



One Path, Four Travellers: A PhD Journey of the Mind, Heart, Body and Spirit

Allison Tucker

Angie Bruce

Jessica Poff

Melanie Manitowabi

Nipissing University

Abstract:

As PhD students in Education Sustainability at Nipissing University, the authors each experienced a personal process of becoming and knowing (Absolon, 2011; Miller, 2019). This paper draws on journal entries, personal narratives, various significant artifacts and uses an autoethnographic (Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Holman et al., 2013) process. The paper offers a counternarrative to the solely academic PhD experiences. We consider how holistic learning engages the whole person and is deep, rich and sustaining (Archibald, 2008; Miller, 2000; Sterling, 2001). Through an exploration of how one path was shared by four travelers and personally understood, it is also an opportunity to reimagine learning (Sterling, 2001) as relational and personally meaningful journeys of mind, heart, body and spirit (Wilson, 2008). It focuses on relational learning (Battiste, 2013), communities of trust (Palmer, 1998), intersectionality, acknowledgement and acceptance of many ways of being. In this paper, four graduate students share humanized, educational experiences rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing and relationality that are personally constructed and transformative in nature. Their

experiences bring about new ways of understanding themselves and extend it to an emergent and deepening understanding of their world views and of who they are as researchers, writers and learners. The four interconnected papers explore each student's learning journey as it was understood in this context, at this time in life and within this community of learners.

Keywords: PhD experience; holistic education; adult education

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Biographical Notes

Allison Tucker is a PhD candidate at Nipissing University in the Schulich School of Education. Her research focuses on teaching as relationship and the sacred pedagogical relational spaces shared with students. Living in Corner Brook, NL, Allison is a program specialist with the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District.

Jessica Poff is the principal of a small, rural elementary school in Ontario. She wholeheartedly embraces love and hope as guiding principles. Jessica is working on her PhD in Education

Sustainability at Nipissing University. She is exploring multiple ways of learning with holistic and critical pedagogical lenses.

Melanie Manitowabi is from Wiigwaaskinga (Birch Island) and is the Early Learning Supervisor in her community. She continues her learning journey towards her PhD at Nipissing University and on the land. Melanie's research focuses on innovative practices in education that sustain and revitalize the languages, land, and oral histories of the Anishinaabek.

Angie Bruce is a proud Metis woman from St. Laurent, Manitoba. She works as a senior executive at Natural Resources Canada. Angie is undertaking her PhD in Education Sustainability at Nipissing University. Her research is focused on Indigenous Identity and employment.