

IGSS Journal

INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

Madeline McCracken (She/Her), Red River Métis, 2021

ABSTRACT: Weaving our Work Together – Supporting First Nations, Métis and Inuit Children and Youth and the Responsibility of Educators

Within the past year, I have been humbled to learn from Dr. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook and Ph.D. Candidate Lisa Howell within the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa in our collaborative partnership with the Indigenous-led non-profit organization, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society (Caring Society). We are developing Spirit Bear's Virtual School as a communicational support network to engage with educators across Turtle Island. In our shared work, we address youth rights and respond to the inequities in Canada's welfare and education systems that continue to harm First Nations, Métis, and Inuit youth. From the research, we have newly developed The Spirit Bear Beary Caring Curriculum for Reconciliation which is embedded in the Touchstones of Hope Principles, Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, Sovereignty, Rights, and Responsible Citizenship. Further, we are guiding teachers (inside and outside contexts of public schooling) to educate their classes about the truth of Canada, discrimination, racism, justice, and reconciliation-based practices through the Caring Society's resources and campaigns.

My response, through story, uncovers the work we are collaboratively doing with the Caring Society to support educators. Additionally, I will unpack our virtual school and curriculum, and how it addresses the holistic health, healing, and advocacy to support First Nations, Métis, and Inuit youth and communities. I will also highlight the importance of collaborating with Indigenous-led non-profit organizations, like the Caring Society, to address this work. Further, I plan to unpack why non-Indigenous educators carry a responsibility to teach truth to their classes and ways they can reconcile through their actions. Lastly, I will discuss how I have been able to care for my spirit throughout this process. The story will weave, much like the Métis Sash, understandings together in aims to address the impacts of our work and how we continue to advocate for change.