

**TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS IN THE
POST-SECONDARY CLASSROOM:
THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN**

by

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of transformational learning, including the elements, attributes, factors, and catalysis of the transformational learning environment, as Indigenous women experienced them in the Indigenous Studies 3040H: *The Meaning of Work in the Contemporary World* (INDG 3040H) course at Trent University. Using a holistic model developed in connection with the Medicine Wheel an Indigenous epistemology is integrated into the study. Qualitative interviews were conducted with eight Indigenous women. The data collected from the interviews indicated that for Indigenous women, the transformational learning environment of the post-secondary classroom is heavily connected to the relationship students develop with themselves, their peers, and the faculty member alongside the content of the course.

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Before all other words, I wish to thank Creator, the Great Spirit that makes all life possible. I also wish to acknowledge and thank my Ancestors for having the courage to walk the Earth before me, and for the everlasting gift of relationship that is their legacy.

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List of Symbols, Nomenclature, and Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Meaning
INDG 3040H	Indigenous Studies 3040H: The Meaning of Work in the Contemporary World
The Gathering Space	Ernie and Florence Benedict Gathering Place

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Chapter One: Introduction

Reader Context

Before exploring the specifics of the study, it is important for the reader to have background information about the research investigator in order to be able to contextualize the study in terms of transformational learning. This background information is presented in the Introduction to the Study.

Introduction to the Study

My name is Lindy Erin Garneau. I am Mi'kmaw, Bear Clan, from the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation, and I have never lived in the traditional territory of my people, Newfoundland. Although I visit my traditional territory as often as I can, much of what I have learned about my culture and what it means to be an Indigenous¹ person I have learned through my formal university education and through the teachings and stories found in the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee people, on land they call Nogojiwanong, meaning place at the end of the rapids. This area is also called Peterborough, Ontario.

From January 2005 until January 2012 I worked closely with Lorne Ellingson, an adjunct professor in the Indigenous Studies Department at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada. Ellingson was a coach and consultant who worked in

¹ *Indigenous* is the term I intend to use when speaking of the collective. There is much dispute over the word(s) used to label Indigenous peoples. Terms such as Aboriginal, Indian, and Native are all used at various times and in various places and there is no agreement on usage, even by Indigenous peoples themselves. Most prefer to speak of themselves using the names that come from their nations or tribes and I will do my best to use these names where possible. That said, the issue of those of mixed ancestry pose an additional challenge as they are also subject to various naming practices. For the purposes of this paper, I will use the term mixed ancestry for those who are Indigenous plus.

various First Nations communities across Canada in the area of economic development. He also taught several courses within the Indigenous Studies Department and the Business Administration Department. Our relationship began and developed while working together in the Indigenous Studies 92C Communications² course, a first year transition course within the Indigenous Studies Diploma Program. During our eight years of working together Ellingson became my mentor, my coach, and my champion.

I have always been interested in learning that transforms people. Working with Ellingson provided a forum in which I witnessed and participated in the practice of creating transformational learning environments within the post - secondary classroom. This study tells the story of how I came into this knowledge, of how transformational learning works within the learning environment, and the pedagogy that Ellingson and I developed together. In January of 2012 Ellingson passed away. His legacy and his teachings continue to greatly enrich my understanding of what it means to be an educator. He helped me to understand the enormous privilege of having a platform in which to provide leadership and to do genuine good in the learning community within the University and outside in the larger community. He provided me with the framework around which this study was conducted.

In the spring of 2006 I was working as a Teaching Assistant in the Indigenous Studies 92C Communications course. Throughout the year I supported the students in their writing, reading, and other academic skills development. By commenting on their

² The Indigenous Studies 92C Communications course (1975 – 2008) was developed into Indigenous Studies 1010Y: Foundations of Indigenous Learning (2009 – 2012), and developed again into two half courses Indigenous Studies 1011H: Foundations of Indigenous Learning (FOIL): Writing; and Indigenous Studies 1012H: Foundations of Indigenous Learning (FOIL): Research (2013 – present).

writing work and providing feedback, I developed meaningful relationships with the students, always encouraging them to continue growing and developing their skills.

During our final class one of the students approached me wanting to thank me for the support I had given him during his first year at Trent. He was an Anishnaabe man and a mature student. I had encouraged him in his writing and in his storytelling. On that day he gifted a story to me.

A long time ago the Anishnaabe people lived in what is now thought to be northeastern Canada, the mainland as well as the mass known as the Rock. We lived together with your people, the Mi'kmaq.

The Wise Ones, the Elders of Elders had a prophecy that people from a different world, a different time, and a different way of life would soon be approaching our coastal shores. These new people will be strong and will come in many numbers and although they intend to do well they will not understand our Sacred Elements: Our culture, our beliefs, and our medicines. The Sacred Elements of our people must be protected.

Together our people created a plan to save the Sacred Elements. The Anishnaabe would be charged with the responsibility of leaving the northeast and travelling as far west as possible, taking with them the Sacred Elements to be hidden and protected until it was safe for them to be retrieved again in time. When the time was right the Mi'kmaq people would come to reclaim them.

The responsibility of the Mi'kmaq would be to stay behind, greeting the new people, knowing that much of the Mi'kmaq culture would be lost, but in doing so would give the Anishnaabe a chance to keep theirs. The Anishnaabe people came as far west as modern day Ontario.

It is because of the sacrifices of the Mi'kmaq people that I had the opportunity to grow up with many elements of my Anishnaabe culture. However, due to these same sacrifices, you did not have the ability to grow up with your Mi'kmaq culture.

Have you ever wondered why you are a Mi'kmaw woman born in Anishnaabe territory?

You are here to retrieve the medicines of your people. You are learning about your culture from the Anishnaabe. In time, through your work and the work of others the knowledge will return to the Mi'kmaq people. For this, I thank you. Chi miigwech. Everything always comes full circle. (Stanford Taylor, 2006).

He then gave me an eagle feather.

This experience changed me. It changed my worldview, my sense of life-purpose, and the way I view and believe in learning and education. After 10 years, as I reflect back to that moment, I consider this experience to be one of the most inspirational events of my life. This event was powerful because I was “seriously challenged to assess [my] value system and worldview and [was] subsequently changed by the experience” (Quinnan, 1997, p. 42, as cited in Mezirow, Taylor, & Associates, 2009, p. 3). This is transformational learning.

The student gave me this story and Ellingson gave me the ability to live into it. When you are given a story so big, how do you make it make sense in your life? How do you live that knowledge? Ellingson gave me the access to begin living it with the students, the faculty and the staff at Trent University. With this came confidence and agency as a Mi'kmaw woman. Through our relationship I became empowered. To empower someone through relationship is to provide them with a transformational learning experience.

Background and Theoretical Framework

Transformational learning is learning that leads to personal change by transforming taken-for-granted frames of reference that have become axiomatic, including: meaning perspectives, habits of mind, and pre-formed mind-sets and creating increased self-understanding through reflection and constructive discourse (Mezirow,

2000, p.7; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 132). In other words, transformational learning is a process of learning in which students are challenged to critically examine their assumptions, beliefs, values, feelings, and pre-conceived self-understandings while participating in course assignments that are designed to promote taking a second look at oneself. In addition, transformational learning is also a process of ongoing dialogue, which provides an opportunity for development, improvement, and advancement within the learner's self-understanding. In the broadest sense transformational learning is about powerful change, so powerful it alters self-perceptions, values, goals, and priorities and is often experienced through the reflection of inner meaning (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 130). It is learning that goes beyond "... informational learning... [which] extends already established cognitive capacities into new terrain" (Kegan, 2000, as cited in Merriam et al., 2007, p. 130). Transformational learning is not taught, it is experienced, often during unpredictable situations, when comfort zones are challenged, or when devastating life occurrences take place. Transformational learning takes hold and people change as a result of the experience. According to Mark Nepo in Parker, Zajonc and Scribner (2010),

Transformational education – understood as educating the whole person by integrating the inner life and the outer life, by actualizing individual and global awakening, and by participating in compassionate communities – has become a quiet but sturdy movement that encourages the recovery and development of the academy as a liberating and capacity-building environment. (p.vii)

Nowhere is this more relevant then in the post-secondary classroom.

Transformational learning takes place within a specific environment and does not occur in isolation as both student and environment are deeply connected to each other.

The post-secondary classroom is born from an interactional environment where the

student affects the environment as much as the environment affects the student (Ellingson 2007, p. 143). This theory is also supported by Langan and Davidson (2005) in their classroom development involving constructive teaching and learning which includes:

Collaboration – viewing knowing as social and knowers as in relation with others rather than as isolated individuals

Deep learning – enhancing understanding of course content by promoting connections among its elements

Reflection – encouraging students to connect to course content with their prior knowledge and lived experience

Engagement – discussing and building a point of view by means of feedback and dialogue regarding course activities

Caring – attending and listening to others so as to foster relationships that acknowledge and encourage acceptance of our differences and similarities (Ed. Mezirow, Taylor, and Associates 2009, p. 49).

Each of these five characteristics contributes to the creation of a transformational learning environment. When students are able to interact with each other in a way that teaches relationship building they are able to see themselves as a part of community of learners, one in which needs their input and involvement to thrive as much as they need it to support their own growth process. A transformative learning experience occurs within the learning environment when students experience an academic or personal event and/or challenge upon which they critically reflect (look twice). Writing journals, participating in ongoing class discussions, and creating a working relationship with the course instructor are all possible vehicles for the reflective process. It is from these interactions that students may begin to form new frames of reference as they open themselves up to new information, knowledge, and other points of view. The final stage of the transformational process occurs when students begin to take action in accordance with

their new frames of reference (Mezirow, 1981, as cited in Merriam et. al., 2007, p. 134). When a student has integrated new information and knowledge into his/her already pre-formed understandings and ways of knowing, it can be an experience of inspiration that motivates the student to take positive action based on his/her new understandings and new ways of knowing.

It is within the transformative learning process that adult students are able to make sense of their life experience (Merriam et. al., 2007, p. 132). Within the context of post-secondary education students are expected to adopt course content and integrate what has been learned into their own personal understanding, life experience, and pre-conceived beliefs, values, and feelings. However with transformational learning the course content, course environment, student interactions, and the teaching style of the instructor may in fact inspire a change in the pre-conceived self-understanding of the students, causing the students to re-examine their beliefs, values, and feelings, thus transforming the student's meaning schemes (beliefs and attitudes).

Transformational learning is important in post-secondary education because it encourages meaningful conversation, creativity, relationship building, and reflection, all of which can lead to personal growth for students. Highly developing these skills is what makes having a university degree relevant today. As students continue to be expected to think critically about who they are as people, as learners, as members of a greater society, and as prospective members of the workforce, post-secondary institutions must provide learning opportunities that foster personal growth. Students enroll in post-secondary programs expecting to be transformed into fulfilled, employable, and successful people. According to Lewis (2007, as cited in Parker et al., 2010), the former dean of Harvard

College, the purpose of university is to provide education that will help students “learn who they are, to search for a larger purpose for their lives, and to leave [university] as better human beings” (p. 3). Transformational learning provides students the opportunities for the personal growth needed for such core developments to occur. This learning goes beyond the absorption of factual information alone, asking students to build on existing information using their own experiences and knowledge while examining who they are, who they want to become, and how they want to impact the world. Through transformational learning, universities provide learning communities that foster the growth of our full humanity as educated people, which is the true purpose of higher education (Parker et al., 2010, p. 3).

Transformational learning also matters in the development of co-curricular learning. The need for personal development and growth within higher education extends beyond the classroom setting and into our student support services. Student services departments are also connected to the growth potential of students and have much to offer faculty and academic departments in terms of how to provide leadership to students who are engaging in transformative learning pedagogy. According to Shea (2010), as post-secondary institutions grow and change, there will be opportunities for academic departments to merge and blend with student services departments as a way of further facilitating “...career services, experiential learning, co-operative education, and learning that occurs in the classroom” (p.149). He also wrote,

Such new approaches will, in turn, place a greater emphasis on credit courses that focus on the career needs of students as they take responsibility for their own development. As career and employment services professionals anticipate what may lie ahead, they would do well to embrace this new holistic learning agenda, reclaiming the development of human capital as their *raison d'être* and

strengthening their connection to the world of work through practices that are both applied and reflective. (p.149)

While academic courses focus on theory and reflection, student services departments may have the ability to provide students with applied experience through co-curricular learning opportunities such as workshops, guest speakers, special events, and student employment. Together, the academic experience paired with the support of student services departments can create a transformational learning environment for students.

Nature of the Study

The research presented in this paper is based on the transformational learning experiences of Indigenous women and women of mixed ancestry who participated in the Indigenous Studies 3040H *The Meaning of Work in the Contemporary World* (INDG 3040H) course that was taught by Ellingson at Trent University.

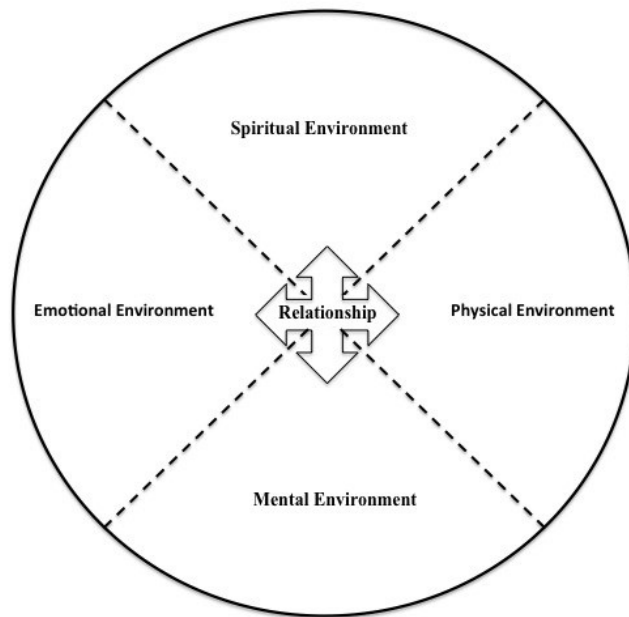
In the INDG 3040H course students are given the opportunity to gather knowledge and reflect on the concept of work and career in the twenty-first century and what work means to them. By examining the different ways in which to create fulfilling and successful careers, students are exposed to creative aspects of learning about the self. The reflective nature of learning about the self creates an environment where transformational learning is a possibility.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to better understand what environmental elements need to be present and/or created in order to produce a learning environment that can be conducive to transformational learning for Indigenous women. This study examined the

environment in which the INDG 3040H course was taught. Using a holistic model such as the Environmental Elements of the Post-Secondary Classroom (Figure 1) this study explored transformational learning through the lens of the holistic environment consisting of four main areas: the physical environment, the mental environment, the emotional environment, and the spiritual environment, similar to a medicine wheel model (Kulchyski, McCaskill, & Newhouse, 1999, p. xx). “The medicine wheel is a traditional [I]ndigenous way of viewing the world that is both ancient and global” (Graveline, 1998, as cited in Orr, 2000, p. 60). Examining the concept of environment(s) in terms of the impact on student’s abilities to experience a transformational learning occurrence requires a broader definition, one that surpasses the idea of an environment being only a physical place and/or space.

Figure 1: Environmental Elements of the Post-Secondary Classroom



Indigenous Epistemology

Working with a holistic model creates an opportunity for an Indigenous epistemology to be considered within the context of transformational learning and the environment(s) in which profound change is possible. Examining the physical environment, the mental environment, the emotional environment, and the spiritual environment of the INDG 3040H course will be more inclusive of the student experience, and will create a more detailed description and account of transformational learning environment(s) within the course. For the purpose of this study each term will be defined as follows:

Physical environment refers to the place(s) and space(s) in which the course is taught. Physical environment includes the way in which the classroom is structured, the seating arrangements, the aesthetics, the furniture, the artwork, the lighting, the air quality and/or any other physical aspect of the environment.

Mental environment refers to a person's ability to build knowledge through intellectual stimulation with the course content. Mackeracher (2004) suggested that each person has his or her own epistemology (p. 198). Within the mental environment of the course in what ways are students able to express and explore their personal knowledge systems?

Emotional environment refers to a person's ability to express, listen to, and consider feelings and thoughts in a place and/or space that is receptive in a respectful way.

Spiritual environment refers to personal ways of knowing and being within a specific context. Within the context of the INDG 3040H course the spiritual environment refers to a person's ability to connect with, and create meaning with course materials, dialogues, ideas, assignments, teachings, and/or core concepts.

Figure 1 represents the cyclical process involved in creating the post-secondary classroom-learning environment. It begins with the intention of creating a relationship and flows out into four environments. Each aspect of the environment, physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual is represented in one of four quadrants. The dotted lines separating each quadrant represent the flow between environments and show no firm barrier between them, as they work together and support each other. Each element builds on the strength and foundation of the others. This is the process of deepening the relationship between students and between students and the professor. This process creates reciprocal trust, caring, and a sense of safety in the classroom, which can lead to transformational learning experiences among students.

The proposed study will seek to determine if transformational learning (learning that leads to personal, academic, and/or career change) has taken place within students who took the INDG 3040H course at Trent University. This will explore the validity of this assertion as well as provide information about the role of the learning environment within the transformational experience.

The hypothesis for this study is that students have indeed experienced transformational learning as a result of their participation in the INDG 3040H course.

There is a lack of research and understanding about how transformational learning is created within the post-secondary learning environment (Taylor, 2007, as cited in

Mezirow, Taylor, & Associates, 2009., p. 4). There is also little empirical research about how transformational learning is encouraged through holistic pedagogical models, including the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual elements of creating a learning environment. This study begins to construct understanding in the area of transformational learning and how it is created and understood when explored using a holistic pedagogical model.

The holistic pedagogical model used in the INDG 3040H course was created by Ellingson (2009, p. 6) and is shown in Figure 2. He used this pedagogy in all of his courses, adjusting only the content and types of assignments as appropriate. Ellingson's Model of Transformative Pedagogy (Figure 2) highlights the essential elements in creating safe learning environments, having meaningful conversations, and building relationships and community in the classroom.

Figure 2: Ellingson's Model of Transformative Pedagogy

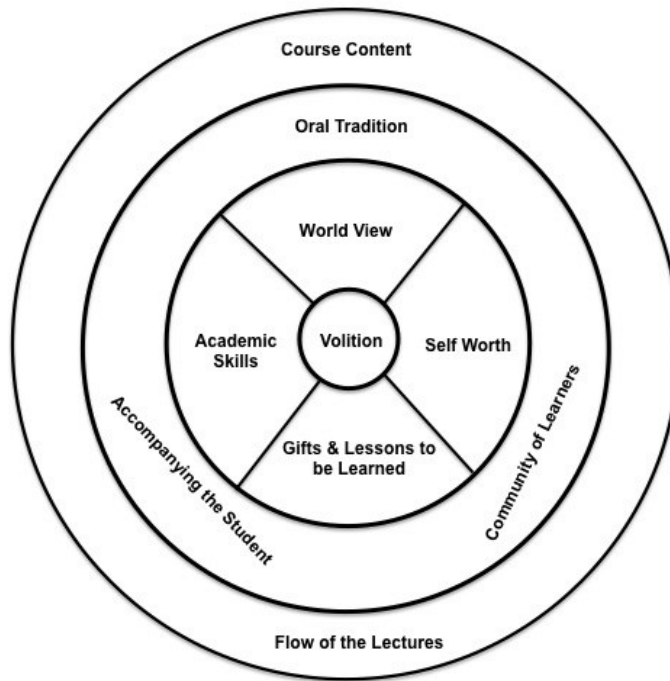


Figure 2 presents a formula through which educators are able to create a transformational learning environment. You will see how these points have added significance when reading Chapter 4 which highlights the comments made by students who were interviewed for this study. Figure 2 is made up of four rings and 10 key elements to creating transformational learning space. Ellingson (2009) described these elements as follows:

The first ring is the core of the model and represents volition. Students must be present in a course of their own choice. They need to feel a sense of autonomy and responsibility in their role as student. Volition is directed energy that is applied over time demonstrating student commitment, persistence, and passion thus being able to achieve learning goals.

The second ring represents academic skills, gifts and lessons to be learned, self-worth, and worldview. Academic skills focus on time and energy management, establishing powerful routines, effective reading, clear and concise writing, active listening, how to ask powerful questions, reasoning and reflecting, rhetoric, notetaking, research and studying.

Gifts and lessons to be learned represents conversations about multiple intelligences and creating opportunities for students to engage in course work in a way that highlights their individual learning styles and strengths. It also represents the process in which students begin to understand how they get into a state for learning.

Self-worth represents self-control, self-esteem the process of building hope, and of caring about oneself. It highlights the importance of intrinsic learning and the presence of learned helplessness. Incorporated is mindfulness, inter and intra personal attunement and self-regulation.

Worldview represents the presence of both supportive and dysfunctional ways of looking at life experiences. Here attention is given to the work view that is held by the student and awareness is created as to whether their worldview serves them or is in need of adjustment based on their learning goals. It is here that students discuss their fears about being in the world and develop courage to help them move forward.

The third ring represents accompanying the student, oral tradition, and community of learners. Accompanying the student is about the role of educators within the learning journey of the student. A teaching relationship is created between the educator and the student, trust is built, and the educator has an opportunity to become a learning companion, supporting the student throughout the course. This is where educators are

most privileged, forgoing the role of sage on the stage and instead choosing the role of mentor.

Oral tradition is about developing the ability to listen and speak together. In the learning space both students and educators are storytellers. It is here where the conversations that matter occur.

When using this model everyone in the classroom becomes a part of a community of learners. The role and responsibility of the course facilitator is to accompany the students on a learning journey, as well as to model community leadership. Through course assignments and group projects student are able to discover how working together can be an enriching experience both personally as well as for the community as a whole.

The forth ring represents the course content and the flow of the lectures. Perhaps surprisingly, it is the course content and the flow of the lectures that are the last pedagogical processes to be formed. Transformative pedagogy focuses on student volition, experience, and community first. Once the course content has been developed educators must be mindful about the best form of delivery so the knowledge can unfold for students as they become ready for to work with it.

Organization of Study

Chapter One has identified the premise for the study and has described the rationale for situating the researcher in the thesis report and its allied research investigation.

Chapter Two of this study discusses relevant research and theories pertaining to transformational learning and community, mentoring, the post-secondary classroom,

culture, and the Medicine Wheel. The lack of research related to transformational learning and Indigenous student experiences is also discussed.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology used in the study and discusses the rationale for using a qualitative research design. Using an interview survey and qualitative interviews as the basis for this study allowed for the participants to share their experiences and determine whether or not they had a transformational learning experience in the INDG 3040H course. This provided primary data and an opportunity for participants to reflect of the impact the course had on them as students. Ethical considerations and intentions for this study are also outlined in this chapter.

Chapter Four presents the demographics of the participants, the interview results, and the data analysis. Highlights from participant interviews are included and discussed. The analysis is broken down into four categories, which include: (1) Elements as aspects of transformational learning that are considered essential to the learning environment. These include, sitting in a circle, reflective learning, and workbook and assignments. (2) Attributes as clearly defined elements. (3) Factors as outside forces and contributors that impact the learning environment. (4) Catalysts represent the outcome of the differing combinations of elements, attributes, and factors. The presence of relationship emerged from the data analysis. This included the participant's relationships to themselves, the course content, other students in the course, and the faculty member teaching the course.

Chapter Five provides an overview of the study. This includes the investigation into the experiences of Indigenous women who enrolled and participated in the INDG 3040H course. Their experiences provide information about the elements, attributes, factors, and catalysts that must be present in the transformational environment of the

post-secondary classroom. Using a holistic framework, developed from the Medicine Wheel and considering the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual environment of the course, an Indigenous epistemology is considered within the research and relationship and a key characteristic of the transformational learning environment is highlighted.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review consists of three main areas. The first area explored relevant research related to transformational learning. This area also discussed individual transformation and community transformation. The second area examined research related to the classroom environment. This area focused on the physical environment, the mental environment, the emotional environment, and the spiritual environment of the classroom. The third area explored the use of the Medicine Wheel as an Indigenous epistemology in relation to transformational learning.

Transformational Learning

Transformational education and learning is a fairly new concept within the area of adult education. The idea that education and learning can be a transformative process has grown out of the emergence of Mezirow's (1978) psycho-critical approach, a theory about the ways in which adults make meaning from their experiences (Mezirow & Associates, 2000, as cited in Merriam et al., 2007, p.132). Transformative learning takes place when there is a change in belief, attitude, or perspective (meaning scheme) versus habit of mind. A meaning scheme is the change of a belief or attitude and differs from a habit of mind which encompasses the entire perspective and world view of a person (Mezirow et al., 2000, as cited in Merriam et al., 2007, p.133). When the meaning scheme of a person is challenged, explored and reflected upon, the person is able to have a transformational experience. This is highlighted within Mezirow's theory where learner experience, critical reflection, and reflective discourse, and action are main components within the transformative learning process (Merriam et al., 2007, p.134). Similarly

transformational learning occurs through differentiation and integration, which increases complexity and inclusiveness (Basseches, 1984, as cited in Mackeracher, 2004, p. 10). These approaches to transformational learning are considered to be individualistic, focusing on the change of a person instead of the change within a larger group or community (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 131). In other words the transformation that takes place happens within a person altering their previous beliefs, worldviews, and self-understanding.

While Mezirow (1978) may have pioneered research in transformational learning there are others who have also supported the development of transformational learning theories. Daloz (1986) provided a psycho-developmental and social constructivist perspective, which states “education is a transformational journey that should promote development” (as cited in Merriam et al., 2007, p. 138). Daloz believed that mentoring can foster transformation within the learner. A mentor/mentee relationship can take form within a teacher or supporter and encourages powerful dialogues in which the learner is able to tell his or her story. Through storytelling learners are able to reflect on their experiences, thoughts, beliefs, and dreams. Daloz stated, “The first business of a guide is to listen to the dreams of the pilgrim. How are our students moving? What do they want for themselves? How do they tell their own stories?” (Daloz, 1986, as cited in Merriam et al., 2007, p. 138). By examining these questions educators are able to think about learning in a personal way that is tailored to each learner. This social constructivist form of personalization nurtures an environment where transformation can take place.

Connecting well with the importance of mentoring and storytelling highlighted by Daloz is the concept of inspirational teaching as a tool to encourage transformational learning. Shahjahan (2004) stated,

Most often as a student, I have learned the most from those teachers who have inspired me. It is not what they taught me in the classroom that is what I took, but it is their passion on the topic, their honesty, their true selves, that inspired me to go out there and change something about myself by reading material once again, or the passion to engage with the learning material, or the passion to take action with what I have learned. (p. 299)

When something or someone inspires a student it can be the beginning of a transformational experience. According to Mackeracher (2004) “[l]earning is *transformative* because it has the potential to lead to change (p. 10). The transformation may be personal, but when inspiration is created from passion and fuelled by curiosity, positive thinking, and hope, it has the ability to be infectious and can affect other areas of the student’s life beyond academics. In this way transformation through inspiration can start the student on a learning journey.

According to Boyd (1991) who developed a psychoanalytic approach to transformational learning, transformation is “an inner journey of individuation from parts of the psyche such as the ego and the collective unconscious” (as cited in Merriam et al., 2007, p.139). In other words, he believes transformation happens as a result of overcoming a problem. By working through the problem the individual is able to grow and develop, causing a change in personality (Boyd, 1991, as cited in Merriam et al. 2007). Transformation occurs when learners are stimulated in a holistic way, such as, emotionally, spiritually, and physically, not just mentally. Learning for transitional change needs all elements to work together to ensure the greatest amount of change. Foote (2015) has added to this approach by stating that,

Transformational learning, narrative learning, and spiritual learning frame adult experiences in new and exciting ways. These types of learning can involve a simple transformation of belief or opinion or a radical transformation involving one's total perspective; learning may occur abruptly or incrementally. Education should liberate students from passive, mindless, and uncritical acceptance of experience and how experience shapes knowledge. Learning to re-evaluate and re-story prior learning experiences can lead adults to make sense of their experience and find a new sense of identity. (p. 84)

Mezirow, Daloz, and Boyd have shared common ideas within their individual theories, the importance of dialogue, reflective discourse, and individual focus. All three researchers have put value on talking about experience as a means of growth and eventual transformation (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 139). Learners must express themselves, anchoring their feelings, thoughts, and experiences while making connections to past knowledge. Another aspect of dialogue is the sharing of experience, receiving constructive feedback, and being able to tell a story to a mentor or teacher who will listen and reflect back to the learner signs of visible transformation. However, when examining these theorists one thing is predominantly clear: transformational learning is represented as an individual occurrence that impacts only the learner (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 131).

Less is known about how transformational learning happens. Some theories such as Habermas (1985/1987) have suggested that transformation happens as a result of *communicative learning* in which the meaning and learning outcomes are negotiated. This differs greatly from the notion of "...*instrumental learning* in which facts and figures are learned..." (as cited in Southern, 2007, p. 331). Likewise Southern (2007) argued that most students are never exposed to education beyond that of instrumental learning because teachers are taught that education is "...about giving information, explaining, and taking an objective stance in relation to students to be able to maintain standards and fairly evaluate performance" (p. 332). Instrumental learning lacks the

reciprocity, collaboration, and personal vulnerability associated with communicative learning, and therefore is not a part of the transformational learning process.

A key concept of transformational learning is experience. Kolb (1984) created Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle to describe how we learn from experience. There are four aspects to this cycle. At the beginning of the cycle is a (1) concrete experience, followed by (2) observations and reflection, (3) formations of abstract concepts and generalizations, and (4) testing implications of concepts in new situations/active experimentation (p. 21). Experiential learning is required for transformational learning to occur; however, participating in experiential learning does not necessarily indicate that transformational learning will occur (Merriam et. al., 2007, p. 144-145). Kolb's experiential learning cycle is an example of a cyclical model of learning. Considering his model with other pedagogical styles reinforces a holistic learning process (Marsick & Maltbia, 2009, p. 162).

Transformational Learning and Community

Since the mid-twentieth century transformational learning within the community has been an area of interest for researchers interested in the sociocultural nature of disenfranchised populations (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 140). Paulo Freire established this aspect of transformation through his literacy work in Brazil (McLaren, 2000, as cited in Merriam et al., 2007, p. 140). Freire's work materialized from the need to address change within communities of poverty, illiteracy, and oppression, a process in which individual transformation is not possible without the transformation of the community as a whole (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 140). Block (2008) referred to this as "...shifting our attention from the problems of community to the possibility of community" (p. 1). Transformation

occurs when there is a change in the lens from which we view the world and when this change is made collectively an entire community is impacted, not just one person. Block (2008) agreed with Freire's theory of sociocultural change; he stated:

[t]o create an alternative future, we need to advance understanding of the nature of communal or collective transformation. We know a good deal about individual transformation, but our understanding about the transformation of human systems, such as our workplaces, neighborhoods, and towns, is primitive at best, and too often naïve in the belief that if enough individuals awaken, and become intentional and compassionate beings, the shift in community will follow. (p. 4)

Community transformation is about profound change that is bigger than the self. The impact of the change shifts the perspective of many people and has a positive effect on the community as a whole.

Highlighted in Freire's (2000) work is the concept of *banking education* versus *problem-posing education* (as cited in Merriam et al., 2007, p. 140). Banking education is teacher-centered in that the teacher makes all the decisions about course content and is the authority and knowledge keeper within the classroom. Within banking education the roll of the student is considered passive, an empty pail to fill, and a silent participant (Freire, 2000, as cited in Merriam et al., 2007, p. 140). This education only serves the educator or the oppressor and does not encourage or foster transformation within the student.

Problem-posing education is learner-centered, yet the teacher and student are able to accompany each other on a learning journey. They are equals, "co-investigators into their common reality, the sociocultural situation in which they live" (Freire, 2000, as cited in Merriam et al., 2007, p. 140). The concept of problem-posing education can be connected to ideas of education in other parts of the world as well. For instance the word

‘education’ is derived from the Latin verb *educere* or (*L educere*) which means to bring out, to elicit, or develop, “from a condition of latent, rudimentary, or merely potential existence” (Ellingson, 2009). In the Anishnaabemowin language the word for education is ‘kendaaswin’ meaning to bring forth knowledge. Within the community it is important that education be viewed as a journey, which learners, facilitators, and educators take together.

The learning community creates

...meaningful relationships, purposeful work, shared leadership, and communicative and cultural competence. The commitment to a new way of being in relationship is the key to working together to create a learning community that supports the vulnerability and risk associated with transformative learning. (Southern, 2007, p. 332)

Transformation Learning and Mentoring

Daloz (1999) wrote about the transformational effects of having a teaching mentor, an educator with undefined goals, who accompanies students on their learning journeys. The teaching mentor accompanies learners in

... exploring previously unknown byways that are revealed to them as they travel, they discover goals never before considered and satisfactions not previously experienced. The mentor of adult learners is not so much interested in fixing the road as in helping the protégée become a competent traveler. (p. xi)

Not all educators are created equal. For a teaching mentor “[w]hat makes the difference is their willingness to care – about what they teach and whom. They know they exist as teachers only because of their students; they know they are part of a transaction, a relationship” (Daloz, 1999, p. 20). Caring is also a part of Southern’s (2007) definition of mentorship for transformative learning as she sees the mentor’s willingness to care as

being in direct correlation to the learner's willingness to be vulnerable and to take risks (p. 330).

Cranton and Wright (2008) have used the term *learning companion* for a person

...who helps the learner to recognize his or her own expertise and experience and draw on that – shifting the emphasis slightly away from being the guide and opener of doors... helping the learner deliver their words to the world and put the learner into the conversation. A learning companion encourages a shared curiosity and engages in an exchange of learning so that the perspectives of both educator and learner are enhanced. (p. 36)

Cranton et al., (2008) highlighted the extensively documented literature about the connection between relationship, mentorship and companionship, and transformational learning.

...Carter (2000) found that transformation occurred primarily through developmental relationships among women in management, and Gilly (2004) reports on the transformative experiences among members of a graduate student peer group in which relationships among were central. Fletcher (2007) describes mentoring as a transformative relationship in which individuals reconstruct possible selves. In Chipping and Morse's (2006) discussion... they describe one of their greatest discoveries as being that mentoring is a two-way learning process – mentoring is a learning experience for the mentor. In Buteau's (2007) study of single mothers returning to school, the importance of support from others emerged as a theme. (p. 36)

The accompaniment of others "...hold[s] the tension that opens the possibility for transformative learning" (Southern, 2007, p. 330).

Mentoring relationships foster learning communities. Southern (2007) stated that mentoring for transformative learning is not only about the relationship between the educator and the student it is also enmeshed with the learning community as a whole "...where we all feel we belong and are held in care" (p. 330). She also stated "...the relationships involved in the learning, whether they are teacher and student, student and student, family or work colleagues, are important to bring into the learning context".

Once the learning community is established learners are able to “...self-organize and share different perspectives through inquiry, story, and dialogue” (p. 332).

Habermas (1981/1987) stated that in order for communicative learning, (read transformational learning) to take place, four components must be in place: mutual compensation, shared values, truth/truthfulness, and trust (as cited in Southern, 2007, p. 332). Southern (2007) also discussed the notion of being in care as it put both the educator who is in a position of authority and the learner into a “space of unknowingness and vulnerability that is necessary for transformative learning” (pp. 334-335). She also states that “...an important condition of transformative learning is creating communities of care that support the discovery of self through meaningful relationships, mutual understanding, and collaborative action” (p. 335).

Transformational Learning and the Post-Secondary Classroom

Ellingson (2007) discussed the learning environment as a process of creating empowering surroundings using interactional environments. He defined interactional environment as the people, situations, and locations that we choose to interact with on a regular basis (p. 143). The post-secondary classroom is an example of an interactional environment where educators have the ability to meaningfully set-up the space so that learners can build relationships with the educator and other students (people), the course content (situation), and the classroom space (location).

Mackeracher (2004) discussed the physical environment, the cultural environment, the power environment, the knowledge environment, and the ‘real-life’ environment in the context of the learning space, highlighting that much of the learning environment is created from invisible contexts (pp. 187-205).

Transformational learning requires a space where “...exploration and discovery” can happen (Cranton et al., 2008, p.38). This space must also provide students with feelings of tension that are created by the experience of questioning preconceived reality, learning new perspectives, and adopting new ways of thinking and being (Southern, 2007, p. 331). If students are to trust their learning process and allow themselves the opportunity to be transformed through their learning experience, the learning environment must be a safe space where vulnerability is embraced and encouraged.

Transformational Learning and Culture

Taylor (2000) questioned how difference, sociocultural context, background factors, and historical and geographical influences impact transformational learning (p.309). One criticism of Mezirow’s original research on the transformational learning experiences of women, who returned to school, was that their experiences were not considered “apart from their historical and sociocultural context (Clark & Wilson, 1991, p. 78, as cited in Taylor, 2000, p. 309). Using the foundational work of Bailey (1996), Hunter (1980), Pierce (1986), Van Nostrand (1992), Coffman (1989), Vogelsang, (1993), and Turner (1986), Taylor (2000) has highlighted the significant relationship between personal and sociocultural factors and transformational learning, where indicators of potential transformation include the “readiness for change, the role of experience, prior stressful life events, and a predisposition for transformative experience” (p. 309). Another sociocultural factor is the education level of the participant as transformational learning experiences are most likely to happen among individuals who are seeking forms of higher learning (Merriam, 2004; Mezirow, 2004; as cited in Cranton et. al., 2008, p. 33).

Tisdell (2003) discussed the role of culture in transformational learning in the context of whole-person learning, which includes “personal, political, historical, and sacred learning” where the educator’s role is to assist learners in revising their personal stories as new meaning is created from the knowledge gained within the course (as cited in Merriam et al., 2007, p. 142). Influenced by the work of Freire and Macedo (1995), she stated that educators need to intentionally set up the learning environment if we want to create the best opportunity for students to experience transformational learning connected with their spirituality and cultural-backgrounds (Tisdell, 2003, p. 190).

There is a lack of research focusing on diverse perspective of transformational learning. Little is understood about how a participant’s culture, race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation impacts how they experience transformative learning (Taylor, 2000, p. 310).

Transformational Learning and the Medicine Wheel

While many qualitative studies have been conducted to gain further insight into the experience of transformational learning (Taylor, 2000, p. 316), it has not yet been explored through the experience of Indigenous women, nor has there been consideration of an Indigenous epistemology. The Medicine Wheel³ provides a culturally based model in which the experience of Indigenous learners can be shared and understood as an interconnected and interrelated process (Bell, 2014). Kemppainen, Kopera-Frye, and Woodard (2008) explained that,

³ The term ‘Medicine Wheel’ was established when stone constructions in the shape of wheels were found on Medicine Wheel/Medicine Mountain National Historic Landmark (formerly known as the Bighorn Medicine Wheel). It is located in the Bighorn National Forest, Wyoming, U.S.A.

For the Anishinaabek, the four quadrants represent many different ideas or concepts and their relationships to each other, the universe, and the individual. Examples include the four directions (east, south, west, and north), four seasons (spring, summer, fall, and winter), four colors (yellow, red, black, and white), four sacred medicines (tobacco, cedar, sage, and sweet grass), four sacred animals (i.e., eagle, deer, buffalo, bear), four stages of life, (child, adolescent, adult, and elder), and four directions of human growth (mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual). (p. 81)

There is a need in education for holistic learning that includes not only the physical and mental, but also the emotional and the spiritual. Research about Indigenous ways of learning and knowing have pointed out that,

According to many Indigenous teachings, the Creator has given each learner gifts to fulfill a unique purpose. Salteaux Elder Danny Musqua stated that connecting to the Creator's gifts to achieve purpose requires 'not only the use of the mind, but also the use of the heart, body, and spirit of the individual'. (Knight, 2007, p. 9, as cited in Anuik & Gillies, 2012, p. 65)

In the traditional western classroom-setting students arrive conditioned to engage with their mind only and are not provided with an opportunity to engage emotionally or spiritually, as these elements are often left out of the pedagogy of the course. Providing a holistic framework allows students to engage in multiple ways with the learning process (Anuik & Gillies, 2012, p.74). Algonquin scholar, Lynn Gehl (2012) wrote about the Anishinaabe concept of the Debwewin Journey, "a personal and wholistic truth that is rooted in one's heart" (p. 55). In her work she shares a conversation she had with Anishinaabe Elder and traditional knowledge holder Doug Williams, who said, "the longest journey... is the one between your heart and your head" (p. 55).

The cyclical nature of the Medicine Wheel addresses the issue of power dynamics that are created within the learning environment. Graveline (1998) referred to these dynamics as "... 'power over' strategies in the classroom" (p.9). Indigenous people often feel that they do not belong in the western educational system. Graveline (1998) wrote "I

wish to actively encourage critical engagement in an analysis of the Eurocentric foundations of Western educational models and to offer the possibility of an alternative paradigm” (p. 10). An example of an alternative paradigm is the Medicine Wheel model. Using this model allows research to be conducted within a holistic framework where physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual elements can be considered. Keeling (2004) discussed the historical understanding of teaching and learning as being about the “...information transfer from faculty to student without a great deal of thought given to meaning, pertinence, or application of the information in the context of the student’s life” (p.9). Information transfer alone denies students the opportunity to develop a relationship with the faculty member, their peers, the knowledge, and with themselves. We know from the work of Taylor (2000) that transformational learning is about relationships and the trust, openness, and confidence that can be fostered within the teacher-student relationship. This relationship is developed and explored through emotions and feelings that come from exploring new learning in a safe and supportive environment. This relationship is needed for the student to participate in critically reflecting on their learning experience. What is still being explored is how educators foster an environment with optimal conditions for transformational learning to be able to take place (p. 308). Transformational learning occurs as a result of experiences that involve “us physically, emotionally, sensually, mentally, and perhaps spiritually (Fenwick, 2003, as cited in Merriam et. al., 2007, p.144).

Twyla, a Cree medicine woman stated that, “Medicine ways will give our people a feeling of belonging again. They will come together in a circle, caring for each other, helping each other” (Steiger, 1984 as cited in Graveline, 1998, p. 13). The Medicine

Wheel model allows for relationship to be at the center of the learning process in a way that highlights the importance of an interconnected approach to creating a space that considers the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual environment of the learning space (Figure 1). These fundamental elements are needed in order to honour what the Group for Collaborative Inquiry (1994) have called learning-in-relationships and whole person learning (as cited in Taylor, 2000, p. 308).

Conclusion

Transformational learning has been studied for decades in terms of its presence among adult learners. Transformational learning is less understood among Indigenous learners and has not been explored using an Indigenous epistemology.

The literature review consists of three main areas. The first area explored relevant research related to transformational learning. This area also discussed individual transformation and community transformation. The second area examined research related to the classroom environment. This area focused on the physical environment, the mental environment, the emotional environment, and the spiritual environment of the classroom. The third area explored the use of the Medicine Wheel as an Indigenous epistemology in relation to transformational learning.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

The goal of the study was to answer the question: How can post-secondary educators create transformational learning environments for Indigenous students? Qualitative research methods were used in this case study including an interview survey and qualitative interviews with participants. Duerr et al. (2003) used three methods of data collection, questionnaires with multiple choice and open-ended questions; qualitative interviews in person or over the telephone, and brief follow up interviews with selected participants. This study utilized a case study and a non-probability sampling method.

This chapter focuses on three main areas: the description of and rationale for the research design; the descriptions of sampling procedures and participants; and the discussion of methodological issues. Together these areas explain the research process used in this study. Also provided in this chapter are the participant selection criteria. This research was accomplished in four phases:

Phase I	Pre-test of interview survey and qualitative interview
Phase II	Content Analysis, ethical implications, and the search for participants
Phase III	Setup of interview survey and qualitative interview
Phase IV	Analysis of interview survey and qualitative interview transcripts

Description of and Rationale for the Research Design

The operational definition of transformational learning that has been utilized for this study comes from Duerr et al. (2003) “and begins with the assumption that the transformation of perspective is not a theoretical one but one that is lived” (p.179). Duerr

et al. (2003) was “interested in ways that transformative learning can move beyond individuation to further the ethical and spiritual development of the learner” (p. 180). This included “... reflective learning, experiential and participatory pedagogy, intuitive and imaginative processes, and contemplative practices” (Duerr et al. 2003, p. 180).

This study was conducted using the stories and experiences of current and former Indigenous students who participated in the INDG 3040H course. This course was chosen because of the mentoring relationship that existed between the faculty member who designed the course and the researcher. Both were interested in the transformational learning experiences of students and both had questions, not unlike the questions asked during the interview that could help educators to be intentional about designing courses with transformative experiences as a part of their learning outcomes.

Current and former students of Indigenous decent were chosen for this study because while the faculty member was of Scottish Presbyterian heritage, the researcher is Indigenous. It is the intention of the researcher for the findings of this study to benefit the Indigenous community and the education of Indigenous students who choose to pursue a post-secondary education.

Two models were used in the creation of this study (see figure 1 and figure 2). Both are cyclical and have been created based on a medicine wheel or medicine circle to root this study in an Indigenous epistemology, or way of viewing the learning experience (Bazylak, 2002, p.136).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, figure 1 represents the cyclical process involved in creating the post-secondary classroom-learning environment. The four environments

(physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual) flow out from relationship, which is situated at the core of this model.

Ellingson's Model of Transformative Pedagogy (Figure 2) was used in the creation of the INDG 3040H course design and pedagogy. It is used in this study as a visual representation for the way the course was taught. It depicted what was valued in the course, as well as illustrated a critical pathway toward course completion, beginning with volition at the center and moving outward to course content and the flow of the lectures.

Phase I

Creation of Interview Survey and Qualitative Interview

Phase I began with the creation of the interview survey and the qualitative interview. The interview survey and the qualitative interview were developed and designed for this study specifically. Wilson (2008) wrote about Indigenous ways of gathering information as methods that are driven by community (p. 110). Therefore it was important for the researcher to involve the key stakeholders in the development process to ensure the questions and the formats were relevant to the study. Key stakeholders include members of the Indigenous student community at Trent University, the faculty member who developed and taught INDG 3040H, and other faculty members and staff of the Indigenous Studies Department and the First Peoples House of Learning.

Creswell (2008) wrote that during the process of qualitative data collection, such as interviews it is common for the researcher to become a part of the environment that is being studied (p. 213). Therefore to fully understand the structure of the course the researcher surveyed the course for one semester from January 2011 through April 2011.

Attending the course allowed the researcher to meet current students and observe how the course was being taught. This provided insight into key themes of the course and experiential knowledge of the course pedagogy. Key themes of the course included the elements found in the four quadrants of the Anishinabek Medicine Wheel: The mental, the physical, the emotional, and the spiritual. Therefore the interview questions were created based on the Anishinabek Medicine Wheel and four aspects of the learning environment: The physical learning environment, the mental learning environment, the emotional learning environment, and the spiritual learning environment. Utilizing the Medicine Wheel to better understand education is not uncommon. Norris (2011) used the Medicine Wheel as an inclusive model of assessment in his arts-based program as a way of integrating Western and Indigenous epistemologies, creating a framework that articulates how concepts interrelate (p.1).

The interview survey and qualitative interview for this study were further developed with the support of Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty members. Also included in this process were Indigenous student services professionals. Including the perspectives of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, who enriched the quality of the questions and the format of the qualitative interview.

Eight qualitative interviews were conducted between October 19, 2011 and March 1, 2012. The interviews consisted of 11 questions, 10 of which were open-ended questions (Creswell, 2008, p, 225), and an interview survey with an additional 10 questions to provide quantitative data to add both support and clarity to the qualitative interview responses from participants (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2008, p. 205).

Phase II

Content Analysis, Ethical Implications, and the Search for Research Participants

The course instructor sent out an email to all students and former students who had taken the course since 2007 using previous class email lists. The email clearly introduced the researcher and provided the students with contact information so interested participants were able to contact the researcher for additional information. The researcher also emailed students who were known to her. In many cases several emails were exchanged between the researcher and interested participants. This process strengthened the relationship and trust, as well as created a sense of community partnership between the researcher and the student or former student. See Appendix A - Email to Participants.

The researcher was also available in person Monday to Friday every week during the time the study was being conducted. As an employee within the First Peoples House of Learning at Trent University where the study was being conducted the researcher had previously established relationships with students. This gave potential participants the opportunity to meet with the researcher and talk about the study before completing the official interview survey and qualitative interview. This process was essential to the creation of partnership between the researcher and student or former student.

As an employee of Trent University, working within the First Peoples House of Learning as an Aboriginal Counsellor and also working as a Teaching Assistant within a first year course in the Indigenous Studies Department, the researcher worked in close proximity to potential participants, and due to this dynamic ethical implications and risks were considered. An actual risk to participants was minimal. However participants may have perceived risks within this study because it was being conducted within an

institution (Trent University), and within a course (Indigenous Studies 3040H) that had power over them. Students could feel obligated to participate in the study believing that their participation or lack of participation may in some way impact their outcome in the course. Due to the researcher's previous and continued involvement with students at Trent University, some students could have felt pressured to participate in the study to please the researcher. Students may have been concerned that their participation or lack of participation in the study would have an impact on the student/staff relationship. Students may have also worried about the level of confidentiality that was maintained regarding their involvement in the study. To address these risks and concerns the researcher arranged the following:

- The study focused on a course in which the researcher had never had any involvement. The researcher had absolutely no power within the course.
- A referral system with the Director of the First Peoples House of Learning was created for students in need of support services relating to the staff role of the researcher. Participants were notified in writing with the consent form (see attached) that other staff members were available to meet with them regarding academic counselling and/or academic skills should they have required support but were uncomfortable seeking support from the researcher due to the dual role within this study.
- Students were notified that their participation in this study was strictly confidential. In the event that a participant was not comfortable meeting in the researcher's office the researcher arranged to book a meeting area somewhere else on campus. If the participant did not want to meet on the Trent campus the researcher booked a private meeting space off campus.
- Participant names were coded and unidentifiable. No student names would appear in the remaining research or within the final document.
- All transcriptions and student data was locked in a filing cabinet within the researcher's office.
- Interviews were recorded using a digital recorder. These recordings were transcribed using an outside agency that signed the confidentiality form (see attached). Participants were not identifiable as their names were coded with a

number (ex. Participant 1). Only the researcher knows the true identity of the participants.

Participants were also made aware of the possible benefits of contributing to this study, with the disclaimer that there may also be no direct benefits for their involvement and contribution. It is possible that participants could learn about transformational learning. They may learn that they have had a transformational learning experience and as a result they may learn where to look for other transformational learning experiences. By participating in this study they will have an opportunity to reflect on their learning and perhaps learn something about themselves.

The intention of this study is to indicate that transformational learning has occurred among student who took the INDG 3040H course. This study has been designed to indicate how transformational learning occurred through the environmental elements present in the course classroom. This study could be of benefit to educators and students if they are able to create classrooms for transformational learning using the environmental elements that are describes in this study. However it must be noted that due to the researchers heavy involvement in the course and in the academic life of the participants involved, the findings of this study may not be relevant to any other situation.

The researcher sent out a secondary email to all interested participants. The email contained a letter of information that described in detail the role and responsibilities of the participant as well as the role and responsibilities of the researcher (See Appendix B - Letter of Information). Also included in this email were copies of the consent form and of the interviewee compensation form (See Appendix C - Consent Form and Appendix D - Interviewee Compensation Form).

The letter of information provided the participants with more information about the study. They were further informed about the topic of the study and were made aware of the study process including what would be required of them as well as informing them about their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

The consent form needed to be read and signed by the participant. This form ensured that participants had read the letter of information about the study. It provided the participants with an opportunity to ensure they had been able to ask questions about this study and receive meaningful answers to all of their questions. The consent form was another opportunity for participants to ensure that they understood what the study is about and what their role is in the study. If a participant was still unsure about the study or their role in it they could ask additional questions. Most importantly the consent form provided participants with a clear message: Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason, and that doing so would not affect them negatively at the time of the study or at any future time.

All participants who had indicated an interest in participating in the study were eligible for a \$25.00 gift card of their choice from four different establishments. As partners in the study it was important that participants understood that the researcher valued their time and their experience. Compensation was given to participants even if they chose to withdraw from the study.

Students and former students who were interested in participating in the study after having received all information were then set up with a face-to-face meeting time. This meeting between the participant and the researcher would serve as both a time and place for the interview survey and the qualitative interview to be completed.

Due to issues of health and distance three of the interviews were conducted over the phone. Phone interviews provided the participants with an alternative method of participating in the study (Creswell, 2008, p. 227).

Phase III

Setup of Interview Survey and Qualitative Interview

The interviews began with the researcher presenting the participants with tobacco through a Tobacco Ceremony. Wilson and Restoule (2010) wrote about how tobacco is to be presented to participants as a form of exchange, reciprocity, “acknowledgement, and gratitude for the knowledge that is shared (p. 34)”. When a participant accepts the tobacco, it is also an indication of consent, and refusal to accept the tobacco is an indication that the participant does not consent (Struthers & Hodge, 2004, as cited in Wilson & Restoule, 2010, p. 34).

This study focused on two methods of obtaining information from participants. The first method was the interview survey, which focused on obtaining demographic information about the participants as well as information related to the participant’s student experience. The interview survey was created using open-ended questions and multiple-choice questions. The participant completed the interview survey during the same meeting time as the qualitative interview. The interview survey was completed before the qualitative interview began. This allowed participants to ask questions if clarity was needed (See Appendix E – Interview Survey).

The second method was the qualitative interview that focused on the participant’s experience within the course and their perceptions and understandings of transformational learning as it related to the study. This allowed the participants to begin

thinking about who they are, where they come from, the university courses that they have completed, their past or upcoming graduation, and the course that was a part of the study.

The qualitative interview aimed to address the following overarching research questions:

1. What attributes are common to the transformational learning environment?
2. In what learning environments can transformational learning occur?
3. What elements are common in the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual environments that support transformational learning?
4. How can transformational learning experiences be replicated in the sense of providing the seminal factors, attributes, and elements?
5. How is transformational learning contingent on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual learning space?
6. What factors and to what degree do these factors promote change?
7. How can post-secondary educators connect transformational learning opportunities with the learning environment?
8. What are the catalysts (attributes, elements, and factors)?

While these were the core questions for the purpose of this study the questions that were posed to participants through the qualitative interview were different. The questions asked were designed to bring about answers or further discussion of the core research questions. Asking the core research questions directly could have disabled participants from being able to speak about their experiences using personal narrative and reflection that was needed in order to fully understand the experience of the participant (See Appendix F – Qualitative Interview).

The qualitative interview was recorded using a Sony Digital IC Recorder. Participants were aware that the interview would be recorded and transcribed. Participants were also made aware that third party research assistants would transcribe their recorded interviews. Three research assistants were hired to transcribe the interviews. To uphold confidentiality the research assistants were not a part of the university community. They read and signed the Research Assistant Confidentiality Agreement (See Appendix G – Research Assistant Confidentiality Agreement) and were never provided with any identifiable participant information. The research assistants were not given access to the participant interview surveys.

The researcher emailed participants a copy of their interview transcripts. This gave participants an opportunity to review their transcripts and approve them before they were used in the study. This also gave participants another opportunity to withdraw from the study.

Phase IV

Analysis of Interview Survey and Qualitative Interview Transcripts Results

The interview survey and qualitative interview were designed to gather information and experiences about transformational learning environments from both current and former Indigenous students who had taken the INDG 3040H course.

Based on the results of the interview survey, qualitative interview, and information gathered from the literature that was reviewed in Chapter 2, patterns have been identified which shed light on the elements of the post-secondary transformational learning environment as it relates to Indigenous students.

Within this study all participants are Indigenous and will be referred to as participants for the remainder of the study.

Developing the Interview Survey Questions

The interview survey was developed to obtain demographic information and to provide brief insight related to the participant's student experience (Creswell, 2008, p. 397). The interview survey focused on gaining basic information about the participants and included the following questions:

Demographic:

1. What is your sex?
2. In what year were you born?
3. Are you an Aboriginal⁴, Inuit, or Métis person?⁵
4. Where is your home community?

Student Experience:

5. What year of study are you currently in? Have you graduated?
6. What are you majoring in? What did you major in?
7. How did you hear about the course?
8. How many full course equivalents had you taken before taking the course?
9. In what year and semester did you participate in the course?
10. Throughout the course how many classes did you attend?

These questions were asked as a way to learn more about the participants and to get a sense of who was agreeing to participate in the study. As Canada's Indigenous people are

⁴ The term "Aboriginal" was used in the interview survey because it was the term most commonly used to identify Indigenous students at Trent University at the time the interview survey was created.

⁵ Participant answers were based on personal self-identification. At no time were participants asked to provide government issued status cards or proof of community membership.

not a homogenous group it was important to get a sense of which Nations were being represented in the study.

Developing the Qualitative Interview Questions

The following research questions allowed for participants to consider their learning experience within the course from a holistic perspective as provided through use of the Medicine Wheel and the four directions of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual:

1. Describe the physical environment(s) of the course? How did they impact your learning? Physical environment refers to the place(s) and space(s) in which the course is taught. Physical environment includes the way in which the classroom is structured, the seating arrangements, the aesthetics, the furniture, the artwork, the lighting, the air quality and/or any other physical aspect of the environment.
2. Describe the mental environment(s) of the course? How did they impact your learning? Mental environment refers to a person's ability to build knowledge through intellectual stimulation with the course content.
3. Describe the emotional environment(s) of the course? How did they impact your learning? Emotional environment refers to a person's ability to express, listen to, and consider feelings and thoughts in a place and/or space that is receptive in a respectful way.
4. Describe the spiritual environment(s) of the course? How did they impact your learning? Spiritual environment refers to personal ways of knowing and being within a specific context. Within the context of the course the spiritual environment refers to a person's ability to connect with, and create meaning with

course materials, dialogues, ideas, assignments, teachings, and/or core concepts.

5. Tell me a story which best represents your experience in the course.
6. How were you impacted by what was taught in the course?
7. How were you impacted by the way the course was taught?
8. In what ways was your learning affected by the professor's engagement in the course?
9. How would you contrast transformational learning with 'regular'⁶ learning?
10. How would you describe the experience of transformational learning?
11. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Open-ended questions were used as part of the interview to allow participants to respond to the questions in the most honest, accurate, and appropriate way (Creswell, 2008, p. 398). Participants were able to respond to questions as they wished, revealing only what they were comfortable speaking about and related to their experiences.

Descriptions of Sampling Procedures and Participants

The involvement of Indigenous students and former Indigenous students in this study was crucial. Students and former students of Indigenous decent who took the INDG 3040H course at Trent University between 2007 and 2011 were asked to participate in this study. This was done using three sampling methods: 1) non-probability sampling, which facilitated a subgroup of current and former Indigenous students from within the overall population of the course to be focused upon (Cohen et al., 2008, p. 113); 2) purposeful sampling, where each selected participant was chosen based on their

⁶ 'Regular' learning refers to rote and didactic forms of learning. The term 'regular' learning was used to allow participants a wide range for responding.

knowledge and experience as an Indigenous student (Creswell, 2008, p. 214); and 3) snowball sampling, which enabled other potential participants to be identified and located based on the input of other participants (Cohen et al., 2008, p. 116).

Discussion of Methodological Issues

Ethics

Honouring the rights of participants was above all the most important aspect of this study (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, as cited in Pidgeon, 2001, p. 77). Ensuring participants were educated about the study took place through the process of informed consent. Informed consent included the disclosure of information, comprehension, competency to consent, and volunteerism of consent (Research text). Participants were also made aware of the study purpose, the research methods, the researcher accountability, their rights as participants, how the study will be used, expected benefits of the study, potential risks of the study, the duration of the study, declaring conflicts of interest, the gathering of data, the storage of data, and the use of data, the reporting of the results, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time during the process. These ethical concerns were addressed in the letter of information that was given to all participants at the beginning of their involvement and again on the consent form that was signed before completing the interview survey and the qualitative interview.

Intentions

The study was not designed to be a definitive representation of all Indigenous peoples. This study focused on the transformational experiences of Indigenous students and former Indigenous students within a third year university course and does not

represent the vast diversity of all First Nations in Canada. The intension of this study was to give a voice to Indigenous students, to gain knowledge and insight into how transformational learning opportunities for Indigenous students can be created through the mental environment, physical environment, emotional environment, and spiritual environment of the post-secondary classroom.

This thesis report is reflective of the participant's stories and learning journeys. The study was conducted using a qualitative research process that allowed for participants to express their experiences, knowledge, and recommendations. These ideas have been clearly expressed within the results of the study.

Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

The research questions that served to focus this study included: What attributes are common to the transformational learning environment? In what learning environments can transformational learning occur? What elements are common in the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual environments, which support transformational learning? How can transformational learning experiences be replicated in the sense of providing the seminal factors, attributes, and elements? How is transformational learning contingent on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual learning space? What factors and to what degree do these factors promote change? How can post-secondary educators connect transformational learning opportunities with the learning environment? What are the catalysts (attributes, elements, and factors)? Chapter Four discusses the results of the findings as well as the scope and limitations of the study.

The study results are based on the interview surveys and the qualitative interviews of eight Indigenous women who completed the INDG 3040H course.

Data Analysis

While an interview survey (See Appendix E) was used to collect data related to the demographics of the participants, the majority of data was collected during a qualitative interview (See Appendix F).

The researcher focused on reoccurring themes and concepts from the data collected in the qualitative interviews (See Appendix F). Using the collected data the researcher was able to understand the participant's experience and create guidelines for

created a transformational learning environment. The researcher based the occurrence of a transformational learning experience on the participant's feelings and thoughts. Some demographic data collected from the participants was compared, such as sex/gender and identity. The participants were given an opportunity to review their interview transcripts and add additional information or omit any information they did not want analyzed or shared.

Demographics of the Study

Demographic information about the participants was collected using an interview survey (See Appendix E). The interview survey consisted of 10 questions.

While all Indigenous students who took the course were invited to participate in the study, eight responded. All eight Indigenous participants were women. While these women are representations of several First Nations groups, their experiences alone cannot speak for all Indigenous people. As previously stated, Canada's Indigenous people are not a homogenous group, so it is important to note that every Nation could not be represented in this study.

All participants were female ranging from 19 years of age to 53 years of age. This study may have attracted female participants because of the higher percentage of female students enrolled at Trent and enrolled in Social Science programs. According to the Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis at Trent University and the Common University Data of Ontario (CUDO) for 2011⁷, about 65% of all Trent students were female. This percentage rises to 69% when considering female students enrolled in the

⁷ Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis; Common University Data of Ontario, Trent University, 2011 https://www.trentu.ca/oirsp/cudo_2011.php

Social Sciences programs, but drops significantly in the business commerce program to 37%. Seven of the participants were enrolled in a Social Sciences program. One participant was enrolled in the Business Commerce program only.

Results of the Interview Survey

Participant 003 was female, 26 years of age, identified as Anishnaabe-Ojibway and First Nations, was in the third year of a Master's Program (at time of interview), was enrolled in the INDG 3040H course during the 2008 fall term, had completed 11-15 full course equivalents, and had attended 10-12 of the INDG 3040H classes. Participant 004 was female, 53 years of age, identified as Métis/Mohawk/Blackfoot, was in the first year of a master's degree program (at time of interview), was enrolled in the INDG 3040H course during the 2008 winter term, had completed 16-20 full course equivalents, and had attended 10-12 of the INDG 3040H classes. Participant 005 was female, 38 years of age, identified as Mohawk and First Nations, had completed a bachelor's degree program (at time of interview), was enrolled in the INDG 3040H course during the 2008 fall term, had completed 11-15 full course equivalents, and had attended 10-12 of the INDG 3040H classes. Participant 006 was female, 23 years of age, Inuit, was in the first year of a Master's degree program (at time of interview), was enrolled in the INDG 3040H course during the 2010 winter term, had completed 6-10 full course equivalents, and had attended 10-12 of the INDG 3040H classes. Participant 007 was female, 26 years of age, identified as Ojibway/Cree and First Nations, had completed a bachelor's degree program (at time of interview), was enrolled in the INDG 3040H course during the 2008 fall term, had completed 16-20 full course equivalents, and had attended 10-12 of the INDG 3040H classes. Participant 008 was female, 30 years of age, identified as Anishnaabe-Ojibway

and First Nations, was in the third year of a bachelor's degree program (at time of interview), was enrolled in the INDG 3040H course during the 2011 winter term, had completed 11-15 full course equivalents, and had attended 7-9 of the INDG 3040H classes. Participant 009 was female, 19 years of age, identified as Mohawk and First Nations, was in the second year of a bachelor's degree program (at time of interview), was enrolled in the INDG 3040H course during the 2011 fall term, had completed 1-5 full course equivalents, and had attended 10-12 of the INDG 3040H classes. Participant 010 was female, 50 years of age, identified as Anishnaabe/English and First Nations, was in the fourth year of a bachelor's degree program (at time of interview), was enrolled in the INDG 3040H course during the 2011 winter term, had completed 1-5 full course equivalents, and had attended 10-12 of the INDG 3040H classes.

Demographic comparisons could not be completed due to the wide range of age groups, diverse identities, varied levels of study at time of interview, year/term enrolled, and number of full course equivalents completed (See Table 1). The researcher instead, focused on the participant's responses to the interview questions.

Table 1: Results of the Interview Survey⁸

Participants	Sex/Gender	Age	Identity (First Nation, Inuit, Métis)	Level of study at time of interview	Year/term enrolled	Full course equivalents completed	Classes attended (12 total)
003	Female	26	Anishnaabe-Ojibway, First Nation	3 rd year, Master's program	2008, Fall	11-15	10-12
004	Female	53	Métis/ Mohawk/ Blackfoot	1 st year, Master's program	2008, Winter	16-20	10-12
005	Female	38	Mohawk, First Nation	Bachelor's degree	2008, Fall	11-15	10-12
006	Female	23	Inuit	1 st year Master's program	2010, Winter	6-10	10-12
007	Female	26	Ojibway/Cree, First Nation	Bachelor's degree	2008, Fall	16-20	10-12
008	Female	30	Anishinaabe-Ojibway, First Nation	3 rd year, Bachelor's program	2011, Winter	11-15	7-9
009	Female	19	Mohawk, First Nation	2 nd year, Bachelor's program	2011, Fall	1-5	10-12
010	Female	50	Anishinaabe/ English, First Nation	4 th year, Bachelor's program	2010, Winter	1-5	10-12

Qualitative Interviews

The interviews provided details about the experiences of the participants in the INDG 3040H course. The interview consisted of 11 questions, and each interview lasted 45 minutes to one hour. The interview was recorded and transcribed to assist the researcher in the data analysis.

The interviews began with the researcher presenting the participants with tobacco though a Tobacco Ceremony before each interview. All eight participants accepted the

⁸ Specific First Nations, territories, home communities and specific program names and majors related to education level have been excluded to protect the identity of the participants.

tobacco indicating their consent in proceeding with the interview⁹. The tobacco was also given to acknowledge the participant for sharing their knowledge.

Findings of Interview Question 1

The interview began with the researcher giving a hard copy of the interview questions to the participants, providing them with a chance to read over the questions before the digital recorder was started. The researcher pointed out that some questions might have several parts to them and include a brief definition and/or context to aid participants in providing meaningful responses.

The first interview question was prefaced with the

Physical environment refers to the place(s) and space(s) in which the course is taught. Physical environment includes the way in which the classroom is structured, the seating arrangements, the aesthetics, the furniture, the artwork, the lighting, the air quality and/or any other physical aspect of the environment.

The first interview question was “Describe the physical environment(s) of the course?” followed by “How did they impact your learning”? Eight participants (100%) talked about sitting in a circle as part of the physical environment of the classroom. Participants made comments such as “...we could arrange the seating so it was more like a circle, which is the best environment, I think for learning” (Participant 010) and some participants commented on where the professor sat during class “...professor Ellingson would sit wherever he wanted in the circle, which is kind of interesting if you think about it. Even in a circle, if the professor sits in a particular direction all the time, he’s still in the ‘teacher chair’. But professor Ellingson, he would sit wherever...” (Participant 008).

⁹ The acceptance of tobacco indicates consent from the participant at the time of the exchange. However, the participant is free to revoke consent at any time during the research process, even when the tobacco has been accepted.

Two students made a connection between the power distribution that is created by sitting in a circle in the classroom by saying “...and it kind of also redistributed power as well in the classroom...” (Participant 003) and “[b]efore we could start class, we would rearrange everything so that we ended up in a circular format, as opposed to with a person at the front of the room and we’re sitting there watching the person. It was when we made it into the circular format, nobody was lead hand, everyone was equal” (Participant 004). For some of the participants it was noteworthy that they were able to see the faces of their fellow classmates. The participants said “...we sat in a circle, and we sat on comfortable chairs without desks, and we looked at each other, which you don’t normally do” (Participant 009) and “[e]very class we came in and rearranged the class into a circle. It was a good practice and we were able to look at each other.” (Participant 006). Another participant commented “... we created this environment where we were facing each other and so it kind of opened up the space and we made nametags that we had every week for the whole course. Every class, we put a nametag... it’s kind of like we got to know each other’s names and we got to face each other and it sort of transformed the way we used space in the classroom...” (Participant 003). The creation of community between the students and the professor was also viewed as a benefit. One participant commented “[t]he facilitator rearranged the seating so that we were all sitting in a circle. This provided a sense of community” (Participant 007). One participant explained: “We set the room up in a circle which helped to make the space better. Inside the circle it was cozy and warm. Outside the circle it was cold and damp” (Participant 005).

Five participants (62.5%) characterized the physical classroom environment as an unpleasant learning space. Depending on the semester or year in which a student took the

course, the room that the classes were held in changed. When the course was offered in a classroom within the DNA Building or Otonabee College students described the environment of the classroom as “... kind of cold and sterile... quite cold, like quite a bit colder even than the rest of the general campus...” (Participant 003) and “... the classroom was yuck! We were over capacity for seating. The room was very stark, very cement, no colour, no windows” (Participant 004). Other comments included “[t]he DNA building is very cold, cloudy, and gray. The type of talking, discussion, and learning that took place in this class did not fit the space” (Participant 005) and “[t]he classroom was in Otonabee College in one of the old classrooms. It was a dark space. Not the best for learning. This space was not suited to the type of learning that was happening in the course” (Participant 007). Another participant commented on the DNA building classrooms by saying “It wasn’t the ideal room, but it could have been worse, and it didn’t affect our learning” (Participant 010).

Four participants (50%) commented on the physical learning environment as an ideal learning space. After talking about attending class in Otonabee College one student said “[a] better space would have been the circle room in the Enweying building” (Participant 007). The participants refer to this space using many different names: Gathering Space, Gathering Place, and the Circle Room. It has been characterized as a “... copper-roofed building offset from the Enweying building. It has hardwood floors, windows, it’s small and intimate” (Participant 008). This same participant stated that “... the building has windows but it’s not distracting. Sometimes when you have windows you’re like ‘oh, I’m watching people and disengaged’ but the windows in the Benedict space, I’ve never really found them distracting. One day we had snow, we had rain, and it

was nice to still be connected to what the earth was doing while we were studying” (Participant 008). Another aspect of the room which this participant thought was important was the “... dream catcher that hangs over the top, in the center of the circle” (Participant 008). Another participant highlighted the physical space by mentioning “...there’s Native artwork all around, and natural lighting and fluorescent lights” (Participant 009). One participant had the experience of attending the last class of the 3040H course in “... the Gathering Space which was great because it is a space that is connected with positive experiences and good energy” (Participant 006).

Findings of Interview Question 2

The second interview question was prefaced with the “Mental environment refers to a person’s ability to build knowledge through intellectual stimulation with the course content”. Participants were then asked, “Describe the mental environment(s) of the course? How did they impact your learning? Six participants (75%) described the mental environment as open. This open environment helped students to “...get to know the people in [the] class” (Participant 009). Within the open environment getting to know each other facilitated sharing in the course. “... [E]verybody brainstorms..., everybody says what they think, and everybody had something to say... because [the course] was so much more open, people were really participating on so many levels” (Participant 003). This participant explains the levels of student participation as a “... level of personal experience... a level of visions... and dreams... dealing in possibilities.... [The Professor] tries to open up possibilities; he opens up a whole realm through the exercises he uses” (Participant 003). Another participant characterized the openness of the environment when saying “[t]here was no right or wrong, there was no, ok, you can do it or you can’t

do it. It was just who you are” (Participant 004). The open environment helped students to open up themselves. “In connection to my learning it helped me to open up. Everyone around me was very open so it made it easier for me to open myself up” (Participant 006). Part of creating an open environment is also ensuring a safe environment. “It was an open and safe environment.... It impacted my learning greatly because I was able to do some self-exploration in a safe environment” (Participant 007). One participant attributed her ability to learn to the openness of the course. “The openness between all of us, [the professor] had a way of making everybody feel so comfortable that nobody was afraid to say what they were thinking or anything. Just the combination of those things helped [me] to learn, and made [me] want to learn more” (Participant 010).

Four participants (50%) described the mental environment as having multiple being connected to the design of the course in terms of offering multiple teaching styles. One participant spoke about how the course was designed as a workshop instead of a traditional academic lecture. She said “... [the Professor] would have these really well developed workshops that were very clearly and carefully laid out and built on top of each other.... Each step of what he would present to us opened up an entire space of engagement...” (Participant 003). This student then qualified the mental environment of the course as one which “...allowed you to work with ideas... [that] allowed [you] to brainstorm” (Participant 003). Another participant, using a metaphor, explained that during this course “... you were going on a walk together, not a sprint.... From beginning to end you were on a journey, and it was interesting” (Participant 008). The design of the course was intended to “...encourage participation and... focus on the students” (Participant 007). Participant 007 also explains that the facilitator “...had a real gift for

pulling information out of students and getting more out of students beyond what they would have normally been able to articulate”. Also, the work in the course “...was tailored to each individual” (Participant 007). One participant questioned why this course impacted her profoundly. She said “...is it just that I like [the] professor and that’s why I’m getting so much? Do I feel positively affirmed and that’s why I’m willing? Is it a matter of will? I don’t think so. I think he’s got a formula that works” (Participant 008). The design of the course created “... a good frame of mind that always helped the mental environment” (Participant 010).

Four participants (50%) spoke about the mental environment as stimulating, inspiring, engaging and about self-discovery and growth. When asked to describe the mental environment of the course Participant 008 said “...stimulation. I found [the] professor... kept things very engaging. The class was three hours and I never sat in the class thinking ‘when will this be over?’ my mind is just going, but at a pace I can maintain”. Another participant said “I was excited about life. [The professor’s] class was exciting every week. It was stimulating, it inspired my personal best all of the time and it made this energy, it made movement or something that I could go off of after [his] class. I felt really good and more confident to get things done... his courses let you really see yourself at your best” (Participant 003). Another participant described her experience in the course as learning that “...made you dig down deep. There was some stuff you just didn’t want to look at, but you had to. A lot of resistance to looking at some things, but if you want to grow as a person you have to look at those things. It affects who you are and how you react to things in the world.... It’s really about looking at who you are, and how you fit into things... and touching back in with your core being” (Participant 004). The

course was also described as “...always interesting.... We talked about ourselves a lot, building on our strengths, it was always very positive. I think that helped with learning” (Participant 010).

Four participants (50%) spoke about how the mental environment was about feeling connected. “[For] me everything is connected” (Participant 004). This participant believed that the Indigenous students in the class were mentally connected to each other and that this bond may have been created based on the instructor. “Most of us loved the instructor... there was definitely bonds there. ... There are still bonds with these people to this day and this [course was] four or five years ago” (Participant 004). Another participant spoke about connection when saying “[The course] went into what we were learning emotionally, physically, and mentally” (Participant 005). The course was set up so the students “...could make connection[s] to what they were learning from their own lives” (Participant 007). The idea of connection was taken a step further when Participant 008 explained,

...for me as a learner, as somebody who has an anxiety disorder and goes through depression, things... can make learning difficult. In spite of those things, I totally got a lot out of the class. It’s kind of amazing when I think back on it. How was that class able to stick with me in spite of everything else that was going on?

This speaks to the ability of the course to be connected to each student as an individual learner with individual learning needs.

Three participants (37.5%) described the mental environment as challenging and “forward thinking” (Participant 007). “It challenged me. The criteria he asked from us was challenging. It was beyond what [we] were being asked to do in other classes” (Participant 005). This participant then spoke about how being challenged impacted her, she said “[i]t was a challenge that made me blossom as a student and as a professional

person. It was a good challenge. It was a challenge that made me look at myself. I now ask myself: Are all conversations that I have meaningful” (Student 005)? Another participant spoke about challenge in terms of workload. “It seemed like minimal work but by the end I realized it was a lot of work” (Participant 007). Another participant thought that “...the course presented complex issues in a very manageable way” (Participant 008).

Two participants (25%) spoke about the workbook and core assignments related to the mental environment. Participant 003 mentioned the use of the course workbook, and a number of the course assignments including the learning contracts, considering values, and setting goals. She said “... I was taking his class and [using] his workbook to make plans to apply to the grad program that I’m in now”. She then continues to explain how she was impacted by the learning contract assignment. “... [W]e did a learning contract and I said ok, I’m going to apply to the Frost Centre and I need to find a thesis to write and I wrote all these steps in the learning contract and it was really helpful” (Participant 003). This same participant also spoke about the importance of the assignment related to values. “... [T]here were these questions about values and experiences and I got to analyze my values, my strongest values, my weakest values, values that I hold that serve me no longer, values that I hold that I can draw upon for different circumstances...” (Participant 003). Another participant described the course as “...similar to a meditation type [course] where you’d stop and do inner reflections” (Participant 004).

Findings of Interview Question 3

The third interview question was prefaced with the “Emotional environment refers to a person’s ability to express, listen to, and consider feelings and thoughts in a

place and/or space that is receptive in a respectful way”. Participants were then asked, “Describe the emotional environment(s) of the course? How did they impact your learning”? Six participants (75%) described the emotional environment as created within the pedagogy of the course. This included the course material and the participation requirements of the course. One participant equated the course material as a way of connecting to who she is as a learner; she said,

I have to equate it to who I am, how it makes me feel, how it reacts in my body, that’s more learning for me than sitting with a paper or a book.... I have to have a balance.... What I found with [this course is there] is a very good balance where [your given] a mix, [the professor] give[s] you a reading, but the reading you’ll have to sit and reflect on. So it does make you go inside, it does make you look at things, it does make you feel things. And then you have to write it. That’s part of school. (Participant 004)

Another participant said “[the facilitator] used a lot of methodologies that were culturally appropriate. His material was simple on the surface, but really deep and rich. The course required a lot of communication skills” (Participant 007). Another participant said “[there] was conversation every class about how people were feeling and [their] emotions” (Participant 005). Another participant shared,

[i]n each class every student was able to speak and this really encouraged students to speak about what they were experiencing. It was a gradual process. At least once during each class every student had to speak. The number of people in the class aided this. There were around 20 and the small class number allowed for learning to happen at an emotional level. (Participants 006)

Adding to this, one participant said “[t]he class was very small, which made it easy to share” (Participant 007). Another participant commented,

...[i]t was really easy for me to share... information about my family and stuff like that. I don’t usually talk about my family in most of my classes.... [W]e also talked about how I feel, and how that impacts the things I do... I guess you get to express your emotions and learn about them too. (Participant 009)

According to one participant the professor created opportunities for conversation within each class.

[The professor] really liked to hear from every single person. He had this ritual at the end of every class where he wanted to hear what you got out of the class.... Everybody was made to participate, which is a good thing, and helps you learn too. (Participant 010)

This participant continued to speak about why she felt participation in this course was important. She said,

[g]athering thoughts and speaking it helps you to gain something in the class and when you leave you think about what you said and what you got out of it and the impact it had on you. It was always good that [the professor] had that time for all of us, to let us just share our little bit of what we thought. We always learned from other students. Sometimes a totally different perspective was taken from another student, like ‘wow, I never even thought of that, that’s so cool!’ it’s a really good way of learning. (Participant 010)

Another participant shared a teaching she had been given by an Elder in which she thought fit well with the pedagogy of the course and the emotional environment. She said,

I had an Elder once say to me, ‘If you have a feeling, and you don’t have a thought, you’re a psychopath.... You have to have a thought with your feelings. If you don’t have a thought with your feelings, you’re going to be a danger to yourself and to other people’. I think [this] is what was going on in the course. There [were] a lot of thoughts with those feelings, so you didn’t have irrational behaviour going on. (Participant 008)

Five participants (62.5%) spoke about their ability to express emotions within the course. The emotional environment was described as a place that invoked raw feelings (Participant 003). Another participant said that some students would become

...quite emotional because of the course content. When they would get emotional it would set the whole of us off.... We would understand and feel their issues, and we tried coming together to resolve things for them, or help them resolve things. It was a unique class, it really was. There were many days where there were tears, laughter; you name it, a whole gamut of emotions constantly. (Participant 004)

One participant explained,

I don't feel that the class was heavily charged, even though there were very personal things going on in people, in their reflections, and emotions could arise. It wasn't that the rising of the emotions was prohibited in any way, which is really interesting, it's not at all that you felt 'don't get too emotional, or let that emotion happen', but in expressing your own emotions and hearing other peoples' emotions, it seemed very relaxed. You could be very emotional but very relaxed, and still maintain self-control.... (Participant 008)

Another participant shared,

I remember seeing a girl crying in class, voluntarily talking. In other classes people don't volunteer to talk and start crying.... She felt comfortable sitting with a lot of her close friends and I think it's important that she volunteered because even though it was going to be a hard thing to say, it's important that she shared it with other people.... We were all sitting equally [in a circle] and the [professor] was sitting with us, and everyone was sharing at that time. It wasn't just her. We were all saying things that meant a lot. (Participant 009)

The emotional environment provided space for students to fully participate in the course.

As another participant said, "Our ability to express ourselves was really encouraged..."

(Participant 010).

Three participants (37.5%) spoke about their experiences within the emotional environment of the course as connected to their learning. Participant 003 explained her experience,

It was a peculiar time. I felt raw, really raw and almost like on a very, very, very steep curve. I was on this incline that was really steep. It was so steep, and that's what you call a transformational learning experience, when an incline is so steep that it changes everything about your perception of your being.

Another participant spoke about her experience in the course as being similar to how she was raised with her family. She said,

...that's the way I learn.... For me it just reaffirms my way of being. How I was brought up with my relatives.... It's more about experiential learning and feelings, and I learn better that way than I do if you put a piece of paper or a book in front of me and say you have to read this, memorize it. To me that's not learning. (Participant 004)

For another participant learning within the emotional environment of this course also had an impact. “[Frankly, it made the learning lifelong. I think that as someone who might go into social work or education I hope that I can foster those kinds of environments” (Participant 008).

Two participants (25%) described the emotional environment of the course as caring. Participant 003 said “I think the environment was really caring, really, really, really caring. One time, someone was crying in class... and then another student who was so caring cheered that student up right away.... A lot of really nice things happened in the course that way”. Another participant spoke to the caring environment of the course in terms of her role as a student who helped others in the course. She said, “I was impacted because I felt that I was helping. If people were scared I could help them to not be scared.... I was able to access the deepest part of [myself] because [I was] able to support other people. After the class I had students... coming to me for help with certain things that were discussed in that class” (Participant 005).

Two participants (25%) described the emotional environment as positive. One participant said

I always left feeling good. I was always upbeat, never did I feel embarrassed to say anything [or] show emotion. It was more courage than discouragement. ...[B]eing in a good state of mind from the beginning of class helps with the emotional environment. When you listen to positiveness all the time, it's hard not to be positive. (Participant 010)

Another participant said “[t]he emotional environment was very positive. The facilitator had really excellent active listening skills. It was fantastic” (Participant 007).

Two participants (25%) spoke about the emotional environment of the course as open and accepting. “The options to talk in class were endless and so accepting.... It was

a very open class. There was endless acceptance from the [facilitator] and the students in the class” (Participant 005). Another participant said,

[a]t one point someone was talking about himself and his powerful emotions and everyone accepted him. There was no judgment. It was nice to see someone able to open themselves up that much. Because I am guarded, it made me realize that some of my guarded feelings were not necessary in this classroom. [The facilitator], from day one, made it clear to everyone that this is an open environment and everyone can feel free to be themselves. Students felt comfortable opening themselves up to [the facilitator]. (Participant 006)

Two participants (25%) felt that they were respected within the emotional environment of the classroom. Participant 008 said “I think the emotional environment was really respectful.... I think probably that autonomy is really what made the emotional environment so respectful”. An example of how autonomy impacted students was highlighted in another participant’s experience, “I was never pushed beyond what I was capable of. I was able to take safe risks. The tools were provided, but it was about me doing the work. I had to draw on my own experiences to do the work and to participate” (Participant 007).

Findings of Interview Question 4

The fourth interview question was prefaced with the “Within the context of the INDG 3040H course the spiritual environment refers to a person’s ability to connect with, and create meaning with course materials, dialogues, ideas, assignments, teachings, and/or core concepts. Participants were then asked, “Describe the spiritual environment(s) of the course? How did they impact your learning”? Four (50%) participants spoke about the spiritual environment of the course as a space that connected to each person’s ability to create meaning. One participant stated,

[the professor] used a lot of quotes about being in the world in a very optimum way. He had a lot of quotes about the nature of being in the world in a good way, being the best person you can be.... [T]here was one phrase I had that was the motto of my elementary school. It was 'living to learn, learning to live', and for me, that's... something I would apply to [the] class because [we] were learning to live. (Participant 003)

Another participant upon contemplating how to describe the spiritual environment of the course said,

...what's standing out here in this question is the word meaning... On a spiritual level, if you ask somebody 'was that meaningful?' are you asking 'did you learn something? Did you accumulate'? [Y]ou would never associate accumulation with meaningful, right? What was taught [in the course] wasn't meant to be accumulative learning. (Participant 008)

One participant was able to make meaning with her connection to the conversations that were happening in the class. She said,

[w]hat connected with me the most was the emphasis [the professor] put on good conversation. The class emphasised conversations that matter. It helped me to connect with the class because we were having conversations that mattered with each other. It connected with thoughts that I already had and with how I was feeling before I started class. (Participant 006)

Another participant said

...I created meaning from what was being taught, and the way I felt about things, like the way I felt about work... family is more important than work, but I still need work to support my family.... [L]ots of things that he talked about to do with work were spiritual for me.... (Participant 009)

Four participants (50%) explained the spiritual environment as a means of connecting with their personal experiences and self-navigation.

It was like building the fundamental skills that you need to truly think in life, to truly navigate your way through life based on an ability to learn interactively or something. To really, really use yourself, your strengths and your being, your core as a catalyst to push you forward in life and almost to propel yourself, based on harnessing your own energy and [the professor] has this very interesting way of doing that. It was almost like he was teaching you. He was opening up the space for us to chart directions based on what was authentically right for ourselves as individuals and it wasn't like 'go look at post-colonial theory and use this kind of

theory and prove it', it was like nothing about that. It was like draw upon the richness of your experience and use that as a catalyst. (Participant 003)

Participant 007 defined the spiritual environment as “culturally appropriate and universal”. She spoke about the ability of students in the course to draw on their own experiences. She said “...during the class discussion students would make their own parallels and draw on their own experiences for spiritual meaning making within the course” (Participant 007). Participant 008 stated, “[m]y understanding of the word ‘spiritual’ is... your mind, your body, and your heart, and your spirit. The spirit to me is that deeper part...”. She continued by using the course Workbook as a tangible example. She said,

[i]f I was looking at a bookshelf and there was a book related to this course, it would be that white binder.... And on the binder, there's a picture. There's a picture of all the students, my face is on the textbook.... It's not that I like looking at my own face, but it's just like... there's me there, and me isn't just being physically present.... (Participant 008)

For another participant the spiritual environment became about getting to know herself, she said

...a course like this... it's so much about yourself, and... your identity... you can't talk about the person as a whole and leave out spirituality. That's part of us. ...I feel it was a necessary part, without it, it wouldn't be the same, we wouldn't have gotten to know ourselves as much without it. (Participant 010)

Four participants (50%) spoke about the risk and courage it took to provide a space in the course for spirituality to exist. The participants seemed to be grateful for this space and aware of the impact it had on their ability to learn. One participant illustrated this best when saying,

... [the professor] didn't shy away from spirituality. A lot of professors don't want to get into that, they are afraid, they don't think that should be part of your learning. But I always found that it helped me to understand things more. I know he was into... Buddhism and meditation.... Meditation can be a part of anyone's

spirituality, whether you're a spiritual person or not, whether you're a religious person.... I learned how important meditation is and how helpful it can be so just him sharing how he meditates and what he learned about meditation... it really helped me in my spirituality.... [I]t had a tremendous impact, a positive impact. (Participant 010)

This same participant also commented on how she perceived the acceptance of a spiritual environment in the course from other students. She said "...[it] wasn't something that was looked at by the other students as a bad thing, it was very welcomed by everyone and everybody was willing to talk about that side of their personality..."(Participant 010).

Another participant talked about how the spiritual environment of the course provided her with a necessary outlet to discuss her intense experiences. She said "...I had done a lot of meditating. I had done 180 hours of meditation and that was really intense.... I guess I got to capture that. [The course] was a process for capturing that insight" (Participant 003).

One participant also spoke about how symbols were used as part of creating a positive spiritual environment.

Symbols like the Medicine Wheel were used and all people can use this spiritual touchstone. As an Aboriginal person it allowed me to connect to the course easily. [The professor] contemporized these images. We were using the Medicine Wheel in a modern way. It did not matter to me that he was not Aboriginal.... He made parallels for people.... [The professor] delivered course materials in a good way, from a good heart and a good mind. It does not matter what nationality you are when this is done appropriately. (Participant 007)

For another participant the spiritual environment was about the acknowledgement that spirituality exists and is a part of people who are learning. She said,

I think the course invited all four elements of presence, and because of that invitation, became more meaningful. Part of it is just the method, the formula – it works. I could tell you a dozen different ways it was meaningful to me, but the important part is it did have that spiritual element to it. [The professor] mentioned [having] a contract with the Creator... [T]he way he introduced the concept was not offensive or disrespectful, it was daring in a way to throw that idea out there, that people might have a contract with the Creator that are spiritual in nature. He

didn't present it in a daring or bold way, but just the freedom to acknowledge that, and I think that was part of acknowledging the spiritual element. (Participant 008)

Three participants (37.5%) spoke about the spiritual environment of the course as respectful. Participant's commented "I would say it was very respectful in allowing [us] to have many different venues and many different peoples' opinions and ways of being" (Participant 004) and "[the professor] was able to deliver the course in a way that was respectful.... He was open and respectful to all" (Participant 007). The professor was able to set the tone of the spiritual environment by showing the students that he valued respect in the classroom. "You can do it in a respectful way... I don't know how the heck [the professor] does it! I don't know how he did it! I totally value that.... The spiritual environment was respectful" (Participant 008).

Two participants (25%) spoke about how the spiritual environment made them feel an increased sense of self-worth and empowerment.

There was just the value of uniqueness of individual people that had nothing to do with other courses where really the aim is to be good in theory and if you're not good in theory well then you're just not going to be successful in academia and you're not going to make it as an academic.... [The professor's] class didn't do that at all. It's wasn't like your worth got to be determined through the backdrop of academia.... [I]t was determined by sincerity. [The professor] extended worth to everybody. Everybody had an inherent worth and things that people said were affirmed and important. (Participant 003)

Another participant said "...I feel empowered... I feel empowered because I learned something and it was up to me to do what I wanted with what I learned" (Participant 008).

Two participants (25%) talked about allowing themselves to feel vulnerable due to the spiritual environment of the course. One participant said

...there was some degree of vulnerability because I was saying some very intense stuff. I was exploding with intensity.... There was vibrancy, and to some degree I

felt like ‘Oh My God!’ did I just say that in front of 30 students? Oh My God, I did! I think the things I was saying were kind of more philosophically oriented... than what other people were saying, but [the professor] was always really smiling a lot, like you could see his face was so bright. It was very bright and... I never felt reluctant to say things. I said them because I was excited and stimulated.... (Participant 003)

One aspect of allowing for vulnerability is creating a safe learning environment.

Participant 004 said,

...there were some [students] that were not Indigenous and they were able to bring things through that helped open up our eyes from their way of being. It also allowed for the Indigenous ways of being to be brought through so they could understand. It was a mixture and blending of the two.... Nobody was ever, ‘well this one is better than the other’.

Two participants (25%) talked about how the spiritual environment of the course supported them in thinking differently and in engaging in new behaviours, which lead to new learning experiences. One participant said,

[the professor] played some type of classical piece of music, and he got us to close our eyes and he turned off the lights... he wanted us to zone out and just really be in our heads... into ourselves, but listening to that. I remember that class in particular. I thought it really stayed with me, because we were talking a lot about feelings that you have if you’re listening to certain music. I actually went home and did it with one of the songs... that was my song to help me through bad times or whatever, and it was amazing how it affect[ed] [me]... That made me want to meditate more, and so meditation became a regular part of my life after that and it wasn’t before.... [An] eye opening experience... what a difference it [made] in [my] life. (Participant 010)

Another participant spoke about her experience creating a board game of life for her capstone portfolio, the final assignment in the course. “[T]he capstone portfolio, I feel that’s spiritual because [of] the way I designed it. [T]he Medicine Wheel, the river, and the turtles, but then, also how every stop is that you’ll learn something that I learned, and I guess that’s spiritual...” (Participant 009). The participant was then asked if the capstone portfolio is a representation of her learning. Her response was “... the most important

things I learned in that class” and the reason she considers this project to be spiritual is because she “shared [it] with someone” (Participant 009). She shared her capstone portfolio with the course professor.

One participant (12.5%) felt the course required a female teaching assistant to aid in the balance of male and female energy in the class. In terms of creating a positive spiritual learning environment this participant thought more support was needed. She said,

[t]he course needed a female TA or some spiritual energy. There needed to be more spiritual exploration in the course. There needed to be a helper in the course who has experience with spirituality.... There needed to be more guidance in the course. It needed protective, nurturing, understanding, and emotional energy. [There was] a need for someone to hold the emotional and spiritual space in the classroom, the yellow and red aspects of the Medicine Wheel. There is more than just the science part of the class; there is an emotional aspect that must be respected. The professor cannot fulfil this role. There needs to be two people, each have a responsibility. It is best if there is a male and female balance. If we are going to hit emotion, then there needs to be balance. (Participant 005)

Findings of Interview Question 5

In question five the researcher asked, “Tell me a story that best represents your experience in the Indigenous Studies 3040H course”. Four participants (50%) spoke about the course as a place where they could feel safe to take risks and step outside of their comfort zones. Participant 003 said, “I was taking a real risk...” when talking about setting goals for herself in the course. This same participant explained why she felt she was taking such a risk when setting goals in the course. She said she was taking a risk

...because of how badly I wanted to go to grad school, because of how much I value academia, because of how long I had been waiting.... That was my whole goal in life to go to grad school... I wanted it more than anything.... It was like taking a risk. That’s what it felt like to me to do that and [the] course was... facilitating that to some degree.

Another participant spoke about presenting a song to the professor as part of her capstone portfolio. She said,

I felt comfortable to leave the room while [the professor] listened to my song. I felt comfortable sharing myself with [the professor], baring my sole. This experience meant a lot to me. He got it. 'That song is completely you'. He was right. He understood me. (Participant 005)

Another participant also spoke about her experience with the capstone portfolio course assignment. She said,

I remember being terrified at first when [the professor] told us about the assignment. I was dreading it the whole term, thinking 'what am I going to do?' He said 'you [can] be creative, do whatever you [want] to do' I had recently made a hand drum... [the professor] said 'you can meditate to anything... it doesn't have to be music... there is no hard and fast rules, whatever makes you feel good is what you should go with'. I started to go down to the lake where I lived, and took my drum, and started to actually meditate with my drum....When it was time to do our portfolios [I thought] 'how am I going to do this?' I ended up making this mock, sort of fake little hand drum and that was what we talked a lot about when I had my interview with him and presented my portfolio to him. ...[W]hen I think about the course, just how much, how it was such a help, and how ridiculous it was that I was so afraid of something that turned out to be so awesome. (Participant 010)

Another participant spoke about how her in-class experience took her outside of her comfort zone. She said,

I got paired with a girl who I did not know and we had nothing to talk about. After a while talking about the class brought us together. I really thought that I had nothing in common with her, but I learned that we did have something in common and talking to her was interesting. I was a little bit put outside my comfort zone. Talking about the weather was not meaningful to me so this situation showed me how meaningful conversations with people you don't know can happen. (Participant 006)

Three participants (37.5%) talked about how the reflective learning in the course impacted them personally and professionally. Participant 004 said, "[t]here was a bunch of us that had taken the course, and to this day we're still very close as far as friendship

goes... there is still a very close bond” (Participant 004). She described the impact of the course as

...very much like ripples in water. If you go to a lake, throw a pebble in, watch the ripples, it does ripple out, it does have that effect. But it also brings it back in too. It’s not just a case of letting go; it’s also a case of bringing in. That was the biggest thing I found with most of the course, an idea would be put out there, and then you go, you didn’t actually sit in class and learn, you had to go home and think about it, or walk in the woods, or walk by the water, or sit by the water, or just sit and reflect. We would go back in the next week and sit and sit and talk about what was going on. And you’d realize you weren’t the only one it was happening with. Everyone else was telling similar experiences, whether it was with water, or riding a bike, or working, or whatever. The same things would be happening and we would come together and talk about it.

Another participant said,

Now professionally I am still impacted by this experience. I am not a level three coach. While I was receiving my coaching training it was like [the professor’s] words and training were coming straight through me. The coach recognized my techniques and new that I had been working with [the professor]. [His] teachings came through me. I was embodying the knowledge that I gained from the course in a way that was recognizable to a stranger. (Participant 005)

Another participant was also impacted professionally by what she learned in the course.

[The professor] showed us a video from TED Talks about reframing your thinking about what education is and how to educate. I do a lot of work with Aboriginal youth and at risk kids and now I am able to point out the strengths that they have. Sometimes it is not culturally necessary for them to have the skills that they are being told they need. I was given a different perspective which has positively impacted the way that I work with Aboriginal youth today. (Participant 007)

Two participants (25%) spoke about how the course supported them in moving forward and setting goals for themselves.

...I was going forward in my life. I was going to leap [right into]... the learning contract when I was like ‘I’m applying for grad school’. That was a really big deal for me and it was a really big deal for me to write ‘I’m going to grad school. I need a thesis supervisor. My application is due on this day and this is how I’m going to do it’. That was a big deal declaring in a statement that [the professor] asked me to fill out which was part of my participation in the class. (Participant 003)

Another student spoke about her goals in terms of the vision she had for her future and how the course created space for her to reflect what she wanted in life. She said,

...what do I want to do with my future? It was a vision on where I want to go with my life. I found out that my fiancé and I were pregnant during my last year of school. I have created a vision piece which had two roads drawn on big chart paper. It represented the two paths that my life could take. It was about the next five and then the next 10 years of my life. I realized that I could choose a nice path or a rough path. Every image in the drawing represented something in my life. (Participant 007)

Two participants (25%) spoke about how the INDG 3040H course supported them in creating a new perspective on their life. One participant said, “I realized how my attitude can really change and impact my life. I could have let negative emotions take over the first three years of my daughter’s life. I chose to see this experience differently and in a more positive way” (Participant 007). Another said,

[t]his [student] shared many times about going on this silent retreat, and she had to sit for 10 days or something in silence. She said this one day she was sitting there and there were these dying mushrooms and she got really mad. She was like ‘I can’t talk to anyone, and I’ve got these... dying mushrooms here, I’m going to quite!’ ...[S]he was thinking about quitting but she didn’t, and she went back and the next day there were all these white mushrooms there that were beautiful and she was like ‘Oh my God, this is a miracle of life, glowing and brilliant and wonderful!’ What [the story] means [is]... you’re looking at something and sometimes it’s really crappy.... And you’re like ‘Ahh! Why am I going through this?’ and then the next time you go, something really fantastic is there. ... [B]eing aware and mindful [about] possibility.... I think maybe for me, it was like ‘Ah, all these dead possibilities, all these bad habits that are here’ and instead it’s like ‘ta-da, here’s these great habits! You could be like those white mushrooms the next day.’ How quickly life can become so brilliant.... (Participant 008)

Two participants (25%) spoke about feeling heard by the professor as well as the other students in the class. The act of being listened to created an environment of respect and acceptance. One participant explained,

[i]t was all about conversations that actually matter. It is important that all experiences be respected. No questions are stupid. No doors were shut down. My

walk of life was respected and accepted. My story... [was] accepted. (Participant 005)

Another participant said,

...there was this [student] in our class and she hasn't learned to speak English that well.... [H]er views were always different than everybody else's. That's something you always get in [the professor's] class, lots of different views, it's never just one or two, there's lots of different views. I feel like if we weren't in that type of class, that [student] might not have spoke up so often, because it was so accepting. You had to take time to listen to her, but everyone was so respectful to her, they didn't try to rush her off or anything. So I guess that's just the way [the professor's] class always was, anybody could really talk. (Participant 009)

Two participants (25%) commented on their ability to have autonomy in their learning. One participant said,

...it's my inclination to process... I need a lot of process to get through and understand life. That's how I am. I need a lot of mechanism for processing like going to ceremonies.... I meditate. I have a lot of conversations with my friends about theory.... With my course I am always really behind and my professor's always give me extensions. No one has ever said 'no, you can't have an extension', and because they gave me an extension I got to do it at my own pace, I did exceptionally well, really well. That's the whole logic of giving students autonomy. When you let them go at their pace and take care of what they need to, when they need to, they'll do the best they can because there's an inherent will and capacity to do well and enjoy learning. (Participant 003)

Another participant spoke about having the autonomy to incorporate and connect what was important to her into her learning in the course. She said,

...our portfolios at the end of term, I think that's one of the best ways to really get to know yourself. Being able to just talk one-on-one with your professor about your life, what you've been through, what's important to you, your values and everything, your family, everything in your life. (Participant 010)

One participant spoke about the process of building relationships.

I guess the biggest thing I would say as far as a story goes would be along the relationship lines... stuff is put out there and it's coming back in, bring it inside, let it go, push it out there.... As you're pushing it out there you're touching the other people in the class.... [I]t was all about relationship. (Participant 004)

Findings of Interview Question 6

In question six the researcher asked “How were you impacted by what was taught in the course”? Five participants (62.5%) described what they learned by taking the course as having a lasting impact. One participant said,

... in the course I learned about silence, the importance of that, and that impacted me because I take more time to reflect even if I’m not writing reflections for the class. I take time to think about it so it doesn’t come all rushing at me at the time I don’t want it to. I learned that most people... have been trained to have good answers but not good questions... [the professor] taught us to think about questions, not only answers.... I learned a lot about energy in that class and how energy impacts the way you learn, how your energy impacts other people, and I learned about engagement, and how it’s kind of a gift to have engagement, and it made me think of all the people that I know who aren’t engaged in things, who aren’t very successful, and the people who are engaged are more successful, having something to strive for. I learned how to ask myself how I feel – in the four ways – mentally, spiritually, physically, and emotionally.... I learned about how competition for me... could be a good as long as it’s friendly competition, but negative competition probably wouldn’t work. (Participant 009)

Participant 003 spoke about what she learned in the course as a series “of useful things”.

She specifically mentioned a quote that Ellingson would say to the class, “don’t work when you don’t have energy, do work when you do have energy, and the rest of the time, do something else”. This philosophy helped the participant organize her approach to completing academic work. Participant 004 explained that the course was about “...digging deep, meditation, sitting quiet, and listening. It’s not necessarily quietly listening to someone yack at me, it’s listening to my own inner voice. Listening to my body”. A participant also said “[t]his course has helped me professionally. It helped me at a different level to understand my own work (Participant 005) and

[t]he course content impacted me greatly. It gave me a lot of different tools to assess what work meant to me. I was not told at the end what my perfect job would be, but I did learn about what type of work fulfills me. It got me thinking about the tangible steps that I needed to take to get there, and I did quite quickly. It was the single most important course in my university degree. In a lot of other

courses you learn a lot but it is only temporary knowledge. This course material is more holistic and can be used forever.... It was more meaningful.... [The professor] would get us to write in our journals. He would get us to name out journal or essay something that was meaningful to us. I remember that I named mine 'The Stadium of Work'.... I have never forgotten the essay. I still think about it. I do not think about any of the other hundreds of essays that I wrote in university – just this one. Even now, this essay still makes sense to me today. (Participant 007)

Four participants (50%) mentioned that what was taught in the course aided in their own self-discovery, in their decision making processes, and helped them to create behavioural changes. Participant 004 said,

... it helped me to rediscover some of what I am. Who I am... It was part of the reason I [began] a [Master's degree]. It made me realize that what I have to say, or what I was thinking was important. ... [O]ver the summer... I started using some of the techniques brought up in class. That was one of the reasons why I didn't sign back on in September to complete the MA, because by using some of the things I had learned through that course... the MA isn't the route I wanted to go. The MA is prestigious... not good for my health and my wellbeing. It's not going to do what I want it to do for the work I'm looking at. I just haven't figured out the route yet. So I'm going to have some more exploring to do.... The course... makes you go back and touch base with who you are, and your core being and your core teachings. For me, that goes back to my relatives, my ancestors, my Elders, not just in this physical world either.

Another participant talked about getting to know herself better through the process of setting and obtaining goals. She said,

I think [the course] just really helped me to get to know myself better. A lot of the course was to do with setting goals and working towards that goal. I sort of already had a goal before I started that class, but it just made me realize it even more that that's what I wanted to do, and that I wanted to get there.... Finding what you'd be best at, knowing yourself is the only way you'll know what you're best at, or what you want to work towards, what goals you want to reach. (Participant 010)

Another participant commented on how the course increased her ability to make profound life changes. When asked how she was impacted by what was taught in the course she responded "...I think it's going to motivate me to change. When I think of impact, I don't

think of something two-dimensional. What I learned is motivating action” (Participant 008). She then explained how her behavior has changed through the self-exploration of asking herself powerful questions.

I had to take everything I learned from the course – what are my values, strengths, and weaknesses? Can I do that? Should I do that? Do I want to do that? Why do I want to do that? All those questions... [I] took [them] and applied [them] to my life, so [they’re] already shaping the direction of my life as we speak... It’s only been a month that we’ve been out of that class but already, life changing decisions at work. (Participant 008)

Another participant was motivated to make some significant changes in the way she interacted with people. She said,

...what I learned from this class was... I have to hold myself in a certain way when I talk to people, I never thought of that before, and also, whether I do it intentionally or not, I hold other people in a certain place, and I just think that’s fascinating to look further into that, and concentrate when I talk to people. (Participant 009)

Three participants (37.5%) felt that what they learned in the course impacted their sense of self-confidence. This included their sense of confidence towards their learning, their professional work, and in their life decision-making. One participant described it as “I’m feeling overwhelmed but I have a thought now about how can I do this effectively, how can I be confident about these decisions, about where I’m going to go in life” (Participant 008). Another participant said, “I guess I’m feeling a lot more confident in getting there... the confidence thing was huge in that course” (Participant 010). She then went on to say,

every class no matter what we were talking about a lot of it was to do with confidence in yourself, self-esteem, your strengths and not dwelling on things you think are your weaknesses. Dwelling more on your strengths and abilities... we did a lot of work on multiple intelligences and things like that. They made what I had sort of thought about myself... clear and real to me I guess. Just helped me to feel better about myself, get to know myself better. I guess it’s just, if you feel good about yourself you’re going to present yourself that way to other people and

it's only going to be helpful to you... If you feel good about yourself, it's going to spread. (Participant 010)

One participant spoke about gaining confidence by learning more about options in terms of work she may do in the future. She said, "I kind of think of work a lot differently. I thought I was just going to grow up and be a teacher, but now I think I'm going to grow up and be a teacher, and do things in the summer and get my creativity side out" (Participant 009). She also commented on how specific course assignments increased her self-confidence in speaking and working with other students that she did not know before the course began. She said,

...discussions specifically impacted me because every time I had to open up and share with people and I didn't know anybody in that class... so it just taught me... it helped me teach myself to talk to other people and how to talk to other people. (Participant 009)

One participant (12.5%) was impacted by what she learned about her personal learning styles. She said, "This course gave me an opportunity to assess my own learning styles and how I work. Much of the course focused on how you learn and how you work, as well as, assessing your own styles and strengths" (Participant 006).

Findings of Interview Question 7

In question seven the researcher asked, "How were you impacted by what was taught in the course"? Five participants (62.5%) spoke about the professor's individualized care for the students in the course. It has been described as an "organic [and]... emergent process. Everything was constantly emerging from personal experience" (Participant 003). This participant also shared advice that she had received from the professor, which had a profound impact on her. She said,

[The professor's] course [was] foundational to my academic life in a way that I draw upon certain things [he] taught and certain insights [he] shared with me. [He] said one time 'sometimes it's not doing more, it's doing less, and it's stopping actually'. And I'm like oh yeah, that's true. (Participant 003)

For another participant the course was “refreshing” (Participant 010). She explained further,

[t]here was a lot of days where I would put my back up and, no I'm not doing this, I don't want to look at this, you skim the surface, and you don't want to dig down deep, but at the same token it was really great. It made me go in, it made me realize that in order to figure out who I am, what I'm supposed to be doing, and how to get there, I need to go in and look. I need to listen, I need to stop, instead of run, run, run, run, run, which is what my life is usually like.

Another participant highlighted the individualized approach to the way the course was taught by the professor when she said, “He helped me figure out what I want to do” (Participant 006). She explained,

[The professor] tries to relate to students by trying to learn from you and what you know... He helped students look inside themselves and find out what they want to do.... He began the course by saying 'this is what I want to do for you'. He wanted to help people to get to know themselves enough to know what they want to do and what makes them happy. 'This is what I want you to do for yourselves'. Helping students to help themselves – a very empowering experience.

Another participant also spoke about her experience,

I was impacted positively by the way the course was taught.... [the professor] met us where we were at. It was about more than the grades. I could tell that he got excited every time someone had an AH HA moment. You could tell that he cared. He would be excited for you and it was an incentive to do well. He would talk about other students and their stories and it let us know that he listened and cared. We were able to personally connect with him through this process. (Participant 007)

Feeling cared about, listened to, and acknowledged was also the experience of other participants who took the course. For instance Participant 009 said,

[I] was impacted by the way the course was taught because I felt really close to the teacher. It was easier to talk to the teacher. I had to do [a] Skype message with him. I was super excited to just talk to him because I didn't get to see him over the break. It made me want to come to class, it made me, even if I really wasn't

interested, or I was really bored, I still wanted to learn it because [he] was so enthusiastic about it.... When you would say something, it wouldn't really matter if it was important to the conversation, he'd act like it really was.... He was enthusiastic for you to be there. I guess it spread kind of like laughter. It made me dedicated to the course. I didn't miss one class....

And Participant 010 said,

...[H]e cares, you know that.... Right from the beginning of the class you felt so welcomed, and like he cared, and what you had to say was important to him. I remember him saying he learned a lot from his students, not just his students learning from him, it was a two-way street. I always felt like he listened and... acknowledged, you were important.... It was unlike any other course that I've ever had where usually you're being lectured to, or have these readings to do, then you do an exam, and that's how they know what you've learned. But the way that [the professor] taught was he knew, he could tell whether you were learning through talking to you and just by your participation in class.

Three participants (37.5%) spoke about how the course impacted their ability to be open-minded. The course was described as being “always so open” (Participant 010). One participant said, “I learned to have an open mind. Not to shut the door on anyone else's ideas. I took not being judgmental to a whole different level. Now I am even more open” (Participant 005) and another said “[the professor] had a lot of respect for people who were out trying to find themselves and find themselves through work. There was no judgment of these people. This meant that he did not judge us” (Participant 006).

Two participants (25%) spoke about the way the course was taught as being infused with learning tools that have continued to impact them, in some cases years after having taken the course. One participant said, “...without even really realizing it we were given ways and tools, except if you sit back and look, and think, and listen, and reflect, and go inside and see how to utilize the stuff, it really is a different way of learning. It really is a different way of being” (Participant 004). She also elaborated on how an entire

community of learners was impacted by the way these learning tools were brought into the course. She said,

...what I've witnessed with a lot of Indigenous community is, yes we learn out of a book, but we really learn when we experience and when we interrelate. ...[A]ctually in working with the quilt for the theatre, some of the tools [learned] from [the professor's] class [were] brought into the making of the quilt. It was the same thing, the same year. Respect, listening, empathy.... We had the Elder come in. The Elder was working with us to show us how to quilt.... One night in particular she read us stories... while we were sewing. It was amazing, some of the [students] working on the quilt were also the same ones that were in the... course.... There were a couple of the [students] working on it that were not Indigenous, and some of us were Indigenous, because I had opened it up to everyone. I remember sitting there and looked around the group and said... 'Guess what?' They all looked up 'What?' We did it! We had the face of the quilt finished. We were presenting it the next night. The enormity of it and the response on their faces was tremendous. How I was taught in [the professor's] class was used to produce it.

Another participant spoke about relationship as a tool that she had learned based on the way the course was taught. She said,

I know it's going to affect the way I interact with other people.... I feel that the way the course was taught provided me a model for how I can inspire change in a way that's effective and respectful, and that involves speaking the way that you speak, the environment you're presenting, and mostly I think extending the autonomy to other people and allowing time for reflection.... I feel like the way the course was taught is going to make me a 'social' worker, and hopefully a good one. (Participant 008)

Findings of Interview Question 8

In question eight the researcher asked, "In what ways was your learning affected by the professor's engagement in the course"? Seven participants (87.5%) spoke about the professor's high level of engagement in the course. Participant 003 highlighted how "[The professor] was completely engaged in the course and his high levels of engagement were infectious". It was also said that "[the professor's] way of teaching [was] very

experiential. He's very passionate" (Participant 004). One participant was able to learn more about herself by watching how the professor engaged with students. She said,

[he] taught me how to talk about myself and my personal experience on a professional level. He would only tell some stories about his daughter or family at certain times. He knew when it was ok to tell a personal story and when it was not. Professionally, I know when to do this, but I really learned it by watching him. I learned something more by watching him. As a student it was great to watch someone else model this behavior for me. I was able to be a sponge and absorb all the knowledge that was brought to the table. (Participant 005)

It was said that the professor possessed "[h]igh levels of engagement which was really important to the course material" (Participant 006) and that "...[the professor] was very present... his individual contribution was very present in everything that he was doing... and engaged... he was crazy enthusiastic (Participant 008). Participant 008 elaborated on her understanding of the professor's enthusiastic characteristics. She said,

[y]ou think enthusiasm, this jumping person all around, and I don't think that... I think his engagement in the course was much more goal oriented.... I learned what he set out to teach me. I'm learning what he set out to teach me. And that wouldn't have happened if he wasn't so concerned about doing it well and effectively.

The theme of enthusiasm was also apparent in the comments from Participant 009, "...kind of like the enthusiastic thing... just because he was engaged, you were engaged, it made me engaged" and Participant 010 who said, "...he was so enthusiastic, so passionate about what he was teaching, he made the students feel that way". Participant 010 also said,

It was infectious; it wasn't forced, just infectious.... [W]hatever the topic was, you always got excited about it. It was presented in such a way that it was exciting.... [H]e would make you think about something you never thought about before, thinking 'I can really do that' or 'this is possible'.... The positiveness and enthusiasm, the passion, all those things just made you want to learn more and made you want to do better, made you want to be a better person, all these things.

Four participants (50%) commented on how the high level of engagement from the professor made them feel cared for. One participant said the professor's "approach [was] completely, completely different. It is so much about who the person is, and who the persona isn't, and what's good for you and what's not good for you" (Participant 004).

Another participant shared her experience. She said,

[h]e cared so much about what each student had to say. A lot of the time I keep my mouth shut in class and having a professor who was clearly interested in what students had to say and in what I was saying allowed me to open up. It felt like a unique experience. I have never had a professor... who was so interested in what students had to say. (Participant 006)

During the interviews it was very clear "...that a lot of care and preparation went into the course" (Participant 008). In their own way each participant felt "...[the professor] cared so much... he would work so hard for you to learn what he was trying to teach" (Participant 009).

Three participants (37.5%) spoke about the professor's connection to the course content and knowledge. One participant said, "...for me, I learn better with somebody who can connect to the knowledge" (Participant 004). Other participants also spoke about the importance of having a professor that is knowledgeable yet able to connect to students in a meaningful way. Participant 007 said,

The type of...facilitator that [the professor] is, is very important to this course. The fact that he has a background in coaching is very important. A typical person would not have been able to bring the learning in the classroom full circle like he can. He has an investment in your learning and he talks about that quite openly. He outright tells you how important it is to learn these lessons.... He maintains a connection with students that most professors do not bother to do. He does this through email and his blog. He is up-to-date on people. I am doing a project now in a remote community up north and I called him to get his input on the situation. I took the course in 2008 and in 2012 I am still contacting him.

Another participant spoke about how the professor engaged with the students in the course by using his knowledge of learning styles. By giving students an opportunity to learn about their best ways of learning the professor was able to make meaningful connections with each student and their learning process. She said,

...he was so knowledgeable... in what he was teaching. He gained his knowledge through his life experiences and shared that with the class. He didn't learn it from reading a book. Sometimes he'd share quotes from a book, but he didn't hammer it into you that you had to be an academic or something to be intelligent or to be able to learn. He made you realize everybody's different in how they learn and everybody has different learning styles.... I realized 'okay, I can't learn that way, that's not the way I learn, this is the way I learn, we're interacting, we're discussing, it's a small class... making us aware that there's nothing wrong with us if we can't learn in a certain way, because there are so many different ways of learning. You might not be the type of person that can sit and listen to a lecture and get an 80. (Participant 010)

Findings of Interview Question 9

In question nine the researcher asked, "How would you contrast transformational learning with 'regular' learning"? Two response types were given. The first are responses related to transformational learning and the second are responses related to 'regular' learning. Participants were then asked this prompting question: "Do you think you had a transformational learning experience in the course or as a result of the course"?

Responses Related to Transformational Learning

Four participants (50%) spoke about transformational learning as learning, which is connected, to Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous ways of learning. Participant 003

credited Leanne Betasamosake Simpson¹⁰ for having taught her that “[w]orking with Indigenous Knowledge... causes personal change... if you’re not changing, you’re not doing Indigenous Knowledge. You’re not really interacting and you’re not really doing the work”. Participant 003 also said,

[o]ther people in Indigenous Studies would almost say Indigenous study is ceremony, you know. That’s how I experience it because I am Indigenous. ...I think in Indigenous Studies, it’s like how will you know it? You know it from inside. You really know it because you learned it and there’s no other way unless you actually know. That’s how transformational learning is. ...[The professor’s] courses, I think are kind of at the forefront of Indigenous Studies here. I think [the professor] is really, really, doing Indigenous Studies.

A similar description was given by Participant 004 who said “[i]f you learn from experiential or transformational learning, it’s in your being, you can’t not acknowledge it, you can’t not know it, it’s there, it’s part of who you are”. Another participant said “...you don’t notice it’s happening while it’s happening, it doesn’t seem like work a lot of the time, it’s not really ever that boring” (Participant 009). From this discussion it became clear some of the participants viewed transformational learning and learning using Indigenous epistemologies as a synonymous process. One participant said “Indigenous learning is like a journey” (Participant 008) while another said that based on her understanding of her culture, transformational learning and traditional Indigenous ways of learning are very aligned (Participant 003).

Four participants (50%) spoke about transformational learning as a spiritual process that stays with you after the course is complete. Participant 005 spoke about transformational learning as “soul learning” and Participant 008 said it is “learning [that] involves... liv[ing] your life a certain way, but it doesn’t have to be religious. That’s what

¹⁰ Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, PhD is of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg ancestry and a member of Alderville First Nation. She is the author of several books, short stories, and poetry and has lectured at universities across Canada.

I've learned". She also said, "Transformational learning sticks with you" a notion which was also supported by another participant who said that transformational learning "...is like eating good food that sits with you and stays with you" (Participant 005). She also said, "Today I cannot tell you anything that I learned from [my other courses]. I can tell you everything that I learned from [the professor's] course. Transformational learning stays with you forever". Participant 010 also agreed as she said, "...transformational learning just stays with you, you get so much more out of it. It affects your whole being, your whole life". This participant also said,

...you can't learn as a whole person and leave spirituality out of it, because there's these certain parts, and if the 'regular' way of learning doesn't tap into all those parts, than you're not going to learn the same way you would in transformational learning. It's the best way to learn as far as I am concerned.

Participant 007 said "[t]ransformational learning is impactful and long lasting. It is relevant because you can use the framework and the tools in any situation.

One participant spoke about transformational learning as community. She said,

[i]t is a sense of community.... There is a vested interest in everyone's learning because you learn from each other. You use a lot of critical thinking. You are looking closely at yourself and questioning your thoughts and behaviours. You begin to ask yourself good questions. There is support from the educator. As the learner you have to be open and willing. (Participant 007)

Three participants (37.5%) spoke about transformational learning as an individual experience. Transformational learning was described as "tangible" (Participant 006), "holistic, and individual... based on your attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs.

Transformational learning is multi-dimensional and has the ability to transcend every learning style" (Participant 007). Another student said "Transformational learning... [is] more enjoyable... and meaningful.... [It] is more skyward [and] it's... about becoming, learning what's involved with your becoming, that's the difference" (Participant 008)

Responses Related to ‘Regular’ Learning

Four participants (50%) spoke about ‘regular’ learning as participating in content-based academic theory, regurgitation, and learning that is linear. She said,

...a lot of my memories of writing assignments are really intense and [are] personally involved and enveloped, sometimes working through trauma. I took post-colonial theory in first year and I have a theoretical background in post-colonial theory and a lot of that was talking about mixed race, urban identity, and theorists who were writing from my exact positionality and also talking about experiences of colonialism. In my first year, I wrote a lot about the 60s Scoop and my mom being a part of the 60s Scoop. I wrote a lot about gender discrimination in the Indian Act and how that relates to me, about Indianness. I spent a lot of time interrogating Indianness and Indigeneity. Then I started moving into epistemology and where academia took me, I think there was always a lot of room for my learning. ...I can participate in theory and it means something, [that’s] how I see ‘regular’ learning, that’s how I see it, but [the professor’s] courses were structurally different.... (Participant 003)

Participants also described ‘regular’ learning as “...learning [that] is by the book”

(Participant 004) and “...learning [that] is like playing Ping-Pong. The information does not stay with you (Participant 005). One participant credited Mark Dockstator¹¹ for teaching her that “the premise of Western education [is] argumentative, it’s critical, [and it’s] cumulative... (Participant 008). This participant also said, “learning isn’t linear, ‘regular’ learning [is]... ‘I got 80% there, passed the test here, read the book, it’s done’”.

Two participants (25%) spoke about ‘regular’ learning as incomplete. It was described as learning that “....does not guide you...[and] is one dimensional in terms of your ability to transmit and absorb information” (Participant 007). Another student called it “fake learning” that is more about “regurgitation” (Participant 010).

¹¹ Mark Dockstator, J.D. is a member of the Oneida Nation of the Thames. He is the first First Nations person to graduate with a doctorate in law, tenured faculty in the Indigenous Studies Department at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, and currently the President of First Nations University in Regina, Saskatchewan.

Responses to Prompt Question

As a prompt in questions nine, the researcher asked “Do you think you had a transformational learning experience in the course or as a result of the course”? Seven participants (87.5%) felt they had a transformational learning experience. Participants responded, “Yes, definitely” (Participant 010) and “Yah, absolutely” (Participant 008). Participant 008 spoke at length about her experience.

...[A]s a person who identifies as an Aboriginal person, linear learning is very frightening for me. I can't imagine myself ever going to... [a] university that doesn't have as much...Indigenous awareness as this university. ...Telling students what the answers are...never letting them answer...in the context of Indigenous history, constantly being told the history is this, according to that non-Native person...when are you going to start asking that Native person what their history is? And so for me, it was like, what are your answers? What's your perspective on that? For me it meant having an opinion. That's sovereignty. As a person from a specific Nation, [it] has really meant decolonization... and that's transformational. As a learner it's meant that I can transform not only my own personal history but also the recorded history... and so it has been liberating. In terms of having a transformational experience, I think it is rooted in the liberty to be an intellectual, not just on paper, but as a person.... It's transformational because it means I'm allowed to be at university, I'm allowed to be a learner.... It's really like an access point for Indigenous study in the university because it's allowing that journey into the university environment.... [It cannot be] a learning institution for me if the journey is not acknowledged.... I wouldn't be here without that... none of my family has graduated from university; I'm going to be the first person...courses like this are absolutely essential to having a successful Indigenous population at this school. I think it goes to show how smart the Indigenous way... is. It predates Christianity. The methods are really old... it's just a testament to [the professor's] intelligence and his commitment to efficacy that he's incorporated that into the class. I don't think it's a mere 'oh [the professors] interested in Indigenous Knowledge, or he's enthusiastic... and wants a job in the Indigenous Studies Department'. I think it's a testimony to his commitment to efficacy and learning [and] making the most of learning and that never offended me at all. He never went into things that were inappropriate, or disrespectful to traditions. He was aware that way.

Another participant said,

I absolutely had a transformational learning experience in [the professor's] course. I know because I still use the tools that were provided to me in that course. I still have the book. I talk to a lot of people about my experiences in that

class and I am now sharing the knowledge that I learned. That is the real sign that you have learned something – when you begin to pass it on to others because you cannot keep it all to yourself. (Participant 007)

One participant (12.5%) spoke of not experiencing transformational learning within the course. Participant 006 stated that she did not experience a transformational learning experience in the course. She said,

[t]his is one of the courses that stands out in my mind, however I think some other students may have had a more transformational learning experience. I did not know what the class was about and I do not think that I was ready to embrace the course fully. Other students were ready for change and they were greatly impacted by the course.

Findings for Interview Question 10

In question 10 the researcher asked, “How would you describe the experience of transformational learning”? Seven participants (87.5%) spoke about transformational learning as an impactful continuous journey. Participant 010 said “there were a lot of Ah Ha moments, but I think with me it was more of a gradual learning experience”. Other participants also spoke about their experience in the course as being about ongoing learning. Transformational learning is the beginning of “... a path that is a continual process. You understand that it continues past the end of the course. It is determination – once you have gone through the hurdles you continue to use the tool” (Participant 007). Another student stated that her transformational learning experience in the course “... still impacts to this day, [even having taken the course] four or five years ago” (Participant 004). Participant 003 described her ability to continually draw on her experiences in the course because she was able to “internalize what the [professor] said.” Another participant said “I still use everything I learned in the course today in my professional life” (Participant 005). Participant 006 spoke about how she was impacted by the course.

She said,

...now I sit in the front row of my graduate classes. I was always a back rower and now I always sit in the front row because [the professor] encouraged students to sit in the front row. I really took that from the class. Sitting in the back row I could never see the professor's face. Sitting in the front row I am more engaged and I listen more to what they are saying. It is incredible. I used to skip a lot of my classes and now I rarely miss a class. If I were to miss a class now, my professor would notice that I wasn't there, so I attend more. As a result I have a 20 percent increase in my GPA.

Participant 009 described the experience of transformational learning in the course as "moving". She said, "... you look at things in so many different ways than you did before. This course isn't just about work, no, work doesn't seem that big of a topic, and then you get into the course and learn about work in so many different ways".

Three participants (37.5%) characterized transformational learning as a validating process which connected with who they are as learners. Participant 004 said "[f]or me it's emotional. It's an affirmation. It's... oh my God, you know. ... Transformational learning affirms everything.... It [is] a reconnection of who I am". The idea of connecting to the self was also present in the experience of Participant 010 who said,

I had these... repressed ideas about myself. I always thought I was fairly intelligent, and fairly capable, but I always had self-esteem issues.... The content of the course, but mostly [the professor's] way of teaching just sort of brought those ideas that I had about myself into more of a reality. I still have moments where I think 'I can't do that' or 'this is too much for me', I still have that always in the back of my mind. [The course] help[ed] you to realize your potential and what's in you. It was like a build-up of confidence and realization that you have all the strengths and you have the potential to do whatever you want. So the experience to me was life changing.

Another participant explained,

using your own knowledge base, less quantitative methods gets you no street credit at university. The university environment makes it very hard and scary to use your own knowledge base. It is much harder to trust ourselves enough to use our own knowledge and experience and not just rely on the knowledge of textbooks and of professors. Doing the internal work of trusting yourself is much

harder in an environment, such as a university, where students feel vulnerable most of the time. In this course we were given a safe space to explore ourselves as knowledge holders. (Participant 007)

Three participants (37.5%) spoke about transformational learning as an empowering experience. “It is empowering, relevant. It is exciting, builds self-esteem, and builds positive attitudes” (Participant 007). Another participant said,

[t]he experience is empowering, but that’s not true of all transformational learning experiences. It’s empowering, exciting not on an emotional level but on the subject of possibility...decolonized is transformational learning... the experience was liberating. Those are probably the three words I’d associate with this: it’s empowering, liberating, and exciting. The real rocks, the anchors of the experience are in liberating and empowering.... (Participant 008)

One participant was empowered through the course content. She said,

... before I got into this course I felt like work wasn’t something you talk about that much, now I think about work and seasonality, and that was something that was already in my life. I never thought about it that way before. [Also] work as spirituality, I never thought of it like that but always knew I wanted to help my people by being a teacher, and that’s spiritual (Participant 009).

Two participants (25%) spoke about their transformational experience as challenging. Participant 003 said, “How I see transformational learning is sort of like when you’re challenged to the degree that the words don’t really have meaning” and Participant 007 said, “It’s determination, once you have gone through the hurdles you continue to use the tool. Some people would think it is a hard course, but there is difficult work to be done in this area”. Transformational learning was experienced as a difficult process born from extreme and challenging circumstances. According to one participant,

[y]ou’re really pushed to the very, very, very, challenging circumstances and I think transformational learning comes from really extreme circumstances.... I think for transformational learning in the classroom it’s also really challenging. There is a challenge in what you are doing. It’s not easy and the motive for excelling is to believe in your own mastery of something. That’s how I would describe the experience; being pushed past the threshold of what you feel you can handle to a place of uncomfortable and revelatory new understanding.... I would

say transformational learning is difficult learning. I would say it is associated with risk and cost. (Participant 003)

Two participants (25%) described their experience with transformational learning as being connected to the relationships that were forged during the course. One student said “[t]he relationships, that was [what the] whole year was [about]. I mean, even with the professor, you can’t say you didn’t have a relationship with him. He was that type of person” (Participant 004). Another participant said,

I did have a transformational learning experience in that class because I was accepted on so many levels. Every side of me from the new student to the mature student, to the student with a child was accepted. I now accept other people. I now am open to other people and their experiences on all different levels. (Participant 005)

Findings of Interview Question 11

In question 11 the researcher asked, “Is there anything else you would like to add”? Six participants (75%) chose to comment. Four participants (50%) spoke about the course pedagogy as connected to the relationships that were developed between the student and the professor. Participant 005 said,

I believe that whatever style [the professor] has for teaching some people need to feel that creativity to make every class in the Indigenous Studies Department more powerful. This teaching pedagogy needs to be shared with Indigenous professors who students expect to be dynamic teachers. Many of my courses with Indigenous professors were ‘dry toast’. [The professor’s] class had all the ‘meat and potatoes’. I am always using the idea of ‘Conversations that Matter’. I make sure that I have conversations that matter with the young boys that I work with. I want them to learn about conversations that matter. I want them to know that I care about them. [The professor] cared about me and that made a difference to me. I was able to go to class and I was able to open up because I knew that [the professor] cared about me.

Participant 004 said,

I’d recommend [the course] to anybody, I really would. I don’t think [the professor] should ever change how he teaches. I would like to see a lot more

professors teach along that line. I mean, honestly, anybody who is going to work with students, should be doing some kind of [transformational] course like that.

Participant 009 said, “You always have to celebrate. That’s what I learned from [the professor]”. Another participant commented further on the way the professor taught the course. She said,

In 3040 it was really helpful to me, and a good way to learn and a good way to see the results of your learning, see the evidence of your learning. All of the [professor’s] courses that I’ve took, are the ones where I have really gotten something out of it. I couldn’t sit here and talk about other courses like this. To me that’s evidence that transformational learning works. That’s the way he taught. And I’m still remembering things from my first year here, from our class, even what somebody else had said in class and that’s very rare. When you think back about my other courses, it’s really hard to come up with something really enlightening that the teacher said, but with [the professor’s] courses, it just has such an effect on not only your learning and retention and all that, but just on your life. You tend to incorporate the things you learned in his classes into your life and it makes everything better. In your work, in your personal life, in your social life, all these different parts of your life have been affected by what he taught you and the way he taught. Those classes will be not only my most memorable classes, but my most treasured memories of Trent. (Participant 010)

One participant (12.5%) spoke about the role of the reflection process. She said,

[j]ournaling is an important part of transformational learning. If you journal it stays with you. You’re thinking about it for the next week or so, you’re thinking about what you’re going to put in your journal. If you’re thinking about something often enough and then you write it down, it really does help you to retain what you’ve learned. If you read your journals back to yourself, you can see the growth, and the change, so it’s an awesome part of the learning. (Participant 010)

One participant (12.5%) spoke about how she was positively impacted by the way the professor modeled success in the course. She said,

Two days ago I was thinking about [the professor] as an example of someone who really made the world work for him through being flexible, being creative, and through insight. He didn’t have to sacrifice insight. He brought it into these institutions in order to open up space. He was able to successfully come into different institutions and open up spaces. I see [the professor] as someone who makes things happen. He brings these courses and markets them to the school and the school hires him. Or he markets himself as a consultant and he’s hired. Just

his behaviours, I observe and then I come back to as a marker of health. I think look at [his] behaviours and I remember them and come back to them and try to use them as models for how to live a good life and be successful. [The professor] has been really successful economically and all around. He extended so much respect and treated me like I was competent. He treated me with so much appreciation. His appreciation of me, I internalized, and can recall when I don't feel very good. I can think that what he said was true. It's kind of like internalizing a model to return to. (Participant 003)

One participant (12.5%) defined her experience in the course as one of sincerity.

She said,

It is a vulnerable thing, being a student, going through a transformational learning experience. I think that it's interesting how universal that need is. I saw other students... [in] a wide variety of situations [who] were... taking something different out of it. I think it's all a good thing. Learning is a journey, that's not something you find on a shelf. So it's honest, I think. Transformational learning at the university is an expression of sincerity. I've been in other educational schools, environments [where] you can tell you're a number, you're the money, go in and do it, or don't do it, we have quotas – first year this many, second year it's ok if we have this many, we don't want too many to drop, your success is something wound up in the financial interests of the university. I think [that universities] would be making a world of difference with classes like this. I hope that it continues. (Participant 008)

Summary of Findings from Interview Questions

The summaries of findings from the interview questions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Findings from Interview Questions

Interview Questions	Themes from Participant Responses	
	Themes	Number of Participants (%)
1. Describe the physical environment(s) of the course? How did they impact your learning?	Sitting in a circle	8 (100%)
	Unpleasant learning space	5 (62.5%)
	Ideal learning space	4 (50%)
2. Describe the mental environment(s) of the course? How did they impact your learning?	Open	6 (75%)
	Multiple teaching styles	4 (50%)
	Stimulating, inspiring, engaging, and about self-discovery	4 (50%)
	Feeling connected	4 (50%)
	Challenging and forward thinking	3 (37.5%)
	Workbook and core assignments	2 (25%)
3. Describe the emotional environment(s) of the course? How did they impact your learning?	Pedagogy of the course	6 (75%)
	Ability to express emotions	5 (62.5%)
	Connected to learning	3 (37.5%)
	Caring	2 (25%)
	Positive	2 (25%)
	Open and accepting	2 (25%)
	Respectful	2 (25%)
4. Describe the spiritual environment(s) of the course? How did they impact your learning?	Ability to create meaning	4 (50%)
	Personal experience and self-navigation	4 (50%)
	Risk and courage	4 (50%)
	Respectful	3 (37.5%)
	Self-worth and empowerment	2 (25%)
	Vulnerability	2 (25%)
	Thinking differently and new behaviours	2 (25%)
	Need for male/female balance	1 (12.5%)
5. Tell me a story that best represents your experience in the Indigenous Studies 3040H course.	Safe to take risks	4 (50%)
	Reflective learning	3 (37.5%)
	Moving forward and goal setting	2 (25%)
	New perspectives	2 (25%)
	Feeling heard	2 (25%)
	Autonomy	2 (25%)
	Building relationships	1 (12.5%)
6. How were you impacted by what was taught in the course?	Lasting impact	5 (62.5%)
	Self-discovery, decision making, and behavioural changes	4 (50%)
	Self-confidence	3 (37.5%)
	Personal learning styles	1 (12.5%)
7. How were you impacted by what was taught in the course?	Individualized care	5 (62.5%)
	Open-mindedness	3 (37.5%)
	Impactful learning tools	2 (25%)
8. In what ways was your learning affected by the professor's engagement in the course?	High level of engagement	7 (87.5%)
	Connection to course content and knowledge	3 (37.5%)
9. How would you contrast transformational learning (TL) with 'regular' learning (RL)?	TL as connected to Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous ways of learning	5 (62.5%)

	TL as a spiritual process	4 (50%)
	TL as an Individual experience	3 (37.5%)
	RL as content-based academic theory, regurgitation, linear	4 (50%)
	RL as incomplete	2 (25%)
9. Prompt question: Do you think you had a transformational learning experience in the course or as a result of the course?	Yes	7 (87.5%)
	No	1 (12.5%)
10. How would you describe the experience of transformational learning?	Impactful continuous journey	7 (87.5%)
	Validating	3 (37.5%)
	Empowering	3 (37.5%)
	Challenging	2 (25%)
	Connected to relationship	2 (25%)
11. Is there anything else you would like to add?	Pedagogy as connected to relationship	4 (50%)
	Reflection	1 (12.5%)
	Positive impact	1 (12.5%)
	Sincerity	1 (12.5%)

Research Questions

Eight research questions were presented in Chapter Three as the overarching questions for the study. These research questions are addressed using an analysis from the findings of the interview questions. Seven (87.5%) of participants claimed to have had a transformational learning experience in the INDG 3040H course or as a result of the course. The research questions are addressed using their descriptions of the course obtained from their interview responses.

The eight research questions are as follows:

1. What attributes are common to the transformational learning environment?
2. In what learning environments can transformational learning occur?
3. What elements are common in the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual environments that support transformational learning?
4. How can transformational learning experiences be replicated in the sense of providing the seminal factors, attributes, and elements?

5. How is transformational learning contingent on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual learning space?
6. What factors and to what degree do these factors promote change?
7. How can post-secondary educators connect transformational learning opportunities with the learning environment?
8. What are the catalysts (attributes, elements, and factors)?

The purpose of these research questions was to create a way of deconstructing the data collected in the interview questions, to better understand how the experience of transformational learning can be replicated. This is not a linear analysis. It is holistic, circular, and a continuous process as opposed to discrete. Therefore the eight research questions have been considered as a whole, to elicit a reasonable description of the often-ineffable aspects of the transformational learning experience.

What has emerged from the trends of the interview question responses are the elements, attributes, factors, and catalysts of the transformational learning experience. The elements represent the essential aspects required to create a transformational learning environment, while the attributes define the type of element, as not all elements are the same. The factors represent the outside forces and contributors to the transformational learning space that are not controllable and the catalysts represent the outcome of the differing combinations of elements, attributes, and factors.

Elements of the Transformational Learning Experience

Elements of the transformational learning experience are the aspects that are considered essential to the learning environment. According to participants the elements of the course included, sitting in a circle, reflective learning, the workbook and

assignments. Specific dynamics emerged with respect to the elements of the physical space. Sitting in a circle removed conventional modes of classroom interacting, such as the professor at the front of the room with ample physical space, while the student understands that she must sit passively in one small, and possibly crowded location, facing the professor at the front of the room. Based on the interview question responses what the circle served to do for these women, was offer a new structure where everyone has the same physical space. The Indigenous women found this a familiar and reassuring power dynamic where everyone is understood to be equal. For the non-Indigenous students the hierarchy was flattened. Sitting in a circle also provided a means for the students to see each other's faces, which aided in the relationship and community building elements within the course.

Participants spoke about reflective learning in their interviews and reflective processes were a part of the pedagogy for INDG 3040H. Reflective learning allows for students to share their learning experiences as a part of the course content. This happens through open student discussion that integrates personal experience with core readings. It also happens through weekly journal entries that help to support the ongoing integration on information and experience. Finally, a capstone portfolio demonstrates the reflective process of each student through an end of year presentation to the faculty member, highlighting what the student has learned in the course and what they will take away with them.

The third element of the transformational learning experience as discussed in participant interviews was the INDG 3040H workbook and assignments. In some ways the workbook and assignments are connected to the reflective learning, however due to

the structure that they provide for the course, they are their own element. The workbook provided a structure for the course in the form of a course syllabus (see Appendix H), weekly readings, a journal-writing template, an evaluation rubric, worksheets, and visual models. All assignments were outlined within the workbook, ensuring students would know what to expect from the course, and providing a guide from which to plan their learning process. While providing students with a workbook containing course assignments is not a new idea, what students are able to learn is that the real work and learning do not come from a workbook, it comes from attending class, from participating, from investing in relationship, and from being able to plan a learning path.

Attributes of the Transformational Learning Experience

Attributes of the transformational learning experience define more clearly the type of element that is considered essential to the learning environment. One of the elements was the circle, however, having everyone sit in a circle does not guarantee everyone will have a transformational learning experience. The quality of the circle is an important attribute of the element we refer to as sitting in a circle.

According to participants the attributes of the course included multiple teaching styles. The use of multiple teaching styles encouraged participants to engage with the course material in creative ways. Learning opportunities were provided through not only lectures, but also workshops, guest speakers, and they increased the number of ways students could learn and interact with each other in the course.

Other attributes included creating an open, stimulating, inspiring, engaging environment that was about self-discovery that is both challenging and forward thinking. This included a course pedagogy, which created space for an emotional, caring,

accepting, and respectful learning experience. The course pedagogy also included rich and reflective readings and assignments, culturally appropriate methodologies, and a small class size. Small class sizes provided an opportunity for every student to speak at least once per class. Personal experience, self-navigation, risk, courage, and autonomy were all attributes of the course that allowed for students to be vulnerable as they explored their personal learning styles. Other attributes included the individualized care of the students by the professor, open-mindedness, and the connection of course content and pedagogy to Indigenous ways of knowing and learning. This includes the consideration of learning as a spiritual process, an individual experience that takes place in community, a holistic experience that is based in relationship to oneself, to each other, and to the learning of the course content.

One attribute of the element of reflective learning is impactful learning tools. This attribute is evoked by the valuing of the unique experience each student brought to the course as an impactful learning tool. An example of this impactful learning tool would be a student sharing with the group that they find writing difficult. The subsequent discussion about the difficulty of writing also emphasizes the importance of writing; therefore writing is an impactful course tool even though it would not be the first choice of students for learning. The discussion transforms the tool of writing into an impactful process from learning.

Factors of the Transformational Learning Experience

Factors of the transformational learning experience represent the outside forces and contributors that impact the learning environment. According to participants the factors impacting their learning experience included, the physical classroom which was

referred to as an unpleasant learning space or an ideal learning space, depending on the space reserved for the class, male and female balance within the facilitation of the course, personal experience, and personal learning styles.

Participants spoke about their experience learning within an unpleasant physical classroom space and a pleasant physical classroom space. These responses indicate that while the physical space in which the course took place impacted the participant's enjoyment of the course, it did not impact their ability to experience transformational learning. Therefore the results of this study do not indicate a correlation between an unpleasant learning space or an ideal learning space and transformational learning. This indicates that transformational learning is more likely to be connected to the elements and attributes of a course as opposed to the contributing outside factors.

Catalysts of the Transformational Learning Experience

Catalysts of the transformational learning experience represent the outcome of the differing combinations of elements, attributes, and factors that are present in the learning environment. According to participants the catalysts of their transformational experience included, feeling connected to course content, expressing emotion as part of the learning, and creating meaning from the course work that connected to their self-worth and empowerment, which supported their ability to think differently and create new behaviours. Other catalysts included moving forward by setting goals, feeling heard within the classroom, and building relationships that helped to support self-discovery, decision-making, and behavioural changes. As a result of the elements, attributes, and factors of the course, participants spoke about having a high level of engagement in the course, which created a connection to course content and knowledge, leading to an

increase in self-confidence. Overall participants reported that the course was validating, empowering, challenging, reflective, and connected to relationship. Participants said the learning in this course was continuous because they were still experiencing learning from the course after it had finished. Teachings from the course stayed with participants because they had personally grown and changed from their experiences in the course. Through this impactful and continuous learning journey participants seven of the eight participants claimed to have had a transformational learning experience.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the environmental elements that are needed to create a learning environment that can be conducive to transformational learning among Indigenous women. Because the participants in this study were Indigenous women the Medicine Wheel was used breaking the environment into its physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual parts (see Table 2). Using this frame, descriptors of the transformational learning environment were established, again in accordance with the Medicine Wheel's four quadrants the descriptors were the elements, attributes, factors, and catalysts, which capture the qualitative aspect of the transformational learning environment, which encourages relationship.

Chapter 5: Recommendations and Conclusion

Overview of Research Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate how transformational learning environments can be created for Indigenous women within the post-secondary classroom. Transformational learning leads to personal change through the process of developing new frames of reference, new meaning perspectives, new habits of mind, and new mind-sets using reflection and discourse to increase self-understanding (Mezirow, 2000, p.7; Merriam et al. 2007, p. 132). It is also the process of reflective and experiential learning, that highlights and values lived experiences, which connect students to an intuitive and imaginative processes of learning (Duerr et al., 2003, p, 179-180).

The study examined interview survey results from participants to investigate whether the transformational changes occurred through influences from an individual, class assignments, or life changes and how they may have motivated the participants' perspective transformations. In addition, one-on-one interviews revealed the life-changing experiences of the participants in their own descriptive words.

In her doctoral dissertation, Ellis (2012) reported that what is missing from the research to-date is an understanding of how "lived experience" impacts transformational learning among learners (p. 109). However when considering the experience of Indigenous women and the transformational learning environment, the research suggests there is a lack of understanding about the relationship between the elements, attributes, and factors of the post-secondary classroom. It is not just the lived experiences of learners; it is the relationships that come from the lived experiences that create the transformational experience. What is offered in the literature is a linear and direct cause

and effect relationship. The research of this study has uncovered a greater complexity, which is better described as catalysts. The caution when reading the earlier research is the desire to quantify and describe a solitary nexus of linked circumstances. In fact this study indicates that transformational learning is a relationship that comprises a matrix of multi-dimensional links. As Elder Dr. Michael Thrasher (2003) has taught, “a relationship is a thousand cups of tea”. It is the dynamic of the relationship that creates the transformational environment.

How does this help to create a transformational learning environment? It is first and foremost the willingness to create relationship. The power of the relationship provides the transformation, because it supports the elements and their attributes as well as the outside factors at the same time. When relationship is present, outside factors do not matter because they impact the learner in different ways from moment to moment and their influence is superficial when compared to the power of relationship. The relationship allows the student to transcend any influence from the outside factors. In the participant’s responses, the influences of the outside factors were openly acknowledged and accepted, which enhanced the relationship so the transformational environment could emerge.

Consider your own experiences as both instructor and instructed. What was it about the elements, attributes, factors, and catalysts that made the experience transformational – or not?

Using a Medicine Wheel model creates an opportunity for a holistic view of the learning process. According to George (2010, as cited in Anuik & Gillies, 2012, pp. 67-68):

1. The Aboriginal worldview is holistic — we are Spirit, Heart, Mind, and Body
2. We are a part of Creation; we are not separate from it
3. We all have a purpose for being here and we have gifts from the Creator that are to be used for fulfilling that purpose and
4. Everything is/has Spirit/Energy. We need to be mindful of our feelings, thoughts, words, and actions. What we put out there affects everybody and everything else.

How do we know that the transformational experiences described by participants were not the result of their cultural expectations for relationship? The course was comprised of Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students. If the root of their relationships were grounded solely in their cultural expectations, we would have expected to see the Indigenous women create strong relationships with each other, but in a heterogeneous classroom culturally, socioeconomically, and from a gender and age perspective we may have expected that their situation would have added to their stigma as a disenfranchised group. This was not the case. Indeed, the professor was not Indigenous he was a Scottish Presbyterian. What was observed and reported by the Indigenous women was that the relationships among all students in the class were created. No single group was isolated. In other words, no matter the student's culture, socioeconomic status, gender, and age interrelationships were made among all students and the professor. The transformational environment increased the ability for relationships to be created, while decreasing social mores.

When an educator teaches using power over the learner, it can create a closed environment, which does not allow for the creative freedom and learning process of the learner. When material is delivered using the 'sage on the stage' approach, where an educator lectures to rows of learners, a power dynamic is visible within the classroom. The power is clearly with the educator. This sends a message to the learners that their thoughts, opinions, and knowledge are not as valuable in this learning environment as the

educator's. This learning environment is not transformational for most students.

Transformational learning is instead about relationship. This model works when an educator wants to be engaging in relationship building with the student.

When the Medicine Wheel is utilized as a pedagogical model power is distributed to both educator and learner. All members of the learning community hold power. Using the Medicine Wheel model material is drawn out of the learner and the educator acts as a catalyst. The power dynamic is visible within the classroom as distributed among all involved parties. This indicates to the learners that their thoughts, opinions, and knowledge are invaluable in this learning environment and a space is created where transformational learning can occur.

The results shared previously in Chapter Four provide insight into how educators can work from a transformative pedagogy where they are able to create learning environments that will provide their students with opportunities to be transformed by their learning experience. Taylor (2000) presented the following questions:

When during the transformative process are supportive relationships most helpful? What do helpful relationships look like? What kind of discourse takes place in these significant relationships that might offer more insight into the transformative process? How can relationships be safely manifested and managed in the context of the classroom? (p. 308)

This study did not specifically address Taylor's questions. However, Taylor's questions could provide added insight because of the power of their specificity.

Further, the power of self-reflection helps us become aware of what we are currently offering as educators and where we might change our approach. Many readers will feel comfortable with a more quantitative approach, and evidence based outcomes are important. However, gaining a sense of familiarity and qualitative aspects of the

transformational classroom can provide a different perspective that a purely quantitative approach cannot offer. The relations modeled by graphs fall short of modeling relationships. To rely on the stories of the Indigenous women who participated in this study is to invite the reader of this study to appreciate the quantitative and to look beyond to the qualitative, so that the reader can develop a relationship with this knowledge.

Recommendation for Future Research

While the results of this study indicate a need for relationship within the transformational learning environment, this study does not investigate the various dynamics of relationship from a psychological, sociological, or cultural perspective. The focus of this study was to examine the environmental characteristics that create a transformational learning environment through the experience of Indigenous women using the Medicine Wheel. The physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the Medicine Wheel was the frame for this study, while the elements, attributes, factors, and catalysts were the descriptors within the frame. Recommendations for future research come from the data collected and the overall results of the research questions.

Firstly, the data shows that relationship is the key to creating a transformational learning environment. Further research could be conducted asking how relationship is actually created, developed, nurtured, valued, and presented within these environments. This includes investigating to what extent transformational learning is possible in the absence of relationship.

Other areas for future research include, as the participants in this study were Indigenous women, further research could be done in this field with participation from Indigenous men, or other cultural groups. Also more research is needed to better

understand the prevalence of negative transformational experiences among Indigenous women, or other cultural or disenfranchised groups and the characteristics that are involved in those experiences. Additional studies could also extend into investigating how transformational learning impacts the career choices and post-graduation choices of students.

Conclusion

This study has indicated that transformational learning is connected to the learner's relationship to themselves, their peers within the learning environment, the faculty member, and the knowledge obtained in the course. Within a transformational learning environment, such as the INDG 3040H course, Indigenous women who have been historically disenfranchised reclaim themselves through the process of relationship building and learning within a supportive community. It is at the intersection of relationship, community, and learning where they are able to set themselves free of prior ways of thinking, feeling, and being or as Mezirow (2000) refers to the process: meaning perspectives, habits of mind, and pre-formed mind-sets (as cited in Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 132).

In order to have a transformational learning experience the learning environment must consider the development of relationship in the design of the physical space, the course content, the course pedagogy, and within the course evaluation. Relationship within the structure of the course has the potential for creating a profound transformational learning experience for our students. When we change the way we approach curriculum, content, dynamics, set-up, and openness, the way we teach, the way we view students, our way of being, becomes transformed. Just as course content is

important in the education of students, so too are the relationships we develop with students as they learn from us. In this way we teach the profound importance of relationship by living it in our classrooms. When we strive to structure courses with the goal of making education transformational for our students, paradoxically, we ourselves are also transformed.

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Appendix A - Email to Participants

Hi Indigenous Studies 3040H – The Meaning of Work Course Alumni,

My name is Lindy Garneau and I am a student in the Master of Education Post-Secondary Studies program at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I am seeking volunteers who would be interested in participating in interviews for my research. This interview will enquire about your experience as a student within the Indigenous Studies 3040 The Meaning of Work in the Contemporary World course that you took with Professor Lorne Ellingson. If you are interested in participating in this research please contact me at lindygarneau@trentu.ca.

Thank you very much,

Lindy Garneau
705-927-7077
lindygarneau@trentu.ca

Appendix B - Letter of Information



Graduate Programs / Faculty of Education

Graduate Programs / Faculty of Education
St. John's, NL Canada A1B 3X8
Tel: (709) 864-8553
Fax: (709) 864-4379
www.mun.ca/educ/grad/

Information for Participants

Study Title: Transformational Learning Environments

Researcher: Lindy Garneau, B.A., M.Ed. (candidate)

Supervisor: Dr. Robert Shea, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador

Study Purpose: The purpose of this study is to determine if transformational learning (learning that leads to personal, academic, and/or career change) has taken place within students whom have taken the INDG 3040 course at Trent University. The INDG 3040 course has been described as a course that provides transformational learning opportunities to students. This study will explore the validity of this assertion as well as provide information about the role of the learning environment within the transformational experience.

Research Methods: This study will involve interviews with 6 to 10 students who have participated as students in the INDG 3040 course. The interview will consist of a written questionnaire to be filled out and answered by the participant as well as an oral interview component. Each participant will be provided with a copy of his/her interview transcript to review and edit as s/he feels necessary, which will then be returned to the researcher.

Researcher Accountability: The researcher is accountable to the Research Ethics Board (REB) and the Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) of Trent University. The researcher is also accountable to the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. As well, the researcher is accountable to the participants to ensure the participants have full input into their contribution to the study by receiving copies of their transcripts for review and editing.

Participation: Participation is strictly voluntary. Participants may choose to remove themselves at any time with no negative consequences or penalties whatsoever.

Commercial Use: The researcher will not make use of the information gathered for this study for any commercial venture.

Expected Benefits: The researcher anticipates that participants may learn about themselves as learners and may also learn about transformational learning. They may learn that they have had a transformational learning experience and as a result they may learn where to look for other transformational learning experiences. By participating in this study they will have an opportunity to reflect on their learning and perhaps learn something about themselves. This study may also benefit Trent University and the Indigenous Studies Department / Business Administration Department as it could potentially provide evidence (or not) of transformational learning which is taking place within one of its courses. This study could also benefit any other post-secondary institution or place of adult learning that is interested in adult learning experiences, especially as they pertain to transformational learning environments.

Potential Risks: The participants may perceive risks within this study because it is being conducted within an institution (Trent University), and within a course (Indigenous Studies 3040) that has power over them. Due to the researcher's previous and continued involvement with students at Trent University some participants may feel obligated to participate in this study. Participants may be concerned that their participation or lack of participation in the study will impact the student/staff relationship. Participants may also worry about the level of confidentiality that will be maintained regarding their involvement in the study. These potential risks and concerns have been addressed with the Director of the First Peoples House of Learning at Trent University through the creation of a student referral system where the Director will meet with, and academically support any participant who feels unable to approach the researcher within her role as Aboriginal Counsellor. Participants will be notified of this option in writing through the consent form.

Study Duration: The study will take place over a period of three months, beginning no later than April 2011, and ending no later than June 2011. Each participant's time commitment is anticipated to be over a period of 1 month, with 2 contacts of 2 hours per contact maximum, with the researcher. Of those 2 contacts, the first will be a semi-structured interview, while the second will be an opportunity for the participant to read over his/her transcript for approval and/or changes.

Conflict of Interest: Where a potential conflict of interest occurs (i.e. the researcher has a direct familial, social or employment relationship with the participant), the researcher will declare this conflict of interest to the participant and the academic supervisor. The researcher will immediately decline to have the participant involved in the study, and will explain to the participant the reasons for the decision.

Data Gathering, Storage and Use: The researcher will use a digital voice recorder and notes (either by hand or computer) to record interviews with participants. The researcher will be responsible for storing all acquired data and information in a secure storage unit (i.e. locked file cabinet) in the researcher's home office. Research assistants will have access to recorded interviews for transcription purposes. All student personal information, including name and contact information will be encrypted. Research assistants will not have access to student personal information at any time. Any electronic

files will be stored on a flash-drive (memory stick), with a backed up copy, both of which will also be stored in the locked storage unit. Any interview data (i.e. transcripts) being transmitted electronically will be encrypted to maintain confidentiality of participants. At the completion of the thesis report, all interview documents will be destroyed and/or erased electronically. The data will be used specifically for the researcher's thesis document, along with directly related articles or presentations.

Confidentiality: The researcher is responsible for and committed to ensuring the confidentiality of the participants. The researcher will not discuss the information received from any participant with another individual without specific written consent. The researcher may discuss non-identifying and non-specific information with others, such as in a case study example for instructional purposes or in articles or presentations in order to share the findings of the study. No identifying information about individuals or specific events will appear in the final thesis document. All data will be stored in a locked storage unit, and all electronically transmitted data will be encrypted.

Appendix C - Consent Form



Graduate Programs / Faculty of Education

Graduate Programs / Faculty of Education
St. John's, NL Canada A1B 3X8
Tel: (709) 864-8553
Fax: (709) 864-4379
www.mun.ca/educ/grad/

Consent Form

Study Title: Transformational Learning Environments in the Post-Secondary Classroom

Researcher: Lindy Garneau, B.A., M.Ed. (candidate)

Supervisor: Dr. Robert Shea, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador

Greetings,

I am a M.Ed. student at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, in the Post-Secondary Studies Master of Education program. In order to complete my program, I am required to carry out a study that will become the body of my dissertation, and would greatly appreciate your participation in this study.

I am talking with students who have participated in the Indigenous Studies 3040 *The Meaning of Work in the Contemporary World* course. The study will involve two parts: (1) an initial interview with participants consisting of a written questionnaire to be filled out and answered by the participant as well as an oral interview component; (2) Each participant will be provided with a copy of his/her interview transcript to review and edit as s/he feels necessary, which will then be returned to the researcher.

Any identifying information of individuals or reference to specific events discussed by you will be changed to maintain your confidentiality, and that of others.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the study is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more

detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, please feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any other information given to you by the researcher.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this study. If you choose not to take part in the study or if you decide to withdraw from the study once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

Study Purpose: The purpose of this study is to determine if transformational learning (learning that leads to personal, academic, and/or career change) has taken place within students whom have taken the INDG 3040 course at Trent University. The INDG 3040 course has been described as a course that provides transformational learning opportunities to students. This study will explore the validity of this assertion as well as provide information about the role of the learning environment within the transformational experience.

Research Methods: This study will involve interviews with 6 to 10 students who have participated as students in the INDG 3040 course. The interview will consist of a written questionnaire to be filled out and answered by the participant as well as an oral interview component. Each participant will be provided with a copy of his/her interview transcript to review and edit as s/he feels necessary, which will then be returned to the researcher.

Researcher Accountability: The researcher is accountable to the Research Ethics Board (REB) and the Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) of Trent University. The researcher is also accountable to the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. As well, the researcher is accountable to the participants to ensure the participants have full input into their contribution to study by receiving copies of their transcripts for review and editing.

Participation: Participation is strictly voluntary. Participants may choose to remove themselves at any time with no negative consequences or penalties whatsoever.

Commercial Use: The researcher will not make use of the information gathered for the study for any commercial venture.

Expected Benefits: The researcher anticipates that participants may learn about themselves as learners and may also learn about transformational learning. They may learn that they have had a transformational learning experience and as a result they may learn where to look for other transformational learning experiences. By participating in this study they will have an opportunity to reflect on their learning and perhaps learn something about themselves. This study may also benefit Trent University and the Indigenous Studies Department / Business Administration Department as it could potentially provide evidence (or not) of transformational learning which is taking place within one of its courses. This study could also benefit any other post-secondary institution or place of adult learning that is interested in adult learning experiences, especially as they pertain to transformational learning environments.

Potential Risks: The participants may perceive risks within this study because it is being conducted within an institution (Trent University), and within a course (Indigenous Studies 3040) that has power over them. Due to the researcher's previous and continued

involvement with students at Trent University some participants may feel obligated to participate in this study. Participants may be concerned that their participation or lack of participation in the study will impact the student/staff relationship. Participants may also worry about the level of confidentiality that will be maintained regarding their involvement in the study. These potential risks and concerns have been addressed with the Director of the First Peoples House of Learning at Trent University through the creation of a student referral system where the Director will meet with, and academically support any participant who feels unable to approach the researcher within her role as Aboriginal Counsellor. Participants will be notified of this option in writing through the consent form.

Study Duration: The study will take place over a period of four months, beginning no later than June 2011, and ending no later than October 2011. Each participant's time commitment is anticipated to be over a period of 1 month, with 2 contacts of 2 hours per contact maximum, with the researcher. Of those 2 contacts, the first will be a semi-structured interview, while the second will be an opportunity for the participant to read over his/her transcript for approval and/or changes.

Conflict of Interest: Where a potential conflict of interest occurs (i.e. the researcher has a direct familial, social or employment relationship with the participant), the researcher will declare this conflict of interest to the participant and the academic supervisor. The researcher will immediately decline to have the participant involved in the study, and will explain to the participant the reasons for the decision.

Data Gathering, Storage and Use: The researcher will use a digital voice recorder and notes (either by hand or computer) to record interviews with participants. The researcher will be responsible for storing all acquired data and information in a secure storage unit (i.e. locked file cabinet) in the researcher's home office. Research assistants will have access to recorded interviews for transcription purposes. All student personal information, including name and contact information will be encrypted. Research assistants will not have access to student personal information at any time. Any electronic files will be stored on a flash-drive (memory stick), with a backed up copy, both of which will also be stored in the locked storage unit. Any interview data (i.e. transcripts) being transmitted electronically will be encrypted to maintain confidentiality of participants. At the completion of the study, all interview documents will be destroyed and/or erased electronically. The data will be used specifically for the researcher's thesis document, along with directly related articles or presentations.

Reporting of Results: The data collected will be used within a thesis report. The data will be reported by using direct quotations and summarizations taken from interviews. No personally identifying information will be used.

Confidentiality: The researcher is responsible for and committed to ensuring the confidentiality of the study participants. The researcher will not discuss the information received from any participant with another individual without specific written consent. The researcher may discuss non-identifying and non-specific information with others, such as in a case study example for instructional purposes or in articles or presentations in order to share the findings of the study. No identifying information about individuals or specific events will appear in the final thesis document. All data will be stored in a locked storage unit, and all electronically transmitted data will be encrypted.

Questions: You are welcome to ask questions at any time during your participation in this

study. If you would like more information about this study, please contact:

Lindy Garneau
1600 West Bank Dr.
Peterborough, On.
K9J 7B8
705-748-1011 x.7905
lindygarneau@trentu.ca

If you have any questions regarding the research ethics review or the study process, you may contact my academic supervisor, Dr. Robert Shea at (709) 864-7594; or Memorial University's Chairperson of the ICEHR at (709) 864-2861; or the Trent University Research Office at (705) 748-1011 ex.7050.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Board at Trent University. For questions regarding participant's rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Trent University Research Office at (705) 748-1011 ext. 7050.

The proposal for this study has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the study (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at (709) 864-2861.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about study
- You have been able to ask questions about this study
- You are satisfied with answers to all of your questions
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing
- You understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you negatively now or in the future.

If you sign this form, you do not give up your legal rights, and do not release the researcher from her professional responsibilities.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form for your records.

Your Signature:

I, _____, agree to participate in this study. I understand that I will be interviewed. I, furthermore, understand that I will be asked to review the transcript from my interview and to provide any editing to that transcript that I determine to be necessary. I may also revoke my given permission to the researcher to use the transcript, should I so desire.

I acknowledge that my signed consent will allow the researcher, Lindy Garneau, to include non-identifying information and quotations from my interviews with her in the final thesis document, and in any publications and/or presentations developed directly from this study.

I have read and understood the description provided; I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the study, understanding that I may withdraw my consent at any time.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this information and consent form for my records.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature :

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

Signature of Investigator

Date

(705) 748-1011 x. 7905
lindygarneau@trentu.ca

Appendix D - Interviewee Compensation Form



Graduate Programs / Faculty of Education

Graduate Programs / Faculty of Education

St. John's, NL Canada A1B 3X8

Tel: (709) 864-8553

Fax: (709) 864-4379

www.mun.ca/educ/grad/

Interviewee Compensation Form

Study Title: Transformational Learning Environments in the Post-Secondary Classroom

Researcher: Lindy Garneau, B.A., M.Ed. (candidate)

Supervisor: Dr. Robert Shea, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador

To compensate you for your time and involvement in this study please choose one of the following gift cards:

Check the box of the corresponding gift card of your choice.

- ☐ \$25.00 Trent University Bookstore
- ☐ \$25.00 Wal-Mart
- ☐ \$25.00 Chapters
- ☐ \$25.00 Cineplex

Participation is strictly voluntary. Participants may choose to remove themselves at any time with no negative consequences or penalties whatsoever. Participants may keep all compensation if he/she chooses to remove themselves at any time.

I acknowledge that I have received compensation.

Participant's Name (print):

Participant's Signature

Date

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Lindy Garneau
1600 West Bank Dr.
Peterborough, On.
K9J 7B8
705-748-1011 x.7905
lindygarneau@trentu.ca

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Board at Trent University. For questions regarding participants rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Trent University Research Office at (705)748-1011 ext. 7050

The proposal for this study has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the study (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Appendix E - Interview Survey



Graduate Programs / Faculty of Education

Graduate Programs / Faculty of Education

St. John's, NL Canada A1B 3X8

Tel: (709) 864-8553

Fax: (709) 864-4379

www.mun.ca/educ/grad/

Transformational Learning Environments in the Post-Secondary Classroom Interview Survey

Name: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Demographics:

1. Please indicate your sex (tick appropriate box):

Male ☐

Female ☐

Other ☐

2. In what year were you born?

3. Are you an Aboriginal person (tick appropriate box)?

No ☐

Yes (specify) ☐

4. Where is your home community?

Student Experience:

5. What year of study are you currently in (tick correct box)?

- Year 1 ☐
Year 2 ☐
Year 3 ☐
Year 4 ☐
Year 5 ☐
Other (specify) _____

6. What are you majoring in (tick all boxes that apply)?

- Ancient History and Classics ☐
Anthropology ☐
Biology ☐
Business Administration ☐
Canadian Studies ☐
Chemistry ☐
Computer Science / Studies ☐
Cultural Studies ☐
Economics ☐
English Literature ☐
Environmental Resources Sciences / Studies ☐
Forensic Science ☐
French Studies ☐
Geography ☐
History ☐
Indigenous Environmental Studies ☐
Indigenous Studies ☐
International Development Studies ☐
Mathematics ☐
Nursing ☐
Philosophy ☐
Physics ☐
Politics ☐
Psychology ☐
Sociology ☐
Women's Studies ☐
Other (please specify) _____ ☐

7. How did you hear about the course?

- Friend ☐
Course Calendar ☐
Other (specify) _____ ☐

8. How many full course equivalents had you taken before taking the INDG 3040 course (tick box of appropriate range)?

- 1 – 5 ☐
6 – 10 ☐
11 – 15 ☐
16 – 20 ☐

9. In what year and semester did you participate in the Indigenous Studies 3040 *The Meaning of Work in the Contemporary World* course (tick correct box)?

- 2008 FA ☐
2009 WI ☐
2009 FA ☐
2010 WI ☐
2010 FA ☐
2011 WI ☐

10. Throughout the INDG 3040 course how many classes did you attend?

- 1 – 3 ☐
4 – 6 ☐
7 – 9 ☐
10 – 12 ☐

Appendix F - Qualitative Interview



Graduate Programs / Faculty of Education

Graduate Programs / Faculty of Education

St. John's, NL Canada A1B 3X8

Tel: (709) 864-8553

Fax: (709) 864-4379

www.mun.ca/educ/grad/

Transformational Learning Environments in the Post-Secondary Classroom Interview Questions

Name: _____

Date of Interview: _____

1. Describe the physical environment(s) of the course? How did they impact your learning? Physical environment refers to the place(s) and space(s) in which the course is taught. Physical environment includes the way in which the classroom is structured, the seating arrangements, the aesthetics, the furniture, the artwork, the lighting, the air quality and/or any other physical aspect of the environment.
2. Describe the mental environment(s) of the course? How did they impact your learning? Mental environment refers to a person's ability to build knowledge through intellectual stimulation with the course content.
3. Describe the emotional environment(s) of the course? How did they impact your learning? Emotional environment refers to a person's ability to express, listen to, and consider feelings and thoughts in a place and/or space that is receptive in a respectful way.
4. Describe the spiritual environment(s) of the course? How did they impact your learning? Spiritual environment refers to personal ways of knowing and being within a specific context. Within the context of the INDG 3040 course the spiritual environment refers to a person's ability to connect with, and create meaning with course materials, dialogues, ideas, assignments, teachings, and/or core concepts.
5. Tell me a story, which best represents your experience in the Indigenous Studies 3040 course.
6. How were you impacted by what was taught in the course?
7. How were you impacted by the way the course was taught?

8. In what ways was your learning affected by the professor's engagement in the course?
9. How would you contrast transformational learning with 'regular' learning?
10. How would you describe the experience of transformational learning?
11. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix G - Research Assistant Confidentiality Agreement



Graduate Programs / Faculty of Education

Graduate Programs / Faculty of Education

St. John's, NL Canada A1B 3X8

Tel: (709) 864-8553

Fax: (709) 864-4379

www.mun.ca/educ/grad/

Research Assistant Confidentiality Agreement

Study Title: Transformational Learning Environments in the Post-Secondary Classroom

Researcher: Lindy Garneau, B.A., M.Ed. (candidate)

Supervisor: Dr. Robert Shea, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador

This study, *Transformational Learning Environments*, is being undertaken by Lindy Garneau, at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The study has two main objectives:

1. To examine the learning experiences of students who have taken the Indigenous Studies 3040: *The Meaning of Work in the Contemporary World* course.
2. To examine transformational learning experiences and the impact(s) that the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual learning environment has on a student's ability to have a transformational learning experience.

Data from this study will be used to determine if transformational learning is occurring within students who have taken the INDG 3040 course.

Sequentially data will be used in the following ways:

1. Data will be collected through the process of digitally recording interviews.
2. Data will be transcribed.
3. Transcribed data will be sent to interviewees for approval.
4. Data will be analyzed.
5. Data will be used to support the overall thesis report.
6. After the thesis report is approved and printed all raw data will be destroyed, deleted, and/or shred.

I, _____, agree to:

1. Keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g. disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than the Principal Investigator(s);
2. Keep all research information in any form or format secure while it is in my possession;
3. Return all research information in any form or format to the Principal Investigator(s) when I have completed the research tasks;
4. After consulting with the Principal Investigator(s), erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this study that is not returnable to the Principal Investigator(s) (e.g. information stored on computer hard drive).

Research Assistant:

_____	_____
(print name)	(signature)

(date)	

Principal Investigator:

_____	_____
(print name)	(signature)

(date)	

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Lindy Garneau
1600 West Bank Dr.
Peterborough, On.
K9J 7B8
705-748-1011 x.7905
lindygarneau@trentu.ca

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Board at Trent University. For questions regarding participants rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Trent University Research Office at (705) 748-1011 ext. 7050

The proposal for this study has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the study (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861

Appendix H - The Meaning of Work in the Contemporary World (INDG – ADMIN 3040H) Course Syllabus

The Meaning of Work in the Contemporary World – Course Syllabus (INDG – ADMIN 3040 (H) – Fall 2011)

Instructor: Lorne Ellingson

Lorne is an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Indigenous Studies, professional coach, management consultant and a speaker. He is the author of 'Conversations that Matter: A path to personal and professional growth'. He also has a blog on transformational learning (<http://transformationallearning.tumblr.com>)

Lorne teaches courses on the Foundations of Aboriginal Learning, Indigenous Community Development, The Meaning of Work in Contemporary Society and the importance of Indigenous Wisdom in addressing 21st Century issues. These courses combine a coaching methodology with Indigenous approaches to learning and growth.

He has worked in the Ministries of Finance and External Affairs in the Government of Canada, the World Trade and Merchant Banking Group of the Royal Bank of Canada and Ernst and Young. He was a founding partner of Toronto Consultants International and now has his own firm, Creative Interactions. He holds Masters Degrees from Simon Fraser and Manchester Universities as well as numerous professional certifications related to his work.

Outside of the University he coaches individual executives, board chairs and teams and focuses on helping his clients to have the conversations that matter in furthering their personal and professional development. His approach to coaching and teaching is one of drawing out the potential of the individual and the group and has been influenced by his practice of Zen Buddhism, Tai Chi, and his research into transformational learning, Indigenous wisdom teachings and his constant learning from his students.



TA: Kevin Spice

Course times and location: The course is scheduled between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. on Wednesdays and will be held in the Gathering Space in Gzowski College.

The first two hours of the weekly session will generally take the form of a lecture with questions, class discussion and exercises. The final hour will take the form of a seminar where students produce a draft written reflection on the lecture / class discussion and then discuss it in groups of three. This is intended to anchor the learning for the day and to provide a basis for the written reflection to be handed in the following weekly session.

One of the classes will take the form of a workshop. It will be held in the Gathering Space and food will be served.

Enrolment: Enrolment in the class is limited to 24 students. This is because the way the course is taught requires a conversational environment where students relate to, and converse with, both the teacher and each other.

Office hours: My office hours are between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Mondays and between 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. on Tuesdays. My office is located in the Department of Indigenous Studies in Peter Gzowski College, Room 330.

Contacts: The best way to contact me is through my email (lorneellingson@trentu.ca or ellingci@rogers.com) or by my cell phone (416-515-2095). I do not pick up messages on my office phone.

The course: The course seeks to assist in preparing students for the world of work they will be entering after they leave Trent. You will explore ways of thinking about the work of work from a number of perspectives – historical, contemporary, future, Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures and those of men and women. One goal of this first part of the course is to build an awareness of the variety of ways work has been, is and may be thought of in the future. A second goal is to help you to decide how you want to view the work of work and, by implication, to begin to see what types of work environments you wish to be part of.

Using a model of personal and professional growth that has been tested in organizations, the second part of the course asks you to reflect on yourself from the perspective of achieving your full potential through participation in the world of work. These reflections will be supported by a review of relevant academic research findings in the area of personal and professional growth. The goal of this work is to help you to develop an informed personal view of the work of work you want to enter and to explore how you will want to work effectively in it.

You are first asked to see yourself from the perspectives of the various dimensions of your energy that will support your success, the values you have and will need, the talents you have and the lessons you will need to learn. In light of individual understandings

created, you will then examine the possibilities and opportunities before you, the specific goals you want to have in your working life and the challenges that will face you in achieving these goals. Following this, attitudes and behaviours that will best support desired personal and professional growth will be explored. Finally, you will develop individual models of the type of interactional environment you want to create for yourself that will take you forward.

Course Composition and Flow

The course is composed of both seminars and a workshop. There will be twelve weekly seminars and one longer workshop session. The purpose of the workshop session is to work through elements of the course that are best handled at the same time and that require more time than a seminar allows.

An accompanying schedule of classes sets out the dates and focus of each seminar and the workshop. Seen as a whole it summarizes the flow of the course.

Readings

(Note: Most of the readings prefaced by asterisks are included in the Workbook. The readings in the Workbook are required readings as are the others that have asterisks.)

General

Anderson, W. (1990). *Reality isn't what it used to be: Theatrical politics, ready-to-wear religion, global myths, primitive chic, and other wonders of the postmodern world.*

San Francisco: Harper & Row. Chapter 1, 'Welcome to the Post Modern World'.

*Fox, M. (2004). *The reinvention of work.* Bolton, Mass.: Anker Pub. Company (Introduction)

Gallwey, T. W. (2000). *The Inner Game of Work.* New York NY: Random House.

*Hertzberg, F. (1975). 'One more time, How do you motivate employees?'. *Harvard Business Review.*

Jensen, B. (2002). *Work 2.0: Rewriting the contract.* Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus Books.

Krouse, S., & Howard-Bobiwash, H. (n.d.). Preface: Keeping the Campfires Going: Urban American Indian Women's Community Work and Activism. *The American Indian Quarterly*, 489-490.

Lawrence, B. (2003). *Strong women stories: Native vision and community survival.* Toronto: Sumach Press.

Levine, R. (2009). *The chuetrain manifesto* (10th anniversary ed.). New York: Basic Books.

Liefloff, J. (1975). *The Continuum Concept*. Perseus Books, United States.
Chapter One

Pauchant, T. (1995). *In search of meaning: Managing for the health of our organizations, our communities, and the natural world*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Chapter 1, 'Organizational Effectiveness and the Meaning of Work'.

Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Chapter 1, 'What is Positive Psychology', Chapter 12 'The Future of Positive Psychology'.

For the First Class

*Ellingson, Lorne, Some thoughts on capstone portfolios (Unpublished paper)

*Ellingson, Lone, Capstone Portfolios (Unpublished paper)

*Herteis, Eileen, Using Portfolios to Document Experiential Learning (Unpublished paper)

* Zubizarreta, J. (2004). *The learning portfolio: Reflective practice for improving student learning*. Bolton, Mass.: Anker Pub.

For the Fourth Class

*Reflections as a Way of Learning: A Classroom Experience

*Text – Chapter 1, Chapter 9

For the Fifth Class

*Text – Chapter 2

* Bopp, J. (1989). *The Sacred tree* (3rd ed.). Wilmot, WI: Lotus Light.
Pages 7 to 18

* Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: How can we overcome them? : A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. New York: Bantam Books.
Chapter 1, 'The Lama in the Lab'.

Loehr, J., & Schwartz, T. (2003). *The power of full engagement: Managing energy, not time, is the key to high performance and personal renewal*. New York: Free Press.

Chapter 1, 'Fully Engaged: Energy, Not Time, Is Our Most Precious Resource'.
New York NY: Free Press

For the Sixth Class

*Text – Chapter 3

Banai, E. (1975). *The Mishomis book: The Ojibway creation story*. St. Paul, Minn.: Red School House Graphics.

Frankl, V. (2006). *Man's search for meaning*. Boston: Beacon Press.

For the Seventh and Eighth Classes

*Text – Chapter 4

* Buckingham, M., & Clifton, D. (2001). *Now, discover your strengths*. New York: Free Press.

Chapter 4, *Go to: www.positivepsychology.org. Highlight 'Learn about positive psychology'. Click on 'Take questionnaire and receive feedback'. Click on 'Register' and do so. When you have registered click on 'VIA Signature Strengths Questionnaire' and do the questionnaire. Review it and go over the VIA Strengths Scale included in the Workbook.

*Go to:

http://www.bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/resources_fbp/client_fbp/ks3/ict/multiple_int/index.htm
and take the questionnaire and bring the results to class.

*Theory of multiple intelligences, Wikipedia

Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st century*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Chapter 3, 'The Theory of Multiple Intelligences', New York NY: Basic Books

For the Ninth Class

*Text – Chapter 5, Chapter 6

*Gladwell, M. (2008). *Outliers*. Litter Brown and Company.
Chapter 2

Zander, R., & Zander, B. (2000). *The art of possibility*. Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business School Press.

For eleventh class

*Text – Chapter 7

* Emoto, M. (2004). *The hidden messages in water*. Hillsboro, Or.: Beyond Words Pub.

* Kohn, A. (1993). *Punished by rewards: The trouble with gold stars, incentive plans, A's, praise, and other bribes*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
Chapter 2, 'Is it Right to Reward'

For the Twelfth Class

*Text – Chapter 8

Alexander, C. (1979). *The timeless way of building*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Chapters 2 to 8.

Leonard, T. (1998). *The Portable Coach*. New York NY: Scribner
Coachville website, Environmental Design: The missing link of professional coaching

Attendance and submission of assignments: As a primary form of learning in the course involves participation in class discussions of seminar materials provided in class, students are expected to attend all classes. Late assignments will carry a penalty of 10%.

Evaluation: The following elements will comprise the evaluation:

- 1) A learning contract between the student and the instructor due in the second week of class.
- 2) Weekly reflections on topics covered in class and discussed in the required readings. These are to be handed in through WebCT. The form of the reflection is largely at the student's discretion and this will be discussed in the first class. There will be 10 possible reflections (for seminars 2 through 11). Each reflection will be worth 6% of the final grade (60% of the final mark). **Nine reflections must be handed in to qualify for a mark in the course and reflections may only be completed for classes you attend.** Students are also asked to post comments on a post of these choosing from my Blog on transformational learning (<http://transformationallearning.tumblr.com>).
- 3) A capstone portfolio that captures student learning throughout the year (25% of the final mark).
- 4) Final presentation to the instructor (15% of the final mark).

Text: Conversations that Matter: A Path to Personal and Professional Growth

Conversations that Matter: Workbook

Course fee: \$20

Applicable University and Class Policies

Handing in of papers

All papers must be handed in by WebCT. Students must keep a copy of their papers for their own records.

Use of computers in class

The use of computers is discouraged in the classroom. If you absolutely need them to take notes let me know. Please do not use computers to do other work during the class as it inhibits your learning and is distracting to the lecturer and to other students sitting nearby.

Use of cell phones in class

The use of cell phones or other electronic devices is not allowed in class.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty, which includes plagiarism and cheating, is extremely serious academic offence and carries penalties varying from a 0 grade on an assignment to expulsion from the University. Definitions, penalties, and procedures for dealing with plagiarism and cheating are set out in Trent University's Academic Integrity Policy. You have a responsibility to educate yourself – unfamiliarity with the policy is not an excuse. You are strongly encouraged to visit Trent's Academic Integrity website to learn more – www.trentu.ca/academicintegrity.

Access to Instruction

It is Trent University's intent to create an inclusive learning environment. If a student has a disability and/or health consideration and feels that he/she may need accommodations to succeed in this course, the student should contact the Disability Services Office (BL 109, 748-1281, disabilityservices@trentu.ca) as soon as possible. Complete text can be found under Access to Instruction in the Academic Calendar.

**INDG – ADMN 3040H – The Meaning of Work in the Contemporary World
Fall 2011**

Course Seminar and Workshop Topics

#	Date	Learning venue	Focus of learning
1	Sept. 14	Lecture Seminar	Course overview, pedagogy / how we will learn together, student / teacher learning contracts, capstone portfolios, evaluation process
2	Sept. 21	Lecture Seminar	The world of work – perspectives
3	Sept. 28	Lecture Seminar	The world of work – perspectives
4	Oct. 5	Lecture Seminar	Overview of the model – Establishing a framework
5	Oct. 12	Lecture Seminar	Understanding your energy and learning to use it wisely
6	Oct. 19	Lecture Seminar	Examining and realigning your value system
	Oct. 26		Reading Week
7	Nov. 2	Lecture Seminar	Understanding your personality and discovering your talents, strengths, and lessons you need to learn (1)
8	Nov. 9	Lecture Seminar	Understanding your personality and discovering your talents, strengths, and lessons you need to learn (2)
9	Nov. 16	Lecture Seminar	Seeing possibilities and opportunities, setting goals and understanding the challenges that will face you in reaching them
10	Nov. 23	Lecture Seminar	Aligning your attitudes and behaviours to your goals, challenges, talents, values and energy
11	Nov. 30	Workshop	Mapping out key aspects of an inter-actional environment that will support your growth process.
12	Dec. 7	Lecture Seminar	Review of course and closing
	Dec. 12-15		Final one-on-one presentations to and discussions with instructor