

The Event: a small Roundtable Discussion was held over 2 hours via Zoom on Friday, August 7, 2020, with 8 out of the 14 Elders and Knowledge Holders who participated in interviews with me this summer to discuss Traditional Education and to envision a Indigenous-led Traditional learning space in Manitoba.

The Goal: The goal of this Roundtable Discussion was for me to share back the results of the interviews I had done with everyone, and to provide an opportunity for the interview participants to discuss some of the interview questions as a group, as well as to discuss the next steps of developing a Traditional learning space together. Over the course of the summer interviews were conducted with each person individually and this Roundtable was meant to be a space to both share back the major themes and ideas that came out of all of the interviews, as well as to foster continued group discussion surrounding some of the logistical concerns for developing a Traditional education space in Manitoba. This was also an opportunity for the Elders and Knowledge Holders to begin establishing an independent working group to continue working on this project going forward.

While the virtual Roundtable discussion was a good starting point for continued discussions on envisioning a Traditional learning space in Manitoba, the group members expressed the importance going forward of continuing these group discussions in person, and on the land. Some of the topics discussed at this virtual gathering included: ways to move away from the Western education system, ideas of what Traditional and land-based education can entail, the benefits of Traditional and land-based learning for Indigenous youth, and the different elements needed to teach an Indigenous way of learning.

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SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS
FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE: TRADITIONAL EDUCATION ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

TRADITIONAL EDUCATION ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Impact: The Roundtable Discussion was meant to benefit the interview participants: individuals working in traditional education schools/organizations, as well as Elders and Knowledge holders from different communities. Historically, information and knowledge has been extracted from Indigenous peoples and communities without sharing the outputs of that information afterwards, and this was an important opportunity for me to share back the information that came out the interviews.

The interviews done throughout the summer with Elders, Knowledge holders, and representatives from the Turtle Lodge Center of Excellence in Indigenous Education and Wellness, the Kaniyasihk Cree Immersion School, the Akwesasne Freedom School, and the Misipawistik Pimatisimēskanaw Program are a starting point of the development of a Traditional education space in Manitoba and will act as a base of knowledge that can be referred back to as the project develops further. As was said during the Roundtable Discussion, the interviews and this initial virtual meeting was the planting of the seed, and over time the seed will bloom and grow into something bigger.

The Traditional education Roundtable Discussion was meant to engage the interview participants directly and as a group, however as this group goes forward and continues to meet, discuss and create a plan to develop a Traditional learning space, it will ultimately benefit the youth of Manitoba, their family, friends, and community. A Traditional education learning space in Manitoba will offer Indigenous youth the opportunity to learn culturally relevant teachings and connect with their culture and land, as well as support positive identity formation, self-confidence and social connection.

