MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Blackfoot ceremony : a qualitative study of learning
by Donald Duane Pepion

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Montana State University
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Abstract:
This study utilizes qualitative research methodology to ascertain the process of learning the ceremonial practices of the Blackfoot Native people in Montana and Southern Alberta, Canada. The literature on adult learning reveals that little is known of how Native Americans learn. Fifteen Blackfoot ceremonialists were interviewed following the general interview guide approach of qualitative research methodology. The study participants were selected as a representative group of ceremonialists known to the researcher. The interview findings are presented in a case study format that provides insight into the naturalistic context of how this group of Blackfoot ceremonialists perceives ceremonial learning processes. The findings were analyzed using the illuminative model of naturalistic research, which identifies recurring trends, incidences and issues as they emerge from the data. The findings were grouped into seventeen categories according to commonalities, patterns, and relationships. The conclusions are presented with interpretive comments based on the common perceptions and views of the study participants. Several recommendations are made relevant to each of the seventeen categories identified in the findings.

The results of the research concluded that the ceremonial learning process of the Blackfoot included the following elements: a) divination process of learning, b) motivational process of learning, c) memory association learning process, d) visual and auditory learning process, e) mentoring and facilitation learning process, f) rite of passage learning process, g) participant-observation learning process, h) process of learning how to leant, i) inductive reasoning process of learning, j) cognitive process of learning, k) environmental process of learning, 1) self-directed/interactive learning process, m) socialization process of learning, n) learning process through symbolism, o) perceived barriers to learning process, p) effects of spirituality on learning process, q) structural synthesizing of learning process, r) effect of language usage on learning process, and s) effect of Blackfoot way of knowing on learning process.

BLACKFOOT CEREMONY:

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by

Donald Duane Pepion

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

of

Doctor of Education

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This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

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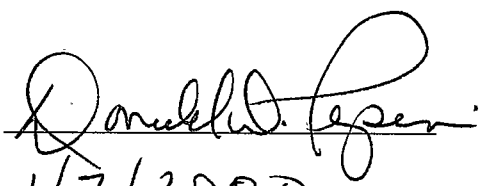
Signature 

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

1. ABSTRACT viii

2. INTRODUCTION 1

Background 1
The Blackfeet People 3
Statement of the Problem 5
Purpose 7
Research Question 7
Significance of the Study 8
Delimitations 10
Definitions 11

2. LITERATURE REVIEW 20

The Blackfoot People 20
Learning Opportunities in Blackfeet Cultural Ceremonies 32
Related Concepts of Adult Learning 39
Learning Principles 49
Learning in Traditional Blackfeet Society 51

3. METHODOLOGY 53

Design 53
Procedures 56
Related Case Studies 60
Description of the Study Environment 64
Research Interview Participants 64

4. FINDINGS 72

Introduction 72
Learning from Visions and Dreams 73
Learning from the Origin Stories 82
Learning from the Elders 91

TABLE OF CONTENTS -- Continued

Page

Rite of Transfer 102
Experiential Learning 110
Developmental Learning 119
Holistic Concept 126
Critical Thinking 128
Environmental Learning 130
Protocols and Taboos 132
Extended Family and Community 137
Learning through Symbolism 141
Effects of Oppression and Cultural Conflict 144
Spirituality 147
Revitalization 152
Language 160
Philosophy 162

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 174

Summary of the Research 174
Conclusions 176
Divination Process of Learning 176
Motivational Process of Learning 176
Memory Association Learning Process 177
Visual and Auditory Learning Process 177
Mentoring and Facilitation Learning Process 178
Rite of Passage Learning Process 178
Participant-Observation Learning Process 178
Process of "Learning How to Learn" 179
Inductive Reasoning Process of Learning 179
Cognitive Process of Learning 180
Environmental Learning Process 181
Self-Directed/Interactive Learning Process 181
Socialization Process of Learning 181
Learning Process through Symbolism 182
Perceived Barriers to Learning Process 182
Effect of Spirituality on Learning Process 183
Structural Synthesizing of Learning Process 183
Effect of Blackfeet Language Usage on Learning Process 184
Effect of Blackfoot Way of Knowing on Learning Process 184

TABLE OF CONTENTS -- Continued

Page

Recommendations....185
Oral Tradition Learning Process....185
Mentoring Learning Process....185
Experiential Learning Process....186
Developmental Learning Process....187
Holistic Learning Process....188
Critical Thinking....189
Environmental Learning Process....190
Effects of Oppression and Cultural Conflict....191
Community Education....195
Language....198
Blackfoot Way of Knowing....200

REFERENCES CITED....202

ABSTRACT

This study utilizes qualitative research methodology to ascertain the process of learning the ceremonial practices of the Blackfoot Native people in Montana and Southern Alberta, Canada. The literature on adult learning reveals that little is known of how Native Americans learn. Fifteen Blackfoot ceremonialists were interviewed following the general interview guide approach of qualitative research methodology. The study participants were selected as a representative group of ceremonialists known to the researcher. The interview findings are presented in a case study format that provides insight into the naturalistic context of how this group of Blackfoot ceremonialists perceives ceremonial learning processes. The findings were analyzed using the illuminative model of naturalistic research, which identifies recurring trends, incidences and issues as they emerge from the data. The findings were grouped into seventeen categories according to commonalities, patterns, and relationships. The conclusions are presented with interpretive comments based on the common perceptions and views of the study participants. Several recommendations are made relevant to each of the seventeen categories identified in the findings.

The results of the research concluded that the ceremonial learning process of the Blackfoot included the following elements: a) divination process of learning, b) motivational process of learning, c) memory association learning process, d) visual and auditory learning process, e) mentoring and facilitation learning process, f) rite of passage learning process, g) participant-observation learning process, h) process of learning how to learn, i) inductive reasoning process of learning, j) cognitive process of learning, k) environmental process of learning, l) self-directed/interactive learning process, m) socialization process of learning, n) learning process through symbolism, o) perceived barriers to learning process, p) effects of spirituality on learning process, q) structural synthesizing of learning process, r) effect of language usage on learning process, and s) effect of Blackfoot way of knowing on learning process.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

This research examines the traditional Native ways of learning within the Blackfoot Confederacy, which consists of the Blackfeet Tribe (Southern Piegan or Pikuni) in Montana and the North Peigan (Northern Pikuni), Blood (Kainaa) and Blackfoot (Siksika) in Alberta. These groups are all part of the same tribe of Indians, which are being termed the Blackfoot Confederacy. Although the Canadian/United States boundary line separated this tribe of people, they have been considered a nation of people for centuries. The tribes maintain their affiliation especially through language, ceremonies and customs. The extended family ties within the Blackfoot peoples are strong especially since they are related by blood and marriage.

Empirical observations of Blackfeet tribal elders (Kicking Woman, personal communication, 1995) in ceremonies and rituals by Blackfeet tribal educators (Kipp, personal communication, 1996) have presented some interesting ideas. The phenomenal memory of elders in conducting ceremonies that involve numerous songs, ritual movements, and dance is extraordinary, especially since strict conduct and adherence to intense dictates are required in the process. How did these people learn to retain and

perform intense, complicated and rigorous ceremonies that can take sometimes several days to perform?

Blackfeet elders such as Kicking Woman (personnel communication, 1995) talk about knowing songs and rituals from being present as a child or young person during ceremonies, although they did not actively participate. This kind of learning has some interesting ramifications as it presents the idea that indirect information is somehow memorized and applied later in life.

This investigation is culturally specific to the Blackfoot tribal people. Brookfield (1986) relates that the generalizations on adult learning are all based on samples of studies done for the most part on ethnically homogeneous Caucasian Americans. In regards to this matter he states the following: "To base a comprehensive theory of adult learning on observations of white, middle-class Americans in continuing or extension education classes in the post-Second World War era is conceptually and empirically naïve." Brookfield further states: "Nonetheless, we fall far too frequently into the mistake of declaring that research reveals that adults, in generic sense, learn in a certain way" (p. 32).

Education imposed from another culture, society, or social structure is oppressive. For example, Horton, in working with Blacks in the South through the Highlander Folk School, found that "individualism" was a white imposed concept from a paternalistic system. He had to accept that a system of equal treatment had to include the Blacks' individual and group characteristics (Adams, 1982). Horton further clarified this by understanding that Blacks had to be free to make their own choices on their own terms.

Thus, anything meaningful for the Blacks had to be "freely what they themselves wanted to be" (p. 109).

The Blackfeet People

The Blackfeet Indian Reservation is located in Northcentral Montana. It consists of 1.5 million acres and is larger than the size of Delaware and Rhode Island combined. It is bordered on the west by Glacier National Park, which is on the continental divide of the Rocky Mountains, and on the north by the Canadian province of Alberta (Blackfeet Tribal Business Council, 1995).

The Blackfeet Indian Reservation lies on the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains where the terrain flows from rolling hills of grassland to where the farmland plains begin toward the east. The elevations vary from 9,000 feet on Chief Mountain to 3,400 feet on the plains.

The 1990 Census as adjusted in 1991 by the U. S. Department of Commerce showed the following profile characteristics for the population of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation:

	Total Persons	Percent of Population
Total	8,549	100.0
White	1,498	17.5
Black	9	.1
American Indian/Eskimo or Aleut	7,025	82.2
Asian or Pacific Island	2	0.0
Other Race	15	0.2

The Enrollment Department of the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council (1997) (governing body of the Blackfeet Nation) lists over 14,000 tribal members. Comparing this number with the above census reveals that about 50% of the enrolled Blackfeet membership does not live on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. The Enrollment Department's records indicate that although many Blackfeet members live in the region, there are high numbers in urban areas including Seattle and California.

The Blackfeet, also called Southern Piegan or Pikuni (as they call themselves), are actually part of a group of peoples that populated most of Montana and southern Alberta, Canada since ancient times. The Blackfoot Confederacy, as this group of aboriginal people is sometimes called, consists of the Blackfoot, Peigans and Blood Indian Tribes. The Blackfeet or Southern Piegan are located in Montana while the North Peigan, Blood and Blackfoot are located in Alberta, Canada. Although most literature indicates that the Blackfoot nations (or tribes) were primarily composed of the three bands, the North and South Peigans were actually one sub-group until the United States and Canadian border separated them. They all speak the same language and have similar customs, traditions and beliefs. According to the anthropologists, this group of people are of Algonquian linguistic descent (Ewers, 1958, p. 6). The differentiation of these people in regards to terminology is explained by Ewers:

> For nearly two centuries the three Blackfoot tribes have been know to white men by their separate names. They are the Pikuni or Piegan (pronounced Pay-gan'), the Kainah or Blood, and the Siksika or Blackfoot proper, often referred to as the Northern Blackfoot to distinguish it from the other two tribes. The three tribes were politically independent . . . So it has been customary to speak of these three tribes as one people, under the general name of Blackfoot or Blackfeet. The former is the more literal translation of Native name, Siksikauwa (black-footed

> people). Together these three tribes comprised the strongest military power on the northwestern plains in the historic buffalo days (Ewers, 1958, p. 5).

For the purposes of this study, the term Blackfoot will be used to talk about the three divisions of the tribes (North Blackfoot or Siksika; Blood or Kainah; and Blackfeet or South Piegan or Pikuni). However, it is important to remember that the North Peigan are also a part of the tribes. (Note the difference between the American spelling of Piegan and the Canadian spelling of Peigan). In this study, the term Blackfeet or Pikuni will be used to discuss the Southern Piegan.

Statement of the Problem

Brookfield (1986) relates that the research in adult education has been largely on "ethnically homogeneous" samples of Caucasian Americans. He further states that "the samples for the studies on which these generalizations concerning the nature of adult learning are based are culturally specific" (p. 32). The work of Heynemman and Loxley in their 1983 study is cited by Brookfield (1986) as follows: "With less than 5% of the world's school population, the United States accounts for the majority of the world's empirical research on education" (p. 32).

Although theories abound on learning styles, strategies and methods, educators really do not know how adults learn. Simpson (1980) noted this when he looked at the state of art in adult learning theory: "In essence, no comprehensive theory of learning seems to exist that suffices for the divergent learning episodes that the adult experiences throughout a lifetime. Moreover, adult educators have been unable to articulate an adequate theory of adult learning" (p. 45).

The situation of examining adult learning from a cultural point of view can be demanding when ethnic values are considered in the domain. This can be especially true when the affective realm of learning is explored. Keefe (1982) notes how affective styles of learning are influenced by many factors including "the cultural environment". Thus, cultural values and certainly personalities are considerations within the learning process. "Not every student can be successful in every learning environment because family or ethnic customs may be at odds with school practices" (p. 48).

It appears, therefore, that there is a case for concern when current generalized studies on adult learning are applied to groups other than white Americans. Brookfield (1986) makes this case apparent when he states:

> How can we write confidently of adult learning style in any generic sense when we know little (other than anecdotally) of the cognitive operations of, for example, Asian peasants, African tribespeople, or Chinese cooperative labors? Even within North American culture the empirical accuracy of generalizations about adult learning principles is highly questionable in that we have few studies of the learning styles of Native Americans, white working-class adults, Hispanics, blacks, or Orientals" (p. 33).

For many years, efforts made to improve the educational level of Native Americans across the nation have been exerted with no significant advancement. For the most part, current educational theory has not had a major influence on increasing the educational status of Indians.

Although there are studies that deal with limiting or accounting for cultural bias, much of the research may be misguided because it starts from the wrong premise. This is especially true with Native Americans because of their diversity in language, philosophy and culture. Each of the over 500 Native American tribes in United States have their own

unique language, beliefs, religion, and traditional knowledge base. These distinct ethnic groups, called Native Americans, pose a problematic situation in research methodology. This can be particularly the situation when the research methodology uses a scientific method, which may be averse to the belief system of the tribal group being studied.

The purpose here is not so much to present a treatise on cultural bias and the scientific method, as it is to present a study based on the frame of reference of those being studied.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the Blackfoot traditional cultural learning process in ceremony and attempt to describe or transmit this information into the dominant culture language and knowledge base. The qualitative research method of case study interview is utilized. The naturalistic technique of research is employed to avoid any contamination of imposing outside influences and value judgements. This is of particular concern since this is not a cross cultural study. It is an attempt to determine how culturally traditional ceremonial learning takes place. It is also important because this study proposes to look at a learning environment within it's own context.

Research Question

This project proposes identifying the traditional Native ways of learning within the Blackfoot Confederacy. Empirical observations reveal that these people perform

intense, complicated and rigorous ceremonies that can take sometimes several days to complete. As with most people, the traditional Blackfeet must have learning styles, strategies and processes in learning ceremony. The research question for this study: what is the learning process used in Blackfoot ceremony?

Significance of the Study

This study is important and useful to a variety of audiences for several different reasons. Most importantly, this research can be useful to educational bodies who deal with Native American learners at all levels. As indicated in the literature, knowledge of Native American learning is limited. Since it is generally known that Native Americans have had lower achievement levels in education than other races, this information may be useful to examining ways to improve educational effectiveness for this group of people.

This study may have some utility for Native and indigenous people throughout the world who are seeking ways to preserve and protect their culture, language and knowledge base. The research verifies that world indigenous people are looking to their own cultures and ways of knowing to find solutions to their situation.

People such as Miles Horton (Adams, 1975) and Paulo Freire, (1985) have identified how paternalism and oppression have imposed ways of knowing on indigenous people that is many times differential to their culture and beliefs. More importantly, effects of oppression and paternalism have created complex issues for indigenous people that need examination, study and research in order to understand the situation and improve things like social/economic conditions. Hopefully, this study may provide the

impetus for Native people and others to examine the effects of oppression that impedes the progress of indigenous people.

Native American traditional practices and ceremonies are considered by many groups to be pagan practices that have little value to the dominant culture in the Americas. Recent studies by Harrison (1997), Real Bird (1997), Rowland (1994), St. Pierre (1996), Still Smoking (1997) and others reveal that Native American ways of knowing are important to learning. This research can be useful to Native American populations in identifying their own knowledge base that can be helpful to improving their social, economic and educational levels.

The qualitative and case study method of research used in this study has utility for diverse cultures whose ways have not been fully articulated through other methods of inquiry. The qualitative research methodology has grown tremendously in the past few years, which has caused it to gain a level of credibility with academia. For some Native populations, this research methodology is conducive to maintaining the integrity of their culture and way of knowing.

Much of the Native American history and culture has not been included in the literature used in schools and colleges in the United States. Most of the current literature used in learning institutions has not been developed from the Native perspective. These kinds of studies can be models for the development of Native materials that can be used in the classroom. Also, vital to the issue of the need for Native learning materials is the development of literature by Native scholars. It is especially important to use Native scholars steeped in the culture and ways of knowing of their tribe.

This research is a model for the beginning of a change process for Native American tribes. As indicated in the literature by Lane and others (Bopp, 1985) change starts from within the people themselves. The culture many times contains ways to understand and explain the complex issues facing tribes. In order to bring about awareness and education on the issues, tribes may use these kinds of studies to begin approaching on-going problems using their traditional ways of knowing. Answers can truly come from within.

Technology and many other factors in a changing world are influencing the traditions and ways of many Native people. It is important to preserve the old ways and ceremonies. This study is one example of how knowledge preservation uses current technology while protecting the integrity of the traditions and culture.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to only the fifteen Blackfoot tribal members who participated in the study. The participants in the study were limited to Blackfoot ceremonialists that the researcher had become familiar with in attending ceremonies. The study participants were all either current or former medicine bundle holders.

Although the study included interviewing Blackfoot ceremonialists, none of the members of the Siksika division participated in the study. Nine of the study participants were from the Blackfeet or Southern Piegan division of the Blackfoot, while four were from the North Peigan and two from the Blood tribe.

The interviews were limited to this representative group of ceremonialists known to the researcher. The findings represent the perceptions of this particular group of ceremonialists. No attempt was made to factor the participants by demographics or any other criteria.

The interviews were limited to the generalized questions asked by the researcher regarding Blackfoot ceremonial learning process. Limited guided questions were asked in order to preserve the integrity of the qualitative methodology.

Interpreting Blackfoot words into English when necessary in the study was limited to phonetic spelling. The Blackfoot tribes do not have an agreed upon spelling for writing the language.

Definitions

Anthropologic - Refers to the methods used in the discipline of anthropology for case study techniques in such things as cultural research.

Band - During the teepee days the members of the Blackfoot Confederacy lived in small groups somewhat like clans. Each group was composed of families with situational leadership. The band groups usually had a name or title. The band affiliation was loose in the sense that some individuals, families or groups may change band association. The term band is sometimes used to describe the members of the Blackfoot Confederacy such as the Blackfeet, North Peigan, Blood or Siksika. Some tribal members still consider themselves as part of a specific band.

Beaver Bundle - The medicine bundle that was given to the people in spiritual ways through the beaver. The origin story of the beaver bundle relates how the animals gave their spirits to the bundle.

Blackfeet - A term adapted by the dominant society to a group of aboriginal people living mostly in what is now Montana. The federal government has adopted this as the legal designation for the Southern Piegan, who are now located on the Blackfeet

Indian Reservation in northwest Montana, adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Rocky Mountain continental divide and Canadian boundary to the north.

Blackfoot - In this study, the term is used to include the Native people who are members of a group that has three primary divisions including the Piegan, Blood and Siksika. The Piegan are divided into two parts called the Southern Piegan who are located on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Montana and the North Peigan who are located on the Peigan Reserve in southern Alberta Canada. The Blood division of the tribe is located on the Blood Reserve near Stand Off in southern Alberta, Canada. The word Blackfoot is also sometimes used to describe the Siksika located on their reserve east of Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Blackfoot Confederacy - A term used to include all the divisions of the Blackfoot people including the Blackfeet, North Peigan, Blood and Siksika.

Blacktail Deer Dance - A winter nighttime dance involving the use of songs and music accompaniment with bells on a leather strap. The dancers jump like deer in a circle around the singers. Some say this dance derived from the Salish-Kootenai people.

Blessed Mother - A term used by one of the study participants to describe the Catholic Virgin Mary.

Blood - A division of the Blackfoot Confederacy located on the Blood Reserve near Stand Off, Alberta, Canada. The Blackfoot word for this group of Blackfoot people is Kainaa. (See definition for Blackfoot).

Brave Dog Society - One of the more social type (as opposed to religious type) of societies of the Blackfoot. Early writers called these fraternal types of age-graded groups. There seemed to be a hierarchy of societies that individuals moved through during their lifetime. The Brave Dog Society is the same as the Crazy Dog Society as termed by the Blackfeet. This society was considered one of the policing groups that kept order in the camps and travels of the tribes.

Buffalo Calling Stone - The special stone that spiritually spoke to the Blackfoot woman in the genesis account. The rock is used by the Beaver medicine person in a ceremony that "calls" or brings the buffalo to the "buffalo jump". (See iinisskimm definition).

Bundle keeper - Much discussion takes place regarding the correct terminology regarding a person who is in possession of a medicine bundle. Since a medicine bundle is transferable, the person only has temporary possession of the article until it is transferred to another. However, contemporary convention has caused some of

the bundle keepers or holders to maintain their status for many years either because of their reluctance or the reticence of others to seek procurement.

Cleansing Ceremony - A ritual that cleanses the individual from being around such things as funerals. The Blackfoot belief in spiritualism contends that an individual needs a purification ceremony after being around funeral rituals, especially before participating in ceremonies.

Creation stories - An expression used to describe the genesis narratives of the Blackfoot people. The term may be used interchangeably with origin or genesis stories. (See origin or genesis stories).

Cultural Materials - The sacred or holy articles brought back by Scar Face and Woman Who Married A Star during their mystical journeys to the cosmos where the divine beings live. In the genesis accounts, these sacred materials were a part of the medicine lodge ceremonies, which was brought to the people by these two individuals. Scar Face brought the Crow Tail Feather, Sun Dance Necklace and bracelet, and the lizard symbol. Woman Who Married A Star brought back the Sun Dance Headdress Bundle.

Dominant Society - Used to delineate those groups of people who emigrated to North America and became the dominant force in language, culture, and governance.

Effigy - In this study the term effigy is used to signify the stone configurations that are located on the prairies of Montana and Southern Alberta. The configurations may be in the outline form of a man or animal. The stone outlines vary in shape, form and size from a one hundred foot "Napi" image to a twenty to thirty foot lizard or turtle likeness.

Elder - This term is usually used to identify an older Blackfoot person who is generally recognized as possessing knowledge and wisdom relevant to the traditional ways of the people. For Blackfoot ceremonialists, an elder is usually someone who has had several transfers in their lifetime. For example, in most societies, the elder advisors are those individuals who have held former positions and status in the society, but they have now transferred that on to others. In some instances, the elder is someone who is twice removed from a status such as a medicine bundle holder.

Ethnographic - A term used to characterize the process of describing different cultures but not in the anthropological demeaning sense of defining literacy in terms of reading and writing by the dominant culture.

Genesis Stories - Narratives that describe the way the Blackfoot people came to be. The narratives may be highly metaphorical or in the form of an allegory.

Hair Parter's Song - A song that is used in Blackfoot ceremony that derived from one of the genesis accounts.

Holy Parent or Grandparent - The term used for the elder mentor who facilitates the ceremonial learning process for the apprentice bundle keeper or holder. Sometimes may be referred to as holy mother or holy father.

Holy Smoke - A ceremony sometimes called the Big Smoke, Smoke Ceremony or Kano'tsisssiss. In the Blackfoot way, the holy smoke ceremony involves an all night ritual of singing and smoking of the individual smoking pipes. As with most Blackfoot ceremonies the women have an important role in the ritual.

Horn Society - One of the most secretive and eminent societies involving both public and private rituals, now practiced mostly by the Blood division of the Blackfoot people.

Iinisskimm or sacred buffalo stone - The holy buffalo stone that is found within most medicine bundles and some painted tepees. In this genesis account, a Blackfoot woman receives information from the spirit within a special rock that provides the song and ceremony for calling the buffalo.

Learners - When the study participants or interview respondents discussed their situation as a learner this title is used.

Learning process - In the context of this study, learning process is examining the way in which learning is taking place. The manner or procedure by which people learn.

Medicine Bundle or Medicine Pipe Bundle - Blackfoot holy or sacred objects are wrapped into a bundle using series of cloth and/or various animal hides, depending upon the nature of the bundle. The bundle is considered a very sacred article to be treated with much reverence and respect. Bundles are usually only opened during ceremonies.

Medicine Horse Bundle - The name of a medicine bundle kept by one of the study participants. In some cases, a medicine bundle will have a name. (See medicine bundle definition).

Medicine Lodge or ookaan - A term commonly used for the sun dance ceremony.

Medicine Wheel - A conventional term used to describe the rock, stone or boulder configurations that have been mysteriously placed throughout North American country especially located in the traditional roaming area of the Blackfoot in Montana and Southern Alberta, Canada. The terminology is also now used to

describe a symbol, which is becoming commonly used by Native Americans. The term may include medicine circle, wheel or prayer wheel or circle.

Miniipokaan - A special child that is adopted, usually by a grandparent, and treated favorably. Some of these children are brought to ceremonies and begin performing small tasks associated with the rituals. These children are sometimes allowed to "play" ceremony, which is taboo for the adult. Several eventually become leading ceremonialists.

Naming Ceremony - A ritual for the giving of a name to an individual. An elder usually confers a name on the child or person in a short ceremony involving prayer and oration. Gift giving, and sometimes a feed, takes place. In former times, there may have been other activities such as a sweat associated with name giving.

Napi - A figure in Blackfoot genesis narratives who had divine qualities as well as human characteristics. He is portrayed in many of the childhood stories as a person that could converse and interact with the animals. Napi has mystical powers, yet he has fallible human characteristics that cause him to suffer consequences of action that is usually forewarned.

Napi Naatosi - The name of the divinity inherent in the sun. In the genesis accounts, Napi Naatosi is sometimes referred to as the husband of Kookoomiikiisoom (the name of feminine moon) and the father of star boy. This term is used frequently in prayer and supplication, and sometimes just the term Naatosi is used as a shortened version with the same meaning.

Native American - Commonly used term in describing the indigenous or aboriginal people of North American. The term is common in the United States but is frequently used as Native in Canada and other countries.

Niitsitapi - A Blackfoot language word used to identify Native American or American Indian people, sometimes commonly used to designate Blackfoot people as a whole.

Ninaimsskaa - This term is presently being used by some to denote members of a medicine bundle society. It is probably a derivative of the term ninaimsskaan, which means medicine bundle owner.

North Peigan - A division of the Blackfoot Confederacy who are affiliated with the South Piegan. The North Peigan are located on the Peigan Reserve near Brocket, Alberta, Canada. (See Blackfoot definition).

Ookaan - The Blackfoot term for sun dance or medicine lodge.

Oral tradition - The oral history of the Blackfoot people but also used to describe the verbal narrative way of transmitting historic and current information.

Origin Stories - An expression used to describe the genesis narratives of the Blackfoot people. The term may be used interchangeably with creation or genesis stories.

Pan-Indianism - A term that is being used to describe ceremonies that have been developed by adopting rituals, symbols, words, actions, or other conventions from other tribes. Usually frowned upon by traditional Blackfoot ceremonialists as compromising the integrity of the Blackfoot rituals. The contemporary powwow type of celebration is considered pan-Indian by many traditional Native people.

Participants - The individuals who were interviewed are called participants in this study. In some cases, they may be referred to as a learner or respondent depending upon the context of the discussion.

Pikuni or Piikani - The name used by the division of Blackfoot that was called Piegan by early historians. This group of Blackfoot is termed North Peigan in Canada and South Piegan or Blackfeet in the United States.

Pipe Dance - A conventional term used to denote a medicine bundle ceremony. Probably derived out of the fact that the medicine bundle keepers will usually dance with the medicine pipe during the bundle opening.

Powwow - A conventional term that is being used to describe the inter-tribal celebrations involving contemporary Native American social dancing and singing. (See Pan-Indian definition).

Protocol - Blackfoot ceremony is imbued with an extraordinary amount of rules and proprieties, which can be contextual, yet sometimes associated with individual ceremonialists.

Rights - Usually through the rite of transfer the person gains rights or privileges, authority, and honor associated with specific actions, objects, tasks, or status.

Rite of Passage - In most Blackfoot ceremony the individual goes through a ritual that serves as an induction into such things as membership in a society. The rite of passage is affiliated with the rite of transfer ceremony, which is used for this purpose.

Sacred - Used in the common dictionary term as something that is holy, religious, revered or spiritual in nature. In the Blackfoot context, it may be something that is mysterious, metaphysical, or supernatural in nature.

Scabby Round Robe - The individual Blackfoot person who in the genesis accounts was taught in a mystical way by the beavers and animals the songs and rituals contained within the beaver bundle.

Scar Face - A male figure in the genesis of the Blackfoot who mystically traveled to the cosmos and consorted with the divine beings embodied in the sun (Naatosi or holy one), moon (Kipitaaakii or old lady) and stars (star boy). Scar Face was "cured" of his disfigurement by the sun and brought some of the ceremony related to the ookaan or sun dance to the Blackfoot people.

Siksiikaisittaapii [sic] - A word that is used to describe the collective body of Blackfoot people. However, the term has meaning and connotation beyond simply "the people".

Siksika - A designation for a division of the Blackfoot Confederacy who are located on the Siksika Reserve east of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The term in the English language means Blackfoot. The literature sometimes refers to the Siksika as the Blackfoot proper. (See Blackfoot definition).

Smudge - An incense composed of a live, hot, charcoal with a substance such as sweet grass, sweet pine or other such material relevant to the ceremony and the ceremonialist. The smudge is used to purify and symbolize the carrying of prayers to the Creator.

Snake Indian - Usually a term to indicate a Shoshone Indian but it is sometimes used to generally signify a person from a tribe that is unfriendly to the Blackfoot.

Societies - Fraternal and religious groups of the Blackfoot that are organized around a complex set of rituals, rules, and behavior with social, religious and governance implications. There is usually some kind of induction and exit process and procedure involving rite of passage in ritualistic form.

Song Service - A ceremony involving the exchange and singing of songs.

Songs or singing – Songs, as discussed in this study, are chants that have been referred to by some as a falsetto intonation. Most ceremonial songs use the accompaniment of a drum or rattle. Some Blackfoot ceremonial songs may be interspersed with minimal wording. In some ceremonies, songs may include simultaneous hand gestures, body movement, or dancing. In medicine bundle ceremonies, each part of the ritual has a specified song or series of songs. Most of the ceremonial songs are connected to an oral tradition narrative or origin story.

South Piegan - A division of the Blackfoot Confederacy called the Blackfeet who are located on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Montana. The term is an English

interpretation of Aamsskaapiikani or South Piegan. The South Piegan are considered the same as the North Peigan located in southern Alberta, Canada. A shortened version used for this group is Pikuni as it is used in the United States but the term is spelled Piikani as used on the Canadian side of Blackfoot country. (See definitions for Blackfeet and Blackfoot).

Spirituality - The common dictionary term that is preferable to some Blackfoot people that best describes Blackfoot spiritual beliefs as a way of life rather than a religion.

Sun Dance - A complex set of rituals combined to form a liturgy of the Blackfoot people that is highly symbolic of the genesis and beliefs, usually conducted in the summer with the participation of most of the tribe.

Sun Dance Headdress Bundle - The medicine bundle containing the sacred articles brought by Woman That Married A Star during her divine journey to the cosmos. These holy articles are used in the medicine lodge ceremonies.

Sweat Lodge - A ceremony involving the use water of splashed on pre-heated rocks inside a covered willow enclosure, which is large enough for a few men. The sweat lodge ceremony is much like a sauna experience, however much prayer, ritual and supplication take place.

Taboos - Like protocol, there are many taboos associated with ceremony. However, individual ceremonialists may have prohibitions or restrictions related to their status or obtained in spiritual ways. Taboos connected to an individual may be sometimes difficult to ascertain since they may not be able to even talk about it.

Teepee transfer - A ceremony involving the rite of transfer where one owner confers the teepee ownership to another individual. In most cases, this is a painted teepee that has songs, rituals, taboos and rights associated with the lodge.

Thunder Medicine Pipe - One of the medicine pipes that were given to the Blackfoot people by the thunder being. The pipe is kept in the medicine bundle as the primary object.

Thunder Teepee - A teepee or lodge that is owned by one of the study participants. A lodge of this type is usually painted and it has certain protocols and taboos as well as song and ritual connected with its status.

Traditional - Commonly used term by Native people to indicate the lifestyle of their ancestors prior to European contact. May also be used to designate those Native people who practice the traditional cultural ways.

Tribe - A term that is used to designate a division of the Blackfoot Confederacy such as Blackfeet, North Peigan, Blood and Siksika. The term may also be used to designate the members of the Blackfoot Confederacy as a whole. The word may also be used relative to the common dictionary term to indicate the different Native groups of North America.

Transfer rite or rite of transfer - A ritual that is conducted to convey authority and privilege to an individual regarding such things as membership in a society; singing a particular song; performing a certain dance; use of a particular object such as a smoking pipe; possessing a certain relationship with a medicine bundle article; or to perform a certain task related to ceremony. The transfer gives the individual certain "rights", privileges and honor associated with Blackfoot ceremonial life. The transfer ceremony can be considered a rite of passage in many cases. Transfer ceremony varies from a complex series of rituals such as a medicine bundle transfer to simple tasks such as carrying a charcoal for a smudge.

Vision Quest - A ceremony usually involving a young man fasting and praying for four days and nights at an isolated area such as a hill top or high mountain area. One of the purposes of this ritual is to obtain spiritual guidance for the person throughout their lifetime.

Weather Dancer - One of the primary dancers in the ookaan or medicine lodge ceremony. The weather dancers are said to be those who have the ability to control weather through supplication with the assistance of divine intervention.

Wholistic or holistic - Related to the word holism or wholism which denotes the concept that some perceive things as a whole rather then components or elements. The term is identified with inductive reasoning as opposed to deductive reasoning where meaning and understanding are perceived as either a whole or the sum of the parts.

Woman That Married A Star - In the genesis of the Blackfoot this is the tribal person who traveled to the cosmos where the divine beings live and brought back the female parts of the song and ritual related to the medicine lodge or sun dance.

Worldview - A term that is being used to describe the belief system of a culturally and linguistically unique group of people. Worldview includes the philosophy of the people but also has connotations to practical application of meaning and understanding either consciously or subconsciously.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Blackfoot People

It is commonly known in the literature and the oral tradition of the Blackfoot tribes that the traditional roaming area of the Blackfoot was between the North Saskatchewan River, Rocky Mountains, and the Missouri River (Reeves, 1997; Schultz, 1986; Dempsey, 1972; Grinnell, 1962; and Ewers 1958). Reeves (1995), an archeologist from the University of Calgary, is a noted expert on the people of the Blackfoot Confederacy. He equates the traditional historic size of the Blackfoot territory to that of the size of France (personal communication, 1995). Although the Blackfoot tribes roamed this entire area, they frequented somewhat regionalized areas. The Piegan divisions seemed to locate more in what is now Montana and the southern edge of Alberta. The Blackfoot proper or Siksika were in the area east of the Saskatchewan River, around what is now known as Red Deer River. The Bloods centered their activities around the Bow and Belly Rivers. However, we must remember that this is not a hard and fast rule as the different bands traveled about in the entire territory, as all boundaries were fluid and variable with no clear lines of demarcation.

In Curtis' (1911) research on North American Indians, he says that the Peigan wintered on the Missouri while the Bloods stayed on the Belly River, with the Blackfeet

on the Bow River (p. 4). He documents that Sir Alexander MacKenzie had seen the Blackfoot in 1789 north of the Bow River. Through this source it seems that the Blackfoot people, at this time, possessed horses and followed the buffalo to Alberta.

There is much discussion in the literature as to where the Blackfoot tribes originated. Hale (1882) in his research identified several early contact persons, who documented information about the Blackfoot peoples' origination. He relates that MacKenzie, an early Indian trader in 1789, said that the Blackfoot tribes lived along the Saskatchewan River from its source to the south branch. According to MacKenzie, they were known to be in this area for a century after traveling from the Northwest. However, Maclean (an Anglican minister and historian in the 1870's) says they came from Red River country where they got their name Siksika since their moccasins were black from soil. In Hale's findings, Maclean feels that the Blackfoot were pushed west by the Crees. Hale's research identifies Father LaCombe, who brought Christianity to Southern Alberta in the mid-1800's, believing that the Blackfeet came from the West after fighting with the Nez Pierce over buffalo territory (p. 6).

Research by Curtis (1911) provides a belief that the Blackfoot peoples lived around the Slave Lake prior to 1790. He based this belief on an informant called Tearing Lodge, who said that they had been living at the Peace River country prior to traveling south (p. 3-4). David Thompson (Henry & Thompson, 1897) stayed at Rocky Mountain House (Alberta Canada) in 1810 and 1811 and indicated that the Peigan territory included the foot of the Rocky Mountains and as far south as the Missouri River. He also indicates that the buffalo regulated the movements of these people. According to

Thompson, the Peigan have large summer camps of "100-200 tents for defense" (p. 723). However, he reveals that these people had smaller camps in the winter nearby buffalo pounds. Furthermore, "30 to 40 tents always stay near mountains" (p. 723) (Which is presumably the Rocky Mountains, since this is where Thompson and Henry had their trading fort built at that time).

Clark Wissler (1912c) believes that the three political divisions of the tribes have their origin in mythology (p. 7). This is corroborated by John Mason Brown (1867) who tells the origin story of Napi (Old Man) creating man from mud of the bottom of the river (p. 162). Recent works by Kehoe (1995) on mythology of the Blackfeet, as compiled and translated by Clark Wissler and D. C. Duvall, presents the following version on the "Making of the Earth":

> During the flood, Old Man was sitting on the highest mountain with the beasts. ...Old Man sent the Otter down to get some earth. For a long time he waited, then the Otter came up dead. Old Man examined its feet, but found nothing on them. Next he sent Beaver down, but after a long time he also came up drowned. Again, nothing was found on his feet. He sent Muskrat to dive next. Muskrat also was drowned. At length he sent the Duck (?). It was also drowned, but in its paw held some earth. Old Man saw it, put it in his hand, feigned putting it on the water three times, and at last dropped it. Then the above-people sent rain, and everything grew on the earth (19).

The Blackfeet Community College Catalog for 1996-98 presents a version of Blackfeet creation as told by Chewing Black Bones (a respected elder) in 1935 to Ella E. Clark in her 1966 book entitled Indian Legends from the Northern Rockies.

> Old Man came from the south, making the mountains, the prairies, and the forests as he passed along, making the birds and the animals also. He traveled northward making things as he went, putting red paint in the ground here and there--arranging the world as we see it today . . . One day Old Man decided that he would make a woman and a child. So he formed

> them both of clay, the woman and the child, her son. After he molded the clay in human shape, he said to it, "You must be people" . . . This is how we came to be people. It is he who made us (p. 8).

In a lecture at Blackfeet Community College, noted archeologist "Barney" Reeves (1994), who has done extensive research on the Blackfoot Tribes, refuted the idea that these people came across the Bering Strait. He based his evidence on archeological data coupled with Blackfoot oral tradition. He discussed the Blackfoot coming from the West where the large body of water exists (Pacific Ocean), which is related in the oral tradition origin stories. He also noted how anthropologists disregard evidence of an Algonquian-speaking people in California. His work on medicine circles and sacred places has revealed Blackfoot relics that date three to five thousand years back in time. Most archeological findings have not been this thorough, since the evidence is quite limited to points and early white contact with North American Natives.

Although there is some criticism of Catlin's writings based on his visits with the Indians on the Missouri in the 1830's, he did intimately get to know some of the tribes. In Catlin's (1841) travels up the Missouri he did stay at Fort MacKenzie for awhile where he had the opportunity to observe and sketch or paint Indian portraits including some Blackfeet (p. 31). In some of his later writings that have been republished over the years, Catlin (1926) became quite philosophical and espoused lengthy dissertations on Native Americans. One such discussion, however, agrees with the traditional beliefs of the Blackfoot:

> I believe they were created on the ground where they have been found, and that their date of creation is the same as that of other human species on the other parts of the globe (180).

According to Hale (1882), the confederacy of the Blackfeet had no regulatory league or constitution. The tribes are separate but they are united by religion, social customs and ancestry. They were also united against common enemies but they never fight each other. Hale relates that Father LaCombe (a Catholic priest, who proselytized in the mid-1800's with the Canadian Blackfoot) says the Blackfoot are a family with three branches who are held together by a bond of kinship. Like many tribes, the Blackfoot had no general name for themselves but sometimes referred to themselves collectively as "Sawketakax" (men of plains or "Netsepaje" which means people who speak one language). Hale could not identify any system of clans or gens. However, he qualified this statement with the idea that this needed further investigation (p. 13).

Much of the relationship and location of tribes is determined by language grouping. The Blackfeet have always been linked with the Algonquian speakers, who are grouped nearby and west of the Great Lakes. In reviewing this connection, Hale (1882) found that MacKenzie (an early Indian trader) felt there was no language affiliation with any other tribes. However, Hale found that Umfreville in his 1791 book listed forty words of Blackfeet. He also finds that Albert Gallatin, in "Synopsis of the Indian Tribes" published in 1836, conveys that the language is different from any known linguistic group. In spite of this, Gallatin believes that the language is connected to the Algonquian family. LaCombe, according to Hale, says the Blackfoot language is the same as Algic, Ojibwa, Sauteax, Masken and Cree. In language, Hale agrees with LaCombe and finds much similarity between words of the Blackfeet, Cree and Ojibwa (p. 4-6).

In discussing linguistic differences between the three Blackfoot divisions, Wissler (1912c) says the differences were chiefly between choice of words and current idioms. He reports the following: "The Northern Blackfoot seem to differ more from the Peigan than the latter from the Blood" (p. 8).

The Blackfoot nations have been somewhat elusive when being researched and discussed by early ethno-historians. Thus, describing these groups of peoples in standard ethnographic categories or terminology was sometimes inexplicable. Hodge (1910) in the "Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico" indicates that the social organization of the Northwest Algonquian tribes was not well known. In describing the Blackfoot division of the Blackfoot peoples he states:

> The Siksika have numerous subdivisions, which have been called gentes; they are characterized by descent through the father, but would appear to be more truly local groups. Each had originally its own chief, and the council composed of these chiefs selected by the chief of the tribe, their choice being governed rather by the character of the person than by his descent (Hodge, 1910, p. 611).

The standard hierarchical authority of the dominant white society was not apparent in this tribe. Hodge goes on to note that the chief's authority was based upon the voluntary cooperation of societies (p. 610). It is noteworthy here that the clan system, as identified in most tribes, does not seem to fit nor is the patrilineal or matrilineal system of grouping seem to be applicable.

Clark Wissler is probably one of the most renowned authors who studied the Blackfeet. Wissler utilized a protege named David Duvall, who was the son of Yellow Bird and a French Canadian named Charles Duvall, to do much of his field work (Kehoe, 1995, p. vi). Since Duvall was part Pikuni (Blackfeet) he could understand and interpret

the language during interviews and participant/observation of ceremonies and activities of Blackfeet people. Wissler (1912c) made the following statement regarding Blackfoot bands:

> As a hypothesis then for further consideration we may state that the band circles and the bands are the objective forms of a type of tribal government peculiar to this area, an organization of units not to be confused with the more social clans and gentes of other tribes which they bear a superficial resemblance (p. 5-6).

Thus, Wissler (1912c) felt that the bands were "conventional by custom" and that they were "merely a conventionalized scheme of tribal government" (p. 1, 2, 5). He says that the bands were a function of social, political and ceremonial groupings that happened to become fixed. Wissler lists the following characteristics of Blackfoot bands:

- instinctive and physical grouping
- sexual group
- adapted to economic conditions
- relation to governance is clearly conventional
- perpetuates the band move
- the bands may regroup for physical economic reasons

Early descriptions of Blackfoot tribal divisions, in Hodge's (1910) research, reveals that the Siksika were considered "restless, aggressive and predatory people" and that they "were constantly at war with all their neighbors, the Cree, Assiniboin, Sioux, Crows, Flatheads and Kutenai." Although the Blackfoot bands were never regularly at war with the United States, they were hostile towards Americans. Although the Blackfoot

divisions traded with the Hudson Bay Company before the arrival of the Americans, their friendship to the Canadians was considered doubtful (p. 257-260).

However, at a later date, Curtis (1911) says, "In disposition the Piegan are particularly tractable and likeable. One can scarcely find a tribe so satisfactory to work among" (p. 10). In fact, at this time in Blackfeet history, Curtis relates the favorable attitude of Blackfeet resulted in marriage of many white men into the tribe. This change in perspective from the mid-1800 to early-1900 created an increase in amount of mixed bloods into the tribe. Curtis (1910) describes the Blackfeet as not being prejudiced against the white man like many other tribes who refused inter-racial marriage (p. 12).

This contradictory view of Blackfeet being vicious and hostile yet friendly and hospitable is portrayed in Father DeSmet's (1843) writing. In one instance he says,

> The Blackfeet are the only Indians of whose salvation, we would have reason to despair, if the ways of God were the same as those of man, for they are murderers, thieves, traitors and all that is wicked (p. 135).

Yet, he then goes on to say, "What's more, the Blackfeet are not hostile to the Black Gowns" (p. 135). He then discusses how the Blackfeet carried him on a robe to the village. These Native people invited DeSmet to a feast and indicated that they knew about his works through sign language. However, it must be remembered that the Flathead Indians were the people who had brought the "Black Robes" out from the East. The Flatheads, as traditional enemies of the Blackfeet, probably had an effect on DeSmet in his unfavorable view of the Pikuni.

However, Hayden (1862) says that the Blackfeet became increasingly peaceful after the small pox epidemic in 1836 and especially after the first treaty with them in 1855. He relates the honor of the Blackfeet as follows:

> From my own experience among the them and from information derived from intelligent men who have spent the greater portion of their lives with them, I am convinced that they are among the most peaceable and honorable Indians in the West: and in an intellectual and moral point of view they take the highest rank among the wild tribes of the plains (p. 3).

Coues (1897), editor of Alexander Henry and David Thompson journals, related that the primary occupation of the Blackfoot people was warring with other tribes. According to these authors, the Blackfoot were considered extremely cruel in the treatment of their enemies. They would not hunt beaver but they traded buffalo robes, wolf and fox pelts (p. 529). At this time in the between 1799 and 1814, Henry and Thompson believed there were over fourteen hundred people in the three tribes. Their tally is as follows (p. 530):

	Tents	Warriors
Cold Band (Blackfoot or Siksika)	120	360
Bloods	80	160
Piegans	350	700
Totals	620	1,420

In the above population count, Henry and Thompson journals (1897) noted that the Piegans were the most numerous and most despised of the three divisions. They relate that other tribes were in awe of the Piegans. The Piegans were known to offer to quell disturbances between other tribes.

The Blackfoot culture, according to early studies, seemed to approximate that of some eastern tribes. Although the three main divisions of the Blackfoot have their own

sun dance, council and elected chief, their social/political/economic unit was the band. Hodge (1910) quotes Grinnell's 1892 works in stating there were forty five (45) bands composed of gentes of which "their gentile character no longer apparent" (p. 570-572). Curtis (1911) in his works identified thirteen (13) gens in the Peigan nation, including the "Worm People, Skunks, Those Who Do Not Laugh, Small Robes, Fat Roasters, White Breasts, Blood People, Buffalo Dung, Black Patched Moccasins, Hard Top Knots, First Finished Eating, Small Brittle Fat, Seldom Lonesome, and Pack Meat Raw" (p. 29). Wissler (1912c) relates that the names of the bands were of no particular significance since grouping was for economic and physical reasons (p. 4). The band grouping, according to Wissler, was a functional adaptation which was a product of ideation and that the marriage role was accidental.

The three sub-divisions each had military and fraternal organizations called the "All Comrades or Ikumuhkahtse" societies. Wissler (1912b) in talking about the Blackfeet and the plains tribes relates the following:

> There were also a number of men's societies or fraternities of a military and ceremonial character upon any one or more of which the tribal government might also call for such service (p. 89).

There were twelve orders of the societies, some of which were extinct as late as 1910 (Hodge, 1910, p. 570). Each society had a great number of rituals, dances, social and war activities (p. 570). According to Curtis (1911), the societies were the dominating force in tribal organization, "indeed the power of the head chief depended largely on his cooperation with them" (p. 16). In Societies and Dance Associations of the Blackfoot Indians, Clark Wissler (1916) lists the following societies:

Little Birds	includes boys from 15 to 20 years old
Pigeons	men who have been to war several times
Mosquitoes	men who are constantly going to war
Braves	tried warriors
All Crazy Dogs	about forty year old men
Dogs}	Dogs and Tails are different societies, but they
Tails}	dress alike and dance together and alike
Horns, Bloods}	obsolete among the Piegans but
Kit-foxes, Peigans}	still exist with Bloods.
Catchers or Soldiers	obsolete for 25 or 30 years, perhaps longer.
Bulls	obsolete for 50 years

The above societies are corroborated in the writings of both McClintock (1937, p. 11) and Grinnell (1962, p. 221). The societies were age-graded as indicated above and men moved from one society to the next through a transfer rite. Grinnell (1962) indicates that the primary function of the societies was to "punish offenses against the society at large", although they were "benevolent and helpful" associations and served in a military capacity for the tribes (p. 220-221).

In addition to the societies within Blackfoot tribal divisions, also secret and religious societies centered on ritual around the "sacred bundle". These societies were characterized by the following elements: a) personal medicine; b) both sexes in some societies and c) principle deities in the Sun and Napi (Hodge, 1910, p. 570).

On observations of religious activities, Curtis (1911) relates, "They did not confine their religious observations to a fixed time or place, but rather were constantly in act or thought supplicating the infinite" (p. 11). When Hale (1882) examined the religion of the tribes he used some of Father LaCombe's impressions as the first Catholic order in Southern Alberta. He found two levels of religiosity, which they labeled primary and secondary creation. In the primary creation, the creator or superior divinity is called

"Apistotokiw". However, the sun (Naatosi) is in some manner identified with the creator. Included in the primary creation are "our mother (Kikristonnan)" and "our father (Kinnan)" who is called on in invocations. "The man is considered to be one and the same divinity with the sun"(p. 9), while the father is somehow a consort of the Sun. The secondary creation includes "old man" who is termed "Napia" by the author. In the Blackfeet creation story, Napi makes the earth from a mud ball that is taken from a water animal's feet whom he had sent down in the waters (see origin stories above). After taking four days to complete the creation of earth including mountains, rivers, plants and beasts, Napi creates a woman in two days. Hale, using LaCombe's findings, notes, "This number four is a fatidical one in the legends of these Indians" (p. 9).

As indicated by Hale (1882), the personified divinity of Napi appears in many Blackfeet legends and accounts (p. 10). He calls Napi a trickster, buffoon, treacherous, being who came down from creation and later disappeared. "Napia is the most genuine and characteristic of Algonquian divinities" (p. 10).

It has long been recorded by Wissler (1912c), McClintock (1912), Schultz (1935), Grinnell (1962), Ewers (1958) and others that the social organization of the Blackfoot evolved around camp life. The major religious, cultural and social event of the Blackfoot was during the annual sun dance encampment. During this time, the different bands of the Blackfoot came together to participate in the sun lodge ceremonies. However, it was also during this time that many of the societies came together for religious, social and cultural interaction (Wissler: 1909; McClintock: 1937).

In 1898, Curtis (1911) saw the sun dance encampment of 230 lodges. One of his informants, Red Plume said the camp compared to earlier times when he observed lodges spread out a mile or more in diameter (p. 13).

The Blackfeet were considered to have a "fanatical devotion" to the sun dance, according to Hale (1882, p. 11). Hale's research is somewhat confounding when he attempts to identify how the Blackfeet obtained the sun dance. On one hand he says it is "not properly Algonquin", as tribes east of the Mississippi did not have this ceremony. On the other hand, Hale relates that the sun dance "may have come west of mountains and taught to Dakotas and Crees" (p. 10-11). Apparently, the Dakota idea came from Hale's findings that a Reverend Stephen Riggs, as a missionary to the Dakotas, had information about the origin of the sun dance. It is interesting to note how Hale does not connect the sun dance with the origin and mythology stories as Wissler later finds. Wissler (1909), in his adept research, using Duvall, found that the Blackfeet story of "Scar Face" alludes to the medicine lodge coming from his (Scar Face) visit to the sun's lodge (p. 64-64). Furthermore, Wissler (1915) found that the sun dance (or medicine lodge ceremony as it is commonly called by the Blackfeet) is a complex set of rituals that is intimately tied to origin stories and medicine bundles (p. 230-258, 268).

Learning Opportunities in Blackfeet Cultural Ceremonies

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest by Blackfeet people in their own culture and tradition. Some evidence of this is demonstrated by the Blackfeet Community College's founding mission statement which includes language that addresses

"educational advancement and cultural preservation" of the Blackfeet nation (Blackfeet Community College Catalogue for 1996-1998, p. 12). In addition, the Blackfeet Community College in 1990, reflecting a service area need, changed the Native American Studies curriculum to Blackfeet Studies. This change process is probably a manifestation of the cultural revitalization effort that has some of its roots in the social revolution of the United States and other countries in the late 1960's (Prucha 1986, pp. 365-369). For Native Americans, the social change critical turning point took place with the action taken at Wounded Knee in 1973 (Deloria & Lytle, 1984, pp. 12-13). Certainly, the Indian affairs legislative action during and after this time has had an effect on the ability to institute a cultural revolution. Some of the legislation included the Indian Self Determination and Educational Assistance Act of 1975, Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968, and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (Indian Tribes as Sovereign Governments, 1988, pp. 14-18, 30, 45-46, 94-100). Although the social climate changed in recent years, which allowed Native people to openly discuss and practice their traditional and cultural ways, the rich spiritual beliefs and practices had been quietly, and sometimes secretly, preserved. This is true for the Blackfoot as well as other tribes. The Blackfeet have always had small groups of people who continued to practice the old ways.

Elders have continued the ceremonial rituals and practices such as keeping the medicine pipe bundle active for many years. One called the "long time pipe" or "thunder pipe" has been handed down through "transfer" rites for generations. Blackfeet tribal elders have been instrumental in not only preserving, protecting and practicing the

traditional ways, but they have been teachers to many tribal people who are seeking the knowledge and ways of the past.

There are certainly several others who have continued to practice the old ways, as evidenced in Dorothy Still Smoking's case study of tribal education using Blackfeet elders (1997, pp. 87-94). However, people like one elderly lady and her late husband were instrumental in being the "keepers" of one of the other medicine pipe bundles that was kept in constant "use" for probably centuries. These two elders are also known as kindly people who provide information and knowledge on language and tradition to genuinely interested tribal members.

The medicine pipe bundle that was kept by the above two elders was "transferred" to a younger tribal member several years ago. This young man has continued to keep the ceremonial and spiritual activities related to this medicine bundle active. As with all these types of medicine pipe bundles, definite ceremonial rituals are required at certain times and seasons.

As a result of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990) and Blackfeet social change, some of the "religious" articles housed in museums and publicly owned collections have been returned to the tribe. Two other medicine pipe bundles have been placed back into active practice, as well as two beaver bundles and a "police pipe" medicine bundle. There are also some medicine bundles that have been kept by individuals on the reservation, but they remain inactive for various reasons. In addition, there are probably numerous "religious" articles still housed in public holdings

like museums and art collections throughout the world. Private holdings are extensive and largely undocumented, also throughout the world.

The important idea here is that there is a revitalization movement going on as demonstrated by the number of "active" medicine pipe bundles with the Blackfeet people. This, coupled with the desire of young people wanting to know their traditional ways, is providing an insurgence of learning opportunities. Not only is this a learning opportunity, it is a "learning event" of increasing proportions. It is vitally important to know that this reactivation movement is not to be viewed as simply a re-socialization of culture within an ethnic group. Medicine pipe bundles are considered very, very sacred among the Blackfoot peoples. Therefore, the notion of re-activating traditional spiritual ways is done with very careful consideration and protocol. It must also be noted that bringing something like a medicine pipe bundle back into practice requires a complex set of ritual activity and traditional canon, which also means that those people involved in becoming "keepers" of the medicine pipe bundles enter a spiritual learning realm that is complex and rigorous. Fortunately, the Blackfeet have elders like an 83-year-old man, who was essentially the only person who has all the knowledge and "rights" related to the medicine lodge and the beaver bundle ceremonies.

In order to understand the discussion of learning opportunities, some fundamental precepts need to be clarified. In order to obtain a bundle, an individual must learn the proper protocol and requirements. As with most things in the sacred realm of the Blackfeet, the process often begins with a spiritual happening such as a dream, vision or event where one obtains a divine message that this is something they need to do.

Consultation with an appropriate elder or keeper of the proper knowledge is important. Another way to obtain a medicine bundle is by making a holy vow or promise to keep the bundle, based on a desire to ward off a potentially harmful phenomenon, or as a result of a favorable outcome related to a negative or positive event in one's life. Once the vow is made, the individual should seek the advice of an appropriate elder who has the kind of knowledge needed in directing the person on how to proceed. It is critically important that the vow maker adhere to strict protocol in learning who, where, when and how to request a medicine bundle. Once the process is initiated, assuming correctly, the process of "transfer" ceremony begins. This process also adheres to rigorous customs and requirements, which eventually leads the person to becoming a "keeper" of a medicine bundle. As the keeper of the bundle, the person now continues learning the many, many songs, rituals, and numerous requirements attached to this position.

The two important concepts in this cursory explanation of basic protocol attached to a medicine bundle are the rite of "transfer" and becoming a "keeper" of the bundle. Although most times bundle "keepers" are referred to as "owners," the former title is more correct. Throughout the ages, medicine bundles have been "transferred" from one individual (or family) to another. No one really "owns" the bundle, as it is a divine gift to be kept by the tribal people. As explained above, the "transfer" concept is a very intricate and complicated process.

One of the difficulties encountered in attempting to discuss Blackfeet spirituality has to do with the word "religion". The concept of a "religion" in the terms of the dominant society is probably not definable in the Blackfeet way of knowledge and

language. The term "spirituality" is now used because the word seems to encompass more of what the Blackfeet way is about. In the Blackfeet way, the practice of religion is not separated from the concept of being human. This is exemplified in the Napi stories told to children. Napi was partly divine, and yet he was human. He had divine powers to talk to animals and to perform supernatural deeds. Yet Napi did foolish things and learned from many mistakes. Thus, the Blackfeet way integrates spirituality into one's existence as a human being. Religion and being are not separate concepts.

Additional learning opportunities exist in the medicine bundle ceremonies as individuals are invited or inducted into the bundle society. The medicine pipe bundle members are called ninaimsskaa and they each have various roles related to the rituals. These members are governed by strict codes of living but they also gain certain "rights" to specific songs, dances and rituals related to the ceremonies. The beaver bundle also has inducted members called beaver people, who, like the medicine pipe bundle members, must learn their specific roles and requirements related to the ceremonies. In addition, like most bundle societies, beaver people also have specific taboos and rights to perform certain aspects of ceremony.

The Crazy Dog Society of the All Comrades, as the collective body of societies was called by the early anthropologists, is still in existence today. They practice some of the same ceremonies of their ancestors of the past. As with most of the societies, the members go through an induction process and transfer rite. The Crazy Dog Society, like most societies, has specific ceremonial activities relative to their group. Members have specific taboos, rights, and duties to their being in the society. Crazy Dog Society

members have traditionally played a policing role in tribal ceremonies and activities. They also act as workers and role participants in ceremonies such as the medicine lodge.

The ookaan or medicine lodge ceremony is still active in the Blackfoot nations. In recent years, the Blackfeet have annually had the medicine lodge ceremony or sun dance, as it is sometimes called. Much of this ceremony is public since the ookaan is considered a spiritual activity that is done for all the Blackfoot people. However, much of the ceremony is so sacred that it is very private with only very specific people, who have the rights, duties and responsibilities, participating in that portion. As indicated in the literature, however, many of the activities involve tribal members, especially in building portions of the medicine lodge. There are an extraordinary number of opportunities for learning in the medicine lodge event. This is especially true since, in addition to the four-day encampment, there are several parts of the ceremony that begin and are carried out before the actual tribal gathering. As indicated above, the ookaan event involves many complex rituals and rigorous spiritual doctrine. The complexity of the ookaan is intimately tied to the genesis, theology, ritual and liturgy of the Blackfoot people. The knowledge acquired by the various elders and people, who participate in the various aspects of this tribal ceremony collectively encompasses many years of study, participation, commitment, hardship, endurance and sacrifice.

The above discussion of learning opportunities is a limited discussion of some examples of the many ceremonial activities that take place with the Blackfoot people. There are certainly many more aspects that could be added to the discussion including things like the sweat lodge, holy smoke, song service, naming ceremonies, teepee

transfer, vision quest, pipe smoking, and several others. However, the above important aspects of Blackfoot ceremonial life reveal that there are many opportunities to experience traditional Blackfoot learning in this context.

In addition, the above ceremonial examples take place within the three tribes of the Blackfoot. Some things, such as the Horn Society, only take place with the Blood division of the Blackfoot confederacy. However, the study will encompass all the divisions with emphasis on the Southern Piegan or Blackfeet (Pikuni).

It is also important to note that there are other ceremonies and Native American cultural activities taking place in Blackfeet country. Some of these, such as the Blacktail Deer Dance, have been adopted from the Salish/Kootenai tribes. Other rituals may be adaptations from other tribes. This study will examine only those orthodox Blackfoot ceremonies that are known to have been in existence for hundreds of years.

Related Concepts of Adult Learning

The Four Worlds Project at the University of Lethbridge in the early 1980's examined some traditional Native learning ideas and precepts. Phil Lane and others had used elders of the Blackfoot Confederacy and other Canadian tribes to create some Native concepts and symbols that could be used in health and wellness education (Bopp, 1985). This group analyzed Native culture and tradition in order to develop meaningful approaches to community development and change process (p. 20). The Four Worlds Project (Bopp, 1985) used the "medicine wheel" symbol to represent the idea that people

are composed of four parts of a whole. The medicine wheel depiction, used to describe the Native way of looking at the world, is as follows:

MENTAL

PHYSICAL SPIRITUAL

EMOTIONAL

The four parts of the medicine wheel include the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual self as described in relation to learning. The Four Worlds Project describes the medicine wheel in relation to learning as follows:

> There are four dimensions to "true learning." These four aspects of every person's nature are reflected in the four cardinal points of the medicine wheel. These four aspects of our being are developed through the use of our volition. It cannot be said that a person has totally learned in a whole and balanced manner unless all four dimensions of their being have been involved in the process (p. 29).

Traditional Indian beliefs knew about this "relatedness of things" or what is being called a holistic philosophy. Simpson (1980) came to a similar conclusion but he used the term "blending". He feels that "no comprehensive theory of learning seems to exist that suffices for the divergent learning episodes that the adult experiences throughout a lifetime." Although he says that no "adequate theory of adult learning" is articulated by educators, he espouses using a "diversity of perspectives" (p. 45-50). Thus, blending to Simpson is infusing practical application with learning theory.

> Merging . . . principles derived from the learning theories, conditions, and circumstances of adult learners can be blended to suggest alternative approaches to designing and understanding adult learning experiences (p. 45-46).

Contemporary educational learning style discussion includes three parts of the holistic medicine wheel as demonstrated in Keefe's (1982) writings on adult education. He categorizes learning styles as cognitive, affective and physiological domains (p. 44). By displaying Keefe's learning styles (in parenthesis) with the medicine wheel idea, we can portray this as follows:

MENTAL (Cognitive)
PHYSICAL SPIRITUAL
(Physiological)
EMOTIONAL (Affective)

Rowland (1994), in his doctoral dissertation, discusses the Cheyenne idea that "life is one interrelated whole" whose purpose is known only by the Creator. This concept relates to the portrayal here that spirituality is a part of the learning process. Rowland (1994) further discusses how the object of learning must include "surrendering oneself to the greater whole of both the physical and spiritual realities" (p. 131).

An illustration of the Native holistic way of thought versus the scientific or rationalistic conception is how these two belief systems view the archeological rock configurations placed throughout traditional Blackfoot territory. Although work has been done by archaeologists and others reviewing, analyzing and categorizing the various rock formations commonly called "medicine wheels", there seems to be no conclusive evidence regarding purpose, function and sometimes even the age. Contemporary archeologists and anthropologists have identified these boulder alignments as sites where Native people have piled these rocks in various formations. Wilkie (1986) theorizes that the rock formations evolved in a developmental process from "commemorative" structures to "burial sites" to "symbolic memorials" (p. 28). However, Wilkie also refers

to one of his informants, who said that the rock formations were the personal visions of individuals who were involved in the original construction (p. 32). In his honors research paper at the University of Edmonton, he found that the medicine wheel construction dates varied from as late as 3500 BC to 1971 (p. 19). However, most archeological evidence indicates that the medicine wheel sites were more generally developed and used between 3500 BC and the mid-1700's.

Vogt (1990) indicates that although over 100 medicine wheel locations have been identified on the Great Plains area, "There are very few reliably accurate datings of these structures, even to within 5000 years, and the same number of reliable cultural associations" (p. 5).

Brumley (1988) postulates that many medicine wheels were constructed by prehistoric and historic period Blackfoot. He cites three evidentiary conclusions for this, including: a) death lodge burial practiced most commonly by Blackfeet; b) stone lines running out of the center of the teepee circle to respect or honor a prominent person (teepee owner); and c) location within historic territory of the Blackfoot.

In their studies, the Kehoes (1979) discuss Blackfoot interpretations of the "medicine wheel" rock monuments (pp. 32-35). They relate a discussion held in 1953 with Adam White Man, who was 81 at the time, in which he stated:

> I heard that when they buried a real chief, one that the people loved, they would pile rocks around the edge of his lodge and then place rows of rocks out from his burial tipi (p. 31).

Jim Weasel Tail, in an interview with the Kehoes in 1975, described the Sun River site (circular ring of rocks with ten linear lines or rocks running at varying lengths

from the exterior of the ring) as a monument to a great leader or chief, with the lines representing traveling war parties that he led in the delineated directions (1979, p. 34).

Discussions with Blackfeet tribal elders impart the idea that the "medicine wheels" are sacred sites, and that out of respect, one need not analyze their existence or meaning (Kicking Woman, personal communication, 1994). This presents the notion that learning includes accepting something as a part of a whole rather than having to scrutinize its interpretation through examination of minutiae. Rowland (1994), in his doctoral dissertation, explained this concept very well when he described the Cheyenne learner.

> Thus, fundamental lessons in life are learned by the young and never questioned because these lessons are vital to continue the Journey of Life as it has been for countless generations. Essentially, this is an inductive approach emphasizing the understanding of the larger processes of life early in life and is in stark contrast to the non-Indian methods of learning skills and fragmentary knowledge in childhood and not having any ideas of the larger forces at work which move people to behave and interact with one another (135).

Contemporary educational theory and application has realized that it must deal with the total individual in their particular environment. McKeachie, (1988) in talking about how people process and retain information through thinking (sensing), attention (focus), perception (organization), working memory and long term memory, says:

> One of the characteristics of human beings is that these things are all going on at the same time; they're interacting; they're part of a system that is not just a sequential system, but one in which the parts are interactive (p. 6).

Although presented as an economic development model, Phil Lane (1986) of Four Worlds Project, University of Lethbridge, made the following statement when he talked

about indigenous people and economic development, in which he explained succinctly how the learning process works:

> Before we consider the development of our people, we must look deeply within first and come to agreement on what is needed. I think if we do that, we'll know where development must begin: from the inside, out. We've been trying so hard to develop from the outside and wondering why our projects are dysfunctional or keep falling apart. If development doesn't start within, there's no strength to the foundation (p. 5).

This model can be applied to learning and fit within the Four Worlds paradigm as characterized here:

Self > Family > Community > Environment

This process of learning includes improving the quality of life for the individual, family, community, and environment through a change process starting from the self (Lane, 1986). Knowles (1980) similarly states that learning is an internal process. Education is not merely the "transmittal of information" and an intellectual process, but the learner controls it by engaging their whole being -- including intellectual, emotional and physiological functions (p. 56). Any learning event begins with the self, which is recognizable through a change in behavior (Keefe, 1982, p. 44). At the World's Indigenous Peoples Conference in Edmonton, Alberta, in 1992, a lady said this same thing in a very succinct way: "How do you know where you are going, unless you know who you are and where you have been?" (Latell, 1992).

The idea presented here uses significant others to depict how the learning process proceeds from the self to interaction with the family and the community. This is important to the Native American situation because of the significance of the role of the

family and kinship in the learning process. Jeanine Pease-Windy Boy (1990) affirmed this in her presentation regarding the Crow Indian perspective of education.

> When we looked at where our knowledge came from, we knew that all of our knowledge emanated from the Creator whether it was from messages from our environment or from each other. The Creator had told us that we needed to be a part of a family and family ways and our family ties were expressions of the Creator's love and regard and respect for us. As Crows, we have a clan system that follows the mother's heritage line. For everything we do and for every achievement or moment of success, we have a recognition ceremony; that is we bring in the clan's people to celebrate along with us (p. 37).

It follows that groups also find solutions to life problems or needs through this interactional process. This agrees with Horton's belief that answers "can only come from the people in the life situation" (Adams, 1975, p. 24). Using the example presented here, it reinforces the idea that learning occurs also in the community through an interactive process.

Tough (1978) says, "A learning project is a highly deliberate effort to gain and retain certain definite knowledge and skill or to change in some other way" (p. 250). In the paradigm depicted above, the environment portion includes all those other things outside of the self, family and community. In this case, it displays how education is a change process and how it can affect those things around us. Using Phil Lane's (1986) ideas, it can be seen that the environment includes all those things that we want to change and improve such as economic development, employment, educational systems, government, and natural resources (p. 5).

The simplicity of the circle represents the way of Native thought, and depicts the relatedness of things. This connectedness is realized in how some educators approach the

learning process. McKeachie (1988, p. 6) reinforces this idea when he indicates that individuals process information through an "interactive process" and not just "sequentially".

The notion here is that individuals learn differently. This belief is affirmed by current educational research findings that learning styles, behavior and mental processes do differ with individuals in adult education (Brookfield, 1986, p. 31). More importantly, it recognizes that the students bring in their own unique knowledge, beliefs, and ways of learning. Therefore, any educational process must consider each individual's needs, knowledge, and motivation.

Conti and Fellenz (1988, pp. 96-100), in their research on teaching and learning styles, found that good teachers are easily identified by students. Some of the characteristics of good teachers included the following:

- respect for the student
- genuine interest in the student
- identify student needs
- encourage questioning
- teachers admit their own mistakes
- display warm human feelings
- communicate teacher/student feelings
- understanding and caring
- friendly and warm
- available out of class

- display enthusiasm
- high expectations
- know the material well
- favorable interpersonal characteristics
- interact with students (formal and informal)
- helpful, encouraging, stimulating
- promote questioning and provide feedback
- repeat material, use examples and supplementary material
- create an environment of trust and respect
- display personal characteristics

Jim Knight (1998), a noted lecturer on equity issues, in a recent training on gender equity for Montana vocational teachers, stated, "good equity is good teaching". The above elements of a "good" teacher are consistent with Knight's findings, which he relates as follows:

- Make student feel important
- Make students feel invited
- Learn the power of nonverbal cues
- Get to know the students personally
- Learn to empathize
- Establish parameters
- Use student centered instruction
- Learn the difference between discipline and punishment

- Be enthusiastic

The studies by Andera and Atwell (1988) in "Understanding the Learning Styles of the Native American Student" relate to the Conti and Fellenz (1998, p. 384) findings that the interaction between the learners and the instructors in certain contexts is the essence of the learning situation. These authors found in their research of the literature that Native American students' learning styles are more effective when the instructor establishes appropriate interpersonal relationships (p. 15). The Conti and Fellenz (1987) discussion has to do with evaluation and assessment. They indicate how one method called "discovery" can relate to the interaction of teachers and learners to "encourage human growth and learning" (p. 385).

While making a case for accommodating learning styles of difference cultures, Ortiz (n.d., manuscript, pp. 11-13) discusses some diversity issues within ethnic groups that must be considered in teaching and learning. His work conveys that in accommodating learning style differences, one must understand the reference group of the learner. Things like "language, customs, traditions, religion, family, attitudes and so forth" (p. 12) are critical to the learning process. Ortiz presents a range or continuum of cultural factors within an ethnic group that can influence learning. These factors or characteristics are related to levels of acculturation which he labels a) traditional culture, b) dualistic culture and c) atraditional culture (pp. 13-15). The traditional culture group is that one which identifies distinctly with the ethnic group. Although the second dualistic group maintains definite cultural values, they modify their customs in order to interact

with the majority culture. The last group on the continuum, called the atraditional culture, basically reflects the white, middle class society.

Learning Principles

Educators have done much work on the cognitive process of learning. McKeachie (1988, p. 1) talks about how the discipline of cognitive psychology was considered "scientific" because it concerned itself with things like measurability, reliability and observation. He goes on to note how the cognitive theorists passed over the common sense idea that something was going on with the thought process of the learner. However, the growing body of knowledge in adult learning is recognizing that it is an intellectual, emotional and physiological process (Knowles, 1980, p. 56). The view that feelings affect learning is receiving some attention. In his manuscript on the "affective domain", Kidd (1973) relates, "The interests, needs, and motivations of any learner, child or adult are primarily a matter of emotions, not the intellect" (p. 94). Kidd asserts that emotional influences play an important role in learning. Environmental issues are now also receiving attention when adult learning is discussed. In looking at existing learning theories and common elements, Cross (1981, pp. 121-123) reviewed the works of Tough, Abbey and Orten. She found that these three theorists shared a common element (among others) that learning has to do with the interaction of the individual with their environment. This is reinforced by other studies such as that by Knowles (1980) which states that the learning experience has two key components, "learning and interaction" (p. 56). However, Keefe (1982, p. 49) takes environment a little further to include

physiological factors in addition to the physical environment. He includes biological factors such as sex differences, health and nutrition in his definition of learning related functioning.

These elements are certainly present in the process of learning the conduct of ceremonies by elders. Therefore, this part of the acquisition of knowledge may be known, but adult educators at Blackfeet Community College (George Kipp III, personal communication, 1996) suspect there is more to the process of this type of learning than what seems apparent.

Brookfield (1986) summarized some principles of adult learning, which he garnered from notable authors including Gibb, Miller, Kidd, Knox, Brudage and Mackeracher, Smith, Darkenwald and Merriam:

a. Adults learn throughout their lives.

b. They exhibit diverse learning styles.

c. Problem-centered and meaningful learning activities are preferred.

d. Application of learning outcomes must be immediate.

e. Former experiences can affect and sometimes limit the learning process.

f. Self-concept is linked to learning.

g. Self-direction is favored (p. 31).

Thus, in applying Brookfield's finding on understanding how adults learn to the Native American situation, there are some implications for consideration. These implications include how individuals' diverse learning styles relate to their personal differences such as how they cognitively process information, integrate learning with the

affective factors, and the effect of environmental or physiological elements. Individual differences and the above learning principles are certainly influenced by cultural distinctions.

Learning in Traditional Blackfeet Society

Discussions by Blackfeet elders generate information about the traditional Blackfeet learning process that is generally accepted and known. Traditional developmental learning began with direct parenting, especially by the mother with the infant. After infancy, the child was under the care and tutelage of the grandparent. Upon reaching adolescence, the individual then returned to interaction with the parent, but usually through some group process with others. Young ladies began working with the women in their tasks, and the young men began the process of belonging to the age grade societies (Ewers, 1958, pp. 102-104), (Wissler, 1912c, pp. 29-30).

However, the process of learning was especially important during childhood years with the grandparent. This process involved learning the origin and mythology stories that provided the philosophical basis for the culture. These stories also provided the values, mores, rules, and laws that guided the culture. More importantly, it provided a thinking and decision making process since the stories were highly metaphorical and infused with simile. This learning process was developed through repeatedly hearing the stories.

As a young person, the individual learned ceremony and ritual from their significant others or from the societies (like clans) of which they were a member. At this

stage, the learner had to pay strict attention to the elder (master) who provided the information, song, dance and ritual to the learner. The information is only told once and questions or dialogue are not permissible.

Important to this study is the observation that some individuals who actively participate in the traditional culture seem to have some inherent abilities of memory. It has been noted that some of these individuals have the unique ability to repeat a song or story after only hearing it once.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Design

In this study, the qualitative approach of research methodology was applied to identify the learning process in Blackfoot ceremony. The data collection used case study interviews. The case studies employ the qualitative method of informal, conversational interview technique and the general interview guide (Patton, pp. 280-287). The data was analyzed using the illumative model espoused by Guba (1978, pp. 39-41), which identifies categories that integrate and describe the phenomena as it relates to the process of learning.

Naturalistic inquiry (presently being termed the qualitative approach) as explained by Guba (1978) does not impose constraints on the output nor does it narrowly define the conditions. This was an attractive methodology for this study since the researcher's interest is in finding "what is" rather than pre-supposing hypothesis and experimenting. As reflected by Patton (1990), naturalistic inquiry, "focuses on the actual operations and impacts of a process, program or intervention over a period of time" (p. 42). The conventional methodology of finding a piece of information that is only valuable to specific point in time is not of interest in this study. Nor do generalities that have no truth to culturally unique groups of people have any merit in this case.

The qualitative approach or naturalistic inquiry is a method of research that is not so much based on hypothetical theory as it is on identifying "phenomena" that exists within a "naturally occurring context" (Guba, 1978, p. 4). In his text, Guba (1978) cites several authors who have looked at the nature of naturalistic inquiry. Some of their descriptions are as follows:

a) According to Menzel, the research strives toward "discovery" and "verification through observation" (p. 4);

b) "It is the stimulus situation, not the response, that defines a naturalistic method" is the idea presented by Willems & Rush in Guba's text (p. 4);

c) "Grounded upon empirical data concerning the patterns of events within... settings where people live their lives.... nature is the only inducer and the investigator can be only a transducer..." (Barker in Guba, 1987, p. 5);

d) According to Gutmann, the researcher organizes regularity as it inherently abides in the universe notwithstanding theory. Gutmann says the aim involves, "bringing out, highlighting some implicit order in the domain of his interest and toward turning the implicit order into explicit data" (p. 5);

e) Rush conveys that "the investigator attempts to exercise no influence over the range of stimuli or the range of responses; it is the subject who selects and defines the repertoire of both stimuli and responses" (p. 5).

The case study method is used here to understand this unique group of people in order to provide information about traditional learning process in its cultural context. According to Patten (1990), "the researcher is the instrument" (p. 14) in qualitative

inquiry. The investigator identified categories that integrate and described the phenomena that relate to the process of ceremonial learning. The categorization of the data derived from investigation of the transcribed interviews. In this manner, the influences come from the procedure of describing and understanding the phenomenon.

The study entails "visiting" with elders using the Blackfoot protocol. Using traditional Blackfeet protocol, a gift was given and the purpose of the visit expressed in a statement or a question. Patton (1990) says, "talk to people formally or informally" since a large part of information collection happens through natural, transpiring dialogue (p. 32). The researcher used the "informal conversational interview" approach since it is most compatible with the Blackfeet protocol (Patton, 1990, pp. 281-282). During the interview sessions, the researcher communicated the request for information related to the ceremonies using the general guided interview approach (p. 280). Some guided questions were used as the need arose relevant to the discussion and the topic of traditional learning. The researcher used intense listening skills, combined with notes and recorder. In most cases, Blackfoot protocol required the researcher to respond only when cued by the elder. Some of the participants explained things through "story telling" which required the researcher follow the oral tradition of verbatim recording.

The interviews were analyzed using the illumative model (Guba, 1978, pp. 39-41), which is essentially identifying recurring trends, significant attributes, commonalities, frequent issues and critical processes. The interviews were organized into a descriptive format with explanation provided by the researcher. Relevant information in

the interviews were categorized and codified as the patterns and regularities emerged and were confirmed from the data.

The naturalistic inquiry method is concerned with "describing and understanding" the phenomena (Guba, 1978 pp. 12-13). The researcher recorded impressions that were formed out of the analysis of the data through cross-checking and recycling the information from the interviews. Results arose from the data through the process of classification and categorization. Naturally occurring relationships emerged from the interviews as phenomenon was "discovered" in relationship to the learning process as it surfaced from the interviews. As noted by Conti and Fellenz (1987), evaluation (interview) elements and assumptions can be used to "discover how a phenomenon is operating" in order to "better understand the intricate interactions taking place in the learning situation" (p. 385).

Since the researcher participates in traditional Blackfoot ceremonies, he knew the protocol and the boundaries for implementing the study. He is familiar with those individuals who are considered traditional elders in the community. In addition, the researcher has training and extensive experience in facilitating both large and small groups, which benefited the interview process.

Procedures

The investigator utilized the case study method to interview Blackfoot Confederacy elders and traditionalists to identify traditional Blackfoot learning process in ceremony. Blackfoot protocol was used as a methodology in order to instigate "informal

conversational interview" using Patton's (1990, p. 280) general interview guide approach. The investigator identified traditional Blackfoot learning process through analysis of interviews using qualitative research methodology. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study of traditional Pikuni learning process, as it relates to adult learning, was compiled by the investigator.

The investigator interviewed elders and ceremonial participants using the qualitative method of informal conversational interview and the general interview guide approach (Patton, p. 280). This interview approach allowed the interviewer to adopt and adapt questions as they arose in the natural course of monologue after initial general questions were asked. The general questions to initiate the interview were also customized to the context and the situation. The case study interview used note taking and audio recording for data collection. This method of case study interview was used because it is conducive to the Blackfoot cultural method of seeking assistance from elders. In the informal conversational interview, most of the informants discussed things related to traditional Blackfoot learning process as a part of personal interaction with the investigator during visits to their homes. The general interview guide was used as a methodology to gather information during the visits to the elders homes, since the basic issue centered on the question of "What are the learning processes used by participants in Blackfoot ceremony?". The general interview guide centered around requesting information through statements like "Tell me how one learns the things one needs to know about Blackfoot ceremony such as the medicine pipe dance", or a follow up question such as "How does a person remember the songs, movements and parts to

ceremony?" or simply "How does one learn to do the things that are done in ceremonies?" or "I'm here to visit you about how a person learns to do the things in ceremony like songs, dance, painting, smudge and so forth".

During the case study interviews with the elders in the homes, the investigator used notes and sometimes an audio recorder. Usually the investigator visited on a very informal basis until a level of comfort was reached in the conversation between the elder and the researcher. After the request was made for information, the investigator asked if notes or a recorder could be used. Most elders agreed to the method of recording but sometimes the conversation moved into the subject matter before the request to do recording could be broached. Therefore, some notes were completed after the interview, but usually within a very short period of one to a few hours.

The interview process was informal but followed Blackfoot protocol and the "informal conversational interview" approach as espoused by Patton (1990, p. 281- 282). Protocol involved approaching an elder (usually in his or her own setting such as the home) and providing a small gift. The gift included things such as a favorite food item, blanket or money. For some elders money is an acceptable gift. Upon presenting the gift, the elders were asked or told why the visit was being paid. The documented interviews followed the naturalistic method of recording descriptive information.

The documented interviews were transcribed into an interview summary, which identified and recorded recurrent matters, persistent trends and frequent incidences on topics that were sustained and discussed. Internal validity and objectivity had some inherent control through Blackfeet protocol since the elder usually controlled the

conversation. Since the elder controlled the interview and prompted questions, this certainly helped to provide some safeguards to objectivity in the interviewing process.

The analysis was completed using Guba's Illumative Model (1978, p. 39-51) to ascertain the opinions and insight of the participants. The Illumative Model encompasses most of the elements of naturalistic inquiry including the following: a) concern with description and interpretation; b) influence and operation in the situation; c) concern with those effected; d) discovery and documentation; e) discussion and discernment; f) common incidents, recurring trends and issues; g) emerging issues; and h) underlying general principles (p. 40). In addition, the Illuminative Model uses a) interview; b) recording of ongoing events; c) interpretive comments; d) uncovers tacit assumptions; e) interpersonal relationships; and f) perceptional view of participants (p. 40).

Fifteen interview participants, who are generally known to be ceremonialists, were selected from the Blackfoot Confederacy. Three of the respondents are esteemed and respected South Piegan elders who are over eighty years old. The three are well known for their lifetime of participation and current leadership in ceremonies throughout the Blackfoot nations in Montana and Southern Alberta, Canada. The four North Peigan participants are middle-aged gentlemen who are respected for their many years of participation and experience in Blackfoot tradition and ceremony. One of the three North Peigans has published literature on the traditional ways of the Blackfoot. The Blood division of the Blackfoot tribes was represented by two participants who are recognized as articulate ceremonialists in both Alberta and Montana. One of the Blood respondents is the author of several publications on Blackfoot culture and customs. The remaining six

participants are South Piegans, five of whom have become medicine bundle proprietors in recent years after several years of participation as medicine bundle society members. Of the nine South Piegans, six were interviewed simultaneously as married couples.

The interview participants were a representative group of ceremonialists who the researcher has become acquainted with while participating in ceremonies. As indicated by Barker (Guba, 1978, p. 5), the investigator is the "transducer" of the study. In naturalistic inquiry, the researcher "selects from those aspects which he considers critical for his purposes" (p. 14). The participants were "selected" because of the common factor of being generally known as ceremonialists by Blackfoot people. The inquiry paradigm was established as a result of the researcher's interaction with the participants as a ceremonial learner. For the last several years, the researcher has been a participant/observer in many ceremonies of the Blackfoot.

Related Case Studies

Rowland (1994) was one of the first Native American people in this region to use the naturalistic, qualitative method of inquiry through case studies with his own Cheyenne people. In his study, Rowland was researching and examining the Cheyenne way of learning "in terms of defining a tribal educational system for their own people" (p. 52). His study used the interview technique as a method of gathering data and information from tribal elders. The interview information was placed into a "descriptive" format in order to document the research findings (pp. 53-54). His initial research participants were selected because of their important positions within the Cheyenne

culture (p. 56). The initial group of four informants was expanded to an additional fifteen through a system of referral and "networking" with other Cheyennes, who were identified as knowledgeable in traditional spirituality and religion. An elder advisor was used throughout the process. This advisor recommended that Rowland use some of his family members (p. 56). In this study, the author used Cheyenne protocol and naturalistic inquiry methodology in interviewing the defined case study group. An interpreter/advisor was used to provide guidance and understanding of the language differences (pp. 58, 60). In analyzing the data, Rowland used the qualitative method of triangulation and collaboration between the interviewees and existing literature (p. 59). The naturalistic research method used by Rowland followed the qualitative process as espoused by Guba and Lincoln (1981).

In her study of Blackfeet tribal education, Still Smoking (1997) used the case study method introduced by Rowland (1994) as a way to research traditional Native American knowledge. Still Smoking interviewed several Blackfeet tribal elders using the Blackfeet language to obtain information related to understanding the knowledge base of the Blackfeet people. The Blackfeet language was then translated into English using an interpreter, although the author had a fairly good grasp of the language. The case study method used the qualitative approach by describing the information resulting from the interviews with Blackfeet elders (pp. 17-18).

In April of 1997, Lanny Real Bird completed a doctoral dissertation called the "Ashaammaliaxia", The Apsaalooke Clan System: A Foundation for Learning. His research used the descriptive study as presented in qualitative methodology. He used the

case study interview technique of qualitative research coupled with an analysis of the publications and archival material (p. 94). Real Bird used a historical approach to examining the process of learning through his tribal clan system (p. 95). Besides interviewing members of specific clans, Real Bird used his membership in the clan as a participant/observation technique (pp. 102-105). In fact, part of the background material presents a lengthy discussion of the author's membership, qualification, and participation in the clan and culture of the tribe (pp. 105-112). He included informal discussions during and after ceremonies as a part of the interview process coupled with his historic participation in cultural and religious activities. The language difference was handled by Real Bird's own knowledge and participation in the culture along with assistance from a small group of clan elder/advisors. His procedures included cultural protocol and ceremonial participation (pp. 100-101).

The case study method of research has a long history. Boas (1894) and others are noted as beginning the discipline of anthropology during the late 1800's that used the informant style of ethnographic research. Clark Wissler (1912b), a student and protege' of Boas, used the ethnographic style of case study in much of his works with American Indians. Wissler did extensive case study work with the Blackfeet Indians. Some of Wissler's works with the Blackfeet are the only recordings of "secret" ceremonies. This was because he employed a new and different technique for that time period by using a part-Blackfeet by the name of David Duvall to do his participant/observation, writing and language interpretation of ceremonies. An excellent summary of the relationship between

Wissler and Duvall is in Kehoe's (1995) edited works of these researchers entitled Mythology of the Blackfoot Indians (p. vi-xii).

The technique of recording the ethnology of the Blackfeet using the case study "informant" style of study is well known to these people. About the time of Wissler, in the early 1900's, another person by the name of Walter McClintock (1912) was among the Blackfeet doing ethnographic case study style of research. However, McClintock choose to culminate much of his work into a "story" of his "adventures" living with the Blackfeet in the book entitled The Old North Trail. Nevertheless, McClintock did publish some studies of Blackfoot Indians that leaned more towards true ethnography through the Southwest Museum Leaflets published by the Southwest Museum of Los Angeles.

Before and during the time McClintock was on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, an individual named James Willard Schultz had begun recording stories from elder Blackfeet tribal members. Schultz (1935) had come up the Missouri in the late 1800's and had worked with the Indian trading companies, such as the Conrad brothers, during the close of the century. Although he recorded many stories and history by Blackfeet tribal members, much of Schultz's work is also in the personalized adventure type of writing such as that in My Life As an Indian. Schultz's impetus probably came from his relationship with George Bird Grinnell, who was a frequent visitor to Blackfeet country. Grinnell (1962) was an important figure in the development of Glacier National Park. As an Easterner, he made several hunting trips with Schultz as a guide into the Rocky Mountains of the Blackfoot territory. Grinnell also published some ethnographic investigations on the Blackfeet. His primary publication, Blackfoot Lodge Tales, was a

culmination of genesis accounts provided by Blackfoot people. However, Grinnell most times chose not to use the ethnographic research method in citing his works. Thus, it seems in the early 1900's that recorders like McClintock, Schultz and sometimes Grinnell were more interested in providing western Indian narratives to an audience of Easterners.

Following these early ethnographers to Blackfeet country were some individuals in the 1930's through the 1950's, who were to continue anthropologic type of case studies with the Blackfoot peoples. These individuals included John C. Ewers, Claude Schaeffer, Hugh A. Dempsey, and Alice and Thomas Kehoe, who incidentally all worked with the Museum of the Plains Indians at Browning during those years.

Description of the Study Environment

The setting in this study was in the natural non-contrived environment. The natural setting in the elders' homes was the place of inquiry. Thus, the context was within the Blackfoot element. The conditions were uncontrolled for the most part, except when the participants were interviewed using the Blackfoot protocol of "visiting". Naturally occurring phenomenon was recorded and no treatment was done other than that noted in the personal visits with the elders. Varying degrees of "discovery" occurred as the data "emerged" from the inquiries (Patton, 1990, p. 59).

Research Interview Participants

George and Molly Kicking Woman are a well-known and respected elderly couple who live on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. They are the keepers of the "Long

Time Medicine Pipe" thunder bundle. At local celebrations, George is usually introduced as the spiritual leader of the South Piegan people. George and Molly have had their medicine pipe bundle for many years. They annually open their medicine bundle in the spring at the first sound of thunder. For several years, George and Molly were virtually the only active medicine pipe ceremonialists on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. They have always been kind and helpful to anyone seeking assistance or information on the traditional ways. As elders in their 80's, they have been the teachers of many middle aged and younger people, who have sought the traditional Pikuni life. With the repatriation of four medicine bundles back to the Blackfeet, George and Molly have been busy conducting the ceremonies and teaching the new bundle holders. They have been the elder advisors for several of the societies, including the Crazy Dog Society. They are always present at any social or ceremonial doings of the Blackfeet. Before starting the interview, George had the interviewer make a smudge so he could pray. In his prayers, George asks for help for all people and for good things to happen.

The Pikuni name of Mike Swims Under is Aah-kuck-aa-mii, "That name means like stars, a lot of light. That old man gave me the name All The Stars. That's my Indian name. Old man Gambler gave me that name", said Mike. He is 85 years old, "I was born on March the fourteen in nineteen fourteen". For several years, Mike was essentially the only person in the Blackfoot tribes who was able to conduct the ookaan or medicine lodge (sun dance) ceremonies. In recent years, he has been "transferring" much of the ookaan ceremony knowledge to others in order to insure continuation. When the South Piegan (Blackfeet) repatriated two beaver medicine bundles back from museums, he was

the only person who had the knowledge to conduct the entire ceremony for the first time since the mid-1930's. Mike is considered the patriarch of ookaan and beaver bundle ceremony. He has been the teacher of many individuals in the Blackfoot Confederacy who have sought ceremonial knowledge. Mike went to school at Little Badger School in 1921 and 1922. He later attended Big Badger School in 1927. His older brother taught him to use enough of English language to attend school. "I don't speak English when I went to school, my brother he showed me a little bit," Mike said. Mike's parents were Joseph and Maggie Swims Under. His mother's Pikuni name was Sis kah kee (Mink Woman) and his father was Stu ta poose see (Swims Under). At the end of the interview, Mike's final comment, "Aah-waa-nay naa-pii-koan (That's the way you say it in white man language)."

Alan Pard is a member of the North Peigan division of the Blackfoot Nations, who has spent over thirty years participating in traditional Blackfoot ceremonies. He currently is a keeper of a beaver bundle and he also has a medicine pipe bundle. Alan is a former member of several societies including the Brave Dog and Horn societies. In addition, he has actively participated in the ookaan or sun dance ceremonies as a "weather dancer" and other aspects of the rituals. In Blackfoot country, Alan Pard is noted as a knowledgeable ceremonialist as well as a proficient singer. Alan is articulate in both the English and the Blackfoot languages. As an established rancher on the North Peigan reserve, Alan has served the Peigan people in traditional and civic capacities including a term on the tribal council. He is well known in the region as a former

basketball player and racehorse owner/trainer. Alan attended college at the University of Lethbridge, where he was a member of the college's basketball team.

Reggie Crowshoe is a middle-aged North Peigan who is acknowledged for both his traditional knowledge and contemporary wisdom. His first language is Blackfoot as learned from his father, Joe Crowshoe, who is distinguished in Blackfoot ceremony. Reggie was exposed to ceremonial life as a child since his father kept a medicine pipe bundle. He attended residential school where he obtained English language and western knowledge. After high school, he studied management at the university level. Reggie maintained that he could not relate to the Blackfoot culture after his ten-year stint in residential school. Just before he entered high school, he began participating in ceremonies after a period of abstinence while attending residential school. Reggie indicated he went through a "relearning process" after receiving transfer rights in the medicine pipe ceremonies. After many transfers, the traditional ceremony is his way of life. He presently manages the Peigan Nation Cultural Center at Brocket, Alberta, Canada, which is involved in cultural preservation. Reggie has published several studies on Blackfoot civilization. He continues research in Blackfoot studies, which involves working with government agencies and universities. He lectures on cross-cultural skills training and multi-cultural sensitivity. He has held "rider" and leader positions in the Brave Dog Society. Reggie held the Thunder Medicine Pipe for 19 years until he transferred to Alan Pard. As well as currently keeping another medicine pipe bundle, Reggie and his wife Rose have "sat holy" in four sun dances. In addition, he has helped

Mike Swims Under and his father Joe in three sun dances. His Blackfoot name is Aasi-see-me-shin.

Jerry Potts is a member of the North Peigan Tribe who is well known as a pipe maker among the Blackfoot Nations and other tribes. He has been a member of the Brave Dog and Horn societies in addition to medicine pipe and beaver bundle societies. He has assembled eight to nine sun dance lodges (the last three as an advisor). Included in his traditional credentials are the Headdress Song and singing in beaver bundle, medicine pipe and Brave Dog ceremonies. Jerry owns a Thunder Teepee and he has danced as a weather dancer in the sun dance ceremony. He has been on the tribal council for the North Peigan Nation and spent ten years as the Economic Development Coordinator for the tribe. Jerry's tribal name is Saa-quee-naa-mah-kaa or Takes The Last Gun.

Morris Little Wolf is a middle-aged man who is a member of the North Peigan division of the Blackfoot. For several years, he was one of the leaders of the Brave Dog Society. His role in the Brave Dog Society is called the "outrider" position. Morris is a weather dancer in the sun dance ceremonies. He is called upon by various tribes to conduct sweat lodge healing ceremonies. In addition, he is known as a singer throughout Blackfoot country as he is used in many of the ceremonies. Morris and his wife Betty live on the North Peigan Reserve in Brocket, Alberta, Canada. Morris works as a liaison with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Native tribes in Southern Alberta. He has been instrumental in assisting Native tribes in Canada and Western United States in utilizing Native traditional justice systems. Morris' Peigan name is Little Wolf, "Ee nuck koo pe kapi si".

Don Shade is a medicine pipe bundle owner who lives in Southern Alberta. As a member of the Blood tribe of the Blackfoot people, he has been involved with his immediate and extended family in ceremonial life since early childhood. Don is articulate in both the Blackfoot and English languages. He is the chairperson for the Blackfeet Studies Department of the Blackfeet Community College as well as instructing classes in that field. He has taught in the elementary and secondary school systems as well as previous work in educational administration. His teaching background includes university system instruction. Shade has a Master's degree with work towards a Ph.D. in educational leadership and Native education.

Beverly Hungry Wolf introduces herself as Sikskiaki. Beverly spent over fifteen years studying with the elders. She has had some college education. She currently teaches at the Cuts Wood School in Browning, which is termed a Blackfoot language immersion school. The Piegan Institute, a private entity, sponsors elementary school education using the Blackfoot language only in the classrooms. Beverly is the author of several publications such as "The Ways of My Grandmothers" which portrays her experiences in learning the traditional ways of the Blackfoot. She is pleased with her current work of developing a phonetic way of teaching the Blackfoot language. Her concern is helping young people to learn the Blackfoot ways, as she sees them drawn to some of the negative things of other cultures, such as gang activity. She feels that cultural identity is vital for the survival of the Blackfoot people. Beverly has four adult children who participate in the traditional ceremonial activities. Her parents are Ruth and the late Ed Little Bear of the Blood Reserve in Southern Alberta, Canada.

Gene Ground is a retired South Piegan, who keeps a blacktail deer dance bundle. His Pikuni name is Maa too mah tapii (First Person). He is also active in the medicine pipe bundle society and attends most ceremonies on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. He is adept at both the Blackfeet and English languages. In fact, he helps the learner by speaking the Blackfeet language and immediately interpreting what he said. Thus, he uses the languages intermittently in speaking to most people. Gene is the son of the late John and Mary Ground, who were the keepers of the medicine pipe bundle now in the possession of George G. "G.G." Kipp III. Gene worked most of his life in the food marketing business both on and off the reservation. He and his deceased wife raised two daughters and a son. His daughter Mary Ellen is married to Conrad LaFromboise; they now are the keepers of a medicine pipe bundle that was returned to the reservation through the repatriation efforts. Gene's mother, Mary Ground, lived to be over one hundred years of age. She was considered the matriarch of the Blackfeet people for many years through the 1960's and early 1970's. Many people would consult Mary Ground on traditional matters and she was the source for many writers who sought information on the Blackfeet.

Virgil Bullshoe is a man in his late forties whose primary occupation has been ranching on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. His Pikuni name is Nii see taa pii. Virgil and his sister Marilyn are the keepers of a medicine bundle called the "Police or the Seizer or Warrior Pipe". Virgil has completed most of his college undergraduate degree requirements. He currently works with Blackfeet Community College in providing agricultural information services to the Blackfeet and Salish/Kootenai Indian

reservations. Virgil comes from a large family who is known for their participation and knowledge of Blackfeet language and traditions. He is married and has two children.

Robert "Smokey" and Darnell Rides At The Door are a married couple in their mid-forties who are the keepers of a medicine pipe bundle. They were transferred this medicine pipe bundle from the elders after it was repatriated from a museum in Denver a few years ago. Smokey and Darnell have a large family. Both of these people have had successful careers. Smokey is currently a member of the local school board as well as managing several business ventures from his home. Darnell has published several booklets on Blackfeet origin stories including the well-known "Napi Stories" document. She continues to host a television talk show called "Indian Country", broadcast out of Great Falls. They recently closed their restaurant business to devote their time to the medicine bundle calling. Both are college educated with several years of experience in education, teaching and business development.

Mary Ellen and Conrad LaFromboise are a South Piegan couple in their late forties who became the keepers of a medicine pipe a few years ago. Both Conrad and Mary Ellen have spent many years as members of the medicine pipe society. They are also members of the Crazy Dog society. They obtained much traditional knowledge from Mary Ellen's grandmother, the late and well-known Blackfeet matriarch Mary Ground. Both of these participants have college degrees and experience in professional vocations. Conrad is currently the Director of the Blackfeet Higher Education Program while Mary Ellen is the Director of the Blackfeet Community Health Representative Program.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

Seventeen findings from the twelve interviews are presented here. The analysis of the data grouped analogous material into categories as it arose in examining the interviews. The emerging results are arranged only as they relate to the learning process. No attempt to manipulate the data through further categorization was made such as age, experience, family background, marital status, gender, or other criteria. Since qualitative inquiry uses descriptive information in its natural form, one respondent may disclose several common themes in a short discourse. This resulted in what may appear to be familiar data appearing under one or more of the categories, but the information under the named groupings is not specifically repeated in another classification.

The findings of the research produced the following categories: a) learning from visions and dreams; b) learning from the origin stories; c) learning from the elders; d) rite of transfer; e) experiential learning; f) developmental learning; g) holistic concept; h) critical thinking; i) environmental learning; j) protocols and taboos; k) extended family and community; l) learning through symbolism; m) effects of oppression and cultural conflict; n) spirituality; o) cultural revitalization; p) language; and q) philosophy.

Learning from Visions and Dreams

Little Wolf explains how some individuals may have a "dream" or "vision" to obtain a medicine bundle. He further reveals how the individual with the dream proceeds after the vision by consultation with an elder.

> At a certain age, they may have a dream or vision to pick up a particular bundle. It doesn't happen to everyone. You don't just say, "I'm going to get this bundle because I got the money, I can afford it." That particular bundle has to come to you in a vision or a dream, telling you to come and approach you to become a keeper of that bundle. Again, I say you don't go and get it because you have a lot of money, horses, and you want to do that. If you get it in that way, I think you're not going to get the spirit of that bundle. You'll just have the body of it. These are the things we have to put in line today. To bring back yesterday, grandpa's way. "What was your dream about?" The old guy would listen. When he figures it out, it was a good vision then to go offer the pipe for this person to be the keeper of that bundle. Then they'll make a move. It's important we talk about this today. In order to get our spiritual way of life back in line again.

Alan Pard discussed learning as it relates to the "vision quest". He communicated how this process is significant to learning as it prepares one for a "ceremonial lifestyle" through guidance by a "supernatural being". In his discussion, he referred to this type of learning as a form of meditation. Pard shared some of his dream experiences:

> We learn from our dreams. In 1974-75 I was dreaming, I went into a teepee. It was all set up for a pipe ceremony. At the seat of honor was an old man who got up, he was holding a drum. He sang this drum song [Pard sings]. He said "Here's the drum, see those people sitting there [where the drummers sit during the ceremony], that are your seat."

In this learning process, Pard related how this dream helped to build his confidence. He discussed how this "inspired" him to learn songs and singing. Alan then discussed another dream situation.

> In 1984, I went to the sun dance teepee and nobody was there, I laid down in the teepee and dreamed of the sun. Bad Eagle, an old man came and said, "Little brother go help the Brave Dog scouts to bring in the center pole, help them," [Alan then sings the center pole song]. He told me to help the Brave Dogs. A Brave Dog member then wakes me up to go and help as no elders are there.

Pard described how he then went to his uncle, who was present in the camp, in order to obtain confirmation that the song was the "center pole song." Alan discussed how these are the kinds of things that provide a "spiritual inspiration" or a motive to continue the ceremonial life.

Jerry Potts discussed how visions provide meaning that people can't understand, and how we need traditional knowledge of the elders to interpret things. Potts discussed some of the enigmas related to the spiritual life of the traditional Blackfoot. "Sis see koo mii koo ka, Thunder Teepee, it's a mystery how it stormed when we were giving a sweat with the teepee". He related how these kinds of phenomenon are like dreams that need "interpretation" by an elder. "I usually get Reggie or Alan. Don't mess with dreams, get them interpreted," said Jerry, since dream translation is a grave responsibility that has consequences if revelations are misinterpreted.

> That's where I become extremely careful. There's few people that I totally humble myself to ask for something. I don't trust a lot of people, especially for something like interpretation. Like Horn stuff, I go to some people, but not for Medicine Pipe, I go to others.

Jerry related a dream he had about a "sweat for a teepee", he was told, "I need to have you help me sing songs." He was reluctant to follow the revelation guidance until he finally became a singer, "I was given specific instructions, but it bothered me until I did it."

The importance of dreams was addressed by Virgil Bullshoe, "Dreams are telling you something." He considers dreams a part of the learning process related to participation in ceremonies as it provides a way of "remembering". Virgil indicated that a person must know "what to do about it" when one has a dream. It is imperative that the person seek out an elder without delay to help with the interpretation. However, Virgil says there is a process to dealing with dreams, "Think about it; draw conclusions; associate it with something so you can remember. Every detail means something. Our people had great minds to remember things."

Bullshoe then communicated how he was able to learn songs related to his bundle during the "transfer" ceremonies.

> Something interesting is when the grandfathers put the songs inside of me. So they're easier to learn as a natural part of sleeping during that transfer because they were listening to me, I was sleeping by the bundle, I sang all them songs in my sleep but I didn't know it. My uncle owned the Police Pipe before I did, he did not know the songs but in his dream, the forked stick taught him all the songs because nobody was there to sing them. So the next day they were wondering how they were going to; during the opening, they were worried how they were going to sing them. But they were taught to him in his dream that night. So the next day he didn't think about them, he just started singing them. That's what they say, that they're planted inside of you. It comes out when needed. When I'm learning these songs I use a little bit of that because if I think about it I can't remember it, but if I just start singing it then I sing it right. That's part of the grandfathers helping me, they won't let me go wrong. So when I really have trouble with a song, that's what I do. Then after I start it, it comes right back to me, then I can start to sing.

Dreams as a way of learning was reiterated by Bullshoe as he stated, "Things given to us in dreams, we tend to learn a lot easier than sitting down and listening to it and trying to focus on it, learn it. I don't know why that is. It's something we have to earn." Virgil acknowledged that he always goes to the elders to obtain assistance

regarding understanding a dream. Dreams sometimes are misinterpreted and elders are needed to obtain meaning. Accordingly, the elders will direct actions that need to be taken regarding the dream.

Conrad LaFromboise discussed the importance of "dreams" in the learning process of the Blackfeet.

> Another thing about learning it from the Blackfeet point of view. After sitting in that medicine lodge, when we talk about dreaming, I really feel that I need that time now to take the opportunity to dream, to think. Where I didn't do that before, but I really think that is important that we have that time for ourselves. We don't get that time in western education.

Conrad discusses his experience and need to dream and contemplate to a couple of generations past when older people used to sit in front of the stores in Browning and visit. He noted how this past generation would sit, smoke and contemplate the world around them. He feels that an important part of the learning process includes time to meditate and ponder.

> Now in working in western society, we got to do this from eight to five and do these specific things. In order to get those benefits and participate in society by having all the comforts of a home, TV, electricity, food, we have to give that up, dreaming that type of thing. I think we need that time to dream, it's important.

Conrad restated the idea of learning through dreaming or some other type of "energy" source, as he called it.

> I also think that there are certain things that are given to people. Either through what they do spiritually and through their actually sleeping and dreaming. They learn certain things. We get things given to us through dreams or things that we do. The ability to learn songs. Maybe certain plants. You learn those but you don't learn them from humans, we learn them from something. Other energy; I think there's a part, I maybe haven't experienced yet. I'm sure that there's some education to all of that; but you can't teach in a classroom about it. It's taught not so much in a group but

> probably in a one-on-one with the other elder people. Other people who had experienced the same type of dream.

"The whole point is what we learn from our dreams," states Conrad.

The idea of learning from dreams was broached by Darnell Rides At The Door. She also related the concept of intuition being related to actions.

> Some learn people learn in their dreams. This whole subject deals with the spiritual realm. A divine entity, our conscience and sub-conscience; they dictate our actions. That's all going to stem around that intuition. Sometimes you have that gut feeling. Sometimes you're blessed with certain things through dreams and it dictates what your action will be, an experience or to help somebody out. Even attending a ceremony might be a dream.

Robert "Smokey" Rides At The Door talked about the importance of dreams in obtaining divine gifts to be used in ceremony. He noted how different races of people throughout the ages have received information through this divine process.

> When the medicine pipe came down from the creator, the person that received it received the instructions. Following that, his dreams continued to add to it, the songs. That gift that was given to them, they could hear a song and the next morning they could get up and sing it. They had to sing it because they had to remember it. If they didn't remember it, it was gone. In those stories, they say the creator only gave you one chance. You not only had to have the gift to receive that, but you had to have the ability to grasp that song. Then repeat it once you're awake on this side and continue to pass it on down.

Some of the spiritual aspects of learning were reviewed in the interview with Don Shade. Don is the keeper of the Medicine Horse Bundle. The phenomenon of people experiencing revelation was imparted in the narration. Special attention was given to a seemingly inherent ability of children to experience visions.

> With a lot of this learning there's been a lot of personal experiences. It's like you encounter situations where you do know these things are alive.

> Children, we've always believed, were a special gift from God, the Creator. Because they are so pure and innocent when they're young, they're privy to a lot of things; they see things that we as adults can't see. You go to these ceremonies and they'll sit there and say, "Did you see that." Like there has been dozens of times we've opened the bundle we've had small kids say "Did you see the horse that is there?" or "We saw the horse!" You're sitting right there beside them and you say, "No."
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> I think that's part of this learning process. Because these things are so powerful they're [children] going to be transmitting [information]. Maybe that's part of the creator's way of starting this learning process. They believe it's not just objects. They have a spirit in them. It's like in western ways, they have spiritual episodes. People have had visions like the Blessed Mother or whatever. Those kinds of miracles, these are the same types of things that happen to us. But with us, it is quite common. Or even to seek visions, you go on a quest and have a spirit talk to you and actually feel that presence. Going back to this learning, you know it's there, but you don't want to question these things.

Dreams and visions are seen as guiding forces in the ceremonial life of the Blackfoot, according to Beverly Hungry Wolf. Another way of obtaining "power" is by making a "vow" to become a keeper of a medicine bundle. Both of these ways involve self-sacrifice, both in a physical and material sense.

> Dreams are your spiritual helpers. They are pushing you to this way of life. You can have a direct vision. Usually people don't listen to the first dream. They'll wait for several more dreams for clarifications of the dream. One of the holy women up in Canada, she dreamt her dream four times before she made a move on it and then she became a holy woman. Another way you can do it is to make a vow to do it. Because you may have hardships in your family, somebody is sick or you want to gain something. So you give up your earthly belongings to get this spiritual power is basically what our religion is about. Some people say you pay for your religion. What you're doing is sacrificing your earthly belongings to get this spiritual help. In former times some people would come home with a bundle and nothing else. They'll have to get a ride, hitch a ride with somebody to take them home. When they have these transfers they give everything up including their teepee, everything in their teepee. They come home with just the holy article. That's how much they wanted the spiritual blessing.

In his narration, George Kicking Woman told a story about an elder whom he assisted in a vision quest venture. Apparently, George was a very young man when this event happened.

> A lot of these old people, the way they get dreams. They go up there alone. Like this old Charlie Iron Breast, I take him way up to Cooper Lake in a wagon. One day he said, "Give me a handful of sage, them big leaves," so I went right out there and I got some sage. I gave it to him. He said, "Me put on my shoes and we'll go." It was right about in the afternoon. I hand them to him and he took them and took his moccasins off. He put the sage, for socks, in his moccasins. He put them on. "What are you going to do? You're supposed to act pitiful towards the Creator." Some shadow, [spirit], they call them the old people, shadow, people that they pray to. They're the ones that making all that stuff; they're miracle people. If you listen you're going to learn all these songs.
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> That time Charlie Iron Breast, I took him up to Cooper Lake in a wagon. Way up there on the lake; where Badger, right down here. I tie them horses. I took the halter rope and just wrap them on one of them little trees. He got off and I got off. He took his blanket and he took his pillow. A lot of matches and tobacco and his pipe. We start to walk up to that place. It ain't very high. It's one of that shale, shale rocks. On top it's kind of flat like. He says, "Get some juniper." There's quite a few there, long ones, about five, ten of them. I just lay them on there. He laid his blanket and pillow and he'll sit in there. "What else?" I said. He said, "I'll smoke with you, before you go down." Then he pass a little pipe, we smoking. When we were smoking, I was thinking. "This old man, gee, he's brave. He's got no protection. Everybody else, he can't do that." It's supposed to act pity.
>
> That's the only way you'll get your dream. But if you go up there now, the way they go up there, civilian clothes and all that they don't do that. Anyway, I took Charlie up there. We were both smoking. I got through, I hand a little pipe. He smoke quite a bit, he smokes a lot that old man. Geez, it's a big ol' smoke coming and they give to me and I smoke. Oki, they empty him. He put him in his hand. There's a rag he put on top. He had a little water in a bottle to drink. He damp that and he put his ashes in that, he said, "I might burn something." So he put it out and put it on the side. So he can see it might start up again. I was thinking kinda didn't believe him, but started to get dusk and dark. He said, "You can go down any time now. Me fix my bed." He put that blanket and his pillow and he laid. He sat there and he said, "I'm going to smoke again." "I'll right, I'm

going to start [George]." He said, "Come after me early, about five o'clock." He didn't have no watch. "But down there, don't take the harness off, just take the bridle off and take them in the barn and tie them up and put hay in. So you just put bridle and lead them out, hook them up and come up, come after me."

He lives up at Little Badger, it's quite a way up there. It must be about eight, nine miles up there. So I told Charlie, "Well I'm going to leave." I kinda didn't believe him, he kept looking. So I said, "I'm going to start." I got up and start and walk down. I stopped looked back at him. He still on his pipe, smoking. I got to the wagon, I could barely see. I took my time, give him time, he might change his mind, I was thinking to my self. He didn't have no protection. He really believe he's really get a dream, vision. He really believe it. I think that's the one he depend on.

He says on the way down, "I heard some, (he never said somebody gave me power) I heard lot of things down here. Somebody pounding on like a wagon box like that. A lot of people up that way. Those are spirit people. People that been camping up there cutting that teepee poles, rails. They used to camp right down the bottom there. Those are their shadows. People still around there." Those are the one's he hear up there. He said, "That's all I hear, sometimes right down here I hear something in there. I just kept praying. I tell him go away. I come up here to visit you folks. So you guys just go away, don't bother us. I was telling him, I said."

So when I got to the wagon, I untied the halter ropes and I turn around. I stop, and look up there again, he still sitting there, you could hardly see him. I thought, well I think he's going to stay. There's nobody in that house of Cooper used to live by the lake. So I went down. This old team they're smart. There's no road, but there's a road down there I join. There's a straight road, I missed it but those horses, they find their way. Little Badger up that way. I come up and I got to the Iron Breast ranch. I put the horses in there. I gave them hay. I went in, I told Molly, I had to go up real early. Cause that old man must be up.

Geez, I got up there early. He was up there smoking. I got up, I put on the harness, bridles and everything. I hitch them up and started out. I went up on a high lope, way up there, it's quite a ways up there. I got up there, there's just one gate. I opened up that gate and left it open. Now I'm going to go through. Way up there, I went up in them hills, steep. I have to go over same place where I tie them horses. I tied them and I walked up. I told him, "You got up. You must have got up pretty early." "Ya," he said, "birds just start singing, way down there, all over. That . . . is still up, he must have got up real early that old man. That's that way, I was smoking. I

was still sitting there. Something up here but he can't see very good." He could hear this, like wind like it goes through. "Must be an owl or must be eagle or something," he said. "Could hear its wings like that."

He never did tell me anybody gave him his power; this person, bird or whatever it is. That vision, he sleep, they gave it to him. I was thinking, might be eagle or owl or hawk or something. He said, "I could hear their wing when they come through. They big birds." He never did tell me. "All right, lets go." Then there was that walk down, pretty slow. We got to the wagon and he got on. We turn around, it was really going down. I was going to go to town that morning. We stopped by his house. A gentle team, I just let them lines go, I just wrap them around that wheel. I helped him out. He walked in the house. I walked out by the barn and put the wagon in.

The same thing, we go up again this evening. We went up there again. He never took lunch or eats at his house and we go up the next morning when we get home then he eats. He don't take lunch up there. He never take anything else, tobacco and he already left his tobacco and pipe and everything, he left them up there where he was going to sleep. I thought again, if was somebody else, you'd take everything. Somebody around there might steal my things. But nobody was around. His things were still there. That's another thing is trust. He said, "I was praying. I'm going to leave my pipe. I going to leave my pouch, my blanket. I don't care about my blanket, somebody can take them if anybody should come. But my little pipe, that would be the one I would miss, if anybody take them." He said, "I'm going to go down and I'm going to be thinking about you folks. I might call you folks later on."

Another thing, Charlie, he never told me. He said, "I'll see you folks again. You folks are in my prayers cause I pray and make smudge everyday." He never did tell me, old Charlie, if there's anybody come. He hear some people down there pounding and every thing like that. That's the only thing and those things flying overhead. Those might be the things that gave him his power.

Right where this hospital, where all them people are, he died right in that place. He was still sitting up, we was up there. He was sitting and laid down. That was it. He had easy death, that old man, old Iron Breast. Charley Iron Breast.

George reveals that there is a spiritual element involved in the conduct of the ceremony. With the spiritual help, the conduct of the ceremony becomes somewhat of an

internalized process; hence the actions are naturalistic for the ceremonialist. He discusses his first bundle openings after the learning period under the tutelage of former bundle holders.

> The first one I kind got lost in there. The old man was sitting there and he correct me. I would just start. Every opening, I kept thinking, "Let's see where do you go from here?" then it would come to me. I was telling Molly somebody is around, I always feel it. He's watching us there and there. This miracle man, I don't know what it is. He's not from up there, but he's handed down from up there. But he's not here, you can't see him. These people must be around and listening. They must have saw me here and said, "That boy, that young man, he really try and learn. Let's help him out. Let's give him these songs. Just give it to him and he'll learn them. He wants to learn these songs." From there, twice I tried it. The third time got at my head and I just start these songs, just the way they are today. I think there's somebody gave them to help me. Somebody send their spirit or somebody belong to that pipe. You never see them. You never hear them speak to you, but they around there with the pipe. They the ones took pity on me and help me out. I just start right off, I never had no trouble.

Learning from the Origin Stories

Pard is adamant that the origin and creation stories are elemental to the process of learning in Blackfoot ceremonies. Without knowledge of the stories behind the rituals one will be lost in understanding the ways of the Blackfoot. However, he notes that the learning process is not like memorization where one must be able to regurgitate information. Things like the Beaver origin story and the genesis of Scar Face are retold within the ceremonies. Thus, the philosophy, protocol and language are imperative to the process of learning in Blackfoot ceremony.

"The beaver bundle has seven hundred songs. It's all in chronological order as things were told in the past." [Pard sang a beaver song]. Accordingly, Pard related that

apprentice learners were sometimes asked to repeat an origin narrative after it was told to them. The repetition would continue until the learner could repeat the story word for word. "Ceremonies are a reenactment of the origin and creation stories," said Alan Pard. "The sweat songs, offering songs are all in different sets. Like in the medicine pipe ceremony, there are seven sets of seven songs which equal forty-nine." Alan then sang some of the songs and dramatized the hand gestures used in the ceremony. "That's how you recall the sweat songs. There are reference points to the sets. If you know the story, the origin, then that's how it is learned," commented Pard.

Mike Swims Under indicated the beaver story and the sun lodge star story are related to the ceremonies. He also noted that the Scar Face story is a part of the medicine lodge. Mike divulged that Scar Face's sister was the first to put up the medicine lodge.

Alan Pard talked about his being invited to lecture before a group of people at Calgary about the Peigan people. He said, "I want to tell them about how we've always been in this territory and how the land bridge theory is a bunch of bull . . . If you look at the animals they all have their territory, the marmot has his place on the hill and gopher down below." He went on to relate that "We were not nomads, we've always been in this place." Alan then discussed how the origin stories validate that the Blackfoot peoples have always been in the area below the North Saskatchewan River, southern Alberta and most of the State of Montana. As he waved his hand toward the west he stated, "Do you know what we call these mountains, they're called puni'kah-tsis or teepee liner." He conveyed that the story of Napi and Kootenai spirit substantiates, through oral history, the territories of the Blackfoot and the Kootenai on each side of the Rocky Mountains.

Napi and the Kootenai Spirit played the hoop and arrow game and Napi won this side of the mountains."

The discussion with Alan included learning from his grandmother when he was a young child. He gave an example of how she would make the worms dance in the web-like enclosure on a berry bush by clapping her hands and singing a song "kom mo yok sti." He related how she would tell the Napi stories like the "nii poo mah kii" (chick-a-dees) where they would shout "muts saa pi poh moh kii" and their eyes would travel out of their head to stick on a tree. He narrated how "Napi found it wonderful" and said, "show me, brothers," but the birds told him he couldn't do it more then four times. But Napi does it five times and loses his eyesight. Alan related how this type of learning taught things such as morals and the consequences of not listening to advice. "This is preliminary knowledge to start learning the origin and creation stories," was the summary statement to this type of learning as related by Pard. As a reference to this discussion, Pard related that his grandmother was eighty-five years old at this time and still rode horseback as well as chopping her own wood. He noted that his great-grandfather was Brings Down The Sun and his grandfather was Leans Over Butchering.

"There is a difference between heritage and culture," comments Pard. Ceremonies have to do with the ontology of the people while other things are merely heritage. "Re-enact the ceremony and I'll hear your prayers," is the essence of ceremony as it was given to the people through their genesis and way of knowing. "It's like ceremonial face painting. We're one of the few tribes in North America that continue doing this. Painting

is done so the Creator could recognize you. With the thunder symbol the Creator said, 'These are people I'm going to help'."

Learning through cosmology is another aspect of knowledge as discussed by Pard. He described his grandmother sharing anecdotes while observing the stars at night. Yet, he expresses concern regarding Blackfoot learners obtaining misinformation such as, "Like mother earth concept doesn't exist in Blackfoot thought. Mother is the mom in the beaver bundle and the sun dance." Pard recounted an overview of the Blackfoot cosmology, "Sun is the twin of Napi. Napi decided to come down to the earth. Kakato'siiksi [stars] like Morning Star is called aapisowoohwats. Sspomitapiix are the sky people, saakoommiitapiix are the earth spirits and saaweetapiix are the water spirits." He then conveyed information regarding the connection of the star oral tradition to such things as the sun dance. Alan told how the hide that is cut to tie the poles on the sun dance lodge is related to the story of the Woman Who Married A Star returning to earth from the sky by way of a strip of cut hide. He talked about the North Star representing Star Boy in the star genesis and how the Woman Who Married a Star dug out a turnip in the sky world and was able to see the earth wherein she returned.

According to Bullshoe, learning the "disciplines" that go with the medicine bundle are "easy" for his immediate family as it has been a "way of life" for his extended family.

> When we open the bundle, I always wondered why we go through all those hand motions. They all go back to the stories of our past like Napi stories, Katoyis [Blood Clot], Morning Star, all them stories. All these stories; they were preparing you for this. I thought they were childhood stories, but they were true. But I didn't know that till I went there [ceremony]. These stories are called folklore, but that is where all those

> stories came from and the significance, why they were given to us. The significance of those stories related to journeys that teach us things like the sweat and how to take care of sickness. When you open a bundle each song deals with a story. From the time you start the ceremony with a smudge, three smudge songs. Each has story, where you have to grab it [medicine bundle], bring it down; songs go with it all the way down. Motions are dealing with the water, or carrying it where the spirit is giving it to us, to go and put it on what's called the bed. Each animal, or each spirit guide within that opening, like the kyiyo [bear] there are songs with specific reasons. They are the powers to open that bundle; they are called opening songs. Each bundle is different, like the Beaver Bundle, how Scabby Round Robe entered the beaver house. How he was taught that winter. All of those songs are referred to opening the beaver bundle.

Bullshoe discussed how he was able to synthesize the things he was learning in the ceremonies because of the knowledge he was given as a child. He was able to relate the childhood "bedtime stories" to the ceremonial process.

> Because I was taught these very young as bedtime stories, I could put it together. Then I could remember. So now I know where the stories come from. It all rotates toward that; everything they tell you when you're small are getting you ready for the future on how you're going to live.

Reggie Crowshoe believes that Blackfoot oral tradition and learning process is "documented" through ceremony. "So this is where Mike [Swims Under] would say I don't know too much about the white man process of collecting and documentation, but on the Indian side, I know because I know the process," stated Reggie as a way of demonstrating his point.

> At the beginning of time a man went out and he got the creation story of Thunder Medicine Pipe, the Thunder, going up to that mountain and finding the woman and all that. When he came home, before he came into camp, he sat there and he said, "Don't let anybody touch me, but build a sweat for me before I come into camp." So they build a sweat, purified him, he came in. He said, "I'm going to tell you a story. From this mystical thing that happened to me, with Thunder, and taking my wife, and me going back to get her, now that we're back, he gave me this Thunder Medicine Pipe ceremony." The object he got was the Thunder Medicine

> Pipe. And the way he documented was through ceremony. He sang the smudge song, then he sang every song and went through the ceremony of Thunder Medicine Pipe. At the end, he documented the Thunder Pipe as Indian culture material and the ceremony was the documentation.

Reggie's idea of ceremony being the documentation of the origin stories is confirmed by the fact that they are still being done the same as centuries ago. In keeping with the traditional way of teaching, Molly Kicking Woman, the elder lady spiritual leader of the Blackfeet, provided a narration of two genesis accounts. The first is an account of The Woman Who Married A Star and the second is the Scar Face Origin Story. The first narration is about how the Pikuni obtained the medicine pipe and the second is related to the sweat lodge and medicine lodge ceremonies.

> What I heard about the pipes, how they got them from the sun and the moon, Napi Naatosi, that's the next world. That where all that come from. I guess they had a big camp, that's what the old ladies said. I really listened to them good. Big camp, two young girls, I guess they were outside sitting there, a lot of people. They laid down. One said, "Oh look at the bright star." You know how stars are. "I wish I could marry that guy, that man". This other girl said the same thing. So they kind of wandered around and when they were going to go home and sleep, this young man come to this girl, two of them. This man told them, "You asked for it, that star, that's me." He was a young man. "I come after you". So the other one, they took them up. They don't know how they get them up there. So they just stayed there. One woman, one young girl, she had a baby by this guy. And the man told all those women to pick, ah, I don't know, they call them turnips, I don't know what they are.
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> This young lady told her husband, "This young man, I'm going with them." And the other girl, they together all the time. So that young man told his wife, the young woman, "Don't dig, you go with them but don't dig. There's a big turnip, don't dig it." So the young women, they went to this; I don't know what they were. And here I guess they come to this big turnip and she told here friend, "My husband told me not to dig that." I guess they kind argued, her friend said, "What for he told you to not dig this. We should dig it and see what it is, what's gonna happen." So they start digging. They finally pulled it out; air just come up when they dig it; they were looking down it's quite a long time. They were looking down.

> They seen this world. And oh, I guess they felt bad. The two young women were crying. "We should go back, we should go back where we come from." They kinda don't like this place, this different world. So they went home. The husband said, "I know that you dig that turnip." I guess those two young women were crying. So I guess he told them, "You folks can go; I'll get some way to get you folks back down. We're going to kill a bunch of antelope or deer or elk. We're going to cut that hide and tie it. You can come down on it."
>
> So I guess they were kinda killing things like that in this trip. So when they're going down, they gave them this pipe from up there. I don't know how big it is, but they told them, "You folks can go down with this." I guess they wrapped them with that pipe and made a big long rope. They made a rope out of these hides. I guess they were coming down right where their own people camped. So they come down. They said, "We'll stay this time."
>
> This crazy boy, he was playing outside, "There's something coming down." These people, they said, "Oh, he's crazy!" They kept getting closer. He run and told those old people, "Come out and look at that, there's something coming." All the people, I guess they stand outside, looking. "Yeah, that boy is right, there's something coming down. We'll watch for it when it gets closer. Oh, it's them two girls, they come back down." When they got down, that one girl was Star's wife, she told them, "They give us this pipe".
>
> That's where it come from. That's what the old people told us. And that one gave it to his dad. Told him the songs, there's lot of songs. It's really something to talk about.

According to Crowshoe, the "cultural materials" brought from the supernatural world to the natural world by the Blackfoot people in the metaphysical genesis narratives "document" the origin stories. These cultural materials validate "sacred articles" while the ceremony substantiates the genesis account. Reggie explained the Blackfoot doctrine:

> The story about the Woman That Married A Star and went to the star world, came back from Creator's world, and she came back with the sun dance headdress bundle. Well, how are we going to document that story, because that's defining our environment and our worldview? That's how we define our worldview and the environment we live in. But this woman came back after marrying, brought back the sun dance bundle. Now,

> before she came, what did she do, she showed people ceremony. Through ceremony her experience of how she brought cultural material, the sun dance headdress, that was the woman's son. She documented so good that today we still have the sun dance.

Reggie used the Scar Face origin story to demonstrate again the hypothesis of ceremonies substantiating the origin narratives. Before discussing Crowshoe's point of view, the story of Scar Face can be heard in the words of Molly Kicking Woman.

> The man they call Scar Face. This man had a big scar on his face. Guess he went over and seen this woman. "I come to ask you if you would marry me?" That woman told him, "I can marry you, but you have to get rid of that scar you got on your face." Oh, I guess he took it bad.
>
> He went back to his camp and told them, "That's what that woman told me, this scar on my face, big scar." He said, "I'm going to sleep. I'm going to go to this different place, this mountains, trees; oh, beautiful. I'm going to go to the mountains to sleep." That's what the old man told him. Scar Face, that's his name. He just left. Went to the northern people; went to sleep. He told them, "Reason why I come to sleep; my face. Is there any way you folks can help me to get rid of this scar on my face?"
>
> He must have went to sleep and this one person told him, "The only one's going to help you is the sun." The sun that was in the night, Napi Naatosi. "How I'm going to get up there?" "You'll get up there, just pray to that sun and he'll bring you up there." So he prayed and prayed.
>
> Okay, these people was wondering. He went [to] Naatosi, that's the sun goes through the night; that's the one. Got up there and Naatosi had a son, and he said, "Oh, you brought another friend. Your other friend got killed by these big geese." I guess they're really big. So his friend told him, "I'm going to help my friend if they attack him again, like my other friend; they killed my other friend. I'm going come up and get these, (I don't know what kind of sticks they had). I'm going to kill them." So I guess they go out and these geese they chase them and I guess he must have told his friend, "Just hit them with that stick and kill them." So they killed all those geese that were chasing them.
>
> And he told [sun], "My son, why did you come up? What did you come for, for help? Or did you come to stay?" I guess he told him the story, "I wanted to get married. I asked that woman to marry me and that women told me when your scar goes away, I'll marry you. So Naatosi, the sun,

> told his boy, "Go and pick willows and so we can make a sweat. Pick bunch of them. We going to make four sweats and doctor your friend." So these two young men picked willows. "Now you folks make these sweats, four of them; set them up. You finish them and you folks get bunch of rocks". Young men really working, getting willows; putting that sweat up. And that one winter, they was doctoring that boy. The first one, the second one; he told him, "You folks both sit here, my friend is going to doctor you". The second one had, he told his son, "Is that scar going away?" I guess his son told him, "A little bit." Come in the third one. Told his son, "How's your friend's scar, is it going?" "Yeah, it's going away," he told his dad. Okay, well last one; no more Scar Face.
>
> "I'm going to go, I'm going to go back down. That woman, you know her, you go and tell her I'm coming back". Yeah, I guess that Sun told him, "You go to her, talk to her, if she says yeah; give it to me, we'll take him up here. So that Scar face went to the woman and I guess he told her, "I was the man that asked you to marry him, and you didn't. You said I had a Scar Face." That woman was just looking at him, "Yeah, I'll marry you now, you don't have no scar on your face."

Reggie Crowshoe continued his discussion on ceremony as the certification of the genesis narratives. He talked about how the above Scar Face story is validated by ceremony.

> Scar Face when on his journey. When he want to marry that girl and she was turning everybody down. He went on his journey where mysterious things happened to him before he got to Creator's lodge. Creator through his sweat, fixed the scar and released the girl so that he can marry and return back. When he came back, he had to document his journey. He came back with the man's side of the sun dance. The crow tail feather, the sun dance necklace and bracelet, the lizard that's drawn on the man when he's painted black. He came back with all that. He came back with cultural material and he came with the man's side, origin side of the sun dance. What did he do in camp? He put it in a ceremony, it was part of the sun dance and today we still know it.
>
> All of a sudden you take all these stories and the common factor that keeps coming out is the ceremony was the documentation. You even look at the Beaver Bundle. The woman that was taken by the beavers into the water, or the two brothers that went into the beaver hut, when they came back, they came back with that cultural material. But what did they do to document where they came from? They put it in a ceremony.

According to Mary Ellen LaFromboise the oral tradition has a form of "documenting" which is exemplified through the "storytelling" method of oration.

> Everything is like a story describing everything that's going on; all of the big picture related to one incident. When you look at all the information that people exchange back and forth and when you look at how that oral tradition, if you want to call it that, or that way of learning. When you heard a story told to you or whatever, then you were more likely to pass it on, almost in the same version that you got it. So it was accurate, it was correct, and I think there were some people that were probably better at that than others.

Learning from the Elders

Mike Swims Under said he acquired knowledge of ceremonies from his father and mother. When asked how he is able to know all the songs, movements and parts of the ceremonies like the Beaver Bundle he stated, "I listen!" He indicates that his mother put up two medicine lodges. He also stated that his parents had a beaver bundle.

"Elders talk in parables. Sometimes, it took fifteen years to learn, before it made sense. You very seldom get the straight goods. I'm not breaching protocol by telling you this," stated Alan Pard as he conversed regarding his recent decision to begin teaching people in a straightforward manner. He noted how a lady named Mrs. Many Guns:

> Told me the real thing, she told me how prayers are the most powerful. After fifteen to twenty years some of the things she told me made sense. It's like martial arts, just because you learn "kung fu" it doesn't make you more powerful. If your head is not in it, if you don't learn it, you'll never be there.

"When you talk to these old people they always take the long way around," stated Smokey Rides At The Door about elders responding to questions. Patience is needed

since they may not provide the answer until some later time. However, he indicated they may talk on the periphery of the question in other sessions. The individual receives so much information related to the question, related Smokey, that the original inquiry becomes irrelevant.

Mike Swims Under is a resource person utilized by Smokey and Darnell. Smokey narrated his interaction with Mike, which demonstrates the ways of the elders:

> It's really unique because I picked that up from Mike Swims Under. I asked him some questions. When he responded, it really had nothing to do with my question. I thought, "Did he hear me?" You can sit by him for an hour and he won't say a thing.

After visiting with Mike and asking questions Smokey found that Mike would later tell someone, "That guy asked me so many questions, but he didn't give me time to answer". Smokey learned that Mike will respond within his own time period. Apparently Mike may sit for an hour or more and not speak at all.

> We go out and visit Mike once in a while. We'll say, "Mike we had this dream. What does it mean?" He'll sit there; you know his mind is moving. What he'll do is he will purposely have you answer your own question. Then you go back there again and you sit with him, he remembers your question from two weeks ago. He'll begin a series of stories that if you listen close enough, that's what you asked two weeks ago.

Bullshoe discussed how his aunt, Mae Boss Ribs, acts as his teacher in the ceremonial learning process.

> The ceremonial part, the little things you have to do during the ceremony, the opening. That's very hard. The person that guides me through all that is my holy mother. She's the one that's teaching me, correcting me. And what she taught me I didn't have a chance to prepare to be bundle holder, keeper. I kinda got put into it overnight.

Apparently Virgil was selected by the elders to become a "keeper" of this medicine bundle. "I didn't want to be or make a vow to become a bundle keeper like most people did. It kinda happened overnight." He had discussed the possibility of becoming a bundle holder with his wife when the next night information was given to him that he was selected as a bundle keeper. However, Bullshoe related, "It was in a dream two years before that it was coming, but I didn't know it. What it was that a buffalo cow came up and handed me a white calf saying "Here take it." That was the bundle coming." Virgil described the ceremonial context:

> My holy mother is really strict. Once I go in and sit down for a ceremony, I'm not supposed to leave. I'm supposed to be right there for my people until it's closed again, so I never leave, I just sit there. I can't go out and go to the bathroom. A lot of them didn't know that. When I'm in doubt of something, she'll always tell me, "If it doesn't help the people in any way, if it's going to harm them, then it's not meant."

George Kicking Woman discussed his learning experience as a very young boy. His grandmother would take him to ceremonies and encourage him to learn the songs and the ways of the rituals. (George is more comfortable in the Blackfoot language. In using English the gender of he/she is used interchangeably).

> I carry his bowl and dishes when they feed out they put them in a sack. "My boy, there they are," he says, "you carry them. My boy, you listen to these songs that the old people sing. Some day you might learn them, you might help the other people." She knows it that old lady. She knows something's going to happen, "Everybody be gone, you be living, you bring these songs and show the people how these things go from the beginning that way." I sit there and listen to the old people. But still, I was a little bit young yet. Some of those songs I didn't get. I got most of them, what I sing. I really tried. My grandma told me; "Listen, the only way to learn is to listen." I sit there and listen and watch the old people. She said "Some day you'll be directing people like that." Today it is happening.

The grandfather of George was also a teacher. By living with his grandparents as a very young boy George was able to learn songs. His grandfather was a ceremonialist who would sing songs around the home, which provided George the opportunity to learn.

> So these ookaan [medicine lodge or sun dance], I know the songs, the holy smoke they sing them. My grandpa he used to sing them. He knows, he used to sit up there. I sleep with my old grandpa, before you go to bed he sing them songs. I was pretty small. I know them, but I don't know where they belong. Swims Under, he knows. Some of them he sings. But there's some songs I heard at that time, I never heard them any more. I think Mike sings them there. He don't sing them anymore, they're too old, a long ways. Some of these songs, I don't think you ever heard them any more, even me or Swims Under. Maybe some of them we skip, we didn't hear them. But we got most of them, that's the main thing. I always tell Mike, he knows quite a bit. He was raised with his mother and dad. They were holy people.

Beverly Hungry Wolf said that she was about eighteen years old when she began seeking information from her mother about the traditional Blackfoot ways. She related that her mother provided general information such as "bundles could be stolen." Although Beverly's mother knew ceremonies related to medicine bundles, she could only convey limited information, due too not being involved in the "rite of transfer." "She wasn't free to tell me all the information, but she was around her grandparents Heavy Head and in-laws Eagle Plume. Both Heavy Head and Eagle Plume were the last great religious leaders of the Blood reserve."

"I'm going to steal one of those moo toh kiks saa mis [Horn society bundle]," was the statement made by Beverly to her mother in those early years. Beverly found that she needed a partner to obtain a medicine bundle, "I started to see the balance between the men and the women. But there were not any Indian boys around. I had made friends with

Adolph. He was going to take a medicine pipe." Adolph asked Beverly to participate as his partner in obtaining a medicine pipe bundle.

> I went for it. The first bundle we were going to take is the bundle that we have now. But something fell through at that time, about 1970. We had a teacher about that time named Willy Scraping White. One of the things Willy Scraping White really stressed to us about when you pick a teacher. We went to him for information. He used to walk to town. Pretty soon he knew the time I came on my way to town and I'd stop and pick him up and give him a ride to town. This old man was the first that I went to, because he was kind of my friend. He said, "The first thing I'm going to tell you is, if you're going to get involved in these holy ways; your husband is a white man; if he came to fool around with our religion, remember you have children. You have a family. If he came to fool around just tell him to go. But if he came to really live by our ways, he'll live a good life."

Beverly addressed the issue of the instructor role in the ceremonial learning process. She also noted that the recital learning environment must be peaceful.

> When you pick a teacher you pick one teacher and you stick with that teacher, because if you go around picking different teachers to sing for you at these ceremonies you'll never learn these songs. You pick one person and you stick with them and that way you'll learn. The other thing he told us you go somewhere quiet, so you'll learn the ceremonies.

In the learning process for Beverly and Adolph, the teachers are called the "grandparents", as they are former bundle holders who have been through at least two transfers of their initial bundle. These teachers now become "elders" who may continue to participate in the advising and teaching role.

Shade supports the idea of a hierarchy of status before one becomes an instructor in medicine bundle learning. He sees the position as being compared to that of becoming a grandparent to the learner since they are twice removed after transferring their medicine bundle.

> Once you transfer your bundle, you have the right to be the teacher. You can't be the teacher while you still have that, you don't have that right. Some people kind of get that to mean this is an old traditional philosophy. So, they say, until you transfer it, then can you begin to teach, because it took you that many years to learn the right information. Once you transfer you have the right to open bundles.
>
> In fact, you wait until even another transfer before you actually get that involved. When you're a member and you transfer or give it away; once you give it away you become almost like a silent person in active participation. It gives you time to synthesize information and to start really doing some soul searching. It's not until the second transfer from when you got it. In other words, its been transferred twice since you had it, then you would become an advisor. Because now you had the bundle and you've had another four years for this information to soak in. Now you reached another stage of maturity. You can begin to tell people; then you have the authority to say this is how you should do it.
>
> After another transfer then you start to really get involved in the hierarchy. Then you can become involved in the decision-making philosophy. You become an advisor to the new group that are working with the transfer.

According to Beverly Hungry Wolf, the instructional process involved learning the taboos and ways of the instructor. The interaction of the teacher and learner is based on protocol specific to the individual elder who may have "spiritual powers" which demands further acknowledgement. A master/pupil approach is used between the elder and the bundle holder couple in learning the specifics of bundle proprietorship. Gender specific teaching is used by a different elder interacting with each member of the couple. The elder male teachers seem to be connected by some type of partnership. Once again, Beverly stressed the importance of using only one teacher:

> We were instructed on how to care for the bundle. We were told all the things that went with it, what the different animals meant. How we were supposed to greet people that came into our home. How we were supposed to take care of things. Our main teacher, Willy Scraping White, we'd go get him once a week and bring him to our home. This old man had spiritual powers. When he eats, nobody can get up and leave the room.

> Everything had to be put on the table that can possibly be imagined that might be needed for that meal. Once everybody sat down, nobody got up from the table until this old man finished his food. This was the way that I was taught to take care of him because of his special powers.
>
> When he finished eating then we'd go make incense and he'd ask us, "How many do you want me to sing; one or two, two or four?" We would tell him. If we said one, he would start singing and he would sing the first seven songs. If we said two, he would sing fourteen songs for us. Any time within that time he could tell us, "OK how much have I sang?" If you made a mistake, he would just quit singing, right there.
>
> This old man [Scraping White] and Paul Weasel Head was his partner. Paul Weasel Head was the one that instructed me on the daily care of the bundle and making incense in the morning, in the evening, or when people came to visit. He is the one that told me, "This is how you do things on the female side." That old man was instructing Adolph for the male side; the songs that he would sing. He really encouraged Adolph to record them. Every time we were going to take the tape and listen to him sing, that we should make incense. It would be just like he was there. He instructed Adolph to go somewhere quiet so that he could learn the songs for the ceremonies and only use his songs because he really encouraged us take one person. We followed him, what he said was true, Adolph really knows the songs and ceremony well because he studied with one person. The different people that I've seen go from one person to another, they don't learn the ceremonies.

In the discussion, Beverly Hungry Wolf was resolved that the role of the teacher is imperative to the quality of learning. She used the patriarch of the Blackfoot ceremony, Mike Swims Under, as an example of excellence in teaching and learning.

> A transfer is a spiritual rebirth. Your holy parents are the one's who shape you for that holy life. Whoever you choose as your elder, he's the one that's responsible for making sure that you know the ceremonies. If you have a good teacher you'll really learn the ceremony. If your teacher's not good then you'll have problems. Like Mike, he told me about his mother, his mother would tell him "OK we're going to sing," even after his father was gone. His mother would sing the sun dance songs and the beaver bundle songs. His mother told him, "You better try hard to learn all these songs because in the future you'll be putting up sun dances for the people and you'll be running beaver bundle. On top of that when you go to nighttime ceremony and you don't know your songs, you'll always be

> paying somebody to sing for you folks. It's better to learn your songs." The magnificent thing about Mike is that he is a genius when it comes to music. It's a special gift. I don't know if it's because of who his parents were; his parents were sun dance and beaver bundle people. Those were the things that his parents were involved in. So they really learned the ceremony. His mother would sing for him over and over again. That's how he learned the songs.

The LaFromboise couple discussed their relationship with Mary Ground, the late matriarch elder, as it relates to the learning process. Conrad conveyed his experience in learning from the elder Blackfoot lady:

> A lot of times it just wasn't one story, but a series of stories. You could sit there and listen to her she would get after something, but it wasn't like she just told you that, but she told you little bit here, a little bit more with something else. As she would visit with you she told you some things around that, then she got into the point where she wanted to talk about. So it wasn't really a quick answer. If you asked her something, it wasn't a quick answer and it was over. That was her way of teaching you. Building a little bit here, a little bit there, so you understood the whole around it, then it was easier to understand. If you take that and put it into some type of ceremony, where you have a lot of those people like that, a whole bunch of things build there, so you have to listen and you have to watch. If you have that confidence and courage in yourself to do that then it's easier to grasp it.

Alan Pard discussed a 1962 film where some of the Kainaa (Blood) elders had a very limited number of people to do a ceremony. He related that these elders had been involved in his formal training.

> It's like a game of basketball, you have practice, coaching and teaching before it happens. Ceremony is the final result; there's less learning at ceremony. Example, if you have a doctor of medicine talk to your class, he must have credentials. It's the same thing with our ways; knowledge is based on credentials.

He then related how Abraham Maslow had based his "situational leadership" theory on his studies with the Siksika in 1962. Pard told how Maslow had found this concept in learning about the life of the Blackfoot.

> The best hunter will be the leader. Depending on the circumstances leadership changes. This is now taught in seminars at universities. This is a Blackfoot concept. The selection of mentors is situational. When learning, go to the best medicine pipe person. If you're a bronc rider, you don't go to a calf roper to learn.

The Rides At The Door couple attributed the beginning of their interest and learning to Mary Ground, who is the great grandmother of Darnell. Smokey related the following:

> Having those ceremonies in our family, Darnell's grandmother, having to care for her and live with us, that respect was there. We needed to begin to refine that. Of course, her being as old as she was, as Darnell being her great granddaughter, we seen a real void in that learning process as to where it's going to be when she does pass on. That was the kind of participation that began the learning process. The learning process that she instilled was something that you don't read. It was the traditional oral part of it where you participated and you watched. You didn't speak. You just absorbed. That's pretty much how a lot of people, as they look at these things, they try to find material instead of going through the actual learning process, they try to get as much information and become authorities. That's where a lot of discrepancies between those that do and those that think they do. We have older people coming and telling us, "I sat and I watched and my relations did this and they did that." I ask them "Were you ever transferred." They'll say, "No." Well, that's the difference. While you're trying to do, we have already completed that commitment to learning process.

Darnell spoke of the influence of her grandmother, Mary Ground, on their ability to take on the life of bundle keepers. By living with the Rides At The Door family, Mary Ground was able to provide them traditional life style teachings some years before the taking of the bundle.

> When the old lady stayed with us we didn't realize it then but she was grooming us for something; maybe she did foresee, maybe she dreamt. She never pushed, she never demanded and she never once was really stern. No, it was very, very delicately sort of discreetly done. She had a way of teaching, a tough teacher. But you didn't realize you'd learned something until it was done.

It was the opinion of Don Shade that parents are intimately familiar with the potential of their children because of the "bonding" which takes place in families. Parents are in the best position to discern the possibilities of their children's abilities.

> They knew that I was going to be the one to carry this on. So that's why they took an interest in the way they were going to mold me and school me and all the prepping that takes place. As I was growing up, they started taking me to ceremonies. Sometimes I used to think they were picking on me, "I have older brothers, why don't they take them. They're older than I am and they'll be able to comprehend all that." There was always that way they got me to go to things.

Shade began his ceremonial learning experience as a young boy. Since his extended family were ceremonialists, it was easy for them to have Shade accepted into the traditional rites of the Blackfoot.

> I ended up seeing a lot of things, I experienced a lot of things, I was privy to a lot of the sacred ceremonies that a lot of outsiders couldn't participate in. Because my grandfather, old man Scraping Horn, my father and others were the advisors for a lot of the people in the societies they didn't question that. He had a lot of latitude in what he wanted to do, so that was one of the reasons there was a lot of legitimacy for me to enter these things because I was so and so's grandson. He was kind of the guru of what they were doing. I got to be around all these ceremonies, a lot of them I worked my way through. They gave me tasks to do. Sometimes I didn't fit right in the ceremony, but I was running around doing stuff. A lot of these things are kind of like an apprentice. You start doing little things and as you get better, you get more responsibility.

Shade believes that the Blackfoot do not direct their children to a vocation such as that commonly called "medicine person." However, through an indirect process children

are "guided" towards recognizing the importance of such a calling. Thus the child takes "ownership" rather than "questioning" the direction of the learning process towards being a ceremonialist. "Well, that's for me, I'm going to go out and do it. Because now people are counting on me," is the comment used by Shade to demonstrate the attitude of the learner in the traditional Blackfoot system. If the learner is directed to the "medicine person" vocation, Shade relates the possible consequences:

> Then for some reason along the way things don't work out you're going to turn around and blame me and say "I didn't want to be a medicine man, but you told me to". There's always that excuse if you're a failure. This other way it makes you take on that task with a lot more meaning behind it.

The role of the instructor in the ceremonial learning process was addressed by Shade, "It seems like you not only had one main teacher but you had a lot of other teachers. Each teacher brought in a different perspective to the whole." He related that the "teachers" taught in both group and individual situations. Although the learner had one principal instructor, other teachers assisted in the learning process. Shade believes that the multiplicity of teachers added to a more "rounded out" understanding.

Shade revealed that the elders were careful in the kinds of advances imposed upon the learner. It wasn't until the latter phases of the learning process that the elders held the learner in public esteem, since they were aware of the peer pressure on the individual. The elders did not want to create any rivalry or isolation between the learner and peers. According to Shade, when the elders were "99 percent" convinced of the learner's advancement into the acceptance period, they would generally honor the individual in societal ways.

Rite of Transfer

In the learning process of Blackfoot ceremony one obtains knowledge through a "rite of passage." Ritual is used as a method to bestow the entitlement of the individual to obtain certain knowledge within distinctive parameters. The qualification to begin learning within the select boundaries is commonly called the "right of transfer" by the Blackfoot. The individual transfer ceremony allows one to enter and interact within certain levels of knowledge. The Blackfoot are ardent about providing information relevant to the status of the individual. This is especially true when a higher level of knowledge is sought due to the sacredness of certain information. There is a hierarchy of knowledge that can only be obtained through the rite of passage.

The transfer of knowledge through induction ritual is progressive from minor individualistic information to mastery of complex liturgies involving several participants. The lesser transfers may involve such things as the right to keep an "iinisskimm," or sacred buffalo stone to major transfers such as becoming the keeper of a medicine pipe bundle.

The rite of passage ceremony is used as the individual moves through the levels of knowledge of the hierarchy. After minor individual transfers the person may be inducted into the social type of societies like the Brave Dogs and then on to membership within a medicine pipe bundle society. Some may move on to bundle proprietorship and then to medicine lodge or holy smoke ceremonies.

"There are parameters, bundles work to get understanding," said Jerry Potts, which in this context refers to the "transfer of rights." This means that one must obtain the "rights, privileges and honor" to participate in various levels of such things as a bundle society. The participation in the bundle ceremony is a learning process itself in that the individual moves from one level of knowledge to another with "transfers" intimately relevant to the specific bundle ontology. In one situation, Jerry was transferred the right to drum and design drums, which in turn led to his becoming singer in the medicine pipe ceremony. He entered the complex realm of learning songs and all the matters that go with the process, including origin stories and their connection to the rituals.

As an example of transfer rights in the holy smoke ceremony, Mike Swims Under clarified that an individual can only sing those songs received through ceremonial transfer. He stated that the southern Pikuni did not have to announce their transfers in the holy smoke as some of the other Blackfoot divisions do when they render the ceremony.

Don Shade described his prelude into the world of ceremonial vocation. The narration provided specific aspects of ceremonial learning process.

> One of the first things that we were told was, if you really want to learn the ceremonial protocol or practice of songs or prayers; they said what to do is go through a proper transfer. If the transfer is proper and it's all legitimate, the learning will take place simultaneously, without effort. They have this concept referred to as the "spirit of learning." That particular spirit then activates learning or protocol; the spirit then enters you and tells you these things. It's really strange how that thing works. If it's done properly; a lot of times you go through the ceremony just once and you'll pick it up. After the ceremony, maybe several days later or whatever, you want to refer back to that; maybe you want to sing a song. You'll just pick it up; it's just there, like it's etched in your memory. If you don't go through this ceremony that thing will not be with you, the song

> will be with you only in the ceremony; you can mimic and imitate, you can sing along with it. But you go out in a day or two; you say, "I'd love to sing that song again." You'll never remember that song; it stays in the ceremony. That's what we refer to as the spirit. If it's done properly then it enters you and it stays with you. But if not then you'll never learn it.

Conrad LaFromboise revealed one way of how elders "transfer" or give the newer participants certain "rights" or entitlements. This individual rite of transfer happened during the conduct of a medicine pipe ceremony.

> Speaking of Jim [Little Dog], he had told G. G. and I one time, he said, "You boys watch, watch this," and he got up to blow that whistle and he danced in a certain way. He done that over period of years, then he told G. G. and I, he said "Its yours". G. G. is the one that took it, but he had a little bit more courage.

Conrad indicated he now possesses the entitlement to do this certain dance with the whistle from the medicine bundle, as it was conferred by the elder. LaFromboise used this as an example of learning by observation as well as the "rite of transfer" wherein the learner must dance "exactly" as bestowed by the elder.

Gene Ground addressed learning through the rite of transfer. He related how his mother, Mary Ground, told him to sit by her during the Blacktail dance and told the group, "I'm transferring these songs to my son." Gene described how she sang with him sitting next to her while he had to concentrate on the songs.

Jerry Potts talked about how he obtained knowledge of pipe making from Willy Eagle Plume of the Blood division of the Blackfoot. He related how virtually nobody had been carrying on the pipe making tradition. Potts was transferred the right to make pipes as he stated, "I paid for what I know." He characterized his pipe making as sometimes "almost a curse" because of the demands made on him by various people needing pipes.

The knowledge of pipe making was almost a lost art until Jerry received the right to make pipes through the transfer ceremony. His instruction and knowledge was obtained through the rite of transfer. He described how his elder grandmother cried when she found that he had become a pipe maker. According to Jerry, his grandmother cried tears of joy because he had taken on something that had almost been lost. He told how the knowledge of pipe making requires the craftsperson to know different society needs in relationship to their pipes. As in one circumstance, he noted how the Horn Society used to dictate that their pipes not be "cooked" or completely finished, as they would do this themselves. "Now the Horns [Society] have lost cooking the pipe", said Potts, as they no longer institute this requirement, but he retains the traditional knowledge about these kinds of factors.

The ceremonial rite of transfer of songs gives one the "right" to use those songs, according to Bullshoe. But those songs can only be used in the specific ceremony and not in others. He will sing the song to himself in order to master it for the ceremony to which it belongs. Virgil saw this as an issue with some of the ceremonial learners as they are using songs in the wrong context. Bullshoe then communicated how he was able to learn songs related to his bundle during the "transfer" ceremonies.

Morris Little Wolf was transferred the authorization to sing and drum on the "big drum" through ceremonial rites conducted by an elder. Morris also gained the privilege of acquiring teepee poles and concurrent song through a transfer ceremony conducted by an elder.

> The Brave Dog songs, Bob Black Plume, he gave me the big drum, omahk-isttokii. Through the Thunder Spirit, when I'm going to look for

> that song, I vision that and right now it catches me. I also was transferred teepee rails. There is a ceremony for that, too. You just don't go into the hills there and take those poles. It's similar to taking the center pole [medicine lodge]. The old man, Bob Black Plume, he painted the tree and then he painted me. He told four stories. He give me the power to get teepee poles. There's a ceremony for everything. There's even a song for those poles. As I mentioned before, everything is spiritual.

Morris talked about the rite of transfer ceremony that is used to confer the privilege and honor of doing certain tasks and deeds. He communicated information regarding the Brave Dog Society and their responsibility to conduct the construction of the medicine lodge. In the process of construction each activity must be done by someone who has received that transfer right. Individual Brave Dog members are transferred rights during the construction process of the ookaan. "The cutting of the hide, saa ah pii kaas, is a transfer. The elder tells four stories as it is passed on to other members. The hide is used to tie the lodge."

> Everything is transferred. As you go along you're gradually upgrading yourself; you learn step by step. You might say you have to start from the ground up; you have that foundation with you all time. You learn and learn and you come back to that foundation. That's your learning stages. You can learn and you can be the best of everything. But if you start thinking that way, you might as well quit praying. You got to always be down to that level, that level of the poorest of what you are and remain there. Then good things happen to you; good things come. You learn in stages when you're down there.

Most times in ookaan transfer the individual selected to do certain tasks are "captured" and taken through the rite of transfer. The elder or the person conducting the ceremony will select the person who will be conferred the honor.

George Kicking Woman provided information on how he obtained the medicine pipe in his possession. He relates that Shoots First had the medicine bundle before they

obtained it. "These pipe are passed along like that," said George as he explained how different people had kept the bundle in the past. According to George, his grandfather, Mike Shortman, had the bundle after obtaining it from Yellow Mink. He indicated, "Little Dog had him, the old man. A long time ago."

> We were pretty young, me and her, his [Molly] stepfather died, so we took that pipe. We took that pipe, that's what you're supposed to do. Whoever is your close relation, you give the pipe to him, he can keep it, till your ready to take it. He thought it would be better to let his uncle Bull Plume have it. He can keep it until we ready; that spring we can take it back. He give it to Bull Plume. Two years he kept that pipe. He told his sister, Emma, "Do you want to take it?" He wasn't interested. We was pretty young. He [Molly] told me, "What do you think, shall we take it?". I told him, "Yes, we can take it. We'll just take it, there's nobody else." That's why I took the pipe.

Molly shared some additional information regarding the acquisition of the medicine pipe bundle in their possession.

> We was pretty young when we got that bundle. My folks had it, they got it from Two Guns. How come my folks got it that Lawrence No Runner at Starr School he was dying. Some kind of sickness. His sisters were crying. My dad was still living, but my mother married Shoots First. Shoots First told my mother, then told old man Blackweasel, "I'm going to take Two Gun's pipe so that boy can get better." The old man took his blanket, "I'm going to call the spirits to take Two Gun's pipe." Old man Blackweasel he took his blanket and he made a smudge, he took ashes and made a smudge. Every corner he prayed, so he [Shoots First] could take his pipe so that boy could get better. He come back in and he went to that little boy and he started praying. He said, "This is the last chance we got." His hands were just cold. We brought him back; two or three days he was sick. That's the way those old people get their pipe.
>
> We [Molly's parents] had it [medicine pipe] for twenty years. Then my step dad he got sick. George commented, "He got that cough, must have had TB. Gee, he was skinny." He passed away. Then my mother had heart attack. So we sent for that woman to come after it; we kept it for one year. My sister said, "There's just two of you folks. You should get you folk's mother's pipe. Don't give it away, keep it."

> I told George, "Should we take my mother's pipe?" We told George's mother, "That old man wants us to take that pipe." His mother said, "We'll start gathering stuff; blankets, we got some horses. We'll ask him to come over." In September we went and got all the groceries. Two days they transferred that pipe to us. George's mother told us, "Tell that old man, we ain't going to just take it, transfer it to us." That old man he stayed at Little Badger, he moved over to Starr School. He camped at our house, that's where we got transferred that pipe.
>
> That old man told us to try hard; how to pray, how to do things and what to do. We finally started praying. We got good singers: Charlie Mad Wolf, Fish, Joe Wolf Tail and John Running Fisher. They all passed away. They were good drummers.

George and Molly talked about the importance of respecting the medicine bundles as they are "nothing to play" with and could be "dangerous" if not treated appropriately. This couple assists most of the new bundle holders as well as others in Canada with their medicine pipe bundle ceremonies.

The discussion with Beverly Hungry Wolf included the role and relationship between the instructors and the new bundle recipients. In the initial "transfer" ceremony the Blood division of the Blackfoot use a facilitator.

> Old Scraping White went to one of his Horn [Society] and he told him, "my granddaughter and her husband is going to take the medicine pipe." On the Blood Reserve you have a go- between; you're kind of like that son-in-law, mother-in-law side of your holy parents. It's more so in some of the other societies, but in ninaimsskaapii [medicine pipe people] and kisstaakaapii [beaver people] you can meet them and greet them, but they're considered your holy parents. This transfer stuff that happens is a real passing on of good luck; of life. The people that pass it on to you are considered your holy parents; that's how sacred that passing on is. When you get a bundle, from then on, you treat these people [good]; in some ways, my mother encouraged me to treat my holy parents better then I did for them. I did a lot for my parents but I was always pushed; do this for your holy parents, do that for them. My mom would always tell me, "You take care of them!" That was a really big teaching.

Beverly explained the initial instruction process related to the transfer of a medicine bundle. Apparently the beginning informational exchange is minimal since learning is limited before the transfer ceremony. Thus, the transferee does not have the "right" to certain knowledge until after the ceremonial rites. In addition, the learner is told of various taboos but the rationale is not provided for these requirements.

> When we got [the bundle]; we weren't given too many instructions. We were just given basic instructions. How the payments were going to go. When to go for the transfer. Not to eat, because you had to go through this fasting before you get a major transfer. Part of the ceremony is they feed you. It's like giving you new life. We weren't given too many instructions before the ceremony because we didn't have the "rights" to have that knowledge. They don't give you that knowledge until you have actually gone through the transfer. After the transfer we started being told, "You can't do this", like you can't say "bear," the Indian word for bear, you have to say sticky mouth. You can't blow on the fire.

According to Reggie Crowshoe, there are two primary precepts one must learn in the ceremonial learning process. He compared these two basics to progressing in elementary school from one grade to the next. The transfer of rights is mastering knowledge at one level and moving on to the next through a rite of passage. He noted how an individual at one level can only practice material at that level until given the "right" through transfer or pass on to the next grade, using the school analogy:

> One is called Kiimmuksin, and Kiimmuksin is a gifted right. Transferred rights are Pumaksin. Now those are authorities for you to learn. So I would say, if I was in grade three, and I learned all my lessons in grade three, once I moved into grade four, I was transferred grade four. And I just have to sit holy with grade four until they know I can do my grade four research. And then I can go into grade five, but I can be creative with grade four material. I think those are the transferred rights I would look at.

Jerry Potts talked about some positive aspects of becoming a keeper of a medicine pipe, "About transfer, you're reborn into a whole new way of life. When you transfer your

status grows." He described how the process of transfer parallels human development in that one moves from being an infant to a parent when something like a medicine pipe is accepted. "When that person transfers they become the grandparent. These are the levels of life. You're always going ahead."

Experiential Learning

"I put up medicine lodge in 1936 at Little Badger," said Mike Swims Under. "My mother put up center lodge." Mike reported that his father was the holy man at a Heart Butte medicine lodge in 1956. "Before, I got Beaver in 1930's," stated Mike. He disclosed that his father, as well as Wolf Plume, used to conduct the beaver bundle ceremony. "I was small that time we go to beaver ceremonies; that guy he opened them," remarked Mike. He said he was around beaver ceremonies for several years. When asked how he was able to learn all the beaver ceremony, he said, "Learn, same one!" In other words, Mike learned most of the songs and ceremony from being in the rituals with his father. It took him about "One-half year to learn beaver ceremony." A tribal member, Gambler, transferred the beaver bundle to his parents.

In his commentary, Shade discussed the major aspects of the ceremonial learning process. He called it a reflection on the "point by point" aspects of learning.

> We initially did a lot of observation. A lot of times we didn't understand. As young kids you see them making incense, you see them following some kind of protocol, some kind of procedure. But none of that made sense. We would look at them doing that but we knew there was some sort of sacredness to it; not to imitate it, or fool around in these ceremonies or be disruptive, these kinds of things. A lot of times we imitated them and talked to our fiends. "Gee, I went to this ceremony and this is how they did it." We imitated that in ceremony.

> A lot of it referred to what white people call 'mastery learning.' We mastered everything before we went on to the next step. Because everything there was always a logical sequence to everything. There was always a start and an end. If you look at our ceremonial songs, everything comes in sets of four. Somebody says "Sing me four sets," well that's sixteen songs. Everything has a sequence to it. It's also referred to in the white man's curriculum lingo as a scope and a sequence. A start and a finish. You should know these things. You got to know A before you can do B. That's the type of mastery learning.
>
> Along with the learning, we began to get involved in the ceremonies. We did what the white people call a practicum. A lot of these ceremonies, you got to do those little things, you had your part in there, a part of the ceremonies. A lot of this stuff you observed and by then you're able to put it into use. What they refer to as altar boys. You could now bring the rocks into, for example, a sweat. You knew how to do it because you had been seeing someone all along. Finally you got a chance to do it yourself. So then you became a part of the ceremony. That was the practicum. Practicing what you had seen.

George Kicking Woman explained the learning process he went through in becoming a keeper of a medicine bundle. Observation and listening were the ways recommended by his teachers in the beginning. Later on they moved George into doing some of the ceremonial activities. The elders seemed to positively encourage George along the way.

> Richard Little Dog, Charlie Reevis, Dan Bull Plume those are the guys that sit up there. I sit by them. Each one of them they tell me, "My boy, listen! That's the only way to learn it." So I really try; I listen. It's really hard. I sit up there. All the eyes are on you; everybody looking at you. You get nervous. I just really try; I just sit there 'til I got ready. Old Fish he told me, "Just sit there, my boy and try. You can't learn it just by sitting there. You think you learn it already. Just sit up there and get used to people. Even if they're looking at you. That's the way." So that's what I did.

The aspect of learning through participation was discussed by Shade. But, he sees participation as a distinctive boon granted by the elders which in turn creates a sense of unique privilege in the learner.

> You became privy to some real special, important information that others didn't have access to. You got to see things; you got to participate; you got to sit in there. Just by virtue of that type of association with the learning experience; you're kind of a special person; getting to sit in here. For some reason you've been allowed this privilege, where a lot of other people weren't. It reinforces the fact that you were chosen for some reason to participate.

Attendance at medicine pipe ceremonies was a part of the learning process for Beverly and her partner, Adolph. After their transfer as bundle holders, initial participation was limited because it is the time when taboo type of activity is introduced to the learner. Mini rites are sometimes required of the medicine pipe people in order to do certain movements in the ceremony. Consequences of inappropriate activity by the learner in ceremonies is an element of the procedure, as explained by Beverly:

> We were told to go to many medicine pipe ceremonies. Usually when they invite you just say, "old medicine pipe owners and medicine pipe owners." You don't go give each person tobacco or anything, you just say medicine owners and old medicine pipe owners. So when they said that we had to go because we were told, especially during the first year of our transfer; that's when we went to ceremonies, it was just like we were still getting transferred. We weren't allowed to really participate in the ceremony. My first bundle, the actual medicine pipe owner didn't get up to dance. He just sat. Especially at this ceremony, I wasn't allowed to get up and dance. The only time was when my dad or my brother was going to dance with the pipe, I told my grandmother "Can I get up to help?" She looked at me in a funny way. She said, "OK, but don't dance hard." There is a lot of restrictions about how the medicine pipe people move, especially on the day of the ceremony. Like the fan, in order to fan ourselves we have to go through a little ceremony. If you want to have good weather, you have come in and sit still until after the ceremony gets going. Through the whole ceremony you're supposed to sit still. The medicine pipe owners

> won't be going around real fast. They always said it would cause a lot of wind.

"The way I learned cultural things by is by watching and repetition", stated Conrad LaFromboise. He related the repetition concept of learning through his association with his grandmother-in-law Mary Ground:

> That old lady, when she would tell you something, she would tell you over and over again. But it wasn't like in the same setting over and over again, but it was over a period of time. On different occasions she would tell you that same story. You didn't sit there and take notes but you learned to listen. The thing of it was you learned by listening, hearing.

Conrad's wife, Mary Ellen, commented that when they would ask her grandmother to audiotape her conversation she would stop talking. Mary said she would make a statement like, "You can't remember, if I just tell you?"

Conrad reported how he had initially become involved in Blackfoot ceremony. His beginning experience was as an outside observer. Most medicine bundle ceremonies can be observed by anyone. But as Conrad described, moving inside the ceremonial circle by becoming a medicine bundle society member brings one closer to the ritual activity. This provides the new member a better opportunity to observe and hear the rituals. The new member, through the rite of transfer, is now privileged to obtain knowledge and information about the liturgy through the elders and the members.

> When I first started going around stuff [ceremonies] it was in 1971, when I had just come back from the Army. That was my first involvement with the medicine pipe. And as I started going over the years, I used to sit out there in the teepee where it usually took place on the outside where the women and children sit. That's where I sat, nobody knew who I was, just that old lady [Mary Ground]. I was usually her driver. But I made sure that I went back every year; I went to those doings. And pretty soon I got bracelets and became a member of that society, then your choices of seats were much better. You see things much better and you become part of

> that, with the elderly people, because you're always there. They [elders] recognize that, they recognize that you're watching and you're around at other times too. Then they call on you to be part of the ceremonies, maybe to pack ashes for them. Later on, you come to fill pipes for them. They recognize that you're trying to learn, too.

As a way of describing the learning process in ceremony, Conrad equated it to "graduating from the outside of the teepee to the inside." He noted how the process included the asking of questions and listening to how elders responded.

> Now that we're at the point of bundle holders. Who are you going to give your information to? We try to get everyone to understand basic things, but there are other things that you try to get across; it's more with some people than it is for other people.

Mary Ellen LaFromboise, the wife of Conrad, responded to the above discussion, "They [elders] always made a big thing out of who's dependable, who's reliable. It's the same way with us now that we have that responsibility [medicine pipe bundle holder], we look at who's always there, who do we always depend on." Conrad reinforced the idea that dependability is an important factor in who the elders select to participate in the various aspects of the ceremony.

According to Don Shade, during the later phases of learning process, the learner is known to be a person who will be present at future ceremonies. Elders can depend upon the stability of the ceremonial learner to support the ceremonial activities. "We know he's going to be there. This summer when we have the sun dance, or open pipes, he's going to be there filling pipes or whatever," expressed Shade to reveal the dependability of the learner. The status of the learner is heightened to the level "prestige and recognition". He described some of his experiential learning:

> In the sun dance, when I was quite young, I was right in where they were dancing. I fed; I helped feed. I danced around. I did all those things. Really you were kind of put in a place where everybody even began see you. You were already getting conditioned for this. It was a form of preparation to get you accustomed to being seen in places like this. They put you in these situations so eventually people associated you with that. So that you weren't a stranger. Like you'd been doing this for ten years. You'd been seen here for ten years. So when people saw you, they automatically said, "Yeah, he was brought up in that kind of scenario." It wasn't just a one time thing and all of a sudden you're a medicine man. They repeated that process and sent the legitimacy out to the people.

In learning songs, Morris Little Wolf disclosed that he learned by following along with drumming and singing groups. But, he did relate the best way to learning singing and drumming:

> When we really learn the songs it's best to learn from that old guy. Offer him tobacco. He sits across from you and teaches you. Then you never forget that song. Why? All you have to do is think of this guy, keeping him in front of you, doing it the way he passed it on to you. One of the strongest ways is to get painted. Then you never lose that.

As a way of demonstrating learning through participation, Morris narrated an excerpt from the time that he was transferred a "rider" position in the Brave Dog Society. He will need to remember the activity in detail as he may have the responsibility of doing the transfer ceremony someday.

> You learn basics from the elder. When I was painted. I was a rider. I had to have a horse outside of my home. The old man Larry Plume. He brought me outside. We lined up four drummers in front of the horse. My robe was thrown over the horse like a saddle blanket. They started to sing. I started to get on, but not fully on the first, when I step down the drummers stop. Four times like that they sang, four times I got on. The fourth time I got right on. Then he told me, "Ride your horse into that crowd and scatter those dogs." They all bunch up, dogs when you look out, they all bunch up. You ride in there and you scatter them. That's what it's about. At the end of every song you scream, holler like a dog; representing your society. Your partner is your keeper of your rattle; the bundle that comes along with it. Even the paint comes with the bundle.

> With me there was eagle feathers that had to go on the horse, that was part of the bundle with the paint, too. The Brave Dog can paint his wife and horse.

According to Pard, the learning process of Blackfoot ceremony is a "hands on" approach. He related how one must be observant and utilize listening skills in things like oral narrations by elders. Alan related how his grandmother, "the old lady," could narrate an account and how it created visualization within him through the use of language to where he could "see the story".

Virgil Bullshoe discussed the difficulty of learning ceremonial songs. He finds that the songs seem to naturally flow during the actual conduct of the rituals. As with most of the experiential learning, the learner must utilize keen listening skills.

> I really envy my uncle, as he can hear a song once and know it. People like that have gifts. Where me, I have trouble learning a song but I have to put in motion, like the dog song. Into motion, go with the song. All the pipe songs are pretty close, it's real hard to learn them. In the Warrior Pipe, the first songs are pretty close. Learning songs, I can't listen to celebration songs, powwow songs because to me they're totally different and it messes you up and you have to go strictly with them [medicine pipe songs]. I had to learn to listen.

Virgil indicated that it took him two years to learn half of the sixteen songs needed for his sweat lodge ceremony. He related the difficulty of "practicing" the songs as elders say that the ceremony is the only place where these songs can be used. But, he disclosed that he had to practice the songs, as it was the only way he could learn. "But in the beginning, I was afraid to do that because they were meant for ceremony."

The learning process in ceremony is a constant activity, according to Bullshoe. The "Indian way, living it all the time, always learning, even when you're sleeping," said

Virgil. He spoke about the experiential learning process in Blackfeet tradition having a way to rectify mistakes that are made by the learner.

> Another thing that I learned that was very helpful to me. As a Blackfeet practicing our traditional way, if I do something wrong to hurt people, I can always correct it. Correct it fast, so that takes a lot pressure off of doing the wrong thing, because they tell you "do by learning". So if I do something wrong I can correct it right away by smudging, praying, and making a vow. And it's corrected, taken care of, and nobody's hurt and I learned a lot from it and I'll remember it.

Bullshoe compared this ability to correct mistakes to other tribes, such as his wife, whose does not have this way in their tradition. Virgil communicated how this made him feel "unafraid" and how it promotes "learning by doing" which in turn is "keeping the culture alive". "My holy mother says, 'While you do it, you'll learn,' now I know what she means by that".

> Every time I open up that Inn-naa-waa-quee-nii-maann [police pipe] I learn something new. It might be a little thing that I did or didn't do. I'm told of it and I can remember it and then I can do it right. Each experience is different and I never do it totally right because I'm always learning. My holy mother is really strict. Once I go in and sit down for a ceremony, I'm not supposed to leave. I'm supposed to be right there for my people until it's closed again, so I never leave, I just sit there. I can't go out and go to the bathroom. A lot of them didn't know that. When I'm in doubt of something, she'll always tell me, "If it doesn't help the people in any way, if it's going to harm them, then it's not meant."

Kicking Woman repeated the idea that learning the conduct of medicine bundle liturgy is largely based on listening and observation. He noted that the method was articulated by the elder teachers:

> That's how I learn these things, just by listening. I listen to these old people. I sit there and sit there. Each one before they start singing say, "My boy, you sit there and listen, that's the only way to learn." Each one would tell me, old Bull Plume, Reevis, and Richard Little Dog. That's what they told me, "You learn them that way!" That's how I learn them; just by listening.

Since much of the learning process is experiential, the learner must gain sharp observational and listening skills. Beverly Hungry Wolf shared information regarding listening and observation along with some consequences of not heeding directives.

> My grandparents were very, very strict for me to listen. I'd be in a ceremony and they would tell me, "Listen, look at what I'm doing because in the future you're going to be doing it, you listen carefully now." We were always being told to listen, listen. They didn't repeat themselves too often. Now a days, I know some elders who tell you something once and if you don't follow it and go do something different they're not going to correct you because they already told you once the proper way. If you don't listen, they'll let you do whatever you want. They won't ever tell you, "Hey you can't do that," they'll just let you make the mistake because they figure you don't have any ears. What's the use of telling you "You can't do this", because you've already made up your mind to do something else.

Beverly indicated the conduct of ceremony follows the way it was conferred in the rite of transfer. However, they were given special privileges to transcribe the ceremonial sequence in written form in order to help recall and proper arrangement. Thus, learning through ceremonial observation became a matter of rote learning.

> Apparently there was a lot more rules and regulations for medicine pipe owners in former times, but I purposely didn't read any of the accounts of the anthropologists because I was getting this knowledge from these two people. In our ways when you get a transfer, you transfer as close to the ceremony as you know it. These people encouraged Adolph to write down how the ceremony went so that he would have the sequence, but again, they told us it was just for our information only. He said "Now-a-days you guys can write, but keep it for yourself. Just so you have the information." The sequence of the songs was written for us, and the words from the songs, because there's words in a lot of those songs. This is how we were taught the ceremony. Another time we went to a ceremony it was just like reviewing. We knew what you were doing.

The learning process in Blackfoot ceremony involves experimentation and apprenticeship. Don Shade stated the comparison, "It's much like the medical doctors

experimenting. When making medicine, as an apprentice sometimes you make it too strong or too weak. It was kind of trial and error, but eventually you got the medicine."

Developmental Learning

Virgil Bullshoe disclosed that he began his learning process as a child raised in a home where traditional Blackfeet ways were practiced. Thus, he knew of many of the "taboos" affiliated with those people who participate in ceremony. "All those were a part of bundles and their discipline" which were a part of the conduct Virgil said he became knowledgeable about as a child. Although he didn't know the significance of the behaviors associated with medicine bundle society people, he was well aware of the deportment required of himself.

When Virgil became a bundle holder, he then made the "connection" of why one has to practice these proscribed behaviors. "By then I knew how to put it to use because I had already learned it and I knew where it came from. So it wasn't to hard for me to do all their disciplines, because I was already taught when I was very young" stated Bullshoe as he discussed ceremonial learning process.

In referencing his childhood, Virgil has a conviction that the way he was raised by extended family prepared him for ceremonial life. According to Virgil, his parents or extended family never disciplined him when he was young. Apparently they used positive reinforcement rather then any negative or harsh approaches. He feels that this has given him self-discipline and confidence in the things that he does. "Don't be afraid

to make mistakes because you can always correct them. Then you're never afraid as you get older to go out and do things, try and do many things."

Some of the most influential people in Virgil's ceremonial learning process were his parents. Virgil obtained much knowledge about traditional ceremonial ways from his father, Leo Bullshoe, who had participated in medicine bundle societies. Leo was raised by his grandmother, who had apparently provided considerable information about Blackfeet tradition. If Leo did not have the knowledge about certain Blackfeet ways, he would refer Virgil to someone who had that information.

> My mom was raised around bundles and traditional life. I always wondered, because she's not a forceful person, she's very meek, easy to get along with. Here that was from being raised around bundles. She had learned that and lived and respected them. There are some things you don't do; jump on them [people] if they don't meet your expectations. That's the way they think, respect everything even if you don't agree with it. I learned a lot of emotional control through her. Control anger, which is the hardest part of being a bundle holder. Every day you're challenged. Especially this day and age when you're confronted with things everyday that make you lose your temper. But if you're a bundle caretaker you can't do that. I learned that when I was about five and I've lived that way all my life. But I've had no problems.

According to Virgil, the South Piegans are probably the only division of the Blackfoot that allow their children to observe the ceremonial events. He believes this is done to allow the children to learn by "seeing and doing".

> So we don't have to try and restructure their lives when they're older. If they live like that when they're young then they learn it. Like the Siksika asked, "Why do you let your kids come in here?" It's for everybody, but the main reason is that our kids can look around and see who is going to teach them. They have to teach them right in here where they're going to learn it. They learn by observing, finding out; it helps that kid, it teaches them self-discipline. One teacher told me he could walk in a classroom and pick out those traditional kids because they have no behavioral problems.

It was the opinion of Shade that parents are intimately familiar with the potential of their children because of the "bonding" which takes place in families. Parents are in the best position to discern the possibilities of their children's abilities.

> They knew that I was going to be the one to carry this on. So that's why they took an interest in the way they were going to mold me and school me and all the prepping that takes place. As I was growing up they started taking me to ceremonies. Sometimes I used to think they were picking on me, "I have older brothers why don't they take them. They're older than I am and they'll be able to comprehend all that." There was always that way they got me to go to things.

The LaFromboise couple believe that developmental learning is imperative to the process of learning ceremony. Much of their discussion centered on the Piegan Institute, which is an alternative school for children. Since they have grandchildren in both the Piegan Institute schools and the public school system they were able to compare their development. They expressed the view that ceremonial learning process is best achieved when the children are provided the opportunity to learn the traditional value system and ways of the Blackfeet. Conrad believes children are "prepared" for the Blackfoot way of knowledge.

The discussion with the LaFromboises encompassed the topic of childhood learning and its effect on the current learning situation. The LaFromboises focused on the learning taking place by the children in the Piegan Institute schools. The schools are alternative grade schools that utilize the Blackfoot language in the classes. They had observed that the young children in this school were very respectful. Conrad gave an example of their granddaughter, Celly, who attends the Cuts Wood School of the Piegan Institute.

> Even though they get rough and play around, I think they're very respectful to each other, more respectful then you see with the kids in public schools. They sit and listen. Watching Celly, especially when they sit and eat or sit at a table. She sits there not as a little kid at times, but she sat there as an individual; holding a space at that table. I think that's the upbringing that they're getting.

Mary Ellen gave an example of the Piegan Institute children's behavior when they attended a naming ceremony at the Blackfeet Community College. She related how quiet and respectful the children behaved. "They all remembered who got Indian names and what they meant and who the people were," stated Mary Ellen. The interactive style of the teacher with these children was noticed as being subdued and reassuring. However, Mary Ellen then compared the observance of the Piegan Institute children with that of the public school when they attended their grandson's second grade Christmas play.

> That was the most disrespect I ever seen towards kids, there was a whole different atmosphere, you could feel it. It was kind of a control thing, Sit down! Be quiet! Be still, come over here! All of their actions, their gestures, their words. It was aggravation.

Mary Ellen compared the two schools and the approaches used by indicating how the Piegan teachers were more of a "guide" and how they created an "expectation". She felt that the grandchild attending the Piegan Institute school had developed more rapidly.

In one interview, the respondent felt that early childhood rearing has an influence on ceremonial learning potential later in life. Beverly Hungry Wolf said infants are nurtured in a serene environment to insure the "spirit" of the baby is ensured. "This is the beginning of the religious training for all young people, taking care of their spirit," stated Hungry Wolf. This knowledge is transmitted during the raising of the children.

> Right from the time it's a baby, they start training it to take care of spirit and to take care of it's physical. And to make sure this child is not upset.

> These children are raised with that knowledge. They always take care of spirit. This is the beginning of the religious training for all young people, taking care of their spirit.

However some children are identified as having some kind of "special" characteristics. These youngsters are "selected" for distinctive treatment by the grandparents. Beverly Hungry Wolf told about the child who is picked for unique learning privileges:

> If a child was a minii'pokaan [grandmother's baby], that child was taken. From a very young age was involved in ceremonial stuff. They just lived it. It became a way of life for them rather then a learning experience.
>
> The selection process was really strange. One of your grandchildren will mean something really special to you. Like my son was born on the same day as my father. My father said, "I'm raising this boy." I had no say in it. He took him home and there was nothing I could do about him.
>
> Those children are special. In some ways they are bratty. In the old ways the minii'pokaan [favorite/special child] to me was more like my grandma. Ponah [grandma] was a minii'pokaan, she was instructed at a very young age. She even had a toy naatoas [sun dance bundle]. She was allowed to play with it. She had her own teepee. My daughter has that teepee today. It was complete with parfleches, all her toy bundles. She had a horn bundle. She had a naatoas. She had a beaver bundle. They were all toy ones. Once a year her mother would come to the school, put up her tent. She had her own parfleches. She had her own cast iron pot. She would cook for her friends. They'd be allowed to sit in the teepee. Every morning her father, his name was Iron; Iron would paint their faces every morning. This was just training from a very young age. She had a natural aptitude for the ceremonies. When she was training me, if the leader got stuck they would turn to her and ask her, "What's the next song?" and she would sing it for them. That's how well she knew the ceremonies.

Don Shade related that he was "selected" by his parents with the help of his grandparents to participate in ceremonial life.

> When I was young, my grandfather and my father knew I had this gift to become involved in our traditional ways. I had older brothers and sisters, as I was the second youngest in the family. They had contact with people

> running ceremonies and things. They knew I was I already chosen within our family to carry this on.

Although Reggie Crowshoe examined the following childhood learning experience from a philosophical point of view to differentiate "process or practice" from "sacredness", it can be useful to see one aspect of developmental learning. In this case developmental learning is viewed from the perspective of the child mimicking ceremonial activities of the adults.

> Can a kid play with ceremonial practice? And almost in every case, the old timers would say if a child found material outside and they were pretending to dance in the sun dance or I've heard stories where kids were playing the societies, playing the warriors because that's who they wanted to be growing up. The old people would say, "Oh let them play because in the future they'll be doing it." It's not what they're playing right now; it's not sacred. They might be playing a Brave Dog ceremony but it's not sacred until they get into the Brave Dogs. They can't play with it then, it's formal.
>
> I went to my dad's pipe dance; I watched all of them dancing, how the Thunder Pipe ceremony went. When I went home, we had a granary by our house and you know how birds like to fly around granaries and cats like to hang around granaries to eat birds. We were by the granary and we found pieces of bird laying around; a wing and few feathers and a cat must have just finished its lunch. We took this wing and those feathers and we were playing Thunder Medicine Pipe dance ceremony behind the granary and the old lady caught us. She said, "I'm glad you guys are playing it, because in the future you're going to want to know what this is all about. You're not going to be allowed to play with it."
>
> My nephew, he's about twelve now, but when he came back home one day we had the teepee up we were going to have our Thunder Medicine Pipe. He was walking around with a couple of sticks and a rope. He was playing with his friends, piercing, how he would tie it in his shirt. The old people were saying, "Well, they're just playing".

In this discussion, Reggie Crowshoe equated the children's "practice" to that of the non-Indian's educational system, whereby institutional learning is "practice" until the

student graduates to "doing". Crowshoe's examination of traditional learning questions the idea of discriminating between when something is determined "practice" or when it is "sacred". "How come those guys are allowed to play with ceremony? Is it practice? Is it not sacred? The old people think it's not sacred. How do we recognize it from a western perspective to call it a process of learning?" Using symbolism of a teepee camp with levels of knowledge progressing in concentric circles unto the middle, which is the ookaan or medicine lodge, Crowshoe postulated:

> If it's a practice out here where the kids are playing, it's only practice, but if you go and use it in the center circle, darn, it's not playing, it's pretty sacred. So out here you have to study it [outside the center], not in here [ookaan - center of the teepee circle], you have to study it out here where the kids can play. So, how do kids play? Well, kids understand, they'll know what bundles are. Kids will also know who sits where, the women on this side and the men. Kids will know who is the bundle opener and who was the bundle owner. Kids will know who were other bundle owners. Kids will know who were the other elders and where they sat. Kids will play drummers, kids will play that. So it's all practical.

The narration of Beverly Hungry Wolf voiced the idea of some kind of childhood or preparation before ceremonial learning. Beverly believes that observation and listening are two of the main proficiencies used in Blackfoot learning process. She feels this way of learning was passed down from the very early times of the Blackfoot before reading and writing influences.

> The way I raised was two value systems. My mother at home had old time value systems. The way I prepared was by observing. My mother would make me sit beside her when she was sewing. She would say, "You watch me cause you'll learn how to sew". Just watching and listening. The two most outstanding things I could think of in the process of preparing to be involved in bundles is listening and watching. In the old days we didn't write things down. You had to watch how somebody made something and keep watching until you got it. Or you had to listen really good to what they were saying. Some old people will tell you something only once and expect you to know it the first time they tell you. If

> you come back and ask them a second time, they'll get really annoyed. Because of their attitude about that, I feel that when they were told, they learned the first time. I think that's a real old time learning skill, listening and watching. If they could be told something once and have it internalized; then that was a great learning skill.

Holistic Concept

The participants discussed the idea of the relatedness of things in Blackfoot learning process. The concept of an integrated whole of ceremonies is expressed through the assertion that "everything is related". Terms like "holistic," "big picture," "whole system," and "everything is important" are used to describe learning in Blackfoot ceremony.

Acceptance of humanism as a part of the learning process is expressed in the interviews. Intellectual and emotional aspects of being human are accepted in ceremonial learning and activity as a part of the process. Although reverential spirituality is utmost in ceremony, contextual humanness is accepted to the point of sharing mirth and jesting.

Darnell Rides At The Door believes that the teachings through the medicine bundle practices contain a wholeness of combined disciplines. However, she sees limitations due to the lack of connections with the past, such as the availability of resource people. The idea of segmented disciplinary learning itself creates a barrier to learning.

> We are here with this bundle to hopefully bring some of those concepts back to the people. The Niitsitapi, the real people. Every religion and every color of people, every group, they have a legend of the real people. Everything that we deal with on a daily basis is simple things, the moon, sun, stars, and the earth. We get everyone of those concepts and put them together; you have everything. You have every educational background,

> every scientific background, every spiritual background; every social, mental and physical aspect of the whole world is what we have in the thunder pipe. It's simple, very simple, but on the same token it's difficult, because there's so many factions on both sides that you have to deal with; gaps in the language and few resources to call upon.

Alan Pard verbalized the idea that the ceremonial process is a comprehensive collection of organized thought, principles and language which creates an epistemology of a people, "You can't segregate things, everything is holistic." Learning in Blackfoot ceremony includes a mental, emotional and spiritual state of being that is more important than the physical.

The narration by Alan Pard includes how ceremonial learning is a "complete extreme state of emotions, humor, laughter, seriousness and reverence. It's a situational process, there's a time to shut up and a time to talk." Emotions and feelings are expressed during the ceremonies, especially in song and dance. Pard related some of the activity to how the blacks and some religious groups are expressive in their music and religion. "You're a human being, humanness has to show." He related this to some of the personalized conversation that men have within their group and the women within their groups. "There's man talk and woman talk. Better to talk it out than act. Napi teaches us we are human beings, not more powerful than higher power."

Shade feels that the elders provided him with the ability to see the "whole" of things in order to gain knowledge. "They gave you the ability to see the big picture. Once you began to see the big picture it was a lot easier to make sense of why we were doing these things." Thus, Shade was able to synthesize the learning process to tangible things such as "why we have the sun dance" or "why can't we do it this another way?"

The concept of holistic learning is inherent in the traditional learning process. Shade conveyed how the elders used story telling as a methodology:

> Another way of learning is telling these stories. In your mind it created the bigger picture. "Why do we do this?" Then they tell you a story. "Oh yeah, now I'm starting to understand why we do these things." As opposed to the white school which is in steps, but you never really see the whole thing. If we're going to go from here to point B and we get a quick visual of the lay out; we can make those choices a lot easier.

Critical Thinking

In the Blackfoot way, critical thinking is tied to story telling and metaphor used in the learning process. The elders' teaching methodology causes the learner to analyze information for meaning. Pard talked about elders speaking in "parables" and the many years he spent listening to the teachings before he could synthesize and understand the information. According to Smokey Rides At The Door, the elder is more of a helper in the learning process. He indicated that the elder will help the learner find needed information by presenting a series of discussions on matters related to the situation. The learner then must draw their own conclusions from the information presented. Some of the cases used the elder Mary Ground as a source of information. They indicate that she, too, would provide knowledge in segments of testimony that allowed the learners to develop their own inferences on matters.

Bullshoe believes that schools have taught Blackfeet people to think differently. He maintains that Indian people spend more time in critical thought rather then seeking rapid solutions to matters.

Conrad LaFromboise talked about the public school systems being a place where students are taught to "regurgitate" information. He feels the Piegan Institute has a "subtleness" which is different from the public schools learning process which "assimilate, more then they try to make you think". The LaFromboises expressed the opinion that the children are not getting critical thinking skills in the public school. "I allow my grandchildren and other little kids to say what they want to say and listen to what they say, I encourage them. I know that when Celly comes out here, I encourage her to talk." Conrad voiced the view that interactive learning through dialogue promotes things like self-confidence, self-identity, and assertiveness.

The narration with Don Shade compared ceremonial learning with things like children learning reading in school. Shade feels that young people today do not get the "thinking" skills such as are provided in the ceremonies. He gave the example of youth doing quantitative mathematical skills without knowing how to do those same skills from a mathematical narrative format. "We went through these exercises to make you think and become logical sequential thinkers," said Shade as he referred to the ceremonial learning process. He related it to developing a "mental focus" in order to make appropriate "choices".

> With these procedures, practices, songs, they [elders] never ever gave you a direct "yes," "no," right answer. What they did was a process referred to as problem solving. They would just give you the practical or hypothesis of a situation. Then it was up to you to figure out the right way and why. We were told or in a scenario, and then we would ask [to oneself], "Why would you do this?" You had to come up with your own answer. That's one of the things today that a lot of your young kids can't do is problem solving.

Learning by association was a topic broached by Shade. "By being around people, by hearing people talk about things. Maybe you didn't actually take part in the ceremony. But because it was something that was common, stuff you learned by being around." Again, he felt that learning by association assisted in "internalizing" the information through "problem solving" and thus realizing the "importance" of things:

> We were told there's a certain amount of importance to this. They kind of mentioned, not in a very direct way, almost an indirect way, you're the one's who's going to carry this on so you better learn this. But they have a way of telling you that, they didn't come right out. That's our way having our kids learning. They have to internalize. They take ownership of it.

The concept of critical thinking is inherent in the traditional learning process. Shade conveyed how the elders used the methodology in story telling:

> That was the whole purpose; this learning is that it brought you to that end point so that you could see the obstacles that were going to be in your way. A lot of times people wouldn't give you these answers, they wouldn't tell you, "OK, these are five obstacles you're going to encounter before you get to the end," it made you figure those things out.

Environmental Learning

In the Blackfoot world everything has a spirit. Much of the Blackfoot genesis relates to stories about communicating with the animals. Morris Little Wolf gave some examples of how the animals relate to the spirituality of the Blackfoot.

> When you talk about nature and animals, everything He made, He didn't make anything that is bad. He made everything with a spirit. The eagle, for example, he is the high flying bird, is our messenger for our prayers to the Creator. This comes from the eagle himself, when they were building the bundles, each different animal sat around and said we have the power, right down to the little mice. Today when you look at these bundles, they're all in there. Each one had a song, even the lizard, he was part of that circle. He said he had power. They told him, "All you do is crawl

> around in the mud, you don't have power." He said, "I'll show you". He crawled away; he made rain. It rained so hard that these animals took off. Pretty soon they called him back and said, "OK, you have power". They all gathered again and he was part of that circle. That's why today he is painted on the sun dance people when they have a Blackfoot sun dance. Everything He made is sacred.

The culture of the Blackfoot involved a communication with nature and the animals. As an elder member of the Brave Dog Society, Morris used the dog as an example of how the Blackfoot revered the animal.

> Our great-grandfathers lived in a very humble and spiritual way. Their way was recognized as a way of life that was given to them by the Creator; nature people. They were people that communicated with the animals, the four-legged animals. They used dogs for transportation. They knew the power and spirit of that dog. The spirit of the dog was highly recognized. They were used as protectors; as warners; name it, I could go on how powerful that dog is. They knew all these things.
>
> It began with the dogs that related to everything. The Brave Dog Society became a society because of their knowledge of communication with animals. This is where the Brave Dog Society comes in, the little pups, the rattles that you see, represent the spirit of those pups. Today when you see a person with a rattle, particularly coming from a Brave Dog member, no one really knows what he has in his hand, it's powerful.

Mary Ellen shared her view of elders conveying information on a repetitive basis, "It's like they were constantly documenting in their mind."

> My grandma knew exactly when the geese came back here. "There's geese that come out here the first week of March." Sure enough, we been out here eighteen years, those geese come not the end of February, not the second or third week of March. After about four or five years I guess it took a while before it dawned on us that this was something that had been going on for so long. So now we start to be more observant.

Learning from animals was an important part of the learning process according to Pard. "Observing animals is part of the transfer connection. This was a practical side of learning where we lived and traveled with the animals in order to receive what it had."

Pard described a personal learning experience. He spoke about how information would be gained by outdoor experiences with a relative.

> The environment is our classroom. When trapping and hunting with my uncle, we would come to a certain area and he would tell stories about that place. These were like field trips. There is always a story to tell like the iinisskimm, buffalo rock. On Bow River, a cut bank, a specific place the buffalo stone was found. It said "Take me, I'm holy". That's where some of our religion started, a place and a story.

The environmental learning relates to the "vision quest". Pard communicated how this process is significant to learning as it prepares one for a "ceremonial lifestyle" through guidance by a "supernatural being". "Early in the morning they start singing and late at night, and I listen to them continuously whistling during the day," said Alan Pard about the supernatural forces in the environment.

Smokey recited the importance of the environment in the Indian belief system. The Blackfeet, like several Native American people, recognize sources of power in natural science. He believes that Indian people were able to control some of the natural powers of the elements.

Protocols and Taboos

Obtaining knowledge of protocol and taboos is important in the Blackfoot learning process. Approaching the appropriate elder who has the knowledge relevant to the learners need is important as well as the method used to request information. The process includes formal and less formal ways of obtaining information.

Protocol also involves the status of the learner being "eligible" to receive certain information. In some cases, unless the individual has obtained the appropriate rite of

transfer, the elder will probably not divulge certain kinds of things. The learner also finds that certain types of information can only be discussed in particular contexts with specific people.

There are a multitude of taboos associated with individuals and the societies and ceremonies with which they are involved. Some elders may have taboos that are associated with the vision or dream that provided them with certain "rights" or "gifts". The learner will usually be provided with the taboos related to their status in certain societies. The reason or the meaning for the taboo in most times is part of the learning process for the individual.

The importance of protocol and inappropriate actions were mentioned by Shade. The elders would apparently have limited flexibility in initial treatment of the learner regarding "mistakes," but then became somewhat harsh later on.

> Along with this you learned protocol. Usually they were quite kind at first. If you made a mistake, people would say he doesn't know any better. But, after that, once you went past that initial stage; you got about one chance to make a mistake. After you used up your one chance, then you really got it; because you should have known from the first time around that this wasn't right.

The telling of origin stories teaches things such as proper protocol, which according to Pard is fundamental to all the ceremonial preliminaries. This type of learning fosters an awareness of basic protocol as well as developing an attitude towards how one does such things as addressing people. He used the example of "niskuni" which is used by an older man to address a younger man.

"The whole area of extended protocol is not evident at ceremony," remarked Pard. He tells how he was transferred the right to drum. "Bob calls me over and hands me a

drum stick while praying. He then tells four war stories. In this way I was transferred the big drum and the hair parters' song. I was transferred the right to hit the drum." Pard talked about learning the art of singing, "Don't concentrate on the song, develop a rhythm, teach rhythm. Without rhythm you can't learn the songs." With protocol one cannot deviate from what was transferred, as it is a strict part of the ceremonial process.

"In learning ceremonial process it is important for the participant or ceremonialist to state their references. In stating references, one must relate the who, what, and when about ceremonial transfer rights," commented Pard as he pointed out how the people validate the oral tradition.

In the Blackfoot way, Pard communicated how one must learn to approach the right mentor who has the knowledge of the subject matter being sought. He related it to the situational leadership where one person will come forth when it comes to overall knowledge of specific practices. "You have to learn that first," he stated, as he compared it to learning the various disciplines such as "psychology, sociology or business".

Pard discussed the formality of seeking information from those who are recognized as possessing knowledge. "Offering like you did today and asking to look at how I was taught. If the individual is hesitant to share knowledge, offer a pipe in order to secure the knowledge or the right." In the Blackfoot way the offering of the smoking pipe is a very formal way of seeking something from an elder.

The direct questioning of elders was explained by Beverly Hungry Wolf as a procedure that must be understood by the learner. As well as knowing the protocol, the learner must select the appropriate elder who has the needed information. She

acknowledged the difficulty in contemporary times since in the past "camp life" things were more common knowledge.

> If you're going to ask a question you always gift that elder. It depends on the elder that you go to; some elders, if they don't think they know enough, they'll just skim over it. Some elders will explain it good to you. But it's a big part of the learning process. In former times, everybody lived in a camp situation; there was always somebody singing medicine pipe songs or horn songs in camp. Or singing songs for the Beaver Bundle so a lot of other people picked up the songs but they weren't involved in the ceremonies. When you're puzzled about something you go ask the proper person. If you go ask the proper person, let's say you have a question about Beaver Bundle, well you go to a Beaver Bundle person and you ask directly. This business of not being able to ask an elder a direct question is not true for our people. What I found is that you go to the proper person, he'll know the proper protocol to deal with your situation. If you go to the proper person, he'll say this person has every right to ask the question. But if they feel that you don't have the right to know the answer they might question. They might want to know why you're so puzzled about this. If they know that you're involved in what you're asking about they'll probably be more than willing to share the knowledge with you.

Jerry Potts provided a commentary about the current situation where Blackfoot ceremonial learners are "challenged, to know what the difference is" regarding the correctness of things. In the past, they did not have to experience the idea "this is wrong", as expressed by some now days, because in former times the Blackfoot "lived" in a world where everyone knew the correct protocol.

In discussing some of the various ceremonial functions being done outside of Blackfoot orthodoxy, Jerry expressed concern about the rise of pan-Indianism. "Answers are in real people, with us it wasn't meant to be easy. Like drummers, they were past medicine pipe holders. That's how times have changed," as he related the subject of pan-Indianism to ceremonial drummers who have not learned the ceremonial way through proper protocol. In proper protocol learning one must gain "the right to talk about it,

there's public knowledge, but through protocol people have to know in order to repeat it," said Potts. He gave an example of people who do not have medicine pipe "bracelets" (a term used to denote medicine pipe society membership) can "burn" or hurt someone through talking about sacred matters. Jerry pointed out that some of the elder medicine bundle holders allow the "Rainbow Tribe" to observe ceremonies. "I got my purpose, I do my duty to the pipe and the people". Potts expressed that one must examine the collective benefit of actions and words in serving the spiritual needs of the Blackfoot people.

There are "taboos" attached to certain things, either in ceremonies or related to certain society member restrictions. Morris Little Wolf equated these requirements to an individual being reminded to be humble. He addressed the restrictions in certain parts of the ookaan ceremony whereby the builders cannot drink or touch water at certain times. The horses used in the ceremony have the same water constraints.

Although medicine bundle holders socially acknowledge death, they limit their participation in funeral rites. It seems that the medicine bundle represents a spiritual existence of all things, which limits bundle holders to participating in death rituals. Smokey Rides At The Door explained this taboo:

> People are attracted to life. What these bundles teach you is respect for life. People say "I didn't see you at the funeral." In the acceptance of what we have, we can't dwell on the negative. We can't dwell on that final stage of life called death. We were told that our entire ceremonies are based on our religion as how it relates to the sun and the moon and all those things as it relates to life.

Smokey noted that medicine bundle holders must have a "cleansing ceremony" after being around death. According to Smokey, many people do not understand this requisite.

Besides the several taboos related to specific medicine bundles, the possessors must conduct themselves in certain ways relative to the setting. Social behavior as well as domicile customs must be adhered to in prescribed ways, imparted Hungry Wolf.

Potts communicated how one must respect the privileges, honor and prerequisites of those conducting ceremonies. "Traditional learning is like when you're running a sweat, for example, I sweat my teepee before I put it up," commented Potts as he discussed how someone engaged to assist must know the protocols of the ceremonialist.

> How do you want me to build your sweat? Things like how many willows? How do you dig the hole? How big do you want it? Things like twelve willows or a square hole. When I go in and sit down, anything in that sweat such as where to sit, you have to wait for me. I'm the conductor, I say when the door shuts and when it opens. The way I run it is the way it was given to me. I take full responsibility for what ever happens in there.

Jerry discussed the responsibility placed upon the person conducting ceremonies. He reviewed the conditions placed upon an elder in such things as directing ceremonies.

> Big Smoke, or Kano'tsisssiss, hiring him to carry the weight of everything. The same way with the medicine pipe or the Beaver, they carry the weight of everything. If something happens like the fire jumps, it could be a bad omen. The person running it has to know how to take care of it. When you get to that level you pay the consequences.

Extended Family and Community

Darnell Rides At The Door spoke about them not having their parents and grandparents available to help in obtaining the knowledge needed as medicine bundle holders. This reinforced the earlier discussion of a generation gap in ceremonial teachers.

> That particular point there. We don't have the luxury that they had a few years ago. Our parents, a generation before us, are virtually all gone. There are very few within my mother's age that are now elders that believe

> this way. We don't have the luxury. We're down to the point that we can't go to Smokey's dad or mother, they're gone, or my side, my grandmother, they're all gone. All we have left is what we've mentioned.

The impact of extended families living apart from one another has an effect on learning culture and language. Smokey talked about his immediate family members living several miles apart. "Geographically, before you had families living along creeks, lived in certain valleys and coulees. They were in communication distance of one another. Having that additional support of having those older people talking Indian all the time," said Smokey. Besides the effect on learning ceremony, this removal from the extended family system has caused a loss of common terminology used in everyday living. He stated the problem: "We have lost that communication as a family, but more so, that Indian-ness, because we don't have that frequency of having Cyn [mother in-law] come over every other supper talking Indian to us about things like the setting of the table."

The loss of rural schools also had an effect on the loss of extended family. Smokey feels that the school provided a gathering place for extended families to maintain their ties. The rural schools were used to socialize and keep people together for ceremonial purposes.

> What our old people have told us is that's the reason the Creator give you these holy things. It's not the benefit to us to be able to charge people to come in and be part of that ceremony. But it's that bringing together that we have tossed out there. We've told people, if you want bracelets, here's some of the responsibilities that comes with it. Here is the respect that you have to show your fellow man as being a bundle holder. Here are the truths; here is the honesty you have to portray. These are the lines that we would like you to go down. So that you have that same respect, being in our society. Those are the things that you will never read in any book. Those are the things only learned through experience. To experience those

> things you have to have the teachers like George and Molly, Mary Grounds and some of these old people who have groomed us.

George Kicking Woman narrated an event that was passed down through oral tradition in his family that had a drastic effect on extended families. [This may have been what is called "the starvation winter of 1883-84" when a major portion of the Blackfeet people died from a lack of rations and subsequent illness. Ewers documented, "Father Prando reported that an epidemic of erysipelas had struck the weakened Indians and they were dying at a rate of one to four a day" (1958, p. 293).]. George related:

> There were a lot of people. The first one had it, they had time to bury them. They go up on the hill and bury them. They took their time. The third or fourth night, they couldn't take care of them from there on. In the teepee, everybody die in there, they just load them up and they take them up on the hill. "They just left them." (commented Molly). Some they just left. Right where . . . lives [Badger Creek, Old Agency area]. I don't know if they even had time to put them on a tree. But they put some; those must be the old people that everybody knows, they must be Indian doctors; they pretty well known at that time; these people that camped out. They say, "We're going to bury that old man on the creek."

George's grandfather apparently told him about the traditional burial of some of the noted people of that time. In the historic times the Blackfeet buried their dead in trees or sometimes the deceased were left entombed in their teepee lodge.

> The old man, he always talk about trees. "We're going to resect that man, we're going to take up the creek." I don't know which one, maybe that's the only one they put on there. The rest, they just leave them in the teepee. Just too many dead. The ones they handle they take them all out in all them hills. Four Horn Lake, them hills, right down that way. People just lay there. Measles, something they got them.

These elders are keenly aware of the impact of this traumatic event upon the Blackfeet. As George related, the population would have probably been immense had this not happened.

> If those people on this earth today, I think we going to have a lot of people. Oh, I don't know how many die at that time. I think we have relations there, too. They'd have been here today. I think we'd be a lot of Blackfeet Indians. They gone, them days. A short time, they got rid of them. That sickness, I don't know what they call it.

This episode in the history of the Blackfeet reveals a sense of helplessness and hopelessness. According to George Kicking Woman, even the Blackfeet "medicine" had little effect.

> We make sweat lodge right over here. They thought they get better that way. So they go in there, when they went in there, it made it worse. They just pass away. They come so fast. Those tepees, they just leave them in there. No way to take them.

A reinforcement of the value system is reflected in how people treat one another. Alan Pard told how extended families and ceremonialists interacted with one another:

> My father and his old friend used to kiss when they would meet. That demonstrated the close relationship they had. It's like the term Naa-ah to address parents as equally important as well as grandmother and grandfather. This creates a philosophical link between relatives; it reinforces values. Ceremonial brothers will kiss each other to reinforce the value of family. Now-a-days, a male would be called a "fag" or something. They wouldn't understand this relationship that is precious and dear to us. It's a reflection of our value system, reinforcing that to our people.

Pard compared the idea of identity and self-worth between the two cultures. He spoke about how contemporary behaviorists consider self care and self love as being important to confidence and identity. "Behaviorists say learn unconditional love, even the Christians teach that God is love. The Blackfoot people's way of life includes loving every body and brotherly love". Pard illustrated this by the terminology used in the language, which expresses endearment and intimacy: " 'Okii, Niskuni' is a term that addresses a young man (boy) as though he is your son. 'Okii, Niskuni' means 'Hello,

little brother,' so every man younger then yourself is your younger brother. 'Okii, nokosiks,' addresses a group of people as your children."

Jerry Potts feels that some of the Blackfoot people are not progressing in the traditional life style of the past. He spoke about the sun dance as a cohesive force between all Blackfoot peoples.

> In the past, communities looked forward to the sun dance. Coming together and placing offerings on the center pole was an Indian Christmas. The offerings were a cleansing of the past, which was the real meaning of the sun dance. As the leader of the Brave Dogs, I built eight or nine lodges. Everyone from communities, all helping those people with prayers. In the old days, the social aspect, everyone contributed.

Learning through Symbolism

The narrative of Alan Pard included the ookaan and the symbolism of the center pole. "I often wondered why they call the center pole the enemy," stated Pard, as he demonstrated how he experienced learning about this structure within the medicine lodge. He demonstrated on a piece of paper the symbol used for a scout, which is a semi-circle preceded by a zigzag line. Alan illustrated that the semi-circle represents a scout encountering an enemy and the line represents a block to his mission. The zigzag line symbolizes the scout's return in such a manner in order to evade being shot by the enemy.

Pard narrated a story about a Peigan who had sought shelter in a cave during a rainstorm. Here is a condensed version of that story: During a rainstorm two men enter a dark, cave area and they cannot see each other. In the dark they use the sign language to communicate their identity. The Peigan rubs his cheek with his fist to demonstrate the sign representing his people. The other person holds the Peigan's hand and makes the

waving movement signifying that he is a "Snake" Indian. After the rainstorm, these two individuals, as traditional enemies, have a contest to see who can persevere. They each take turns performing actions to humiliate, disgrace or overcome their adversary. The Snake Indian cuts the hair lock of the Piegan, commonly termed the scalp lock. The Peigan then begins to cut the forehead of the Snake in an action to cut his scalp. The Snake begins to plea for mercy. Pard said the "victory song" is sung when the holy people come out the teepee during the sun dance and the center pole is raised. The victory song came from the cave story account. He then sang the victory song and states how the holy people who "fasted" the four days have "conquered evil, sickness or death". The center pole epitomizes the "conquered adversary current to the sun dance" as explained by Pard.

According to Pard, "Everything has a purpose, a meaning, every action reflects something." Pard said that very few Indians today understand the meaning of the existence of things in their life as a Native person. "It's like people who wear a cowboy hat but they don't know what the life of a cowboy is all about. It's like the floral designs; they represent your dreams. Simple things like that -- we've lost the purpose. Like the cross represents the morning star."

Pard's son obtained a weasel skin to use as an amulet or charm to carry with him when he received his first name in a ceremony. He noted how the naming ceremony and amulet symbolizes the origination and affirmation of a successful, long life.

Terminology is important in ceremonial learning, commented Pard. He gave an example of some of the terminology used as it relates to the sweat lodge ceremony.

> In the sweat, the water used on the rocks is a water smudge called saa ama too see or mata too see ama too see, which teaches us it's an incense. The clay trail in the sweat is of white clay, which is the Wolf Trail or moko koo see wai, or the Milky Way. These take your prayers to the above.

Crowshoe discussed symbolism and ceremony as it relates to the stone teepee circles and stone effigies found throughout the traditional roaming area of the Blackfoot. He noted how some of ancient stone teepee circles are enclosed with rocks while others have an opening for the doorway. When the Blackfoot found a campsite of another tribe they would place rocks to enclose the doorway.

> They can't get out; we close their doors. The Blackfoot's doors are going to stay open, because that way the spirits can more in and out. Knowledge and wisdom can move in and out. We don't want their [other tribes] knowledge and wisdom. So they closed the door by using the Wolf Song to hold them. That's why some of them are closed and some of them are open.

According to Crowshoe, the stone effigies found throughout the traditional Blackfoot territory are actually boundary markers. The effigies, especially those of the human figure, were a representation of foreign people who were being held back from entering Blackfoot territory.

> You take this individual ceremony to every rock on this human being. The old people said this was a [foreign] Indian, we weighted him down by the North Saskatchewan River. Because once he crossed the river only his real body crosses, his spirit doesn't cross. So when he's on this side without his shadow [spirit], he's not real to us, we can kill him; because his shadow is on the other side of the river. So that's protecting our territory. That was him we blocked his spirit across on that river so soon as he comes across, past that effigy, his spirit doesn't cross. It makes it easier for us to kill him; we can kill him. That's why we did that, the eastern and southern tribes were coming in.

The larger stone circles commonly being called "medicine wheel" by some archaeologists are "landmarks" professed Crowshoe. These stone circles mark out important geographic areas relevant to the genesis stories of the Blackfoot.

> In our language you'd say, nii-a-tsi-ka-kia-waa-tsi-na-wa, this is where we weighted them down [other tribes]; so that their bodies can come across and their spirit stay on that side. Where you see teepee circles, but the doors are closed, some are full circles and some are not; these ones are [foreign] camps and we don't want their spirits in our territory. We lock them in their tepees.

Crowshoe related that each of these symbols have a song and an "action". He also indicated that this same symbolism is used on a smaller scale ceremony to "weigh" an individual down and keep them at home in order for one to travel a long distance for a visit.

Effects of Oppression and Cultural Conflict

Little Wolf speaks about the fear placed on past generations based upon the religious doctrine imposed upon them in mission and boarding schools. The God-fearing ways of the dominant society religious and institutional systems has been internalized by some of the Blackfoot people to the point of fearing their own traditional ways. Conversely, some Blackfoot traditional practitioners use this fear-based concept in an attempt to dominate learners by using Blackfoot protocol as a gatekeeping mechanism. As a result of these complex issues, potential learners can be perplexed, which in turn has many implications such as misconstruing or misunderstanding the ways of the Blackfoot.

> Where there is a lot of scariness that is used in our spiritual way today, which we adopted from boarding schools, through missionaries and everything. It wasn't a forgiving God that they learned from. All at once it came into this area, where

> they found out there was this forgiving God, but yet what they learned on this end, they took it to this [other] end. I'm using spiritual people [as an example], you don't have the rights; you don't have this, you don't have that; that's what makes it a very unbalanced in life. There are a lot of young people that are so confused about how some of our people talk to them.

In spite of these concerns, Morris is stalwart regarding the continuation of Blackfoot knowledge. He reminded, "Everyone is gifted in a different way. We don't have room to judge. We have to clean your act before you start judging." He sees some of the traditional practitioners as lost and therefore judgmental of others. As a way of dispensing with some of the difficult issues being discussed, Morris sang one of the ancient songs handed down through the generations [Morris sang a spirit-calling song].

LaFromboise reiterated the opinion that the Blackfeet way of learning has been totally disregarded by contemporary society. He talked about how the educational systems of the past had an impact on the Blackfeet situation today.

> Because of what the government, along with other agencies including the federal schools, Catholic schools, systematically rubbed that out. If you didn't think the way that they wanted you to do it, you were beaten, not physically chastised, but hurt; so that you could learn their way, your way was no good. That still surfaces today. That's why a lot of our elders, people that are older then us know the Blackfeet language, but because of the way that they were taught, that respect, they don't teach that to us. That was the mechanism that they tried to yank out of them, so they say "Go to school, learn this way".

Some Pikuni people have been assimilated into the other culture to the point that they question their own traditional ways, asserted Pard. "Once at a sun dance, a guy of our tribe I know questioned our ways. He said Indian religion is an old time way and it's not for us. White superstitions have made this guy think this way, it's not folklore." He went on to tell how the viewpoints of the traditional ways of the Blackfoot have become

dysfunctional. "Some people think there's a genetic link [to medicine bundles]," said Pard and asserted the transfer function as the way to become a "bundle keeper". Accordingly he stated, "Some people maintained bundles and others did not," thus others were participants while some were concerned with only practical things like learning to survive and hunt. According to Pard, some individuals choose a career change and became a spiritual person.

Apparently there are groups on the reservation who blame deaths on the misdeeds of medicine bundle holders. Darnell Rides At The Door provided the following comment:

> What makes us stronger are those kinds of things [criticism]. It will cause us to find what you should do. Nine times out of ten, you make that smudge and you pray, ask for guidance and good decisions. You try to find that balance. It's a never-ending cycle. Sometimes it's not easy. But it's a good life.

These younger medicine bundle holders, like Smokey and Darnell, are confronted with challenges in the current tribal social systems. Some older people will treat them with the traditional respect related to their position of bundle holders, while other older people will actually degrade their status. Smokey provided the following commentary on cultural conflict:

> The learning process that we have had to go through is never ending. The situation is that we are one of only four couples that have this responsibility. It's kind of an up and down situation, you have a lot of older people that respect that. But you do have a lot of older people that don't respect that and they tend to make fun. That's the ups and downs of it. You have older people who will see you in the community and they will treat you like an elder. They'll sit you down, they'll get you coffee, even though they're much older. They'll even feed you, if they have it there.

Smokey recounted some people saying, "Don't deal with that stuff, you're going to get hurt. Things that you don't know, they are going to hurt you." Thus, some people

are so removed from the Blackfeet way of knowing that they can only rely on superstition as imposed from the dominant culture.

One of the difficulties encountered by Smokey is having to do his career as a businessman while being known as a medicine person. This has caused some people, such as tribal council elected officials, to be critical of his dual role. Apparently he had been told that because of his traditional status, he should not be conducting business deals. Although Smokey is able to distinguish the boundaries of his dual role, other people may use his status to prevent his interaction in things like the conduct of business.

Spirituality

George Kicking Woman expressed his faith in the healing powers of the medicine pipe. He gives an example of a young man who was healed of what the medical doctors had diagnosed as the effects of a stroke (apoplexy).

> I really believe it. That boy, something hit him in the back. They cleanse him with the pipe, painted his, face, use the smudge. In three, four days he was all right. I thought that was a miracle. I believe the pipe. What I saw, four or five days after, he seen him and shook hand with him. I said, "How are you?" He said, "I'm all right. I mount my horse, put on a saddle and bridle, I got on and rode. I went out to look for some of my horses."

However, George explained the commencement of the illness in other terms. He recounted the belief of the elders that spirits may cause sickness.

> He said somebody hit him on the back that night when he closed the gate. That's all them people up on them hills. Those are the people that's around there all the time. Right where he lives they buried them people. They die so fast they couldn't take care of them; they couldn't bury them; they didn't even have time to put rocks around their graves. They just lay them up there, a blanket over them. They die so fast. I don't know what kind of sickness they had but everybody's got that. To begin with, when its first

> people that had it, they were in there; just about three, four of them in there. They all camp here and there. Big camp. Everybody pass the word. Somebody's sick over here by me. They all know the old man.

In order to know the Blackfoot people, Little Wolf believes one must examine how they lived over a century ago. He sees this as the basis of gaining an understanding. Nevertheless, Little Wolf is resolute that the God gave the Blackfoot people their way of life.

> We are what the Creator made us, Native American people. We have to go back and talk about the way of our grandfathers, our great grandfathers. When we go back, especially Blackfoot people, which is not very long ago, about one hundred and twenty five years. That's when we had the real traditional root of Creator's gifts. This is where we have to start, by building that foundation of where we come from and what is our root.

There is a divine force present with the bundle keepers, disclosed Little Wolf. He told how that force was present during the tutelage of ceremonial songs by his grandmother.

> Then the old lady, she'd take you in her arms. I don't know how many months she sang me an old song [Little Wolf sang the song here]. There's energy in those songs, meaning keeping up their spirit. They know that the spirits are living with them. Today we put that radio on full blast and forget about who we really are. That way of life was very powerful.

Pard indicated that "we need to keep our feet on the ground. Our old timers say the white man is sometimes too intelligent for their own good." He imparted the idea that the whites are still "trying to conquer from them living in caves". Thus, while the Blackfoot people practice a form of ontological theology, they are pragmatic and do not see a need to apply deductive reasoning to their "way of knowing".

Potts discussed some of the issues related to ceremonial learning, "We need scholars like LeRoy Little Bear and Deloria to argue our point of view. Protect the

integrity of old ways, the traditional things expand our own lives. People benefit from traditional knowledge." He discussed how visions provide meaning that people can't understand and how we need traditional knowledge of the elders to interpret things.

Potts is concerned about viewing Blackfoot knowledge from the white man's point of view. He believes that Blackfoot knowledge should stand on its own and not be examined relative to another belief system such as that of the white man. "The way protocols work, we have to protect what we have. We've been under comparative analysis. It's not given what it should be, it's our own entity, it's our own beliefs."

"My grandfather said 'Stay away. Once you start there's no turning back'," said Potts as he talked about his participation in traditional ceremony, "There's no such thing as being a little bit involved." Potts narrated how he will be transferred a medicine pipe in the near future:

> Been involved twenty years and only now worthy to take it. We're going to take a medicine pipe. The whole house will have to adjust to it. Like when I joined the Horns. The whole house will be affected. Another whole set of protocols. Now our life is at the mercy of a past medicine pipe people.

Potts communicated concern of explaining the knowledge of Blackfoot learning process in terms of the dominant society. He is very worried about maintaining the integrity of the Blackfoot way of knowing in both language and meaning.

> We have traditionalists that have the academic skills and knowledge of traditional Indian protocols in order to maximize learning. But we need to translate the meaning of things in a non-comparative way. We have people like Pete Standing Alone and Andy Blackwater who are old politicians and real traditionalists. They can say, "Look here is an interpretation. These are my people talking about tradition, it's no hookey (colloq.) business."

The concept of what may be called inherent sanctity within a person is discussed by Shade as he related personal experiences. This phenomenon is accepted in native cultures as a part of the way of knowledge.

> Because of the spiritual contact they're told so and so is going to be the one to carry this on. I was kind of born with that idea. I was up in Edmonton one time and the elders were having a ceremony; I just popped in there for a second. Somebody in there wanted me to give them a ride somewhere. The room was quite large; it was a big building. All I did was come in the door where there was a porch and I opened the door into the main area. I asked this person, "Do you still want a ride because I'm heading out now?" She says, "No, my daughter is going to pick up the vehicle." That was about the extent of the conversation and I left. I saw her a few weeks later. These elders where asking her "Who is that young man? What does he have? What does he do? Because when he came in, we could feel (what white people refer to as his aura); we could feel that he's got something with him." She explained to them that I was involved in the medicine pipe. They said "Well, that explains it."

According to Shade, the people in this ceremony were what are called "bush" people in Alberta, who practice their traditional ways. These people could "sense" or "feel" the energy force related to Shade's person-hood as a medicine bundle practitioner. He discussed another example of this type of knowledge:

> I went to a meeting in eastern Canada at Quebec. The same thing [happened]. A bunch of elders, sitting like on a couch; they were having coffee. One fellow was talking, who happened to be from Calgary, I knew the guy. He was talking to them, getting advice and I walked by. The same thing happened. These guys said, "Who's that guy? What does he do? What does he have? Does he practice traditional medicine? Because we can feel that."

Shade realized through these experiences that his grandparents had identified him as the kind of "special" person who has some of the unique qualities inherent to what may be called "medicine people". He described his father experiencing both the Cree and Blackfoot traditional ways. His father gained some of the Cree's cultural ways through

friendship and assistance to them. Shade's father worked with the Cree and the Blackfoot in conducting sweat lodge healing ceremonies. "My father told me, "I had to work to get a lot of this stuff. But for you it's already there; if you really want to polish it then use everything at your disposal," related Shade. His father had equated Shade's inherent "power" as a "diamond in the rough".

Things like prayer and religion are inseparable from ceremonial activities of the Blackfoot. Although the prayers are not universal maxims, it is integral to the everyday life of the Blackfoot ceremonialist. "We pray before we have meals, we pray before doing anything. You run to your elders to get advice," which is a continuing process according to Shade.

Pard transmitted information regarding how learning through the use of the smudge can be instigated. By smudging the ear, the person will be able to hear and retain information that is communicated. In turn, the head and the mouth can be smudged respectively to comprehend and verbalize knowledge. Once again, Pard related how the songs emanate from the genesis accounts, which is the process for knowing what song to use in what part of the ceremony. As a demonstration, he sang a song that comes from the story of Scabby Round Robe, which relates to the beaver bundle.

The holy smoke or big smoke, "comes from that medicine lodge," said Mike Swims Under. Some of the beaver ceremony is used in the ookaan and some of the ookaan rites are used in the beaver ceremony. He talked about an old man who danced in the "sun lodge" and disappeared upward into the sky. Four nights later, he sent four pipes and songs. "That's how we got holy smoke," said Mike. He further related, "He gave

woman's pipe, that how we got women's pipe. That's why woman joined holy smoke; that's why they be in there; that's oo-kaah-pii."

Revitalization

In discussing the Blackfoot, like how the Siksika had come close to losing some of the ceremony, Jerry Potts noted that a 1910 film depicted the tobacco planting ceremony, which is no longer performed. The tobacco planting ceremony is intimately connected to the beaver bundle ceremony. Ceremonies such as the beaver bundle has recently seen a rebirth in the Blackfoot peoples, partly because of the United States Native Repatriation and Graves Act which provides for the return of religious items to Native Americans. "Nobody knows the tobacco planting ceremony," remarked Potts and further stated, "It's like George [Kicking Woman] and Mike [Swims Under], nobody knows as much as them, when they're gone, that's it." Jerry was expressing concern since Mike Swims Under is probably the most knowledgeable man in the Blackfoot nations regarding the beaver bundle and sun dance ceremonies. George Kicking Woman has been one of the elder individuals who have carried on the medicine pipe bundle ceremony. George has been the elder ceremonialist for the medicine pipe bundle ceremony for many of the Blackfoot people. Thus, Potts expressed concern regarding the loss of these great ceremonial leaders and the impact it will have on continuation of the rites. Jerry noted how in some of ceremonies, the learning process is interrelateded such as the Naatoas (sun dance bundle) being intimately connected to the beaver bundle as well as the kano'tsisssiss (smoke ceremony). He spoke about the hundreds of songs connected to the

beaver bundle, which takes a lifetime of learning. Without the two Blackfeet ceremonial leaders, the Blackfoot peoples may be in great jeopardy regarding continuation of the entirety of some ceremonies.

Potts compared the situation to the film where two of the elder ceremonialists had to paint each other as apparently they no longer had any elder whom they could call on to conduct the ceremony. The implication, as it relates to the Blackfoot situation in the 1930's and up to the 1960's, was that there were a very limited number of Blackfoot people who were carrying on the ceremonies. He gave the example of the Siksika or North Blackfoot (near Gleichen, Alberta, Canada) division of the Blackfoot nearly lost all the ceremonies as depicted in the 1910 portion of the film. However, as demonstrated in the restored video tape, the Siksika had been very significant in ceremonial life and medicine bundles in their past history. Jerry discussed how the Siksika were now in the third year of revitalizing some the ceremonies and medicine bundles. Through arrangements with museum collections and elders in other divisions of the Blackfoot, who have retained the knowledge and "rights" to practice the doctrine or the belief systems.

Potts expressed concern over how some current traditional practitioners have drawn barriers that are not following the respect and protocol of the past. But Potts communicated hope by saying, "We have to use each others' strengths and learn from weakness. We share many things." He gave an example of how George Kicking Woman transferred the medicine pipe bundle and Mike Swims Under the beaver ceremony to Alan Pard since they knew he could sing. Potts demonstrated how the Southern Piegan

worked with the North Peigan to continue ceremonial practices. "We're all Siksiikaisittaapii" remarked Potts, as he used the word that includes all the Blackfoot peoples. The sharing concept between the Blackfoot will be continued by Pard performing transfer ceremonies for the Siksika as they begin their traditional ceremonial renewal process.

In discussing some of the various ceremonial functions that are being done outside of Blackfoot orthodoxy, Potts expressed concern about the rise of pan-Indianism. "Answers are in real people, with us it wasn't meant to be easy. Like drummers, they were past medicine pipe holders. That's how times have changed," as he related the subject of pan-Indianism to ceremonial drummers who have not learned the ceremonial way through proper protocol.

Potts gave some examples of the kinds of research in the past that had both merit and yet questionable elements. He related how Duvall's writings were "on track," yet Schultz had some undesirable characteristics. However, he felt that Duvall's works are exciting material and he recommended that those interested read the original manuscripts such as those in the Glenbow Museum in Calgary. "He wrote ceremonies in pretty good detail. There's meaning behind everything. There are elders around that know what's going on. We don't known some things but these elders can guide you." Potts also spoke of Blackfoot material in the Hudson Bay literature at Winnipeg, as well as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police archives in Regina.

Smokey Rides At The Door spoke about the present generation of new medicine bundle holders not having the former generation teaching them. It seems that a generation

of teachers has been skipped. Related to this situation, Smokey noted the difficulty of having "distractions" which the older generation may not be confronted with in the learning process.

> But in time, the way that the process had been delivered before, there wasn't the gaps that we have now. Look at the age of George and Molly, eighty some years old and us coming in at the late forties. There should be a generation of sixty-year-olds that are in there that are actually in our position. But, because we seen that void, we sat in for years as participants as people sitting on the sides; watching and trying to interpret it became a necessity by which we took that big leap. It's difficult because the parents that should be there; uncles that should be there, the relations that should be there, taking the time to teach us for another ten or fifteen years, we don't have that opportunity. We need to able to step within the next few years and be able to take over process.
>
> It's difficult because as a sixty-year-old you don't have the distractions you have as a young forty-five. As an eighty-year-old you've begun to concentrate on just those types of things.

The positive thing in this situation, according to Smokey, is the fact that the middle-aged people are supporting a revitalization of the language and the culture. In addition, this has caused some of the older people to come forth and support learning with heretofore withheld information. "Which is good, because the more things that we can hear, we can interpret through our learning; the easier it is apply it to what we were taught," commented Smokey.

Smokey asserted the belief that this revitalization movement of culture and language had caused some of the older people to be able to deal with conflicting belief systems. "When you have older people die, the first things their families want to do is tradition. They want to have part of the funeral traditional." He noted the positive aspect

of the return to using cultural ways in funerary ritual, while feeling unfortunate for the loss of the dead person's traditional knowledge.

In the discussion, Smokey related some of the varying opinions regarding integration of traditional ceremonial ways into the dominant society's religious practices. He feels that the religious practices of the different cultures should not be blended. Smokey is adamant about maintaining the integrity of the traditional Pikuni ways. "Our learning process tells us that to be comfortable with what we have, we first have to accept what we are," commented Smokey as he discussed issues related to cultural identity and individual internal conflict regarding religiosity.

The concern regarding some knowledgeable people practicing ancestral ways while integrating outside customs is of concern to Smokey. He feels they are akin to lawbreakers.

> It's surprising to see some of our traditional people and their children, because their children have assumed that position in that society. What is also difficult to see is a lot of our traditional leaders and their children really going outside the realm of that. But [saying] it's all right because I'm traditional. I can't really buy that. Trying to take the best of both worlds and combining them into one that says now I can either make or break the law. Those people are going to have trouble.

Smokey revealed the observation that people seem to be influenced by the fact that they had a medicine bundle. He believes that their actions to become medicine people have demonstrated leadership, which has created a new group of people now willing to consider practicing the old ways. This opinion is substantiated through the number of people who have expressed a desire to learn or obtain assistance from the medicine bundle. "I think our people have become followers as a result of those ration

days. As long as somebody is willing to jump in there and begin some new cycle there's those followers are going to be coming in," surmised Smokey.

In relating to the idea of learners being confronted with too many activities such as work, which limits the time they can spend with ceremonial learning, Beverly Hungry Wolf responded: "It's just a cheap excuse. In the old days, survival and trying to make a living was even harder than it is today". However, she did concede that there are probably more "distractions" in contemporary times, which may effect the learner. Hungry Wolf contended that bundle ownership is an alternative life-style, which is a matter of choice.

> If you decide to live with sacred bundles, it's up to you how you take care of them. If you really want to know how to take care of them properly, you might be told to go live quietly somewhere, like we were told. We wanted to live somewhere quietly. If you know, I was married to a white man. For a white man to get involved in our culture he had to perform at a better rate than your actual Indians. The things that the old people put Adolph through, they didn't put the young Indian boys through. Adolph was really used by the old people to wake up our young people.

Beverly stated in the former times people lived together in what she calls "camp life," so ceremonial learning was more accessible. Because of all the distractions in current times, she supports the idea of writing ceremonial sequence and audio recording of the teachings. "Your mind is competing with all kinds of other things like radio, television, books." However, the bundle keeper has a choice:

> It's up to you how you want to take care your bundle. If you just want to have a bundle hanging in your house, you can do that. But if you really want to learn the ceremonies, there's certain things you're going to have to give up. Like I gave up living among people. I gave up having TV; I gave up modern conveniences to learn the ceremony. I feel that I learned it fairly well.

Morris Little Wolf expressed a concern regarding the loss of traditional ways. He spoke of some of the things like songs that are no longer used, but he is grateful for the people who do carry on the songs.

> There is beautiful songs that I know, I learned them as a boy, I don't hear them anymore. It makes the community happy to hear those songs. Today you hear some of them that's still alive are thousands and thousands of years old. I think people that know these songs are very proud of them.

Morris is troubled about people deviating from the traditional ways because of their lack of knowledge. He articulated how important it is to ethically practice ancestral customs. The integration of other religion into the traditional ceremonial practices of the Blackfoot is an issue of concern.

> I'm not a person to judge because we're not made out to judge one another. But, what we have to do is to correct some of our mistakes that we're doing. One elder told me, "In our language, you speak the truth to this generation and they'll carry it to the future. But, if you have to say a lie, that's what they're going to carry into the future." It's important, that honesty. If we don't know it, we just be honest about it. Rather then making new laws. You can see a lot of those laws that are used today in some areas. They took the religious part of different cultures and put it into spiritual way.

Reggie Crowshoe is concerned about the young people understanding and preserving the traditional knowledge of the Blackfoot. He shared, in story form, the "pitfalls" of young people practicing Blackfoot ceremony without following learning process:

> Let's say if we took a white kid into our native community and we said, "This white kid doesn't really know about his world." He just knows about Indian world. He knows this world good. He thinks like Mike 'cause we've trained him so good; we took him into our world but he doesn't know that [other] world too much. So I say, "I pity you, you're a white kid, you should know some of your world." Then I would say, "You know, in your world they have institutions called education institutions." "All I know

> about is," I would say, "they have people dressed in black robes and black hats and different color bands and it means something; but they are powerful people. I don't know how, but they can stop a train dead on the tracks. I don't know how they do it, but they can do it. That's how powerful they are; that's how you would learn here."
>
> You get a chance to go back home to your white reserve, or white community from the reserve, and you come back there with robes and this black hat to show your white friends that you are a professor. Your white friends will think, "Whoa, you must be pretty smart. You left, you came back, you're a professor. You're wearing those robes. You're educated." You're saying, "Yeah, I got power, I can stop a train on the tracks." So your white friends will say, "Okay, prove to us you can stop a train on the tracks." If you don't know how to do it, you're going to think, "They know this is power, this black robe and this flat hat. I don't know how the heck to stop a train on tracks. I guess we got power so he'll stop 'em." Stand on the tracks and put his hand out. The train will hit him, run him right over and kill him.

Crowshoe used this story to demonstrate how perceptions of power can be misconstrued when the proper learning process is not followed. It also illustrates differences between cultures and how they may perceive accessing knowledge. Reggie further characterized how the reverse situation can happen when the native youth is educated in the white institutions and returns to obtain ceremonial knowledge.

> Our kids are taken by white communities and they're taught; white communities teach our kids whatever they know about Indian people and they talk about power. That kid might have lived good in a white community; in this community he might live really good! He comes back to our world and he says, "I got a bundle, and I can stop a train and lightning will come out of my fingers and it will stop because I've got power". But he doesn't have Mike's knowledge to say, in our ceremonies, this is how we do things. So when those kids try to make this kid prove he's as strong as Mike, this guy will kill himself proving it. This is where I'm saying we gotta put this information in acceptable [ways], understandable for these young kids to know there is a route.

The hope expressed by Crowshoe is that the young ceremonial learners will follow the proper learning process. He further believes that ways of knowledge can be

obtained from both the native and the non-native dominant society. "Those are the kinds of parallels I want to find to make our young people say, I could be just as strong in my culture as I could be in the white man world. Because if they can do that, then we're gonna save our culture."

Understanding the basics as explained by Crowshoe is the pathway to Blackfoot ceremonial knowledge. He believes that young learners need to be provided the opportunity to learn the basics. Furthermore, once the essential aspects are understood, Crowshoe feels that the learner can proceed in an almost self-guided manner. But, the challenge of learning Blackfoot ceremony is hindered by the current situation of rising pan-Indianism. "Our world view and ideals is not powwowing. People around the world think that powwow is our sacred ceremony and our worldview, which it's not. We've got to put the real thing back". According to Crowshoe, learning the "real thing" means helping young learners to access the traditional teaching process and allowing learning interaction at the appropriate levels. "I think we need help from the guys that are just getting bundles and running ceremonies. We need help from them, but we also need help from both sides," said Crowshoe regarding using knowledge from both worlds to enhance learning Blackfoot ceremonial orthodoxy. "We're going to have to justify both to make things real. And to me, I value education as much as bundle repatriation."

Language

According to Hungry Wolf, the language has an influence on the learning process. She feels that the learner doesn't grasp the full implications of ceremonial knowledge

without knowing the language. However, ceremonial learning can still take place but the learner may not obtain the full meaning of things.

> I've always felt it, but I've never been able to articulate it in a very satisfactory way for myself this bond between the language and culture. It's really intertwined. You can definitely learn ceremonies without knowing the language, but I feel that you miss a lot.

Regarding the use of the Blackfoot language, Virgil Bullshoe conveyed that it is important to pray in the native tongue. He understands the language but has some difficulties in speaking. "My holy mother and my mom pray totally different" than what he hears from most people who use the language. Virgil remarked that owning the bundle has caused him to improve his language skills. Knowing the language helps in learning songs through word association, according to Bullshoe. He gave an example of one bundle holder who developed his language skills from very short prayers in the beginning to where he now vocalizes lengthy invocations.

Reg Crowshoe believes learners must be intimately involved with the ceremonialists and medicine bundle holders in order to know the ritual process of the Blackfoot. Although he envisions all young Pikuni having knowledge of both the dominant society and the Blackfoot belief systems, he asserted that earnest commitment to ceremonial learning process is imperative.

> They've got to know how to speak Blackfoot, they've got to know how the ceremonies run, they've got to be in the ceremonies, they got to start helping, and work their way up. And learn Blackfoot and work their way up and experience it. That's the only way they're going to learn this.

Terminology is important in ceremonial learning, commented Pard. He gave an example of some of the terminology used as it relates to the sweat lodge ceremony.

> In the sweat, the water used on the rocks is a water smudge called saa ama too see or mata too see ama too see, which teaches us it's an incense. The clay trail in the sweat is of white clay which is the Wolf Trail, or moko koo see wai, or the Milky Way. These take your prayers to the above.

Jerry Potts expressed concern regarding maintaining the integrity of the Blackfoot way of knowing, both in language and meaning. His concern related more to the loss of meaning due to explaining things from the dominant society's belief system, than the literal language translation. According to Potts, there are respected ceremonial elders who are adept at explaining the Blackfoot way of knowledge.

In referencing words used in the beaver songs that Mike Swims Under sang in his interview, he gave as an example the beaver pipe song, which says, "(My pipe holy)". Although Mike was not comfortable translating or talking about the words in the holy songs, he validated their presence. Mike shared some of the words used in ceremony songs and prayers. These included spoom-mii-taa-pii (above spirit people); saa-que-ta-pii (underwater spirits); saa-koom-mii-taa-pii (earth spirits) and naa-taa-wee-taa-pii (holy spirits). The saa-koom-mah-kayii is the white swan and the matsi'sai'piyi is the loon.

Philosophy

In order to understand the Blackfoot "world view" Reggie Crowshoe used the story telling method of communicating information. Reggie demonstrated how the Blackfoot can apply ceremony to a practical application of knowledge that is integrated from another culture.

> Bear Child went to the North Saskatchewan River by Edmonton to trade with the Hudson Bay fur traders and he traded with a white man by the name of Henry Henday. Now Henry Henday spoke English. It was his

> culture that invented the rifle and he can document the instructions and use of a rifle on paper, which is a total different culture. Bear Child, on the other hand, spoke Blackfoot, believed in Creator and his ceremonies in an oral culture. See there's two different cultures meeting. Bear Child, with the use of an interpreter, started a ceremony. He made a smudge. Once he made a smudge and a prayer, and then he asked the interpreter to start interpreting the instructions for loading up that rifle. And as he did that, they went through the actions and he interpreted it into Blackfoot, those instructions. When he was all done, he made another smudge and he finished the ceremony. Bear Child created ceremony, an oral cultural traditional process of documenting information through ceremony. He developed that; I mean, he didn't develop it, but that was his way of documenting. And that's what he put that information in. And when he came home, each of the warriors that he gave a rifle to had to go through transfer. He had to put the smudge on and then he had to go through instructions. He gave it to each warrior and each warrior went and took it; then they got their rifle and then they finished off the transfer with a smudge. So the warrior at that point said, "I have a rifle and I have a transfer right which is knowledge and they come to me through a process called ceremony."

Reggie considers ceremony as the way of "documenting" oral tradition. He used the above narration to demonstrate how the Blackfoot utilized "learning process" as a way of validation.

> We might call it a ceremony, and to this day Billy Gun can sing you song for song, word for word, from 1750 to now. I think that's important. That's where he brought the first rifle and the first ceremony. Now look at the sun dance ceremony; we're shooting rifles. It's made its whole journey in.

Crowshoe demonstrated that ceremony is way of transmitting knowledge, especially using the "transfer" function. He presented an interesting proposition that practical application of technology was conveyed through the ceremonial process:

> I think if we look at the reason why I used Bear Child's story is to say Bear Child went from the Indian side to the white man side, took the information in Indian process and brought it back. We barely see that today. Today we mainly see the white man side and anthropologists using white man process going over to take Indian information and putting it back into white process; that's what we are familiar with today. We never

> see Bear Child's side where he went over and used Indian process to bring white information back. So this is where Mike [Swims Under] would say, "I don't know too much about the white man process of collecting and documentation, but on the Indian side, I know because I know the process." That's how I would understand how Mike and Bear Child are so close where others are starting to jump at gaps. So the other thing I look at is Bear Child used his Indian process to document white instruction of a rifle or a white man invention.

Crowshoe presented a grid of concentric circles in order to demonstrate the Blackfoot concept of knowledge moving from basic information to higher levels of learning. The grid or template depicts the Blackfoot camp circle with four concentric circles of tepees within each of four areas around a common center. Each of the four concentric circles represents progressive levels of knowledge starting from the outer ring. The center embodies the ultimate of knowledge sought in the learning process. Crowshoe explained the symbolic template as follows: a) the outer circle of white tepees represents the basic informational level; b) within the second inner circle, from the outside, are the painted tepees whose owners are involved in minor transfers; c) the third inner circle contains the societies and d) the fourth level holds the medicine bundle keepers. The middle of the circle represents the medicine lodge. Crowshoe explained the model as follows:

> Our traditional theory would say, if you look at a camp, let's use the sun dance camp as an example. One of the things I have observed at sun dance camp are concepts; this kind of concept. If you look at old pictures of sun dances, all the white tepees are out here [outer circle]; and then the next row [second from the outside] coming in seems to be all the painted tepees.

The third level on the inside of the circle is the societies, said Crowshoe. This is where the individuals become members of the societies either through capture or

voluntary initiation. The society teaches the individual the protocol of ceremonial life. At this level the learner obtains knowledge about the conduct of ceremony.

> Painted tepees seem to be in the next row [third circle from the outside]. The next row I see coming into sun dances and from stories and ceremonies that I've heard would be say, there'll be a ring here to say there's a big camp here for the Brave Dogs. Maybe the veterans might have a teepee here; maybe the Horns might have a teepee here; maybe the tsis-tsi-ks, or Little Birds, might have a teepee here. Those are the societies.

The fourth interior circle of tepees in the Crowshoe model represents the medicine bundle owners. At this level the bundle keeper becomes intimately involved in obtaining knowledge relevant to the enactment of ceremony.

> In from those, would be medicine pipe people, sun dance people; bundles or beavers would camp in that inner circle [fourth level]. And then the sun dance lodge and the sun dance teepee [middle or center of the circle].

The interior of the circle is the ultimate of higher knowledge where a voluminous amount of information comes together in the hierarchy of ceremony. The bundle keepers and society members participate in the various levels of the medicine lodge ceremonies. The interior teepee is occupied by the vow makers and those former holy people who have all the rights of transfer relevant to the highly secretive rites within the lodge. Much of the ceremony involves some of the songs and rites of the beaver bundle, which means those bundle keepers, are closely involved in the medicine lodge ceremonies.

The depiction by Crowshoe was used to demonstrate the concept of levels of knowledge, which can be compared to the grade system of schooling used in contemporary society. Like the grade system, some knowledge must be obtained at certain levels before one can effectively proceed to understand the next echelon.

> Let's say, for example, in western world, if you want to recognize western world view, you got to learn your elementary. If you don't learn that elementary language, reading, writing where do you belong in the classroom, if you don't learn those elementary, you'll never understand that. This is what Mike [Swims Under] is saying, if you don't know your language, your songs, your ceremonies, you'll never make it to this worldview.

In order to understand how the model fits with the Blackfoot social structure as it relates to the belief system, Crowshoe introduced the band concept. During the teepee days, the Blackfoot people lived and traveled in extended family groups that are now commonly called bands. The bands came together usually in the summer for ceremonial purposes such as the sun dance. Each band camped within a certain area of the sun dance circle area. Naturally within each band there were people who are bundle holders, society members, painted teepee owners, and minor transfer owners. Crowshoe's template then had an overlay of band groups that overlapped the four concentric circles in a designated area for each band. The overlay template was used to show that the same learning process occurred within each band as within the overall model. Crowshoe related how the Blackfoot way of knowing can now be understood from an individual point of view within the model:

> That's why we look at saying this is a template we have to look at the world by. One of the things we looked at was how the bands fit together. Indian Days [encampment celebrations] today, the clans and bands still sort of camp the same place. They have their own areas. Even when you go to sun dances, these are bands that move in with their own levels of people in their bands. When they all come together this is how they camp. Mike would say, "I'm from this band and this is were we camp. This is where I learned all the way from creation to bundle creation to being part of the societies, running sun dances and eventually having a sun dance. This is the way I come in, but my band was part of here."

Understanding the metaphor of the circle is imperative to Blackfoot way of knowledge. Crowshoe sees the camp and teepee circle allegory as introductory knowledge to the worldview of the Blackfoot. Crowshoe used the term "play with it" as a way to demonstrate that one has gained the rights and privileges through the rite of transfer to interact at a certain level of knowledge.

> Now you, you play with that, and as you play with it, you understand, you're understanding your elementary basics. It's like going to elementary school. Once we learned this practical circle, then we can start understanding as we're going. I think this is where understanding, this playing concept, Bear Child took this concept, used it to go document the rifle and bring it back. The guy that brought the thunder medicine pipe bundle came out to the outside of camp and he said, "Give me a sweat, I'll talk to you about this." Once we understand it, it finally came in. The woman and the man came with the sun dance, came back to camp in creation, said give me a sweat, knowing that, then they came in. And the beaver bundle. They all had to learn this to document that information and bring it in. So this I would identify as process to understand our world.
>
> This is what I would say our worldview is: to understand our worldview, you have to understand first the circle, then moving in. Whether if it's a rifle being brought in, whether it's a thunder medicine pipe being brought in.

In essence, Crowshoe believes that the symbolic concentric circle grid of tepees overlaid by social groupings represents the process of learning in the Blackfoot way. He was careful to qualify the concept as preparatory knowledge, which can be a methodology to understand the composition of learning process. Crowshoe used the model to demonstrate how a senior Blackfoot elder would process information from another culture. He reinforced the idea that new knowledge can be processed through the Blackfoot "rite of transfer" ceremony which "documents" the information for future generations. A concern was expressed by Crowshoe regarding individuals not

understanding this "way of knowing" which in turn causes some to "skip" a level of processing information which has implications of disconcert.

> Mike Swims Under understands his world. If he's going to understand vehicles, then he has to understand it from here [the circle template] and bring it into his mind. If he had to understand schooling, education, he had to understand it like this and then bring it into his world. If he had to understand government and politics, he had to understand it in this first process and then bring it in. That's why he's so smart, because he was taught the basics and he can keep his worldview; that's how he thinks. Others weren't taught this; if they'll understand it from here [the template] and eventually be masters of that rifle. If they're going to understand a vehicle [structure], they have to start [outer circle of the template], until they master that vehicle. With Mike, it's from here in [outer circle], with others it's from here [outer circle] to there [skipping to the inner circle]. I would say, in this process, the classroom, the structure and the participation is the process. In this process the teepee, the bundle, and the people are the basics of process. Once you can grasp that, you can bring it in the rest of the way. It's just teaching elementary basics.

Crowshoe provided an analogy of the elder being comparable to a graduate committee. The elder "validates" the progress of the learner through the process or "practice" of learning. The learner is only allowed to function within the boundaries established through knowledge and parameters established by the rite of transfer. "Mike [Swims Under] is like a professor. Mike is allowing you to play [interact] with it [knowledge] by giving you this information." Once the learner understands the "structure and learning" process, Crowshoe conveyed that the elder will "move you up the ladder" to the next level of knowledge through the rite of transfer.

> Mike would say it this way, "Here's research, I'm giving it to you in a ceremony. Now you sit holy with it because I'm just giving you the information. Don't change any, don't ever change anything in that ceremony. Don't add to it, you just take the transfer and sit holy with it and help people. I'll tell you how to run it." Only after you transfer on to somebody else, then you can be creative with it. So Mike can be creative,

> because he's already transferred on, but while he was a bundle owner, he just had to sit holy with it, he couldn't be creative.

Information is processed through the "world view" of the Blackfoot learner said Crowshoe. "That's how I was raised and taught in this way. That's my world view that I understand the world in." In relating how he processes information, Crowshoe commented, "So somebody taught me something in here [non-Blackfoot], I've got to jump over here [Blackfoot world view] and digest it, to really understand it. If I'm going to say something in here [non-Blackfoot], I've got to jump into here [Blackfoot] and tell these guys what I'm saying."

Protocol is vitally important to the learning process in Blackfoot ceremony. Not following the proper proprieties in the learning process as outlined by Crowshoe can lead to misguided assumptions. He provided the following analogy of a native person assuming non-native knowledge:

> Let's say, if I didn't speak English, and I come to white man's world, and I say, you know this is an educational institute, maybe college. Now these guys have a big ceremony every year and they wear these gowns and flat hats and different colors. I observed, and I'll be speaking in Blackfoot for example, that man sitting right on that stage with all his partners are dressed in those black gowns and different colors and hats; those guys make a good living. All the masses of people honor them because they are leaders. Then I would say, if I can get a black robe and a hat, I could sit up there. Without going through the basics, what if I got one and I'm sitting up there, I'm the guy here, I'm the Ph.D.

Crowshoe used this misguided assumption about mere participation in ceremony as a way to obtain knowledge. A comparison is used to demonstrate how some native people may assume status without going through the process as illustrated in the concentric teepee learning model.

> It's sad to say when people end up with bundles and cultural materials, that swings them straight to the center, without knowing this. That's what is hard for our people. They're wanting to start here [center of learning model] and come out. Where Mike started here [outside edge of the teepee circle] and came in. If you visit somebody that starts here [center of the circle], he's going to start talking to you about sacred stories. The most sacred stuff he'll come out and tell you information this way. But the guy that was taught here [outside the circle] coming in, would start teaching you from here [outer ring of circle] for you to understand.

Crowshoe used this situation to indicate his concern about Blackfoot people obtaining medicine bundles without going through the process and procedures of learning which comes before that level of knowledge. He indicated how someone going to these bundle holders for information would obtain a segmented version of the way of knowing.

> So let's say I got a bundle, from the museum, and then I got it without being transferred but then later on having it transferred to me. Now, I just got it like that. You came to see me to talk to me about your research, I would start saying, "You know these are sacred stories" and you'd sing these songs this way and "Let's make a smudge here; this is sacred topic, etcetera". I'm talking about sacredness coming, I'm talking about philosophy coming out. Whereas somebody that was taught here (teepee learning process model), like Mike, that goes the other way would talk to you about the basics. [They] would come back and say, "You learn these things and come back to me and I'll verify." That's the difference of finding people on reserves today. Those are the two hardest [things] that I have a hard time with.

The personal decision to move into the center circle of higher learning in the Blackfoot way is an issue of contention for Crowshoe. He related his own reluctance to assume a role that he may not be ready to accept:

> I hesitate to move into here, I really hesitate. I want to stay out of it until the time I'm ready to do it, but I'm not ready now. I've gone through holding bundles and I've gone through societies. I've gone through these transfers and I'm still making my way in there. When I feel I'm ready, I'm going to take it. But, I don't want to be forced into it, to start doing things, running ceremonies, when I'm not ready.

To further clarify the idea of role assumption in Blackfoot learning process, Crowshoe expanded on the comparison of someone assuming the role of a professor:

> It's like I'm telling you, I want you to start running classes, when you don't even have your master's degree. What are the masters [college professors] going to think? Those are some of the ways I would look at. But the guy that says, "I got from the museum these gowns and this hat and educational outfit. I'll run in there and run a class. And you say, "You know, that guy doesn't have education, yet he's running classes".

In order to understand the Blackfoot worldview, Crowshoe shared some related concepts of reality and spiritual being. He presented the concepts in the form of genesis metaphor.

> In his book, Percy Bullchild talks about when Creator put those two snakes [on earth]. He put two snakes on the world and they overran the world. He then killed them off and all he saved was two small snakes to say in the future we would have snakes. That might be one of his first mistakes. The second time he was going to make a creation, so he doesn't have to kill them all off. He said, "I'm not just going to take action." This is what I hear from the old timers, the old man [Reggie's father] when he talks to me about creation. The Creator said, "I'm not going to make a mistake the second time. I'm not going to take dirt and do this and make it come alive because it will overrun the world like the snakes did." So when Creator made his second creation, his second creation was first abstract, wisdom, knowledge, honor, dishonor, lying, truth, respect, disrespect, all of that He thought of. Once he thought about all that, that information became abstract.

Once the ability to reason is conceptualized in origination, then humanity is created. In addition, Crowshoe explained how genesis of the Blackfoot brings rationality and spirituality together by "naming" the people.

> That abstract information became what we call shadow or mottakkis [spirit?]. When He came back and he took the dirt like he did with the snakes and put life into it, then he put the human being in. So once he had this shadow or the abstract information and the physical being come together. The point of coming together is where Niitsitapi, where Real People [Blackfoot] come from; that's where creation is.

The ability to reason provides humanity the choice to create practical application of knowledge. The nature of being in the Blackfoot way of knowing is authenticated through action or ceremony.

> So now we look at this process, the concept of idea comes in and the process comes together. Mandate and process. This is a venue that's used to create real thought, Niitsitapi thought, that's where Creator created Niitsitapi. Because this ceremony or process brings together an abstract and a physical component to make it real; that's how the Creator make us.

The epistemology of the Blackfoot way is now synthesized in Crowshoe's discussion on the nature of being. The metaphysical and physical relationship to spirituality through action creates the quality of being for the Blackfoot.

> For me to understand the circle, that's how the old man explained it to me. He said, "This circle isn't holy, but what is holy is this physical being and this shadow being. These two are holy." But the venue is a practice to bring those two together. My conclusion, my thought to do something is holy; my picking up the hammer and nail to build it was holy but putting it together was the actual ceremony of building it. I put my thought and I put my action into place and I built something and it became real. Maybe a birdhouse I built, but it became real before my eyes. Making it real is the process of practical. That's where the old man told me, "In order to understand this, you got to go back to understanding creation, when he created people and why they're real."

Crowshoe believes that ceremonies represent the development of norms, standards and laws that have become a part of the Blackfoot way of knowledge. He used the example of the "sacred vision" being taught to others through ceremony which becomes a norm. "It's like Bear Child bringing back the rifle, and everybody's amused at the rifle; but they weren't sure about the ceremony, so it was a norm," said Crowshoe. He articulated how the transfer ceremony became a standard that was officially accepted by the Blackfoot people as whole:

> When the community uses it [ceremony] and accepts it, it became law. So you're setting your norms, standards and laws. Every year when the thunder medicine pipe bundles open their ceremony, it's renewing those laws.

Crowshoe believes that the non-Indian society is wrong when they argue that native people did not document their laws.

> We still run these ceremonies from ancient times to now that still justify these laws, This is the first story in the vision and the ceremony. Once you put it together with the song and your belief in the ceremony, then it becomes a standard; then it finally becomes a law. It started from a simple thing where a guy left camp and came back with a vision -- dream. Then eventually it became part of our laws. Our laws define us; our laws are principles that define our environment and where we live, that define our world. That's what our laws are. All of those laws become our principles of practice; our ceremonies. I think that's what is important. That's looking at it from a Blackfoot mind frame.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Research

This study used the qualitative research methodology to interview members of the Blackfoot Confederacy to determine learning processes related to their ceremonial activities. The research was inspired by the researcher's years of experience as a participant observer of the complex rituals conducted in tribal ceremonies. The inspiration was bolstered by adult educators such as Brookfield (1986), who revealed that little is known about the learning styles of different culture groups. "Even within North American culture, the empirical accuracy of generalizations about adult learning principles is highly questionable in that we have few studies of the learning styles of Native Americans" (p. 33).

Although little has been published, the literature discloses that Native people in the Americas are beginning to examine their own ways of learning. The Four Worlds Project of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, in the early 1980's, worked with Native people including the Blackfoot to document ways in which they could use indigenous concepts to ameliorate Native community social maladies such as alcoholism and chemical dependency. Judie and Michael Bopp (1985) collaborated with Lee Brown and Phil Lane to identify things such as Native ways of knowing, which could be used in assisting indigenous people to find "meaning" in their quest for "health, well-being" of

"individuals and communities" (p. 20). Their work followed a movement by Native people in United States and Canada, during the 1970's, to deal with the issue of alcohol abuse that had plagued them since the arrival of the white man. In 1993, the Nechi drug and alcohol recovery programs in Alberta, Canada hosted "A World Indigenous Conference: Promoting Addiction Free Lifestyles". In that conference, attended by over three thousand indigenous people throughout the world, the participants discussed using their own concepts and beliefs in recovering from addictions. In 1999, the World Indigenous Conference on Education, held in Hilo, Hawaii, found Native people again discussing how they could use their own ways of knowing to preserve and continue such things as language and culture.

These social movements by Native people of the Americas and the world to find answers to their disadvantaged social/economic situation, corresponds with Native adult learners seeking higher education as way to understand and find meanings in their lives. Native students in master and doctoral programs at Montana State University are finding literature on individuals such as Miles Horton (Adams, 1975) and Paulo Freire (1985), who are able to articulate the situation of oppressed people in a way that conceptualizes the disadvantaged conditions.

Doctoral students at Montana State University, including Rowland (1994), St. Pierre (1996), Still Smoking (1997), Real Bird (1997) and Harrison (1997), provided access to ways in which Native Americans in Montana could use research to examine Native knowledge. The qualitative research methodology used by these scholars acknowledged their tribes as having a knowledge base that has been largely disregarded

in the search for truth. The qualitative research methodology as embraced by Guba (1978), Morgan (1988), Patton (1990), Creswell (1994), and others provides a means for scholars to study the intellect of groups of people whose way of knowledge is difficult to express.

Most importantly, this study reveals how some Blackfoot people learn the complicated ceremonial rituals. The story is told through their words, which can provide some insight into this group of tribal people's way of knowing.

Conclusions

Divination Process of Learning

> I conclude, that Blackfoot learning process includes the phenomenon of learning through dreams and visions.

In Blackfoot learning processes, dreams and supernatural experiences are ways in which some of the individuals obtain "power" or the "right" to render certain rituals. It is my conclusion that the spirit in a dream is teacher who provides the learner with specified ceremonial practices. It is my conclusion that phenomenon of a "spiritual helper" assists the ceremonial learner in the learning process.

Motivational Process of Learning

> I conclude that Blackfoot ceremony learning process is conducive to formulating a learning environment where individuals may self-actualize.

The Blackfoot ceremonial learning process provides the learner self-esteem and self-worth. Dreams provide reinforcement or "inspiration" to continue the ceremonial learning process. Dream and vision learning experiences enhance self esteem and bolster

motivation to learn. The learning process involves encouragement by elders to concentrate on the process and not on the feelings of self-consciousness. This provides a sense of worthiness and privilege to be treated so well by the elders.

Memory Association Learning Process

> I conclude that Blackfoot ceremonial learning process includes associating past information and connecting the new information with prior knowledge, which then enhances memory.

Learning process in Blackfoot ceremony, is a concrete sequential procedure that "chunks" information. Recalling a dream experience is a way of "remembering" and providing "meaning" to some of the ceremonialists. Blackfoot learning process in experiential learning is by way of association. In Blackfoot learning, memory is enhanced by "association and networking with previously acquired knowledge". In Blackfoot learning process, the elders take special note of association of information in the mentoring process with participant observation activities. This provides the learner a way to comprehend and retain ceremonial process.

Visual and Auditory Learning Process

> I believe the descriptive narrative style of learning reinforces the preference for visual and auditory learning process.

Blackfoot learning processes uses "eye-minded" learning. The story telling method of learning provides voice inflections that reflects "ear minded" learning. The colorful story telling, coupled with the ceremonial reenactment, demonstrates the utilization of visualization learning process in Blackfoot ceremony. The graphic retelling

of dreams reinforces the idea of visual learning. The process of experiential learning emphasis is upon the development of visual and auditory skills.

Mentoring and Facilitation Learning Process

I conclude that mentoring and facilitation are a part of the learning processes in Blackfoot ceremony.

In Blackfoot learning process, the student/instructor relationship is that of a mentor and self-directed learner. The mentor facilitates the learning process for the student by helping the student to achieve understanding and knowledge through association and metaphor. I conclude that most of the elders used a facilitative type of learning process with the learner. Learning process includes dialogue and interaction between the ceremonial learner and an experienced teacher. I conclude that Blackfoot learning process uses the facilitative style of helping the learner to obtain information through utilization of analysis and logic. Though mentor facilitators guide the process, the student seeks knowledge from other "experts" who use the non-direct learning process through a helper role.

Rite of Passage Learning Process

I conclude that Blackfoot ceremonial learning process includes a rite of passage before an individual can obtain certain kinds of knowledge.

Participant-Observation Learning Process

I conclude that much learning process in Blackfoot ceremony is through participant observation of ceremonies.

The learners gained knowledge of proper protocol and procedure in ceremony through participant observation. The environment and situation in experiential learning is a major consideration in Blackfoot ceremonial learning process.

Process of "Learning How to Learn"

> I conclude that ceremonial learning process begins with childhood development practices in the family.

Family values, mores, norms, folkways and beliefs are important to ceremonial learning as it prepares individuals for the kinds of behaviors associated with such things as respect and reverence for the medicine bundles. Blackfoot ceremonial learning process includes parental modeling behavior in preparation for mentoring. I conclude that Blackfoot ceremonial learning process includes "bonding" between the learner and the parent or grandparent mentor. Socialization and social structure are important to Blackfoot learning process especially as it relates to childhood experiences. I conclude that institutional learning has a negative effect on ceremonial learning process. I conclude that cultural learning process values, through Blackfoot ceremony, are surviving the onslaught of "invasion" by other cultures. I conclude that allowing the child to reenact ceremony through play reinforces the learning process. The concept of "learning how to learn" is applicable children who observe Blackfoot ceremony.

Inductive Reasoning Process of Learning

> I conclude that Blackfoot ceremonial learning process is a global concept of learning that integrates information through a collection of organized thought, principles and language.

I conclude the Blackfoot ceremonial learning process includes the concept of holistic or global learning especially when used to connect the genesis accounts to ceremony. I conclude that Blackfoot learning process includes "cognitive, affective and physiological" traits interacting simultaneously with the ceremonial learners.

Cognitive Process of Learning

I conclude critical thinking is inherent in ceremonial learning process.

Teaching through story telling and mentoring uses metaphor and facilitation as a way of learning, which requires the learner to use, thought processes in order to attain understanding and meaning. Learning process includes utilization of critical thinking skills to examine phenomenon to find meaning. Those raised in the traditional Blackfoot way, learn critical thinking from the Napi and origin narratives which helps to guide the individual through the process of discerning appropriateness of information. Story telling as a methodology instigates critical thinking in which the student must reason the consequences of action. I conclude that the Blackfoot ceremonial learning process includes elder teaching methodology that follows the metaphorical way of learning through story telling. As the learner is inducted into specific segments of a more comprehensive ceremony, ceremonial learning process has separate smaller components that eventually combine to provide meaning. The learner has to use listening and thinking skills in learning from the elder since comprehension can be achieved through processing linked information presented by the elder teacher on different occasions.

Environmental Learning Process

I conclude that learning from nature is a part of Blackfoot learning process.

Self-Directed/Interactive Learning Process

I conclude that Blackfoot ceremonial learning process includes obtaining knowledge through self-directed, interactive activities.

I conclude that obtaining much of the knowledge related to taboos and protocol is a self-directed learning process where the learner interacts with the elder. I conclude the contemporary lifestyle of the Blackfoot has an impact on individual ability to learn protocol and taboos. It is sometimes difficult for learners outside of traditional households to obtain information relevant on protocol and taboos.

The Blackfoot learning process in ceremony is self-directed. The student is self-directed in that the instructor provides guidance but not directives. However, self-direction is within boundaries established by protocol, which the student must obtain through experiential learning. Learning through dreams and visions include characteristics that are conducive to the elements of self-directed learning and intrinsic motivation. The "locus of control" is with the learner as the elder provides a learning environment in a physiological way which is conducive to promoting affective learning through metaphorical story telling.

Socialization Process of Learning

I conclude that Blackfoot ceremonial learning process includes acquiring knowledge from significant others and extended family as well as the community.

I conclude that traumatic events involving sickness and death in the history of the Southern Piegan (Blackfeet) has an impact on the loss of culture, language, and identity. In Blackfoot learning process, things like parental status, blood quantum, and family background are of limited consequence to obtaining status in Blackfoot ceremony. However, traditional family environment can enhance learning process through traditional teaching and learning practices. In Blackfoot orthodoxy, ceremonial status is not inherited. This does not mean that a father could not "transfer" status to a son. Nevertheless, it does mean that the transfer must follow strict protocol and procedure regardless of familial relationship. I conclude that ceremonial learning process is affected by the loss of a generation of elder teachers through acculturation and assimilation which has created a limited traditional human resource pool available to potential learners. Knowledgeable elders, who know the ceremonies, are limited and quickly aging. The de-socialization of Blackfoot people, through the loss of communities where extended families and communal groups (associated with the former band concept), has created a separateness that isolates tribal people from former interactive learning.

Learning Process through Symbolism

Learning process in Blackfoot ceremony involves the use of symbolism as a figurative way of transmitting knowledge.

Perceived Barriers to Learning Process

I conclude that a history of repression, paternalism, and trauma has had an effect on Blackfoot ceremonial learning processes.

The study participants are aware of the governmental, educational, and religious institutional oppression of Blackfeet people.

Effect of Spirituality on Learning Process

I conclude that spirituality is integrated into the Blackfoot learning process.

Faith or belief in a spiritual force or power is inherent in the in Blackfoot ceremonial way of knowledge. However, the doctrine or dogma has not been formalized in the oral tradition in a way that it is has through other cultures. Through the transfer ceremony, the individual receives a "spirit" which assists one to do things such as singing a specific song, appropriate to a certain ceremony.

Structural Synthesizing of Learning Process

I conclude that the ceremonial learner must comply with a definite learning process in order to achieve certain levels of status, such as being medicine bundle holder.

It is my conclusion that "mastery learning" takes place as one moves from one level of knowledge to the next. The learner moves through various levels of learning that are progressive within certain boundaries. The learning process is hierarchical and sequenced according to the individual learner's demonstration of perseverance. In learning Blackfoot ceremony, the learner must be cautious in associating appropriateness of information. Learning the basics from the suitable elder mentor is important. Through interaction, one learns the proper protocol, which leads to obtaining relevant information from the correct elder. Some of the new learners in Blackfoot ceremony, who may come from acculturated or assimilated backgrounds, may encounter difficulties in

discriminating between Blackfoot ceremonial orthodoxy and some of the contemporary practices.

Effect of Blackfoot Language Usage on Learning Process

> In Blackfoot learning process, an individual can learn ceremony without intimate knowledge of the language.

However, Blackfoot language skills improve as one participates in ceremony. In Blackfoot ceremonial learning process, much of the language is particular to the ceremony. Some terms are names used in such things as genesis accounts that are not common in conversational Blackfoot. A Blackfoot language speaker would have to learn the terminology just as any learner, regardless of first language. Blackfoot ceremonial learning process is bringing about a return of language usage and knowledge of Blackfoot culture in general.

Effect of Blackfoot Way of Knowing on Learning Process

> I conclude that Blackfoot learning process has a structure based upon principles, theory and practice.

Learning in Blackfoot ceremony originates in the history and development of this group of people. Through the origin stories, the principles, values and ethics of the Blackfoot permeate into a way of knowing. Like most philosophical thought, the Blackfoot way of knowing is based on the values, attitudes and understandings of the people. Not only does the Blackfoot learning process have structure through the levels of knowledge, but also it is overlapped by the social organization of historic Blackfoot

"bands". Thus, there is a clear relationship between knowledge and practice, which logically interprets and clarifies the Blackfoot way of knowing.

Recommendations

Oral Tradition Learning Process

1. I recommend that Blackfoot scholars study the concept of oral documentation as presented by some of the participants in this research.

The idea that ceremony as documentation of the genesis of the Blackfoot is a paradigm that may have possibilities for how people view knowledge. Oral tradition has been accused of being unworthy as a credible base for the pursuit of knowledge. Naturally this kind of study needs to be done in a culturally appropriate and respectfully way.

2. I recommend further study on the learning styles used in the narration of origin stories, as they may be an avenue to understanding why Native people are not effective in the dominant culture learning institutions.

The study findings do not do justice to the intonation, body language, songs and dance demonstrated by the study participants. The visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning has interesting possibilities especially as it relates to the "global or holistic" idea of learning process.

Mentoring Learning Process

3. I recommend a review of the elder mentoring process as a model-mentoring program for learning at any level or situation.

The elder mentoring methodology of interacting with the learner contains most of the learning process elements as identified in adult education research. The elder mentors

use the facilitative approach to learning by responding to the learning needs through story telling. The elder mentoring process with youth and adults can have application in many learning situations. The situation of bringing the child to ceremonies and providing small tasks like carrying a bag of "dishes" used in the food eating part of the ceremony, along with the observation develops "learning how to learn" processes.

Elder mentors continue to work with adults throughout their lives. This life long learning concept is coupled with story telling, listening, and thinking skills. As indicated in the findings on origin stories, the learning process in the affective domain of the learner seems to play a major role in this way of obtaining information.

Experiential Learning Process

4. I recommend the investigation and development of Blackfoot experiential learning process as a learning model.

The literature in adult education reveals that immediacy of application of knowledge is one of the criteria for increasing student positive response to learning. In ceremonial learning process, the adult is an apprentice type learner, who in many cases works one on one with an elder mentor/facilitator. After the rite of passage into the level of learning, the learner is encouraged to participate in ceremonies as a limited participant observer. The apprentice learner is given more and more tasks through minor transfers and learning process through time. The learning is in accordance with the learner needs and levels of mastery. Although listening and observation skills are used at all levels, the one on one learning process associates information with the experiential events. The learner is referred to special elder mentors as the need arises for information relevant to

the level of learning. Since the learning is self-directed the learner is also given time for thinking and synthesizing information.

Developmental Learning Process

5. I recommend the study of childhood rearing practices of traditionally oriented Blackfoot families along with research into historic child development practices.

The infant nurturing practices and childhood mentoring through modeling behavior prepared ceremonialists for the kinds of mores and norms that are conducive to the lifestyle requirements. Maslow's needs approach to learning seems to fit the developmental learning style of the Blackfoot, so those looking to this kind of model have a way of "naming" some of the developmental learning processes. Once again, as in some of the other recommendations the ideas of holistic learning and levels or phases in the learning process are apparent. The grandparent role of respect for the child and interaction in their playact world is a part of the process.

One interesting study would be the minii'pokaan or "grandmother's babies" who are given special attention throughout their life. These children are "selected" for special treatment at a young age and nurtured in a unique learning environment. As in one case, the child is allowed to playact ceremony, which was validated by the fact that other children were allowed at a young age to reenact ceremony. This is an interesting phenomenon as at a certain point close to adulthood, it is forbidden to do this kind of thing out of context.

Holistic Learning Process

6. I recommend that schools and colleges with Native American populations consider offering interdisciplinary Native American Studies courses somewhat like the "great books" methodology of learning introduced several years ago.

This method of learning works especially well with the humanities courses when they are taught from a historical approach starting with the origin and genesis narratives through the development of language, music, art, dance, religion, history and philosophy. The instructors in these kinds of courses collaborate and team-teach classes. For example, during one week the instructors in art, music, dance, religion, history and philosophy would take turns facilitating learning around a particular period of time relevant to their discipline. I recommend that the curriculum be developed around experiential and story-telling type of learning experiences as well as dialogue at all levels. The course work should include some self-directed learning projects relative to the subject material. Group interactive learning process could be offered as a choice of participation, or at least observation, by those not selecting to participate in the process. A great deal of visualization can be used in addition to other techniques relevant to sensory learning. Experiential learning such as field trips to historical sites or cultural activities is encouraged. Group processing using the "talking circle" method can be done occasionally to allow an opportunity to personalize the learning process. In the talking circle, students are provided an opportunity to discuss whatever they wish regarding the course on a personalized level. This is much like the seminar approach to learning. However, the instructors would need to receive training in group process especially pertinent to the idea that students may choose to participate or not.

The interdisciplinary study approach recommendation fits with the idea of global or holistic learning process found in this study. The learning process includes the aspects of the physiological, environmental, cognitive and affective elements of learning. Some type of teacher training or staff development would need to be done with this learning model, as it is not conducive to the institutional model of learning that most instructors have experienced. The instructors would need to meet weekly to discuss the positive and negative aspects of the learning process. A casework type of model for individual students could be used to assist the student in achieving a positive learning experience. Counselors and appropriate support service staff could participate in the weekly instructor seminars.

With this recommended approach, an instructor development program can be implemented to assist in learning things like facilitative learning, culture and diversity, effects of oppression and other instructor needs.

Critical Thinking

7. I recommend that Blackfoot parents continue to tell the Napi stories to the young children in order to develop critical thinking skills.

The story telling as a method of learning, especially in the Blackfoot Napi and origin stories, provide critical thinking skills that children may use throughout their lives. The metaphor and allegory of the narratives told with inflection, vividness and body language helps the learner to use critical thinking to develop meaning and understanding. Freedom of choice and responsibility are inherent in the Napi stories. The allegory in the

genesis accounts provides meaning through critical thought and eventual synthesis of knowledge, as the stories are associated with ceremonial life of the Blackfoot.

This is the beginning of inspiring values and things like critical thinking skills in the child's mind. These stories provide the child freedom of choice through examining consequences of action. As noted in the findings and conclusion, the ceremonial learners felt the origin stories provided them the ability to synthesize information later in life. It is truly the basis of "learning how to learn" in Blackfoot culture!

Environmental Learning Process

8. I recommend that schools and communities with Native populations examine the environmental learning issues such as culture, nutrition, health, gender and student attitude which are important to meeting the needs of students, teachers, administrators and the communities.

Learning institutions and families are encouraged to initiate experiential learning activities in the natural environment. The Montana and Alberta region is rich in history, climate, flora, fauna, mountains, rolling hills, plains and seasons. There is much geological, archeological, anthropological information related to the natural environment in the region. Outings by schools, colleges, families, and community groups provide an opportunity for the folk stories, history and information to come forth in a naturalistic way. The "Discovery Channel" is in the backyard of this region. The Blackfeet Community College has hosted several learning outings for students and the community to learn about historical and significant cultural places in Montana and Alberta. This kind of learning experience is easily achievable with minor modifications in the learning structure.

It is also important for schools and colleges to observe the learning environment that they are providing to their service population. The lighting, setting, furniture, and facilities all impact upon the learning process. It is suggested that school boards, teachers, support staff, students and parents walk through and around their learning environment. Many issues and needs can be identified and solutions sometimes easily achieved.

Are school policies conducive to meeting the individual needs of students? Is it equitable school policy when both students are punished for being late when one does not care, but another likes school and rushes to be on time after helping his young brothers and sisters prepare for the day?

Effects of Oppression and Cultural Conflict

9. I recommend the tribal colleges, universities and colleges and all of post-secondary education provide awareness and education on the effects of oppression as a diversity issue.

Native scholars need to research this complex situation Although controversial and complex, this situation must be acknowledged and understood before attempting to understand the meaning of dream and vision process as it relates to such things as learning.

10. I recommend that tribal communities develop their own school systems that can best meet their needs and cultural differences.

As found in the literature and the research findings, state operated institutions are not conducive to the values and interests of Native people. The state-operated institutions operate on a value system based on the dominant culture, which is not favorable toward

changing to meet different cultures' needs. It is not the fault of the Native teachers, support staff, administration and school boards, as the system operates on state laws, rules, regulations and requirements that are not developed to meet the Native situation.

11. I recommend that tribal colleges and the three community colleges in Blackfoot country facilitate community education and community development sessions on effects of oppression in their service areas.

As stated by Jordan (Reyhner et. el., photocopy, n.d.), "when the culture of the school and culture of the child are incompatible, 'the school fails to teach and the child fails to learn'" (p. 11). The colleges are in the best position to help people examine the effects of oppression to determine their future destiny for the preservation of identity, culture, language, and traditions. The tribal colleges are one of the few entities that are in a position to allow freedom of expression by the "grass roots" people of their nations. School boards, tribal councils and other institutional and government agencies, for the most part, have not demonstrated their ability to do much other then to perpetuate the oppressive practices brought into the tribes from the dominant culture.

The tribal colleges can facilitate a learning process in their communities to help Native people to ameliorate their own conditions. The Miles Horton idea of the Highlander folk school used in southern United States is the kind of situation that Native people can use in order know that there are ways to help themselves. Blackfoot people would probably identify with Horton as he obtained some of his motivation and inspiration from "dreams" (Adams, 1975, p. 24). In Adams (1975) book about the Highlander "educational idea" (p. 24) he states Horton's vision, "He knew what he must do; get behind the common judgements of the poor, help them learn to act and speak for

themselves, help them gain control over decisions affecting their daily lives" (p. 24). Horton's paradigm fits well with the findings in the Blackfoot way of learning experientially, as he believed that, "People learn about unity by acting in unison. They learn about democracy by acting democratically" (p. 207).

Before tribal colleges begin their idealistic journey of helping people to help themselves it is important that they examine their own motivations and beliefs. Because educated Native people are products of oppressive institutions, they can quite easily become the oppressors. Using Freire's (1985) process of "dialogue, action and reflection" (p. 119, 125) college educators "must 'die' in order to be reborn though and with the oppressed" (p. 127). This way, educators can position themselves to facilitate legitimate change through their action by a process of "critical reflection which increasingly organizes their thinking and thus lead them to move from a purely naive knowledge of reality to a higher level, one which enables them to perceive the causes of reality (p.125-126)."

Freire perceives the duality issue of oppressed leaders reflecting "about" the oppressed rather then thinking "with" them (p. 127). This type of reflection complements studies of Rowland (1994, p. 163-168), Real Bird (1997, p. 259-261), and Still Smoking (1997, p. 141, 143, 148) who find that it is only the people who can emancipate themselves from their oppressed state. In Horton's way it's, "letting the people it serves and the times in which they live define precisely what brotherhood, democracy and mutuality and united social action mean" (Adams, p. 206).

Therefore, in order for tribal community colleges to facilitate community development they must free themselves from the institutional indoctrination that perpetuates oppression. As Adams (1994) relates through the words of Joseph K. Hart, "We have plenty of men and women who can teach what they know; we have very few who can teach their own capacity to learn" (p. 23). Tribal college educators and scholars need to challenge their thoughts as some of their knowledge was obtained from a dominant society perspective, which reflects:

> The psychological domination that characterizes much of North American scholarship in adult education prevents a serious and much needed penetration of the theoretical and empirical problems (Rubenson in Merriam and Cunningham, 1989, p. 66).

12. I recommend that Native American scholars do more studies on the effects of oppression.

As noted in the findings there are obstacles to learning and progress in Native country, which are complex and diverse. As Paulo Freire indicated at a conference in Omaha, Nebraska, educators can be strategically inside the educational system but tactically on the outside. Thus, it may be possible to work in an oppressive system and yet strive towards liberation.

The language immersion schools such as those with the Piegan Institute on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation are recommended as model programs for Native tribes to implement. These schools are excellent examples of how to begin to address effects of oppression and cultural conflict.

Community Education

13. I recommend that tribal colleges instigate community development sessions with localized groups in their service area.

Socialization is important to maintaining the values and culture of any group of people. The findings reveal that extended families have become disconnected from one another. This, coupled with the loss of sense of community, does not provide an environment conducive to transmitting the culture and language. Resource people who know tradition and language are isolated from those who need their knowledge.

Community education can be developed to facilitate interaction in the communities. The community education courses can be cultivated around local needs for information. Some of the structured Native studies courses can be offered for continuing education units or as community education courses in order to bring about awareness of issues. For example, the Blackfeet Studies Department at Blackfeet Community College could offer a community education language or humanities class in order to bring people together. Later, learning sessions could be developed using the dialogue and problem posing facilitative processes as advocated by Freire. The idea here is to help people help themselves, such as utilized in the Highlander idea advanced by Miles Horton.

14. I recommend that Native people examine their traditions and discover ways to improve social-economic conditions including learning and knowledge.

At the World Indigenous Peoples Education Conference in the summer of 1999, the aboriginal people from around the world examined how education could be used to preserve, protect, revitalize, and advance language and culture. One of Native Hawaiian hosts during the opening ceremonies stated, "Good health and good education IS at

home!" Just as adult education is finding that change and learning is an internal process within the individual, it is the same with individual cultures, change starts from within. The answers to the situation of improving and protecting language and culture are within the people themselves.

15. I recommend that the tribal colleges offer community education courses in areas much like the Pikuni Humanities within the Blackfeet Studies Department at the Blackfeet Community College.

In the contemporary dominant society, religion and education are separated. In the Blackfoot way, spirituality is integrated into the learning process, which is especially true as it relates to obtaining ceremonial knowledge. However, higher education does examine religion as it relates to certain disciplines such as philosophy, sociology and other behavioral sciences.

This has much value since the study respondents were concerned about misinformation and misinterpretation of the Blackfeet traditional ways. An awareness of traditional Blackfoot spirituality provides the opportunity to obtain better information and choices for those who have been marginalized from their culture.

The Blackfoot elder ceremonialists can be one of the best resources for the tribal colleges in developing and maintaining the traditional knowledge of language, culture and traditions. Some of these learned people are beyond the professor or doctoral level of knowledge in the dominant society. It is recommended that the Blackfoot tribal colleges continue to use the elder advisory boards. The elder ceremonialists need to be more intimately involved in curriculum development and classroom instruction in order to

protect the integrity of the Blackfoot ways and insure that appropriate information is contained in the course work.

16. I recommend that the Blackfeet Studies Department of the Blackfeet Community College expand their curriculum by completing a needs assessment with the elders on what can appropriately offered to meet the demand by community members to obtain awareness and education on Blackfeet cultural traditions and language.

The rise of tribal members wanting information regarding traditional ceremony is creating an increasing demand upon the limited number of elder mentors. This is especially true for the Southern Piegan, who have a larger and more diverse population then the other divisions of the Blackfoot Confederacy.

Further study and publication on Blackfoot traditional learning process needs to be done so that educational institutions will have a guideline for developing educational curriculum and learning methodology. Such studies and publications can be one tool by which potential ceremonial learners can obtain information that is acceptable and appropriate as deemed by the elder ceremonialists.

Because of the concern for authentic information and ethical practices regarding Blackfoot ceremony, it is recommended that the elder ceremonialists convene a colloquium to address these issues. Although there are protocols that protect the integrity of the old ways, it is important that young interested tribal members know that such a system exists. Not only are some of the youth being lost to pan-Indianism and misguided leaders, but some tribal members are exploiting ceremony for payment.

17. I recommend that the Blackfoot tribes support studies by their own scholars that preserve and protect the traditions and culture.

The Blackfoot people have not been free to practice their beliefs for many years. It is only now that the Niitsitapi can begin to freely discuss and practice the old ways. This new found freedom has brought about a renaissance of interest and participation in Blackfoot ceremonies.

18. I recommend a convocation of Blackfoot traditional scholars on a regular basis to articulate and document tribal knowledge in a culturally appropriate manner.

As pointed out in the study by one of the participants, it is important that the Blackfoot way of knowledge "stand on it's own" and not be used as a comparative instrument of analysis to support or reject another culture's beliefs or knowledge. The time is now! The elders are quickly leaving and outside influences are overwhelming the young.

This study briefly skimmed the surface of traditional Blackfoot learning and knowledge through dreams and visions. There are several areas that can be studied to help tribes preserve and protect their knowledge base. The process of learning songs would be an intriguing and interesting study. How do elders interpret dreams? What are the qualifications and criteria for interpreting dreams? The meditation state referred to in this study is certainly an area that has several fascinating possibilities for research. The recall and memory process in learning from visions and dreams has some interesting ramifications for further study.

Language

19. I recommend that tribes develop their own schools in order to teach language and culture.

Public schools with significant Native populations need to offer Blackfoot language courses. As indicated in the Findings, the young children in the private immersion schools are obtaining the language while the adults are able to study the Blackfoot language in the community colleges.

The public schools, as indicated above, are not taking action to meet the needs of the Native children and communities. Throughout the United States "charter" schools are being developed in communities where the public schools are not favorably inclined towards different cultures and religions. Tribal governments are in a position to assert their sovereignty in order to meet their constituents' educational needs.

It is important for the communities to support the language immersion schools both morally and financially. For the Southern Piegan it is a critical time since many of the language speakers are being isolated from conversing with one another.

The Blackfoot tribal colleges' language programs need to be supported and enhanced. It is recommended that the language instructors develop an on-going association of some sort so they can share information and material. New discoveries and developments are happening quickly in the area of language learning. Tribal people need to share information and assist each other in utilizing their important discoveries.

20. Blackfoot language instruction is advocated at all levels of learning for schools and colleges with Blackfoot students.

The language contains some of the protocol and taboos necessary for inter-acting in Blackfoot culture. The immersion schools such as the Piegan Institute in Browning and tribal colleges seem to address this need, while the public schools are lacking in Blackfoot language instruction.

Blackfoot Way of Knowing

21. I recommend that the four divisions of the Blackfoot Confederation assemble a colloquium of Blackfoot scholars and people of wisdom to begin developing an articulation of the Blackfoot Way of Knowing especially as it relates to learning.

The recording of such an event would not only preserve and protect the knowledge base, but it would provide a basis for educators at all levels to develop programs and materials to enhance learning at all levels. The Blackfoot tribal colleges including Blackfeet Community College at Browning, Red Crow College of the Blood Reserve, and Old Sun College of the Siksika are in an excellent position to host a series of gatherings. The recorded wisdom of the Blackfoot people would be available for those who continue to struggle to free the people from domination and indoctrination into another culture. In this kind of situation, the Blackfoot people would not only be in control of what is appropriate, but they would be best able to produce explanations in terms that are sensitive to the values and culture.

22. I recommend that Blackfoot scholars begin to publish the valuable information on the Blackfoot Way of Knowing that is being exchanged and developed in seminars, conferences, lectures and discussions.

A Samoan lecturer at the World Indigenous Conference on Education in Hilo, Hawaii commented that although aboriginal people were in most cases forced to use the English language, it can now be used as a way for indigenous people to communicate and help one another. The Blackfoot people have many intelligent and scholarly people in both the traditional and contemporary societies. Certainly there are many fears, criticisms, and concerns about impugning the integrity of the Blackfoot way of

knowledge through documentation, but as indicated in the findings of this study the traditional ways of protocol will prevent such a happening. Furthermore, the study reveals that the answers are within the people. In the meantime, tribal colleges will continue to use the written word of people outside of the culture. Certainly some of the publications can be in the Blackfoot language through the audio-visual format. But for some, a English written format could certainly provide a way to address the dominant society's way of learning that is not working for many of the people.

23. I recommend that Blackfoot people as a whole support the continuation of ceremonies.

Regardless of what goes on in the other cultures it is vitally important that the traditional ways continue as it has for thousands of years. This is the stable force that will perpetuate the knowledge of the Blackfoot for centuries to come.

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