations when an unexpected outcome occurred that was different from other similar situations.

Simon has described a process of learning, that was the result of a series of events in his life, that led him to make some decisions about who he was and who he wanted to be. I coded Events accumulated, in this case, as Simon arrived at his conclusions after returning to his home community, established a relationship with his spouse and began to have children:

...And self developmental kinda things trying to achieve sort of a higher awareness, or an awareness, or whatever, whatever the term might be. I know where it was triggered, but then you know life processes how things, how you grew up, I really believe how you grew up influences, everything that's gonna happen later on. And so a lot of my reflections in terms of how I grew up and what, what my destiny was I suppose. Even how, where I am today, how it, how it started, I think, I think that in terms how my childhood was. Um, I was basically a loner, before I went to, before I was at school I was always alone, loner. Um, things were quite different at that time eh... But is seemed, it, it, hindsight it kinda seems that uh, say at that point, you go on a road of uh, self-development or self-discovery or you know, awareness. And so initially, a lot of the self-awareness kind of thing wasn't really on track. It was still building up, you know, but the seed was there. And then at some point, it, it really digs in, and you know, you're sucked up into that, that kind of self, self-development uh, process...I think, I think um, many times I think it's uh, it's a life process and yet on the other hand I think um, something could happen uh, to a person and that you know just a dramatic shift. And a life process has no, nothing to play in that situations. I dunno, I dunno which it is. But I know from my own experience that it's processes had been at play. I can't really pinpoint and say there was one magic moment or a, a dramatic shift, so my own situation was processes and I guess if went deeper I, I would, I would, I would find that uh, what the seeds were that, there were some seeds planted, uh. But uh, you know looking at my own life processes is kind of a fragment uh sort of a fragment is in fragmenting. What is going on, those undercurrents are, are actually larger than who we are, and I, I really believe and my grandfather for example has something to do with you know where I am at today, or any of my brothers and sisters or family. He had a lot to do with it and even maybe my great-grandfather before that. So you know, a lot of that I look at it that way, and a lot of what I do, I am thinking, as my great-grandfather would of if that was the situation because I'm looking at my great-grandchildren. So I, you know, it's, it's, it's not just what I did, you know, that was born up to now, um a lot of it was already determined before...There are turning points, there are turning points uh, but let me put it this way, just, just to look at uh, say the you know the inter-generational, a whole generation, after generation
process. If we can look at some generations for example you know Native people throughout those, those seven generations and what we do today is affecting our children or our grandchildren. ...Well, I would say uh, you know, I dunno how much um, if we think about this spiritual aspect of it, I don't know how much a part grandfather plays, because in, in order for a turning point to occur or in order for uh, a person to, to believe that this is the path they're gonna follow, see it doesn't, it doesn't depend on just one, one single thing. And in order for that to kick in, then, or how it kicks in, it's, hard to pinpoint but, also we can just look at common, pretty common instances where people uh, say self, self-discovery, self-development or, that may not be it because self-development would be sort of a life long process. But a turning point uh, you know, it may be just one small (unknown)at a time. ...Um, say um, power, you know, that you can force people to agree with you. That you can force people to do what you want, a baby would cry if they don't get what they want, an adult instead of crying would probably do other things, so I, you know, I can kinda see sort of a child kind of still fiddling around my life which, which I never resolved, but so, those instances, you know where you lash out, are, are you know are and again I, I, you see that as power. You know, you have to do it my way. Turning point, I dunno, again sort of a process 'cause and, and it's and not solely based on you as a person saying I'm gonna change this, but it may, it may be a word of somebody else, like an elder say. Something or even child doing something. It could be that, and, and in my case that's probably what happened cause as I was mentioning, uh, the male role in the family, you know uh, a lot of it stems from reading, you know, a lot is also what I, what I hear from other people and the male was very insignificant in terms of you know this house or the teepee or whatever the family unit. And so be thinking about all that and, and what elders say about uh, about a role as a woman. See even, even that enters in me trying to rationalize what, what my behaviours were, and, and you know, I know my wife sometimes say that what, what you and what you think you do are two different things. I see them she says. So, you know, when I think uh, the very strong thing that makes me really respect my wife is that she had two children, you know, I can say my children, but she had two children from, from our union, and, you know, just thinkin' about that. She brought 'em up and everything and yet on the other hand, I'm gonna strike this other person that did that, you know, we had this union and we have children and which we think were very special, and yet on the other hand I'm gonna strike this person that did that with me, you know. So, a lot that is kind of trying to rationalize it in, in that sense so, when I think that you know, I just want a hug my wife, and, and just tell her I love her. Never mind all you know, all this uh, power thing you know. This, this is really great what we did here. And that's what I wanna dwell on. And, and so, you know when I think back again to those situations where I become angry and, and she becomes angry or vice versa we get each other angry and then I try to detach. Try to detach from that situation and look at it. You know, place myself on the moon and looking down on the earth at these two people being mad at each other is very insignificant, you know, it, it only says well you know those people have problems. Why don't they try to solve their problems, why don't they look at themselves somehow. So, my wife, I try to do that, and I, and I look at myself, well OK where did this come from? So, again you find yourself looking at different things, and you try to read and find out what it is. So, where the turning point is, I dunno, it's, it, it's all based on a, a need for a change, you know you're also wanna believe that you cannot hide, you cannot hide from those other beings that are more powerful you know, in the spiritual world. And, and thinking we're all ultimate destinations. We, we can't hide from that whole process so why don't you get down to the real thing and just try to synchronize yourself with what is supposed to be our purpose here. So, I mean, a lot of it is very spiritual in nature. So, probably a part of it because, we uh, if we look to our visions, you know, our, our childhood visions or, uh dreaming, day dreaming what you would like to be; in essence what we are doing is that. You know, we're replacing ourselves in a certain situation an then this analyzing through self-talk or you know, kind of an encoding in your mind almost that this is the situation and, and a lot of this positive self-talk, positive imaging, you know is based on that idea that you, you can think, that you can. I know that's quite different from detachment. Detachment itself is uh, like there's one, one uh, situation I was looking at my, my little girl when she was small. I was laying on the couch just' at here
like this. She was on, she was walking around looking at her. Then all of a sudden I had
this feeling that, that I could think of myself you know, the way I was in my whole
situation, kinda look at myself. And I'm not sure if that's detachment and what I
described of being on a moon looking at yourself, you know, that's sort of imaging. Um,
detachment I think is, something else. Uh, I'm not quite, quite sure what it, what it, what,
what detachment would be because when I say experience, when you're imaging, your
experience is here. But, you know sort of a abstractly created an image over there that
you're doing something you know. I think detachment is the opposite, you know, you
come the image and you can control this from other there, so I, you know, I'm very
clear on, on that. But my idea of detachment is that, I can control and, from over here.
See I can, from over there create a cut right here. Or think certain things from over there
you know, but my experience with me here not over ther... So I, dunno, I, what I was
describing was imagery you know. I think of it. I certainly see I have, I have how
everybody has it when their small. It, it could be either positive or negative...

Life Long Learning: Institutions Accumulated

I coded the sub-theme Institutions accumulated in the Life Long Learning main
theme when my teachers described a series of encounters in their lives that were with
institutions of various descriptions. I used a broad definition of institutions including every
thing from various churches and religions, government bureaucracies, police forces and
schools. In each case where I coded Institutions accumulated the learning that
occurred was cumulative from a series of encounters where my teachers' reactions were
the same or where my teachers' experienced similar treatment from the people involved
with the institution.

Mary has shared her accumulated experiences with institutions and how she
learned that she was not as good as others. In this case the institution was the Roman
Catholic church and its schools. I coded Institutions accumulated because Mary's sense
that she was not good enough resulted from several encounters with the institution over
a period of years:

...We lived beside a church, a Catholic church, each day we'd have to, there
was mass every day, we'd have to go to school, we'd have to go to church every day.
There was a school beside the church, not far from our house, it was a mission, a Catholic
mission school. I don't remember the building, but I remember the foundation we used to
run around. When my Father would go drinking and he'd leave us weeks at a time, the
nuns would give us food so that we didn't go hungry, and a lot of times we'd be hungry
when my Dad would be drinking, but they fed us, I remember the nuns being so clean,
so, everything in their houses was so clean, and their faces were different, they were a
different colour, and to this little kid here they were (unknown) how pretty. That's my first
memory of a white person. ...They'd wear long black dresses. When my Father would go
away to the trapline, the fish camp, and for some reason he'd leave us, we'd have, you
know the nuns would feed us, give us food. But they wouldn't give us----they'd give us
what they had left over, all the time. It wasn't very often that our Dad would leave us at
that, maybe he did, I don't remember, at that young age...I can't remember exactly
how long, now that I think back it wasn't a very long time, but back then it seemed like a
very long time. They had us in this dorm where they, where each, the rooms were small,
they'd have two bunk beds, and my sister who was a year older-----a year younger than
me, we were, we were separated, and she was scared and she was, she used to cry a lot. sometimes we'd just sit and watch, just look at each other---- just to be together made us, made me feel safe (weeping), we'd do chores, we'd be assigned chores, whether it was washing the floor or washing the walls, doing dishes, vacuuming, that was a daily thing (finger pointing down for emphasis), the family that kept us the women had children of her own, and she was strict, she was even strict with her kids... I was at the residence and went to school at one of the catholic schools, and there was about three of us from the same community in the same school, and cousins, and there’s a couple of nuns there, their, with their black robes, and we were shy and we were different from all the rest and we used to hang around together, and one of them taught Home Ec. I can’t remember what we did, but I remember that she got mad and she threw us into the storage room and locked the door, it was very dark, all three of us, she locked us there. But we’d, at least you know, at were weren’t alone, at least we had each other. But they----they weren’t all bad, but you still felt-----I still felt I wasn’t as good and I’d never be as good, as them...The other students or the white kids, the white people... 

Discussion of the Systematic Findings Suggesting a Preference for Accumulating Experience

The teachers in their stories have demonstrated a marked preference for a process of accumulating experience, rather than a process of analyzing new information. For example, the total frequencies of the Life Long Learning accumulated sub-themes was almost one third greater than the total frequencies of the Life Long Learning reflected sub-themes. Furthermore, I found in the horizontal search that Life Long Learning accumulated sub-themes were related to other themes more than three times as often as Life Long Learning reflected sub-themes. Similarly, the total frequencies of the Incremental Moments sub-themes was far greater than the total frequencies of sub-themes from any other of the main themes in the vertical search and the Incremental Moments sub-themes were related almost twice as often to other themes as Salient Moment sub-themes in the horizontal search.

I found this result to be significant because it suggests that the participants used a process of learning that requires doing and experiencing rather than learning about abstract concepts and practicing those concepts in an artificial environment. This process is reminiscent of the activity-oriented or learning-oriented learners described by Houle (1961). These learners, described by Houle (1961), participate in activities for the sole purpose of experiencing new ideas that they can then apply in their own lives, or for the benefit of their families and communities. I do not wish to suggest that the participants sought all the situations, like abuse, but that they were able to benefit from those situations through accumulating the experience in their memories for later retrieval and comparison.
Furthermore, I have found these findings significant as they are similar to the findings of other researchers on the process of learning. In particular the findings relate to some of the principles of educational practice as summarized from the learning research by Darkenwald and Merriam (1982). They suggested that people learn best when new information is related to past experience and knowledge and to the needs of the learners. As well, active rather than passive participation in the learning process, where learners discover relationships, concepts and meanings on their own, has been identified as the most successful learning strategy.

I have included the findings from the Incremental Moments and the Salient Moments main themes as it suggested at least three important points that I have learned from the participants stories in the Incremental Moments main theme. First, the fact that Incremental Moments is the second most frequently coded theme in the participants’ stories suggested to me that there was a second dominant memory and learning process at work my teachers’ lives that is closely related insight learning. Second, the sub-themes in the Incremental Moments main theme have given me the first hint that the participants learn holistically. Third, the participants appear to use these incremental memories to develop patterns of awareness that challenge what is considered by the culture to be normal and to expand their possibilities and reorganize their sense of what their futures might be (Simon, 1992).

The teachers seemed to be able to retain minute experiences from their lives, in memory, until the accumulated information reached a certain point and recognizable patterns of awareness were formed. The suggestion that this was a dominant learning process was re-enforced because there were approximately twice as many sub-themes in this main theme, common to all six participants, as there were non-systematic sub-themes. This was not the case for the Salient Moments main theme.

Years ago a fellow member of my self-help group made great efforts to convince me that I could not think my way into good living but that I must learn to live my way into good thinking. It took me years to understand what he meant. If I have it right today, I understand that all my education and training in analysis and planning cannot help me to learn to live well. I have learned that I have to work at living in a manner that is consistent with my values and beliefs by actually doing the things that will help me to feel good about myself and to think well of myself. For example, when I am busy with school or work, I regularly postpone exercising, until I have once more ceased all forms of exercise. I know from my accumulated experience that this leads to a lack of energy, stiffness from old injuries and if left long enough, to depression or chronic fatigue. I therefore try to be faithful to an exercise program of some form as my accumulated
experience suggests to me that I feel better, think more positively, and have more energy when I exercise. Hence, when I exercise regularly I am living my way into good thinking.

It seems from the above evidence that a substantial portion of my teachers’ learning occurred in the acts of living well or not living in a manner consistent with their own values and beliefs. The Life Long Learning accumulated sub-themes, People, Events and Institutions are among the most frequently coded of all the sub-themes in this main theme. This suggested to me that the accumulated experiences stored in their memories were the most significant learning factors in their lives and contributed positively to helping my teachers feel good, think well of themselves and seek to repeat behaviours that contributed positively to those feelings and thoughts.

The evidence above has suggested to me that my teachers learned from all their encounters in life. As well, the learning was based on a process of accumulating experience, in an incremental fashion. Interactions with people were the most frequently reported by my teachers with events reported next most frequently and interactions with institutions reported least often. This evidence further suggested to me that interactions with people, in my teachers’ families, communities, and elsewhere were the most important occurrences in helping them to develop a sense of who they were and who they wanted to be. These findings are closely related to the findings about insight learning, lateral thinking and holistic and ecological learning, that I have discussed above and will continue to discuss below. It appeared to me that the incremental moments and the accumulated experience of my teachers was the vehicle for the formation of patterns that they then reorganized to draw conclusions about who they were and how they wanted to behave.

Holistic Learning Context

Henderson & Battiste (1997) have said that Aboriginal knowledge is about a system of relationships between the people and the spiritual and ecological world at a specific location. Any framework for understanding Aboriginal knowledge must be contextualized and decentralized to the specific location in question. Furthermore, the framework must respect the cultural rules and relationships that are unique to that knowledge system. Ermine (1995) goes further than this in stating that Cree Aboriginal knowledge is a subjective experience in a context of happenings and connection to all of creation. It is, therefore, the relationships to all things and the events that give meaning to those relationships that constitute Aboriginal knowledge.
In this section I have compared the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel with the commonly related themes from the horizontal search in an effort to determine the context of my teachers' learning that was most dominant in their lives. With this comparison I was seeking to reveal the relationships to the four directions of reality and therefore determine the most beneficial context for promoting health in northern Saskatchewan.

I intended no disrespect to Aboriginal elders and their teachings in this section by suggesting that the Medicine Wheel teachings are a theory. Most Aboriginal elders that I know would consider the Medicine Wheel teachings spiritual truths, rather than theories and the Medicine Wheel itself a symbol of a life. Indeed it seems likely that they have been part of many Aboriginal cultures teachings and belief structures for perhaps thousands of years. I used the teachings as a theory because to the best of my knowledge the ideas have never been rigorously tested in an experimental setting as would be required by the scientific discipline. I have, therefore, used the idea of the Medicine Wheel here to attempt to broaden the generalizability of the findings from this study, not only to other Aboriginal communities and people, but also to give the findings greater validity in the scientific community.

The quadrants, or in this case the contexts, are physical, social/emotional, mental and spiritual. A person seeking to "live well" (Adelson, 1990) must develop their potential in each quadrant and balance the learning in each. In this sense the elders are teaching about a life long process of learning that can only be achieved by living one's life according to the teachings. I have provided the descriptions of each quadrant in the sections below and I have reported the frequencies of the relationships to the quadrants of the Medicine Wheel in Table 9 in Appendix F.

**Social/Emotional Quadrant**

I coded Social/emotional context when my teachers described happenings in relation to other things where they were learning about their emotions and how they affected themselves and others and practiced respect for themselves and others, and learned about their place, responsibilities and obligations in their families, their communities and their nations.

As an example of the relationships between the Socio/Emotional quadrant and the commonly related themes, Charles has described the relationship between himself and the members of his family since their recovery from he and his wife's abusive drinking. This part of Charles' story is laden with emotion in himself and in the intensity of
his words as he describes the enormous challenge of breaking the cycle of family
dysfunction. Furthermore, it fulfills the requirement of a social situation as his learning is
taking place during interactions with his family members:

... So, today like uh, you know, we have trust in our family. But now I'm starting to
see things again. When I was told over here after my dad sobered up what he told me.
Now I am starting to experience that things, what I put my dad through, because of my
two boys and I have two grandchildren now. I'm experiencing, I'm seeing what my dad
seen, you know, and sometimes I have to take control of myself because, you know, I
don't want to blame myself at times you know. I have to talk to my wife today, when I
have something I talk out with her and I share things with her, like at one time I didn't.
Like if I feel so rotten about something, you know, my uh, one of my boys go out there
like, goin' drinking, leave a trail of girls behind you know. And I have to think before I take
action, you know I have to think first, and I says and I used to tell my wife, that's
the... exactly the way I treated them. Now slowly I'm trying to work things with my boy,
the oldest one, like uh, I don't want to see him go through that same turmoil that
experiences of my life I went through. I don't want him to try and go that direction and
uh, I have to try and break that cycle, somewhere, cause shouldn't not be carried over
generation after generation. I have to try and bring it back and break it someplace.

Mental Quadrant

The Mental quadrant or context was the second most frequently coded context
when compared to the related themes from the horizontal search. I coded the Mental
context when my teachers described happenings in relation to other things where they
were developing their memories, problem solving abilities and skills.

Francois has provided an example of Life Long Learning accumulated related to
the Mental quadrant. He describes his reasoning about why he was treated so poorly by
his step-father when he was a child. His thinking is related to his observations during his
life time about how families relate and how children were raised. Hence, his reasoning is
related to his accumulated life long learning:

... I think that was kind of a part of the culture. 'Cause you never talk against
about anybody like you know, especially your parents eh. You couldn't say a word
against 'em. There's no way. Like even today I like I can't, I can't talk bad to my mother.
I can't say anything wrong against my mother, and I can't say anything wrong, like I
dunno, like it's hard, like you know, and it always built up, like, when I was a little kid, like I
said when I hated my dad eh. You know when I grew up oh, I'm gonna show this man,
I'm gonna show this man what he's doing to me right now. And I don't wanna live like
him, you know, being a bum, uh, poor. When I grow up I wanna work and earn my
money and work. And that's still what I'm doing today like you know. 'Cause when I left
home at age 13, I never went back home, till today like you know. I'm still on my own.
And I used to tell my kids that, I got two boys three girls they're all on their own right now.
And two boys are working in McMurray and my three girl living in Edmonton, they're
going to school. One of them is taking University, the oldest one she went back to
school. And I told 'em that I cannot look after your kids, my grandkids. One day I would
do it, like you know, one for a few hours stuff like that, that's OK but, but for me to baby-sit
for them, I'm not gonna do it, 'cause I had a hard time raising them up myself when I
went drinking and all this stuff eh. And I, after, after I sobered up I look after them when
they were small and mom was drinking I took care of them till then they’re all grown up.
And I said once you’re grown up you’re on your own. Just like I did, I said you have to do
it. You cannot live with me after your age is up.

**Physical Quadrant**

I found that the Physical quadrant was related the third most frequently to the
commonly related themes from the horizontal search. I coded Physical when my
teachers described happenings in relation to other things where they were learning
about and respecting their bodies, experiencing something that had an effect on their
physical well-being, their environment and developing physical skills that enabled them
to be active and safe.

Therese has provided an example of Accumulated Life long Learning associated
with the Physical quadrant. She has described living on the land and learning the skills
necessary to do that with her whole family when she was young. As she described
learning the physical skills, she satisfied the coding criteria for the Physical quadrant and
this learning was part of her accumulated life long learning as she later, in her story,
describes further learning of bush skills from other elders and community members:

...I’ll start with my, in my childhood. Was lot of memories in there, in the back
years as I was growing, comparing to nowadays. There’s alot a good things in there, that
I remember as, when I was a kid. ’Cause as I’m growing I kind of grew up out in a
trapline. We usually go there, before it’s freeze you know, by a boat. And then we stay
there till up up to around Christmas, and a little bit before Christmas, we used to come
back. But when we’re comin’ it by a, a dog team. And there’s lotta that is really joyful
and peaceful in those days for me. ’Cause we see a lot a wildlifes and, caribou things
like that. And even though when we’re going up North with uh, other groups, but yet my
my parents we used to stay in a different, a little bit distant from the other people we
used to stay in a different locate, just my younger sister, my dad and my mom. Even
though we’re kind of only one family livin’ there but it was still alot a fun. Because my dad
when we were out there he used to teach us how, how to go fishin’. Setting net and all
those things like that. So out of that I was out uh, had experience in those. And there’s
lot of uh, kind of a hard times, sometime when you travel by a dog team. Even in a one,
one team we used to carry everything in there. Like supplies whatever and beside all of
us have has to sit in there too.

**Spiritual Quadrant**

I found that the Spiritual quadrant of the Medicine Wheel was related to the
commonly related themes from the horizontal search fourth most frequently of all the
Medicine Wheel quadrants or contexts. I coded Spiritual when my teachers described
learning about and remaining connected to the spirit world through observation, prayer and ritual.

John has provided an example of Positive personal insight associated with the Spiritual quadrant of the Medicine Wheel. He has described the situation when he had gone to a Sweat Lodge ceremony, with offering to the grandparents, prepared to ask for a spiritual name. He found that he pitied a woman with cancer at the ceremony and offered his gifts instead for her recovery. The elders present were very grateful for his sacrifice and he felt good at having achieved a moment of humility. Thus, he satisfied the coding criteria for Spiritual by practicing his spiritual skills, and he satisfied the coding criteria for Positive personal insight by feeling that he was making progress along his chosen path:

... I was given a name there you know uh. It's amazing how I got that name too you know. It's it's funny. The powers behind it work. A lot of our people don't understand the power behind the sacred Sweat Lodge. The power of the Creator. The Spirits. Even that time I mind that the spirits were reading my mind at the time. There was an old lady, just she had cancer. I had my offering for a for a name. I was really excited to get a name. But I felt sorry for that old that little old lady. She was dying of cancer. So I offered the instead of offering my you know the the offerings I had for my name I I offered it to the medicine man for that old lady that's dying of cancer. And right away, the elders said 'what a humble man you are, what how kind you are'. That's what he told me. He said, 'And for that we're going to name you, we are going to give you a name. I'm very proud of what you did.' You know, because I but because at the time, I thought you know I have a whole lifetime to get my name, but this person here's got cancer. Maybe if I put offerings, you know maybe somehow they can doctor her back to health again you know. Maybe the cancer will leave her and stuff like that, I was thinking. So that was you know that was when I that was a pat on the back for me you know. Hey good man you know, you're a humble guy you know. So that made me feel good. That was the beginning of the teachings. You know to be kind to people. Think of other people. To be humble you know. Right to this day I still don't like being in the limelight. As a matter of fact, if you weren't my friend I wouldn't there would there was no way I'd want an interview like I you know I just want to be away like.

Discussion of the Holistic Context Findings

By comparing the systematic themes from the horizontal search with the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel, I found that my teachers learned in a holistic context. These contexts ranged from classroom settings and listening to stories for mental development, practicing sports, bush and household skills for physical development, to church and the Sacred Sweat Lodge for spiritual development. However, the context most often described by my teachers was social interaction with family, friends, teachers, and others from outside their communities. As I stated previously, I have understood the teachings about the Medicine Wheel to be the accumulated wisdom of thousands of
years of experiencing life by "living well on the land" as the elders of the James bay Cree have stated (Adelson, 1990). Although the Medicine Wheel is divided into quadrants that express the content areas or domains of life long learning, the elders teach that each quadrant is a continuum and is interrelated and interconnected which each of the other quadrants (Bopp, Bopp, Brown and Lane, 1984).

I gave the Social/Emotional quadrant the most weight as it related to the commonly related themes that I found in the horizontal search almost four times as often as the next closest quadrant of the Medicine Wheel. This relationship between the Socio/Emotional quadrant and the commonly related themes suggested to me that most of my teachers' life long learning occurred in social situations and that there was a heavy emotional content included in the learning. As most of the learning occurred in a context of relationships with other people, there was a heavy emotional component to the learning. Bower (1992) and others have shown with their research that there is a heavy emotional content to all learning and that the emotions are most often aroused when individuals are in contact with others.

Similarly, Positive and Negative personal insights were the cluster of related themes that were most frequently related to the quadrants of the Medicine Wheel. This further suggested to me, as I found in the vertical search process, that my teachers relationships with people were the most important environment for learning about themselves. As well, Beliefs was the next most frequently related main theme. Life Long Learning reflected was related so infrequently as was Skills that they are negligible for the purposes of this study.

This strong relationship to the Socio/Emotional quadrant in this triangulation suggested to me that most of the insights about themselves that occurred to my teachers during their life times, occurred during social interaction. As well, it seems likely to me that most of my teachers' belief structure was formed during social interaction.

I found that the Mental quadrant was also noteworthy as the second most frequently coded of the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel. The fact that the Mental quadrant was related to the commonly related themes second most frequently suggested to me that my teachers have spent a great deal of time during their lives thinking through problems and learning by analyzing new information. Although this fact is perhaps not surprising, it has illustrated that my teachers were actively and continuously engaged in discovering new information about themselves and how the world around them worked. The fact re-enforced the proposition that the daily act of living and learning from that living experience is more important for the process of life long learning than the salient events that occur less frequently in persons' lives.
Life Long Learning accumulated was related most frequently with the Mental quadrant. Furthermore, Positive personal insight was related second most frequently, Life Long Learning reflected was related third most frequently, Negative personal insight was related fourth most frequently and Skills was related fifth most frequently. Beliefs was related so infrequently that these results are negligible for the purposes of this study.

As I stated previously, Life Long Learning accumulated was the most frequently coded sub-theme in the Life Long Learning main theme. The relationships of this theme, to the Mental quadrant suggested to me that my teachers understanding of the world around them occurs as a result of accumulating bits of wisdom and understanding and again re-enforces the proposition that life long learning is a process of daily accumulation of experience. The relationships of Positive Personal Insight and Negative Personal Insight to the Mental quadrant further suggested to me that insight thinking occurred for my teachers while they were in the process of accumulating new information. The relationships of the Life Long Learning reflected sub-theme to the mental quadrant also suggested to me that part of my teachers' learning process involved reflecting on the information that they had learned and deciding how best to use that information. Although Skills was related to the Mental quadrant only about a third as often as Life Long Learning accumulated, there was a strong enough relationship suggested to convince me that a large component of the mental context in which my teachers were learning involved skill development. These skills included bush skills, athletic skills, artistic skills, interpersonal skills, problem solving skills and academic skills.

Even though the Physical quadrant is related to the related themes from the horizontal search only about half as often as the Socio/Emotional quadrant, there still appeared to me to be a strong physical context in which the learning of my teachers occurred. Life Long Learning accumulated was associated most frequently with the Physical quadrant. Furthermore, Negative Personal insight was related second most frequently, Positive Personal insight was related third most frequently and Skills was related fourth most frequently. Life Long Learning reflected and Beliefs were related in such small numbers that the relationships are negligible for the purposes of this study.

The fact that Life Long Learning accumulated was the most frequently related to the Physical quadrant suggested to me that my teachers' learning about their physical being occurred most often in small increments as they experienced new skills and other physical sensations and practiced familiar skills and remembered familiar sensations. Similarly, the strong relationship between negative personal insight and Positive personal insight suggested that physical experience was an important part of teachers' learning about themselves. I have not found it unusual that Negative personal insight is related to
the physical quadrant in such high numbers, considering the amount of physical trauma that many of my teachers experienced, especially as children. Although Skills is related to the Physical quadrant only about half as often as Positive personal insight, the relationship still suggested to me that much of my teachers' learning involved the development of new physical skills. This was especially true of their experience as children and teenagers, but less so as they grew to adults.

Although the Spiritual quadrant was related to the commonly related themes from the horizontal search only about a third as often as the Socio/Emotional quadrant, the relationships still suggested to me that there was a strong spiritual context to my teachers' life long learning. Positive personal insights was the common theme related most frequently to Spiritual quadrant. As well, Life Long Learning accumulated was related second most frequently, Beliefs was third most frequent and Skills was fourth most frequent. Life Long Learning reflected and Negative personal insight were related so infrequently that these results are negligible for the purposes of this study.

Positive personal insight was related to Spiritual three times as often as the next closest theme, Life Long Learning accumulated. The frequency of this relationship suggested to me that my teachers spiritual lives were an important part of their understandings of themselves and was instrumental in helping each of them to develop a positive self concept. As well, the somewhat less strong, but important relationship to Life Long Learning accumulated suggested to me that the spiritual context of my teachers lives was an on going and continuous context. This relationship was somewhat surprising to me as elders have taught me, and Simon reinforced this in his life story, that significant spiritual events happen only once or twice in most people's lives. Yet, my teachers in this study shared with me that they not only had significant events, but were in almost constant daily contact with their spiritual guidance. It seemed to me that they have achieved an almost constant spiritual awareness. This awareness may be why my teachers all have a strong relationship between Beliefs and the spiritual context of their lives in their life stories.

Pitman, Eisikovits & Dobbert (1989) claim that most human learning in today's industrial environment is aimed not at social learning but at training for work. As a result our human societies do not have a healthy proportion of holistically balanced individuals. They feel so strongly about this issue that they have proposed a set of criteria for educators to follow when designing learning environments. I believe, based on the findings in this study, that any learning environment that intents to teach health to Northerners needs to consider these criteria. They are:
• Emphasize the value of observation and peoples' ability to learn from each other, including primary care givers and peer groups.
• Learn and take into account the cultural rhythms and the acquisition and transmission of culture.
• Allow opportunities for people to learn and practise culturally appropriate emotional attitudes and strategies.
• View all human learners as active learners, with a high need for arousal, attraction to the novel in their environment which develop and support human's complex brain and polyphasic learning.
• Value the learning of social strategies as a life long learning activity, crucial for development at all ages.
• Broaden the understanding of the social group to include all generations and the manner that humans learn life affirming values, beliefs and attitudes.
• Think of play, for all age groups as essential in developing optimal adult function and flexibility by promoting novelty and therefore better adaptive strategies.

This test, described above, indicates to me that my teachers found themselves in situations that granted them opportunities to develop spiritual, socio-emotional, physical and mental skills. These contexts were not always ones in which they felt comfortable, but the other parts of their personal makeups allowed them to learn within the context. The fact that the Socio/Emotional quadrant was the most frequently related to the other groups of related sub-themes was consistent with a large body of literature dating back to the early 1970's (Kimbal, 1982; Poirier & Hussey, 1982). Essentially, this research all concludes that the social environment, regardless of its configuration, provides the context in which most people learn and mature. It is within the group that both direct individual learning in interaction with the environment and the passing on of group traditions occur. A person's learning in the social context is about the social group, group limits, and existence or function of relationships. This learning begins with the primary care giver, and is influenced by his or her status in the group, and his or her relationships with others, including kinship relationships. Most critical to the person's learning is the stability or lack of, that is provided by the group.

A Holistic Ecological Learning Process

To discover the process of life long learning used by my teachers, I searched the seven clusters of commonly related themes for relationships with the seven
interconnected circles of learning behaviour, in search of a life path as specified by Cajete (1994). Cajete (1994) describes this process as an ecological learning process where a person’s whole being relates to and learns about the whole of Creation. Cajete (1994) explores and tracks the unique ways that Aboriginal people teach and learn. In his book, he attempts to honour the Aboriginal process of seeking life through their special connections to nature, family, community and spirits, and the place that process has in Aboriginal life. Cajete (1994) asserts that the special wisdom of traditional Aboriginal education is found in the processes of environment, myth, legend, visions, arts, community, and spirituality. He further asserts that these processes are necessary for one to find one’s true character, potential and identity, as well as, one’s soul, creativity and passion, and as well as, one’s true work or vocation. Finding one’s life in this manner can only be achieved through a special kind of perception and creative thought that can be described as the seven interconnected circles of asking, seeking, making, having, sharing, celebrating and being (Cajete, 1994).

In the sections below I have given Cajete’s (1994) descriptions for each of the seven interconnected circles and in Table 10 in Appendix E I have reported the frequencies with which the commonly related themes were related to Cajete’s (1994) seven circles.

**Having Behaviour**

Having behaviour was the circle of learning behaviour that was most frequently related to the commonly related themes from the horizontal search. I coded Having when my teachers shared evidence of a high level of maturity and self-acceptance by understanding the difference between being created by circumstance and creating their own circumstance. Thus, I coded Having when my teachers gave evidence, in their stories, of persisting toward a goal or independent thinking or taking action to seize opportunities. The fact that Having was the most frequently related of the circles provides further evidence that my teachers were all mature individuals with an achieved level of identity development, when they shared their life stories (Marcia, 1966). However, the evidence from this search suggested to me that my teachers used the Having behaviour from an early age. Thus, if Cajete (1994) and Marcia (1966) are right, my teachers demonstrated maturity from an early age, perhaps making them an unusual sample.

Having was related to Positive personal insight most frequently, Life Long Learning accumulated second most frequently and Negative personal insight third most
frequently. Beliefs and Skills were related to the circle Having an equal number of times for fourth most frequent. Thus, these findings suggested to me that even though my teachers appeared to display a high level of maturity throughout their lives they still continued to learn about themselves and develop Beliefs and Skills based on that learning.

Mary has provided an example of Having behaviour related to Positive personal insight. In this segment of Mary's story, she is telling me about the first month after she left her husband, how difficult it was for her and her children, but how she persisted toward her goal of finding a safe environment in which to raise her kids. Thus, she has decided to create her own circumstances, acted on that decision and persisted toward her goal. She has a positive personal insight about herself when she realizes she must and she can live through the pain of that experience to be successful:

... And we stayed there for a month, but for that whole month the boys cried, I cried, we'd hug each other and sit on the bed and cry. But even though we missed him and both wanted to go home, I had to they couldn't, they didn't know what was best for them, and even though it hurt me and it hurt them too I had to try and do what was best for me. Because you know I felt in order, even though the pain felt that it would never go away, I went through, we went through, when I was drinking just to shut the to numb the pain. I realized it always came back when I was drinking and it got worse. I thought it was only through feeling the pain that I would come out of this feeling OK. So we prayed hard, the kids were small. I, we'd all kneeled down and we prayed. We would pray for (husband) to change, that things will be different. Praying for what I thought felt was right was different to what I felt um what I thought was better for the kids that was being away from home, trying to make things different. There's times where I could think logically, but there's times too everything was so confusing. I always kept in mind that you know it would be OK, but I had to go through the pain... In order to be OK, I had to feel pain...? I think maybe from realizing when I was still with my husband, that there was, realizing that no matter how no matter how long I used the alcohol to numb the pain, when the alcohol wore off the pain was still there and sometimes it was worse. The feeling that uh, not being wanted by my husband um, and being hurt because he didn't seem to love his kids. And then wanting something different other than what I had, but something better. If things, things didn't get better, but things changed, but I had to make the move. I decided to to leave, I decided to leave, by leaving I wasn't being hit anymore, but I was also missing him you know. I wanted the kids to be happy but they were sad, and they weren't happy because they weren't with their dad. Uh, and then, thinking also that, it's better that they don't grow up seeing me get hit and thinking it's normal. I know it hurts now, but it's not always gonna hurt. And maybe it'll be better. I guess that's where, it's from experience that's where I learned that, maybe from my mom too when she says when she said that, all that she went through with being married with my dad in this life—in the end it's maybe it'll be better for her when she goes to heaven. So the pain that she went through, she'll get a reward, and she'll be much happier in the end. But in order to get to there she had to she felt she had to go through this. So from different experiences and taken little, a little at a time from different people, I guess that's where I learned it.
Seeking Behaviour

Seeking was the circle that was second most frequently related to the commonly related themes from the horizontal search. I coded Seeking when my teachers described a quest for self-development, of a spiritual, physical, socio/emotional or mental nature. In some cases this involved a relocation to a new community, but could also be as simple as a trip to the library, or to an elder for new information or perspective. Similarly, a vision quest or a fast would have been included, as would getting married as a means of leaving one's parental influence, or joining a group for self-development. I also included times when teachers were seeking guidance from their experience through meditation or reflection.

The fact that Seeking was the second most related circle to the commonly related themes suggested to me that my teachers were active learners throughout their lives and were continually, or at least often, involved in a process of self-discovery. Thus, according to Marcia (1966) these were unusual individuals, as they did not seem to experience many moratorium periods in their lives. However, Cajete (1994) suggests that for Aboriginal people this continuous process of self-discovery is normal.

Seeking was related to Positive personal insight the most frequently, Negative personal insight the second most frequently, Life Long Learning accumulated the third most frequently and Skills the fourth most frequently. Life Long Learning reflected and Beliefs were related so infrequently that they are negligible for the purposes of this study. Thus, these results suggested to me that my teachers, in their seeking behaviour, continued throughout their lives to learn about themselves through a process of incrementally accumulating information which led to a mature sense of themselves as individuals.

Charles has provided an example of Seeking behavior associated with Positive Personal Insight. He has described two ways of seeking in this segment of his story. First, he shares that he goes off to see a mental health person and then he goes to the bush to be alone with his Creator and ask that Creator for help and guidance. His positive personal insight came when he realizes that once he began to ask for help, his life began to take a turn for the better:

...You know, you don't have to be crazy to see this person, he says you know, but he's there to help you know. And uh, we struggled on our second time up, second time around, but I have some wonderful experiences in my life, when I uh, when I sobered up again, like the spiritual side of things, like uh, I experienced a lot of things out, I used to go camping alone you know, I have to be away from myself. I wanted to be by myself because I wanted to deal things with my Creator and I wanted things what he has in store for me and, I used to go out for two night, sometimes three nights, to go out there
be by myself and be amongst everythings. Be quiet, you know, just the birds, nothing, nobody talking, and those are some of the things, the experiences I got you know, the feelings, you know, and finally admitting it to say to myself you know, instead of saying to my Higher Power, here I am, and what am I gonna do. Take control of my life, I cannot control it myself anymore. I cannot run my life anymore. And that's the thing that then this feeling, is kinda this feeling, I don't know how to explain it still today. It's a feeling that uh, some kind of something that entered into your body, that entered into your mind, and it was the greatest feeling I ever had in my life. And I uh, I felt joy and I felt relieved and I cried, I cried like a baby. I never cried that much in my life, because of this feeling this beautiful experience I had and from there, you know, things fell in place, you know, things fell my way, you know, just like somebody put things in front of my all the time, when I needed things, when I needed help, somebody put this person here.

Asking Behaviour

I found that Asking behaviour was the circle that was related to the commonly related themes from the horizontal search third most frequently. I coded Asking behaviour when my teachers indicated that they were asking for information, or guidance from a relative, elder or friend. I also coded this behaviour when my teachers shared that they were praying for guidance, wisdom or strength from their Creator or Grandparents. Similarly, I coded Asking when my teachers indicated that they asked for information to clarify a situation, or confronted someone about their behaviour. Furthermore, I coded Asking when my teachers sought to have their social, emotional or physical needs met.

Asking was related to Positive personal insight most frequently, Negative personal insight second most frequently and Life Long Learning accumulated third most frequently. Beliefs was related fourth most frequently to the commonly related themes from the horizontal search. Skills and Life Long Learning reflected were related so infrequently that they are not important for the purposes of this study. These results have indicated to me that the process of asking for guidance and information has contributed greatly to my teachers' self-knowledge. As well, the strong relationship to Life Long Learning accumulated suggests that this process of learning about themselves and the world around them, through asking, was an on going and incremental process of discovery. Similarly, the strong relationship of Beliefs to this circle of Asking behaviour suggested to me that my teachers developed their belief system, at least in part by using this process.

Simon has provided an example of Asking behaviour associated with Positive Personal Insight. He has described a turning point in his life where he was in danger of repeating an old behaviour, that of quitting on the point of success, when he had a realization, based on a series of asking processes, that he would pass that behaviour to
his children, if he was to follow his instinct and quit school. At the end of this segment from his life story, he has had a positive personal insight when he realizes that he has overcome this old, limiting behaviour:

... And I, and I did, and I stayed home. I had talked with my supervisor before that night, and I told him that I was really havin' problems there and I'm gonna quit. So I quit for one day. I phoned that supervisor, and I told him the situation. And the word spread around and other people came to see me again, it felt good again, people come to see me because I quit. People come to see me tellin' me "can't do that". I had phone calls to say "can't you can't do that". I thought about it, and I, I'd lay in bed and I'd look at my kids, and that's when it hit me, you know, this quitting. I sort of a track record of quitting. And here I am quitting again. And when I looked at my kids, it looked like they were sleeping. I said, 'how in the hell this, how do I, how are things transferred. If I quit now, she's gonna have to deal with that problem in her time', you know this idea of transferring eh, how you, how the parents transfer things, and so it really hit me there. I can't quit. If I really love that kid, then I'm gonna do that, I'm not gonna quit. If I really love that kid, you know, I don't wanna give her that, dealing that problem. So, its, that's sort of that, that turning point there again. Hmmm, few other people phone and they gave their rationale, talked to the supervisor again, 'OK, it's not too late, you can come back'. I was away two days. I missed two days. So I went back and then, all the kids over there, they just, they knew I quit, 'cause the co-op told em. So they welcomed, like I was really welcomed back, but I still had to deal with this, you know this uh feeling that you know, you can't go through with it. I even had a dream, when I was crossing this bridge in this dream, with my vehicle and there was a lane, sort of a rut, where the vehicle goes. I was crossing that bridge and driving up this hill. About half way up, there's uh, a sort of a fog, up on top the hill, can't see the top. And I was spinning, about half way up that hill in my vehicle and I, I backed up again. And I made a run for it, trying to stay on track, and I dunno somewhere up three quarters of the way, I woke up. So I didn't know if I made it over the hill. So that dream came out at that time. So I stuck with it, and it you know, I really had a lot of problems, a lot of problem there, I couldn't really rationalize it, could be the pressure, but when I think about it, like kids didn't give me a rough time, the co-op, nobody in the school came me a rough time, the co-op, nobody in the school came me a rough time, it seemed I had to go through something like that, you know, and I and I saw it as a test, like this is a test for you. And so I saw it as a test, that I had to overcome. And that I thought about all those times I quit, and it's coming to a head now. If you quit, you're a quitter for life. But if you don't quit then you beat, you beat it... And so, I went through with it, and that last day, I was finished, so I went home, and I followed this trail. It was in that dream, I saw that bridge and there is a place like that between the reserve and, and the school, cutting across. So I went through there and I parked at the other side there. I parked on this side and I walked across that bridge, and I just, put out a big yell. And I sat there for quite awhile looking at that hill and that bridge and I drove up, you know, just get enough of that first, and, 'cause I made it. So that, that was that situation. I dunno, now I see um, I, I try to see tests for what they are. Since we, sometimes, if I say they're tests then I'm really cognizant of the situations. Maybe they're not tests, I dunno. But I see tests, and I try to overcome them.

Making Behaviour

Making was the circle fourth most frequently related to the commonly related themes from the horizontal search. I coded Making behaviour when my teachers, in their life stories, indicated that they were making life anew, by starting a new life, a new relationship, a new job, or had new outlooks or new goals as a result of their visions or
beliefs. Although I coded Making only about two thirds as often as Having, these results suggested strongly to me that new beginnings were an important part of my teachers' lives and their learning processes. This indicated an unusual level of courage and vision to me, as well as, a willingness to assess their situation and take action to change what they found unsuitable. However, Cajete (1994) would say that this is precisely what he would expect Aboriginal people to be doing in their lives until they were ready to share what they had learned.

The Making circle was related to Positive personal insight most frequently, Negative personal insight second most frequently and Life Long Learning accumulated third most frequently. Beliefs and Skills were equally related to the Making circle fourth most frequently. Life Long Learning reflected was related to the Making circle so infrequently that these results are negligible for the purposes of this study. These results indicated to me once again that my teachers' willingness to start new ventures and relationships helped them to discover good and bad about themselves and thus contributed strongly to their life long learning process. As well, these results suggested to me that my teachers once more used an incremental learning process rather than waiting for an event that would shock them into action. Similarly, once again Beliefs and Skills are closely related to Making, thus suggesting to me that my teachers also used Making behaviour to develop a belief system and learn and practise new skills.

Francois has provided an example of Making behaviour associated with Positive Personal Insight. He has described, in his life story, leaving his community to accept a new job, in a treatment centre, in another community where the people didn't even speak his own language. His positive personal insight came at the end of this segment of his story when he realized at Christmas dinner that only a year previously he was sharing a little frozen fish with a friend for Christmas dinner, because he had been drunk and broke. He was impressed with what a difference a year had made in his life:

...Ya, six months sober. So I got, I went to (another town)and that's when they, that's when they hired me and I worked there. I remembered that I worked for about a year, and then all of the sudden, this guy coming in from La Ronge, Dwayne Geysler, I remember I used to see him there. And one day, he walk, he walked in again. You know, I wanna talk to you. So he, he took me to my office and he's talkin' and he said I wanna hire you. I wanna give you a job. Can you go for interview? Where? La Loche. OK, so went to, he picked me up a plane, we flew to LaLoche, and Sister (name) was in charge here, I guess, he was the director for Social Service. So we got there, they did some interview with me, by the time I was OK and that you know, doing my little stuff. So I got hired right away here. And then Fall, I moved in 1978, that's when I moved to La Loche. And then that's when I started workin', till today like you know. ... And I remember when I quit drinking, back years, 1976, when I quit drinking, that summer I quit drinking; In June, June the first, 1976, and that fall that Christmas came along, I was invited to uh, a Christmas dinner in Ile a La Crosse Treatment Centre. That's when I was working there, you know, and I was invited for that, you know, Christmas dinner there. When I got back
there I walk in the house and here I, oh, the food was so beautiful. All decorated, you
know, when I got to the table there I was crying, 'cause I look back last year what I had
for Christmas, a little frozen jack fish, not decorated or anything. (laughing) And here I
walk into a table all decorated with food, different kinds, and I thought, oh, that make a
lot of change. It's best that I stay sober, so that's, that's was my turning point there in uh,
you know, Christmas I think.

**Being Behaviour**

Being behaviour was the fifth most frequently related to the commonly related
themes from the horizontal search. I coded Being behaviour when my teachers shared
evidence that they were being joyful and grateful for their gifts, abilities, opportunities,
friendships, family or community. I had suspected that being behaviour would come
much higher on the list of relationships because my teachers in their life stories seemed to
speak regularly about how grateful they were. However, these results indicated to me
the humility of my teachers that I was regularly aware of during the telling of the stories.

Generally, my teachers spoke about their gratitude to their Creator, for their
opportunities and for the people that were placed in their path as helpers and guides.
These comments often came at the end of a section within each story and were related
using few words, so that the coding of the relationships may not have given full weight to
the level of my teachers' Being behaviour.

Positive personal insight was the most frequently related to Being behaviour of all
the commonly related themes from the horizontal search. Life Long Learning
accumulated was the second most frequently related theme, Skills was the third most
frequently related theme and Negative personal insight was the fourth most frequently
related theme. Beliefs and Life Long Learning reflected were coded so infrequently that
these results are negligible for the purposes of this study. These results indicated to me
that Being behaviour assisted my teachers to discover good and bad in themselves
through a process of incremental learning. Furthermore, my teachers practiced old skills
and learned new skills during Being behaviour.

Therese has provided an example of Being behaviour associated with the Positive
personal insight commonly related theme. She has described how her daughter's friend
shared that she wished she had a mother like Therese. Therese was grateful that all her
hard work at her own recovery and all the days she had spent leaving her community for
training were paying off. Her positive personal insight came as she realized that even
though the family's life had for many years been in turmoil, she had been able to make a
positive impression on her daughter and her daughter's friends:
Ya. Like why like even to my daughters, the older ones, I had two teenagers, and I tell them that, I'm their best friend so, they, they, they really understand that now, that's why they they share anything with me. And I'm still a friend to them. And from them I think their kinda like me. If there's something good that they have learned from me they share it with their friends too. 'Cause before not too long, that my daughter had told me that. She thought I was talking to her, she said that one of his friends had said that I wish I had a mother like yours. That made me, you know, touched me. There is something that I'm doing. I don't only do to my older, I do it to even like my younger, my four year old, as soon as I know that they can understand and when I see a kid I know sometimes they're busy doing, playing or whatever, but still they are put in, whatever you say in their mind and sometimes it takes a long time and one of these days, whatever I said there, to flashback to them. So it's better not to be afraid to say or talk to your kids or even your husband or any, anyone, 'cause even though they're not getting anything at that time, but it comes back to them. 'Cause that's how I am in my life. I, I listen to a lot of elders, to me anyone is no stranger to me. That's how I see it. Like white people whatever, you know where I go. I feel that way since. I started seeing things fairly after all that, that nightmare behind. That's why I wanna, I don't wanna throw that away.

Sharing Behaviour

Sharing behaviour was the sixth most frequently related to the commonly related themes from the horizontal search. I coded Sharing behaviour when my teachers shared evidence, in their life stories, that they were sharing their learning and experience. This sharing could be with children, spouses, siblings or community members. Occasionally, my teachers described traveling to other communities, or taking jobs in other communities where they also shared their learning and experience. I had expected that Sharing behaviour would be among the least frequently related of the circles. This is because Cajete (1994) has suggested that Sharing behaviour comes toward the end of ones life, after a life time of accumulating wisdom. These results suggested to me again the humility of my teachers. I had noticed as they told their stories that they often appeared reluctant to spend a great deal of time talking about their work at sharing their knowledge, strength and hope with others. As well, only two of my teachers, Charles and Francois, could be considered old enough to be any where close to the end of a long life. In the cultures in northern Saskatchewan, that I am familiar with, younger people, without a great deal of gray in their hair, even though they may be wise and experienced, are reluctant to share with others in a public forum, as they would rather leave that role to elders who have lived longer and experienced more.

I found that Sharing was related to Positive personal insight most often, Skills second most frequently and Life Long Learning accumulated third most frequently. Negative personal insight, Life Long Learning reflected and Beliefs were related to the commonly related themes from the horizontal search as to be negligible for the purposes of this study. Positive personal insight was related to Sharing behaviour almost twice the
number of times of the next closest theme. This suggested to me that when my teachers
did share their experience, strength and hope with others the result was very satisfying
and they were able to feel good about themselves. The strength of this relationship
alone suggested to me that sharing was also an important part of the learning process as
well as being important to the self-development process. Similarly, Sharing behaviour
appeared to be important in the development of skills by my teachers. Life Long
Learning accumulated was also important in relation to Sharing behaviour. This result
suggested to me that my teachers used their accumulated experience when they
began a sharing process rather than using a process of reflection.

John has provided an example of Sharing behaviour associated with Positive
Personal Insight. In this segment from his life story he has described sharing his learning
about the value of encouraging people to think well of themselves and believing in their
abilities. His positive personal insight comes from his understanding that he learned this
lesson well at the feet of the old man who served as his surrogate parent and
grandparent:

...Uh hm ya, see and that’s that’s a thing too that I really had a hard time I had
a hard time with it when I first started off as a correction worker, because no matter what
you know first and foremost there’s other rules in there too that have to be
followed and uh so on one hand I got my corrections cap on during the day, and
towards the evening when I wanna light my Sweat Lodge then I put on my you know my
long hair and my braids and my sweet grass you see. So I’m playing a dual dual role in
there you see. But it’s just how you do it if you know. As long as you’re fair you know, you
know. And uh like you still like I still have to you know I was approached by some of the
uh workers there. That you know like, you know I’m I’m still a corrections worker, don’t
forget that you know you’re here as a corrections worker you know. But I’m a stubborn
I’m a stubborn man in my own way. I go in there with what I’ve learned you know all
with with all the the teaching of my Elders and I go in there with that attitude you see.
Like how can I how can I get fired when I’m trying to help another human being you see.
So that’s how it is like you know like, I could like on own hand I could put on my
corrections cap and say “you gotta you gotta respect these rules that we have here, we
have camp rules and stuff like that”, you know but as long as you’re fair to them, they
know, they know anyway, they’re smart you know so. I, I sort of but in my way, I empower
them I empower them to you know to feel good about themselves. Just like that old
man had empowered me when I was a child, when nobody it seemed like no one
wanted me you know my, I always go back to that old man who believed in me, who
loved me, who respected me. I treat I treat the offender that way today. I empower
them, I believe in them. “Hey, I believe you can make a change in your life”. You know?

Celebrating Behaviour

Celebrating behaviour was related to the commonly related themes from the
horizontal search the least frequently of all the seven circles of learning behaviour. I
coded Celebrating when my teachers described times, in their life stories, when they
were celebrating their gifts, achievements, friendships and family, whether as an
individual or a member of their community. I found this result somewhat distressing as I
have learned in my own life that celebrating one’s successes and celebrating one’s gifts
to be crucial to a happy and fulfilled life. I was distressed because there did not seem to
be a lot of indication from my teachers that they spent a great deal of time celebrating.
As I think of these people as healthy in most other ways, I must conclude that they simply
did not share these moments because they were either private or they did not seem to
think that those were moments important to their stories.

Positive personal insight was the theme most frequently related to Celebrating,
Life Long Learning accumulated was the second most frequently related and Skills was
the third most frequently related. Negative personal insight, Beliefs and Life Long
Learning reflected were related so infrequently as to be negligible for the purposes of this
study.

Mary has provided an example of Celebrating behaviour associated with Positive
Personal Insight:

...I wanted to go back so I can maybe put things to rest. It was like going back
home when you’re traveling that route. Uh I think it’ll before they had canoes, I mean
before they boats and motors and how they used to travel, how families used to be
together and the the foundation where the cabins used to be. Um, well at, canoeing
the route that my grandparents and their grandparents must have traveled and how it
can never be that way, but not to be embarrassed, and to be proud for what the
background that I have. Um, growing up I never realized, or I never appreciated what I
had um until I got older. And now to to be able to go back and say "this is where I am
from, this is some of the things that happened", and just just a you know proud, ya proud
from where I came from but not uh, how would you say it (Cree) um not in a mean way,
like an an appreciation, not in a greedy proud way, but an appreciation. Do you
understand? Can you understand? ... Not in a boastful way, no. It was good to go back.
Aloot a good memories aloot a sad memories. But, we had twelve days and we weren't in
a rush, it was like a dream come true. And I didn't believe I could, we could do it, I'd
have kept on dreaming and never made it a reality. But once we said you know "It's
about time.", and that's not just saying "We are gonna do it." but just to "Let's do it".

Discussion of the Ecological and Holistic Learning Findings

By comparing the systematic related themes with Cajete’s (1994) seven circles of
learning behaviour, I found that my teachers followed an ecological or holistic learning
process as described by Cajete (1994) and detailed in chapter 3 of this paper. I found
with this search that all Cajete’s (1994) seven interconnected circles of learning
behaviour were related to the commonly related themes from the horizontal search.
These relationships suggested to me that my teachers used an ecological learning
process during their lives and that it was very similar to the Tewa’s ecological learning process described by Cajete (1994).

The teachers described spending most of their time in the Having circle during their life stories. This suggested to me that they have presently arrived at a place in their lives where they are using the skills and knowledge they gathered over their life times to live a balanced and healthy life. According to Cajete (1994) one would expect my teachers to be at this stage in their development process as they are all entering, in the middle of, or leaving middle age. In Cajete’s (1994) theory middle age is the time of assimilation of experience and living by the daily use of the learning that has accrued from that learning. For example, Therese, after an extended period of seeking and making behaviour has decided that she will stay at home to raise her younger children. Her decision is based on her accumulated experience that has suggested to her that her children need to have a full time mother and that she can make substantial contribution to her community by raising stable well adjusted children.

The second most frequently related circle was Seeking. This finding suggested to me that my teachers spent a great deal of time in their lives looking for a better way of living. This result is also consistent with the learning oriented learners described by Houle (1961). The teachers in their younger years spent much time seeking new information, new experiences and reorganizing those experiences into meaningful patterns that helped them to understand the rapidly changing world in which they lived. All of my teachers engaged in this type of behaviour well into their twenties. Some even continued in their thirties and forties. For example, Mary’s determination to have work and get further training, so that she would not have to live on welfare after she left her husband, led her to new communities and into employment that was very hard on her emotionally. However, she speaks gratefully about her work and the learning she had while working at the women’s shelter. These experiences cemented her resolve to put her children first so that they were secure, loved and nurtured. She did not want her children becoming "latch key children" who were left to face the world without the benefit of parental guidance.

The teachers described Asking and Making behaviour third and fourth most frequently, respectively. Being behaviour was the next most frequently related to the systematic related themes from the horizontal search. I found that Celebrating was the circle that my teachers described spending spending time in least often.

Cajete (1994) has stated that Aboriginal educators have to:

...facilitate our children and ourselves in the ancient journey to find our face (to understand and appreciate our true character), to find our heart (to understand and
appreciate the passions that move and energize our life), to find a foundation (work that allows us to fully express our potential and our greatest fulfillment), and to become a complete man or women (to find our Life and appreciate the spirit that moves us).

As my teachers' stories have yielded themes that are related to each of Cajete's (1994) seven circles of learning behaviour, I have found that they have been progressing through the tasks that he has specified in the above quote. Thus, my teachers have followed a similar learning process to that described by this Tewa man as being one common to all Aboriginal people. As the government was actively attempting to dismantle the culture during the life time of my teachers, I was surprised to find that they had followed so traditional a process in their life long learning.

I also found evidence in this study that my teachers learn holistically. For example, sub-themes in the Incremental main theme, show a rich learning environment and learning response from my teachers. The teachers described learning situations where four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel can be identified. Similarly, sub-themes in the Salient Moments main theme also encompass all the four quadrants in the Medicine Wheel. As well, comparisons with the Medicine Wheel indicated that all the quadrants in the Medicine Wheel are related to my teachers learning. This has suggested to me that my teachers have learned in a rich holistic context.

I also found stronger evidence of holistic learning on the part of my teachers was in the horizontal search. The sub-themes from the Incremental Moments main theme were all related to Positive personal insight, Negative personal insight, Life long Learning reflected and Life long Learning accumulated. Similarly, the sub-themes in the Salient Moments main theme were all related to Positive personal insight, Negative personal insight, Life long Learning reflected and Life long Learning accumulated. Furthermore, Positive and Negative personal insights were related to Skill development and practise, the development of beliefs and Life Long Learning reflected and accumulated.

These results are consistent with a body of research that began with Karl Lashley (1929), Karl Pribram (1969) and Paul Pietsch (1972) and indicate that humans are capable of learning holistically or ecologically as Cajete (1994) has stated. All organisms with brains have no particular area in which memory is located (Pribram, 1969 and Pietsch, 1972). This research was the beginning of scientists' understanding that the brain stores memories holistically with no particular section being responsible for physical, emotional or other types of memories. Recently, Damasio (1994) has theorized that the various units of information are then united at convergence zones. These convergence zones can result in images when they combine associations from the higher order cortices like the occipital, temporal, parietal, frontal regions and the basal ganglia and
limbic structures (Damasio, 1994). Neuroscience research seems to suggest that the design of the brain circuitries are influenced not only by genetics but also by a complex interaction of the growing person and the activities in which he or she engages, and on the action of bioregulatory circuits as these react to such activities. In other words the brain, mind, memory continuum can be achieved only if three conditions are met, a precise genetic structure; individual activity and the reactions of the individual to environmental stimuli; and the self-organizing pressures resulting from the sheer complexity of each individual and their perceived need (Damasio, 1994).

Neuroscience is therefore slowly developing an understanding of the brain, memory, mind continuum as a body, brain, memory, mind continuum. In fact, Damasio (1994) asserts that the body contributes more to the brain than life support. The body contributes content that is part of the normal workings of the normal mind. In fact, in a summary of current research, Bower (1994) concludes that emotion plays a role in reacting to the present situation, evaluating plans and their execution, signaling discrepancies between remembered and new information, directing attention to the discrepancies, coding new information in memory and promoting rehearsal of action based on the new learning. In this way, when one learns new information, a more accurate interpretation of a current situation is possible. Later, emotion arousal retrieves associated thoughts plans or actions.

Pitman, Elisikovits and Dobbert (1989), in an examination of the above research and theory have argued that the memory, mind, brain, body continuum are evidence that all humans in all cultures are able to learn holistically. However, in the dominant culture in North America, most children are taught at an early age to ignore the emotional and physical aspects of learning, to prepare them to be successful in the industrial-scientific disciplines where vertical, sequential and linear logical thinking is the accepted norm.

The combination of the evidence from the vertical search, the horizontal search and the comparisons of the systematic related themes to the theories of the Medicine Wheel and Cajete’s (1994) theory of Aboriginal learning behaviours suggested strongly to me that while my teachers followed the Aboriginal learning process they were also engaged in a holistic learning process.
Discussion of the Non-systematic Findings from the Vertical Search

Discussion of the Non-Systematic Findings in the Personal Data Theme

A number of sub-themes in the Personal Data main theme were not common to all of my teachers' life stories. As I stated earlier, I coded these themes knowing that the NUDIST (Ryplee Pty Ltd., 1992) software would allow me to sort out those that were common to all six teachers' stories and those that were not. Moreover, a number of authors have stated that the non-systematic themes are as important and can be as reveling as the systematic themes (King, Keohane & Verba, 1994). These sub-themes in the Personal Data main theme included: age at event; physical and cultural beliefs; own values and other's values; cultural identifiers, gender, marital status; number of children and grandchildren; current age and sibling rank.

I had not expected to get systematic findings in the cultural identifiers, gender, marital status, number of children and grandchildren, current age and sibling rank sub-themes due to the diversity of my teachers and their life stories. I have therefore not discussed these sub-themes below. I had, however, expected to get systematic results from the age at event, physical and cultural beliefs and the own and other's values sub-themes. I have discussed each of these five sub-themes below and the reasons why I consider them important as non-systematic themes in this study.

Age at Event

I coded Age at Event when teachers were able to state their age when significant learning events occurred in their lives. For example, when Therese was age ten, her mother died and she discovered the importance of prayer in her life. I had hoped, by coding this sub-theme, to be able to determine whether or not similar experiences occurred at the same age for each teacher. There are several reasons why this sub-theme was not systematic or common to all six teachers. First, as I coded each theme by specific age, it became apparent that my coding strategy was flawed. None of my teachers experienced similar experiences at exactly the same age. I may have gotten better results if I had coded the experiences across age ranges of two or three years as this method would have allowed for slight differences between my teachers, but still provided an age range at which certain events occurred.

Similarly, I was able to determine from the data that the women had different learning experiences and those experiences were often at an earlier age. It seems from...
the stories that the women took on family and child responsibilities earlier than the men. As has been demonstrated earlier in this chapter, much of the learning for both men and women occurred during social interaction. The men, however, apparently were more self-centered when they were younger. Their stories reflected their growing understanding of themselves as other people and events affected them. The women, on the other hand, tended to come to understand themselves in terms of how their behaviour affected other people.

This finding is significant for two reasons. First, it confirms that women's frame of reference to the world and their developing understanding of themselves is different than the men's. Many feminist writers in the dominant culture have written about this (Dinnerstein, 1976; Chodorow, 1979), but to my knowledge there has been no research that suggests Aboriginal women have different frames of reference and therefore perspectives on their developing selves, than do their male counterparts. Secondly, this finding is important because it suggested to health development practitioners that there are many windows of opportunity for learning and awareness and that there is no specific time to introduce concepts and ideas. In other words, as educators, every day is an opportunity and every day is important for people in their learning and development.

**Physical Beliefs**

I coded the sub-theme Physical beliefs when my teachers stated that they believed something to be true as it affected their physical well-being. For example, Francois has stated that he used to run in front of the dogs to break trail when he and his father were out on the lake to check the fish nets. Francois talks about his increased ability physically from this rigorous exercise and his sense of self-esteem that resulted from his ability to win dog races as a youngster. I had expected that there would be common beliefs among my teachers around the ideas of diet, exercise and general care and nurturing of their bodies. It is possible that my teachers did not talk about their beliefs about physical wellness because I did not specifically ask for this information in my framework questions, asking instead, for them to describe what their lives were like at various periods.

However, the fact that there were not common beliefs about these ideas suggests at least two important findings. First, although each teacher shared that they exercised and ate good food when they could, none of my teachers seemed to have a regular planned system of care for their physical well-being. Exercise for all of my teachers involved activities in the bush, like walking and hunting. Each teacher has
shared that they participated in these activities for their mental and spiritual health, rather than for their physical health. This leads me to believe that my teachers think of exercise in relation to the traditional activities that they were involved in when they were young. As well, when my teachers have talked about food, they did not think of food in the sense of their physical health, but rather in terms of their connections to family and traditions, and the sense of joy and comfort when eating food from the land prepared in the traditional ways. Hence, food to my teachers appeared to be more important socially than in terms of their physical health.

These non-systematic findings were significant, for the purposes of this study, as they suggested to me that health promotion activities aimed at increasing exercise and improving nutritional intake could best be accomplished by focusing on social activities that involve being close to nature and that might be followed by feasting or snacking on health promoting foods.

**Own Values**

I had expected systematic findings in the Own Values sub-theme. I thought that there would be values shared by my teachers around the ideas of family, health and life in general. My belief stems from my experience in communicating with both Dene and Cree people who seem to believe many of the same ideas around these concepts. I coded Own values when my teachers expressed that they valued certain things or ideas in their lives. For example, John and Simon both expressed that they value children. However, although all my teachers spoke about children and the importance of children in their lives, only John and Simon expressed this as a value that they hold.

There were many other values stated in this sub-theme. Among them were: family loyalty, responsibility to self, responsibility to others, respect for oneself, respect for elders, connections with friends, connections with community and various spiritual values. However, there were no values that were common to all six teachers. I believe that the most likely reason for this occurrence is that in the telling of their stories my teachers' selected incidents that spoke to their learning process as I had asked them to do. It is possible, therefore, that they did not connect value development with a learning process.

However, I have also noticed, in the data, that there are definite differences in the values held by the women and the men. For example, the women tended to place greater emphasis on their responsibility to family and their connections to friends. The men tended to place greater emphasis on their connections to their communities and
to themselves. I believe, therefore, that it is equally conceivable that the gender differences in value development led to the lack of systematic findings in this sub-theme.

This non-systematic finding could be important to health promotion activities northern communities as it suggested to me that activities for women must be different than for men. Activities for women could be centered around the family while those for men could be centered around their responsibility to their communities.

**Other's Values**

Each of my teachers spoke about the influence, both positive and negative, that other people's values had on their lives. I coded the sub-theme Other's Values when this influence was expressed by my teachers. Other's values that emerged from the life stories and that influenced the lives of my teachers were: parent's values, grandparent's values, community values, institutional values, friend's values, sibling's values, spouse's values and children's values. I had expected systematic results from this sub-theme, but every teacher seemed to be influenced positively and negatively by different individuals and different groups. For example, Mary was isolated and ostracized by her husband's family because she was Catholic and the family was Pentecostal. Charles, on the other hand, thought that the Grey Nun's values around self-discipline were the cause of many of his woes as a child, but as an adult came to adopt these values in his own life. This non-systematic finding suggested that health promotion efforts in the North might benefit from values clarification activities so that individuals could determine what values they wanted to have guiding their lives at a younger age than some of my teachers, in this study, made those decisions.

**Cultural Beliefs**

Similarly, as with Other's Values, I had expected to find systematic results in the Cultural Beliefs sub-theme. My expectations were based on the fact that my teachers were from three different cultures and from six different regions within northern Saskatchewan, but my experience indicated that although the cultures are completely different in many ways, they do share common points of agreement. For example, I knew that all three cultures value children highly. I coded cultural Beliefs when my teachers stated that they believed something to be true. These beliefs were common behaviours among the people that were observed by my teachers or were teachings passed down from an elder.
When I coded Cultural Beliefs, I did not distinguish between different cultural beliefs. All my teachers expressed cultural values, but not all shared cultural beliefs. I distinguished between beliefs and values by identifying cultural values as those things, behaviours and attitudes valued by a majority of the people. Beliefs were those things, stories or teachings that a majority of the people believed to be true. For example, both Francois and Therese stated that they had observed, as children, that food, compassion and assistance were freely shared by all the people. They stated that the old people believed that the people could not be healthy without these types of sharing.

Simon, Francois and John all shared that they believed that the Sacred Circle inside the Sweat Lodge would assist their people to return to balance, as their elders have believed. Mary, Therese and Charles did not speak about the Sweat Lodge as being part of their cultural belief system, although Charles did say that he occasionally attended Sweats.

This non-systematic finding is significant, for the purposes of this study because it suggests that there are not commonly held beliefs in the cultures. This type of fragmentation weakens communities and therefore health promotion efforts aimed at developing community cohesion around beliefs and values might help to strengthen a people's vision about who they wanted to be.

**Discussion of the Non-Systematic Findings in the Incremental Moments Theme**

A number of sub-themes in the Incremental Moments main theme were not common to all of my teachers' life stories. As I stated earlier, I coded these themes knowing that the NUDIST (Rylee Pty Ltd., 1992) software would allow me to sort out those that were common to all six teachers' stories and those that were not. Similarly, a number of authors have stated that the non-systematic themes are as important and can be as reveling as the systematic themes (King, Keohane & Verba, 1994). The non-systematic sub-themes in the Incremental Moments main theme include: Incremental Moments Social visuals, Social denial, Social isolation and Emotional fear. I have reported and discussed each of these sub-themes in detail below.

**Incremental Moments: Social Visuals**

I coded Social visuals when teachers described a vivid memory of a social interaction with other people so that they appeared to remember in detail the scene as it occurred. I only coded this sub-theme when my teachers described where people
were standing or what they were wearing or were able to remember precisely what the person or people said. All of my teachers described scenes from their lives but some of my teachers used richer descriptions than others. I have found that this was the reason why I did not code all of these descriptions as Social visuals.

I have found this non-systematic sub-theme to be important, for the purposes of this study, as it suggested that at least some of my teachers are able to recall scenes from their social interactions many years later with vivid detail. This reinforces the proposition that they used a process of daydreaming or reorganizing their memories and thinking about specific situations in their lives to arrive at understandings of the possibilities for them. Health promotion efforts in northern communities could therefore be more effective if workers could arrange opportunities for individuals to share their memories, in a safe environment, with others. This would enable the individuals opportunities to reorganize their thinking patterns and explore new possibilities for their lives.

**Incremental Moments: Social Denial**

I coded Social denial when my teachers stated that they had not been affected by another person’s or other persons’ behaviour or an event in their lives, only to later describe behaviour or feelings that could only have been caused by those situations. Only one of my teachers seemed to be in denial about events in his life. Simon stated that he did not believe that his years in residential school had affected him, at least he did not want to believe that as he felt that it would only cause difficulties in his life. Later he described being very lonely while in the school and he also described having to witness the beatings of other students when he was very young. These public beatings were intended to be deterrents for the students who were forced to witness. Later in his story, he explained how he had difficulty with authority and felt angry when ordered to do something. Without going into a lot of psychological theory, it seemed reasonable to me that his experience at the residential school, at least in part, influenced his current difficulty with authority.

This non-systematic finding is important to this study as it suggested that most of my teachers are able to confront their behaviour and thinking and proceed to make changes in their lives. Even Simon only had the one instance of denial that he was able to eventually acknowledge and act to change his behaviour. Health promotion workers, in northern communities, might, therefore, consider that many people will not automatically proceed in counselling situations or other interactive situations from a position of denial. The reticence that I have noticed, in these situations, and have often
assumed to be denial, could therefore be caused by any number of other factors rather
than denial of the reality in the individual's lives.

Incremental Moments: Social Isolation

I coded Social isolation when my teachers described feeling isolated, cut off
from family or friends or simply felt lonely and missed intimate human contact. The
women both described this form of isolation during the times when they were
experiencing abuse from their husbands. John also described times when he was left at
the residential school all summer without proper clothes and no family visits. He was also
abused by the priests at these times. Although Charles and Francois each described
times when he appeared to be isolated socially, they wore their aloneness as a kind of
protection to avoid emotional hurt and as a means to avoid complicating their lives with
intimate relationships. I did not therefore code these times in Charles' and Francois'
stories as social isolation as they described themselves as being alone by choice. Simon
has described being a loner since he was a child and appears to have grown into that
role because he did not have any play mates and his siblings were already in residential
school. Simon's isolation was not something that appeared to affect him until he was an
adult and his spouse demanded more intimacy from him.

This finding is important, for the purpose of this study because it suggested that
the men and women teachers tended to deal with their isolation in different ways. This
finding also suggested that health promotion efforts to help people avoid social isolation
have to be, at least, gender specific. Better still, the health promotion efforts might be
aimed at developing strong ties in the community for both men and women.

Incremental Moments: Emotional Fear

I coded Emotional fear when my teachers stated that they experienced fear in
repeated situations at home as children or in other social situations as adults. For
example, Charles described the random violence he experienced when his father was at
home and also during his time in school when children would be strapped without cause.
John also experienced random abuse from his step-father, as did Francois. I only coded
Incremental fear when my teachers, in these situations stated that they lived with a lot of
fear in their lives. When my teachers described actual abuse scenes, I coded those as
Salient Moments, as these tended to be times that actually stood out in their memories as
important. Mary and Therese did not express that they had lived in fear during their
childhoods and their descriptions of the abuse they experienced as adults tended to be described in graphic detail, hence I coded them as Salient Moments. All of the men seemed to not talk about fear in their adult lives but described other emotions that they used to express this primary emotion. Hence, there was not a common pattern of Incremental Moments of Emotional fear. However, it was plain in the data that all my teachers experienced fear in their lives. Northern health promotion efforts, could benefit from activities that provide safe environments for children and adults to learn and to grow in.

Discussion of the Non-Systematic Findings in the Salient Moments Theme

A number of sub-themes in the Salient Moments main theme were not common to all of my teachers' life stories. As I stated earlier, I coded these themes knowing that the NUDIST (Ryplee Pty Ltd., 1992) software would allow me to sort out those that were common to all six teachers' stories and those that were not. Similarly, a number of authors have stated that the non-systematic themes are as important and can be as reveling as the systematic themes (King, Keohane & Verba, 1994). I found that there were twenty non-systematic sub-themes in the Salient Moments main theme. They include: Salient Moments Spiritual dream, Spiritual vision, Spiritual message, Salient Moments Social connection, Social restriction, Social coercion, Social defiance, Social curious, Social responsibility. As well, there were Salient Moments of Emotional trust, emotional envy, Emotional regret, Emotional jealous, Emotional grief, Emotional shame and Emotional numbness. Similarly, there were Salient Moments of Physical violence, Physical accomplishment, Physical protection and Shared story. I have reported and discussed each of these sub-themes in detail below.

Salient Moments: Spiritual Dream

I coded Spiritual dream when my teachers described having dreams that were spiritual in nature. By the term spiritual, I had intended to limit the coding of dreams to those that taught my teachers something that assisted them to solve a problem in their lives or pointed to a new interpretation on a problem or difficulty they were experiencing. John described in detail a dream in which he was a wolf and where he was able to locate a wounded moose so that the next day he and his friends were able to find the moose. Simon described having a dream where he was unable to get over a certain hill and realized eventually that it was representing his old problem of quitting on the point of
success. Francois described a dream where he was instructed where to find healing herbs. Mary described repeated dreams in which she was chased by zombie like creatures, leading her to quit her training course and return to the North. Only Charles and Therese did not describe similar types of dreams. I suspected there were two possible reasons for this occurrence. First, teaching dreams of this nature are considered, in Cree and Dene cultures, to be very personal in nature and if shared the dreamer risks losing the power of the dream or risks making themselves vulnerable to unscrupulous individuals who would seek to use the dream teaching for their own unethical purposes. Secondly, Charles and Therese may simply have not been blessed with these types of powerful experiences. This non-systematic sub-theme suggested to me that spiritual teaching or learning dreams may not be common to all northern people and that they would only serve a purpose in health promotion activities, if people who have been blessed with the dreams, were willing to share their experience with others.

Salient Moments: Spiritual Vision

I coded Spiritual vision when my teachers described having a vision, in a non-sleeping state, as a result of asking their Creator or Grandparents for help or as a result of feeling very spiritually connected. Mary was the only teacher to describe this type of experience. As a young girl, she was walking in the woods and feeling very lonely and isolated even though she was near family and friends. She stopped to ask her Creator for help and was suddenly confronted with a bright white light and an immediate feeling of comfort and peace. This non-systematic finding suggested, first, that visions are perhaps not a common place occurrence and therefore may not be of much use in health promotion activities. Furthermore, the finding suggested to me that health promotion activities, in northern Saskatchewan, could only make use of people’s visions if the person was willing to share with others and then only if the vision was of not of a personal nature but one that would benefit all the people.

Salient Moments: Spiritual Message

I coded Spiritual message when my teachers described receiving messages following prayer or other forms of asking their Creator or the Grandparents for assistance. John, Charles and Therese were the only teachers who have described this type of message. Both John and Charles have described physical sensations in their bodies, on occasion, when they were asking for help. These sensations implied to them that their
request had been heard and responded to. Therese, on the other hand, described her message as being sent through her son when he was very young. She was awakened one night, while sleeping at a friend's house to avoid her husband's abuse, to find her son, who couldn't yet talk, kneeling in front of a statue of the Virgin and making noises like prayer. She accepted this happening as a message that her prayers for peace and security were being answered. Francois and Simon have not described any experiences like this. Again, they perhaps did not share because of the cultural sanctions against it or perhaps the personal nature of the message. Likewise, they may never have had a similar experience. This non-systematic finding suggested to me that northern health promotion activities should not rely on spiritual messages received by individuals to effect changes in populations. The messages that were reported above were of a very personal nature and the result of my teachers asking for help from their Creator. I would not say that a spiritual component of individuals and groups' experience is not important to growth and development but only that spiritual messages are personal and therefore not appropriate for population health development efforts.

Salient Moments: Spiritual Connection

I coded Spiritual connection when my teachers described times in their lives that they felt profoundly and intimately connected to their Creator or the Grandparents. In order to be coded as Salient Moments of Spiritual connection these incidences had to have been significant for my teachers. Francois and Simon again were the only two who did not report these types of experiences, although both spoke of the importance of the spiritual aspects of their lives. Again, I would say that because these are very personal experiences, and therefore not likely to have been shared widely, emphasis on spiritual development by health promotion workers needs to focus on group activities that would encourage practice of spiritual ritual and the seeking of connection to whatever version of Creator is common to the group.

Salient Moments: Social Restriction

I coded Social restriction when my teachers described significant incidences in their lives when they were restricted by parents or others from following their own voice and behaving in a manner that they thought appropriate at the time. All of my teachers, except Simon, described some form of restriction, both as children and as adults. Simon described his childhood as being very unrestricted. His parents apparently
allowed him a great deal of freedom to make his own decisions and to learn from his mistakes. This was not the experience of the other teachers. As this type of restriction appeared to cause my teachers, besides Simon, a great deal of turmoil in their lives, and many agonized decisions about what was best for them, health promotion workers might consider working with parents to allow their children opportunities to question and explore their options. I would not suggest that children be allowed to be unsupervised or to engage in activities that were dangerous to their health and well-being, but to have the freedom to, within reason, make their own choices and live with the consequences of their actions.

**Salient Moments: Social Coercion**

I coded Social coercion when my teachers shared that they had been led into situations where they were not happy with their behaviour. Sometimes the teacher did not realize the seriousness of their behaviour until later. For example, John, when he was very young, was coerced by an older brother-in-law to begin drinking at parties where he played the guitar and sang. It wasn’t until he sobered up that he realized how wrong this was. Mary was coerced into sniffing nail polish and other solvents by a friend who was adventuresome and seemed to be everything that Mary wanted to be. Although all of the other teachers also shared getting themselves into similar situations, their stories were not related with the same sense of vulnerability as expressed by Mary and John. I didn’t, therefore, code those situations as Salient Moments of coercion. This non-systematic finding suggested to me that only some of my teachers were vulnerable to coercion and that this was the result of parents being unable to supervise their children closely and other adults, who were supposed to be responsible, preying on the vulnerability of children. This finding then suggested to me that a certain number of children in any community could be vulnerable to coercion, and although some the coercion may be good learning opportunities, some form of peer pressure education and adult proofing might be a valid health promotion activity, in northern communities.

**Salient Moments: Social Defiance**

I coded Social defiance when my teachers described times in their lives when they defied their parents or the prevailing social norms and did what they felt to be the correct thing. Mary, for example, defied her parents when she decided to marry someone from outside her faith. Simon, when he was young, and in the company of
others boys, approached a sacred sight that he was forbidden to go near. Francois, described sneaking around to visit girls, sometimes arranging to meet them at the outhouse at night, in complete defiance of his parents and others in the community. Charles defied his father, at the age of sixteen, and choose to leave home rather than go to the Athabaska to fish. However, not all my teachers seemed to share this type of determination in the face of pressure from parents and community members. Likewise, the defiance did not always improve my teachers’ situations. These times of defiance occurred frequently enough that northern communities might consider having personnel trained in the art of family mediation, so that rifts in the family did not have to necessarily occur in order for determined children to explore their options.

**Salient Moments: Social Curious**

There were many moments in the life stories some of my teachers’ when they would describe being curious about something they had seen or about something they had heard. I coded these segments of the life stories as Social curious. These were moments that were significant in my teachers’ lives and led them to see something differently or learn something that was later significant in their lives. For example, John and Mary both described being very curious when they saw the first people in their communities who did not have brown skin. Charles was very curious about how messages were sent across wires, when he saw his first telegraph. Simon described being so curious about a sacred site that he was not supposed to visit that he defied one of his parents few restrictions on him. Therese has shared that she is always curious about how others live their lives and that this is one of the reasons she regularly participates in pilgrimages to France and other countries in Europe. However, Francois did not share times when he felt curious in these manners. As these salient moments of curiosity have mostly been beneficial to the growth and development of those teachers who shared situations where they were curious, health promotion workers, in the North, might consider opportunities for both adults and children to visit other cultures and explore other ways of living, other than those available in the community.

**Salient Moments: Social Responsibility**

Several of my teachers described times in their stories when they showed courage and maturity in emergencies and took responsibility for another’s safety or rescue. I coded these times as Social responsibility. Mary rescued a baby that was
strangling in its swing when its mother had left it to go drinking. Simon went to great lengths to get his son from the care of Social Services once he discovered that the boy was really his. Although all my teachers described times in their lives when they demonstrated social responsibility, most were during the course of living. That is, they were all thoughtful of the needs of their children and their spouses, but not all had those types of moments described above. This sense of responsibility, to their children, family and community members, appeared on many occasions to be a prime motivator that pulled my teachers back from behaviours of their own, that affected others around them and that therefore helped them return to balance. How to enable children and adults to develop this sense of responsibility, without having to have continued turmoil in the communities, could be something that northern health promotion workers might want to reflect on.

**Salient Moments: Emotional Trust**

I coded Salient Moments: emotional trust when my teachers described significant times in their lives when they placed their trust absolutely in someone else. Charles, for example, when he was seriously contemplating suicide remembered the number of an old friend and called him for help. Mary when she was quite young placed her trust in an older girl who said she could get them home from residential school. Francois, placed his trust in his older sister, to find him some help, when he had hit his bottom from drinking. Therese regularly, during the early years of her marriage, placed her trust in friends to hide her from her husband’s abuse. John placed his trust in a friend when he went to his first Sweat Lodge, even though he was terrified. Simon did not share any significant moments when he placed his trust in others. He seemed to be a very self-reliant individual. However, I was not surprised that this was not a sub-theme common to all teachers. In my work, in northern Saskatchewan, one of the barriers to being able to be more effective was the inability or unwillingness of people to trust me as an outsider who was from the dominant culture. I have always suspected that this distrust was the result of the colonization process that northern people experienced. How to encourage people to trust and how to reward that trust with positive results could be something that northern health promotion workers might consider addressing in their work.
Salient Moments: Emotional Envy

Only John and Mary described significant moments in their lives when they were envious of others. John, described times, as a child, when he was so angry at other children, especially boys, because they had fathers and he didn’t. Mary was envious as a child of other people, who seemed to have enough to eat and clean clothes. I coded these situations in the life stories as Salient Moments of Emotional envy. None of the other teachers described these types of situations where they were envious of others.

Salient Moments: Emotional Regret

Simon and Mary were the only teachers who described regret at some of their behaviour in the past. Simon expressed regret that he did not think about and therefore act to get custody of his son who was born out of wedlock, believing that both their lives might have been different if he had acted sooner. Mary expressed regret about some of the decisions she had made and especially her behaviour toward her children when she was under extreme stress soon after leaving her husband. I coded these times in my teachers’ lives as Salient Moments of Emotional regret. None of the other teachers expressed regret for their past actions, preferring instead to look on those behaviours as necessary to learn a better way to live. Northern health promotion workers might therefore consider that this non-systematic sub-theme suggested a health strategy aimed at helping people learn from their mistakes and move forward in their growth and development without the self-denigration that leads to regret.

Salient Moments: Emotional Jealous

I coded Salient Moments Emotional jealous when my teachers were affected by someone else’s jealousy. Therese eventually discovered that much of her husband’s rages and abuse when he was drunk were because he imagined that she was still fond of the man she had been fond of as a teenager. Mary also experienced abuse from her husband but she only described one incident when the beating was the result of an old flame in another community sending her a hello over the radio. None of the men described being affected by another’s jealousy. However, my experience and the stories of Therese and Mary suggested that a great deal of family violence in the North is the result of jealousy by the male spouse. I have long suspected that this jealousy stems from a feeling of powerlessness by the men due to a loss of their roles as competent and
successful providers for their families. Helping men to develop personal power, without the need to dominate others, might therefore be considered as a health promotion strategy by northern workers.

Salient Moments: Emotional Grief

I coded Salient Moments of Emotional grief when my teachers described a long or significant process of grieving for the loss of a loved one or a relationship. Therese described a significant process of grieving that went on for several years when she lost her mother at twelve years of age. Francois described a process of sleeplessness and great agitation when his wife left him and eventually came and took the children from him. Mary and John also expressed great grief at the loss of their significant grandfathers. Charles described the loss of a brother as being very significant in his life. Simon was the only teacher who did not express grief at the loss of his sister or his father. I do not believe that he didn’t experience grief at these times, as he spoke fondly of each of these people, but that he simply did not share his grief with me. Unresolved grief, therefore, seemed to be a major block at times to most of my teachers’ personal growth and development. This suggested to me that grief counselling might be a useful health promotion strategy for many people in the North.

Salient Moments: Emotional Shame

Mary was the only teacher who described being ashamed of her behaviour when she allowed her husband to do unusual things to her sexually when he was drunk. She also described being embarrassed by her behaviour, as a teen, when she was sniffing because she was afraid that the RCMP officer who had befriended her might find out. Charles described once threatening his wife with a knife, but he did not express that he was ashamed by that behaviour, rather he sounded more amazed that he could have done that and he sounded angry with himself. None of the other teachers described situations in their lives where they were ashamed of their behaviour.

Salient Moments: Emotional Numbness

I coded Emotional numbness when my teachers described times in their lives when they were emotionally numb. These were times for the women, often after
experiencing severe violence, when they did not feel any emotion. None of the men
shared times when they were in this emotional state.

Salient Moments: Physical Violent

All of my teachers, except John, described times in their lives when they were
violent toward another person. Both of the women have shared at least one time when
they attacked their husbands in self-defense. Charles and Simon have both described
being physically violent toward their spouses, although Simon only shared one time when
he pushed his wife. Francois, did not share any times when he was violent toward his
spouse or his children, but he described regularly fighting with the RCMP when they
would try to get him to leave the bar. I coded all these incidents as Salient Moments
Physical violent. The violent behaviour that my teachers shared appeared to be when
they felt they had no other choice but to defend themselves with violent behaviour. A
health promotion strategy that might be considered in the North, therefore, is to help
people discover options other than violence when they are forced into situations where
they feel that their safety is completely compromised.

Salient Moments: Physical Accomplishment

John and Francois both described times in their lives when they achieved
physical skills that were significant for them in terms of their self-concept. John moved
with his family at one point to a community on the plains where they were granted land
to farm. During this time he began to learn to drum and played in a local band. This
accomplishment obviously delighted and surprised him, and therefore, I coded it as
Salient Moment Physical accomplishment. Francois, also received a great deal of
satisfaction and self-esteem from his ability to run and win dog races. None of the other
teachers shared significant physical accomplishments, although all of them were
competent in bush skills and other tasks. I, therefore, coded these moments as
Incremental Moments due to their daily and repetitive nature.

Salient Moments Physical Protection

I coded Physical protection when my teachers described putting themselves at
risk to protect another person. For example, Mary shared that at one point when her
father was drunk and beating up his wife, she jumped on his back and was prepared to
stab him with her pocket knife. Only the look in her mother’s eyes kept her from following through with her intention. None of the other teachers described significant times where they were able to learn the extent of their own courage or perhaps anger. All of my teachers spoke strongly, however, of their love and commitment to their children. I got the impression from them that they would go to any length to protect their little ones.

Salient Moments: Shared Story

Some of my teachers told of times when an elder or another shared a story with them that was significant to their later learning and understanding of the world. Charles had an elder that he visited regularly, as an adult that helped him find some balance in his life after sobriety. Mary’s grandfather, just before his death, shared with her some of his own history and that of his family and strongly suggested that Mary always rely on the Creator and for her to get an education so that she could help Nitho (the people). Although all my teachers shared that they relied on the wisdom of elders Charles and Mary were the only ones to actually share the wisdom that was passed along. Hence, I could not code those unspecified times as Salient Moments Shared story. Health promotion workers, in the North, might therefore, consider using elders and their wisdom in helping people to see alternate paths that they could follow.

Postscript

Unlike the other main themes, Personal Data, Incremental Moments and Salient Moments, all of the sub-themes in the Life Long Learning main theme were systematic or common to all six of the teacher’s life stories. Hence there are no nonsystematic sub-themes to report.

Discussion of the Non-systematic Themes from the Horizontal Search

Discussion of the Non-Relationships in Positive Personal Insight Cluster

Positive personal insight was not related to Life Long Learning Institutions reflected and Salient Moments of Social rejection, Social betrayal, Emotional anger and Emotional fear. As well, Positive personal insight was not related to Physical brutalized, Physical neglect, Physical violent. Similarly, Positive personal insight was not related to
Incremental Moments Spiritual despair, Social lonely, Social confusion, Emotional grief and Emotional regret. As all of these themes could be expected to carry negative emotions or emotions that would be at least difficult to cope with, I had not expected to find relationships between Positive personal insight and these themes. For example, only Simon had anything good to say about his experience in residential school. Similarly, Mary and Francois were the only teachers who spoke well of their relationship with the police. Hence, I would nor have expected that there would have been positive insights resulting from those encounters. Similarly, being rejected, brutalized, neglected or betrayed would not help one to feel good about oneself, as a child or as an adult. As well, the significant moments when my teachers felt very angry or afraid would not likely engender positive insights about oneself. This finding suggested to me that it is difficult for individuals in this population to think well of themselves when they are constantly having to cope with difficult situations and the associated emotions that accompany those situations. Although, this finding may not be surprising to most people, it did suggest to me that northern health promotion efforts need to focus on equalizing power relationships within the communities and providing safe environments for all the people, so that individuals would have a better opportunity to develop positive understandings about themselves.

There were several odd non-relationships in the findings as well. I had suspected, conversely, that Salient Moments Physical care and Salient Moments Social acceptance would be related to Positive personal insights. I was certain that when my teachers felt accepted and cared for that they would then have insights about themselves as being valued and valuable, but this was not the case. Similarly, Positive personal insight was not related to Incremental Moments Social recall and Social curious.

Discussion of the Non-relationships in the Negative Personal Insight Cluster

Negative personal insight was not related to Salient Moments of Spiritual hope, Social connection, Emotional love, Emotional joy and Physical care. Similarly, Negative personal insight was not related to Incremental Moments Social enterprise, Social recall, Social responsibility, Social curious, Emotional joy, Emotional love and Physical comfort. Furthermore, Negative personal insight was not related to Life Long Learning Institutions reflected and Events reflected. Nor was Negative personal insight related to Beliefs. I had nor expected Negative personal insight to be related to these sub-themes as they would tend to mostly be situations where my teachers would generate positive emotions about themselves. For example, when my teachers are being socially enterprising, I
would expect them to think well of themselves and to, therefore, have positive personal insights. However, this finding does reinforce the suggestion in the Positive personal insight cluster discussion that northern people need to have safe environments and events in their lives that help them to feel good about themselves.

There were also some odd non-relationships in this cluster. For example, Negative personal insight was not related to Incremental Moments of Social lonely, Emotional grief and Salient Moments of Emotional anger, Physical brutalized, Physical violent. In my experience, working with northern people, these types of situations tend to be ones where people are left doubting themselves or regretting their behaviour. I would have expected, therefore, that my teachers would have had negative understandings of themselves when they shared, in their stories, the situations that led to me coding these themes.

Discussion of the Non-Relationships in the Life Long Learning Accumulated Cluster

Life Long Learning accumulated was not related to Salient Moments of Spiritual hope, Social rejection, Social betrayal, Emotional love, Emotional anger, Emotional fear, Emotional joy, Physical sensation, Physical brutalized, Physical violent and Physical care. Similarly, Life Long Learning accumulated was not related to the sub-themes Incremental Moments Spiritual connection, Social lonely, Social confusion, Social enterprise, Social recall, Social responsibility, Social curious, Emotional joy, Emotional grief, Emotional regret and physical comfort.

I had expected that Life Long Learning accumulated would be related to all the other sub-themes as evidence from the Personal Insight sub-themes seems to have suggested that my teachers were able to learn from both the good and the bad situations in their lives. Hence, for example, it seemed likely to me that Life Long Learning accumulated would be related not only to Salient Moments of Spiritual hope, Emotional love, Emotional joy and Physical care, but also to Salient Moments of Social rejection, Social betrayal, Emotional anger, Emotional fear, Physical violent and Physical brutalized. Given my teachers propensity for learning from all situations in their lives, I have assumed that these non-relationships were the result of some form of coding anomalies. Perhaps, for example, when I was coding Salient Moments, I selected only the text units that spoke specifically to the situation at hand, ignoring the subsequent described learning from my teachers. Another possibility could be that my teachers when describing these defining moments in their lives assumed that the description would be enough for me to grasp what they had learned and I failed to do so.
Discussion of the Non-Relationships in the Skills Cluster

I found that Skills was not related to the systematic sub-themes Spiritual connection, Spiritual despair, Social lonely, Social confusion, Social acceptance, Social enterprise, Social recall, Social responsibility or Social curious, as well as Emotional love, Emotional grief, Emotional regret and Physical discomfort, in the Incremental Moments main theme. Similarly, Skills was not related to any of the systematic sub-themes in the Salient Moments main theme. As well, Skills was not related to Life Long Learning People reflected and Institutions accumulated or reflected. Skills was also not related to any of the systematic sub-themes in the Personal Data main theme except for Positive and Negative personal insight. I was very surprised at the lack of relationships in the Skills cluster. I had expected a heavy emotional response or description of emotional response related to Skills as well as strong relationships to the social sub-themes. I felt that the learning and practise of skills would follow the pattern found elsewhere in this research and show a strong tendency toward wholistic learning. These findings are important, for the purposes of this research, as they suggested to me that the learning and practise of skills were not very stimulating for my teachers.

Discussion of the Non-Relationships in the Beliefs Cluster

I found that Beliefs was not related to Incremental Moments of Social acceptance, Social coercion, Social rejection, Social confusion, Social responsibility, Social enterprise, Physical comfort, Physical discomfort, Physical sensation, Spiritual despair, Emotional love, Emotional jealous, Emotional joy and Emotional regret. Similarly Beliefs was not related to Salient Moments of Social acceptance, Social nurture, Social connection, Social rejection, Physical neglect, Physical sensation, Spiritual loss, Spiritual hope, Emotional anger, Emotional joy and Emotional fear. Also, Beliefs was not related to Life Long Learning People reflected, Life Long Learning Events reflected and Life Long Learning Institutions accumulated. As well, Beliefs was not related to Negative personal insight. I was once again very surprised at the lack of relationships in the Beliefs cluster, as I felt that a wholistic process of belief development, similar to other findings in this study, would be very apparent. I have assumed, therefore, that the development of beliefs by my teachers followed another process that was not apparent in the life stories.
Discussion of the Non-Relationships in the Life Long Learning Reflected Cluster

Life Long Learning reflected was not related to Incremental Moments Spiritual connection, Social lonely, Social confusion, Social enterprise, Social recall, Social responsibility, Social curious, Emotional grief, Emotional regret and Physical comfort. Similarly, Life Long Learning reflected was not related to Salient Moments Spiritual hope, Spiritual loss, Social acceptance, Social rejection, Social connection, Social betrayal, Emotional love, Emotional fear, Emotional joy, Physical sensation, Physical brutalized, Physical neglect, Physical violent or Physical care. Furthermore, Life Long Learning reflected was not related to any of the sub-themes in the Personal Data main theme. These findings suggested to me, for the purposes of this study, that reflection was not a primary learning mode of my teachers. Further, these findings suggested to me that health promotion efforts in northern communities would not benefit from sessions where people are asked to give examples of situations in there lives and then reflect on what they had learned from those situations. Rather, as suggested many times above, my teachers in this study, appeared to prefer a process of doing or living through a process of experience and then drawing conclusions from that experience.

I have now reported and discussed all the findings of the study. In the next chapter I have synthesized the findings, drawn conclusions and inferences, discussed how the study answers the original research questions and discussed the implications of the findings of the study for the theory and practice of health promotion.
CHAPTER SIX: SYNTHESIS, INFERENCES, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Synthesis

In this inquiry, I have examined the lives of six northern Saskatchewan Aboriginal people from three different cultural groups and six different regions of northern Saskatchewan. Having completed a thorough literature search to find the most culturally appropriate and respectful method of inquiry and developed a set of principles that guided this inquiry, I listened to the life stories of the six individuals. I then transcribed the stories verbatim and analyzed the stories by searching for themes. Using a software program that permitted cross case comparisons, I then found the themes that were common to all six teachers in the inquiry. Further to the analysis, I compared those common themes to determine whether any were related to each other in the telling of the stories. This procedure demonstrated that there were also common patterns of relationship between the themes. Finally, I triangulated the findings with three theories to improve the generalizability or the external validity of the findings.

Several patterns common to all six teachers emerged from their life stories that are relevant to the practice of health promotion and community health development in northern Saskatchewan. The findings showed that my teachers had the necessary factors present in their early lives for the development of resilience, that they all employed a thinking style known variously as insight learning or discovery learning, that they learn by accumulating patterns of information in their memories that have a substantial emotional content as well as a factual content, that all their learning occurred within a holistic context and that they all employed a holistic ecological learning process in their lives.

In the following sections I have summarized each of the major findings, drawn conclusions about each of these findings, commented on the whether or not the research has addressed the original questions and problems stated in chapter 1 and commented on the implications to the theories of health promotion and community health development as they apply to northern Saskatchewan Aboriginal people.
Major Findings and Conclusions in the Systematic Themes

In the following sub-sections I have briefly restated the findings from this study and stated my inferences and conclusions based on those findings. I have listed each set of findings and the conclusion under a separate sub-heading for clarity.

Foundations of Wellness and Resilience

Comparison of the themes from my teachers' life stories with the theory of resilience demonstrated that the factors necessary for the development of resilience were present in the teachers' early lives. The factors leading to resilience in my teachers were present in each teacher, in their families and in their communities, despite rapid cultural, economic and political change. These factors also assisted my teachers to return to balance after periods of extreme stress and to continually seek healthier life styles. Stressors that the individuals in the study experienced were caused by rapidly changing communities, economic realities and access to information from a wider spectrum of people and cultures.

I believe that there is a danger in relying solely on resiliency research and its findings to draw conclusions about health promotion policies and strategies. Focusing on individuals who respond exceptionally in the face of adversity and developing strategies aimed at helping individuals to become stronger in the face of adversity ignores the problems generated by poverty, unemployment, colonialization and learned powerlessness. If health promotion workers were to focus solely on helping the individual develop better coping skills, we ignore the more difficult challenges of improving social justice and equity. We must be vigilant to avoid having these issues ignored or resiliency can become a tool to maintain the status quo of power relationships while appearing to give assistance to those most in need. However, the political and social struggle necessary to overcome the social justice and equity challenges will require individuals, communities and nations that have a large population of resilient people.

Those resilience factors that were most dominant in my teachers' stories were a sense of responsibility, a history of competence or success, spiritual practice, social competence and interpersonal skills, support seeking, positive self-esteem and self-efficacy, problem solving abilities, positive relationship with an adult outside the home and feelings of control over life. Those factors that were dominant in the families and the communities of my teachers were opening of opportunities, strong extended family network, positive parent child attachment and positive parent-child interactions.
In each of these relationships the groups of themes, Positive and Negative personal insight, Life Long Learning accumulated and Beliefs were the most often related to the factors of resilience found in the individual. These results indicated to me that my teachers had many of the factors necessary for the development of resilience and that they are therefore, similar to people from other cultures who also have these factors of resilience. As well, these results suggested to me that the factors of resilience were crucial to my teachers for development of understandings about themselves, development of their belief systems and to their life long learning process.

As well, these results, for both individual and family and community resilience, have suggested several other things to me. First, anyone who has done community work in northern Saskatchewan may look at these results and believe that I have viewed the lives of my teachers through rose colored glasses, given the chaos that most of them described in their growth and development. Yet, all of these teachers have come to understand their lives through a positive perspective. How did they manage to see through all the chaos to the good in their lives and restructure their belief systems to focus on the strength that they have? Mangham, McGrath, Graham and Stewart (1994) and many others have speculated that it is the factors of resilience, both in the individuals and their families and communities, that give people this ability to bounce back from trauma and disruption of life path by providing internal strength. My experience in northern Saskatchewan has taught me that there are many of these people in every community. One focus of community health promotion efforts then would be to find these people and begin to develop a core group of those interested in making change within their communities. I have found, in my experience, these people to be the catalysts for most community change efforts.

I have therefore come to several conclusions, about northern health promotion strategies, based on this theme of a foundation of resilience and wellness in each teacher:

- First, in every community it may be possible to find individuals who have been able to move through trauma and turmoil because of resilience factors influencing their lives. There will likely be some people who are more resilience than others because they have had more of the factors present in their lives. Finding these people in each community and working with those who are willing, will help workers to develop a core group of citizens to provide advice, to teach about the circumstances of their community and begin the process of planning to make change.

- Secondly, as Minkler (1994) and others have advised, one must search out the strengths of each community. The teachers' lives in this study have suggested that by
looking for the factors of resilience in individuals and families, these strengths will become apparent and then a core group composed of resilient individuals, with the help of local health staff, can begin the process of promoting those strengths as desirable for a strong healthy community with an abundance of strong healthy people.

- Thirdly, with the help of the core group, have health staff develop locally appropriate programs or activities that will help the mental or spiritually wounded individuals in the community return to balance by re-examining their lives and finding the positives so that they will begin the crucial process of developing hope and vision for what their lives can become. One of the ways that this could be accomplished is to establish an environment of "possibility" as proposed by Simon (1992). He has stated that when teachers and community people work together they need to decide what knowledge and perspectives are needed by whom and why. Furthermore, they need to decide what practices contribute to an investment in old desires and new motivations. Similarly, they need to decide how these effects can be realized within an open process of learning and, where appropriate, how the process of personal growth can be extended and shared through time. And finally, the people need to decide the moral and ethical framework within which all the decisions and change will occur.

Lateral Thinking and Learning Style

The Personal Insight sub-themes in the Personal Data main theme, as the most frequently coded theme of all the themes in the life stories, demonstrated a strong tendency by my teachers to use a form of thinking and learning variously called insight learning, discovery learning, or lateral thinking. This style of thinking was first described by Gestalt theorists (Bode, 1929) and later by Cognitive theorists (Ausubel, 1963). These theorists suggested that learning necessitates the reorganization of experiences into systematic and meaningful patterns. As explained earlier, Gestalt is a German word meaning "pattern" or "shape". Thus, insight becomes a "shape" or "pattern" that has formed in a person's memory from a reorganization of previous experience.

More recently de Bono (1970) has described this thinking style as lateral thinking. In this theory lateral thinking is an insight tool and as such is an important function of education. Lateral thinking is concerned with changing patterns, an attitude of open-mindedness and learned reasoning ability. For de Bono (1990) lateral thinking is different from logical or vertical thinking in several ways. First, lateral thinking is concerned with changing patterns. Secondly, lateral thinking, for de Bono (1990), is an attitude as well as a method of using information. Thirdly, according to de Bono (1990), lateral thinking must
be learned, as human brain circuitry are adapted to perpetuate learned and
consciously recognized patterns. This third difference between lateral thinking and
vertical thinking has produced a puzzle for me. Although my original intent in this inquiry
was to identify common patterns in my teachers' life stories, and lateral thinking and
learning style is one, I am left with the question of how my teachers learned lateral
thinking.

This thinking and learning style is similar to my own. How did I, therefore, come to
learn lateral thinking? I can only speculate that my close association with nature, in my
early years, had something to do with my ability to recognize patterns. As I have
pondered this question over the last three years, I have spent many hours and days in the
bush for the quiet and peace it affords me. What I have been able to understand by
going back to the bush is that when I am in the bush, I am immersed in patterns of
colour, design, movement, smell and sound. These patterns have become so much a
part of my consciousness and indeed my unconsciousness, that they produce feelings in
the core of my being. So, when I am on a lake in my canoe, a slight shift in the wind, a
slightly different smell in the air will cause me to become restless. I have learned when I
feel restless, at times like this, to check the horizon for rain clouds.

I suspect that I carry these non-conscious awareness and feelings, learned in the
bush, into the other world where I live in Saskatoon. Similarly, because all my teachers
spent their early years in close association with nature, they may also carry the patterns
of awareness and feeling in to other situations in their lives. Rupert Ross (1992) has
observed that many Aboriginal people use a particular process of information storage,
retrieval and synthesis. He calls this process pattern thinking. Ross's (1992) observations
on the differences between the people he has lived and worked with, and his own
people, have been applauded by many Aboriginal leaders and writers. As well, his
observations, from many years of living in close proximity with Aboriginal people in
northern Ontario, have brought a discussion about Aboriginal learning and intelligence
right up against current research.

Ross (1992) describes his observation of pattern thinking in these words:

... I believe it was this sort of mental process that guided the choices of the
hunter-gather. His central daily, unending preoccupation was with this one mental task:
accurate prediction. Successful prediction could not, of course, be accomplished
without paying close attention to details and patterns, but that was not enough on its
own. Observational skills had to be accompanied by a storing of those patterns in
memory and by a skill at comparing those stored patterns, in their incredible diversity,
with the ever-changing patterns of the day at hand. As experience increased, so too
did the wealth of stored patterns, making it increasingly likely that a 'match' would be
found for any succeeding day. At the same time, increased experience would enable
each person to 'see' more each day, to absorb more detail and discern ever more subtle patterns...Time alone permits a sharpening of these skills of perception (p. 74)

Ross (1992) speculates that the memories of these patterns are accompanied by a strong emotional content so that in a particular situation when a "match" is found a person "feels" the correct course of action rather than "thinks" in a logical step by step process. I have found that this process that Ross (1992) describes is supported by current research. In a summary of current research, Bower (1994) concludes that emotion plays a role in reacting to the present situation, evaluating plans and their execution, signaling discrepancies between remembered and new information, directing attention to the discrepancies, coding new information in memory and promoting rehearsal of action based on the new learning. In this way, when one learns new information, a more accurate interpretation of a current situation is possible. Later, emotion arousal retrieves associated thoughts, plans or actions.

Indeed, recent research demonstrates that all humans have the ability to learn, recognize and apply patterns from one situation to another and has been demonstrated as a normal process of brain development in humans (Pinker, 1997; Greenspan, 1997). However, many people are schooled, at an early age in vertical thinking and learning to accommodate the requirements of the industrial-scientific disciplines (Pitman, Eisikovits & Dobbert, 1989). Most researchers, studying how humans think and learn, now agree that early childhood experiences determine which neurons in the brain grow and remain active, resulting in an ability to associate new patterns to old ones (Pinker, 1997; Greenspan, 1997). However, for most children these patterns are developed in schools where they are taught primarily vertical thinking with little or no emotional content to the learning (Pitman, Eisikovits & Dobbert, 1989).

How, then, have all my teachers apparently learned to recognize patterns about their own and other people's behaviour and communication and see the associations in their own lives as good or bad depending on their own set of values and beliefs? I can only speculate, based on the data available in the life stories of my teachers, that it has something to do with the close association to nature and the rich social environment in which each of my teachers was raised. Both of the women teachers and all four of the men have shared that they spent time alone and in the company of their parents in the bush, where they learned bush survival skills and trapping and fishing skills. Even though all my teachers were exposed to education systems that stressed vertical thinking, they all had opportunities in their lives to return to the bush and all remained closely associated with their social support networks.
Thus, it is not possible to determine from the life stories how my teachers learned lateral thinking, but it has been an important tool in learning about themselves in relation to their environment and to other people. I will have to wait for further research on the subject to know for sure whether this close association with nature was the reason my teachers learned lateral thinking. However, de Bono (1970) says that there are basically three steps in teaching and learning lateral thinking and that children as young as seven years old can begin to grasp these techniques. First, one needs to have a problem or the need to make something new from what one has. Then one can have as many people as possible describe the problem. Each person will bring a slightly different perspective to what the problem actually is. Similarly, a person acting alone can look at the problem from as many different perspectives as possible and then consider all the perspectives to arrive at a definition of the problem or new design.

Secondly, the group can brainstorm as many solutions to the problem or as many ideas as possible for the design of something new. There are no wrong answers in this process and one should allow oneself to jump to unexpected solutions. When all the answers are in, compare all the proposed solutions. By group consensus eliminate all the solutions that are standard or cliché responses to the problem.

Thirdly, have each person in the group write down a plan for each solution. The group then compares all the plans and eliminates the impossible ones due to limited resources or time or whatever. The rest of the plans may be combined, synthesized or one may be chosen as the best plan.

These results have suggested to me that health promotion efforts in northern Saskatchewan should consider the use of lateral thinking teaching and learning techniques in the classrooms and in the community with groups attempting to solve community problems or make something new from the resources and strengths available in the community. De Bono (1970) predicts that the capacity for lateral thinking learned in one setting will be carried over into all aspects of life, so that people will eventually be able to reorganize their experiences and develop new patterns of insight to help them deal with all situations in their lives.

There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from these findings:

• Some process or condition or situation was present in the lives of my teachers that helped them learn lateral thinking. If this process or condition could be sought and known it could be used for the development of health promotion strategies in the North.

• Health promotion workers, in northern Saskatchewan, should consider teaching lateral thinking techniques, to all age groups, as an integral part of health promotion strategies.
Health promotion workers should consider using lateral thinking strategies in addressing health challenges in communities and planning for change.

A Preference for Accumulated Experience

The teachers in their stories have demonstrated a marked preference for a process of accumulating experience, rather than a process of analyzing new information. I have found evidence of this process present in the vertical and horizontal searches. In the vertical search the total frequencies of the Incremental Moments sub-themes was far greater than the total frequencies of sub-themes from any other of the main themes. Similarly, the total frequencies of the Life Long Learning accumulated sub-themes was almost one third greater than the total frequencies of the Life Long Learning reflected sub-themes. As well, I found in the horizontal search that the Incremental Moments sub-themes were related almost twice as often to other themes as Salient Moment sub-themes and Life Long Learning accumulated sub-themes were related to other themes more than three times as often as Life Long Learning reflected sub-themes.

These findings are closely related to the findings about insight learning, lateral thinking and holistic and ecological learning, that I have discussed above and below. It appeared to me that the incremental moments and the accumulated experience of my teachers was the vehicle for the formation of patterns which they then reorganized to draw conclusions about who they were and how they wanted to behave. This finding was consistent with the findings in the vertical search process that suggested that incremental moments in my teachers' lives were more often remembered and reported than the salient moments. I found this finding to be significant because it suggested that my teachers used a process of learning that requires doing and experiencing rather than learning about abstract concepts and practicing those concepts in an artificial environment. This process is reminiscent of the activity-oriented or learning-oriented learners described by Houle (1961). These learners, which have been described by Houle (1961), participate in activities for the sole purpose of experiencing new ideas that they can then apply in their own lives, or for the benefit of their families and communities. I do not wish to suggest that my teachers sought all the situations, like abuse, but that they were able to benefit from those situations through accumulating the experience in their memories for later retrieval and comparison.

These findings suggested to me that it was the daily living experience which was most important in the lives of my teachers. I conclude, therefore, that:
• Health promotion efforts in northern Saskatchewan would benefit from the active participation of community members in defining challenges, arriving at solutions and planning and implementing changes that will enhance and sustain wellness for all the people and practising new ways of being as this would encourage the community members to use their preferred mode of learning by accumulating experience and then applying that experience to new and creative solutions.

Holistic Learning Context

By comparing the systematic themes with the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel, I found that my teachers learned in a holistic context, much as that described by the authors above. Most of the learning occurred in a context of relationships with other people, hence there was a heavy emotional component to the learning. Graveline (1998) reported that there is strong evidence that Aboriginal learning must also include an emotional content. Similarly, Positive and Negative personal insights were the cluster of related themes that were most frequently related to the quadrants of the Medicine Wheel. This further suggested to me, as I found in the vertical search, that my teachers relationships with people were the most important environment for learning about themselves.

The second most important learning context was the mental context where my teachers thought through problems or learned new mental skills. However, a substantial proportion of the learning also occurred in the spiritual quadrant through dreams and practise of spiritual ritual like prayer. Likewise, the physical quadrant was important, although not as important as the above three quadrants. These contexts ranged from relationships with the happenings, the people, and the situations in classroom settings and listening to stories for mental development, practicing sports, bush and household skills for physical development, to church and the Sacred Sweat Lodge for spiritual development. However, the context most often described by my teachers was in social interaction with family, friends, teachers, and others from outside their communities.

This test, which is described above, indicates to me that my teachers found themselves in situations that granted them opportunities to develop spiritual, socio-emotional, physical and mental skills. These contexts were not always ones in which they felt comfortable but the other parts of their personal makeups allowed them to learn within the context. Pitman, Eliskovits and Dobbert (1989) have suggested that rich environments that include cross-generational relationships, problem solving challenges, physical activity and contact between people, and some form of spiritual ritual, stories
and mythology are all important for the acquisition of culture and a holistic learning
process to occur.

This evidence suggested to me that my teachers learned about themselves by
observing others and by observing their own interaction with others. These facts are
important as they further suggested to me that Aboriginal health promotion strategies,
aimed at helping people to learn about themselves and form healthy belief structures,
need to be developed as social activities where many age groups and people with
different experiences are involved. Furthermore, Pitman, Eisikovits and Dobbert's (1989)
criteria, described on page 142, have suggested to me, when combined with the
findings in this study, that health promotion strategies for northern Saskatchewan
Aboriginal people, utilize a broad, multifaceted approach to knowledge acquisition,
fashioned on a holistic understanding of human development. This approach will go a
long way toward tempering our industrial biases and encourage a process oriented
approach to health promotion.

A number of conclusions have formed for me from the learning I have
experienced from these results:

• These finding suggested to me that health promotion and community
development strategies, developed for northern Aboriginal people, would benefit from a
focus on providing rich social, physical, spiritual and mental contexts within which
Northerners can learn.

• Teaching new skills such as crafts, games, sports or other kinds of physical
activity can be an opportunity for health promotion workers, in northern Aboriginal
communities, to discuss issues and challenges that community members are facing.

• Crises in the community or other events or situations that have a profound
emotional content can be used as teaching opportunities by having community
members examine the root causes of the crisis or event.

• Community members in northern Saskatchewan will respond to problem solving
challenges that begin where the people are at and that work toward practical solutions
so that the community members sense of responsibility is honored (Minkler, 1994).

**A Holistic Ecological Learning Process**

By comparing the systematic related themes with Cajete's (1994) seven
circles of learning behavior, I found that my teachers have participated in an ecological
learning process. The teachers described spending most of their time in the Having circle
during their life stories. This suggested to me that they have presently arrived at a place
in their lives where they are using the skills and knowledge they gathered over their life times to live a balanced and healthy life. The second most frequently related circle was Seeking. This finding suggested to me that my teachers spent a great deal of time in their lives looking for a better way of living. The teachers described Asking and Making behaviour third and fourth most frequently, respectively. Being behavior was the next most frequently related to the systematic related themes from the horizontal search. I found that Celebrating was the circle that my teachers described spending time in least often.

I found stronger evidence of holistic learning on the part of my teachers in the horizontal search. The sub-themes from the Incremental Moments main theme were all related to Positive personal insight, Negative personal insight, Life long Learning reflected and Life long Learning accumulated. Similarly, the sub-themes in the Salient Moments main theme were all related to Positive personal insight, Negative personal insight, Life long Learning reflected and Life long Learning accumulated. As well, Positive and Negative personal insights were related to skill development and practise, the development of beliefs and Life Long Learning reflected and accumulated.

These results have suggested to me that health promotion efforts in northern Saskatchewan could also consider working toward revitalizing the cultural values, beliefs and practices that helped the people to be strong in the old days and helped them to adapt to new lands and circumstances as the need arose. As well, these health promotion efforts could provide a rich environment of spiritual, physical and social activities so that the people will have the opportunity to develop their memory, mind, brain, body continuum to its fullest potential. Only in this way will the people be able to find balance in their lives by recognizing and reorganizing patterns of learned experience.

I have drawn three conclusions from these results:

- First, health promotion efforts in northern Saskatchewan could consider working toward revitalizing the cultural values, beliefs and practices that helped the people to be strong in the old days and helped them to adapt to new lands and circumstances as the need arose.

- Second, health promotion workers could consider developing activities that assist people to complete their own journeys through Cajete’s (1994) seven interconnected circles of learning behaviour so that they will find balance in a traditional fashion without attempting to integrate the industrial culture’s thinking, learning and relating modes of behaviour.
Furthermore, these health promotion efforts could provide a rich environment of spiritual, physical and social activities so that the people will have the opportunity to develop their memory, mind, brain, body continuum to its fullest potential. Only in this way will the people be able to find balance in their lives by recognizing and reorganizing patterns of learned experience.

Do the Findings Answer the Stated Questions of the Study?

At the beginning of this study, in chapter 1, I listed three questions I was attempting to address with this study. First, I wanted to know if a respectful form of cross-cultural inquiry could be found to complete a study with Aboriginal peoples. Secondly, I wanted to know if common patterns would be apparent in the life stories of Aboriginal people who changed their life path from a health destructive process to one that more closely approximated the Cree and Dene understandings of health. And thirdly, I was curious about whether common patterns, if any, would point to culturally appropriate strategies for use in northern Aboriginal communities. In the following sub-sections, I have discussed each of these questions and the significance of the findings in answering those same questions.

Respectful Inquiry in Northern Aboriginal Communities

For the purposes of this inquiry, I developed several principles to guide my behavior during this inquiry that were based on a thorough investigation of the literature. I have discussed each of these principles below explaining how I behaved and arranged the interaction with my teachers so that I could be as respectful as possible.

- Berger (1988); Bird (1992); Erasmus (1989); Estes (1992); Lacy (1984); More (1987) and Slim and Thompson (1995), all with substantial cross-cultural research experience, have suggested that life story research is not only a valid means of working in Aboriginal communities but is also considered by Aboriginal people the most respectful way of learning about Aboriginal people. I, therefore, chose to listen to and record the life stories of six northern Saskatchewan people who had changed their life path to more closely approximate the Cree and Dene understandings of health.

- Katz and Nunez-Molina (1986); Perdersen (1993) and Stokes (1985) all suggested that trust must be established by demonstrating that I was able to operate in both cultures (mine and my teacher's). I knew all my teachers for some years before the study so that they were all aware of my ability to operate in both cultures. As well, I lived
and worked in northern Saskatchewan for nearly fifteen years, where one's reputation tends to proceed one, due to the closeness of many individuals from different communities. Similarly, all my teachers but Simon assured me that the only reason they were telling me their life stories was because they trusted me.

- Paterson and Bramadat (1992) have suggested that my teachers should be assured that their contribution will be for the benefit of the people and not for the benefit of my career. I was somewhat ambivalent about this principle as it suggested that my teachers did not know or could not understand why they were telling their stories. Nevertheless, most of my teachers told me as part of their stories that they were telling it precisely because they hoped that it would benefit their people.

- Patern and Paterson and Bramadat (1992) all suggested that I assure that my teachers understood the purpose of the research and the audience for whom it was intended. I spent a fair amount of time explaining the purposes and the audience of the research and listened carefully to the explanations of my teachers about what they understood them to be. I did this by first giving my teachers a written summary of the research design, the purposes and significance of the study. Before interviewing each teacher, I asked them about their understanding and asked if there was any part of the described process that they were uncomfortable with. As well, I explained to them, both in writing and verbally, that telling their story to another could alter their perceptions of their own story and cause emotional distress. These behaviours contributed to and were other reasons why my teachers decided to trust me.

- Perdersen (1993) suggested that it was important to acknowledge the personal history of my teachers and the social history of the people. In chapter 2, I have dedicated a whole chapter to the social and health history of the people of northern Saskatchewan. Furthermore, in chapter 4, I have given a summarized version of each of the life stories of the six teachers. I have restricted the personal histories in this way as all my teachers are well known in their communities and in the North and their confidentiality would be compromised if I had used more detail from the stories.

- Patern, (1987) and Paterson and Bramadat (1992) all suggested that I describe in detail who would see the stories, where the transcripts and recordings would be stored, and who owned the stories. I promised my teachers that the stories, in their entirety, would be seen only by me and the bonded typist that I had hired to type the transcripts. As well, as I explained in chapter 3, I assured them that I had rented a large safety deposit box and once the transcripts were typed, both the transcripts and the recordings would be stored in the box. The only other place where the stories would be visible would be on my computer where I kept them in files.
accessible only by password. Furthermore, I agreed to relinquish any claim to the stories and further agreed to use them only for the purpose of this research. I included a part in the agreement that if the stories were to be used for any other purpose, I would seek the teacher's permission. In another part of the agreement I promised to share revenues from any publication of the results with my teachers.

- Kushner and Norris (1981) and Patai (1987) have suggested that I negotiate the time and place of the interviews, the researchers obligation to my teachers, any financial remuneration, as well as the quotes attributable to my teachers. All of my teachers were given the option of choosing the time and place for their interviews and I have returned all the attributable quotes that I used to each of my teachers and secured their permission to use them. I knew that it was considered disrespectful in the North to offer money to listen to some one's story. I made no reference to financial remuneration and none of my teachers requested any. I made it clear to my teachers that I considered my obligations were to protect their confidentiality and keep them informed of the progress of the study by regularly mailing them copies of the work completed to date. The teachers did not suggest any other obligations necessary on my part and I complied with my side of the agreement.

- Katz and Nunez-Molina (1986); Patai (1987); Stokes (1985) all suggested that I must listen with quiet respect to my teachers, without constant interruption and interjections. I listened quietly to the stories using only questions for clarification and to return to a part of the story for more detail. With Therese and occasionally with Mary I had to use prompts as they had come to end of their thought and didn't know where to go from there. I asked permission first and secured their permission and understanding for me that the prompt questions were helping the process.

- Patai (1987) and Slim and Thompson (1995) all suggested that I transcribe the stories accurately using verbatim transcription and that the stories be verified by my teachers. I did this, although at first I had to make sure that the typist was actually transcribing verbatim. Furthermore, I mailed the completed transcripts to each teacher and asked for their comments and critique of the work.

- Katz and Nunez-Molina (1986); Kushner and Norris (1981) and Lather (1991) all suggested that I encourage collaboration by seeking input on the interpretation, theory building, and findings and providing accessibility to all aspects of the research. I attempted to accomplish this behaviour by mailing the completed work to my teachers at each stage of the analysis and asking for comments and alternate interpretations. All of my teachers responded to these attempts by saying that they trusted me and that I should get on with the work.
Lather (1991) suggested developing the theory in dialogical and dialectical relationships with my teachers. I was not able to accomplish this to the degree that I would have preferred because of my limited budget and the busy schedules of my teachers.

Katz and Nunez-Molina (1986); Lather (1991) and Stokes (1985) all suggested grounding the theory in the every day circumstances of my teachers. This is precisely why I used the life story approach to this study. I wanted my teachers lived reality in their own words so that they would have the opportunity to contribute to the development of health promotion strategy in northern Saskatchewan.

Patai (1987) and Stokes (1985) both suggested reporting the results back to the people interviewed in understandable language. I have attempted to write this thesis with a minimum of academic jargon and I gave it to each teacher and asked for their comments as soon as it had been approved by my Committee.

I believe, therefore, that I have found and used a respectful form of inquiry for this study.

Common Patterns in the Life Stories of the Six Teachers

Several patterns in the life stories of my teachers were common to all six teachers. They were a lateral thinking and learning style, a preference for accumulating experience over analysis and reflection, all my teachers learned in a holistic context and all my teachers used a holistic and ecological learning process. These patterns, therefore, answer the question posed, at the beginning of this study, about whether common patterns would be apparent in the life stories of six northern Saskatchewan Aboriginal people.

Possible Strategies for Health Promotion in Northern Saskatchewan

Several possible strategies were suggested by the finding in this study. They were:

- Some process or condition or situation was present in the lives of my teachers that helped them learn lateral thinking. This process or condition could be found and used for the development of health promotion strategies in the North.
- Health promotion workers, in northern Saskatchewan, could consider teaching lateral thinking techniques, to all age groups, as an integral part of health promotion strategies.
• Health promotion workers could consider using lateral thinking strategies in addressing health challenges in communities and planning for change.

• Health promotion efforts in northern Saskatchewan would benefit from the active participation of community members in defining challenges, arriving at solutions and planning and implementing changes as this would encourage the community members to use their preferred mode of learning by accumulating experience and then applying that experience to new and creative solutions.

• These findings suggested to me that health promotion and community development strategies, developed for northern Aboriginal people, could focus on providing rich social, physical, spiritual and mental contexts within which Northerners can learn.

• Teaching new skills such as crafts, games, sports or other kinds of physical activity can be an opportunity for health promotion workers, in northern Aboriginal communities, to discuss issues and challenges that community members are facing.

• Crises in the community or other events or situations that have a profound emotional content can be used as teaching opportunities by having community members examine the root causes of the crisis or event.

• Community members in northern Saskatchewan will respond to problem solving challenges that begin where the people are at and that work toward practical solutions so that the community members sense of responsibility is honoured (Minkler, 1994).

• Health promotion efforts in northern Saskatchewan could consider working toward revitalizing the cultural values, beliefs and practices that helped the people to be strong in the old days and helped them to adapt to new lands and circumstances as the need arose.

• Health promotion workers could consider developing activities that assist people to complete their own journeys through Cajete's (1994) seven interconnected circles of learning behaviour so that they will find balance in a traditional fashion without attempting to integrate the industrial culture's thinking, learning and relating modes of behaviour.

• As well, these health promotion efforts could provide a rich environment of spiritual, physical and social activities so that the people will have the opportunity to develop their memory, mind, brain, body continuum to its fullest potential. Only in this way will the people be able to find balance in their lives by recognizing and reorganizing patterns of learned experience.
It seems, therefore, that the question of whether or not strategies would be suggested by common patterns apparent in the life stories of six Aboriginal Northerners has been answered.

Contribution of the Findings to the Stated Problems

In chapter 1 in the discussion of the problems that led to this inquiry, I stated that there were three problems facing Aboriginal people in northern Saskatchewan. First, these people have been culturally dislocated and disenfranchised, leaving them without a voice in determining the type of health services they require. Secondly, the earlier health challenges of infectious disease outbreaks has been mostly brought under control, only to be replaced by new epidemics of lifestyle disease. Thirdly, a noticeable lack of research is evident that attempts to determine how any Aboriginal people make health decisions, let alone those who live in northern Saskatchewan. In the following subsections I will address how this inquiry has addressed these problems and any impact that I think the research has made.

Cultural Dislocation and Disenfranchisement

By listening to the life stories of my teachers, I have attempted not only to use a culturally appropriate and respectful form of inquiry, but also to return to the Aboriginal people of northern Saskatchewan the ability to speak about their own historical development and the triumphs and challenges they have faced in a rapidly changing cultural and political landscape. Similarly, by involving my teachers in negotiating the interpretation of the stories, the manner in which they were told and the location of the interviews, I attempted to reverse the disenfranchisement experienced by Northerners, in a small way. I have at least made every effort I could think of to not further the sense that outsiders were dictating how their life stories would be told and how they would be used.

Further, to the issue of cultural dislocation and disenfranchisement, I hope that the findings of this inquiry will be used in the new Aboriginal health services by health promotion and community development workers responsible for developing community health development strategies in northern Saskatchewan.
Contemporary Health Challenges of Northern Aboriginal People

Tuberculosis infection incidence is once more on the rise in Aboriginal communities across Canada and in northern Saskatchewan. As well, there has been a shift to new epidemics of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, obesity which were previously insignificant causes of mortality and morbidity in the earlier history of Aboriginal people. Similarly, there has been an alarming increase in injury, both intentional and unintentional to Aboriginal people. Injury is the leading cause of mortality for Aboriginal people in Canada (Waldram, J., Herring, D. & Young, T., 1995). These new epidemics are commonly referred to as lifestyle diseases, in the medical-scientific literature, as they are diseases that can be prevented or altered by a change in lifestyle that can lead to improved health outcomes (Glanz, Lewis & Rimer, 1990).

By interviewing six teachers, in this inquiry, who have changed their life course from one that challenges their health to one that more closely approximates an Aboriginal understanding of health, I have highlighted the learning and personal development of my teachers. In telling their life stories, my teachers have shared how and why they changed. This will enable community health development workers to develop strategies, in their work environments that may encourage others to follow a similar change process.

Lack of Research About Aboriginal Health Decision Making

McLeroy, K., Bibeau, D., Steckler, A. & Glanz, K. (1988) have identified five sets of factors that comprise an ecological perspective that one must use in developing health education or health promotion strategies for individuals, families or communities. They are:

- Intrapersonal factors- or characteristics of the individual such as knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, self-concept, and skills. This includes the developmental history of the individual.
- Interpersonal processes- or formal and informal social support systems, including family, work relationships, and friendship networks.
- Institutional factors- or social institutions and their formal and informal rules of operation.
- Community factors- or relationships among organizations, institutions, and informal networks within defined boundaries.
- Public policy- or local, provincial and national laws and policies.
In this inquiry I have focused on the individual, as there is little or no written material about the intrapersonal factors that influence Aboriginal peoples health decision making. In the Personal Data main theme I have reported the intrapersonal factors, shared in the life stories, that influenced my teachers learning and decision making. Furthermore, my teachers reported their developmental histories pointing to the challenges and triumphs they had in living through the rapid cultural, political and economic change that they experienced.

Theoretical and Practice Implications of the Study

There are two important implications for the theory and practice of health promotion in northern Saskatchewan communities that emerge from this study. First, health promotion efforts in the North need to focus on increasing the general health knowledge of the populations. Second, health promotion efforts need to use the theory and principles of community health development. I have discussed each of these implications for the theory and practice of health promotion in detail in the following sections.

General Knowledge Health Promotion

Before the dislocation of the cultures in the North by Europeans, there was a general knowledge of healthy physical behaviour, healthy spiritual practise and healthy emotional and social behaviour among the people of the North (Young, 1988). This general knowledge helped people to maintain and sustain a general level of wellness that is not present in the population today (Feather, 1991; Waldram, Herring & Young, 1995). The evidence from the Personal Insights sub-themes and the Life Long Learning accumulated sub-themes, from the life stories of my teachers, in this study, suggested that northern people have the ability to learn from their interactions with others and to accumulate experience based on their daily living and learning. As well, the evidence that the Incremental Moments sub-themes appeared to be the most often remembered and therefore the times and situations that would contribute most to learning, suggested that the more information my teachers are given and the more opportunities they have to try new ways of being healthy, the more likely they will be to retain the information and experience. Increasing the general health knowledge in the populations would therefore add to the accumulated experience of individuals. A large component of this health information could be a Friian kind of discovery of the determinants of health
and the health challenges in that particular population (Minkler, 1980). This method attempts to help the people see the world not as a static place, but as a situation which challenges them to change it.

Meredith Minkler (1994) has postulated ten commitments that are needed by health education or health promotion workers that would help community members reach the goal of general health knowledge. They are:

- First, start where the people are at and not the agencies agenda, thereby affirming a commitment to self-determination.
- Recognize and build on community strengths, rather than finding remedies for the communities deficiencies, thereby empowering people by starting from a position of strength.
- Thirdly, honour the community, but do not make it holy. In other words, recognize and honour the wisdom in the community, but be aware of the limitations of those with less technical knowledge and also perhaps racist, sexist, ageist or other problematic tendencies. These tendencies exist in all communities, but especially in those communities where people have been systematically colonialized and oppressed, as people in those situations tend to take on the values and beliefs of their oppressors (Bell, B.; Gaventa, J. & Peters J., 1990).
- Next, foster high level community participation so that helpers from outside the community will be gifted with the wisdom and knowledge of the community members. As well, opportunities to practise the new learning, in interaction with other people, would provide opportunities for community members to gain insight about themselves and accumulate experience about health and wellness.
- Fostering celebration and laughter is the next commitment as the need to celebrate has been proposed by Aboriginal writers like Cajete (1994) to dominant culture writers like Orstein and Sabel (1989).
- Frame health challenges in terms of their political, economic and social contexts, because pathologies do not exist in isolation. Also, do not tolerate the perpetuation of racism, sexism and classism and similarly, work for social justice, so that inequitable power balances in the community are minimized. Therefore, it would be necessary to think about local issues in terms of how the larger dominant culture affects the peoples' ability to sustain health.
- Finally, foster individual and community empowerment by being committed in our work to all of the above commitments and thereby creating environments in which individuals and communities can take the power they need to transform their lives.
If health workers were committed to the above principles of practice several benefits could be derived that relate directly to findings in this study. First, fostering empowerment would increase self-esteem and self-efficacy which were important factors in the resiliency of my teachers. Next, including as many people as possible in determining the health challenges of the community and actions to be taken, would broaden the peoples’ accumulated experience by listening to others and working on solutions together. Similarly, this would also increase the peoples’ personal insights, an important element in the teacher’s' growth and development. Fourthly, celebrating and working with others would increase the peoples’ sense of social connection and opportunities for social support which were also important issues in the lives of my teachers in this study. Furthermore, getting the people involved in improving their lives would open opportunities for individuals to learn about their own personal strengths, and problem solving abilities, and increase their opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility, all of which were important in the lives of my teachers. Moreover, daily or regular interaction with others in the community would facilitate development of social skills and competence, another important factor in my teachers growth. Finally, using Minkler’s (1994) commitments in their work, health promotion workers would by necessity be using the Aboriginal ecological learning process proposed by Cajete (1994) and furthermore, they would be providing a holistic context, with an emphasis on social interaction, that would facilitate the peoples’ growth and development, both of which were important in my teachers' growth and development in this study.

Community Health Development

A large body of literature suggests that best way to improve the health and well-being of members of communities, especially those who have been subjected to cultural dislocation, poverty and other injustices, is to use a community health development process with community members (Minkler, 1994; Wallerstein, 1992; LaBonte, 1990; McKnight, 1987). Community health development is a movement for social change that seeks to address the conditions, political, economic, environmental and social, that make people unhealthy, by involving the people effected in making decisions about what the determinants of health are, in their communities, and how to enhance those determinants.

As stated previously, the Prince Albert Tribal Council, the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, the Lac La Ronge Indian Band and the Montreal Lake Cree Nation have all chosen to use this model of health promotion during their health transfer period and into
the future. Principles of the community health development model are very similar to the ten commitments of Meredith Minkler (1994), mentioned in the above section and that are necessary for health education workers. The Municipality of LaLoche (1994) in its health and social development planning process developed their own set of principles using the wisdom of a core group of citizens. They are:

- Directions for development will come from the citizens of the community and their participation and involvement will be promoted and actively encouraged.
- The values of respect, open mindedness and cooperation will guide development so that an atmosphere of "everyone learning from everyone" will be fostered.
- Behaviour that is safe to one's self and others, cooperative, respectful and encourages participation of all citizens will be considered appropriate, and will be encouraged and expected of all elected and appointed leaders and public employees.
- Development will be holistic so that issues of the whole community are addressed.
- Community solutions will be developed by examining problems to identify root causes rather than symptoms, and will be organized to achieve lasting change.
- Community programs and organizations will work in ways that are coordinated, cooperative, and respectful.
- Success will be measured using means that include not only financial success but also social and physical wellness.

If health promotion workers in northern Saskatchewan were to work according to principles similar to those of the municipality of LaLoche, several benefits, for the people of the North, could be derived that relate directly to several of the findings of this study. First, fostering community member involvement in the discovery of the political, social, environmental and economic determinants of their health will increase the peoples' insight about themselves, broaden their accumulated experience and foster social connections for affirmation and support. This strategy will also help to develop a holistic context in which people can learn, especially that of the social and emotional quadrant on the Medicine Wheel. Furthermore, as people gain insight about themselves and their incremental experience begins to accumulate, they will begin to behave in ways that are more appropriate to their own health and the health and safety of others. These are all important factors for my teachers' growth and development in this study.

Secondly, using Cajete's (1994) ecological process of Aboriginal learning will facilitate the revitalization of traditional values and beliefs that will guide the process of encouraging the development of whole people. This process will also address the
principle of holistic development by encouraging the people to develop their whole selves and return to the traditions of sharing, cooperation and respect. As well, my teachers, in this study, used all the seven circles of learning behaviour, Asking Seeking, Making, Having, Sharing, Celebrating and Being. Involving the people, in the North, in seeking root causes and developing solutions for the whole community will encourage Asking, Seeking, Making, Having and Sharing behaviour. I would suspect that when the process is under way Celebrating and Being behaviour will also be a natural result of the process.

Thirdly, using the principles of community health development to guide one’s work will address all of the most important resiliency factors, for my teachers in this study, enhancing resilience in people, families and communities. Getting the people involved in improving their lives would open opportunities for individuals to learn about their own personal strengths, problem solving abilities and increase their opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility, all of which were important in the lives of my teachers. Similarly, regular interaction with others in the community would facilitate development of social skills and social competence another important factor in my teachers growth.

Fourthly, as the people, in northern communities, sought solutions to the health and social problems in their communities, they would be following the ecological learning process of Asking and Seeking, described by Cajete (1994). As well, they might engage in visioning exercises that would allow them to reflect on their past experiences and therefore begin to realize the good in their lives, as well as the unpleasant experiences. Furthermore, sharing unpleasant and pleasant experiences with others in the community, as a means to explore the health challenges in the community, would help people move beyond focusing on the trauma that they have experienced and begin to recognize, value and appreciate the good in their lives. This appeared to be what my teachers in this study did to move past their trauma.

Similarly, as the people gained experience in new ways of living and used a process of trial and error in addressing the health and social problems in their communities, they would begin to shift their beliefs about themselves and their communities. This would then facilitate the transformative process that Wallerstein (1992) has described and which was so much a part of my teachers’ experience in this study. This was the process used by my teachers in this study to shift their belief structures and gain a sense of hope or a sense of possibility (Simon, 1992).

Furthermore, as the people participated in their community’s health and social development, they would accumulate experience and learning from their own and other people’s stories and receive new information about their health and social well-
being. Furthermore, they would begin to relate the new information to their experiences. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) have suggested that this is how people learn best and it appears to be a learning method used often by my teachers in this study.

Implications for Further Research

There are several implications for further research that are the result of this study. They are the desirability of repeating this study using the Cree and Dene languages, a need to increase the sample size to improve the external validity and the generalizability of the results, a need for research that determines how Aboriginal people learn lateral thinking, a need for research that determines how Aboriginal people develop the brain circuitries for holistic thinking and learning and a need for research that identifies that determinants of health in Aboriginal populations. I have discussed each of these research needs in detail in the following sections.

Repeating the Study

Each of my teachers had communicative competence in English. However, both the Cree and Dene languages are verb based languages and describe relationships among things rather than describing the things themselves as English does. This difference in the languages may have limited the ability my teachers to fully describe their experiences in English. It would be desirable, therefore, to repeat this study using the Cree and Dene languages with people who were fluent in those languages.

A Larger Sample

Patton (1990) has stated that sample size should be determined, in qualitative research, on whether the intent is to seek breadth or to seek depth. By breadth he means that one could study a specific set of experiences for a large number of people so that the external validity or generalizability of the study would be improved. Or a researcher could choose to study a smaller number of people to seek a more open range of experiences in depth. In this study I have used several techniques to seek depth. I have reported several methods, in chapter 3, that I used to improve both the depth and breadth of this inquiry. Never the less, research is needed to improve the breadth of the study by doing life stories interviews with a larger sample of the population in northern
Saskatchewan. Miles and Huberman (1994) have suggested that using multiple case study samples gives one the ability to base a research design on a recognized or suspected theory. So the next research, resulting from this initial inquiry could use multiple cases, selected with the same criteria as in this study, but would seek only to find the major themes found in this study. In this way the generalizability or confidence in the results would be improved as there could be a larger number of people from the selected cultural groups with the same general themes in their life stories.

**Learning Lateral Thinking**

For de Bono (1990) lateral thinking is different from logical or vertical thinking in several ways. First, lateral thinking is concerned with changing patterns. Second, lateral thinking, for de Bono (1990), is an attitude as well as a method of using information. Third, according to de Bono (1990), lateral thinking must be learned, as human brain circuitry are adapted to perpetuate learned and consciously recognized patterns. It was not possible in this inquiry to determine how my teachers learned to use lateral thinking or to discover insights about themselves and their behaviour. De Bono (1990) has proposed several steps, described above, that will help people to learn to think laterally, however, it is not possible from the data in this inquiry to determine whether my teachers used these steps to learn lateral thinking.

Because lateral thinking or insight learning was such a dominant theme in the life stories of my teachers and therefore is likely a dominant learning style in northern Aboriginal people, further research is needed to determine how northern Aboriginal people learn to think laterally.

**Brain Circuitry Development**

Recent research demonstrates that all humans have the ability to learn, recognize and apply patterns from one situation to another and has been demonstrated as a normal process of brain development in humans (Pinker, 1997; Greenspan, 1997). However, many people are schooled, at an early age in vertical thinking and learning to accommodate the requirements of the industrial-scientific disciplines (Pitman, Eisikovits & Dobbert, 1989). Most researchers, studying how humans think and learn, now agree that early childhood experiences determine which neurons in the brain grow and remain active, resulting in an ability to associate new patterns to old ones (Pinker, 1997; Greenspan, 1997). However, for most children these patterns are developed in schools
where they are taught primarily vertical thinking with little or no emotional content to the learning (Pitman, Eisikovits & Dobbert, 1989). Lateral and holistic thinking are dominant themes in the life stories of my teachers, suggesting that northern Aboriginal people with similar life experiences will use similar thinking and learning styles. Similarly these dominant themes appeared to be crucial in my teachers' abilities to learn from their life experiences and change their behavior to improve their ability to live well. Further research is needed to determine how northern Aboriginal people who use this type of thinking and learning style developed and maintain the brain circuitries that allowed them to continue to use this type of learning throughout their lives.

Aboriginal Health Determinants

Substantial research has been done to determine the determinants of health for mainstream populations. Some of the determinants of health that this research has uncovered are: Social and economic environments such as, kind of employment, status in the employment environment and in the social milieu, community safety and well-being, and family strength and social support systems; Physical environment such as, the quality and quantity of sanitation, housing, sewer and water, and exposure to dangers in the environment; Biology such as, genetics and the limits of human potential; Psychology such as the level of confidence in individuals, the levels of self-esteem, the sense of control over the living environment, the sense of personal safety, and attitudes toward self and others; Lifestyle issues like smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, diet, levels of exercise, safety habits and the type of occupation; Health Care issues like the level of access to services, and the quality and quantity of services (Evans, Barer and Marmor, 1994).

Little research has been done, however, to uncover the determinants of health for northern Aboriginal people. This study has addressed the theory of resilience (Mangham, McGrath, Reid and Stewart (1994) in the northern Aboriginal populations, that cover some of the dominant cultures determinants of health like family and social support, levels of self-esteem and self-confidence and family strength. As well, Feather (1991) has completed a survey to determine the social health of the northern Saskatchewan population that demonstrates that many of the environmental, social and physical determinants of health are non-existent or of very poor quality and quantity.

This inquiry has uncovered the types of life long learning styles and processes used by my teachers and has therefore suggested some strategies for health promotion work that is culturally appropriate and specific to northern populations. However, the
oppressive measures of the colonial era are still present in many policies and laws that
govern the lives of Northerners. Portions of the population, like the First Nations, have
made significant changes in politics and policies that affect health, but much of the
population is still in need of research that is specific to the northern cultures and
populations. What is needed, therefore, is research that will uncover the determinants of
health that are specific to the northern population. Differences in culture, environment
and social interaction, from the dominant culture, make this kind of research imperative.
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APPENDIX A

Proposal to the University of Saskatchewan Ethics Committee

Application for Approval of Research Protocol

Thesis Research for Master of Adult and Continuing Education

Life stories: Life Long Learning and Transitions to Improved Self-care and Mithwayawin

R. Bruce Chamberlin
Adult and Continuing Education, College of Graduate Studies, University of Saskatchewan
94-12-18
Abstract

This study uses collaborative, interpretive life story research to determine if themes of life long learning emerge from the life stories of six northern Saskatchewan First Nation people. The life stories of individuals who have made life transitions from unhealthy lifestyles to lifestyles that more closely approximate the Cree First Nation concept of health called mithwayawin will be used. The life stories will be recorded on video tape to capture all the story including the body language and the facial expressions. The study uses the case study method of analysis and synthesis of themes as proposed by Patton (1990). The study is designed using culturally appropriate methods, to give voice to First Nation people in determining what factors are important to consider in planning culturally appropriate health promotion strategies for First Nation individuals, families and communities in northern Saskatchewan.

Hypothesis

There will be themes of life long learning revealed by the life stories of six northern Saskatchewan First Nation people who have experienced life transitions to mithwayawin.

Funding

This study is being funded entirely from the resources of the student. Travel on Northern Medical Services flights into fly-in communities has been approved by the acting Director, Dr. Dale Dewer.

Subjects

The subjects are all individuals that the researcher is acquainted with through his work as a community educator in northern Saskatchewan. The researcher has approached each subject personally and has obtained his or her agreement to participate in the study. Subjects with whom the researcher has worked and shared personal growth issues have been chosen to reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation, inter-cultural or gender disrespect.

Risk or Deception

The subjects will participate in the interpretation of their life stories and the designation of learning themes. As well, all teachers will be involved in synthesizing the life long learning themes at the end of the study.
Confidentiality
Each teacher will be given the opportunity to use a pseudonym. The life story transcripts will be stored in a safety deposit box when not in use and until the study is completed. The investigator agrees to not leave the transcripts and video tapes unattended when in use. The life story transcripts and video tapes will be returned to the subject or destroyed depending on the request of the teacher, upon completion of the study. In this way confidentiality will be ensured.

Consent
Each teacher will be required to sign a form (see attached) giving the researcher permission to record their life stories on video cassette and to engage them in a process of negotiated interpretation about the themes of life long learning that emerge from their stories.

Debriefing and Feedback
Each subject will participate in searching for themes in their own life story and at the end of the study they will be brought together in a group, if they agree, to discuss the study and participate in synthesizing the themes of life long learning.

Signatures

Student Investigator Signature:

R. Bruce Chamberlin, MCEd. candidate, Education Foundations.

Supervisor Signature:

Dr. Marie Battiste, Indian and Northern Education Program, Education Foundations.

Department Head Signature:

Dr. Verner Stephan, Acting Head, Education Foundations.
CONSENT FORM

Title:
Life Stories: Life Long Learning and Transitions to Improved Self-care and Mithwayawin

Contact Persons:
R. Bruce Chamberlin, MCEd. Graduate Student, Adult and Continuing Education, Education Foundations, College of Graduate Studies, University of Saskatchewan
(306) 975-0122

Dr. Marie Battiste, Supervisor Indian and Northern Education Program, Education Foundations, College of Graduate Studies, University of Saskatchewan
(306) 966-7576

Dear colleague or friend,

I am requesting your participation in an investigation of the life stories of six northern Saskatchewan First Nation people. I will be recording your life story on video cassette and seeking your help in determining the themes of life long learning that emerge from your story. At the end of the investigation you will be invited to attend a session with the other teachers to discuss the study and participate in synthesizing the themes that emerged from all the stories

Purpose:
The purpose of this study is to determine if there are any common patterns or themes of life long learning in the life stories of six northern Saskatchewan First Nation people who have experienced life transitions from unhealthy lifestyles to lifestyles more closely approximating the Cree concept of health called mithwayawin. If common patterns or themes can be identified, the study could help First Nation health promotion and community development workers plan culturally appropriate health promotion strategies aimed at helping northern Saskatchewan individuals, families and communities become healthier.
Please be advised that I makes no claim that this investigation is guaranteed to yield the results that I seek to uncover.

Another important purpose of the study is that this life story approach to research will give the people of the North a voice, in determining their own health needs, that they do not often have in the main stream medical culture. In this way, at the very least, some individuals may be able, in a traditional way, to learn from the experience of others.

Procedure:

Your life story will be recorded on video cassette tape at a place a time that is convenient to you. Six to eight hours of your time will be required. Following the preparation of a written transcript and preliminary interpretation and ordering of some of the themes, I will mail each transcript to you for study. I will then return to talk about the story and seek your interpretations of themes and expressions not verified in the original interview.

After I have recorded six life stories and we have interpreted the themes of life long learning, you will be invited to a one day meeting to discuss the study and synthesize the themes from each of the recorded life stories. Expenses will be paid by the researcher.

Questions I will ask you to answer to initiate the telling of your life story are:

1. Please describe what your life was like before you attended school. I am interested in knowing where you lived. Who were the important people in your life? Are there any important things that happened to you of which you might have very clear memories? What were your favorite things to do? Can you describe a time that stands out in your mind?

2. Please describe what your life was like after you started school. I am interested in knowing where you lived. Who were the important people in your life? Are there any important things that happened to you of which you might have very clear memories? What were your favorite things to do? Can you describe a time that stands out in your mind?

3. Please describe your teenage years. I am interested in knowing where you lived. Who were the important people in your life? Are there any important things that happened to you of which you might have very clear memories? What were your favorite things to do? Can you describe a time that stands out in your mind?

4. Please describe your adult years. I am interested in knowing where you lived. Who were the important people in your life? Are there any important things that
happened to you of which you might have very clear memories? What were your favorite things to do? Can you describe a time that stands out in your mind?

5. I am talking to you because you are a person who has made very dramatic changes in your life. Can you tell me how you came to your time of troubles and what happened along the way to change your mind about how you wanted to live?

The usual probing questions will be used to get more information about particular incidents in your life that are not addressed in the life story in detail.

Possible Harm:
You need to be aware that people who participate in life story research often experience emotional discomfort when they relive old hurts or traumas. Furthermore, you may find that telling your life story will cause new perspectives on all old issues to emerge leading you to reinterpret your life.

Teacher Rights:
You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without fear of penalty of any kind. You will have the right to decide the time and place of the interview(s). You have the right to use a false name for the purpose of recording your life story. You are guaranteed the right to have your voice included in the interpretation and synthesis of the themes of life long learning. You will have the right to veto the use of any quotations from or interpretations of your life story that can identify you. You are guaranteed to be informed of any new information that will have a bearing on your decision to continue in the study. You have the right to retrieve all the video tape and written transcripts or to request that they be destroyed following completion of the study. You will be given a copy of this form.

Confidentiality:
I am seeking information from your life story for the completion of my thesis for Master of Continuing Education. I agree not to use any information in writing the thesis that will allow anyone to identify you. I agree to protect the video tapes and transcripts from observation or study by other than myself by storing them in a safety deposit box and not leaving them unattended when in use. Typing of transcripts will be accomplished only by myself or by bonded office services personnel.
Consent:

I will participate in this investigation of life long learning and transitions to mithwayawin by allowing my life story to be recorded on video cassette and by participating in the interpretation of themes that emerge from the story. I will consider an invitation to participate in a joint meeting of all teachers to discuss the study and synthesize the themes that emerged from all the stories. My signature indicates that have read the above information, that it has been explained to me, that I understand it, that I have received a copy of the agreement and that I have freely made my decision to participate. I realize that I may withdraw from this investigation at any time, without penalty or prejudice, after I have signed this form.

_________________________ Date: ______________
Teacher’s Signature

_________________________ Date: ______________
Investigator’s Signature
The University Advisory Committee on Ethics in Human Experimentation (Behavioral Sciences) has reviewed your study, "Life Stories: Life Learning, and Transitions to Improved Self-care and Mithwayawin" (95-03).

1. Your study has been APPROVED,

2. Any significant changes to your protocol should be reported to the Director of Research Services for consideration in advance of its implementation.

for Dr. C. von Baeyer, Chair
University Advisory Committee
on Ethics in Human experimentation,(Behavioral Science

cc: Dr. C. von Baeyer
On behalf of the Northern Medical Services Research and Development Committee 1 am pleased to inform you that your proposal was very well received and the Committee has endorsed providing support to you for the project.

Northern representatives on the Committee felt that the resulting video will be very useful as a health promotion tool and that it will be well received in Northern communities.

The Committee's support is associated with certain requirements:

As much as possible, you should interview individuals who were associated with the 3rd Annual Northern Health Conference, with the objective of capturing some of the file stories that were shared at that event which linked individual and community healing. Where these individuals are involved, several of the Northern representatives felt that it would not be necessary for you to obtain community consent to conduct the interviews. (This is not to preclude the need for consent which may be associated with your research or required by your thesis committee.) We recommend that you familiarize yourself with the existing record of the conference (complete audio tape record, selected video recordings by C. Roy, and notes kept by Bonnie and Jean) and give consideration to
how excerpts from those records might be used to supplement your own video material, in preparing the final video production.

The issue of language must lie carefully considered. The Committee echoed your concern about respondents being to express their stories in their native languages how will you interpret ibis information, and how will this be handled in the resulting video?

The Committee sees your research proposal as a vehicle through which a health promotion video record, linked to the conference, can lie achieved. The Committee suggests that any issues related to the research aspects of this endeavor be a matter between you and your thesis committee, and that as much as possible the research nature of the interviewing of Northern individuals be downplayed. The Northern representatives felt that portraying this as a research inquiry into file stories would be poorly received

in Northern communities.

B. Chamberlin, Nov. 25, 1993, Page 2

As far as possible, Northern Medical Services will accommodate your travel and video expenses within its existing budget in ibis and the next fiscal year, and will work with you to take advantage of opportunities that arise to further ibis project. For example, it might be possible obtain or record community-based footage to augment your own recording, to enrich the final video product. You might be able to interview a respondent in Saskatoon if he/she happens to be in the city for other reasons; wherever possible NMS will try to arrange travel in association with other people going North on other NMS-related matters. These measures would reduce the costs as estimated. On the other hand, to achieve a high quality video production, it is likely that an appropriate sound track and other visuals will be required, which might increase the estimated costs in the final category of your preliminary budget. It will be necessary for you to work closely with James and NMS to explore all possible funding avenues to make this project feasible.
Once again, thank you for pursuing Ibis project with such interest. We believe it will result in a very valuable product of importance to promoting health in Northern Saskatchewan.

c.c. J. Irvine

c.c. James Irvine
APPENDIX B

Introductory Letter and Consent Form

Title:
Life Stories: Life Long Learning and Transitions to Improved Self-care and Mithwayawin

Contact Persons:
R. Bruce Chamberlin, MCEd. Graduate Student,
Adult and Continuing Education, Education Foundations, College of Graduate Studies,
University of Saskatchewan
ph/fax: (306) 975-0122

Dr. Marie Battiste, Supervisor
Indian and Northern Education Program, Education Foundations, College of Graduate Studies, University of Saskatchewan
(306) 966-7576

Dear colleague or friend,

I am requesting your participation in an investigation of the life stories of six northern Saskatchewan First Nations' people. I will be recording your life story on video cassette and seeking your help in determining the themes of life long learning that emerge from your story. At the end of the investigation you will be invited to attend a session with the other teachers to discuss the study and participate in synthesizing the themes that emerged from all the stories.

Purpose:
The purpose of this study is to determine if there are any common patterns or themes of life long learning in the life stories of six northern Saskatchewan First Nations' people who have experienced life transitions from unhealthy lifestyles to lifestyles more closely approximating the Cree concept of health called mithwayawin. If common patterns or themes can be identified, the study could help First Nations health promotion and community development workers plan culturally appropriate health promotion...
strategies aimed at helping northern Saskatchewan individuals, families and communities become healthier.

Please be advised that I make no claim that this investigation is guaranteed to yield the results that I seek to uncover.

Another important purpose of the study is that this life story approach to research will give the people of the North a voice, in determining their own health needs, that they do not often have in the main stream medical culture. In this way, at the very least, some individuals may be able, in a traditional way, to learn from the experience of others.

Procedure:

Your life story will be recorded on video cassette tape at a place a time that is convenient to you. Six to eight hours of your time will be required. Following the preparation of a written transcript and preliminary interpretation and ordering of some of the themes, I will mail each transcript to you for study. I will then return to talk about the story and seek your interpretations of themes and expressions not verified in the original interview.

After I have recorded six life stories and we have interpreted the themes of life long learning, you will be invited to a one day meeting to discuss the study and synthesize the themes from each of the recorded life stories. Expenses will be paid by the researcher.

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3. Please describe your teenage years. I am interested in knowing where you lived. Who were the important people in your life? Are there any important things that happened to you of which you might have very clear memories? What were your favorite things to do? Can you describe a time that stands out in your mind?
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5. I am talking to you because you are a person who has made very dramatic changes in your life. Can you tell me how you came to your time of troubles and what happened along the way to change your mind about how you wanted to live?

The usual probing questions will be used to get more information about particular incidents in your life that are not addressed in the life story in detail.

Possible Harm:
You need to be aware that people who participate in life story research often experience emotional discomfort when they relive old hurts or traumas. Furthermore, you may find that telling your life story will cause new perspectives on all old issues to emerge leading you to reinterpret your life.

Teacher Rights:
You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without fear of penalty of any kind. You will have the right to decide the time and place of the interview(s). You have the right to use a false name for the purpose of recording your life story. You are guaranteed the right to have your voice included in the interpretation and synthesis of the themes of life long learning. You will have the right to veto the use of any quotations from or interpretations of your life story that can identify you. You are guaranteed to be informed of any new information that will have a bearing on your decision to continue in the study. You have the right to retrieve all the video tape and written transcripts or to request that they be destroyed following completion of the study. You will be given a copy of this form.

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Consent:

I will participate in this investigation of life long learning and transitions to mithwayawin by allowing my life story to be recorded on video cassette and by participating in the interpretation of themes that emerge from the story. I will consider an invitation to participate in a joint meeting of all teachers to discuss the study and synthesize the themes that emerged from all the stories. My signature indicates that I have read the above information, that it has been explained to me, that I understand it, that I have received a copy of the agreement and that I have freely made my decision to participate. I realize that I may withdraw from this investigation at any time, without penalty or prejudice, after I have signed this form.

_________________________ Date: ____________
Teacher's Signature

_________________________ Date: ____________
Investigator's Signature
APPENDIX C:

Theme Trees

1. Personal Data

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<td># of</td>
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<td>Sib-</td>
<td>Bel-</td>
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Figure 1: Personal Data Theme Tree
Figure 2: Incremental Moments Theme Tree

3. Salient Moments

Figure 3: Salient Moments Theme Tree
4: Life long Learning

4:1 People 4:2 Institutions 4:3 Events

4:1:1 reflected 4:2:1 reflected 4:3:1 reflected
4:1:2 accumulated 4:2:2 accumulated 4:3:2 accumulated

Figure 4: Life Long Learning Theme Tree
APPENDIX D:

Coding Frequencies of Systematic Sub-Themes

Table 1
Coding Frequencies of Personal Data Systematic Sub-Themes

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<td>Personal Data/</td>
<td>Beliefs/ social/</td>
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<td>Personal Data/</td>
<td>Beliefs/ emotional/</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Data/</td>
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<td>Personal Data/</td>
<td>Personal Insight/ positive self</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Data/</td>
<td>Personal Insight/ negative self</td>
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Table 2
Coding Frequencies of Life Long Learning Systematic Sub-Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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APPENDIX E:

Frequency of Relationships Between Systematic Sub-Themes

Table 5
Frequency of Relationships Between Systematic Incremental Moments Sub-Themes and Other Systematic Sub-Themes.

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Frequency of Relationships Between Life Long Learning Systematic Sub-Themes and Other Systematic Sub-Themes

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