

Longing to Belong: An Examination of the Connection Between Language and Belonging in a
First Nations Community

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Counselling (MC)

City University of Seattle
Vancouver BC, Canada Site

Tuesday, July 11, 2017

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Abstract

The intent of this thesis is to outline the ways in which language can create an enhanced sense of belonging amongst a First Nations Community in Vancouver's Lower Mainland. Due to colonization, a vast amount of First Nations Communities have not only lost a connection to their languages, but many languages are now extinct. Further, there is a lack of research within this field. It is proposed in this thesis that the integration of First Nations Language, specifically in a school setting has a positive effect on First Nations children. This thesis is an attempt at being able to display the necessary connection between language and belonging, whilst advocating for future research within this field. A proposed study is also included to further depict the ways in which research could move forward in understanding the connection between language and belonging within this indigenous population. Due to the recent political agendas of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015) this research is pertinent to counselors, teachers, academics, and Canadians.

Key words: First Nations, Indigenous, Language, Belonging, Truth and Reconciliation, Coast Salish, Social Identity Theory, Theory of Dislocation, Education, Cultural Diversity, Colonization.

Acknowledgements

First, I want to acknowledge the First Peoples of Canada for allowing me to have the great fortune of finding my belonging on their majestic land. I would like to honour the fact that most of this thesis was created and nourished on unceded indigenous land. I would like to thank Dr. Maria Stella, and Sarah Kim for their loving aid, mentorship, feedback, and guidance throughout this process. I am truly grateful for the administrators and staff at City University who have supported me in this journey; they have made my grandest dreams come true. I want to acknowledge my professors and cohorts for inspiring me to continue with my studies. I want to thank Kathy LaRock for helping me learn the importance of Indigenous Language, and to know that our ancestors are listening to us every time we use our native language. I wanted to thank all the children, youth, and parents I have worked with over the years. You have been my biggest teachers. I wanted to thank Gilbert Kimani who tutored me through high school and graduate studies, and helped cultivate the confident academic I am today. Further, I hold great appreciation for my mother (Kerstin Loesch), Oma and Opa, my brothers (Reh & Khal), and my sister (Tash) for their continuous support over the years. I want to also thank all the friends and members of my chosen family who have had immense patience with me, and have always been able to cajole me into meaningful distractions here and there. I would like to thank our dog Oliver who spent relentless days curled up on my lap, silently cheering me on while I persistently typed every assignment, word, or post for my Masters degree. His need for walks, cuddles, and love made this journey more enjoyable and comfortable. Lastly, I want to thank my best friend and husband Dave. You truly are the light within my life. I am grateful for all your support, love, and belief in me. You are my rock. I adore every moment we share building our life together, expanding our love, and creating more beauty in the world. Finally, I want to acknowledge this incredible journey, and dream.

Finishing my Master's degree has forever altered not only my life but my entire being and soul, and for that I am truly grateful. All my relations.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Problem	1
Language Decreasing Suicide Rates	3
Social Identity Theory.....	3
Belonging	4
Theory of Dislocation	5
Purpose of the Study	5
Situating the Author.....	6
Definitions.....	6
Significance.....	8
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	9
Indigenous Worldview.....	10
The Medicine Wheel.....	11
Spirituality.....	12
Dreams	12
Stories	12
Sweat Lodges	13
Spirit/Vision Quests	13
Healers and Elders	13
Relevance of Worldview.....	14
Colonization.....	14
Urban First Nations.....	14
Counselling First Nations	15
Social Identity Theory.....	16
History.....	16
Social Identity Theory and Indigenous Populations	16
Theory of Dislocation	17
History.....	17
Relevant Rhetoric.....	19
The Importance of Language and Cultural Belonging	20
Why language decreases suicide rates	20
Language Creating Social Connectedness and Belonging.....	21
The Incorporation of Indigenous Language within a School Setting	22
Culture Being Used to Negate Violence	23
Culture Affecting Depression	24
The Importance of Speaking your Native Tongue.....	24
Not Learning One’s Cultural Language Can Be Detrimental.....	25
The Significance of Indigenous Practices in Healing	26
Culturally Appropriate Interventions Preventing Suicide.....	27
The Healing Lodge	27
Difficulty in Creating Indigenous Approaches	28
Summary.....	28
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY	29

Qualitative Research	29
Narrative Research Inquiry	30
Setting and Sample	31
Procedure	31
Proposed Research Questions	32
Summarizing and Analyzing the Data	33
Ethical Considerations	34
Studying Indigenous Populations	34
Approval and Consent.....	36
Anonymity	36
Ethics within Narrative Inquiry	37
Limitations	37
Research with Minors	37
Aligning the Research with Culture.....	37
Short Time Frame	38
Attachment to Theoretical Lenses	38
Lack of Access.....	38
Reliability and Validity.....	39
Final Proposed Limitations	39
CHAPTER 4 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	40
Summary	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Culture.....	40
Worldview.....	41
Belonging.....	41
Language.....	41
Recommendations.....	42
General Suggestions.....	42
Recommendations for Teachers.....	42
Recommendations for Counsellors	43
References.....	44

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart” (Mandela, n.d.)

Background of the Problem

In 1831, the first residential school was opened in Canada (Hart, 2016). With the implementation of the Indian Act of 1876, a rigorous plan was set to strip indigenous people of their land, their culture, and their traditional establishments of power (Clark, Kleiman, Spanierman, Isaac, & Poolokasingham, 2014). The primary method of killing cultural practices were education, specifically the creation of residential schools. “The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy [the Indian Act of 1876], which can best be described as ‘cultural genocide’”(Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 1). Further, it is outlined:

In justifying the government’s residential school policy, Canada’s first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, told the House of Commons in 1883: When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write. It has been strongly pressed on myself, as the head of the Department, that Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 2)

With courage and strength these terrible incidents in Canadian history are coming to light with survivors sharing their stories, and proceeding to take legal action. The last residential

school was finally closed in 1996 (Hart, 2016). Since then survivors have fought for recognition and restitution by creating the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (2007) (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Additionally, in 2008 Prime Minister Stephen Harper gave a formal public apology to First Nations Peoples on behalf of the government's brutal actions (Hart, 2016). These events resulted in the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (Clark et al., 2014). "The Commission was officially established on June 2, 2008, and was completed in December 2015" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, introduction). The Commission outlined 94 calls to action with specific focus on language and cultural restoration (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Call to action 14 and 15 outline that:

The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation... We call upon the federal government to appoint, in consultation with Aboriginal groups, an Aboriginal Languages Commissioner. The commissioner should help promote Aboriginal languages and report on the adequacy of federal funding of Aboriginal-language initiatives (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 2).

It is due to these calls to action that the provincial schooling system has needed to heed this call, and integrate First Nation curriculum and language within the school system (Hart, 2016). Therefore, current research on this topic is critical and politically relevant. Providing accurate benefits of these initiatives would advocate further for First Nation rights, increase funding, and create an overall awareness of the necessity of language and culture, and restoration. Unfortunately, research within First Nations is almost non-existent. This is due to the notion that a great deal of the psychological research involving language has been addressed

within the terms of immigration, mother tongues, language development, or non-verbal communication (Hart, 2016, Clark et al., 2014). This lack of research and literature has created a necessary demand for the current study. Consequently, the focus of this specific research is directed at following question: Does the acquisition of Aboriginal language create a sense of belonging in First Nation children and youth?

Language Decreasing Suicide Rates

Although it was previously mentioned that there is a lack of research within this area of study, there are relevant theoretical orientations and studies. One compatible study within this context is a study done by Chandler & Lalonde (2008). Chandler & Lalonde hypothesized that the integration of language and educating First Nation youth on culture decreases youth suicide rates. Consequently, further research must be done to indicate how language can increase a sense of belonging.

Social Identity Theory

The suggested framework within this study would be:

Tajfel's (1978) social identity theory, [which shows that] group identification comprises cognitive awareness of group membership, along with its importance to the self-concept (centrality), the value ascribed to group membership (in-group affect or pride), and a sense of emotional involvement or attachment with other group members (in-group ties) (Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2010, p. 508).

This theory is crucial in understanding the way in which social identity is created and fostered. Within the context of First Nations it could be used to describe the ways in which language creates a construct for social identify. Further research done by Harrell (2000) is also pertinent as it was outlined that ethnic identity is key in creating resiliency and contributing to

well being in minority groups. In addition to Harrell, Bombay et al. (2010) emphasize that "...in-group affect and in-group ties was associated with greater self-esteem and social functioning, and with decreased depressive symptoms in Navajo adolescents" (p. 508). This type of literature can further validate the notion that language contributes to more in-group ties and affect, thus decreasing depressive symptoms in First Nation youth. These types of findings further hint towards the significant role ethnic identity plays in personal welfare.

Belonging

Although the purpose of this study is focused on determining the connection between language acquisition and a sense of belonging, it can be challenging to define the term belonging within research terms. Neville, Oyama, Odunewu, & Huggins (2014) define belonging in terms of "...*racial-ethnic-cultural* (REC) to capture the interrelatedness of the concepts and as a way to acknowledge the artificial divide between the terms" (p. 415). Further research by Hart (2016) provides the insight that culture is seen as a way to manage the risk of violence and decrease violent acts. This further validates the current study's preposition that language acquisition should increase a greater sense of belonging in First Nation youth and children. Further literature provided by Bombay et al. (2010) studied the way in which ethnic identity affects depressive symptoms and perceived discrimination with First Nations. According to Bombay et al. (2010) "...increasing First Nations peoples connections to their traditions and cultural identity was a positive factor in facilitating greater well-being" (Bombay et al., 2010, p. 514). The Bombay et al. (2010) investigation legitimizes the necessity of culture and tradition. Although many of the studies above provide further awareness of the necessary issues involving language, culture and ethnicity, it must be reasserted that there is a lack in literature highlighting the exact effects of language acquisition and feelings of belonging found in First Nation children and youth.

Theory of Dislocation

Alexander's (2008) Theory of Dislocation proposes that addiction is a result of individuals feeling dislocated from self, community, and social networks. This theory addresses colonization, capitalism, and dysfunctions within policy and systems as specific contributors of dislocation. Its main premise is that substance dependency is caused by feelings of dislocation. Therefore, the Theory of Dislocation will also be integrated, as it is vital in understanding the ways in which belonging can deter substance dependency. Specifically, Alexander (2008) remarks that "Many native people remain severely dislocated, and native people comprise a grossly disproportionate number of those afflicted by addiction, family violence, HIV/AIDS, mental illness, and criminality" (p. 369).

After reviewing the relevant academic discourse surrounding the connection between language acquisition and belonging within First Nation communities, it became clear that there was an immense lack of research within this topic. Therefore, it is a topic that demands further exploration, especially since Canada's political strategies surround notions of implementing more Indigenous languages within our schooling systems to promote cultural restoration, and resiliency.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this narrative study is to discover the connection between language acquisition and feelings of belonging within First Nation Peoples. Within this suggested research the specific research questions are:

1. How does language acquisition enhance a sense of belonging within First Nation Peoples?
2. What are the ways in which language creates connection?

3. How do feelings of belonging affect individuals' lives?

The intent of this study would be to enhance the understanding that language acquisition within First Nation communities does increase a sense of belonging, and creates an advanced sense of well-being. However, it must be noted that the research must remain culturally sensitive, and not further propagate notions of colonization through the research. Therefore, these research questions are guiding points, but there is a demand for flexibility. Finally, this study is qualitative with a Narrative Research Design, as it enables the reporting and telling of stories of others (Creswell, 2012). This type of design will also be incorporated to create more of a realistic representation of the individual life experiences, as well as inducing free flowing interviews that are reflective of the experiences and practices of First Nations.

Situating the Author

To remain culturally sensitive, my own cultural background and overall connection to this topic must be revealed. I am of German and Kenyan decent, and I was born in Canada. I was raised quadrilingual with a wide array of divergent cultures. Being a mixed race person and not obtaining a native language provoked a great deal of questioning in regards to my own identification and sense of belonging. I am drawn to this work based on my own personal struggle, as well as my current work as a First Nations Support Worker. I hold immense gratitude to be able to work with First Nations Peoples over the past eight years. It must also be noted that although I do not identify with being First Nations, my family members are Chehalis and Tahltan.

Definitions

Belonging refers to a feeling of home and connectedness. According to Neville et al. (2014), belonging is connection to group, place, ethnicity, language, and culture. Moreover,

belonging is considered to be a crucial aspect in enhancing life satisfaction, well-being, increasing resiliency, and creating self-identification (Neville et al., 2014). Within the context of this thesis belonging is referred to in the above terms, but more specifically in regards to belonging found within First Nation youth and children within a Coast Salish Band on the Lower Mainland.

Language is defined as the verbal culture in which groups of people communicate. Depending on the usage of the term it can be linked to native language, ancestral language, or everyday language which represents the dominant culture of English.

Native Language or Mother tongue refers to a speaker's first language. Typically, it is the language given to a newborn.

First Nations defined. First Nations refers to the Indigenous inhabitants of Canada that do not identify with being Metis or Inuit. It is a term that was established instead of the word Indian, or Native (Joseph & Joseph, n.d.). It includes a wide array of bands, and Canadian locations.

Aboriginal is the term established to refer to pre-colonization inhabitants of Canada. It is the definition used to include First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Peoples of Canada. It is an umbrella term to include all nations and bands (Joseph & Joseph, n.d.).

Indigenous is defined as all first inhabitants of lands before settlers. It refers to global territories where colonization has occurred, such as Australia, New Zealand, Africa, and North America.

Coast Salish is the word used by settlers to highlight the First Nation bands that live along the coast of British Columbia. This term also includes the coasts of Oregon and Washington.

Lower Mainland is the term used to identify a region in Vancouver, British Columbia. The Lower Mainland consists of two main districts: The Fraser Valley and The Great Vancouver District. Sixty percent of British Columbia's population can be found on the Lower Mainland and the definition includes coast, city, and rural territories ("Welcome To The Lower Mainland", n.d.)

Significance

This study may positively influence the way in which our general public, educators, and politicians view the restoration and implementation of Indigenous language. This type of exploration may also trigger more advocacy within the realm of indigenous language integration, retention, and allow for more discussion surrounding notions of belonging.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

“I wish there was a treaty we could sign

Between your love and mine” (Cohen, 2016)

Literature will be investigated within a conglomerated manner. Themes include: Indigenous worldview, Social Identity Theory and Theory of Dislocation, the importance of language and cultural belonging, and the significance of Indigenous Practices within healing. Key areas of focus will be explored within belonging such as language within First Nation communities, Inuit sign language and integration within educational systems, effects of in-group connection and speaking ‘native’ tongues, resiliency being fostered through cultural connection, and lack of language creating discomfort within individuals. Upon investigating this topic, it is vital to discover the relevant academic discourse. A great deal of the rhetoric relies on immigration populations, individuals whom are deaf or non-verbal, or participants that are forced to language broker or culturally assimilate based on contextual influences within environments. Therefore, these studies will be interwoven within the framework of First Nations language and culture. This connectedness is necessary due to the insufficient academic discussion surrounding First Nations’ language and culture. It must also be noted that not only is there a lack of academic discourse within this area of focus, there is a misrepresentation of the material as many First Nations Peoples stories have not been heard, or they have not been inherently consulted. A great deal of the academic discourse has been formulated by “outsider” voices (Smith, 1999). Finally, this chapter will begin with attending to specific aspects of Indigenous worldview, which is relevant in facilitating an overall understanding and respect for Indigenous culture.

Indigenous Worldview

According to Rodriguez (2013), worldview refers to the way in which a person identifies their belonging within the universe. This perceived placement affects an individual's beliefs, spirituality, attitudes, and values, and fuses together with cultural identification (Rodriguez, 2013). Worldview was established during the North American conquest, and became a Eurocentric way of describing the world (Rodriguez, 2013). For example, Europe was considered the 'Old World' and North America was referred to as the 'New World' (Rodriguez, 2013). Although this may have been true for early colonizers and settlers, this viewpoint was never an accurate portrayal of how Indigenous populations felt. For example, many Indigenous populations have a worldview that includes myth, folklore, philosophy, sky-knowledge, interconnectedness, rituals, and ceremonies (Rodriguez, 2013). In stark contrast are Eurocentric worldviews that were founded on philosophical aspects of Egyptians, Greek, and Romans (Rodriguez, 2013). Rodriguez (2013) claims that when differing worldviews clash, prejudice and discrimination are inevitable. Given the vast discrimination against Aboriginal Peoples, a firmer understanding of worldviews seems pertinent. Rodriguez (2013) outlines three ways we can overcome contrasting worldviews and work together, specifically in a therapeutic setting. These recommendations involve: knowledge of worldviews, cultures, and a specific awareness of cultural non-verbal and verbal skills (Rodriguez, 2013). An opposing worldview found within the European-Indigenous dynamic is an individualist standpoint versus a collectivist or collateral-mutual worldview (Rodriguez, 2013). Individualist societies are rooted in self-enhancement and personal attainment, whilst displaying a competition amongst the group (Rodriguez, 2013). In comparison, Indigenous worldview of collateral-mutual relies on community members working together as a group, and doing what is best for the overall group

(Rodriguez, 2013). Individuals do not think of themselves as one person, but identify as a member of the group (Rodriguez, 2013). Further, France, McCormick, & Rodriguez (2013) assert that the most fundamental differing belief between both cultures is that First Nations Peoples believe "...the idea that all living things are related-brothers and sister" (p. 292). Therefore, Indigenous culture demands a strong respect for the Earth, and disease is perceived as an event that occurs when someone is out of harmony with the cosmos or land (France et al., 2013). Within this realm it is evident that Indigenous populations focus on harmony with nature, whilst non-indigenous communities attempt to control nature to meet their own needs (France et al., 2013). Moreover, values shared amongst Indigenous populations are notions of respect/harmony, sharing, vision/wholeness, harmony/respect, centered in spirit, integrity/honesty, courage/bravery, humility/respect, and wisdom (France et al., 2013).

The Medicine Wheel

One fundamental tool in displaying the worldview of harmony with nature and balance is the Medicine Wheel (France et al., 2013). The Medicine Wheel is a circular symbol with four quadrants. Each category represents a person's emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental aspects of life. The wheel as a whole portrays the connectedness amongst the group, and the overall relation to the universe, the land, or the cosmos (France et al., 2013). The wheel also represents the four corners, or four directions, and the colours are: black, red, yellow, and white (France et al., 2013). The colour black is used to link to the West, and it is believed that black released rain from the clouds/above (France et al., 2013). White is used to represent the North, and it depicts courage, persistence, and cleanliness (France et al., 2013). Red is used to identify the East, and it portrays the pipe's power, as well as peace's power, and the enlightenment of a soul through attainment of wisdom (France et al., 2013). Finally, the yellow colour represents the South, and it

shows healing and growth (France et al., 2013). The Medicine Wheel is an essential tool in demonstrating balance, and it has been used within healing traditions and modalities, as well as rituals and honorary ceremonies (France et al., 2013).

Spirituality

A key aspect of Indigenous worldview is spirituality. Indigenous Spirituality relies on the collective group. Not only is the Medicine Wheel incorporated, but smudging, ceremony, tales, dance, drumming, smoking the pipe, vision/spirit quests, and sweat lodges are used as ways to reconnect with Spirit (France et al., 2013).

Dreams

Within First Nations culture, dreams are held in high regard (France et al., 2013). They are viewed as messages from Spirit, and the way in which ancestors are able to communicate to us, or help us predict future events (France et al., 2013). The sharing of dreams, and engaging in ‘dream talk’ is a way for the community to bond, and prepare for unforeseen events (France et al., 2013).

Stories

Stories are used to explain aspects of life, to increase wisdom, to allow for the exploration of inner worlds or truth, to reiterate cultural values and ethical conduct, and to connect to Spirit (France et al., 2013). France et al. (2013) remark that “Stories carry life, history, traditions, and culture (p. 300). Subsequently, when working with Indigenous population it is necessary to have an understanding of the power of myth and tale.

Sweat Lodges

Sweat Lodges are used to connect to spirit by means of purification and detoxification (France et al., 2013). The Sweat Lodge is considered to be a ceremony, and symbols of nature are present, as well as prayer to Spirit (France et al., 2013). It is believed that the Sweat Lodge cleanses the soul, eliminates evil, reconnects to spirit and is a ritual of thanksgiving (France et al., 2013). Moreover, after key tasks have occurred within the lodge, the following sentence is exclaimed by participants: “All my relations.” The reference to “All my relations” portrays the interconnectedness a person carries to Spirit, the community, the land, their ancestry, and the universe (France et al., 2013). Through the Sweat Lodge ritual it is believed that one enters as a person, and one exits as a person who is re-born (France et al., 2013).

Spirit/Vision Quests

Vision quests are rituals whereby a person typically leaves the group and goes into isolation. Within the vision quest the person usually does not eat, drink, or speak for at least a few days. The vision quests are meant to reconnect the person, and it “resembles an inner journey, where the spirits are confronted” (France et al., 2013, p. 304). Consequently, the vision quest is considered to be sacred, and a way in which someone is able to open themselves up to a vision from beyond.

Healers and Elders

Traditional Healers and Elders are held with utmost respect and regard. Typically, they are considered to be the Medicine Men or Woman, and they facilitate ceremonies and rituals (France et al., 2013). These respected leaders are responsible for passing on oral histories and stories, conducting ceremonies, and passing on the knowledge of healing properties of various herbs or rituals (France et al., 2013). With regard to research or work with Indigenous

populations it is vital to collaborate with Healers and Elders (France et al., 2013). They are considered to be guides and reference points for their people. Further, to ensure a culturally sensitive approach, both therapeutically and within the study, it is essential to consult and remain in constant communication with Healers and Elders.

Relevance of Worldview

The relevance of understanding Indigenous Worldview within this thesis is high. Not only is it vital for readers, academics, and researchers to comprehend this specific worldview, it is necessary that reflection is issued in regard to one's own worldview, specifically within a counselling setting. Rodriguez (2013) remarks that this is the only way counselors and mental health professionals can provide ethical services and negate prejudice.

Colonization

Unfortunately, colonization has stripped many bands and First Nation communities from these practices. Due to the Indian Act (1876), many First Nations people were banned to perform many of these key Worldview tasks (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Therefore, a great deal of present day Indigenous people no longer obtain this sacred knowledge. This is specifically true for individuals that are living in urban areas (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

Urban First Nations

The term Urban First Nations refers to Indigenous People that have moved off reserve and have migrated to urban areas in pursuit of jobs. "More than one-half of Indigenous people live in urban centres" (France et al., 2013). According to France et al. (2013), Urban Natives are most prone to culturally identity issues when living in the city. This is due to the notion that they

are now considered to be minorities, there is immense pressure to assimilate, high exposure to drugs and alcohol, and a lack of support in maintaining cultural practices (France et al., 2013). Since there is such a high population of Urban First Nations it is essential that more academic rhetoric display the ways in which cultural identity and urban centres interact within this population.

Counselling First Nations

Counselling Indigenous people can be challenging when a counselor lacks understanding of the socio-political issues within the lives of First Nations People (France et al., 2013). Further, it is essential that mental health professionals or counsellors in training begin to become versed in working within this population, as Aboriginal populations are growing almost six times faster than the non-indigenous communities (France et al., 2013). With this ever-increasing population it is vital that counsellors learn how to conduct counselling with First Nations in a respectful and ethical manner. Moreover, it should be recommended that as Canadians, all settlers have a firmer understanding of First Nation culture and the implications of colonization. Further, creating a culturally sensitive therapeutic environment relies on the counsellor's knowledge of the great difference between First Nation worldview and Euro-centric worldviews. It also requires the therapist to reflect continuously on their own personal biases and the effect of their own culture and worldview. Additionally, it can cause the counsellor to comprehend the oppression, genocide, cultural obliteration, discrimination, and stigmatization that face First Nations people. Next the Westerner worldview of Social Identity Theory is introduced below.

Social Identity Theory

History

Social Identity Theory (SIT) was founded by Tajfel (1972) as a way of explaining the importance of group membership and the effects of discrimination (Hogg & Williams, 2000). Additionally, SIT is used to explain how an individual contextualizes their place within community and the relationship of the self, the other, and society. According to Tajfel (1972), “he defined social identity as “the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership” (Hogg & Williams, 2000, p. 87). Consequently, esteem is derived from group membership (Jetten, Spears & Manstead, 1996). However, discrimination can influence an individual’s connection to a group (Jetten et al., 1996). Therefore, a person can have a negative relation to their group membership, or a positive one (Jetten et al., 1996). This is dependent on how the dominant society views a specific group (Hogg & Williams, 2000). Moreover, Jetten et al. (1996) suggest that

group members exhibit such in-group bias because they are motivated to seek or maintain a positive identity and group distinctiveness, and one important way to achieve this is by favoring the in-group over the out-group (p. 1223).

Thus, SIT has not only been applied to explaining the ways in which people create value in group memberships, but it has been used to outline how members of certain groups can discriminate against out-groups.

Social Identity Theory and Indigenous Populations

Since colonization, many indigenous demographics feel a lack of belonging and a negative sense of self due to group membership of a highly stigmatized community (Neville et al., 2014). Moreover, “...a history of invasion, colonization, and racial oppression...the stealing

of land, displacement of people, and assimilation policies have denied Indigenous [people]" (Neville et al., 2014, p. 423) the ability to feel connectedness to self, group, and place. Within Indigenous populations there is a brutal severance of placehood (Neville et al., 2014). Moreover, "To the extent that mainstream American society is filled with representations that portray Indigenous Peoples in a negative light, one might expect that people who identify strongly with this devalued group may suffer decreased self-esteem as a result" (Adams, Fryberg, Garcia, Delgado, & Torres, 2006, p. 496). Further, rhetoric outlines the notion that not only is SIT reflective of one's membership within community, but within Indigenous demographics SIT incorporates connection to the land and spirituality (Neville et al., 2014, Pep). Finally, a study done by Sibley & Haoukamau (2013) investigated Maori identity and highlights that SIT is highly influenced by "...cultural engagement...[and] exposure to and learning about Maori culture and what it means to be Maori from different sources (e.g., from parents vs. friends vs. at school)" (Sibley & Houkamau, 2013, p. 107). Thus it can be assumed that SIT resides within connectedness to group members, land, spirituality, language, cultural engagement, and inter-group community mentorship within Indigenous demographics.

Theory of Dislocation

History

Dislocation Theory was founded by Alexander (2008) as a way of addressing the increasing amount of addiction to substance use within our present global society. Alexander (2008) highlighted that our increasing globalized free-economy markets are driving disconnection amongst community members, and our way of coping with this severance is creating dependent relationships with substance use. Alexander (2008) conducted a study called Rat Park as a counter project towards the 1960's 'Skinner box'. In the 'Skinner box' it was

discovered that rats, monkeys, and mice would self-medicate with? cocaine, heroine, and amphetamines (Alexander, 2008). This experiment seemed to indicate that addiction was linked towards individuals being chemically addicted to substances with little control of their behaviors. However, Alexander's (2008) Rat Park disproves this thesis by indicating that it was not a matter of chemical addiction, but more a reflection of the animal's current environmental state, and feelings of belonging within their habitat. Rat Park consisted of 16-20 rats. The rats were either individually caged, or put in a cage that was scenic, spacious, contained wood scraps, and simulated a Rat Oasis. Upon creating the two separate environments, Alexander (2008) and his team set up two bottles on each cage. One bottle consisted of a fluid infused with morphine, whilst the other was a water solution. The results indicated that the Rats that were housed in individual cages were consuming "...20 times as much morphine as those in Rat Park" (Alexander, 2008, p.195). Consequently, it became clear that addiction to substance use was linked more to the rats' feelings of isolation, lack of community, and experiences of dislocation. In contrast it was evident that Rats that have adequate social networks, live in pleasing environments, and do not experience dislocation are able to negate addiction towards substance use, and seem uninterested in using substances. Additionally, Rat Park has served as a vital example in propagating Alexander's (2008) theory of dislocation. Finally, it seems appropriate to assume the same is true for humans. Therefore, within First Nation communities it can be suggested that an increased level of addiction is linked to feelings of dislocation due to the harsh implications of colonization. Additionally, Alexander's (2008) work allows for the suggestion that language integration can play a crucial role in increasing feelings of belonging and diminishing effects of dislocation.

Relevant Rhetoric

Academic discourse supports notions of dislocation, trauma, and the effects of cultural and socioeconomic factors. McQuaid & Bombay (2015) emphasize that Canadian First Nations are more prone to substance use coping and depression due to early childhood traumas, systematic and social discrimination, and interactions that lack support from the dominant culture as well as the in group cultures. McQuaid & Bombay (2015) further assert that

...parenting difficulties and the resulting high rates of childhood trauma and neglect are among the most harmful consequences of certain historical traumas (e.g., Indian residential schools) faced by Aboriginal peoples, as childhood adversity is a central mechanism in the proliferation of stressors across the life span and across generations (p. 326).

Within this quotation it is evident that historical traumas have affected the way in which parents raise their children, and the greater effects this has on the following generations. These notions further support the struggles linked to dislocation while conveying the complexities surrounding healing and change. Muzak (2009) further outlines the relationship between trauma and addiction by highlighting that "...survivors of child abuse, rape, and domestic violence shared many of the same symptoms as those observed in war veterans" (p. 26). Unfortunately, many indigenous cultures have been subjected to these intense traumas, and early childhood adversities are largely ignored, and are causing individuals to rely on substance use as coping and being more susceptible to mental health diagnoses such as PTSD, anxiety, and depression (Muzak, 2009). Muzak (2009) further integrates the feminist perspective and criticisms of trauma, whilst maintaining that an immense amount of drug use lies within the perception that "...when a person is powerless in a certain situation, when she realizes that resistance is futile, she may go

into a state of surrender and escape the situation by altering her consciousness” (p. 28).

Consequently, drug use is seen as a method of disassociation, and a way to stop the “reliving” of trauma, whilst being aware that “Children who have been abused or severely punished develop the capacity for dissociative states into ‘a fine art’” (Muzak, 2009, p. 28-29). Ideas of trauma, coping, and the need to disassociate can be applied towards the battles faced by First Nations. Moreover, “...violence, widespread loss of indigenous language, culture, and ceremony has combined with multigenerational disruptions in parenting practices to yield a harrowing legacy of distress and disability for contemporary Native peoples” (Gone, 2013, p. 752). Gone (2013) asserts this by claiming that “Although substance abuse features prominently in the lives of many residential school survivors, a wide range of additional problems [needs to be] targeted...including anomie, bereavement, relational problems, sexual abuse” (p. 753).

The Importance of Language and Cultural Belonging

Why language decreases suicide rates

Chandler & Lalonde (2008) indicated a connection between reduced suicides within First Nation communities due to the introduction of ancestral language. According to Chandler & Lalonde (2008), young indigenous people in Canada have the highest rate of suicide than any other population in the world. Chandler & Lalonde (2008) explain: “First Nations youth are reputed to be especially and infamously suicidal, taking their own lives at rates variously estimated to be between 5 and 20 times higher than that of the general non-Native population” (p. 3). Therefore, risk of suicide is an extensive and alarming issue within First Nation communities. Chandler & Lalonde (2008) highlight that this increase in suicide amongst First Nation populations is related to a failure to acknowledge cultural continuation, a lack of development in regards to self-identity, and a depreciated sense of ‘identity-securing’ tasks.

Therefore, within their 6-year study Chandler & Lalonde (2008) analyzed the way in which the implementation of culture, indigenous practices, and language affected suicide rates. Their results were astonishing and Chandler & Lalonde (2008) conclude that

individual and cultural continuity are strongly linked, such that First Nations communities that succeed in taking steps to preserve their heritage culture, and that work to control their own destinies, are dramatically more successful in insulating their youth against the risks of suicide (p. 6).

These results are significant in providing evidence towards the immense benefit of creating cultural connection through language, and thus increasing overall adjustment in First Nation youth. They also aim at indicating the proposition that language acquisition within First Nation communities can intensify a sense of belonging and consequently exaggerate feelings of well-being.

Language Creating Social Connectedness and Belonging

Since the implementation of language and culture can decrease suicide rates, it can be assumed that there is a link between language, social connectedness, and belonging. Within Neville et al.'s (2014) study, a REC scale was created that measured belonging and life satisfaction along with the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM). These two measures allowed Neville et al. (2014) to identify the ways in which ethnicity identification is created and relevant meanings of culture are formed. In addition to this, Neville et al.'s (2014) "Results suggest that greater ethnic social connectedness was related to increased satisfaction with life and positive affect" (p. 415). In addition to increased life satisfaction, "A sense of belonging, for some, was connected to shared commonalities among Indigenous Australians, particularly around language and culture" (Neville et al., 2014, p. 420). Barriers to belonging in Neville et

al.'s (2014) study were phenotype, social identities, and (pre and post) colonization history. Positive contributing variables of REC belonging include interconnectedness, shared language and culture, sense of community, acceptance and pride, and an understanding of: history, place, and personhood (Neville et al. 2014). Sub categories to these variables include: individual identity versus group, ties to extended family networks, commitments to giving back to the community, spirituality, political activism, and overall feelings of humanity (Neville et al., 2014). Consequently, the research done by Neville et al. (2014) can provide insight towards confounding variables towards belonging. Since the present study is focused on language acquired within the school setting it is vital to access the way in which this type of environment may affect the children. This is due to the overall respect of acknowledging the way in which past education systems were detrimental towards First Nation Students. Since there is a history of violence within the context of education, it is necessary to understand the way in which the school setting may influence the children's sense of belonging. Wright, Taylor, & Macarthur (2000) did a suitable study within this area.

The Incorporation of Indigenous Language within a School Setting

Wright et al. (2000) claim that although many English-only advocates are guided by the view that the school's primary responsibility is to prepare children to function in the dominant society...an increasing number of minority-language groups are rejecting this assimilationist position, believing instead that the school should reflect and support the heritage cultures of the children it serves. The points in favor of this position include the maintenance of minority languages and cultures, improvement in school retention and academic success among minority children, inclusion of parents and the minority community in the educational process, and

the need for schools to reflect broader societal values of diversity and multiculturalism. In fact, some groups are now demanding, in the strongest terms, that public education acknowledge and respond to their demands for greater inclusion of their heritage languages (p. 63).

In Wright et al.'s (2000) longitudinal study it was asserted that there is vast benefit to including Inuit language within the school system even if it forces children to become trilingual (learning French, English, and Inuit). This type of approach ensured that children learn all three dominant cultures and fostered a greater sense of community and connection to one's heritage long-term (Wright et al., 2000). Moreover, these findings forged the conversation of including access to Inuit sign language for deaf Inuit children, and challenging the Canadian Charter of Rights (MacDougall, 2000). Although previous research in language, ethnic development, and belonging is pertinent to the present study, it is also necessary that the researchers and facilitators within this present study are aware of the issues facing First Nations People today.

Culture Being Used to Negate Violence

According to Hart (2016)

many Indigenous Peoples...are more likely to be affected by crime and violence, because of the trans-generational social upheaval and trauma that are part of the legacy of colonialism. Major risk factors for crime and violence are typically much more prevalent among Indigenous Peoples than among the majority culture or even among other minority groups—for example, higher likelihood of exposure to childhood abuse or neglect, violent victimization in adulthood, substance use, mental illness, poor access to education and employment, and so forth. Increased risk for engaging in crime and violence, as well as overpolicing and lack of access to legal services, has resulted in the

overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in criminal justice settings in all of the countries (Hart, 2016, p. 78).

This type of awareness is necessary as it educates the researchers (who are outsiders) to become more culturally sensitive towards the subject matter. In addition to providing this awareness, Hart (2016) provides the insight that culture is seen as a way to manage the risk of violence and decrease violent acts. This further validates the current study's notion that language acquisition should increase a greater sense of belonging in First Nation youth and children. Additional research by Bombay et al. (2010) remarks that cultural identity affects depressive symptoms and the ways in which stigmatization is perceived by Indigenous populations.

Culture Affecting Depression

According to Bombay et al. (2010) numerous Aboriginal communities have been taking active efforts to reclaim their cultural heritage, and to socialize new generations to embrace their Aboriginal identities. Such an approach to reestablishing a sense of pride is intuitively appealing, and indeed, more positive in-group affect appeared to influence depressive symptoms directly, and to disrupt the relation between perceived experiences of discrimination and depressive symptoms (p. 514).

Therefore, it would seem relevant that part of embracing Indigenous identity can be tied to language and can contribute to more positive in-group affect, as well as increasing resiliency towards stigma and discrimination.

The Importance of Speaking your Native Tongue

Research done by Ivaz, Costa, and Duñabeitia (2016) outlined that speaking in one's native language elicits more of an emotional response, thus indicating that those who are forced

to speak second languages do not necessarily reveal themselves fully. This study could provide a foundation for creating an awareness of how First Nations may feel more like themselves by speaking their 'native tongue.' Further research with immigrants may also aid in providing more insight towards this notion. Research done by Chen et al. (2014) suggested that it was vital to intervene early on in the lives of children in regards to language, and to be able to provide an approach in including both heritage language and practice as well dominant culture language and practice. Chen et al.'s (2014) findings advise this type of approach due to the pressures facing immigrant children. It seems that immigrant children are called to assimilate within both groups (in-group and dominant culture) (Chen et al., 2014). Although First Nations People are not immigrants, it has been noted that they do not feel a part of the dominant culture (Hart, 2016). Consequently, Chen et al.'s (2014) research may be relevant in describing the ways in which children navigate identity. Chen et al. (2014) claim that;

Ethnic identity as a subjective sense of belonging to one's ethnic groups, the feelings and attitudes that accompany the affiliation, and the process of exploring what it means to be an ethnic minority within a larger culture (Weisskirch et al., 2011, p. 44).

Therefore, the direct consequence of being a member of the out-group and overall in-group creates multi-levels of identity: one's sense of belonging in their own in-group as well as one's sense of membership within the overall out-group.

Not Learning One's Cultural Language Can Be Detrimental

Further research done by Weisskirch et al. (2011) also points to the way in which failure to learn one's cultural language creates discomfort, stunts identity development, and prevents future generations' cultural retention and preservation. Therefore, within the context of our study it is vital to be cognizant of the ways in which lack of language may affect First Nation children.

Although many of the studies above provide further awareness of the necessary issues involving language, culture, and ethnicity, it must be further reasserted that there is a lack in literature highlighting the exact effects of language acquisition and feelings of belonging found in First Nation children and youth.

The Significance of Indigenous Practices in Healing

Relevant research indicates the necessary use of Indigenous worldview, practices, and rituals as a way of enhancing feelings of well-being and creating long standing self-satisfying lives. According to Gone (2013), a suggested approach is a blend of

Western therapeutic and Aboriginal cultural practices [such as] lodge activities...The medicine wheel—represented as a circle bisected into four interior quadrants—images the unity and harmony of four constituent parts (e.g., the cardinal directions, the races of humankind, or the experiential domains of human existence) even as it portrays the cyclical movement of time (e.g., the four seasons or the four stages of human development). As a result, the medicine wheel distinguishes treatment that expresses pan-tribal commitments to balance, harmony, and holism as key constituents of wellness. Moreover, promotion of the medicine wheel approach to healing simultaneously and self-consciously designates treatment efforts as overtly Aboriginal in character (p. 753).

Further research by Mushquash (2014) also suggests a collaborative approach that involves early interventions, specifically with First Nations adolescents. Mushquash (2014) speaks of his own experience as a First Nations person and highlights the need for community-based resources at an early age as a solution for prevention and healing. Finally, it must be noted that consistent training and continuous education is necessary when working with First Nations populations.

When clinicians are engaging in this manner they are remaining culturally sensitive, and are not further propagating colonization, stigma, and discrimination.

Culturally Appropriate Interventions Preventing Suicide

A study done by Muehlenkamp, Marrone, Gray, and Brown (2009) articulated that the use of indigenous practices within suicide prevention programs were highly successful in fostering more healing amongst Indian Americans. The suicide prevention program consisted of Soup Fridays, Medicine Wheels, mentorship from Elders, and spiritual ceremonies. According to Muehlenkamp et al. (2009), that holistic approach allowed for students to feel more connected to University suicide crisis responders and enabled more of a culturally sensitive model.

The Healing Lodge

A pilot program was created by Gone (2010) within the Northern Region of Canada. The program attempted to address substance dependency within the community. The Healing Lodge was a physical monument that incorporated the use of counsellors and Elders. The culturally sensitive approaches that were used were story-telling, native crafts, dancing, sweats, talking circles, medicine wheels, and sundances. Gone (2010) explains:

Counselors celebrated and sponsored prayer and “smudging” (i.e., purifying oneself by burning sacred plants), talking circles, tobacco offerings, pipe ceremonies, sweat lodge rituals, fasting camps, and various other blessing rites (e.g., ritual renewal of the colored cloths that marked the directional entrances to the Lodge) (p. 192).

Moreover, this intervention allowed for

...the ongoing process of positive self-transformation—fueled by introspection, reflexivity, insight, disclosure, catharsis, “dealing with” one’s problems, “working on” oneself, and finding one’s purpose as an Aboriginal person—that ultimately reoriented

fragile and often damaged selves toward a more meaningful and compelling engagement in the world” (Gone, 2010, p. 196).

In conclusion, the blend of indigenous practices and Western approaches enhanced the healing journey for many of the participants. These results further edify notions of the value behind cultural continuation and connection within the lives of First Nations.

Difficulty in Creating Indigenous Approaches

Although there are vast improvements and benefits towards including Indigenous Traditions within psychotherapy, there are obstacles in developing evidence-based practices. Pommerville, Burrage, and Gone (2016) claim that the lack of academic research depicting evidence-based research of indigenous approaches within a therapeutic setting create a challenge in adapting therapeutic practices. Moreover, there is active debate as to whether or not indigenous populations benefit from therapy (Pommerville et al., 2016). Additionally, “the inclusion of cultural practices is viewed positively by those involved in Indigenous mental health, but the extent to which these practices have a specific effect on therapy is not well understood at this time” (Pommerville et al., 2016, p. 1035). Therefore, within the realm of integrating indigenous practices within psychotherapeutic settings, more research must be done.

Summary

Upon reviewing the relevant academic literature, it is clear that cultural practice and continuation are vital in enhancing healing, resiliency, and belonging within First Nation Cultures. Additionally, it is evident that there is a diminished amount of resources in dealing with specific aspects of culture, such as the integration of language and its overall effects on an individual’s quality of life. Therefore, proposing to investigate this notion further is not only appropriate, but ethically necessary.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

“Reconciliation is realized when two people come together and understand that what they share unites them and that what is different about them needs to be respected” (Kinew, 2015)

The purpose of the study was to explore the ways in which Indigenous language can increase a sense of belonging within Aboriginal children and youth. The most appropriate way in which to organize this suggested study would be within a Qualitative framework. Specifically, the study should be structured in a Narrative Inquiry format.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is regarded as flexible and diverse (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Qualitative research is founded more in the exploration of a problem, and gaining more insight or understanding (Creswell, 2014). Further, qualitative research attends less to relevant discourse, and more to the data derived from the participants (Creswell, 2012). The data that is typically collected are stories, interviews, conversations, or discussions with the subjects (Creswell, 2012). Moreover, the problem to be studied is seen more as something to be understood, and explored, thus the overall research result is to find a larger meaning within a broader context (Creswell, 2012). Additionally, the themes that are present within the stories of subjects become data that is categorized based on the relevant topics (Creswell, 2012). Creswell (2014) claims that qualitative designs are appropriate if

the inquirer seeks to examine an issue related to oppression of individuals. To study this, stories are collected of individual oppression using a narrative approach. Individuals are interviewed at some length to determine how they have personally experienced oppression (p. 19).

Therefore, in the context of this proposed study it would seem that this approach is most suitable. This is tied to the vast oppression and genocide First Nations Peoples and their culture have been and are subjected to.

Narrative Research Inquiry

Narrative research requires a smaller population as the researcher is collecting stories, narratives of individuals, and describing the lives of participants (Creswell, 2012). This type of inquiry is also directed at research that focuses on educational settings and includes students, teachers, and parents (Creswell, 2012). Additionally, narrative research allows for the experiences of individuals to be heard and creates a dynamic whereby everyday life is captured and a sense of familiarity within the participants' stories is manifested (Creswell, 2012). The type of Narrative study that is proposed is rooted in the personal experience story, teachers' stories, parent/guardians' story, and narrative interviews. The Narrative inquiry that relies on person experience story allows the researcher to focus on a single episode within someone's life, or a particular event (Creswell, 2012). According to Creswell (2012), the steps involved within Narrative Research Inquiry are as follows: identify a problem, find a small sample of subjects to tell their story, researchers then re-tell the stories, collaborate with the participants, and present the overall research in a way that accurately portrays the participants' experiences in regard to the problem. Subsequently, upon reviewing this qualitative approach it seems Narrative Research Inquiry is appropriate in conveying the ways in which language generates a sense of belonging within First Nation culture. It must also be noted that this is a proposed study, and therefore, suggestions must be reviewed before future execution of the study.

Setting and Sample

The setting of this study will be focused on one First Nation band within the lower mainland. The specific study will be executed on local schools within the lower mainland that have introduced indigenous language as a school language requirement. The population sample will consist of students from grade 3 to grade 7. The students live on local reserves and identify with a Coast Salish Band within the Lower Mainland. The school in which the students will be recruited has introduced Indigenous Language into the school. Moreover, since this is a Narrative Research Inquiry, there will be no more than six participants. This is also due to the notion that the parents, guardians, and teachers of these participants will also be included within the study. The subjects will be chosen in a purposeful sample whereby the researcher is guided by the following criteria: the student must identify as First Nations, the student must be an active member of the language class with regular attendance, the student must be in grades 3 to 7, and the student must volunteer their time. Moreover, the students will be recruited by speaking with the administrators and following their guidance in finding subjects. Finally, the students, parents/guardians, and teachers of the students will have consented to their participation.

Procedure

Initially, an interview will be set up within the school. For this to take place it is proposed that the researcher discuss suitable times with administrators and classroom teachers. The interviews will take place in a private setting, which only includes the researcher and the participant. To increase trust and allow familiarity for the students, a classroom is suggested as a reliable setting. Interview times for students will be during school hours and on school property. The interviews will last between 45 minutes to 1 hour. Subsequently, caregivers and teachers will be interviewed for 30-45 minutes. The teachers will be interviewed during school hours and

the parents and/or caregivers will be interviewed at their homes between 5pm and 7pm. The integration of the relevant adults is to provide an external view of the children's lives. Further, classroom teachers will be interviewed as a way of understanding the student's overall wellbeing and functioning at the school. Incorporating the parents and the teachers should provide a more extensive perspective of the children's sense of belonging. Additionally, the Indigenous Language Teacher will be interviewed as a way of identifying the ways in which the children have participated in language and to receive further validation of the benefits of language acquisition. Data will be recorded in an interview format, whereby specific themes within conversations will be coded and categorized. Further, recruitment would be based on the details outlined above. The interview will have structured questions, however, it will be guided by free flow to ensure appropriate depiction of the personal experiences of the participants. Moreover, it may be necessary to include an elder or relevant band member within this process. This is a crucial component that must be discussed with the band upon seeking approval. Following this method will allow for a more ethical approach, while remaining culturally sensitive.

Proposed Research Questions

The interview will include the following questions for students: What is your experience in learning your Indigenous language? What changes have you noticed? How does it make you feel? Tell me more about your experiences of learning the language. How has it made you feel more connected? The purpose of these questions is to remain more open, and to allow for the students' true representation to arise. Parents/guardians will be asked the following questions: Have you noticed any changes in the child/youth since taking the language class? How do you think the class has allowed the child to feel more connected? Tell me more about the changes you have seen within the child since taking the class. It is vital to reiterate that the questions must

be used as guides and should not obstruct or limit participants in sharing true experiences and narratives.

Summarizing and Analyzing the Data

It is proposed that the narratives derived from the interviews will encapsulate a vivid picture of the way in which indigenous language acquisition is experienced within indigenous students. It is crucial to understand that the data rests in the narratives of the participants, and it is vital not to alter or attempt to depict messages and themes that are convenient for the researcher. It is much more essential that the data reflect the actual narratives of the participants and provide more insight towards the indigenous experience of years of language loss and current striving for language obtainment. Analyzing the data will also require that the researcher identify key themes and code them in a Narrative Inquiry method. Once themes have been coded, it is vital that the researchers collaborate with the participant and engage in restorying of the data. This allows for the data to be more coherent and portray a chronological order that appropriately depicts the relevant narratives of the subjects (Creswell, 2012). Constant collaboration is necessary within this research as data is only derived through the interactions found between the researchers and the participants' oral accounts. Further, within the restorying step it is essential that characters, problems, intentions, feelings, settings, and continuity be attended to (Creswell, 2012). The majority of the data is first person oral telling, and therefore a collection of narrative stories will be derived from this study. These stories include a beginning, middle, and end (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, coding the themes is essential in organizing the data. It is also suggested that the themes be outlined within the study as well as creating a separate section for them. This allows for more insight into the data and induces a better understanding of the material (Creswell, 2012). Additionally, it generates a more accessible resource for potential academics and readers.

Subsequently, the data from the qualitative interviews would serve as a platform for further research as important themes and topics would arise. The data could also be analyzed as a way of recording the trans-generational effects of colonization and the continuous struggle to restore and preserve First Nation Culture. Consequently, it is suggested that the derived data would provide further insight for counsellors and educators working with First Nations.

Ethical Considerations

Studying Indigenous Populations

First and foremost it must be emphasized that the methods required for this research must be aligned with the Canadian Tri-Council's Policy Statement on Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples of Canada (2010). Therefore, there must be inclusion of an Aboriginal elder within the focus group, the First Nations Support Worker, and the language teacher. This inclusion should enhance trust and create more ethical legitimacy and cultural sensitivity (Clark et al., 2014). According to Clark et al. (2014)

the Tri-Council Policy Statement on the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (2010) declared that Aboriginal peoples in Canada demonstrate reasonable mistrust of research that originates outside of their communities. This mistrust is rooted in a long history of exploitation by White researchers in North America. Thus, they may be wary of participating in research. To protect their anonymity and enhance trust, we [will] ask... participants for self-selected pseudonyms (p. 114).

With regard to the validity of this study it is important to remind the reader and the researchers of the vast cultural implications this type of research has. First, it is not for the researcher to decide whether or not this is an “indigenous problem” (Smith, 1999). The idea of the

'indigenous problem' is a recurrent theme in all imperial and colonial attempts to deal with indigenous peoples. It originates within the wider discourses of racism, sexism and other forms of positioning the Other. Its neatness and simplicity gives the term its power and durability. Framing 'the . . . problem', mapping it, describing it in all its different manifestations, trying to get rid of it, laying blame for it, talking about it, writing newspaper columns about it, drawing cartoons about it, teaching about it, researching it, over and over...how many occasions, polite dinner parties and academic conferences would be bereft of conversation if 'the indigenous problem' had not been so problematized?' (Smith, 1999, p. 90-91)

Moreover, it must be noted that the researchers are not First Nations. Therefore, positioning this research in ethical terms would be to empower First Nations people and be guided by their needs. Consequently, the approach of this study will take a community action approach (Smith, 1999).

Community action research... 'is a collaborative approach to inquiry or investigation that provides people with the means to take systematic action to resolve specific problems'. These approaches not only enable communities but also enable indigenous researchers to work as researchers within their own communities. Community action approaches assume that people know and can reflect on their own lives, have questions and priorities of their own, have skills and sensitivities which can enhance (or undermine) any community-based projects (Smith, 1999, p. 127).

This type of approach also limits the researcher in ‘othering’ indigenous people and becoming the ‘expert’ (Smith, 1999). Second, it is necessary to comprehend that a limitation within this study is that the researcher has a secondary relationship to the children, parents, language teacher, teachers, and the school. This secondary relationship may create bias in the researcher and can shape the data in unforeseen ways. Smith (1999) asserts that it is necessary for a non-indigenous researcher to be aware of these additional relationships and to be educated about the ways in which these connections create power imbalances.

Approval and Consent

To ensure an accurate execution of ethics it is essential that consent be ongoing. Consent is needed from the students, teachers, parents/guardians, administrators, as well as the specific First Nations band. It is necessary that the Indigenous band not only approved this study, but that permission is granted and they are to remain active within this study. This inclusion should enable for continuous contact and communication with leaders and elders within the Indigenous band. It should also be re-iterated to all participants that they are able to stop or withdraw at any point of the study. Further, a university must approve the study, and there may be instances whereby approval from the Institutional Review Board committee must be retrieved. Consent and approval are vital within this research as most participants are minors.

Anonymity

To protect the identities of the participants it is recommended that the names of each subject be changed to pseudonyms. This allows for the individual’s story to be highlighted and their identity to remain confidential. Further, it enables a more accurate depiction of the story, as the participant no longer has a fear of being recognized within the data. Generating anonymity for the participants is essential in maintaining ethics within the proposed study.

Ethics within Narrative Inquiry

Due to the notion that the research relies on the stories of others, ethical issues are likely to occur. Issues regarding the authenticity of a story, accuracy of the narrative, ownership of a story, or intent of the story all surround the notions of the ethics (Creswell, 2012). Moreover, in the restorying step of the study many ethical issues can arise over false depiction of narrative. Therefore, it is crucial that researchers and participants remain in constant contact and collaboration. To ensure proper ethics, Creswell (2012) recommends "...member checking, triangulating among data sources, searching for disconfirming evidence" (p. 516). Having a firm understanding of the ethics involved in Narrative Research Designs is vital.

Limitations

Research with Minors

An issue found within this research design is that perhaps this type of interview style is not appropriate for the children. For some it can seem that the questions require too much self-reflection that is not aligned with their cognitive development due to their biological age. For other participants it may seem that the topics and themes are not in their current awareness.

Aligning the Research with Culture

A limitation that may present itself is that the way in which the participants are being researched is not aligned with their cultural needs. Hart (2016) emphasizes this notion by highlighting that

Developers should ensure that their tools take into account the relevant scientific and professional literature dealing with diverse groups, whenever it exists; make sure the risk factors included in their tools are potentially relevant across diverse groups; make sure

users are advised and have some mechanism to incorporate in their assessments risk factors that are unique to a specific group; and caution users about the intended target groups of their tools (or, conversely, the groups to which their tools may not be applicable) (p. 91).

Although the researcher attempts to approach the material in a culturally sensitive manner, these attempts may fail, creating more injustice for First Nation People.

Short Time Frame

Another limitation within this study is the idea that the design is only focused in a short time frame. The study's validity would improve if the design were to be longitudinal. A longitudinal study would allow for more data, tracking, and inference (Creswell, 2014).

Attachment to Theoretical Lenses

Further, the previous academic discourse has guided the study to integrate Tajfel's (1978) Social Identity Theory and Dislocation Theory. However, this theory is only meant to be a guideline. Solely focusing on social identity theory may create rigidity that denotes the pressing data or needs of First Nation People. According to Creswell (2014), "...the theory may appear at the beginning and be modified or adjusted based on participants' views" (p. 67).

Lack of Access

Additional limitations can be found with lack of access to all classrooms, students, teachers, and guardians/parents. It may be that some schools do not want research to take place within their facility. Further, a problem that may arise is the nation within the lower mainland not wanting to participate within this study. Without all the cooperative components the study is in flux.

Reliability and Validity

Due to the notion that this study requires personal accounts, it is necessary for researchers to investigate the credibility of the narratives. If stories do not depict accuracy or truth, a major limitation has presented itself within the study. Consequently, it is essential that researchers engage in Creswell's (2012) recommendations of "member checking, triangulating among data sources, searching for disconfirming evidence" (p. 516). For the research to be reliable and embody a strong sense of validity, the personal accounts must be authentic.

Final Proposed Limitations

Lastly, as outlined within ethical considerations, it is necessary to re-iterate that a limitation may be that this study fails in assuming the indigenous perspective and looks upon relevant issues through an outsider lens. This is a limitation of any indigenous research as it is a westernized structure to record and study other cultures.

CHAPTER 4 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“A different language is a different vision of life” (Fellini-Ivaz et al., 2016, p. 495)

Summary

The purpose of this thesis was to advocate for a research proposal that depicts the way in which the introduction of ancestral language may evoke feelings of belonging found with First Nation children and youth. Given the current political sphere and agendas regarding the need for increased cultural support, a more thorough examination of the benefit of language inclusion seems pertinent. Further, after reviewing the relevant academic rhetoric it is evident that there is a lack of study focused on this specific topic.

The current study is based upon the following research questions: How does language acquisition enhance a sense of belonging within First Nation Peoples? What are the ways in which language creates connection? How do feelings of belonging affect individuals' life? These are all necessary questions that aid in contributing to the overall exploration between the relationship found in language and feelings of belonging.

The review of literature examined Indigenous worldview, Social Identity Theory, the Theory of Dislocation, the importance of language and cultural belonging and, finally, the significance of Indigenous practices in healing. Next, the main themes of culture, worldview, belonging, and language are further considered.

Culture

In regards to creating an ethical study, this research includes knowledge surrounding the importance of the medicine wheel for Indigenous culture. Indigenous spirituality, dream work, stories, sweat lodge ceremonies, vision quests, and the incorporation of Elders and Healers are also mentioned. Further, it is essential that researchers are educated in the ways in which

colonization has affected First Nations culture, as well as migration and the creation of Urban Indigenous Peoples.

Worldview

Subsequently, it is also necessary that there is an understanding in the difference between Westerner worldview and Indigenous worldview. This contrast is typically found in the group collectivist dynamic found within Aboriginal worldview versus the individualistic ideal rooted in the settler's worldview. Additionally, within Indigenous worldview there is more focus on not only the group, but on cultural continuation, ceremonies, rituality, and ideals.

Belonging

It is vital to witness the ways in which belonging has been stripped from First Nation Peoples due to the harsh actions of colonization. It is this missing facet that makes this proposed research valid and essential in demonstrating how a sense of belonging can be reinforced within this population. Further, belonging refers to a connection to culture, self, spirituality, and land. It also incorporates the ideas of safety and comfort. In a sense the feeling of belonging is closely linked to bringing a person home. It is the intent of this proposed study to demonstrate how belonging can be enhanced through the integration of ancestral language.

Language

Language is important in displaying a paramount cultural tool that not only allows for communication, but ultimately creates a sense of connection. For the purpose of this study, language is focused in the integration of ancestral language and the interaction found between language and a sense of belonging. Due to colonization, many Indigenous languages have been

lost. Therefore, as a way to restore culture and enhance cultural connectedness and identification, language plays an influential role.

Recommendations

Since this study is proposed to be facilitated within a school setting, recommendations include suggestions for teachers. Additionally, recommendations will also be targeted as counsellors to provide relevancy towards this program.

General Suggestions

It is my intention that this study will advocate for more programs that focus on cultural restoration within Indigenous populations. It is also my intent that this study demonstrates the power and positive influence culture has towards well-being and resiliency. It would seem that culture could serve as a healing tool and would be highly beneficial in allowing our country to further steps towards reconciliation.

Recommendations for Teachers

It is suggested that this study will allow teachers to gain a further understanding in how to approach First Nations students in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner. The relevant rhetoric outlines the way in which a settlers' culture or viewpoint may differ from that of Aboriginal Peoples. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers undergo more training in how to teach First Nations students. This is especially vital since a great deal of cultural genocide was executed within the schooling environment of residential schools. Teachers need to be aware of the implications of residential schools on their students and the parents of their students. Moreover, teachers need to become versed in ways of teaching that are ethical and do not further

re-traumatize First Nations students or their parents. It is my intent that this future research become a resource of teachers in learning more about their First Nations students.

Recommendations for Counsellors

This proposed study is also meant to be a resource for counsellors. Specifically, Canadian counsellors who are working with Indigenous children and youth. It is recommended that counsellors have training in providing culturally sensitive services and ethical therapeutic processes. Moreover, it is essential that counselors understand the ways in which their own personal worldviews may interfere with the worldviews of their First Nation clients. Further, it is recommended that counsellors are versed in the brutal history imposed on First Nations and that there be a firm awareness of the ways in which trauma presents within Indigenous peoples, as well as the way in which intergenerational trauma and abuse are reflected in their First Nation clients. Finally, it is suggested that counsellors understand the ways in which language can increase belonging. More importantly, it is recommended that counsellors understand the ways in which culture and belonging can serve a tool towards resiliency and can enhance the well-being of a client.

Finally, it is my overall intent that this proposed study creates more understanding amongst Canadian settlers. As non-Indigenous Canadians we have the responsibility to understand how our presence and the actions of colonization have created immense pain within Aboriginal communities in Canada. It is also recommended that not only is there a need to take responsibility, but there is a need to work together towards reconciliation.

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