

**POSTER: Picturing Human Health and the Environment:
First Steps ... from 'Co-Learning Journey'
to 'Two-Eyed Seeing'**

**Cape Breton Regional Health Research Symposium
"Human Health and the Environment"
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AUTHORS

- **Sana Kavanagh**, MES (candidate) at Dalhousie University and Integrative Science research assistant at Cape Breton University
- **Cheryl Bartlett**, PhD, Canada Research Chair in Integrative Science and Professor of Biology, Dept of Biology, Cape Breton University
- **Nadine Lefort**, MEEC (candidate) at Royal Roads University and Integrative Science research assistant at Cape Breton University
- **Albert Marshall**, Elder, Eskasoni Mi'kmaq First Nation, and Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources
- **Murdena Marshall**, MEd, Elder and Spiritual Leader, Eskasoni Mi'kmaq First Nation; and Associate Professor (retired) of Mi'kmaq Studies, Cape Breton University

ABSTRACT: This poster outlines how visuals were used to facilitate discussion among university researchers, health professionals, and Mi'kmaq community members about possible relationships between human health and the environment. This discussion was a first step in an Aboriginal community-based, participatory action research project entitled "Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land" which was funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research – Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health (2003-2006). This poster will show visual icons that were created to capture meanings of terms used in research, and particularly health research. In addition, it will feature a visual that was used to describe the collaborative process; this visual was based on the Medicine Wheel, a contemporary symbol for wholeness, change, and balance used in many Aboriginal communities. All these visuals were used to foster an atmosphere in which people could come together, learn together, and learn what they had in common, a process we initially called the Co-Learning Journey. The idea of a Co-Learning Journey was subsequently strengthened by the suggestion of 'Two-Eyed Seeing', introduced to the group by Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall, of Eskasoni First Nation. In this metaphor, one 'eye' is the Western science perspective and one 'eye' is the Indigenous science perspective. In Two-Eyed Seeing, we try to find the strengths of each perspective and mindfully bring them together, to work together, and to go forward together. One outcome from this project is an increased understanding of the diversity of ways in which the relationship between human health and the environment can be conceived, both within the Western health sciences and Mi'kmaq communities. Another outcome is our use of Two-Eyed Seeing as a useful and powerful metaphor for learning about, and collaborating within, the common ground for Aboriginal and Western sciences.

Picturing Human Health and the Environment: First Steps

breakdown of poster to show seven parts enlarged in pages that follow

1

er shows how visuals helped facilitate discussion among researchers, health and environmental professionals, community members about Mother Earth and her means about health, healing and wholeness in an community-based, participatory action research project Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia.

Via our work, we concluded that visuals can help a group to reach:

- a shared understanding of how to talk together,
- a shared vision of how to work together,
- a shared understanding of terms and concepts.

2

Project Title

Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land

Key Points

• Mutual connectedness with the land can be re-kindled and used as a positive option within health and healing processes from Mi'kmaq communities.
• Mutual understandings about common ground and differences in Aboriginal and Western thinking can be shared such that mutual understandings can facilitate new health options for Mi'kmaq communities as well as future research partnerships.

Goals

- Establish a research partnership with Mi'kmaq community input, participation, and guidance.
- Create a new path of mutual trust and mutual respect between university researchers, health and environmental professionals, and Mi'kmaq communities.
- Co-learn about traditional knowledge that can promote improved health, particularly among young people in Mi'kmaq communities.

Co-Learning Approach

Our Co-Learning Approach involved:

- Learning together
- Learning from each other
- Learning the common
- Learning the differences

3

Learning Approach was guided by the following wisdom:
"... see the birch, maple, pine. Look underground and see us holding hands. We as people must do the same."
- Mi'kmaq Chief, Spiritual Elder, and Healer Charlie Labrador



Co-Learning Journey

A shared understanding of how to talk together

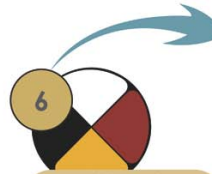
This visual is based on the Medicine Wheel (or Circle of Learning)



4

Individuals from Mi'kmaq communities in Cape Breton share their understandings of the concepts introduced by students.

3



6

Example

Two-Eyed Seeing

A shared vision of how to work together

Two-Eyed Seeing is a vision of how to work together which is a result of the new understandings that emerged during the "Integrative Health and Healing" project. Two-Eyed Seeing is learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Aboriginal knowledge, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledge, and to using both these eyes together, for the benefit of all. Thus, Two-Eyed Seeing intentionally and respectfully brings together our different ways of knowing to motivate people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike, to work together.

Creating a visual for Two-Eyed Seeing has helped us share the spirit of mutual respect and trust which is an essential part of collaboration.



Two-Eyed Seeing was brought forward by Elder Albert M... of Eskasoni Mi'kmaq First Nation during the Integrative Health and Healing Project. In his words:

"Two-Eyed Seeing is and has to be your Guiding Principle as to how you should live while you are here on this Earth. Our journey here is not meant for one perspective or one consciousness to get us through. We all need each other. The lesson that we are trying to put forth for our young people is that it's going to be much more expedient if we can take the best of whatever tools the white man has brought forth and the tools our forefathers have left us with... to use all our gifts so we leave the world a better place and thus the opportunities for our children and youth will not be compromised by our inactions today."



Concepts + Terms

A shared understanding

Visual icons were paired with verbal explanations to help participants look beyond terms and language to find common ground and differences in key concepts about health and the environment. Below are a few examples:



5

6

7

Picturing Human Health and the Environment: First Steps

breakdown of poster to show seven parts enlarged in pages that follow

1

Poster shows how visuals helped facilitate discussion among researchers, health and environmental professionals, community members about Mother Earth and her lessons about health, healing and wholeness in an community-based, participatory action research project in Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia.

Via our work, we concluded that visuals can help a group to reach:

- a shared understanding of how to talk together,
- a shared vision of how to work together,
- a shared understanding of terms and concepts.

Project Title

Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land

Key Points

Mutual connectedness with the land can be re-kindled and used as a positive option within health and healing processes from Mi'kmaq communities. Mutual understandings about common ground and differences in Aboriginal and Western thinking can be shared such that mutual understandings can facilitate new health options for Mi'kmaq communities as well as future research partnerships.

Goals

- Establish a research partnership with Mi'kmaq community input, participation, and guidance.
- Create a new path of mutual trust and mutual respect between university researchers, health and environmental professionals, and Mi'kmaq communities.
- Co-learn about traditional knowledge that can promote improved health, particularly among young people in Mi'kmaq communities.

Co-Learning Approach

Our Co-Learning Approach involved:

- Learning together
- Learning from each other
- Learning the common
- Learning the differences

3

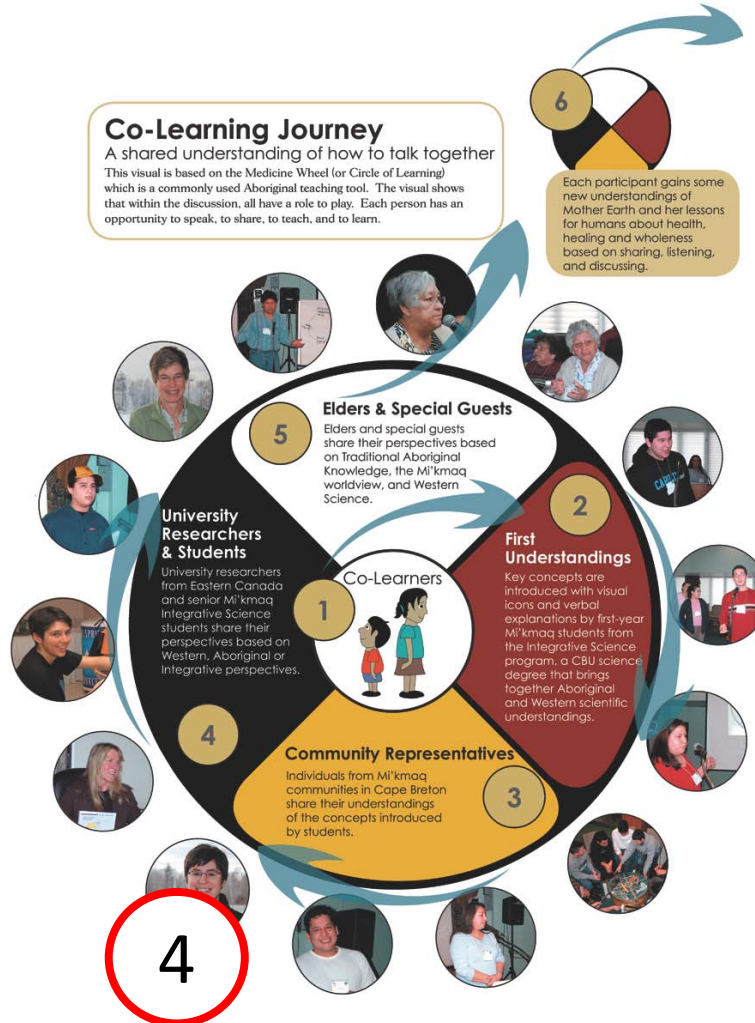
Learning Approach was guided by the following wisdom: *... see the birch, maple, pine. Look underground and see us holding hands. We as people must do the same.*



Co-Learning Journey

A shared understanding of how to talk together

This visual is based on the Medicine Wheel (or Circle of Learning) which is a commonly used Aboriginal teaching tool. The visual shows that within the discussion, all have a role to play. Each person has an opportunity to speak, to share, to teach, and to learn.



4

Community Representatives

Individuals from Mi'kmaq communities in Cape Breton share their understandings of the concepts introduced by students.

Co-Learners

University researchers from Eastern Canada and senior Mi'kmaq Integrative Science students share their perspectives based on Western, Aboriginal or Integrative perspectives.

Elders & Special Guests

Elders and special guests share their perspectives based on Traditional Aboriginal Knowledge, the Mi'kmaq worldview, and Western Science.

6

Each participant gains some new understandings of Mother Earth and her lessons for humans about health, healing and wholeness based on sharing, listening, and discussing.

5

Example

Two-Eyed Seeing

A shared vision of how to work together

Two-Eyed Seeing is a vision of how to work together which is a new understanding that emerged during the "Integrative Health and Healing" project. Two-Eyed Seeing is learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Aboriginal knowledge, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledge, and to using both these eyes together, for the benefit of all. Thus, Two-Eyed Seeing intentionally and respectfully brings together our different ways of knowing to motivate people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike, to work together.

Creating a visual for Two-Eyed Seeing has helped us share the spirit of mutual respect and trust which is an essential part of collaboration.



Two-Eyed Seeing was brought forward by Elder Albert M... of Eskasoni Mi'kmaq First Nation during the Integrative Health and Healing Project. In his words:

"Two-Eyed Seeing is and has to be your Guiding Principle as to how you should live while you are here on this Earth. Our journey here is not meant for one perspective or one consciousness to get us through. We all need each other. The lesson that we are trying to put forth for our young people is that it's going to be much more expedient if we can take the best of whatever tools the white man has brought forth and the tools our forefathers have left us with... to use all our gifts so we leave the world a better place and thus the opportunities for our children and youth will not be compromised by our inactions today."

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Concepts + Terms

A shared understanding

Visual icons were paired with verbal explanations to help participants look beyond terms and language to find common ground and differences in key concepts about health and the environment. Below are a few examples:



7

This poster shows how visuals helped facilitate discussion among university researchers, health and environmental professionals, and Mi'kmaq community members about Mother Earth and her lessons for humans about health, healing and wholeness in an Aboriginal community-based, participatory action research project based on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia.

Via our work, we concluded that visuals can help a group to reach:

- a shared understanding of how to talk together,
- a shared vision of how to work together,
- a shared understanding of terms and concepts.

Project Title

Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land

Starting Points

- Spiritual connectedness with the land can be re-kindled and developed as a positive option within health and healing processes in modern Mi'kmaq communities.
- General understandings about common ground and differences between Aboriginal and Western thinking can be shared such that these understandings can facilitate new health options for Mi'kmaq communities as well as future research partnerships.

Goals

- Establish a research partnership with Mi'kmaq community input, participation, and guidance.
- Create a new path of mutual trust and mutual respect between university researchers, health and environmental professionals, and Mi'kmaq communities.
- Co-learn about traditional knowledge that can promote improved health, particularly among young people in Mi'kmaq communities.

Co-Learning Approach

Our Co-Learning Approach involved:

- Learning together
- Learning from each other
- Learning the common
- Learning the differences

Guiding Wisdom

Our Co-Learning Approach was guided by the following wisdom:

Go into a forest, you see the birch, maple, pine. Look underground and all those trees are holding hands. We as people must do the same.

(late Mi'kmaq Chief, Spiritual Elder, and Healer Charlie Labrador)



Co-Learning Journey

A shared understanding of how to talk together

This visual is based on the Medicine Wheel (or Circle of Learning) which is a commonly used Aboriginal teaching tool. The visual shows that within the discussion, all have a role to play. Each person has an opportunity to speak, to share, to teach, and to learn.

6

Each participant gains some new understandings of Mother Earth and her lessons for humans about health, healing and wholeness based on sharing, listening, and discussing.



4.1

Co-Learning Journey

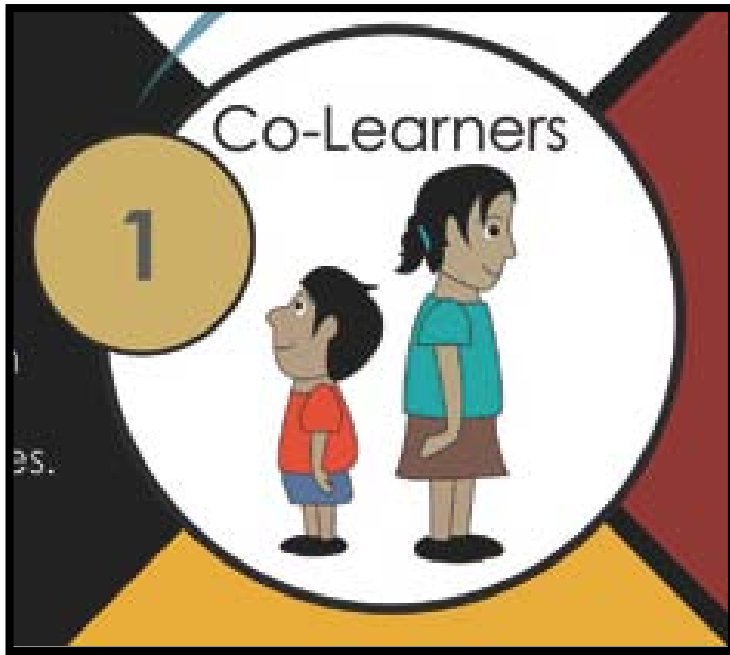
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4



4.2



4



2

First Understandings

Key concepts are introduced with visual icons and verbal explanations by first-year Mi'kmaq students from the Integrative Science program, a CBU science degree that brings together Aboriginal and Western scientific understandings.

ratives

A large graphic with a dark red background and a yellow circle containing the number '2'. The text is in white. The graphic is part of a larger design with blue and yellow elements. In the top right corner, there is a small circular inset showing a person wearing a black hoodie with 'CARRY' written on it. At the bottom, the word 'ratives' is partially visible.

4.3

and we understand

Community Representatives

Individuals from Mi'kmaq communities in Cape Breton share their understandings of the concepts introduced by students.

3

University Researchers & Students

University researchers from Eastern Canada and senior Mi'kmaq Integrative Science students share their perspectives based on Western, Aboriginal or Integrative perspectives.

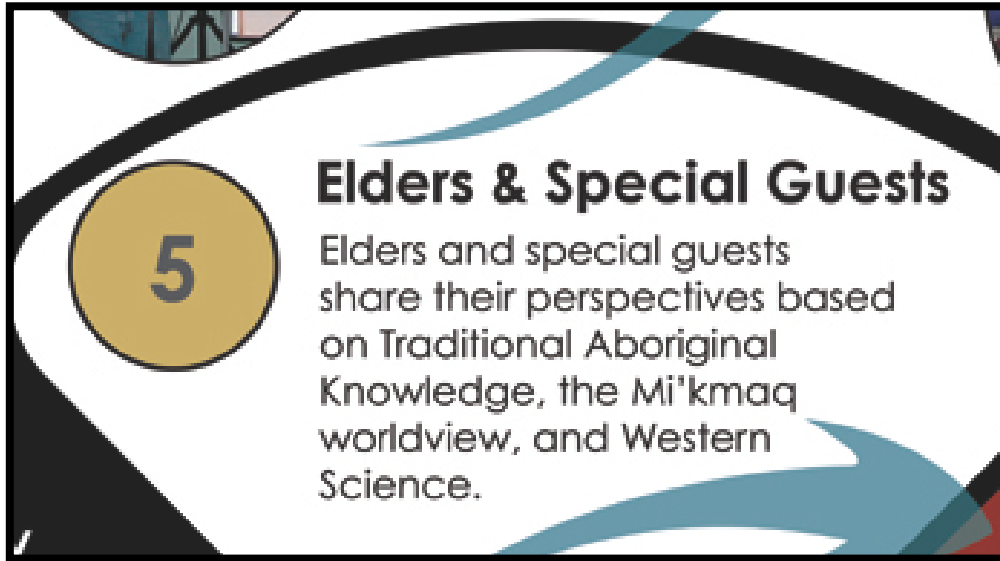
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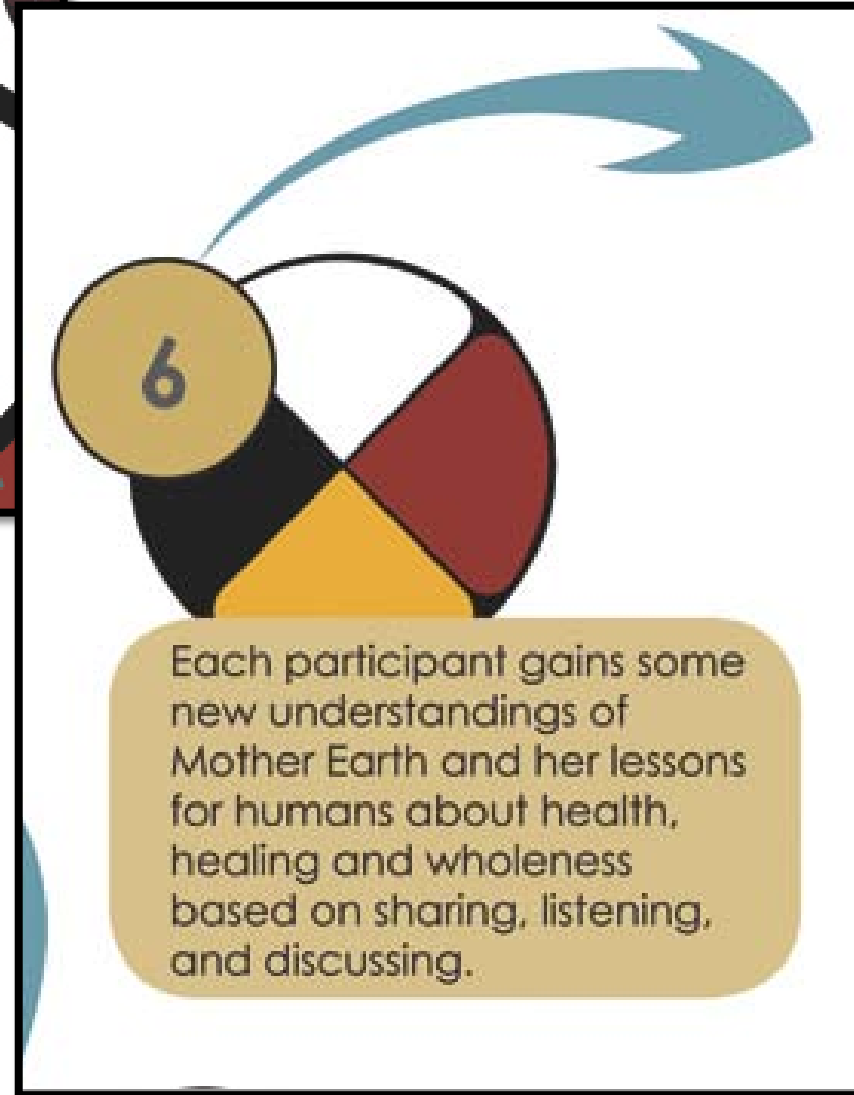


4.4



Elders & Special Guests

Elders and special guests share their perspectives based on Traditional Aboriginal Knowledge, the Mi'kmaq worldview, and Western Science.



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Example

Two-Eyed Seeing

A shared vision of how to work together

Two-Eyed Seeing is a vision of how to work together which was one of the new understandings that emerged during the “Integrative Health and Healing” project. Two-Eyed Seeing is learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Aboriginal knowledge, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledge, and to using both these eyes together, for the benefit of all. Thus, Two-Eyed Seeing intentionally and respectfully brings together our different ways of knowing to motivate people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike, to work together.

Creating a visual for Two-Eyed Seeing has helped us share the spirit of mutual respect and trust which is an essential part of collaboration.



the best of
Aboriginal
Knowledge



the best of
Western
Knowledge

Two-Eyed Seeing was brought forward by Elder Albert Marshall of Eskasoni Mi'kmaq First Nation during the Integrative Health and Healing Project. In his words:

“Two-Eyed Seeing is and has to be your Guiding Principle as to how you should live while you are here on this Earth. Our journey here is not meant for one perspective or one consciousness to get us through. We all need each other. The lesson that we are trying to put forth for our young people is that it’s going to be much more expedient if we can take the best of whatever tools the white man has brought forth and the tools our forefathers have left us with ... to use all our gifts so we leave the world a better place and thus the opportunities for our children and youth will not be compromised by our inactions today.”



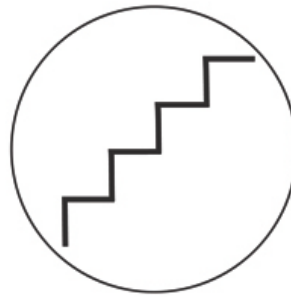
Concepts + Terms

A shared understanding

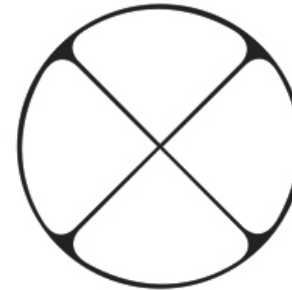
Visual icons were paired with verbal explanations to help participants look beyond terms and language to find common ground and differences in key concepts about health and the environment. Below are a few examples:



Indigenous Research
Methodologies



Western Research
Methodologies



Balanced Lifestyle



Spiritual
Connectedness



Relationships with
the Land



Health Promotion



Canada Research
Chairs

Chaires de recherche
du Canada



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada
Canada

**CIHR-IAPH research award to
CRC Cheryl Bartlett for project entitled**

*“Integrative Health and Healing:
co-learning our way
to expanding wholeness
through restoration
of relationships with the land”*

**Institute of Aboriginal
Peoples’ Health (IAPH)**



CIHR IRSC

Canadian Institutes of
Health Research

Instituts de recherche
en santé du Canada

CAPE BRETON
UNIVERSITY

**The support of key
funding agencies
is gratefully acknowledged.**