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An Exploration of Collaboration In Indigenous Language Revitalization In A First Nation Community

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

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores how Indigenous language leaders at Six Nations of the Grand River can collaborate for the purpose of revitalizing Indigenous languages. Using an Indigenous research study approach, I conducted single 45-60 minute semi-structured interviews with 10 Indigenous language leaders from the Six Nations of the Grand River. To develop an understanding about the concept of collaboration informed by Haudenosaunee epistemologies, I explored three cultural stories that generally constitute the foundation of Haudenosaunee philosophy and worldview. Together, insights from both the participants and the cultural stories informed this study and supported the development of my conceptual framework, which includes six components of collaboration: vision, problem-solving, partner engagement, purpose, roles and structure, and resources.

Findings indicate that Indigenous language leaders understand collaboration and processes of collaboration in mostly similar ways; as a process through which individuals and groups who experience a shared problem can work together towards a common goal. The vision, problem domain, purpose, roles and structure, and resource needs of the collaboration are further clarified and affirmed through discussion and dialogue. Indigenous language leaders identified strategies they use and challenges they experience engaging in collaborative work. According to Indigenous language leaders, two main challenges include a lack of human resources (specifically language speakers), and financial resources. Throughout the process of analyzing the data, I explored two themes: (1) complexity and variation in the work of Indigenous language leaders, (2) Indigenous language leaders' perception of a gap in interaction and coordination between language programs and initiatives at Six Nations of the Grand River. I discuss the role of colonialism in relation to these challenges and emerging themes, and argue that frameworks for collaboration found in Haudenosaunee cultural stories can help navigate these challenges and provide support to collaborative efforts in Indigenous language revitalization.

Keywords: collaboration, Indigenous educational leadership, Indigenous language revitalization, Haudenosaunee cultural stories, Indigenous language leadership

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In ways, this doctoral journey feels like it started a long time ago in a quiet, red brick school on 5th Line Road at Six Nations of the Grand River, a school that would close due to asbestos contamination before the time I started the fourth grade and was the first place I ever heard the Cayuga language. In my heart, I know it started much earlier than that, and it will go on much longer than the four years I have spent learning from and alongside so many wonderful people here at Western University.

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Dedication

Ne:ʔ gonatgɔnyɔhsdahgwɛh nɛ:gyɛh neʔ ɔgwahsotshɔʔgɛhɛ:ʔ, ne:ʔ hniʔ tsɛh ni:ga:ʔ
goihoʔda:gyeʔ a:gɛnɔ:nhe:k nidwawɛnoʔdɛhshɔʔ. Nya:wɛh.

In honour of our ancestors, and for all those working to keep our languages alive. Thank you.

PROLOGUE

Sgę:nq swagwe:gqh. Qdadrihqnyanisoh hni gya:soh. G'anyade nogesyaode, ganyegohono niwakwejode. The preceding words are written in the Cayuga language, which is one of the six Haudenosaunee languages that are spoken in my community, Six Nations of the Grand River and is the language that I am currently learning to speak. With these words I am introducing myself, sharing my Ogwehoweh name (Qdadrihqnyanisoh, which means "she is teaching things") and explaining which nation and clan I belong to (Mohawk Nation and the Turtle Clan). Introducing myself in this way is something that I have always been encouraged to do by my elders and language teachers. It is also a way for me to begin establishing my positionality in this study, which has impacted the research questions that were selected for this study and the approach I used to conduct it.

Being able to introduce myself in this manner, after thirty plus years of mainstream provincial education in which I had little exposure to our languages is something I am very grateful for. Although I have a fondness and respect for formal, mainstream education, most of my learning about my people, our languages and our intellectual traditions has happened through other forums within my community; through attending ceremony and community gatherings; through visits and discussions with friends and family who also live in Six Nations; by spending time outside in the forest or by the Grand River, and visiting our ancestral lands in upper New York state. These experiences have helped me foster an ever-growing awareness and appreciation for the natural world and the ways it supports our existence, health and well-being. This ongoing practice of respect and gratitude is at the core of the Haudenosaunee worldview and as an Indigenous researcher utilizing an Indigenous research approach, it has impacted my positionality and how I locate myself in this study (Absolon & Willet, 2005). In short, my formal and informal education have both resulted in learning that I am grateful for, though I know I will continue my language learning long after I have finished formal academic study.

As this research study is unfolding, I am working for an Indigenous education institute in the Six Nations community. My work involves further developing the

research capacity of our school, mobilizing knowledge, building relationships and supporting the ongoing development of academic programs. I am actively learning the Cayuga language through an approach known as the Master-Apprentice method. I am committed to supporting language revitalization activities throughout my community and believe that our languages can stabilize and grow to flourish if we use effective tools, resources and practices. I further believe that these tools and supports can be inspired by both academic knowledge and practice, as well as cultural knowledge and practice. It is in this spirit that I welcomed reading literature about Indigenous language leadership, Indigenous educational leadership, Indigenous language revitalization and collaboration, as well as the cultural stories that form the foundation of my people's philosophy and worldview.

The question of collaboration and the establishment of sustainable collaborations has come up several times in my work. As a policy analyst working in the area of First Nation education, I first encountered the challenge of collaboration while working for the Chiefs of Ontario (COO), a coordinating and advocacy organization representing the 133 First Nation communities in Ontario. As a COO coordinator, it was my role to work with First Nations communities, as well as the Political Territorial Organizations (PTOs) that represented those communities on matters of federal and provincial policy impacting Indigenous Peoples in Ontario—a responsibility requiring high levels of communication, cooperation and a willingness to listen. Working at COO simultaneously taught me how powerful collaboration could be when done well, and how challenging it could be when the process needed work. Thus, there were many moments through the literature review where I found myself physically nodding or remarking out loud at how familiar the collaboration scenarios were. It was like seeing all my professional experiences reflected back at me.

In 2012, I left COO and returned to my home community, Six Nations of the Grand River. I left with the intent of learning one of the six ancestral Haudenosaunee languages (which include Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, Seneca, Mohawk and Tuscarora). While I valued my work at COO, I felt that becoming a language speaker was the most impactful way I could support my people's efforts to resist colonization and pass our languages onto future generations. I began working for Six Nations Polytechnic (SNP),

an Indigenous post-secondary education institute, as a development officer. My main assignment was to develop an Indigenous language degree and guide it through the accreditation process established by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) for private institutions.

In the three years that followed, I organized several meetings and gatherings, including two conferences to discuss the language situation at Six Nations. I had conversations with many people; the majority of whom were involved in some way with language revitalization efforts. I learned about the programs they were involved with, the classes they took, and saw a glimpse of the vision they had for the future of languages in our community. I also began to hear about some of the challenges they had experienced.

Many of the challenges faced by those seeking to revitalizing Indigenous languages are well known and documented. Indigenous languages are critically endangered; in Canada, only three Indigenous languages are expected to survive the next one hundred years. There are few first or heritage language speakers and fewer and fewer second language speakers. Challenges abound even in the words used to articulate the problem; some argue that describing Indigenous languages as ‘dying’ serves to limit the scope and goals of revitalization projects to purely documentation and archival efforts (Hermes, Bang & Marin, 2012). These critiques resonate with me, and over the course of my formal and information education I have long since come to view our language as a living spirit deserving of respect, nurturing and nourishment. Despite the words we choose, one thing remains certain; the loss of Indigenous languages as a result of the impacts of colonization are ongoing and though the effort to revitalize languages is heartening—the challenges are significant. People, myself included, want to understand how to overcome them.

This desire to overcome the threat of language loss is what brought the notion of collaboration back into my purview. I took note of the many times when I heard people say ‘we need to work together’, ‘be strategic’ and reflect out loud about how community organizations could make this happen. I tried to pay attention to the specific areas where they felt this could happen. I registered the moments when leaders of Six Nations organizations expressed their wish for a more coordinated proposal-writing process so that we would not duplicate existing efforts at a time when resources were scarce, and

funding agencies were critical and watchful for such occurrences. Overall, these discussions resulted in my desire to explore how (if at all) collaboration could help achieve the goals of reversing language shift, what role leadership could play in such an effort, and what a meaningful and effective collaborative process might look like.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Revitalizing Indigenous languages is challenging work that requires the efforts of more than one individual. This is not to say that a single individual cannot make significant strides or progress, rather that language leaders working to revitalize Indigenous languages across Turtle Island (North America) face a myriad of interconnected challenges including: a declining first language speaker population, limited language documentation or archival resources, second language teachers who are spread too thin, limited financial resources for language programs, a lack of curriculum resources to support programs, a lack of language teacher education training programs, and a lack of space to host classes, to say nothing of the prevalence of English in every aspect of life in many communities. As leaders of Indigenous organizations and language revitalization efforts deal with these challenges, they are also confronted with pressures to demonstrate and document their successes, ensure accountability to community and funding agencies, articulate a vision statement that holds languages at its core (Green, 2016), and ultimately, prevent the loss of the estimated 60 languages still spoken across Canada (Galley, Gessner, Herbert, Thompson, & Williams, 2016).

Meeting these challenges requires taking action on several fronts, and the interconnected nature of language revitalization work makes it apparent that addressing them requires more than one individual person or group's effort or expertise. Instead, it may require that several individuals and groups harness their combined skills and expertise about second language acquisition, teaching, curriculum development, resource development, documentation, administration, policy development and drawing from their successes in creating speaking capacity in their selves and others, articulate strategies to overcome existing challenges and further advance language revitalization efforts. Six Nations of the Grand River is fortunate to have several organizations and language programs or initiatives with different strengths and experiences to contribute to such an effort. This research study explores the efforts of the Indigenous language leaders whose work preserves and revitalizes Indigenous languages and how those leaders might work together to increase their chances of success. Stated in other words—how they can collaborate.

Collaboration is a complex undertaking requiring significant investments of time

and resources (Lasker, Weiss & Miller, 2001). It requires that individuals and organizations come together and engage in a process of shared decision-making, towards a clearly defined common goal (Armistead, Pettigrew & Sally, 2008; Wood & Gray, 1991). Collaborative work can be slow and frustrating in that it calls upon capacities that are different from how people and organizations normally operate. Lasker et al. (2001) contend that to undertake collaborative work, leaders and coordinators of collaborations need to have a strong understanding of how they function and what makes them more successful in achieving outcomes than a single organization working alone. For leaders of Indigenous organizations, the majority of whom are consistently asked to validate their existence with outcome-based results on a yearly basis to multiple funders, and who do not have access to core operational resources to sustain and grow their programs, committing precious time and human resources to a collaboration is indeed, a tall order.

Despite these pragmatic challenges, the notion of collaboration features prominently in the Creation Story and other foundational narratives of the Haudenosaunee people. Indeed, some of the most difficult and challenging experiences of our collective existence were addressed or resolved by establishing a shared goal which was ultimately accomplished through a collaborative process. Creating a positive environment for collaboration to occur requires that participants have a highly developed understanding of the ways in which collaborations can operate, the individual goals of their partners, common challenges in sustaining collaborations and strategies for overcoming them. So long as Indigenous communities continue to prioritize language revitalization, research about how to better achieve the goals of revitalization will always be valuable. However, as interest in revitalizing Indigenous languages continues to increase (the United Nations has declared 2019 as the Year of Indigenous Languages) and as more organizations and groups emerge with a language revitalization agenda, the purpose of this study is not only necessary but timely.

Purpose of the Study

The goal of this study is to use an Indigenous research approach to: (a) develop an understanding of how leaders of Indigenous organizations and Indigenous revitalization projects understand collaboration, and (b) to explore the role Indigenous language leaders

could play in advancing collaborations within a First Nation community for the purpose of revitalizing Indigenous languages. The work of leaders delivering, overseeing, administering or coordinating Indigenous language revitalization activities is demanding and complex. Further, the nature of their work varies from initiative to initiative. Depending on the type of language activity or programming occurring and the structure of the organization, leaders may be responsible for the coordination, administration and quality assurance of the programming at the same time as they are responsible for the teaching, learning, and curriculum development. Indeed, given the relative lack of financial support for language initiatives, it is not uncommon for a single person to be responsible for all of these areas. From the outset, it was apparent there was a possibility that the complex nature and range of responsibilities associated with Indigenous language leader's roles could potentially impact the way certain leaders viewed collaboration efforts. This will be discussed further in the literature review about collaboration in Chapter 2.

Research Questions

The overall research question driving this study is: How can Indigenous organizations collaborate to support language revitalization? In an effort to deeply explore some of the nuances of this overall research question, the following research sub-questions were investigated.

Sub-questions:

1. How do the various stakeholders understand collaboration (or collaborative processes)?
2. What strategies have been utilized in an effort to collaborate?
3. What challenges to collaboration do these stakeholders experience?
4. What supports need to be in place in order for collaboration to come together?

In this thesis, I argue that Indigenous language leaders who participated in this study understand collaboration and collaborative process in mostly similar ways. I also argue that these Indigenous language leaders have different work experiences when it

comes to Indigenous language revitalization, and drawing from these experiences saw different opportunities, and voiced varying degrees of interest, apprehension, patience, understanding and willingness to participate in collaboration concerning revitalization efforts. Indigenous language leaders who participated in this study all experienced the consequences of work intensification, but each had a shared vision of seeing Haudenosaunee languages thrive. For the most part, Indigenous language leaders were able to articulate the goals of their language programs. Finally, I argue that establishing a positive and impactful collaborative experience needs to involve five aspects: (a) a discussion and clarification about the vision for language revitalization efforts at the program, organizational and community level, (b) purpose and goals that are clear, supported by Indigenous language revitalization research and well understood, (c) partners who are engaged and remain motivated towards the achievement of the shared goal(s), (d) a structure that roles that enable the work of the collaboration to advance, and (e) sufficient resources to support the achievement of these goals.

Context of the Research Study

It is relatively easy to reconstruct historically, describe and analyse cases of reverse language shift (RLS), one at a time. It is also easy to prescribe ‘fixes’ that cannot really be undertaken. It is relatively vacuous to suggest that speakers of threatened languages should be ‘larger in number’, should establish ‘more and stronger language supporting institutions’, or should ‘provide their language with more status’. It is of no help to tell a patient that he should attain health by getting better, or that she should get better by being healthier. These are redundant and non-operational bits of advice. (Fishman, 2001, p. 13)

According to family story and recollection, my grandfather could speak at least two of six Haudenosaunee languages, Mohawk and Onondaga. For reasons I am not completely privy to, neither of these languages were passed on to either my mother or her siblings. And while neither of my grandparents had family members who attended residential school, more than once my mother has shared the story of how she and her siblings narrowly managed to avoid what has come to be known as the Sixties Scoop, a period of time in the 1960s when Indigenous children were being apprehended at

alarming rates by the Children's Aid Society and taken into foster care situations away from their families—a heartbreaking practice that has continued to this day. I mention this as a way of pointing out that the reasons for why people in my community do or do not speak our languages are deeply personal and unique; nuanced and fraught with historical and contemporary experiences of colonialism and educational policy, media consumption, dialect differences that result in the use of English as a common language, and perhaps also now—globalization (First People's Cultural Council, 2013; Fishman, 2001; Hinton & Hale, 2001). Languages are an important part of Indigenous identity, linked to our Indigenous knowledge systems, our cultural identity, informing the way we move and interact with the world around us. Battiste & Henderson (2009) argue that if Indigenous knowledges (IK) are “the collective genius of Indigenous peoples that exists in the context of their learning and knowing from the places where they have lived, hunted, explored, migrated, farmed, raised families, built communities and survived for centuries despite sustained attacks,” (Battiste & Henderson, 2009, p. 5) then one of the primary sources of IK, is Indigenous languages.

There are of course, Indigenous peoples all over the world, each with distinct knowledge and linguistic systems. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates that at least 43% of the world's 6,000 languages are endangered (UNESCO, 2010). UNESCO continues its work to raise awareness about the state of these languages. On their website is an interactive world atlas of endangered languages. On this map, it is possible to see how all six of the Haudenosaunee languages (spoken at locations in both Canada and the United States) are categorized as either definitely, severely or critically endangered (UNESCO, 2018). In all of the Haudenosaunee communities on the map, there are efforts underway to revitalize languages. Endangerment and the desire to recover and reverse language shift is one of many common experiences that draws Indigenous Peoples together at forums like the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education (WIPCE) or at the American Educational Research Association (Tuck, 2018). The 2017 WIPCE was co-hosted by Six Nations Polytechnic and the opening ceremonies were conducted at the Chiefswood National Historic Site located along the Grand River. Thousands of Indigenous Peoples coming together in a powerful expression of resilience and hope.

Still, until treaty rights and other comprehensive agreements are honoured by settler states, Indigenous peoples must continue to advocate with external governments and funding agencies for much needed financial resources to invest in language revitalization activities. For Turtle Island (what is now known as Canada), this means investment into 12 language families—60 languages in all. Among the 134 First Nation communities in Ontario, there are four main language families: the Anishinaabek, Mushkegowuk, Ogwehoweh and Lenape languages. I have had the good fortune of hearing languages belonging to each of these families spoken, and through my attendance at various language conferences have gained some sense of the hard work and dedication that speakers, teachers and learners have shown to our languages. There is no doubt that my experiences with Indigenous language revitalization have led me to appreciate and be inspired by both the resilience and the urgency of the language revitalization effort.

Nation to nation. Today, it is possible to learn about the resilience of our languages by coming to understand the horrific nature of assimilation policies that began with residential school policy, continued with the removal of children from their families, is perpetuated by mainstream educational systems, and through systemic policies that determine the scope, reach and breadth of the majority of institutions governing public life in Canada. Still, over the past two years I have read several dissertations which continue to state that in Canada, education is a provincial jurisdiction and seem to forget (or perhaps are not aware) that for the majority of First Nations—this is not the case:

There are three basic models of First Nation education currently in Canada.

There are federal schools operated by Indian Affairs; provincial and territorial public schools; and local schools operated by First Nations, with the latter often being under the administration of a local school board or education authority.

None of the current arrangements are satisfactory from a legal, social or cultural perspective as they do not address the fundamental issue of jurisdiction. (Chiefs of Ontario, 2012)

The matter of jurisdiction is an important one for First Nations, who assert that education is an inherent right and that Indigenous peoples have exercised jurisdiction

over education since time immemorial (Battiste, 2002; Chiefs of Ontario, 2012). It is also important because while the federal government has a fiduciary role and an obligation to uphold various treaties, the federal government's approach to First Nations education has been largely negative and negligent, coloured by the grim and dehumanizing experience of the residential school era, and by subsequent attempts to offload responsibility for education onto provincial governments, a solution advocated for by Pierre Trudeau's 1969 White Paper. The message has been consistent. For the worse part of the last 150 years—Canada has shown no real interest in educating Indian children unless that education means an eradication of Indigenous identity and languages.

Six Nations of the Grand River. Six Nations of the Grand River is the largest First Nation community in Canada, by population and the second largest by size. The name of the community refers to the six nations that belong to a league of nations known as the Haudenosaunee Confederacy; the formation of which provides one of the more prominent cultural frameworks for collaborative processes that will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four. Six Nations is one of the communities where the administration of the schools fall under the department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). Six Nations is also home to three privately run schools, two of which have a language immersion focus.

There are approximately sixteen organizations or groups who are undertaking language revitalization efforts in the Six Nations community. These efforts include language programming for children and adults (ranging from early childhood education, K-12 immersion, K-8 Native as a Second Language courses, adult immersion, conversational courses and postsecondary education courses), resource development, professional development, research, and documentation and transcribing of archived recordings. In Ontario, language revitalization activities undertaken by these organizations are typically funded by developing and submitting proposals to one of several funding entities including: Heritage Canada's Aboriginal Language Initiative (ALI), the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), Six Nations Community Development Trust Fund (SNCDTF), the National Indian Brotherhood Trust (NIB), Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), the Ontario Ministry of Adult Education and Skills Development (MAESD), The Six Nations Elected Council (SNEC), and the

Haudenosaunee Development Institute (HDI). None of the groups or organizations undertaking language revitalization activities at Six Nations receives stable, ongoing funding for their core operations. Instead, proposals must be written and reviewed in a competitive process on an annual basis—a situation which creates additional administrative strains on top of concerns over language vitality.

During the period in which this study was conducted, new policy and funding developments were unfolding in the area of Indigenous languages at both the federal and the provincial levels. First, the federal government announced its intentions to develop legislation in support of Indigenous language revitalization, following the release of the Final Report on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Residential Schools (TRC) in June of 2015, which documented the impact of federal residential school and education policy on language loss and family breakdown for First Nations, Metis and Inuit people across Canada. Subsequent to the announcement of the proposed legislation, INAC hosted a series of engagement sessions with First Nations across Canada in partnership with the Assembly of First Nations, and *Bill C-91, An Act respecting Indigenous languages* had its first reading on February 5, 2019. The announcement did not detail what (if any) financial commitments would be put in place to support and implement the legislation. Second, in January 2019 the federal government announced a new approach to on-reserve education funding commencing in April 2019. The new funding approach is to include a \$1500 per student allocation for language and culture funding (Canadian Press, 2019).

In Ontario, the provincial government announced the creation of the Indigenous Languages Fund, following commitments made in the 2016 plan, *The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples*, which was also a response to the release of the TRC report. Through my role as a Development Officer, and then the Acting Director of Research at an Indigenous post-secondary education institute, I was able to witness firsthand the efforts of organizations—internal and external to Six Nations—to form partnerships for various funding deadlines, and reflect on the challenges that emerged from trying to establish meaningful partnerships within tight time frames in my research journal. These occurrences created a unique contextual experience and perspective that would not have existed had I not occupied the position

that I did.

Finally, in the summer of 2018 the government of Ontario underwent significant political change. Among the first actions of the new Ontario government was the cancellation of curriculum writing sessions intended to fulfill the recommendations made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to include the legacy of residential schools in the Ontario curriculum—the exact kind of content that would enlighten Ontario citizens about the impacts of colonization and assimilation on Indigenous languages, knowledge systems and families (Christou, 2018). These actions were both disappointing and alarming. They were also not wholly unexpected. In the days after the cancellation, I reminded myself that this was not the first time in the history of our relationship with external governments that promises were made and broken, that support was given and withdrawn, or that priorities shifted and changed. I was also reminded that despite this reality, I have never known Indigenous peoples to give up all together on advocating for what is vital for us to survive as Ogwehoweh people, or to stand in the integrity of our responsibilities to the natural world. What it did impress upon me, was how important, how urgent it was to learn how to work together to undertake the work that we—more than anyone else in the world—are most invested in. To understand how we as Indigenous peoples can collaborate with one another to continue the work of language revitalization and resurgence. Because it is painfully evident that no one else will.

Problem of Practice

This Doctor of Education (Ed.D) research study was designed around a problem of practice. A problem of practice is a situation or challenge that exists in one's workplace, school or community (Pollock, 2014). Literature, research and inquiry can all help practitioners gain a better understanding of the problem and consider what possible solutions could be crafted to address it. My problem of practice emerged when as a developer of an Indigenous language degree program hosting a series of meetings, conversations and events, I saw a disconnect between what participants said they wanted (i.e., to work together) and what was appeared to be happening (i.e., groups and organizations were working in silos with little to no communication between them).

Further questions arose in 2013 when I organized a language conference for Six

Nations community members and those who were working in the area of language revitalization. The event was a success in many ways, but most especially for how it inspired the attendees by simply creating a network for them to come together in a welcoming space, for a common purpose. Energized by one another's shared commitment and passion for our languages, conference participants created a series of groups that could take on various activities such as fundraising for future conferences, building a community language revitalization strategy, organizing a language immersion talk-a-thon, and bringing together a group of speakers interested in holding Skype conversations with one another to help create a virtual speaker community. Despite the willingness of the community to act, it was not obvious who should have the responsibility for coordinating these groups—even if that coordination only meant sending an initial email to introduce them to one another. The organization who was best positioned to fulfill this role was the Six Nations Language Commission (SNLC). They had also sponsored the conference financially. However, the language commission was experiencing a modicum of organizational change at the time the conference occurred and my organization, Six Nations Polytechnic (SNP), had no staff whose express role was dedicated to language. My own work as a development officer was spread between working on the language degree, creating policy required by the Postsecondary Education Quality Assurance Board (PEQAB), event planning and proposal writing—until such time as the organization hired another proposal writer. I emailed an initial letter of introduction to the members of each group in an attempt to connect them with one another but ultimately; the groups never quite formed the way I knew the attendees had envisioned them.

Fortunately, over the six years that I have worked at Six Nations Polytechnic, I have been able to have many discussions with Indigenous language leaders and learn from the experiences of other groups and organizations in the community who are undertaking language revitalization work. I am deeply grateful for these conversations and have been inspired by the wealth of knowledge our community collectively holds about language revitalization. It is through these conversations that I began to gain a sense of how collaboration might be beneficial, and identify areas where collaboration might occur. At present, these areas include: advocating for sustainable funding,

promoting the value of language learning within the community, clarifying community language goals, documenting our languages, making existing language resources accessible to the broader community; as well as the schools, creating student pathways between various programs, mapping student pathways and transitions from Kindergarten to post-secondary, developing an archive of language materials, identifying gaps in language programming, conducting research, and mapping which language materials are most appropriate for which levels of proficiency. This is by no means an exhaustive list of the potential areas for collaborative work to occur, nor is it an articulation of the specific goals and ideal outcomes required to bring focus to what are very broad categories. It is however, my own effort to acknowledge what I think many people in my community perceive—that there exists some potential for more than one individual or organization to work together and contribute their experience and expertise to addressing a challenging issue in a manner that could benefit the collective.

One would think it possible to identify how a collaborative working relationship could be established by simply looking for examples in other places and implementing them and certainly—this would be one approach. I however, found my thinking aligning more closely with Tom (1987), who argued that such an approach relies more on “gaining knowledge of those who are experienced rather than figuring out what works, what does not, and why” (p.8). While I agree it is important to seek out the knowledge and insights of those who are experienced (for example, in this research study I purposefully sought out the insights of my ancestors as recorded through our cultural and Creation stories), my experience at the Chiefs of Ontario signaled to me that there may be more to the notion of collaboration than I realized. For this reason, I believed that before asking if and how collaboration could support my community in reversing language shift, I needed to have a better understanding of what it was and how it functioned. In this way, my research question grew out of my problem of practice.

Significance of the Study

This study has the potential to develop or enhance education stakeholder understandings about Indigenous language revitalization, the work of Indigenous language leaders, and how this work is situated within the broader field of educational

leadership.

For individuals: For individuals engaged in Indigenous language revitalization, this work provides one of many examples of the kind of work that can be undertaken in the language revitalization effort. This work is also helpful for those who are interested in exploring the relationship between leadership, educational administration and language revitalization. In my experience conducting this study, this is an area where a tremendous amount of valuable work can be done.

For First Nation communities: For First Nation communities with a range of revitalization activities occurring, this work provides insight into the importance of relationship building and partner engagement, and highlights some of the common challenges to be aware of prior to entering into collaborations.

For organizations: For organizations considering collaborative work, this work provides insight about how to establish collaborations and how to determine if an organization is ready for a collaboration. It also provides an opportunity for organizations to reflect on concerns or challenges they might have regarding collaboration, and explore how to express those concerns prior to joining one.

For existing collaborations: For existing collaborations, this research study provides pragmatic examples in the literature review about how to strengthen collaborations by sharing information about strategies and supports that help collaborations to succeed, such as partnership synergy frameworks and feedback loops.

For Indigenous language leaders: This study provides a description of the work that Indigenous language leaders undertake, as well as examples of where collaboration might prove helpful. It also provides an opportunity for language leaders to hear the experiences of others and from this exercise, invites reflection about the specific goals or vision for a leader's projects or programs.

For the field of educational leadership: This study adds to existing research in the area of Indigenous educational leadership. It adds to existing research exploring how Indigenous knowledges articulate theories of leadership through cultural and Creation stories and discusses how this knowledge could impact present-day practices. It provides Indigenous language leaders or those responsible for Indigenous language programs (as well as learners) an opportunity to reflect on their own practices regarding collaboration.

Finally, the major contribution of this study is in the conceptualizing of a potential framework for establishing a collaborative effort for Indigenous language revitalization activities.

Organization of Chapters

This dissertation is organized into seven chapters. In Chapter 1, I outline the purpose of study, research question and sub-questions, context of the research study, problem of practice, positionality, definition of key terms and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 presents the relevant literature on language revitalization, Indigenous language leadership, and discusses the conceptual framework that guided the study. In Chapter 3, I discuss my methodology, which was an Indigenous research approach. I describe the methods that I used to collect data, including 10 semi-structured interviews, a document analysis of cultural stories and a reflective research journal. I also describe how I approached data analysis and data interpretation, and end the chapter with a discussion of trustworthiness. In Chapter 4, I present my findings of my story analysis work of the cultural stories, and discuss how my findings enriched my understanding of collaboration and helped establish a rich context for the semi-structured interviews. Chapter 5 will present the findings to my central research question and sub-questions. Chapter 6 will present an overview of the findings as they relate to the literature review, my research questions and my conceptual framework. Chapter 7 presents a summary of my research study, the implications of the findings for my own practice, for the field of Indigenous educational leadership, for education policy makers and for my community. At this time, I also discuss the limitations of the study. The study concludes with recommendations for next steps, further research and a final reflection on my learning.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I present my literature review and conceptual framework. The goal of this study is to explore: how leaders of Indigenous organizations collaborate to revitalize Indigenous languages? To build this understanding, I conducted a review of relevant literature, including a review of the Haudenosaunee cultural stories which are discussed in more detail in Chapter Four. This literature review is organized into two sections. In the first section I include a brief and broad exploration of educational leadership, followed by a narrower focus on Indigenous educational leadership specifically. Insights about leadership from the Haudenosaunee cultural stories are included. I end this section by considering the context of Indigenous leaders as it pertains to Indigenous language revitalization and whose work is a focus of this research study. The second section of the literature review looks at the concept of collaboration utilizing my four research sub-questions. In this section, I review existing literature on the notion of collaboration. I also include insights about the notion of collaboration from the Haudenosaunee cultural stories. In keeping with the principles of an Indigenous research methodology, I have endeavoured to keep the cultural stories and the ideas emerging from them together in Chapter Four, to demonstrate my understanding and respect for the way in which these stories represent interconnected and complete bundles of knowledge. (As opposed to splitting them apart to integrate them amongst the literature review. There is nothing wrong with thinking about or holding all of this information collectively in our minds, however—the point of laying it out in the text as separate chapters, is to honour the ideas and the knowledge systems that they arise from).

Exploring Educational Leadership

There is some symmetry to be found between the work of Indigenous language leaders and the expansive literature that describes and defines leadership. In defining leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2012, p. 3), Northouse (2012) sets out one way to understand the leadership work that Indigenous language leaders must do; work with others towards the common goal of revitalizing an Indigenous language.

Leadership has also been defined as functions that can be accomplished by individuals, groups or through tasks or processes (Richmon & Allison, 2010; Ryan, 2005). The relevance of this lens to Indigenous language revitalization work is that it can create the opportunity to involve more people in what is a complex, multi-faceted undertaking. There are also various leadership theories that can inform how these functions are established. Within what can be characterized as Western or non-Indigenous leadership theory, authors have explored several possibilities, including: trait theory, behaviour theory, situational leadership, transformational leadership, authentic leadership, servant leadership, distributed leadership, shared leadership and social justice leadership. Leadership within these theories can be assigned or emergent. Assigned leadership describes leaders who have been assigned a formal position of leadership within an organization (Northouse, 2012). Emergent leadership describes individuals who are viewed as the most influential and who have the support of the group or organization (Northouse, 2012). Ideas about assigned or emergent are relevant to the experiences of Indigenous language leaders. Indigenous language leaders sometimes occupy formal leadership positions, but also, leaders come to be viewed as influential for their commitment to, or success with, language revitalization work.

While recognizing the great diversity of theories within the leadership field, some research has focused on matters related to the practice of leadership. Examples of this include exploring whether leaders can be made, how leadership interventions impact work outcomes, how leaders develop concepts of self and identity, and understanding how and when leaders are ready to undertake development work (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009). Others include establishing a shared understanding about what leadership is and what the practical application of leadership theories looks like in real-life settings (Richmon & Allison, 2010). While these ideas and their application to Indigenous language leadership is not the subject of this research study, the possibilities they raise are nonetheless compelling, especially for how they might broaden opportunities for Indigenous language leaders to access professional development that is best suited to their work. Thinking about how leadership theory is enacted in real-life settings does however, help us examine how conceptualizing leadership as a function concerned with

the exercise of power and responsibility demonstrates the importance of thinking about practical application more closely.

Decision-making power can be enacted in both a hierarchical and non-hierarchical manner. Typically, in a hierarchical manner, there is a leader who exercises or assumes power over others within a group or organization. A non-hierarchical or horizontal structure approach to power is more likely to promote equality amongst members of the group or organization (Langley, Mintzberg, Pitcher, Posada & Saint-Macary, 1995). That said, power dynamics also play out in various ways amongst the many kinds of leadership approaches. For example, an organization that has a social justice mission, may also have a hierarchical power structure (Ryan, 2005).

In discussing the connection between power and perspective, Ryan (2005) argues that we must understand the kind of leadership perspectives that are important to us, because these perspectives shape who makes decisions, who those decisions are made on behalf and in favour of, and ultimately, what our communities and organizations look like. An exploration of Indigenous leadership perspectives begins to reveal how as Indigenous peoples, we are the beneficiaries of ancestral knowledges and perspectives that outline specific ideas about all three of these things: what our communities ought to look like, how our organizations can respond to that vision, and what capacities our leaders must draw upon to establish and maintain that vision. These insights are relevant to the discussion of Indigenous language leaders because they help inform the community context in which Indigenous language revitalization work unfolds and which revitalization efforts are supported or driven by.

Indigenous leadership. Perspectives about Indigenous leadership are concerned with, and influenced by, the context in which they are practiced, a context which may be shaped by many factors including place, people, land, history and the language itself (Kenny, 2012; Pidgeon, 2012). Though no two Indigenous communities are the same, the ideas and practice of leadership in Indigenous communities has evolved or persisted through several key periods including, “autonomy, imperialism, colonization, resistance, and renaissance” (Kenny, 2012, p. 1). Further, each of these communities has had a specific cultural and historical experience, creating unique contexts for their leaders. While this could be said of education leaders in many public school boards across

Ontario, it is emphasized in this study for several reasons. In Canada, the Constitution Act, 1982 establishes education as a matter of provincial jurisdiction—except where it concerns First Nations communities. Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island have, and retain, the inherent right to educate their children. The nature of these inherent rights arises from First Nations’ status as sovereign nations who entered into treaties with Crown representatives; which subsequently established treaty rights (Venne, 2011). The Constitution Act of Canada reaffirms and upholds both Aboriginal and treaty rights in section 35 (Chiefs of Ontario, 2012). Still, treaty rights and inherent rights are not the same thing. Within this rights framework, inherent rights are not delegated to First Nation communities by the Canadian government. Rather, they flow from creation stories, teachings and ceremonies Indigenous Peoples were given by the Creator (Monture, 2016; Venne, 2011). For example, Six Nations is a community that belongs to the league of nations known as the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. There are four other Haudenosaunee communities in the province of Ontario. There are also Haudenosaunee communities in Quebec, New York, Wisconsin and Ohio. So, while the Haudenosaunee people may share a common Creation Story and ceremonial practices, the educational and language revitalization context that leaders navigate is impacted by local, provincial, state, and federal education and language revitalization policy. For this reason, Indigenous leadership is a field that embraces the discussion of leadership that is meaningful to the inherent governance structures of Indigenous nations and localized to the specific experiences of communities belonging to those nations.

Despite a reluctance to define Indigenous leadership, several authors have made efforts to conceptualize and describe it. Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) describes the foundation of Indigenous leadership as residing in the 4 R’s; respect, reciprocity, relevance and relationships. Pidgeon (2012) expresses support for the 4 R’s and further describes Indigenous leadership as being embedded in Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing. Other authors stress the importance of Indigenous leaders being “community-minded, dedicated to honouring our cultures and working toward decolonization” (Jacob, 2016). Leon (2012) describes leadership as a gift and discusses leadership using four themes: (a) land interaction; (b) cultural practices; (c) community service and; (d) language and pedagogy. In describing grassroots Indigenous leaders who

have taken action to keep languages alive, Gardiner (2012) describes their leadership practice as “rooted in spiritual values and belief in the sacredness of Indigenous languages; they recognize that land, identity, culture and spirit are interconnected and intertwined” (p. 125). Gardiner (2012) also uses the 4 R’s as a framework to discuss Indigenous leadership.

Some authors address the tensions between mainstream Western and Indigenous notions of leadership. One author shared the story of her grandfather who told her that, “We walk with one foot in the Western ways and one foot in our traditional ways. You need to take the best of both” (Cheney, 2012). The notion of Indigenous leaders needing to practice awareness of the tensions between Western and Indigenous ways echoed through much of the research literature, whether the leadership space was a community, an organization or an academic institution (Fitzgerald, 2006; Jacob, 2012). Describing these differences, Kenny (2012) writes, “the road to leadership is paved with land, ancestors, Elders and stories—concepts that are rarely mentioned in the mainstream leadership literature,” (Kenny, 2012, p. 4).

Indigenous educational leadership. There is an emerging literature on Indigenous educational leadership literatures that expands on the ideas and concepts about Indigenous leadership discussed previously, and which is useful for helping to place the work of Indigenous language leaders. Faircloth & Tippeconnic (2013) suggest that colonization has created a common experience of education for many Indigenous leaders across the world, despite there being no single definition of Indigenous leadership. They further suggest that Indigenous education leaders can learn from one another’s efforts to decolonize their systems of education.

Some authors argue that it is not just education systems themselves that require decolonization. Indigenous leaders must also demonstrate knowledge of colonization and reflect on how colonization has impacted their own ideas and worldview. Indigenous educational leaders are also, not simply educators who are Indigenous. Instead, they are leaders who uphold their Indigenous identity by centering Indigenous languages, knowledges, values and culture. Indigenous educational leaders think critically about what their communities desire from education (Benham & Murakami-Ramvalho, 2010; Cajete, 2016; Kahukura Hohepa Nga, 2013). Cajete (2016) suggests this happens as and

when Indigenous leaders internalize the “story of their community” (p. 368). Expanding on this idea of relational leadership development, Benham and Murakami-Ramalho (2010) propose a model of Indigenous educational leadership based on four key principles: a) the concept of *ha*, b) the concept of place, c) the sacredness of relations and *mana*, and d) the concept of individual generosity and collective action. In their model: *ha* is a principle that links all persons (past, present and future); place is where individuals, families and communities experience life; relations and *mana* speak to the notion that all things are connected and that connections are sacred and maintained through ceremony; and individual generosity and collective action suggests an altruism that creates reciprocal benefits for individuals and communities (Benham & Murakami-Ramalho, 2010). In proposing this model, the authors reaffirm that leaders must “understand the context, history and relations of Indigenous peoples within their community, and across diverse or dissimilar communities over time,” (Benham & Murakami-Ramalho, 2010).

Similar to what was found in literature about Indigenous leadership, the research literature about Indigenous educational leadership confirmed that differences do exist between Indigenous and Western approaches. However, some researchers stressed that these differences did not represent a binary opposition (Benham & Murakami-Ramalho, 2010; Kahukura Hohepa Nga, 2013). Rather, it was suggested that there are and may be tools of mainstream educational leadership that can assist with and advance the Indigenous education goals of an Indigenous community. Some researchers suggest that Indigenous education leaders reflect on an individual basis about perceived differences between Indigenous and Western forms of educational leadership as certain tools—though ‘Western’—might be needed to achieve their community’s goals. For example, parental and community engagement strategies that emerge from a mainstream education context might also be used to bolster parental and community engagement in Indigenous language immersion elementary schools. Kahukura Hohepa Nga (2013) suggests this reflection on how to engage with strategies that originate from the mainstream can happen through a process of acculturation, in which there can be acceptance of non-Indigenous technology and tools alongside a retention of Indigenous values. The author also proposes the notion of *Indigeneity*, as a way for Indigenous education leaders to focus their practice on a foundation of Indigenous knowledge, while exploring non-

Indigenous leadership approaches as needed (Kahukura Hohepa Nga, 2013). Similarly, Cajete (2016) offers that Indigenous peoples must view themselves as “evolving and dynamic” (p. 375) and Indigenous education leaders should be able to apply bi-cultural approaches to leadership in a balanced, conscious way. This approach is relevant to our discussion about Indigenous language leadership. While the goals of Indigenous language revitalization constitute an indisputable act of decolonization, Johnson (2016) writes, “revitalization requires great effort, a force of will, and a reliance on proven second language acquisition tools and techniques—there is nothing traditional about rebirthing an Indigenous language” (p. 311). As my own learning continues, I have tended to view languages as alive (albeit threatened and struggling), but the metaphor here is helpful. There are ideas and strategies that do not necessarily have their foundations in Indigenous knowledge that are nonetheless vital to the language revitalization effort. Indigenous language leaders must know and make good use of them. And yet, when it comes to determining what the vision or mission for individuals, groups, and communities ought to be; there is something very powerful about approaches which set their foundations in Indigenous knowledges.

Haudenosaunee concepts of leadership. For my people, the Haudenosaunee, notions of leadership are informed by our knowledges, languages, cultural stories and ceremonial practices. These bodies of knowledge also outline the way we ought to conduct ourselves as individuals, the manner in which our organizations operate, our vision for our communities, and the way our leaders work in service of that vision. The vision itself is a state of peace, brought about through kindness, goodmindedness and gratitude (Gibson, Woodbury, Henry, Webster & Goldenweiser, 1992). This vision and commitment to peace is explored most vividly in the story about the Peacemaker and the formation of the League of Five Nations, which is known today as the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. This story and the leadership teachings it carries are embedded within a series of wampum belts.

In speaking about the relationship between Haudenosaunee stories, wampum belts and language to notions of leadership, Deer (2018) described how wampum belts help to relay the story of what happened and where it happened, which has the effect of connecting our people to a land and a place. Using the Peacemaker’s Belt as an example,

he shared how the belt tells the story of a leader who was sent by the Creator to share a message with our people. That leader, the Peacemaker, came from a community that is today called Tyendinaga, and is located in Southern Ontario. The Peacemaker was instrumental in establishing the process by which the five Haudenosaunee nations came to be at peace with one another following a period of war and strife—a story that is told in yet another belt. As a part of this process, formal leadership roles were established and mandated, including that of chiefs, clanmothers, wampum keepers, fire keepers, and pine tree chiefs, to name a few. Their work is described as follows: “so now your work is to see to it, that they shall all survive, the people living on Earth, and that it shall function, the Great Law which will bring about peace throughout one’s territories as the families continue on” (Gibson et al., 1992, p. 240). Deer (2018) explains that this process involved both male and female leaders, who are often referred to in English as chiefs and clanmothers. Deer further shares the two words that are used to describe these leadership roles in the language, *hoya:neh* and *goya:neh*, and points out that these are two versions of the same word and carry the same meaning with one important difference. The *h* denotes the male leadership and the *g* denotes the female leadership. He shared how in his mind, Haudenosaunee languages manage to promote a sense of respect for both male and female leadership roles that was somehow lost in the English translations for these words. This idea that leaders have the same level of respect, rights and responsibilities is also referenced in the Great Law, which says:

thereupon, now you are all standing up on the land, and you shall be tall tree trunks, rooted tree trunks; and as to that, everyone shall be on the same level upon all of you twelve tree trunks, and this is what it means for you to be tall trees; you are the ones who will stand in front—at your backs they stand—your people—but as to you, you Chiefs, it is on the same level that you stand which means that your various nations are all equal. (Gibson et al., 1992).

The Story of the Peacemaker and the coming of the Great Law, sets out a mandate for peace for Haudenosaunee leaders. The Great Law serves as both a rich theory of leadership that also requires the practical application of it. For example, the Great Law continues to be utilized as a governance structure in Haudenosaunee communities to this day. What I have shared here is only a small example of the manner in which story,

concepts of land and place, language and wampum belts come together to create insight into the purpose and focus of Haudenosaunee leadership. Much of this knowledge is vested in the language, which brings us around to the important work being undertaken by Indigenous language leaders and the consideration of how to accomplish this work through a collaborative effort.

The work of Indigenous language leaders

Indigenous language leaders are responsible for the preservation and revitalization of Indigenous languages. Within this broad mandate, the work and role of Indigenous language leaders can vary depending on several factors, including the size and structure of their organizations, programs or initiatives. While there are no leadership guidelines or frameworks of accountability that support their work, there is an unspoken and underlying expectation that their efforts will counteract language loss and contribute towards the recovery or stabilization of the Indigenous languages they are working on. The following section explores the work of language leaders as it relates to language revitalization. It begins with a brief discussion of what constitutes language revitalization.

Defining language revitalization. Indigenous languages are those that are spoken by Indigenous peoples and are native to a particular locale or region (Hinton & Hale, 2001). Like other Indigenous nations across Turtle Island, my people, the Haudenosaunee, communicated in one of five (later six) languages. Languages are a collection of signals that human use to communicate with one another. There are written languages, sign languages, and spoken languages, among others. This study is concerned with spoken Indigenous languages, and the revitalization of spoken Indigenous languages. Language shift is the term used to describe what occurs when a community begins using one language instead of another. In the case of the Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island (what is now known as Canada and the United States), a widespread language shift occurred from Indigenous languages to English as a result of multiple factors, the most significant of which is colonization and colonial policies with goals of forced assimilation (Jacob, 2012; McCarty, 2003). Indigenous language revitalization includes any and all activities that work towards reversing the language shift that has occurred within communities (First Peoples' Cultural Council, 2013).

Indigenous language revitalization is a complex undertaking. At their core, revitalization efforts are and should be driven by First Nation and tribal communities (First Peoples' Cultural Council, 2013; Hermes et al, 2012; McCarty, 2003; Thorpe & Galassi, 2014). Revitalization projects range from immersion classes for adults and children, resource development, curriculum development, language documentation, teaching, teacher accreditation, developing community plans and policies, partnership development (Thorpe & Galassi, 2014) and engaging communities in prioritizing language revitalization (McCarty, 2003; McIvor, 1998; Pulkinen 2008). Many, if not most, of these activities happen in an environment where human and financial resources are scarce (Jacob, 2016). Many of these activities also require an interdisciplinary approach from diverse fields such as education, curriculum and pedagogy, linguistics, applied linguistics, library and information sciences, community engagement and leadership. And while historical tensions persist between Indigenous communities and academic researchers, between Indigenous communities and the education system, and between teachers and learners, some degree of collaboration is necessary; no one can revitalize a language on their own (Pulkinen, 2008).

Building speaking proficiency. The responsibilities of Indigenous language leaders are interconnected in a way which makes them all important and valuable, however there is little argument that the most urgent and compelling responsibility Indigenous language leaders have is to create a critical mass of proficient adult-aged speakers in the shortest amount of time possible and document their elder speakers (Fishman, 2001; Johnson, 2016). Immersion language programming has become the standard for accomplishing the former (Green, 2016). Helping learners build their speaking proficiency requires that Indigenous language leaders develop (or work with curriculum experts and teachers who are also language speakers to develop) curriculum that will achieve their speaking proficiency goals, use effective methods to teach the curriculum to their learners, and assess the learning that is taking place in a meaningful way (Green, 2016; Johnson, 2016). This process often requires the development of resources to support the teaching work (Greymorning, 1999; Hermes, 2007). Critical reflection was described as a tool language leaders use to reflect on and refine their

programs within the broader language revitalization effort occurring within schools, organizations, or communities (Pulkinen, 2008).

Setting the vision and mission. Indigenous language leaders facilitate the establishment of a clear vision to guide their revitalization efforts. In addition to being driven by community, this vision should also be informed by knowledge of second and Indigenous language acquisition processes, understanding of community dynamics, awareness of the vitality of the language they are working with, and relevant research about instructional, documentation, and assessment strategies (Green, 2016; Johnson, 2016; Maracle, 2002; McInnes, 2014). Leadership might also endeavour to undertake a broader strategy of language planning, which sets out the overall plan guiding the revitalization efforts. Having a vision or a mission to rebuild a critical mass of adult-aged speakers and/or record speakers, encourages leaders to set clear goals around proficiency and documentation activities, which enables them to monitor and assess their impact in a measurable way—for those that can be measured. For example, speaking proficiency can be measured through the administration of an oral interview at the beginning and end of a program. Documentation efforts might be measured by the number of hours of audio/visual data that is collected, transcribed, and archived. Given the enormity of these goals, along with the time-consuming nature of administering the day-to-day operations of language programs and preservation projects, multiple positions may be required to accomplish them, although it is not uncommon for an Indigenous language leader to perform a combination of each of these activities all on their own.

Advocacy. Advocacy involves using one's voice to draw attention or garner support to an issue that is important to them. It can involve an individual or a group drawing on their political, cultural or social capital and acumen to reach their intended audience and improve the chances that their message will be heard and action taken. individual or group's political, cultural or social capital or acumen. Indigenous language leaders often find themselves in positions where they are responsible to advocate for or promote the value of learning the language (Greymorning, 1999; Pulkinen, 2008). Advocacy efforts can take place externally and be focused at external governments, policy-makers, special interest groups and funding agencies. They can include the preparation of presentations, briefing and information notes, technical papers, reports,

and letters intended to generate interest and investment in supporting Indigenous languages. It can also include connecting with media, utilizing social media campaigns, mobilizing people and groups, developing resources and working with gatekeepers. Advocacy efforts can also take place internally; with language leaders advocating within their work places, school systems and communities.

The challenge presented by both internal and external advocacy cannot be understated. In describing his experiences as an Indigenous language leader advocating for a greater commitment to language learning within his school, Greymorning (1999) shared:

When I presented the idea of increasing the time devoted to language instruction by taking away the time used to teach other classroom subjects I was looked at as if I had gone crazy. When I continued to press the issue I was finally told, as if I were a child attending the elementary school, that if that were to happen the standard classroom teachers would not be able to effectively teach their subject areas to their students. I further explained that 15 minutes a day, multiplied by 180 days in the school year, equals 45 hours of language instruction per year. I made it clear that they expected our language instructors to teach, and students to learn, a language in 45 hours; the amount of time many administrators usually devoted to their jobs in one week (Greymorning, 1999, p. 7).

Johnson (2016) further characterized the various forms of resistance that language revitalization efforts encounter. She writes, “An obstacle to language revitalization in the early stages is fear, unconstructive criticism, negativity, resistance from community, ongoing discussions, disagreements over strategy and methods, delay tactics and community politics” (Johnson, 2016, p. 312). Advocating on behalf of language revitalization while navigating these strategies requires leaders to develop various skills and capacities, including the ability to “create strong bonds with their teachers, families and communities” (Pulkinen, 2008, p. 74).

Capacities. Capacities include the skills or abilities that individuals draw on to carry out their work. Many Indigenous language leaders have come to their positions through having the rare and valuable skill of speaking an Indigenous language, either because they are a first language speaker or they have acquired proficiency as second

language speakers. They can also come into positions of leadership because they have a willingness to learn the language and share what they are learning with others, and are able to leverage other skills and capacities such as research and networking to learn from the experiences of others (Hermes, 2007; Johnson, 2016; Pulkinen, 2008). Individuals with operational or administrative experience can also offer leadership to Indigenous language revitalization endeavours, although this likely will not include instruction. Indigenous language leaders also embrace responsibility. In a study exploring the lived experiences of Indigenous language immersion leaders, one participant commented:

All administrators know that the operational takes all your time. My advice for administrators starting off—get two, one person takes care of operational and one person takes care of curriculum/instruction. That person that does the operational side doesn't need to speak the language. The person who takes care of the curriculum and instruction needs to know the language—got to. (Pulkinen, 2008, p. 56).

Along this line, fundraising and proposal writing is also included within the scope of necessary, if operational, work of Indigenous language leaders (Greymorning, 1999; Johnson, 2016; Pulkinen, 2008).

Concept of Collaboration

The second major theme in this literature review, collaboration, is discussed in eight sections. The first section focuses on problem solving. The second section pertains to partner engagement. The third section focuses on the purpose of collaboration. The fourth section focuses on roles and structure. The fifth section focuses on resources. The sixth section considers how collaboration impacts leadership. The seventh section explores some of the known challenges of undertaking collaborative work. The eighth section briefly outlines how notions of collaboration can be explored from a Haudenosaunee perspective, which is explored further in Chapter 4.

Awareness of a shared problem. There is a vast literature about the collaboration and collaborative processes. Research has been undertaken to define collaboration (Gray, 1985), to consider the pre-conditions for collaborations to succeed (Lasker et al., 2001), and to document common challenges experienced by managers

undertaking collaborative work (Armistead, Pettigrew, & Sally, 2007). Common to the various ways in which collaboration has been considered is the notion that certain problems require more than one individual, group or organization to solve, and the notion that a collective effort to address a problem will prove more successful than individual efforts. This idea that several parties might have a shared stake in a problem domain is what can initially draw partners together. It also alerts a potential convenor of a collaboration to consider who else might be affected by this problem and who to invite to participate in the solving of it. Waddell and Brown (1997) argued that identifying the preconditions for partnership that would signal to those considering a collaborative approach could occur at this stage. In each of the Haudenosaunee cultural stories that are explored in this research study, the problem is one that is familiar and experienced—the problem is impacting many different groups of people.

Partner Engagement. If collaboration is a process by which individuals and groups engage in a problem solving exercise (Wood & Gray, 1991), then the process of partner engagement is central to the success of a collaborative effort. It is also one of the most time consuming. Partners in collaborative efforts need (and want) to feel appreciated and valued (Hord, 1985; Lasker et al., 2001). In addition to having a voice in setting goals, partners require that their individual and mutual goals are understood and respected, and that the time they invest in collaboration will result in some form of benefit or advantage (Lasker et al., 2001; Lewis, Isbell, & Koschmann, 2010). Since collaborations require additional and intensive energy beyond the individual and organizational mandates of individual partners, this perceived benefit is a key factor influencing a partner's decision to participate in collaborative activities (Hibbert & Huxham, 2005; Lasker et al., 2001). Creating a forum for the discussion and exploration of the problem is one of the ways in which a group of autonomous stakeholders can become engaged (Wood & Gray, 1991). This forum not only provides a mechanism for convening partners, it also serves to frame and define the problem through an interactive process (Waddell & Brown; 1997; Wood & Gray, 1991). Gray (1985) argues that this process is also one in which partners can begin to understand and appreciate their interdependence. As we will see, the forum that supports this interactive process also

supports subsequent phases in the collaborative process, including the setting of common goals.

Setting common goals. Setting goals is a crucial step in the collaborative process and one that builds from the problem identification and partner engagement phases. The discussion forum emerging from the partner engagement phase, provides a foundation for partners to begin articulating a sense of common purpose, to explore how their goals might be met and what their shared direction might be (Gray, 1985; Waddell & Brown, 1997). The ability to develop and convey a deeply relevant purpose is, in my view, a large part of what lends a collaboration the vitality to withstand the challenges presented by demands on time, partner relationships and external pressures.

Lasker et al. (2001) contend that partnership synergy is what lends collaboration its “unique advantage” (p.183), and writes that evaluating synergy involves evaluating the extent to which the involvement/contributions of different partners improves the ability of the partnership to:

- Think about its work in creative, holistic, and practical ways.
- Develop realistic goals that are widely understood and supported.
- Plan and carry out comprehensive interventions that connect multiple programs, services, and sectors.
- Understand and document the impact of its actions.
- Incorporate the perspectives and priorities of community stakeholders, including the target population.
- Communicate how its actions will address community problems.

While the authors initially conceived of these determinants as a way for partners to assess synergy, I also found myself viewing them as a useful framework to organize a discussion about purpose and facilitate the setting of common goals amongst an already convened group of partners.

Structuring/Implementation. Outlining specific tasks and assigning roles to carry out planned activities or interventions is the next phase of collaboration. This is also a phase where the challenges of collaborative work can reveal themselves most clearly because it is a phase in which members of the collaboration are called upon to take specific action and accept responsibility for seeing through any assigned tasks. One way

of navigating the shift between what has largely been an exercise in dialogue and sharing through the discussion forum, is to create a formalized structure and assign roles to sustain the goals of the collaboration over a longer term. This was ultimately an approach that was utilized in the Haudenosaunee Story of the Peacemaker, which we will examine further in Chapter Four.

This is also a phase (in addition to the initial convening of the partnership) where leadership can be critical. Crosby and Bryson (2010) argue that leadership in collaborations can take the form of specific roles that include initiators, champions and sponsors. The initiator role shares some similarities with Gray's (1985) convenor. The convenor is perhaps best described as a presence that helps facilitate the formation of partnerships, but is not required for a collaboration process to proceed. The convenor may become involved either because they are a stakeholder or they have been requested by the stakeholders. The convenor assists in explaining the auspices for collaboration and is engaged at all stages of the collaboration process, which includes identifying and bringing partners to the table (Clarke & Fuller, 2010; Wood & Gray, 1991). Despite not being a necessary condition of collaboration, researchers nonetheless suggest that collaborations are more likely to succeed if certain roles (such as a convenor) are present, but other have expanded upon these to include initiators, champions and sponsors. Indeed, the Haudenosaunee cultural stories that were read for this research project, also take pains to mention the various contributing leadership roles that help collaborations come together.

In bringing together the potential partners, it is the initiator's job to recognize the leadership abilities present in the group; to be aware of the internal and external circumstances impacting the group and from this—to identify champions and sponsors (Crosby & Bryson, 2010). Crosby and Bryson (2010) suggest that champions can be individuals or the group as a whole, and they are described as “a person who is a tireless, process-savvy organizer and promoter of the change effort” (p. 219). A sponsor, by contrast, has a less direct role and supports the change effort through “authority, money or connections” (p. 219). Champions and sponsors should have a deep understanding of the problem but should not have a narrow, predetermined or unyielding vision of the solutions (Crosby & Bryson, 2010).

Resources. One way to approach thinking around the resources required to support collaborative work is to group the resources into categories such as human, financial and procedural. Collaborative work has already been identified as a time-intensive activity, resulting in additional strains or pressures on partners—despite the benefits. It can be useful then for collaborations to have human resources whose role is to carry out activities planned by the collaboration, and financial resources dedicated to the same. The formal structuring phase presents one opportunity to discuss how many and what kind of supports a collaboration requires to meet its goals. Lasker et al. (2001) offers the following resource considerations: money, space, equipment, goods, skills and expertise, information, connections to people/organizations/groups, endorsements and convening power as useful to the formative stages of collaboration as helpful determinants of the likelihood of success.

Procedural resources offer additional means for collaborations to improve their chances of success through mechanisms such as “feedback loops”, which Crosby and Bryson (2010) argue help to counter the limitations of linear process models, allowing for “corrective action, overlapping activities and cyclical decision-making” (p. 91). Evaluation and/or monitoring therefore becomes another important layer of activity within the collaboration’s process cycle—a place to ask critical questions about the process, to register what interventions have been completed and to what result. As Lasker et al. (2001) explains, a collaboration ought to be able to explain to the community how its interventions will help solve a problem—evaluation ensures that the collaboration is accountable to answering whether or not that assumptions were accurate.

Implications for leadership. It bears mentioning that despite a clear direction and established processes—even a perfectly designed and defined process—collaborations are not always successful (Lewis et al., 2010; Wood & Gray, 1991). Leadership in the form of convenors, initiators, sponsors and champions are each roles that have been described as having an impact on a collaboration’s success. In addition to a discussion around roles, several studies have considered the various leadership lenses used in the context of collaboration, including: transformational leadership, distributed leadership, complexity theory, and integrated leadership (Armistead et al., 2007; Crosby & Bryson, 2010).

Research on characteristics of leadership in the context of collaboration suggest that leaders foster respect and trust, embrace shared leadership, empower partners, resolve conflict, establish welcoming environments, bridge diverse cultures and understand leadership as a collective task (Armistead et al., 2007; Crosby & Bryson, 2010; Lasker et al., 2001). They also exercise high degrees of emotional intelligence, truthfulness, advanced listening skills and an understanding of partner needs and wants (Armistead et al., 2007).

Challenges to establishing and maintaining collaborative partnerships. Being involved in collaborative work (both at the Chiefs of Ontario and Six Nations Polytechnic) served to heighten my interest in reading and thinking about how other organizations experienced collaborative work. While challenges were not the only thing I was interested in learning more about, they were of particular interest for the way they caused me to reflect on my own involvement in collaborative work and ask myself what had been absent (or what had happened that was effective). If it is true that a collaboration could have a clear direction, effective process, and strong leadership but still fail to achieve their goals—it was important to me to gain some insight into why this was happening. Fortunately, some research studies have documented the challenges of collaborating from the point of view of participants (Lewis et al., 2010; Vangen & Huxham, 2008).

In these studies, participants identified a range of challenges including; partner participation, partnership buy-in, partner turn over, tensions around ownership of the process and process outcomes, time commitments, competing interests, trust issues, inability to compromise, failure to reframe issues, partner motivation, and fear of losing autonomy. Some researchers propose additional layers of process to account for these challenges, such as Vangen and Huxham's (2008) trust-building loops. Clarke and Fuller's (2010) feedback loops may also serve a similar function, allowing collaboration to amend the process as concerns arise.

Other studies explore challenges about collaborative work itself—for example, the difficulty in evaluating how effective partnerships are in achieving the goals of the partnership and asserting claims that investment in collaboration is warranted in the first place (Lasker et al., 2001). These questions resulted in research on partnership synergy,

which Lasker et al (2001) define as, “the proximal outcome of partnership functioning that gives collaboration its unique advantage” (p. 183), and subsequently led to the establishment of a framework for assessing partnership synergy and identifying its likely determinants (Lasker et al., 2001).

Haudenosaunee Cultural Insights Regarding Collaboration. The cultural stories I read to enhance my understanding of collaboration from a Haudenosaunee perspective explored similar themes as was found in the literature. In reading the stories and choosing examples to look at more closely, it became evident that different kinds of collaboration had occurred at important moments in Haudenosaunee history. These included: crisis responses, task-oriented partnerships to achieve a single task, and change efforts meant to bring about major shifts in behaviour. One change effort example also articulated a process of collaboration that forms the underlying principles of traditional and present-day Haudenosaunee governance. Broadly, this process involved a period of time in which a problem was being experienced, and was shortly thereafter identified or named.

In the stories that I read, collaborations were typically convened by an individual who undertook extensive outreach to raise awareness about the problem and to engage partners in a dialogue about potential solutions. These dialogues served to confirm the vision or purpose of the collaboration, along with the collaborative activities, commitment and resources that would be required to achieve and maintain the vision. In the majority of stories, there is an emphasis on the importance of assigning roles to help the collaboration function and be successful in achieving its goals, which in turn informed the collaboration’s structure and decision-making processes. In Chapter 4, I provide a detailed summary of the three cultural stories I read and thought about as part of this study. I also provide a detailed discussion of the themes about collaboration that emerged from these studies, along with a short glossary of Cayuga and Onondaga words which are used within the cultural stories.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used in this dissertation divides the concept collaboration into six components: vision, problem solving, partner engagement, purpose,

roles and structure, and resources. After reflecting on the literature, the cultural stories, and the interviews with participants, I felt this framework would be a useful tool for sharing my learning about what the concept of collaboration in the context of Indigenous language revitalization might look like at Six Nations of the Grand River.

The Hiawatha Belt: A Visual Representation of My Conceptual Framework.

Figure 1. The Hiawatha Belt



The path to my conceptual framework was not a straightforward one, although looking back at my entire research journey I can see the collection of small, interconnected insights signaling its emergence along the way. There were times when I considered the conceptual framework might be best epitomized by looking at the tree of peace itself (which is pictured in the center of the Hiawatha Belt), and others where I felt I should draw inspiration from the belt I felt most familiar with, the *Guswentha* or The Two Row Wampum.

After hosting an event at the Indigenous Knowledge Centre for Six Nation's annual community awareness week, a colleague of mine lamented the number of people who believed that the Hiawatha belt was only a flag—when it actually represented so much more. Her comment caused me to go back to the belt and look at it with new eyes. By this point, I had already read *Concerning the League*, which details the coming of the Peacemaker and his efforts to engage others in a peace building process. In doing so, I had developed a deep and genuine appreciation for how central this story was to who we are as Ogwehoweh people, and what it meant to belong to the larger confederacy of nations that the Hiawatha belt depicts. Indeed, I had begun to see the story as

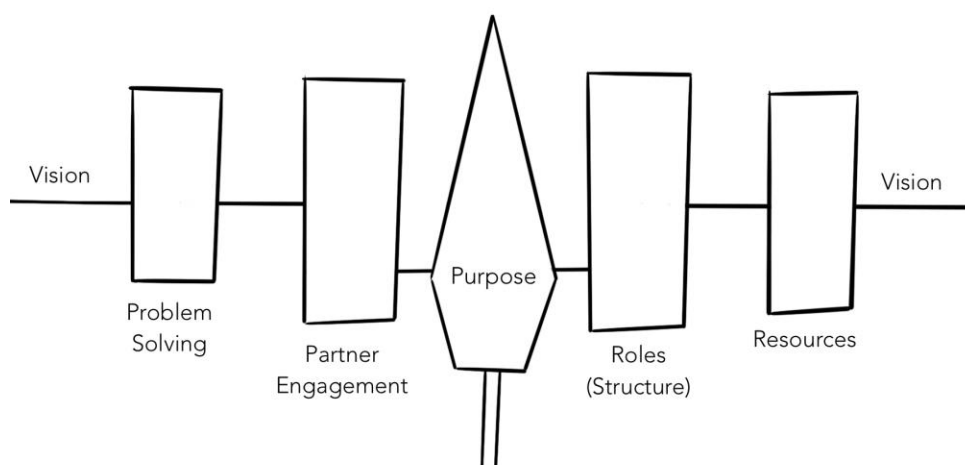
representing one of our most important moments as a people; the culmination of considerable effort, dialogue, and trial. A symbol of how profoundly our ancestors believed in and valued both the notion of and physical manifestation of peace, and; from my reading of the other epics, how connected this story was to our Creation Story and the ceremonies that help us maintain a peaceful frame of mind as individuals. It became clear to me that this symbol celebrating an intensive process of collaboration to ensure peace amongst the five Haudenosaunee nations, was the natural and obvious framework from which to organize my learning from the literature, cultural stories and leaders within my community about how a collaborative effort in the area of Indigenous language revitalization might come about.

Defining the components of the conceptual framework. My conceptual framework is made up of six components related to collaboration: problem solving, partner engagement, purpose, structure, roles and resources. The identification, framing and experience of a challenging problem is one of the factors which motivates individuals or groups to seek out potential collaborators (Gray, 1985; Waddell & Brown, 1997). Creating a forum for dialogue and relationship building is necessary to identify, understand and become familiar with the goals and needs of individual partners (Gray, 1985). Setting a shared vision, purpose or direction, and establishing common goals enables partners to think creatively about the resources required to achieve the vision and how to evaluate progress towards the vision (Gray, 1985; Lasker et al., 2001). Visioning also helps partners think about how they will evaluate progress towards their common goals and what structures might support their efforts (Gray, 1985; Waddell & Brown, 1997; Clarke & Fuller, 2010). Structure was found to be a particularly important component in the Haudenosaunee examples of collaboration, particularly in collaborations concerned with bringing about change. In some examples, the structure was less defined as the collaboration came together in response to a crisis event, leaving little time to put a formal structure in place. In the Story of the Peacemaker and the establishing of the Great Law however, great time and care is taken to develop a structure to support the collaboration, which was developed and formalized through conversations with existing and potential partners. Those conversations also served to elaborate on or clarify the specific roles the collaboration required to achieve its goals. Crosby and

Bryson (2010) suggest that establishing roles is useful to the process of collaboration and increases the likelihood that the collaboration will be successful.

A framework for organizing and synthesizing my learning. In choosing an Indigenous research methodology as my research approach, I was also mindful that the framework I chose needed to resonate and align with the epistemologies of the nations whose knowledges were guiding my study (Absolon, 2011; Kovach, 2012; Wilson, 2009). That it was not only the concepts that mattered, but the way in which they were presented and shared. Choosing the Hiawatha belt as the visual representation of the conceptual framework served to clarify the way I looked at the notion of collaboration in an Indigenous language, community-based context. It helped me to understand how Haudenosaunee views of leadership support collaborative processes. Most of all, it helped me make sense of the research findings and see what potential next steps might be. This framework, along with the research sub-questions, is the tool that will be used to organize and synthesize the ideas shared by the Indigenous language leaders and program administrators who participated in this study.

Figure 2. Conceptual framework for how Indigenous language leaders might approach collaboration



The above visual was created to formalize my thinking about how these six concepts could be embodied within the design of the Hiawatha Belt. As we saw in Figure 1, the Hiawatha Belt is made up of both white and purple wampum shells, and a white line connects each of the icons representing the five nations and the tree of peace in the center of the belt to one another.

In designing a visual representation of my conceptual framework, I considered how the six components of collaboration (vision, problem-solving, partner engagement, purpose, roles and structure, and resources) might be placed if I were to use the framework provided by the Hiawatha Belt. Because of the importance of vision in guiding and connecting aspects of the collaborative process, I chose to place vision as the line joining the other components together. Moving from west to east, the concepts of problem-solving and partner engagement were placed first, to demonstrate how discussion amongst partners helps further define the problem that participants in a collaboration will work together on, leading to a confirmation of the purpose of the collaboration, followed by a discussion and confirmation about the roles, structure and resources required to carry out the necessary activities.

Chapter Summary

This literature review outlines the work of Indigenous language leaders and situates the work of Indigenous language leaders within a broader discussion about educational leadership approaches. It explores how Indigenous language leadership work aligns with the goals of Indigenous leadership to support the strengthening of Indigenous nations and the communities in which Indigenous peoples live and work. In exploring the literature, I made the point that the work of Indigenous language leaders aligns with ideas found in Indigenous educational leadership—that it is possible to lead from a foundation of ancestral Indigenous knowledge, while utilizing research and evidence-based methods to effectively achieve language revitalization goals. Following this, I looked at existing literature about collaboration and discussed common aspects of collaboration. I related these concepts to the experiences of Indigenous language leaders. I also shared brief insights into Haudenosaunee notions of leadership and cultural stories. Finally, I

explained the conceptual framework that will be used in my research study to summarize my findings and learning about how Indigenous language leaders can collaborate to revitalize Indigenous languages.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The goal of this study involved exploring how Indigenous language leaders at Six Nations of the Grand River understand and approach collaboration for the purposes of revitalizing Indigenous languages. This understanding was formed through a literature review, an exploration of cultural stories relevant to the First Nation where the study was conducted, by listening to the stories and experiences of ten Indigenous language leaders and language program administrators in the community, and by reflecting on my learning through a research journal.

As the researcher, I believed that having a better understanding of collaboration would enable Indigenous language revitalization leaders and workers to better undertake collaborative work and design collaborative processes from a more informed perspective. This chapter focusses on the methodology used to answer the research questions posed in this study. In the first section of this chapter, I discuss the rationale for selecting an Indigenous research methodology. In the second section, I provide an overview of the information that was required to answer the research questions, the data collection methods that were used, and the way in which study participants were selected. The third section discusses how I analyzed and synthesized my data. In the fourth section, I discuss issues of trustworthiness and ethics.

Rationale for Choosing an Indigenous Research Approach

To answer my research question and research sub-questions, I used an Indigenous research approach. Research conducted using an Indigenous research approach posits that reality is constructed, and continually re-constructed, through a series of interconnected, interdependent relationships. Everything is related to something else. Some researchers illustrate this idea using Indigenous languages in which both Indigenous worldviews and knowledges are embedded. In translating the Cree word for ‘sofa’ as meaning “the place where you sit”, Wilson (2015) shares how the sofa is not named as an object, it is named through its relationship to the speaker.

My own experience with learning to speak an Indigenous language echoes this finding. In the Cayuga language, it is impossible to use a verb without relating it to

someone or something else. To use the verb -rhəd-, “to lead” for example, requires that you state who is doing the leading. From there you can further elaborate on who or what they are leading or provide context around when they were leading: *ehəde* (she is leading right now) or *hahədek* (he was leading). The verb root cannot be used on its own. It has no meaning in this form. This small sample provides insight into the notion of leadership as something that happens in concert with other things, time or people, for example. It is not something that happens in isolation. There is a sense of movement, relationship and action implied in how the language expresses the concept.

The relational nature of Indigenous epistemology extends beyond describing furniture to encompass “the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of individuals with all living things and the earth, the star world and the universe” (Lavallee, 2009). Through my research study, I sought to understand how relationships are constructed and co-constructed in a community space where language revitalization activities were taking place. For me, utilizing an Indigenous research approach provided the best opportunity to design a research study that aligned with my own view of the world as an Indigenous woman, and my ever-growing appreciation for language, community, and honouring relationships. To design my study, I continued reviewing the literature to understand other features of Indigenous research approaches that were emerging, some of which are described below.

Features of Indigenous Research Approaches

Decolonizing Aim. Research conducted using Indigenous research approaches center tribal epistemologies and include a decolonizing aim (Kovach, 2012). They reach beyond the impacts of colonization, seeking change (Kovach, 2012). This can encompass the change, transformation and learning journey that is experienced by the researcher themselves that are experienced by the researcher themselves (Wilson, 2015). Smith (2012) argues that engaging with decolonization also requires that researchers understand “the underlying assumptions, motivations and values which inform research practices” (p. 21). For my research study, this understanding of underlying assumptions informed the way in which I designed my study and worked to center Haudenosaunee epistemology.

Researcher Preparation. Throughout the past three years I have come to see that the doctoral research journey is also in many ways, one of perseverance. Kovach (2012) describes the importance of preparing for research as both a symbolic and spiritually sustaining practice that is an important component of an Indigenous research approach. My preparations for conducting research included reviewing research writing guides, learning from the experiences of others through articles assigned in the course work, and by reviewing helpful videos about the research process hosted by Western University's Faculty of Education.

They also included those activities that prepare and strengthen my spiritual health and wellbeing for the various roles that I fulfill in my everyday life, such as continuing to be a parent, learn language and participating in ceremony. And while I certainly did not participate in ceremony for the sole purpose of conducting this research, I was nonetheless aware that continuing to learn, attend ceremony and engage in creative activity (painting and writing) strengthened my overall wellbeing as I moved through various stages of the project.

Strong narrative component. Finally, Indigenous research approaches also contain a strong narrative component (Kovach, 2012; Wilson, 2015). For this research project, I approached the narrative component in two ways. First, I wrote regularly in the reflective research journal as a way of capturing ideas in a manner similar to what Dunleavy (2015) refers to as creating a "paper memory" (p. 36). This process helped me to brainstorm, explore emerging themes or new ideas, and reflect on the decolonizing aims of the research. Second, I wrote a series of letters or articles to my two daughters, explaining important ideas or concepts I had in a format free from the pressures of academic writing. While writing letters, stories and poetry for my children about who we are as Ogwehoweh people and how I have personally learned about and enacted my responsibilities as an Indigenous woman is something I have done from the moment I first became pregnant, the notion of including those letters as part of a research process was inspired by Wilson's (2015) use of this method in his research exploring Indigenous methodologies. Ultimately, this exercise helped me consolidate my thinking, strengthen my own voice and make decisions about what information was most important to

communicate. Both of these efforts informed my approach in writing up the discussion and research findings sections of this study.

Overview of Information Required to Answer the Research Questions

In this section, I provide an overview of the information required to answer the guiding research question and the research sub-questions. In this section, I describe the participants, the sample size, and the instruments used to collect the data.

Participants. The participants for this study included ten leaders of Indigenous language revitalization projects in the First Nation community, Six Nations of the Grand River. Participants were selected using a purposeful sampling process (Creswell, 2014). There are approximately sixteen groups or organizations engaged in language revitalization activities in the Six Nations of the Grand River community. An invitation was extended to each of these groups and organizations to have the option to participate. This was done because providing the opportunity for all organizations to participate aligned best with an Indigenous research methodology. Each of the participants held an official leadership role within one of these groups or organizations.

All study participants held positions of leadership at organizations with an Indigenous language mandate, or were the program administrators for Indigenous language programs. Participants had been in their positions anywhere from two to twenty years, with many identifying that they had been involved in language revitalization activities longer than they held formal roles as leaders or administrators. Participants in this study held either solely administrative duties, or instructional duties along with administrative duties. A summary of participants and the different realms of revitalization work they are responsible for are illustrated in Figure 3 and Table 1.

Figure 3. Realms of Responsibility of Indigenous Language Leaders**Table 1. List of Participants**

Name	Realms of Responsibility
Alison	Realm 4
Catherine	Realm 4
George	Realm 3,4
Hannah	Realm 4
Henry	Realm 4
Leo	Realm 1, 2, 4
Margot	Realm 1, 2, 4
Neil	Realm 1, 2, 3
Phoebe	Realm 2, 3, 4
Terrance	Realm 1, 2, 3

As illustrated above, leadership and administrative duties included activities such as proposal writing, advocacy with local, provincial and federal governments to institute supportive policy and funding initiatives, hiring and community engagement.

Instructional duties is the realm concerned with building speaking proficiency through teaching and learning activities. The other realms that Indigenous language leaders in this study had responsibility for included; curriculum development, resource development and assessment (realm 2), and preservation, planning, research and documentation (realm 3).

Recruitment Process. Study participants were recruited via email based on the researcher's knowledge of the group (Kovach, 2012). Indigenous language leaders were contacted through email by a community contact and invited to contact the researcher if they were willing to participate in the study. The recruitment email included a letter of information and an invitation to participate in a 45-60 minute interview. A copy of the letter of information and consent form can be found in Appendix C.

Information Needed to Conduct the Study. In seeking to understand how Indigenous language leaders and program administrators understood the notion of collaboration, one research question and four research sub-questions were devised to guide the data collection. The research questions were shaped by the literature review and sought to explore: a) how Indigenous language leaders view and understand the notion of collaboration, b) strategies Indigenous language leaders use to collaborate, c) challenges Indigenous language leaders experience collaborating, and d) supports required for a collaboration in the area of Indigenous language revitalization to come together.

Data Collection Methods

Semi-structured interviews. Indigenous researchers use a variety of methods to hear the stories of their participants, including interviews, conversations, and research-circles (Kovach, 2012). To answer my research questions and my research sub-questions, I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with ten Indigenous language leaders from the Six Nations of the Grand River. All interviews occurred in-person, at a location of the participant's choosing (Creswell, 2014). Interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. Prior to starting each interview, I reviewed the purpose of the study and the letter of information with each participant. All interviews were audio recorded so that I could focus on what each participant shared. I also made notes during the interview to make note of any follow-up questions or clarifications. All interviews were then transcribed and member checked by participants. Due to the tight time frames in which this study occurred, participants were asked to review transcripts within a two-week time period.

My interview questions and probes were tested in two pilot interviews. The pilot interviews were conducted with an Ed.D colleague and a work colleague. The pilot

interviews provided an opportunity to practice not asking leading questions, and to practice interview techniques such as learning being comfortable with silence between questions. At the end of each interview, I reflected in my research journal and jotted down any potential changes to make for the next interview. The interview protocol that I used can be found in Appendix D.

Cultural Stories. Different nations or First Nation communities utilize stories in different ways, however, cultural teachings or understandings are often embedded in stories (Kovach, 2012). While there remains a strong oral tradition of storytelling in many communities, some stories have been recorded in written form. To create a Haudenosaunee specific context for my research study, I selected a sample of cultural stories to read as auxiliary documents to help me gain an understanding of the notion of collaboration within a Haudenosaunee specific context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These stories included: The Story of the Peacemaker, The Creation Story and The Story of the Fatherless Boy. After reading each of these stories, I conducted a story analysis and reflected on how Haudenosaunee cultural stories convey ideas about collaboration or collaborative processes. I utilized my research sub-questions (understanding, strategies, challenges and supports) to organize emerging themes and ideas. Because the stories I chose were written versions of what are traditionally oral narratives, I drew from postcolonial literary theory to help inform my approach to the story analysis and ensure I was thinking critically about the lens or intentions of the authors in their written representations of the cultural stories.

Reflective research journal. As an Indigenous woman striving to speak more language at home with my family and supporting ongoing work in schools and organizations in our community, I began the study with the recognition that I am not a neutral participant and language revitalization is a subject in which I am deeply engaged. Keeping and using reflective journals enabled me to make my experiences, opinions and ideas visible and apart of the research design (Ortlipp, 2008).

Keeping a research journal also helped me explore and be transparent about my researcher biases and assumptions and the emerging impacts those had on my research design. It also provided me an opportunity to further reflect on and explore questions about my chosen methodology, which is Indigenous research methodology utilizing a

Haudenosaunee epistemology. Wilson (2015) argues that an Indigenous research methodology must adhere to a relational accountability that includes respect, reciprocity and responsibility and suggests a series of questions that can be reflected upon in a reflective research journal. One example question is, “What is my role as a researcher in this relationship, and what are my responsibilities?” (Wilson, 2015, p. 77). Reflections about this question informed my ideas about the implications of this research for my own practice, for the field of educational leadership and for my community. It also provided a space for me to reflect on how I was navigating insider/outsider tensions while conducting this research study.

Methods for Analysis and Synthesis

Data Analysis. Data analysis was ongoing throughout the course of my research study (Creswell, 2014). After transcribing each interview, I read each of them several times, and reviewed the field notes I had made. I recorded my general reflections about the data and any possible themes into my research journal (Saldaña, 2009; Kovach, 2012). Next, I utilized my research question and research sub-questions to generate an initial list of themes to help guide my initial efforts to sift through the data (Creswell, 2014). This initial list of themes included ideas about collaboration and processes of collaboration including strategies, challenges and supports. As an initial step, I chose to code my data manually, making notes in the margins of the transcripts and adding to the list of emerging topics (Saldaña, 2009). Once I had finished coding the transcripts, I recoded them and grouped the topics into broader themes that I organized into mind-maps using Nvivo software. I undertook a similar process with the Haudenosaunee cultural stories, utilizing my research questions to populate an initial list of themes which evolved as the analysis of the stories progressed (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). In the next phase of my analysis, I used several tables to help guide the process of analysis. I created a data analysis table to help organize and keep track of participant responses around the emerging themes, in particular those themes that related directly to my research sub-questions (Mears, 2009). These tables also helped me observe the point at which data saturation occurred, where participants were not adding new data but rather

reinforcing and verifying emerging themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Saturation for this research study occurred after seven interviews.

I also created a table that showed a side-by-side comparison of the major themes emerging from both the interviews with participants and the Haudenosaunee cultural stories. Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) recommend the use of an analytic category development table. I created a version of this template and utilized it as a tool to help organize my thinking around the potential findings and formulate categories that would help me talk about them as it became time to write up my learning. In doing so, I endeavoured to organize the categories around my research sub-questions, as well as my conceptual framework.

Trustworthiness. Trustworthiness in research is a concern shared across Indigenous and Western research approaches. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) write that “all research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge” (p. 237). Addressing how to communicate about trustworthiness in qualitative research, Guba and Lincoln (as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) advance concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as suitable criteria. These criteria, coupled with the notion of the researcher as the primary data collection instrument in research, led to the establishment of various strategies for demonstrating validity and reliability in a research study, which includes member checking, audit trails, and researcher reflexivity.

Although this research study utilized an Indigenous research method, issues of trustworthiness were of no less relevance. Kovach (2012) argues that while there are certain ethical standards such as member checking and informed consent which “cross cultures” (p. 147), concerns emerging from institutional academic spaces can be markedly different from those emerging from Indigenous research spaces. The former can be concerned with issues of institutional liability and of protecting the data with various layers of demonstrated objectivity. The latter is concerned with relationships and trust and ensuring that research is relevant and accessible to Indigenous communities (Kovach, 2012), while acknowledging that accessibility does not determine how Indigenous communities choose to interpret the research. Wilson describes this aspect of the researcher role in his treatise on Indigenous research methods:

As a writer, a speaker or storyteller, I have a set of obligations to fulfill in my discourse. My role is not to draw conclusions for another or to make an argument. My role, based upon the guidelines of relationality and relational accountability, is to share information or to make connections with ideas. The ethic in place, is that it is not right to interfere with another's actions or thought process-that would not allow them to be accountable to their own relationships. (p.133)

In talking about this notion of relational accountability, Wilson (2015) emphasizes the importance of subjectivity. For me, this was an area where one of the tensions between Indigenous and Western research revealed itself most clearly. While Western academic and research spaces seemed to be most concerned with protecting the integrity of the data; the Indigenous research framework felt most concerned with honouring the people, the knowledge systems, and the communities in which relationships to those knowledge systems were continuing to deepen and expand, as well as the efforts that communities were taking to assume ownership of our stories and knowledges (Absolon & Willet, 2005). This practice of prioritizing relationships and respecting that "truth can be found in the subjective" (Kovach, 2012, p. 149), resonated with me.

My research study was guided by Haudenosaunee epistemologies and cultural knowledge, and I entered this study aware of the tensions in the historical relationships between research and Haudenosaunee knowledge, particularly around cultural and linguistic knowledge (Hill, 2017). The call to conduct research in a good, well and valuable way (Kovach, 2012) was therefore, very important to me and I endeavoured in all stages of the research study to practice respect, confidentiality, and to use what my people refer to as "g'anigohi:yo:" or *goodmindedness* in my interactions with the literature, the cultural stories, and the participants. I ensured that I followed the research ethics processes established by both Western University and the Six Nations of the Grand River community, and prior to submitting my research ethics proposal, I presented on the proposed study to the Board of the Six Nations Language Commission to determine if there was any input they wanted to have into my research. They expressed interest in the results of the study, but had no particular input they wanted to share. I challenged myself

often to reflect in my research journal about the different ways I felt my research could be helpful within a community context, and utilized those reflections to stay focused on completing this work and fully exploring the research questions.

Ethics Approvals. This study received REB approval from Western University. It also received approval from the Six Nations Elected Council. As part of their participation in this study, participants were provided with a letter of information that was reviewed at the start of all interviews. Prior to beginning the interview, I took time to answer any questions participants had and reminded them that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Interviews began once the consent forms were signed. To respect and protect participant's identities, anonymized data was stored on an encrypted, password protected device. Hard copies of all data, including audio recorders, paper copies and journals was kept in a locked filing cabinet. Audio recordings were transferred to an encrypted, external hard drive.

Navigating Insider/Outsider Research Tensions. Before concluding this action on trustworthiness, I want to share a brief word about navigating insider and outsider research tensions, and how this struggle helped strengthen my ability to listen to members of my community. A principle concern in an Indigenous research approach is to do no harm and conduct research that will be good, well, and valuable to the community in which the study is taking place, and supportive to the efforts of the community toward self-determination (Kovach, 2012; Smith, 2018). This concern was helpful in focusing this research study in several ways. As an Indigenous researcher conducting research in my home community there were moments when I struggled with feeling both like an "insider" and an "outsider" (Champagne, 2015; Smith, 2012). For example, there were moments during the study where the research project felt like it was creating a barrier between my natural movements in the community and in pre-existing relationships I had established with colleagues working in the area of Indigenous education and language revitalization. I first noticed this tension when it came time to develop and pilot one of my data collection instruments.

In designing those instruments, I had sought to develop them in a way that made me a good listener—simultaneously neutral, non-judgmental and objective (Seidman, 2013). This proved challenging at times, because I had already worked alongside many of

the language leaders I hoped to interview, and in many cases, had a genuine interest and curiosity to learn more about what they were doing and thinking about language revitalization work that seem stifled by the use of pre-determined research questions. The result were these moments where I felt disconnected from the people and the work I had been engaged in for several years, and I struggled to understand why I had willingly created a barrier between myself and my community by choosing to undertake a research study. Interestingly, it was the new research strategies I was learning to employ that helped to, if not quite resolve, then certainly quell some of the tensions I was experiencing.

While it felt at times, like my attempts at neutrality were detracting from the natural relationships and conversations I had been having with the majority of my colleagues about language revitalization, there were also times where having a researcher-participant relationship created the space for people to talk and share their stories in a secure, confidential manner. At times, it even seemed to deepen our connection to one another. Where practicing qualitative interview techniques such as being a patient listener, and learning to lean into the silences between questions and the pauses between answers resulted in some truly insightful moments that I believe may not have been possible had I not been wearing a ‘researcher’ hat. For example, in every single one of the interviews I conducted, people paused for considerable lengths of time. In a normal, everyday conversation, I might have chosen to speak—but as a researcher, I wanted to show respect for the thought processes of the participant. And in every single one of these instances, participants had something more that they wanted to say. So while at times I struggled with feeling *too* formal, *too* distant, or *too* rigid, I also recognize that engaging as a researcher concerned with listening deeply enabled me to demonstrate even more respect for the participants who shared their time with me, albeit in a different way than other kinds of conversation might have produced. In reflecting on her own experiences with insider/outsider research, Smith (2012) offers the following:

Insider research has to be as ethical and respectful, as reflexive and critical, as outsider research. It also needs to be humble. It needs to be humble because the researcher belongs to the community as a member with a different set of roles and relationships, status and position. (p. 140).

It is my feeling now, at the end of this study, that this project has taught me a great deal more about humility, respect and working within and alongside community.

Chapter Summary

This chapter summarized the Indigenous research approach that I used to conduct this study. This approach was used because this study sought to understand how Indigenous language leaders can collaborate to revitalize Indigenous language in the Six Nations community, and the process of collaboration as understood by Indigenous leaders and Haudenosaunee epistemology, such as may be learned through conversations and story. My methodology was an Indigenous research approach, guided by Haudenosaunee epistemologies, and my methods included semi-structure interviews, the review of three cultural stories and a reflective research journal. I conducted a total of 10 interviews with Indigenous language leaders. In this chapter, I described how I gathered, analyzed and interpreted the data, and discussed how I approached issues of trustworthiness. In the next chapter, I present the findings from the story analysis of the cultural stories.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS OF CULTURAL STORIES

The purpose of this chapter is to share the findings of the story analysis of the cultural stories. The goal of this study was to explore how Indigenous language leaders at Six Nations of the Grand River understand and approach collaboration for the purposes of revitalizing Indigenous languages. To form this understanding, and to develop a clearer understanding about the concept of collaboration from a Haudenosaunee perspective, I conducted an analysis of three cultural stories that generally constitute the foundation of Haudenosaunee philosophy and worldview. These were: The Creation Story, The Story of the Fatherless Boy, and the Story of the Peacemaker. This chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, I discuss the framework I used to conduct the analysis, including a discussion on postcolonialism and decolonization. In the second section, I provide a summary of the three cultural stories. In the third section, I outline the themes emerging about collaboration from each of the stories using my research sub-questions as an organizing tool.

Section One: Story Analysis

In this section, I discuss the approach I used to explore and analyze the cultural stories. I explain the story analysis framework I developed for the review of the cultural stories and share how my research sub-questions provided the initial themes I used to explore the stories. Finally, I describe how becoming more familiar with the stories enriched my personal appreciation for the stories and guided me towards confirming a conceptual framework for the study.

“Tracking down leads, being open to new insights, and being sensitive to the data are the same whether the researcher is interviewing, observing, or analyzing documents. Since the investigator is the primary instrument for gathering data, he or she relies on skills and intuition to find and interpret data from documents” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 175). Interpretations of the data deriving from the cultural stories were organized using a document analysis framework designed specifically for this research study. The document analysis framework included three phases.

In the first phase, I established the authenticity of the document, making note of the author, the place and date of the writing, and inasmuch as was possible—the context in which the document was written (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Because written versions of oral narratives can subsume, misrepresent or impose unintended meanings (Hill, 2017; White, 2017), this phase also included a series of reflections on the way political context impacted the anthropological and research activities that were occurring when the stories were gathered (Said, 1979). I sought to balance out these tensions by exploring other forms of documentation where Haudenosaunee knowledge and ideas are embedded, such as wampum belts.

In the second phase, I utilized my research sub-questions and literature review to populate an initial and brief list of concepts and themes to explore, and which evolved as the analysis progressed (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). I made note of how Ogwehoweh languages described concepts that were of interest to this study, including leadership and collaboration, and which I have included here. Together, the stories, wampum belts and language created a larger than life view of Haudenosaunee notions of leadership and collaboration, and could be discussed in far greater detail than I have done so here.

To establish an understanding of the notion of collaboration that fit with the spirit and intent of an Indigenous research methodology with a Haudenosaunee epistemology, I chose a selection of cultural stories specific to my community and the community where the research study was taking place. Based on my own experiences as an Indigenous woman learning from elders and community, I had a pre-existing appreciation for the way in which our stories and languages act as a vehicle to convey knowledge regarding Indigenous worldviews, thought processes, and methods of conflict resolution and problem-solving across generations (Kovach, 2012). This understanding was further affirmed through the literature review process and reading about how Indigenous knowledges are embedded in Indigenous Peoples' stories of creation (Datta, 2018; Hill, 2017; Simpson, 2011). I have elected to include a more substantive discussion of the cultural stories in this chapter to demonstrate the richness of their insights into the notion of collaboration and subsequently, about leadership.

Initially, I had positioned these cultural stories as a secondary support to the primary data collection that would occur through the interview process. As the study

progressed I quickly realized that the stories were much more than this, especially in terms of how they informed the place of theory in my research. While my research questions had initially led me to literature in the areas of Indigenous language revitalization, Indigenous educational leadership, and collaboration—there was no particular ‘theory’ that emerged to help me position the overall study. Because of the inductive, exploratory nature of my study, I found myself gravitating to using a philosophical perspective to guide my research (Southampton Education School, 2012) as opposed to a theoretical framework, yet still felt a need to deepen or uncover the way theory was guiding or influencing my inquiry. Adams and Buetow (2014) recommend that beginning researchers construct a theory timeline, identifying seven areas where theory interacts with one another in various ways throughout a study. Using this model as a guide, I constructed my own theory timeline and began to reach back into the writers and thinkers whose work provided a foundation to the thinkers and writers I was reading. What I found both startled and surprised me.

Decolonization Theories and Practices. A common theme in literature from the fields of Indigenous language revitalization, Indigenous educational leadership and Indigenous research methodology is the notion of decolonization. It appears as a steady thread binding together past, present and future; both in terms of how it is theorized and how it is enacted. In Indigenous language revitalization, learning and speaking Indigenous languages is often described as a decolonizing act (Pulkinen, 2008), and work to interrogate or resist the way Indigenous languages are studied within fields like linguistics is to engage, challenge or disrupt status quo language study (Johnson, 2016). In Indigenous educational leadership, a commitment to decolonization and an awareness of the impacts of colonization is viewed as an important characteristic of a leader (Cajete, 2016; Kahukura Hohepa Nga 2013). In Indigenous research methodology, decolonization is described as an aim of the research itself (Kovach, 2012). There is, as early readers of this work have pointed out, an abundance of work by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars which discusses decolonizing theory. Throughout the research process I returned to the notion of decolonization again and again in various articles, attempting to situate the theory and practice of it within a larger theoretical framework and a “theory timeline”. These efforts invariably led me to Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s work

on decolonizing methodologies and from there, to the field of post-colonialism and the work of Edward Said and Paulo Freire.

Post-colonialism. Post-colonialism is relevant to this study and the story analysis presented in this chapter in the following ways. Firstly, because post-colonialism is premised in part on the politics of knowledge (Norton, 2001), how and what colonizers know about the colonized people and how that knowledge is used to subjugate people, post-colonialism helped to inform the lens with which the story analysis in this research study occurred. As mentioned in my methods section, the cultural stories I chose to inform my understanding of the notion of collaboration are historical oral narratives that belong to the Haudenosaunee People, some of which have been reproduced in written form. Post-colonial literary theory requires that any analysis of texts pay particular attention to the political contexts in which a text is written, the intentions and influences of the author, and the extent to which these are apparent in the literature (Said, 1979). Discussing the practice of hegemonic writing about other cultures, Said writes, “they acted, they promised, they recommended public policy on the basis of such generalizations” (Said, 1979, p. 238).

A second contribution post-colonial theory offers to my story analysis is to establish the impacts of these colonial narratives on both the colonizer and the colonized people, and the extent to which these narratives can be internalized and repeated. Despite recognizing how these attitudes were perpetuated and replicated through the education system, Freire (2012) believed that education was also the means through which an oppressed individual could become liberated. Essential to this liberation was for an oppressed people to “perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform” (Freire, 2012, p. 49). For those who have internalized colonial narratives and become an oppressor of others, Freire suggests such individuals do not use guilt to enable the status quo; instead, they demonstrate solidarity with the oppressed by “fighting at their side to transform the objective reality which has made them these ‘beings for another’” (Freire, 2012, p. 49).

Considering Freire, I could not help but think of the Indigenous scholars, educators and language workers whose articles I had read in the initial stages of my research—and the many fields that they were writing across. To me, these individuals

had recognized that the circumstances of oppression and culture loss could be overturned through critical awareness and action—and had already taken significant steps in this direction. Moreover, I saw a convergence between Said’s ideas regarding an awareness of the contexts in which imperialism persists through literature, Freire’s calls for action to liberate Indigenous education systems (and Indigenous educators themselves), and the decolonization work that was unfolding in the areas of Indigenous language revitalization, education and research. In a way, it felt as if theory had brought my research design full circle. The final step here then, is to explain and position how I understood this convergence and applied it to my analysis of the cultural stories.

Creation Narratives as Grand Theory. Throughout this research study, I had the opportunity to consider how to situate my research within a theoretical framework. Had I chosen to follow Adams and Buetow’s (2014) theory timeline to pinpoint the theoretical influences in the field of post-colonialism in a particular direction, it might have led me to explore areas such as post-structuralism and structuralism. While there is little question in my mind that this would have resulted in an interesting and fruitful line of inquiry, this did not feel like the right step to take for this research study or the Haudenosaunee epistemologies guiding my research choices.

Leanne Simpson writes, “‘theory’ isn’t just an intellectual pursuit – it is woven within kinetics, spiritual presence and emotion, it is contextual and relational. It is intimate and personal, with individuals themselves holding the responsibilities for finding and generating meaning within their own lives” (Simpson, 2011, p. 7). In my humble experience of being one Indigenous woman, living on Turtle Island and learning from many kind and generous Ogwehoweh people, rich languages and vibrant stories, the truth of these words could not ring truer. My engagement with Indigenous intellectual thought does not just impact or encompass my work as a researcher or an intellectual. Indeed—the words ‘researcher’ and ‘intellectual’ might cause some community members to cringe. But the idea of engaging with Haudenosaunee knowledges, and of intentionally drawing them into my life so as to generate meaning, guide my conduct with family members and loved ones, and direct the work I do to give back to my community—these are activities that would resonate with many of my friends and colleagues.

Ultimately, Said's work was an important reminder to me that words and language have meanings that extend beyond individual interpretation; that they are representative of social contexts, shaped by political attitudes and perceptions, and—in the case of post-colonialism—often constructed for the precise purpose of colonization, or as Patel (2016) might argue, to continue the settler colonial work of “erasing to replace” (p. 37). Together, these reminders helped me to think critically about the nature of the written word as I was reading the cultural stories.

Similarly, Freire's discussion of oppression and the role of education in liberation made me curious about the progress that had been made. Had Indigenous peoples managed to transform our reality? Had our educational leaders developed the capacities to be critically aware of their own journey to emancipate themselves from oppression? Did the tools exist to support them in this effort? Upon reflection, I realized that the articles I had initially read to gain a sense of what was happening with respect to Indigenous language revitalization, Indigenous educational leadership and Indigenous research, along with the lively discussion occurring in these fields, was indeed confirmation or evidence of a resurgence across all of these areas. While I (and likely many others) would contend there is considerable work yet to be done to heal and stabilize Indigenous knowledge systems (including families, schools and organization)—to make no mention of Indigenous and settler relations; literature produced by Indigenous scholars demonstrates that a kind of transformation of and within community was already well in motion. And further—that the word ‘transformation’ was probably an inaccurate (and possibly insulting) way to describe the many activities already occurring within Indigenous communities that are not necessarily visible to academia. After all, as members of my community have pointed out to me on several occasions—there have been groups of people in my community practicing ceremony and speaking the language in an unbroken chain for the last five hundred years. This leads me to my last point regarding my story analysis.

A dialogue positioned entirely around the notion of ‘transformation’ would exclude the effort that members of my community and their families have been a part of for the last five hundred years. As Monture (2014) argues, Haudenosaunee organizing and political advocacy has been ongoing for just as long, and at all levels of policy

making. Which is to say, that as important as it is for Indigenous learners and researchers to engage with and connect with theorists like Said and Freire, and to situate discussions about education and decolonization within these other forums for discussion, it is just as important—if not more so—to reach back and connect with our original stories, teachings and knowledges. It is useful to undertake this exercise to connect with postcolonial theory. It may not however, be necessary to achieve the goals of revitalization, restoration, and recovery.

Building connections between Haudenosaunee oral traditions and knowledge systems, and the practice of Indigenous educational leaders in Indigenous language revitalization is the driving force behind my exploration of these stories. Using an Indigenous research approach allowed me to ensure that Haudenosaunee knowledges systems are not left behind in favour of post-colonialism and post-structuralism. Rather, an Indigenous research approach allows for these knowledge systems to become the foundation my research study is built upon. This is not a study about transforming the outcome of our test scores, our literacy rates, or our graduation rates. At its core—this is a study about connecting with our responsibilities as Ogwehoweh peoples, learning from the struggles that have faced us (and our ancestors) along the way. It is the story of the strategies we have used to thrive in times of peril and the places where we draw those strategies from: stories, language, ceremony, and embodied knowledge.

A Personal Note. For several reasons, this chapter was easy to write and difficult to place. It was apparent to me from the outset that notions of leadership and collaboration featured prominently in each of the three stories, but I could not have anticipated how deeply these themes ran and how relevant they were to our experiences today. I likely should have; I had been told as much by elders and speakers before that our stories of Creation were the place to begin when considering strategies or insight into the challenges our people face today. But until I took the opportunity to create space for and spend extended periods of time with these stories, with our language and the wampum belts, it was difficult to fully appreciate the wisdom in this guidance.

Of the many insightful and valuable exercises undertaken throughout the research process, this one of creating space for myself to reflect on the original teachings of our people and explore how I might use those teachings to transform my own thinking about

how to live my life, and work alongside others towards a common goal was probably the most powerful. It became for me, a very personal kind of *decolonizing aim* (Kovach, 2012), and it helped me to see how my research could truly have an impact—even if it was only on myself. That is something that I will always be happy and grateful to this study for, for as Simpson (2011) points out, “Indigenous thought can only be learned through the personal; this is because our greatest influence is on ourselves, and because living in a good way is an incredible disruption of the colonial metanarrative in and of itself” (p. 41).

Section Three: A Summary of the Cultural Stories

In this section, I explain which stories I chose to use for this study and provide a brief explanation of each one. This section is organized into two parts. In the first part, I will provide a brief background on the selection process. In the second part I will provide a short summary of the cultural stories.

Selecting the stories. There are many stories told by my people that carry value and impart or spark the opportunity for learning, understanding and growth. Many stories that could provide insight on collaboration and the other themes that are at the center of this study, such as notions of leadership within an Indigenous education context—even the act of listening to a story is believed to represent an opportunity to develop leadership capacities (White, 2007). The stories I chose to examine here are in no way the only ones that could be brought to bear on my guiding research question, however, they were chosen after careful reflection for their significant contribution to the formation of Haudenosaunee history, values, ways of knowing and systems of organizing. Together, these stories make up three of four epics stories that are often referred to as the “original instructions” and that have played an essential role in shaping Haudenosaunee intellection traditions (Hill, 2017; Monture, 2016). They also evoke ideas about collaboration, collaborative processes and leadership. These stories are: The Creation Story, the Story of the Fatherless Boy, and The Peacemaker’s Journey. I have provided a brief description of the stories below. I must admit that I am hesitant or reluctant to do so because these stories are so integral to my people that summarizing them here seems like I am not doing enough to impress upon the reader how complex and rich they truly are, or

the endless potential they have to impact and guide the development of our thinking about our communities and our responsibilities as Ogwehoweh people. In our ceremony, the Thanksgiving Address, the speaker often finishes with these words: “*Ēswe:he:k di’ netoh nigadrihwatgwenyohs nēdah niyoihwa*”. This is a way of saying, I have done the best that I can at this time, and perhaps someone could have done a better job than me, but thank you for having patience and compassion for what I have managed to do here. And so I would like to say the same of what I am about to share below. These stories come to life best in live, personal retellings, in the languages with which they originated. I have done my best to provide a brief summary here, but no doubt there are better versions to read or listen to and it is my hope that I have not offended anyone with what I have shared, and rather, that what is here will help situate our discussion of the themes that are of utmost concern to the question of this project: how do we work together to revitalize languages?

Summary of the Stories

The Creation Story. The Creation Story tells of a place that is referred to as Skyworld, at the centre of which stood a celestial tree that provided Skyworld with its light. A young woman was born to a family there, who along with her brother, was gifted with a kind of magic that is referred to as *orenda*. The leader of the people in Skyworld was a Chief who was plagued by a dream that he could not guess the meaning of. After all the beings in Skyworld were unable to help him, he called upon the woman to come and visit him and guess his dream—which she did. The dream was to uproot the celestial tree. At the chief’s behest, the men of Skyworld came together to uproot the tree. The woman, who had since become his wife and become pregnant happened to fall through the hole. After this happened, the tree was put back in its place. A being came and helped the young woman who was falling, but could not take her all of the way to her destination. Instead, they guided her part of the way there and after they left her, she fell the rest of the way to the watery world below. Animal beings who had already left Skyworld saw that she was pregnant and falling. The ducks who saw her flew up to help her and guided her back to the surface of the water, where she rested on their back. Aware that she could not live on their backs forever, they decided to procure her a more

stable surface. Eventually, it was the great turtle who volunteered to hold her. Seeing that she would need greater sustenance, they decided to procure her earth from the bottom of the water that she could use to grow land. After many attempts by the animal beings, the muskrat was able to procure this soil. However, in doing so, the muskrat lost his life. The woman took the soil and spread it across the turtle's back. And as it grew—so did the mass of land that she could live upon. Before some time had passed, the woman gave birth to a daughter. When the daughter was grown, she became pregnant and gave birth to two twin boys. Unfortunately, she died in the process because one of the twins decided that he would come out of her side instead of being born in the natural way. In various versions of the story, the grandmother of the twins asks which one of them caused her daughter to die. One of the twins, who is called Flint, answered that it was the other twin.

As the two boys grew, they came to have different mindsets. While Flint was favoured by the grandmother, the other twin was taken under the mentorship and guidance of a character referred to as “Turtle Man”. Both twins had something of their mother's power and abilities. Under the guidance of Turtle Man, Sapling used these abilities to create plants, animals, fruits, and medicines. Using the clay of the earth, he also created human beings which he filled with his blood, his flesh and his breath. Flint also used his abilities to create things, but very few of his creations turned out the way Sapling's did, and in every instance he created things that would be dangerous to human beings. Sapling took care to provide for the human beings and gave them careful instructions to always be grateful for the world that provided for them, warning them of the discord that would result if they were to forget. Occasionally, Sapling asks for help from humans and non-human beings in his endeavours to make the world a hospitable place. For example, in one part of the story Sapling recovers his mother's remains from his grandmother and places her in the sky, where she shares light with the being of Creation as the moon. In this sequence, the first human and several other non-human beings come together to help Sapling steal back the moon (his mother's head) from his grandmother.

In subsequent oral histories, when the human beings did forget their responsibilities to Creation and experienced times of grief or war, Sapling was careful to

send them messages, gift them ceremonies or help them establish practices that would draw them back onto a peaceful path.

The final two examples of collaboration from the Creation Story emerge towards the end of the text I reviewed. In the first, people are trying to ensure that all members of their village are taken care of and are able to eat (therefore maintaining a good mind). To meet this need, the village holds a dialogue that results in the recommendation to establish a practice of planting and harvesting everyone can undertake together.

In the second example, the Ogwehoweh people have once again taken to fighting with one another and discord is spreading across their lands. At this time, the Creator (Sapling) sends a messenger to help establish the clan system. Similar to the planting and harvesting example, the formation of the clans emerges through a process of dialogue and extensive participation. The emerging sense of kinship offers a sense of stability and belonging to the Ogwehoweh people. In subsequent oral traditions, when humans once again forgot their responsibilities to Creation and experienced times of grief and war, Sapling was careful to send them messages, gift them ceremonies or help them establish practices that would draw them onto a peaceful path. These messages (and the ceremonies) are embedded within subsequent oral histories—two of which are explored in this research study. These are *The Story of the Fatherless Boy* and the *Story of the Peacemaker*.

The Story of the Fatherless Boy. At Six Nations, and other Haudenosaunee communities, there are four ceremonies that are done throughout the year. They are referred to as *Gei Niyoihwá:ge:.* The Story of the Fatherless Boy has a special relevance to our people because it shares about how we came to practice the four ceremonies. These four ceremonies are put through on two major occasions in the annual Haudenosaunee ceremonial cycle—Midwinter and Big Green Corn. In some versions, this story is included in the Creation Story.

The story goes that a long time ago, a young woman had a dream that she was going to have a child and that her child would have special knowledge. Soon after having this dream, she became pregnant. In the story, we learn about how the young woman's mother was unsupportive of the pregnancy as she felt her daughter had deceived her in becoming pregnant. This was because the daughter did not know who the father was or

how it was she came to be pregnant. Over time, her mother's attitude began to affect the young woman, causing her to have negative feelings about herself.

One night, the young woman's mother had a dream where she was told that she needed to change her attitude towards the daughter because she was causing her distress. The messenger also told her that the baby was coming to deliver knowledge from the creator that the people needed. Moved by the dream, the woman did as the dream requested. Soon, the young woman gave birth to a son. Twelve other boys had been born at the same time as the young boy and they spent time together as they grew up. But it was not long before the mother noticed that her son had a way about him. That he was always talking to the other babies, and not only was he always talking, but the other babies were listening. They would sit in their cradleboards and listen to what it was that he was telling them. This continued as they grew up to become young men, that he would be talking to them and teaching them things.

One day, he declared that the things that he had most to teach them were the four ceremonies. He held a great lacrosse game that others came to participate in and when the games were done, he would teach them a ceremony. When he had finished teaching a ceremony, he would ask if anyone could learn it. For each one, a single person volunteered and said that they would try. He welcomed their willingness to learn and expressed how fortunate it was that the ceremony would continue.

The Peacemaker's Journey. There are many versions of the Story of the Peacemaker. In each of them however, he is born during a time of considerable unrest and war and sent by the Creator to bring people the message of peace. The stories tell how because of the widespread strife, the Peacemaker's mother and grandmother chose to raise him away from other villages. One day, the Peacemaker told his mother and grandmother that he had come to share a message with the people about the importance of peace and that this was the reason why he had come. Shortly thereafter, the family decided to return to their village, where they told the village leader why they had left and what the boy told them. The leader accepted their accounting of events and welcomed them home. As the boy grew, he began sharing about the importance of peace and how the time of peace had come, along with what he called the power and the good message. The first time he ever did so, it was with a group of children who were hurting one

another. He intervened and explained to them that they should exercise more kindness towards one another, and so they did. Eventually, the children told their parents about what he had shared with them. They too asked to be told about the peace, the power and the good message. And so he told them what it meant, that the time to stop killing and warring amongst one another had come, and that instead people should embrace peace. The village agreed to do so. However, they asked what would happen if other villages did not agree to do the same? At this time, the Peacemaker set out on an extensive journey visiting all five of the nations across Finger Lakes and Adirondack mountains until they agreed to form what is known today as the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, a league of nations with representation from 50 chiefs and clan mothers, each of whom is charged with the duty of guarding the peace through an elaborate deliberation and discussion process.

Examples of Collaborations. “Coming to know the past has been part of the critical pedagogy that is decolonization” (Smith, 2014). Reading these three stories confirmed that collaboration and ideas about collaboration are deeply embedded in our historical narratives. Collaborative efforts are used both as a response to moments of crisis (Sky Woman Falling), and as a way of organizing large groups of people around a unified vision. For example, collaboration becomes the mechanism by which the Great Law of Peace is realized and sustained.

Table 2. Seven examples of collaborations from the cultural stories

Story	Example
The Creation Story	Pulling Down the Celestial Tree
The Creation Story	Sky Woman Falls
The Creation Story	Stealing the Moon
The Creation Story	Planting and Harvesting
The Creation Story	Formation of the Clan System
The Fatherless Boy	Conducting the Four Ceremonies
The Story of the Peacemaker	Establishing the Great Law of Peace

Building on this recognition, I structured my analysis of the notion of collaboration in the following ways. First, I identified seven examples of collaborative activity that occurred in the three stories. These seven were chosen because they

represented the clearest examples of collaboration (human and non-human beings working together toward a common goal). I then utilized my four research sub-questions to help me explore what was happening in the stories. This exercise illustrated what the seven examples from the Haudenosaunee cultural stories revealed about how collaboration was understood, the strategies that were used to collaborate, the supports that were required to collaborate and the challenges that were encountered.

Section Four: Emerging Themes

In this section, I highlight ideas and notions about collaboration that emerged from the Haudenosaunee cultural stories I engaged with as part of this research study. To form this understanding, I selected examples of collaborative processes and occurrences of collaboration across the three cultural stories that met the criteria of individuals or groups of people working together towards a common goal. A total of seven clear examples emerged. Next, I organized the ideas and insights emerging around these examples into four themes that correspond with my research sub-questions: understanding, strategies, challenges and supports, each of which has sub-themes. I have also included a brief discussion about these concepts (understanding, strategies, challenges and supports) in the Cayuga language as a way of drawing this research study closer to language and challenging myself to think about these concepts beyond their English meanings. Also, to connecting language to the stories.

Understanding (Gaihwædeihstra': 'knowledge of something (a fact, a process, etc.)'

The first theme explores how the cultural stories that were read for this research study provide insight or understanding about collaboration and collaborative processes that emerge from Haudenosaunee knowledge systems. It is discussed in three sub-themes: types of collaborations, purpose of collaboration and visioning.

Types of Collaborations. In reviewing the three cultural stories, it became apparent that there were different types of collaborations. In the stories, collaborative efforts are used both as a response to moments of crisis, and as a way of organizing large groups of people around a unified vision. In the seven examples I identified, I found the

examples could be organized into three categories: task-oriented, crisis response, and change-oriented.

Table 3. Types of Collaborations in Haudenosaunee Cultural Stories

Type of Collaboration	Story	Example
<i>Task-oriented</i>	The Creation Story	Pulling Down the Celestial Tree
<i>Crisis response</i>	The Creation Story	Sky Woman Falls
<i>Task-oriented</i>	The Creation Story	Stealing the Moon
<i>Task-oriented</i>	The Creation Story	Planting and Harvesting
<i>Change-oriented</i>	The Creation Story	Formation of the Clan System
<i>Change-oriented</i>	The Fatherless Boy	Conducting the Four Ceremonies
<i>Change-oriented</i>	The Story of the Peacemaker	Establishing the Great Law of Peace

The first category is *task-oriented*. In this category, people come together to perform a specific task. For example, in the Creation Story the men of Skyworld work together to pull down the celestial tree. This is the first example of collaboration to appear in the stories, and it is described very briefly in only a few sentences:

“Then at that time a large body of men were assembled there, and said, “Come, under the circumstances let the suggestion of the dream of our chief be undertaken. Then at the same time, the men severally grasped it and then uprooted the tree at the Hodae:he’ (the tree that stood for Hodae:he’), and that came to pass, it left an opening through the ground, there was a made a chasm through the Earth (Ohwejadeh). At that time then the men said, “Now verily we have fulfilled the requirements of what caused our chief to dream” (Hewitt, 1900a, p. 26).

Despite the concise description of the event within the story, the activity surrounding the action of pulling down the tree nonetheless provides insight into the strategies and supports required to undertake the task successfully (including the preconditions or events leading up to the activity, that is, the dream). These are discussed throughout the other subsections.

Another example of collaboration in the *task-oriented* category is when the good twin, Sapling, steals the moon back from his brother, Flint, with the support of both man

and animal beings. In this section, Sapling organizes a group of helpers to go and steal back the moon from Flint. Once the task is complete, the collaboration ends, and is not discussed further in the text. A third example describing how people work together to accomplish a task occurs towards the end of The Creation Story when the human beings work together to plant and harvest a community garden for the first time. Again, the story makes it evident that people come together to work towards a common goal, but once the task is complete the collaboration comes to an end.

A second type of collaboration that appeared in the cultural stories is the *crisis response*. In the Creation Story, the uprooting of the celestial tree creates a hole through which Sky Woman falls. The birds and animals of earth see her falling and go up to help her. One animal being in particular, the Loon—cries out to the other animal beings that she is falling and urges the ducks to go up and help her. Once the ducks have her safely on the surface, the animal beings determine that she is still not safe because she is only resting on the backs of the very same ducks who flew up to catch her. Together, the animals determine that this is not a long-term solution and that they need to find her a surface to live on. This example is interesting for several reasons. Although the initial collaboration happens in response to a crisis, and the collaboration ends once the crisis is averted, the animals recognize that the crisis response is only a temporary solution to the problem, and that further action is required.

The third type of collaboration that emerges from the stories, is *change-oriented*. These examples show people coming together with a specific vision or goal in mind to solve a problem. In these examples, collaboration is used as a vehicle to sustain the vision over a longer term. The most prominent example of this category, is in the Story of the Peacemaker, in which the Peacemaker and his helpers travel amongst the five nations (Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida and Mohawk), with the purpose of establishing peace amongst them. This story provides the most detailed insight into the process of collaboration; it is a story about collaboration, which also outlines a formal collaborative process. Together, these seven examples can provide further insight into the notion of collaboration. Before I continue, it is important for me to clarify that these insights arise from my engagement with these stories for the purpose of better understanding the notion of collaboration. I approach this thinking and analysis from a particular, lived experience

as a Haudenosaunee woman, living on Turtle Island at Six Nations of the Grand River and working to better enact my responsibilities to creation, and my insights should not be interpreted as cultural canon or Indigenous knowledge in and of itself—nor as the experience of Haudenosaunee people as a whole. Rather, they represent an effort to interact and engage with a source of Haudenosaunee epistemological knowledge that is collectively held and nourished. Further, these insights are rooted in a particular time and place; it is entirely possible that my own interpretations and interactions with these stories will shift and grow as I do, and as I revisit them through a lifelong, ongoing learning process.

Purpose of collaboration. Collaborations form because there is some acknowledgement that people (or animals and other-than-human beings) need to work together to achieve a common goal. In the cultural stories reviewed for this study, these common goals included: taking down a tree, stealing the moon, preventing Skywoman from falling to her death, preventing starvation by growing a community garden, thwarting disconnect amongst Ogwehoweh people by establishing a clan system, addressing grief and idleness through the learning of the four ceremonies, and ending war by establishing a peace covenant among five nations. In each case, the purpose of the collaboration was meant to address or solve a specific problem that was being experienced or witnessed by both human and other-than-human beings.

Awareness of a Shared Problem. Having awareness of a problem that is impacting people or groups is an aspect of collaboration that featured prominently in the cultural stories. The cultural stories reviewed for this research study illustrated this awareness by including exposition at the beginning of the text (prior to the official start of a collaboration) that indicated to the reader/listener what the problem was. For example, the Story of the Peacemaker begins as follows, “This is what happened when it originated, the Great Law. This is what happened in ancient times: There was warfare, and they habitually killed each other, the Indians of the several nations.” (Gibson et al., 1992, p.1). The story goes on to share how two people, a woman and her daughter, move away from all of the villages in an attempt to avoid the warfare that is happening. Both women are aware of the problem facing themselves and the other nations—warfare. However, at this stage there is not an active effort on their behalf to identify the problem

and initiate a collaborative process. Still, this widespread awareness and experience of the problem of warfare is connected to the collaborative process, because the Peacemaker (and other beings) draw attention to the situation and begin to seek partners to help resolve it.

In the *crisis response* example, this awareness of the problem is sudden and immediate. For example, in the Creation Story when Skywoman is falling, the Loon looks to the sky, sees her and hollers, “It would seem that a Man Being is falling down from above!” (Hewitt, 1900a, p. 33). Awareness of the problem spreads instantly to the other animal beings and the response is immediate. The matter of Skywoman falling is resolved fairly quickly. This is not always the case. In some of the examples, the problem exists for long periods of time before it is addressed. Take for instance, the Story of the Fatherless Boy, in which a young man helps reintroduce the four ceremonies to his village. In this story, which is one of the *change-oriented* examples, the problem that is being experienced is turmoil due to fighting (and killing) and grief due to loss of family and loved ones. The problem persists for several years (as the young man grows up) before it is fully discussed by the community and collective action or common goals are agreed upon. In reading the cultural stories it felt significant that there was always time spent on this state of awareness that something is happening that causes people to be unhappy, in danger or at risk—even if the people within the stories are not actively starting the collaborative process. In a way, the story itself acts as a vehicle for identifying and framing the problem. In my view, part of why this occurs is so the vision of the collaboration becomes easier to articulate and the reader/listener can more easily grasp why the problem is important enough to devote their time and energy to.

Vision. Throughout the cultural stories, as life progresses on earth, there are several moments when human beings experience times of suffering. The vision for collaboration emerging from the cultural stories is very much tied to providing a response to these moments of suffering. For example, each of the change-oriented examples across the cultural stories are about helping the Ogwehoweh people remember the gifts they were given by creation that help them maintain a state of peacefulness and gratitude. One of the specific goals of the collaboration in three of the examples, is to remind Ogwehoweh people that they have to perform the ceremonies that were given to them as

medicine for their minds, bodies and spirits as a way of warding off grief, sickness, and strife. For example, in the Story of the Peacemaker, warfare causes people to experience grief. This grief clouds their minds and leads them to forget to perform the ceremonies. Eventually, this grief transforms into anger, and by the time the story begins there is a widespread and ongoing warfare amongst the five nations. In this case, the vision driving the need for collaboration is peace. Achieving a peace accord required an extensive engagement process to share this vision with many potential partners, each of whom was spread out across what is now known as Southern Ontario, and the Finger Lakes and Adirondack regions of New York State—an enormous geographic area across which to conduct a large-scale diplomatic effort. In *The Story of the Peacemaker* however, it was necessary. It was not sufficient for the vision to convince one group or nation to put aside war—everyone needed to be convinced. This leads to a discussion of the strategies that human and animal beings in the cultural stories utilized in an effort to collaborate.

Strategies (Deyōdrihodahsya'dahkwa': 'things one untangles matters with')

This second theme involves the strategies that human and animal beings use to undertake collaborative work. There are seven sub-themes: use of dreams to generate knowledge and prompt reflection, use of metaphors to build understanding, relationship building, creating discussion forums to identify problems and set goals, structuring, relationship building and partnership characteristics.

Use of dreams to generate knowledge and prompt reflection. Each of the stories make mention of the role dreams play in supporting collaborative work. In the stories, dreams were primarily used as a way to communicate information or generate knowledge and understanding. For example, in the Story of the Peacemaker, the Peacemaker's mother is not happy that her daughter has become pregnant and this unhappiness manifests itself in their relationship to the point where the daughter begins to internalize it, and think negatively of herself.

During this time, the Grandmother has a dream where a messenger visits her and tells her that the baby her daughter is carrying is coming with an important message from the Creator, and that she needs to treat her daughter with kindness lest her daughter do herself harm. The Grandmother heeds this message, and later shares this message when

the family finally rejoins their village. While the grandmother's actions occur outside of the collaborative process itself, they nonetheless shape the environment or pre-conditions of the life of the person who will ultimately attempt to convene the collaboration later in the story—her grandson.

A second example of the use of dreams as a way of conveying information happens in the Creation Story. At the start of the story, the Chief of Sky World invites all the beings in Sky World to help him understand a dream that is plaguing him through a dream-guessing ceremony (a Haudenosaunee ceremony that is still practiced in some communities today). When Skywoman correctly guesses the meaning of his dream, he is better able to interpret or reflect on the dream's meaning. This process of reflection leads him to act on what he believes needs to happen next, and thus, he directs the men of his village to cut down the celestial tree.

Archibald (2008) provides additional insight into what this process of generating meaning and understanding from dreams meant for her own research and learning journey:

For quite a while I pondered the meaning of this dream. It occurred when I was beginning to do research about the oral tradition. I thought that the dream was directing me to go on a “journey of learning,” to meet and learn from those who use the oral traditions, especially Elders. I also felt that I needed to learn how to hear what the Elders had told me in the dream. After learning how to listen to the stories, I was expected to use their cultural knowledge and to share it with others, thereby ensuring its continuation.” (Archibald, 2008, p.3)

In the Haudenosaunee cultural stories reviewed for my research study, dreams were accepted as a tool for communicating information, generating knowledge and understanding, and prompting the reflection required to help establish the environment from which a collaboration could take shape. Other tools that were used to generate understanding of the purpose or potential goals of a collaboration include the use of metaphors.

Use of metaphors to build understanding. Helping potential partners understand the value of working together in a collaborative process is important. Throughout the cultural stories, this message is often conveyed using visual imagery. For

example, in the Story of the Peacemaker, the Peacemaker describes collaboration amongst the five nations as a “bundle of arrows” (Gibson et al., 1992, p. 300), and explains how when the five arrows are bundled together they are more difficult to break. He further explains how if even one of those arrows were to be taken away, the collaboration would be weakened. The metaphor used here suggests there is a perception that collaborations strengthen the collective and improve their ability to achieve their goals. This metaphor is also used to talk about the impacts to the collaboration if partners were to leave, suggesting that the goals would be difficult to achieve and/or maintain. Taking time to convey ideas and communicate with potential partners is important. This type of relationship building and partner engagement featured prominently in the cultural stories.

Relationship building. Relationship building is one of the major strategies that is utilized to establish collaborations and collaborative processes require partner engagement. In the Story of the Peacemaker, the Peacemaker undertakes extensive outreach, visiting all five of the founding nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy—often more than once—in order to invite them to set aside war and embrace peace. During this time, the Peacemaker listens and reflects upon their concerns, and invites them to offer ideas about how they might be overcome. His efforts at relationship building are wide ranging. They include visiting people face-to-face, providing food, being present, telling stories, building trust, and making connections for partners by pointing out the relationship between the vision or goals of the collaboration and communicating what the outcome of the change will be.

Throughout the story, the Peacemaker endeavours to share information, build interest in the idea of peace, answer questions and maintain communication at all stages of the engagement effort. For example, before leaving one community, he makes a point to let people know which village he will go to next. He tells them how they can contact him, updates them on how the work is unfolding, and shows a willingness to prove the sincerity of his message through demonstrations or acts that are chosen by the community. For example, one community asks him to prove the truth of his message by standing in a tree that they then cut down. The tree falls into the river, but the Peacemaker survives. As a result of this demonstration, the community is more willing to

believe in his vision. There are undoubtedly different interpretations about why the community asked this of him and what the completion of this task demonstrated to them. At this time, and in viewing it from the lens of relationship building and partner engagement for the purpose of establishing a collaboration, I am inclined to interpret this particular scenario the following way: that the Peacemaker was able to build a stronger relationship with the community because he demonstrated that he heard their reservations and concerns about the enormity of what he was asking them to do (embrace peace at a time of war and potentially endanger their community), he heard their request to undertake an equally dangerous action (which he did and survived) and in doing so, he was able to demonstrate that he was willing to commit as much as he was asking. Being able to have a place for potential collaborators to communicate with one another, discuss and identify problems and make plans is another strategy that appears in the cultural stories that supports collaboration.

Create forums for discussing problems and making plans. Collaborations require that collaborators identify the problem they will collectively address and begin to strategize about how they will address it. In the majority of cases across the three Haudenosaunee cultural stories reviewed for this research study, this is achieved through the creation of a forum for discussion. For example, in The Creation Story, the problem of Skywoman falling is identified by the Loon, who then rallies others to action by calling attention to the sky. Later, once she is safely landed, Loon also points out that their work is not done and that they must find her a more sustainable surface to live on. At this point, the other animal beings confer with one another and begin to make suggestions about different things they can try. They consider what kind of surface she will require and who might be able to provide such a surface (the Turtle). When they realize that she will need earth to cover the Turtle with, and that the only earth they have access to is at the bottom of the watery depths, they have a discussion about which animal might be able to secure the earth. And then, once Skywoman is safely ensconced on the Turtle's back, the discussion is concluded and the forum closes.

In the example of the Story of the Fatherless Boy, referred to as *Tę' ęh de'hqnishe'* (literally meaning "the fatherless one" who is male, and who is not named in the story) also creates a forum for discussion, although it takes a different form that what

we see in The Creation Story. In the Story of the Fatherless Boy, *Tę' ęh de'hqnishe'* establishes a network of his peers that meets regularly over the course of their lives. During this time, he shares what he has learned with them about ceremonies so that when the time comes, they are able to conduct them (which is the primary purpose of collaboration in this story).

Undoubtedly though, the most elaborate forums for discussing problems, sharing about goals, and understanding how people can work together towards a common goal appear in The Story of the Peacemaker. The Peacemaker's approach to creating forums for discussion varies across community and audience. His earliest effort to create a forum for discussion to identify problems happens early on in his life, and with a youth audience. The Peacemaker of course, has a vision for there to be an end to war and suffering that the nations are experiencing. Upon witnessing a group of children in his village quarrelling and wanting to fight one another, he stops them and explains how it is bad to be unkind to one another, and that people should be kind to everyone—including people they do not know. He offers his view that when the fighting stops, the various nations will become like family in the future. The children stop fighting and later they repeat this story to their parents, who come to him and ask him to explain what he meant. He convenes a larger discussion (complete with a meal) where he shares this vision with everyone. The message he shares, becomes the message that he takes to other nations when he finally begins seeking other collaborators in earnest. The forum for discussion changes once again, once most collaborators have agreed to be involved. The discussion forum begins to shift to reflect the formalized structure of the collaborative effort.

Clarify structure. Collaborative processes may have a structuring phase which involves the participants setting goals, outlining tasks and assigning roles. As Gray (1985) argues, there is also the opportunity in this phase to create a more formalized process for the collaboration, and such is the case with The Story of the Peacemaker. Indeed, out of all seven examples from the cultural stories, this is the only one which outlines a formalized structure for collaboration, elaborates on the roles of collaborators and the way that matters are deliberated and decided upon. For example, it is this story that establishes that there will be 50 chiefs and 50 clanmothers who work together to provide leadership for the Haudenosaunee people, outlining their respective roles and

duties in the process. This story also establishes a forum for discussion for the fifty Chiefs and outlines how discussion will occur (by passing matters back and forth across the fire). And it is this story that explains how to resolve a discussion that leaders are struggling to find common ground.

The list of examples goes on. The Story of the Peacemaker provides insight into how the collaboration might expand beyond the five nations and outlines a mechanism for adding additional partners in the future. There is also discussion outlining how to engage with individuals or groups who have expressed little interest in collaborating, establish a decision-making process, establish a dispute mechanism, set out a process for discussion, establish a mechanism by which they can be alerted to threats posed by external forces, address the scope and reach of the Confederacy's decision making powers (to respect local autonomy and focus on matters which impact the Confederacy as a whole), establish a process for speaking (holding strings of wampum), and go through a process of disarmament in which they bury their weapons beneath the tree of peace. The collaboration also establishes a mechanism to replace deceased leaders, as well as a mechanism to recognize and honour people who support the collaboration and the goals of peace (these leaders are referred to as pine tree chiefs).

Within this one example then, there are a multitude of smaller, important strategies and tools that emerged from discussions with collaborators as to the structure of the collaborations and the roles the collaboration requires—the majority of which are outlined in The Story of the Peacemaker. Demonstrating respect towards the contributions of collaborators is another strategy that appears as part of the collaborative process in the stories reviewed for this research study.

Demonstrate respect for the contributions of partners. Collaboration requires personal sacrifice of time and resources. The idea that human and animal beings working in collaboration should be treated with respect came up several times throughout each of the stories. In the Creation Story, when the animals are trying to gather earth from the bottom of the waters, one of the animals, Hanq̄hgyę (Muskrat) loses their life in the effort. When Hanq̄hgyę's body rises to the surface, it is lifeless. However, as the animals tend to his body they find a clump of dirt in his claws. This dirt allows them to proceed with the next phase of the plan and place the earth on the back of the Turtle's back so that

Skywoman will have a place to reside. This example is of a grim and serious nature, but to me it showed that the stories understood and were conveying the various forms of sacrifice that sometimes accompany difficult or challenging tasks.

This aspect of the story particularly resonated with me because I could relate to it in the context of my personal language learning efforts. Many of the language learning resources I currently access to help me improve my ability to speak, were created by speakers who passed away many years ago. Some of them were already gone by the time I even began making a serious attempt to learn. I, (and many others) from my community carry a lot of appreciation and regard that those speakers dedicated their time and energy to making these resources. In doing so, they provided an inspiration and a foundation for language revitalization for many other efforts across the community.

This example also speaks to the notion that different partners will be able to make different kinds of contributions to a collaborative effort. That while there needs to exist a kind of appreciation and mutual respect amongst partners, it may also be valuable to establish particular roles within a collaboration to achieve its goals.

The use of a convenor and other roles. Collaborations can utilize various roles to increase their chances of success. These roles can include convenors, champions, and sponsors. In the majority of examples from the Haudenosaunee cultural studies reviewed for this study, collaborations utilized the role of the convenor. In describing the role of the convenor, Gray (1985) suggests that the convenor is an individual or group that identifies and brings all other stakeholders to the table. In the cultural stories, the convenor role is typically played by the protagonist or central character (the Peacemaker, the Fatherless Boy, Sapling). For example, it is the Peacemaker who identifies and individually approaches the leaders of the villages who he wishes to engage in the collaboration. He does not stop there, however. In the Story of the Peacemaker, the Peacemaker takes great care in selecting what Crosby and Bryson (2010) referred to as champions. First, with the clan mother Jikonsaseh (often referred to as the First Clan Mother or the Mother or Nations), and secondly, with Hiawatha, the chief of the first village that he visits. The Peacemaker also makes an ally of the most powerful leader, Tadadaho, an Onondaga chief who is influential and feared.

With these three people by his side, the Peacemaker is better able to persuade people to commit to his vision for peace. The text provides a confirmation that he takes those relationships seriously; that he is invested in them. For example, at a crucial part of the story he refuses to confront Tadadaho before Jikonsaseh has joined them. At another time he takes time out from his relationship building work to help Hiawatha work through his grief over the loss of his daughters. At another point he uses his own abilities to clear the Tadadaho's mind of darkness. It is apparent to the reader/listener that he recognizes how important their support is to the success of the collaboration. To me, these represent strategic choices in the selection of partners, an awareness of the specific roles they can play and a clear view of how those roles can help the collaboration achieve its goals.

It is also clear that there is a role for experience and expertise in a collaboration. This can be seen in The Creation Story, when Sapling, the good twin, undertakes to steal the moon. He is careful in his selection of partners, choosing only those helpers who have the skill set to help him achieve his goal. Indeed, in this example he asks people to volunteer, but also asks them to declare what skills they have that will help him with his task. In some cases, if he is not satisfied with their answer, he does not include them on the team. This is an interesting example, at odds in some ways with the inclusive nature of the The Story of the Peacemaker (which aims to include everyone). Part of the difference in these two stories might be attributed to the type of collaborative effort that is occurring in Sapling's heist example (task-oriented) and the different challenges that emerge around different types of collaborations. This serves to introduce a discussion around challenges that are experienced around collaboration.

Challenges (Degadi:hoha:kta': *'things that impede'*)

The third theme explores the challenges around collaboration that the cultural stories read for this research study. It is discussed in four sub-themes: partner behaviour, lack of resources, lack of time, and fear and resistance.

Partner Behaviour. The success of collaborations can depend in large part on the behaviours of its participants. The Haudenosaunee cultural stories reviewed in this research study showed examples of partner behaviour that proved challenging within a

collaborative process. These examples include the level of commitment shown by the members at various stages of the collaboration, or partners who do harm to the collaboration through their own (often unintentional) actions. Partner behaviour could also be impacted by grief, loss, or illness.

In reviewing the cultural stories, I took note of examples where members demonstrated varying degrees of commitment to the collaboration. For example, in the Story of the Peacemaker, not every partner immediately agrees to the message that is being shared by the Peacemaker.

In the Creation Story, when the good twin, Sapling has successfully stolen the moon back from his brother and grandmother, there comes a point in the effort when two animals (who were not a part of the mission to begin with) join in on the mission. When the grandmother calls out and demands that the moon be returned, one of these animals takes pity on the grandmother and decides to try return the moon to her. Sapling essentially calls the animal being out on this action and relegates them from the collaboration. Shortly thereafter the second animal who had joined the collaboration midway through also leaves.

This was an interesting sequence and I thoughtfully considered the content while reading it. For the most part, I interpreted this episode as a kind of parable about or commentary on collaborators who are not fully committed to the vision of the collaboration, are susceptible to the goals and wishes of external forces, or have joined midway through (on a whim, in this case and not by invitation) and may not be fully informed as to the significance of the collaboration's goal. I also found that this example of something going wrong in the collaboration made me reflect on the collaborative process as a whole; the steps that could be taken to better engage partner's commitment to the common goals, for example, or a consideration of how Lasker et al.'s (2001) model for assessing partner synergy might have strengthened the collaboration against these particular happenings prior to beginning the mission to steal back the moon.

The stories also showed other examples of partners leaving collaborations, either because of circumstance (illness) or because they have died (as in the case of the Muskrat who dies while retrieving earth from the water's depths in the Creation Story), or who have overextended and caused harm to themselves while participating (the Muskrat

example once again). The cultural stories also indicate that the loss of a fellow collaborator through any of these means impact the behaviour of other members of the collaboration. The particular challenges presented by grief due to the death of a partner are explored at length in the Story of the Peacemaker, and are so significant as to require a specific ceremony called a Condolence (in which the remaining leaders are comforted or ‘condoled’, and a new Chief takes the place of the one who has passed on).

Resources. A lack of resources to complete the activities or achieve the goals of a collaboration are a challenge. While there was some indication in the cultural stories that physical resources were a challenge for collaboration, it was clear that human resources were most definitely a challenge. Moreover, it was particularly challenging to find the right person for the right job. For example, people (or animal beings) assigned to certain tasks can get tired or the work they are assigned can prove to be beyond what they are capable, resulting in key tasks not being completed. When Sapling embarks on the mission to steal the moon back from his twin brother, he discovers that one of his team members is physically unable to complete a task. Ultimately, the task is completed but not without adjustments to the plan.

Time. Although it did not appear in every one of the stories read for this research study, for me, a lack of time stood out as one of the challenges experienced by members of a collaboration. This is largely in part for the ways in which a collaboration needs to adjust their planning efforts to account for a scarcity of time to respond or solve a problem. For example, in the case of Skywoman falling, the need for urgent action created a crisis scenario in which there was limited time for planning—only response. As a result, the initial strategies used to intervene and help Skywoman circumvented a tragedy but were not sustainable over a longer term, and additional actions were required to resolve the matter. For me, the challenges around time resonated with the context of collaboration that this research study is interested in (Indigenous language revitalization), where a scarcity of time creates an urgency to act, but longer term, strategic interventions are also vital to stabilizing threatened languages (Fishman, 2001).

Fear and resistance. Fear and resistance emerged as one of the most prominent challenges alluded to by the cultural stories reviewed in this study. Resistance in the cultural stories took many forms and the stories attempted to illustrate how resistance can

exist prior to the formal convening of the collaboration. For example, at the beginning of the Story of the Peacemaker, the grandmother (who has been isolated from other people along with her daughter), does not understand how her daughter could have become pregnant. Despite what her daughter tells her, she is angry with her and her anger begins to have negative impacts on her daughter. This particular example of a someone choosing to resist the truth and acting from this place of resistance in a way that negatively impacts a relationship occurs across all three of the cultural stories. In every case, this kind of resistance creates an inhospitable environment for working together that must then be overcome before additional steps or parts of the process can occur.

Resistance can also take the form of fear. For example, in the Story of the Peacemaker, most potential collaborators expressed their fears about agreeing to peace only to be overcome by another nation who did not commit to the same agreement. Their uncertainties were compounded by the fact that they were warranted. There were leaders in the Story of the Peacemaker who did not want to give up their power and did not see the benefit in doing so—even for peace. In these cases, the resistance that various people had toward undertaking collaborative work were resolved through an arduous relationship building process—but they were certainly challenges that the Peacemaker and his fellow collaborators had to work on overcoming.

Supports (Gadi:hwaw'aseh: '*things that support*')

The fourth theme explores ideas emerging from the three cultural stories about the supports that help a collaboration achieve its goals. There are four sub-themes: resources, people and non-human being participants, relationships and family supports, and a shared knowledge base. They are each described briefly below.

Resources. Collaborations often require physical resources. The nature of these physical resources varied across each of the examples from the stories reviewed for this study. For example, in The Creation Story after Skywoman is rescued, she requires earth so that she can stand, move around and establish a home for herself. Land is a resource that also appears in The Story of the Fatherless Boy. His collaboration to reinstate the practice of the four ceremonies required land, or a physical space where the community could live together in safety and where they could gather together for both social and

ceremonial purposes (in the story, they play lacrosse as well as conduct ceremonies). In the Story of the Peacemaker, the Peacemaker the required physical resources include a canoe, a paddle, and antlers. The Peacemaker uses the canoe to travel the distance between the village where he grew up, and the shores of Cayuga Lake, where the story tells us he first came ashore. Physical resources are a support that helps the work of the collaboration to occur. Human and animal beings are another support that help undertake the work of a collaboration.

People and non-human being participants. One of the main supports in each of the collaborative examples emerging from the stories, is the need for willing participants. Several times through the stories, the person in the convenor role asks if someone is willing to do a certain task. For example, in the Story of the Fatherless Boy, when showing people how to do a ceremony, the boy asks if someone is willing to try and learn what he has shown them. In every case at least one-person volunteers, and he takes care to acknowledge and point out to the other members of his village how fortunate it is for them that someone is willing to try and take on this responsibility.

Relationships and family support. The idea that relationships, and family support and kinship ties were important to the success of a collaboration was a feature was unique from the other kinds of supports described by the research literature about collaboration. The majority of the seven examples of collaboration in the cultural stories involved the role of a convenor (a role that helps identify other potential partners). As I was reading this story, it occurred to me that there are several moments in the life cycle of a collaboration, where the convenor's work was supported by community and family members. For example, in the Story of the Peacemaker, the grandmother must overcome her resistance because she is impacting the health of her pregnant daughter. Once her daughter has given birth, the grandmother takes both of her kin to their home village, which accepts and embraces their family. It is during this time, as the Peacemaker is growing up, that he is able to develop and grow his leadership skills and enhance his understanding of the work he hopes to undertake and the problems he wants to address. It felt significant that all this learning and growth was enabled because of his mother and grandmother had helped to make it so. While this is a somewhat unconventional view of

support, this idea of community and family history also resonated with the context of collaboration in an Indigenous language revitalization context.

Shared knowledge base. Connected to the notion of community and family support is this idea of having a shared knowledge base or shared understanding. This knowledge base becomes a support because as the convenors encourage their partners to embrace the notion of peace, they frequently draw on symbols or metaphors to explain how collaboration will help solve the problem. For example, the Peacemaker uses the example of a bundle of arrows to describe the impact of people coming together as one. “So this is what you shall contribute, one arrow for each of your nations, that is, five nations and five arrows, of which we shall make a bundle and they shall become one...what you are looking at is five arrows which I have joined to make only a single one” (Gibson et al., 1992, p. 300). The fact that the nations have a shared knowledge base (they utilize arrows for survival), make the metaphor a meaningful one.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings from my analysis of the Haudenosaunee cultural stories explored in this study. The findings were organized in accordance with the research sub-questions. The Indigenous research methodology guiding this study required that the findings from the Haudenosaunee cultural stories were shared to provide a clearer picture of the foundational cultural knowledges that underpin this study. In exploring examples, themes and metaphors of collaboration from Haudenosaunee cultural stories, I sought to honour the foundational importance of ancestral Indigenous knowledge, build a personal understanding and appreciation for the insights therein, and challenge myself to reflect on how they could help answer the overarching research question guiding this study which is: how can Indigenous language leaders collaborate to revitalize Indigenous language? In the next chapter, I present the findings of the semi-structured interviews with Indigenous language leaders at Six Nations of the Grand River.

CHAPTER FIVE: INTERVIEW FINDINGS

In Chapter Five, I share the findings from the semi-structured interviews. The goal of this study was to explore how Indigenous language leaders at Six Nations of the Grand River understand and approach collaboration for the purposes of revitalizing Indigenous languages. This chapter is divided into four sections, which correspond with the four sub-research questions guiding the study. These sections are: understanding, strategies, supports, and challenges. Each section is further explored through subsections which emerged from participants' perceptions of what collaboration is, stories about their experiences undertaking collaborative work and their ideas and opinions about how to approach collaboration. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Understanding

The first section explores how Indigenous language leaders understand the notion of collaboration. This theme emerged from questions about how participants think about collaboration and their experiences undertaking collaborative work, both within their organizations as well as with external groups or stakeholders. It is discussed in four subsections: the purpose of collaboration, setting goals, examples of collaboration and Haudenosaunee cultural perspectives about collaboration.

Purpose of Collaboration. Working together towards a common goal or in an attempt to resolve a problem that cannot be solved alone is one purpose which drives collaborative work. The majority of language leaders interviewed for this study talked about collaboration as a process in which two or more groups could work together towards a common goal. For example, Hannah described collaboration as a way to harness the collective strengths of the group to reach a target or accomplish a specific goal. "Helping each other in areas that you know, taking what one organization is good at and helping another organization where they're not so good at. Using each other's strengths to get to point X quicker." Hannah's discussion about harnessing collective strengths to accomplish goals resonates with Lasker et al's (2001) argument that the problem solving process can benefit from including diverse perspectives, "Working together, through a process that encourages the exploration of differences, people

involved in partnerships have the potential to break new ground, challenge accepted wisdom, and discover innovative solutions to problems” (Lasker et al., 2001, p. 184). While these can all be potential outcomes of working together, participants in this study did not explicitly discuss problem-solving in relation to collaboration. They did however, talk about collaboration as a mechanism to improve things or make a situation better. In this case, their comments about collaboration occurred in the context of the revitalization of Haudenosaunee languages at Six Nations. For example, Margot framed collaboration as a process when, “you work together for the good of something”. In Margot’s view, language programs could better help revitalization efforts by working together but in expressing this viewpoint she also shared that she felt it was important for a relationship to be developed first. Similarly, Henry described collaboration as, “people working towards something, a common goal or giving each other what they need.” Together, Margot and Henry’s comments demonstrate an understanding about the nature of the collaborative process as being one where people or groups coming together to undertake work. The next subsection delves further into how the nature of this work can be determined.

Setting Goals. Building on the idea that the purpose of collaboration is to work together towards a common goal, it follows that shared goal-setting becomes an important aspect of the collaborative process. A few of the participants in this study confirmed that setting goals is an essential activity for collaborations to undertake and suggested it would be helpful to the collaborative process if participants were able to articulate what their individual or group goals are (in addition to contributing to a collective goal-setting exercise). In sharing his perspectives on collaboration, Leo offered the following, “I think that for there to be collaboration in the community, there has to be clearly stated goals for each of the groups that are working in the community about what is the goal of their projects. And once we find those things out, okay, is there another group that has this same or similar goal to you? Well then, those groups can work together.” Leo emphasized that individuals or groups running Indigenous language revitalization projects should have clear goals, and that these project-level goals could inform the broader collaborative efforts that might take place within the community. Leo’s perspective on the importance of goal-setting at the project level, aligns with

Gray's (1985) suggestion that collaborative processes provide opportunities for partners to articulate individual values, examine commonalities and explore how their goals might be met. Leo's reflection about his own experiences setting goals, informs his understanding about the meaning of goal-setting within a collaboration.

Examples of Collaboration. Collaborative work occurs in a variety of contexts. Participants in this study shared examples of the contexts in which they undertake collaborative work within departments in their organizations, and with outside organizations. Participants also collaborated with elders and language speakers to provide language support or create language resources for use within schools or language programs but overwhelmingly, the majority of participants in the study provided examples of hosting events as the main form of collaborative activity they were engaged in. The events participants described were typically held with one of three intentions: (a) to raise the profile of language within the community, (b) for professional development purposes, or (c) as a fundraising activity. Participants tended to describe these events as having a clear start and finish (rather than being an ongoing collaboration), although they each include a planning, delivery and evaluation component. Participants saw these events as being beneficial to the Six Nations community in various ways including: informing community members about opportunities to learn languages, connecting community members with language learning resources, and providing them with ways to financially support or sponsor language revitalization (even if they were not learners themselves).

In describing the nature or purpose of these events, Alison shared that they occur "for the benefit of the broader community." She spoke about how she viewed these events as an opportunity to show two or more organizations working together to provide a platform for other organizations or language groups to share their work with the Six Nations community. Alison's perspective of organizations modelling how to work together while mobilizing knowledge about community language revitalization efforts aligns with Lasker et al.'s (2001) suggestion that partnerships with considerable amounts of synergy can better understand and document the impact of their actions. For Alison, being able to document the impact of language revitalization activity and actions for community was a priority. These sentiments about helping or sharing information with

community were shared by other participants in the study. Participants tended to view the Six Nations community as the beneficiary of their language revitalization efforts, and this notion of community (almost more than any motivator mentioned) helped shape understandings about the meaning of collaboration in a language revitalization context.

Collaboration references embedded in Haudenosaunee culture. The Haudenosaunee culture stories reviewed in this research project contained several examples of collaborative work being undertaken. Throughout the interviews, participants drew on examples or metaphors for collaboration that emerged from other Haudenosaunee cultural contexts, and they shared the ways those examples also informed their understanding of collaboration. For example, Alison shared her thoughts about how an underlying sense of collective responsibility helps to shape the role various organizations take in supporting the cause of Indigenous language revitalization.

The responsibility and ownership of language is collectively held. But we have one piece of the that we're contributing, not that we own it but that we're contributing to given our role in the community. So, it's knowing your place and knowing what you can do to help that collective responsibility and not stepping on anybody.

Alison also shared her belief that it was important to let collaborations develop naturally and in line with the way "we do things". Elaborating on this, she added, "It's like getting ready to cook at the longhouse. It's organized, but it's pretty organic. The people show up and everybody starts doing their thing, you know what I mean? The meal gets done, but you never really know who is going to be peeling the potatoes." Here, Alison describes a scenario where participants operate from a shared and familiar knowledge to accomplish what needs to be done for the collective good of those attending a gathering.

This idea of having focus and getting things done for the good of the collective was also echoed by George. In talking about the Creation Story, George described a situation in which the bad-minded twin (Flint) becomes preoccupied with what the good-minded twin (Sapling) is doing which causes him to be agitated and suspicious and leads him to confront his brother.

There's a part in there where the bad minded twin comes up to his brother and says, 'Why are you always making people upset with me? Or why are you always doing things against me or looking down on me or something?' And the good minded twin is like, 'What are you talking about? Why are you so worried about what I think or what I'm doing or what others are saying or doing?' And it just seemed to me that—because they're just trying to get along, right? And I think that's about collaboration and getting along, is I would see those two twins. Because you know, the good-minded twin is just quietly going about his business, because he knows what needs to be done, right? He needs to make this world for the human beings that are going to come. So he's set on a purpose. And he's able to work toward that and focus on that and not get too caught up in what his brother's complaining about.

George's story about the way in which the good twin works or gets things done for the good of humans aligned with the way several of the participants connected the ideas of community, the purpose of working together, and the focus required to accomplish work. In sharing this story, George is illustrating one of the many ways to connect ideas from central Haudenosaunee stories to ways of working together in the present. He further adds,

Our people are interesting because it is collective. Everything we do is pretty much collective. You know, we gotta help each other. There's a sense of clans, and working across the fire, and the stuff you see. It's groups of people helping other groups of people. It's very rare that it's an individual who's you know...from time to time in our stories there's one individual whose shown us different ways but for the most part, on the day to day, it's people who have to work together, you know? In the way in which faith keepers are instructed to work together these days, right? To do their duties responsibly and fairly and to the best of their abilities at all times. So they help each other accomplish that. And you know, I think a lot of our stuff is built into our ways. We collaborate all the time. We can make things happen with the recognition that everyone's good at something.

Participants held that cultural stories and practices carry valuable knowledge about how collaboration functions. While their individual understandings and experiences of collaboration were unique (as one might expect), participants in this study drew examples and metaphors from cultural stories and community-based cultural practices and utilized those insights as a way to understand and describe collaboration.

The next section describes the strategies participants use to collaborate.

Strategies

The second section explores the strategies Indigenous language leaders in this study have used to collaborate or work in a collaborative manner. This section emerged from participants sharing stories and reflecting on their experiences working with others, especially elders and language speakers with whom collaborations on language revitalization projects frequently occurs. This section is discussed in five subsections: relationship building and acknowledging previous work, establishing trust, communication, sharing the work and food.

Relationship Building and Acknowledging Previous Work. The process of engaging existing and potential collaborators is an ongoing activity throughout the duration of a collaboration. The majority of participants in this study identified relationship building as fundamental to the process of collaboration and had different strategies that were used for this purpose and are included in the subsections to follow. In sharing their perspectives on relationship building, participants talked about the importance of establishing positive working relationships based on trust and mutual respect. These efforts were particularly important where it concerned Indigenous knowledges or language projects, which participants attributed to ongoing challenges created by colonialism and policies of forced assimilation, as well as a history of negative experiences with research and knowledge extraction. For example, several participants acknowledged how the attitude of the Six Nations of the Grand River community towards languages had not always been positive and it resulted in many of the community members, who were engaged in language revitalization work over the last forty years, often doing it with little support.

In talking about this history, George shared that Six Nations of the Grand River is a community with many (and often competing) priorities and within that broader community, there were certain leaders or groups of people who endeavoured to preserve language and cultural knowledge: “Really, the way I feel about it, is there’s a traditional community that has survived because those folks, and this is, you know, the spiritual longhouse part of it or the political arm of it, knew it was a responsibility that they had to keep these things up in order for the rest of us to be healthy, and well, and safe. And they understood that that responsibility transcended any kind of political oppression or put downs that they received or felt from outside this community or within this community.” Relationship building in a climate where there is a history that includes both resilience and apathy requires a genuine acknowledgement of the efforts undertaken by those who endeavoured (in this case) to keep languages and cultural knowledge alive for present and future generations.

The need to acknowledge personal commitments and sacrifice regarding language revitalization was echoed by Alison, “some of the initiatives that happen in the community, or are happening in the community, came about as a result of really serious personal sacrifice. And so there’s a lot of personal sense of ownership there. And so you have to acknowledge and respect that.” Like other study participants, Alison felt it was important to acknowledge the work and contributions of others as an initial step in the relationship building process. Recognizing and celebrating the efforts undertaken by various groups and individuals to revitalize languages is one way to demonstrate respect and a step towards establishing trust and creating a welcoming environment for collaborative work to occur.

Establishing Trust. Establishing trust and creating a level of comfort and security for collaborators is an important part of the collaborative process. Because of the nature of Indigenous language revitalization work, potential collaborators often include elders or first and second language speakers, many of whom recall and are healing from the tensions created by the historical circumstances mentioned previously (colonialism, assimilation, and exploitive research practices). Participants therefore viewed establishing trust as a natural component of working with others, including elders and language speakers, and used various strategies to go about establishing it.

Phoebe talked about the importance of taking time to create a level of comfort for elders and language speakers who work with her organization. “It’s almost like you have to start with creating a relationship just in general with the person. So sometimes, we have some people there, and even then, they’ll ask ‘Well, who are you working with? What is it for?’ And some of them shy away from certain things.” For Phoebe, creating a sense of trust was accomplished by taking the time to talk or answer their questions about a project, even when she faced deadlines. Phoebe pointed out, “You know, you gotta go with the flow. And that’s hard too because, like I said, work is fast-paced, you’re in an office or you’re doing something with your own deadlines. But you just gotta make that work, you really gotta work with the person because, again you’re there getting something from them.” As with other participants in the study, Phoebe felt that trust was best established when she prioritized taking the time to make the environment comfortable and responsive to the needs of the elders or speakers she was working with and who were sharing their expertise with her.

Alison shared similar views about how she had learned to work with elders and language speakers and create a welcoming environment. “To work with them, you really have to take your cues from them in terms of comfort level. You can’t bring them into an environment and you know, have them formally stand up and lecture. It has to be the way they conduct their life. And that’s usually very face-to-face, because that’s how they acquired the information and that’s how they’re willing to share it.” Allison’s insight about being aware of how information is (or is not) acquired and passed on were echoed by other participants.

Terrance agreed that it was important to establish trust by not placing elders or speakers in overly formal environments, and further, that it was also helpful to be thoughtful and thorough when inviting participants to participate in projects. Terrance also explained how using Ogwehoweh languages themselves can create a level of trust and comfort, sharing examples of times when projects were described in the language before asking people to participate. “That often does seem to make them more comfortable. It makes the elder more comfortable because it’s their first language really, and, just because they can speak English just as fluently, doesn’t mean they don’t appreciate hearing or communicating in their language instead.” Terrance explained that

it can also be helpful if family members are present and able to help make sense of the request to participate or share information, if needed.

Finally, participants expressed a belief that establishing trust also included respecting people's boundaries. Most importantly, participants felt that it created an atmosphere of trust and demonstrated respect to accept those times when people (whether elders, or language speakers, or other community groups), say they do not want to participate. Being willing to hear and accept what people are saying, helps to keep lines of communication open and positive.

Communication. Communication is a strategy that helps find new partners, keep existing partners engaged in existing projects or meet the goals of collaborative projects. Participants talked about the various strategies they used to communicate, and the various purposes that communication helped them accomplish. Phoebe explained how she uses communication as a way of finding new people to collaborate with. For her, this was especially important given the scarcity of speakers, or workers with particular skill-sets who are also speakers. "Networking. Networking to find more people, and again just talking to other people who may know someone." Like other participants, Phoebe saw being able to interact with people at community languages events or conferences as one opportunity to share about the type and scope of language work that she was looking to collaborate on.

Being prepared to talk about a project's aims, its importance and why people should dedicate their time to it was another communication strategy participants used to collaborate. George described this process as, "A lot of talk and cajoling and convincing and demonstrating and being purposeful. To be clear in your vision and articulate that briefly, well and concisely. And show it, too, not just talk about it, but show it with examples and symbols and things you can do to make people believe in that and work towards it." George's description emphasizes the importance of taking time to think and plan communications about a project and improving the clarity of the project's goals using visuals and examples. These ideas align with the use of symbolism and metaphors from the Story of the Peacemaker like the bundle of arrows, which helped to explain how the collaboration would work and why it would be beneficial to participate.

Communication is important at the start of a collaboration to share about the idea or to engage potential partners, but participants also shared the belief that communication is vital at all stages of a collaboration. For example, Leo explained how his organization used communication to help understand what changes need to be made or what needs to be done differently to achieve their goals. In describing the steps they take to have this dialogue, Leo offered, “We just talk about it. There is no blueprint. There’s no...you can’t Google it.” Other participants described a similar process of using meetings to communicate about and provide updates about projects. Terrance mentioned having meetings with simple agendas during the times where there was a collaboration occurring between his organization and another. “It was just an exercise of organization more. Like setting the times, and getting registrations sorted. I don’t want to make it sound too simplistic. But it was a meeting to discuss what was going on.” For Terrance, having meetings helped to accomplish the tasks of the collaboration and helped the activities of the collaboration run more smoothly. Participants in this study recognized and placed value in meeting and communicating, but also pointed out the importance of being respectful of people’s commitments and obligations to other projects.

Sharing the work. Respecting the demands on people’s time and sharing workloads helps enable their participation in collaborative work. All of the participants acknowledged that there was a scarcity of human resources where it concerned language speakers or technicians who are also able to speak an Indigenous language. Henry felt that it was a part of his role as a leader to be aware of this reality and to allocate workloads in as respectful a manner as possible. “The other thing is not burning them out. Sharing the load. Because if you have one person who’s strong, it’s easy to put everything on their plate and expect a lot from them, but as a group I think they know that everyone’s got to support each other. So try to share that responsibility. Try not to make someone the lead of every project and every committee and all that.” For Henry, it was important share responsibility as a strategy for keeping people engaged in language revitalization work. Other participants talked about using a similar approach. Phoebe shared how she tried to spread work around amongst her developing network. “You know, we still help others. If we know they’re capable, but nobody accesses them, we will ask them if they want to participate in something. Because again, some elders may

be super busy and some may not be.” Sharing workloads was important to many of the participants because of concern over the limited availability of speakers to do certain kinds of work.

Food. Sharing a meal and ensuring that participants are nourished helps prepare them to undertake collaborative work. While this was a strategy that emerged more from the Haudenosaunee cultural stories than the literature review about collaboration, it seemed significant that it was reinforced through conversations with participants. Margot shared that food and eating together was one of the ways her organization approached relationship building between learners, elders and speakers. At the gatherings learners are encouraged to speak and ask question in the languages, and the elders are invited to share their knowledge in return. “Our very first meeting with elders, that one is always the most uncomfortable because everyone is shy because these are first language speakers, and they, like I said, you ask them something it is right off the top of their heads. So these new students are very shy to be able to talk in front of them. But after that first snack...they’re all best friends.” Margot described how at the first meeting, the elders are invited to share words of encouragement with the learners and how this reciprocal sharing of time, knowledge and food helps to establish their relationship which continues through more gatherings throughout the year. Listening to Margot’s stories about the gatherings and how much the learners and elders enjoyed sharing language and food with one another, brought to mind the following words shared by Linda Tuhiwai Smith at a gathering of educators and researchers, “Our lives and our careers have intersected and interacted and I think what that means is that we are a community. And to me, a community has a conversation together and then we eat.” (The Graduate Center, CUNY, 2013). In Margot’s example, food and sharing food was the coalescence of several strategies: relationship building, establishing trust, taking time to communicate and demonstrating respect for people’s time and creating a sense of community around a collaborative act of revitalizing language.

Challenges

Participants in this study identified a wide range of challenges that emerged from engaging in or attempting to engage in collaborative work in the area of Indigenous

language revitalization. These challenges include a scarcity of human and financial resources, limited time and intensive workloads, the lack of a broader strategic focus, the perceptions and attitudes of community members towards language, and a competitive environment. Participants in this study signaled a sense of disconnect from other groups engaged in language revitalization across the Six Nations of the Grand River community and spoke about there not being enough time to do the level of relationship building that collaboration required. Participants also suggested that funding was the major barrier to collaboration, because most programs were too concerned about being able to continue from year to year to think beyond what is needed to survive in the present. Other participants shared their belief that indifference towards language was one of the main challenges to overcome, and that indifference manifested itself in various ways within different audiences and impacted the overall community perception of language.

Human Resources. The scarcity of first and second language speakers of Haudenosaunee languages was identified as one of the main challenges by the participants in this study. Participants in this study talked about the risks posed to long-term revitalization efforts if there was not a sufficiently large group of language speakers to support the delivery of language programming at all levels (early years, K-12, adult immersion, and post-secondary) across the community. Participants explained that the impacts of a small speaker pool go beyond the classroom—it also impacts and limits the creation of educational or curriculum resources. Henry explained, “To me, the biggest challenge is can you ask so and so, or can you ask this person? Well, they’re already doing ten different things for the language. So there’s such a scarcity of human resources which makes actual other resources difficult.” Neil echoed the challenge of having insufficient human resources. “Sometimes we come across that here where we have, you know, several people will work in various programs, and sometimes they’re all pulled in and wanted in different places at the same time.” Other participants faced similar challenges, sharing that even when they did have funding to create curriculum and learning resources for their language programs it could be a struggle to find people to work on them who were not already overextended. Phoebe expanded,

Finding people that are willing to work with you, that’s the biggest challenge, finding people that have the qualities that you’re looking for to complete a job.

Because we do a lot of contract work—like independent work and we have a core staff, but say we need a Seneca speaker or an Onondaga speaker. We need to seek them out. So finding them, seeing if they're willing to work if they're not busy, because that's a big thing, too. For a lot of language people with everything that's happened, everybody's busy or employed, or they're in school constantly. So a lot of the time, some people you can't even ask because you already know they've got like four or five projects going.

For Phoebe and many other participants, finding language speakers with specific skill sets was a major challenge and one that continuously impacted other language revitalization work.

For example, Alison explained that a lack of human resources to produce language resources could sometimes compound challenges because people developed materials, but for various reasons were not comfortable sharing them. She explains, "That can be problematic because then we keep writing the same stories over and over again." Alison's concern over potentially reproducing similar materials at a time when there was such great need for a variety of resources in classrooms was echoed by other participants. But though participants pointed to the lack of human resources as a challenge, they also saw their programming efforts as one of the ways they were trying to create a larger pool of speakers to draw from to strengthen the overall language revitalization effort. In doing so they often encountered a new barrier: the lack of stable, operational funding.

Funding. It is challenging for organizations or groups to work together when there is uncertainty around the funding for their individual programs or projects. All participants discussed the variety of challenges posed by limited or inconsistent funding to their programs. Hannah spoke about the challenge of needing to create new projects when applying for funding, as opposed to being able to support the activities of a language program on an ongoing basis. She explains, "The hardest part, and as you know, I've said this before too, is when you apply for these different sources, it's often based on new activity, there's no way we can enhance. There's no way it can go to our core. It has to be based on new activity which is not where we need it." Like other participants, Hannah was concerned about having to create new projects instead of being able to strengthen investments into the activities that have demonstrated success in creating new

language speakers, replicating successful practices or programs with different target audiences, or modifying existing to programs to better align with successful practices.

Leo also talked about the fact that there was no ongoing funding, and how language programs need to apply for funding year after year. “The thing is always funded on an ad hoc basis. Most of the times, it’s six months or eight months. You know, your job only lasts until you get refunded. So you’re constantly scrambling to get refunded.” In sharing further about the impacts of this funding cycle on job security for employees involved in the programs, he offered, “Well, at the back of everyone’s mind who works here, you know that your job could end at the end of the next fiscal period, or the end of the year. They don’t know that they have a job the following year. So that’s unsettling.” Here Leo highlights one of the peripheral impacts—job security—that a lack of ongoing operational funding creates for his employees.

Participants also pointed out that proposal driven funding was a challenge because it forced individuals, groups and organizations to compete with one another over it. Henry explains, “The trick at Six Nations is that it’s not the only language, right? That’s another one of those real challenges. The resources are splintered that way even. We fight for the same...that colonialism thing, right?” Henry’s comments highlight an important issue underscoring the funding challenges that participants in this study faced—they are forced to compete with one another for funding through a proposal process. Henry was one of several participants who linked the underfunding of language programming with the goals of colonization (to assimilate Indigenous Peoples into the mainstream through the erosion of language, culture and connection to land). Catherine for example, expressed a desire to work together but expressed her concern that collaborating or being strategic with funding would also end up decreasing the amount of funding available to her programs. She explains, “But then my fear is that if that happens and our current funding covers those workers, they’ll say ‘Oh, okay. Now you’re going to get those three workers and they’re going to go through this funding channel’. And then we lose these through our core funding, which we often see, right? Because the overall funding envelope usually doesn’t change. They just realign things”. Catherine’s concern stemmed from her experience with external government funding, where resources allocated to First

Nation communities rarely increase when new funding is announced, but are instead pulled from one priority and reallocated to another.

Neil echoed these comments, pointing out how the competition for funding does not occur solely amongst the languages or language programs, but at the broader funding landscape of community programs as well. “Sometimes though, you know, economics plays a role because language is not a priority for everyone. Sometimes other priorities trump language. And so when it comes to competition of resources, monetary resources, you know sometimes we’re told, well, having a roof over someone’s head trumps them being able to sit in a language class.”

In reflecting on the challenges created by a lack of funding and by the nature of the policy and funding landscape for First Nation communities, Alison shared her perception that there was still a willingness on behalf of the groups to work together. “I think there’s a willingness amongst most of the stakeholders to try and make it work, as long as we know. But trying to run two and three-year programs and not know if you’re going to have the money from year to year. It’s not good.” Alison went on to explain her view that once the funding situation was more stable, that the collaborative activities would follow. Recognizing that collaborative work often means an increase in workloads, the next barrier or challenge to be discussed is time.

Time. Managing an intensive workload impacts the availability of time and energy collaborators can dedicate toward collaboration. Participants interviewed in this study perform a variety of duties and responsibilities as a part of their role as leaders of Indigenous organizations or as administrators of language programs. Developing relationships with potential partners is a time-consuming process and participants were quick to point out that it was difficult to find the time within their already busy schedules to do this work, particularly when each organization had limited human resources.

In sharing her experience trying to bring partners together for a meeting, Hannah offered, “This is hard for them because everybody is so busy with their own agendas. It’s like they have to make the commitment to want to meet, you know, once a week, once a month, whatever it takes and just roll this out together.” Hannah was sympathetic to time challenges based on her own experiences attending meetings. She explains, “I think when you attend, then you’re behind in some other area, right? So the more you’re pulled out of

the office, the more you've got to come back to, especially when you're in a small operation. So when you're away, I mean, there's no one there to count on to do anything so it just kinda piles up, and piles up." Many other participants shared similar challenges balancing day-to-day obligations and emerging issues with attending to more collaborative endeavours. In describing on initiative, Alison shared that the project got started and then, "through operational pressures and everything, it just kind of fell off the table." Several participants in this study experienced challenges with having enough time to devote to collaborations in Indigenous language revitalization and described having to spend their time undertaking other actions such as advocating to external government or funders about the importance of investing in language revitalization. However, external stakeholders were not the only group that participants were concerned about. Many participants also expressed concern about the perception of language in the Six Nations community.

Perception of language in the community. Advancing language revitalization efforts in an environment where there is a lack of understanding and support for language was identified as another challenge that impacts individual and collaborative efforts. In trying to explain why language was important, participants pointed to the positive impacts of language on individual and community health and well-being and how it shaped a sense of identity. They also pointed to moments where it seemed like the community and the community's leadership were not prioritizing language as much as they could be, in spite of the fact that the majority of people living within the community have language speakers in their family history. Terrance explains,

So here at Six Nations, literally whatever the band registry is, like 25,000 people or something. Literally, every single one of those people has ancestry. Iroquoian ancestry. And that probably means with a fairly high certainty that language is also in their ancestry. And probably multiple languages. What's happened though, is that part of the identity has fallen away. Of being Ogwehoweh or being Haudenosaunee. For a lot of people. Just because they're so far removed from anyone ever speaking that language, or a language, I should say.

Here, Terrance is highlighting that an overwhelming majority of the Six Nations community has a relationship to language, and yet a small percentage of the community

is actively involved in language revitalization efforts. Terrance, along with a few other participants, felt that indifference played some role in why so few people were engaged. Despite participants identifying indifference or lack of community involvement as a challenge, they also recognized that challenges could emerge amongst those who were participating in language revitalization efforts.

Competing Ideologies. It goes without saying that there are different ideologies about how teaching and learning is accomplished and that those ideologies can occasionally come into competition or conflict with each other. Participants in this study acknowledged that there were, on occasion, differences of opinion or disagreements about how to approach language revitalization between or within groups involved in language initiatives. In reflecting on this challenge, George expressed uncertainty about where disagreements originated from, wondering if they occurred for a variety of reasons such as; limited resources, competition for students, or a difference of opinions over learning approaches. He shared, “Maybe that is the challenge. People feel they’re in a competition either for money or space or students and that their way is the proper way and those other people don’t know what they’re doing, kind of thing. I really don’t know.”

In reflection on his own observations of this challenge, Henry offered the following, “I find that there’s people that think that one way’s right. They can’t...sometimes they can’t get past their own personal, political, ideological...I don’t know how you want to say it. But then, I don’t know how open people are with each other, too.” Like all participants, Henry recognized that language revitalization was often a deeply personal experience, connected as it was to a history of assimilation and cultural genocide that could be felt on both an individual and collective level right up to the present. Still, Henry shared his thoughts about the importance of having challenging discussions about what is working and what is not, and being willing to follow up on potential strategies or new ideas. He further explains, “At some point, someone has to be able to say something uncomfortable. Otherwise, people just keep doing what they’re doing and they don’t agree. They might sit there and say, ‘yeah, yeah, yeah’. And then they go back and do their own thing, right?” Introducing new ideas, even when they are helpful to the effort of revitalizing language, is not always an easy task and participants in this study were careful to not assign blame or characterize one another’s efforts as

failures. And while none of the participants in this study particularly enjoyed talking about internal conflicts, sociolinguist Joshua Fishman (2001) offers the reassuring observation that differences of opinion are a nature occurrence in language revitalization. Fishman (2001) writes, “I have yet to meet a threatened language community that does not evince differences of opinion, of tactics and of ultimately underlying objectives along such lines.” (p. 9).

While participants acknowledged the realities of occasional disagreement and conflict over revitalization tactics, and that the potential for conflict might always be present—they also expressed a desire to move beyond them. George explained, “It's never easy and it's always gonna be filled with, you know, anger and conflict and jealousy that arises. That's always built into our stories, too. You see that everywhere. So it's gonna happen. Like, you can, you know, talk about being of one mind and a good mind and we know that this is the goal. That's what you work towards. But you know it's never that easy.” Participants in this study recognized that challenges and difference of opinion can and do emerge when working together towards a shared objective, while also indicating that these challenges could be overcome. Another challenge that participants identified was a lack of shared focus.

Lack of a common goal. Collaboration typically involves two or more individuals working together towards a common goal. This common goal provides a rallying point around which collaborations can focus their energies, align their efforts and commit their available resources. Participants in this study identified a lack of a common goal or shared focus as another challenge they faced when considering a collaboration in Indigenous language revitalization. Some participants felt that this occurred when organizations or groups did not include language in their vision and mission statements in a meaningful way. Sharing an experience of working for an organization that was not solely language-oriented, Terrance explained, “The impression was it was just me there and in their day-to-day running, language was absolutely not in anyone’s conscious whatsoever. It wasn’t taken seriously, if that’s the way to put it. Whenever I tried, because I would try to bring it up, no one was ever rude, but they just couldn’t engage. It was just not something that they really cared about.” Connecting this experience to a potential future collaboration, Terrance shared his view that languages needed to have

some place in the mandates of partners who are involved. He adds, “If that vision itself is not articulated in their values some place, and they’re only concerned about using up this money they have left over, to translate some things that are actually really difficult to translate, then it really is just a handoff. Like, here’s some money. Translate this and we’ll say we collaborated. Well, no. To me that’s not a collaboration.” Terrance, like some of the other participants, recognized that as language revitalization grew in importance within the community, more and more organizations would begin trying to include it in their operations. Some participants recognized that this would create an additional strain on the already limited human resources available to do revitalization work and recognized that a strategic approach to language might be beneficial—one that might include asking organizations to include language as a part of their vision and mission. In talking about this effort, Hannah offered, “I think we all have the good intention of doing it, we just haven’t, right? And why? Well, maybe it’s just that we think we still have to have our own agenda, our own purpose. So maybe it is just sometimes, I don’t know, our agendas are not flowing as good.” Hannah recognized the importance of clarifying individual agendas as a way of contributing to an overarching or shared vision. Participants in this study recognized that it was important to include language in their vision or mission statements in a meaningful way. Another emerging challenge then, is a lack of awareness about potential collaborators, their goals and their work.

Lack of awareness. A lack of awareness about what potential partners are working on can hinder collaboration efforts. Throughout the interviews, participants expressed uncertainty about which language groups were doing what. Hannah explained, “If you ask me right now, what such and such is doing with language, I couldn’t tell you. I know they have a language department. I know they’re interested in, like I know they have a bunch of resources or articles there and that sort of thing. But I don’t know exactly what’s happening.” Like several other participants, Hannah did not have the time to learn what each organization involved in language revitalization was working on. For some participants, not knowing what each other’s work entailed evoked a sense of disconnection. Margot spoke on how this disconnection made collaboration difficult. She explained, “I think we need to build a relationship, build a rapport with each other. And then, I think, we can start the process of collaboration. Because I think nobody knows

each other.” Like many of the language revitalization activities discussed by participants, from teaching and learning to administration, building a relationship and establishing a rapport requires time and commitment. All of the participants interviewed for this study had several projects underway, and while the majority of participants acknowledged that they were not quite certain what other organizations were doing they were still interested in learning about each other’s work. In reflecting on this, Phoebe offered the following, “We have a lot of things and we always encourage people to come in, but honestly, not a lot of people come in. Unless certain people know and then they find out, then they really take advantage of it, which is good. But I know people are really busy too, and they don’t really have a lot of time to advertise to everybody what they’re doing either.”

Like other participants in this study, Phoebe recognized that the challenges of collaboration in Indigenous language revitalization were many and interconnected. A lack of human resources created intensive workloads and limited the time participants could invest in networking or advertising their projects and language resource holdings. Funding uncertainty and day-to-day operations created additional strains and kept leaders and administrators busy with external advocacy and proposal writing to keep their doors open and their lights on. But while the challenges facing leaders in this study were significant, participants were also able to identify several supports that would help a collaboration in the area of language revitalization to come together.

Supports

Participants in this study were asked to share their views about the supports that would be required to undertake collaborative work in Indigenous language revitalization in the Six Nations of the Grand River community. Supports identified by participants included physical supports (space, money, resources) and organizational/supplementary supports (community support, knowledge of how to access resources, forums for discussion). Participants often connected their ideas about supports to the challenges outlined in the previous section.

Sustainable Funding. Funding was identified as one of the main supports required to make collaborative work feasible. Alison shared her view that even though leaders and program administrators were willing to collaborate, it was difficult for

potential partners to think about a broader community-wide collaboration when they were concerned about their individual funding allocations. Alison explained, “I think the biggest driver would be predictable and reliable funding. And from there the rest would follow. I think the motivation is there in the community, the intention and willingness to do things is there, it’s just that, you know. Can we eat or not? Are we going to have the capacity to do it?” For Alison, and many other participants, having a sense of security about the funding for ongoing initiatives would make it easier to consider how they might operate or work with others. Stable, multi-year funding was also viewed as an opportunity to strengthen existing language preservation efforts such as documentation, establish more intensive language programming to reach higher levels of proficiency than are currently being achieved, and to make a greater investment in cultivating the human resources necessary to support a larger scale revitalization effort.

Increased Human Resources. Increased human resources were identified as a support that would better enable community-wide collaborations to come together. Participants in this study identified two kinds of human resources needs. The first entered around language-specific human resources. Participants felt it was vital to have a large pool of highly proficient language speakers to work with, as the vast majority of language revitalization activity hinges on their involvement. Henry talked about how vital speakers were to his organization and how he valued the efforts of the speakers he worked with, including the second language speakers. He said, “I don’t think they (the second language speakers) give themselves enough credit for how much they do know. They know they’re not first language speakers right, and they just got to get over the fact that, well there’s not that many of them and so it’s going to be up to the second language speakers to keep it going until we get back into a cycle where there are first language speakers again.” Like Henry, many of the participants in this study expressed appreciation for the first and second language speakers who were engaged in language revitalization activities and spoke about how enormous or emotionally heavy the work of revitalizing threatened languages can feel at times. To alleviate and share this heaviness, several participants talked about the importance of matching the right person with the right work to make the best use of their knowledge, skills and expertise. For example, participants felt it was helpful to have additional support staff to help ease the amount of administrative

demands on language leaders and program administrators so that they could focus more on the language-specific aspects of the work—if that were their strength.

This brings us to the second kind of human resource support that was identified as being helpful to a broader collaborative effort in Indigenous languages—having additional staff to help manage the administrative or organizational matters that emerge from delivering language programs and coordinating projects. For Hannah, having additional administrative support would create more time for her to focus on collaborative efforts. She explains, “If we could have one full-time office person that could do all of these sixteen little things, that would be handy.” For Hannah, the day-to-day “little things” took up significant amounts of time and left little to dedicate to a broader effort.

Alison viewed having additional administrative staff as a way of creating more time to network and build awareness of what language resources other organizations had. She pointed out that with limited staff, there was little to no time to do the important relationship building work that would support collaboration—even when people wanted to. Using the example of building a catalogue or database of available language resources at Six Nations, she explains, “They can’t really go around and say, ‘just dropping by to get a copy of that’. Which is the light touch way to go about it.” Having administrative staff whose time could be dedicated to important, support functions and keep leadership informed of the activities and impacts of a collaborative effort is one support that participants identified as beneficial.

Leadership. Building or establishing a collaboration requires leadership. Participants in this study talked about leadership as one support that would help manifest a collaboration in language revitalization. Participants in this study felt that it was important that leaders have a high level of commitment to revitalizing Haudenosaunee languages. Several participants also felt it was important that leaders were able to speak one or more of the Haudenosaunee languages. In explaining why his own thoughts about why this is important, Henry offered the following, “Because no matter what...no matter how passionate or informed I am about language revitalization, my role in it is as limited as my ability to speak and understand it. So in many ways I feel like I'm the best non-speaking person that can be in this position and it's not enough. Like it's not enough.”

Like other participants, Henry believed that when the leader of an organization could speak one or more of the languages, it signaled a level of commitment that could echo through the organization and positively impact the organization's mission and goals.

Leo also shared the view that it was important for leaders to have the ability to speak because the leader's experience as a language speaker could help a program meet its language revitalization goals. He also acknowledged that institutions could be led by those who were not language speakers, but that their strengths and therefore, the focus of their institution's work might be in other areas. He explains, "There can be institutions where people aren't speakers at the top, but they may end up be working in areas where they may be doing research or archiving or something like that, where it's not creating speakers."

When it came to leaders who valued language (even if they were not themselves speakers) several participants shared the view that having leaders who valued language was important as it meant they were more likely to make language a priority. Phoebe explained, "If you have somebody at the head, and they don't really particularly care for something, they're not going to strive to do anything about it. If they're passionate about say leukemia research, they're going to do everything in their power to make sure everything related to that is going to get funded, or it's going to be seen out there, or attention is going to be brought to it." Like other participants, Phoebe recognized the role that leaders could play in generation funding and understanding around an issue.

Participants also felt that leaders had a role to play in establishing a language revitalization strategy. Hannah shared her view that leaders need to help set the direction and goals of such a strategy. While she recognized that leaders might not have time to commit to a broader collaboration on an ongoing basis, she thought it would be helpful if each organization could still delegate someone at their organization to make time and be involved in the early stages of the process. She explains, "I'm thinking with the leaders or the directors of each organization, or if they have a right hand, they can delegate someone to keep them all informed and in the loop so that nobody's voice is excluded." Like some of the other participants, Hannah felt it was important for leaders of the organizations to help set the direction of a collaborative effort at the onset, to make it easier for collaborators to align their activities and resources towards the goals of a collective

strategy (such as it may be) without losing sight of their individual goals. In addition to support from leadership, participants also indicated the importance of having the community support for Indigenous language revitalization.

Community Support. Community support for language revitalization can send a message of affirmation and appreciation to language revitalization workers, language learners and teachers, funders, and political leadership. Several of the participants in this study shared stories about the history of language revitalization in the Six Nations community and commented on the lack of interest that language speakers and activists often had to contend with over the last forty plus years. Many of the participants welcomed what they perceived as a shift in the community's attitude towards language over the last decade as being more positive than it had been previously. Like some of the other participants, Catherine expressed the view that the shift in community attitude seemed to coincide with greater public awareness about the impact of colonization and residential schools on Indigenous languages. Leo echoed this, explaining, "It's part of the movement that's going on for the last 10 years easily, where the language revitalization thing has really become stronger throughout Canada and the U.S. So that it's a thing to do. Also, Pierre Elliot Trudeau's statement from 1969 is still keeping in people's minds too." Here, Leo is referring to a statement made by Pierre Trudeau when he held the position of the Minister of Indian Affairs that suggested that once Indigenous Peoples stopped speaking the language and practicing their culture, they ceased to be Indian and were no different than Canadians. Needless to say, this statement galvanized Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island to come together and oppose Trudeau's proposed policy—the now infamous 1969 White Paper.

All of the participants in the study welcomed the notion of community support for Indigenous languages. Participants expressed the view that community support could support collaboration in Indigenous language revitalization because it created energy and life around revitalization initiatives, for example, when participants attended events or spoke well of community programs. Community support also signals to funders that an issue (in this case language) is a priority to a broad audience and helps make the case for the potential impact funding can make. While support from community and leaders were identified as being helpful, participants also described the importance of creating a

network in which they could learn about and support one another as vital to a potential collaboration.

Creating space for dialogue. Participants in this study identified the importance of gathering together to share, discuss and familiarize themselves with one another's work as an important step towards the creation of a broader collaborative effort. Phoebe explained her view that it would be beneficial to have a forum for dialogue and interaction amongst the language groups in the community. One strategy she felt would be effective was for someone to organize a large gathering where all the language groups could meet one another. She explains, "I almost think that the language commission could probably do that. Just shoot an email to everybody and say, 'We want to have a big meeting, see how everybody is doing, if programs need help or if programs are doing great. You know, and then you guys can know what we're doing as well and what we're supporting, and what's just standing on their own, things like that.' I think that would be cool. I think the language commission could totally handle getting almost like a glossary of language groups, language programs, language research developers. And if they want to do a big annual general meeting and just say, how's the language going with everybody because we want to know?" Like other participants, Phoebe saw the value in creating a space for programs to get to know one another better as a first step towards other more intensive collaborations.

Neil also spoke of the importance of creating a space for interaction and dialogue. Similar to Phoebe, Neil suggested that seminars and events could be a potential strategy to bring groups together to share what they are working on. In explaining why he felt this was important, he offered, "I think there's still a little bit of a disconnect in the sense that there's a lot of different areas in terms of language revitalization that we haven't really touched on. So language revitalization isn't only about teaching and learning. Preservation is another issue where we haven't really spent a whole lot of time on the preservation of language, where we have a very large resource of first-language speakers talking in the language, whether it be on audio or video or both. Even written." For Neil, bringing people together to discuss what projects individuals, groups and programs were working on could help illuminate areas where there were gaps in the language revitalization strategy of the Six Nations community and potentially initiate some

dialogue about how these gaps might be filled—or to ensure that they really were gaps. Although most of the participants in this study indicated that there was a need for more resources, the majority of them did not know for certain what resources already existed.

Creating easier access to existing resources. Being able to access existing resources that support the language goals of a programs saves leaders and their organizations time. Participants felt that having knowledge of who had what resources (curriculum, books, audio recordings) and how those resources could be accessed would make it easier to free up time for a collaborative effort. Henry explains, “When I'm looking for stuff it's like...we found these old curriculums and I said that earlier and you're like, ‘Well, wait...why are they not front and center? Why are they not the thing we're using?’ I feel like there's this constant wheel spinning.” Like some of the other participants, Henry had a desire to use existing resources but was unable to because he and his colleagues either did not know about them, or did not know how to gain access to them. Alison echoed these challenges. She explained, “The next stage is to try to get more collaboration on knowing what all is in the community. I’m quite sure there’s quite a bit of resources in the community but nobody knows where they are and how to access them in efficient ways. And so, that’s a challenge that I think we need to address head on as a community.” For Alison and other participants in the study, gaining an understanding of what language resources exist and how to access them was a priority. Participants also identified the importance of coming together to identify other priorities, plan and where possible, set common goals.

Making plans and setting goals. Collaborations come together to identify problems, prioritize, and set goals. Participants identified the importance of having conversations with one another as an initial and necessary step towards a potential collaboration in Indigenous language revitalization. Most participants held the view that meeting would serve several purposes. It would help organizations and programs inform one another about their existing work and it would also help potential collaborators make connections to those who shared similar goals. Some participants suggested that having an initial conversation would also serve to educate potential collaborators about the vision of their respective organizations prior to establishing the collaboration. Terrance explains, “Maybe it doesn’t even have to do with language. Maybe it’s just, let’s talk

about how we can enlighten each other about each other's realities. Here's what we're thinking the reserve is going to look like in 20 years. There's going to be lots of language everywhere. Yours is that people are going to be healthy and fed. That's great. But here's what ours actually means and how can you fit that value into your space? We're saying hopefully, if you can, then let's collaborate further and actual projects can come through. Sort of the actual on the ground projects. But maybe this higher, not higher, but loftier visioning has to occur." For Terrance, it was important that organizations hold a clear sense of what one another's vision for the Six Nations community was prior to making plans or choosing specific projects to work on as collaborators.

Neil also expressed the view that having broader planning discussions was important and shared that these discussions should also include how to resolve emerging challenges. "I think collaborating, as long as everyone is trying to do the same thing and is honest about it, then things should work out. I mean, you may have competition for resources and things like that sometimes, but I think if you're collaborating, those kind of things shouldn't happen. They still might. I'm not saying they won't. But you know, you're collaborating and you're working together, so hopefully, you know, you could work things out before they take place so that you not competing over resources. You're actually sharing them."

Physical Space. Indigenous language programs and other language revitalization activities also require physical space. Some of the participants acknowledged the need for a central building or location where all of the languages would have space available for their needs. Several of the participants thought that having such a space would foster collaboration. Hannah explains, "If we were all in the same building, it would be the best scenario, because then everyone will save on resources but you know, we could all meet regularly, keep each other in check." For Hannah, having a central, physical location dedicated to language could serve multiple purposes as it was a cost-saving measure as much as it was a strategic support for collaborative work.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings from the semi-structured interviews with the study participants. The findings were organized according to the research sub questions.

In this chapter, study participants drew upon their personal experiences and ideas about collaboration within an Indigenous language revitalization context. Participants described collaboration as a process where individuals and groups came together to work towards a common goal. They shared about the strategies that they used to collaborate with others, and they identified the challenges that they faced in approaching collaborative work. Among others, these challenges included a lack of time, human resources, and awareness about what other groups were doing. Participants shared that it was particularly difficult to participate (or consider participating) in collaborations while they faced ongoing uncertainty around the funding for their language programs and revitalization projects. In the next chapter, I will discuss and interpret my findings, connecting them back to the literature review and the analysis of the cultural stories.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

In this chapter I discuss the main findings of my research study through the lens of my conceptual framework, research questions, and literature review, and explain the connections, relationships and tensions that emerged. The purpose of this study was to explore how Indigenous language leaders at Six Nations of the Grand River understand and approach collaboration for the purposes of revitalizing Indigenous languages. This study used an Indigenous research methodology to gather perspectives to inform the research questions, the design of which was informed and guided by Haudenosaunee epistemologies. Indigenous language leaders participating in this study identified human and financial resources as the most significant challenges they face as they advance efforts—including collaborative efforts—to revitalize languages.

In this chapter, I argue that the challenges of revitalizing Indigenous languages are rooted in and compounded by historical and present day experiences of colonialism, and further, that the collaboration strategies cultivated and employed to overcome challenges throughout Haudenosaunee history, including periods of war and strife amongst the five Haudenosaunee Nations, can be utilized to overcome language revitalization challenges—should Indigenous organizations desire to do so. In situating this argument, I explore two key themes emerging from the data 1) Indigenous language revitalization work is complex and varied, and Indigenous language leaders are engaged to varying degrees in different aspects of this work 2) Indigenous language leaders perceive an existing gap in interaction and coordination between language programs at Six Nations of the Grand River.

Indigenous language revitalization work is complex and varied

Indigenous language leaders work to revitalize language in several ways. The data indicated that Indigenous language leaders participating in this study perform a variety of functions, including teaching, developing curriculum, developing resources, writing proposals, administering funding, administering programs, and presenting to internal and external stakeholders, to name a few. The data also indicated that these functions vary from leader to leader—for example, not all leaders who undertake administrative

work are teaching. Indigenous language leaders expressed a need for additional human and financial resources to assist with the volume of work stemming from their programs and initiatives. Some participants indicated that it would be challenging to consider undertaking additional work until such barriers were addressed.

The Role of Colonialism in Indigenous Language Revitalization

The lack of financial and human resources to revitalize Indigenous languages can be explained in large part by the role colonialism has, and continues to play, in the lives of Indigenous Peoples (Hinton & Hale, 2001; McCarty, 2003). Indigenous languages were impacted by colonialism in multiple ways; the loss of first language speakers through sickness and disease, the further erosion of language through forced assimilation via education policy, and the impacts of these two occurrences on intergenerational language transmission (Hinton & Hale, 2001). Further connections can be made between colonialism and its rippling effects on language loss into the present day. In Canada, the founding and publicly stated goal of federal education policy concerning Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island is assimilation into mainstream society (Chiefs Of Ontario, 2012). Many Indigenous educators and scholars have argued that this goal has never truly changed, and that it continues to impact the amount of funding available and the mechanisms by which Indigenous Peoples can access such funding to enhance language revitalization efforts (Morcom, 2014). The nuance of how colonialism impacts a community's language revitalization efforts is therefore important to framing a discussion about collaboration in the context of language revitalization in several ways. In the first, the history of colonization impacts available human resources, specifically language speakers, to develop and deliver language programs. In the second, the financial resources available to support language programs face limitations. And a third impact participants in this study identified was how the nature of the funding (annual, project-based, proposal-driven, no duplication) can create a competitive atmosphere. Thus, there is an emerging tension between this competitive atmosphere and scarcity, and the environment of trust and continuous nurturing required for successful collaborations (Vangen and Huxham, 2008). Nonetheless, this was the funding and human resource reality of all participants in this study.

Gap in interaction and coordination between programs

In addition to providing information about collaboration and their respective revitalization efforts, Indigenous language leaders participating in this study also identified a gap in the interactions between the language programs in the Six Nations community. This core insight provides the foundation for my argument that the theories and strategies about collaboration stemming from Haudenosaunee cultural stories can be used to inform a collaborative effort to revitalize Indigenous languages; in particular, through establishing a process of collaboration that includes space for visioning, problem solving, partner engagement, the defining of purpose and goals, roles and structure, and the allocation of resources.

Vision

One of the main features in each of the three cultural stories (the Story of the Peacemaker, the Creation Story, and the Story of the Fatherless Boy) is the notion of vision. In most of the examples of collaboration in the cultural stories, the presence of a vision or mission motivates the central figure, often filling the convenor-type role, to seek out other individuals and groups for dialogue and potential partnership toward the fulfilment of their vision. Similarly, a main component of collaboration is the common vision or goals guiding the partnership (Gray, 1985). The majority of participants in this study could articulate a vision for their language programs. For example, several participants spoke about the desire to see languages thrive and be spoken throughout the community. And though this was an area where participants acknowledged that they were not certain what the vision or goals of one another's programs were, some participants expressed a willingness and openness to learn more about one another's vision and how they might interact.

Problem Solving. Another component of collaboration is problem solving. This component involves the identification, framing and discussion about a problem that is impacting groups or organizations (Gray, 1985; Waddell & Brown, 1997). Problem solving is the space where potential collaborators can think about the problem, view it from different perspectives and begin to envision how addressing it will impact

community (Lasker et al., 2001). Wood and Gray (1991) point out that this is also the space in which stakeholders can explore, “the empirical question of whether they have common or different interests” (p. 146).

In the cultural stories, the linkages between the visioning and problem-solving stages are explicit. For example, in the Story of the Peacemaker, the problem is the ongoing war and conflict that is causing grief to several communities. The vision is for an end to warfare and the restoration of peaceful relations. The stories also make it clear that people are aware of the problem and that they are experiencing it and responding to it in different ways.

While no participants were engaged in a space where they had collaboratively begin discussing and framing problems, all of the participants in this study had engaged in a process of problem identification that led to their respective work to revitalize Indigenous languages. In advancing this work participants identified additional problems, including a lack of human (specifically language speakers) and financial resources as a main challenge they faced. Once again, participant responses helped to establish that a gap in discussion forums where interaction, information sharing and coordination among the various language communities might occur and in which partners could become engaged.

Partner Engagement. The Story of the Peacemaker illustrated that engaging partners and bringing new partners into a collaboration is an essential and time-consuming component of a collaborative process (Gibson et al., 1992). In the story, partners remain engaged through ongoing communication and information sharing that happens before, during and after the collaboration is established. Participants in this study emphasized the importance of communication, engagement and relationship building, however several participants shared that they knew very little about one another’s programs and that interaction only happened when it was mandated. Participants also suggested that it would be easier to collaborate with others if they had access to more information about them. When asked about why they had not connected with each other, participants attributed it to a lack of time to engage and expressed an interest in initiating outreach to other groups.

Wood and Gray (1991) suggest that information sharing is useful because it helps partners “understand the problem domain more fully and in a transformative way” (p. 159). Understanding the problem domain also helps partners identify the way their contributions will have the most impact. The Creation Story provides examples that illustrate how the contributions of the partners need to factor into the goals of a collaboration, and how it is important to be thoughtful about who the partners are. Lasker (2001) refers to this as efficiency, writing

to maximize synergy and keep its partners engaged, a partnership needs to be efficient. In other words, in addition to ensuring that the thinking and actions of the group benefit from the contributions of different partners, the collaboration process must also make the best use of what each partner has to offer. (p. 195)

In other words, participant engagement is increased when a collaboration can demonstrate that participant time and energies are being well spent. Participants in this study were able to speak to a lack of engagement amongst the groups and organizations in the community, demonstrating that they understood the important role discussion and relationship building plays in fostering the willingness of partners to participate in collaboration and perhaps signaling that additional work to clarify common goals and how participants can help meet those goals might occur.

Purpose and Goals. A main component of collaboration is the common purpose or goals guiding the efforts of the partnership. In addition to sharing that they were unfamiliar with one another’s work, participants also shared uncertainty about what the purpose and goals of one another’s programs or language revitalization efforts are. In sharing how they defined or conceptualized collaboration, many of the study participants shared that it was important for a collaboration to have a well-defined and practical purpose. Some participants emphasized that language revitalization work needed to have goals that were clear, measurable and meaningful—a message echoed by the literature about both language revitalization and collaboration (Fishman, 2012; Lasker et al., 2001). Once again, the data appeared to point to a lack of interaction and communication between the language programs—this time around the purpose and goals of each.

In thinking about how these goals are communicated, I turned to reflect on one of the many strengths I noted about the approach to engaging stakeholders in the Story of

the Peacemaker. The Peacemaker provides a clear example of an engaging convenor. Throughout the story, the Peacemaker takes great pains to communicate the goals, vision and purpose of the collaboration. Six Nations is a community which has few first language speakers and has not yet achieved intergenerational transmission of any of the languages that it is currently working to revitalize (although it feels important to note that the successes are growing and for some languages, particularly promising). The recommended approach for languages that face these challenges is to create a mass of adult speakers and to document first language speakers (Fishman, 2001; Green, 2016; Johnson, 2016). Although these are two different activities, they are activities within which specific goals can be established and worked towards through a collaborative effort. They can also be viewed as being different kinds of work. For example, one participant classified the creation of speakers as revitalization work, and the documentation of speakers as preservation work. This also provided insight into one of the other themes emerging from the research—that Indigenous leaders were involved in different aspects of language revitalization work.

Roles. Collaborations are more likely to be successful when partners take on various leadership roles throughout the effort (Crosby & Bryson, 2010). Wood and Gray (1991) argue that a theory of collaboration by needs must first consider the role of the convenor, a role which “uses various forms of authority to identify and persuade stakeholders to participate” (p. 149). In the Haudenosaunee cultural stories, this role is often filled by the person who is presented as the story’s main protagonist; the Peacemaker, Sapling, and the Fatherless Boy. In these cases, the protagonist uses a variety of methods to persuade others to participate, including articulating what problem will be solved by the collaboration, finding creative ways to include everyone, and utilizing champions and sponsors. Crosby and Bryson (2010) argue that collaborations require one committed champion and one committed sponsor, defining a champion as “a person who is a tireless, process-savvy organizer and promoter of the change effort” (p. 219) and sponsor as “less involved in the process, but deploys authenticity, money or connections to move the change effort forward” (p. 219).

While participants did not speak explicitly about the role of the convenor, participants did refer to the cultural stories and identified the role that certain leaders

played in creating forums for discussion, raising awareness about their vision, and making suggestions about how to move forward. Similarly, participants did not directly outline the role of champions or sponsors but did speak about the roles within traditional longhouse culture and how people fulfilling those roles worked together to tend to the wellbeing and continuation of ceremony within the community. Thus, participants were able to identify the ways in which well-defined roles can support collaborative and meaningful work. Study participants also identified potential organizations with the ability to convene or bring groups together, such as the Six Nations Language Commission, suggesting that the organization could be a catalyst for creating forums or supporting more intensive relationship building and communication amongst the various groups and organizations.

Structure. Formalized structures can help sustain collaborations over a longer term (Gray, 1985). Although it was included as an interview question, none of the participants in this study offered in-depth commentary about what a formalized structure might look like in language revitalization at Six Nations. In reflecting on this, it seemed that this was a conversation that could only happen once programs had begun interacting with one another more and information sharing about individual and collective goals and roles had occurred (or started to occur). I have nonetheless included structure as a consideration for the conceptual framework because it featured so prominently in the seven examples of collaboration I read about in the cultural stories.

While the first two instances of collaboration which occur in the Creation Story are brief and leave little room for a discussion about structure, there is a subsequent increase in the mention of structure until we reach the Story of the Peacemaker—in which a highly detailed structure to support collaboration is established. Indeed, the Peacemaker and his other partners spend a significant amount of time working on a structure that can sustain various processes for discussing ideas, making decision, resolving conflicts and adding new members. Lasker et al. (2001) confirms the importance of procedures and decision-making, offering, “through procedures that determine who is involved in partnership decision-making and how partnerships make decisions and do their work, governance influences the extent to which partners’ perspectives, resources and skills can be combined” (p. 195). In the model of the

confederacy which emerged through the Story of the Peacemaker, the structure was created during and after roles were established and assigned. For this reason, I have chosen to embed structural considerations within or alongside the concept of roles.

Resources. One of the main components of collaboration are the resources that each partner helps contribute to achieve the goals of the partnership. These resources can include human resources, such as specific skills or expertise. They can also include space, information or financial resources or less tangible resources such as “people, organizations and groups” (Lasker et al., 2001, p. 190). Most of the participants seemed aware that a variety of combined resources could help achieve the goals of a collaborative effort, however, they also expressed that they saw a lack of resources for their own programs as a barrier to participating in a broader collaboration.

Extending the Rafters

Before moving on to explore the data through the lens of the research sub-questions, I wanted to briefly offer the following insight about the wampum belt that inspired my conceptual framework. The story symbolized in the Hiawatha belt tells of how the five nations (Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk) embraced a message of peace and formed the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. In the wampum belt, the notion of peace is symbolized by the white line connecting each of the nations. Part of the vision underpinning this constitution, is the idea that other nations or partners could become members of the confederacy. This is a practice referred to as *ejidwanasdahsq:de:ʔ* or extending the rafters (Gibson et al., 1992). Indeed, my community is called Six Nations of the Grand River because another nation, the Tuscarora, became a member of the confederacy in the early 1700s—an act made possible both through the structuring of the confederacy and the intent of it. While the data suggests that opportunities for collaboration Indigenous language revitalization at Six Nations appear to be in the early or emerging stages, this is nonetheless an interesting concept that might allow for further growth and development.

Participants understand collaboration.

The participants in this study have an understanding of collaboration that, for the most part, aligns with ideas and definitions about collaboration in the existing literature and the cultural stories. Most participants described collaboration as “working together”, with some participants explicitly stating that it meant to work together towards a common goal (Gray, 1985). Participants in this study also expressed an understanding of collaboration as a process which enabled participants to better understand one another’s respective work while forming strategies to achieve a common goal.

For the most part, participants had undertaken forms of collaborative work that had a clear beginning and end, organizing a language conference or a fundraising event, for example. Participants therefore shared not only their experiences with these types of collaborations, they also expressed their ideas about how larger or more complex collaborations might operate. In this regard, participants expressed that given the challenges of collaborative work—such as increased demands on time and impacts on individual workload—they would need an influx of resources or support to be able to participate fully. Broadly, these insights seemed to align with Lewis, Isbell & Koschmann’s (2010) suggestion about what collaboration is understood to be, “minimally, collaboration is understood to involve: (1) cooperation, coordination, and exchange of resources (e.g., people, funding, information, ideas), and (2) mutual respect for individual goals and/or joint goals.” Participants also identified examples or insights about collaboration in Haudenosaunee cultural stories and practices and made connections between those stories and how Indigenous leaders, groups and organizations work today.

Participants also confirmed that collaborative work was taking place, albeit in modest amounts. This was unsurprising given most participants spoke about having intense and heavy workloads that left them with little time to focus on anything other than what they were doing. Participants also talked about not knowing enough about each other’s work to be able to gauge if a collaboration would be helpful or desirable, which once again highlighted the gaps in coordination and interaction amongst groups.

Indigenous language leaders use similar strategies to collaborate. Participants in this study utilized a variety of strategies when undertaking collaborative work. These

strategies include relationship building, acknowledgement of previous work, establishing trust, communicating, sharing the workload, and food. While there were few examples of times when participants had undertaken collaborative work, participants who did describe examples each described the planning of an event such as a conference or a fundraiser as a catalyst for collaborative work. As such, the strategies that participants utilized most to collaborate included communication through regular meetings to prepare, execute and debrief from events, which included discussion related execution of these duties and the sharing of responsibilities amongst partners (preparing the agenda, review of registration, or event logistics, etcetera).

Some participants in the study collaborated with other groups or organizations on a more regular basis than others. Those who did collaborate more regularly expressed their view that opportunities to work with other groups came about as a result of demonstrated willingness and openness to collaboration that they expressed through being visible and cultivating an environment of trust. The strategies that they used to signal visibility included communication in the form of active social media pages, attendance at community events, and word of mouth outreach. Strategies participants used to cultivate trust included creating welcoming physical environments, taking time to explain a project even when they faced deadlines, respecting people's decision to not participate, and recognizing the contributions of others.

It occurred to me in going back to the Haudenosaunee cultural stories, that based on the semi-structured interviews there were some strategies that Indigenous language leaders were not yet using in their efforts to collaborate. Strategies like the use of dreams to generate knowledge and prompt reflection, the use of metaphors to build understanding, the creation of discussion forums to identify problems and set goals, and the use of a convenor and other roles to support collaborative efforts. Several of these strategies were also identified in the literature review as well, such as Clarke and Fuller's (2010) feedback loops, designed to amend the collaborative process while it is in progress. One possible explanation for this, is that these strategies will be utilized as collaborations grow in scope and complexity, providing opportunity to generate discussion and incorporate reflective activity.

Indigenous language leaders identify several challenges to collaboration.

Participants in this study identified several barriers that prevented them from undertaking collaborative work. These challenges include a lack of highly proficient language speakers, a lack of financial resources, time, attitudes towards language in the Six Nations community and beyond, a competitive environment, a lack of awareness and a lack of shared focus. Because these challenges include both external and internal environmental factors, I have chosen to organize the discussion into these two categories.

External factors. External environmental factors include those that stem from community characteristics and public and organizational policies (Lasker et al., 2001) Lasker et al. (2001) described how persuading partners to participate in collaborations is difficult in

“communities in which there is little history of cooperation and trust, significant competition for resources or clients, resistance of key people and organizations to the goals and activities of the partnership, problems bringing together partners due to crime or lack of transportation, or numerous partnerships involving many of the same partners” (p. 196).

The challenges that participants in this study perceived echoed with Lasker et.al’s argument. All of the participants were able to discuss the “public and organizational policy barriers” (Lasker et al., 2001, p. 196) that resulted in inadequate funding for core operations related to the undertaking of collaborative work. They also voiced their opinions that the current structure of proposal-based funding models often put them in competition with one another. When coupled with the finding that participants often did not know what other programs or organizations were working on, made it relatively simple to observe how an unavoidable competition over already scarce resources, coupled by a lack of time to communicate might make it difficult to create an environment in which there were high levels of trust and cooperation. Indeed, if there was anything that surprised me throughout this study, it was that there was not a complete lack of trust between the participants given the situation. Instead, Indigenous language leaders were able to draw a clear connection between their funding challenges and somewhat older education policy objectives toward Indigenous languages, such as those that created the residential school system (which mandated the removal of Indigenous

children from their families and punished them for speaking their languages), the 1969 White Paper (which attempted to strip Indigenous nations of their nationhood status and relegate them to municipalities within the Canadian state using language shift as evidence of a diminishing Indigenous identity), and inadequate funding frameworks for First Nation schools by the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (Chiefs Of Ontario, 2012). Ultimately, Indigenous language leaders were acutely aware of the challenges presented by external policies concerning Indigenous education, language initiatives and funding—even as they continued to engage with those policies for the sake of their revitalization work.

Internal factors. As mentioned in Chapter 5, participants in this study recognized that the potential for conflict or disagreement may exist or had happened from time to time amongst (or within) language groups. Participants expressed uncertainty about the exact cause of these disagreements and hesitated to offer views about what the causes might be and how they might impact a potential partner's willingness to participate in a collaboration. In reflecting on this, I acknowledged there had been some reluctance on the part of participants to talk about times when there had been disagreements or arguments. I understand and can wholly empathize with this reluctance, and instead of extrapolating further, will instead note that disagreement and debate about language revitalization efforts are normal, regular occurrences. As Fishman (2001) writes, "I have yet to meet a threatened language community that does not evince differences of opinion, of tactics, and of ultimately underlying objectives along such lines." (p. 19). It is my hope that we can all take some comfort in these words, and a modicum of joy in the fact that so long as we are a community that prioritizes language revitalization, it is likely that many lively, engaged discussions and debates about our efforts are yet to come. The next challenge that will be discussed is engaging partners in a collaboration or discussions about collaboration.

Engaging Partners in Collaborations. A scarcity of resources can create a competitive climate in which it is difficult to fully engage partners in a collaboration for fear that they will lose much needed supports in the process. Catherine was one of a few participants who worried that projects and positions would stop being supported if funders believed there was another source that it could be offloaded to. Unfortunately,

scarcity is not the only challenge influencing a partner's decision to enter into collaborative work. There are a range of drawbacks that are relevant to a discussion about prospective partners' decision to join collaborations (Lasker et al., 2001). Participants in this study identified several of them. For example, Allison talked about not getting into relationships that “detract from the integrity of what you're doing”. Hannah expressed concerns about falling behind with her work. Catherine worried that projects and positions would stop being supported if funders believed there was another source it could be offloaded to. Henry, Leo and Neil all expressed concern about the limited time language speakers have to commit to other projects. It was apparent through the data that participants in this study understood potential challenges posed by collaboration and were able to discuss them.

Since partners need to be willing to dedicate time to the collaboration, proponents of collaborations will therefore need to do an excellent job in articulating the benefits and minimizing the drawbacks of participation (Lasker et al., 2001). Armistead, Pettigrew & Alves (2007) also argue that greater attention must be paid to “the interaction between partners with different cultures and structures, and how these might need to adapt to shape more effective partnerships” (p. 213). This was another area where participants in this study signaled the absence of interaction and coordination amongst the language programs. While the cultural stories and the research literature about collaboration both point to the need to listen and build an understanding about who potential collaborators are, and what their goals, ambitions, and concerns are—participants clearly stated that the space for this to occur does not currently exist.

Supports Indigenous language leaders require for collaboration

Overwhelmingly, participants in this study identified sustainable funding and an increase in highly proficient language speakers as the two main supports that would better enable a collaboration in Indigenous language revitalization. In addition, participants also identified physical space, community support, a forum for dialogue, access to existing language resources, leadership and a mechanism for planning and goal setting.

The need for funding has appeared elsewhere in this discussion, as has the need to be strategic about creating more highly proficient language speakers to undertake the work of revitalization: creating speakers, creating resources, and teaching, for example. In thinking about these supports, it appeared to me that some of these supports would be easier to bring about than others. For example, so long as participants need financial resources, advocating for increased financial resources would remain a priority. So too, would writing proposals to access the funding that was available under various funding pockets. Still, there would be some lag in the time that a proposal is submitted and when the confirmation of the funding arrives. There would also be a significant period between when new policies and funding envelopes might be created and when resources might become available from them.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, organizing a forum to begin the process of identifying shared experiences or problems, or to help groups and organizations better understand one another's work could be achieved more readily. So too, could the creation of information regarding existing language resources and how they could be accessed. In short, a relationship building effort could genuinely begin to occur for the sake of closing the gap of interaction and communication, while also beginning to discuss, frame problems and dialogue around short and long term strategies.

Another kind of support that emerged from participant data and the cultural stories was the notion of community support. In the cultural stories, family and community support acted as a kind of first step to collaboration, or a *pre-condition* as Waddell & Brown (1997) refer to it. In the majority of examples from the cultural stories, the pre-conditions included the activities of a convenor-type role (the Peacemaker, the Fatherless Boy, and Sapling). The cultural stories each described the events leading up to the moment where the convenors set about doing their work, and the specific context in which their work was originating from. For example, convenors often spent considerable time living in communities and there was a sense that this time afforded them the opportunity to reflect deeply upon the problems facing their communities. For me, this provided further insight into the way the vision or purpose of goals of the collaboration first start to emerge—at least within the cultural stories. This was insightful, as it suggested that prior to any collaborators being invited to the table, collaborators (and

convenors) already have thoughts and ideas about the potential vision or direction a collaboration could move in. Through the interviews, participants suggested that it would be valuable for individuals and organizations to undertake internal work to reflect on and clarify the goals of their programs or initiatives and share those with others. For example, Leo explained his view that this exercise would make it simpler for organizations to then communicate those goals to potential partners and create opportunities for collaboration to occur.

Chapter Summary

The intent of this chapter was to present a discussion on the findings of this study. My approach to discussing the findings of this exploratory study was interpretive, highly subjective and augmented at times by personal insights, as would be expected of a study using an Indigenous research design (Kovach, 2012). I argued that the challenges of revitalizing Indigenous languages are rooted in and compounded by historical and present-day experiences of colonialism, and further, that the collaboration strategies cultivated and employed to overcome challenges throughout Haudenosaunee history can be used to support collaborative efforts to revitalize Indigenous languages. In relating the research and research sub-questions guiding this study back to the literature, the cultural stories and the interviews, I determined that Indigenous language leaders understand collaboration in what appear to be similar ways. Most of the participants in this study described collaboration as a process in which people work together and some participants specified that members of a collaboration should be working together towards a common goal, or a greater good. Some of the language leaders spoke specifically about goal setting, and how clarifying the individual language revitalization goals of programs or organizations might create opportunities for collaboration in language revitalization to occur. I explored how Indigenous language revitalization work is both complex and varied. I established that Indigenous language leaders are engaged to varying degrees in different aspects of this work. Finally, I explored a key theme arising from the participant data, which is that there is a gap in the interaction, coordination and communication of language programs at Six Nations. In the next chapter, I present a summary of my

findings, implications for myself, Indigenous language leaders, for education policy, and for research in educational leadership, as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was to explore how Indigenous language leaders understand collaboration for the purposes of revitalizing Indigenous languages. In this chapter, I provide a summary of my study and discuss implications and recommendations for future research. I begin with a summary of my research methodology and research questions. Next, I discuss the implications for my own practice, for Indigenous language leaders, for research in educational leadership, and for my community. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research and a personal reflection.

Summary of the Study. The goal of my research study was to explore how Indigenous organizations could collaborate to revitalize endangered Indigenous languages with a focus on Haudenosaunee languages (Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk, and Tuscarora). I chose to conduct my study using an Indigenous research methodology. A key aspect of research using an Indigenous methodology are the cultural knowledges guiding the research choices (Kovach, 2012). For my people, who are the Haudenosaunee, our Creation stories and historical narratives are sources where our philosophies, worldview and knowledge creation processes are embedded (Hill, 2017; Monture, 2016; Watts, 2013).

In my effort to understand underlying notions of collaboration within Haudenosaunee thought, I selected three foundational Haudenosaunee narratives: The Creation Story, The Story of the Fatherless Boy, and the Story of the Peacemaker. Moreover, I presented a literature review to inform the semi-structured interviews with Indigenous language leaders and program administrators in the Six Nations of the Grand River community. The conceptual framework guiding this study emerged from one of these narratives as well as from my literature review.

Summary of Findings. Indigenous language leaders at Six Nations of the Grand River share a responsibility towards the revitalization of the Indigenous languages spoken by the Haudenosaunee people. While these leaders have little in the way of public policy or leadership frameworks to guide their practice, they are supported by rich stories and cultural traditions that can inform the development of tools and resources to help them undertake this important work. They are also supported by research about Indigenous

educational leadership, second language acquisition, Indigenous language revitalization, and endangered languages. Indigenous language leaders who participated in this study understand and define collaboration in a similar manner. Through this study, they were able to share their ideas and opinions about collaboration in the areas of Indigenous language revitalization at the Six Nations of the Grand River community, identifying strategies they use to collaborate, challenges they experience in collaborating, and supports required for a collaboration to come together. The findings were organized based on the research question and sub-questions guiding the study, and the conceptual framework. I present a summary of those findings under the heading of each of the questions in the following:

Research sub-question one: How do the various stakeholders understand collaboration (or collaborative processes)? The findings demonstrated that Indigenous language leaders interviewed for this study understood collaboration as a process in which individuals or groups worked together toward a common goal and that the majority of the leaders had participated in a form of collaborative work.

Research sub-question two: What strategies have been utilized in an effort to collaborate?

Leaders in this study utilized several strategies in their collaborative efforts. These included building relationships, acknowledging the previous work and contributions of others, establishing trust, communicating, sharing the workload and bringing people together using food. Other strategies that emerged from both the cultural stories and the literature review included: using dreams to generate knowledge and prompt reflection, using metaphors to build understanding amongst collaborators, creating discussion forums to identify problems, setting goals for the future, clarifying structure and decision-making mechanisms, and utilizing roles such as convenors, champions and sponsors.

Research sub-question three: What challenges to collaboration did these leaders experience?

Participants in this study identified sustainable funding and a lack of highly proficient language speakers as the two main challenges and common barriers to their work as Indigenous language leaders. Participants also identified intense workloads and the associated lack of time as another barrier to participating in collaborations. Other

barriers and tensions mentioned by participants included; the community attitude towards language, a competitive environment brought about by existing funding frameworks, differences in approaches to language revitalization, a lack of awareness and a lack of a shared focus.

Research sub-question four: What supports need to be in place for a collaboration to come together?

Indigenous language leaders in this study identified the following supports that would need to be in place for a collaboration to come together. These include: sustainable funding, increased human resources (specifically language speakers), physical space, community support, a forum for dialogue, access to existing resources, and an opportunity to build a plan that outlines specific goals. Additional supports that help collaborations come together from the cultural stories and literature review included the role of convenors, sponsors and champions, relationships and family supports and a shared knowledge base.

Guiding research question: How can Indigenous organizations collaborate to support language revitalization?

The data made apparent that there was a gap in interaction and coordination amongst the groups, programs and organizations at Six Nations of the Grand River. The cultural stories revealed significant evidence of a thriving history of collaborative activity amongst Haudenosaunee nations and provided detailed templates for collaborative work that could be adapted to present data situations or challenges. The Story of the Peacemaker was the most prominent and detailed example of such a process. The collaborative frameworks in the cultural stories could therefore be utilized to close gaps in interaction and coordination between language programs, should the community desire to do so. In this research study, I proposed utilizing a conceptual framework that includes the following components: visioning, problem solving, partner engagement, purpose, structure, roles and resources, as a useful way to begin to convene or structure initial conversations about a collaboration at Six Nations for the purpose of revitalizing Indigenous languages.

Limitations

This study was designed to ascertain the experiences of Indigenous language leaders at Six Nations of the Grand River regarding collaborative efforts in language revitalization and relied on Haudenosaunee epistemology to guide choices about the information to be considered and included. Thus, while the discussion presented in this research study may resonate with other groups undertaking revitalization work in different areas, it is probable that these findings may not be generalized to other contexts or experiences. A second limitation of this study is that it did not include every Indigenous language leader, speaker, learner or community member at Six Nations. Thus, it may or may not represent the entire picture of the perspectives of Six Nations' Indigenous language leaders and language community about collaboration in language revitalization. While data saturation was reached after seven interviews, it is possible that additional themes or insights would have emerged had all leaders participated or had the population sample been expanded.

Implications for study for my own practice, research in educational leadership, for policy makers, and for my community

My study has implications for my own practice, for Indigenous language leaders, for research in educational leadership and my community.

Implications for my own practice. Over the course of this research study, my role in my organization has changed and grown. Throughout this time, my commitment to understanding how to best support Indigenous language revitalization efforts, especially those happening in my own community, has never wavered and my appreciation for all language revitalization efforts underway at Six Nations has only grown. Many of the challenges to collaboration that were shared with me by participants, were challenges I could also relate to and had experienced. This study helped me realize that there were several more strategies I could apply to my own practice to collaborate more effectively, and with significantly more understanding of the pressures and challenges my potential collaborators are experiencing. It has also helped inform ideas I

have about the actions I can undertake as a learner, a mother, a language activist and a researcher to support language revitalization at my community.

For me, this research study has reinforced the importance of establishing relationships and learning from the community of language users, speakers, teachers and learners around me. Of learning how to confront contemporary challenges by turning to our core knowledges and stories to help me reflect and work through issues. Specifically, this study has helped me think about the language goals of the programs that I have been fortunate enough to work on, helped me identify strategies to clarify the vision and purpose of those programs and helped align them with the language goals and aspirations of other groups, organizations and schools in the community. This study has also helped me understand the pressing need to create access to more resources (financial and otherwise) for language groups and organizations in my community, and to advocate for our languages and our language programs at every opportunity. Finally, it has confirmed for me the importance of language in my life and reignited my desire to focus my efforts on improving my own speaking proficiency and engage with Haudenosaunee cultural stories even more than I have over the last three years.

Implications for research in the area of educational leadership. This research study focused on how Indigenous language leaders could collaborate to revitalize Indigenous languages. At the time of writing, there was a growing literature about Indigenous educational leadership that was helpful in shaping my own understanding of the issues and challenges facing Indigenous educational leaders. Within this literature, there is a paucity of writing specifically focused on the work and role of Indigenous language leaders. Future research could therefore expand in any number of directions. Some helpful places to begin might be to explore the types of tools and supports Indigenous language leaders require, to explore the potential of professional networks with other Indigenous language leaders, and to explore training or capacity development opportunities for Indigenous language leaders. As a major finding of this study was the gap in interaction and coordination amongst people involved in leading language programs, further research into a convenor-type role or function might also be a beneficial leadership area to explore.

Implications for policy makers. Indigenous language leaders do not have access to frameworks or guidelines to support their efforts or help them measure or reflect on their success at revitalizing Indigenous languages. At Six Nations, a document or guide could be developed and implemented that would help Indigenous language leaders undertake program evaluation and develop strategies for tracking and improvement. For example, program evaluations have already been utilized to guide improvement or innovation at two (that I am aware of) language programs at Six Nations. Such program evaluations are tools or documents that could also help inform discussions about potential collaborations and/or collective strategizing with other groups and organizations at Six Nations.

This research study also identified sustainable funding as an ongoing barrier preventing revitalization efforts from advancing at a quicker pace. Participants identified specific challenges related to funding, such as the need to come up with new activities every time a funding application was put forward or having to layoff staff because funding does not run all year round. Education program and policy developers working within communities, provincial and federal governments, or other organizations with the potential to support can make efforts to decolonize funding mechanisms so that First Nations and Indigenous organizations can access much needed funding within parameters that allow language revitalization efforts to fully achieve their goals.

Implications for my community. This research study posed a question about how Indigenous language leaders could collaborate in Indigenous language revitalization. In reflecting on the potential implications of this research for my community, I think ultimately, this research study clarifies some of the work required to build stronger relationships at Six Nations of the Grand River and to create a safe and welcoming environment in which collaboration could occur. Some of this work can begin at the individual or organizational level. For example, for individual organizations (including the organization that I work for), they can reflect on and clarify their language goals, the planning in reaching those goals, and communicating those goals to other organizations as a way to share information that could potentially create the opportunity for future collaborations. This study also provides initial steps that might be taken towards relationship building, such as having the Six Nations Language Commission

organize a gathering for all language groups to get to know one another better, as one of the participants suggested during their interview.

Organizations might also benefit from reflecting on relevant research about Indigenous language revitalization as a way of exploring how and where their own efforts fit within a broader community language strategy. Organizations can also help identify potential gaps in programming that could be addressed through a coordinated or strategic approach, thus preventing anyone from feeling like they need to take on all the work alone and unsupported. Finally, this research is one of many offerings, including previous research studies, curriculum documents and teaching materials, that highlight the endless ways in which Haudenosaunee knowledge systems provide insight and wisdom that can be used to address contemporary challenges using strategies that are found in some of our most powerful stories.

Recommendations for Future Research

Indigenous language leaders carry many responsibilities and can wear multiple hats as they go about their efforts to revitalize languages. This can require them to develop several capacities to be successful in their work. Further studies on the work of Indigenous language leaders, and the strategies or support systems that will help develop those capacities are also needed.

This research study also utilized cultural stories and Indigenous language to explore notions of collaboration. Throughout the study, I found myself making several notes where the stories made references to leadership and leadership roles and responsibilities, as well as the wampum belts that discussed similar themes. I also took notes about the language (Cayuga and Onondaga) that was used to describe leadership and collaboration concepts. Additional research could expand on and explore these concepts further as a way of sharing additional insight from Haudenosaunee knowledges systems into notions of Indigenous educational leadership.

Another potential and natural direction for this study could be a move towards increased collaboration between Indigenous language groups and organizations at Six Nations of the Grand River. This could take the form of smaller collaborations around specific issues such as: external and internal advocacy for funding, community advocacy

in support of bilingualism, resource development, the creation of a resource database, curriculum studies, program evaluation, documentation, assessment and evaluation strategies, and the creation of a community language strategy. It might also take the form of an information sharing network, which is an idea offered by several participants in the study. A sharing network is also an idea that is progressing in other parts of Turtle Island with the launch of the Indigenous Language Learning Atlas project in late September of 2018—which created an online gathering space for communities and organizations working at language revitalization to share about their efforts and access resources.

My Learning

Over the course of the EdD program, I had the opportunity to spend time in the Adirondack mountains. The Adirondack mountains are known among the Haudenosaunee people as the Mohawk homelands. They are also home to the Abenaki people (and possibly others that I have neglected to name here). They are rich and beautiful lands, covered in acres upon acres of new and ancient forest, rushing rapids, great boulders, pots, bogs, and swamplands. They are without a doubt the most hill covered lands I have ever visited, with roadways steep and rolling.

The Story of the Peacemaker tells us that he (the Peacemaker) travelled across these lands sharing his message of peace to end warfare amongst the nations that would come to be the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and while there is no written record documenting the exact date that these activities occurred, it is widely believed to be over 1,000 years ago. In thinking about this story, it occurred to me that this great peace my ancestors established was made at a time when travel was done primarily by foot or canoe. That to forge peace amongst the five nations, the Peacemaker and his helpers had to travel hundreds of miles, gradually bringing in more and more partners, revisiting existing partners to reassure them that the plan was progressing, and finally bringing everyone together in a large summit. It was astonishing to me that this was achieved at a time when the conveniences of today (cell phones, email, fax, computers, automobiles, trains, planes) were absent. It is a stark reminder of what is possible when the wellbeing and needs of our people, coupled with our responsibility to honour our relationships with creation are matched with a powerful vision.

My excitement for language and my journey to language revitalization work has been informed by a series of encounters throughout my life that have helped me understand the vital role language plays in shaping identity, guiding individual action, supporting individual and community health and well-being, and providing a framework of values for engaging in relationships with the world around us. Through the study of Indigenous-settler state relations, I came to learn how our languages were targeted as a matter of public policy, to more swiftly resolve the “Indian problem” by attempting to assimilate our people and gain access to our lands and resources. My understanding of these issues has been the result of two decades of encounters with postcolonial scholarship, Indigenous studies courses, studies in education and educational leadership, and language learning, as well as over fifteen years of working for Indigenous organizations. I end this work with a clear sense of purpose about what I plan to do to further my own learning, and how I will continue to communicate and learn from our stories with my children, my family, my friends and my colleagues. In other words, I end this work with a great deal of hope for the future. And I do not think I am alone in feeling this.

I started writing the first draft of this chapter during a unique day in our community. Our people were doing a condolence ceremony (which is described at length in the *Story of the Peacemaker* that I read for this study) for two Chiefs in our Confederacy. In other words, they were putting new leadership in place—the same leadership that are responsible for maintaining this great and ancient peace amongst our own nations, as well as settler nations. That morning, I drove by the longhouse and saw that many people were already there getting ready. There was a sense of great life, pride and hope emanating from the longhouse that was impossible to ignore. It so happened that the Condolence was happening during a week in which the community had experienced a great deal of loss and unrest. It had also been on my mind because my father-in-law was going to be conducting the ceremony and had been spending much of his time practicing the lengthy speeches that are required. I knew that my husband was thinking that these speeches were something he should perhaps learn as well, so that he could help—should the need ever arise. The Condolence then, felt like a significant occasion for a lot of reasons that had nothing to do with this study—and yet, because I

had chosen the Hiawatha Belt as the inspiration for my conceptual framework—it too, felt connected to how I was living through and thinking about what it meant for this important ceremony to be taking place. It was a reminder about the enduring relevance of the story of the Peacemaker and the Hiawatha Belt, because the peace epitomized by the belt was still alive and moving. Indeed, it continues to unfold and grow even now. And because the power it holds is as strong as it has ever been, I genuinely believe that our community's dedication to it will only grow as more people find their place and their work in this great effort—despite all that has been done to make us forget about it.

There is a lot of work ahead. Working for Indigenous organizations in these different capacities, has helped me to see that all the work (policy, advocacy, planning, delivery, encouragement, healing, resisting, challenging, learning, teaching, conducting ceremony) is important. It is valuable. It is necessary. And ultimately, we need everyone, everywhere, doing all this work, all the time. In times like this, we need to find ways to support one another. And so to everyone who has found their work, or who is on the path to finding their work—*nya:wəh*. Your efforts have helped me, inspired me and motivated me to continue navigating my own path, and for that, I will always be grateful. *Da netoh*.

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APPENDIX A: Research Ethics Review Approval



Research Ethics

Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board NMREB Delegated Initial Approval Notice

Principal Investigator: Dr. Katina Pollock
Department & Institution: Education\Faculty of Education, Western University

NMREB File Number: 109607
Study Title: An exploration of collaboration in Indigenous language revitalization in a First Nation community

NMREB Initial Approval Date: September 27, 2017
NMREB Expiry Date: September 27, 2018

Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Western University Protocol	Received September 9, 2017	
Recruitment Items	Recruitment Email	2017/09/06
Letter of Information & Consent		2017/09/27
Instruments	Interview Protocol	2017/09/06


The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the above named study, as of the NMREB Initial Approval Date noted above.

NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the NMREB Expiry Date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.


Ethics Officer, on behalf of Dr. Randal Graham, NMREB Chair or delegated board member

EO: Erika Basile __ Grace Kelly __ Katelyn Harris ☒ Nicola Morphet __ Karen Gopaul __ Patricia Sargeant __ Kelly Patterson __

APPENDIX B: Six Nations Elected Council Ethics Review Approval Letter

October 27, 2017

Sara General
1920 Onondaga Road
OHSWEKEN, ON
N0A 1M0

Dear Sara

This will confirm that that your request to conduct research titled "An Exploration of Collaboration in Indigenous Language Revitalization in a First Nations Community" has been granted full approval by the Six Nations Elected Council

The Ethics Committee reserves the right to request your attendance at upcoming meetings to provide written and/or verbal progress reports. Should this be a requirement, you will be provided notice in writing. The Ethics Committee looks forward to receiving a final report upon completion of your research and is requesting that you send two copies of your final report.

Thank You


Teresa Longboat,
Committee Secretary

APPENDIX C: Letter of Information and Consent Form

The University of Western Ontario

1137 WESTERN ROAD

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

London, Ontario N6G 1G7

Fax No. [REDACTED]

Katina Pollock

Email: [REDACTED]

Tel. No.: [REDACTED]

Sara General

Email: [REDACTED]

Tel: No.: [REDACTED]

Letter of Information and Consent – Participant

Project Title: An exploration of collaboration in Indigenous language revitalization in a First Nation community

Dear Participant,

My name is Sara General and I am an (Doctor of Education) EdD student at the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario. I am currently conducting research to understand how leaders of Indigenous organizations collaborate to revitalize languages and would like to invite you to participate in this study.

The aims of this study are to explore the strategies Indigenous leaders use to collaborate, the challenges leaders experience, and the supports that need to be in place for a collaboration to thrive. This study includes a one-to-one interview. You have been identified as a potential participant because you are responsible for administering Indigenous language programming in the Six Nations of the Grand River community.

If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked for a one-to-one interview that will take approximately 45-60 minutes. This interview will be audio-recorded. Interview will be scheduled to occur in physical offices in your organizations. Attached is the letter of information and consent form that I will ask you to sign prior to the interview.

Your name, email address and audio-recording are the information that is being collected. The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential and all the data will be stored in a password-protected computer, which will only be accessed by me and my supervisor. In addition, Western's Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to the study-related records in order to monitor the ethical conduct of the study. You will not be identified by name in any reports or publications of the research. A list linking your name and email address to your unique study ID/pseudonym will be stored for 5 years in a secure location separate from your study data.

There are no known risks to participating in this study. The potential benefits are that language groups in the Six Nations community may identify avenues to work together and have an increased understanding of how collaboration could assist language revitalization efforts. This additional sense of understanding could help in the formation

of community language plans, identifying human, financial and other resource needs, and creating new partnerships.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your work or your employment. Your decision to participate (or not) will not be shared with employers, and participant data will not be shared with employers. If you decide to withdraw from the study, you have the right to request withdrawal of information collected about you. If you wish to have your information removed please let the researcher know.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Human Research Ethics [REDACTED], email: [REDACTED].

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me; Sara General at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] or my thesis supervisor Dr. Katina Pollock at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Nya:węh/Thank you!

Sara General



CONSENT FORM

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to be audio-recorded.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I consent to the use of direct, unidentifiable quotes to be used in research dissemination.

Yes ☐ No ☐

_____	_____	_____
Print Name of Participant	Signature	(DD-MMM-
YYYY)		

Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

_____	_____	_____
Print Name	Signature	(DD-MMM-
YYYY)		

APPENDIX D: Interview Protocol



Interview Protocol

TITLE: *An exploration of collaborative partnerships in Indigenous language revitalization in a First Nation community*

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

PURPOSE OF STUDY:

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the role language program leaders play in advancing collaborative partnerships within a First Nation community for the purpose of revitalizing Indigenous languages. The site for this study is the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. This study seeks to understand how language program leaders understand collaboration and processes of collaboration, the challenges Indigenous language leaders face in forming collaborations and examines the strategies language program leaders use to establish and maintain collaborations.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee (pseudonym):

INTERVIEW SCRIPT/NOTES OF WELCOME TO INTERVIEWEE:

INTRODUCTION

Hello, Sge:no'. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. Before we get started, I'd like to take a quick moment to recap the purpose of our meeting. As I mentioned in the invitation to participate, I am interested in studying the notion of 'collaboration' as it pertains to Indigenous language revitalization in the Six Nations community.

The purpose of this interview is for me to gain an understanding of your perceptions on collaboration and how organizations in the community can work together to support language revitalization.

To form this understanding, I am going to ask a series of open-ended questions. The interview will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes and will be audio-recorded. This is so I can accurately capture all the details and at the same time, really focus on what you share today.

RE-CONFIRM INFORMED CONSENT

At this time, I'd like to assure you that all your comments will remain confidential. I also want you to know that you can withdraw from the study at any time, in which cases, your participant data will be destroyed. Before we begin, I'd like to ask if you could please sign this consent letter confirming your participation.

Great! Let's get started.

Interview Questions:

1. Please tell me a little bit about yourself and how you came to do this type of work/perform this role?

Possible Probes:

- How long have you worked in the area of language?
- What languages do you speak or are you interested in learning?
- What kind of language programming or language activities does your organization have or do? (immersion, evening classes, documentation, transcribing, resource development)

2. What language goals do you hope are achieved by your program(s)?

Possible probes:

- What languages goals do you hope are achieved by the Six Nations

community?

- How does your program help to meet those goals?

3. Does your program work with other individuals or groups in the community? And if so, how?

- Does your program work with elders or language speakers?
- Does your program work with community groups?
- Can you share an example of a time when you worked with another individual or group?
- How do you approach working with elders or language speakers?

4. What other activities is your organization required to do that are not related to language?

Possible probes:

- How is your language program funded?
- Who writes the proposals for funding?
- Are you required to advocate for your language program, and if so, what form does this advocacy take?

5. What are the biggest challenges in doing this kind of work?

Follow-up questions:

- What strategies have you used to meet those challenges?
 - What additional supports would help you meet those challenges?
6. Where, or in what ways, could your program collaborate with other language programs in the community?
7. Can you share your thoughts about what a collaborative partnership in language

revitalization across the community (of Six Nations) would look like?

Possible Probes:

- How could this be organized?
- What supports would need to be in place for this kind of collaboration to come together? (Policy, staff, support from the Six Nations Language Commission, Funding, Space)
- What concerns would you have about a potential collaboration?

8. Do you have anything else to add?

Nya:węh for your time.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name:	Sara General
Post-secondary Education and Degrees:	<p>McMaster University Hamilton, Ontario, Canada 2000-2007 B.A.</p> <p>The University of Western Ontario London, Ontario, Canada 2013-2015 M.PEd. (Leadership in Indigenous Education)</p> <p>The University of Western Ontario London, Ontario, Canada 2015-2018 Ed.D. (Educational Leadership)</p>
Related Work Experience	<p>A/Director of Research and Development Six Nations Polytechnic 2018-present</p> <p>Development Officer Six Nations Polytechnic 2012-2018</p> <p>Strategic Planning & Policy Coordinator Chiefs of Ontario 2010-2012</p> <p>Education Coordinator Chiefs of Ontario 2008-2010</p>