

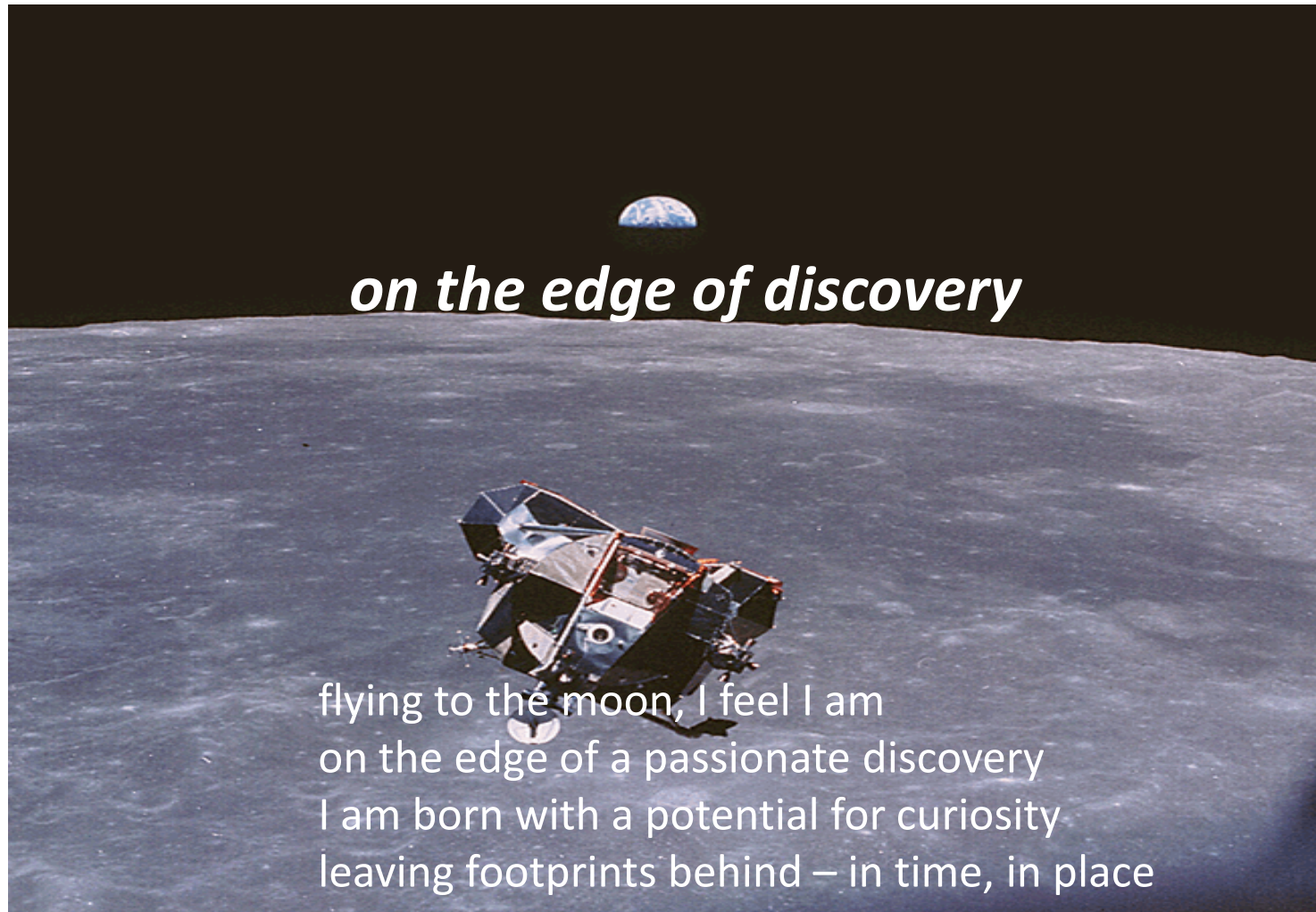


on the edge of discovery:
Purposefulness; Learning and
Teaching; **Assessment and
Accountability**

"The year of the Métis"

Awasis 2010 Keynote
Indian and Métis Special Subject Council
Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation

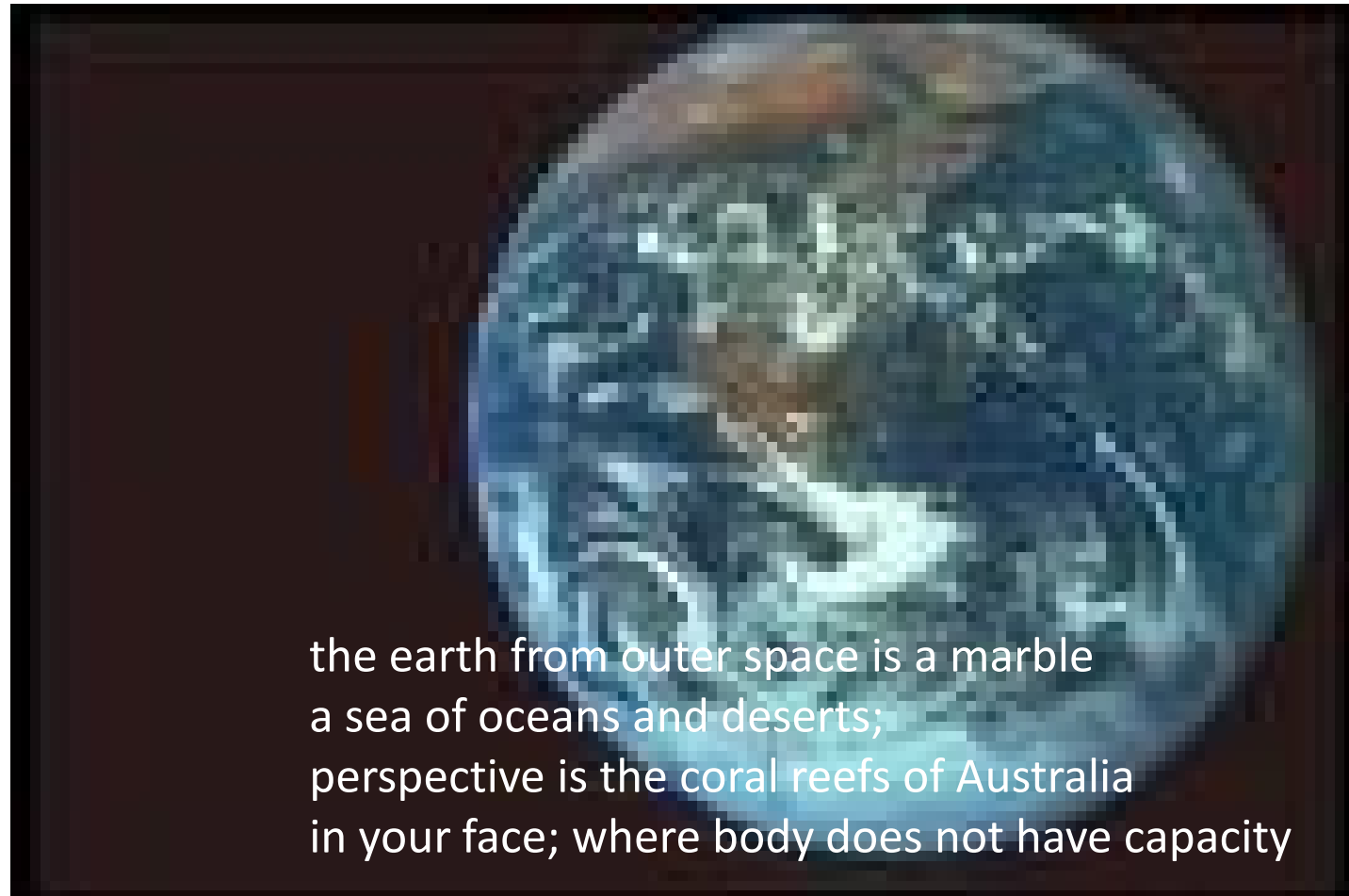
Rita Bouvier



on the edge of discovery

flying to the moon, I feel I am
on the edge of a passionate discovery
I am born with a potential for curiosity
leaving footprints behind – in time, in place

the earth from outer space is a marble...



the earth from outer space is a marble
a sea of oceans and deserts;
perspective is the coral reefs of Australia
in your face; where body does not have capacity



what values should we pass on?

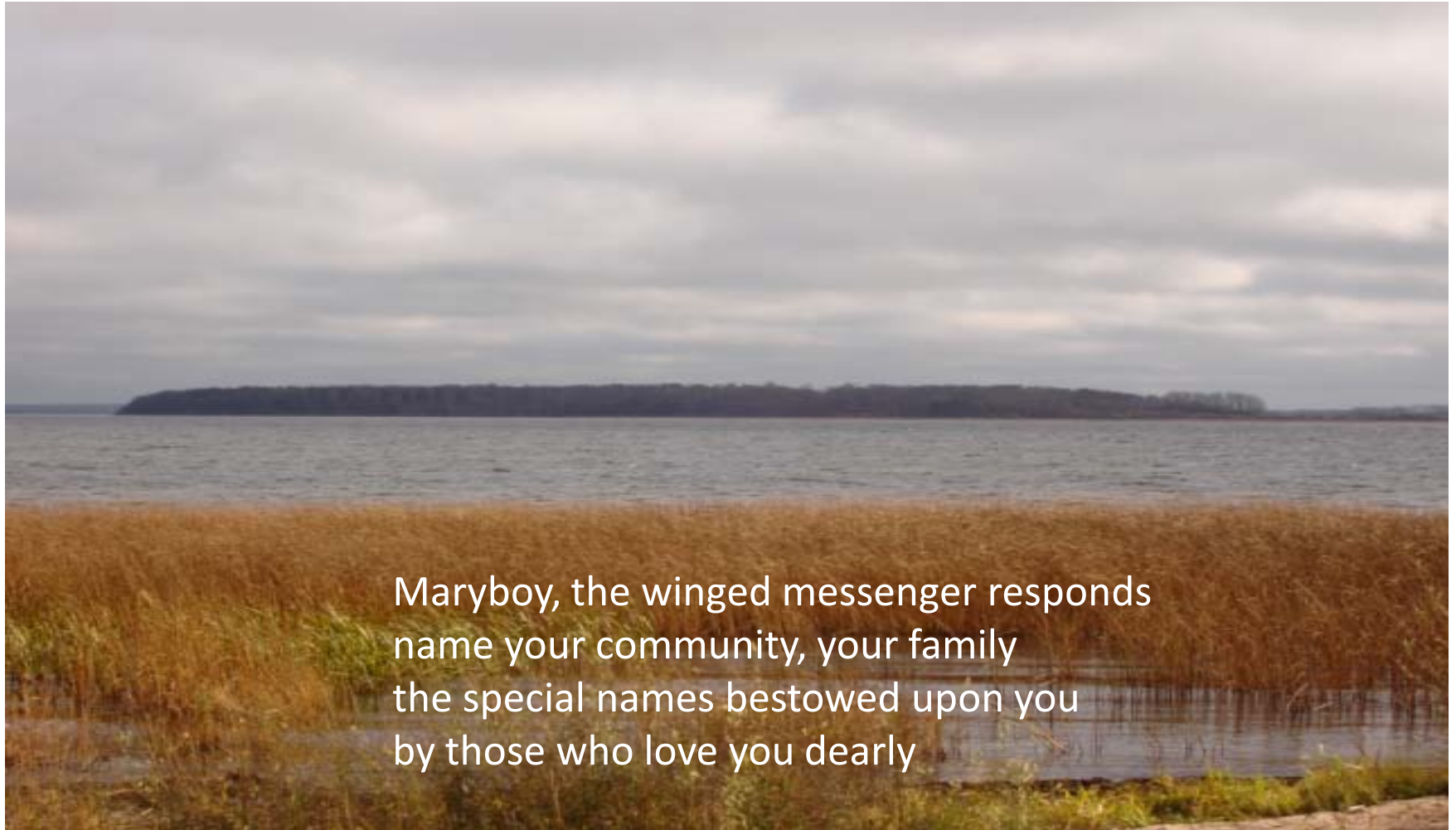


for a quick change. I wonder sailing into space,
what values should we pass on?
what gives meaning and pleasure
to our existence in this place, in this time?

INDUSTRIAL
IMAGES



name your community,



your family...



Rita Bouvier 2010

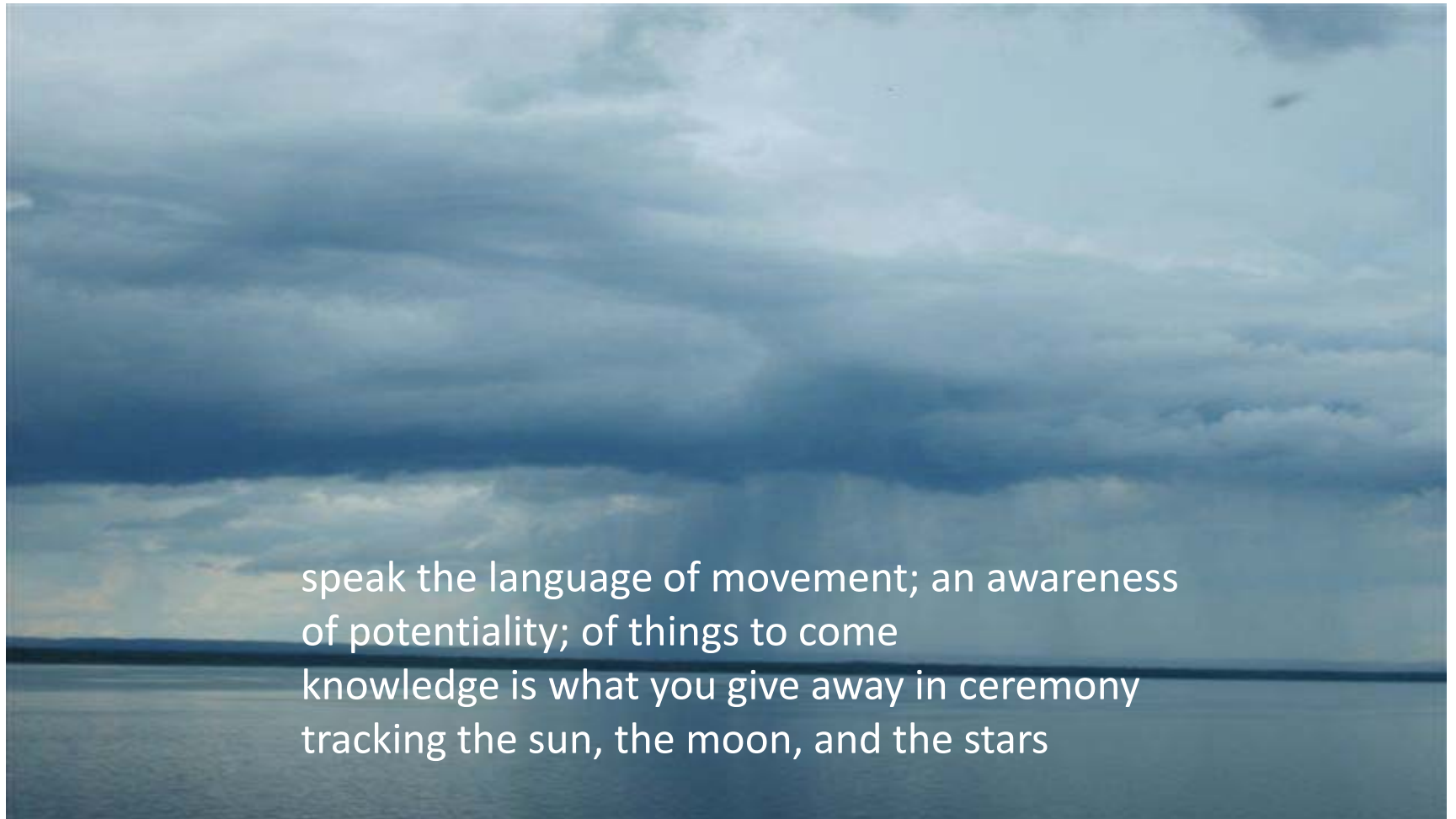


each and every part connected...





speaking the language of movement...



speaking the language of movement; an awareness
of potentiality; of things to come
knowledge is what you give away in ceremony
tracking the sun, the moon, and the stars

Knowledge is what you give away...



tracking the sun, the moon, and the stars



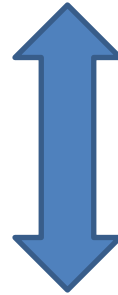


*This thing called **accountability***

- Vague and ill-defined... and the approach taken may be eclectic and mixed depending on its purposes, definition and the discourse adopted (Kenneth Leithwood in CTF, 2004).
- It is *political*

*This thing called **accountability***

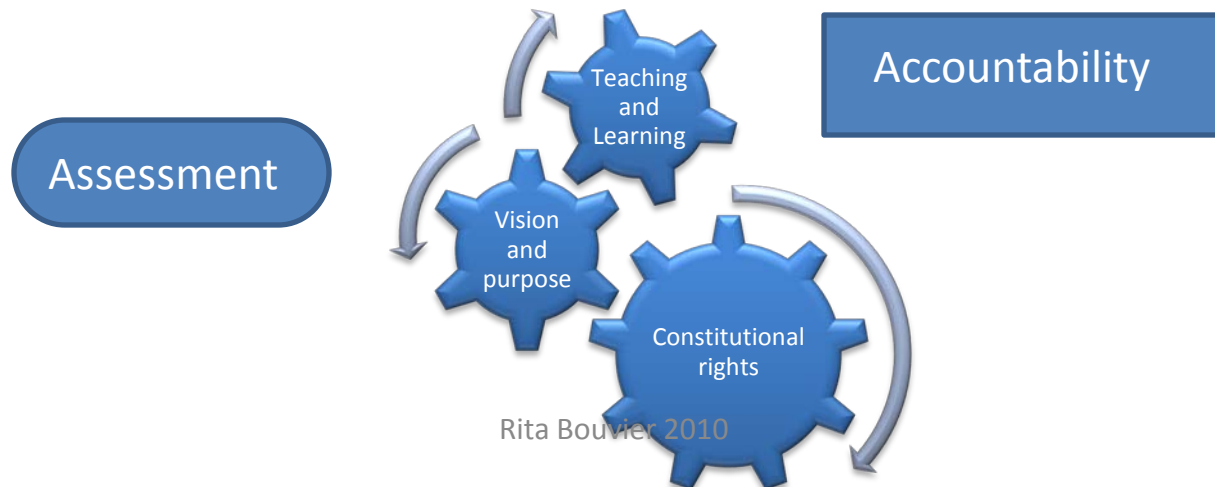
Reforming schools based on a market ideology **for efficiency** (getting the best bang for the dollar), **control (based on narrow measureable outcomes usually in the form of standardized tests), competition (ranking of schools)...** thereby ensuring competitive advantage of nation states (the big boys) in a transformed global economic order.



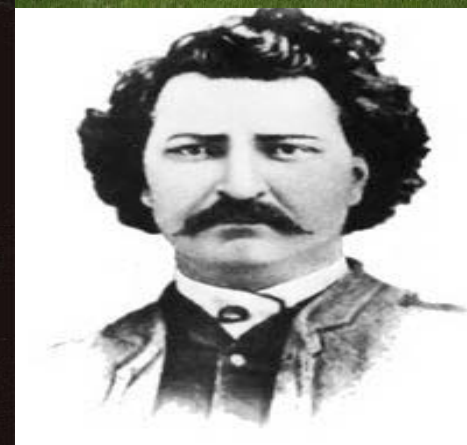
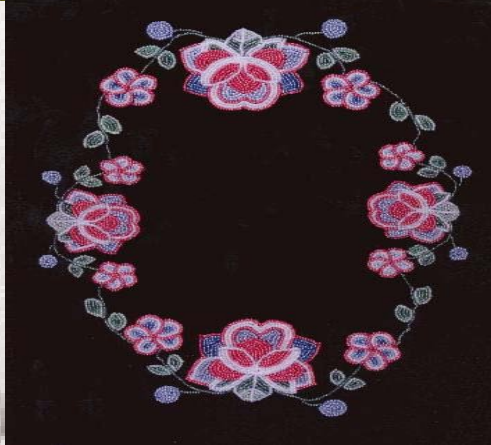
A foundational principle [of *public education*] based within a framework of a **strong vision, with multiple goals that foster a breath and depth in the promotion of shared values, in holistic development of students to foster critical, reflective and creative thinkers, in well defined governance structures with various roles and responsibilities delineated,** accountability is embraced as **an ethical responsibility... to the public** (yes, parents) by teachers, by schools, by school districts, departments of education, and governments.

*This thing called **accountability**—what shape has it taken in our systems?*

- What is accountability and what does student assessment have to do with it?
- AND, what is the relationship of **accountability**:
 - with the **constitutional and democratic rights** of people served by the education system;
 - with **vision and purposes of education** or definitions of **success**; and
 - with **teaching and learning processes**



Continuance as Dene, as Dakota, as Métis...



- Success through struggle, advocacy, allies



Accountability and Aboriginal Education: Dilemmas, Promises and Challenges

(Bouvier and Karlenzig, 2006)

Education's Iron Cage

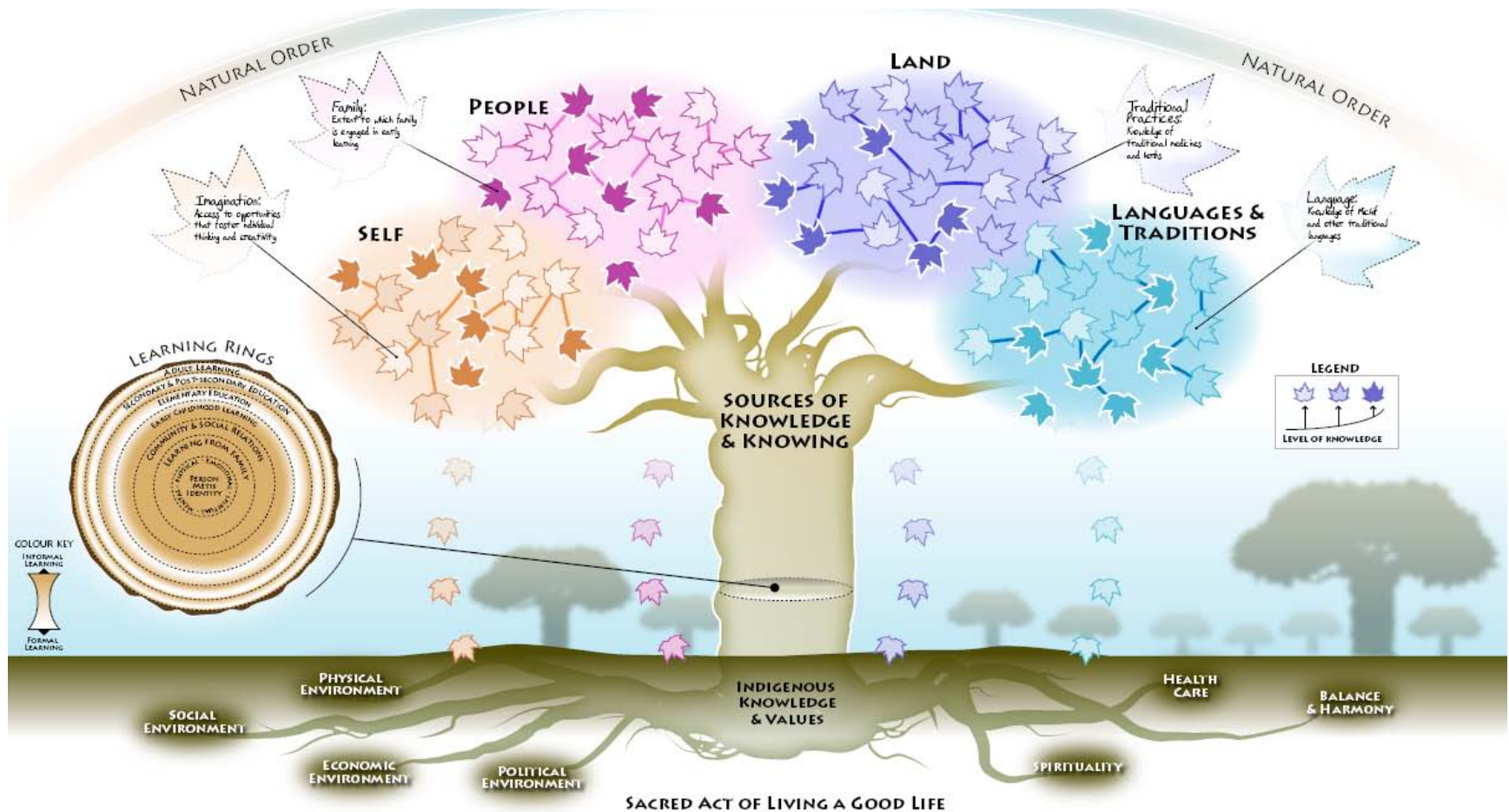
And its Dismantling in the
New World Order

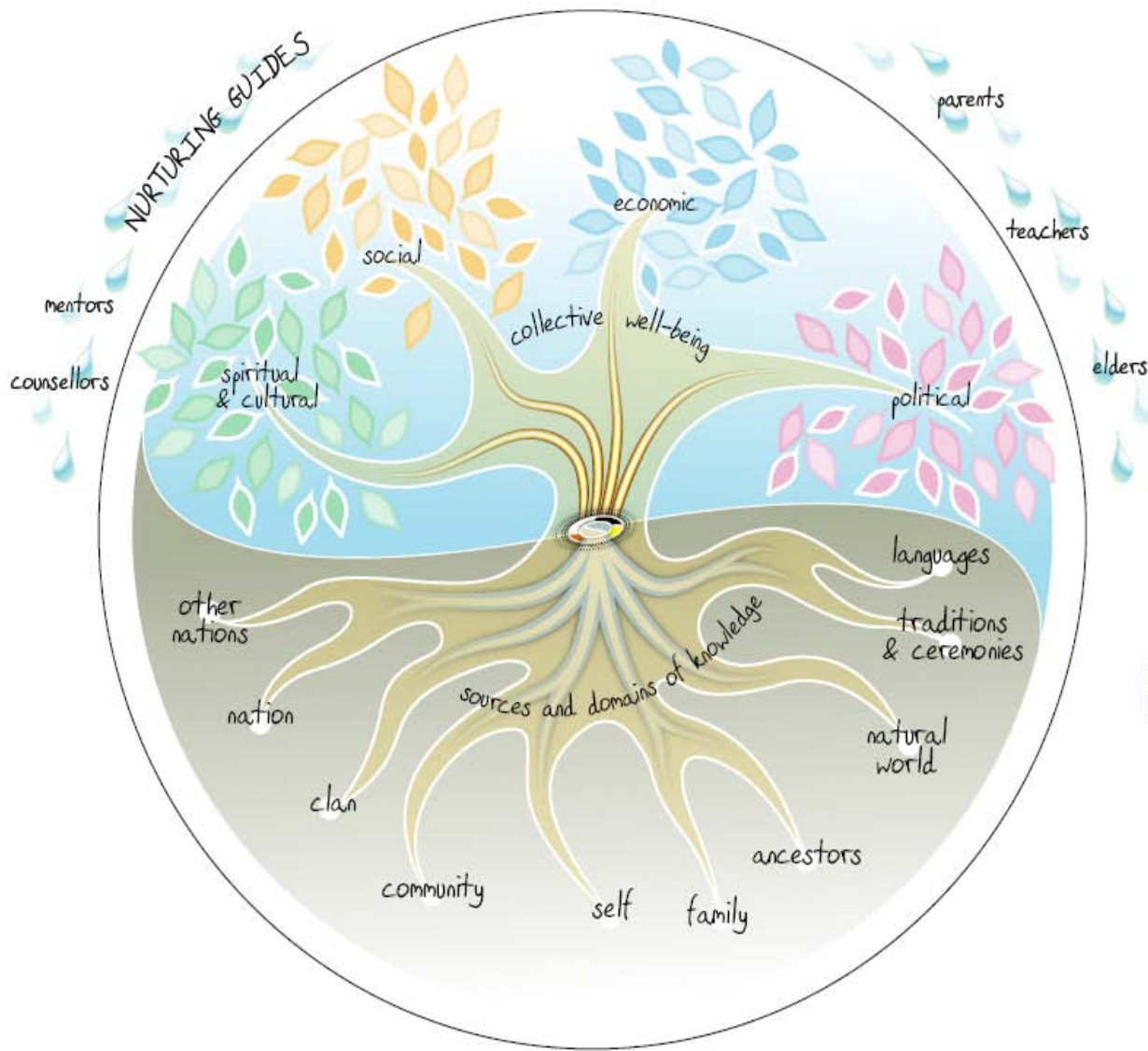
OurSchools Ourselves
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
2006

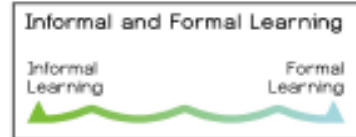
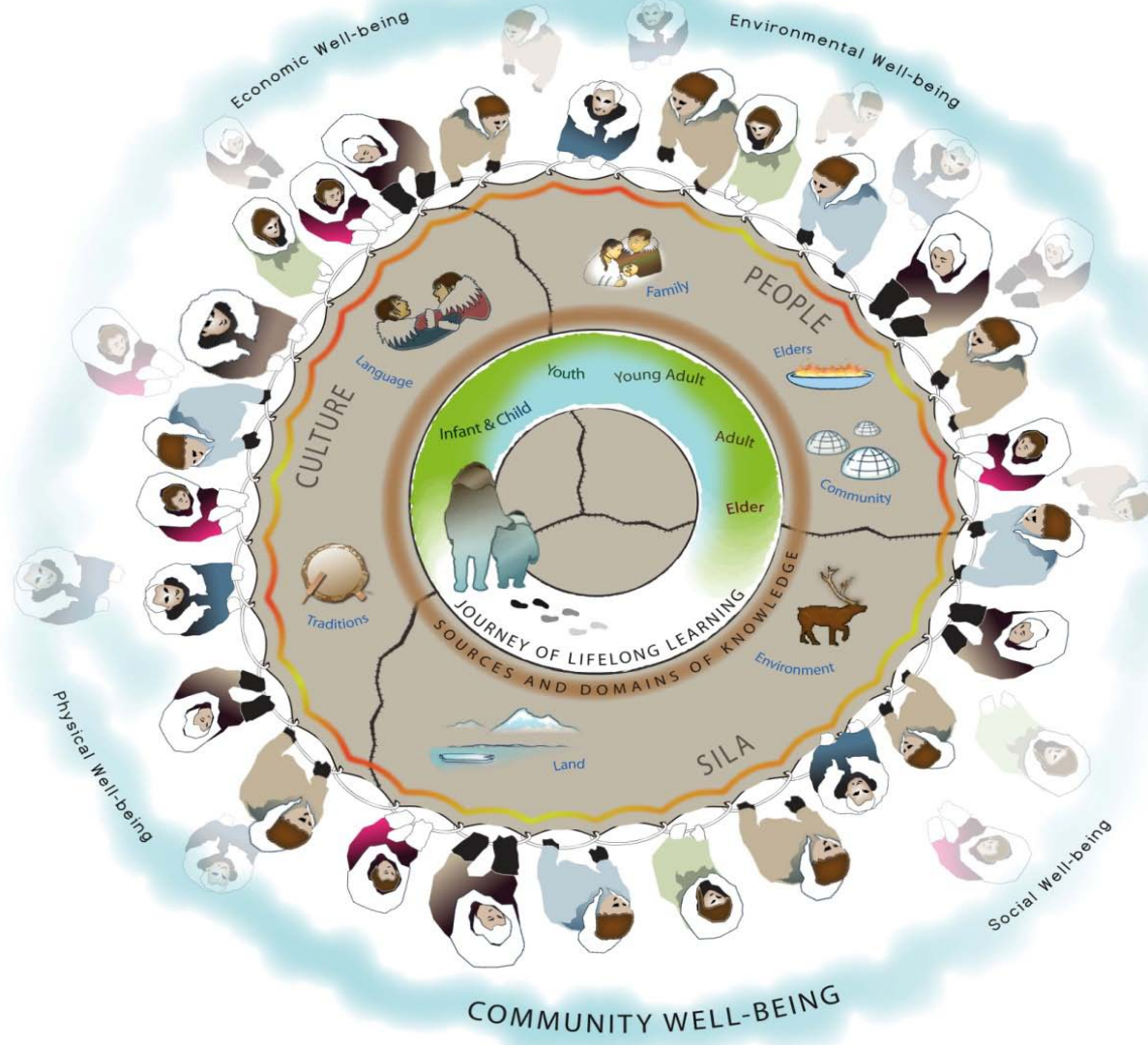


CCL and AbLKC Initiative

On [re]Defining Success in Aboriginal Learning







CCL Reporting and Monitoring Success in Aboriginal Lifelong Learning

2009

The State of Aboriginal Learning in Canada:
A Holistic Approach To Measuring Success



Rita Bouvier 2010



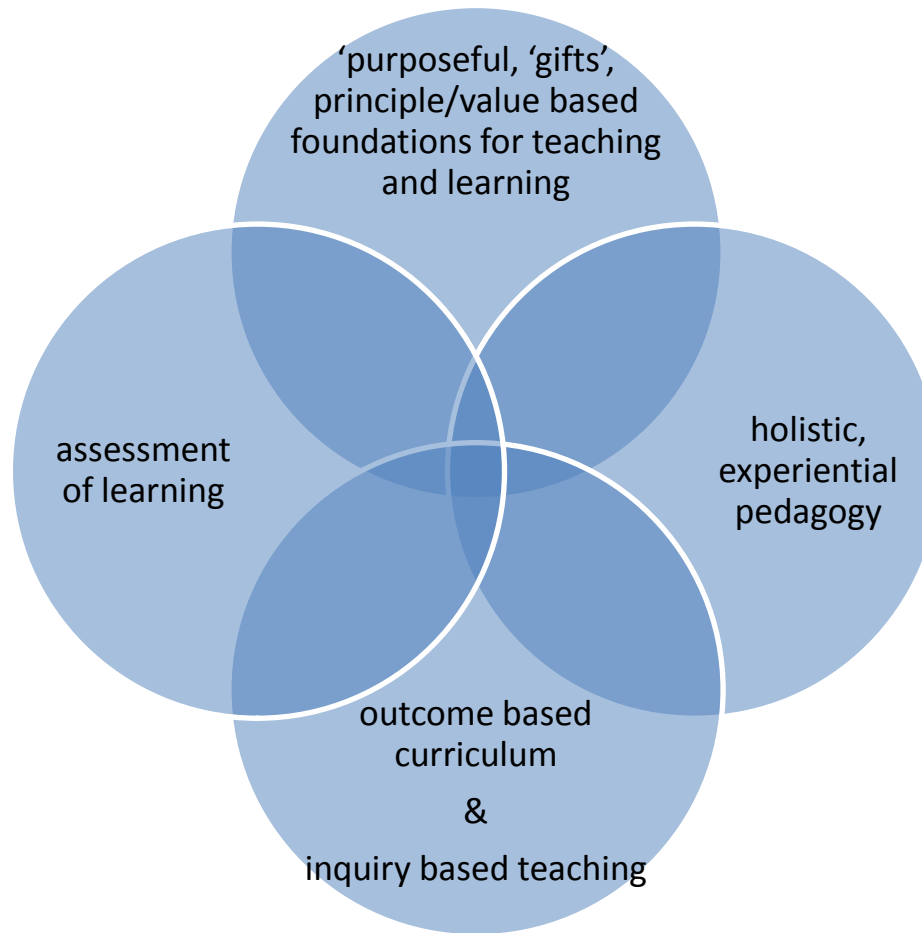
Saskatchewan's Vision and Direction

- working in partnership with Aboriginal people, respecting their authority (in case of First Nations) and right to have a say in the education of their children
- creating a significant shift in thinking regarding value of IP languages, knowledge systems and histories
- mandating treaty education for all students
- integrating vision and direction into CIF



...a context for teaching and learning in Saskatchewan

National/
international
"accountability"
data collection
purposes
what
making meaning
who



Saskatchewan

Accountability through continuous improvement through data collection and improvement

- CIF
- Curriculum renewal
- Assessment for learning



Important Contextual Considerations

relationship of accountability with the **constitutional and democratic rights** of people served by the education system; **vision and purposes of education** or definitions of **success** and with **teaching and learning**

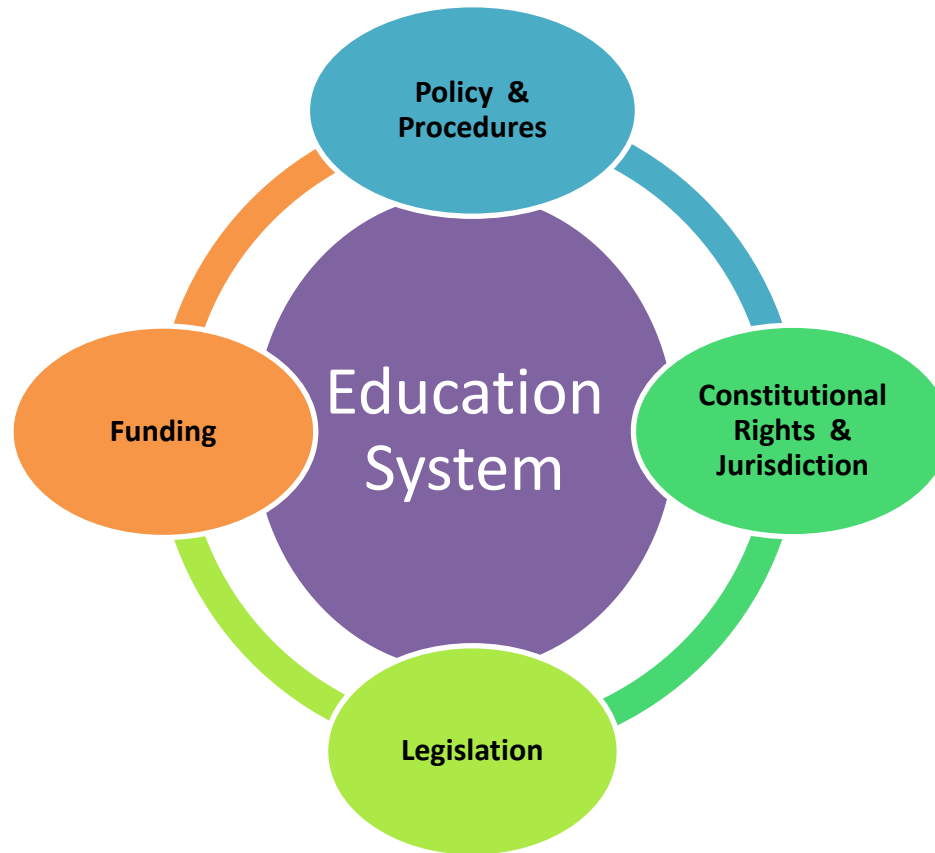


Aboriginal People, *the Constitution*(1982), Education & Governance

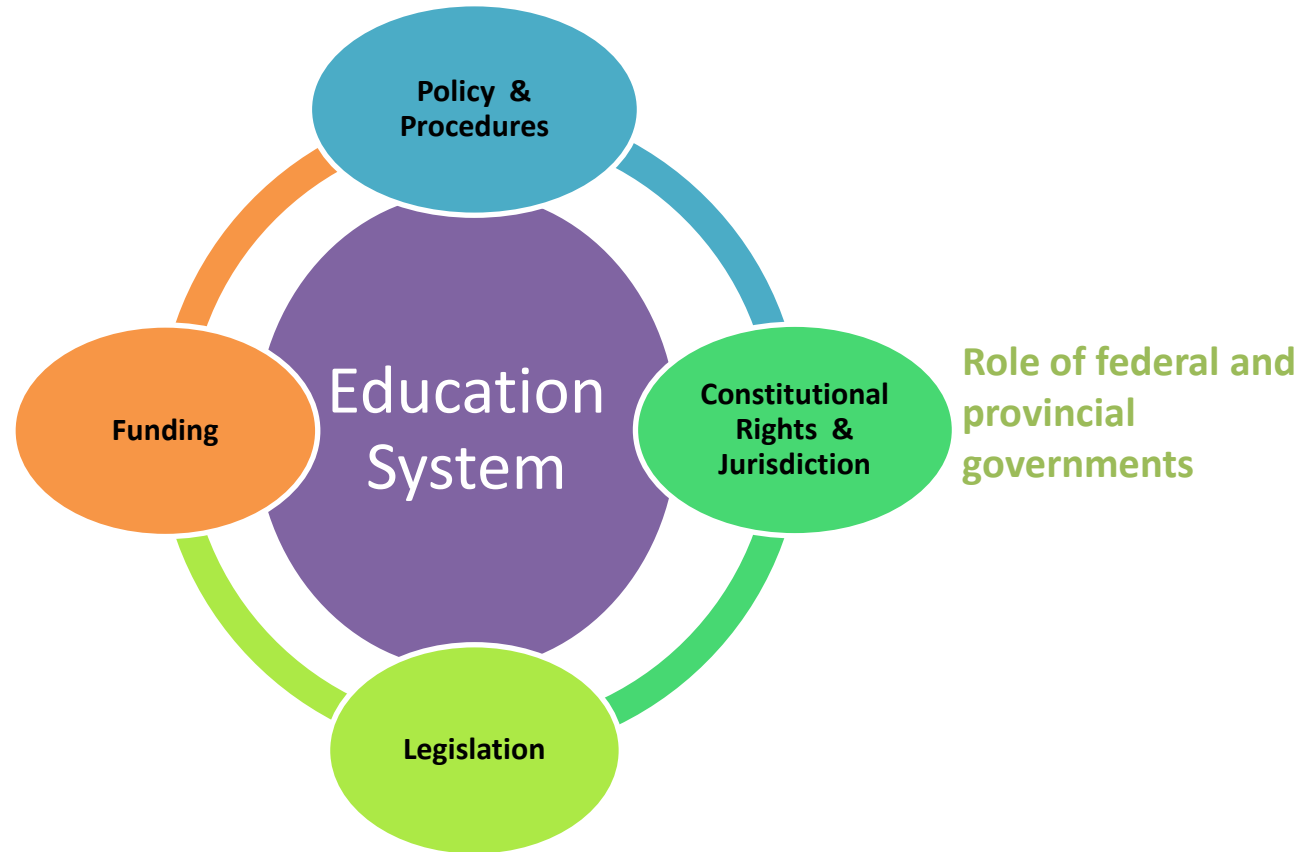
- A structural context : **Aboriginal and/or treaty rights protected in the Canadian Constitution**
- To create a transforming and capacity enhancing education system, **reconciliation of these rights with provincial education systems is important** (Sakej Henderson, Battiste and Bouvier, 2008).
- It requires **attention to governance structures** that protect those rights, attention to **infrastructure** and a **sustainable funding** formula which ensures a quality and equitable education for students.
- This would require **all levels of government, including First Nations to work together to ensure *sustainable structures* that make room *for systematic and sustained improvement over time*.**



Education and Governance

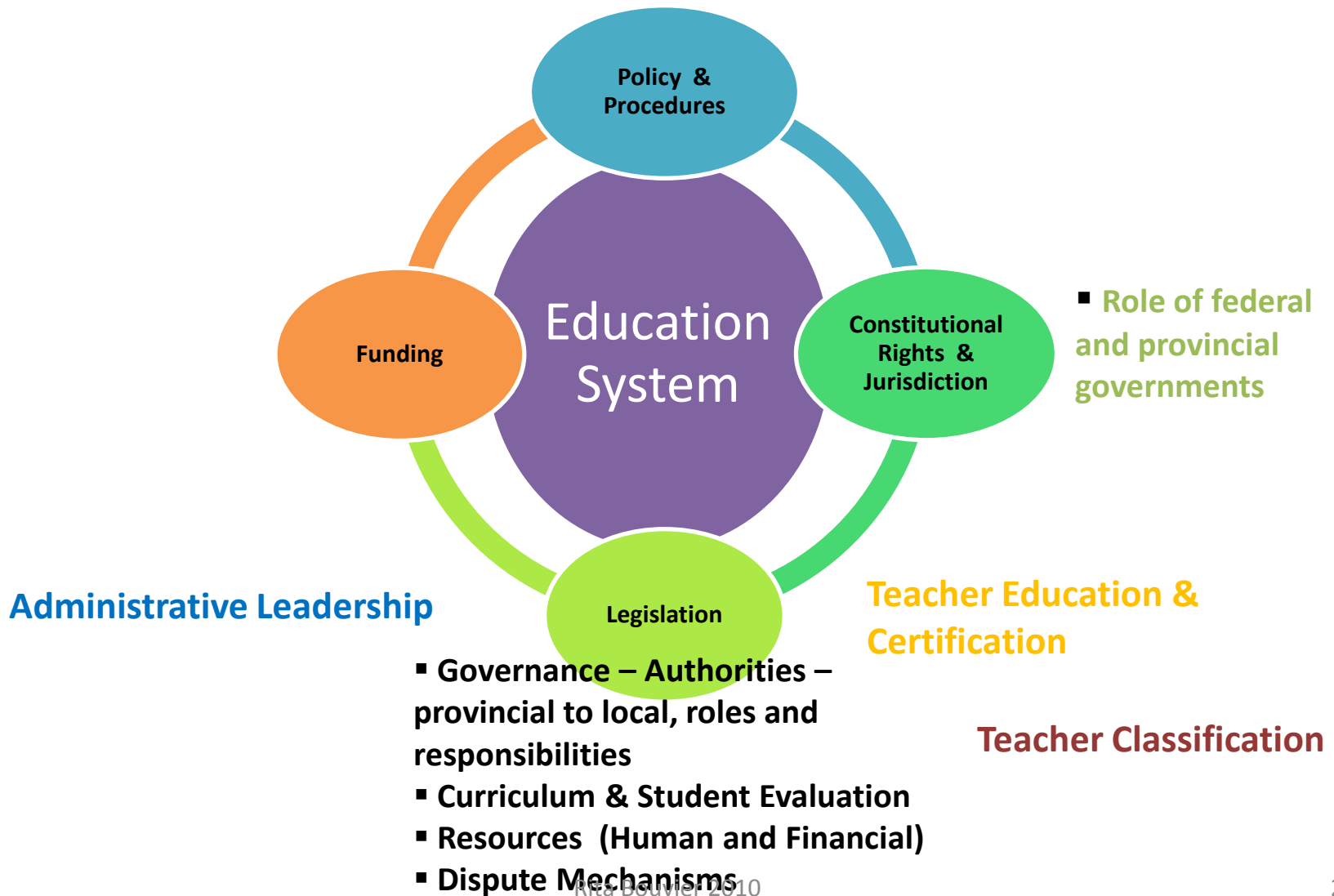


Education and Governance

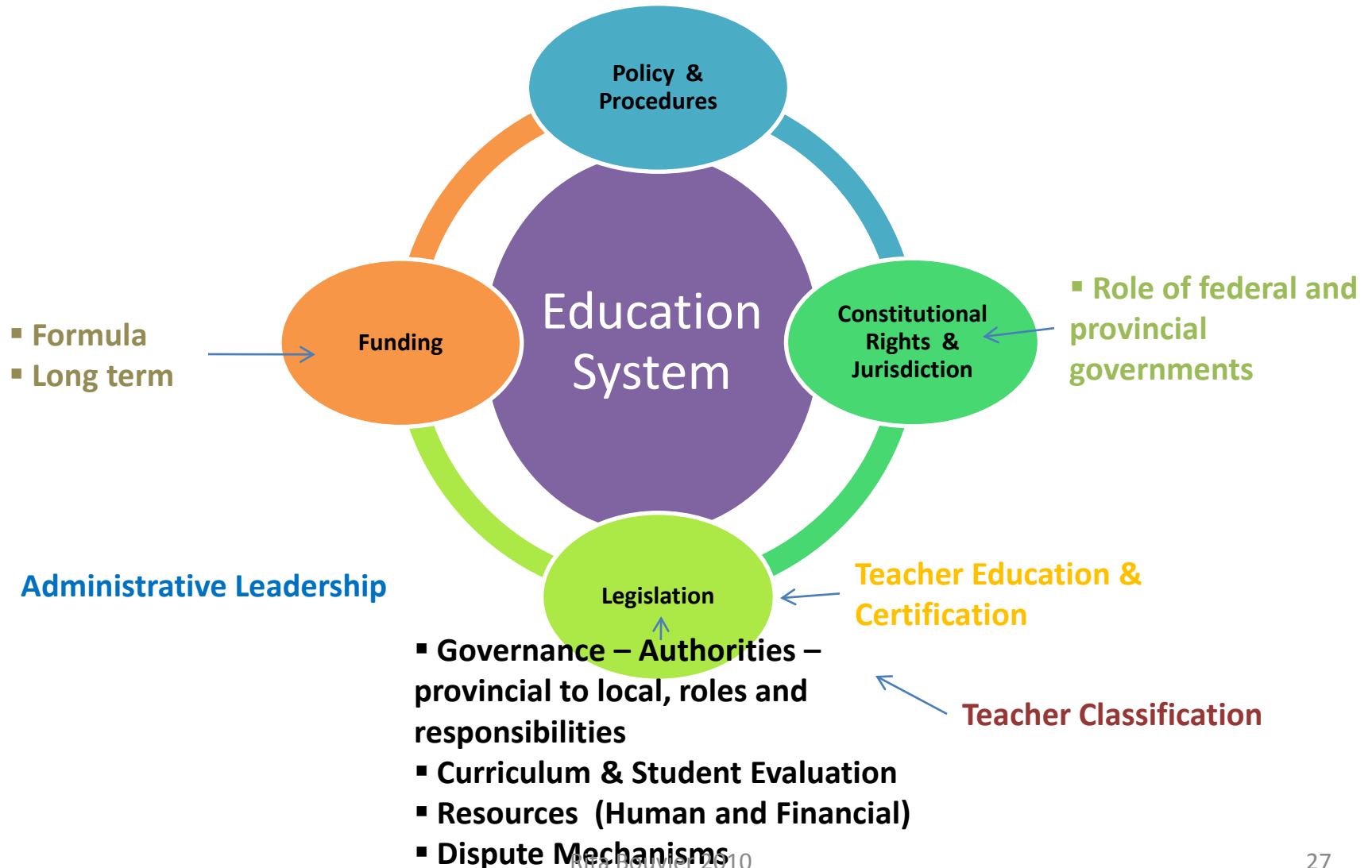




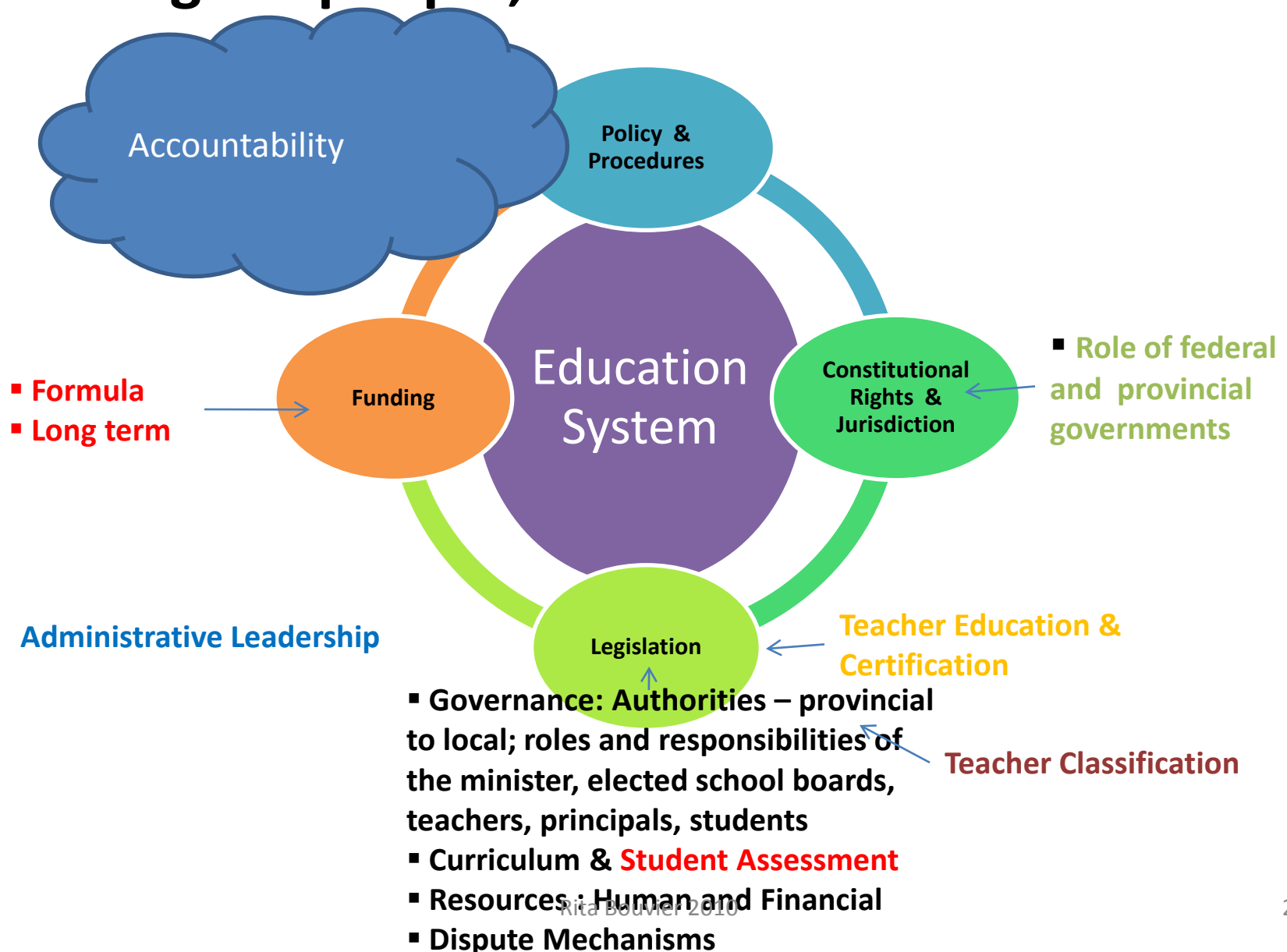
Education and Governance



Education and Governance



Aboriginal people, Education and Governance





Ideological shift

dominant euro-centric
knowledge system
&
diminished or essentialized
understanding of culture
rendering identities that
are static and one-
dimensional.

Shifting our practices from
a focus on 'culture' and
'differences' as a cause of
failure to exploring the
social, political and
historical dynamics of
racism in Canada and how
this impacts on Aboriginal
people's lives (St Denis,
Millar, Ireland, and
George, 2009)

Underscoring the aspiration
and right of Aboriginal
people to engage creatively
in preserving their ways of
knowing, being, valuing
and doing into the 21 st
century.



On [re]Defining Success in Aboriginal Learning

[Re]defining Success in Aboriginal Learning

Canadian Council on Learning

Purposes

To live a good life
To become human...
To protect the earth to
ensure sustainability of all
life

Key Attributes of Aboriginal Learning

Learning is holistic [extends from self, to family, to community and all life];
Learning is lifelong [and inter-generational];
Learning is experiential [all senses];
Learning is rooted in [Aboriginal] languages and cultures;
Learning is a communal activity;
Learning is 'place based' and spiritually oriented;
Learning integrates Aboriginal and Western knowledge [traditions of many peoples]

*Despite diverse cultures, histories and geographies, First Nations, Inuit and Métis people share a vision of learning as a **purposeful, holistic, and lifelong process.***



2007

CCL State of Learning Report

**No Time for
Complacency**



The Value of Assessment *for* learning and the Challenges of “Assessment *of learning* for Accountability”

Assessing
Student Ways of
Knowing

Dr. Rick Sawa, Ed.
CCPA



The Value of *Assessment **for** Learning*

- Student assessment is an integral aspect of student learning and teaching
- Authentic assessment is situated in place, cultural and social contexts of students lives
- Done right, student assessment as part of the teaching and learning process imparts hope, empowers and supports the development of lifelong, self assessing skills for students

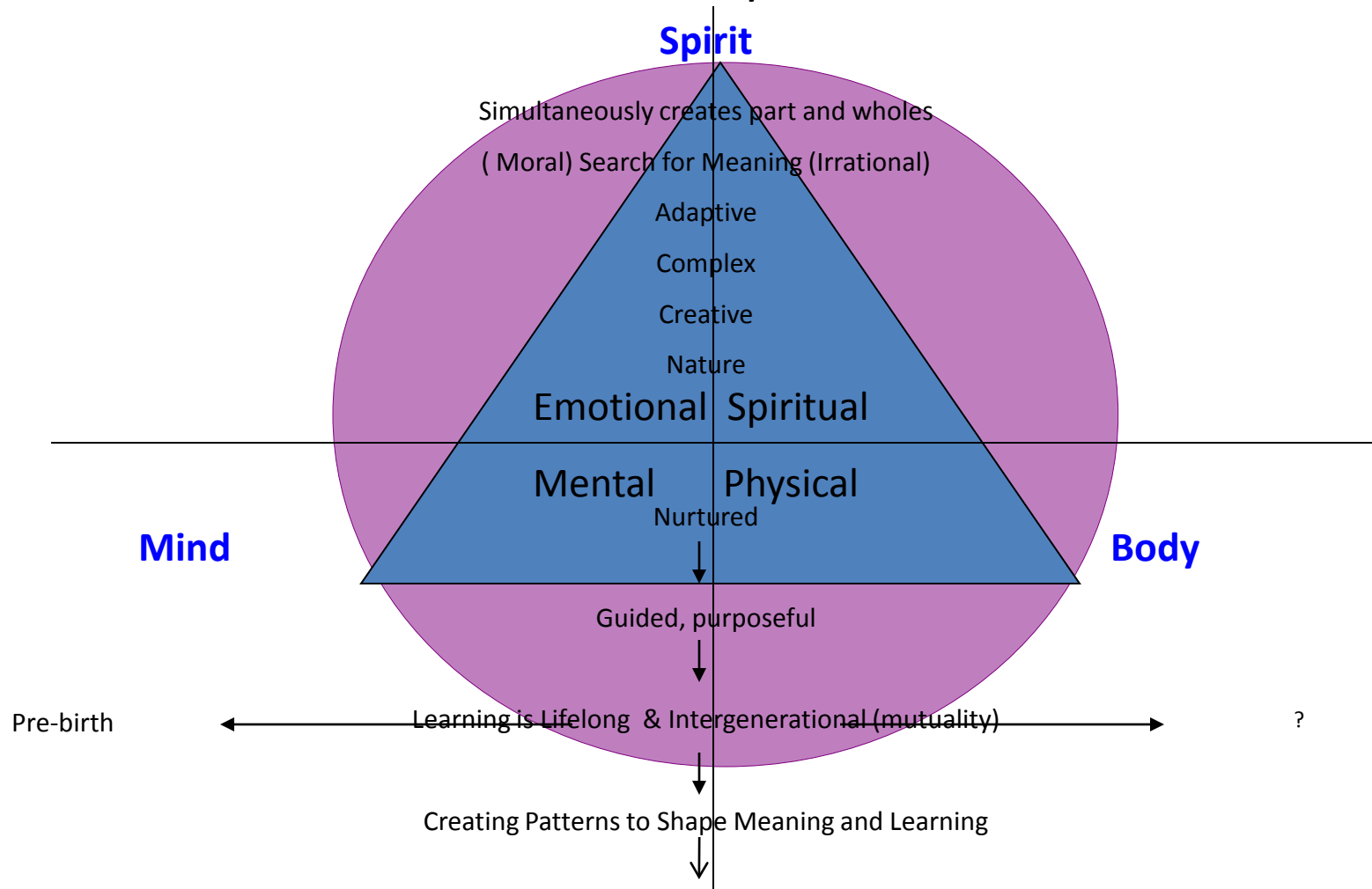


Nature & Nurture

learning theory and philosophy –

Aboriginal Holistic Learning Philosophies and the 21st Century Learning Initiative

'an ethical space'



We do not know everything, we are but a small part of the great mystery

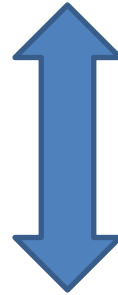
Rita Bouvier 2010



*This thing called **accountability***

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Discourse: Raising the bar... Achievement... Consequences... Measurable... Results... Outcomes... etc.



A foundational principle [of *public education*] based within a framework of a **strong vision**, with **multiple goals that foster a breath and depth in the promotion of shared values**, in **holistic development of students to foster critical, reflective and creative thinkers**, in **well defined governance structures with various roles and responsibilities delineated**, accountability is embraced as **an ethical responsibility... to the public** (yes, parents) by teachers, by schools, by school districts, departments of education, and governments.

Discourse: Growth of the individual... Learning... Responsibilities... Evidence... Understanding... Development... etc...



Challenges of Assessment *of* Learning for Accountability

What are its intentions and purposes?

- Is it progress towards desired ethical ends to promote understanding and to build capacity for the system?
- Is it a bureaucratic impersonal set of procedures and processes handed down to direct the course of our deliberations at the community level.
- Is it lopsided in the interests of one powerful force shaping our lives—the economy or in the value given to what is tested or not tested.
- According to Leithwood (2001) **some approaches taken in the name of accountability are unethical...** holding groups of people and organizations accountable for things they have little or no control, who have little decision making power for funding, for curriculum and infrastructure to deliver programming.



Proceed with Caution: Children and Youth at **Play** and Learning



Challenges of Assessment *of* Learning for Accountability

- We have **reason to be cautious** when the magic bullet of “increased accountability” to address the deep and complex issues facing our communities and society is thrown in our direction. At the very least, we need to **be engaged, asking thoughtful and hard questions** along the way.
- If accountability processes and procedures have a laudable purpose than Aboriginal people must be involved in naming its intentions and purposes. More importantly, as supposed beneficiaries in these deliberations, we need to define what is measured and how it will be measured.



Challenges of Assessment *of* Learning for Accountability

Assessing Ways of Knowing (2009), Sawa (ed)

- **Yes** to use the use of evidence and information collected on an intermittent basis to inform change in policy and practice
- **Caution** on the type of Assessment tools utilized for performance and summative evaluation *of* student learning.
- **Caution** on how information is used and reported
- **No** to the use of standardized tests
 - Created as instruments of ranking and to spread out the scores (culturally and socio-economically biased)
 - Disadvantage to students who are poor and to rural schools with limited economic opportunities etc
 - Tendency to homogenize learning
 - Focus is on subjects easily measured
 - Regime of testing can be excessive and repetitive
 - Standardized tests often measure superficial, disconnected thinking which may “divert attention from the learning processes and, in the context of Indigenous knowledge, the ethical dimension of learning” (Kohn, Bouvier and Karlenzig).



Current Policy Directions in First Nations [Aboriginal Education] Education



Indian and Northern Affairs

First Nations Schools

First Nations Student Success Program

- A foundation for long term reform of FN education... to improve student and school results
 - School Success Plans
 - Student Learning Assessments - (to indentify areas for improvement) *At minimum schools will participate in their respective provincial standard testing process
 - Performance Measurement

Education Partnerships Program

- A proposal driven program to promote collaboration between First Nations, provinces and INAC and other s to improve student success



CD Howe Institute – Policy Direction (Evidence Based)

- “How to bring about better outcomes is not an easy answer.”
- Successful certification is not the only criterion to evaluate Aboriginal education accomplishments (Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal students learning more about Aboriginal heritage and culture.
- A marginalized community (such as Aboriginal people) can not escape poverty without a major undertaking by everyone to *close “the education gaps”*.
- Key variables are emphasis on early learning, successful mastery of basic knowledge and skills imparted by a *good* primary and secondary education and on the completion of high school.



CCL Reporting and Monitoring Success in Aboriginal Lifelong Learning

2009

The State of Aboriginal Learning in Canada:
A Holistic Approach To Measuring Success



Canadian Council on Learning

CD Howe Institute – Policy Direction (Evidence Based)

- *professionalize* school administration through the creation of First Nations Education Authorities
- Reserve based Aboriginal leadership has not placed education achievement high among its priorities. And without determined leadership from Ottawa it is doubtful that that school management will be professionalized.

ASK:

- How does *professionalizing* school management fit with a need to reconcile the rights and *responsibility* (read as accountability) of First Nations for the education of their children?
- What are the sustainable structures and processes envisioned?



CD Howe Institute – Policy Direction (Evidence Based)

Off reserve

- Need for better school district management and leadership
- Best performing schools
 - Place emphasis on student outcomes (making consistent use of data on student outcomes, set measureable targets for improvement and have more involvement of Aboriginal leaders and parents)
 - Outcomes are better in schools where students come from families with socio-economic conditions and where non-Aboriginal students perform better... and the presence of Aboriginal students is lower.

ASK: Would educational achievement have anything to do with the relative economic condition of the Aboriginal students' families living in the district?



CD Howe Institute – Policy Direction (Evidence Based)

post script

- Extent to which socio-economic conditions, in school dynamics and strategies pursued by regional authorities explain the gap in performance
 - Gaps based on racial identity exceed those based on gender
 - Most important socio-economic variables ... parental education and family income
 - Value of Aboriginal teachers and a school curriculum geared to Aboriginal experience
 - A school culture with low expectations has a negative impact on student performance
 - Focus on student learning by all
 - More links with community partners capable of supporting students needed to be nurtured
 - Success is realized in a collective culture when admin and teachers take pride in their district through shared planning, decision-making and achievements.

“There is no quick fix”



Research: What fosters success?

(CTF 2004, SELU 2009)

- Emphasis on supporting early childhood learning
- **[Productive Educational Cultures in the Home]**
- Effective leadership **[effective Operations and Governance]**
- A collaborative professional culture...
- A safe secure learning environment **[a supportive learning environment]**
- Support for students with special learning needs
- **[High expectations]** **[Academic Press]**
- **[School Disciplinary Climate]**
- **[Connectedness]** **[Partnership with Parents]**
- **[Cultural Affirmation]**
- Quality **[Engaging]** instruction
- **[Rich Curricula]**
- Small**[er]** class size
- Small school size **[Heterogeneous Grouping]**
- **Diverse Student Population**
- **[Time for Learning]**

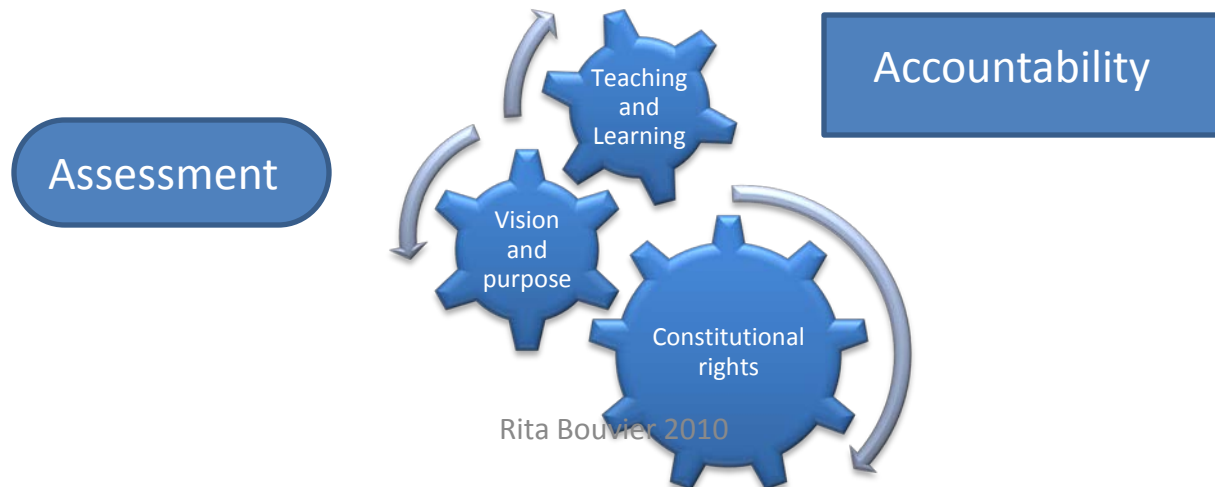


Policy Directions & Research

Community Dialogue on First Nations Holistic Learning: Learning as a Community for Renewal and Growth
Accountability and Aboriginal Education: Dilemmas, Promises and Challenges State of Learning in Canada: No Time for Complacency *Redefining Success in Aboriginal Learning*
Educational Accountability with a Human Face. Constitutional Supremacy and the Deadbeat Crowns Responsive Learning Systems in Aboriginal Learning: A Synthesis Paper Improving *Education on Reserves: A First Nations Education Authority Act*
Closing the Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal Education Gaps *Understanding the Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal Gap in Student Performance: Lessons from British Columbia* Reclaiming the Learning Spirit: Learning from Our Experience *Significant Leadership and Ethical Space, Transforming Educational Opportunities for First Nations and Métis Learners & Many More*

*This thing called **accountability**—what shape has it taken in our systems?*

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On Promising and Pragmatic Directions for Assessment *for* Learning and Accountability in Aboriginal Education



Pragmatic & Promising Directions

- Adoption of a purposeful and holistic philosophy for lifelong learning
- Consensus on evidence to be collected as a measure of progress
- Instrumentation beyond norm referenced standardized testing; external reviews
- Wide base of evidence that takes into account current social and economic policy, educational policy and practice, sustainable governance and operational structures
- Local and regional (to ensure relevance)
- Consideration to processes for interpreting results (mediated through democratic processes by stakeholders)
- Responsible, honourable governments, engaged communities and an articulate teaching profession on the finer nuances of complex pedagogies for teaching and learning which includes authentic assessment for learning .



Pragmatic & Promising Directions

The bottom line:



- the constitutional reconciliation of Aboriginal peoples' rights and responsibilities for education supported by structures (legal and otherwise) and processes to ensure a sustained effort over time and improvements based on learning of what works in the current context and environment we may find ourselves.
- sustained *continuous dialogue* in communities regarding the foundational base of values fundamental to a purposeful life to ensure success and well being for individuals, their families and communities.
- the creation of learning environments and opportunities for *all* students that are gift/strength-based, relationally based, place based, meaningful and relevant to current realities – local and global.



sharing the wisdom of...

Rita Bouvier 2010



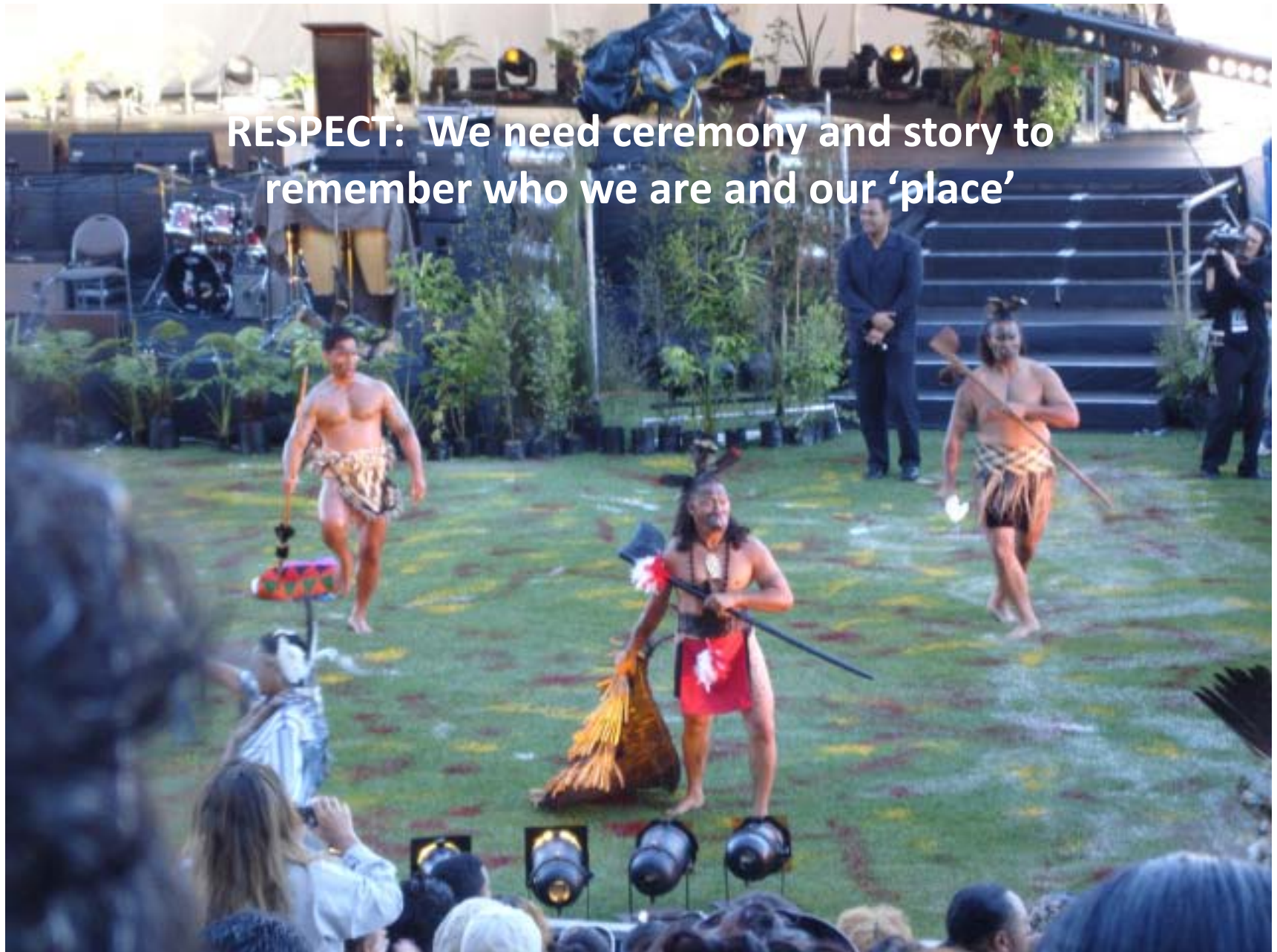
what values should we pass on?





HOPE: We need custom and tradition – not as a rigid construct of control but rather as a dynamic poetic expression of our values to each other and to the world





RESPECT: We need ceremony and story to remember who we are and our 'place'



LOVE: Each generation needs to impart a lasting sustaining legacy to the next generation





papîyâhtak

Photo Acknowledgements

- Batoche Theatre Company
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