INDIGENOUS YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: REDISCOVERING YOUTH LEADERSHIP

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MICHAEL JAMES ARTHUR LICKERS

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This dissertation has been accepted for the faculty of Royal Roads University
by

Chair

Advisors

Dr. James Frideres – Dr. Robin Cox
Committee Members
Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann
Dr. Marie Delorme

COMMITTEE APPROVAL

The members of Michael Lickers Dissertation Committee certify that they have read the dissertation titled *Indigenous Youth Leadership Development: Rediscovering Youth Leadership* and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Social Sciences:

Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann, committee member

__________________________________________

Dr. Marie Delorme, committee member

__________________________________________

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate’s submission of the final copy of the dissertation to Royal Roads University. The dissertation supervisor confirms that he has read this dissertation prepared under his direction and recommends that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirements:

Dr. James Frideres, Supervisor - Dr. Robin Cox, Co-Supervisor
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ABSTRACT

This Indigenous methodology (IM) and participatory action research (PAR) explored the methodologies and principles of Indigenous youth leadership (IYL). Some Indigenous researchers studying leadership and Indigenous leadership reflect on ancient tribal stories while considering the challenges of Western leadership philosophies. Although some Indigenous youth leaders are acquiring traditional leadership knowledge, practice of this knowledge is exceptionally limited. The literature review uncovers the complexity of leadership and its multidisciplinary perspectives from the point of view of Western leadership, Indigenous leadership, youth leadership, and IYL. The author presents a story of 30 First Nations youth leaders in Alberta, (Canada), with specific themes deriving from the data. A model to enhance the field of IYL is presented based on the data gathered. The stories present the youth leader’s knowledge and experiences and make recommendations for IYL that include the development of an IYL centre, additional education on the knowledge of Indigenous leaders past and present, their progression towards leadership, and practical applications to realize this knowledge.

Keywords: Indigenous-Aboriginal youth leadership, youth leadership, leadership, Indigenous-Aboriginal leadership, action research, Social Sciences.

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1 I use the term Indigenous because I intend this research to be used outside of Canada even though I interviewed First Nations individuals in the province of Alberta. See Appendix A for a more detailed discussion of the nomenclature.

2 I use the term traditional leadership to identify historical Indigenous leadership.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to all young Indigenous people.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

We are not alone. The spirits of those gone before guide our steps, our traditions, our beliefs. We are not alone. The care of those around us leads us to healing and wholeness and comfort. We are not alone. (Peate, 2003, n.p.)

In the near future, Indigenous peoples around the world will be challenged with a leadership void (due in part by a shift in demographics). This raises questions about whether here in Canada, Indigenous (First Nations) leaders are doing enough to educate and prepare future youth to take on leadership roles within Indigenous communities. Are First Nations leaders preparing First Nations youth for leadership roles within mainstream corporations, governments, or education systems? Do First Nations leaders know how to do this? Do First Nations leaders know about current youth leadership development practices? Are First Nations communities seeking to further understand effective approaches to youth leadership development?

To answer these questions requires what I have called, the “Delicate Dance Between Two Worlds” (Lickers, 2006, p. 49), the ways in which Indigenous youth must navigate mainstream education systems and programs that often do not include tribal philosophies or methodologies that shape most tribal communities. Living in two worlds has not been an easy undertaking for most youth; having to balance a Western worldview with an Indigenous worldview has created a delicate dance between the two cultures. A story that my father once told me captures the message of understanding one way of seeing the world while appreciating another:

Son, have you ever seen an Eagle fly with only one wing? An Eagle cannot fly with only one wing; it needs to have both wings to ascend. You will need to have
a good understanding of this new world that we live in while never forgetting the
world that you belong to, a Haudenosaunee world; then you will soar to great
heights.

In a discussion of Indigenous youth leadership (IYL), it is important to consider the
aforementioned questions.

The inequity of Indigenous people remains a key development concern in
Canadian society, despite trends that suggest improvements in educational attainment,
available social services, and poverty reduction over the past decade (Feathers of Hope:
A First Nations youth action plan, 2014). At the same time, the population of Indigenous
youth is growing, and it is estimated that about 48% of the Canadian Indigenous
population of 1,172,790 people who identified themselves as an Indigenous person in the
2006 Statistics Canada–Aboriginal Peoples Survey (Statistics Canada, 2006) are between
the ages of 15-30. New data from the National Household Survey (NHS) show that
1,400,685 people had an Aboriginal identity in 2011, representing 4.3% of the total
Canadian population; Aboriginal youth aged 15 to 24 represented 18.2% of the total
Aboriginal population (Statistics Canada, 2011).

The call for more work to be carried out to understand and resolve the challenges
that young Indigenous people face in a rapidly changing social and economic
environment has increased. Youth endure some development challenges (Identity, sense
of belonging and purpose), which have resulted in social, economic, and political
exclusion occasioned by high rates of unemployment, poverty, victimization, and
disempowerment (Bland, 2015, pp 11-15). However, a shift away from justifications for
“fixing” youth for prosperity has occurred in discussions about youth inclusion as a
fundamental matter of equity, (Hopkins 2013). In that regard, youth leadership studies need to take into account the heterogeneous experiences of youth, without ignoring the structural forces and context that, in effect, homogenize and exclude youth as an important class of citizens. Therefore, we need to examine the complexities of challenge and opportunity within various “landscapes” and address the concept of “youthscapes of leadership” by exploring the relationships between young people and the world around them.

Youth leadership development in Canada has assumed an increasingly complex and challenging evolution over the past three decades. Although some Canadians may have the perception that Indigenous youth are in crisis, and represent a threat to the established social order, these perceptions have been more pronounced over the past few years (Bland, 2014). Moreover, government policy (Child Welfare family policies, Social Services youth policies), seems to reflect that IYL development policies are a strain on public funds and not capable of resolving the myriad of issues and challenges that now confront Indigenous people (Blackstock, 2013).

Young Indigenous people seem to be disproportionately impacted by social exclusion, economic marginalization, and an increasing virulent and dysfunctional political culture (Alfred, 2015). Some reports have suggested a pervasive hopelessness and despair among the youth cohort (Brittain & Blackstock, 2015). Yet, amidst the concern, the majority of young Indigenous people are coping with many challenges (Harder, Rash, Holyk, Jovel, & Harder, 2012). Many young people have contributed, and continue to do so, to the development of their communities, even in the face of a governance culture that needs to be addressed (von der Porten, 2012).
Indigenous—you specifically, First Nations—leaders in Canada are continuing to witness the challenges that people face who are struggling to live in two worlds; it is a delicate dance between epistemologies and worldviews that have clashed over time. Indigenous youth leaders face similar challenges, including those of disappearing languages and the erosion of cultural identity and values. Many Indigenous youth may, in the future, work within corporations, government, or their Nations. Giving Indigenous youth a solid foundation that includes teachings of their own Indigenous ways of knowing will enhance their capability to be inspirational leaders in any environment. The purpose of this research was to answer the following questions:

1. What philosophies, methods, or principles of traditional Indigenous youth leadership were instilled in the leaders of yesterday?
2. What can we learn from traditional Indigenous youth leadership ideologies and share with institutions and communities that desire to support Indigenous youth leadership?

Very little has been written about IYL and even less on youth leadership training that is derived and draws from Indigenous teachings; that is, ideologies, philosophies, principles based on Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. To better understand what Indigenous youth require to take on leadership roles that will address the gap (social, education, and economic), additional research is necessary to encourage and prepare Indigenous youth who wish to assume leadership roles.

Social sciences, education, business, and leadership literature largely focuses on leadership’s multidimensional aspects and to a large degree, the leadership teachings and functions overlap (Yukl, 2002). In a very general sense, education focuses on the theory,
pedagogy and practice of leadership and administration (Hohepa, 2013; Bogotch & Shields, 2014; Munroe, Borden, Murray Orr, Toney, & Meader, 2013) whereas business and management focus on the bottom line, and leadership in profit and non-profit sectors (George, 2012; Goleman, 2011; Henein & Morissette, 2008). The social sciences cover a vast array of topics that address an equally vast array of populations, values, research, and ontology (Delorme, 2011; Elsey, 2013; Kenny & Fraser, 2012). Review of the following literature also suggest similarities between Indigenous and Western styles of leadership; however, differences do exist between the worldviews (Little Bear, 2002).

The literature pertaining to Indigenous leadership has documented the accounts of First Nations leaders who signed treaties with the Crown (Botting, 2006; Edmonds, 1980, 1984; Hauptman, 2008; Jonker, 1988; Warner & Grant, 2006; Wiebe, 2008), unknowingly surrendering or giving into principles of dominant Western governance. Specific training programs aimed at helping Indigenous youth leaders to understand Western styles of leadership also are documented. These include examples such as the Tim Hortons youth leadership program (YLP) (2015), the Boys & Girls Clubs of Canada youth program (2015), The City of Calgary LEAD youth program (2015), Canada World Youth (2015), and Canadian Roots (2014), to name a few.

However, the aforementioned programs adopt Western or dominant cultural styles of leadership. This leaves me to question: how can Indigenous youth learn leadership in ways that shift from the dominant Western cultural model to an Indigenous model or styles of leadership that are based in Indigenous philosophies?
The goal of this research was to understand how Indigenous traditional leadership knowledge is passed on to youth in order to enhance their ability to become effective Indigenous leaders within their communities.

I explored the following research question and sub-questions to gain information that could increase our knowledge and understanding of Indigenous leadership and the transmission of knowledge to potential Indigenous youth leaders.

**Research Question**

The primary research question: How was/is traditional Indigenous leadership knowledge transmitted to Indigenous youth in leadership roles?

**Sub questions**

The sub questions include the following:

1. What are the traditional Indigenous epistemologies that have been and can be shared with Indigenous youth to develop their leadership skills?

2. What are the current processes of educating Indigenous youth to become future leaders within communities, organizations, governments, and/or their Nations?

The intention of this research is to identify culturally appropriate methods and practices of leadership development for Indigenous youth. The findings and recommendations could lead to a leadership education program for Indigenous youth and general Indigenous leadership epistemologies for current leaders to share with Indigenous youth.

The Indigenous leadership knowledge that First Nations youth voiced in this study could be a valuable tool for future Indigenous youth leadership development.
Specific research findings could include a leadership framework for formal and informal education practices, as well as perhaps business and social sciences practices that support Indigenous youth and peoples globally. I envisage the creation of an IYL center where youth can attend, share, and study IYL.

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature on leadership. Specifically, I focus on the challenge of defining leadership, Western ways of interpreting leadership, Indigenous leadership and the challenges that Indigenous leaders face, Western youth leadership, and, finally, IYL and programs that support the progression of Indigenous leadership knowledge.

Chapter 3 explores the methods and procedures used within this research, the positionality of the researcher, the use of IM+PAR, research design, the selection process of youth leaders, the data collection, interview process, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 reports the findings of the stories of Indigenous youth leadership, process, re-engagement of youth leaders, and the stories - re-telling of IYL.

Chapter 5 explores the model created by the youth and the author that has yielded a new IYLD model. This is followed by the conclusions of the youth leader’s story and considerations. Chapter 6 offers recommendations in key areas such as education and business that youth leaders wanted to make certain were expressed to current Indigenous leaders.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion chapter summarizing the youth leaders’ thoughts as well as those of the primary researcher.
Chapter 8 is the researcher’s personal journey through the process of this specific research and that of Indigenous leadership, followed by the appendixes.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following questions were the basis of the literature review and parallel the research questions that were presented within the first chapter:

1. What traditional Indigenous concepts of leadership can assist in the development of Indigenous youth leadership programs?

2. How are historical Indigenous leadership philosophies and the knowledge of current leadership philosophies being transferred to youth from the older leaders in communities?

The question must also be asked: Are First Nations leaders doing all that they can to share their ways of knowing and their collective knowledge of leadership with youth?

Based on these questions, I chose the following four areas to explore in my review of the literature on IYL development: (a) leadership (b) Indigenous leadership (c) youth leadership (d) IYL, and (e) IYL programs.

The intent of this research was to gain an understanding of Indigenous leadership and to develop an IYL framework that can be used in the education of Indigenous youth in the future. Indigenous youth are currently the fastest growing population in Canada (Frideres & Gadacz, 2012, p. 94); therefore, IYL is essential to the vitality and sustainability of Indigenous cultures in Canada and Indigenous people’s ability to dance between two worlds. I review information on IYL and programs to educate Indigenous youth leaders.

Leadership

To begin, I present a brief commentary on general leadership theories to establish a context for the current research. The concept of leadership has been of interest in both
Indigenous and mainstream society for some time. For instance, from a Western perspective, Bass and Bass (2009), Gardner (2011), Goleman (2011), Grint (2011), Northouse (2012), Wren (2013), and Yukl (2002) have identified and developed leadership theories and explained leadership practices. Leadership has been documented to the extent that a great deal of literature has described a variety of leadership theories and styles and is continuously shifting.

**Leadership defined.** Stogdill (1974; as cited in Yukl, 2002) identified the challenges of defining leadership: “There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept” (p. 2). Yukl, after reviewing leadership definitions from the past 50 years, explained, “Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization” (p. 2). Goleman (2011) stated, “...to be leaders is more an art than science. After all, the personal styles of superb leaders vary” (p. 1).

Definitions of leadership have constant and reflective aspects that have changed in the past 50 years, and authors have described what it takes to be a good leader. Drucker (2011) a professor who focussed on business management and organization identified eight components of effective leaders:

1. They asked, “What needs to be done?”
2. They asked, “What is right for enterprise?”
3. They developed action plans.
4. They took responsibility for decisions.
5. They took responsibility for communicating.
6. They were focused on opportunities rather than problems.

7. They ran productive meetings.

8. They thought and said “we” rather and “I.”

The first two practices gave them the knowledge they needed. The next four helped them convert that knowledge into effective action. (pp. 23-24)

Northouse (2012a) states, “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p.5). Kouzes and Posner (2002) add “Leadership is not at all about personality; it’s about practice” (p. 13) and further state that there are five exemplary practices of leadership:

1. Model the Way.
2. Inspire a Shared Vision.
4. Enable Others to Act.
5. Encourage the Heart. (p. 13)

**Review of leadership theory.** The majority of the current leadership literature (Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001; Bass, 1990; Bass & Bass, 2009; Caligiuri & Tarique, 2012; DePree, 2011; Glaser, 2010; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; Grint, 2011; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Northouse, 2012, 2015; O’Toole, 1996; Senge, 1994; Wheatley, 2010; Yukl, 2002) has stated that leadership skills can be taught. A book chapter in the Harvard Business Review (2011) supports that thought, and that leadership is enhanced over time with self-knowledge and the development of certain knowledge, skills, practices, attributes, and competencies (Bennis & Thomas, 2011). Bass and Bass (2009) in their handbook on leadership introduce a range of theories (pp.37-55), from the
more historical and authoritarian theories to the more current transformational and
democratic theories and practices. Bass (1990) states:

The early sociological theorist tended to explain leadership in terms of either the
person or the environment. Later researchers tended to view leadership as an
aspect of role differentiation or as an outgrowth of social interaction processes.
Recently, the naive theories of leadership we hold have been considered most
important in explaining what is going on. But this is as it should be. (p.10)

MacNeil (2006) noted, “The evolution of leadership theory, however, is by no
means linear. It is still possible to see the evidence of trait theories or even ‘great man’
thinking in contemporary writing on leadership” (p. 28). Furthermore, the numerous
categories of leadership theories range from individual or behavioural to management
(e.g., crisis management – Demiroz & Kapucu, 2012), to organizational, to global
leadership (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2012; Jenkins, 2012). Bolden and Gosling (2006),
argued the importance of the following for leaders:

Genuine personal vision based on self-belief and moral courage; the ethical and
social responsibilities of leaders; the importance of self-awareness and reflection;
shared, emergent and situational leadership; balancing leadership dilemmas that
arise from complex and uncertain situations; the development of current and
future leaders; and the impact of wider social change such as shifting ethnic
identities and national allegiance. (p. 156)

Goleman et al. (2002) recommended that leaders become mindful of
competencies early in life and noted that these competencies (leadership competencies
like interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence, are leadership skills and behaviours
that contribute to superior performance; Leadership Competencies, 2008) are later reflected in leadership style when leadership responsibilities are assumed:

Leaders’ first awareness of a competence came late in childhood or adolescence; then, in their first jobs, or when some other radical transition made it crucial for survival, they used the competence more purposefully. As the years went by, and as they continued to practice the skill, they became increasingly better at it; there were distinct moments when they first used these competencies and used them regularly. The progression from a person’s first awareness of a competence to the point of mastery—in other words, being able to use the competence regularly and effectively—offers a fine-grained look at how leadership excellence develops in life. (p. 101)

Being aware and learning competencies can help develop a leader, and is one way in which leadership has been expressed; however, with constant change evident in the fluctuating global economy (among other places), leadership practices always need to be varied according to situations. Kotter (2011) suggested that leadership is constantly changing and that it is affected by economic and global changes: “Leadership, by contrast, is about coping with change. Part of the reason it has become so important in recent years is that the business world has become more competitive and more volatile” (p. 38). Managing volatility and dealing with adversity can be indicators of leadership. Bennis and Thomas (2011) agreed and suggested, “[O]ne of the most reliable indicators and predictors of true leadership is an individual’s ability to find meaning in negative events and to learn from even the most trying of circumstances” (p. 97).
As brief as this review of the literature is, the resounding thought is that leadership is complex, continuously changing, and will in the future again transform to accommodate the technological advances, global threats and needs, business and country agreements, and numerous additional factors that produce change.

**Indigenous Leadership**

In addition to the mainstream literature on leadership, certain authors (Banff Centre, 2015; Botting, 2006; Calliou, 2005, 2006; Edmonds, 1980, 1984; Goulet, 1999; Hauptman, 2008; Jonker, 1988; Kenny & Fraser, 2012; Kotowich-Laval, 2005; Newhouse, Voyageur, & Beavon, 2005; Murphy, 1993; Ottmann, 2002, 2005; Porter & Ka-Hon-Hes, 2008; Smith, 2013; Taylor, 1989; Turner, & Simpson, 2008; Voyageur, 2011; Voyageur, Brearley, & Calliou, 2015; Walton & O’Leary, 2015; Wiebe, 2008; Wilson & Fletcher, 2014) have added to the discourse on Indigenous leadership. The theories, techniques, lessons learned, and research all vary, yet all share the common theme that there is no one, single perspective on Indigenous leadership because of the diversity that is evident within Indigenous populations. Smith (2013) stated, “The complexity of the Cherokee Nation made it difficult to identify a suitable leadership model” (p. 28). The challenge of defining a singular specific leadership model is similar in Canada, where the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit population is spread from coast to coast to coast, as Dickason and Newbigging (2015) indicated in their book, *A Concise History of Canada’s First Nations* (p. 227).

Chad “Corntassel” Smith (2013) stated, “There are hundreds of books, theories, seminars, videos and audio tapes on the topic of leadership. It is a word so often used for different things that its meaning becomes vague” (p. 27). Not only in the context of
leadership is theory or epistemology ambiguous, but Indigenous leadership is often also misunderstood. Smith posited, “[L]eadership is the ability to go from Point A to Point B” (p. 31). It is important to ensure that all people who were identified as leaders took this role as if it was their own personal responsibility, that they are able to reflect on their actions and share their journey with others. Smith (2013) states, “The silent influence we have on those around is a powerful aspect of leadership. The most important leadership is personal leadership, each of us making decisions for ourselves” (p. 32).

Edmonds (1980) commented, “Throughout history, Indian leaders and their methods have both perplexed and fascinated other Americans” (p. vii) and that most traditional Indigenous leaders had other attributes besides the well-known warrior leadership trait that was largely unknown to the outside world because most North American Indigenous leaders were domestic in nature. A good example of the domestic nature of Indigenous leadership is the (Haudenosaunee) Iroquois women whose leadership and roles within the Six Nations confederacy were of a formidable nature (p. xiv), Haudenosaunee women were leaders within the community and in their families, and they were clan mothers within their Nation. Indigenous women’s leadership deserves exploration in its own right. Further to the evolving changing aspect of Indigenous leadership, Hauptman (2008) stated, “From the era of forest diplomacy and beaver wars to the present age of casinos, [Indigenous Peoples] have come up with a variety of ideas distinct, often competing, strategies and leadership styles to maintain their culture and separate nationhood” (p. 204).

In general and historically, selected young Indigenous leaders received a diverse education, both formal and informal. According to Ottmann (2005), the skills learned
throughout childhood contribute to the diverse leadership qualities that were necessary later in life and in modern urban settings, not just on reserves or within First Nations communities:

First Nations leadership development should include historical teachings and traditional stories from a First Nations perspective to establish meaning and purpose, and to maintain a connection to the people. Traditional First Nations elements can then be incorporated in a modern setting. They too can and will adapt. As mentioned, organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of, and implementing structures and programs that encourage, learning and adaptation. Through time, experience and maturity settles and strengthens both.

(p. 51)

The First Nations leaders in Ottmann’s (2005) study described their own development processes as beginning in childhood largely with encouragement and direction from First Nations Elders, family, and inspiration and support from other Indigenous leaders. The participants in the study had all completed at least some postsecondary education, participating in ceremonies, and listening to Elders (formal), and participated in informal and formal leadership development programs. These leaders suggested that development programs (formal) such as postsecondary or further leadership development (formal and informal) such as learning and exploring at a young age, all contributed to their personal advancement as leaders (pp 186-189).

Leroy Little Bear (2002), in his article “Jagged Worldviews Colliding,” described the competing worldviews and the philosophy of natural laws: “No matter how dominant a worldview is, there is always other ways of interpreting the world” (p. 77). Dr. Reg
Crowshoe (personal communication, April 18, 2015) suggested that the worldview of Indigenous people is “the stage in which our foundation rests, our way of knowing the world and all else is connected to this.” Seeing the world through different lenses and from a cultural perspective supports the thoughts of the participants in Ottmann’s (2005) doctoral research: “The differences between Western and First Nations leadership highlighted cultures with differing fundamental worldviews. Overwhelmingly, the leaders believed that differences [between First Nations and Western leadership] were found in availability, collective orientation, and the spiritual element in leadership” (p. 222).

Murphy (1993) presented a very thought-provoking analysis: “If Sitting Bull could visit us today, he would urge us to search the frontlines of business and public life for heroic leaders capable of addressing America’s disconnection and loss of focus” (p. xii). Indigenous youth leaders might demonstrate a new way of leadership if we support their interest. Indigenous youth are formidable in nature, some are educated in both formal and non-formal processes of Indigenous leadership, speak the language fluently, and are not necessarily at the front of, but are keeping their culture alive. Casey Eagle Speaker (personal communication, February 25, 2015) talked about Indigenous leadership:

The old leaders learned at a young age to not be the one in front; they were raised to know that it was the leader’s role to be supportive or to be the ones below the people to hold them up to achieve their goals.

As much as the understanding of theory and methodologies related to Western leadership are complex, so too is Indigenous leadership. With an ever-increasing body of literature and scholars portraying the challenges that current and past leaders face, there is
no question that the subject of IYL needs further research to better understand how Indigenous youth leaders can be nurtured and supported.

Youth Leadership

Brumbaugh (2013) explained that youth leadership literature focuses on the youth learning about adult leadership; it does not focus on making the learning meaningful through experiential learning opportunities. The focus is more on content and not on the context of how youth are learning leadership (p. 16).

The subject of youth leadership is correspondingly as confusing as that of adult leadership. MacNeil’s (2006) supposition about youth leadership is influential:

In the “tens of thousands of pages” written about leadership, what are the contributions to our understanding of youth leadership, youth leadership development, and the differences between youth and adult leadership? In much of the literature focused on leadership theory, leadership development, or leadership practice, youth are noticeably absent. For example, in a comprehensive review conducted by Bass of more than five thousand leadership studies, there is nothing about youth as leaders or about leadership development for youth. The leadership literature, both popular and scholarly, focuses heavily on adult leadership development and practice. (p. 29)

The challenge is to derive some value from adult theory to create or develop a youth leadership theory. Brumbaugh (2013) stated, “The primary roles for youth workers in the field of youth leadership development are to understand leadership concepts and be trained to teach youth leadership” (p. 92). Researchers and teachers in the field of youth leadership can learn from the thousands of articles or books written about leadership, and
can offer a starting point whereby a youth leadership theory is presented. “The bottom line is youth leadership development theory needs to be created” (p. 17).

Similarly to adult leadership, youth leadership requires a definition that MacNeil (2006) called a working definition of leadership: “Leadership is a relational process combining ability (knowledge, skills, and talents) with authority (voice, influence, and decision making power) to positively influence and impact diverse individuals, organizations, and communities” (p. 29). Within the context of exploring youth leadership, this definition is a good starting point. However, research on youth leadership also needs to take into consideration other factors. Brumbaugh (2013) commented:

While there is no youth leadership development theory per se, successful youth leadership development programs exist and are thriving. Youth leadership development is an approach over time that not only teaches about leadership, but allows youth the opportunity to apply leadership principles to their everyday lives. (p. 18)

With the increasing amount of literature and number of programs dedicated to youth leadership and with the themes that emerge from this research, I hope to develop an appropriate model that might be used for developing youth leadership. Youth leadership covers a vast area, ranging from civic, political leadership (Dempster, Stevens, & Keeffe, 2011; Edwards, 2014; Powers & Allaman, 2012; Ricketts & Rudd, 2002) to educational youth leadership (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Crooks, Chiodo, Thomas, & Hughes, 2010; Dudley, 2012; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Matthews, 2004). Youth leadership also is engrained in community (Irfan, Schwartz, & Bierre, 2012; Rodd, 2012; Rose, 2007) and team or sports leadership (Lerner et al. 2011; Williams & Mumtaz, 2007). This is by no
means the extent of the literature; there is much more on youth leadership and adult-youth perspectives on leadership. A specific challenge in defining youth leadership is that adults write most of the scholarly articles. However, some researchers have used qualitative methods to include youth, such as grounded theory and/or action research, Cahill, (2007); Castleden & Garvin (2008); Hopkins (2013) and Conrad (2015) to name a few.

Because youth leadership is equally as complex as adult leadership and no clear theory supports youth leadership, it is imperative that a model on youth leadership be developed with and for youth. Discussion of youth leadership points to the significance of the understanding of leadership methodologies and can only enhance our consideration of leadership.

**Indigenous Youth Leadership**

“Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?” Although these three simple questions originally posed by Paul Gauguin in the late 1800s were intended to provide meaning to human existence, they do offer a simple analogy to delve into the mysteries and ambiguities of leadership. (Stewart, 2006, p. 2)

Leadership development was intended to teach adults about leadership history, theory, practice, management and organizations. In general, youth leadership development programs today cumulatively emphasize adult leadership development approaches from a Eurocentric viewpoint. The leadership emphasis in IYL programs is based on this Eurocentric worldview rather than allowing Indigenous youth to experience Indigenous knowledge systems that include natural stages and ceremonies honouring growth. An Elder (G. Twance, personal communication, January 16, 2015) described this
natural stage of growth as a rite of passage, or the ability to obtain collective cultural knowledge of leadership expertise, and referred to it as a young person’s “natural stage of growth guided by natural laws.”

The rites of passage, as Gilgoff and Ginwright (2013) suggested, as a program that includes, “whatever the ethnic background of the youth served, rediscovering their culture builds ethnic pride; strengthens knowledge of their history; and fosters a worldview that values community, balance, and harmony” (p. 14). Therefore, leadership is not only a body of knowledge, but also a series of personal life experiences and knowledge sometimes attained from storytelling, which reflects an Indigenous philosophical worldview (Little Bear, 2002).

Very little has been documented on the process of traditional Indigenous youth training: how they develop leadership qualities, learning processes, and how they learn about responsibility. However, it could be supported and or parallel within western youth development research such as Rodd (2012) and PYD, M. P. O. (2015). Some Indigenous youth today are learning about Western ways of leadership through Western youth leadership programs. However, should they also be learning about Indigenous leadership philosophies so they can be equipped in the forthcoming decades to assume roles in leading communities, nations, companies, as well as developing their individual understanding of place and identity?

The review of national and international literature relating to IYL revealed that the majority of literature is focused on youth leadership development programs, and programs and skills evaluation paradigms. Van Linden and Fertman (1998) suggested that “understanding and appreciating the complexity of leadership is a prerequisite to
supporting and challenging teenagers to be the best leaders they can be” (p. 8). Murphy and Johnson (2011) contended that the “lack of systematic study of leadership through the lifespan is that there are no theoretical models of leader development that incorporate these younger years” (p. 460). According to Klau (2006), “It is important to recognize that scholars have highlighted the field’s problematic lack of clarity and coherence regarding the definition of leadership” (pp. 58-59); this also applies for youth leadership development.

Evidence of the value of IYL programming can be found in the work of Crooks et al. (2010): “Students in the First Nations Cultural Leadership Course showed higher academic performance and lower absenteeism in this class compared to their other courses” (p. 168). Young (2006) discovered that youth could access the valuable knowledge of Elders and faculty through the Longhouse Leadership Program (p. 6). The youth in this program discovered, rediscovered, and consequently learned to appreciate traditional leadership. The University of British Columbia’s (UBC’s) Longhouse Leadership Program was created in 2000 to teach the skills to work in and understand Indigenous contexts, in partnership with UBC’s First Nations House of Learning, various faculties, and student services. To facilitate teachings on leadership and cultural protocols, the program meets two to three times a month and has a service-learning component (Kenny & Fraser, 2012).

If Indigenous leaders are to share their own ways of knowing, they must first recognize and comprehend their histories to understand why they are where they are today for the purpose of enriching their future. The importance of understanding one’s history is crucial to effective and strong leadership: “Indigenous identity, language, and
culture contribute to an exceptionally important awareness for youth as they initiate their journey to comprehend leadership” (J. Ottmann, personal communication, January 19, 2013). R. Hill (personal communication, January 23, 2013) agreed: “People are born with innate qualities that became obvious to the clan, the leaders. One’s keen, respectful observation allowed one to absorb the values needed to be a good leader, along with the mentoring influence of older leaders.”

The mainstream education of Indigenous youth lacks Indigenous philosophies or methodologies; however, an increasing number of programs support IYL and integrate Indigenous ways of knowing. Some IYL programs, (e.g., Rediscovery, Me to We, First Nations Leadership Course) focus on the development of personal skills, leadership skills, spiritual connections, language, and other abilities that increase the effectiveness of leadership development through the applied philosophies and methodologies of the local Indigenous communities.

C. Eagle Speaker (personal communication, February 15, 2015) suggested that the epistemology of Indigenous leadership is not a process that can be transferred through lesson plans; rather, it is an experiential process that involves sharing lessons through stories and individually experiencing life. Some youth leadership programs use this form of teaching in interactions with Elders as well as with other Indigenous and non-Indigenous ‘experts.’ The participants must be able to take part in various formal and informal ceremonies and experiential learning activities, which are stimulating and vigorous forms of education. Sometimes participants are also encouraged to embark on a very important journey of self-discovery through a variety of self-reflection activities that
foster a deeper understanding of what it means to be human and how that affects their identity and sense of self (Wihak, Lickers, & Allicock, 2006; Robinson, 2015).

Experiential education is in many ways self-directed. The participants are encouraged to decide at what level they want to initiate their journey of self-exploration and discovery or rediscovery of cultural identity. Offering Indigenous leadership programs to youth contributes to their educational success. Hill (as cited in Coulter & Ahnungoons/Debassige, 2013) in *Woven Words for Indigenous Education* explained that “by integrating Aboriginal perspectives, culture and spirituality into our schools, First Nations students will gain a greater sense of identity” (p. 85). Hill also reported, “[S]tudents developed a greater sense of cultural awareness and were more engaged” (p. 91). Aylward (2012) described the experience of Inuit youth in the Nunavut Abroad Program (NYA):

Participants also highlighted significant contributions that NYA had made to their academic success. In addition to receiving high school credit for participating in NYA, many alumni reported experiencing an attitudinal shift whereby they felt more motivated and more personally responsible for their academic success. (p. 45)

IYL education is vital to Indigenous communities as it can lead to protecting Indigenous ways of knowing, cultural languages, and spiritual awareness and, most of all, IYL education can help to ensure that youth will successfully continue to take a lead in
the “eighth fire.”

Crowshoe (personal communication, April 12, 2015) cautioned, “We need to ensure that this generation of youth get the instructions in traditional leadership soon; otherwise it may be the generation that doesn’t get all the knowledge base.” Not only is the fear of the loss of Indigenous leadership knowledge expressed by one Elder, but some Elders and youth within communities also speak a language other than English (their own traditional language), so traditional leadership lessons for youth need to be translated in a way that makes sense to them today.

**Indigenous Youth Leadership Programs**

Many platforms for Indigenous youth leadership education exist. For example, the National Indian Youth Leadership Project (2013), Outward Bound Canada (2014), Canada World Youth (2015), Right to Play (n.d.), Indigenous Leadership Development Institute Inc. (n.d.), and Ghost River Rediscovery (n.d.) have offered Indigenous youth leadership program. These and other programs offer Indigenous youth leadership practices that mainstream education systems do not currently offer. In general, several youth leadership programs offer Indigenous leadership education programs, yet documentation on the success of programs is limited, which is true of most leadership programs.

IYL is a combination of and exposure to learning the Indigenous philosophy, knowledge and practice based on Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. Because the

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3 A prophecy from some Indigenous communities with regard to the next generation of leaders: the change from Seven Generations since contact in North America to the 8th Fire (CBC-Radio Canada, 2015).
stories and experiences of IYL are not heavily documented, it is imperative that youth leaders have an opportunity to take part in experiential learning as part of their leadership education. Experiential exploration of philosophies and methodologies inform youth and give them opportunities to explore various aspects of leadership development from their perspective, and ensures that the youth are exposed to Indigenous teachings on leadership. C. Eagle Speaker (personal communication, February 15, 2015) stated, “The process of learning took place in a very different environment, not in a classroom. The classroom was outdoors in an environment rooted in deep learnings not only about the land [and] how to live with it, but how you are connected to that place.”

Experiential education, which includes the discovery or rediscovery of Indigenous leadership traditions such as active listening and observing, are vital to the preparation of Indigenous youth for leadership. “More broadly, the recovery of tradition itself may be viewed as healing, both at individual and collective levels. Hence, efforts to restore language, religious and communal practices have been understood by contemporary Aboriginal peoples as fundamentally acts of healing” (Kirmayer, Simpson, & Cargo, 2003, p.17). Experiential learning, place-based or land-based learning, and the philosophy of the medicine wheel are equally important as they offer practical solutions to IYL development:

The pedagogical framework for the development of Indigenous youth leadership capacity that the Youth Leadership Program (YLP) employs is an Aboriginal educational model that is framed by the medicine wheel (development of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual capacity) and is grounded in cultural and outdoor experiential learning. Indigenous ways of knowing are not tangible
lessons that can easily be transferred by reading a textbook or memorizing a lesson. Through lived experiences, participants in the Youth Leadership Program explore cultural norms and protocols, history and language as well as a myriad of other subjects and issues surrounding Indigenous peoples. This form of education and learning is encompassed by a philosophy and learning method known as “Rediscovery.” (Lickers & White, 2008, p. 116)

Many of the teachings on which IYL programs focus originate in traditional Indigenous theories of leadership. In a number of Indigenous communities, when members of the community were selected as leaders, they understood that leaders had certain requirements: “In the old days leadership depended on the personal prestige of the people whom the community choose as leaders” (Deloria, 1999, p. 316). Hill (personal communication, January 23, 2013) agreed, “Not only were you born with innate qualities that Clan mothers were aware of, [but] there were [also] leaders around that would guide and mentor a future leader with purpose and intention.”

In IYL programs, Elders and community representatives integrate Indigenous leadership philosophies and ideals into their teachings. Through experiential learning activities, youth gain insightful experience and knowledge about leadership from an Indigenous perspective. Several authors have contributed to the discourse on and benefits of experiential learning (Dudley, 2012; Lowan, 2008, 2012; Ritchie, Wabano, Corbiere, Restoule, Russell, & Young, 2015; Simpson, 2002; Stevenson, Brody, Dillon, & Wals, 2014; to name a few). For example, Dudley stated:

Spending time in nature is important for childhood development because senses are engaged in a way that is impossible indoors. “Playtime—especially
unstructured, imaginative, exploratory play—is increasingly recognized as an essential component of wholesome child development” (Louv, 2009). When children spend time in nature they are applying creativity and resourcefulness, skills heavily influential in critical thinking and problem solving. Additionally, spending time outdoors aids in stress reduction and has been a positive treatment for depression. (p.2)

**Components of Indigenous youth leadership programs.** Most IYL programs have numerous components, such as skill challenges and knowledge of leadership that involves the use of all four areas of the medicine wheel\(^4\) model. Brendtro (2009) presented a compelling argument regarding the Circle of Courage and youth leadership:

The Circle of Courage posits four universal growth needs which apply to children and youth in any culture or learning environment: Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity. When these needs are met, children thrive. When neglected, children present a host of social, emotional, learning, and behavior problems. The Circle of Courage is being employed in diverse cultural settings world-wide. Belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity are crucial to learning and positive youth development. These are parallel to the four foundations of self-worth as established in the extensive early research by Stanley

\(^4\) The medicine wheel represents the alignment and continuous interactions of the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual realities. The circle shape represents the interconnectivity of all aspects of one’s being, including the connection with the natural world (Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., 2015).
Coopersmith (1967) and in recently recovered writings of Abraham Maslow which update his hierarchy of human needs (Koltko-Rivera, 2006). Blending developmental psychology with Maslow’s concepts\(^5\), we summarize these four growth needs which are universal across cultures:

- Attachment provides safety, significance, and belonging.
- Achievement brings knowledge, competence, and esteem.
- Autonomy builds efficacy, power, and self-actualization.
- Altruism fosters morality, virtue, and self-transcendence. (pp. 6-7)

A specific highlighted and critical component of IYL programs is the interaction with Elders and other Indigenous and non-Indigenous experts (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 2002). Youth leaders are encouraged to engage in dialogue with Elders and mentors on a deep and profound level. Elders bring up various topics and share numerous stories; some of these topics include historical dialogue, residential schools, leadership values, and the interpretation of and debate on current world events (Kolenick, 2013).

Brendtro (2009) explained that, Increasingly, Elders are not involved in the education of Indigenous youth leaders, which is a phenomenon that will increase should Elders not be connected to the leadership aspect of Indigenous youth: “The greatest risk facing many of today’s youth is they lack positive adult bonds and seek out substitute belonging among other disconnected peers. In sum, youth in modern culture suffer from a\(^5\)

veritable ‘elder deficit disorder’” (p. 10). The lack of interaction between youth and
Elders results in not only a lack of traditional understanding, but also a loss of historical
knowledge.

Ceremony is correspondingly an integral part of any IYL programming. Participants take part in many different types of ceremonies such as sunrise ceremonies, pipe ceremonies, and sweat lodges, which is thus a very dynamic form of education. Young (2006) suggested that Elders agree and that part of ceremony is part of leadership:

The Elders recommended continuing cultural ceremonial practices and supporting
students’ cultural interests and gifts. Supporting the cultural diversity and
leadership needs of Indigenous students by including ceremonies from different
traditions is important. The Elders spoke of a fundamental commonality that lies
beneath the details of particular traditions this articulation allows students to
engage in particular ceremonies as they create a shared culture through their daily
interaction. Indigenous students need to know that they and their traditions make
significant contributions to the leadership education of all peoples. (pp. 75-76)

Additionally, in some IYL programs, the participants are encouraged to embark
on an important journey of self-discovery through a variety of self-reflection activities
that foster a deeper understanding of what it means to be Indigenous, or of his or her
people (e.g., Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, Métis, Inuit) and how that affects identity and
sense of self (Henley, 1996). Physical and educational learning activities, which can
include bridging Western science and Indigenous knowledge (Actua, 2012; Krug, 2012)
form an integral part of the learning process in some IYL programs.
This method of education is in many ways self-directed in that the participants can choose at what level they want to originate their journey of self-exploration and rediscovery of cultural identity. Ultimately, IYL programs offer a journey of discovering/rediscovering one’s relationship with the Earth and cosmos, with all of one’s relations, and with one’s own inner self (Edwards, 2014; Houwer, 2013; Lowan, 2008, 2012). In the past, the rite of passage for youth was a critical process of self-exploration: “It gave purpose and direction for all to consider, and an Elder would guide or mentor that youth from that moment onwards” (R. Crowshoe, personal communication, April 12, 2015).

Likewise, the Yiriman Back to the Bush program in Australia inspires youth to explore their relationship to land, place, and culture, and “the participants, young and old, often walk between 15 and 20 kilometers a day, regularly combining travel with other physically demanding tasks such as digging, hunting and collecting firewood” (Palmer Watson, Watson, Ljubic, Wallace-Smith, & Johnson, 2006, p. 323). Reconnection to land and identity is central for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth and it requires the co-creation of existence (Bell, 2014).

Seldom do IYL programs include community exchanges, overseas projects, or learning opportunities; yet there is so much to study, compare, and share between Indigenous youth leaders from other parts of the globe, about the challenges and successes that are experienced. International exchanges offer a potential platform for IYL programs to do this; for example, the Ghost River Rediscovery’s YLP:

An important aspect of the YLP’s experiential learning approach is that it allows youth to explore leadership theory and practice in both a local environment as well as an international environment. In the Empowering Indigenous Youth
program, youth participate, first, in a Canadian wilderness portion, which allows them to learn about leadership in an environment that is somewhat familiar to them. This portion of the program varies in length and can range from two to sixteen weeks. During this time, the youth are presented with challenging activities and ceremonies to ensure that they will be prepared for the challenging experiences presented during the international portion of the program. It is important that the first portion take place in a wilderness setting as it allows youth to disconnect from the pressures and stimulations of the urban world. (Lickers & White, 2008, pp. 117-118)

Most youth leadership programs offer a land-based experience for youth leaders, some of which are full out-trip expeditions, and others are an amalgamation of base-camp operations and day trips to specific cultural areas within the traditional territories of Indigenous communities. Youth learn to reconnect with the land and themselves (Eagle Speaker, personal communication, February 15, 2015; Elsey, 2013; Lowan, 2008, 2012). The day-trip portion of most IYL programs (e.g., Outward Bound, Ghost River Rediscovery, Rediscovery programs, YMCA) is a physical experience for youth, who are encouraged to reach beyond their comfort zone in all aspects of the medicine wheel (i.e., their physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional senses).

International Indigenous exchange programs guide youth leaders in remote locations and encourage them to move even further outside their comfort zone (Lowan, 2008, 2012; Wihak, Hately, Allicock, & Lickers, 2007). Depending on the country and the program, this portion can range from six weeks to three months (Aylward, 2012; Ghost River Rediscovery, n.d.). Some of the challenges that youth face as emerging
leaders in programs that offer international Indigenous exchanges are awareness of
Indigenous knowledge of leadership from other countries, language barriers, cultural
protocol, and isolation and culture shock (Hallett, Chandler, & Lalonde, 2007).

In both local and international settings, “youth learn how to express and
individuate themselves within the group while at the same time, building a united and
cohesive team that is based on principles of equality, justness and fairness” (Lickers &
White, 2008, p. 118). An important aspect of IYL programs is that youth leaders can
learn from each other while they learn about the methodologies of Indigenous leadership.
Youth leaders have an abundance of family and community histories to share, and
reciprocal learning often takes place unnoticed (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern,
2002).

Indigenous leaders know the value of introspection and take time to reflect on
decisions or actions that they have to make. One of these key activities is called Spirit
Spot (Henley, 1996):

During this time, participants are given the opportunity to engage in self-
reflection and observation of the natural environment. There are a few guidelines
about the Spirit Spot that ensure its success. First, no individual should be in view
of another or in view of the camp. Second, silence must be maintained during the
allotted time and third, once a Spirit Spot has been selected, the youth must return
to the same spot each day. (p. 83)

It is a daunting undertaking to learn about Indigenous leadership, its lessons and
opportunities, and what to do with that knowledge once an individual acquires it. Leroy
Little Bear (as cited in Alfred, 2005) spoke about Indigenous leadership and the requirements of leaders:

  Given the opportunity, a culture attempts to mold its members into ideal personalities. The ideal personality in Native American cultures is a person who shows kindness to all, who puts the group ahead of individual wants and desires, who is a generalist, who is steeped in spiritual and ritual knowledge—a person who goes about daily life and approaches “all his or her relations” in a sea of friendship, easygoing-ness, humour, and good feelings. She or he is a person who attempts to suppress inner feelings, anger, and disagreements with the group. She or he is a person who is expected to display bravery, hardiness, and strength against enemies and outsiders. She or he is a person who is adaptable and takes the world as it comes without complaint. That is the way it used to be! That is the way it should be! (p. 10)

It is extremely difficult to determine future direction if we do not ponder and examine our history and roots. Lee and Chen (2014) pointed out that “studies have suggested that group identity and cultural recovery affect individuals” (p. 3), not only in the understanding of leadership, but also in career achievements. Drawing on Indigenous knowledge as a basis, Elders, leaders, and instructors teach youth the importance of appreciating cultural diversity and the key role of culture in determining identity (Elsey, 2013; Kulmann, 2012; Ortiz, 2009; Ty, 2012).

Youth must have an opportunity to learn about and practice leadership by being placed in situations in which they can explore and experience various leadership competencies and strategies. This type of learning requires that youth engage in activities,
dialogue, and ceremonies that encourage mental stimulation, physical action, introspection, and evaluation (Aylward, 2012).

As policy and attitudinal changes unfold, the momentum towards presenting the challenges that Indigenous youth face to Canadian society as a whole increases. Should we not consider programs that address IYL and its diverse cultural principles and languages? Some Indigenous youth leaders are already well on their way to successful leadership, for example, Kendal Netmaker (Neechi Gear, 2015) and many others (CBC News, 2015). Bennett (2010) provides some thoughts about activity in youth programming: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual are all aspects of most IYL programming:

Opportunities for Aboriginal children and youth to participate in recreation and pro-social activity through sports, safe activity centres, and develop their physical strength and skills are limited in many respects. Poverty, poor facilities, and the absence of a national Aboriginal sport or recreation policy pose barriers for these children and youth to obtain key lessons in healthy living and self-care on an equal footing to other Canadian children and youth. (p. 8)

Physical and learning activities that are usually present in IYL programs include Indigenous traditions and values that give youth a hands-on approach to learning leadership from an Indigenous perspective. The challenge is that little knowledge of what Indigenous leadership methodology involves is clearly documented or available. As I (2006) pointed out, “There is little or no literature that reflects on the transfer of knowledge, methods, spiritual approaches, or storytelling of Aboriginal people” (p. 27). Especially with the majority of Indigenous youth, now living in urban centres (Frideres &
Gadacz, 2012) this could be an even greater challenge. Experiential learning programs are therefore imperative. This form of education is vital to ensure the development of inspired, informed and educated Indigenous youth leaders.

**Global examples.** The subject of IYL is not limited to Canada. Indigenous communities around the globe are working to rediscover ways of knowing that will support IYL development. Some of the recent efforts from around the globe include: the First Alaskans Institute’s (2014; USA) youth leadership development; the work of Anaya (2015), Daniels (2009), Lee and Chen (2014; Taiwan), Mafile’o, Simeon, Api, and Thomas (2010), and Ngunjiri (2015); the Smith Family’s (2014; Australia) IYL Program; the Queensland Government’s (2014; Australia) IYL Program; Yalari’s (2015; Australia) IYL Program; AIESEC’s (2014; Canadian chapter) Global Youth Leadership Program; and the Native Youth Leadership Alliance ([NYLA] 2014; USA). Postsecondary education centres often have IYL programs housed within their institutions.

The AIESEC⁶ (2014) program, for example, is considered the world’s largest student-run non-profit organization that helps students on a global scale to develop into responsible leaders. The NYLA (2014) focuses its efforts mainly on and invests in young Native American leaders to spark culturally based community change. It is a multiyear

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⁶ AIESEC is originally an acronym (French) *Association internationale des étudiants en sciences économiques et commerciales*. (English) *International Association of Students in Economic and Commercial Sciences*; however, the full name is no longer officially used as members can now come from any university background. (Retrieved from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AIESEC](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AIESEC)).
fellowship program that offers culturally based training, resources, and a community of support to help young Native leaders create positive change in their communities. A core group of Tribal College students and Elders founded the program in 2009 to create an organization rooted in Indigenous approaches to leadership.

Leaders and educators in Australia are dealing with a similar dilemma of how to educate youth on Indigenous leadership principles. Daniels (2009) discussed the need for Indigenous youth to reconnect to the land, values, and identity: “By participating in cultural camps, urban Aboriginal youth are provided with the opportunity to construct identity narratives about their Aboriginality. In this way, Aboriginal youth begin their own journey and conversation with the land” (p. 32). A photovoice project involving Indigenous youth in Papua New Guinea (Mafie’o et al., 2010) is yet another global initiative that encourages IYL to use a lens of storytelling that includes photography as a tool to appreciate place and Indigenous identity.

Globally, “according to the United Nations Education for All Global Monitoring report (2012), 25% of the world’s population is comprised of youth who are defined as people between the ages of 15 and 24 years” (Qureshi & Nair, 2015, p. 555). Numerous IYL programs are increasing the possibilities in education, leadership, and business. I have discussed some of these in the literature review.

Camps, indoor and outdoor lessons, and other forms of youth leadership have resulted in numerous IYL programs in Canada and globally (UNESCO, 2012), yet there is still the challenge of interpreting the way that some historical Indigenous leaders were educated and how these astute and great leaders became leaders of their nations or communities. I believe that research on Indigenous ways of leadership for youth will be
of significance as young people on a regional, national, and global scale prepare to take leadership roles.

**Conclusion**

Some key points emerged from the literature review: Western and Indigenous leadership is complex, varied, and constantly changing, and Indigenous leadership is challenging to move into its rightful place in the leadership literature. In the ongoing dialogue on the subject of leadership, in evolving from the classical studies of leadership (Doyle & Smith, 2001) to present-day theories (Northouse, 2015), the lexicon and methodologies have evolved.

The lack of relevant literature available for this review created an unclear definition of leadership as a whole, but agreement on the definition of Indigenous leadership has also become complex. In the literature, from the progression of settler-documented histories of Indigenous leaders to current literature by Indigenous authors, varied perspectives on Indigenous leadership have emerged. Indigenous leadership values, philosophies, methodologies, and rites of passages have been and still are hidden and, in most of the literature, excluded from present-day leadership conversation.

The complexity of leadership extends to youth leadership. YLPs and youth leadership development for non-Indigenous and Indigenous youth is largely comprised of the philosophies and methodologies of Western leadership. Although no tangible theory of youth leadership or IYL exists, I have presented models in this literature review of authors that reveal an emergent and growing trend towards the progression of leadership knowledge, theories, and practices for youth.
CHAPTER 3: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the methodology, methods and processes that I used to conduct this research. My discussion includes the use of qualitative research that includes Indigenous methodology (IM) of storytelling within the framework of participatory action research (PAR). I also consider my place within the research, the principles that guided my research with the First Nations youth leaders, and the principles that guided me personally.

The goal of this research was to understand how Indigenous traditional leadership knowledge is passed on to youth in order to enhance their ability to become effective Indigenous leaders within their communities.

To reiterate, I explored the following research question and sub-questions:

1. How was/is traditional Indigenous leadership knowledge transmitted to Indigenous youth in leadership roles?
2. What are the traditional Indigenous epistemologies that have been and can be shared with Indigenous youth to develop their leadership skills?
3. What are the current processes of educating Indigenous youth to become future leaders within communities, organizations, governments, and/or their Nations?

The intention of this research is to identify culturally appropriate methods and practices of leadership development for Indigenous youth.
Qualitative Research

Considering the lack of research and knowledge on how Indigenous youth acquire leadership skills, I was inspired to engage in a blend of qualitative (Berg, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Flick, 2009; Glesne, 1999; Woodwell, 2013) and Indigenous methodology (Kovach, 2005, 2009, 2010; Moreton-Robinson & Walter, 2009; Smith, 1999; Steinhauer, 2002; Walmark, 2013; Wilson, 2008). Indigenous methodology is more in line with my personal and professional worldview, and it is more appropriate to use with the participants with whom I conducted my research. Moreover, my initial discussion of this methodology with Indigenous people, and youth in particular, explains my decision to use a qualitative and Indigenous methodology. At the same time, I considered the youth partners in developing this research project and considered their thoughts in designing the research questions and my interpretations of their responses. Therefore, this is a qualitative research study that reflected on the works of several researchers (Berg, 2004, 2007, 2011; Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2013; Denzin, 2007; Flick, 2009; Glesne, 1999; Palys, 2003; Richards, 2009; Richards & Morse, 2007; Tracy, 2010; Weber-Pillwax, 2004). To understand qualitative research, I drew upon Denzin and Lincoln’s definition (as cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 44):

*Qualitative Research* begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes
patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description of the interpretation of the problem, and it contribution to the literature or a call for change. (p. 44)

With regard to the research questions I posed, I believe that an Indigenous methodology that focused on the method of storytelling (Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2009a) is consistent with Indigenous value systems and well-suited to working with Indigenous youth in the context of this research (see Figure 1. p. 55). Storytelling is a method central in Indigenous methodology. Stories reflect the experiences, thoughts, and knowledge that are important to Indigenous people and collectively map their creative and critical relationships, their philosophies, and their own history. Stories create, define, and maintain the people’s relationships with each other and the world around them, and when the storytellers share stories, the listeners reflect and learn as part of a community and a people (Archibald, 2008, pp.11-12). Stories also indicate where the storyteller is in the universe and where he/she needs to go in the future. Stories can explain the rules and expectations for normative behaviour. Storytelling is therefore not a simple one-dimensional act, but a complex historical, social, and political process embedded in the continuance of the storyteller’s collective presence and knowledge (Archibald, 2008; Auger, 2001; Borrows, 2002; Innes, 2013) and therefore appropriate as a research method working in the Indigenous context.

**Researcher Positionality**

To illuminate my position as a researcher drawing from Indigenous methodologies, I must first explain who I am to locate myself within the context of my
research and establish clarity, respect, and trust (Kovach, 2009a, pp. 110-111). Because my research would incorporate the stories of IYL in a Canadian context, an Indigenous method of storytelling and retelling, as Kovach noted, would be congruent with this research focus and context. In essence, as Thomas King (2003) stated, “The truth about stories is that that’s all we are: ‘You can’t understand the world without telling a story’” (p. 32).

Here is my story. I am a Haudenosaunee (referred to as the “People of the Longhouse,” “Iroquois,” or “Six Nations Confederacy”) citizen, Upper Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk), from the Turtle Clan. I come from a rather large family; I am the oldest of nine children. My parents (my father is upper Mohawk and my mother, registered as Tuscarora, and is of German descent) were adamant that we celebrate, honour, and recognize diversity, never forgetting our origins as Haudenosaunee people. Appreciating both worlds and being able to walk in the two worlds were mutual goals of our parents when we were children. Taking part in the “delicate dance between two worlds” (Lickers, 2006, p. 49) has not been tranquil, to say the least. In one world, we are never enough, and in the other, we are too much.

I have lived on numerous reserves in Canada and have been formally adopted into two communities, the Nakoda Nation (Stoney Nation) west of Calgary, Alberta (my Nakoda name is Tatanga Jusin, or Little Buffalo’), and the Kwakiutl Nation in Ft. Rupert, British Columbia (my Kwakiutl name, kala’kalus, meaning ‘Walking together’). I also have ties to the Inuit in Rankin Inlet, where I am called Akla, or Bear. I currently reside in Calgary, Alberta, an urban centre. For many years, I have been part of the ceremonies of the Haudenosaunee, Nakoda, Siksika, and Kwakiutl peoples, all have
given me honour to participate, grow and learn about our ways as Indigenous leaders. As a Pipe carrier, in the sweat lodge, and participating in Sundances, the understanding of traditional leadership principles and methodologies was an important path on my personal journey.

I view myself as constructivist in nature, as one who acknowledges the world has multiple realities (Wilson, 2008, p. 37). This means that I construct my reality based on my ontology and epistemology. This perspective then determines how I acquire data (learning and information) as well as interpret the world that I observe and within which I interact. Place and space are important contributors to my interpretation of objects and events. Indigenous ontologies treat seemingly inanimate objects as animate objects (Wilson, 2008); this perspective supports constructivism because it fosters multiple worldviews. Wilson elaborated on this position, “Knowledge in itself is not seen as the ultimate goal; rather the goal is the change that this knowledge may help to being about” (p. 37). In this research, my intention was to allow First Nations youth leaders to share their reality with other Indigenous youth leaders so that all might benefit from their stories and epistemologies. However, sharing was the not the end goal; sharing would move the youth closer to their end goal, which was to support the development of IYL so that future youth leaders can lead skillfully and represent their people and culture.

As an Indigenous student and researcher, I believe that it is my duty to articulate and present my understanding of Indigenous leadership and storytelling through my own cultural lens and to transfer Indigenous leadership knowledge to Indigenous youth. Indigenous storytelling and retelling (Kovach, 2009, 2010) are valuable to study the
processes involved in IYL. Hence, I followed an Indigenous methodology, using Indigenous methods, to complete my research.

**Indigenous methodologies (IM).** Methodologies have major differences, and Chilisa (2011) explains a few of the differences between Western and Indigenous methodologies: “One of the shortfalls of Euro-Western research paradigms is that they ignore the role of imperialism, colonization, and globalization in the construction of knowledge” (p. 8). Moreover:

social science research needs to involve spirituality in research, respecting communal forms of living that are not Western and creating space for inquiries based on relational realities and forms of knowing that are predominant among the non-Western Other/s still being colonized. I have always been disturbed by the way in which the Euro-Western research process disconnects me from the multiple relations that I have with my community, the living and the nonliving. (p. 3)

Indigenous methodologies are not solely represented in the collection of data or the research design but include the interpretation of the material once the researcher has collected it. Wilson (2008) articulated Indigenous methodology in the following way:

Methodology refers to the theory of how knowledge is gained, or in other words the science of findings things out. Your view of what reality is, and how you know this reality will impact on the ways that more knowledge can be gained about this reality. If the ontology is that there is one ultimate reality, then there should be one way of examining this reality (methodology) that will help to see it best (epistemology). If the ontology is that various realities exist, then you will
choose ways of examining one of these realities (methodology) that will take into account your point of view as a researcher to come up with a better understanding (epistemology). Methodology is thus asking, “How do I find out more about this reality?” (p. 34)

Louis (2007) also reflects on Indigenous methodologies, drawing from several sources to describe the key characteristics of this approach:

Indigenous methodologies are alternative ways of thinking about research processes (Akan, 1992; Cajete, 1994, 2000; Ermine, 1995; Crazy Bull, 1997b; Abdullah and Stringer, 1999; Bishop, 1999; Semali and Kincheloe, 1999; Smith, 2000; Steinhauer, 2002; Atleo, 2004; Hodge and Lester, 2006). They are fluid and dynamic approaches that emphasise circular and cyclical perspectives. Their main aim is to ensure that research on Indigenous issues is accomplished in a more sympathetic, respectful, and ethically correct fashion from an Indigenous perspective. (p. 133)

Given the power imbalance between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people, as well as the marginalized location of Indigenous people’s narratives in mainstream Canadian settler discourses, and the seeming normality of internal colonial rule over Indigenous peoples, hegemony is an important consideration. Hegemony is to establish and maintain control, not through violence and coercion, but through ideology. Non-Indigenous people constructed a narrative based on their own values, beliefs, and social conditioning; this narrative was then normalized and naturalized until it became the common-sense values of the settlers. As a result of dominant colonial narratives (e.g.,
ethics that can influence legislation; Castellano, 2014), Indigenous methodologies have been rejected and they have lost validity in a Canadian societal perspective.

Dominant discourse has the power to influence public dialogue and discourse because it designates the terms of the debate, analysis, and “solutions” to the Indigenous “problem”. In short, it creates a class of “disqualified knowledge” that is inclusive of Indigenous ways of knowing. As a result, Indigenous ways of knowing have not been considered relevant or valid information.

Space is an arena in which decision making takes place; it is where power operates in two ways: (a) by excluding participation (a closed space) and (b) by managing and restricting participation (an invited or emancipatory space, where the participants control the participation, process, and decision making). Place designates the local, national, or international level of power and political engagement. Thus, power intersects in those spaces and places with different degrees of visibility that correspond to the way power is enacted by formal rules, by hidden privileging of particular groups or interests, or by invisible, internalized common sense. This is where Indigenous methodologies comes into existence and allows the participants to guide the researcher`s meaning of their responses (Denzin et al, 2008; Escobar, 2008).

Indigenous ways of knowing embody a different way being and knowing (ontology and epistemology), and of viewing the world that I considered when I interpreted the results of the participants’ stories. Their stories highlighted the epistemic potential and local histories embedded in or arising from colonial differences; locating them resulted in some of the most meaningful sources for alternative world construction. Because space, time, place, and power create multiple realities and possibilities that can
contain more than one meaning, from this perspective, Indigenous knowledges has transformative powers (Wallace, 2013) and Indigenous ways of knowing may create a different space in which different versions of reality or power are created. Involving the participants in the interpretation of data (bounded by place and space) has ensured that their voices, their First Nations voices, were heard; including the youth that participated in the study in the interpretation of the data supported my ability to consider with them, these interactions of space, place, and power (Denzin, Lincoln, & Tuhiwai Smith, 2008; Escobar, 2008).

In interpreting and appreciating the stories shared by youth, the presentation of their stories is through re-telling their story. It should be noted that my use of the term stories is not focused only on traditional oral renditions of events such as the Elder Brother stories Wisahkecahk and Nanubush (Innes, 2013), but on the Indigenous youths’ narratives that, I as the researcher, heard in response to the research questions.

Similar to Wilson’s (2008) description of ontology, axiology, epistemology, and methodology (p. 70), Martin (2003) posited an Australian Indigenist viewpoint on Indigenous research:

For Indigenist research to be recognised by the academy of western research it must also identify its methodology. But western research is a western practice and in this way, it is not a feature of our own world so a research framework that is entirely Aboriginal, is not possible. So Indigenist research occurs through centering Aboriginal Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being and Ways of Doing in alignment with aspects of western qualitative research frameworks. This
alignment or harmonisation occurs in both structure of research and in research procedures. (p. 12)

Indigenous research is therefore about the use of research in ways that are defined, organized, and conducted by Indigenous peoples, and beneficial to Indigenous communities. In this context, protocols, methodologies, and research interests are grounded politically in specific Indigenous contexts and histories, struggles and ideals. Indigenous research stems from Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies that include cultural protocols, values, and behaviours as integral parts of the methodology. Indigenous-centered decolonizing research methodologies are the development of theory and practice by Indigenous scholars and community that reflects and is grounded in the development of what it means to be an Indigenous person, where the ultimate goal is self-determination (Smith, 1999). In the current research, my focus was on developing appropriate and meaningful strategies to advance the knowledge and practice of IYL.

In addition, Indigenous research involves power and implementation of both culturally responsive and appropriate research practices, as well as Indigenous control over the production, distribution, and uses of the knowledge – intellectual property. Researchers who adhere to such a set of research ethics and principles understand that knowledge needs to be co-generated, shared, and conducted with a sense of political and moral commitment and authenticity (Battiste, 2000).

Indigenous methodologies engage in what Said (1983) describes as the “politics of interpretation” (as cited in Smith, 1999, p. 37); that is, who is writing, for whom the writing is done, and in what circumstances the writing is done (Smith, 1999, pp. 35-37). In other words, knowledge and research are neither anonymous nor neutral. Rather,
knowledge is about power and whether research is accountable for recognizing its place in the broader relationships of power. The results of this research will be shared with Indigenous communities to help them to develop youth leadership for the coming generations, minimizing power and control.

Last, Indigenous research does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory, research, or Western ways of knowing. Rather, it is about centering Indigenous concerns and worldviews, being committed to knowing and understanding Western theory and research, and coming to know and understand theory and research from an Indigenous perspective and for an Indigenous purpose.

Atkinson (as cited in Wilson, 2008) suggested that Indigenous research involves several guiding principles, which applied in my research:

- Aboriginal people themselves approve of the research and the research methods;
- A knowledge of and consideration of community and the diversity and unique nature that each individual brings to community;
- Ways of relating and acting within community with an understanding of the principles of reciprocity and responsibility;
- Research participants must feel safe and be safe, including respecting issue of confidentiality;
- A non-intrusive observation, or quietly aware watching;
- A deep listening and hearing with more than ears;
- A reflective non-judgemental consideration of what is being seen and heard;
• Having learnt from the listening a purposeful plan to act with actions informed by learning, wisdom, and acquired knowledge;

• Responsibility to act with fidelity in relationship to what has been heard, observed, and learnt;

• An awareness and connection between logic of mind and the feelings of the heart;

• Listening and observing the self as well as in relationship to others;

• Acknowledging that the researcher brings to the research his or her subjective self. (p. 59)

These key points are consistent with the writings of other authors who describe and discuss Indigenous methodologies, Indigenous research, and respectful community-based research including Kahakalau (2004); Evans, Hole, Berg, Hutchinson, & Sookraj (2009); Saini (2012); Menzies (2001); Coulthard (2010); McGuire (2010); Steinhauer (1999); Tobias (2000); Weber-Pillwax (1999, 2001, 2004); and Stone (2002).

**Participatory action research (PAR).** PAR is a methodology that aligns with Indigenous worldviews. A major contributor to the method of action research is the work of social psychologist Kurt Lewin (1946), (as cited in McTaggart, 1997), who essentially “invented the term action research as proceeding in a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of planning, acting, observing and evaluating the results of the action” (p. 27). Lewin’s ground breaking work was the beginning of research that represented the voices of those who were being researched who might historically not have had a voice within the greater society or the world, particularly women and ethnic minorities. My Indigenous research drew from the principles of PAR, although, in application to an
Indigenous population, I made some evident modifications (as noted in the previous section).

My goal was to select a methodology that would incorporate the “cultural protocols, values and behaviours” (Smith, 1999, p. 15) of Indigenous life as integral components. Kovach (2005) confirmed that part of decolonization for Indigenous peoples is their gaining control of how research is conducted. For this reason, “the critical, collective, and participatory principles of participatory research has made it a popular methodology for many Indigenous projects in Canada” (p. 23). Orr (2013) described PAR and the value of its skillful use:

Participatory research brings to light dimensions and understandings that lead to indicators that are more completely grounded in, representative of, and relevant to participants’ views and experience. As such, when done sensitively and skillfully, participatory research results tend to have greater validity. The process of engagement of participants are also more likely to lead to empowerment, capacity building and social transformation, impact that go far beyond simple buy-in to data collection and interpretations. The use of participatory research and participatory evaluation is one of the five core elements or principles that comprise what are called real world approaches to program evaluations with Aboriginal communities, the others being cultural sensitivity, community based, being respectful of relationships and contextualized within communities. (pp. xiv-xv)
Indigenous Methodology and Participatory Action Research (IM+PAR)

The final approach that I adopted for the present research was to use both Indigenous methodology (IM) and participatory action research (PAR), a multi method approach within a single paradigm of qualitative research (Morse, 2003; Creswell, 2013). I adopted data analysis principles and methods from Indigenous methodology and PAR that supports; (a) the participants’ role in deciding the research agenda (b) the participants’ determination of how the research should be designed or conducted (c) the participants’ decision on how the analysis should be constructed, and (d) the participants’ control of how the information should be used. In other words, the research participants are partners rather than subjects. This meets Kenny’s (2004) recommendation for research with Aboriginal people:

The involvement of Aboriginal participants and communities should be incorporated into all stages of the research process. Aboriginal people should be the ones who determine the issues or topics to be researched as well as the design and development of the research components. (p. 11)

Kovach (2009b) stressed that “those active in Indigenous community research will look to a form of participatory action research methodology” (p. 528).

My process of Indigenous research that incorporates participatory action research (Field notes, 2015) drew upon Indigenous worldviews and values and, most of all, allowed the voices of Indigenous youth to be heard (Sium and Ritskes, 2013). I used the Indigenous method of storytelling (Kovach, 2009a) and qualitative data-gathering techniques (such as one-on-one interviews), heard the participants’ stories or storytelling
and the retelling of their stories, and co-created a IYL story to answer the research questions in my IM+PAR process.

IM+PAR (Indigenous Methodology + Participatory Action Research) is research that engages research participants in directing the research on a facet of their own lives; it generally involves using collective critical thinking to find ways to solve an issue or problem that is of critical importance to the participants.

PAR is also similar to the process that some Indigenous leaders used to hear all members of the community before they made decisions. Traditionally, they deliberated on, challenged, accepted, or denied the opinions of people; but they heard everyone, and the Chiefs, Elders, and community members often consulted even the youngest of children. Thus, IM+PAR is as relevant today as it was in the past. In this research, I used a combination of Indigenous methodology and PAR (IM+PAR), which are compatible as a research strategy.

The common parallels that bind IM+PAR include a highly rigorous yet reflective and interpretive approach; active engagement of the participants; practical outcomes related to the lives of the participants; and a spiraling set of steps, each composed of some type of planning, action, and evaluation (Berg, 2004, p. 196). Smith (1999) explained that Indigenous methodology emphasizes the benefit to society and the recognition of social responsibility (pp. 117-118): “Social research at community level is often referred to as community action research or emancipatory research. Both approaches are models which seek to make a positive difference in the conditions or lives of people” (p. 127).
Greenwood and Levin (2007), who presented a specific conceptualization of PAR, describe action research as a participatory methodology grounded in a democratic ethic and focused on real-world, practical outcomes. They argue that PAR, although it is concerned with generating knowledge, is also a methodology that encourages “more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities” (p. 1).

The advantages and disadvantages of IM+PAR must also be considered. One advantage is that it allowed the participants to be the experts as the knowledge keepers of their own experiences. Sharing Indigenous knowledge on leadership and creating a succinct set of research questions to discuss also gave the participants an opportunity to share their experiences. IM+PAR are the best methodologies for this study because they generate useful results that participants could use in developing leadership capabilities; in this case, First Nations youth leaders.

The disadvantage of IM+PAR is that, although it is vital that the research participants take part, have meaningful dialogue, and be willing to share personal feelings, they might be hesitant to do so. To deal with this potential disadvantage, it was my task to ensure they felt that I valued and respected their voices if they were hesitant to share their stories based on previous negative experiences with research (Smith, 1999).

I demonstrated my commitment to honouring their (First Nations youth) voices and stories by building their confidence and comfort by staying true to the principles that I identified above. Therefore, it was critical that I build trusting relationships with the research participants to generate vibrant, respectful, reliable, and truthful communication. For this reason, I thoroughly considered my terminology (Appendix B) and phraseology,
although they varied with each participant. For example, if some youth did not comprehend the questions, I further explained and/or discussed it with them as required.

**Research Design**

A research design includes who, what, where, when, and by what means research is conducted. The research design includes the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that combines relevance to the research purpose with economy of procedure. In short, the research design is the blueprint for the entire research. Below (Figure 1.) describes my interpretation of an Indigenous research design and process.

*Figure 1. Indigenous Research Process (Lickers 2016).*
An Indigenous research design is an iterative process in which Indigenous epistemology, ontology, axiology, and methodology are consistent throughout the research process. The research design process includes Indigenous methodology and participatory action research (IM+PAR), interviews or Indigenous storytelling, and interpretation using IM+PAR to acquire the results or Indigenous ways of knowing. (Lickers field notes, 2015)

To begin, I needed to determine whom I would interview, where they would be located and how the interviews would be carried out (Jackson, 2011). It specifies the procedures for gathering information on a large number of people by collecting information from a few of them. It involves the accumulation of information from individuals who otherwise would not have an opportunity to describe their experiences, values, and attitudes. The essence of qualitative research is the ability of the researcher to question individuals on a topic and then to describe their responses (Jackson, 2011). Jensen (2010) states, “In short, the qualitative survey is the study of diversity (not distribution) in a population” (p.2). Jensen (2010) expounds:

There is also a qualitative way of defining and investigating variation in populations, however. The qualitative type of survey does not aim at establishing frequencies, means or other parameters but at determining the diversity of some topic of interest within a given population. (p. 2)

In the overall research design, I initially employed Indigenous methodology and participatory action research (IM+PAR) to delimit the population, decide upon a sample and to draw the boundaries of the sample to be interviewed. All this takes place alongside an Indigenous methodology (IM) of storytelling and participatory action research (PAR)
context. This approach allowed some flexibility in the research process and honoured Indigenous approaches within current research. Although researchers usually use surveys in quantitative research styles and administer questionnaires, my research is qualitative and relies upon face-to-face interaction. I linked the principles of surveys to IM+PAR in my data-collection phase, below (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Research Process (Lickers, 2016).

In the following sections, I discuss the sampling, location of the research area, the data-collection process and strategies, the analysis methods, rigour and trustworthiness, and ethics.

**Sampling.** I conducted 30 one-on-one storytelling interviews (Flick, 2009; Kovach, 2009a, 2010) with First Nations youth aged 18 to 30 (this is a standard defined age range for Canadian youth in non-profit sector area such as the Canadian International Development Agency). I selected participants by using a multi-staged purposive sampling approach. I chose purposive sampling to ensure a valid scope of youth who represented the communities that I had identified and to gather rich data. I did not use a random sampling strategy for this study because, as Flick (2009) cautioned:
The appropriateness of the selected sample can be assessed in terms of the degree of possible generalization which is striven for. It may be difficult to make generally valid statements based only on a single case study. However, it is also difficult to give deep descriptions and explanations of a case which was found by applying the principle of random sampling. (p. 125)

Purposive sampling on the other hand ensures that “the inquirer selects individuals and sites for a study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2013, p. 156).

I began my multi staged purposive-sampling procedure by dividing the province of Alberta into three Treaty regions. I then looked for communities within each of the Treaty regions that represented large urban centers, remote community areas, and reserve areas to sample youth participants who either were involved in leadership roles or had aspirations of taking on leadership roles. Once I had selected my initial communities, I approached youth within them with an invitation-to-participate form letter that I developed with the assistance of the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre (AFNIGC) (Appendix B).

My purposive sampling approach was designed to ensure equal representation of First Nations youth from, for example, rural and urban areas, males and females, and different ages. The AFNIGC assisted in recommending youth leaders based on previous experience in youth leadership programs or active leadership in their communities. Once I selected potential participants for my research, I contacted the First Nations youth by phone (Appendix C), through e-mail, or face-to-face and explained the focus of the research project in more detail, my role as the researcher, my background, and the nature
of their involvement in the research project. I then determined whether each individual fully understood the nature of the research. In all cases, it was clear that the youth were informed with regard to the nature of the research.

After my initial contact with the potential participants, we had numerous discussions with regard to the project and their involvement before they were included in the sample. Once the youth agreed to participate, they were given a consent form (Appendix D; Appendix E includes the guidelines for free and informed consent) to ensure they understood the conditions of their involvement and my responsibilities as the researcher. I then left a copy of the consent form with the participants or e-mailed it to them.

To select participants, Creswell (2013) advises that they be “individuals who have participated in the process or action the researcher is studying” (p. 150). Therefore, I chose First Nations youth leaders based on their experience and knowledge of Aboriginal youth leadership and who had indicated an interest in or had been identified as leadership contributors within their communities. I included a diversity of First Nations youth leaders in the storytelling interview process; they ranged in Treaty area, status, 

7 gender, age, geographic location, and socioeconomic status. However, this research focuses only on First Nation youth leaders in Alberta, Canada.

7 The Department of Aboriginal Affairs defined Indigenous populations in Canada as including Indian, Inuit, and Métis. The definition of Indian has several categories; for example, treaty, status and non-status.
The following table (Table 1.) specifies the participant involvement throughout the project. This includes the Treaty area in which the participant was associated with at the time of the interviews. The next columns: *Medium age*, the average age of the youth leaders that participated, *M/F*, male and female participation. *Develop research project*, identified those participants who were involved with preliminary review of the interview questions. *Interview and theme*, are the participants involved in the interviews and theming of the data. *Indigenous Youth Café* are those participants that could attend and participate in the conference in Calgary. As there was limited funding available for bringing youth to this session and some youth were working, not all participants in the research were able to attend. *Story*, identifies the participants that contributed to the creation of the stories resulting from the Indigenous youth café and combined final stories presented.

The final column reflects the review of the final material relating to the conclusions (two of the participants did not respond). Berg (2004) states, “One of the operative principles of action research is to inform and empower people...[T]his necessarily includes both informal and formal meetings” (p. 201), whereby my connection is continuous and ongoing, through emails, informal meetings and updates regarding the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Medium age</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Develop research project</th>
<th>Interview/Theme</th>
<th>Indigenous youth Café*</th>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Final</th>
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<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>10 - Treaty 6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>10 - Treaty 7</td>
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*Table 1. Participant demographic attributes and involvement (M. Lickers, 2016).*
**Location of research area.** The province of Alberta, located in Western Canada, contains three of the numbered Treaty areas in Canada; Treaty 6 signed in 1876, Treaty 7 in 1877, and Treaty 8 in 1899 (Lackenbauer, Moses, Sheffield, & Gohier, 2009). As diverse as nations are culturally, linguistically, Treaty 6 has mostly Cree-speaking peoples; Treaty 7 has mainly Blackfoot, Tsuu Tina, and Nakoda; and Treaty 8 has generally Cree and Dene speaking peoples.

There are 45 First Nations within the three Treaty areas covering approximately 812,771 hectares of reserve lands ([http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100020670/1100100020675](http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100020670/1100100020675)).

Figure 3 (p. 62), shows the current locations of the three main Treaty areas in the province of Alberta, Canada with some overlap from Treaty 4 and Treaty 6 located primarily in the province of Saskatchewan.

Figure 4 (p.63), gives historical Treaty locations within Canada; this map does not reflect current treaty or new land claims within Canada. Figure 4, shows the map of the province of Alberta, and is located in the western provinces of Canada.

I conducted the interviews starting in the Treaty 7 area, to Treaty 6 (in Alberta only), and finally in Treaty 8 (In Alberta only) north of Edmonton. Some of the interviews were held in urban locations, but most were conducted in remote locations or Reserves located within the Treaty areas. This was especially challenging in the northern portion of Treaty 8, where some locations are fly in only, or during the winter, where you travel by ice road.
Figure 3. Map of Treaty areas in Alberta (Alberta Aboriginal Affairs, 1996).
Figure 4. Map of historical Treaty areas in Canada (National Defence, 2010).

Data collection. I invited the youth to respond to a general e-mail invitation and conducted the storytelling interviews (Kovach, 2009a,) in communities where First Nations youth were practicing leadership. When they returned the consent forms, I began by establishing primary areas for interviews. Even though the province of Alberta is so vast, I traveled to each of the Treaty areas.

Richards (2009) described interviews as “both the most ordinary and the most extraordinary of ways you can explore someone else’s experience” (p. 42). To acquire data for the purpose of understanding how to transfer Indigenous leadership knowledge to Indigenous youth leaders, I conducted one-on-one interviews with all of the Indigenous youth leaders in my sample. The interview questions were open ended (Charmaz, 2006). However, it is crucial to keep in mind that because the research was “co-created” with
First Nations youth. In the process of developing questions for the participants, additional research questions and data collection processes were necessary and consistent with semi-structured interviewing practices and IM+PAR. The initial questions that I formulated were therefore tentative and changed once the research was underway (Appendix F); Appendix F also includes the final research questions that I asked all of the participants.

Storytelling, according to Elsey (2013), is parallel to open-ended interviewing process and is vital to qualitative data collection, and the participants’ stories in their interviews related to my analysis and the final synthesis and summary of the data. Storytelling unfolds in many forms, from mythical to teaching; storytelling also honours the richness of narrative (Kovach, 2009a) and has been “bound since time immemorial as a legitimate form of understanding” (p. 95).

In addition to a choice of storytelling as a method, the co-creation process that interpretative narrative invites has implications. In co-creating knowledge, not only is a story a means of hearing another’s narrative, but it also invites reflexivity into the research. Reflexive stories give researchers an opportunity to express their inward knowing. Sharing a story is an aspect of co-constructing knowledge from an Indigenous perspective (Kovach, 2009a, p. 100).

I selected this method of data collection to understand the process by which First Nations youth leaders learn about traditional leadership. Palys (2003) suggested that reviewing people’s pasts helps us to retain and learn from the knowledge. In addition, interviewing people about their present “ensure[s] that their record is available for future generations” (p. 165). Palys referred to oral histories as “lived memorizations” (p. 163).
My objective was to hear, understand, and re-tell the stories and experiences of the youth leaders. Storytelling (which the interview process facilitated) was therefore my chosen method of data collection.

The invitation and description of the proposed research were clear and concise and allowed the youth to become co-creators of the details of the research and the interview questions (Kovach, 2009a). The initial interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes to an hour, and I allowed an additional 20-minute follow-up period for the participants who needed it. I electronically recorded the interviews by using a digital device and took notes during and after the interviews to add to the accuracy of the information (Rothbauer, 2008).

**Interview settings.** I held the interviews at locations where the youth lived or worked in both rural and urban settings. I obtained confirmation of the location and time from each youth via e-mail. The locations of the interviews included a variety of settings such as a private residence, a home, a conference at which I set aside a room for the interviews, a university office, a local community building, an office located on reserve, and a hotel lobby. In the next section, I discuss the interview process in more detail.

I first interviewed in the area of Treaty 7 (border of the United States to Red Deer) and connected with several First Nations youth at a conference on youth leadership. I conducted the first six interviews during the Treaty 7 youth conference and later attended a community function to conduct the final four interviews, for a total of ten interviews in the Treaty 7 area. As it turned out there are and were several others that wanted to participate, however the plan was to conduct ten youth leader interviews within each of the Treaty areas.
I then moved to the Treaty 6 area (Red Deer to north of Edmonton), where I met with several participants and conducted five interviews in two separate locations. I later returned to conclude the remaining four interviews at two different times in different locations and interviewed the final youth leader from Treaty 6 in Calgary, for a total of ten interviews. At first, some of the participants were unaware of the specific nature of the interviews because they had only received the information a week prior to my contact with them (one of the lessons learned). In light of this, I agreed to give the youth leaders time to reflect on the research questions and ensured that they fully understood the invitation to participate and the process. The final four participants agreed, and we made arrangements to conduct the interviews.

The concluding set of interviews were more challenging and required several trips, including flights to remote areas. The Treaty 8 area (North of Edmonton to Northwest Territories border) is a vast section of land that requires air travel in most circumstances. I arranged the meetings but cancelled the interviews in one community because of a funeral. In another, I had scheduled the meetings, but the youth were unable to find transportation to the interview location, so I had to cancel the interviews. Finally, in two days, I was able to conduct eight interviews, but another two youth cancelled due to illness. I conducted an additional two interviews in Calgary with Treaty 8 youth leaders and concluded the interview process for a total of ten.

**Interview process.** I electronically voice-recorded all of the interviews by using a Sony digital recorder and kept them in separate files. I also retained field notes and key codes that I considered important to ensure that I did not lose information in the transcription process or during the interview period. The interviews averaged 45 minutes
to 1.5 hours in length. I sent the recordings to a transcriber who previously signed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix I), finalized the transcriptions in an agreed-upon format and sent them back to me. The format facilitated line-by-line interpretation and numbering, which gave me the capacity to refer to specific interview answers. This format also allowed me to reflect skilfully on the initial coding in my notes and legitimize the answers to the interview questions.

Once all of the interviews were transcribed, I sent them back to the participants via e-mail and asked them to review them or to add information or expand on details that they thought were missing from the initial interviews. I also requested that they look specifically for key themes that they thought were relevant to the research project and the questions that I posed, as well as to select a pseudonym or alias that they wanted me to use in the final summation of the data. I requested that they send the corrected interviews back to me with any edits by the end of October 2014, at which time I began to summarize my own data analysis while I reflected on the youths’ interpretations of their own information.

To respect the cultural and social contexts, I adhered to a recognized protocol to express my appreciation to the participants by offering them a cultural gift for sharing their knowledge. I also familiarized myself with the diverse areas and organizations prior to conducting the research, which helped me to be more respectful of and attentive to the current environment. For example, when I started the interviews, I offered cedar as a cultural gift (a sacred medicine for the peoples of the west coast of Canada) that I had collected from the campus of Royal Roads University. Some of the youth thought this was interesting because they had seen only Elders receiving gifts for their knowledge. I
also became familiar with the youth and the communities where I was conducting the interviews through member observations, peer conversations, and contact with community representatives.

**Data Analysis.** The analysis of the data involved triangulation (Rothbauer, 2008), which included coding and thematic analysis, and recoding to extract themes from the data. This included data from my field notes, the interviews, and the initial coding completed by the youth. I created and organized the data files from the interviews and read the texts to make notes and formulate the initial codes. I then used initial coding to establish primary coding structures and define a central experience and utilized a coding structure to define causes, context, and ordering (Creswell, 2013, p. 197). Once I had completed the coding, I engaged in a thematic analysis of each of the interviews to create my version of the story, and then shared with the youth. Creswell (2013), states thematic analysis “... [a]ssumes emergent multiple realities; the link of facts and values; provisional information; and a narrative about social life as a process” (p. 197). Kovach (2009a) reminds us that analysis is a reductionist process intended to break data into units of meaning; this contrasts with Indigenous ways of knowing, which are “non-fragmentary and holistic” (p. 130).

At times, it was necessary to re-engage the participants to ensure that I had accurately heard and interpreted their stories before I would present the information, visual model, or theory. As noted earlier, the participants were part of the analysis of the data (see Table 1. p.60) through regular contact and meetings, email, texts, and calls. The participants were part of every step of development, analysis, and summary of data. This was carried out following an action research spiral process, a technique that involves
identifying the research questions, gathering information, analyzing and interpreting the information, and sharing the results (Berg, 2011). The participant’s story was the basis of the final version of IYL story and IYL Model developed; to be discussed later.

Memos are an important part of an analysis. Charmaz (2006) explains that integrating memos and sorting “may explicate implicit theoretical codes which you may have adopted without realizing it” (p. 121). I utilized all of the memos that I summarized from the data to extract themes and created a diagram or visual model to highlight IYL development. My analysis of the story-interviews and memos, my coding and recoding, and the creation of a story, figure, diagram, or theory revealed findings that have made a substantive contribution and support the knowledge of IYL; for example, the critical need to address cultural identity for Indigenous youth.

The research process was closely related to an Indigenous method of storytelling in which the listener hears a story and codes it for meaning and purpose, recodes it for retelling, and then, when called upon, retells the story as he or she heard it. Finally, the listener summarizes the relevance or importance of the story at that particular moment and in that particular place.

**Reengagement.** As part of the action research process (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, Maguire, 2003; Stringer, 2013), after I analysed the initial interview data and after the youth reviewed their own data and we collectively created themes, I created a space for an Indigenous Youth Café (World Café, 2015). With the support of the Suncor Energy Foundation and Suncor Energy, I sent email invitations to the participating youth leaders inviting them to a meeting in Calgary on October 3, 2014.
I had planned the Indigenous youth café earlier in conversations with youth; it was a direct result of the action goal of this IM +PAR project such that I conducted not only interviews, but also organized an action (i.e., Indigenous youth café) based on the results from the research (Stringer, 2013, pp. 166-182). Twenty youth were able to attend starting with a sharing circle (Appendix G), continuing with the Indigenous youth café, which I describe in further detail below. The response from participants indicated the remaining ten youth were working, in school, or not able to attend for various reasons.

**Indigenous Youth Café session.** The goal of this session was to engage with the youth in an action plan on which they could work immediately. The focus was to elaborate the findings and stories developed through the research in order to work collectively on a project.

On October 3, 2014, twenty of the youth leaders interviewed convened in an World Café process (Appendix J), I termed “Indigenous Youth Café” to continue the conversation on youth leadership as a group while we set an action planning process in place. The Suncor Energy Foundation was holding a “Gathering” to bring together governments, non-profit organizations, foundations, and individuals to work towards an understanding of social change and social innovation. At the initial Gathering the year before (2013), the Suncor Energy Foundation had identified two areas for concentration: Aboriginal youth engagement and the non-profit sector. The Director of Community Investment at Suncor asked for my input, and I replied:

> If we are going to talk about Aboriginal youth engagement, we should have some Aboriginal or Indigenous youth present at the Gathering. There is no point in setting goals for Suncor or Aboriginal youth engagement without knowing from
youth what is important for them, and I know of some youth that might be interested in attending. (M. Lickers, personal communication, February 12, 2015)

The Indigenous Youth Café took place the evening of October 3, 2015, which was the first day of the Gathering. It served several purposes: first, it gave the youth an opportunity to meet and learn more about Suncor and its work on youth engagement; and second, it was an opportunity for a group of young Indigenous leaders to connect. Some of the youth knew each other, so setting the stage and comfort level for the session was critical. I designed the room in café style and used prewritten flipcharts. The following is an example of the setup and goal of the World Café:

1) Set the Context
2) Create Hospitable Space
3) Explore Questions that Matter
4) Encourage Everyone’s Contribution
5) Connect Diverse Perspectives
6) Listen together for Patterns and Insights
7) Share Collective Discoveries

(World Café, 2015, para. 2-8)

On each of the charts, I had written the four main themes extracted from the data. Each of the four areas had a table host, someone familiar with the World Café style approach and able to engage the youth leaders in conversations.

The four tables contained coloured markers, paper, notepads, sticky notes, Silly Putty, cut-out designs, pipe cleaners, and other small items that the participants could use to create a display of leadership (Figure 5). I encouraged the participants at each table to
create something and explained that, as the youth rotated, each person could add to the image and the notes that they were adding to each of the flipcharts. Because the table host did not know the youth, I began with an introduction of the participants and the table hosts and reiterated the task: to generate an action plan (Appendix H) to transfer and increase the understanding of IYL.

*Figure 5. Photos (M. Lickers, 2014)*

The Director of Suncor Energy Inc., Community Investment, and the Suncor Energy Foundation shared the direction that they were taking with regard to youth engagement and the future direction for funding programs and began an open conversation about energy futures. The director also discussed the need for industry to include youth leaders in events such as the Gathering to share the concerns, challenges, and successes of First Nations youth in communities. I believe that this set the stage for the open conversation and served as a trusting, sacred space for the youth not only to discuss youth leadership, but also to offer suggestions for the Foundation and Suncor to consider in dealing with First Nations youth leaders.

**Rigour and trustworthiness.** The four aspects of rigour and trustworthiness in this research include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Krefting, 1991, p. 217). I addressed rigour and trustworthiness from the outset by
reflecting on my biases as an Indigenous researcher. I spoke to other academics, youth, and leaders to ensure that my project was valid and practicable. I have worked in the field of youth leadership for over 30 years and was familiar with the numerous concerns that I have identified in this dissertation.

_Credibility_. Prolonged contact with the youth offered one aspect of credibility, member checks, peer reviews, document and content analysis, and my own journal reflection assisted with the credibility of this research.

_Transferability_. Because this study had an Indigenous (First Nations) youth perspective and included interviews that reflect their personal details, it may be transferable only if similar (First Nations) Indigenous youth are interviewed. The depth of the interviews and the action planning offer generalization, and therefore could be transferable to another study.

_Dependability_. I triangulated the data analysis by using member checks, multiple methods of coding, and an additional thematic analysis (Creswell, 2013, p. 252). For example, during the member checks (through which I conveyed the data back to the participants), I gave the participants an opportunity to reframe their stories in a way that would best reflect their worldview and suggested that it could involve retelling the story using multiple techniques such as media, art, and/or photography. The goal of this activity was to ensure that the information that I presented reflected the participants’ words and their understanding of IYL.

_Confirmability_. The accuracy of the data is reflected in the raw data (the full text of the interviews and my field notes), the data that I discuss in this dissertation, and the audit trail (which involves notes that depict the key methodological and method
approaches). I also addressed confirmability by reviewing my personal journal and the member checks, as well as my continued conversations with peers and the youth.

**Ethics**

To address ethical concerns, I referred to the *Tri-Council Policy Statement [TCPS2]* of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2010; (the Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada section), Royal Roads University’s (2011) ethics policy, and the AFNIGC (2015b) and Assembly of Treaty Chiefs (AoTC) Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP™) ethics review.

As an Indigenous person conducting this research, I reviewed the guidelines of current and relevant publications that addressed ethics in an Indigenous context (e.g., OCAP™, *TCPS2 Chapter 9*). I elaborated on my research approaches to demonstrate a broader understanding of ethical issues (traditional knowledge and Indigenous knowledge) that might arise in approaching Indigenous people and could influence the accuracy of the research and/or interpretation. I believe that conducting interviews with these considerations in mind made a distinct difference in the quality of the information that I gathered.

The guidelines that I followed in the current research are those of the Tri-Council (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2010) and OCAP™ (AFNIGC, 2015b) principles of respect for persons, concern for participants’ welfare, and justice in reporting the data. I concluded that this research presented minimal risk to the participants. *Minimal risk for harm* is defined as the “...probability and magnitude of
possible harm implied by participation in the research that is no greater than those encountered by participants in aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2010, p.23). However, if any participants had felt that I had breached the guidelines of minimal risk, I would have directed them to appropriate Elders or counselors to share their experiences; however, they brought no concerns my attention.

Anyone who conducts research must submit standard ethics applications (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2010). However, anyone who conducts research with Indigenous peoples in Alberta must add another stage, the AFNIGC (2015c) application. Whether it is Indigenous or non-Indigenous research, researchers are now required to submit this application, which regional committees and a combined Treaty area committee review; all researchers take ownership of their research data and its use in the future. This process is called Ownership-Control-Access-Possession (O CAP™); the participants and the AFNIGC maintain, “the inherent right to self-determination and jurisdiction in research and information management” (AFNIGC, 2015c, para. 1).

To enhance the ethics scrutiny, I submitted the proposal to the Royal Roads University ethics board for approval, and when the board approved the project, I submitted it to the AFNIGC. Bonnie Healy, the Operations Manager of the AFNIGC, then sent the research proposal to regional chiefs in the Treaty areas of Alberta (Treaties 6, 7, 8) then she reviewed my proposal and assisted in sending out my request for 30 First Nations youth leaders to participate in this project.
As I outlined in my invitation-to-participate ethics form letter (Appendix B), I specifically sought young First Nations youth who had some leadership experience and had participated in a youth leadership program or were in current leadership roles in their communities. I did not limit the project to First Nations youth who lived on reserves; some attended schools in different Treaty areas but were recognized as members of specific Treaties when I conducted the interviews; some also lived in urban areas. I had an equal representation of male and female youth leaders.

The process of sending the request in midsummer to participate took extended time because most of the regional Chiefs were attending the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) meeting in Halifax (July 12-18, 2014) to address the resignation of the AFN’s National Chief Atleo. However, I found some success with the administrators of the regional Treaty areas. I connected with several community representatives and educators in the Treaty areas and requested the participation of youth leaders; my request included the details of the project, an introductory e-mail, and established times that I could contact them via phone should they require additional specific details of the project.

Some of the youth leaders with whom I was advised to connect were linked to programs that included more than one youth as good candidates for interviews. Therefore, some youth leaders were single representatives of a community in a region, whereas multiple others represented some communities. When several youth from one community volunteered to participate, I offered to meet them individually in their community at staggered specified times, making sure that the youth could not identify each other’s participation in the research. This enabled me to maintain the anonymity of the youth leaders whom I interviewed.
Use of data. I securely stored all of the data in locked files on my computer; Dr. James Frideres also stored them. I will make the data available for three years after I complete the research project, at which time I will destroy all of the audio and data files unless the information might be required for future projects or presentations (Appendix D). Furthermore, I asked the transcriber to sign an agreement to keep the information confidential (Appendix I). Only my immediate supervisor and I will have access to the raw data that I used for my analysis. If they ask for access to it, I will make the anonymized data available to the communities in the researched areas (Treaties 6, 7, and 8 in Alberta) and the youth participants after I complete my project. I will therefore irrevocably strip information from the data if it contains direct identifiers, and the risk of identifying individuals from the remaining indirect identifiers is virtually nil. I will also give copies of the dissertation to the participants, their communities, and others who have supported the research project.

I used the final data to meet the dissertation requirements at Royal Roads University, and I will use this information for presentations, conferences, and/or future publications. The youth and I will be co-owners of the data. If any of the participants want to share their experiences and speak about the results of the research project, I will be more than happy to invite them to do so.

I gave each participant his or her own final data, as I noted that I would on the consent form (Appendix D). They are free to use their data in any way that they like. Elders and leaders in communities can benefit from the information, and I will store a final copy of the dissertation and raw data at the AFNIGC for future community use and leaders who offer youth leadership programs.
Conclusion

Chapter 3 describes PAR, Indigenous methodology, which are the methodologies that I utilized for this research, IM+PAR. I also discussed the methods and processes that I used to conduct the research and the ethical considerations.

I accumulated data by conducting semi-structured interviews of First Nations youth, using the Indigenous method of storytelling. Finally, I followed the principles of participatory action research and conducted an action planning session, or Indigenous youth café, to ensure that action would result from the research.

I also addressed the rigour, trustworthiness, and ethics of this research project. Knowing only what is available to date, in conducting this research project, I adhered to the most current ethical standards and addressed the credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability of the results.

In the following section, I discuss the inception of the research project and findings that arose from the interviews, the Indigenous youth café, and the youth leaders’ stories of IYL.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This is a story of First Nations youth in Alberta, Canada; 30 young leaders who took time to share the lessons that they have learned from their families, leaders, and Elders. This chapter includes the stories of the Indigenous youth who shared their insights, and knowledge of historical and current leadership that could create great leaders.

Overview

Overall, I analyzed the specific points of reference (codes) and key comments from the one-on-one interviews in response to the research question and sub questions. I then compared the key points from the interviews and the field notes to the points of reference (codes), and the youth leaders whom I interviewed and I further broke them down in conversation and analysis into four key theme areas. The voice data averaged 45 minutes to 1.5 hours, the transcription of the interviews averaged 15 double-sided pages and the additional field notes covered approximately 22 pages.

The Process

After reviewing the 30 interviews, I began to code the data and identified four key themes and e-mailed the coded data and emergent themes to the youth leaders to review. The material included the transcripts of their interviews, my reflections and coding, on the key themes. I asked them to amend their own data if necessary by adding or deleting comments from their interviews and, finally, to agree or disagree on the key theme areas that I had coded. The idea was to make the coding and theme identification a joint effort with which the youth could agree, and to ensure that their interviews included data that might have been missed from the original interviews.
This process required several e-mails from each of the participants; some responded later than others did. Some of the participants made changes to the interview data, but others did not. Overall, the process of gathering the participants’ responses with regard to their interviews and gaining their approval on the key theme areas took well over three months. In total, 14 of the youth responded initially to the emails, with six responding upon a second request, 10 of the youth did not add to their responses indicating that they were okay with their interviews and summary of data. Two of the youth leaders responded twice with additional comments and revisions to their interviews, data analysis, and stories.

I also asked the youth to agree or disagree with the original set of themes that I presented to them and to add to them or include other considerations about the themes, as we discussed this process during the initial interviews. As part of the Indigenous methodology, the process of presenting their voices through stories and gaining consensus was vital to the project, and we discussed it during their initial participation in the project. None of the participants disagreed with the original set of themes.

As I discussed with the youth during the interviews, I asked them to extract themes from their own data and then sent them my themes based on their interviews. Some of the youth leaders’ comments paralleled my interpretation of the themes in more than one theme area; however, from my field notes, I directed the comments to and placed the identifiers in one of the specific theme areas. My field notes (and the youth participants) indicated that there was limited connection specifically to Elders or knowledge holders, Elders who knew about historical leadership methodologies. The lack of understanding and knowledge of leadership theory, values, and methods of becoming a
leader was also a missing component. These missing components and others will be shared later in the discussion of my IYL Model (Figure 7, p.119).

After several emails back and forth to the youth leaders’, a specific set of four themes evolved. At the end of this process, we collectively agreed upon the key theme areas (Figure 6), which in turn is the genesis of the IYL Model presented later in Figure 7 (p.119).

![Figure 6. Four key themes (M. Lickers, 2016)](image)

**The Conference Re-engagement (Action Plan)**

As I explained earlier, action research has an actionable outcome, and the Indigenous Youth Café was an opportunity for the youth leaders in attendance and for me to confirm and work towards an action plan. This was phase 2 of the data-gathering process. The four key theme areas (presented in Figure 6 above) were the basis for the action planning session on October 3, 2014.

In the Conclusion chapter, I give some examples of the actions that resulted from the action planning session. Appendix H lists the raw data that I collected from the
Indigenous youth café, a result of the IM +PAR plan. Some of the actions that resulted from the youth café resonated with the key theme areas of identity, rite of passage, language, and traditional leadership ways of knowing.

Themes emerged from the transcribed data and the analysis of the comments from the youth leaders and, with my own scholarly and practical assessment, we collectively created the emerging themes.

Figure 6, (p.81) depicts the four key theme areas, highlights, or sub-factors within each of the theme areas. In each of the key sub-theme areas are several points that reflect and encompass the main themes. For example, under the main theme of historical leadership knowledge, ways of knowing is a key point that resonated with most of the youth. Hence, the side boxes contain points that reflected the key themes areas, points that the youth considered important to include. Figure 6 in this format helps to understand these points. Because the circle is endless, no one area is more important than any other; they are all connected.

To fully understand the data, I will discuss the following in a story format that is harmonious with Indigenous ways of knowing, and a format that the youth leaders recommended: the creation of knowledge, and the search for understanding. The latter includes my analysis of responses to each of the research questions, with key themes bolded to point out the elements in Figure 6, and a four-part indigenous youth leadership story.

**The Creation of Knowledge**

To understand the evolution of this project, I will journey back to the beginning, when I posed the initial questions: How was/is traditional Indigenous leadership
knowledge transmitted to Indigenous youth in leadership roles? What are the traditional Indigenous epistemologies that have been and can be shared with Indigenous youth to develop their leadership skills? What are the current processes of educating Indigenous youth to become future leaders within communities, organizations, governments, and/or their Nations?

From the inception of these questions began a journey to develop the project plan and processes. The three research questions were not random; nor were they questions that I generated at the beginning of this research. For the previous 30 years, I have been engaged in a multitude of specific methodologies and methods of educating youth leaders. My experiences began in Ft. Rupert, BC, with a small assemblage of committed youth, designing a youth council for the Owitna’gula Rediscovery program, progressed to Native Counselling Services of Alberta as a youth worker and court worker, Hull Child and Family Services coordinating therapeutic foster care and supporting staff with expertise in Aboriginal youth issues. Founding, creating, and operating Ghost River Rediscovery as executive director involved conversations with youth that eventually led to the conception of my research.

In my current work with Suncor Energy Inc., as a senior advisor in Indigenous Relations and Community Development, I set strategic direction for youth engagement and have created a youth-engagement strategy from a corporate perspective. However, I also offer youth opportunities to create their own leadership abilities, entrepreneurial possibilities and jobs, and education or employment prospects with Suncor. In some ways the foundation of this work gives me a continuing opportunity to exercise my passion,
which is to engage with Indigenous youth as well as to inform the Indigenous community of the steps that they need to take to develop Indigenous leaders.

The Search for Understanding

I addressed the research question and sub-questions and the responses of the youth leaders whom I interviewed. When I explained the process of reporting the data that I collected from the interviews and the Indigenous Youth Café session, one youth leader asked, “How can we define ourselves as youth leaders or future leaders in this country or in our communities without telling our story?” (participant Digger, December 15, 2014).

Next, I refined and analyzed the participants’ stories and here present the key themes that emerged from that refinement (bolded in text below), identifying how the youth’s responses informed the questions that I posed. I also discuss the action plan that the youth created to address the current situation. I will begin by addressing the overall research question.

Research question 1. How was/is traditional Indigenous leadership knowledge transmitted to Indigenous youth in leadership roles?

When I asked the question “Has any one specific person guided your leadership journey?” I received diverse responses that ranged from family, to extended family, to teachers, and to current leaders such as chiefs or council members. Nevertheless, according to the youth I interviewed, the transfer of Indigenous leadership knowledge to youth is limited. Some youth revealed that Indigenous leadership knowledge was a transfer of family history, and if the family had leaders, they noted it in the interviews. In several cases, there was no transfer of historical or contemporary Indigenous leadership
methodologies. Some youth leaders were unaware of how a person could become a leader or the methods that it involved.

More than half of the participants attributed their personal knowledge of Indigenous leadership to their **grandparents** or **parents**. For example, Star noted:

Aside from my mom, it’s a little difficult to say one specific person guided me. I would say a lot of people contributed bits and pieces and were influential in guiding my life lessons. . . . I guess just a lot of my close family, my friends, and a lot of professors.

Another participant noted the role of **grandparents**: “My grandma was very inspirational in my life. She was knowledgeable of our ways and taught me what was right and wrong” (Kar’ihton). In my field notes was the resounding thought that most, if not all, of the participants reported that their grandparents had been important influences in their learning about traditional leadership: “My late grandma and my dad, that’s pretty much where I learned most of my traditional leadership” (Digger).

Another participant commented, “I would have to say my grandparents. They taught me traditional teachings and stuff and always told me to be proud of who I am” (Kahenta’ke’ha). My field notes also indicate that the identity of young leaders was another key message: “Most of the young leaders credited their **parents** and grandparents for instilling pride in who they are as First Nations.” For example, a participant focused on his/her parent as the source of information on leadership:

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8 Each of the themes co-generated, from my analysis of the interviews and the youth leaders review, will be in bold text as indicated earlier on page 82.
I was raised by a single mother who brought me up traditionally, and with my journey, I kind of think about Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse and try to picture what they would be doing now—warrior, healer—just in a different way nowadays. I can picture myself being a modern warrior with a good sense of who I am.

(Aten’a:ti)

As I noted above, family, regardless of the generation, has been an important factor in transferring traditional leadership skills to youth. Over half of the participants focused on family as their source of knowledge and understanding of Indigenous leadership. It is interesting to note that most of the participants cited the females (i.e., mothers, aunties, and grandmothers) as prominent in sharing the knowledge.

On the other hand, as I explained earlier, some of the participants relied upon sources outside of their families and/or a mixture of sources. For example, one participant stated that his/her aunt had influenced him/her, the aunt was also involved in the politics and operations of the band: “My aunt who was on council was a big influence in my leadership, and I learned a lot from her” (Omiyosiw).

Another participant told me that both his/her grandfather and father were influential and that they were involved in the organizational structure of the band: “My grandfather, and his dad was a chief before, and their teachings on what a chief was like before; the tribe was their children” (Kane’n:nawen).

Although youth that I interviewed indicated that parents, grandparents, and family were the main factors in the oral transmission of Indigenous leadership method, it was very limited in nature, and family history rather than any specific leadership lessons was
the focus of the transmission. It is also important to note that the members of the family were sometimes involved in political positions within the band.

Others, outside of the family, also influenced the leadership potential of the youth; some of the youth participants identified guidance counsellors and teachers. Referring to a guidance counsellor, one participant said, “She genuinely made me feel like I was important; she was a first” (Faith). This youth did not mention being mentored for leadership, but he/she pointed out that the guidance counsellor helped him/her to forge a path and see possibilities.

Another participant identified his/her teacher as having guided him/her: “I kind of dropped out of school for a while; she always gave me a second chance to go back” (A'hsire).

Some youth related more to a specific program that made an impact on their journey as a young leader: “The program and the staff really helped me to find myself and bring my dreams to reality. . . . It’s like reprogramming your brain” (Ohkwa’:ri). Another youth stated, “This program and the staff really gave me a mentor. I always relied on myself before, but [name] is a good mentor. It’s really the first time I have actually had a mentor” (Amazon). My field notes and the statements of the youth leaders all revealed that teachers, mentors, and family played an important role in helping them to recognize the value of education: “My instructors were very important for me. They inspired me to go on and dream big and challenge my education” (Iaonhawi’:non).

Although mentors, counsellors and teachers were important supporters, their interactions were limited to offering support and encouragement rather than transferring Indigenous leadership methodologies. Within the context of students’ schools or
programs, counsellors and teachers ‘set the stage’ or help students to see the possibilities. Teachers played a vital role in sharing and/or transferring the knowledge of Indigenous leadership to youth (Farruggia, Bullen, Solomon, Collins, & Dunphy, 2011; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011).

The participants frequently gave community representatives credit for their efforts to share their knowledge of Indigenous leadership. For example, one youth noted that, “if it wasn’t for [name], I would probably be doing the same thing. Between them and my mom, they pushed me to see my potential” (Kara’hkwa). Another youth leader stated, “I have had good leaders and not so good leaders and a couple of good mentors. I am sure they knew I was watching them like I would my grandfather, and [I] gained skills to lead people by caring” (Moose Hunter). River said, “At the Native Centre [name] really took me under her wing; the program and all of the leaders here really are amazing.”

My field notes and the youths’ comments also confirmed that Elders and community members played a key role in giving the youth leaders the incentive to take on leadership roles: “The best thing about my job is that I can connect with Elders. On your worst day they make you feel better” (Kane’n:nawen). Another youth stated, “The community members are coming to talk to me, so it’s slowly coming around, and I am meeting more and more people that are influencing my journey” (Iaonhawi’n:non).

Community representatives also identified to the youth some of the key characteristics of leadership (i.e., honesty, empathy, conviction); however, again, they were limited. The conversations with the youth demonstrated that community representatives’ sharing is a type of informal leadership. One youth leader stated, “I
definitely had a lot of influence from community members. I did kind of see that as informal learning, like my dancing and ceremonies” (Aten'a:ti).

**Sub research question 2.** What are the traditional Indigenous epistemologies that have been and can be shared with Indigenous youth to develop their leadership skills?

When I asked the question “Do you have formal or informal traditional leadership training?” most of the youth were able to describe in some detail a program that they had attended and teachings that they had learned from their families or Elders. The challenge however was that the participants were not able to identify the specific ways of knowing; most had attended programs intended to teach them about leadership, but were not able to say exactly what that was. One youth stated, “Not really. What I know about ways of knowing is from my dad. It was more about what not to do in life because of what he went through” (Ohkwe’;sen). Another youth stated, “My dad was the one who taught me and my grandma; that was about all. I never had an Elder there until she passed away” (Digger).

Some youth did not understand formal and informal Indigenous leadership training, so I explained, and, once they understood, their learning evolved. Digger asked, “What do you mean by formal and informal?” and Iak’on:kwe stated, “I am not sure what you mean. What is formal and informal training?” Lee and Chen (2014) explained, “while formal education tends to emphasize professional training without the questioning of underlying mainstream values, non-formal education often aims to raise students’ awareness of social injustice and the value of commitment in social change” (p. 5).
One youth leader reported that when he/she asked for something, his/her mother would always ask for a reason: “Why do you want this?” In relation to leadership and the value of social change, she explained:

I want you to give me a reason why; you need to provide me a reason why you want to do something. Otherwise, you’re not going to get it. . . . In terms of leadership, you have to be able to understand what you want to do and the reason behind it. (Star)

Star added, “My beliefs on certain things, my understanding of morals on certain issues, I began to understand how I wanted to live and the lessons needed.”

With regard to formal and informal leadership training, my field notes and the comments of the youth leaders shed light on the implicit fact that most of them did not know what formal and informal meant. According to my notes, it is evident that most of the youth had informal training from family and/or community members, yet they were unable to distinguish the difference between formal and informal learnings. One youth leader stated:

I didn’t have any formal Indigenous leadership training not really knowing my culture. My dad was into drugs. . . . He dug himself into a deep hole, and I was raised by my mom. I hate to see that it [education of Indigenous leadership] is not alive, and it’s discouraging to see that a lot of youth have not had any formal or informal leadership from our own culture. (Ohkwe‘:sen)

Another youth noted that Elders had passed on the ways earlier, but that some youth are no longer connected to them in the way that they were in the past. This was evident in my field notes: Elders were a major influence in the advancement of youth leaders, yet some youth could not distinguish between formal and informal teachings:
The Elders are saying that we as young people don’t want to learn our leadership ways: “If they don’t learn the culture, it will slowly kind of disappear, and other cultures will get born.” . . . It’s sad, because it’s our fault. (Ohkwe':sen)

One youth leader commented, “I am not sure what you mean by traditional leadership. . . . Growing up with my dad and late grandma, listening to them, that’s pretty much my traditional leadership” (Digger).

Evidence in the interviews reveals very little sharing of Indigenous leadership methodologies, whether formally or informally. The following comments from the youth leaders demonstrate the lack of awareness of Indigenous leadership methodologies, and how formal/informal learning might have influenced that knowledge:

I look at my father, who was a band councillor, and all that he showed the community. Instead of giving money to people, he would show them he cares and help them in other ways. That’s pretty much how I see traditional leadership. (Kari’hton)

One youth reported that involvement in cultural activities increased the Indigenous ways of knowing through informal more than formal programs:

I would say more informal than formal, from dancing, which taught me a lot of traditional teachings, to international travel, which taught me about myself and my culture. . . . I would say you pick up things as you go, but there was not one lesson; there were many. (Aten’a:ti)

Another youth stated:

I don’t think I’ve had any training I’m aware of; just seems like informal within my family. You mostly hear about politics, like when we are going to get a new chief or councillors. . . . because they seem like they’re going to bring change. (Eagle Kiss)
It’s pretty hard nowadays to really get heard. Older people are to be respected, and it’s hard to say anything even if they are wrong, so it’s good to see that there is a space being created for youth to speak and be heard. (Aten’a:ti)

Two of the youth leaders had participated in camp or outdoor programs and described their learning of Indigenous ways of knowing as more informal, although in a formal setting: “When I was younger, I went to a camp. They were teaching us some traditional ways, . . . to be more confident about the future and how to lead myself” (Eagle Kiss). The other explained that an “experiential learning initiative” was set up, and “we spent a week out at camp. We did a bunch of different things, learned GPS stuff, catching fish, learning how to cut up moose. So it was pretty cool” (Iwoe’:ren).

The interview data reflect a disturbing trend in the transmission of Indigenous leadership epistemologies from one generation to the next, nevertheless, the individual responses form a pattern: The youth have not had a lot of access to Elders’ traditional leadership knowledge.

The participants’ responses were rich in information. One youth noted that he/she sees Elders but does not interact with them in any specific manner, and another youth’s uncle was a medicine man who passed along some traditional knowledge. Most of the youth lamented the lack of leadership knowledge: “My understanding of traditional leadership is probably very, very low. . . . My spouse’s family is pretty cultural and participate in ceremonies, but as for any formal or informal training, no” (Faith). Another youth explained, “I have been to powwows and such, and there are Elders there that talk about traditional views and stuff like how you see the world, but I haven’t really been to any formal or informal traditional things” (Iak’on:kwe).
The youth leaders made clear, resounding statements about the lack of traditional Indigenous leadership knowledge: “I don’t know anything about traditional leadership, not really. No, I don’t” (A’hside); “I’ve actually got to be honest: I’ve never actually had any traditional leadership training” (Aonkw’et’a:kon); “I don’t know if I have had any formal traditional leadership training. . . . I see traditional leadership training as being with the community and people” (River); and “Nowadays we may not take the same progression as our ancestors did. We just kind of ask kids to take on roles of leadership; we haven’t really guided them” (Kahrhata’ke’ha).

Some youth reflected on the impact of their parents’ upbringing or the challenges that they faced in their youth that limited their involvement or knowledge of Indigenous leadership: “I don’t remember any specific traditional leadership training. Most of what we did was ride horses; we didn’t do any ceremonies. I started powwow dancing, but that didn’t last long. I got into drugs and alcohol” (Kano’tsot).

Another youth referred to the impact of residential school on the lack of the transfer of knowledge:

I honestly don’t think I have grown up very traditionally. I have a moshum who was in residential school, so I grew up Christian because of him. . . . We would smudge and stuff like that, but I don’t think he was too traditional. . . . I was raised more in a Western way; attended Bible camps and such. I do have an uncle that is a medicine man, but I don’t have any training from him. (Omiyisiw)

Some youth shared their own thoughts of Indigenous leadership based on what they have been exposed to so far, and reflected on the passing of knowledge from parents or family members and some Elders. Some youth indicated that ceremonies or
participation in cultural activities had grounded them in formal and informal Indigenous leadership knowledge:

I think that most of my knowledge of traditional leadership was taught by passing wisdom from Elders, grandparents, fathers, and mothers. My training was mostly from watching my grandfather in the way he dealt with people, and a lot from my father. He showed me you not only have to talk, but lead by example. (Moose Hunter)

One youth leader reflected on the value of attending ceremony:

As for traditional leadership teachings, both formal and informal, I was able to learn from home: the Sundance where I have watched and learned from the small things, to the formal part where you’re guided by an Elder. So, yes, in my family there is a process of understanding traditional leadership and incorporating today’s technology. (Akohsa’tens)

Another youth leader commented on the role of chiefs in passing on leadership lessons and the difficulty of being a chief and/or Elder:

Elders and the Chief, they speak and tell you what it’s like. . . . It’s a stressful job, I’m sure, but they’re showing great leadership because of [what] their chief—not only chief, but Elders [shared with them]. (Nithoio’n:ha)

My interpretation of the data and my field notes revealed that most of the youth, with the exception of the few I noted above, had little or no formal or informal traditional leadership knowledge. It was also evident from the data that only some Elders, parents, or community representatives shared or transferred the knowledge to youth.

Confidence and communication are key attributes of most of the youth. Their sense of belonging and purpose, the idea that someone was listening to them, and the
process of learning by doing, or **experiential learning**, are all factors that made the youth leaders feel that they counted.

The following statements depict how information is shared. Some youth leaders were familiar with the process of experiential learning, although they did not consider it leadership knowledge. It helped them to understand how youth are acquiring knowledge on traditional leadership:

I went out to my papa’s and mom’s cabin. They taught me how to do traditional stuff like scale fish, make dry meat, dry fish, light fires, and stuff. They taught me everything they did when they were kids. They tried to teach me Cree and Dene, but I just couldn’t pick it up. (Kahenta’ke’ha)

**Mentoring** is another topic that the youth discussed and that I recorded in my field notes. Although some youth’s comments reveal that they did not consider it a valuable contribution to their advancement as youth leaders, mentoring has had some impact on a few of the youth leaders:

The way I understand traditional leadership training, it’s mentoring—lots of one-on-one time with an Elder, someone who has the traditional knowledge. You can ask lots of questions, but it’s lots of **observing** and putting in the time. . . . It’s taking people under your wing and showing them different skills and knowledge. When you learn about Western leaders, you learn about it in a classroom; you’re writing about it. . . . When you learn about our leaders and everything they’ve done, it’s oral history; you hear it over and over again, and you see different examples of it. (Kane'n:nawen)

According to another youth:
I always thought of my Kookum’s. They had all the training and they tried to teach us, but we were either babysitting or else we couldn’t be there. I have been getting taught by my Kookum for a while now. She taught me so much that I didn’t know, so many stories I didn’t know about the past, stories of how things are and why, and what they mean. (Tohoto’nha)

Some youth took it upon themselves to find information, to enhance their knowledge of traditional leadership. Yet, as they explored, they found that some of the leadership knowledge came from only one family. Hence, self-exploration, research and understanding were required:

I went back and looked up a hundred years of leadership in our community since 1877. It’s been the same families, and the Elders teach us and remind us who we were before colonization. We were hard workers, and then there are the generations of residential school survivors, and now it’s all about money. I think that we are losing our old ways to these new ways. (Ohkw’:ri).

Ceremony was a key method of transferring that knowledge in the past as well as currently. By attending programs that focused on the rite of passage and participating in ceremonies, some youth gained vital knowledge on Indigenous leadership. In response to my question on how is traditional Indigenous leadership knowledge has been transmitted to Indigenous youth in leadership roles, one youth stated, “I would say my Grannie. She taught me things when I was young, about being a good person and traditional ways of knowing. She was an inspiration for me, taught me the basics” (Iora’hkote). Some of the youth made the following statements about learning ‘formal’ traditional leadership knowledge:
I went on a puberty rite of passage or ceremony where the women Elders guided you for four days. I cooked, cleaned, made my own skirt and blouse by hand, and I made a baby blanket and moss bag. I took care of my Kookum and other Elders there while we learned all about being a woman. . . . It did shape me when I was younger, because I learned about discipline and respect, so I did learn core values from that. (Amazon)

Another youth leader explained that Elders were an important part of traditional teachings:

The Elders knew about the land, they knew how the land worked, and I was able to learn from them and work to protect our lands. Traditional leadership is hard work. . . . From the Sundance to other ceremonies, we learned about the land and how people used it respectfully. (Iaonhawi’non)

Traditional leadership, ceremony, and language are all aspects of leadership. My field notes and the comments of the youth leaders provided examples that Elders are passing on the lessons:

I kind of grew up around it. It’s important to me, so I took it upon myself to seek it out, find the people that can help me out, and a lot of it comes from my dad, because he speaks Cree, and so does my mom. We attend Sundances, ceremonies, powwows, sweats. And there are always other Elders there, and my dad talks to them, and I sit and listen. (A'kwe'ks)

The data from the youth show that the transfer of Indigenous leadership knowledge is far from all encompassing, and only sporadic in some cases. This is critical to program, community, and school development because it is evident that the youth were seeking information on Indigenous ways of knowing and leadership. Not all of them were
involved in spiritual activities, and most were not in a position to attend or interested in doing so; however, the data indicate that ceremony can guide the transfer of Indigenous ways of knowing and leadership.

**Sub research question 3.** What are the current processes of educating Indigenous youth to become future leaders within communities, organizations, governments and/or their Nations?

When I asked the participants to “tell me a story about your leadership journey,” most of them replied that they did not see themselves as leaders; it was not until the final stages of the interview that most recognized that they had accomplished something more than they had anticipated, guided by Elders, teachers, family, and community members. One youth leader described how he/she felt as a leader and the role that he/she would continue to play in leadership:

Good question. . . . Leadership has so many different variables. . . . You can’t just rule with an iron fist. From elementary school to university I have always involved myself with committees. I worked on advancing my knowledge of science. To be a medical doctor, I think, involves leadership in so many ways. You heal people, but you’re also influential in how they live out their lives. My mother wanted me to always give back to the Aboriginal community, and through medicine and healing I see my leadership journey to help people, no matter what. (Star)

Most of the youth had faced some difficult times, which was evident in my field notes and their comments: “I don’t give myself enough credit. . . . It’s like, wow, at 21 I’ve been through a lot of stuff!” (Ohkwe’:sen). One replied, “I can’t answer that right now, I don’t see myself as a leader. . . . Sorry” (Loro’n:rote).
Several youth reflected on their personal journeys:

Oh, wow, I have been through so much: . . . parents divorced, drugs and alcohol, struggled through school. But I did it. . . . Ever since that I have been still learning to be a leader. Youth look up to me for music, drums. I never looked at myself as a leader, but for the youth I work with, I want to show them they can do it and learn right from wrong. (Kari’hton)

Others found that the impact of the leadership programs was not immediate and it was not until they returned to their home that they understood the ideas of leadership or the benefit of the programs:

The biggest part of the leadership program is that you don’t really see the leadership skills or lessons until you are back in your community. That’s where you will use them: to learn how to live back on the reservation. When I came home my eyes were really opened to a lot of what happens on the res and how your friends are. (Aten’a:ti)

Others found that moving into the labour force brought new insights into addressing issues in the community:

I graduated from high school, and a month later I was working, . . . thought it would be a day job and then leave. When I started, I began asking questions like, “What can we do? What’s possible for us?” It’s pretty cool. I write proposals, and I am pretty good at that, and I am a certified personal trainer. . . . Wow! (Iowe’:ren)

Others in the community didn’t see themselves as leaders in the community but found that situational events thrust them into leadership positions:
I don’t really see myself as a leader, I never actually wanted to do this job. I wanted to go into nursing and I will; just a couple courses short. . . . My parents are getting older, and they need someone to take care of them. (A’hsire)

It’s a real struggle for me, I will tell you that right now. It was a struggle because I had to go through the phase of following to realize that I had to be a leader. . . . I had to go through a lot of pain and anger and stuff like that just to realize I had to become that for me to get past certain points in my life. . . . I’m tired of standing behind people and waiting for people to make their move so I can make my move. One day I just woke up and said, “I’m going to start doing things for myself.” (kara’hkwa)

Some of the participants found that their challenging experiences brought to them the notions of leadership:

I was bullied at school, real bad. My mom had to go to the school and ask them why they were not protecting me from all this. . . . So with what I went through, being a victim of bullying, I see it as a positive now. I teach other youth and share with them. I’m the rock. . . . You never know what people are going through in their lives.

(Aonkwe’ta:kon)

Several youth considered their journey, although it had been difficult, also a blessing. They were able to face the challenges and help others to see the good in themselves. “My leadership journey is one where I have always been able to lead others. . . . In school I performed the best, took advanced courses, became a staff leading others. . . . This method I use to keep showing my ability to lead (Moose Hunter). Another stated, “So it’s gone up and down, up and down, but my leadership training has always
taken me back to the top. . . . Cadets, camp, school, and my business all led me to where I am today (Amazon).

Another youth leader asserted, “You can use extravagant words or spend time in a classroom, but to me experience is one of the main things that I’ve come to know that really helped me in leadership” (Akohsa’:tens). This is a very insightful statement. My field notes show that most of the youth value the experience of leadership, practicing the phases of leadership, and the way in which leaders took time to learn. Their personal experiences have made them believe that they can guide other youth leaders:

I see myself as a role model in my community because I still do traditional stuff. I teach traditional dancing, help kids my age and younger to dance and the teachings of it. . . . I am the only person from my graduating class that is in college; no one else is yet. (Kahenta’:ke’ha)

My field notes reveal one key point: that most of the youth leaders have had very traumatic lives, yet they have been able to move beyond the challenges and make a better life for themselves and their families. As one youth stated:

I don’t really see myself as a leader. I did a lot of bad things in my life, and [I’m] just trying to get that all straightened out. I would really like to open a group home for youth, I was in a group home and it helped me out, and I see a lot of youth going down the same path as me. I think this program is really helping me, and I want to take kids out on the land, learn, hunt, and stuff. (Kano’:tsot)

Another youth leader stated:

I was a young mother to be, just starting Grade 12, which was tough. Now I am going into university. The programs I took all helped me stay in school and be
successful as a young leader. I would say it is experience that made the most impact.  

(A’kwe’ks)

Others noted, “It took a lot of hard work to get to where I am now; school, work, and training courses all helped me get to this. I’m good, life is good; couldn’t be happier with my job and life” (Iaonhai’:non).

Some of the youth did not consider the term leadership journey key; they were more concerned with what they wanted to accomplish in the future: “I’m not sure I could use the words leadership journey, school, work; that’s about it. . . . Not many kids around here know about their culture, so I want to create a program that shares that with them” (Iora’hkote).

Some of the youth attributed their leadership journey to family, to the lessons that they had learned from their parents and families. My field notes demonstrate that all of the youth identified family and/or parents as very important parts of their leadership and growth: “I grew up traditionally. My family is very traditional, and I have always had a connection with spirit, having good thoughts and trying to figure out ways to make my community a good place to live” (Eagle Kiss). One youth leader reflected on the impact of his/her family on his/her leadership journey:

As far as my leadership journey [is concerned], I have five older siblings and one younger; I am the first to graduate from high school, the first to go to college, . . . and I watched my siblings not really go anywhere until I did. Then four of my siblings went to college, so I acted as a catalyst for them. I left my community and went to design school and came back to create my own business. . . . I am nowhere near where I want to be, so it’s only up from here and the only way I am looking at it. (Faith)
Education has been important to most of the youth leaders, although some could not understand this until later in their young lives; however, my field notes indicate that most of the youth leaders considered education vital to leadership, whether formal or informal. A few reflected on their leadership journey:

I really thank my grandma for encouraging me to go to school, and I wanted my little sister to look up to me. I learned a lot from older people, family, looking up to them and asking them for advice and stuff. (Iak’on:kwe)

It started a while back. My dad owned a company for ten years, and I helped in some areas, basically took it around and learned on the way. . . . Now I own my own company, and I’ve got a company to run. It’s a big thing, owning a company. It’s still a learning journey for me. (Digger)

No one’s ever asked me that [about educating youth to become leaders]. I’m really young, only twenty-two. . . . My outfit was a gift to me; that’s where my leadership started. I’m thankful to my family for involving me in ceremonies, Sundances and sweat lodges, and songs. . . . I got a sense of who I was and where I needed to be and where I come from. I motivated myself to take a leadership program and travel. . . . Going on that journey really opened me up from a participant to a team leader to the UN. I encourage youth in any way I can to see the possibilities. (Aten’a:ti)

Listening to Elders and associating with them taught most of the youth lessons that they did not consider until I asked about them: “My grandmother always told us stories. . . . But simply a lot of things weren’t talked about back home, and I didn’t feel that I knew much, but I know more than I thought” (River). According to another youth, “I was a shy little boy, but my relatives encouraged me to speak up, and I’m just now
thinking that I can be a great athlete and pass that along to the youth in my community” (Nithoio’n:ha).

My field notes indicate that most of the youth were engaged in leadership roles, some within the community and some in programs. One youth leader explained:

People have come up to me and told me that I have leadership skills, but for me I’m just a person, just a man. I have had many people share their knowledge with me, the traditional ways and Western ways. Many have passed on their knowledge, and it has opened doors, and it has made a kind of peace with me. [I’m] humbled to be asked to share what I know now. I am still learning, keep an open ear, and do anything in my ability to learn from Elders and my family. (Akohsa’tens)

Several youth leaders discussed language and communication as integral parts of leadership. My field notes show that communication on their leadership journey was part of several themes in the data from the youth leaders:

My auntie and the programs I attended are all part of helping me come out of my shell. Learning how to speak in public was a way for me to speak up for myself. A lot of kids are shy and don’t know how to communicate, and I want to show them it is possible and show determination with my goals and business. (Omiyosiw)

Practice and more practice. I do everything with my grandpa. He brought me here, which is a lifetime opportunity. Once it’s a routine, you keep doing it over and over again; then you share what you have learned. And that’s been my leadership journey so far. I am still learning. (Kahrhata’ke’ha)

It was evident that having experiences, communicating, visiting with Elders, and learning from Elders were important parts of the youths’ personal leadership journey:
I remember when I was twelve or so, my sister and people brought me in front of a group of Elders, and they asked me, “How do you say this?” and “How do you say that?” . . . Just growing up around the language, and I always thought it would be important. My sister and I were always active in learning. (Kane’n:nawen)

In my field notes I wrote:

If more and more people took the time to share what they know, more youth would be excited to learn. If we are able to provide learning experiences for youth leaders and offer tangible experiences where they could make mistakes, then talk about it, this might be part of Indigenous leadership.

The next section, Indigenous Youth Leadership Story, Part 1, and the following stories, Parts 2, 3, and 4, are a combined story from the conclusions of the Indigenous Youth Café’ and that of the youth leaders, following co-analysis of the data and extraction of themes. The youth leaders wanted to express their voices in stories to explain the data. I e-mailed the stories to all the participants and asked them to make additions or changes; the following is the outcome.

**Indigenous Youth Leadership Story: Part 1**

We want to acknowledge our families, our ancestors who have shared so much with us and continue to give us support as we acquire knowledge of our culture and leadership. Our grandparents and some of our parents went through a tough time, from limits under the Indian Act to residential school experiences, loss of language, being forced in some cases to adopt a religion that was not theirs, to the removal from their culture and families, to name a few. Yet they persevered,
survived, and some were able to maintain an awareness of language, culture, and identity along this difficult trail.

For us as young leaders, this is a problematic burden to hold on our shoulders. In many cases, we do not have our languages in ways we did before, and those of us that do have a challenging time speaking with others or getting others to see the value in our languages. For many young leaders this is complex. We live in this world dominated by other cultures, and our own cultures are often seen as not worthy or forgotten. Within Indigenous culture relatives were strong people, and the culture and language defined who they were; yet this is not the case today on many reserves or communities off reserves. Young Indigenous people want to learn, want to understand their history and ways of knowing, yet it is so difficult to find individuals in our communities and outside of them who are familiar with all of these details. Due to external and internal factors, Indigenous communities have been impacted in many different ways.

Some community historians, teachers, Elders, and leaders say, the youth are our next generation of leaders; yet some young Indigenous leaders do not always hear the knowledge, the stories, or the language of the previous generation. We are not always aware of the historical nature of our communities, nor fully appreciate how the leaders influenced their path to leadership. If Indigenous people are to consider and make thoughtful decisions for the next seven generations, we want to ensure that the transfer of Indigenous ways of knowing is relevant, shared, and celebrated before it is too late. It is difficult for some young Indigenous people, particularly those who have moved away from their communities to work, attend
postsecondary school or trade school, to have any specific access to a community’s Indigenous leadership knowledge. In some cases, Indigenous youth were born outside of their ancestral communities, and they do not have a prodigious connection with their own leaders or Elders. This is an ironic situation in that various leadership and cultural programs offered at postsecondary assist in developing leadership skills. They are learning from others but not their own community.

Then there are the social challenges that young Indigenous people face, such as gangs, drugs, alcohol, limited economic opportunities, lack of appropriate education, and abuses of many kinds. Young Indigenous people, like other Canadians, want to have a good life; we want to learn about our culture, our language, and establish new relations. In the end, we want to be proud of who we are and be in a position to share that with future generations. The knowledge of historical Indigenous leadership is limited in the everyday lives of young people. Moreover, in the schools and in the communities, knowledge of historical Indigenous leadership is lacking. Finally, there are few current community leaders who have the traditional knowledge that would allow them to instill leadership skills in youth. This deficiency of historical knowledge, cultural ways, ceremonies, spirituality, traditional knowledge, language, and others that we identified are the root causes of our lack of identity, self-worth, and pride. We want to understand how our historical leaders became leaders, what it was that prepared them in the face of adversity, and how that historical knowledge can be resurrected to offer to future young people. (Youth leadership participants, 2014)
Indigenous Youth Leadership Story: Part 2

There are numerous Indigenous youth leadership programs being offered; most share Western epistemologies, and some share Indigenous ways of knowing perspectives. However, there are seldom Indigenous youth leadership programs that focus on how young leaders are to reflect on their own ways of knowing. For example, we as youth leaders learn about servant leadership from a Western perspective, yet in Indigenous ways of knowing this method of leadership was natural to us, but we don’t know what that looked like.

There were traditional protocols that reflected how Indigenous individuals were selected, appointed, or raised as leaders; yet it is unclear what those methodologies and protocols were. We know that there were different types of leaders; some were warriors, some were medicine people, some leaders of societies, Sundances, and/or other ceremonies; some of tribes or the whole nation. Yet it is not clear what [the] skills, lessons, or ways in which Indigenous leaders learned these skills [were].

This information may not be available any longer, or maybe it is just not shared with young leaders. Maybe this information was lost in the generations impacted by colonial influence or residential schools. Nevertheless, it was the foundation of Indigenous communities. It is imperative that we learn how this knowledge was shared, what lessons were given to young leaders in preparation for taking on leadership roles and what mentors they had. In addition, current leaders may not be aware of these methods or protocols and rely upon Western ways of leadership to guide a community that is not accustomed to Western ways; and as a result,
many members of the community fight to protect their ancestral ways. The question remains as to why leadership is not one of those components of culture that are not considered important enough to revive.

In the end, it may be that we have not searched out the wise ones, the Elders, the leaders past and present that may have this knowledge. We know that there are still traditional leadership systems in place in some communities, hereditary chiefs, society chiefs, and others that may have this critical information. This is not to say that our current leadership is not doing a respectable job; rather, we should also be capable of utilizing our historical leadership skills as well as Western leadership skills to make our communities stronger, our next generation of young leaders more able to deal with the changing environment and be adaptive as our ancestors were.

Programs such as the Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, and others that are set up to address youth leadership, and in particular Indigenous youth leadership, need to share more about Indigenous ways of knowing. For example, bringing Elders into the programs who are conscious of these ontologies and processes in which youth were raised to become leaders would be an important step. This could be an awakening for not only the youth, but also other leaders in the communities, a time where all can learn about our histories. (Youth leadership participants, 2014)

**Indigenous Youth Leadership Story: Part 3**

We as young leaders believe there needs to be more specific Indigenous youth leadership programs that focus on traditional leadership knowledge, more about the ways in which young people were guided to become leaders. We know that
there are several Indigenous youth leadership programs that focus on the outdoor skills, language, ceremonies, songs, land, and cultural-based knowledge, and even some that focus on families or, specifically, boys and girls separately. Some address the bridging of Indigenous science and Western science, traditional knowledge-based camps or hunting and fishing, trapping. However, seldom are there any programs that focus on Indigenous leadership while sharing the other relevant information around culture. Rediscovery is a good example of a national program in Canada that has adapted over its history, while respecting the culture of where the programs are located.

We want to know what leadership skills Big Bear acquired as a youth, or Crowfoot, Sitting Bull, Poundmaker, Bull Head, Red Crow, Walking Buffalo, to name a few. We want to recognize to not only learn about the skills that these leaders had, but the processes of leadership they embarked on, and put them into practice. We think that just learning about these and other great Indigenous leaders can improve the connectedness, identity, and skills of leadership. Moreover, there also needs to be practice about this knowledge. Practical application of leadership skills would help us as young leaders learn and apply leadership skills. Mentoring us as young leaders would be very helpful and in some cases, it would be a good idea to let youth make the decisions. If we falter, as mentors, you could guide our ways. We see Elders as our advisors and mentors, you could offer us wisdom. We believe that this could be a good way for us to learn about our own ways of traditional leadership. (Youth leadership participants, 2014)
Some youth also reflected on the important parts of IYL programs. I wrote in my field notes, “From my interviews it is evident that more practical leadership opportunities need to exist.” I have always thought that cultural outdoor education teaches both formal and informal leadership lessons, rite of passage, and ceremony. I went on to state, “I believe programs that embed all aspects of Indigenous leadership knowledges will be ones that Indigenous youth leaders will need into the future.” One youth stated, “You don’t just learn about your Aboriginal heritage in a classroom; ... an Indigenous youth leadership program would have lessons from the past to the present” (Star).

**Future Indigenous Youth Leadership Training**

Indigenous youth leadership programs should include as many voices of youth and Elders as possible. There needs to be more sharing from Elders to youth, and youth must take an active stand in learning about these matters. There needs to be a combination of formal and informal learning. If that means reading about and hearing about our past leaders and then putting some of the skills into practice, then we think this is a good way to move forward. Being on the land is not for everyone, and there may need to be a combination of the skills and teachings that can happen for all to learn. Skills that youth learn, need to reflect an Indigenous perspective, rooted in our ways of knowing, and as best as possible include language and Elders from as many areas as possible to support an on the land based education program. A place is critical, neutral to all the politics of the Nations, and one where land and knowledge can be practiced and experienced.

There needs to be a good person or people to lead the program. This is vital for the success of any Indigenous youth leadership program. We don’t want just a
person hired for the summer as with most of our youth programs today; this needs to be supported year round, with qualified staff, Elders, and teachers. Within Alberta there are many wonderful places, but this can also pose a challenge. If it were, for example, in Treaty 6, which is in the middle of the province, would youth from Treaty 7 and 8 attend? Would their community leaders see this program as beneficial for all and not worry about the location? We would hope that current leaders could put aside their political stances and really support youth leaders for the benefit of all Treaty areas and First Nations youth.

It would need to be separate from any politics of communities; unfortunately, we have seen what can happen if a council controls the programs. Believe in the leaders you select and the staff that would be there, the Elders and others, and support us no matter where any program exists. (Youth leadership participants, 2014)

The next section, Indigenous Youth Leadership Story: Part 4, as shared earlier are a combined co-created story from the conclusions of the Indigenous Youth Café’.

**Indigenous Youth Leadership Story: Part 4**

We as youth leaders are not really sure what the term *leadership* means as there are numerous diverse expressions used to define *leader*: someone who leads, someone who mentors others, someone who makes difficult decisions, someone who leads a team of people, who leads activities in their community, creates a job for themselves and others, and so on. Therefore, we found it difficult to distinguish the term, as there are so many different kinds of leadership. We also found the terms *formal* and *informal leadership* a bit challenging to answer.
Attending a workshop may be considered formal, and sitting with an Elder at a Sundance or ceremony may be informal; it just took us a while to think about what this meant. Once we understood what was being asked, we began to reflect on the varieties of leadership lessons we have all have been part of.

Even when the question was related to traditional formal or informal leadership training, we really needed to consider what that meant. Some of us spent time with Elders most of their lives, or live still a very traditional life as best we can, and some of us have been disconnected from our cultures and are only now returning to reconnect. So it was challenging for us to understand the terms formal and informal; yet once the terms were explained and what they meant, we were able to see and remember what leadership may have looked like in the past from our families or leaders that are on councils currently. We as Indigenous youth leaders want to understand how to be good leaders; we want to understand what it took for our traditional leaders to be great people; not just leaders, but great leaders. (Youth leadership participants, 2014)

**Reflection on leadership journey.** The communities have recognized the participants as young leaders; for that, they are grateful, but they need to understand and learn more about IYL. From my field notes:

Youth want to learn the skills that they will need to lead their Nations or communities; they want to learn their languages, which they believe are an important part of the Indigenous knowledge that helps leaders to make effective decisions. They want to know their own history, their own ways of leadership,
and one day is able to share that with other youth leaders in forums, conferences, or educational settings. They are not sure if they are ready to do that now.

Even with clarification of what a leadership journey is, some of the interviewed youth still did not see themselves as leaders. Programs such as Canada World Youth, Cadets, Mentor Nation, Change It Up, High School to University and College, Native Woman’s Retreat, Friendship Centres, church and religion, students’ associations, Rediscovery, international exchanges, Aboriginal achievement awards, cultural camps, firefighting training, sports, Bridges Social Development, experiential camps, Actua, Outward Bound, YMCA, and the Boys and Girls programs, and others all seem to contribute to some aspect of leadership understanding. Yet very few if any specific programs address IYL knowledge or Indigenous knowledge of youth leadership. Even more concerning is the lack of knowledge on how Indigenous leaders became leaders and how communities trained or educated their youth to take on tasks that would benefit the community or Nation as a whole.

Once I explained what I meant by the notion of a leadership journey, the youth were able to find their place in the question, but it took them a while to realize that they have been educated, have acquired some skills, and are valued as young leaders within their communities:

Leadership is therefore complex, subsequently diverse, and if we are to take on these roles within our communities, there needs to be an understanding of what this term leadership means for us as young Indigenous leaders. We want to understand not only the skills, but also the lessons we’ll need to share with others as they get ready to take on leadership roles, the youth and generations of youth to
come. There can be a balance of worldviews with this understanding, Indigenous ways and the Western ways. It will allow us to grow and become more aware of our surroundings, but we feel and have felt that if we understand youth leadership from their own ways first, we can succeed, as it will give us our identity, pride, and, most of all, a reconnection to our languages and Indigenous knowledge of youth leadership. (Youth leadership participants, 2014)

### Conclusion

The findings and the stories of the youth leaders clearly indicate that knowledge of Indigenous leadership, its methodologies, epistemologies, ontologies, and the sharing of historical traditional Indigenous leadership knowledge is critically lacking. To summarize, family is prominent in the sharing of some knowledge of Indigenous leadership ways of knowing, yet these youth leaders had limited knowledge of those methodologies. I also found that some YLPs, teachers, and educational programs have played a part in the formal learning and that community representatives, counsellors, and family play a key role in practical informal learning. From my field notes I stated, “There is evidence that immediate family is fundamental in the passing of family leadership knowledge, however there is limited involvement from Elders or community representatives”. I noted “...there seems to be more of this [traditional leadership] knowledge being passed along in a formal learning perspective, hence teachers and others may be able to share more, limited is the practical knowledge or the voice of Elders”.

The youth leaders whom I interviewed strongly desired to learn more about their historical leaders and the methods and processes through which they became leaders. They wanted practical education (cultural outdoor education) for the youth to acquire not
only the formal learning of leadership, but also the informal learning and experiences. It is critical that First Nations schools, teachers, and community representatives take a more active stance in sharing this knowledge, from both a formal and an informal standpoint.

In Chapter 5, I bring together the results obtained in Chapter 4 in an attempt to present an IYL model that emerged from the interviews and the youths’ action planning session. The development of the IYL Model reveals the linkages of the various factors that impinge upon Indigenous youth and upon their efforts to engage in leadership roles in their community.
CHAPTER 5: AN INDIGENOUS YOUTH LEADERSHIP (IYL) MODEL

I conducted this research specifically from an Indigenous perspective on PAR to establish an IYL Model after I had completed the research rather than applying existing theories to direct my research (Charmaz, 2006). Paradigms are complex and theoretical and within them are methodological frameworks used to analyze and explain objects of social study, and facilitate the organization of knowledge. However, theories are constantly evolving; therefore, they can never be presumed to be complete. In the present case, it can involve analysis at a macro-level, which focuses on social structures shaping the society or the social interactions taking place in specific situations or at a micro level as demonstrated in the interviews carried out with potential Indigenous youth leaders.

In the present study, the results reveal that socialization is an important perspective in explaining youth leadership. It is the means by which individuals begin to acquire the skills necessary to perform as a functional member of society. These skills are among the most influential learning processes one can experience. Socialization is a term that refers to the lifelong social experience by which individuals develop their human potential.

The question over the primacy of either structure or agency in human behaviour is an important debate in the field of leadership (Kenny & Fraser, 2012). In this context, agency refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices. Structure, in contrast, refers to the recurrent patterned arrangements that influence or limit the choices and opportunities available. My research shows that while Indigenous youth leaders act independently, the structure in which they operate is one made from socialization with family and community; shaping their understanding of
Indigenous leadership. The results of my research are closely connected to ‘network theory’ (White, 1992), who claims that norms and behaviours are embedded in chains of all types of relations; which is central to Indigenous way of life--all my relations.

**Indigenous Youth Leadership Development: An IYLD Model**

Figure 7 below (p.119, depicts a new IYLD Model, derived, in part from Figure 6 (p.81). The IYLD Model that the youth leaders considered, co-generated (their data) and felt was prominent, is a direct result of the interviews, data analysis, the Indigenous youth café, and finally co-creation of stories. The identified points were in some cases, correspondingly ones that were lacking in their own lives and communities. On one side are the points that would ensure practice and comprehension of Indigenous leadership, while the other side (dying depiction) is, according to these youth leaders, the current state of Indigenous youth leadership based on the research within this study.

Language is rooted in culture, and culture an expression of ways of knowing (epistemology) and being (ontology). Ways of knowing and being offer a sense of place, identity, purpose, well-being, and overall health (ontology), and leadership supports their development. Furthermore, experiential learning is a large part of learning in an Indigenous way of knowing and assists in the development of youth’s values and morals (axiology).

My IYLD Model of youth leadership development is rooted in culture, language, identity, and leadership knowledge, which are the roots of and support IYL; these can expand like a tree in full bloom. If any of the roots are damaged or weak, it affects the growth of the tree. Therefore, an important part of this IYLD Model is the assurance that
all aspects of epistemology, ontology, axiology, and methodology are rooted in an IYL framework.

Figure 7. New IYLD Model (M. Lickers, 2016).
Figure 7 reveals the living aspect of IYL: constantly changing, ever evolving, and having clear objectives to help youth leaders to comprehend the historical and current value of Indigenous leadership. Therefore, my proposed IYLD Model includes these aspects as well as aspects of youth and Elder involvement, youth leaders’ voices, and experiential learning.

As noted, I added placed-based learning or experiential learning to this IYLD Model, for it is critical to the advancement of IYL and the education of youth in general. As I recorded in my field notes, “Indigenous way of knowing is rooted in the “original school,” the outdoors; it is not found surrounded by the four walls of a classroom”. That is not to say that the classroom does not have its purpose or that classrooms ought to be eliminated; rather, in classrooms we ‘book-learn’ and collectively discuss issues that support outdoor or place-based learning. The rite of passage is critical to learning, reflection, introspection, and action as well as to the application of these critically established developments within Indigenous leadership.

Elders are vital and critical to the discovery and/or rediscovery of the methodology of Indigenous leadership. Elder does not necessarily mean ‘old people’; it means those who have ‘knowledge of,’ which in some cases is why we use the term knowledge keepers. In Indigenous leadership, the knowledge keepers of the history (many Elders/knowledge keepers, know much more than history) need to be found and consulted and engaged with to teach the lessons.

I pondered the above reflections in creating this IYLD Model on Indigenous youth leadership, in which I expanded upon Wilson’s (2008) work. My intention is to
encourage others to add to my thoughts in the future as we continue to explore IYL and it values, lessons, and ways of knowing.

Wilson (2008) talked about research and the value of utilizing epistemology, ontology, axiology, and methodology as a framework to conduct research. I used a similar framework in conducting my research and found that each of these areas has a direct connection to IYL. Ways of knowing are specific to IYL—in this case, how past leaders learned and became leaders; and ontology refers to what constitutes existence or meaning which supports identity development and gives youth a sense of identity and belonging. Axiology refers to the value youth leaders have and understand or want to engage in IYL; and methodology is the process that I used to conduct this research project (IM+PAR), which involved interviews and storytelling as the method of sharing data.

I have completed this research with a renewed hope that IYL ways of knowing will continued to be explored and expanded upon, and, most of all, will continue to inspire the youth with whom I had the honour of working.

To all of these youth leaders, I offer my thanks for sharing with me and trusting me. My father once told me the following story. I do not know where he heard it; he did not say. I share it with my children, knowing that the participants as young leaders have found their gift.

**The Gift**

Along time ago, the Creator held a council with all of the Animals.

As all of the wise Animals of the world gathered in this council—the four-legged ones, the winged ones, and the swimmers—the Creator said to them, “I have a
special Gift for the two-legged Animals, the human beings, when they come to the Earth. However, they are not yet ready for this Gift; it is too powerful. I do not want them to find this gift too easily. They are not ready to understand this Gift or use it in a good way, and they will hurt themselves and all of the other two-legged beings.”

The Buffalo entered the circle and said, “Give it to me, and I will hide the Gift in the long prairie grasses. The humans and the two-legged beings will never find it there.” The Creator thought for a moment and said, “No, the humans will cut all the grasses down and dig it up. They will find the Gift before they are ready, and they will not know how to use this Gift, and they will hurt themselves and all the others.” So the Buffalo moved back into the circle, and . . .

The Bear entered the circle and said, “Give it to me. I will take the Gift to the mountains and hide it there, high up on the mountains, or, even better, deep into the rock. The humans and the two-legged beings will never find it there.” The Creator thought for a moment and said, “No, the humans will be able to climb the mountains; the humans will make machines and tear down the mountains and even go through the mountains. They will find the Gift before they are ready, and they will not know how to use this Gift. They will hurt themselves and all the others.” So the Bear moved back into the circle, and . . .

The Salmon entered the circle and said, “Give it to me, and I will hide the Gift in the waters of the rivers, lakes, and oceans. The humans and the two-legged beings will never find it there.” The Creator thought for a moment and said, “No, the humans will be able to travel the rivers; the humans will make machines and go
deep into the lakes and oceans. They will find the Gift before they are ready, and they will not know how to use this Gift. They will hurt themselves and all the others.” So the Salmon moved back in the circle, and . . .

The Eagle came into the circle and said, “Give it to me. I will take the Gift high into the sky beyond the stars. The humans and the two-legged beings will never find it there.” “No,” said the Creator. “The humans will learn to fly and will find it there. They will be able to go beyond the stars, and they will find the Gift before they are ready, and they will not know how to use this Gift. They will hurt themselves and all the others.” So the Eagle flew back into the circle.

The Creator posed the questions again: “Where shall we hide this Gift until the Humans are ready so that they will not hurt themselves or other humans?” The Animals gathered close in the circle and again talked among themselves.

As all of the wise Animals were talking, a little Mouse ran up onto the shoulder of the Creator and whispered in his ear. The Creator smiled and then laughed. He said, “That’s it; that’s where we will hide this Gift! For sure the humans will never look for it there.” All of the wise Animals stopped and looked, for they wanted to know which of the wise ones had found the answer to where to hide the Gift.

Then the Creator said to all of the Animals, “I have learned two things today. First, I know exactly where we will hide this Gift. We will hide it deep inside the humans; they will never look there. It will be a long time before they are ready to find it, and only when they are ready to see and use this Gift in a good way will they know where to look. Second, we need to listen to the little ones, the ones
who do not speak the same as we do or speak at all, the quiet ones, for they have much to teach us if we listen. It was the discreet and smallest of creatures that taught me that today, and I am grateful.” (Robert James Stanley Lickers, 1940-1991)

Conclusion

The data that I collected from the Indigenous youth leaders to answer the research question and the sub-questions have led to the following conclusions.

How was/is traditional Indigenous leadership knowledge transmitted to Indigenous youth in leadership roles?

I have concluded that little if any specific Indigenous leadership knowledge has been transferred to youth in leadership roles. The models that were transferred included family histories and some leaders in the past. The Indigenous youth leaders who participated in this study were not aware of how the knowledge was transferred, and the literature did not clearly identify the processes that were used in the past to teach Indigenous leadership.

What are the traditional Indigenous epistemologies that have been and can be shared with Indigenous youth to develop their leadership skills?

The youth leaders were unclear about the epistemologies that guided Indigenous leaders in the past, but they expressed a resounding interest in learning; however, their lack of this knowledge was evident in the data. Nevertheless, the data revealed their strong interest in understanding the ways of knowing, how past leaders were taught, and the process by which the leaders learned their lessons.
What are the current processes of educating Indigenous youth to become future leaders within communities, organizations, governments, and/or their Nations?

The youth leaders had attended several YLPs, some that focused on the cultural ways of knowing, but most addressed the Western way of knowing leadership. They reflected on the current processes and most valued and incorporate Western ways of knowing, but that little reflects their Indigenous perspectives. The Indigenous youth leaders whom I interviewed also expressed a strong interest in and the desire to find, understand, and incorporate Indigenous leadership principles into their own lives.

My suggested IYLD model and perspective acknowledges that youth are leading; youth are in leadership roles yet they are voicing a concern about the lack of Indigenous leadership methodologies. There are several points that contribute to success of youth leaders yet there are key points as indicated in Figure 6, which must be reflected upon.
CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

The Journey Begins

In this chapter, I present the recommendations that resulted directly from the Indigenous Youth Café session and the youths’ interviews. The youth leaders discussed the key themes, expanded on the ideas in the Indigenous Youth Café, and made the following recommendations. We discussed as a group how best to present the data, through stories, and what specific areas the youth thought were important for adults to note. We therefore addressed the following areas: education, business, communities, and leaders. The final section is the conclusion.

As much as leadership has shaped our current reality, Indigenous ways of knowing can enhance Western ways of knowing. From this research project, I have gained a sense of perseverance, resilience, and urgency and, most of all, the energy, knowledge, and expertise to make a difference with and for Indigenous youth leaders.

Because most of my career has involved working in the outdoors with Indigenous youth, I have witnessed a transformation over the past 30 years in how Indigenous youth perceive themselves and their surroundings. Some of these transformative moments tend to occur after the experience, and some materialize immediately. For me, experiential learning has been one of the most engaging processes that enrich the rite of passage for youth leaders. In relation to this study, the leadership rite of passage for youth occurs in several ways, from learning in different societies as they grow to adulthood, to assuming a role at school, in the home, or in the community, that requires commitment and an understanding of leadership. Sometimes they are involved in YLPs with non-Indigenous
roots or values and then expected to be leaders. Youth are not learning critical Indigenous ways of knowing with regard to Indigenous leadership.

Placing youth in leadership positions before they are ready is a huge burden for them to carry if they have not received guidance on the methods, knowledge, and experience of leadership. Some adults have several years of experience in leadership prior to taking on a leadership role, and even then, they make mistakes and have to continue to learn to acquire new understandings of leadership. The youth leaders whom I interviewed understood the challenges and recommended the following actions to benefit all Indigenous youth leaders.

**Recommendation 1 (Education)**

It is critical that IYL development include the lessons of our ancestral leaders, epistemological understandings, skills, and, most of all, the traditional ways in which young people were guided to leadership. The first recommendation is that in learning the traditional Indigenous ways, youth leaders also consider Western leadership, but only after they have acquired information on traditional Indigenous ways. According to one youth, “I think we must learn our own ways first, and then we can learn about other ways” (Kahrhata’ke’ha).

The Indigenous youth also recommended that potential youth leaders study the philosophy and behaviours of Indigenous leaders, analyse their activities, and understand their cultural context. This analysis extends beyond their own Nation. They must also acquire the knowledge of other Indigenous leaders who have dramatically influenced the lives of our peoples. With the meagre information on Indigenous leaders and leadership, the youth recommended that a determined effort be made to distribute Indigenous
leadership information before it is lost. One youth commented, “I don’t think that schools share anything about our history or the chiefs that made treaties. That’s got to change for sure” (Nithoio’n:ha).

The youth leaders recommended that, when communities’ Indigenous leadership knowledge is oral and/or minimal, extensive research be conducted and every effort be made to discover and rediscover this critical and vital information to improve our well-being and support identity development.

Moreover, non-Indigenous postsecondary institutions that offer Indigenous studies programs should incorporate the study of Indigenous leaders and leadership into the curriculum rather than just governance. These topics are somewhat related, considering the historical development of governance; nevertheless, knowledge on leadership might be required first before Indigenous leaders can decide to change or improve their own governance.

It is exceptionally important that communities, schools, educators, and youth workers understand as much as possible (which might mean critical research in communities), teach and celebrate Indigenous leaders of the past. The youth leaders recommended an emphasis on cultural outdoor education and incorporation of the rite of passage to make youth feel part of the progression of learning and identity. One youth stated, “I think it is super important for schools to get outside; that’s where I learned everything about my culture, way of life, and ceremony. The Elders always guided me.” (Kane’n:nawen).
Recommendation 2 (Business)

The youth leaders in this study recommended that future Indigenous youth leaders gain a better understanding of Indigenous leadership values, methods, protocols, and characteristics and knowledge of Western ways of leadership. Methodologies, theories, practices, pedagogy, and methods of leadership change constantly and progress in an ever-changing global environment, but without a knowledge base of Indigenous principles, Indigenous youth will have only one worldview. Therefore, the youth leaders recommended that current leaders in Indigenous communities reflect on the historical methodologies and ideologies that have guided their Indigenous Nations, the traditional ethics and ways of knowing, and the rite of passage that enabled leaders to guide nations. They must also consider the principles of Indigenous leadership rather than Western ways of leadership.

The youth leaders recommended that businesses begin to appreciate Indigenous principles, values, and ethics if they are to continue to work on the Indigenous or Treaty lands of the first peoples. Indigenous business leaders have had and will continue to have a positive impact on the lives of young leaders and their communities. It is vital that the public and private sector respect and appreciate Indigenous ways of conducting business when they deal with present-day Indigenous leaders. Certain business protocols are important to follow in doing business with any company, and Indigenous business have faced a lack of respect for their practices. Indigenous businesses are sometimes required to use Western business processes to obtain contracts to provide services.
Mentoring also has its place now in giving Indigenous youth the practical skills that they need to take on leadership roles in the years to come. One youth reported, “It was my mentors that helped me get where I am today” (Iowe’:ren).

The youth leaders recommended that leaders of businesses actively pursue an experiential method of teaching and sharing their current leadership skills once youth leaders’ learning has been grounded in an Indigenous philosophy. Indigenous youth leaders know they will be asked to take on adult leadership roles or roles within their communities. One youth reported, “I am already a leader in my community; Elders and community people come and ask me questions about our language” (Kane’n:nawen). Theses youth participants want to be ready with the skills that they need to help all Indigenous community members to thrive. “I have the skills already and consider myself a leader. I will be passing that on to my children and community” (Moose Hunter).

Mentoring can occur in the field or in an office, and practical experience is vital to the success of any leader.

One community that I worked with actively several years ago involved all levels of leadership in mentoring a youth for the summer under its community job creation program. The adult leaders mentored youth leaders for two months, during which time the youth were to shadow the leaders and learn about the role, the expectations, the educational requirements, the challenges, and other practical experiences that they could acquire only by working in the role. It is indeed an opportunity for youth to actively participate in their own skill development by shadowing and being mentored by the chief or the heads of community development, education, or social services. However, it is not an easy task for the mentors. It requires commitment, dedication, and, most of all, a plan
for how to involve the youth, how to teach them about mentoring, and how to continue to support them.

In leadership, as in business, succession is important, which may involve encouraging replacements to improve the practice of their predecessors. It is not always necessary that leaders (e.g., the chief) mentor; it is also possible for councillors or executive assistants to the chief to assume that role. For example, the executive assistant might mentor a youth who wants to learn about the role of the chief and can teach the youth the necessary skills and lessons.

**Recommendation 3 (Communities)**

The youth leaders in this study recommended that communities that struggle with youth issues such as gangs or a lack of programming or funding need to consider Indigenous youth’s need to establish an identity and sense of belonging. The findings of this research clearly reveal that some youths’ lack of purpose leads to some of these issues. There is also a lack of support (i.e., training, emotional, spiritual) for Indigenous youth even while some adults are claiming that communities should listen to the youth because they are the future leaders. Indigenous youth need more than words; they need action. One youth stated, “It can’t be talk. There are still bad things happening. We need to take action now” (Loro’n:rote). The youth leaders argued that all Indigenous youth are entitled to a safe place to live, study, grow, become parents themselves, and be active participants in the society or community.

The youth leaders recommended the establishment of safe places and programs that all youth can feel comfortable attending. Unfortunately, the thoughts on traditional versus contemporary issues are so diverse that they have divided some communities.
With very little leadership lessons or support for young Indigenous people in their communities, they will surely leave and not return; or, if they stay, they will not actively participate in the community. With limited opportunities to grow as young people, to have economic opportunities or advance their education, youth will leave the community and find these things in other places. If they leave to pursue their education, they might not return to apply their education because of the limited or lack of opportunities for employment. This will create a void in leadership potential and a lack of identity and feeling of belonging to a community.

In addition, the youth leaders recommended that communities create opportunities for cultural experiences that define the communities and their history, and have programs that will allow the youth to identify opportunities that are important to them and make them feel that they belong. Creating a sense of identity is critical to help alleviate the challenges that all Indigenous communities face. Outdoor or cultural programs do not always require being outdoors or engaged in culture; and they can help youth to find their space and sense of belonging. Culture is very important, as is knowledge of the environment, language, and rite of passage; but, more than anything else, youth will feel a sense of pride when they know that they belong and are rooted, that their voices are heard, and that they are important contributors to the success of the community.

Some communities are dedicated and committed to supporting their youth through programs or addressing the environment, education, and social issues; yet we still hear sad and disturbing news about the lack of support. Clearly, this research has shown that identity, belonging, and the ability to pursue dreams are critical factors that the youth leaders felt were important for communities to consider.
Recommendation 4 (Leaders)

Current leaders of Indigenous communities more vigorously promote the awareness of traditional leadership. With the demands of the current reality (i.e., suicides, missing young women, gangs), and the challenges that current leaders face (i.e., budget, land negotiations, development), it is a daunting task to assume other roles; such as historian or educator. Having the knowledge of historical leadership is vital to the community’s continued success and that of future young leaders as they prepare to assume leadership roles.

Although some communities’ members have a working knowledge of traditional and elected leadership, in some communities, recognition of and respect and appreciation for both worldviews are lacking. This lack of a shared worldview and knowledge causes fragmentation within a community and causes concern for future young leaders. Some communities have no traditional leadership and governance upon which to reflect, and the current process of election is the only worldview that they maintain.

Indigenous histories have taught us that most of the lessons for learning were oral based, transmitted to the people through stories and songs. It might be difficult to rediscover this knowledge base. Dr. Reg Crowshoe (personal communication, April 23, 2015), an Elder from the Piikani Nation, commented on this:

Our societies linked us to our nations and our lands. No person could be given a role without the recognition or transfer of a song. This gave that person permission to assume a leadership role, and then the community was aware of this responsibility.
Conclusion

The youth leaders considered these recommendations vital to leaders, communities, educational programmers, and others to contemplate with regard to IYL. Implementing them will be a challenge. The requirement of educational institutions to change the curriculum, the policies that must change at a community and/or band level, and the shift in mindset for businesses will all require dedication and resources. A youth leader stated, “Leadership is big action, to help people. . . . Leadership, it’s what you do to help people” (Digger).

Nevertheless, it is in the best interests of communities and Indigenous Nations to implement the recommendations as soon as possible. Otherwise, youth will leave their communities for better opportunities or opt out in some way or another. They will look elsewhere for employment, education, and entrepreneurial opportunities. One youth commented, “If there were more Indigenous YLPs, courses, workshops, Aboriginal youth would get their degrees, have better jobs, a balanced life” (Akohsa’:tens).

If communities do not take these recommendations seriously, they will be unable to prepare potential youth leaders adequately for future leadership roles. As the fastest growing population in Canada (Frideres, 2011), Indigenous Nations must implement these recommendations to help ensure a successful future for all Indigenous youth. A youth that participated in this study stated that he/she wants a better life for his/her children, and my field notes reflect similar comments: “Most of the youth want a better life, better jobs. Most have children and want a better life for their kids.”
If our young people are assuming positions of leadership without being guided by their own traditional Indigenous leadership ways, the chances are high the colonial processes that prevent our communities from changing and growing will continue.

The recommendations and themes from this study are critical to consider; they parallel the important messages from the youth that I work with and have worked with over the years. If we want to alleviate the burden that colonial systems and settler groups have placed on young Indigenous people, it is essential that we give them vital information on traditional Indigenous leadership and the appropriate tools to enhance their leadership in the future.
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

As an Indigenous researcher, I believed that it was imperative that I conduct my research with the utmost of respect, care, and attention to detail all while respecting the Indigenous method of storytelling. Indigenous stories seldom change, and the participants shared their views with the intention of imparting lessons within them; it was my honour to interpret and share these stories.

Storytelling, specifically the story of IYL, is an Indigenous way of knowing in which we share stories with youth, leaders, and community members to enhance the knowledge of traditional leadership while actively engaging youth in learning, acting, and assuming future leadership roles. I used an Indigenous methodology process, PAR, which is a strong research methodology, and used multiple techniques that I defined as Indigenous.

My intention was to encourage Indigenous youth leaders to present their stories of leadership in their own words and to act upon them. This process can possibly serve as future text to inform IYL development because very little is known about IYL. Moreover, how knowledge of Indigenous leadership is transferred to youth; to my knowledge, no model of IYL has been developed, and the possibility of creating a new model was exciting and required the involvement of the Indigenous youth leaders.

All of the participants in this study are good leaders, ready to act and take on additional challenges as they grow into leadership positions as adults. Some of the youth have already begun the journey, but some will need more support and nurturing to understand the complexities of leadership. Raelin (2016) states “Leadership development thus requires an acute immersion into the practices that are embedded within social
relations and between people, objects, and their institutions” (p. 7). One youth leader intends to write down personal lessons for his/her Nation’s youth and other communities and First Nations, while others are working with their bands or nations to increase awareness of Indigenous youth leadership. If this is a result of the research process, then we collectively have accomplished some of my goals.

It is the responsibility of adults to nurture the momentum and to share all of their knowledge on Indigenous leadership, the development of Indigenous youth leaders, and Indigenous ways of knowing with youth. As community leaders, they will need to support the development of IYL programming, facilitated by their own people whenever possible, and guided by Elders. As educators, they will first need to learn more about Indigenous leadership and share that knowledge with youth (through both formal and informal channels), as well as knowledge of Indigenous and Western knowledge.

The recommendations that emerged from the findings are important to consider in shaping IYL lessons in the future. Financially, politically, and culturally, we must support the development of IYL programs and educate, study, and share within educational institutions, not simply as the add-on programs that we have seen, but truly as First Nations frontrunners of successful IYL programs for all Indigenous youth.

Two youth leaders from different communities have set up youth councils and are working together to establish a cultural outdoor education program for their community to explore language, history, traditional leadership skills, and nature skills, to name a few. The communities’ chiefs and council members have supported the program, which will be offered in the summer of 2015, with the intention of working in collaboration with several other communities. They hope that this will be the beginning of a regional IYL
program that serves a specific linguistic and cultural area. In the next phase of this project, youth will be allowed to attend meetings in other communities and share the benefits, learnings, and successes of their project.

One youth leader whom I interviewed is currently working on a collection of stories from other youth in the community (Ohkwa’ri). He/she is knowledgeable and experienced in communications and wants to ensure that the challenges that Indigenous youth face, as well as the successes, create opportunities for sharing with other youth leaders. There is great interest in this work, and it will be in draft format by the end of the winter of 2016. The efforts of this youth are to be commended, because the publication will be the first of its kind and one of the points that the youth brought forward in the action planning session. The idea is to ensure that Indigenous youth leaders’ hopes and dreams, and challenges and successes, are written down and presented to other Indigenous youth as well as communities that might value the process. One youth participant created a Facebook page, and several have continued to create opportunities for youth leadership in their own communities; another youth leader is considering creating a specific centre for outdoor education and the transfer of traditional leadership knowledge.

Place, space, and power were important factors within this research for youth, their epistemology (ways of knowing), ontology (well-being), and axiology (values) all seemed to indicate that some youth had varying perspectives on leadership, their place within that role, and why they choose to take on leadership roles. Trust was established and reciprocal, and in offering a gift in recognition of their knowledge and experience, power was reduced. This was even further reduced when the youth were given the choice
and task to determine the parameters of the research and the results. Space and place I believe contributed to their reflection of leadership, their openness to share, and the ability to analyze the data with different lenses (Field notes, 2015).

The results of this research project are highly transferable to similar situations in other First Nations communities in Canada and Indigenous communities internationally. The sample size was large enough to present a full picture of the nature of IYL and the transfer of Indigenous leadership knowledge. My intention was to understand the youths’ stories of leadership and their experiences.
CHAPTER 8: THE PASSAGE TO DATE

My Personal Journey

Marker (2015) states, “No wonder the Elders watched me carefully when I finished graduate studies. I had adjusted to the university institutional culture enough to complete my degree but then needed to readjust to the Indigenous community reality” (p. 249). One thing that I have encountered is the difficulty of learning, unlearning, and then relearning. I have faced many challenges, from conforming to the requirements of academia to discovering that the values often contrasted with my Indigenous worldview to working full time while completing a doctoral degree.

In my current career, I am often challenged because of where I work and what I do. When I discuss my role as senior advisor of Indigenous Relations, most people begin to understand that working within a corporation allows for change. Questions from Elders and community members include “How could you think of working in an energy company while spending the majority of your previous work life striving to protect Indigenous knowledge, the environment, and other innate values?” I am still working towards this goal; my dissertation is evidence of a primary goal from long ago to ensure that Indigenous knowledge is recognized, respected, and fully accepted in academia, as well as part of company development.

In academia, I have also been challenged to mould a way of life within a framework that does not allow for the full appreciation of Indigenous lifeways and or knowledge. Some institutions have not appreciated the integration of Indigenous values, concepts, and knowledge, while others have taken great strides to accept and incorporate Indigenous knowledge and courses. Indigenous methodologies and methods are
increasingly being accepted and used in academia, but other methods of Indigenous knowledge are not:

Stories go in circles. They don’t go in straight lines. It helps if you listen in circles because there are stories inside and between stories, and finding your way through them is as easy and as hard as finding your way home. Part of finding is getting lost, and when you are lost you start to open up and listen. (Tafoya, 1995; as cited in Wilson, 2008, p. 6)

I was lost, the candidacy exam and the edits of my presented proposal took some wind out of my sails, and I went around in circles. I viewed the results as a mangled mess with no reason or purpose. Once I reviewed the edits of all of my committee members, I realized that I was not clear about what I was saying in writing and that the edits were therefore critical to my moving forward. I was deflated and felt that the more that I composed, the less that I understood; until one day it all came together, and the edits seemed clearer and more necessary than I had anticipated. I thank my committee for challenging me to address each chapter with concise and clear objectives; however, moving the thoughts in my head to paper was not always an easy task.

The next phase of learning began just as I was about to submit my ethics application to Royal Roads University. I was attending a board meeting of the University of Calgary’s Aboriginal Post-Secondary Committee and the subcommittee on Aboriginal Research Ethics and learned that Alberta had just implemented a Treaty ethics standard (AFNIGC). I contacted Bonnie Healy, the Director of AFNIGC, and requested a meeting to determine whether I had to submit my proposal and ethics application to this process. Because mine was the first application to be processed, I sent the proposal to the three
committee reviewers in the Treaty areas, and they asked some questions, which I answered. They were concerned mainly the issues of ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP™) and where I would house the final data.

I then had to unlearn and relearn a process that was familiar to my Indigenous beliefs: planning interviews. When researchers seek answers, they look for people who will openly share their experiences or offer wisdom. When an Indigenous person seeks answers, they often turn to Elders for guidance, in my case the wise ones would be the youth leaders. I offered the participants a gift, and they discussed IYL with me; if they were unable to answer my questions, they suggested others who might be able to do so. Therefore, the interview process began, slowly at first, but gradually 30 young First Nations youth were willing to share their wisdom on youth leadership. From the interviews began the exciting and arduous journey of sorting the data into some pattern, some way of making meaning of the information. I asked the youth to decide what the meaning was, to reflect on the information that they had given me, and to create themes that they considered relevant. Then, together, we created short stories about their experiences as young leaders.

Connecting with the youth was a huge lesson on different types of communication. Seldom do youth use e-mail; Facebook, texting, Twitter, and other forms of communication now take precedence. It was challenging for the participants to e-mail notes to me because their familiarity and or preference with technology might have been somewhat limited to the tools that they use in their everyday lives—a lesson that I will apply to my work and life. I connected regularly with nearly all of the youth, but some I did not hear from after the Gathering (October 3, 2014).
The action part of the research process was invaluable to both the youth and me. I believe that it closely connected us, and we had time to discuss what would happen next. Most of the youth reported that it was unlike any other research process in which they had ever been involved. The Indigenous Youth Café resulted in the critical development of the IYL model, the advancement of the data, and summary of the stories, none of which would have been created without full participation of the youth.

The next phase of the “deep dive” (further dialogue regarding youth engagement) conversations from the October 2014 Gathering with Suncor Energy will once again bring some Indigenous youth leaders together to carry on the conversation on youth, youth leadership, and education and social issues. Most of the youth with whom I connected in this research are still interested in being involved in these conversations and will allow me to reconnect with them.

The writing phase of the dissertation was challenging, to say the least. Teaching at the University of Calgary, working at Suncor Energy, and maintaining a life with my children and family have been a journey. I am blessed to have supportive people in my life, and my family has encouraged me to write. I entered into a similar phase while writing the final dissertation as I did with my candidacy edits, more and more I found that writing and editing was a huge challenge. I was frustrated and not wanting to continue, yet my advisor, committee, family, and friends continued to encourage me to move beyond the process and just write. As Whyte (2001) lamented:

The task is simple and takes a life pilgrimage to attain, to inhabit our life fully, just as we find it, and in that inhabitation, let everything ripen to the next stage of conversation. We do this because that is how we make meaning and how we
make everything real. The core act of leadership must be making conversations real. (p. 61)

What you see contained here is a combination of their efforts, the youth, and mine. It is the creation of a dream, to instil pride within youth leaders. To develop a national youth leadership program that educates young people in Indigenous ways of knowing and traditional leadership methodology. To understand, learn, and develop a young person from an Indigenous perspective, and to prepare young leaders to assume leadership roles within their communities or wherever they take their skills. That has been my journey, my path in this life.
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APPENDIX A: A BRIEF NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

The issue of how to identify First People in Canada has both practical and political implications, and for this reason, it has been problematic. In addition, the nomenclature for First Peoples in Canada has changed over time. Historically, they were called *Indians*, *Eskimos*, and *Halfbreeds*, but over time, these titles have changed to *Native*, *Inuit*, and *Métis*, respectively. More recently, the term Native was clarified in the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution in 1982. This legal document notes that Canada has recognized Aboriginal people, and the term includes Indians, Métis, and Inuit. However, it does not identify the criteria for the operationalization of these terms. At the same time, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Canada and Statistics Canada maintain a count of the number of Aboriginal people in Canada. Statistics Canada refers to Aboriginal people as those who report that they identify with at least one Aboriginal group—for example, North American Indian, Métis, or Inuit—those who report that they are Treaty or Registered Indians as defined by the Indian Act of Canada, and those who report that they are members of an Indian band.

In the late 1970s, Indians collectively coined the term *First Nations* in an attempt to differentiate themselves from other Canadians. The term has both symbolic and philosophical implications. The Government of Canada has not accepted the term First Nations as anything other than a symbolic marker that a group of people uses. It has no legal meaning, and the courts do not use the term; rather, the courts and governments refer to *Indians*, which has legal meaning. At the same time, government, the media, and Indians themselves commonly use the term First Nations. However, it is a nebulous term, and who it includes varies according to the person using it. Sometimes it means
Registered Indians; at other times, it includes Indians, Métis, and Inuit. At still other times, it means anyone who claims to be an Indian. Finally, it should be noted that English Canada uses the term First Nations, but Quebec has chosen to use First Peoples as the official title of Indians and Inuit.

The use of the term Indian implies acceptance of the meaning as a legal definition, as specified in the Indian Act. However, it does not take into consideration individuals who consider themselves Indian but are not recognized by the government (they are sometimes called non-Status Indians). All of this reveals the attempts of Indian people to define who they are rather than to allow the government to define unilaterally who is and is not Indian. Thus, the term First Nations was born out of the initial efforts of the National Indian Brotherhood and later the AFN to define themselves.

In the current research, I chose to use the term Indigenous for several reasons. First, outside of North America, the term Indigenous is widely used to identify First Peoples in the country. Given that my research has international applications, it seemed to be a good fit. Second, the term refers to First Peoples who occupied North America, and anyone who identifies as First Peoples fits the category of Indigenous. Finally, it resolves the issues of who is Aboriginal—a term coined and used exclusively in Canada. However, this term is limited to Status Indians, Métis, and Inuit. I intended my research to move beyond Canada and to adopt the nomenclature of the United Nations: Indigenous. According to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (2015):
**Who are Indigenous peoples?**

It is estimated that there are more than 370 million indigenous people spread across 70 countries worldwide. Practicing unique traditions, they retain social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live. Spread across the world from the Arctic to the South Pacific, they are the descendants according to a common definition - of those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived. The new arrivals later became dominant through conquest, occupation, settlement or other means.

Among the indigenous peoples are those of the Americas (for example, the Lakota in the USA, the Mayas in Guatemala or the Aymaras in Bolivia), the Inuit and Aleutians of the circumpolar region, the Saami of northern Europe, the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders of Australia and the Maori of New Zealand. These and most other indigenous peoples have retained distinct characteristics which are clearly different from those of other segments of the national populations.

**Understanding the term “indigenous”**

Considering the diversity of indigenous peoples, an official definition of “indigenous” has not been adopted by any UN-system body. Instead the system has developed a modern understanding of this term based on the following:

- Self-identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member
- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies
• Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources
• Distinct social, economic or political systems
• Distinct language, culture and beliefs
• Form non-dominant groups of society
• Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities. (para. 1-3)
APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INVITATION

RESEARCH/STUDY PARTICIPANTS

April xx, 2014

Dear xxxxx,

I would like to introduce myself and invite you to participate in an Indigenous Participatory Action Research project. My name is Michael Lickers, Mohawk from Six Nations; this project is part of the requirement for a Doctor of Social Sciences degree at Royal Roads University. Dr. James Frideres is the primary supervisor and Dr. Robin Cox from Royal Roads University is co-supervisor.

Study Purpose: The objective of my research project is to explore IYL development. This opportunity will allow you to share your views, thoughts, and experiences regarding youth leadership individually.

Role of Participants: Participants in the study will engage in a 45-minute one-on-one interview process, with a follow-up session of 15 minutes to ensure your comments are documented correctly. The study will start at the beginning of June 2014 until November 2014. I will conduct 30 one-on-one interviews representing Indigenous youth leaders in Alberta.

Confidentiality: All information in this study will be kept confidential and summarized in an anonymous format into themes. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual or their community.

You are not compelled to take part in this research project. If you do elect to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time with no prejudice. Similarly, if you
choose not to take part in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at any time. If you have any questions about the nature of the research, you can contact Dr. James Frideres or, alternatively, Dr. Robin Cox directly. If you would like to participate in my research project, please confirm your interest with me before May 15th, 2014, at:

E-mail: XXXXX@XXXXXXX.XX
Telephone: XXX XXX-XXXX Work or XXX XXX-XXXX Cell Phone
Dr. James Frideres: XXX XXX-XXXX
Dr. Robin Cox: XXX XXX-XXXX

Respectfully, I remain,

Michael Lickers
APPENDIX C: TELEPHONE SCRIPT

Hello. My name is Michael Lickers. I would like to introduce myself and invite you to participate in an Indigenous Participatory Action Research project. I am inviting you specifically to participate as you have either self-identified or been recommended as an Indigenous youth leader who could share value.

I would like to set a time or meet with you personally to discuss my project, “Indigenous Youth Leadership Development.” If you are interested in participating, more detail of the project will be shared; this should not take any longer than 20 minutes of your time. This research project is part of the requirement for a Doctor of Social Sciences degree at Royal Roads University. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by telephoning Dr. James Frideres: XXX XXX-XXX or Dr. Robin Cox: XXX XXX-XXXX or by e-mail at XXXX@XXX.XX or XXXX@XXXXXX.XX

Participation in this research project is voluntary. You are not obligated to participate. Should you be interested, we can set a time to meet and discuss the project details further. If you choose not to participate, there will be no discomfort, ill will, or negative repercussions. Thanks.
APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM

You may complete electronically through e-mail, mail (address below), or give verbal consent on the phone. Participation is voluntary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation in a Research Project - Consent Form</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By signing this consent form, I ( \underline{\text{(Please print or type-in your name)}} ) give my free and informed consent to participate in this project in <strong>writing</strong> or <strong>verbally</strong> (Please circle one) On this day <em><em><strong><strong><strong>, Year</strong></strong></strong></em>. I understand that I may withdraw all or part of my participation at any time during the project without consequence. Written Consent - Signature: ( \underline{\text{</em>_________________________<strong><strong>}} ) Verbal Consent – Signed by: ( \underline{\text{</strong></strong>__________________________}} ) on behalf of the above participant.</td>
</tr>
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<th>Identity Disclosure</th>
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<td>(Please Check or comment :)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ I understand that my name and/or my communities name will not be disclosed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ I understand that future use of my anonymous information may be used for example in: professional presentations, future articles, literature relating to Indigenous leadership and/or Indigenous youth leadership.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final Report Distribution

(Please check one or comment :)

_____ Yes, I want to receive an electronic version of the final project report once it has been finalized. You may send it to this e-mail address: ______________________ or mailing address: ________________________________

_____ No, I do not want to receive an electronic version of the final project report.

_____ Other comments: ________________________________

Signature: ______________________________________

Follow-up

_____ Yes, I am open to being contacted again following this interview should the researcher have any further questions or clarifications.

_____ No, I do not want or am not available to be re-contacted for future questions or clarifications.

Signature: ______________________________________

Additional comments:
By signing this letter or providing verbal consent, I understand the supplemental guidelines for free and informed consent and give free and informed consent to participate in this project.

________________________________________________________________________
Name (Please Print)

________________________________________________________________________
Signed

________________________________________________________________________
Date
APPENDIX E: SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDELINES FOR FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT

This is an Indigenous Participatory Action Research project, Indigenous Youth Leadership Development. The objective of my research project is to explore Indigenous youth leadership development and the transfer of Indigenous leadership knowledge to youth leaders. This opportunity will allow you to share your views, thoughts, and experiences individually.

This participatory action research project is part of the requirement for a Doctor of Social Sciences degree at Royal Roads University. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by telephoning Dr. James Frideres: XXX XXX-XXXX or e-mail XXXX@XXX.XX or alternately Dr. Robin Cox: XXX XXX-XXXX or e-mail XXX@XXX.XX

Participants must enter the research domain with free and informed consent. Participants must be given the basis from which to make an informed decision prior to giving their consent to participate. For example, prior to granting his or her consent, a participant must be well informed of the focus and long-term implications of the research. Participants have the right to know how their stories will be used and interpreted for meaning. I will make a concerted effort to make the research processes and final analysis as transparent and confidential as possible.

You are not compelled to participate in this research project. If you do choose to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice. Similarly, if you choose not to participate in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence.
Moreover, consent can be withdrawn at any time. Therefore, should a participant decide to discontinue his or her involvement in the project, he or she may do so without fear of any discomfort, ill will, or negative repercussion. I honour the wisdom of each participant’s right to change his or her mind. Interestingly, this ethical principle is very much aligned with Aboriginal beliefs and values.

The research project will consist of one-on-one interviews lasting approximately 45 minutes in length, with an additional 15 minutes of follow-up time should it be necessary. The foreseen questions will refer to Indigenous youth leadership development and your personal views.

Information will be recorded in a handwritten format and a digitally taped format, summarized anonymously, in the body of the final report. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual or his or her respective community. The information that you provide will be kept confidential, and I will use pseudonyms (aliases) for you and your community. In this way, I will keep the information you provide confidential and neutral.

The information that you provide will be themed and brought back to you for clarification. Once completed, you will be able to view the final thesis or acquire a copy of the thesis electronically. A copy of the final report will be housed at Royal Roads University and will be publicly accessible.
By signing this letter, I understand and give free and informed consent to participate in this project.

__________________________________________________________
Name (Please Print)

__________________________________________________________
Signed

__________________________________________________________
Date
APPENDIX F: INITIAL AND FINAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS
FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH LEADERS

Possible Research Questions

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself
2. Tell me what Leadership means to you?
3. Do you have formal or informal leadership training?
4. If so, where did you take your leadership training?
5. How do you understand traditional leadership training? Have you had any formal Traditional leadership training?
6. Have you had any informal Traditional leadership training?
7. Tell me a story about your leadership journey?
8. Is there anyone specific that has guided you on your leadership journey?
9. What will you do with your leadership skills now?

Final Research Questions

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself
2. Tell me what Leadership means to you?
3. Do you have formal or informal leadership training?
4. If so, where did you take your leadership training?
5. How do you understand traditional leadership training? Have you had any formal Traditional leadership training?
6. Have you had any informal Traditional leadership training?
7. Tell me a story about your leadership journey?
8. Is there anyone specific that has guided you on your leadership journey?
9. What will you do with your leadership skills now?
10. If you were tasked with creating an Indigenous Youth Leadership program, what would that look like?

11. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me about Youth Leadership?
APPENDIX G: SHARING CIRCLE

Talking Circle: Fact Sheet

Download this fact sheet

Suitable for: Group Activity | Facilitator-led Activity

Talking circles are based on the sacred tradition of sharing circles. People leading a traditional sharing circle will have a blessing from an Elder to do this, and will use special prayers and sacred objects in the ceremony.

The purpose of the less formal talking circle, used as part of classroom instruction, is to create a safe environment in which students can share their point of view with others. In a Talking Circle, each one is equal and each one belongs. Participants in a Talking Circle learn to listen and respect the views of others. The intention is to open hearts to understand and connect with one another.

- Participants sit in a circle. The circle symbolizes completeness.
- Review ground rules with participants. For example:
  - Everyone’s contribution is equally important.
  - State what you feel or believe starting with “I-statements,” e.g., “I feel …”
  - All comments are addressed directly to the question or the issue, not to comments another person has made. Both negative and positive comments about what anyone else has to say should be avoided.
  - An everyday object such as a rock or pencil is sometimes used as a talking object.
• When the talking object is placed in someone’s hands; it is that person’s turn to share his or her thoughts, without interruption. The object is then passed to the next person in a clockwise direction.

• Whoever is holding the object has the right to speak and others have the responsibility to listen.

• Everyone else is listening in a non-judgemental way to what the speaker is saying.

• Silence is an acceptable response. There must be no negative reactions to the phrase, “I pass.”

• Speakers should feel free to express themselves in any way that is comfortable; by sharing a story, a personal experience, by using examples or metaphors, and so on.

This excerpt on talking circles ©Alberta Education; *Our Words, Our Ways: Teaching First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learners*, 2005, p. 163.

**Cautions**

• Consider the individual needs of the participants.

• Respect the differing comfort zones of the participants.

• Ensure that the participants feel safe.

• Be mindful of regional protocols in the design of the circle.

Reference: [http://firstnationspedagogy.ca/cirletalks.html](http://firstnationspedagogy.ca/cirletalks.html)
APPENDIX H: INDIGENOUS YOUTH CAFÉ OUTCOME DATA

Where do youth learn about leadership now? And what would that look like in the future?

Defining leader
- Someone who’s open
- Role model of community
- Trustworthy person
- Culturally rich
- Speaks the language
- Humble
- Shares what’s going on
- Be understanding of situation
- Fair/gender equity
- Encourages a positive outlook for youth
- If you fall they pick you up, get you going, open doors
- Give other opportunity to improve/self-improvement
- Family, friend, parent, grandparents

Where do youth learn about leadership now?
- media (video games, TV, movies)
- dogs and horses teach personal leadership qualities
- parents
- family
- community members
- traditional teachings (formal, informal, in general)
- life experiences
- swag (how you look/ what you look says about you)
- sense of dignity: values, morals, you adopt characterizes of leadership
- personality (strong foundation)
- pop culture
- responsibilities (helping mom with siblings/in school/at work)
- programs (i.e. Cadets) – started at bottom and moved up; always wanted more responsibility, thus progressed; when you move up you can boss others
- observing others in past (elders, authority figures)
- by being open and accepting
- take time to connect with self, know your own values and what you want in life
- dreams and aspirations for future demand certain learning along the way
- dreams motivate you to access parts of yourself that you didn’t know about
- ceremonies (Moon Time)
- family: parents, family is a BIG one
- coaches, teachers
- life experience
- family dynamics
- going away from family
- being raised/process of learning
- trial and error
- someone will/may guide you, but can’t hold your hand
- specific teachings, culturally based—must respect multi areas and work in multiple areas (give tobacco, can’t make eye contact in certain situations, faith, respect each person’s faith, respect where people are at, there are limits—can’t ask certain things)
- ceremonies/rites of passage/coming of age
- Television: what kind of elder do you want to be?
- Local community initiatives/youth organizations/councils
- Volunteering
- Educational workshops
- Informal cultural learning
- Lean to appreciate every little thing
- Spiritual cultural guidance—passing on traditions (i.e. elder passes outfit to appropriate descendant, the leadership qualities are in the outfit, therefore give it to someone with those qualities)
- Vision quests/rites of passage
- life experience
- peers
- overcoming hardships and struggles
- failure/opportunity
- get a chance to try something
- surrounding community
- family of origin/extended family
- Youth Leadership Tour/ACGC (trip to Ethiopia): see how people worked the rough hardships is eye-opening/cultural shock=ability to relate
- Independence (have to be able to be alone to be a leader)
- Must stand alone
- Become role model when forced to take responsibility (i.e. taking care of siblings)
- Being the first to graduate shows others in family (lead by example)
- What shaped us to actually lead? Who else if not me? Determination/desire: seeing their struggle (they didn’t finish school, therefore they struggled)=I don’t want to be like that/them
- Sports clubs
- Programming
- School (incentive, achievement, diploma)/applied management
- Books
- Media (documentaries)
- History (Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, nation leaders, warriors, past chiefs)
- Holding an elected position
• mentors
• coaches
• role models
• teachers
• elders
• culture: western, pop culture (superheroes)
• aboriginal culture: clans, societies, roles of men and women
• rites of passage (teach others)
• stories
• travel
• celebrate achievement (child with supportive family does better at school)
• Have the confidence to try (many can’t/don’t do it): what made me what to do better?
• Leadership qualities: are they genetic? Passed through blood/DNA?
• Blood memory
• We learned that leaders in our communities don’t listen to us
• Grandparents, teachers, uncles, aunties
• Parents
• Self-development: learning about their personal dreams are and a willingness to build that dream
• Protests on TV, statements by government are inaccessible
• Family and community
• Family and extended family
• Family roles
• Friends and peers
• Community
• World leaders via media
• Life experiences
• Elders
• Parents
• Programs
• Culture and language
• Mentorship
• Social media is now where leaders are openly free to follow: Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter
• Positive parents, grandparents, teachers, peers
• Negative: TV, Steven Harper, Chief/Council, social media:

**What would that look like in the future?**

• looking ahead as the solution
• observing others
• youth have less attention span, what you do has to change to grab their attention
• teach marriage and family (purpose and benefits of roles and partnership/what is the meaning of finding a partner)
image is not important
becoming an adult: ceremonies, moon time, rites of passage, ritual, coming of age, identification as adult
taking care of the land
discipline
unity in our people and our nation
crucial now because we are coming to that time = we are the largest and fastest growing population in Canada
connection to self, place and others
larger identity: not just me
think more globally
stewards of the earth
elders and authority
respect leaders to become a leader
accountability
stories: elders carry on teachings/knowledge
spiritual aspects
oral transmission
books with pictures – add the visual for the next generation
permanent exhibit/museum of reconciliation (like Dachau), residential school
built capacity of youth (let us define success)
language: need the language to explain the spiritual/cultural tradition
national day of reconciliation/Treaty Rights/Demolishing, like Remembrance Day, Day of Residential schools
language of each group
documentaries/multi-media: key in telling stories
books
can’t eliminate the elder aspect
historical landmarks with/of each tribe
hold historical history about things that aren’t talked about
how were people with each other (politics, communication, conflict/resolution): compare how it was with how it is
cultural ceremonies/practices – always going to be there
women need to be empowered
online connections (communities)
social media: (twitter: follow leaders), Tumblr, blogs
“YouTube University” (free tutorials: learn without paying)
Instagram, Facebook
responsibility to continue roles/become the elders
stories: legends, creation, virtue, fables, life-building, stories from the past, stories of resilience
share what our families went through in the past
pass on collective memory
celebrate milestones and achievements, especially from young age
• building families
• be there to support descendants/trickle down
• repetitive/learn from patterns
• access to opportunities
• create legacy
• deal with issues/learn how to overcome personal pain
• in the future more programs to build their own personal development and self-esteem

What is the best way to connect and bring Indigenous youth leaders together?
• The arts: visual and audio
• Post-secondary or furthering education (clubs, groups on campus)
• Access to culture and history
• Treaty days
• Survival camp
• Camping, survival training
• Events: embracing fundamental values and activities of Indigenous culture
• Youth summit at post-secondary (dreaming education processes)
• Dreamcatchers: Youth Cultural Conference
• Modernize educational curriculum
• Heave health events/weekends to help strengthen our people
• Fellowship retreat/meeting more intimate communication where people feel safe and comfortable to share their true ideas and opinions: meetings longer than one day; build community
• “Reservations Youth Exchange:” to connect reserve community together; to learn about each other’s culture; to reflect on how/where we are from
• “Youth Exchange:” reserves to urban/cities/town/provinces/countries/world wide
• help provide transportation
• calm environment outside of the cities
• social media recruitment supports
• meet at schools or universities . . . because people envision their dreams better when they can physically see the steps they need to take
• Teach Indigenous youth how to apply for funding: clarify!
• Connecting rural and urban
• Indian Village Camp Survival: learn to create art, clothes, and shelter, and gather food—authentic, from clothes, housing, food
• Workshops
• Powwows
• Hockey
• Horses
• Culture
• Youth centre
• Youth council
• Give them the opportunity to be head (writing, just conversation or video for reflection for themselves)
• Self-reflection
• Conference
• Do activities where it doesn’t give them the time to over-think leadership
• $ incentives
• merging culture, outdoor, health and business or formal schooling
• travel and cross-cultural exchanges
• honest action on the part of the organization to list to and action plan youth voice and opinion
• youth conferences
• culture camps
• sporting activities
• workshops
• creative events (the arts)
• social media
• go out and find them (Mike L.) aka outreach
• P.I.C.S.S.
• Education initiatives
• Powwows
• School Aboriginal Group
• Workshops, conferences
• Facebook: groups, invites
• An opportunity for change and Growth!!
• Traditional education
• Aboriginal support programs (rural and urban)
• Social media groups in Facebook
• Camps (role model/leader)
• Promote drug-free lifestyle
• Talent show
• Groups (make up, choir)
• Powwows
• Being diligent in directly searching for Indigenous leaders in communities
• Recreation centre
• Youth groups
• Formal (dress to impress) meet and greets
• Incentives (rooms paid, parking paid, food and drink)
• Resources (local)
• Social mixers
• Workshops/conferences
• Much music video Dance
• Different choices on topics to engage in (women, men, health, sports, business, writing, etc.)
• Evenings (after school)
- Transportation available
- A trip (get away from school, home, etc.)
- Interaction (not to make them sit and listen but stand up, walk around, talk, move around)
- Ice breakers
- Youth Council (headed by the youth)
- Great opportunity
- Praise (acceptance)
- Social media
- Music festival
- Youth centre (“safe place”)
- Traditional collaboration
- Geographical location
- Cultural summits
- Invitation
- Peer-support
- Music makes friends
- Build libraries
- Conferences
- Youth gatherings
- Formal gatherings
- Informal gatherings
- Leadership programs
- Committees
- Multi-media
- Cultural and spiritual ceremonies
- Gatherings (Powwow, R.D., sweat lodge, pipe ceremony, cultural workshops)
- 10-day festival with multiple events (spiritual, educational, experimental, learning, sharing, formal, informal, powwow, food making, cultural teachings, conferences, summit, movement)
- cultural and educational conferences/symposiums (“Learning from the past, building for the future”)
- P.E.T.
- McMac ??
- Canada World Youth
- multi-media
- Networking
- Week-long festival
- powwow, music, library, parade
- Cultural summit on traditional territory
- Symposium
- Aboriginal Program Alumni
- Events
- Round dances
• Powwows
• Open band
• Meetings
• Social media
• Programs
• Family
• Reunions
• Friends of family
• Family or friends
• Conferences
• Networking
• Traveling
• School
• Socializing
• Mentors
• Trips
• Schools
• Opening board meetings
• Dreamcatcher program
• Arts
• Events
• Programs
• Hearings
• Powwows
• Ceremonies
• Storytelling

What would an Alberta Indigenous Youth Leadership program look like?
What are the components? (i.e. outdoor and experiential education, classroom teaching about historic leaders, etc.)
• in a perfect world it would be in Indigenous languages
• show them how awesome things can be
• youth mentors, who they can relate to
• mixing traditional knowledge with western science in balance
• challenging
• outdoors
• obstacle courses
• travel
• improving employment skills
• risk taking
• education: learning more about your culture (who you are and when/where you’re from)
• wanting to know and learn your history past
• Youth run!
• Cultivating hidden potential
• Language App: for youth learning language
• Personal growth!
• Goal setting group and helping to pursue them (follow ups)
• Run by youth!
• Variety
• Make it fun
• Deep convos
• Free education
• Interests!
• Drama (class)
• Sports
• Language learning
• Aboriginal history
• Cultural understanding
• Cultural re-enactment
• Family healing
• Spirit name gathering: what each spirit represents as one then as a whole
• Visual learning
• First Nation, Métis, Inuit: identity
• Awareness and education on spiritual leadership – past/present
• Revealing/finding oneself
• Formal and informal learning is key
• Community engagement: awareness, service
• Outdoor and experiential education component: hands on
• Culture/spiritual component
• Awareness education
• Cross-cultural exchange
• Self-healing
• Self-esteem/confidence
• Equality and acceptance (gender, sexual preference, cultural)
• Vision quests
• Big Sister/Brother programs
• Community gardens
• Most reserves were given for ranches for survival on our way of living: to set up a program to teach on where we come from
• Find out how the youth learns best and apply that to the curriculum
• Promote growth
• Cultural roots
• Dignify our youth, culture, roots
• Teach how to reduce waste: money, environment, food, resources, and more
• To teach cultural history to modern day of culture camp survival – natural vs. modern
• Ranch life, stable life, to cities
• Travel: see the world
• Take them to traditional lands where they used to hunt, gather and travel
• Traditional land on where/who they are or different ways
• Full Moon gatherings: ceremonies, collaboration
• Powwow
• Clothing making, beading
• Tradition foods: what can we eat naturally
• Horse leadership teachings for personal development and for group leadership
• Food production
• nutrition
• tradition
• self-care
• soap, hair, hygiene
• budget and finance
• traditional medicine
• Indigenous dialect
• Nehiyaw cuisine
• Team building (group activities), outdoor and indoors
• Job shadow a leader (chief and council or business owners or managers)
• What would an Indigenous Youth program look like? A classroom, a curriculum, mentors, job shadowing, a leader, self-development classes, computer classes, group activities, team building), mostly fun, get the youth excited, find something they like
• Hiking, mountain climbing, canoeing
• Workshops, demonstrations, presentations
• Explore historical and contemporary leadership
• Discuss what defines personal leadership
• Highlights: unity and identity
• Inclusive of culture and traditional teachings
• Should youth directed
• Ongoing guidance and support from community
• Youth membership
• Team-building and community building activities
• Discussion/explanation of values
• Would be a great experience for our younger generations to know their culture and to speak their own language
• On programs, activities, rec centres, or even playing with others, learning to socialize with families and friends
• Children never have fun because parents are always drinking and spending their family allowance on drugs and alcohol, then spending it
• It would give children the rights on being a kid, then growing too fast and become a fast teenager; not knowing how to be a child
• Different options for girls (fashion, cosmetics, esthetics, make up, art, writing, expressing)
• Indoor/outdoor
• Formal/informal
• For boys: sports, science, technology, culture, etc.

What can we do now as an action plan?
• historical record/exhibit: reconciliation/residential schools
• take a stand on identity so next/future generations don’t have to deal with it: impact on identity, multi-generational affect
• Be proud of who we are: I am ________ from ________.
• Unity/unify
• Environmental research: old bones, protect land
• Youth exchanges: build relationships between community leaders
• Reach out to other communities youth committee, set up way to come together, create youth nation-wide community (like chapters of fraternity)
• Use technology: tap into what they’re already doing
• Historical library/landmarks
• Youth-ownership in own community
• “sit at one big table:” connect, communicate, intellectual networking
• What’s going on in other parts of the country?
• AB connect to what’s working in other communities
• Change by-laws/constitution
• Create Indigenous constitution: many/most have guidelines that govern how human interact with others and the universe (natural laws that are laid out as basis of governance; use this constitution as a mission statement, then build
• Find protocols that lay foundation and build based on those laws (traditional leadership)
• Definition/distinction between leadership and true leaders
• Cultural aspect is key
• Building constitution based on traditional laws of each nation: articulate these key principles and values
• Program: take twenty AB youth into the bush and live the old way; have a Cree, Sioux, and Blackfoot camp; mix up and learn about each other: informal, hands on (kill animal, skin it, cook and dry berries)
• Specialties and trading
• Gathering to exchange
• Language immersion: learn from young age to high school; learn language and teachings first—give stronger understanding of who they are
• Elders to connect with youth, share their knowledge
• Rites of passage
• Full Moon ceremony
• Book about women leaders
Who will do this and how?
- Involve elders as educators
- Identify the traditional informal holders/wisdom keepers: spirituality and culture
- Speak with younger youth (4+) engage them, they are smart and creative
- All here present to take action
- Keep/involve those who are working or lack funding (re-engage)
- Training: to get message to younger youth re: preserving culture
- Social media
- APTN, Change it Up, make it fun, funny
- Create a youth channel, a YouTube channel
- Create a news report about moving off the Res
- Create a show /reality show (Days of our Res)

When should this be done?
Now!!
APPENDIX I: TRANSCRIPTION CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

My name is Michael Lickers, and this research project is part of the requirement for a Doctor of Social Sciences degree at Royal Roads University. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by telephoning my supervisors:

Dr. James Frideres; at XXX XXX XXXX
Dr. Robin Cox: at XXX XXX XXXX

This document constitutes an agreement to participate in my research project as the transcriber for the proposed research. The objective of the research is to gain a greater understanding from Indigenous youth leaders.

As the transcriber for this research, your role will be to transcribe the audio recordings from the methods used to gather the data: interviews.

Obligation of Confidentiality. During the evaluation period and for one (1) year thereafter, the transcriber will keep the interviews confidential. Disclosure or use of the confidential Information by the transcriber in breach of this agreement will be deemed to cause the researcher and participant irreparable harm for which damages are not an adequate remedy.

As this research is conducted with Indigenous youth, signing below constitutes your understanding that the stories shared by Indigenous youth leaders are to remain confidential. This is necessary to protect your rights and to ensure that any information you impart during the research is not shared outside of the research, other than what is stated by you to the researcher.
All information will be treated as anonymous unless the participant wishes to use her/his name. In all other cases, pseudonyms will be used to identify commentary presented in the dissertation by the participant.

Transcriber Signature: _____________________________________________

Print Name: ______________________________________________________

Date: _________________________________ (Month/date/year)

Researcher as Witness: _____________________________________________

Date: _________________________________ (Month/date/year)
APPENDIX J: WORLD CAFÉ

Design Principles

The following seven World Café design principles are an integrated set of ideas and practices that form the basis of the pattern embodied in the World Café process.

1) Set the Context

Pay attention to the reason you are bringing people together, and what you want to achieve. Knowing the purpose and parameters of your meeting enables you to consider and choose the most important elements to realize your goals: e.g. who should be part of the conversation, what themes or questions will be most pertinent, what sorts of harvest will be more useful, etc..

2) Create Hospitable Space

Café hosts around the world emphasize the power and importance of creating a hospitable space—one that feels safe and inviting. When people feel comfortable to be themselves, they do their most creative thinking, speaking, and listening. In particular, consider how your invitation and your physical set-up contribute to creating a welcoming atmosphere.

3) Explore Questions that Matter

Knowledge emerges in response to compelling questions. Find questions that are relevant to the real-life concerns of the group. Powerful questions that “travel well” help attract collective energy, insight, and action as they move throughout a system. Depending on the timeframe available and your objectives, your Café may explore a single question or use a progressively deeper line of inquiry through several conversational rounds.
4) Encourage Everyone’s Contribution

As leaders we are increasingly aware of the importance of participation, but most people don’t only want to participate, they want to actively contribute to making a difference. It is important to encourage everyone in your meeting to contribute their ideas and perspectives, while also allowing anyone who wants to participate by simply listening to do so.

5) Connect Diverse Perspectives

The opportunity to move between tables, meet new people, actively contribute your thinking, and link the essence of your discoveries to ever-widening circles of thought is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Café. As participants carry key ideas or themes to new tables, they exchange perspectives, greatly enriching the possibility for surprising new insights.

6) Listen together for Patterns and Insights

Listening is a gift we give to one another. The quality of our listening is perhaps the most important factor determining the success of a Café. Through practicing shared listening and paying attention to themes, patterns and insights, we begin to sense a connection to the larger whole. Encourage people to listen for what is not being spoken along with what is being shared.

7) Share Collective Discoveries

Conversations held at one table reflect a pattern of wholeness that connects with the conversations at the other tables. The last phase of the Café, often called the “harvest”, involves making this pattern of wholeness visible to everyone in a large group conversation. Invite a few minutes of silent reflection on the patterns, themes and deeper
questions experienced in the small group conversations and call them out to share with
the larger group. Make sure you have a way to capture the harvest – working with a
graphic recorder is recommended.

For a more in-depth look at the World Café design principles, see the World Café book.
Retrieved from http://www.theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/design-principles/