



At the Heart of the Stories: A Process of Bringing Forward Indigenous Heart Work/Pedagogies

Lori Huston (she/her), Métis Nation Ontario
The University of British Columbia, Vancouver
PhD Student in Faculty of Education Curriculum and
Pedagogy

The pathways to enlightening the heart work of the Indigenous early childhood educators (ECEs) in northern Ontario First Nation communities are connected to their local stories and cultural knowledge and inspired by personal work and relationships, which have been an experiential process(es) with Indigenous ECEs. The work is within the Storywork methodologies of reciprocity, lifelong engagement with knowledges, sharing new knowledges, relationality, and incorporating many stories.⁷ The presentation's relevance is connected to the pathways between communities and research on Indigenous people's lived experiences through the impacts of colonial history in Canada. Shirley (2017) speaks to how "Cultivating the heart through Indigenous epistemological aspects is necessary when educators teach into the risks by exposing the oppressive present-day conditions linked to colonialism" (p. 167).⁸ Indigenous heart knowing/teaching has been shared through stories and experiences by Elders, educators, children, and families. The work is grounded in critical and Indigenous pedagogies during the presentation with a view of place as "an expression of culture that represents the outcome of human choices and decisions" (Gruenewald, 2003b, p. 627), and that reflects place-conscious educational theory (Gruenewald, 2003b, p. 627), a multidisciplinary and critical pedagogy.⁹

⁷ Archibald, J., & Parent, A. (2019). Hands back, hands forward for Indigenous storywork as methodology. In S. Windchief, & T. San Pedro (Eds.), (pp. 3-20) Routledge.

⁸ Shirley, V. J. (2017). Indigenous Social Justice Pedagogy: Teaching into the Risks and Cultivating the Heart. *Critical Questions in Education*, 8(2), 163–177.

⁹ Gruenewald, D.A. (2003a). The best of both worlds: A critical pedagogy of place. *Educational Researcher* 32(4), 3–12; Gruenewald, D.A. (2003b). Foundations of place: A multidisciplinary framework for place-conscious education. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(3), 619–654.