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CREATING SPACE FOR AN INDIGENOUS APPROACH TO DIGITAL STORYTELLING: "LIVING BREATH" OF SURVIVANCE WITHIN AN ANISHINAABE COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN MICHIGAN

BRENDA K. MANUELITO

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Ph.D. in Leadership and Change Program

of Antioch University

in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled:	
CREATING SPACE FOR AN INDIGENOUS APPROACH TO DIGITAL S "LIVING BREATH" OF SURVIVANCE WITHIN AN ANISHINAABE CO NORTHERN MICHIGAN	
prepared by	
Brenda K. Manuelito	
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'Ahéhee shízhe'e yáá (thank you to my late father) Robert Andy Manuelito and shimá (my mother) Evelyn (Carol) Pine Manuelito for giving me life and watching me take my first "living breath." Nihí na'nitin bénáshniih dóó nihí tsodizin diishts'a'. (I remember your teachings and I heard your prayers). Baa 'ahééh nisin. (I am grateful).

'Ahéhee shik'éí dóó shi dine'e. (Thank you to my relatives and my Diné people). Dóó 'ahéhee ntsaa'igii shił'hajiijéi (Thanks a lot to my siblings) Ronneye, Cassandra, Roberta, dóó Eugenia. Bił hajiijéi 'éí bił 'ahaa'ádahojilyá. (Siblings help each other). Nihínálí sání sání (Our great, great grandfather's) Chief Manuelito ííná baahane' bik'i diishtííh dóó 'éí bik'i diishááł 'ałdó' (life story I have come to understand and that is how I travel too)—as a leader of people.

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Nizhónígo da 'asglíí (It is finished in beauty).

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my growing *nDigiFamily* spreadout across our beautiful sacred homelands near and far—your lives and stories have touched me very deeply.

Throughout my daily journey, I always remember one of your stories, your voices, your teachings, your songs, your photos, or your drawings. In those quiet moments, I draw you near and send you and your family, community, and ancestors a silent prayer for goodness, strength, and beauty.

Abstract

As Indigenous peoples, we have a responsibility to our global community to share our collective truths and experiences, but we also deserve the respect to not be objectified, essentialized, and reified. Today, we are in a period of continual Native resurgence as many of us (re)member our prayers, songs, languages, histories, teachings, everyday stories and our deepest wisdom and understanding as Indigenous peoples--we are all "living breath" and we are "all related." For eight years, Carmella Rodriguez and I have been nDigiStorytelling across the United States and have co-created over 1,200 digital stories with over 80 tribes for Native survivance, healing, hope, and liberation. By the making and sharing of *nDigiStories*, our training and consulting company called nDigiDreams is Healing Our Communities One Story at a Time.® This dissertation is a phenomenological study about *nDigiStorytelling* in an *Anishinaabe* (Ojibwe) community in Northern Michigan; it explores two four-day digital storytelling workshops during November 2013 and May 2014. Using an emergent research design called "Three Sisters," I combine Indigenous methodologies, community-based participatory research, and portraiture to explore the "lived experiences" of our *nDigiStorytellers* who are thriving and flourishing in their families and communities and who are widely sharing their *nDigiStories* to help others. An Indigenous approach to digital storytelling is much needed and provides a new avenue for understanding how we can use *nDigiStorytelling* and our visceral bodies to release ourselves from traumatic experiences and how we can utilize technology and media-making for healing ourselves and others. The electronic version of this Dissertation is available in open access at AURA, http://aura.antioch.edu/etds/ and OhioLink ETD Center, www.ohiolink.edu/etd This dissertation is accompanied by a PDF that contains links to 24 media files on the *nDigiStoryMaking* YouTube Channel that are referenced in this document.

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Introduction

Hayoołkáałgo Sisnaajiní nihi nel'iih łeh. Blanca Peak is adorned with white shell. Blanca Peak is adorned with morning light. She watches us rise at dawn. . . .

She is the brightness of spring.
She is Changing Woman returned. . . .

Because of her, we think and create.
Because of her, we make songs.
Because of her, the designs appear as we weave.
Because of her, we tell stories and laugh.
We believe in old values and new ideas.
Hayoołkáałgo Sisnaajiní bik'ehgo hózhónígo naashá.

Excerpt from poem by Luci Tapahonso (1997, p. 39)

I am a Native digital storyteller. I never imagined I would ever define myself by these three words. In Montana, there is an *Amskapi Pikuni* (Blackfeet) woman, Theda New Breast, who Carmella and I met at one of our digital storytelling workshops in 2009. She calls us the "two divas." I never considered myself a diva either.

Our Blackfeet *nDigiSister* participated on a digital storytelling panel at our first *nDigiFest* at the Tenth Annual Native Wellness Conference in San Diego, California in 2010. It was a poignant moment when Theda began sharing her experience about making her first digital story. She explained about our *nDigiStorytelling* workshop (see Media 1.1):

It was like going to a mini-treatment program. . . . I feel like I packed 45 days into three days because you can't bullshit, you cannot fake, and you have to show who you are. . . . You have to be authentic. . . . It's like a legacy. It's not like we need a grant or some federal people to come in and do this to us. We have the ability to tell our story. I have to really encourage you . . . take the time to do your story. It's healing.

Theda's words reinforce what I have always intuitively known about *nDigiStorytelling* and which this dissertation demonstrates—it can be very healing.



Media 1.1. Theda *nDigiFest* panel. (Used with permission of *nDigiDreams*). This can be viewed at http://youtu.be/--33s6sYMiw

Carmella Rodriguez and I are co-owners of *nDigiDreams*, LLC (hereinafter called *nDigiDreams*) an Indigenous-focused digital storytelling consulting and training company that was created in 2008. For the past several years, we have travelled extensively to Indigenous communities across the United States to teach "our people" how to create 3-5 minute first person narratives called *nDigiStories*. To date, we have co-created over 1,200 digital stories with over 80 different tribes across 15 states. The digital stories are being made by *nDigiStorytellers* who have been hardest hit by Western hegemony, particularly Native women, men, elders and youth. They are not simply personal first-hand accounts about individuals who have been wounded, traumatized and victimized by colonialism, racism, and sexism, but they are "living breath" from Native people who are engaged in Indigenous survivance, healing, and hope in multiple and complex ways.

In *Living Indigenous Leadership: Native Narratives for Building Strong Communities*,
Choctaw-Haida Carolyn Kenny and Māori Tina Fraser (2012) write, "Stories are a creative act of leadership through which we manifest our solidarity and strengthen our people to take their next steps in encouraging good and healthy lives" (p. 1). Indeed, the *nDigiStories* we are co-creating show individuals who are taking sometimes fragmented and silenced pieces of their life story and "breathing life" back into them—they are everyday narratives about being healthy, alive and whole, again. Thus, we believe that digital stories are more than "data" or "phenomena" to be studied and objectified by health researchers, anthropologists, psychologists, and historians. We believe that the *nDigiStories* we co-create must be understood and respected from an Indigenous

epistemological framework that considers digital stories as a "living breath" from the person who thought, spoke and created it into being.

nDigiStories are alive and sacred. nDigiStories are spirits that breathe. And, through their "living breath" they connect us to our ancestors, our sacred homelands, our diverse languages and to our unique cultural and spiritual teachings. And, they connect us to our future generations who are yet unborn. Indeed, nDigiStories connect us to our basic goodness, balance, and wholeness. Together, with our nDigiStorytellers, we are Healing Our Communities One Story at a Time® by the making and sharing of healing and liberating digital stories. We consider digital stories as works of survivance; a term coined by Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) literary critic Gerald Vizenor (2008) to highlight Indigenous people's ability to persist despite enormous adversity imposed by colonialism. Needless to say, there is an Indigenous resurgence happening across the globe and across our sacred homelands on Turtle Island and it includes a new wave of Native digital storytellers.

In this dissertation, I will explore a four-day digital storytelling process that Carmella Rodriguez and I call *nDigiStorytelling* and I will do it by privileging grounded Indigenous epistemologies and by creating and using an emergent research design called the "Three Sisters." The purpose of my dissertation is to understand the "experiences" of a small group of *Anishinaabe nDigiStorytellers* in Northern Michigan who participated in two *nDigiStorytelling* Workshops in November 2013 and May 2014, respectively. At the center of our Indigenous teachings is an understanding of reality that is centered on human experiences, dreams, visions and other embodied ways of knowledge production. Ultimately, in order to understand the world, one must begin with the self.

Use and Formatting of the Indigenous Words and Languages

In this dissertation, I will use Indigenous (e.g., *Diné* for Navajo and *Anishinaabe* for Ojibwe) words and phrases to encourage other Indigenous researchers and students to use, retain, and preserve our beautiful, sacred Indigenous languages for our future children and grandchildren, who may one day read our dissertations. In this study, I will privilege Indigenous languages by placing it first in italics followed by the English translation in parenthesis. In some instances, I will only use *Diné* or *Anishinaabe* when appropriate. In the latter instance, I have been greatly assisted by my *Anishinaabe* co-researchers. My intention is to recognize a different philosophy, epistemology and language beyond the Western-scientific-English language presented in most dissertations.

In addition, I will interchange the word "Indigenous" with "Aboriginal," "Native," "American Indian", "Alaska Native," or "First Nations," unless I identify specific nations of people such as the Blackfeet or Ojibwe, in which case I may use their own descriptive term for themselves as in *Amskapi Pikuni* or *Anishinaabe*, respectfully.

Being Diné and Situating Myself as a Researcher



Media 1.2. Brenda Manuelito digital story. (Used with permission of *nDigiDreams*). This can be viewed at http://youtu.be/EQ1XtYuKI6A

I am *Diné* (see Media 1.2). I am the youngest of seven children. My late father is Robert A. Manuelito from *Tó Haach'* (Tohatchi, New Mexico) and my mother is Carol Evelyn Pine Manuelito from *Nahashch'idí* (Naschitti, New Mexico). *Shímá dóó shízhe'e yáá* (my mother and my late father) were my first teachers and my first storytellers. Growing up, they used to

always tell me: "Shí yazhí, shí awe'e (my little one, my baby), remember who you are and where you come from."

Yá'át'ééh shi'kei, shidiné'e. Shí 'éí Brenda Manuelito yinishyé. 'Ádóne'é nishłínígíí 'éíya Kiiyaa'aaníí nishłį dóó 'Áshįįhí bá shíshchíín. Hat'lishníí dashichei dóó Tł'ogí dashinálí. 'Akót'éágo 'éí 'asdzáan nishłlį.

I am a member of the Towering House Clan born for the Salt Clan. My maternal grandfather is the Mud Clan and my paternal grandfather is the Weaver (Zia) Clan; that is how I recognize myself as a Navajo woman.

I grew up in a Navajo diaspora on the high plains of southeastern Wyoming in a small rural town called Laramie. It is a place that was named after a French-Canadian fur trader where the local streets were called Custer, Canby, Gibbon, Sheridan, Kearney and Fetterman. Although I was born in Laramie, it was never really "home" to us because of my family's deep spiritual and cultural connections to *Diné Bikéyah* ("Navajos land"). In fact, I used to tease my mom and dad that my birth certificate and early school records should have read that I was born and raised in the backseat of their 1961 blue Chevy wagon due to the numerous trips we took back-and-forth to visit our ancestral homeland called *Kin naaskaad* (Where The Rock Spreads Out), about four miles southeast of present-day Naschitti, New Mexico (see Figure 1.1) and *Séi Bii'tó* (Sand Springs) almost ten miles northeast of present-day Tohatchi, New Mexico (see Figure 1.2), respectively.



Figure 1.1. Kin naaskaad (Where the Rock Spreads Out). Maternal ancestral homeland. (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).

We were constantly travelling back-and-forth to be with my k'é (relatives) for holiday visits, summer vacations, healing ceremonies, graduations, funerals, tribal fairs, Native American Church (peyote) meetings and for anything else we could imagine a need to go home.

Figure 1.2. Séí Bii'tó (Sand Springs). Paternal ancestral homeland. (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).



Before I was born, my parents moved to Wyoming out of economic necessity and because of my father's insatiable curiosity to see what existed beyond our four sacred mountains and our four sacred rivers that protect and bound *Diné Bikéyah* ("Navajo land"). In May 1951, my father drove north with other male relatives to find work and, two months later, my mother joined him. For the first time in his life, my father left the high desert plateau of northern New Mexico and traveled north across the San Juan Mountains; like most Navajos, he stopped to make prayer offerings at *Sis naajiní* (Blanca Peak, which lies at the southernmost tip of Colorado's Sangre de Cristo Range near Alamosa). I know this because he told me this story and he taught me how to make prayer offerings when I travel too.

Besides my older siblings and cousins, I was the only Navajo student in the mixed-race schools I attended. I am *lók'eeshcháá'í* (the youngest) in my family and I was always being taught, nurtured and protected by my large Navajo extended family. Within our small Navajo diaspora we lived and practiced our Navajo culture and spoke our Navajo language daily. Like most Navajos, I grew up within a Navajo matrilineal social and familial network that included my mother, my father and five older siblings; my mother's two younger sisters and their twelve

children; and numerous other aunts, uncles and cousins who would come to visit us throughout the year. In Laramie, Wyoming many of the older Navajo males found employment as laborers at the Pacific Fruit Express ice plant or local rail yards operated by the Union Pacific; then later some worked at the Monolith Portland Cement Plant, while any of the older Navajo females became domestic servants, wove Navajo rugs or made arts and crafts to sell.

My father, who was born in 1931 and the youngest of 13 children, finished the eighth grade before he had to quit school to take care of his family's livestock and widowed mother. His older brothers were drafted into WWII to serve as Navajo Code Talkers and infantrymen and he was the closet male relative. He told me he has always wondered what it would have been like if he had "finished school" and perhaps why he was always so encouraging towards his children and grandchildren to "climb the ladder" of education "as far as you can go" and to "come back and help your relatives." My mother, who was born in 1932 and the oldest daughter of 15 children, went as far as the eleventh grade. She was sent away from the four sacred mountains as a young woman and had to live with a "mean" aunt in Fort Worth, Texas for three years, until she returned before her senior year. My parents met each other at the Tohatchi Boarding School in 1944, became reacquainted as young adults, then married in Gallup, New Mexico on April 15, 1950.

My parents exemplified hard work and perseverance. Whenever we wanted to accomplish something in our lives, my parents used to always say, "*Táá hó ájit'éégóó*," a Navajo phrase meaning, "it will be up to yourself whether you succeed or fail." Across the Navajo reservation today on billboards, t-shirts, bumper stickers, and on digital stories, you will see this Navajo phrase shortened: "It is up to you!" *Táá hó ájit'éégóó* is a Navajo foundational precept

that encourages individuals to lead self-determined lives because we understand that each person is, ultimately, responsible for her or his own decisions and actions.

What I remember most about growing up was being around *shímá saní dóó shí'chei* (my maternal grandmother and grandfather), Ethelyn and Nelson Pine. I remember them always visiting with my parents and telling family stories, for example, what relative was preparing to have a *Hózhǫji* (Blessingway) ceremony, how many lambs were killed by coyotes that spring and who was preparing their fields for planting corn, squash and melon. During payday weekends in the summertime, I especially remember my *Kiiyaa'aanii* (Towering House) maternal relatives butchering fat sheep at one of the local surrounding ranches. Afterwards, we'd all load into daddy's pick-up truck to drive to a set of jumbled monolithic rocks that seemed to appear out of nowhere. It was Veedauwoo, an Arapaho sacred site called *bito'o'wu* (land of earth-born spirit). I remember how we would spend summer days, nights and entire weekends together as a large extended family visiting, playing, and grilling fresh mutton with homemade tortillas over an open-pit fire.

In 1973, after *shi'chei* (my grandpa) retired from the local cement plant, he moved back to *Kin naaskaad* (Where the Rock Spreads Out), my maternal grandmother's ancestral homeland. My grandfather returned to ranching and herding sheep while *shimá sani* (my grandma) continued to weave rugs and take care of their homestead that required much attention and energy since there was no electricity or running water. From this point on, our family trips back "home" became more frequent. My teenage years were spent constantly driving from the high plains of southeastern Wyoming to the San Luis Valley in southwest Colorado, over Wolf Creek Pass, then down into the Colorado Plateau almost every weekend. During long summer vacations from school or extended holiday vacations, my parents would drop my older siblings

and myself off at my grandparents' or my paternal aunts' *hooghans* (homes) where we would help herd sheep, haul water, chop wood and do anything else they needed to have done like grind corn, clean peyote, put up tipis, clean sheep corrals or drive them to the local trading post to pick up mail and groceries.

During the winter months, when the roads became impassable, my grandmother had a niece help her record family stories and everyday happenings onto a cassette tape and she would mail them to my family. My grandparents only spoke Navajo and did not read or write English. Thus, besides physical visits, the postal service was the only way she could reach us across the mountains. When a package arrived, we'd sit around the kitchen table listening to grandma's stories spoken in her soft Navajo-language that she would punctuate with deep pauses, laughter and choked-back tears. Afterwards, we would take turns recording our own stories and mailing the cassette tape back to her. Thus, stories were of great importance to my family for cultural continuity and most likely one of the reasons I am fascinated with listening to and telling stories. I can imagine it is also why I am captivated by the possibilities of new technology to bring today's Native families and communities closer together through stories and storytelling.

As a child, I was captivated listening to my grandmother's voice on 60-minute voice-recorded cassette tapes that she physically placed in the mail. Today as an adult, I am intrigued by the diverse number of Indigenous voices, languages, visual images and musical sounds that are found within our 3-5 minute *nDigiStories* and that are beginning to be more frequently uploaded on personal Facebook accounts or on YouTube.

Diné oral traditional stories were very important in my family too. My father was the first person who taught me about the beauty and power of our *Diné* oral stories and teachings. While sitting sprawled across his lap, I learned about Navajo values, norms, behaviors, ethics

and morals through oral traditional stories. During the winter months, marked by the hibernation of certain reptiles and the end of lightning and thunderstorms, my father would spend evenings telling us *Diné* oral stories. After he finished his shiftwork, he would return home, shower, eat dinner and teach us stories about our Navajo universe, constellations, mountains, plants, herbs, and animals. The stories my father told us were passed down to him through his maternal grandmother. Although we would always try to coax daddy to repeat our favorite stories over and over again, he would only tell them to us once, each winter season, and he would encourage us to pay close attention so that one day we could share them to our children and grandchildren.

In our *Diné* way, my parents, my grandparents and my great-grandparents were considered "rich people" because, combined, they possessed a plethora of *Diné* oral teachings, stories and songs. Besides giving me life, they passed down everything they held most precious—their *Diné* stories and their *Diné* prayers, which are my shield, and my blessing and protection to live a long and healthy life. According to my maternal clan grandfather Dr. Wilson Aronilth, Jr., a cultural specialist and former colleague at *Diné* College, our *Diné* teachings "were handed down from the Holy People to our great forefathers, ever since life began" (Aronilth, 1992, p. 3).

To be clear, my father was not simply telling us children's stories about "Coyote and The Doe and How Fawns Got Their Spots," but embedded in these oral stories were age-old *Diné* teachings. They were about the importance of maintaining sacred relationships and having the utmost reverence—for ourselves, for each other, with our natural universe, our animals, insects, and birds, and with all our sacred elements called earth, air, fire and water.

Briefly, our *Diné* epistemology begins with the assumption from experience, that everything in the cosmos is connected and that all physical bodies and minds are expressions of a

deeper spiritual essence. As Navajo scholar David Begay and Choctaw-Navajo scholar Nancy Maryboy argued, "this epistemology cannot be fully conceptualized in terms of an individual person. The mind, body and spirit are intrinsically interrelated with the cosmic whole" (1998, p. 323). Thus, when a Navajo refers to dził (mountains) that surround our sacred homeland it is not as purely physical matter, but includes an understanding and relationship with the life cycles of the animals and plants which grow at different elevations, the weather patterns of the surrounding area and the human experiences of being in the mountain. As such, the foundation of our *Diné* way of being and knowing is called sa'ah naagháí bikeh hózhóón nishłóó naasháá dóó. Navajo writer, poet and current Navajo Nation Vice President, Rex Lee Jim translates this phrase as follows: "May I be Everlasting and Beautiful Living" (2000, p. 232). The terms sa'ah naagháí (Long Life) and bikeh hózhóón (Happiness) are primordial life-giving forces of the Navajo cosmos that define the natural order of all livings things and can be summarized as hózhó (beauty).

This is who I am. This is how I fit within my family, community and the world around me, and how I situate myself as a *Diné* researcher. Before I discuss the purpose of my study and approach, let me explain how I became involved in digital storytelling.

Becoming a Native Digital Storyteller

My interest and involvement in digital storytelling came, first, as a deep intuition and knowingness that it could be useful to our Indigenous peoples; then, it transformed into an overwhelming feeling of love for all the Indigenous people who have found their way into our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops and whom we call our *nDigiFamily*. Through our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops we are witnessing numerous Native women and men, many of them community leaders, advocates, activists, parents and elders, who have been re-centering their lives,

re-vitalizing their dreams and re-claiming their histories. In the pages below, I will share some personal experiences, dreams and visions regarding the *nDigiStorytelling* practice I am engaged in and which is the topic of this dissertation.

In the spring of 2005, I was first introduced to digital storytelling. I remember being in my office at the University of Arizona reading community-based outreach grant reports focused on reducing health disparities among American Indians and Hispanics. Several progress reports crossed my desk that day, but *one* caught my attention—it came with a DVD. I immediately placed the DVD in my computer before I read the written report and up popped a menu with a set of digital stories. I will always remember the first digital story I ever saw. It was a three-minute digital story about a young Hispanic girl and her father who was caught for dealing drugs and put in prison. The Hispanic teen talked about how she was helping her mom raise her younger siblings while working to get good grades, and how she was starting to reestablish a relationship with her dad. It was the young girl's voice and her family pictures that drew me in, but it was her expression of love, resilience, and hope that I felt touch me deep inside and I knew I had to learn more. The first digital stories I saw on that first DVD were powerful and deeply moving and, immediately, I became hooked to digital storytelling. And, in that moment, my life's path changed forever.

I immersed myself in organizing and conducting digital storytelling workshops that focused on training Indigenous peoples. For the first few years (2005–2007), I hired, watched and helped other non-Native digital storytellers work with staff, students and community members under two National Institutes of Health (NIH) Center research grants I administered at two major universities—the University of Arizona grant focused on reducing diabetes and substance abuse among American Indians and Hispanics, and the University of Washington

grant focused on reducing cancer disparities across an eight-state region (Alaska, Oregon, Washington, Montana, South Dakota, North Dakota and Wyoming).

In the beginning, I wanted to show how digital stories made by local community members, who were finding positive ways to meet and manage their health challenges (e.g., by improved diet and exercise or by preventive screening), were better suited for Native peoples than the "one-size-fits-all" text-based health information being sent out by federal and state governmental agencies. As a Navajo woman with a background in cultural anthropology, I knew making culturally appropriate health literacy and health communication were important issues to tackle. I will always remember the times I saw shímá saní (my grandma) being given health material at a tribal fair and another time when she was given a two-page written hospital discharge summary at a nearby hospital, even though she did not read English. One day I saw her crumble up a health brochure and place it under a wobbly table leg in her hooghan nimazí (round home). And, another time I watched her place paper diabetes-education material into her wood stove to help heat up a pan of hot stew and tortillas when she was cooking dinner. From my perspective, what helped my grandmother manage her diabetes for over 40 years was not all the glossy health material she acquired, but it was the support of particular family members who not only translated important health information for her, but told her first-hand stories about how they themselves managed their sugar and salt intake during ceremonies or how they made sure they did their follow-up visits at the clinic.

Although I had only recently heard about digital storytelling myself, I tried to share everything I knew about it with my Native and non-Native colleagues; I also began to help Indigenous peoples create digital stories before I did one of my own; and, I started to make presentations about digital storytelling at numerous Native health conferences. In April 2008, I

attended a "Healthcare Perspectives on Digital Storytelling Retreat" on Bowen Island, a twenty-minute ferry ride from West Vancouver, British Columbia. From in-depth conversations with the other digital storytelling practitioners, I knew there was something unique about the work I was conducting with Indigenous peoples and I knew I had to quicken my pace. But first, I needed to take care of a few important matters.

Respecting Others' Creativity and Practice

As a *Diné* woman, I understand the need to respect other people's unique knowledge and expertise and that I needed to ask permission to use digital storytelling to have positive outcomes. This is an important tenet in our *Diné* teachings and how knowledge, especially ceremonial, is passed down from generation to generation.

Since Dana Atchley, the person who created "digital storytelling" as a multimedia autobiographic piece in his performance theater work, had passed away in 2000, I decided to make my request to Joe Lambert, Executive Director of the Center for Digital Storytelling. I met Joe Lambert, for the first time, at the Bowen Island Retreat, but made my request two months later, in June 2008, at a-renovated-hog-farm-turned-training-center in Lyons, Colorado. I was there with thirteen other digital storytelling trainers. Little did I know that that is where I would meet Carmella Rodriguez who would later become my partner and *nDigiSister* and who I would travel the thousands of miles with sharing *nDigiStorytelling* to help "our people."

Figure 1.3. Digital Storytelling workshop in Lyons, CO. (Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*).



At the advanced digital storytelling workshop (see Figure 1.3), facilitated by Joe and other individuals associated with the Center for Digital Storytelling in Berkley, California, I set up a meeting to speak to Joe Lambert. He pointed out a recent news article he read in *Indian* Country Today by Babette Herrmann (2008) titled "Stories Save Lives" (http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2008/06/18/stories-save-lives-93058). It described the digital storytelling work I was doing with The University of Washington's Native People for Cancer Control program. After a few more exchanges of stories, I made my verbal request. I remember saying something like: "Joe, my people need digital storytelling. It has been around for over ten years. In all my travels across Indian Country and at all the health and education conferences I have ever attended in my lifetime, I have never heard about digital storytelling. I have never heard about it, nor have I seen it being used." I continued: "My people can use this tool in our communities, and out of respect for what you have created I would like your permission to use it. My plan is to share it—I want to spread digital storytelling out as wide and as fast as I can, especially across rural and underserved Native communities. We need it now because my people are facing many critical issues and no one seems to know about them. I want to take digital storytelling across Indian Country; you see, some of us don't have the time nor the money to travel to all the big cities where you give your workshops. What do you think?" After I finished, I remember he smiled and affirmatively nodded his head. Then, he began to tell me about how hard it had been for him to work within Native communities and how nothing had really taken off. He also told me about a digital storytelling project he did for the National Museum of American Indians that was focused on Native veterans and about a Native digital storyteller who lives in Sacramento, California.

Afterwards, my life took another turn. I decided to leave the *whitestream* (Grande, 2003)

research-driven universities to more fully train a cadre of Indigenous digital storytellers who live and work in rural communities and to ignite a grassroots Indigenous digital storytelling movement across the United States. In a recent essay titled, "Where it all Started: The Center of Digital Storytelling in California," Joe Lambert (2009) writes:

The challenges for the community of practice around digital storytelling, as diverse and as expansive as it has become, seem to call for a similar reclamation project to restate and reinstill core principles. While diversity and plurality are important in any emergent practice . . . to situate it outside a social change framework . . . is to miss the point, almost entirely. (pp. 81–82)

For Carmella Rodriguez and I, the focus of our *nDigiStorytelling* work will always be for healing and social change. We are also interested in using it for Indigenous community building and organizing and for human rights and social justice activism. We know that our most important work needs to address the greatest challenges we face as Indigenous peoples today (e.g., land and water reclamations, treaty rights, language revitalization, violence against women, and cultural, visual and spiritual repatriation), which often takes place within our ancestral homelands.

Indigenizing Digital Storytelling

In his traditional world, the Native American lives in the presence of stories. The storyteller is one whose spirit is indispensible to the people. He is magician, artist, creator. And, above all, he is a holy man. His is a sacred business (Momaday, 1988, pp. xvii–xviii).

As a *Diné* woman, I immediately recognized digital storytelling could be a powerful and sacred process for Indigenous peoples because I was well aware of our diverse holistic healing systems and I knew the impact stories and storytelling made throughout our lives because they are always remembered or revisited. When an all-night *hatáál* (ceremony) is held to restore a relative back to health and wellbeing, chants are sung and corn-pollen prayer offerings are made, but not without stories being sprinkled throughout. The songs we sing tap into the female

energies of our being, while the prayers we pray come from our male side—both are sacred and necessary because they balance each other and make everything whole.

A common thread between an *nDigiStorytelling* workshop and a Navajo healing ceremony, besides stories and prayers, is a focus on thought and speech. In our workshops, our *nDigiStorytellers* have to think about a personal story that they would like to share with others, they write it into a script, and then speak it out loud into a microphone in a private recording session. In *Language and Art in the Navajo Universe*, anthropologist Gary Witherspoon (1977) writes:

Navajo believe in the power of thought. The world was created by it; things are transformed according to it; life is regenerated from it. People are cured and blessed, vegetation is improved and increased, and health and happiness are restored by the power of thought. (p. 29)

In our *Diné* worldview, a person's speech or language carries sacred air, wind, energy and life. Thus, we believe a person can re-establish, in themselves and the world around them by the act of speech, a condition of health, wellness, beauty, and harmony symbolized by the Navajo word *hózhó*. In *Language and Art in the Navajo Universe*, anthropologist Gary Witherspoon (1977) writes:

After a person has projected *hózhó* into the air through ritual form, he then at the conclusion of the ritual, breathes that *hózhó* back into himself and makes himself a part of the order, harmony, and beauty he has projected into the world through the ritual mediums of speech and song. (p. 61)

According to Navajo philosophy, a person's thought, which is *Sa'ah naaghaii* (Long Life) and speech, which is *Bik'eh hózhóón* (Happiness), are interrelated and inseparable. We consider *thought* as the inner form of speech and *speech* as the outer form of thought. All natural phenomena have inner forms, including human beings, which we call *nilch'i bii' sizíinii* (in-standing wind soul) (Witherspoon, 1977, p. 29). Like our *Diné* ceremonies then, digital

stories tap into a person's thought and speech to create change and transformation at the level of the person's "in-standing wind soul" or "soul wind." To take it a step further, when our *nDigiStorytellers* draw from their Indigenous knowledge, which is the inner form of thought, and speak their story or sing a song using their Indigenous language, which is the outer form of speech, there is immense healing and restoration. Both Carmella Rodriguez and I have witnessed, during the audio recording of a digital storyteller's voice, especially when using their Native language, an immediate change in the person's physical and emotional state. This is an area of our "*nDigiStorytelling* ceremony" that I will briefly explore in my dissertation and, therefore, will be expanded upon. Suffice it to say, during these "ritual" moments, when digital storytellers are thinking about a life experience to share or speaking it out loud to obtain a voice recording, that we know our digital storytelling work is "sacred business."

For this reason, before *nDigiDreams* started travelling extensively, Carmella Rodriguez and I returned to my clan grandfather's ceremonial *hooghan* (home) in northwestern New Mexico to make prayer offerings and to sing *Hózhǫqjí* (Blessingway) and *Hóchǫqjí* (*Protectionway*) songs for our *nDigiStorytelling* journey. We wanted to lay down our best thoughts and intentions for a new path we were both headed down. During the ceremony, I remember my grandfather telling me in Navajo:

I see it, right there, in the *tséghádí'nídíní* (rock crystal). It's as if your ancestors opened this path for you to help your people. It's like your grandma and grandpa who used to stand there shaking a can full of small pebbles that was tied to a stick with wire. They used to do it to get their sheep's attention so they would turn a certain way that would lead them to the water hole. That is how I see it in the crystal, your ancestors have been trying to get your attention, both of you, so you would recognize this tool, this digital storytelling, as a way to help our people. (O. Detsoi, personal communication, September 31, 2009)

At the turn of every season, we make a point to return to my ancestral homeland near the *Chuskai* (Chuska) Mountains in northwestern New Mexico to renew these prayers and songs.

Using the Diné Cornstalk Teachings for Digital Storytelling

I am fully aware of the teachings of our *Diné* cornstalk teachings (see Figure 1.4) because I used to teach at *Diné* College, the higher education institution of the Navajo people; thus, my first inclination as a *Diné* educator was to adapt this metaphor for *nDigiStorytelling*—from the design of our training manuals to the dissemination of our *nDigiStories*.



Figure 1.4. nDigiStorytelling and Diné Cornstalk Teachings.

Briefly, corn is indigenous to this continent and has always provided physical and spiritual sustenance and renewal for our communities. Within our Navajo teachings, we recognize four different varieties of corn—white, yellow, blue and black that are associated with the four cardinal directions. In particular, the *naadaa' ałkai* (white corn), *naadaa' ałtsoii* (yellow corn) and *tádídiín* (corn pollen) have spiritual significance and are used within our Navajo ceremonies and within Navajo daily life. Corn represents human development from conception

to birth to old age. In order to grow and reach full maturity, corn requires the four elements (earth, air, fire and water).

A cornstalk represents a process of life and the developmental stages of teaching, learning and understanding can be easily understood as one moves from the roots of the cornstalk to its tassel. For example, regarding our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops, we require a physical space on earth to conduct the workshop and the "living breath" (air) that comes from the inner being or *hwii siziinii* (spirit) of a person willing to tell a part of their life story. As another example, regarding the training of our *nDigiStorytellers*, we start at whatever developmental stage they are most comfortable with when engaging the technology (e.g., some may be considered "infants" who have never touched a keyboard, while others are "young adults" who have created and edited word documents and spreadsheets on a computer, but never used a video editing software program).

For the purpose of this dissertation, it must be understood that this inquiry into nDigiStorytelling will be divided into two complementary dissertations. Each stands alone, but strengthens and makes "our story" whole. My dissertation will focus on the planting of the nDigiSeed, that is, the nDigiStoryMaking or the birthing of a digital story that occurs within a four-day nDigiStorytelling workshop. I am particularly interested in the self-reported healing and personal transformations that occur within nDigiStorytellers as they think about a personal life story, share it within an nDigiStoryCircle, read their story into a microphone to obtain a voice recording, and gather personal photos and songs for their background music. I am also interested in how they "experience" editing and screening their own mini-movie. If we consider digital stories as "living breath" that comes from the inner being or hwii siziinii (spirit) of our nDigiStorytellers, then when and how does the transformation occur? Throughout the entire

process, I am also interested in exploring moments of creativity, inspiration, intuition, healing and liberation—all concepts that have been brought forward to us by former digital storytellers. How do digital storytellers describe them? Most importantly, how do they embody them?

On the other hand, Carmella Rodriguez's complementary dissertation will focus on the *story-sharing*. If we return to the above metaphor, when a cornstalk fully matures it creates a corn tassel that emits corn pollen. For us, this is the moment when a completed *nDigiStory* is screened on the last day of an *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. To explain, as I complete my inquiry at the end of the workshop during the local screening process, Carmella begins her inquiry. She then follows the *nDigiStories*, that is, the "corn pollen," as it is being spread across Turtle Island (e.g., first at a community-wide *nDigiFest* and then later with their spouses and families, in small to large group settings, and whether or not they are being uploaded to Facebook and YouTube).

As mentioned, the ultimate stage of development for a cornstalk is the spreading of its corn pollen; for the Navajo, *tádídíín* (corn pollen) represents good health, good blessings and good life. And every living entity, in essence, completes a natural cycle that ends (and begins) in balance, harmony and goodness (*hózhó*). Therefore, from our perspective, each digital story we co-create with others is *hózhó* and it has the power to help those who create it and those who watch and listen to it. I have witnessed in my own practice how *nDigiStories* have changed and transformed Native individuals and families. I can only imagine how they are also speaking to our mountains, land, air, water, and ancestors in a positive and beautiful manner. Carmella Rodriguez and I have explored these ideas and concepts with our *Anishinaabe* co-researchers and we are beginning to better understand their teachings about "the good life," called *Mino Bi-maadiziwin* (Benton-Banai, 1988).

Planting nDigiSeeds Across Indigenous Sacred Homelands

In June 2008, after speaking with Joe Lambert and after combining dreams and expertise with Carmella Rodriguez, we formed a woman-owned Indigenous-focused consulting and training company called *nDigiDreams* (http://www.ndigidreams.com/). Since 2008, we have been teaching nDigiStorytelling workshops in well over a hundred community-based tribal settings in the Pacific Northwest, the Northern Plains, the Great Lakes and the Southwestern regions of the United States. Because of who we are, as a playful gesture, we started to name everything we created with the preface "nDigi." Thus, we train nDigiStorytellers at nDigiBasic and *nDigiAdvanced* levels within our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops. We also have a Toyota passenger van we travel across the United States in and have named her nDigiChidi (the last part of this word means "car" in Navajo). The individuals we have met and trained have taken hold of this unique orthography, thus, we have *nDigiSisters* and *nDigiBrothers* in a growing *nDigiFamily* who email, text and call us after our workshops are finished and everyone returns home. Like members of our own families, we "friend" them on Facebook, send them personal cards and emails, chat with them over the phone and sometimes visit them in person when we are driving by their communities. Recently, we have started organizing *nDigiFests* (digital storytelling film festivals) within local tribal communities and within urban Indian enclaves, where we screen a variety of *nDigiStories* with continual permission from the Native digital storytellers. With permission, we have also submitted *nDigiStories* to various local, regional and national film festivals (e.g., the 2012 "Rock with Wings" Film Festival in Shiprock, New Mexico and the 2014 Red Nation Film Festival in Los Angeles, California).

All of this is mentioned here to describe the multiple ways we have planted our nDigiSeeds and nurtured a growing cadre of Indigenous digital storytellers across Turtle Island. Like most gardeners I know who have healthy plants and abundant harvests, there is a certain amount of love and devotion that always takes place. This is true in our *nDigiGardens*, too. In fact, in several tribal communities in Montana, Michigan, Nevada and New Mexico, for example, we are beginning to see the "corn tassels" spreading goodness and beauty. We have a handful of advanced *nDigiStorytellers*, mostly Native women who have become our *nDigiHelpers* at various workshops in their surrounding area or in other states, if they are willing to travel with us. In some cases, in collaboration with various funding agencies, we have provided them with mini-digital-storytelling-stations (i.e., *nDigiStorytelling* Kits) and we are constantly teaching them about how to use and take shortcuts with their equipment. Some of the advanced *nDigiStorytellers* we have trained are planting their own *Anishinaabe nDigiSeeds*—some of them are co-creating digital stories with small groups of individuals in their tribal community, while others are working one-on-one with community members to make 3-5 minute digital stories.

Creating Space for *nDigiStorytelling*

In this section of my paper, I will briefly introduce four bodies of literature: digital storytelling, Indigenous film, historical trauma and Indigenous resilience. My purpose is to create space for *nDigiStorytelling* by exploring gaps and limitations in the academic literature. My goal is to challenge us to think about digital storytelling with Indigenous peoples differently and to interpret digital stories that are gathered with them from an Indigenous epistemological framework.

Digital storytelling. Digital storytelling is a multimodal approach that includes written text, the spoken word, images and music. Since 1994, the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS) has taught a training method that focuses on the production of 3-5 minute "mini-movies" within

intensive three-day hands-on workshops (Lambert, 2002). Their goal is to democratize the media and spread new media across the globe. Digital storytelling gives ordinary people, who may not be trained in film production, the opportunity to create a digital story and it also gives them the authority to own and disseminate it.

Gaps and limitations. Unfortunately, mainstream researchers who are using digital storytelling as an emergent social science method (Cueva et al., 2013; Gubrium, & Turner, 2011; Gubrium, Hill & Flicker, 2013; Wexler, 2014a, 2014b; Wexler, Eglinton & Gubrium, 2012; Wexler, Gubrium, Griffin, & DiFulvio, 2013; and Willox, Harper, Edge, & 'My Word': Storytelling and Digital Media Lab, & Rigolet Inuit Community Government, 2012) are too often focused on the collecting of digital stories as "phenomena," "artifacts," or "data" that can be analyzed, sorted and coded to study personal and societal health issues, especially in minority and underserved communities. Because they have been trained in university settings and regularly receive their funding from Western hegemonic institutions, they too often frame their digital storytelling research within "damage-centered" research frameworks. From my perspective, there is an element of "fetishism" and "voyeurism" (Bhabha, 1994) in digital storytelling, when digital stories are funded, created, and disseminated as "data" or "objects" within universities, which some consider colonial discourses of knowledge and power. Indeed, power and privilege play important roles in digital storytelling because of the nature of sensitivities required for the sharing of personal stories. For researchers (Gray & Young, 2011; Hill, 2008) who create digital stories about culturally sensitive topics (e.g., women affected by obstetric fistula in Uganda or who are HIV positive), for example, issues of race, class, culture and gender come to the forefront and must be addressed.

Indigenous film. According to anthropologist Faye Ginsburg (1994), Indigenous film comes from a different kind of positioning within Indigenous communities and that "only by understanding Indigenous media work as part of a broader mediascape of social relations can we appreciate them fully as complex cultural *objects*" (p. 378). A discussion about Indigenous film must always consider two issues: sovereignty and aesthetics. Santa Clara Pueblo-Navajo filmmaker Beverly Singer (2001) describes cultural sovereignty as "telling our story [through film and video which] is deeply connected to being self-determined as an Indian" (p. 2); Seneca scholar Michelle Raheja (2011) identifies the "creative act of self-representation [in film]" (p. 60) as visual sovereignty; finally, Randolph Lewis (2006) explores representational sovereignty as "the right, as well as the ability for a group of people to depict themselves with their own ambitions at heart" (p. 175). Regarding Indigenous aesthetics, Hopi filmmaker Victor Masayesva Jr. (1994) writes, "film is about imagined time and space, it is borne from the imagination of people each of whom have constructed those times and spaces differently . . . by expressing our distinct tribal voices, we would be expounding the indigenous aesthetic" (p. 20).

The limitation of this body of work is that the issues of sovereignty and aesthetics in Indigenous film and video are relatively new concepts that are being hotly debated; and, there needs to be a deeper discussion about differences in Native voice, power, aesthetics, and agency. Much of the literature is "looking back" at stereotyped representations and images of Natives peoples, for example, in Hollywood Westerns. Māori filmmaker Barry Barclay (2003) coined the term *Fourth World Cinema*, a gaze that has been unmediated by outside aesthetics, politics, and agendas. However, because of the inherent economics and politics of making and distributing films, there seems to be a "looking down" upon Indigenous filmmakers which, I

believe, is accentuated when you consider the growing cadre of new media makers called *nDigiStorytellers*.

Historical trauma. Historical trauma is defined as "cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences," (Brave Heart, 2003, p. 7). According to Brave Heart, historical trauma is directly linked to the banning of cultural practices by various colonization policies and institutions of assimilation (i.e., involuntary theft or removal from land; suppression of language, culture, ceremonies and spirituality; destruction of Indigenous family systems; and residential boarding schools) and causes intergenerational unresolved grief (Brave Heart, 1998, 1999a, 1999b; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Brave Heart argues that this process of cultural degeneration results in alcoholism, substance abuse, suicide, family violence, sexual abuse, child neglect, vandalism and theft. Further, she has identified a historical trauma response, that is, a set of reactions to multigenerational, collective, historical wounding of the mind, emotions and spirit (i.e., reactions: denial, depersonalization, isolation, confused memory, loss of concentration, nightmares, psychic numbing, hyper-vigilance, fixation on trauma, identification with death, survivor guilt and unresolved grief) (Brave Heart, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2003; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Duran & Duran, 1995). Academic researchers (Brave Heart, 1999a; Evans-Campbell & Walters, 2006; Lowery, 1999) have been focusing on the use of narrative to interrupt the transmission of intergenerational trauma among Native peoples; they gather historical trauma narratives in several ways, for example, by getting individuals to draw a lifeline and plot out traumatic events on it to create a Trauma Graph, by encouraging individuals to share trauma testimonies within talking circles and sweat lodges, and by using individual and group interviews and focus groups.

Gaps and limitations. Within the historical trauma literature, like digital stories, trauma stories have become "phenomena" or "data" that are studied within university settings by researchers, both Native and non-Native, who have the power and privilege to gather, analyze, code and discuss text. Because of the nature of the topic, most of the narratives about "soul wound" are "looking back" to better understand historical trauma responses or intergenerational unresolved grief. Although there are some researchers (Walters & Simoni, 2002; Walters, Simoni, & Evans-Campbell, 2002) who are exploring "present-day" or embodied traumas, because of their data collection methods (e.g., key informant interviews and focus groups), the narratives are still about experiences of everyday trauma (i.e., narratives as "objective" phenomena) instead of from an experience of trauma (i.e., narratives as "subjective" phenomena) that includes the visceral body, emotions, dreams, intuitions and spirit. Similar to digital storytelling research, since most of the historical trauma research funding comes from Western hegemonic institutions, most of the production of knowledge occurs within a "damage-centered" research framework (Tuck, 2009) and primarily focuses on causal factors. And, although there have been efforts to conduct community-based participatory research with and for Indigenous communities, the level of involvement of storytellers and community members after the "data" or "phenomena" have been collected, analyzed published and disseminated is still questionable. To be sure, some researchers (Gone, 2013a; Wesley-Esquimaux, 2010a, 2010b) are beginning to challenge the focus on traumatization, victimization, adversity and despair.

Indigenous resilience. Indigenous resilience "is a reflection of an innate determination by Indigenous peoples to succeed" (Durie, 2007, p. 8) and is a concept that focuses on community resilience, which is an understanding of positive responses to adversity at the level of families, communities and larger social systems. This level of inquiry is helping resilience

research move away from a focus on "at risk" traits and patterns within individuals (Kirmayer, Sehdev, Whiteley, Dandeneau, & Issac, 2009). Kirmayer, Dandeneau, Marshall, Morgan, and Williamson (2011) argue that "the metaphor of resilience suggests the ability to return to an original state after being stressed, perturbed or otherwise bent out of shape" (p. 85) and points towards interventions for Indigenous peoples, including revitalizing language, enhancing cultural identity and spirituality, enhancing local control and collective efficacy and respecting human diversity. Kirmayer et al. (2011) suggest one of the most interesting ways to understand and build resilience is through gathering "narratives of historical identity and continuity [that] speak directly to the ruptures of cultural continuity that have occurred with colonization and the active suppression of indigenous cultures and identities" (p. 89).

Gaps and limitations. Unlike historical trauma research, Indigenous resilience theories and approaches focus on "positive" responses to adversity. However, like historical trauma research, Indigenous resilience narratives are primarily gathered through key informant interviews and focus groups that creates a focus on "looking back" at experiences of Indigenous resilience and can still be considered "damage-centered" research because some researchers are still looking for "ruptures" of colonialism and "suppression" of cultures to form a backdrop for their work. Finally, like historical trauma stories, Indigenous resilience stories are about experiences of those who "bounce back" instead of from the experiences of Indigenous peoples who are thriving and flourishing as evidenced by the nature of their thought and speech.

An Indigenous Perspective and Practice for Digital Storytelling

I will tell you something about stories [he said]. They aren't just entertainment. Don't be fooled. They are all we have, you see, all we have to fight off illness and death. You don't have anything, if you don't have stories. (Silko, 1977, p. 124)

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2008) remembers the knowledge-bearers of the past in Lighting the Eighth Fire: The Liberation, Resurgence, and Protection of Indigenous Nations.

She writes:

They encouraged us to take their work further down the path of decolonization, grounding our work in the languages, philosophies, and ethical principles of our respective nations . . . our work does not rely on Western theories, or even post-colonial theory, to frame our research, analysis, and writing. We rely heavily on the growing, yet still marginalized, body of fourth-world theory—theories, strategies, and analysis strongly rooted in the values, knowledge and philosophies of Indigenous Nations. But . . . we are also committed to a particular politic: putting the freedom of Indigenous Peoples as [our] highest priority. (p. 15)

As a *Diné* woman, I have spent almost ten years of my life helping and teaching Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island how to create *nDigiStories* for themselves and their people. And, many hours have been spent bearing witness to the thoughts, words, prayers and songs of my Native brothers and sisters as Carmella Rodriguez and I co-taught and co-facilitated over 120 *nDigiStorytelling* workshops and co-created over 1,200 digital stories about healing, transformation and liberation.

My plan is to explore the process of *nDigiStorytelling* within Indigenous communities. I think that an Indigenized version of digital storytelling can provide Indigenous peoples with an opportunity to explore embodied experiences of historical trauma and Indigenous resilience from human beings who are thinking, speaking, writing and healing in our "*nDigiStorytelling* ceremonies." Consider the work of Cherokee Two-Spirit writer, activist and performer Qwo-Li Driskill (2008) in "Theatre as Suture: Grassroots Performance, Decolonization and Healing." He writes:

Colonization is a kinesthetic reality: it is an act done by bodies and felt by other bodies. Violence is not an intellectual knowledge, but rather one that is known because of damage done to our skin, flesh, muscles, bones and spirits. It is both our homelands and our bodies that are violated through colonization. If colonization is a kinesthetic wounding, then decolonization is a kinesthetic healing. (p. 155)

I would take it a step further to say that sovereignty depends on the widespread kinesthetic healing of Indigenous peoples and, ultimately, *Ni'hasdzáán nihimá* (our Earth Mother). According to an article by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012), "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," too often "the language of decolonization has been superficially adopted into education and other social sciences . . . yet, we have observed a startling number of these discussions make no mention of Indigenous peoples and their struggle for recognition of their sovereignty" (pp. 2–3). Thus, there can be no mention about storytelling being a tool for decolonization without considering how it helps restore our Indigenous languages, revitalizes our Indigenous cultures and strengthens Indigenous land reparations. Therefore, my focus is on how *nDigiStorytelling* and *nDigiStories* not only help us to survive and resist, but on how they help us to renew and regenerate ourselves.

The approach I will take for my study of our *nDigiStorytelling* process will be with a focus on "desire-based" research (Tuck, 2009). Aleut scholar Eve Tuck (2009) writes:

For Indigenous peoples . . . a framework that accounts for and forwards our sovereignty is vital. We can practice our sovereignty within a framework of desire but cannot within a damage framework. By this I mean that a framework of desire recognizes our sovereignty as a core element of our being and meaning making; a damage framework excludes this recognition. (p. 423)

Survivance can be considered a framework of desire and will be a concept that I will employ for understanding the creating and healing power of *nDigiStorytelling* and *nDigiStories* within Indigenous communities. Gerald Vizenor's (1994) concept of survivance moves us beyond survival; it includes resistance. It means "moving beyond our basic survival in the face of overwhelming cultural genocide to create spaces of synthesis and renewal" (p. 53). *nDigiStorytelling* is understood, in this paper, as a liberating self-determining process. It can be considered a healing journey, like the corn pollen pathway of the *Diné* that lies at the sacred

center of life where everything thrives and flourishes. This pathway or center has many names. For the *Anishinaabeg* (the people), "the good life" is called *Mino Bi-maadiziwin* (Benton-Banai, 1988); for the *Diné*, we call it *Hózhó* (Kahn-John, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

In my dissertation study, I plan to create space for *nDigiStorytelling* by conducting "indigenist research . . . [that] takes the research into the heart of the Indigenous struggle" and "focuses on lived, historical experiences, ideas, traditions, dreams, interests and aspirations, and struggles of Indigenous [peoples]" (Rigney, 1999, p. 117). The purpose of my dissertation is to conduct a phenomenological study of *nDigiStorytelling*, an Indigenized version of digital storytelling, within an *Anishinaabe* community in Northern Michigan. My study is an emergent research design that privileges Indigenous methodologies for qualitative inquiry called the "Three Sisters": Indigenous methodologies, community-based participatory (CBPR) research and portraiture. My "Three Sisters" approach is analogous to bricolage (Kincheloe, 2001); it provides a much-needed critical, multi-perspective, multi-theoretical and multi-methodological approach for the study of *nDigiStorytelling*. According to Joe Kincheloe (2001) "bricolage is concerned not only with multiple methods of inquiry but with diverse theoretical and philosophical notions of the various elements encountered in the research act" (p. 682).

"The Three Sisters" are the three main agricultural crops of Indigenous peoples in North American: corn, beans and squash; when planted together, they benefit the overall garden. Indigenous methodologies will represent the "corn" which provides a structure for the "bean" to climb, which is the CBPR strategy of inquiry and the 3R's (respect, reciprocity and relationship) for conducting Indigenous research. Finally, the "squash" will be represented by portraiture; thus, "portraits" of Indigenous digital storytellers will be created to spread out across the ground

to prevent against colonialistic encroachment. By utilizing a "Three Sisters" approach to qualitative inquiry, I believe I can better show how *nDigiStorytelling* is helping Native people heal themselves and each other. In my dissertation, I draw "portraits" of the planting of Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 *nDigiSeeds* within one *Anishinaabe* community in Northern Michigan. I am particularly interested in the following research questions:

- 1. What is the personal experience of a Native person who goes through our *nDigiStorytelling* workshop?
- 2. Does "the making of an *nDigiStory*" help Native people "think" and "speak" about the journey of their life's path (e.g., how and when they overcame hardship or how and when they tapped into their innate beauty and strength)? If so, when in the *nDigiStorytelling* process does self-reported healing and transformation occur most frequently (e.g., when writing their script, recording their voice, finding family pictures, editing their digital story or during the group screening)? Finally, what happens in the *nDigiStorytelling* process, when a person's Indigenous knowledge system or Indigenous language is tapped?

This study will focus on *nDigiStorytelling* within one *Anishinaabe* community in Northern Michigan—the *story-making* (see "brown line" in Figure 1.5) begins on the first day of our *nDigiStorytelling* workshop and ends at the local screening on the last day of the workshop. As mentioned previously, this study is complementary to Carmella Rodriguez' dissertation study that focuses on the *story-sharing* (see "blue line" in Figure 1.5) of the *nDigiStories* from the above workshop—which begins at the local screening on the last day of the workshop and focuses on the different ways the digital stories are shared across the community and the outside world.

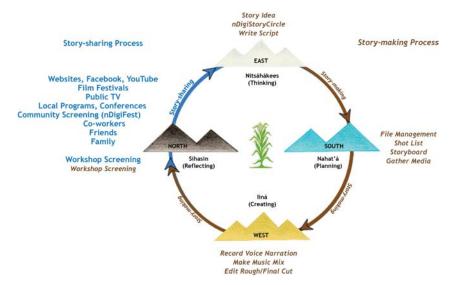


Figure 1.5. nDigiStorytelling Four-Directions approach. (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).

A Phenomenological Study Using the "Three Sisters")

In the following pages, I will briefly describe an emergent research design called the "Three Sisters"—Indigenous methodologies, community-based participatory research (CBPR), and portraiture.

Indigenous ways of knowing or epistemologies sit at the center of Indigenous methodologies and must be briefly mentioned. Indigenous epistemologies are grounded in unique tribal languages, cultures, histories, worldviews, places and spaces and are difficult to define or deconstruct as universals. Nevertheless, Nêhiýaw and Saulteaux author Margaret Kovach (2009), in *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, attempts to describe Indigenous ways of knowing using the following English words and concepts: relational, interactional, holistic, inclusive, animate, cyclical, fluid and ceremonial. While Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2008), in *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, asserts the importance of *relationality* with all of creation (i.e., cosmos, animals, insects, plants) and not limiting it to interpersonal relationships. Indigenous methodologies, according to Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) is about decolonization; it is "about centering our

concepts and worldviews and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes" (p. 39). Again, Indigenous methodologies are the "corn" or the "cornstalks" that rises from the earth to the sky and is a structure for the "bean" to climb upon.

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) has gained acceptance and respectability within the public health field (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003) and is being increasingly used by digital storytelling, historical trauma and Indigenous resilience researchers. CBPR has a set of core principles that researchers adhere to in order to rebalance power relations amongst community and academic co-researchers: trust and relationship-building, co-learning and empowering, mutual benefit and long-term commitment (Cancian, 1993; Hall, 1992; Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998; McIntyre, 2008; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003; Park, 1993; Petras & Porpora, 1993; Wallerstein & Duran, 2006). As mentioned earlier, Indigenous researchers have similar principles, for example, Metís Cora Weber-Pillwax (2001) provides the 3R's for conducting Indigenous research (respect, reciprocity and relationality). Since "relationality" is an important concept in Indigenous research, it must also be understood this includes sustaining proper relationships with the surrounding environment and spirit world. As the "bean" climbs the "corn," the third, and final, sister is the "squash, which provides groundcover to prevent weeds from coming through which suggests it needs to be "thick."

Portraiture is a "thick descriptive" method of data collection and analysis that can be equated with case study, life history, narrative and ethnographic approaches. As described by sociologist and educator Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot and developmental psychologist Jessica Hoffman Davis in *The Art and Science of Portraiture* (1997), this method of inquiry and documentation in the social sciences combines "systematic, empirical description with aesthetic

expression, blending art and science, humanistic sensibilities and scientific rigor" (p. 3). Portraiture allows for a closer examination by "capturing the essence and resonance of the actors experience and perspective through the details of action and thought revealed in context" (p. 12). Thus, a "thick description" of how Indigenous people embody trauma, enact resilience, and remain on "the good life" is well suited for a method like portraiture. In fact, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) write, portraiture "begins by searching for what is good and healthy and assumes that the expression of goodness will always be laced with imperfections" (p. 9). In the creating of portraits, scrupulous researchers value voice, context and relationships; they engage in an iterative and generative process that locates emergent themes in the data; finally, they construct an aesthetic whole that "resonates" for the actors, the researcher and the audience. Portraits allow us "to inform and inspire, to document and transform, [and] to speak to the head and the heart" (p. 243) which I believe is most needed in research that is being conducted among Indigenous peoples today.

Planting *nDigiSeeds* in Northern Michigan

With a group of *Anishinaabe* women (Eva Petoskey, Arlene Kashata and Linda Woods) and a non-*Anishinaabe* ally, co-worker and friend (Terri Tavenner), our initial idea was to collaborate on planting *nDigiSeeds* across the State of Michigan for recovery and hope. We met the group of women, whom we call our *nDigiDreamers*, in a series of *nDigiStorytelling* workshops we held across Michigan between 2011–2012. Over the past few years, we have been collaborating on various projects: co-creating digital stories for their *Anishnaabek* Healing Circle, Access to Recovery Program (ATR); co-creating the script and jointly voice recording a *nDigiStorytelling* Visual Logic Model (see Media 7.1) for ATR's "Sowing The Seeds of Recovery;" and, planning and working on a short film about the Indigenous sobriety/wellness

movement in Michigan. Most of all, we have been getting to know each other better. Also, since each of the women has been through one of our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops (three in the first workshop we held in Sault Ste. Marie in 2011, and one in a subsequent workshop we held in Peshawbestown in 2012), we easily began to call ourselves *nDigiSisters* and are part of a growing *nDigiFamily*.

Selection of Research Site

Eva Petoskey is the Director of the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan's Anishinaabek Healing Circle, Access to Recovery Program (ATR), a large statewide collaborative involving the twelve federally recognized tribes in Michigan. Through Eva's understanding about the importance of "community readiness" in CBPR and based on 35 years of experience conducting research and evaluation in tribal communities, she identified the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) as an *Anishinaabe* community that might be interested in *nDigiStorytelling*. We have been collaborating and capacity-building with ATR on a series of nDigiStorytelling workshops and have co-created a number of *nDigiStories* for their "Sowing The Seeds of Recovery" website (http://www.atrhealingcircle.com/sowing-the-seeds-of-recovery). Since Eva and her team have long-standing relationships with KBIC and they were part of their "behavioral health network," she thought they would be a good fit for developing doctoral-level research on *nDigiStorytelling*. In fact, we learned later that in the mid-1970s there was only one residential treatment facility for Native people in the area and it was established by the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC). It is called New Day (Oshki Gijigad) Residential Treatment Center and still has its doors open. Keweenaw Bay is a community that stands united around many important issues facing Native peoples (e.g., land reclamation, fishing rights, and, most recently, keeping their waters clean from contamination from sulfide mining).

In the summer of 2013, Carmella Rodriguez and I travelled to Peshawbestown, Michigan to spend several weeks with our *nDigiDreamers* (Eva Petoskey, Terri Tavenner, Arlene Kashata and Linda Woods) who are our co-researchers and who fill the role of Anishinaabe cultural advisers and teachers. Over many days and hours, we gathered to discuss *nDigiStorytelling*, our dissertation research plans and timetables, strategies for providing technical assistance and capacity building for ATR. It has been an amazing time to ponder many things with our *nDigiDreamers* and many of them have been our *nDigiHelpers* during various digital storytelling workshops between 2011 and 2013. The best part is that we have also spent much-needed time in the storied landscape of the *Anishinaabe* people walking paths that meander near birchbark trees and along the waters of Lake Michigan near the Peshawbestown village of the Grand Traverse Band of Chippewa and Ottawa Indians. Throughout our stay, we usually offer group and individual prayers with our co-researchers where we always acknowledge our safe journey and to ask for spiritual guidance for our collaboration. We do this because it shows deep respect for the land, water and ancestors of our *Anishinaabe* co-researchers who are our *nDigiSisters*. And, we do this because it respects and recognizes that each one of us plays an important role as we journey down a path of knowledge acquisition and knowledge creation—together.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of this dissertation is to understand how a group of Native individuals and their helpers "experience" an *nDigiStorytelling* workshop that is held within or near their ancestral homeland. A group of nine *Anishinaabe* community members in Northern Michigan agreed to participate in two four-day *nDigiStorytelling* workshops that were scheduled six months apart (one in November 2013 and the second in May 2014). Seven of the nine participants were men and two were women; eight of the participants were from the Keweenaw

Bay Indian Community and one from the neighboring Sault Ste. Marie Band of Chippewa Indians. Approximately five individuals participated in the first workshop and four individuals participated in the second. (One individual from the KBIC community dropped out at the last minute due to catching the flu).

This phenomenological study is about the *nDigiStoryMaking*, that is, how Native peoples think about what personal story they would like to share in the *nDigiStoryCircle*. After that they write personal stories and truths in a one-page script, record their story into a microphone to create a voice-recording, gather photos and short video clips to fit with their story, edit their mini-movie, and watch it during the last day of the four-day workshop with their workshop peers and helpers.

The time commitment involved, for each *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, was four consecutive days (Monday–Thursday) of approximately eight hours each and a Friday afternoon or evening being for a one-two hour community-wide *nDigiFest*. The November 2013 workshop is called the "Fall 2013 planting of *nDigiSeeds*" and is considered the pilot study; the May 2014 workshop is called the "Spring 2014 planting of *nDigiSeeds*" and is considered the final study. The *nDigiStorytelling* process is hands-on and each individual who attends the four-day workshop can choose to participate at any level they feel comfortable during the writing and editing stages. Since Carmella and I were filling multiple roles as digital storytelling practitioners, teachers and researchers, at least three members of the *nDigiDreams* Team became our *nDigiHelpers* (Arlene Kashata, Linda Woods and Terri Tavenner) during the November 2013 workshop. For the subsequent workshop during May 2014, at least one *nDigiDreamer* became our *nDigiHelper* during the four-day process (Linda Woods) and we also recruited an

nDigiDreams-trained Native woman from New Mexico (Clara Fernando), who has trained at least four times with us in other states. Clara is an *nDigiSister* and was our second *nDigiHelper*.

The pilot study was a four-day nDigiStorytelling workshop held in three cabins at the Aurora Borealis Resort in Skanee, Michigan (see the fourth chapter, "Dagwaagi —Fall 2013 planting of *nDigiSeeds*") and involved five individuals (three men and two women from the KBIC community). After completing five *nDigiStories* during the November 2013 workshop, the Keweenaw Bay tribal members wanted to screen their *nDigiStories* at a community-wide nDigiFest at the Ojibwa Casino and over 50 invited relatives, friends and co-workers attended as well as a small group of individuals from the New Day Residential Treatment Center and the Four Thunders Drum. The final study was a four-day *nDigiStorytelling* workshop held in the Chippewa Conference Room at the Ojibwa Casino in Baraga, Michigan (see my fifth chapter, "Ziigwan—Spring 2014 planting of nDigiSeeds") and involved four individuals who made five *nDigiStories*. Three of the men were Keweenaw Bay tribal members and one of the men was from the Sault Ste. Marie Band of Chippewa Indians. The community-wide nDigiFest, at the end of the four-day workshop, was held at the Keweenaw Bay Community College's gymnasium and all ten nDigiStories were screened to an audience of approximately 75 people and the Four Thunders Drum.

We obtained consent from all participants at both *nDigiStorytelling* workshops to audio- and video-tape all group dialogues and individual interviews during different parts of the *nDigiStorytelling* process (e.g., during morning reflections on Days 2–4, after writing scripts and gathering photos, after voice recording their story, and before they screened their first *nDigiStory* on the last day of the workshop). (Note: In this dissertation, I have included at least one video-clip of each KBIC *nDigiStoryteller* in order to hear and feel each person's unique voice,

breath, cadence and delivery). My goal was to capture the fluidity and multiplicity of voices, histories, stories and reactions of a small group of *nDigiStorytellers* making their first *nDigiStory* with a group of *nDigiDreams*-trained Native digital storytellers who worked alongside them at each step of the process and who provided their own voices and perspectives about *nDigiStorytelling*.

A limitation of this study is the small sample size—we documented the experiences of nine *Anishinaabe nDigiStorytellers* from Northern Michigan who participated in two workshops. However, portraiture is an approach that focuses on in-depth interviews or dialogical conversations and helps to offset this limitation by the amount of information that can be obtained. For example, I have included a variety of "portraits" that shares the voices, experiences and perspectives about the *story-making* from a total of nine *nDigiStorytellers* who were assisted in the two *nDigiStorytelling* workshops by a total of six *nDigiHelpers*. The "portraits" in the fourth and fifth chapters are drawn from focused interviews and dialogical conversations that occurred over the four-day hands-on workshop process. Thus, the total time spent together making, interviewing and conversing about *nDigiStorytelling* is approximately 30 hours at each workshop. By including short media clips of each individual who participated in the *nDigiStoryMaking* process, particularly in the fourth and fifth chapters, the audience has a chance to further deepen their own experience and understanding about the "space" and process we go through as *nDigiStorytellers*.

Another limitation of this study may be the in-depth attention and time we have given both our dissertations because *nDigiStorytelling* is our life's work and it might have blinded us to some considerations because Carmella Rodriguez and I are fully invested in finding a "recipe" for our *nDigiStorytelling* work in order to help others across Turtle Island.

Organization of Chapters

The first chapter provides an introduction to the dissertation study. It describes my positionality as a *Diné* digital storyteller/researcher and introduces our *Diné* epistemology and some *Diné* foundational concepts. Specifically, it describes how Carmella Rodriguez and I have used the *Diné* cornstalk teachings for *nDigiStorytelling*. In order to create space for *nDigiStorytelling* research and practice, the first chapter introduces four bodies of literature relevant to this study—digital storytelling, historical trauma, Indigenous resilience and Indigenous film—and briefly discusses their gaps and limitations within the research. Then, it provides the purpose of the study, research questions, and scope and limitations.

The second chapter is a review of four bodies of relevant literature (digital storytelling, Indigenous film, historical trauma, and Indigenous resilience). It includes an analysis and synthesis of recently published research in each field, with a focus on stories and storytelling, and a broader discussion of the gaps and limitations of the research. The second chapter also draws upon eight years of *nDigiStorytelling* work with Carmella Rodriguez under the auspices of *nDigiDreams*.

The third chapter discusses the "Three Sisters," an emergent research design for conducting qualitative inquiry that includes: Indigenous methodologies, community-based participatory research (CBPR) and portraiture. It also provides a brief description of the pilot study conducted in November 2013 and the final study in May 2013.

The fourth chapter provides "a portrait" of the November 2013 KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop held in three cabins near Huron Bay at a place called Aurora Borealis Resort in Skanee, Michigan. The four-day process, otherwise known as "the Fall 2013 planting of

nDigiSeeds," was "experienced" by four KBIC *nDigiStorytellers* (three men and two women) and delivered by five *nDigiHelpers* (all women).

The fifth chapter provides "a portrait" of the May 2014 KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop held in the Chippewa Conference Room at the Ojibwa Casino in Baraga, Michigan. The four-day process, otherwise known as "the Spring 2014 planting of *nDigiSeeds*," was "experienced" by four *nDigiStorytellers* (three men from the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and one man from the neighboring Sault Ste. Marie Band of Chippewa Indians). Four *nDigiHelpers* (all women) delivered the workshop.

The sixth chapter reviews the purpose of the study and the emergent research design that privileges Indigenous methodologies called the "Three Sisters." This then sets the stage for engaging Indigenous epistemologies to explore *nDigiStorytelling* in Keeweenaw Bay. First, I provide a general discussion of the nine *nDigiStorytellers* and their "experience" within the two KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshops. Then, I explore the "living breath" of *nDigiStories* through *Mino Bi-maadiziwin* and the Seven Grandfather Teachings of the *Anishinaabeg* (the people). Finally, I explore the "living breath" of *nDigiStories* through *Hózhó* and my *Diné* traditional healing system, then I revisit "experiences" of the nine *nDigiStorytellers* to better understand embodied notions of healing, liberation and personal transformation can occur using modern technology.

The seventh and concluding chapter discusses implications for future research and is purposefully short and succinct like some of our Native songs and prayers in order to provide emphasis to the importance of this body of work. In this chapter, I also share how this dissertation research impacted and changed me as a Native digital storyteller and as an Indigenous scholar.

Literature Review or "Tilling the Soil"

There is a great and rich store of information still locked in the hearts and minds of Indians all over the nation. (Rupert Costo as cited in Grinde, 1994, p. 1)

The wind chill was 30 below zero. The bitter wind nearly stole Carmella's wool scarf from around her neck and almost blew the rental car's door against me, while I worked to unload the last 50 lb. suitcase. A winter storm was in the day's forecast. We knew we needed to give ourselves extra time for the 60-mile drive from where we were staying at the local casino to where we would be training at the tribal college. As we sped down Highway 18, we watched thousands of falling snowflakes hit the ground and swirl around across the pavement. When we crossed Porcupine Creek, several horses lifted their heads and looked towards us as if to "welcome" us. Eventually, we saw a small green highway sign that read "Pine Ridge," located in southwestern South Dakota on the Nebraska state line about 50 miles east of Wyoming. Pine Ridge lies east of the Wounded Knee Massacre site, where the Seventh Calvary killed over 300 Native men, women and children in 1890, and is the sacred homeland of 20,800 Oglala Lakota. It is the place where we would conduct a digital storytelling workshop for the Sweet Grass Suicide Prevention Project.

In the middle of winter, on January 10, 2009, we "showed up" for the community. We were contracted by the Oglala Lakota Director of Tribal Health Administration to teach their staff and other local tribal members about digital storytelling. The year before, the tribe received a three-year Substance Abuse Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) grant to implement a suicide prevention awareness campaign. Upon our arrival we walked towards the main building and, when we tried to open the front door against the gale-force winds, we literally bumped into the Health Director who was running out of the building. She quickly hugged us and immediately apologized for not being able to introduce us to her staff and ceremonially open the

first day of our workshop. She told us she had just received a phone call that the Pine Ridge community lost another Oglala Lakota youth to suicide. He was 15-years-old and she had to rush to help the family in crisis. It happened so fast. Everything hit me as we waved goodbye. At that moment, we knew we were there for an important reason—to share all we knew about *nDigiStorytelling* to help their community.

Afterwards, the Assistant Director met us and escorted us from the tribal health complex to Oglala Lakota College. Ten individuals gathered in one of the classrooms and were waiting for us, about seven women and three men—some were health educators, others were tribal faculty and staff, and one was an elder from the community, the great-grandson of American Horse, the Chief of the Oglala, who fought during the Sioux Wars of the 1870s and signed several treaties with the U.S. Government.

On the first day of the workshop, after an opening prayer, we started the *nDigiStory Circle*, where we gather to share personal stories, experiences, and dreams that become the focus of a set of *nDigiStories*. A young Lakota woman, who everyone knew except Carmella and I, was the second to last one to tell her story. Her story meandered here and there, building upon various details about characters and events in her life—like most good stories do. First it was a story about someone she knew who committed suicide a few years back; then, it became a story about her boyfriend who committed suicide. Finally, she shared the "real story"—that she thought about committing suicide herself but remembered how that would make her mom feel and didn't. Over a three-day period, the young woman finished her 3-5 minute digital story. She worked quietly each day—recording her voice, gathering personal photos, mixing her voice and music and, finally, editing her mini-movie with ear buds on. We stepped in to give her a little video-editing feedback, but she mostly did the *nDigiStory* on her own. After we finished

watching her "final cut" on her computer screen with a pair of headphone audio splitters, she clapped and smiled as tears bubbled up in her eyes. Then, spontaneously, we all clapped for her. On the last day of the workshop, when everyone shares their finished mini-movie with each other for the first time, our tears flowed as we watched the young Lakota woman's *nDigiStory*, again, and heard her "living breath" share her hopes and dreams to help others. After it was done, one-by-one, everyone stepped forward and hugged her. The elder was the first to speak. "There now", he said, "it is out of you. I'm proud of you. Now, it's time to move forward with your life and help others."

Carmella and I will never forget that workshop. It showed how an *nDigiStoryteller* during the winter of 2009 used her "living breath" for survivance on the sacred homelands of the Oglala Lakota people.

Since our experience in Pine Ridge, we have worked with other Native youth and adults to create digital stories about suicide prevention, for example, in Fort Peck and Billings, Montana and in Nixon, Nevada. In July 2010, we worked with a suicide prevention program in Crownpoint, New Mexico, located 48 miles away from my paternal grandmother's ancestral homeland. It was one of the first digital storytelling workshops we conducted on the Navajo Nation. Health educators and community members at the local Indian Health Service Unit were interested in creating a set of digital stories for their local Navajo community members who were healing and recovering from a cluster of youth suicides. Over three days, we worked hard to complete a set of digital stories that we screened in the Crownpoint Division of Public Health conference room. The *nDigiStories* were about hope, faith, love and loss. The *nDigiStorytellers* encouraged their audience to embrace Navajo teachings and culture, described community-based youth prevention events, and shared community success stories such as the Crownpoint Teen

Court. It was during one of our hour-long commutes to Crownpoint when we both turned to each other and said: "How can we help?" Our complementary dissertations that explores how our *nDigiStorytelling* process can be healing and liberating for Indigenous people is one small way. The other way, of course, is to keep "showing up" and to keep teaching as many Indigenous people as are "ready." If we can make and share "real stories" about our "lived experiences" through the power and beauty of our "living breath," it could help Native survivance and resurgence.

This literature review will be presented in two parts. The first part begins with exploring relatively new and evolving scholarship on digital storytelling with a focus on research that has been carried out by or with Indigenous peoples and/or within Indigenous communities. Next, I will explore Indigenous film studies with a focus on the role of sovereignty and aesthetics. My interest is to better understand issues of self-representation and self-determination in film and digital storytelling. The second part of this literature review will explore two theoretical concepts that are valuable for this dissertation study: historical trauma and Indigenous resilience. Why? Because historical trauma researchers have steadily utilized storytelling and "talking circles" to interrupt intergenerational trauma transmission and because Indigenous resilience researchers have increasingly elevated the importance of narratives, culture, and spirituality to better understand resiliency at the community level. Most importantly, because historical trauma and Indigenous resilience researchers are, ultimately, seeking the same overall goal I am, that is, to restore the health and wellbeing of our Native peoples. At the end of each body of literature, I will discuss gaps and limitations in the research. The literature review will conclude with an Indigenous perspective that challenges us to think about and interpret digital stories differently. In order to do this, I will privilege my Indigenous experience as a *Diné* woman, who has been

shaped and strengthened by her *Diné* language, culture, values, and ceremonial practices, and I will reflect and draw upon almost ten years of *nDigiStorytelling* practice.

Returning to the *Diné* cornstalk teachings metaphor, the purpose of this literature review is to "till the soil" of pertinent academic research in the fields of social work, psychology, nursing, public health, anthropology, and film studies. My intent was to explore "the compacted soil and dormant weeds" that can exist in the literature and to determine the best soil amendments to add in order to plant new *nDigiSeeds* and to write about the process, too. My ultimate goal is to create space for *nDigiStorytelling*—where the "living breath" of digital stories can take root and spread across the world to liberate and heal all people.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

In my review of the literature, I have set some criteria for the inclusion and exclusion of research in order to limit the scope of this chapter to relevant theories, concepts, and approaches. For example, in the digital storytelling literature, I am particularly interested in research conducted within the past 15 years with a focus on work within Indigenous communities or by Indigenous peoples. In the Indigenous film literature, I am not as interested in the history and representation of American Indians in film and media as I am with the twin issues of sovereignty and aesthetics. In the historical trauma literature, I start with the assumption that this evolving concept is "real" and exists for Indigenous peoples; thus, I do not explore research that focuses on issues of validity or measurability. Instead, I focus on those authors that explore how Indigenous peoples "heal" from historical trauma or how historical trauma is transmitted from generation to generation, especially with regard to the role of story and storytelling. Finally, in the Indigenous resilience literature, I am particularly interested in articles that point toward

strategies of resilience at both individual and communal levels, such as language, relationships, connections to land, spirituality and healing, with a special focus on story and storytelling.

Digital Storytelling

Digital storytelling started in the early 1990s during a production workshop by Dana Atchley and was later developed by Joe Lambert into a training method promoted by the San Francisco Bay Area-based Center for Digital Storytelling (Lambert, 2002). Digital stories, produced in intensive hands-on workshops, are 3-5 minute "mini movies" that combine still images, short video clips, voice recordings, text, music and sound. Digital storytelling gives ordinary people, who may not be trained in film production, the opportunity to create a digital story and the authority to own and disseminate it (in most cases). Digital storytelling democratizes the media by breaking away from the mass media system; this requires an important shift from being a passive audience member to being an active and engaged media-maker. Joe Lambert (2002) argues that the first-person narrative approach found in digital storytelling creates opportunities to connect with others through a conversational production method and that digital storytelling can be used for community organizing, human rights and social justice activism, education, and public policy change.

The Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS) training model was first adopted in the field of education (i.e., K-12, higher education, and adult education) as a method for building engagement and multimedia literacy (Kadjer, 2006; Ohler, 2007). Recently, public health researchers and anthropologists have begun to explore its use as an emerging participatory research approach (Gubrium, 2009; Gubrium & Turner, 2011; Gubrium et al., 2013), as well as a public health advocacy tool (Hill, 2008).

In a recent essay by Joe Lambert in *Story Circle: Digital Storytelling Around the World* (Hartley & McWilliam, 2009), he writes:

Something about the depth of engagement with other humans, not just listening but acting with and alongside people, the use of every conceivable aesthetic tool and cultural reference, the fluidity and improvisational complexity of the production processes, and the never-ending humbling of one's expectations and sense of authority, make this work a profound journey for an individual. (Lambert as cited in Hartley & McWilliam, 2009, p. 89)

In my experience, this journey is especially unique when taken alongside Indigenous peoples because of our unique histories, languages, and cultural teachings

In an earlier chapter in *Story Circle: Digital Storytelling Around the World* (Hartley & McWilliam, 2009), co-editor Kelly McWilliam uses three themes to frame global community digital storytelling workshops: (a) historical—focus on collecting public histories of community and/or place; (b) aspirational—focus on empowering storytellers, especially marginalized individuals; and (c) recuperative—focus on helping storytellers overcome adversity (McWilliam, 2009, pp. 60–61). I am particularly interested in digital storytelling research that focuses on the recuperative aspect (Cueva et al., 2013; Gray & Young, 2011; Hill, 2008; Mahmood & Shams, 2011; C. Walsh, Rutherford, Krieg, & Bell, 2013). In the next few pages, I will focus on work being conducted by Hill (2008) and Gray and Young (2011) because their approach comes closest to our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops.

Amy Hill is a long-time collaborator, facilitator, and trainer for the Center for Digital Storytelling. When I first started digital storytelling in 2005–2006, I went to a conference in San Francisco, CA and met her in person to discuss our mutual interests in public health and our mutual focus on underserved communities. In 1999, Hill co-founded "a not-for-profit international digital storytelling initiative offering a safe, supportive environment for telling stories that too often remain unspoken" (http://silencespeaks.org/). The goal of Silence Speaks

"is to create spaces for bearing witness and nurturing individuals and group transformation;" their vision "is to listen deeply and encourage participant involvement in collective action to support justice" (Hill, 2008, p. 49). Amy Hill is arguably the person who has been digital storytelling the longest in the area of public health, although she has only recently been publishing and expanding her reach internationally. In "'Learn from my story:' A participatory media initiative for Ugandan women affected by obstetric fistula," Amy Hill (2008) describes how she was recruited by South Africa NGO EngenderHealth "to design a project that would capitalize on digital storytelling's ability to open people up to sharing intimate, relevant and accessible details about their lives, in digital video format" (p. 51). Eleven digital stories were created with the assistance of local project staff who helped recruit, translate, and coordinate various aspects of the digital storytelling workshop. Hill writes that altogether the digital stories "recount hardships and celebrate achievements related to the participants' daily struggles with pregnancy, loss and relationships, as well as their search for safety, acceptance and dignity" (p. 57). Later she writes, "what is most striking about the women's narratives was their refusal to unanimously reflect the belief that fistula patients are always abused or rejected by their male partners" (p. 58). Because of the nature of Hill's digital storytelling work, she co-authored a recent article that discusses ethical issues when using participatory and visual digital methods (Gubrium et al., 2013). Gray and Young (2011) created digital stories for the Positive Women project in New Zealand in order to destignatize what it means to be HIV positive. Art therapist Bronwen Gray and Graphic Designer Alan Young have been influenced by the late Michael White and his colleague David Epston, who are narrative therapists. In "Digital Storytelling with Women who Live with HIV: A Journey for Psychic Acceptance and Social Inclusion," Gray and Young (2011) write, "as a multi-layered process, digital storytelling can be seen as a creative

form of narrative therapy, as it provides participants with the opportunity to re-author their lives and the opportunity to externalize problems as a way of contextualizing their lived experiences within wider discourses" (p. 39). Both Hill (2008) and Gray and Young (2011) explored sensitive topics within local communities that uncovered traumatic first-person experiences from digital storytellers who used memory, voice, image, and music to recreate the feeling(s) they went through. Their focus on "bearing witness," "listening deeply," "speaking silences," "telling truths," and "re-authoring lives" shares common ground with our *nDigiStorytelling* work.

Regarding digital storytelling research being conducted within Indigenous communities, the majority of the research is from an "outside" academic (and, mostly, analytic) perspective. For example, in the article "Using Digital Stories to Understand the Lives of Alaska Native People," Wexler et al. (2012) solely engaged in the process of coding 271 youth-produced digital stories, then pulled out 60 that they deemed "noteworthy," and from that group identified 31 "exemplary" stories. Later, they write how "video clips from numerous digital stories were spliced together by the second author to create montages representing the meanings and complexities of key themes [e.g., "indigeneity," "masculinity" and "spaces of achievement]" (p. 9). (This strikes me as colonialistic knowledge production and needs to be better explored). Again, these themes are culturally-embedded notions and, I believe, are best understood by "insiders" or local community members who, at the very least, could have been recruited as co-researchers who might have selected a different set of digital stories to critically analyze or a different set of key themes. Another example is research conducted by Donna Hancox (2012) and described in "The Process of Remembering with the Forgotten Australians: Digital Storytelling with Marginalized Groups." Hancox writes about the numerous difficulties that arose in her workshop—from participants who "did not have photographs of their childhoods or

their families," to "participants [who] were not interested," to "a degree of bad will [that] appeared between those who had and those who had not been compensated" (pp. 69–70). She writes:

The foundation of the stories was memory rather than a narrative arc. It became imperative to embrace the fragmentation, inconsistency, and incoherence of the memories and to incorporate these aspects into the digital stories. The stories in this workshop had moved further away from the kinds of digital stories typical of state and national libraries or museums that I had previously done. (p. 70)

This commentary raises the question of how much the author's positionality burdened her project and created barriers with the Aboriginal participants. Obviously, her education and experience were in non-Aboriginal institutions.

Through my review of the literature, I found relatively few Indigenous researchers, practitioners, and digital storytellers (Samia Goudie, Judith Iseke, Sylvia Moore) who have published their work. This is an important point because Indigenous peoples provide the perspective and experience necessary to address cultural nuances and local dynamics. For example, in "Hope Vale Digital Storytelling Project. Using the Camera: Telling Stories Our Way," Davey and Goudie (2009) write:

The trainers within this project avoided overtly intervening with the processes of participants by taking a non-prescriptive approach to the construction of their stories. The result is an attempt to allow authentic voice in the first person to emerge. The trainer's role is that of support in co-creating stories and following the direction of the participants. (p. 11)

Similarly, in our *nDigiStorytelling* work, we recognize "the power" of editing video and have taken the necessary steps to ensure our *nDigiStorytellers* have full access, full participation and full decision-making power, at whatever their comfort level. For example, we extend the length of our workshops to accommodate individuals who might not have any computer

experience, or, we ask them to come earlier or stay later for one-on-one assistance. In our workshops, we have trained Native elders as old as 82 and children as young as eight years old.

Another example is the work of Judith Iseke, a member of the Métis Nation of Alberta, who has included a set of Indigenous protocols (i.e., offering tobacco and cloth) and is sometimes related to the individuals she interviews (i.e., great-niece). In "Indigenous Digital Storytelling in Video: Witnessing with Alma Desjarlais," Judith Iseke (2011) writes:

Indigenous media, as an extension of [the] storytelling process, is a social practice located in the cultural politics and social actions of a community. As such, Indigenous media need to be understood on their own terms and need to be reconsidered as spaces for pedagogical witness. (p. 324)

This article is especially interesting because of her focus on "healing through sharing testimony" and on "healing the wounds of colonization by reinvigorating traditions" which is similar to our *nDigiStorytelling* work that focuses on re-centering ourselves on healing and liberating paths that can lead us or keep us on "the good life." In their article "Community-based Indigenous Digital Storytelling with Elders and Youth," Judith Iseke and Sylvia Moore (2011) describe their process as follows: "When filming Elders, Iseke gives them control over what they share; she gives them autonomy in the research and filming process because she typically does not ask direct questions" (p. 24). They value the Elders' input in the knowledge that is being shared and "although [the Elders] do not sit and cut video on the editing floor," they advise them by watching edited clips and talking about them via the telephone. Unfortunately, because Judith Iseke is a trained filmmaker, the type of "Indigenous digital storytelling" she conducts are video interviews with Métis elders; they are headshots against black backgrounds or within home settings with piano, fiddle, or flute music playing in the background
(http://www.ourelderstories.com/). My point is that there is a range of work described as "digital

storytelling" and Judith Iseke's process lies towards the other end of the continuum where Native voice, power, aesthetics, and agency are less important than in our *nDigiStorytelling* process.

Gaps and limitations. The study of digital storytelling is an interesting mix of "insider-outsider" research (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). For example, if one is a digital storyteller practitioner they may be considered an "insider." Yet, if they are teaching and researching digital storytelling among individuals who have different cultural, gender, and class backgrounds than their own, they are "outsiders." My point is that power and privilege play important roles in digital storytelling because of the nature of sensitivities required for the sharing of personal stories. Therefore, it can be difficult for digital storyteller / researchers in the field. For example, Hill (2008), who worked with Ugandan women in South Africa, and Gray and Young (2011), who worked with HIV positive women in New Zealand, faced numerous barriers and had to utilize others to recruit participants, translate languages, and help write scripts. In both instances, the authors took the women's narratives and constructed digital stories without their involvement, except perhaps to view the final story before it was screened. For example, Amy Hill (2008) writes, "while my co-facilitator and I scanned drawings and photos and assembled rough edits of the stories, the women went as a group to visit Kitovu Mission Hospital where they had been treated for fistula" (p. 54). (Again, this strikes me as colonialistic knowledge production and needs further exploration). Similarly, Gray and Young (2011) write, "graphic design students take the final stories and bring them to life visually" (p. 38); later, they argue, "designers are able to provide a more professional visual treatment than the women themselves could do" (p. 38). Although the authors take great strides in helping to capture the "authentic voice" of marginalized women, I believe, they still miss the mark in ensuring that a person's voice, agency, and authority is fully present and never negotiated. Needless to say, I am not

attention to the complexity of the *nDigiStorytelling* space we inhabit as digital storyteller-researchers. As I will discuss in the next chapter, this notion of "insider-outside" is somewhat dualistic and minimalistic when considering Indigenous peoples. In our own digital storytelling work, Carmella Rodriguez and I understand how critically important it is to create a safe and supportive space—physically, culturally, emotionally, and spiritually—when we work with Indigenous digital storytellers from rural, isolated communities and who have been the most silenced and oppressed in the history of the United States. In fact, Native people, especially women, have commented that it is because of "who we are" that they have felt "safe" and were able to share deep stories, about their personal lives, more freely. On the other hand, we have also worked with other Native women who want their own "space" and will only go so far in their own personal reflections, but very comfortable sharing their professional experiences.

Unfortunately, researchers from Western hegemonic institutions who are utilizing digital storytelling as an emergent method (Gubrium, 2009; Gubrium & Turner, 2011) and/or making digital stories with Indigenous peoples (Wexler, 2014a, 2014b; Wexler et al., 2012; Wexler et al., 2013) still view digital stories as "data," "phenomena," and "artifacts" that must be analyzed, sorted, and coded. Moreover, in my review, there are still many who study digital stories as "objects" within damage-centered research frameworks (Tuck, 2009). And, although they argue digital storytelling is an innovative community-based participatory research model for community engagement and participation, there is a noticeable "split" between academic researchers and community members when issues about "data" ownership, dissemination, and publication are considered.

Indigenous Film

There is a burgeoning field of scholarship about Native Americans in film in the United States (see Aleiss, 2005; Cummings, 2011; Hearne, 2012; Howe, Markowitz, & Cummings, 2013; Knopf, 2009; Marubbio, 2009; Marubbio & Buffalohead, 2013; Rader, 2011; Raheja, 2011; Schweninger, 2013; Singer, 2001). In addition, there are numerous authors who have explored Indigenous filmmaking in Canada (Gittings, 2002; Hafsteinsson & Bredin, 2010; Lewis, 2006), South America (Himpele, 2008; Schwiy, 2009), and in other parts of the world (Alia, 2012; Columpar, 2010; Deger, 2006; P. Wilson & Stewart, 2008).

During the Civil Rights era, when there was an upsurge in Indian activism across the country (e.g., the reclamation of Alcatraz Island, the Trail of Broken Treaties, the takeover of Wounded Knee), an Indigenous film movement took root in the U.S. and Canada. Indigenous filmmakers across Turtle Island began using Native voice, agency, community access, and resistance to fight for sovereignty and self-determination. Canada took the lead by creating Native-directed and Native-focused television broadcasting companies (e.g., the Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium, now the Native American Public Telecommunications, Inc., and the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation). They also formed community media collectives, where individuals could promote cultural knowledge while gaining job skills (e.g., Iglossik Isuma Productions), and established a National Film Board of Canada. Valerie Alia (2012) in *The New Media Nation* explains, "Although dominant-society media made early incursions into Indigenous communities, the main movement in Canada has been from 'periphery' to 'core'—with Indigenous media moving gradually toward the urban centers' (p. 17).

In Native Americans in Film: Conversations, Teaching, and Theory, Elise Marrubio and Erin Buffalohead (2013) suggest that government funding initiatives and a higher number of First Nations people in Canada encouraged Indigenous film activism in Canada. One Canadian Indigenous filmmaker who is celebrated for her efforts in shifting the power and access of mainstream media is Abenaki singer, storyteller and filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin, who has worked for Canada's National Film Board since the 1960s and has directed over forty documentary films, to date. According to Randolph Lewis (2006), who wrote a biography of the prominent Abenaki filmmaker, "Obomsawin has shot back at the homogenizing narratives of nation and carved oppositional practices into Western mediascapes. Somehow she has found independence where others might have found dependence and despair" (p. xx). Obomsawin utilized a social documentary format to highlight First Nations issues and set the stage for other Indigenous filmmakers in the United States (e.g., Phil Lucas (Choctaw), Victor Masayesva Jr. (Hopi), and Sandy Osawa (Makah)). Collectively, their work can be understood as a cinema of sovereignty, which Randolph Lewis (2006) describes as representational sovereignty, or "the right, as well as the ability, for a group of people to depict themselves with their own ambitions at heart" (p. 175).

Sovereignty and aesthetics in Indigenous film are two topics I would like to consider in more detail below. The opening words to Lenape historian Joanne Barker's (2005) book, *Sovereignty Matters*, begins: "As a category of scholarship, activism, governance, and cultural work, sovereignty matters in consequential ways to understanding the political agendas, strategies, and cultural perspectives of indigenous peoples" (p. 1). Sovereignty also matters for Indigenous filmmakers. For example, Santa Clara Pueblo-Navajo filmmaker Beverly Singer (2001), in *Wiping the War Paint Off the Lens: Native American Film and Video*, maintains,

"telling our own story is deeply connected to being self-determined as an Indian" (p. 2). She sees it as a social movement called cultural sovereignty, which "involves trusting in the older ways and adapting to our lives in the present" (p. 2). Seneca scholar Michelle Raheja (2011), in *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty and Representations of Native Americans in Film,* introduces another term visual sovereignty and suggests it is "a creative act of self-representation that has the potential to both undermine stereotypes of Indigenous peoples and to strengthen the intellectual health of communities in the wake of genocide and colonialism" (p. 60). She continues, "as expressed by Indigenous filmmakers . . . [visual sovereignty] involves employing editing technologies that permit filmmakers to stage performances of oral narrative and Indigenous notions of time and space that are not possible through print alone" (p. 62).

Within the field of Indigenous art, issues of sovereignty are also being discussed. For example, Tuscarora artist and activist Jolene Rickard (1995) boldly states, "Sovereignty is the border that shifts indigenous experience from a victimized stance to a strategic one" (p. 51). In a later article, Rickard (2011) argues, "the concept of sovereignty by Indigenous civilizations is about self-defined renewal and resistance" (p. 467). Indeed, as Joanne Barker (2005) declared almost ten years ago, "Sovereignty can be confused and confusing," (p. 1).

While a full discussion regarding sovereignty and self-determination is beyond the scope of this chapter, I will share a definition of sovereignty that resonates with my own digital storytelling work. Osage Robert Warrior (1995) in *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions*, a book that focuses on the work of Vine Deloria Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux), considers sovereignty as an active process and not an end result. "Sovereignty," he writes, "[is] a decision we make in our minds, in our hearts, and in our bodies—to be sovereign

and to find out what that means in the process" (p. 91). Warrior describes his concept as intellectual sovereignty. It is an appealing description because it is a self-reflexive process that spends less time *writing back* to the colonizer and more time *writing forward* to a sacred and creative Indigenous space.

Another equally "confusing" term is aesthetics. There is a long history of discussion and debate regarding aesthetics in film. According to Robert Stam's (2000) book Film Theory: An *Introduction*, "aesthetics derives from the Greek word Aisthesis, which is defined as perception/sensation" (p. 10); aesthetics is understood as the study of art, beauty, and taste. With regards to this discussion, then, film scholars began to ask: What is considered Native film? Is there an Indigenous aesthetic? Hopi filmmaker Victor Masayesva Jr. (1994) explored this topic in an article titled "Through Native Eyes: The Emerging Native American Aesthetic." He writes, "If film is about imagined time and space, it is borne from the imagination of people each of whom have constructed those times and spaces differently.... By expressing our distinct tribal voices, we would be expounding the indigenous aesthetic" (p. 20). He suggests an indigenous aesthetic "would permeate technique, style, dramatic continuity; narrative would begin, conclude, cut, and be extended without didacticism" (p. 21). Steven Leuthold (1998) in Indigenous Aesthetics: Native Art, Media and Identity, understands Indigenous aesthetics with respect to "the role of intercultural contact and conflict, generational relations, native and white relations to land, and native religions as they impinge upon aesthetic expression of native identities" (p. 5). Finally, anthropologist Faye Ginsburg (1994) who wrote an article titled "Embedded Aesthetics: Creating a Discursive Space for Indigenous Media," discusses a notion that Indigenous peoples understand that "[a] quality of work is judged by its capacity to embody, sustain, and even revive or create certain social relations" (p. 368). Ginsburg argues that

Indigenous media comes from a different kind of positioning within Indigenous communities and that "only by understanding Indigenous media work as part of a broader mediascape of social relations can we appreciate them fully as complex cultural objects" (p. 378).

In considering Indigenous aesthetics, the definition that resonates with my own digital storytelling work comes from Victor Masayesva Jr. (1994) who wrote, "If we indigenous filmmakers were to showcase our true differences, we would infuse film with the same reverence we have for our oral and performing traditions. By expressing our tribal distinct voices, we would be expounding the indigenous aesthetic" (p. 20). Indeed, the *nDigiStories* we share are sometimes spoken with Indigenous languages and created in a creative and spiritual space. We share our *nDigiStories* with each other not only to survive, but also to flourish and thrive within our sacred homeland amongst our ancestors and other spiritual beings. I agree with Victor Masayesva: "There is such a thing as an Indian aesthetic, and it begins in the sacred." (as cited in Wood, 2013, p. 52).

A definition of sovereignty within Indigenous digital storytelling is still emerging. At the first Keweenaw Bay *nDigiStorytelling* workshop in this study, Arlene Kashata, an *Anishinaabe nDigiHelper*, provided this interesting perspective about how we are creating space to be family-focused Indigenous media makers and how we value our "living breath":

It is done with your voice. I think that is how it reaches our people—it is Indian people talking to Indian people about their life stories and it is not being narrated over or being told by some *Chimookman* [white people]. It is our people talking in their own voice, and it is powerful and it is a gift to give your families.

Gaps and limitations. Indigenous film is a relatively new field of inquiry and the issues of sovereignty and aesthetics are still being hotly debated. Much of the literature is "looking back" at stereotyped representations and images of Native people. In *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film*, Jacquelyn Kilpatrick (1999) writes, "American Indians have been, for the

full run of film history, a sort of weathervane of social and political currents" (p. 178). The timing is ripe for "looking forward" toward a sacred and creative Indigenous space where our Native voice, power, aesthetics and agency are more fully practiced and exchanged with each other and more fully recognized and appreciated by Others. Indeed, too much of the Indigenous film literature is still "looking back" at stereotyped representations and images of Natives peoples, for example, Hollywood Westerns. *Fourth World Cinema*, a coin termed by Māori filmmaker Barry Barclay (2003), is a gaze that has been unmediated by outside aesthetics, politics, and agendas. However, because of the inherent economics and politics of making and distributing films, there seems to be a "looking down" upon Indigenous filmmakers which, I believe, is accentuated toward the growing cadre of new media makers called digital storytellers.

Historical Trauma

In the late 1980s, Lakota social worker and researcher Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, who worked with Jewish survivors of the Holocaust in her psychoanalytic clinical training, was the first to apply the term "historical trauma" to the genocide and ethnic cleansing of American Indians. Historical trauma is defined as "cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences," (Brave Heart, 2003, p. 7). According to Brave Heart, historical trauma is directly linked to the banning of Native cultural practices by various colonization policies and institutions of assimilation (i.e., involuntary theft or removal from land; suppression of language, culture, ceremonies, and spirituality; destruction of Indigenous family systems; and residential boarding schools). Brave Heart also introduced the concept intergenerational unresolved grief and argued that cultural degeneration and loss left a legacy of chronic trauma and grief for Native peoples and reaches across generations (Brave Heart, 1998, 1999a, 1999b; Brave Heart & DeBruyn,

1998). Historians have similarly explored the idea of a Native holocaust (Stannard, 1992; Thornton, 1990) and the term historical trauma is used interchangeably with the terms soul wound, historical legacy, and intergenerational posttraumatic stress disorder (Duran, 2006; Duran & Duran, 1995; Duran, Duran, Brave Heart, & Yellow Horse-Davis, 1998). Brave Heart (1998) argues that this process of cultural degeneration results in alcoholism, substance abuse, suicide, family violence, sexual abuse, child neglect, vandalism, and theft. She has also identified a historical trauma response, that is, a set of reactions to multigenerational, collective, historical wounding of the mind, emotions and spirit (i.e., reactions: denial, depersonalization, isolation, confused memory, loss of concentration, nightmares, psychic numbing, hyper-vigilance, fixation on trauma, identification with death, survivor guilt and unresolved grief) (Brave Heart, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2003; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Duran & Duran, 1995). Healing from historical trauma, according to Brave Heart, is accomplished through education and acknowledgement about the effects of historic traumatic events, sharing of affects that produces a cathartic release, and collective mourning and healing to allow for grief resolution (Brave Heart, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2000, 2003).

In 1992, Brave Heart established the *Takini* (a Lakota word meaning "survivor or one who has been brought back to life") Network, a Native group of social workers and community volunteers who helped her develop a holistic healing model called the Historical Trauma and Unresolved Grief Intervention (HTUG). The healing from trauma intervention focuses on four main areas:

1. The mind, by remembering, speaking, and coming to terms with the horrifying, overwhelming experience that led to the trauma response;

- The body, by learning to acknowledge and master the physical stress responses like anxiety and sleeplessness;
- The emotions, by re-establishing relations and secure social connections; and, the spirit, by recognizing that the spiritual and the cultural have often been critical aspects of the original wound or trauma.

The *Takini* Network delivers effective psycho-educational interventions across the United States. During 2001–2004, the *Takini* Network organized international historical trauma conferences to bring together Indigenous survivors of massive trauma and their descendants. In 2004, when I worked at the University of Arizona in the College of Public Health, I attended one of their conferences at Santa Ana Pueblo, near Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Historical trauma research predominantly derives from the fields of social work, psychology, nursing, and public health. Today, Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers are working to provide reflective essays (Quinn, 2007), theoretical overviews (Campbell & Evans-Campbell, 2011) and literature reviews (Fast & Collin-Vézina, 2010). Meantime, others are introducing new conceptual frameworks (Sotero, 2006) and new historical trauma scales and measures (Walters et al., 2002; Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt, & Chen, 2004; Whitbeck, Chen, Hoyt, & Adams, 2004); while others are developing new models and maps for understanding historical trauma transmission (Myhra, 2011; Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004;); and combining historical trauma with theories about "weathering" (Palacios & Portillo, 2009) and "embodiment" (Walters, Beltran, Huh, & Evans-Campbell, 2011; Walters et al., 2011) as ways to explain increases in health disparities.

Needless to say, historical trauma is a concept that has been critically debated and not widely accepted as a valid construct within the Western medical and psychological scientific

community. It also has a few Indigenous critics too. For example, Gros Ventre psychologist Joseph Gone has been highly critical of the literature on historical trauma. In "Redressing First Nations Historical Trauma," Gone (2013a) writes, "HT [historical trauma] as a concept is vulnerable to several formidable critiques, including its simplistic essentialist rhetoric" (p. 700). In a subsequent article in the same journal, "Reconsidering American Indian Historical Trauma," Gone (2013b) outlines four assumptions of historical trauma research: (a) it explains current health status of American Indians, especially mental and behavioral health; (b) it elaborates and extends Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), an already established psychiatric category, and applies it to American Indian circumstances and settings; (c) it proposes that traumatic experiences of past generations endure over time to pose unique health risks and vulnerabilities for descendants (e.g., intergenerational unresolved grief and historical trauma transmission); and, (d) it uses historical instances of oppression, colonization and genocide by Europeans as the principal causal factors for health disparities (pp. 3-4). Later, he writes, "the construct of AI [American Indian] historical trauma . . . appears to function as a powerful *moral rhetoric* of rather recent refinement that implicates Euro-American conquest and colonization in the onset and maintenance of pervasive and ongoing AI psychosocial problems" (pp. 16–17). Although he does not object to this rhetorical ploy, Gone (2013b) writes:

I strongly object, however, to the essentialist implications that many or most contemporary AIs are *traumatized*—wounded, weakened, disabled—by history, and that many or most AI experiences of colonization—including adjustment to and resilience in the face of these processes—were more uniform than diverse in terms of their past impacts on indigenous communities throughout North America. (p. 17)

I too have found myself rejecting these essentialist arguments and often choose to talk about Native peoples thru the lens of "historical greatness" instead of "historical trauma."

Similarly, Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux makes this point in "Trauma to Resilience: Notes on Decolonization" (2010b), she writes:

To put it succinctly, it is our responsibility to become healed. *Victorizing* our lives, rather than focusing on being perpetually victimized (or perhaps being in a perpetual state of healing) is one way to do that. And, perhaps the most logical place to start is to celebrate our victory and our survival at home. The fact that First Nations women possess the capacity to thrive and fulfill themselves is undisputable. (pp. 26–27)

In "Narrative as Lived Experience," Wesley-Esquimaux (2010a) suggests one way to become healed. She argues:

Only by deconstructing historical trauma and (re)membering the far distant past, are indigenous peoples enabling themselves to see each other from the oppositional realms they presently occupy in existing dominant and resistant cultural structures. This awareness is the only path to healing and the reconstruction of positive life-ways. The creation of inspiring narratives to guide people home can only come from within the circle of timelessness that has become our mutual lived experience. (pp. 55–56)

Wesley-Esquimaux's notion about the need to create "inspiring narratives to guide people home" is what I see happening regularly through the making of digital stories in my work. As I will discuss further below, Indigenous peoples in our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops appear to be making individual and collective journeys back toward the center of the circle of life—"the good life"— where balance, harmony, holistic healing and innate well-being exists.

Since the gaps and limitations between historical trauma and Indigenous resilience, as it pertains to stories and storytelling, are very similar, I will reserve my critique of the research until after I discuss the next body of literature.

Indigenous Resilience

The idea of psychological resilience was first introduced by Norman Garmezy (1983), a clinical psychologist who conducted research at the University of Minnesota, to explain why some inner-city children, who were genetically at risk for developing mental illness, flourished while others experienced stress and adversity. Similarly, E. James Anthony (1987), a British

psychoanalyst who studied child development under Jean Piaget, began to wonder why some children raised in conditions of high adversity were coping better than others. Inherent in this construct is the psychological ability to "bounce back" through flexible adaptation and the strategic use of positive relationships and emotional experiences. Initially, much of the research focused on identifying specific traits or characteristics of resilient individuals (i.e., general hardiness, cognitive flexibility, problem solving ability, intelligence, sense of humor, and social skills) (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Eventually, resilience began to be framed within collective or communal dimensions; thus researchers became interested in the durability of interpersonal relationships within the family or within wider social networks of support (F. Walsh, 2006). Finally, others began to challenge these models because they did not address the unique historical, social, cultural and geographic settings of Indigenous peoples; nor did they incorporate Indigenous definitions of identity, health and well-being (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008; Kirmayer et al., 2009, 2011; Kirmayer, Dandeneau, Marshall, Morgan, & Williamson 2012; Tousignant & Sioui, 2009). Mason Durie (2007), a leading Māori psychiatrist and health expert from Aeoteora/New Zealand, was the first to describe resilience among Indigenous peoples in a paper titled, "Indigenous Resilience: From Disease and Disadvantage to the Realization of Potential":

Superimposed on adversity and historic marginalization, indigenous resilience is a reflection of an innate determination by indigenous peoples to succeed. . . . Resilience is the polar opposite of rigidity. It provides an alternative perspective to the more usual scenarios that emphasize indigenous disadvantage and allows the indigenous challenge to be reconfigured as a search for success rather than an explanation of failure. (pp. 8–9)

This understanding that human beings and other natural systems flourish, thrive and prosper instead of simply survive will be further discussed below.

Similar to the trajectory taken within historical trauma research, Native and non-Native scholars have begun to focus on decolonizing resilience by developing communal non-deficit frameworks that fit with Indigenous worldviews and epistemologies (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008; Kirmayer et al., 2009, 2011; Kirmayer et al., 2012; McGuire, 2010; Tousignant & Sioui, 2009).

I am drawn to a few authors in the field of Indigenous resilience who are beginning to focus on community and narrative resilience. First, Kirmayer et al. (2009) in their article titled, "Community Resilience: Models, Metaphors and Measures," develop a concept of community resilience to understand positive responses to adversity at the level of families, communities and larger social systems and helps move us away from a focus on "at risk" individuals and families. This strikes me as being similar to the notion of Gros Ventre "vitality" being studied by Joseph Gone (2011) and the idea of "victorization" among First Nations peoples being argued by Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux (2010a, 2010b). Second, Kirmayer et al. (2011) in their article titled, "Rethinking Resilience from Indigenous Perspectives," argue that all ecosystems naturally reset themselves to a place of thriving and flourishing, including human beings. They write, "[b]ased on experience with physical materials, the metaphor of resilience suggests the ability to return to an original state after being stressed, perturbed, or otherwise bent out of shape" (p. 85). They suggest that interventions to build resilience among Indigenous peoples include: revitalizing language, enhancing cultural identity and spirituality, enhancing local control and collective efficacy, and respecting human diversity. Most interesting is their discussion about the importance of narratives. Kirmayer et al. (2011) write:

Ethnographic research by our group and others makes it clear that culturally based narratives provide cognitive and rhetorical resources for resilience in Aboriginal communities. Narratives of historical identity and continuity speak directly to the ruptures of cultural continuity that have occurred with colonization and the active suppression of indigenous cultures and identity. (p. 89)

Finally, Kirmayer et al. (2012), published "Toward an Ecology of Stories: Indigenous Perspectives on Resilience," which describes their *Stories of Resilience* project focused on gathering local Indigenous understandings (e.g., Mi'kmaq, Mohawk, Métis, and Inuit) about resilience as expressed through life narratives. They argue, "Ecologically, stories function to constitute a social landscape, configuring identities and the imagined world within which we live. Stories give individuals rhetorical tools to position themselves within local worlds and fashion their own biographies" (p. 408). Over several years, the collaborative research team gathered stories across four Aboriginal communities to examine specific individual and contextual factors that contribute to "doing well" despite adversity. In the above article, Kirmayer et al. (2012) introduce a concept called narrative resilience. They write: "[it] has a communal or collective dimension, maintained by the circulation of stories, invested with cultural power and authority, which individuals and groups use to articulate and assert their identity, affirm shared values and attitudes toward challenges, and generate creative strategies to address predicaments" (p. 401).

Recently, others have taken "a narrative turn" in the Indigenous resilience literature (Denham, 2008; Goodkind, Hess, Gorman, & Parker 2012; Ramirez & Hammack, 2014; Wexler, 2014a, 2014b; Wexler et al., 2013). In the following pages, I will only discuss a few of these articles to highlight the use of narratives to better understand history, context, and identity within individual and communal resilience. First, in "Rethinking Historical Trauma: Narratives of Resilience," Aaron Denham (2008) begins by discussing "the conspiracy of silence" as a frequently cited transmission mechanism of historical trauma, which is similar to the idea of "breaking the silence" discussed below. He argues that "the conspiracy of silence" has mostly been understood through psychological and psychiatric models at the level of individuals and

families and has not taken into account the larger sociocultural and historical context. Through ethnographic fieldwork, he studies the transmission of historical trauma by examining resilient narrative expressions found within a Coeur d'Alene Indian family spanning four generations. He concludes: "trauma narratives transmit strength, optimism and coping strategies that family members internalize and use to emplot their own narratives, or organize life events and experiences into a coherent and ever-evolving story" (p. 393); thus, he challenges us to rethink the historical trauma complex which may not be *all* stories of struggle, but stories about survival too. Similarly, in "'We're Still in a Struggle': *Diné* Resilience, Survival, Historical Trauma, and Healing," Goodkind et al. (2012) study narratives within three generations of *Diné* on one reservation community in the Southwest. They argue:

One of the greatest effects of historical trauma recognized by elders, parents, and youth was the breakdown in intergenerational communication and relationships. . . . Bridging this intergenerational gap will contribute to increased intergenerational discussion of past events, allow "traditional' coping mechanisms to be more fully developed (e.g., "talking to people"), and thus promote collective healing." (p. 1033)

Finally, in "Surviving Colonization and the Quest for Healing: Narrative and Resilience among California Indian Leaders," Lucio Ramirez and Phillip Hammack (2014) argue for the use of narratives "to preserve the holistic, idiographic approach to lives in context" (p. 119) and take us on an exploration of the life stories of two tribal leaders in California. They conclude: "the two narratives shared a *redemptive* form in which the potential *contamination* of historical trauma was mitigated as the men constructed coherent life stories in which they discovered a sense of meaning and purpose in their tribal and Native identities" (p. 119). Therefore, by reflecting on narratives and the absence of narratives, all of the above authors were able to critically examine historical trauma and better understand that historical consciousness is deep, selective and variable.

Next, I would like to highlight an article titled "Resilience and Aboriginal Communities in Crisis: Theory and Interventions" (Tousignant & Sioui, 2009). The authors provide a set of characteristics—spirituality, holism, resistance and forgiveness—specific to the notion of resilience in Aboriginal communities. Then, they not only explore individual resilience but community resilience and discuss the important process of lateral knowledge transfer and the capacity of families to be resilient which involves breaking the law of silence. Interestingly enough, this idea of needing to "break the law of silence" is also discussed in the work of Denham (2008) and Wesley-Esquimaux (2010a) and in the historical trauma intervention models of Brave Heart (1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2000, 2003).

Although a critic of historical trauma research, Gros Ventre psychologist Joseph Gone (2009) values the establishment of culturally sensitive community-based treatment programs across Indian Country. For example, he studied a nationally accredited First Nations program in Manitoba and shares four components to the success of their healing journey from historical trauma: (a) clients understood they carried childhood pain that led to adult dysfunction, (b) such pain was to be confronted and confessed if relief was to be obtained, (c) a cathartic expression inaugurated the healing journey of lifelong introspection and self-improvement, and (d) the healing journey entailed reclamation of indigenous heritage to remedy the damage from European colonization (p. 760). These components can also be found in Brave Heart's historical trauma intervention or what she describes as "the return to the sacred" for the Lakota people (1998). Interestingly, they are also recognizable components in the *nDigiStorytelling* workshops we conduct across Indian Country. A true comparison of these four components is outside the scope of this paper, however, it is certainly a direction for future research.

Gaps and limitations. Narratives and stories have been gaining prominence across the globe and especially within historical trauma and Indigenous resilience research. In Brave Heart's psychosocial educational intervention work among the Lakota people (1998, 1999b), she used narratives to help her people heal from historical trauma. For example, she has participants draw a lifeline and plot out traumatic events on it to create a Trauma Graph, and she uses storytelling, talking circles and sweat lodges as opportunities for individuals to verbalize traumatic experiences. Although the Indigenous resilience researchers I have discussed may not all be interested in designing intervention models, they are most definitely interested in the study of narratives. For example, Kirmayer et al. (2012) focused on gathering "traditional stories of origin and the adventures of mythic figures" (p. 89); Gone (2011, 2013b) is studying historical narratives of ancestral figures among his people, the Gros Ventre (e.g., Bull Lodge and Watches All), and exploring stories of residential school survivors (2013a); and, Denham (2008), Goodkind et al. (2012), and Wexler (2014b) are interviewing contemporary Native peoples and exploring resilience within multigenerational families. All the above researchers used ethnography (i.e., key informant interviews, focus groups, reflective journals, and surveys) and one used historiography (i.e., archival material) to gather narrative data. To my knowledge, all of them, with the exception of anthropologist Lisa Wexler, have never utilized digital storytelling. Thus, one gap is their methodological tool of inquiry, as I will more fully discuss below with a few examples. Another limitation in this body of research is that the narratives and stories that are being gathered, sorted, coded, analyzed, and written about are by academic researchers who are not part of the Indigenous community they are studying, with the exception of Brave Heart and Gone, who were the Principal Investigators, and Gorman and Parker, who were junior members of the research team. Although some of the researchers established

long-term relationships with Indigenous peoples, installed Community Advisory boards, and/or trained local community members to be a part of their research teams, there is still a level of etic perspective and authority which can create barriers for understanding tribally-specific subjectivity and working with culturally-embedded notions about culture, identity, spirituality, and healing.

As a Native digital storyteller, I believe participatory media in the form of *nDigiStories* could help close the gap. In our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops, Indigenous peoples create, on their own, 3-5 minute digital stories from beginning to end. They think about a personal "lived" experience, talk about it in a story circle, write a script about it, speak a part of their life story into a microphone, select photos and create music to go with it, and edit the digital story into a "final cut," with some technical assistance and guidance from Carmella Rodriguez and me. This means there is little to no interference in obtaining a digital story to share with others. Imagine if Lawrence Kirmayer's Roots of Resilience project (https://www.mcgill.ca/resilience/), which covers Canada and New Zealand, included digital stories! What if members of First Nations communities could have included their own voice, pictures, and music? Would it still focus on "the ruptures of colonialism" or on the cultural and spiritual sutures we use to heal? And, what if we actually saw the faces and heard the voices from resilient Aboriginals healing from historical trauma—instead of read about them through text-based documents? What digital stories would they have made, if left to their own resolve? Again, the process of creating digital stories provides us with an opportunity to explore theoretical concepts, such as historical trauma and Indigenous resilience, from the experience instead of about the experience.

Based on my own Indigenized approach to digital storytelling, my bias is that I believe the deeply embedded issues these researchers are trying to uncover can best be observed through

the lens of Indigenous knowledge and through a growing body of Indigenous methodologies, for example, *nDigiStorytelling*. Linda Tuhuwai Smith (1999) reminds us, there is a global movement toward decolonization and a centuries-long and on-going struggle of Indigenous peoples against the "Western knowledge machine" (p. 1) and the agents of this machine, namely, "education and schooling, the academy and intellectuals, theory and research" (p. 1). Thus, to be of true and lasting benefit for Indigenous peoples, I think we must focus more of our efforts on uncovering and sharing everyday narratives about "vitality," "victorization," and "historical greatness."

Unlocking Indigenous Hearts and Minds to Create Space for *nDigiStorytelling*

In *Research as Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, Lester-Irbanna Rigney writes, "Indigenous peoples think and interpret the world and its realities in differing ways to non-Indigenous peoples because of their experiences, histories, cultures and values" (as cited by S. Wilson, 2008, pp. 54–55).

In the past year, Carmella and I have been working with more and more Indigenous peoples healing and recovering from alcohol and substance abuse and we have been listening to more and more women, and a few men, "break their silences" around domestic violence, incest, abuse, and trauma. Many continued to share stories about how different they felt after the workshop, as discussed above. Slowly, I found myself asking: how and when did their self-reported healing and transformation occur? Did it happen when the *nDigiStoryteller* talked about her/his "lived experience" to a small group of fully engaged listeners in a *nDigiStoryCircle* we made "safe and sacred" with ceremony and prayers? Or, maybe, it happened the moment the *nDigiStoryteller* listened to themselves doing some truth-telling, for the first time about a life event; more specifically, it could have been when they heard, like us, the cadence of their voice

change or their breathing become short and gaspy. Or still, yet, maybe "the healing" happened when they noticed something new in an old family photo or when we found "the right" image for their audience to visually and emotionally relate to a turning point in their life story. Finally, it may have happened at the end of the workshop when the *nDigiStoryteller* stood up to introduce her/his *nDigiStory* to their first assembled audience, who might have been their relatives and/or co-workers, who knew parts of their story, but not all of it. Certainly, Carmella and I have noticed and shared comments about the physical bodily changes we have observed and the emotional outbursts we have heard when we do our *nDigiStorytelling*. For this reason, we started including Native purification rituals (i.e., smudging, cedaring, praying) and we have always made corn pollen offerings or burned cedar whenever we travelled to a new community.

In an article titled, "The Healing of our People: Substance Abuse and Historical Trauma," authors Robert Morgan and Lyn Freeman (2009) write, "It is easy to see that when healing is viewed as a gift that must be shared, it becomes empowering and moves people to their own power, in the sense of self-liberation from obstacles to their well-being" (p. 90). To elaborate, within most Native communities, it is understood that the power of healing comes from a spiritual source and it is given to the people. In the same light, Carmella and I both feel like *nDigiStorytelling* came to us in unique and profound ways, and we have always acknowledged this by using *Diné* prayers, offerings, and ceremonies to spiritually ground our *nDigiStorytelling* work and ourselves in the process. In our complementary dissertations, we hope to describe the powerful niche we have created in the field of digital storytelling and how we imagine it can be used within Indigenous healing, practice and research.

There is a moment of opportunity at hand today. Mohawk curator Steven Loft (2005) in Transference, Tradition, and Technology: Native New Media Exploring Visual and Digital Culture, described it best: "When members of a community assert control over their own lives and culture, politically, socially, and artistically, they go beyond oppression. Thus, control of 'our' image [and stories] becomes not only an act of subversion, but of resistance, and ultimately, liberation . . . " (p. 66). nDigiStorytelling is one of those moments of opportunity where we can merge our Indigenous oral traditions and storytelling with new technology to create first-person digital stories that will bring forth survivance, healing and liberation.

In the book *Reclaiming Indigenous Voices and Visions*, Leroy Little Bear (2000) writes in his chapter titled, "Jagged Worldviews Colliding:"

In Aboriginal philosophy, existence consists of energy. All things are animate, imbued with spirit, and in constant motion. In this realm of energy and spirit, interrelationships between all entities are of paramount importance, and space is a more important reference than time. (p. 77)

Carmella Rodriguez and I have always realized the importance of spirit and spirituality in our *nDigiStorytelling* work. We consider the *nDigiStories* we co-create as a "living breath," thus, we work to ensure digital stories remain the *nDigiStoryteller's* "intellectual and spiritual property." For example, we have rewritten standard media release forms from university, governmental, and tribal agencies to ensure ownership goes to our *nDigiStorytellers*. We openly negotiate this before we agree to be a part of any project and before we know what stories or storytellers will be a part of the workshop. We insist on this because of the history of exploitation by mainstream media outlets.

In addition, through words, prayers, and ceremony, we have always acknowledged the land and ancestors of the Indigenous people we work with. We also understand that everything we do, hear, see, or say is embued with an invisible life force called spirit. For example, sometimes there may be an individual who is not able to attend our workshop at the last minute, but another person will take the seat, and we know there is "a reason for it" which is often

revealed during the workshop. Or, sometimes, particular photos or music appears, out of nowhere, "for a reason." Indeed, timing, respect, relationships, and spirituality all play an important role in the work we do.

Leroy Little Bear (2000), in "Jagged Worldviews Colliding, declares, "When jagged worldviews collide, objectivity is an illusion. The only things I know for sure are the things I experience, see, feel, and so on" (p. 85). It is this experiential knowledge, grounded in almost ten years of co-creating digital stories with Indigenous peoples, which I plan to draw upon for my dissertation research.

At *nDigiDreams*, our work is about survivance. It is about using *nDigiStories* for self-representation against subjugations, distortions, and erasures of colonization and Western hegemony. Gerald Vizenor (2008) calls survivance, "an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion; survivance is the continuation of stories, not a mere reaction" (p. 1). Thus, the experience of survivance opens space in digital storytelling scholarship and can be used to visually and emotionally show how Indigenous people thrive and flourish because they are rooted in place, land, community, and spirituality. Feminist and social activist bell hooks (1996) reminds us, "none of us can create successful revolutionary movements for social change if we begin from the standpoint of woundedness" (p. 145). Our work, then, is not only to "share the voices and stories" of *nDigiStorytellers* who have survived historical trauma and overcome health risks but to come from an Indigenous perspective that understands our way of living, healing, being and breathing that begins and ends with *Mino Bi-maadiziwin* or *Hózhó*.

Summary and Conclusion

Two years ago, after completing an *nDigiStorytelling* workshop for a program that encourages Native women to reclaim their traditions (e.g., breastfeeding and cradleboards) to

Gloria Bird (Spokane) and Joy Harjo (Muscogee Creek) titled *Reinventing the Enemy's Language* (1997), a collection of poetry, fiction, prayer and memoirs by Native women about resilience and resistance. She wrote in an accompanying card: "This is what you do . . . you are using the Enemy's technology to help our people. Keep up the great work and thank you!" In the opening pages of the above book, Bird and Harjo (1997) remind us: "To speak, at whatever the cost, is to become empowered rather than victimized by destruction. In our tribal cultures the power of language to heal, to regenerate, and to create is understood" (pp. 21–22).

In this literature review, I "tilled the soil" within four bodies of research: digital storytelling, Indigenous film, historical trauma and Indigenous resilience—in order to plant new *nDigiSeeds* that can be the catalyst for future change. I believe *nDigiStorytelling* is an Indigenous survivance tool for capturing everyday narratives, but it must be done outside damage-centered research frameworks to better understand the complexity, fluidity, and multiplicity of our Indigenous "lived experiences." In this chapter I will discuss an emerging research design that I describe as the "Three Sisters"—Indigenous methodologies, community-based participatory research (CBPR) and portraiture.

"Three Sisters"—An Emergent Research Design That Privileges

The holy blue corn seed I am planting. In one night it will grow and be healthy. In one night it grows tall. In the garden of the Home God.

The holy white corn seed I am planting. In one day it will grow and ripen. In one day the corn grows tall. In beauty it grows.

Diné Planting Song (Bingham & Bingham, 1979, p. 3)

In this chapter, I plan to elucidate upon a set of methods and strategies of inquiry that will further my doctoral study; namely, Indigenous methodologies, community-based participatory research (CBPR), and portraiture. These three methods and strategies of inquiry complement each other in multiple ways: they focus on building relationships, they see the wholeness and goodness in people, and they share their research outcomes with broader audiences.

Kanien'kehaka scholar Taiaiake Alfred (1999) writes,

As intellectuals we have a responsibility to create and sustain a social and political discourse that is respectful of the wisdom embedded within our traditions; we must find answers from within those traditions, and present them in ways that preserve the integrity of our languages and communicative styles. Most importantly, as writers and thinkers, we should be answerable to our nations and communities. (pp. 143–44)

As a *Diné* woman-digital storyteller-practitioner-researcher, I have always felt a deep responsibility, and an even deeper respect, for all Indigenous peoples' teachings and wisdom. These twin beacons of light have always guided my life's journey—including my practice, my work and my scholarship.

I have been trained in two different graduate programs. In 1986, I obtained a Master's Degree from the Department of Anthropology at the University of New Mexico; by 1991, I completed doctoral coursework in Ethnography and wrote the first four chapters of my dissertation that explored "Navajo-Anglo Intermarriage as a Borderland of Cultural

Construction, Change and Innovation." I left the program in 2001 as an A.B.D. ("All But Dissertation") student. Almost ten years later, in 2010, I began the Ph.D. Program in Leadership and Change at Antioch University and within three years I completed my doctoral coursework; then, between 2014 and 2015, I conducted community-based-participatory-research, wrote and defended my dissertation. In various academic institutions (the Universities of New Mexico, Arizona, and Washington), I have been an administrator on multiple public health grants and, at two prestigious research institutions (The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC and the Newberry Library in Chicago). I held an internship/fellowship and an assistant director position, respectively. Thus, I am well aware that whoever controls research, controls knowledge.

As mentioned previously, for four years (2005–2008) I tried to build and nurture a digital storytelling "movement" within the intellectual-boxed-walls of the academy. Through academic presentations and faculty/staff meetings, I tried to make Western-trained-and-educated academics understand how digital storytelling could contribute to the academic discourse and improve health outcomes for Native peoples. After a few years observing that university-based scholars and scientists, both Native and non-Native, had little to no interest in digital storytelling, at the time, because there was "no data to prove it worked," I left the university setting. I left with my receptive spirit, tender heart, and good conscience still intact. Today, I travel extensively throughout Indian Country and I am planting nDigiSeeds within the sacred-interconnecting-circles of our Indigenous communities. And, everyday, it seems I am engaged in a rush of activity, non-stop conversations and phone calls due to our Native people's enthusiasm that nDigiStorytelling is a tool they can access, learn how to use, and share with others to make meaning about our Indigenous peoples.

Intuitively, I guess I always knew *nDigiStorytelling* could be "good medicine" and could help other Native people, if it was understood and practiced from an Indigenous perspective. In

August 2013, this intuition was fully realized in a conversation Carmella Rodriguez and I had with the daughter of an *nDigiSister*. It happened at a *Jiingtamok* (powwow) on the ceremonial grounds of the Grand Traverse Bay of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians near Suttons Bay, MI (see Figure 3.1). The village of Peshawbestown is the sacred homeland of our *Anishinaabe* co-researchers who met us at the gathering and invited us to the announcer's stand to introduce ourselves and to say a few words about our digital storytelling work. Afterwards, while



Figure 3.1. nDigiDreamers at Peshawbestown 2013 summer Jiingtamok (L-R, Linda Woods, Arlene Kashata, Carmella Rodriguez, Eva Petoskey and Brenda Manuelito). (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).

Carmella and I were looking for *Anishinaabe* frybread, a young woman, who was the daughter of a local digital storytelling workshop participant, stopped us to say: "I want to thank you for the work you do. I can tell you do it with a good heart. It really helps. I don't want to start crying, but I just wanted to tell you, thank you!" (Anonymous, personal communication, August 17, 2013). Later, we ran into our *nDigiSister*, the young woman's mother, and she talked about how healing her digital story was for herself and for her family and asked if she could make another one, in the future.

In her seminal book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999), Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues, "we must be engaged in making space through struggles over power, over what counts as knowledge and intellectual pursuit, over what is taught and how it is taught, over what is researched and how it is researched and how it is disseminated" (p. 5). In this dissertation study, I am creating space for *nDigiStorytelling*. I

know that the environmental, economic, social, and political dilemmas and upheavals we are facing, today, are as one global community and that we need to be more conscious about the ways we live, work, play on this one earth, our Mother. I also know my responsibility is to help make this happen through sharing the tools of digital storytelling. Similar to Mutua and Swadener (2004), Carmella Rodriguez and I seek to help build a liberatory path "leading toward a decolonizing space for research" (p. ix) because we know the need is great and the time is critical.

Although the three methods and strategies of inquiry—Indigenous methodologies, community-based participatory research (CBPR), and portraiture—have been developed over time by numerous researchers, who work among diverse peoples exploring different topics, and although there is a burgeoning number of books and articles, within this chapter, I will only mention key researchers who have developed and/or are leading each field of inquiry, particularly within Indigenous communities.

"Three Sisters": An Emergent Research Design

In the opening chapter, I introduced my methodologies and strategies of inquiry as an emerging research design that I call the "Three Sisters." To reiterate, Indigenous methodologies is the "corn" or "cornstalk" which guides my research and is based on my Indigenous ontology and epistemology; CBPR is a strategy of inquiry that I will call the "bean" because it climbs up the corn and will help me reach my research destination; and, the "squash" is portraiture, a method or technique I will use to gather the "thick descriptions of "lived experiences" within the *nDigiStorytelling* workshops (see Figure 3.2).

By applying the "Three Sisters" in this dissertation study, I believe it will help me better describe the power, beauty, and spirit of an "nDigiStorytelling ceremony."



Figure 3.2. "Three Sisters:" An emergent research design. (Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*).

The "Corn": Indigenous Methodologies

You can't understand the world without telling a story. There isn't any center to the world, but a story. (Gerald Vizenor as cited in Cotelli, 1992, p. 156)

In my lifetime, I have been grateful to know and interact with three generations of
Indigenous scholars and researchers. First, I had the privilege of meeting some of those who
were at the forefront of academic Indigenous discourse in the United States: Paula Gunn Allen,
Vine Deloria, Jr., N. Scott Momaday, Alfonso Ortiz and Bea Medicine (the latter were two of my
mentors in the field of American anthropology). Afterwards, I had the chance to meet a wave of
Native scholars and writers—Greg Cajete, Brenda Childs, R. David Edmunds, Donald Fixico,
Joy Harjo, Caroyn Kenny, Luana Ross, Leslie Marmon Silko, Karen Swisher, Luci Tapahonso
and Anna Lee Walters, among others—who developed Indigenous theories and approaches for
education, history, music and film; shaped Native American Studies programs; and defined new
territories for Indigenous writing and literature. Alongside them were other Native scholars and
writers (Wilma Mankiller, Winona LaDuke, Darrell Kipp, and Daniel Wildcat), whom I had the
pleasure to meet, who took their Western-educated-minds and returned back to their ancestral
homelands to engage in concrete action. They reformed tribal governments, rallied to protect
Indigenous treaty, water, and fishing rights, organized Native language camps, and built tribal

colleges where some would later teach. Still, there were other Native philosophers, teachers, and ceremonialists (Wilson Aronilth, Donald Denetdale, Avery Denny, Oscar Detsoi, Mae Kay James, Annie Kahn, and Harry Walters) who are my *ke'* (my relative) and who are or have been the keepers of our *Diné* stories and songs within our sacred homelands we call *Diné'tah*.

Today, Indigenous scholars and researchers are digging deeper to dislodge and excavate the imperialistic roots of Eurocentric knowledge systems and planting holistic seeds from our Indigenous knowledge systems, such as, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Devon Abbott Mihesuah, Taiaiake Alfred, Marie Battiste, Sákéj Youngbear Henderson, Q'um Q'um Xiiem Jo-ann Archibald, and Leroy Little Bear. Their presence and voices are more deeply felt and heard and more readily accessible across four Indigenous continents (Australia, Canada, US and Aōtearoa/New Zealand) via YouTube, Vimeo and Facebook. Across multiple generations Indigenous intellectual-activists are rising and we are building Indigenous revitalization, resurgence and contestation movements (e.g., Tribal Canoe Journeys, Tar Sands Healing Walks, White Bison Wellbriety trainings, *Idle No More* flashmobs, International Council of the Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers gatherings, Si Tanka Wokiksuye (The Bigfoot Memorial Ride), Gathering of Native Americans (GONA) trainings, and Anishinaabe Grandmother's Water Walks). I believe *nDigiStorytelling* is part of this Indigenous resurgence. I also believe that *nDigiStorytelling* can better connect our common effort by sharing resilience and liberation stories for the coming generations. Similarly, Choctaw-Haida scholar Carolyn Kenny (2012) in the first chapter of Living Indigenous Leadership: Native Narratives on Building Strong Communities (Kenny & Fraser, 2012), "Stories are a creative act of leadership through which we manifest our solidarity and strengthen our people to take their next step in encouraging good and healthy lives" (p. 1). Let us be *Idle No More*—let us make digital stories to heal, liberate, lead, and take the next step, together.

Indigenous ways of knowing or epistemologies sit at the center of Indigenous methodologies and must be briefly mentioned here. Indigenous epistemologies are grounded in unique tribal languages, cultures, histories, worldviews, places and spaces and are difficult to define or deconstruct as universals. Nêhiýaw and Saulteaux author Margaret Kovach (2009), in *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, attempts to describe Indigenous ways of knowing using the following English words and concepts: relational, interactional, holistic, inclusive, animate, cyclical, fluid, and ceremonial. Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2008), in *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous research methods*, asserts that the importance of relationships in our Indigenous epistemology, or relationality, is with all of creation (i.e., cosmos, animals, insects, plants) and not just limited to interpersonal relationships. And, Choctaw-Haida scholar Carolyn Kenny (2004) argues that "great importance is based on the principle of *balance* in this delicate web of life" (p. 8) and that it is always changing, and provides the following holistic model (see Figure 3.3).

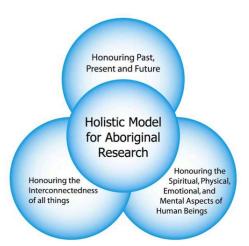


Figure 3.3. Holistic model for Aboriginal research (Kenny, 2004, p. 9).

According to *Mi'kmaq* scholar Marie Battiste (2000), the task before us is not to simply establish Indigenous as a binary opposite to Western knowledge and benchmark the limitations

of Eurocentric theory, but that we need to look at the similarities and seek a deeper understanding of Indigenous knowledge. Further in this article, Battiste coins the term *cognitive imperialism*. She writes:

Cognitive imperialism is a form of cognitive manipulation used to disclaim other knowledge bases and values [e.g., language and culture]. . . . As a result, cultural minorities have been led to believe that their poverty and impotence is a result of their race. . . . The gift of modern knowledge has been the ideology of oppression, which negates the process of knowledge as a process of inquiry to explore new solutions. This ideology seeks to change the consciousness of the oppressed, not change the situation that oppressed them. (p. 3)

For over 500 years, Eurocentric systems of religion, law, education and science were imposed on Indigenous peoples and "not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of subverted logic it turns to the past of the oppressed people and distorts and disfigures, and destroys it" (Maaka, 2004, p. 20). The first step for Indigenous scholars and researchers was to re-center our Indigenous epistemological frameworks; the next step was "decolonizing methodologies," a phrase coined by Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999).

To "decolonize" research some would argue is a "messy, complex and perhaps impossible endeavor" (Mutua & Swadener, 2004, p. 7). Much of the scholarship has focused on critiques of methodological and intellectual paradigms within research (Chilisa, 2012; Denzin, 2008; Grande, 2004; Kawagley, 1995; Kovach, 2005, 2009; Lincoln & Smith, 2008; Mihesuah, 1998, 2003; Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004; Mutua & Swadener, 2004; Smith, 1999; Steinhauer 2002; S. Wilson, 2008) and conflicts within the knowledge systems (Battiste, 2000; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004; Smith, 1999; S. Wilson, 2008). According to Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), the decolonization of research methods is "about centering our concepts and worldviews and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes" (p. 39). By "decolonizing," she argues, Indigenous

researchers will find better ways to achieve social justice (e.g., transform, decolonize, heal, and mobilize) through various research methods.

Mohawk scholar Marlene Castellano (2004) similarly asserts "fundamental to the exercise of self-determination is the right of peoples to construct knowledge in accordance with self-determined definitions of what is real and what is valuable" (p. 102). Indigenous methodologies have a large number of purposes and objectives which cannot be covered in this paper; suffice it to say, there are some key areas where work is being focused: intellectual property rights of Indigenous peoples, protection of Indigenous knowledge from misinterpretation and misuse, importance of communicating research back to the owners of this knowledge, and considerations about what decolonizing methodology involves and how it is to be enacted.

Finally, Lester-Irabinna Rigney (1999), an Aboriginal scholar from the Narungga Nation in Australia, provides three fundamental and interrelated principles that must be met when conducting Indigenous research:

- 1. Resistance must be part of the struggle for recognition of self-determination;
- 2. Political integrity, that is, setting the political agenda for liberation by Indigenous peoples within Indigenous research; and,
- 3. Privileging Indigenous voices by focusing on the lived, historical experiences, ideas, traditions, dreams, interests, aspirations and struggles. (p. 18)

In the final part of this section on Indigenous methodologies, I want to offer a minor critique of current Indigenous scholarship and research efforts and, then, discuss how I would like to approach my dissertation study on the *nDigiStorytelling* process as it is being conducted within an *Anishinaabe* community in Northern Michigan. First of all, I am cognizant of the enormous effort Indigenous scholars have made toward critiquing Eurocentric positivist

approaches; however, I think we need to "walk our own talk" by re-centering our Indigenous way of being in the world. For example, much of the literature I am particularly interested in focuses on researching back or talking back to dominant theoretical approaches and asks us to de-colonize research or write counter-narratives to combat imperialistic text. In my mind, this means imperialism is still considered "the center" and still framing our best intentions. Consider, Marie Battiste's earlier comment about how we simply establish Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies as binary opposites to Western knowledge instead of focusing our attention on deepening our understanding about Indigenous ways of knowing. In 2005, when I first began talking to others about the possibility digital storytelling holds for Indigenous research and scholarship, I found myself talking about digital stories as "counter narratives" (Manuelito, personal journal, June, 10, 2005). As I spent more time exploring how I wanted to share this tool with Indigenous communities, I started to re-center my own thoughts and language within a primarily Indigenous milieu and I found myself not wanting to talk about digital storytelling as "countering" anything. Instead, I shifted my focus toward wanting to nurture, build, and envision hope and liberation for our Indigenous peoples through digital storytelling. Coincidentally, Leanne Simpson (2013), in her chapter in Centering Anishinaabeg Studies: *Understanding the World Through Stories*, writes:

While theoretically we have debated whether Audre Lourde's statement 'The master's tools can dismantle the master's house' is correct, I am interested in a different question. I am not concerned with how we dismantle the master's house—that is, which sets of theories we use to critique colonialism—but I am very concerned with how we (re)build our own house, or our own houses. I have spent enough time taking down the master's house, and now I want most of my energy to go into visioning and building our new house. (p. 280)

Similarly, Quechua scholar Sandy Grande (2004), in *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought*, advocates:

A hope that believes in the strength and resiliency of Indigenous peoples and communities, recognizing that their struggles are not about inclusion and enfranchisement to the 'new world order' but, rather, are part of the Indigenous project of sovereignty and indigenization. (pp. 28–29).

And, finally, Jo-Ann Archibald (2008) eloquently states: "[Indigenous peoples] need some space to talk so that we can share our stories in our own way and create discourses based on our Indigenous knowledge systems. Then we can open the conversation for others to join" (p. 19). Thus, it is important to draw on Indigenous epistemologies to understand the stories, rather than Western theories that don't "fit;" to do otherwise, is to engage in "new acts of colonization" (Archibald, 2008, p. 16).

According to Santa Clara Pueblo scholar Greg Cajete (1994), in *Look to the Mountain:*An Ecology of Indigenous Education, it is through our "metaphoric mind" we have come to know, through our stories, songs and dances which communicate to us through feeling, what otherwise cannot be said and seen directly. In our Indigenous ways of knowing we have always honored and respected the senses and the "metaphoric mind." Thus, at the beginning of our nDigiStorytelling workshops, we often have an individual from the local community offer a prayer that asks assistance and direction from our ancestors and acknowledges the sacred ground where we gather to make digital stories together. For Carmella Rodriguez and I,

nDigiStorytelling is "ceremony" where we think and speak about stories together as well as offer prayers and songs; thus, we plan to conduct "sacred research" (Struthers, 2001).

Returning to the metaphor of "The Three Sisters" in our *nDigiGarden*, Indigenous methodologies are the "cornstalk" or the center pole that reaches from the earth to the sky in my dissertation study. The "bean," which is community-based participatory research (CBPR), is a growing strategy of inquiry being used within Indian Country and will be fully discussed below.

The "Bean": Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

Indigenous peoples have often remarked that they have been "researched to death" (Castellano, 2004; Cochran et al., 2008, p. 22) and that "researchers are like mosquitoes; they suck your blood and leave" (Cochran et al., 2008, p. 25). Thus, finding a research approach that rebalances power relationships in research and encourages respect for Indigenous peoples and their wisdom is key. One such approach is community-based participatory research that has been called "a new frontier of fruitful research" (Hagey, 1997). Although it is not within the scope of this chapter to fully explore the historical and philosophical roots of this tradition, I will present some basic features of this approach and discuss its successes and challenges when working within Indigenous communities, especially with regards to health and wellbeing.

Numerous terms exist to describe this orientation or approach to research, including community-based participatory research (CBPR), participatory action research (PAR), participatory research, action research, collaborative research, mutual inquiry, and feminist participatory research. Across various disciplines within the academy—education, organizational development, psychology, nursing, community development—there exists different nuances to this approach; however, there is also a set of core principles researchers adhere to in order to rebalance power relations amongst community and academic co-researchers: trust and relationship-building, co-learning and empowering, mutual benefit, and long-term commitment (Cancian, 1993; Hall, 1992; Israel et al., 1998; McIntyre, 2008; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003; Park, 1993; Petras & Porpora, 1993; Wallerstein & Duran, 2006).

Figure 3.4 is a useful diagram that illustrates how community-based research more fully incorporates Indigenous peoples' values, practices and knowledge. I am particularly interested in the term community-based participatory research (CBPR) that has gained acceptance and respectability within the public health field and bridges the gap between science and practice in

order to increase health equity (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003). Over the past decade, CBPR is increasingly being used as the "turquoise standard" when conducting research with Indigenous communities (Chino & DeBruyn, 2006; Cochran et al., 2008; Fisher & Ball, 2003; Gray et al., 2010; LaVeaux & Christopher, 2009; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003; Sahota, 2010; Salsberg et al., 2007; Wallerstein & Duran, 2006).

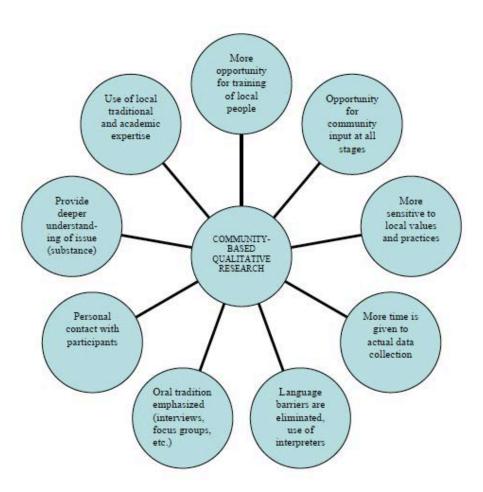


Figure 3.4. Community-Based Qualitative Research (Kenny 2004, p. 24).

As an Indigenous researcher, I am drawn to the emancipatory historical roots of the "Southern tradition" (see Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003) that challenges the colonializing practices of positivist research; in particular, Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire (1970) and his publication *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire influenced the transformation of how researchers viewed communities as *objects* of study toward an understanding that community members are *subjects* of their own experience and inquiry. This emancipatory perspective fits well with the type of Indigenous-centered research our leaders are calling out for:

As we seek our own understanding of tribal research and scholarship, we must remember the people of the community are the source of profound understanding of tribal life, values and rituals. We must hear their voices and participate in their stories and rituals in order to attain the wisdom we seek. As we explore the world of scholarship, the everyday people and everyday rituals must form the foundation for the lodges we build. (Crazy Bull, 1997, p. 16)

During my ten years working in the field of public health at the Universities of Arizona and Washington, with a focus on diabetes, substance abuse, and cancer prevention, I observed how many CBPR researchers, both Native and non-Native alike, tend to overly focus on negative health problems and risks and spend far too much time and energy working to develop *evidence-based* best practices. According to Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), "problematizing the Indigenous is a Western obsession" (p. 95). Over twenty-five years ago, Lakota anthropologist Bea Medicine (1988) argued research focuses on "Indian problems" which:

Categorized Native Americans as a single group, and constructs differentiating tribal-specific structures, socioeconomic status, residence patterns, and educational achievements, as well as gender, remain fuzzy. Indians tribes, urban conglomerates, and females and males have often been lumped together and glossed into pathological parameters. The pervading view of the Indian problem has focused research agendas upon such dissonances as poverty on reservations and general economic development strategies, which very often are context-sensitive and not ameliorating. . . . This foci, in my assessment, have caricatured native peoples in a very unflattering way and have made understanding of them impossible. (p. 86)

Unfortunately, in my opinion, university-based public health researchers still essentialize the Indigenous experience and continue to focus their research agendas on health disparities at the expense of much-needed community-based participatory research on healing, liberating and restoring our Indigenous peoples. Dakota scholar and activist Wayazitiwin Angela Wilson (2004) points out that "Indigenous communities throughout North American are experiencing a resurgence in interest in traditional knowledge and practices that are associated with health and well-being rather than pain and sorrow" (p. 365). Then, why don't researchers focus their efforts on better understanding the thriving the flourishing that is happening across Turtle Island?

In the next section, I will describe portraiture, "the squash" which provides a groundcover that can spread far and wide. Portraiture is a method of technique I will use to gather "portraits" that show the complexity, fluidity and multivocality of "lived experiences."

The "Squash": Portraiture

Digital storytelling has been described as an "emergent method for social research and practice" and is beginning to be utilized in the fields of public health and higher education (Gubrium, 2009; Gubrium & Scott, 2010; Gubrium & Turner, 2011). Steadily, academic articles about digital storytelling among Indigenous peoples are being published (Iseke & Moore, 2011; Palacios, 2012); however, the focus is primarily about how digital storytelling provides rich "data" to explore with little attention being paid to the digital storytelling as *process* or a consideration that digital stories are a "living breath" or "spirit." This latter focus is especially important when we consider the context of today's Indigenous experiences that cannot be removed from the larger historical, cultural, political milieu. As *Sicangu* Lakota educator and CEO of the American Indian College Fund, Cheryl Crazy Bull (1997), argues:

We, as tribal people, want research and scholarship that preserves, maintains, and restores our traditions and cultural practices. We want to restore our Native languages; preserve and develop our homelands; revitalize our traditional religious practices; regain our

health; and cultivate our economic, social, and governing systems. Our research can help to maintain our sovereignty and preserve our nationhood. (p. 17)

Thus, another method that can be beneficial to my dissertation study is portraiture because it addresses my critique about digital storytelling scholarship and Crazy Bull's call for tribal research. One of the reasons I am particularly drawn to Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's work is because of her understanding that more work being conducted in the academy does not reach beyond its walls. In *The Art and Science of Portraiture* she writes:

Academicians tend to speak to one another in a language that is often opaque and esoteric. Rarely do the analyses and texts we produce invite dialogue with people in the 'real world.' Instead, academic documents—even those that focus on issues of broad public concern—are read by a small audience of people in the same disciplinary field, who often share similar conceptual frameworks and rhetoric. (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997e, pp. 9–10)

There are many aspects of portraiture that I am drawn toward and I will discuss more fully in this next section. First of all, portraiture is a method of inquiry that can be equated with case study, life history, narrative, phenomenological and ethnographic approaches. As described by sociologist and educator Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot and developmental psychologist Jessica Hoffman Davis in *The Art and Science of Portraiture* (1997), this method of inquiry and documentation in the social sciences combines "systematic, empirical description with aesthetic expression, blending art and science, humanistic sensibilities and scientific rigor" (p. 3). Portraiture emphasizes the ongoing dialectic between product (the portrait) *and* process (collecting and interpreting data). Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997d) explains:

Portraitists seek to record and interpret the perspectives and experience of the people they are studying, documenting their voices and visions—their authority, knowledge, and wisdom. The drawing of the portrait is placed in social and cultural context and shaped through dialogue between the portraitist and the subject, each one negotiating the discourse and shaping the evolving image. (p. xv)

Besides voice and context, as alluded to above, there are three other discerning features of portraiture—relationships, emergent themes and aesthetic whole. (For a more in-depth

discussion about portraiture and the above defining features, see Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Carroll, 2007; Chapman, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997c, 2005; Matthias & Petchauer, 2012).

In qualitative research, particular attention has been paid to the nature of *voice*—what is being articulated (and by whom), how it is being represented, and who has the power to assert it. Portraiture works to tell the stories of people who do not have "voice" in the academy. In fact, for Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997a), "the portraitist's voice . . . is everywhere—overarching and undergirding the text, framing the piece, naming the metaphors, and echoing through the central themes" (p. 85). There are six aspects of "voice" in portraiture: voice as witness, voice as interpretation, voice as preoccupation, voice as autobiography, voice as dialogue, and listening for voice. They overlap each other throughout the text and are purposefully sequenced from the researcher being an almost invisible and restrained observer (voice as witness) to one that is involved in conversations which captures the evolving relationship between researcher and actor (voice as dialogue). These multiple modalities of voice are purposeful and conscious for portraitists who understand the power and privilege inherent in research.

Previously, I described how *context* is critical to enacting decolonizing methodologies.

This is also true within the method of portraiture. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997e) points out:

Context becomes the framework, the reference point, the map, the ecological sphere; it is used to place people and action in time and space and as a resource for understanding what they say and do. The context is rich in clues for interpreting the experience of the actors in the setting. We have no idea how to decipher or decode an action, a gesture or a conversation, or an exclamation unless we see it embedded in context. (p. 14)

Portraiture distinguishes between the internal context (the physical setting), the personal context (the researcher's particular background, agenda and presence) and the historical context (the ideological and cultural journey of the subject or site).

Relationship was alluded to above when I discussed the nature of "voice" and how it moves from being an invisible witness to an engaged conversationalist. Davis (1997b) suggests:

"the terms and outcomes of relationships differ greatly depending on the duration and circumstance of the rapport—the length of time in which the portraitist and actor are in dialogue together and whether the focus is on an individual or an institution" (p. 161). *Emergent themes*, according to Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, "reflects the portraitist's first efforts to bring interpretive insight, analytic scrutiny, and aesthetic order to the collection of data. [It] is an iterative and generative process; the themes emerge from the data and they give the data shape and form. The portraitist draws out the refrains and patterns and creates a thematic framework for the construction of the narrative" (Davis, 1997b, p. 185). Other qualitative researchers, such as ethnographers, describe this process as coding. Portraitists use five modes of synthesis, convergence and contrast—repetitive refrains, resonant metaphors, institutional and cultural rituals, triangulation and revealing patterns. Although a lengthy discussion of emergent themes is beyond the scope of this paper, suffice it to say, they "occur within and across the stories, language, and rituals of subjects and sites" (Davis, 1997a, p. 232). Finally, when we weave together voice, context, relationship and emergent themes we come to an understanding of the aesthetic whole. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997c) writes: "in constructing the aesthetic whole, the portraitist seeks a portrayal that is believable, that makes sense, that causes that 'click of recognition' [which she calls resonance]" (p. 247) for the actors, the researcher and the audience.

To close, I would like to expound upon two attributes of portraiture that draw me to this method. First, as a former public health researcher, I appreciate portraiture's focus on "goodness." As mentioned above, there are far too many images that tell the story of the powerlessness and pathology of Indigenous peoples; portraiture, on the other hand, focuses on community strengths instead of deficits and explores the multiple sites and manners in which challenges are addressed by those who are not to be considered down-trodden victims, but survivors and emancipators. Portraiture "begins by searching for what is good and healthy and

assumes that the expression of goodness will always be laced with imperfections" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997e, p. 9). This idea of empowerment not only exists within those being studied (the actor), but also lies within the researcher (the artist) and audience. Thus, portraiture is not only about analysis but intervention. Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) writes:

In the process of creating portraits, we enter people's lives, build relationships, engage in discourse, make an imprint . . . and leave. We engage in acts (implicit and explicit) of social transformation, we create opportunities for dialogue, pursue silences, and in the process, we face ethical dilemmas and a great moral responsibility. This is provocative work that can disturb the natural rhythms of social reality and encounter; this is exciting work that can instigate positive and productive change. (p. 12)

For me, this parallels the work of Indigenous researchers who are decolonizing and Indigenizing research and community-based participatory researchers who are rebalancing power and deepening ethics of research. Second, as a former ethnographer, I appreciate the distinction Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997e) makes between listening *to* a story and listening *for* a story: "The former is a more passive, receptive stance in which one waits to absorb information and does little to give it shape and form. The latter is a much more active, engaged position in which one searches for the story, seeks it out, is central in its creation" (p. 12).

Much of my *nDigiStorytelling* work with Indigenous peoples is an engagement at these deeper levels of goodness and co-creation. Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997b) argues that there are "dual motivations guiding portraiture: to inform and inspire, to document and transform, to speak to the head and the heart" (p. 243). I have always focused guiding our *nDigiStorytellers* to travel down seventeen-inches-from the-head-to-the-heart because I know by seeking deeper levels of engagement in our digital storytelling workshops we can better inspire, transform, heal, and liberate one another.

Eva Petoskey (Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians) is the Director of the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan's *Anishinaabek* Healing Circle, Access to Recovery

Program (ATR), a large statewide collaborative involving the twelve federally recognized tribes in Michigan. We met Eva Petoskey and two of her ATR team members (Linda Woods and Terri Tavenner), in 2011, at the first *nDigiStorytelling* workshop we held in the state of Michigan. A year later, while we were conducting a second *nDigiStorytelling* workshop for their program, we began sharing thoughts and ideas about how we could collaborate on various projects. The five of us worked well together—we enjoyed each other's company, stories, laughter, prayers, cooking styles, and jokes. About six months later, Carmella Rodriguez and I approached Eva and her team to be co-researchers for our complementary dissertation research projects. Overwhelmingly they all agreed. A few months later, upon our return to the Michigan area in the late spring of 2012, we began to earnestly discuss our future collaboration, but not until we held a pipe ceremony to pray to our ancestors for guidance and protection as we embarked on a new journey together. Each individual on our co-research team, whom we call *nDigiDreamers*, expressed their commitment and dedication for the health and well-being of our Indigenous people, especially in Michigan. We held several meetings with our co-research team and over time began working on various ATR-nDigiDream projects including co-facilitating nDigiStorytelling workshops at various places across Michigan, organizing an nDigiFest at a Peer Coach Recovery Institute in Petoskey, Michigan, co-creating digital stories for an Anishinaabe Cultural Assessment tool, and applying for a federal grant to create a nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model for ATR's Sowing The Seeds of Recovery website that includes *nDigiStories* (see Media 7.1).

Selection of Study Participants

As discussed in my first chapter, since we knew Eva Petoskey understood the importance of "community readiness" and was well aware of tribal histories, politics, activities, interests and needs, we asked her assistance to select a research site. Being a former doctoral student herself

and having worked on numerous federal grants, she was way ahead. Eva is a deep thinker, active listener, and naturally spiritual. She said she already "knew" which community we should approach with our request. Eva Petoskey made the first inquiry followed by a conference call with two local leaders (Jerry Lee Curtis and R. D. Curtis), who each attended the KBIC **nDigiStorytelling** Workshops**. Eva said she told them about our interest in making and sharing **nDigiStories** with their Keewenaw Bay Indian Community and, in exchange, we wanted their assistance to help the **nDigiDreamers** learn more about the "experiences" of those who participate in the four-day process. And, with everyone's permission, that Carmella and I would be involved in conducting doctoral research during the **making** and **sharing* of **nDigiStories**. Over a period of 6–9 months, the group of us (ATR, Keweenaw Bay, and Carmella and I) began organizing and planning a four-day **nDigiStorytelling** workshop in Michigan on November 5–9, 2013.

R.D. and Jerry Lee, two local leaders in the KBIC community, selected the first set of five KBIC *nDigiStorytellers*. When asked, they said they "already kinda knew" who would be willing to tell their story. Since R.D. Curtis is the KBIC Substance Abuse Outreach Director and Jerry Lee Curtis is the Administrator at the New Day Residential Treatment Center, they both knew they wanted to recruit individuals who had "long-term recovery," that is, over 10 years of sobriety. Or, people who were "interested and ready to make a digital story." They also said they wanted both women and men from different age categories. One of the local leaders, Jerry Lee Curtis, told us, after the two *nDigiStorytelling* workshops were finished and the *nDigiStories* were completed, that he "knew" if they could get the first group to attend, then, "the rest would follow the braves ones." In the first workshop, five individuals attended the workshop; in the second workshop, we had four. As mentioned above, the first group "paved the way" for the second group by showing their *nDigiStories* across their community and talking to each other

about the experience they all went through together. After participation was confirmed, an "Invitation to Make a Digital Story" (see Appendix B) was sent out by the *Anishnaabek* Healing Circle ATR and nDigiDreams Team with a "Digital Storytelling Information Packet" (see Appendix C) which describes what to bring and how to prepare for the workshop.

In order to get acquainted with the local leaders and others in the community who could be potential participants to the first KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, Carmella Rodriguez and I, on two occasions, drove to Northern Michigan's Upper Peninsula to meet R.D., to talk with interested individuals, and to watch a handful of "released" *nDigiStories*. Previously, Eva Petoskey had showed R.D. and Jerry Lee the digital stories we co-created on their "Sowing The Seeds or Recovery" website.

The first time we visited the Keewenaw Bay Indian Community was in Baraga, Michigan. Arlene Kashata and Linda Woods came with us. Local community involvement is always very important when organizing an *nDigiStorytelling* workshop and this was true for the pilot study that entailed making arrangements for lodging, meals and transportation for the *nDigiStorytellers*, and locating a training site workshop. After driving around the next day with R.D. to several different rentals within the area. We all chose the Aurora Borealis Resort, three wooden cabins on Huron Bay, for the first KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop.

At the first recruitment and planning meeting, Carmella and I described our collaboration with the ATR team and our *nDigiStorytelling* work across the state of Michigan. We also described how we wanted to further our understanding about what "lived experiences" individuals have who participate in the four-day process. I used an analogy to make it clear. I said, "It is as if we were coming together to learn what ingredients go into the making of an Indian frybread that is different from all the others we have seen and tasted before." One of the

prospective participants lit up and he said, "Oh, like my mom's bread! She used to put a lot of love into it when she made it."

Ethical Issues for Planting *nDigiSeeds*

Met's scholar Cora Weber-Pillwax writes that research "is within the context of a real person doing real research in a real community" (2005, p. 80). She argues, "the most serious consideration for me as a researcher is the assurance that I will uphold the personal responsibility that goes along with carrying out a research project that I have decided to work within (p. 79). Besides the human-to-human ethical considerations when conducting this dissertation study within an Anishinaabe community in Northern Michigan, are other Indigenous considerations and protocols an Indigenous person must make to the land, the ancestors, the spirits that surround the research site and the *nDigiStorytelling* process. Indeed, after discussion with our co-researchers, Carmella and I followed Antioch University's Ph.D. in Leadership and Change IRB guidelines and obtained written consent from all individuals involved in our pilot and final studies which formed our dissertation research (see Appendices D and F). Because of our deep respect for all Indigenous peoples we work with, we also obtained additional verbal permissions to include all the information we gathered from the two workshops. In addition, from my own Indigenous practices and with the advice of our *Anishinaabe* co-researchers, I also made corn pollen and tobacco offerings numerous times and on numerous occasions for a positive outcome for all.

In an earlier part of this chapter, I discussed how digital storytelling has recently benefited from the development of a set of ethical guidelines (Gubrium et al., 2013). This recent article addresses the "fuzzy boundaries" of participatory visual and digital methods of "data" collection. It focuses on recruitment and consent to participate, confidentiality, the power of shaping, release of materials, etc. The article mentioned a digital storytelling project that was

done with HIV positive Indigenous youth in Canada, a subject matter that could be "highly stigmatizing or potentially stigmatizing" (Gubrium et al., 2013, p. e4). Since the Indigenous youth considered "written consent forms . . . as tools of colonization," the authors write, "participants went through rigorous training on how to obtain "verbal consent in a respectful manner" Gubrium et al., 2013, p. e4). The irony for me, if I am reading this article correctly, is that the Indigenous youth had to undergo "rigorous training" to basically "give their word" about confidentiality issues, etc. Similarly, individuals at Keweenaw Bay said they did not want to be "anonymous" [or given a pseudonym]. One older KBIC male *nDigiStoryteller* expressed their common sentiment: "My role is for helping someone or helping one another. If [my story] can help one person a day that's fine or if it can help many people that's great. . . . I don't want to be anonymous! I am proud of where I am at and what I have done, especially with the recovery aspect." This idea of IRBs and written consent forms being "tools of colonization" was much discussed with our *nDigiDream*ers, especially as we were beginning to write our dissertation manuscripts. At one point in our discussion, Arlene Kashata said:

It would be colonizing all over again to be out there and not be truthful. Everybody has to be truthful in order to go through that recovery and to write their own story. We learn that in our culture you have to be truthful to sit on the drum and to sit in ceremony.

Afterwards, Arlene explained the importance of the Seven Grandfather Teachings (see Figure 6.2) as *Anishinaabe* people that includes honesty and humility.

Within our tribal communities there are numerous ethical considerations that are not written about but are "seen" or "felt." In fact, these non-written forms of communication between individuals quickly determine whether you "represent harm" and at what level of "consent" you will need. For example, when we planted our first *nDigiSeeds* in November 2013 in Keweenaw Bay, between the second and last day of the week, we began to hear comments like:

I had a lot of trust in you ladies because I could tell you guys walked the walk and we say that in our language as *niwaabakwe nishnaabezeek* (you walk in a spiritual way of the people). I can tell that and I was comfortable.

Right from the beginning, when I met Brenda and Carmella, there was a certain calmness and easiness; I put my guard down. I didn't need that fence up around me anymore. As soon as I met you, as soon as I looked at you when I walked in the door—"ah, they're good people." I can feel. I can sense. I sleep with one eye open around some people. But, you guys, no, everything was let go.

This is an interesting aspect to think about—how human beings "feel," "sense," "tell," and "look" at each other and determine levels of comfortableness and trust, especially within Indigenous communities that are considered "insular" or "closed." I think what I am grasping for is a broader understanding that a much larger, intricately-and-spiritually-woven, web of relationships lies beyond IRB and Human Subject Review Boards and beyond written and verbal consent forms. Indigenous peoples have a knowingness about who or what "represents harm" and who or what represents "good relationships" that is beyond physical matter and form.

Let's consider the above statement I just made from the perspective of "insider/outsider" or "emic/etic" notions that are at once amorphous and essentialist. For example, Linda Woods, one of our co-researchers and an *nDigiHelper* at both workshops, explained about the *nDigiStorytelling* workshop process that, "It is a tender process, and we need to be mindful of this throughout. Their stories come from a very sacred place within them and they are entrusting us with their sacred journey." Similarly, Terri Tavenner, another co-researcher and an *nDigiHelper* at the November 2013 workshop said: "We must create a safe place for the telling to happen—create a safe haven where the feelings arise and can be acknowledged and validated. We must become witness to the good, the bad, and the ugly. Also, to the hope and the healing that arises once the story is told." Because of the "tender process" or "sacred journey" we bear witness to and because of the "safe place" or "safe haven" we must provide, I imagine we do it at a deeper level of relationship—as human beings or *bilá ashdla'íi* (human beings). This is not to

minimize that we did not "benefit" from relationships that were created decades ago. For example, between Keweenaw Bay and the ATR team (Eva, Terri, Arlene and Linda), who would be, relative to us, considered "insiders?" Or, that all of us didn't "benefit" from Arlene being a we'enh (spiritual sponsor) to the elder KBIC female, who would be considered an even closer "insider," because she established a "sister" relationship to members of the Keweenaw Bay community when she was 17 years old. On the other hand, Carmella and I, and insomuch have been told, strengthened relationships between the ATR team and members of Keweenaw Bay and we have strengthened extended family relationships by our two nDigiStorytelling workshops and the completed set of nDigiStories. And, we have established a growing KBIC nDigiFamily. My point is that within our "nDigiStorytelling ceremony" we come from a much deeper level of relating to each other. It is simple, but deeply profound—we speak, listen, feel, dream, and bear witness to each other as human beings on this journey we call "life."

Summary and Conclusion

Cora Weber-Pillwax (2005), in "Indigenous researchers and Indigenous research methods: Cultural influences or cultural determinants of research methods," writes:

The choices I make as a researcher about what and how I contribute to the nature and quality of the connections I have with others and with the environment are reflected in the choices I make about how I do research and with whom I do research and what I do as research. I can choose ways that affirm life, or ways that throw me, and those around me, out of balance with each other. (p. 89)

By better understanding and utilizing the "Three Sisters" in my dissertation study

—Indigenous methodologies, community-based participatory research, and portraiture—I can enact decolonization in my research and prioritize indigeneity. Ultimately, for me,

nDigiStorytelling is about Indigenous knowledge recovery, healing and liberation. Wayatsizin Angela Wilson (2004) writes,

At the dawn of the twenty-first century the recovery of Indigenous knowledge is a conscious and systematic effort to revalue that which has been denigrated and review that which has been destroyed. It is about regaining the ways of being that allowed our peoples to live a spiritually balanced, sustainable existence within our ancient homelands for thousands of years. (p. 359)

Further, she argues, "Indigenous knowledge recovery is an anticolonial project. It is a project that gains momentum from the anguish of the loss of what was and the determined hope for what will be" (A. Wilson, 2004, p. 359). In the same light, when we focus on the goodness and hope inherent in *Mino Bi-maadiziwin* and the Seven Grandfather Teachings when working with *Anishinaabe* digital storytellers in our *nDigiStorytelling* workshop(s), they will not only survive, but also thrive.

Dagwaagi — Fall 2013 Planting of nDigiSeeds (Pilot Study)

In the preceding chapter, I introduced an emergent research design called a "Three Sisters" that privileges Indigenous methodologies for qualitative inquiry. "The Three Sisters," a sophisticated sustainable system of gardening practiced by Indigenous peoples to create abundant results and ensure long-term soil fertility. In the "Three Sisters" approach, "the cornstalk" or center pole represents our Indigenous methodologies, "the bean" stands for community-based participatory research, and "the squash" is portraiture.

My overall goal in this and the next chapter is to provide "portraits" of the deep and rich experiences that two groups of Native people shared in two consecutive *nDigiStorytelling* workshops in Northern Michigan. To be specific, this chapter describes the dreams, intentions, assumptions, experiences, and stories of five tribal members from the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) who participated in a *nDigiStorytelling* workshop during November 5–8, 2013 in Skanee, Michigan; and the next and fifth chapter describes the lived experiences of three tribal members from KBIC and one tribal member from the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians who participated in a subsequent *nDigiStorytelling* workshop during May 5–9, 2014 in Baraga, Michigan. A total of six *nDigiDreams*-trained digital storytellers "helped" the new *nDigiStorytellers* make digital stories, and thus it is important that their experiences, perspectives, voices and visions be included here.

The *nDigiStorytelling* process is a profound experience—emotionally, physically, spiritually, and mentally. It is different for every person and varies with every setting. In spite of these individual differences, Carmella and I have observed consistent shared healing, liberation and transformation for individuals who attend our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops. In the following pages, I can only attempt to "portray" a small piece of what a small group of *Anishinaabe* digital storytellers and their "helpers" experienced—together. With permission, I

tried to document our "nDigiStorytelling ceremony" through taped audio and video recordings. This includes dialogues and exchanges we made during our morning reflections or "check-ins" with the entire group, as well as evening debriefs with our workshop facilitators. In addition, I interviewed nine *nDigiStorytellers* at various points in their *nDigiStoryMaking* process. Our workshop co-facilitators (Arlene, Linda, Terri, and Clara), otherwise known as our nDigiHelpers, all took notes and made first-hand observations during the nDigiStorytelling workshop where they assisted. Several times after the *nDigiStorytelling* workshops were concluded, during the process of writing our collaborative dissertations, we reached out to many individuals to double-check information as well as ensure correct translations and spellings of Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) words and phrases. Any mistakes and omissions in this dissertation are mine. Because of the significance of the embodied experiences I am discussing here, I have also selected a set of still pictures, links to short video clips taken from various interviews, and a link to a set of digital stories on the "Sowing The Seeds of Recovery" Internet site where each person's digital story has been released and placed in the public domain. My intention is better provide the reader with a visual, sensory and spiritual connection to the overall experience.

The first "portrait," described below in this chapter, is my pilot study and is described as "Dagwaagin—Fall 2013 Planting of nDigiSeeds." The second portrait, described in the fifth chapter, is my final study and is described as "Ziigwan—Spring 2014 Planting of nDigiSeeds." Each "portrait" begins with the journey Carmella and I made to the Great Lakes region of the United States to conduct research, and ends with the closing circle that occurred after the nDigiStories were completed on the last day of each workshop. There was a six-month lapse of time between the fall and spring nDigiSeed plantings that took place in two different nDigiGardens (research sites) that will be fully discussed below and in the next chapter.

nDigiDreams utilizes an *nDigiStorytelling* Four-Directions Approach (see Figure 1.5) within our four-day *nDigiStorytelling* workshops; therefore, I have organized each "portrait" by the day (i.e., Day 1, Day 2, Day 3, and Day 4), the direction (i.e., East, South, West, and North) and the task (i.e., Thinking, Planning, Creating, and Reflecting) we were primarily engaged in during the workshop process. Finally, because we are planting *nDigiSeeds* in the sacred homelands of the *Anishinaabeg* (the people), I have asked permission to describe the days, directions and the two seasons using *Anishinaabemowin* (the Ojibwe language) to acknowledge, in one small way, their beautiful language, values, and teachings, and their exceptional contributions to this inquiry.

To reiterate, this dissertation is about the *nDigiStoryMaking* process—the four-day digital storytelling process a group of Native digital storytellers underwent in two consecutive workshops within the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community. My dissertation begins on the first day of each *nDigiStorytelling* workshop and ends on the last day of the *story-making* process. A complementary dissertation, written by Carmella Rodriguez, describes the *story-sharing*, that is, the journey ten *nDigiStories* underwent after they were completed in the two *nDigiStorytelling* workshops and shared across and beyond the community. Carmella's dissertation begins where mine ends—they are two complementary pieces of inquiry, yet they can also stand alone. Carmella Rodriguez' dissertation about the *story-sharing* begins on the last day of each *nDigiStorytelling* workshop and continues to the public KBIC community-wide screening called an *nDigiFest*. On one occasion, after the November 2013 *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, Carmella was able to continue to follow the *story-sharing* of five *nDigiStories* six-months after they were completed.

Aambe! Let's go!

nDigiDreams Trip to Michigan in Fall 2013

In the middle of October 2013, Carmella Rodriguez and I were scheduled to make our eighth trip to Michigan. Previously, between August 2011 and December 2012, *nDigiDreams* (Carmella and I) travelled to the state of Michigan to conduct four basic, and one advanced, digital storytelling workshops in four different communities (Sault Ste. Marie, Peshawbestown, Omena, and Petoskey). During this period of time, we had the joy and privilege of meeting, training and, later, recruiting four women leaders to be our co-researchers for both our dissertations. As described earlier, over the years our *nDigiSisters* (Arlene, Eva, Linda and Terri) have become closer to us, and every time we "showed up" we were able to deepen our personal connections through a lot of laughter and stories exchanged, as well as adventures taken into the woods or along the lakeshores, not to mention an occasional horseback ride, trip to the movie or visit to the Kateri Tekakwitha Church for a baby shower or Sunday service.

It was our third cross-country trip from Arizona to Michigan. Before every nDigiStorytelling workshop, no matter how close or faraway, Carmella and I offer prayers for our safe journey and a beautiful workshop. We use my "special" golden eagle feather to cedar ourselves off, including our nDigiChidi (see Figure 4.1), an endearing Navajo term we use for our Toyota passenger van. For this particular journey, we also stopped by my grandfather's hooghan (home) in northwestern New Mexico so that he we could offer more $Din\acute{e}$ prayers to the Holy People, and I could sing our beautiful $Din\acute{e}$ travelling songs with him. We wanted to be protected and blessed as we embarked on a six-week-long journey away from our beloved Southwest. With beautiful prayers and good intentions, we headed straight east on Interstate 25.



Figure 4.1. nDigiChídí on Navajo Nation. (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).

After driving over 2,000 miles, we arrived on October 16, 2013 in Camp Daggett located on the shores of Walloon Lake near Petoskey, Michigan. Our co-researchers were hosting a Recovery Coach Institute as part of their Anishnaabek Healing Circle, Access to Recovery Program (ATR), and we agreed to co-organize the first ever Michigan *nDigiFest* for the assembled group. Afterwards, Carmella and I met with our co-researchers to plan how we would videotape and interview a handful of elders who made significant contributions to Michigan's Native sobriety movement for a joint film project. As with all our trips to Michigan, lately, it was for plan and implement multiple ATR-nDigiDreams projects. Still later, while our co-researchers were back at the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan catching up on everyday business, Carmella and I took care of some *nDigiDreams* commitments. We flew into Grand Forks, North Dakota, rented a car, and then drove to the Spirit Lake Nation to conduct an nDigiBasic digital storytelling workshop at Cankdeska Cikana Community College (CCCC). We were hired to co-create a set of digital stories with local tribal members and college students for the National Library of Medicine's "Native Voices: Native American Concepts of Health and Illness" travelling exhibit, which was slated to open on the CCCC campus in Fort Totten, North Dakota on October 25, 2013 (see Figure 4.2). The set of eight *nDigiStories* can be found at: http://www.littlehoop.edu/content/index.php/news/9-cccc/320-student-digital-stories.



Figure 4.2. National Library of Medicine's traveling exhibit "Native Voices." (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).

Separate Journeys to Skanee, Michigan

On November 4, 2013, five of us (Arlene, Linda, Terri, Carmella and I) were finally ready to travel to Keweenaw Bay for the first *nDigiStorytelling* workshop in that area. It was the third time the ATR-*nDigiDreams* team would meet in a rural community in Michigan to train a group of Native digital storytellers together. ATR was interested in collecting another set of digital stories to add to their "Sowing The Seeds of Recovery" website (see http://www.atrhealingcircle.com/sowing-the-seeds-of-recovery). At the same time, Carmella and I were interested in understanding how Native community members experience the *story-making* and *story-sharing* of their *nDigiStories* for our complementary dissertations.

R.D., a KBIC tribal council member and Director of the KBIC Substance Abuse Outpatient Department, heard about digital storytelling through the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan's *Anishnaabek* Healing Circle, Access to Recovery (ATR). On November 8, 2013, at the first KBIC *nDigiFest* attended by approximately 35 individuals, he told the following story:

The Inter-Tribal Council [of Michigan] has been doing this about a year and a half now. ['Almost three' audience members shout in unison.] Three? I'm way behind time. They did 12 so far from down state; tribal members from down there shared their story. They kept trying to get KB [Keweenaw Bay]. I kept saying, 'No.' Finally, I said, 'Yeah.'

At the second KBIC *nDigiFest*, on May 9, 2014, after R.D. had attended the second *nDigiStorytelling* workshop and completed two *nDigiStories*, he stated, "I'm glad its over and

now I get to share them with everybody. It was a long week. Like I said [I was] up and down emotionally. Hopefully this will help somebody. . . . It's a good thing this digital storytelling."

As discussed in the third chapter, R.D. and Jerry Lee were the local leaders in the community who helped to recruit KBIC tribal members to attend one of two nDigiStorytelling workshops in their area. In November 2013, four "brave" KBIC tribal members drove approximately 60 miles every day, between their homes and the Aurora Borealis Resort, to attend the first *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. Each KBIC workshop participant who drove clocked approximately 240 miles during the entire week while our *nDigiHelpers* drove between 250-350 miles one-way to get to Skanee, Michigan. Terri Tavenner, and her dog Cassie, drove west across Michigan's Upper Peninsula, from Pickford to Skanee, a distance of 250 miles. Carmella and I followed Arlene Kashata in our *nDigiChidi* driving north out of Traverse City, Michigan, across the Mackinack Bridge, the longest suspension bridge in the western hemisphere, then west through the Great Lakes National Forest to Skanee, a distance of 350 miles. Finally, Linda Woods and Ogitchidaa Kwe Migizi (a female Eagle "healing" staff) followed a similar route from Traverse City, Michigan and covered the same distance. Terri was the first to arrive on Sunday afternoon, November 4, 2013. Carmella and I arrived next with Arlene right behind us. Since we had been to the Aurora Borealis Resort four months prior, we took the lead a few miles off the main highway and made all the correct turns to get there. About an hour after sunset, Linda pulled into the long dirt driveway with her car named "Blue Pony." We all reached our final destination. I share this information to show the dedication and commitment we all had to meet and co-create digital stories together about recovery and wellness, especially the *nDigiDreamers* who have all witnessed the power of healing that individuals are experiencing within our "nDigiStorytelling ceremony."

nDigiStorytelling at Aurora Borealis Resort

The Aurora Borealis Resort, near Skanee, Michigan, is located on Huron Bay (see Figure 4.3). Tall green hemlocks encircled the cabins. It was fall, and autumn colors of red, yellow and

Figure 4.3. Aurora Borealis Resort in Skanee, MI (Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*).



orange were popping up everywhere—on the leaves of sugar maple trees, on the small pumpkin that sat outside one of the cabins, and on the socks and sweaters people wore. Upon arrival, we each unpacked our food, pillows, toiletries, flashlights, and everything else one needs to comfortably settle into a cabin for the week. There were three cabins lined up in a row on one side of the dirt road. Terri took the first one, Carmella and I the second, and Arlene and Linda the third. Carmella called the first cabin closest to the water, where we would record voice narration, "The Singing Lodge;" the middle cabin, where we would spend most of our time creating and editing digital stories, "The Creating Lodge;" and the third one, where we would take meal breaks and spend evenings visiting and planning the next day with our co-facilitators, "The Nurturing Lodge."

Each cabin was decorated with different styles of wood furniture and wall hangings that looked like they came from a local yard sale. I was constantly reminded about how far away I was from home in Tucson when I walked across the large wool rag rug on my way to the bathroom and saw a row of loons across the ruffle of our shower curtain or moose patterns on the hand towels.

After unpacking our personal belongings, laptop computers and books, we all unloaded the rest of the equipment from *nDigiChidi*—everything we needed to conduct a community-based digital storytelling workshop anywhere (i.e., two large Pelican suitcases filled with laptop computers and scanner, and various other suitcases and bags containing our digital cameras, audio recording equipment, DVD projector/player, jumpdrives, headphones, manuals, etc.). Since we planned on videotaping parts of the *nDigiStorytelling* process and the community-wide *nDigiFest*, we had additional boxes and bags filled with videotaping and sound equipment to unload.

Finally, when we were able to stretch our legs and walk around the property, we saw

Arlene R., the owner of the resort. She mentioned that the largest cabin on their property was

recently vacated by a group of Michigan hunters. I figured out as much when I saw a couple 4x4

trucks, a three-wheeler and a small portable satellite dish sitting outside their cabin next to their

over-sized beer cooler. The next morning I noticed the hunters got their "first prey," when, at the

entrance, I saw the pumpkin-headed-scarecrow-with-denim-overalls wearing one of their bright

fluorescent orange vests.

Three months earlier, R.D., Carmella and I visited four other rental properties before we found the Aurora Borealis Resort. We all agreed it was the perfect setting to hold the first KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. Carmella explains:

When we first came here, we went into that red cabin and we saw the big picture window in the front room. I said, 'Oh my god, this is the recording room, right here! We'll move the table and put the digital storyteller's chair right there so they can connect to the trees, the water, and everything else, especially when they need that moment to just look out and pull that strength in.'

Over the years, we have found that "the space" in which our Indigenous peoples work on their *nDigiStories* has a significant impact on the tone of their relationships and on the outcome

of their final movies. And like everything else in our culture, in order to be authentic, we need to connect with the elemental and spiritual worlds that surround us.

Janice, an elder *Anishinaabe* digital storyteller, who kept glancing out the window between "takes" of her voice recording was one of those individuals we anticipated would especially appreciate this serene setting and the beautiful view of Huron Bay. When we asked her feedback about "The Singing Lodge" and its large picture window, she said:

The water has a calming affect. I feel the Creator there [she gestures towards the water], you know. He's there. And sometimes He sends spirit helpers too, like the ripples of the waves on the water. If I was outside, I could hear the waves.

We were told that the surrounding woods used to be part of the "traditional hunting grounds" of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and that over the years vast tracts of reservation land became lost, "sold," or stolen which formed a "checkerboard area." Jerry Lee, a former KBIC tribal council member and the current administrator at the New Day (*Oshki Gijigad*) Residential Treatment Center, was the first tribal member to arrive and the first person we heard crack a joke about the irony of the situation—we were a bunch of Natives making *nDigiStories* on the *Anishinaabe* ancestral homelands about the historical and current injustices that surrounded them. Jerry Lee's one-of-a-kind beige Ford pick-up truck and camper is covered with at least a dozen or more bumper stickers that are colorful, witty, satirical, yet, pointedly impactful to read: one says, "Sure you can trust the government, just ask an Indian" and another has an image of Chief Geronimo saying, "I was cool before being Indian was cool." On the third day of the workshop, after we voice recorded Jerry Lee, we asked for his overall feedback about the digital storytelling setting. He offered:

I kinda was hesitant coming here. I questioned, 'why would they want to go so far out?' But now that I am here and we've done it, I couldn't think of a better place that was more quiet, more serene, more peaceful. We joke around a lot about it being beyond 'enemy lines' or in the 'war zone,' but we have a lot of good friends out here. It is beautiful! I

love it! And, it made it a lot easier because it's so quiet. I'm so glad we don't have to be in a city setting and listening to horns and sirens.

Preparing the Fall 2013 nDigiGarden

Whenever we first arrive at any tribal community-based setting to conduct an *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, there are numerous details we need to consider and address. For example, in the middle cabin, called "The Creating Lodge," we needed to accommodate 10 individuals who would sit in an *nDigiStoryCircle* to share their story ideas. This meant we needed to gather, from the other cabins, enough chairs and small tables where they could sit comfortably, with their *nDigiHelper*, to work on their scripts and edit their movies. This meant moving things around, rolling up throw rugs so no one tripped, making sure there were enough outlets to keep our laptops charged, as well as enough natural or artificial light to work at different parts of the day. We also had to set-up a printing and scanning station and, of course, coffee/tea and snack stations in the small kitchen of "The Creating Lodge." Since we were also conducting pilot research for both our dissertations, we packed Carmella's Sony HDV camcorder, a piece of equipment we would not normally use in an *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. This meant finding an unobtrusive place to set up the large black camera and tripod and a nearby counter to hold tapes, extra battery packs, gaffers tape, and the lavalier microphone. Since we were in the rural Upper Peninsula of Michigan, we also had to determine "the best places" to stand inside and outside the cabins to get the most signal on our various cellphones. Basically, we made everything feel like home and made sure everything worked. What still makes me laugh today, when I think about preparing the *nDigiGarden* that first night, was when I saw Carmella inside the resort owner's two-story home walking by the upstairs window. Moments later I asked what she was doing up there and she casually remarked, "Fixing their Internet, of course, so we could get better access to download pictures faster." Like Carmella, all my

n*DigiSisters*, Arlene, Linda, and Terri, have unique skills, talents, abilities, and life experiences. We beautifully complement each another and, lately, we have been finishing each other's sentences.

Figure 4.4. Anishinaabe co-researchers watching an nDigiStory (L-R: Eva Petoskey, Linda Woods, Terri Tavenner, Arlene Kashata and Carmella Rodriguez). (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).



Fall 2013 nDigiHelpers

A full discussion of our *Anishinaabe* co-researchers (see Figure 4.4) was provided in the third chapter. Several of these individuals have become our workshop co-facilitators, or *nDigiHelpers*, during the implementation of our research. Below is a brief description about each *nDigiHelper* who assisted with the Fall 2013 planting of *nDigiSeeds* at KBIC, as well as a statement about what they remember most about making their own first digital story. Most of them shared their recollections at the first KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop in Skanee, Michigan.

Typically, Carmella Rodriguez and I solely work together to co-facilitate *nDigiBasic* and *nDigiAdvanced* digital storytelling workshops for *nDigiDreams*, our training and consulting company. However, since we were involved in a CBPR project, we immediately recognized we had a unique opportunity to further enhance the ATR's digital storytelling skills as well as provide the both of us with much-needed assistance to better document the *nDigiStorytelling* process from multiple experiences and perspectives. Most of all, we were all there to help teach the *Anishnaabeg* (the Ojibwe people) about digital storytelling. Linda Woods summarized it best on the first day of the workshop:

I am honored to be here. I consider myself a helper and I would be honored to help all of you at anytime. . . . We haul around one of those kits [she points to the large black Pelican cases stacked in the corner] and it weighs a ton. We go and help people tell their stories.

Arlene Kashata. I first met Arlene in January 2012 at an *nDigiBasic* digital storytelling workshop that Carmella and I co-facilitated for the *Biimaadiziwinaa Eyaawing* Prevention Program in Peshawbestown, Michigan. She is an enrolled member of the Grand Traverse Bay of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, a Traditional Pipe Carrier, and a certified Substance Abuse Counselor. She conducts contract work for the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan's *Anishnaabek* Healing Circle, Access to Recovery Program (ATR) and a member of our co-research team. For over 20 years, Arlene has been a cultural consultant in many different educational and health-related settings; she promotes healing and growth for Native people on the road to sobriety and wellbriety by incorporating traditional ceremonies and teachings into her work.

Arlene is a petite woman with silver-framed glasses and long dark hair that she pulls back with beautifully beaded barrettes. Her small hands remind me of my mother's, especially when she was younger. During our team meetings, she can always be seen stitching beautiful powwow outfits or moccasins for her kids or grandkids. I have also seen other fine creations of hers, like Ojibwe-style beaded neckties, and tasted some of her specially prepared foods like wild rice soup. Arlene is very attentive to details, and it shows in her photo searches and in the co-created digital stories she makes with other Native digital storytellers. Carmella and I have been through four *nDigiStorytelling* workshops with Arlene, two workshops as our student and two as an *nDigiHelper*. She is beginning to make more digital stories on her own and has teamed up with Linda, who is described below. I'm proud to tell others about the digital storytelling work they are doing with Native people in recovery across the state of Michigan.

When they need a little extra technical assistance from *nDigiDreams*, they'll often call, text or FaceTime Carmella who is always ready to assist.

Arlene provides a lot of unconditional love and seems gracious with her time and energy towards those around her. She resonates a deep spiritual presence, but in an instance she can get all of us rollicking with laughter by her subtle wit and humor. On the first day of our workshop, she shared this about the timing and making of her very first digital story, titled, "Walking in Two Worlds," (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CoqI6p4yt0g&feature=youtu.be).

When I got involved in this [digital storytelling] . . . our prevention program needed people to make a story on our culture. I think I was ready to tell my story because I thought about it a lot. [My digital story] talks about being taken away and being in foster homes and surviving out there. It's about how the culture helped me really make sense about it. I was a child growing up in an alcoholic home and being taken away. I did my story for the same reason, I did it because I know that at that time in my life 80% on our rez were dealing with drugs and alcohol. And, to be able to talk about that and acknowledge it; for me, there was a lot of healing in finally doing that.

Linda Woods. I met Linda in August 2011 at an *nDigiBasic* Workshop we provided for the National Native Commercial Tobacco Abuse Prevention Network at the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. I was told there were a few available seats in that *nDigiBasic* digital storytelling workshop and Linda, Eva, and Terri filled them on behalf of *Anishnaabek* Healing Circle, Access to Recovery (ATR). Linda is an enrolled member of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and a U.S. Air Force (1962–1966) veteran. She has worked with Native clients as a social worker and substance abuse counselor for over 20 years; presently, she is an independent consultant and conducts contract work for ATR and is a member of our co-research team. Linda has over 45 years of sobriety and "has remained sober to help others." She said, "I love seeing my own people learn to turn their lives around and live a good life—*Mino Bi-maadiziwin*—that's all I ever wanted. I am thrilled to see others get clean and sober to discover who they are, as they are creating their story in their life."

Linda is a recognized Elder in the Grand Traverse Bay (GTB) community. Carmella and I tease her about being one of our FBI (Facebook Indian) nDigiGrandmas because she was the first to ask us how to upload her digital story on the Internet before it was even screened on the last day of our workshop. Since then she has posted her digital story many times on her personal Facebook page and has also posted it with Women of Wellbriety and Sober Indianz. Linda is a short, like me. She has shoulder-length stylish silver hair that frames her constant smile and twinkly eyes. I thought I wore some of the nicest matching Native-made-and-designed necklace and earrings sets, until I met Linda. As I have been told about her grandma, Linda is also very loving and nurturing to everyone around her, especially towards her two sons and five grandchildren. At the November 2013 nDigiStorytelling workshop, she made one of the best "three sister" stews I have ever tasted. Like Arlene, she is quick to make you laugh. I especially enjoy hearing all the playful slang words and phrases she sprinkles throughout our meetings and conversations like: "Init," or "Who tat?" Or, when she jokingly calls out, at unexpected moments, "Elvis, where are you?" At the same time, Linda has shared some of the most profound life teachings I have ever enjoyed hearing and we can get into some very deep conversations about Native social justice issues.

After undergoing numerous traditional ceremonies and teachings, in August 2012, Linda brought *Ogitchidaa Kwe Migizi* (a female Eagle "healing" staff)—the only female veteran's staff in the United States—into her community's traditional *jingtamok* (powwow). Linda frequently travels with *Migizi* (see Figure 4.7) to many Native communities, powwows, conferences and tribal gatherings near and far. In November 2013, she brought her to the first KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. Later in this chapter, I will explain *Migizi's* significance in the "circle."

Linda has pretty much finessed co-writing and co-editing *nDigiStory* scripts; she knows when to quietly sit back or when to gently ask insightful questions of the *nDigiStoryteller* to uncover pertinent details or to fine-tune story sequences. She has been through five *nDigiStorytelling* workshops with Carmella and I, two workshops as a student and three as an *nDigiHelper*. With Arlene, she is beginning to co-create more digital stories for other Native digital storytellers in Michigan. Her first digital story titled, "A Gift of Love" can be seen at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhdIvEJMpsg

On the first day of the November 2013 KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, Linda explained to the small group of *Anishinaabe* workshop participants how she transformed her digital story from a third- to first-person narrative:

When I did my first story, and like all of us, I had a ton of stuff going on inside. I had to decide which one I was going to do. I did not have a clue. I didn't know what was going to come out. I think in the story circle I had read something that was written. It was kinda like I didn't talk about myself. I was talking about an Odawa Indian girl and I told them the story and everything. I didn't personalize it, at first, and I wasn't sure what this was all about. Eventually I turned that story; instead of holding it out there, I brought it in here [she gestures toward her heart] and then that is when I began to tell MY story about what happened that was life.

Terri Tavenner. I met Terri at the same *nDigiBasic* Workshop that Linda and Eva attended in August 2011. Terri is originally from the Pacific Northwest and has worked with the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan since 1997. She is a grant-writer extraordinaire and has extensive experience working with various tribes in planning, curriculum development, facilitation and program design. She has been a long-term advocate for recovery oriented systems of care and has been in recovery for almost 30 years.

Terri wears wire-framed glasses that either lighten or darken when she goes inside or out; which she does during workshop breaks in order to stretch her legs, get a little fresh air, or play with Cassie, her Border Collie and "ultimate companion dog." Terri explains, "Her job is to

remind everybody to play—every day—preferably Frisbee." Terri lives on a small farm in Pickford, Michigan with her husband; she raises chickens, gardens, and "looks forward to the day when she can semi-retire to the farm."

Terri has wavy silver hair that gets curlier and curlier the longer she is in damp, humid weather, I am told. Every time I have asked Terri a question about anything—local plants, cooking, regional history, names of lakes and rivers we come across on our drives—she always provides me with detailed answers, which my curiosity deeply appreciates. She is a warm, witty, and kind woman who loves to ride horses, like me, and who does Reiki, like Carmella. And, when Terri takes out her hand drum to sing, she always brings me to tears because she makes me feel close to Earth Mother's slow beating heart and to all my Navajo mothers and aunties who also carry ancient melodies and tunes inside them.

We have been through four *nDigiStorytelling* workshops with Terri, one workshop as a student and three as an *nDigiHelper*. During our *nDigiStoryCircles*, like Linda and Arlene, she is a deep listener. Because she is a creative writer, I would add, she fully understands how one builds tension and writes subplots, even if they are within short one-page digital story scripts. Terri's first digital story titled, "Canoe Keeper's Song" can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAQvgXXxvVg&feature=youtu.be

Recently, Terri shared the following insights about her first digital story:

What I thought my story was about—NW cedar canoe journeys, becoming keeper of a canoe, becoming a singer—was only a small part of what my story was really about—being a non-Native woman standing in the circle as the eighth fire is lit and having a place in this circle that is life. . . . As we tell our stories—we gain perspective, we gain insight. As we share our stories—we are validated, released, and healed.

On the first day of the November 2013 KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, Terri shared her preconceived idea about attending her first digital storytelling workshop:

So I went in there, with absolutely no idea. I was thinking maybe it would be an interview and maybe I had a story or a narrative and I had my pictures, but the whole process was different than what I thought it [would be].

Eva Petoskey. I met Eva in August 2011 at the first *nDigiStorytelling* workshop we held in the State of Michigan at the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan; it was at the same workshop where I met Linda and Terri. Eva is an enrolled member of the Grand Traverse Bay of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and served as the Vice Chair of the Grand Traverse Band Council from 1990–1996. Eva has been involved in prevention since 1978 and is the lead author of the Red Cliff Wellness Curriculum that was created by the First American Prevention Center in Bayfield, Wisconsin. The Red Cliff Wellness Curriculum, a substance abuse prevention intervention based in Native American tradition and culture, was developed into a K–12 school curriculum and has been recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and included on its National Registry of Evidenced-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP).

Although Eva Petoskey was not physically helping us plant *nDigiSeeds* at the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community in November 2013 or May 2014, I still consider her one of our *nDigiHelpers* because her presence and prayers are always being felt across the miles. Often one or all of us will call, text, or Facebook her during our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops to keep her informed about our activities, or we will make an impromptu group conference call at the end of a workshop to share our deep spiritual joys and blessings. On the first morning of our Fall 2013 KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, Eva skyped with some of our *nDigiHelpers* to cheer them on before we got started.

Eva attended her first *nDigiStorytelling* workshop with Linda and Terri in August 2011 at the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan. Her digital story titled "Water Spirit" can be seen at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3QuOhwV4Uzk

Eva told Carmella and I she intuitively knew the possibilities digital storytelling could hold for Native people in her community, and she immediately reached out to *nDigiDreams* to plan and organize a workshop for *Anishnaabek* Healing Circle, Access to Recovery Program (ATR) at Omena, Michigan in September 2011. Since then our ATR-*nDigiDreams* partnership has been steadily growing, and we are constantly exchanging ideas and finding more and more ways to collaborate. For example, we have co-created digital stories that will be used as part of an overall *Anishnaabek* Cultural Assessment for the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan and we have co-created a powerfully beauty and historically grounded *nDigiStorytelling* Visual Logic Model for their "Sowing the Seeds of Recovery" digital storytelling program.

Eva is a tall, thin woman with long dark hair that flows like the stylish clothes she wears. She has a deep beautiful voice and an infectious laugh that catches you by surprise. Being in Eva's presence is like sitting next to a deep soft pool of water in the middle of Northern Michigan's woods. Eva describes herself as being on "a personal healing journey all [her life]." For Eva, it is a "healing journey of storytelling and listening." She recently shared:

I have found healing and spiritual growth through the practice of prayer and meditation as a central part of my healing. I also find spiritual support through ceremony and being in the presence of the ancestors and the water. I am the mother of two beautiful children; I have been blessed with the sacred work of mothering and for the past 24 years this sacred work has been a large part of my spiritual journey. Along the way I have cared for my parents, siblings, husband, uncles, aunts, nieces, various animals and an enormous garden of flowers and sacred plants. I have a home where all are welcome, just as my mother did. I am the daughter and granddaughter of strong and loving women.

Indeed, Eva is always listening, thinking, analyzing, seeking out and finding the next "best" step before you do, and that is probably what makes her a stellar leader, director, evaluator, and grant writer. I felt immediately close to Eva when we first met for many reasons; one is probably because I have three older sisters, and she feels, to me, like another "big sister" of mine.

Eva connects deeply with the vision of our *nDigiStorytelling* work because she too is a naturally-gifted Native storyteller and writer and she recognizes the healing power of our "living breath" that comes out in the form of words, thought and speech. She explained:

I have worked with storytelling for many years as a listener and as an occasional speaker. I have witnessed great healing through finding my voice and listening as other people do the same. Many people, Native people especially, have experienced a loss of their voice. This has happened in large part from various forms of inter-generational trauma. When people begin to find their voice their spirit is liberated and they can begin their walk of personal and collective liberation. I express myself through writing spiritual poetry and prose. I occasionally read my poems in public forums but mostly in small groups. My poetry emerges from my dreams and spiritual experiences. It usually comes to me in a large picture and then finds its expression in words. The poems are alive with spirit.

I believe that all sound is spirit so the voice is the expression of our moving wind or breath. Our voice is a spiritual tool that expresses our sacred breath in the form of words. All words are powerful but when our words emerge from a place of truth and love, from our heart or our seed of life, they have the healing power of love. *Mino Bi-maadiziwin*.

Carmella Rodriguez. I met Carmella in June 2008 while we were both attending an advanced digital storytelling training in Lyons, Colorado (see my introductory chapter). She was in graduate school at the University of Colorado and in the process of obtaining a Digital Storytelling Certificate, although she was already a highly trained videographer as well as a computer designer and engineer. When I first saw Carmella sitting in the workshop next to me, she looked completely organized and ready-to-go on the first day of the weeklong workshop. She had a lime-colored three-ring binder with four dividers and a set of colorful mechanical pencils. After co-facilitating over 120 digital storytelling workshops for Native people and others, Carmella still manages to be very organized and she still likes to surround herself with beautiful colors, music, textures, sounds and people.

Over the years, I have watched Carmella change her hairstyle, her eyeglass pattern and lens color, and her clothing textures and designs, but I have never seen her change her core values. She is a very intelligent, loving and nurturing woman. She treats everyone she meets

with respect and equanimity. In our digital storytelling workshops with the ATR team, I have begun to call her "Dr. Fix-it," which means everything—stalled computers, jammed cameras, jumbled Internet signals, or torn and over-exposed photos—absolutely everything, I know she can fix it.

Before I describe an *nDigiStorytelling* workshop held on November 5–8, 2013 in Skanee, Michigan for KBIC tribal members, I would first like to discuss a Four-Directions Approach that I adapted from my *Diné* teachings to plan and deliver *nDigiStorytelling* workshops that would accommodate the ways of our Indigenous peoples. In fact, we share it with all the people we train, not only Indigenous. I believe that by taking a few pages to explain this approach will help the reader better understand some deeper parts of the *nDigiStorytelling* process we go through.

nDigiStorytelling Four-Directions Approach

nDigiDreams has taken the standard digital storytelling process and framed it within a Diné philosophy of learning that accords with our traditional living system called Sa'ah Naagháí Bikeh Hózhóón. Our Indigenous framework (see Figure 1.5) is grounded in the four-directions and follows the path of the sun from East to West or follows a clockwise fashion. Since I am a Diné woman, I am most familiar with our Diné sacred mountains that teaches us about the four parts of our day and the four seasons, elements, minerals, medicines and Holy Beings associated with each mountain that lies in the four directions of our sacred homelands. Our Diné sacred mountains "model" is analogous to the "the medicine wheel" of other tribal nations, for example, the Anishnaabeg (the people). In our Diné teachings, Blanca Peak, our "White Shell" mountain of the East, is considered like the "north arrow" on a map. Blanca Peak was put in the eastern direction of our sacred homelands because that is where the sun rises and where we start our day. Thus, for our Diné people, Blanca Peak might be understood as our "magnetic north;" it provides an orientation for a person's mind and a person's physical presence on earth. Although other

Indigenous peoples might place the East direction of their "Medicine Wheel" to the right, it is still analogous to the four-directions approach of my *Diné* people using our four sacred mountains. For instance, in 2010, one of our *nDigiSisters* made it culturally appropriate for the digital storytelling work she was doing with tribal communities in Montana.

East is closely associated with early morning dawn, the mineral white shell, the element light and our sacred mountain called *Sis naajini* (Blanca Peak in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains near Alamosa, Colorado). Towards the East, at early dawn light, we are taught to pray to the Holy People with our corn pollen and to think positively, as we set our goals and intentions for the day that lies before us. In this stage of the *nDigiStorytelling* process, called *Nitsáhákees* (Thinking), as we face the East direction, each *nDigiStoryteller* focuses on her or his story idea. Metaphorically speaking, this is when the heart of the digital story slowly begins beating, within the safe and protected *nDigiStoryCircle*, where everyone is considered sacred and equal. This is when each individual thinks deeply about their unique past histories, their present lived experiences, and their future dreams and visions. When one of our *nDigiStoryteller's* takes the eagle feather, sits up straight, and begins to speak, the heartbeat of the story begins to beat faster and faster as thought becomes speech, which carries sacred energy and life. During the scriptwriting process that follows, we continue to listen more closely to the rhythms, patterns, tensions, and nuances of an individual's life story to create a final script.

South is associated with daytime, the mineral turquoise, the element air and our sacred mountain called *Tsoodził* (Mount Taylor west of Albuquerque, New Mexico). Before the sun reaches the zenith, we are taught to set forth our plans and gather together the materials and resources we need. In this stage of the *nDigiStorytelling* process called *Nahat'á* (Planning), as we face the South direction, each *nDigiStoryteller* plans her or his shotlist which helps one gather images, video and audio in an efficient manner. Next, the *nDigiStoryteller* plans out her

or his storyboard from beginning to end and everyone learns how to create and organize their files for easier and faster access when editing their movie.

West is associated with evening twilight, the mineral abalone, the element water, and our sacred mountain called *Dook'o'oosliid* (Humphrey Peak in the San Francisco Mountains near Flagstaff, Arizona). As Father Sun moves across the sky toward the West, we are taught to carry out our thoughts and plans and live through our day in the fullest manner possible. In this stage of the *nDigiStorytelling* process called *liná* (Creating), as we face the West direction, each *nDigiStoryteller* uses their unique voice to record their narration. Metaphorically speaking, this is when the "breath of life" is breathed into a digital story; it occurs when we use the power of our own voice, words, speech and language to tell our own story. This then, allows a person's *nitch't bii'siztinii* (in-standing wind soul) the opportunity to create change, healing and transformation. After a person speaks-truth-to-power, then they select their background music, sing a song, or play an instrument to create a "music mix." Metaphorically speaking, this is the stage when the digital story begins to grow, play, explore, move, and feel as the *nDigiStoryteller* creates a roughcut and, then, a final movie.

North is associated with darkness, the mineral black jet, the element Mother Earth, and our sacred mountain called *Dibé Nitsaa* (Mount Hesperus, the highest summit in the La Plata Mountains near Mancos, Colorado). At the end of the day, before we retire and go to sleep, we are taught to assess and evaluate our thoughts, plans and actions and continue to hope and pray for a long life of old age and happiness or *Sa'ah Naagháí Bikeh Hózhóón*. At this stage of the *nDigiStorytelling* process, as we face the North direction, called *Sihasin* (Reflecting), we have finished our digital story and will share it with our first audience—our *nDigiFamily*—the small group of *nDigiStorytellers* and *nDigiHelpers* who went through the process with us. When we

share our *nDigiStories* through video and sound we are also sharing it with our spiritual guides and ancestors and all the elemental forces that surround us. Afterwards, with permission, *nDigiDreams* will share the completed set of *nDigiStories* at a community-wide screening called an *nDigiFest*. Often, *nDigiStorytellers* will share their *nDigiStories* with family members, friends, peers, and coworkers via local film festivals, conferences, and the Internet (i.e., Facebook and YouTube). Metaphorically speaking, this is when the digital story begins to travel to the four directions of the world and when it begins to touch the hearts, minds, and spirits of those across our tribal communities who long to hear something good, positive, and beautiful about being Indigenous people today.

Our *nDigiStorytelling* Four-Directions Approach is circular which means the methods, tools, and techniques we share can be used again and again to create more *nDigiStories*. Also, because it is a "cycle," we repeat it every day of our life—think, plan, create and reflect—for example, when we wake up, we think about what we will do, we plan it, we live it or create it and, then, at the end of the day, before we fall asleep, we reflect on what we have done. As *Diné* people we go through this four-directions "cycle" in our lives at home, at work, at play, and in our ceremonies. In this process, *as bilá ashdla'íi* (human beings), we strive to create a balance between the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual parts of ourselves and, when this occurs, everything is harmonious, balanced, and beautiful, which means we are in the "center of life" which is analogous to being in the center of "the medicine wheel."

Thus, in our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops, we move through this "cycle" and touch all the different parts of ourselves. For example, the first day can be very mental as we are thinking and writing scripts. The second day can be very emotional as we see parts of our life story written on paper and as we begin to look at photos and listen to music for our digital story. By the third day, we begin to feel our physical being as we begin to feel weary from sitting long hours in

front of the computer editing the rough cut of our *nDigiStory*. But slowly, as we begin to watch and listen to our final movie being created and coming to life we reach the fourth day. This is when we screen it for the first time to our first audience. It is at this point our spiritual being begins to awake, open, release, heal and liberate. The "cycle" of being a human "being" in this process is flexible and fluid which means we can sometimes be moving through all parts of ourselves—mental, emotional, physical and spiritual—all at once or multiple times during different parts of each day. This is the path of healing I have witnessed as a *Diné* female digital storyteller who has conducted over 120 *nDigiStorytelling* workshops with Indigenous peoples across the United States.

As a way of grounding the *Diné* approach in actual practice, I will use the following pages to describe and discuss the four-day *nDigiStorytelling* workshop held on November 5–8, 2013 in Skanee, Michigan for five tribal members from the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) and six *nDigiHelpers*. I will begin with an introduction to the five *nDigiStorytellers*; I will share their intentions, assumptions, experiences, reactions and stories from Day 1 to Day 4. In addition, I will also bring in the voices, experiences, perspectives and visions of six *nDigiDreams*-trained digital storytellers who "helped" the new *nDigiStorytellers* make digital stories throughout the process. In this way, I intend to show not only the *nDigiStorytelling* process but also demonstrate the methods by which these practices are being passed on to an increasing number of workshop leaders.

Aambe! (Lets go!)

Day 1: Waabanong (East)—Thinking

November 5, 2013. It was a clear beautiful day. There was a breeze you could feel, but mostly see—when small white peaks of the waves covered the morning lake water and the yellow leaves of the sugar maples spun and danced on branches. It was fall, in the Upper

Peninsula; this meant that locals wore light jackets, but I noticed Carmella and I dressed in layers of clothes and always wore a jacket when we went outside. The *nDigiHelpers* gathered in "The Creating Lodge" to prepare for the arrival of our "relatives"—we made coffee and tea, set out fresh fruit and nuts, printed agendas, and built a small fire in the woodstove. When the fire began to roar, I took out small pieces of hot red charcoal with a small shovel and sprinkled dried cedar I brought with me from my sacred homeland, *Diné Bikéyah*. Jerry Lee was the first to knock on the door; then we saw Donnie and Janice walking up the wooden ramp to the middle cabin; afterwards Marty arrived, and, finally, Carrie. The first day is always the quietest, yet it didn't last long because the handshakes and cordial "hellos" soon turned into a few long hugs between the KBIC tribal members and the ATR team.

After jackets were laid on the bed in the back room, coffee cups were filled to the brim, and everyone was settled onto the couch or into a wooden chair, we moved into welcoming everyone to the first KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop in Skanee, Michigan.

Opening Prayer

Before we went to the first item on our workshop agenda, "Introductions," we did an opening prayer to start our week together. Our n*DigiHelpers* (Arlene and Linda) had already been discussing and checking things out with their *Anishinaabe* relatives about where and how they wanted to start this journey together. All of us knew instantly it would be at the water's edge, so one-by-one we began to stroll down the road, past the owner's double-story house, by her dormant garden and white gazebo, over to the blue, blue water. Arlene Kashata offered *asema* (tobacco) to Jerry Lee and he used it to pray. Afterwards, we decided to take a group picture (see Figure 4.5). We were standing before a beautiful natural backdrop—tall men and one woman in the back and all the short women in the front. It took a few "takes" since we had to

find someone to shoot the picture for us, and we had to find a way to keep two dogs, one of them Cassie, from running across the foreground of our picture as they playfully chased each other.



Figure 4.5. Fall 2013 nDigiStorytellers in Skanee, Michigan. (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).

Carmella remembered this special opening prayer with a few words:

It was beautiful! When we went out to the water, the wind picked up and you know how sometimes the wind picks up, especially on the desert? It was like [she makes a sound like wind blowing with her mouth] . . . a whirlwind. But when the wind picked up by the water, it was so calming. I could have just stayed there. You didn't feel cold or any of that because you felt the spirit of the water.

Fall 2013 nDigiStorytellers

When we returned to "The Creating Lodge," we first went through the week's agenda (see Appendix E). We always know we train a lot of very busy Natives so we double-checked everyone's schedule and that is when we learned: one individual took off from his construction business for the week; three individuals, who work at New Day (Oshki Gijigad) Residential Treatment Center, were considered "on training;" and the retired elder rearranged a few things on her schedule and made carpool arrangements in order to attend. Indeed, there were also multiple family and community to juggle during the week: childcare pick-ups and drop-offs, the Four Thunders Drum practice, volleyball games, Monday night football, and various tribal and community meetings and events.

Afterwards, we asked each KBIC tribal member to share a few words of introduction and to answer two questions: how did you hear about the workshop and why do you want to make a digital story at this time?

Carrie. The youngest of the *nDigiStorytellers* in the first workshop is employed at the New Day (Oshki Gijigad) Residential Treatment Center and is interested in obtaining a certificate in Substance Abuse Counseling. She is in her early 30s and a wife and mother of four children. Carmella and I met Carrie in August 2013 when we came to the KBIC community to meet with R.D. and other tribal members who might be interested in attending a digital storytelling workshop. She came to the meeting with her Uncle Marty and said she taught herself how to make a movie on Microsoft MovieMaker using only photos and music. She made it when she graduated from treatment and she showed it on the second day of the Fall 2013 KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop.

Carrie is a tall quiet, but friendly, woman with long medium-brown hair who always came in with a tall to-go cup of coffee in one hand and her laptop computer bag in the other.

Carrie was the first to volunteer why she was at the *nDigiStorytelling* workshop:

I wanted to do this because I like making videos. . . . I never really told my whole story and, for me, I think that I am a miracle because it is rare that an IV drug addict makes it to where I am in my life. I just want to share that with other people.

Afterwards, Jerry Lee proudly noted, "She is the first. They changed it from the drug court to Indian wellness because they didn't want to give her that stigma. She was one of the first ones [to graduate]." The next day, Carrie explained further why she wanted to make a personal digital story about herself:

It's important for me that some of my children, two of them [who] are a little bit older, see how me and their dad acted in that type of lifestyle, in that addicted lifestyle. And it's important to me and him that they are able to see what the solution is too. You know, to see the solution. If anything happens in your life, where you become addicted or a friend,

I want others to know how to deal or to cope with that. How do you help yourself and help others, too?

After recording voice, Carrie also reflected more about her own upbringing and how a digital story could have helped her and she understands how she has an opportunity to help her children with the making of a deeply personal *nDigiStory*:

We've seen a lot of dysfunction with alcohol and drugs, but we didn't see a lot of the solutions. . . . My uncle got clean and sober, but I never got to see those solutions later on in life..I can leave that for my kids. They'll be able to pull [my digital story] up, if they need it. Kinda like what I do when I go look for quotes and inspirational stuff. It gives me energy that sometimes makes me look at things differently. So, this is something they can do too. They can grab a movie, something that they know their mother went through and say, 'Wow, look how she did that!'

Marty. He is Carrie's uncle and works at New Day (Oshki Gijigad) Residential

Treatment Center and is a certified Substance Abuse Counselor. Marty is married and has two kids and four grandchildren. He sits on the Four Thunders Drum, participates in traditional ceremonies, and enjoys watching and playing sports. Every day Marty wore a Green Bay Packers jacket or a Philadelphia Eagles one. What caught my eye was when he wore a large beautifully beaded medallion of an Eagle head that matched his dark green Philadelphia eagles jacket and cap. Marty is fun loving and was always quick to laugh and make jokes, especially about the healthy food choices we had at the workshop. He began to tease us about our "Glutton-Free-Food." Carmella and I met Marty at the second meeting in August 2013 when we met his niece Carrie. This is how he recalls first hearing about digital storytelling:

I first talked to Jerry Lee and he said, 'you have to come over here and check this out. We are doing digital storytelling.' What the heck? What's that? No clue, whatsoever. I had heard of storytelling before at ceremonies, drum groups, and powwows and stuff, but *digital* storytelling?

Marty, then, explained how Jerry Lee showed him the ATR "Sowing the Seeds of Recovery" website and he watched a couple digital stories on it. He said he also remembered

watching the ones Carmella and I screened at the August 2013 recruitment meeting for interested KBIC tribal members. He continued:

I said, 'Wow!' I've always wondered since I have been sober, you know, I look back at my life and I think about things, the good, the bad, the ups and downs, the in between throughout all my life and I think, 'Damn, you know, I might be a hit horror show!' [He laughs.] You know, parts of my life, it would be a good movie. Then this comes up and they said, 'well, what message would you like to send and what's your story?' I don't know and I still have no clue because there are so many stories and a result of all of it is who I am today.

Afterwards, Marty shared a story about a motivational speaker he identifies with, "who went through a lot of stuff with sports and being a mixed-blood and everything. He told his story and it was my story and it was really awesome." He stated, "The end result I am looking for is that whatever I put out there, about who I am now, if that is an inspiration for someone, then so be it!" He continued, "I know when I sobered up the AA program brought me my culture [and] my culture brought me my spirit back." Marty then shared more personal history about how difficult it was "growing up between the rez and the city" (Milwaukee) and how he was "looking for [his] identity." He closed by stating, "I think why I am here doing this is to help me make sense out of it, for a little bit . . . that's it! That's me!"

Jerry Lee. He is an administrator at the New Day (Oshiki Gijigad) Residential Treatment Center and a former KBIC tribal council member. Jerry Lee sits on the Four Thunders Drum and was one of the local leaders who helped to recruit individuals for both nDigiStorytelling workshops. Jerry has a wife, five children and, what he jokingly called in is completed digital story, "fourteen and three-quarters" grandchildren. Jerry has kind soft eyes and a quick joke to make you smile, like most grandfathers I know. This was the first time Carmella and I had ever met him, although, we heard Eva mention his name many times as she spoke about the long-term friendships and collaborations she has been building over the years with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community.

In his introduction, he said, "Hi, my name is Jerry Lee. My native name is *Gwaiakosse Inini*, which means "man who stands tall and walks straight for his people." Then, he explained some personal history behind his name, paused to clear his throat, then shared his recovery story—from his first drink to the day he entered treatment. He informed us he had to go to a meeting in that afternoon and would miss the *nDigiStoryCircle* so during this introduction he shared much more about himself than would have been encouraged. He summarized:

Now, I am the administrator at the same place where I went to treatment. They talk about a full circle and that is one of the stories I share with incomers who come to our place there. If can do it, I know that anybody can do it! It's a lot of work. Sobriety is a lot of work. It's not a smooth road, like some people think; they set themselves up. It has some bumps but you can deal with it. Then, Jerry Lee, finished by stating why he wanted to make a digital story:

When you reflect back on this recovery aspect, the gratitude is never ending for what you have now. That is how I feel [and] this is a way for me to give back what I keep getting. You are never done getting when you are in recovery, and I think in an indirect way you are never done giving either. . . . I think that that was my biggest reason . . . to give back . . . to just one person will be well worth it and that is why I am here.

Janice. She is an Elder in the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and has life experiences and family history that overlaps all the other KBIC *nDigiStorytellers* in the circle including, Arlene, one of the *nDigiHelpers*. Janice is retired from a "a career in social work;" she also "worked for the state 22 years as an outreach worker." Janice describes herself as part of the Four Thunders Drum family, she goes to powwows, and "had a strong Native growing up." The first time Carmella and I met Janice was at the first recruitment meeting for KBIC tribal members in July 2013. She has long silvery tendrils of hair that frame her beautiful face and broad smile. On the first day of the workshop, Janice walked up the wooden ramp to "The Creating Lodge" on her youngest brother Donnie's arm. She seemed a bit tired and frail, but when she came in and saw Arlene and those whom she already knew closely, she lit up.

She began by introducing herself in *Anishnaabemowin* (the Ojibwe language). Then, continued:

My Ojibwe name is *Miigizi Miigwans Que* and my English name is Janice. Creator helped me be on this earth and everyday I wake up saying, 'Thank you, *Chii Miigwech*' and every night I say, '*Chii Miigwech*.' There are so many facets of my life; you'll hear a lot about it thru my little brother Donnie so I am not going to go into that. . . . I will get right to the point of what I want to be here for. I did have misgiving about coming here because I don't know if I can handle it yet, but I am grieving, right now.

She explained, "I do not like to talk about my grief and that is probably what I need to talk about most." When asked whether she would like to make a digital story or not, Janice commented at the first recruitment meeting we had in July 2013, "Arlene [Kashata] has been in my family for many years and that is the only way I could do that." She continued, "I know you are all so kind and loving and stuff, but I need someone I can trust because I had a tragedy many years ago" [Then, she begins cry and Arlene comforts her.]

In her opening introduction, Arlene explained to the group that when she was 17 years old "[She] worked in Baraga after she graduated from high school and [she] went to powwows there. [Janice's family] are my best friends and sister friends." But what made Janice trust Arlene more, she explained, is that, "In our Indian way of life, I am her *wen'enh* (a spiritual sponsor). I am responsible for helping her on her journey and life with teachings and guidance." She explained even further that night at our first debrief:

I would be like her auntie. I am her sponsor. I remember when she got her name and she was a lot older than I am and I thought, 'Oh my goodness!' We did that at Watersmeet powwow and that is the only reason I went to Watersmeet powwow that year because she was getting her name and she wanted me to be her sponsor. She calls me her *we'enh*, so there is a spiritual connection there.

After Janice regained composure, with an arm around her shoulder from her brother

Donnie and the rest of us holding a "sacred space" for her, she was able to move forward. She

laughed and continued to tell more short stories. Then, she restated why she was at the *nDigiStorytelling* workshop:

The thing that, I think, I need to get out is a tragedy that I had many years ago and how I survived it. The main thing I want to do is talk about my recovery today. My recovery today is totally awesome! I have a strong recovery in alcoholism. I have been sober for 35 years.

As mentioned earlier, Janice admitted she had some misgivings about coming to the *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, but that she mustered up courage to do it because her family would be there to support her. She admitted:

It is scary! I know when I woke up this morning I had many thoughts, 'Take a chance. This too shall pass. It will be a good thing. Arlene's there.' I'd think to myself, 'What is wrong with you? Get out there and do it!' Like I have to get that courage to do it, you know, and so, 'Okay' [she sighs heavy]. I got myself together and I got everything here [she points to her pictures] and I want it to be perfect! [Everyone laughs.]

Like many of *nDigiStorytellers* we have trained across the Turtle Island, Janice said about her story, "It just needs to get out. If I can only save one or two, I would have done my job." Her hope is to share it with a young mother she met who experienced a similar tragedy, but who she lost contact with. She remarked, "I will never forget her face because. I will see her again." Afterwards, Janice finished her introduction by saying, "Thank you so much for listening. I really appreciate it. This is the furthest I have ever gotten since treatment about talking about grief. I let my sponsor in on a little bit but that was about it."

After Janice finished, we took a small break. Before we stood up, Donnie said:

I just have to say one thing! It is SO refreshing to be in a group of people, today, in recovery, because I go to work every day and I am right in the midst of that funk, the crazies, and the denial. I see real strength here. Out there, there are some guys who I work with who are six feet tall, 280 pounds, and they think they are strong just because they're loud . . . that's construction. So it is great to see real strength in this room.

We all thanked him for his kind words, then, everybody scattered in different directions to do different things—some to the restroom, others to the coffee/tea station, some to their

cellphone or Facebook messages, and one to her border collie waiting to catch a few Frisbees.

Before the break ended, the *nDigiHelpers* stepped to the side to plan how we would finish the morning session, introduce the research project, get consent forms signed, screen a few *nDigiStory* examples, make lunch and complete an *nDigiStoryCircle* everyone left at 5:30 p.m.

When I saw and felt the rain falling outside, during my own small break, I knew everything would run smoothly and work out exactly how it needs to—the *nDigiSeeds* we were planting that day in the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community were already being nourished and were receiving a lot of blessings.

Donnie. He is currently the *Ogimaa* (Chief) of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community. He sings on The Four Thunder Drums, dances at powwows, and participates in traditional ceremonies like most of the people who attended the *nDigiStorytelling* workshop that day. He has long dark hair, wears silver-framed-glasses and always carries a cellphone. Like most construction workers I know, he is an early riser and was always the first one at the workshop, even if he drove over 30 miles that morning. He often brought a tall silver coffee mug with him, and one day he brought his hand drum and still another day, his big album of photos. Donnie and Marty could be a Native comedy duo because of their non-stop humor and joking during our *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. At the same time, Donnie also showed a lot of reverence. I noticed it occurred especially when a person was trying to share their deepest thoughts and words. I always enjoyed sitting next to Donnie because, like my uncle, he was always singing softly under his breath and it make me feel like I was back home sitting near one of my uncles who sings. Carmella and I met Donnie at the first recruitment meeting in July 2013 and he was the first to acknowledge his interest in making a digital story.

Introduction to the Research Project

When we returned from eating Linda's "three sister" stew and other homemade dishes including a nice big green salad, I briefly told the group of KBIC tribal members how *nDigiDreams* started doing what we do, that is, travel the United States teaching Indigenous peoples how to make and share *nDigiStories*. This brief introduction led me into sharing my own experience seeing the first digital story I ever saw about a young Hispanic girl being raised by a single parent while trying to establish a relationship with her father in prison (see first chapter). Then, I shared how I began hearing, many times from Native people who sat in one of our workshops and watched a handful of *nDigiStories*, "That's my story!" I explained further:

So, we see each other's humanity. We know we are all human beings. In Navajo we call it *bilá 'ashdlá'íí*. We are all five-fingered people and Creator gave us the gift of forgiveness, of love, of faith, of healing, of hope, of laughter, of grief, of sadness. We are just like other "living beings" who experience those feelings, but we can talk about it and, through the digital stories, we can not only talk about our life, but see photos and say, 'Wow, that is how he did that! I could do that too! I could go back to school!' It helps to see someone else showing us how they did it. It is really different from some of the YouTube things you see, like some dog flipping over [everyone laughs] or dancing. These [digital stories] are like universal truths about how precious we are as human beings and that, as Indigenous people, we are still here!

Afterwards, I explained our *nDigiStorytelling* Four-Directions Approach and told them how Carmella and I were sharing this model with Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island. I finally closed by teasing: "Have you heard about the powwow circuit?" Many nodded their head affirmatively. "Well, this is the digital storytelling circuit." Everyone laughs and then Carmella stands up to speak.

Carmella, like the other *nDigiHelpers*, shared some personal history about herself growing up in Santa Fe, New Mexico in various foster homes and how she emancipated herself at the age of 17. She said, "I was just in this world trying to figure it out alone, but luckily the

trees, and the earth and the sky and everything that was around me is what supported me, what hugged me, and what took care of me." Then she described how she tapped into early experiences with listening to people's stories and her early intuitions about digital storytelling:

During my video production days, I learned when people came in to make movies they made movies like you did [she nods towards Carrie]. And, we'd have these incredible conversations over a photograph and it felt like narrative therapy. Something was happening and I don't know what it was, but it was powerful. So when I heard about digital storytelling, I didn't know what it was. I never saw one, but I knew there was something bigger than me that was happening [she sighs]. Then I scooped it up and I said, 'I got to learn everything I can about this!'

Next, Terri explained how she met Carmella and I in 2011 at the Inter-tribal Council of Michigan and how the *Anishnaabek* Healing Circle, Access to Recovery Program (ATR) team made three digital stories in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. And, how shortly later ATR hired *nDigiDreams* to go to Omena where "they got a bunch of storytellers from down there and we did a bunch of stories." She showed pictures from that workshop. There were many individuals like Martha, Chris and Arlene N. who the KBIC tribal members immediately recognized. Terri explained, "we had a story circle and everybody talked out what their stories were, and then we went to work and everybody got to be on computers and stuff. But, it wasn't nearly as intimidating as you think because each of you will get a story mentor." Lately, Carmella and I have been calling our co-facilitators our *nDigiHelpers*. Indeed it is unusual in our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops to have one assigned to each *nDigiStoryteller;* however, as mentioned earlier, we were all wearing multiple hats and knew we all worked well together.

Then, Terri began to talk about our present community-based participatory research (CBPR) project. She said:

So, these guys are in a Ph.D. Program at Antioch University and guess what it's about? Believe it or not, it is about digital storytelling! [Linda laughs.] Go figure! And so part of what we are doing now, collaborating if you will, is trying to figure out how to document the process—both for the people who are making the story and those who are [sharing and] viewing the story. And, as we discussed, you guys are kinda like our pilot project.

I reminded the group about the conversation and metaphor we used at the recruitment meeting they attended in July or August 2013—that *nDigiDreams* and ATR were trying to figure out "the digital storytelling recipe." I told them that, basically, we wanted to figure out what we do, how we do it, and why people keep coming back to us so that we could also figure out how to share "the Indian bread" we make more broadly. I told them we wanted to understand the ingredients, how we prepare it together, how people feel when they taste it and when they share it with others and that we were looking for a group of tribal community members who could assist us with this project, which would involve asking them questions at different points of the *nDigiStorytelling* process and getting permission their permission to record their thoughts and feelings.

Terri asked Carmella and I to explain more about informed consent. I started by sharing my thoughts about the history of research among Indigenous peoples—the good and the bad— and how it was beginning to change as more and more Native people were doing research, especially in an open and respectful manner. We talked about how we began to work with ATR and how we have developed a research strategy that is both collaborative and participatory.

Before we could say any more, Arlene interjected, "So what we are asking of you is to consider signing a set of releases that would allow us to get the documentation we need so that we will all go down in history!" [Donnie laughs.] Jerry Lee replied, "Go down or live on!" [More laughter.] After more jokes about living and dying were added, we decided to take another break—everyone was getting hungry and simply wanted to get started with their digital story. During break, Carmella and I sat down individually with each person to explain our research projects and informed consent more fully. We told them we wanted to be respectful and we wanted to ensure we had everyone's permission, including our nDigiHelpers, to audio and video

record different parts of the *nDigiStorytelling* process and that our plan was to engage in personal interviews and to also record what we see and hear throughout each day as we all work to create digital stories. Every person provided full consent and agreed to participate in both our dissertation research projects. A full discussion about conducting research within tribal communities and how issues of anonymity and confidentiality may arise when people know or are related to each other has been provided in the third chapter here. It is important to restate that we have contacted every *nDigiStoryteller* and *nDigiHelper* involved in this inquiry numerous times to double- and triple-check use of names, accuracy of material being presented and spelling of Ojibwe words as we began to write-up our manuscripts. Carmella and I took enormous strides to be very respectful of everyone we worked with and we would have delayed our timelines or rewritten sections of this manuscript, if necessary.

Screening of *nDigiStory* Examples

At every *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, we watch a handful of *nDigiStories* that have been co-created by *nDigiDreams* over the past eight years, from different tribes and on different topics. We only screen those that have been fully released to share with others in our workshops. Often, those are the ones that are also in the public domain. Usually, we will select those that pertain to the topic at hand, in this case, sobriety and wellness. Or, we might choose a specific *nDigiStory* to screen because it portrays a particular story that would be beneficial for a particular person to see (i.e., a young Native man who left behind drugs and alcohol to be "a father" even though he didn't know his own dad when he was growing up, or a mother who went back to school to become a positive leader for her tribal community).

When we review *nDigiStories* in our workshops as examples, Carmella and I will often point out unique features of the movie (i.e., a particular way a person's voice and background music was "mixed," why an image was cropped and "photo-shopped," or how two images, one

color and the other black-and-white, have been juxtaposed on the timeline). Our purpose is to show them how *nDigiStorytellers*, like themselves—that is, those who have never used video editing software before—can create aesthetically powerful visual, emotional, spiritual and culturally-grounded *nDigiStories* that can sometimes reach to the very core of our hearts and spirits where, I imagine, healing occurs. We tell them it all starts with telling their own personal story and recording their own "sacred living breath" (i.e., personal voice), then combining that with personal photos, short video clips, music, sound effects, graphics and sometimes text and drawings to tell their story. Each day of the workshop we watch *nDigiStory* examples, which we discuss to help prepare them for making their own. For example, by the second day we might point out how a person used pauses or inflections in their voice to deliver an impactful story and on the third day we might show how *nDigiStorytellers* added transitions, video effects, pan and zoom effects in Microsoft MovieMaker to help bring their movie to "life."

During our *nDigiStory* reviews, we will also share various communications we have had with our *nDigiFamily* members about how and where their *nDigiStories* have travelled, sometimes to other parts of the world; but most of all, we introduce them to how a person's *nDigiStory* has been used to promote hope, healing, survivance and unity within their life, their family and their community. The *nDigiStory* examples are screened on Days 1–3 (see Figure 4.6). On Day 4 of our *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, every person is well on their way to finishing their own movie which will be screened on the last day of the workshop with an audience of their peers and their *nDigiHelpers*.

Figure 4.6. Watching released *nDigiStories* as examples. (Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*).



In the Fall 2013 *nDigiStorytelling* workshop at Skanee, Michigan, for example, we shared two digital stories we co-created for ATR's "Sowing The Seeds of Recovery" website: Martha Kase's digital story, titled "Full Circle," can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KvTz4ySM8k and Chris Ballew's digital story titled, "Morning Lightning," can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= bsRCmoUTsRE &feature=youtu.be. Another one we shared, and which can be found in the public domain, is North Bear Fragua's, titled "Let Me Show You," which can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tzdTewTd7Q.

After screening *nDigiStory* examples, by the second day, Marty commented, "By watching all the examples, I kinda know what I want to do and don't want to do." His niece Carrie had an insight on the third morning after we finished showing another set of *nDigiStory* examples:

To watch other's videos was like, Wow! You know, it's really deep. And it's rare too that a person gets to look at someone from the inside. Sometimes when someone talks to me, I might hear what they're telling me, but it's going outward, you know what I mean? We don't see and hear all the things going on inside and that is what this type of movie does. It's like seeing myself. I'm actually getting to see a glimpse of myself. So, I think it's powerful and it's emotional.

The *nDigiHelpers* shared some of their own reactions and thoughts about feelings that arise after watching *nDigiStories* or when a person is dealing with their own life story. For example, Linda said, "Sometimes feelings hit after the fact." Then, she went on to explain how she became disoriented after the loss of both her parents and how she reached out to a social worker friend. Terri added, "It comes and it comes and it comes. As we tell our stories, they come in waves and layers and that is okay because that is part of the healing process and that is what we are supposed to be doing, you know, and somebody needs to be there for you and we need to be there for each other." Afterwards, Donnie said, "Oh yeah, I can relate," explaining,

when he went to the hospital to visit a relative, how all the sights and smells took him powerfully back to an event when he was sixteen. Thus, by seeing, listening, looking, feeling and thinking about *nDigiStories*, a lot happens on the at the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual levels, no matter if you were the person who created the digital story in the first place and now have watched your own movie over and over again.

Making *nDigiStories* and teaching others how to do it can be equated with how our grandparents might have sat down and showed us how to weave *Anishinaabe* black ash baskets, or how to dye and spin yarn for *Diné* rugs. We learned by watching and listening, and then, by doing it ourselves. We *also* learned in a supportive space from someone who was patient, attentive, nurturing and loving. Similarly, that is how we teach and train our *nDigiHelpers* and together as a team, that is how we train other *nDigiStorytellers*. We share experience through presence. Metaphorically, we are gardeners in our Native homelands planting *nDigiSeeds* of healing and hope. And as all good Native gardeners and weavers know, when we want to "create" anything that we intend to use to feed or clothe our people, we fill it with spirit—which happens from the inside out, which happens by tapping into all that surrounds us, and which happens in relationship with others. Thus, everything we "create" *always* happens by, with, and through "ceremony." It is for these reasons that we speak about our training workshops as an "*nDigiStorytelling* ceremony."

Fall 2013 nDigiStoryCircle

We sit in an *nDigiStoryCircle* as human beings, first; then second as family, friends, relatives, co-workers and acquaintances. At the Aurora Borealis Resort in "The Creating Lodge," on November 5, 2014, we were a small group of beautiful, healthy and deeply spiritual individuals who were *being* humans together. This is a simple, but also deeply profound

practice. We were speaking, listening, feeling, dreaming, (re)membering, and witnessing other humans *being* on this journey we call "life."

In the Fall 2013 *nDigiStoryCircle*, I felt honored that so many Native men and women allowed me the opportunity to listen to parts of their life story that described how they found their path to sobriety or to the "Red Road," a term used to describe a person's recovery journey from addictions through the practice of Native ceremonies and spirituality. I also felt grateful for each person's willingness to be open, authentic, honest and generous enough to share a part of her or his life story, because most of us in that "circle" have shared that experience, or if we haven't, we know someone close to us who has. I know I am not alone in expressing this because of all the thoughts, words and prayers I heard being shared throughout the week by our *nDigiHelpers*. And, from a much larger Indigenous perspective, I know all of us were not alone because on that November quiet afternoon, while we were having our first KBIC *nDigiStoryCircle*, it rained. The water spirits were gently falling outside on the earth, trees, and rocks that surrounded us. They too were listening and blessing their "relatives."

Most people I know are familiar with "talking or sharing circles," where one person speaks at a time, uninterrupted, and everyone listens. As Native people, we learn this early on and do this naturally within our ceremonies and sweat lodges, and, depending on how we were raised or how our communities have been influenced by outside forces, we naturally do it within our families and at tribal gatherings. An *nDigiStoryCircle* is similar to "talking or sharing circles," but it is also different. It is similar by the way we show respect toward one another through deep listening, suspending judgment, and not interrupting a person when they speak. It is also similar by the way we encourage confidentiality; that is, we tell individuals that when they leave the "circle," whatever was said there stays there, except for the piece of a person's life story that they decide to make into a digital story. And, finally, it is similar by the way we do not

set a timeframe when we need to end the "circle" because we have a knowingness it will complete itself organically when everyone is done speaking and sharing themselves.

On the other hand, an *nDigiStoryCircle* is different from the usual "talking or sharing circle" by the manner with which we proceed. For example, we do not always go in a circular fashion; instead, we allow the beating heart of the story to start wherever and with whomever it needs to start first. We use a more flexible format because we have found that sometimes when we go in a clock-wise rotation it adds to a person's nervousness and anxiety, when they know it is almost getting to be their turn, and it inhibits their ability to pay full attention to the person speaking. It is also different because of the approach we take to "pull out" a person's life story, if they are willing to let us. For example, in a very respectful manner, we might begin to ask questions about how a certain event in a person's life was experienced, that is, how it looked and how it felt to them. Essentially, it is a way of (re)membering or bringing the events back together. We might also ask them other experiential questions, such as what it was that their senses were seeing or hearing, etc., when a particular event happened. Or, we might ask them spatial or relational questions, like what season of the year a particular event occurred and who was with them. Since our focus is on "digital storytelling" as opposed to "storytelling," we are always seeking out visual and auditory cues that can help us help an individual tell their story in a more powerful sensory way, because, we know the importance of their intended audience being able to connect with the person's story through their visceral bodies and through various mutual lived experiences. In the sixth chapter here, "Creating space for an Indigenous approach to digital storytelling," I will explore this idea more thoroughly. Suffice it to say, in our nDigiStorytelling work, we are trying to pass Indigenous experiential knowledge and wisdom to present and future generations not only through, spirit and emotion, but also what was happening with their sensory perceptions. Thus, our focus is not only on what they were thinking and

feeling when they experienced a particular event or engaged in a particular behavior, but also on what was happening with their body and senses. Therefore, nDigiStorytelling is a holistic way of looking at a person's life story, because we are approaching it through mind, body, emotion and spirit. For this reason, we ensure we provide a "sacred space" for this to occur, and we travel down that pathway to wholeness only if the n*DigiStoryteller* is ready to make that journey. Generosity is at the core of this process. The focus is on sharing lived experiences. I remember one of my grandfathers used to tell me that the only time you really know something is if you "lived" through it. Or, I would add, if you knew someone who "lived" through it and was generous enough to share gained wisdom and knowledge with you. In the Fall 2013 *nDigiStoryCircle*, we were listening to Native men and women tell us stories about when they first drank alcohol or used drugs, and when they stopped. They were individuals who once "lived" in the harsh underworlds of alcohol and drugs, but they were also men and women who found their way to the path of sobriety or the "Red Road." In our nDigiStoryCircles, we encourage individuals to share all sides of their "lived experience." We do not just focus on the negative side of life—the shame, grief, stress and trauma; but we also focus on the positive side too—self-acceptance, balance and wellness. In essence, they are present-day warriors and messengers who are sharing their life experiences to help guide some of our relatives back home to the "center" of life. They are Native people living, breathing, speaking and being *Mino* Bi-maadiziwin or "the Good Life," and their stories are strong and beautiful because they were willing to be fully human. They felt safe to be open, real and authentic, and they trusted us enough to "let it go" or to "get it out." In the sixth chapter, I will explore phrases I have used here, such as, "pull out, "let it go," and "get it out," all terms that have been used by individuals within our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops to speak about life events that have become "stuck" in them. Using Indigenous knowledge and healing systems, I will show how we can think in a

conceptually different way about how we can use "digital storytelling" for our own Indigenous healing, liberation and transformation.

Finally, an *nDigiStoryCircle* is different from "talking and sharing circles" because we ask permission to record notes. Often, we have had *nDigiStorytellers* ask us when they are writing a first draft of their script, "What did I say when I was talking?" And, that is when we bring out our hand-scribbled notes in order to help them retrace idiosyncratic words or sentences and descriptive metaphors or scenes they shared when they were (re)living and (re)membering parts of their lives. When taking notes, I might also jot down for myself at which point in the retelling of a person's story I heard their voice cadence pick up or saw their body lean into the center of the "circle." I do track these things because it has been my experience that the *nDigiStoryCircle* is often when they are being the most open, raw, and real about being human. It is important to state that, out of respect, we have never audio- or video-taped an *nDigiStoryCircle*; however, on a few occasions we have asked to take a photograph of the "circle" before we got started. We never mechanically voice or video record anything because we recognize the original circle as a sacred and spiritual moment when a group of courageous human beings are first opening and allowing us to come inside and listen to their hearts stirring and beating about something they want to share in order to heal themselves and make a digital story which might help others.

When we begin an *nDigiStoryCircle*, I will basically lay the "ground rules" by summarizing how it is similar and different from other "talking and sharing circles" I've experienced, and I will ask permission to take notes for myself and for all our *nDigiHelpers*. Then I will ask: "Who wants to go first?" "Who wants to tell a story that only they can tell?"

On November 5, 2014, this is how we began the first KBIC *nDigiStoryCircle*. To ease some of the tension Arlene initially felt when I asked these questions of her friends and "relatives," she said:

Our stories are healing and powerful and they are really good medicine. We started out with ceremony and the Creator takes care of what needs to be said. It will just come and it will fine-tune itself down. It is what it is and it is powerful.

That simple reminder was all that was needed to start the Fall 2013 *nDigiStoryCircle*.

The opening circle ended, approximately five hours later. At 5:30 p.m. sharp, the group of KBIC *nDigiStorytellers* drove off to go home.

It is always unbelievable how we cover so much terrain in our hearts—the valleys, the peaks, the meadows, and the glorious mountains where we could stand and look back to where we have come from on our life journey. By the end of that first day, we were all yawning, some louder than others, but all somehow refreshed.

Day 1: Facilitators' debrief. Carmella and I, since we shared a lodge together, began our own debrief session while Terri was outside talking and playing with Cassie and Arlene and Linda were mostly on their phones and Facebook since they are both mothers and grandmothers who are always making sure everyone knows where they are at and that they know what everyone is doing—like all good matriarchs of the family do. This was our pilot study and we didn't figure out, until the next day, how we needed to make time to all debrief together, at the end of each day.

My mind was fluttering around like the autumn leaves outside. It always helps for me to keep listening and talking it through, and we did that. We talked about how we came to realize that day that all the KBIC tribal members who were with us in the workshop were part of a large, intergenerational family and that four out of five of them also belonged to the Four Thunders Drum family. Carmella commented, "You can see how they have grown through all their

healing and recovery. They have been growing with each other as a family, because you can see the closeness, the caring and the love." I agreed. Then we discussed how each *nDigiHelper* brought their unique perspective, story and inquiry into the "circle" and into our group discussions. Carmella observed, "It's because of the different things we pick up based on our different experiences. We can't know it all, no way!" I replied, "Yeah, that's true." I thought about that one saying I read for the first time, in 1986, at an American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) evening program at their annual meeting: "We are not human beings trying to be spiritual, but spiritual beings trying to be human."

When we finished talking, we got hungry and went to "The Nurturing Lodge" to warm up Linda's three-sister stew and while we were munching away together, we naturally fell into another "debrief." Interestingly enough, Terri also said, "They were a cohesive group coming in. I did not know they were all related. It was very clear they knew each other, worked together and fed off each other." Linda pointed out that in most AA or 12-step programs, "We [tell our stories] in five minutes or we do it in an hour—what we were like, what happened, and what we about now. Terri offered, "I think what happens is when they tell that whole story, it is part of their healing process. It is terribly therapeutic, whether it takes ten minutes or an hour and a half, it has to happen that way." Arlene made an observation about the long day of introducing and talking about their story with us, "I think this group were ready to start. They were waiting for us and chomping at the bit. This group came ready!"

Day 2: Zhaawanong (South)—Planning

November 6, 2013. It was another clear beautiful fall day. The wind wasn't as strong. When I bumped into Arlene R., the owner of the Aurora Borealis Resort, who was headed to the wood pile, she commented, "You folks are lucky . . . this far north, you just never know, there could be lots of snow on the ground." When I returned to "The Creating" Lodge all of the

nDigiHelpers were bustling around making coffee, bringing in wood, and straightening up cushions on the couch. I was immediately reminded about my *shimá saní* (grandma) Ethelyn and how she was always tidying up when I was a little girl as I peeked out of the warm covers and watched her, busy in the early dawn light. For a Navajo grandma that meant sweeping the earthen floor in the *cha'a'oh* (shade house), replacing water in the wash basin on the leftside of her cookhouse door, and bringing in *chizh yazhí* (small wood chips) to light a fire as she began making tortilla dough. *Shi chei* (my grandpa) Nelson was always busy, too. They were preparing for the Holy People who would come and give them blessings for another day, because they were awake and ready for the new day.

It was a special morning for all of us because Linda brought *Migizi* into "The Creating Lodge." Donnie arrived, shortly afterwards, and was sitting on the long blue couch sipping on his tall mug of coffee taking everything in. He looked relaxed and happy! Pretty soon, Linda and Arlene began "dressing" *Migizi* which is a very spiritual sight to see if one is present as Donnie, Carmella, I were, for the first time. What was even more touching was when Donnie started singing, very quietly, the *Ogitchidaa Kwe* (the ceremonial head woman leader or, in



Figure 4.7. Donnie singing Ogitchidaa Kwe song for Linda and Migizi. (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).

this instance, the female eagle leader) song. Later that afternoon, Donnie recorded the song for Linda and *Migizi* (see Figure 4.7). It was a beautiful moment! After the workshop was over, I asked Linda to share a few words about why she brought *Migizi* and how she understood what she did at our *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. Linda explained:

[*Migizi*] watched over us as we worked. Her presence was clearly felt in many ways [and] that is not easy to explain. She is Sacred; she is not 'just' an eagle to display. She has a job to do, and she does that with her healing presence.

The other *nDigiStorytellers* began to arrive—Marty with Janice, then Carrie and still later Jerry Lee. I put New Mexico cedar on a small pile of charcoal we took out from our fireplace, and we asked everyone to smudge themselves. Afterwards, Arlene was the appointed person to get things rolling. She explained how, on the second day, we would be focused on scriptwriting. Most of all she started the morning reflections in a good way by sharing her own:

I just wanted to say thank you for being so honest and open and trusting and sharing that part of your journey in your life with us. I'm just excited today to get started in writing and seeing where they go. I'm full of energy today and ready to do the next step. I am so grateful that you are all here, and I think you give all of us in Indian Country hope that our families can be like yours.

Morning reflections: "Anyone else?"

Each morning, after we smudged and before we started thinking, planning, and creating our *nDigiStories*, I asked everyone to say a few words about what they felt or thought as they left last night or as they were driving in this morning for the second day of the workshop. I asked them to share whatever they wanted. Before we began, Carmella clarified if it was okay to videotape all our morning group reflections and everyone agreed.

Janice was the first to start. She shared:

Marty and I were talking on the way here, and I told him I felt that we had a little bit of treatment yesterday saying our stories. You know, all those feelings came back, and that is probably why I left here [without] my jacket, but it wasn't that cold so that was okay. [Yesterday], I just felt a sense of relief. You guys were awesome about being patient with us

She closed by saying:

I felt joyful this morning when I got up. I said, 'Oh, I'm going to go in and I'm going to do what I need to do.' And, I don't know how good of a storyteller I am, [and] I don't know how good I am when I'm writing things down, but I'm gonna do the best that I can with what I got! Because I know you guys will help us a lot, and that's where the trust comes in. I really enjoyed each and every one of your stories [as she looks around the

circle at the other *nDigiStorytellers*]. It's amazing what we survive out there. That's where I'm at! *Chi miigwech!*

Marty said he had quite some time to think about his story, and he talked back and forth with R.D. about it and he said his thoughts that morning were: "What kind of story do I want to tell? What kind of message do I want to come out of this story, and who am I telling it too, you know, my audience?" He said he was still trying to pinpoint his story. Then, he began talking about his inhibitions with the computers and technology:

Along with all that was, geez, I'm not really an expert at computers or doing this and doing that, but I guess you really don't have to be. I wasn't prepared to do something like this, you know, I don't want to be the dummy of the class [he laughs]. I can see it's getting easy and there's nothing to it really, you know. I'm starting to get interested and get going and see what it looks like.

Then, Carrie began:

I was thinking about what I want to say now. I thought to myself, 'What did I need that I went looking for that I got during that time?' And that's something that I wanted to share with people that might be looking for that too. You know, because it was really difficult for me. I tried so many times, and I seemed to always fail, but when I look at it, I didn't fail. I actually gained a lot of wisdom from my failures. I want to be able to share that now, but I wasn't sure how to say it. I was like going over some things in my head, because I'm a writer, and I like literature. I like reading sayings and so I started talking to myself in the quiet van drive here. Getting started, I think, is always the hardest part for me for anything. My uncle [Marty] told me: 'just be open and kind of let it flow, whatever the Creator wants will happen.' So that's what I'm doing. I think the hardest part for me is getting started and writing down those first two sentences, after that, I know myself. Whoosh! It'll just flow!

Jerry Lee arrived while Carrie was talking and slipped into an empty seat. After Carrie was done, I said, "Good morning." He shot back: "Is this the healing seat or what?" [Everyone laughs.] I explained to him where we were at in our *nDigiStorytelling* process: Day 2 morning reflections. He immediately stated in a matter-of-fact way, "I didn't think about anything. I didn't mull it over or anything. I didn't evaluate myself." But, later, he shared how he recorded himself telling his story on his Blackberry phone, and how, when he was playing it back to himself he thought, "Geez, I wonder if I confused them!" Then, he better explained the

sequencing of his educational journey. I told Jerry Lee, "I think you might be the first. Like you said, that is how you do all your meetings, you record them and then you listen to it again by yourself, while you are driving." Afterwards, we all began to joke about being careful about what we said around Jerry Lee, and he told us how useful it had once been to argue his case with people, and this made us all laugh again.

Donnie was the last to share his morning reflection as a KBIC *nDigiStoryteller*. He said:

Yesterday when I left, I said, I think I told that story like I run a construction crew because I have, you know, some guys framing and some guys doing cement for me, and I am all over like that, but it usually gets done when it's supposed to get done.

Jerry Lee, being another Green Bay Packers fan and a football player in high school himself, chimed in with his own metaphor of the process, "It's like we're the players and they're, basically, the coaches." Donnie continued:

I didn't know if I said this yesterday, but I had a lot of trust in you ladies because I could tell you guys walked the walk and we say that in our language as *niwaabakwe nishnaabezeek* (you walk the spiritual way of the people). I can tell that and I was very comfortable.

Jerry Lee further opened an important dialogue about trust:

Jerry Lee: Yeah, the fact that you're with these three [he nods toward Linda, Arlene and Terri]. I've worked with them over the last few years. I know them. I had no qualms either.

Brenda: Uh huh.

Donnie: Because that is the scary part—am I going to tell them that? I don't even know.

Jerry Lee: It's kinda like a client coming in with a counselor they've never had.

Donnie: Right!

Carrie: Yeah, this is a good thing and it's positive. That's why I feel comfortable, I mean, I might feel nervousness and anxiety a little bit, but I know right here [she points to her heart] that this is a good thing and it's going to benefit a lot of people and I'm just going to do the best I can like Janice was saying

Donnie: And, I think, knowing everybody here is family, it really helps the comfort level here.

Janice: Yeah.

Carrie: Yeah.

Indeed, trust and relationship are two cornerstones to having a successful nDigiStorytelling process, particularly for Indigenous peoples and will be discussed more fully in my sixth chapter.

This "portrait" would not be complete if I didn't also include a few morning reflections provided by the *nDigiHelpers*. Carmella said she got some good rest and she was "feeling a lot of energy." She said:

This morning I walked down to the water, made an offering, and took some photos and I kinda walked back and forth, and it was really peaceful, *really* peaceful. That happens when we do a little healing and we're letting things out because it goes out in the Universe, and it continues to just heal. It hits against those trees, brushes against the water and against the land—it's all healing. It's like a wind; it just picks up and goes through. I feel really good this morning and thank you for sharing your stories with us.

Linda also "felt very much rested" and added the following:

I just want to say *Chi Miigwech* [thank you] to all of you too. Your stories are so beautiful and to come from one family that just sings to me. It is a dream that I have for my family.

I was also very grateful for the gift of stories coming from a large family like the one I had back in the Southwest. I shared:

[Carmella and] I have probably done over well over 120 workshops, and definitely it was beautiful to see the strength and the power in your extended family, and that is what I went away with. I just felt really honored to be able to be here and to work with your stories with ALL of you. You're just amazing, and I was really touched. I felt really excited this morning to get up and to begin to help for another day.

The fertile soil was tilled and our *nDigiSeed* planted!

Scriptwriting: "It Was Awesome!"

As soon as the morning "check-in" was over, we started setting up the laptops at the make-shift work stations, and we assigned everyone a computer, except for Carrie who brought her own. Often, we do not bring laptops out on the first morning or sometimes the entire first

day because the focus of our *nDigiStorytelling* work does not begin and end with technology. Rather, we are guided by the deep rhythmic beating of a person's life story as it gets louder and louder with each passing hour. As an *nDigiHelper*, you begin to notice many things in this stage of the process; for example, some individuals like to type on computers, and others don't while still others only write in longhand. Everyone is different and is fully supported in whatever manner they're most comfortable. Since we have worked with individuals as young as eight and as old as 82, Carmella and I have developed many creative strategies for helping individuals write a script they will eventually voice record. *nDigiScripts* are typically no longer than 400 words or *one* page; however, we do make exceptions. For those who have never thought about or written a certain part of their life story (i.e., recovery story), which is often the case in many of our workshops, we tell them to write their first draft as long as they want and not to concern themselves with any writing conventions. If they write 3–6,000 words, and some of them have, we'll ask the *nDigiStoryteller* to begin thinking about which part of their script they would like to make into a digital story, and to start by copying and pasting it into a second draft. We also encourage them to write like they're having a "coffee conversation" with a close relative or friend. That means we guide them to write in their vernacular language to enhance the transmission of a person's experiential knowledge, especially across unique and diverse tribal communities.

Scriptwriting can elicit a range of mixed feelings (i.e., joy, sadness, trepidation, laughter, gladness, guilt, relief, grief, etc.). It is different for everyone. The *nDigiHelpers* have discussed this issue many times. As Linda pointed out,"[It] is a very tender process, and we need to be mindful of this throughout. Their stories come from a very sacred place within them and they are entrusting us with this sacred journey." Terri articulated this shared belief when she stated one evening:

We must create (with prayer and ceremony) a safe place for the telling to happen; create a safe haven (with empathy and caring) where the feelings that arise can be acknowledged and validated; and, we must become witness to the good, the bad, and the ugly. Also, to the hope and the healing that arises once the story is told. And, further, we must also be able and willing to make sure we don't leave the storytellers without support in the weeks and months afterwards.

In the following pages, I offer a discussion about how each KBIC *nDigiStoryteller* experienced the process of scriptwriting. I have also included the experiences and observations of various *nDigiHelpers* who were in the *nDigiGarden* weeding, hoeing, transplanting, and nurturing various thoughts and words across the page.

Carrie wrote her script in longhand in a spiral notebook. She started outside on the front porch with a chair and her cigarette. Eventually she moved to her laptop where she typed multiple versions. I walked over to ask how she was doing, and she replied, "Oh, it is so healing?" I probed, "what do you mean?" She continued:

Well, you know, this digital storytelling is so healing. [In group] we do a lot of different things like writing, drawing and arts and crafts and stuff and that can be really healing. Writing has always been healing for me, but this is like different. I've told my story at New Day, but I only get so many minutes. Then, when I was in jail, I started to write what I was feeling—I felt this, I felt that, I felt this. Now, I am telling the whole story so I had to add all these other details and parts. I have never sat and written my whole story.

Carrie was a "solo" writer, thinker, editor and digital storyteller. She sat across a table from Janice and Arlene and listened to music through her headphones while she worked.

Occasionally, one of us would check in and see how she was doing. We'd read her final script and give her some feedback. One time I talked to her about sequencing and not giving her story away too soon. Another time I saw her crying after she read her script back to herself out loud. I asked how she was doing and she said, "I'm doing okay." The next day, after we recorded her voice, she added the following about how it felt to write and read her script out loud (see Media 4.1):

It became very real to hear myself say my story back to me. Do you know what I mean? It was different. I don't know how to explain it. It's like that's me! That's my life! It's like when you're in the program you have to write things down on paper. It's called a fourth-step inventory. You go through like a bunch of different things so when you write it on paper you actually look at it. It's not just up here anymore. [She points to her head.] It's on paper and you see it in front of you. Like hearing it is something kinda real. It's my story, it's my life; so when I am reading it I know how I felt then so when I use certain tones and I express myself I am actually putting feeling into the sound of my voice and I am hearing it back. It's like it's bouncing back off of me instead of onto you or somebody else getting it, I'm getting it back. Am I painting that picture for you? [Carmella asked if it's like seeing a reflection in a mirror]. Yeah, it's like a mirror but with sound and seeing it on the paper and soon seeing the movie put together with visuals. It's going to be very moving.



Media 4.1. Carrie post-voice recording interview. (Used with permission of *nDigiDreams*). This can be viewed at https://youtu.be/aTQH7iqQIyE

Marty typed his own script on a laptop computer. He sat across from Donnie at a draped card table in the front kitchen. Like his niece, he started out on his own but eventually accepted more and more help with his script, especially after his computer screen went black, and he lost his work. If I think about it, Marty let each one of us come by and give him some feedback. Of course, as *nDigiHelpers* we always communicate amongst ourselves so we know what each one said in order not to confuse our *nDigiStorytellers*. Although Marty sometimes grumbled and acted like he wasn't enjoying the scriptwriting process, in actuality, I think, he did. The next day he offered:

She was a big help [he points at Arlene] kinda getting rid of the crap and getting to the meat and potatoes. It was awesome how we worked together. She was so understanding because I'd say, 'No, I want to keep that in there,' and she'd say, 'Oh, okay, we'll keep that in there.' But, then we'd change something else, and it would stay the same but get smaller. It was awesome . . . buddy! [Marty playfully slaps Arlene arm and everyone laughs.]

Arlene explained more about her process for working with Marty:

What I did was the magic of combining some of his sentences. I didn't take away from what he was saying; I just reworded it. I'd say, 'This has more impact.' He would look at it and go, 'Ah, you're right, I got it, that does sound better.' We got his words down without really losing what he was saying.

Donnie also sat down at a laptop and immediately started typing out his story although, like Marty, he didn't spend a lot of time in this kind of environment. Later in the day when I had a chance to ask about his experience, he stated:

I haven't done this kind of work since I was a game warden [he laughs], almost 20 years ago today. Sitting, taping, and researching and actually putting stuff together for a case or whatever it was, you know. I'm not used to it. I'm used to getting my hands calloused up and dirty. It's a different kind of stress, but I am holding my own, I told my son

He had some *nDigiHelpers*, primarily Linda, who enjoys working with one person although she will also help others, too. She said the following about working with Donnie:

After he shared his story with tears and laughter, he wrote his story—over 1100 words! As we began to edit his story down to about 400 words, he began to see how he repeated his words throughout his story. We were able to scale his story down one sentence at a time. It was painful at times for him. He experienced shame and guilt from using and drinking, and he shed some tears, but he made it through. I was able to provide the loving encouragement necessary for him to continue to move forward. He admitted to using joking as a way to cope with deeper feelings and to relieve his stress. It certainly was emotional for him, yet he found courage to continue.

While everyone was working on scripts, before noon, I slipped out to fix lunch. I warmed up butternut squash soup and made a green salad. Earlier in the morning Arlene made a dish with meat and potatoes, and it was ready. Without much coaxing, everyone got up from their computer and walked next door to "The Nurturing Lodge." Janice always brought her own special lunch and sometimes she would join us, but sometimes she would also eat in the other cabin so she could also have some quiet time to take a quick nap. That afternoon everybody was talkative—about Monday night's football game, childhood memories, and future travels. We found out earlier in the day that it was Carrie's birthday, and we all signed a card and surprised

her by singing "Happy Birthday." After lunch, we went back to work at the computers in "The Creating Lodge."

Janice is an Elder in the KBIC community. In the first planning meeting with the KBIC community in August 2013, I remember Janice leaning over, touching Arlene's arm and quietly telling her, "you're the one to help me with my story." And, she did! As mentioned earlier, Janice met Arlene "when [she] was fresh out of high school." Afterwards, Arlene became "one of her sponsors in the ceremony to get her Indian name which strengthened [their] relationship to an even deeper spiritual level. They have known each other for over 30 years.

Arlene described their process together:

In my journey with Janice, during the digital storytelling process, I did all the typing and editing with her input at the computer. She was not comfortable with typing and did not want to learn how to edit or use [Microsoft] MovieMaker. . . . Janice was emotionally involved with her story, with finally opening that door to her grief due to the loss of her children. It would have been too much for her to do both.

During our facilitator debrief at the end of the day, Arlene shared what happened when Janice had her first emotional release as they were writing her script:

Janice really broke down, the first time in the morning. She said, 'It's in black and white, and I finally see it!' She started crying because she was reading the paragraph about the fire, when her children died. When she started crying, Jerry Lee who was sitting behind us reached over. They are protective of her to the max. He reached over and patted her arm and he said, 'You're in the right place and I'm glad you're here. I'm glad you're sharing and talking and it is okay.' Then he says, 'Donnie, come over here your sister needs a hug!'

Arlene described how her brother came and hugged his sister and how she stood up and let herself be held as she cried even harder. It was a beautiful moment. The room fell silent, but you could feel the enormous love and support in the room for Janice as each of the *nDigiHelpers* took turns going up to hug her again. Afterwards, I went over and put some more cedar on charcoals from the fire. Everything was good. Everything was beautiful.

Jerry Lee used his Blackberry phone to record his story. I remember seeing Jerry Lee and Terri seated at a small table in front of the back door listening to it as they worked with his script (see Figure 4.8). Jerry Lee was wearing a black long-sleeved t-shirt with lettering on the back: "Four Thunders Drum." Instantly, I imagined the two of them sitting at a drum—listening to the recorded vocals, working through the rhythms, and trying to find the beating heart of he story. Then, Terri would begin typing words on a page until they got to a final draft



Figure 4.8. nDigiHelper Terri working on script with Jerry Lee. (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).

Carmella and I always take turns reading versions of everyone's script to provide additional feedback. As *nDigiHelpers*, we are always asking the digital storyteller different questions: When did that happen? How did you feel? Did this happen first or second? What else happened? It is an iterative process that allows us to deepen the *nDigiScript*'s emotional impact, uncover significant turning points, and include descriptive details. After the scripts have been read, by at least one of us, we ask the *nDigiHelpers* to show the digital storytellers how to put their script into a shot list, which is essentially a table that lists photos, video, and drawings a person wants to include to "visually" tell their story. I use a number of analogies in our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops. For example, to explain the purpose of a shot list, I tell them it is like have a shopping list to go to the grocery or hardware store; if you know what you need then you won't get lost and lose time wandering around looking at everything.

Gathering Media: "There It Is! That's It!"

After the script and shot list are completed, we begin gathering the media. For 3–5 minute digital stories, we start with approximately 30–40 pictures. We encourage everyone to start with their photos first, and to be respectful of other's work. Individuals will bring in personal photos to scan, or they will download them from jump drives, phones, email and Facebook accounts. If they don't have photos, they will email, text, Facebook or call their family, relatives and friends. Or, they will borrow a digital camera and take the photos they need. As a last resort, they will locate pictures on the Internet.

Arlene reminded the five KBIC tribal members in our Fall 2013 workshop:

For our Indian people, images are really important because we're really visual people. We listen a lot, but we really see things. We don't miss a thing when those videos come out because we're watching everything going on in the background.

In the following pages, I will discuss how each KBIC *nDigiStoryteller* experienced the process of gathering media. Again, I have included the experiences and observations of various *nDigiHelpers* who were in the *nDigiGarden* assisting them.

Carrie had many talents; besides being a writer, she was a wonderful photographer. She used many of her own photos or took new ones when she didn't have any. At the end of her *nDigiStory*, she placed a time-lapsed video clip of a flower bud slowly blooming into a beautiful red rose. It was perfect and everyone at the screening was happily surprised. In our workshops, we have witnessed many creative Native writers, artists, photographers, and singers tap deep into their talents to make their *nDigiStories*. Carrie is one of them.

During our facilitators debrief, we shared the following impressions about her work:

Linda: Oh my gosh, her imagination is thru the top!

Terri: And the photographs she takes, wow!

Brenda: Have you seen her photographs?

Carmella: I haven't seen them.

Brenda: She has a really good eye for photographs. She has taken a bunch of her family's photos and I told her, 'Oh my God, you could be a children photographer!'

Terri: Very professional looking!

BK: Yep!

Carmella: I just saw her writing and I was blown away!

Donnie brought a handful of photos with him and he also perused Janice's photo albums (see Figure 4.9). If he didn't have what he needed (i.e., a king's crown, jail bars, or a blue

Figure 4.9. Donnie looking at photo album with Janice and Carrie. (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).



car), we found an image he liked on the Internet. In all our workshops, we provide a list of websites where individuals can type in a word and find photos that can fill the gaps. Often times our *nDigiStorytellers* will email, text, and call their relatives to borrow photos and we remind them to add their name to their "Photo Courtesy" credits, which will run at the end of their video. When everyone starts pulling out their photos, it can bring forth a range of feelings: laughter, tears, joy, sadness, and anger. I love looking at photos myself and enjoy getting to see our *nDigiStorytellers* when they were young children, where they grew up, and "visually" meet other members of their family. Family photos come in all shapes and sizes—torn, stained, faded or as black/white or Polaroid pictures, for example. Whatever they have and want to use, it is solely their decision and we will work with what they have to make it be a part of their digital story.

Marty did not have many personal photos of himself growing up. When we asked about photos he could use to "visually" tell his story which began with a story about his early childhood. He explained his dilemma:

Well, geez, I don't have a lot of pictures. I don't even know if I have any pictures of me when I was little, because my whole life we moved, we moved, we moved, we moved. There was no stability. There were probably pictures taken my whole life but where they went, I don't know. One of my aunties had pictures of all of us, but she passed away. I have no idea what happened to all that.

His niece Carrie immediately said, "Cheryl has them." Marty replied, "Does she? Oh wow!" Then, Janice interjected, "How about taking a picture of your nephews? They could pass for you as a younger man." Often in our workshops, we have had *nDigiStorytellers*, like Marty, who do not have any personal photos, and we also have others who bring hundreds of photos with them—in photo albums, small boxes and jump drives. We shared with Marty that Chris only had a few photos for his digital story, but he was able to complete it within the workshop. Marty responded, "Oh yeah? Well, I got some pictures of me, my wife and some kids. I just need to get on the computer on my email and download them and pick the ones that I'm going to put on it. And, that is what he did. If he had any more he needed, we took them with a digital camera on the spot or we searched the Internet (see Figure 4.10). It is always interesting when a

Figure 4.10. Marty gathering media from internet. (Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*).



person searches the Internet and finds a photo of themself that they did not know existed. Or, when they find photos of their relatives, their community, or their drum group.

Janice brought in a handful of photos and a drawing she did of Beartown, her Native community. Arlene helped her review all of her photos (see Figure 4.11). As the days wore on, Janice would bring another envelope full of photos or another family photo album to share with others. Arlene explained what happened for Janice when she went through her personal photos:



Figure 4.11. nDigiHelper Arlene discussing personal photo with Janice. (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).

Janice, today, released a lot. She had another aha moment when she was doing pictures. She was talking about herself when she really broke down and cried really hard. She said, 'These tears are for me.' She was looking at what she looked like before and what she looks like now. She just cried and said, 'These tears are for me because I have never cried for me.' I just hugged her and let her cry.

It wasn't all tears for Janice, though. There were times in the workshop when she would laugh out loud. And, there was the time she sat smiling broadly at the younger beautiful woman wearing a white buckskin dress. Linda and Arlene, who are both powwow dancers too, were looking at her picture and they began to talk about outfits they have beaded or made over the years.

Arlene explained that when she was looking with Janice for photos on the Internet to "visually" fill in the gaps, she would ask her to further describe the place, event or emotion for her. *nDigiStorytellers* are keen observers—they know what they want and what they don't want. Below is a discussion the *nDigiHelpers* had about this topic:

Arlene: I mean, it is hard, sometimes, to find that right picture for them. Sometimes I'm right on and they'll go, 'There it is! That's it!'

Linda: They know.

Terri: Uh huh

Arlene: And, it'll be right what they want.

Terri: That one, not that one, that one.

Brenda: Or, you'll say, how about these cans, will they work? No!

Carmella: No. It's gotta be the Campbell can with the red label.

Luckily, as *nDigiHelpers*, we have all known and have all experienced a time when the "right" picture will appear out of nowhere. We know Creator is always helping. This happened for Arlene while gathering media with Janice. She recalled:

It was a critical place in her script, when her three children died. When I asked how she felt or what it looked like, she said, 'It felt like darkness and turmoil.' How do I find that? Remember how the Internet was so slow during the day when we were all on it? Well, I got up real early and had a list of pictures Janice had given me . . . I think we are really guided. It is like all of the sudden the one I needed appeared. They all did. I can't explain it. When I showed Janice them, it seemed like she didn't feel any more fear. She said, 'Yep, that's it, use that one!' It's that picture with the three crosses.

Jerry Lee brought in a stack of family photos from home or worked with Terri, his *nDigiHelper*, to find some on the Internet. Terri shared the following:

He was very clear on wanting photos of Baraga High School [when he couldn't find one, he took one on his way into the workshop]. In the B.I.A. building where he worked in DC, we went through several versions until we found the "right" view; and, he wanted Haskell University's bell tower because it was connected to playing sports. Jerry had a clear idea of what he wanted to say and a vision of how it should look.

Jerry Lee, as an administrator at New Day (*Oshki Gijigad*) Residential Treatment Center, had meetings to attend and other time commitments throughout the week. Unlike most of the other *nDigiStorytellers*, he had to leave the workshop for short periods at a time. Terri explained, "He didn't have a lot of extra time to spend, so once we had thoroughly discussed his script and shot list and found half of the photos, he left me to do [the rest.] Terri also noted:

The big thing for Jerry Lee was the video clips which Carmella, he, and I took to support his dialogue. Two of the clips stand out. The first clip was Jerry Lee walking across a footbridge and along a path in the woods [short pause] that clip faded into a second clip of Jerry Lee "taking a long drive" while trying to work out how to deal with the relationship loss and his choice of whether or not to pick up a beer. He was blown away by the finished product.

At the end of the day, everybody was tired but feeling like we were making progress. We were halfway through the workshop—hungry, tired, but elated. The *nDigiHelpers* decided we needed "a run into town" to eat dinner and get some supplies. Linda, Arlene, and I carpooled to the nearby Village of L'Anse in *nDigiChidi* while Terri and Carmella left to follow Jerry to take some video.

Day 2: Facilitators' debrief. At the restaurant, we ordered dinner and then began to "debrief" for the day. First, we had to hear why Terri and Carmella were late in arriving:

Carmella: You know, when I agreed to take some video of Jerry, I thought we were going to follow him to the spot where he used to drink and take a short clip, but then we were going through these woods and it was all like scary, but I just told Terri, 'Follow him!' I had my camera on his tail lights and dirt was kicking up! It was actually kinda cool.

Terri: Yeah, and we took a wrong turn down there and we go, 'Whoa wait a minute!'

Carmella: I said, 'Who's this guy?' At first, I thought we were just going to reenact it. Just sit outside and reenact it, but he had to go to the exact spot, to the exact bar.

Terri: And, he had to pull in the same way he pulled in.

Carmella: He drove us over by the lake, by Swedes [a local bar]. . . . I'm glad we did, though, it was fun!

This conversation took the *nDigiHelpers* into a discussion about "triggers" and reinforced how we needed to be considerate and safe when we set up shots and make decisions about props. Terri looked at Linda and Arlene and stated:

I was so glad that you guys are helping us with these stories because you are both clinicians and, when stuff comes up, you know how to deal with it right there. You can see that stuff and see what to do or how not to go there in the first place.

We knew all the Fall 2013 *nDigiStorytellers* were in long-term recovery, attended 12-step programs, were part of a supportive Four Thunders Drum family, or worked at the New Day Treatment Center, but we decided to share this dialogue in the larger group the next morning.

After dinner we went to the grocery store in L'Anse, and then headed back to Aurora Borealis Resort. When I pulled into the long driveway to park, my headlights shined their beams on a row of green beer bottles and metal cans sitting on the porch railing in front of the hunter's cabin. I commented, "That's kinda ironic. We have all these Natives on this side of the road healing, writing and telling stories about all that bad medicine; then you have those on that side of the road."

Day 3: Ningaabi'anong (West)—Creating

November 7, 2013. The weather was beginning to turn. The air smelled moist and the wind cold, something I was not used to in the Southwestern desert. It was noticeable. Since I wasn't outside to see what direction the crescent moon was tilting the night before, because after dinner I was inside the cabin preparing for the next day, I didn't know if it was going to rain or snow. There was a small older television set with "rabbit ears" in the cabin, but since our cellphones and the Internet lacked a good signal, I didn't even try to find a weather channel. All I knew was that I was putting on more layers of clothes, and I noticed that when people arrived, they would remain in their jackets—except for Janice, who came in wearing a home-sewn vest-and-skirt-outfit with a pink shirt underneath that had Elvis predominately displayed. It was beautiful, and she looked happy! Everyone seemed excited! We were going to show two more digital story examples, but beforehand, Carmella displayed a picture of the entire group standing next to Huron Bay after the opening prayer. Everyone lit up and Linda said, "Oh my gosh, isn't that beautiful!" and others agreed. Then Janice added, "That water really brings out the best in us" and everyone laughed. Then, Donnie remarked, "That is awesome!"

Afterwards, Carmella provided a quick review about how we set up their folders on the computer, took their script and made it into a shot list, and how we were to spend the day

creating a storyboard, recording voiceovers, and making music mixes.

Voice Recording: "It Became Very Real"

In the morning, before everyone dispersed to their work area, Carmella shared the following words with our *nDigiStorytellers*:

One of the most important things in your story is your voice. Every voice is unique. I have been recording over 1,200 stories with different people, and voices are so beautiful! They are so unique. It is like when you walk outside and you see every plant and you see every tree and everything is different, and it's beautiful and that's how every voice is. I can tell if it sounds like honey or if it sounds scratchy and has texture. Oh, I just love recording voices! [Everybody laughed.]

Arlene added:

What a gift you are giving your grandchildren. One thing that was going thru my mind is how true is it . . . that when a mother is gone, and you don't hear her voice, that you still can with video. It is done with your voice. I think that is how it reaches our people—it is Indian people talking to Indian people about their life stories and it is not being narrated over or being told by some *Chimookman* [white people]. It is our people talking in their own voice, and it is so powerful, and it is a gift you will give your families.

We always try to record voice first thing in the morning, when we are all alive and fresh, our voices too. Sometimes this is done on the second day of the workshop, but definitely the morning of the third. We begin recording voice narration when most scripts have been reviewed and finalized. In the Fall 2013 workshop, we were continuing to train our *nDigiHelpers* which meant Arlene, Linda and Terri came with their digital storyteller to sharpen their skills in voice recording. Before we started, Carmella and I met Terri in the "The Singing Lodge" she was staying in next door to make sure it was set up and warm enough for the *nDigiStorytellers*. We moved a small wooden table and a set of chairs next to the large window that looked out over the lake. We unplugged the refrigerator and removed any ticking clocks off the walls and put them under the quilt covers. Carmella brought over her laptop, set up the microphone, adjusted the light on the script holder, and pulled up the software program. Since we were given permission

to videotape a post-voice narration interview, we also brought Carmella's camera and tripod and set it up too. We were ready!

Carrie had never recorded her voice before. She was a little nervous, at first, and would tug at her black scarf around her neck. While Carmella was positioning the microphone, she said, "I read it at home fine; what if I don't do it fine now?" Carmella calmed her worries and told her she would do just fine. She told her, "Just read it like a conversation, like your telling me and Brenda your story for the first time." After Carmella warmed her up, Carrie began telling her story. Every now and then, she'd mispronounce a word, stop, take a deep breath, and start again. Her pacing and her voice inflections were perfect. As Carmella was cleaning up her voiceover—taking out extra long pauses and smoothing out times when she breathed too hard—I asked Carrie how that was recording her voice and she said, "It became very real to hear myself, [to hear] my story [come] back to me, you know, what I mean? It was different."

Carrie, who made videos before with photos, affirmations and music, began to explore the difference between what she did and digital storytelling:

With recording your voice, then, you're seeing it like at the movie and your putting it together with your own visuals. It's going to be very moving. What this type of movie [does] is let me see myself, like I'm actually getting to see that glimpse of myself. I think it's emotional. I'm really glad that I didn't cry today because last night I was like, you know [she laughs], crying when I was reading it.

Then, she explained how she was practicing her script by reading it out loud at home the night before. When she kept reading one phrase over and over, she started laughing with her husband. Eventually, her older daughter sat down and began listening to her read, and she whispered to her mom, "Is that us?" Carrie continues:

I don't think I really shared with her the deep feelings that I had at those times. I didn't share with her that [spiritual] experience that I had in that jail cell, you know. She doesn't know that I was hurting that bad. I could tell from the look on her face that it was like, Wow! It was as if she almost had an understanding, you know, it wasn't just, 'Well,

mom did these things and she really didn't have any real feeling about them.' She was like able to see that part that I kind of kept from her because it was difficult back then.

Marty used to be a radio announcer so he was used to recording voice. He warmed up easily on the first paragraph and began to record his audio track, immediately. Half way through his story, Carmella asked him to re-record one sentence—that was it; he was done! Afterwards, Carmella showed Marty a few things about recording voice because he was interested (see Figure 4.12). Often, we will cover this information in our *nDigiAdvance* digital storytelling workshops. For his digital story, Marty used a few different kinds of music and specific audio effects to emphasize his story's emotional impact.



Figure 4.12. Carmella explaining audio editing to Marty. (Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*).

It was late in the day, and Marty was beginning to yawn when I asked him to talk about how he felt about his story and his voice recording. He answered (see Media 4.2):

What's happening here, and I would go on record to say what is happening to me and to the rest of the four here, is that subconsciously they realize that they are going to let people out there know who they really are. We've always been open and ready to do that anyway, but here we are having that chance to do that. The people who we associate with every single day, we do that. They know who we are for real and probably know our story. Now, they'll get a more in-depth look at who we really are! It's cool! I like it! I'm not afraid to let anyone know who I am today. At one point in my life, there was a time.



Media 4.2. Marty post-voice recording interview. (Used with permission of *nDigiDreams*). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/-C80graE0Qw

When I probed Marty to share more about what he thought or felt about recording his story into a microphone and hearing it back, he said:

I almost felt like I was listening to someone else's story. There was a pause before the storm, then the storm, then the point after recovery. Yeah, it felt like I was listening to somebody else's story. I was interested, even though it was mine! [He laughs.]

He added:

I think for this story that I did, it is just a little piece about me. There is a lot out there that I didn't talk about. Not that I didn't want to, but I think I have a lot more stories to do. I could do three or four more and have a different message for each one. Since I sobered up, there's been a lot of things that I'd forgotten about that came to me in the past few days. Wow! It's like I've been on a journey. Holy Smokes!

Donnie had never recorded his "talking voice," although he had spent many hours singing on the Four Thunders Drum. Carmella told him, "It's like going into a storytelling mode, and I know you're a good storyteller because I heard you in the 'circle.' You're not reading from a book, but going into your heart." Donnie nodded and sat quietly with his fingers interlaced and thumbs touching, as if, holding a hand mantra to calm himself. Carmella quickly reminded Linda how to set everything up. Every now and then, Donnie would take a small sip of water; then, it was time to record. Donnie sat up in his chair, positioned his hands on his lap, and then began his storytelling. His first vocal was almost perfect except for his speaking his words too fast. After another take, he was done. He said he wanted his son Donnie Jr., who sings on the drum, as his background music. As Carmella and Linda were replaying his voiceover all the way through, Donnie sat following along with his script in front of him. We could tell he was holding back emotions when he heard certain parts of it. After it was all done Carmella deeply breathed and said, "Good! Let's just hold this moment for a sec." She was getting room tone, but also acknowledging the powerful moment.

Afterwards, I asked Donnie how that was to record his voice. He said:

It's strange to hear your own voice come back like that—very strange—because you have a different portrayal of what you're going to sound like. You don't want to hear the same as others hear you. On the drum, several people tell me that the Creator has given me a great gift of voice and that's tough for me [to hear], especially in the first eight or nine years of my recovery. Don't give me no compliments. I'm getting better. I'm getting better about it. I'm not arrogant about it, but *miigwech*!



Media 4.3. Donnie post-voice recording interview. (Used with permission of *nDigiDreams*). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/y3MbGLmxEX0

Before Donnie went back to the other cabin, he recorded the *Ogichidaa Kwe* song for Linda; the one he sang while she was dressing the female Eagle leader staff. She brought *Migizi* over to "The Singing Lodge" and offered him some *asema* (tobacco). Then, Donnie pulled out his hand drum, and Linda went and stood next to *Migizi*. It seemed like all of Creation tuned in for that song as the leaves, outside the window began to dance and flutter to the rhythm of his drum beat. Linda teared up towards the end of his song. We all did. Then, she gave him the biggest hug. It was absolutely beautiful!

Janice said she once recorded her voice for "the domestic violence program, but it had been brief, only one paragraph. I'm going to speak up louder, because I learned when I talk, sometimes my voice gets low." Arlene commented that her voice does too and asked Janice if she wanted to practice her script out loud. She said, "Yeah, I want to practice." As she started, Janice stumbled in the first sentence, over her *Anishinaabe* name, and started laughing at herself. Arlene said, "It's different when you have to read it, than say it, right?"

We did everything we could to make the Elder KBIC tribal member comfortable; we draped a tan polar fleece blanket over her shoulders, put a footstool underneath the table for her, and a pillow behind her back. She was ready and so were Arlene and Carmella. Janice pulled

her chair closer into the table and got comfortable, again. When she did her first take, she read her script a little too fast. Carmella explained why we slow down the pacing; she said, "Janice, reading and telling a story is completely different. When we were taught to read the written word we were taught to speak fast . . . and when we read these [scripts], we read it as conversation. Go back to that moment, as that eight year old little girl who loved Grandma Charlotte, and let us feel that moment with your voice." Janice nodded her head. They got it! While they were cleaning up her voiceover, Janice sat quietly looking out the window. After the Carmella and Arlene exported the proper audio file for MovieMaker, I began to interview Janice about her experience. I asked her: "What was it like to record? Did you feel anything in this process?" Janice replied, "Well, for one thing, I know I don't wanna be a movie star!" We all laughed. Then, she became serious and said (see Media 4.4):

I feel relief. I feel a relief that this happening. This is probably one of my dreams come true, just doing something like this. Maybe not quite with my voice, you know, but through a written story or one-on-one with a person going through grief. But this here seemed to be the answer to me, as well as that other person that's gonna use it—to make them feel stronger, to make them feel like, 'Hey, she went through it, maybe I can too,' and, to give them that spark of hope.



Media 4.4. Janice post-voice recording interview. (Used with permission of *nDigiDreams*). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/_q9u0sAvgcc

After Janice got finished recording, her son Paul came over with his hand drum. He too works at New Day (*Oshki Gijigad*) Residential Treatment Center and was contacted by his mom to record a song for her background music. Before he could sing, he stood in "The Singing Lodge" and held his hand drum next to the heater. When he began to sing, Janice, who was sitting with Carmella talking, got up and stood near him to honor her son's song and the drum. Paul had a very beautiful and strong voice. We could hear him singing next door. When he got

done, Janice hugged him and he drove back to L'Anse. Carmella said, "Janice was full of joy! When she left, she practically started skipping down the ramp like a little girl. It was as if she transcended to a different place. Then, she caught herself. Probably because she remembered she was an Elder and started to walk slower." Carmella was right behind her to make sure she was safe, especially because the snow was beginning to lightly fall. When Janice went inside, Arlene asked, "How was it?" Janice whispered, "Paul, he sang that song! I just wanted him to sing that song." Arlene said she could just see tear-filled joy in her face.

Jerry Lee "has a deep resonant voice and is a natural orator," Terry said. "His voice recording was excellent, with nice timing and perfect inflections," she added. When he sat down, Carmella and Terri had Jerry Lee practice recording his first paragraph to check his pacing and volume. Everything was perfect. When they were ready to go "live," he sat up, cleared his throat and then hung on to the black script stand. He recorded his voice beautifully and quickly. Afterwards, I said, "Tell us how that's feeling to go through this 30 minute process. How did that feel? Anything happen for you?" Jerry responded (see Media 4.5):

I went back to some of those places where I used [alcohol] and some of those things that led up to that. I was replaying those scenes in my mind. It hit pretty close to home there. It brought me back to a lot of places and then to hear it again; me telling it and listening to myself was kinda surreal. It brought up some memories and some emotions. Some good memories, you know, it wasn't all bad. It's just that I was addicted to alcohol and had no way of turning that weakness over by myself so I asked for help. I just lost a good relationship, in the meantime, but I got a great one now!



Media 4.5. Jerry Lee post-voice recording interview. (Used with permission of *nDigiDreams*). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/WMxojlnMxCE

Most of the third day was spent voice recording, scanning photos, doing storyboards,

Facebooking and calling family and friends for more photos, and shooting short video clips for

certain *nDigiStories*. Everyone was tired and "the caravan" pulled out of the long driveway that was beginning to fill with light snow. We brought wood in for the night before we went to "The Nurturing Lodge" to have a group debrief with our *nDigiHelpers*.

Day 3: Facilitators' debrief. Linda and Arlene were warming up leftovers when Carmella and I walked into their cabin. They wanted to hear how the voiceovers went for all the *nDigiStorytellers*. Even if they were in the cabin and helped record someone's voice with Carmella, it seemed they always wanted to hear the story again. We all did. As co-researchers, they were also interested in hearing how everyone responded to the post-voice recording questions we asked. One by one, we all tried to remember what happened. The highlight of the night came when we began to share what happened when Donnie sang the *Ogichidaa Kwe* song for Linda. Terri came in the cabin right at that moment while Arlene left to answer a call. We began the story:

Carmella: I don't know what happened in that room.

Brenda: Oh, yeah.

Linda: Oh my god!

Terri: Oh, really?

Carmella: But something went thru that room. [Donnie] had such presence and he had this beautiful voice when he sang the song for *Migizi* for Linda.

Linda: He made me cry.

Carmella: It was just beautiful, we just all had to stop.

Linda: None of us could fathom what happened.

Brenda: And we held that moment-the four of us.

Terri: Wow!

Carmella: After he sang . . . what was interesting was that when everybody left, we got ready for the next person and when I walked in the room, the room was still vibrating.

Terri: It was still there, huh?

Carmella: Yeah, you could literally sit down and feel the vibration in the room. I was like, wow!

Brenda: His song was just so beautiful.

Terri: His songs are!

Brenda: It was like he had 16 or 17 year old vocals.

Carmella: Wow, it was just a beautiful voice!

Brenda: Then, we sat down and asked him the questions and he was just really

feeling it.

Carmella: Yeah, it took us to another place.

Brenda: Yeah.

Linda: It was just such a spiritual experience, the whole thing!

Brenda: Yeah.

Carmella: Uh huh, it was.

As a result of all our shared dialogues, there was a deepening of our *nDigiSisterhood*, and although we were sitting there yawning, we kept sharing more stories about how we grew up and how we survived, too. We heard stories about how Arlene's family worked in the strawberry fields and her memories about her grandmother, and stories about Carmella's foster family. I told stories about being the youngest in my family, and Linda shared what it was like being an only child. Pretty soon, we started yawning a bit more, and I asked, "So how do we get to the end? How do we get to the finish line?" It was 8:30 p.m. We quickly ran through what needed to be done and the three of us went back to "The Creating Lodge" to do the agreed upon music mixes, find a few missing photos we had discussed with the *nDigiStorytellers*, and begin to put everything on the timeline so that most of our workshop participants would be ready to "edit" first thing the next day. But, not before we all agreed we would not work past 11:00 p.m.

Day 4: Giiwedinong (North)—Reflecting

November 7, 2013. The snow began to flurry on the final day of the *nDigiStorytelling* workshop but most of us were oblivious to the weather because we had a lot of things to do to finish all the digital stories to order to be able to screen them at the end of the day. Before we

began, though, we wanted to do one more morning check-in to see how everyone was doing.

Morning Reflections: "Do You Have a Word?"

We asked everyone to "share one word about how you feel today, the last day of the workshop." We started going around the "circle" one-by-one in relatively quick succession. Donnie said, "I'm thinking." Janice was next and said, "While he is thinking, I'll say the first word that came to me, 'joyful.' I am joyful today. I am full of love. I am a loving heart." Linda commented, "You look like you are at peace," and Janice replied, "Oh gosh, I am very much at peace, and I want to cry for joy." Then, Carmella shares the story about how she had to run alongside Janice. She says, "I became that young woman again!" I asked Marty if he had a word and he said, "Tired!" Donnie confessed, "I took a week off work to take a break. This is harder than the physical labor I have been doing all my life so I guess my one word would be grateful." Carrie said, "Motivated!" Terri said she was "excited about watching it all really coalesce." She added, "We got a bunch of stuff to do today, but you can see it in sight." Linda was next and said, "I'm feeling very, very honored to be involved in all this." Arlene said she was, "Focused." Terri asked me how I was feeling and I said, "I feel really happy for all these beautiful stories coming out and spending my week with all of you guys!" Donnie shouted, "Milgwech! [Thank you!]" and Janice said, "Ditto to that." Then, I said, "Carmella?" She is the last to respond to the initial question and she replied, "I [Carmella] think I share a lot of the same words all of you have expressed. I feel all of those different emotions and I am also grateful that Creator has given us one more day on earth together. I feel blessed, maybe that is my word, blessed!"

Since we had *nDigiHelpers*, one assigned to each digital storyteller, we were putting together roughcuts before noon. This meant we had the voiceover or "mix," photos, title, and credit on the MovieMaker timeline. The next step was to sync each person's voice with their photos. We handed out headphones and audio splitters to everyone, except Carrie who had her own "earbuds" and jumped into her project solo because she already knew the basics for using the video editing software program. Marty and Donnie worked with an *nDigiHelper*, first, then eventually got the hang of it and started timing their voices with their photos.

Linda briefly shared about how it was like to finish a movie with Donnie, "It was just so intense. We were making sure everything was done right and we were just in the flow and everything. We were moving pictures around" (see Figure 4.13). Terri observed, "It looked like you were having a really good time!" Linda responded, "We were having a good time; how can you not?"

Janice watched Arlene create her roughcut and guided her regarding the timing of certain photos to her voice to finish her movie. Arlene shared, "Janice was so happy with emotion



Figure 4.13. nDigiHelper Linda video editing with Donnie. (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).

when she saw it and it strongly affirmed the effect was more than she had hoped for. She was so proud of the final project and had an emotional healing and released her shame, guilt and grief that she carried for years."

Jerry had a meeting in the City of Houghton, one hour away, and left his digital story for Terri to finish. Carmella created all the music mixes and assembled Jerry's "road trip" video with sound effects and all. Terri said, "On late Thursday afternoon, Jerry Lee returned, and we

ran through the draft video and got his final edits and approval. He was blown away by the finished product."

I showed Carrie how to trim video and then went around the room reviewing movies, answering questions, and showing the *nDigiHelpers* a few editing tricks. Everybody was working quickly to get to the credits at the end of their movie. Lunch was leftovers on their own time. People were at different stages in their editing process and began to understand why the scripts had to be shorter than they first wanted.

By late afternoon we were done! It was 5:00 p.m. and we planned to have a small group screening with everyone at the workshop, before the *nDigiFest* scheduled the next day at noon. Since their movies were only five minutes each, we figured we would be done by 5:30, at the latest. Before we knew it, though, everyone had gathered their jackets, photo albums, coffee mugs, and were already in their vehicles getting ready to leave. We were confused, at first, because it was the first time in over 120 workshops that Carmella and I did not have a small group screening. Then the next thing you know, Donnie came back in with a wooden feather box tucked in his arm and he set it on the chair, opened it, and began pulling out a set of eagle feathers—five of them. He said, "I want to give you guys something," and then he began to hand out eagle feathers individually to each of us [Arlene, Linda, Terri, Carmella and I]. Before we could really comprehend what had happened, the caravan of nDigiStorytellers pulled out of Aurora Borealis Resort—not to return again—at least, not the next day for an nDigiStorytelling workshop. Had we not heard the weather report? Did they have a family matter to attend to? Or, did they just assume that the first sharing of their digital story would begin at the communitywide screening or *nDigiFest*?

Closing Circle

It was 5:15 p.m. The laptop computers were still open and lying everywhere and coffee-stained cups sat piled on the counter. I began by saying, "I felt like I was at the top of the ferris wheel and I was ready to go. Then, someone turned the switch off!" Linda interjected, "Well, I think they were ready to go. They were hungry!" Terri said she heard there was a volleyball game, most likely, one of their grandchildren. We gathered in a "closing circle." Linda was the first to hear Jerry Lee's truck in the dirt parking lot. We quickly exchanged:

Linda: Hey, Jerry Lee's back!

Arlene: Jerry Lee's back, yay!

Brenda: We have one digital storyteller! [Jerry Lee came in the door].

Arlene: Sit.

Brenda: We are trying to have a closing circle.

Jerry Lee: Oh, I saw all them guys up on the main road!

Terri: You drove all the way to Houghton and back?

Jerry Lee: That's nothing!

Without skipping a beat, we made an opening in our small circle and brought in a sofa chair where Jerry sat down and we each had a chance to express ourselves one last time together, in the "circle" at "The Creating Lodge."

Linda held her gifted eagle feather and said, "This caught me off guard, him giving us this, so it has been a blessed day. I am going to feel a little sad missing some of it [the *nDigiFest*] tomorrow because I'll have to leave [because she had another commitment in Minneapolis]." She ended by stating, "So I am feeling very thankful and very blessed to be a part of this whole experience. It has been wonderful!"

After a long pause, Carmella went second:

I feel very blessed, and I think that is how I started out this morning, with that one word and it's interesting that Donnie gave us this [she holds her feather up]. He has come full circle and we've only known him for a couple days, but he shared a lot of his life . . . all of you shared your lives with us. [She paused.] Today, when we went out to the water and the snow was coming down, it was just fascinating to me because I just love looking

out the windows and seeing the snow come down. It was like a new birth. Almost like a new birth, too, for all these films. We were so busy birthing babies and some of them were kinda stuck! [Everyone laughed.] Yeah, every workshop happens the way it is supposed to happen, and I really believe that and I believe that tomorrow, when all the stories are shown, it will be a great gathering. *Mitgwech* [Thank you] to your community. I am grateful. I thank Creator, the Great Spirit, *Migizi*, the dreams, the songs, the vibrations were just so powerful, and this whole experience has been amazing.

As we continued around "the circle," Arlene was next.

I just really feel honored. [She paused while she held back tears then she cleared her voice then started again.] So much has changed in this community since I was here, when I was 17, and it is amazing—all the sobriety and all the love that they have for each other. It's amazing and what is even more is being treated like I just left yesterday. It has been over 30 years since I lived here. I come every summer for the powwow and that's like coming home. [She looked up at Carmella and me.] Creator takes you to where you need to be to help people and I am grateful that we were all here today. I am proud of the people who were in this circle and shared their stories. *Miigwech* [Thank you]!

I was sitting next to Arlene and recalled the word I started my day off with "happy."

Then, I said:

I am really happy to be here to get acquainted with this sacred land and all the beautiful *Anishinaabe* people. . . . By people coming forward and saying, 'I'll do my story. I'll share.' That is where it begins. When people say, 'I can help share something in my life to help another,' that's really healing and can help our communities. All of us with our heartfelt stories and our joy and our sorrows and everything, can help each other. I learned a lot and I grew a lot just by being here. I feel close like family. I have been reminded about mine through all the laughter, the joking, and struggles. I am grateful for being here too.

Terri was next and explained how her word-of-the-day was "excited" and then shared:

You know, when they told me, 'We're going up to Keweenaw Bay,' I thought, 'Gosh, Keweenaw Bay, hmmm, those guys are going to be tough nuts to crack because they're not gonna just open up and tell their stories.' [Everyone laughed.] Then you guys [she looked at Carmella and I] came out here twice to talk with R.D., and after that I thought, 'Hmmm, I wonder how that's going to go because [the community] can be kinda insular and they got their family and stuff.' Well, what an incredible family and the gift of getting to know your family a little better—they're healthy, sober and sitting on the drum. I am just so grateful, too, so *Miigwech* [Thank you] for having us. It was a good gift to be here.

Finally, Jerry Lee was the last to express his feelings in the closing circle:

It took just these three days for me to go where I have never been before [with the relationship loss he experienced in his life]. I didn't know that it was that deep, you know, it seemed like I closed the door on it and I never thought I would have to worry about it any more. Dealing with it this week reinforced I was healing pretty good so that is what I am grateful to you women for, thank you for being here.

When we finished "the closing circle," we asked Jerry Lee if he wanted to watch his digital story and that before we did, we only needed him to provide us with his title and credits. While he started writing it down on a tablet, Carmella and I did one final polishing.

Local Screening: "It's a Powerful Message"

At each digital storytelling workshop, on the last day, we ask each *nDigiStoryteller* if they would like to share their movie with the small group. We ask them to introduce their movie, say something about the process, and when they're finished to tell us to "roll it!" Before we screen their movie, we gift each person with an *nDigiBand*, a leather band with turquoise strapping and stamped lettering which says, "N D I G I S T O R Y T E L L E R." (see Figure 4.14). Over a thousand of these bands cover Turtle Island today.

Figure 4.14 nDigiStoryteller leather band. (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).



I find it touching to see a member of our growing *nDigiFamily* wear it on their wrist when we stop to visit them, return to a tribal community to conduct a second workshop or host a local *nDigiFest*.

Before we screened Jerry Lee's *nDigiStory* (see Media 4.7), Carmella and I told him, "We have a gift for you. You might be somewhere and you'll see one of these and you'll know you are a part of our growing *nDigiFamily*." He hugged us and called us his "little sisters."

Before we watched his mini-movie, Jerry Lee shared the following reflection about our *nDigiStorytelling* process (see Media 4.6):

It wasn't what I really thought it was gonna be. To me this is was kinda really professional. It's my first experience with something like this. I thought it would be something with maybe a handheld video thing and you'd just sit around and say, 'Here tell us your story' [laughter]. I thought there's not going to be no hardness to this. It's going to be lengthy, but easy. I was in for a pretty good surprise, I guess. It wasn't a bad negative surprise.

When I first came in and saw all these cars and came through the door and I was looking around and seeing what was going on. What did I get myself into here? They've introduced us to each other and I've known three of you before [Arlene, Linda and Terri] for years. But at the onset, right from the beginning, when I met Brenda and Carmella, there was a certain calmness and easiness. I put my guard down then. I didn't need that fence up around me anymore. As soon as I met you, as soon as I looked at you when I walked in this door. 'Oh, they're good people.' Cause I can feel, I can sense. I sleep with one eye open around some people. But, you guys, no, everything was let go.

He continued:

Then when we started getting into it. You told us what we were going to do which I really liked. It's not like you said, 'Ok, cameras on, go!' We were walked into this thing. Everything we had to do there was a process, a step-by step. I really liked that and you guys made it so easy . . . [I thought] I'm going to have difficulty with turning this into a 3-5 minute thing. That is what I was really thinking about too. They want my life story from first drink to sobriety in 5 minutes? [Laughter]. I mean I was thinking about that you know and R.D. goes, 'Yes, I was too! '[Everybody laughed.] But, I understand how it's done now. It's a very powerful message I think without even seeing it but reliving those things.



Media 4.6. Jerry Lee pre-screening reflection 1. (Used with permission of *nDigiDreams*). This can be viewed at: http://youtu.be/2Ao6lWVKJ c

Jerry Lee *nDigiStory*



Media 4.7. Jerry Lee *nDigiStory* (Jerry Lee Curtis, 2013). Permission granted by storyteller through informed consent and verbal confirmation (see Appendix H for full transcription). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/yufeNhL1vpU

Epilogue

The next morning, after we put all the finished *nDigiStories* on one DVD, we all drove to Baraga, Michigan, which was thirty minutes away. We met at the Chippewa Conference Room in the Ojibwa Casino to have the first KBIC *nDigiFest*. We saw all our *nDigiStorytellers* and met some of their family in attendance as well as other KBIC members. We screened all five of the *nDigiStories* that were co-created in the Fall 2013 *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. Carmella Rodriguez's complementary dissertation describes this event as she explores the sharing of their *nDigiStories* across the community and beyond. Besides Jerry Lee's *nDigiStory*, the KBIC Fall 2013 *nDigiStories* include four more (see Media 4.8–4.11):

Donnie *nDigiStory*



Media 4.8. Donnie nDigiStory (Donnie Shalifoe, 2013). Permission granted by storyteller through informed consent and verbal confirmation (see Appendix H for full transcription). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/cQIS90XEc1M

Janice nDigiStory



Permission granted by storyteller through informed consent and verbal confirmation (see Appendix H for full transcription). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/stPfK95rgg8

Media 4.9. Janice's *nDigiStory* (Janice Shalifoe, 2013).

Carrie nDigiStory



Media 4.10. Carrie nDigiStory (Carrie Curtis Paquette, 2013). Permission granted by storyteller through informed consent and verbal confirmation (see Appendix H for full transcription). This can be viewed at:

Marty nDigiStory



Media 4.11. Marty *nDigiStory* (Marty Curtis, 2013). Permission granted by storyteller through informed consent and verbal confirmation (see Appendix H for full transcription). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/sVOMkb2Ns4I

The first *nDigiSeed* was planted and we would watch it grow! In my fifth chapter, I provide "a portrait" of the Spring 2014 planting at the Ojibwa Casino in Baraga, MI where five male *nDigiStorytellers* and four female *nDigiHelpers* participated in the second KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop.

Ziigwan—Spring 2014 Planting of nDigiSeeds (Final Study)

In this chapter, I have provided a "portrait" of a four-day *nDigiStorytelling* workshop held in Skanee, Michigan for the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC). The pilot study, held during November 5–8, 2013, was attended by five individuals, from one extended family, who each made a digital story about their recovery from alcohol and drugs and their present-day experience of living and being sober and well. *Mino Bi-maadiziwin*.

I tried to create a polyvocal text that included multiple layers of voices, experiences, intentions, and assumptions. For example, I drew a "portrait" of the Aurora Borealis Resort that was our pilot study site. Then, I created "portraits" of each *nDigiStoryteller* (Carrie, Donnie, Janice, Jerry Lee and Marty) who participated in the November 2013 *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. Finally, I included "portraits" of our *nDigiHelpers* (Arlene, Carmella, Eva, Linda and Terri) who were involved in the fall planting of *nDigiSeeds* (the pilot study) or provided enormous insight and thoughtful feedback at every stage of this research project.

This chapter is a "portrait" of a subsequent four-day *nDigiStorytelling* workshop held in Baraga, Michigan, during May 5–8, 2014. It begins with our journey to the final study site and ends with the closing circle. The final study was attended by four *nDigiStorytellers* (Don, Robert, Tim and R.D.) who made five digital stories about recovery from alcohol and drugs with a focus on how they are presently walking "the good path" of life called *Mino Bi-maadiziwin*. The final study site, the Ojibwa Casino in Baraga, Michigan is centrally located in the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community. The *nDigiHelpers* included Linda and Carmella from the pilot study with the addition of Clara Fernando, an *nDigiDreams*-trained Native digital storyteller from Laguna Pueblo, New Mexico. Again, I tried to create a polyvocal text by

drawing multiple "portraits" in order to conduct a phenomenological ethnographic study of nDigiStorytelling within one Anishinaabe community in Northern Michigan.

nDigiDreams Trip to Michigan in Spring 2014

In two days, Carmella Rodriguez and I packed up *nDigiChidi*, our Toyota passenger van, with our digital storytelling equipment and personal clothes for a two-week trip to Michigan. On May 1, 2014, late at night, we departed Tucson, Arizona for Traverse City, Michigan, when the temperatures were cooler and the interstates were relatively empty. It was our fourth cross-country road trip from the Southwest to the Great Lakes and our ninth digital storytelling workshop in the state of Michigan. We had 36 hours to travel 2,700 miles to Traverse City, Michigan, our first destination (see Figure 5.1). We made a bed in the back of *nDigiChidi* since we knew we would have to take turns driving like a pair of cross-country truck drivers who only make stops for food and gas. As always, we offered prayers for a good journey and a safe return.



Figure 5.1. Cross-country drive from the Southwest to the Great Lakes. (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).

Since we were leaving my home "fireplace" for several weeks, I took out my "special" eagle feather and my bag of cedar and we smudged ourselves off as well as *nDigichídí*.

Carmella and I have many family members and *nDigiStorytellers* who tell us they are constantly praying for us because they know we are always travelling across the country sharing *nDigiStorytelling* with others. This time was no exception.

One Vanpool to Baraga, Michigan

On Saturday morning, May 3, 2014, Carmella and I picked up our *nDigiSister* Linda Woods for a trip to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to conduct our final study. She was an *nDigiHelper* in the pilot study we completed in November 2013. It was the fourth time an ATR team member and *nDigiDreams* would meet in a rural community in Michigan to train a group of Native digital storytellers. ATR was interested in collecting a fourth set of digital stories to add to their "Sowing The Seeds of Recovery" website, which currently includes 22 digital stories. (http://www.atrhealingcircle.com/sowing-the-seeds-of-recovery). Carmella and I were interested in continuing to understand for our dissertations how is it that a group of Native community members "experience" the *nDigiStoryMaking* and *nDigiStorySharing* processes.

Before leaving Traverse City, Michigan, we stopped at Oryana, a natural foods market, to load up on supplies. *nDigiChidi* was overflowing with suitcases, laptop computers, and other video and audio recording equipment. We also had the requisite food cooler, pillows, blankets, and jackets for making a trip to northern Michigan. The only thing missing were driving tunes for Linda, so we went back to her apartment to pick up a handful of Elvis Presley CDs.

The night before, on Friday, May 1, 2014, we went to Traverse City's Cherry Capitol Airport to pick up our *nDigiSister* Clara Fernando who agreed to be an *nDigiHelper* for our final study. We met Clara in 2009 at our first *nDigiBasic* digital storytelling workshop in Laguna, New Mexico and have since recruited and trained her to assist us with teaching other *nDigiStorytelling* workshops in AZ, NM, and SD. This was Clara's first visit to Michigan, and we knew she would provide us with a fresh perspective for our collaborative research project.

Every time Carmella Rodriguez and I travel across the United States, we try to support Native communities by stopping at local tribal galleries and arts and crafts stores as well as

native-owned coffee houses and cafes. We also make sure we carry *asema* (tobacco) to make offerings along the way, especially when we are travelling around the *Anishinaabe* sacred homelands. During the drive north, the four of us quickly eased into sharing stories and laughing at each other's jokes as we followed the shores of Lake Michigan along Highway 31. Linda was always telling us stories about local tribal history. For example, she recalled when we drove across the Pine River Channel Bridge near downtown Charlevoix:

A long time ago, when we had council meetings, all the people would gather together. When I worked at Little Traverse Band they said the shore was just lined up with canoes. Can you imagine that?

Clara replied:

When we were passing by, I could feel the energy. I see the vision or imagery of that and it is overpowering. You know, when we were passing through I also saw bright green lights. My son, who is very spiritual, sees colors or auras when he meets people. He said when they are green it means ancient waters.

During our drive north, we saw other colored lights and orbs along the lakes and highways and amongst the trees and skylines; they were green, white and rainbow-colored. We spent the night halfway to our destination in a roadside hotel in Manistique, Michigan, on the north shores of Lake Michigan. At breakfast the next morning, on the local news channel, I saw a news reporter talking about an eight-foot wall of ice being pushed ashore from Lake Superior in the northern Upper Peninsula. It was damaging the coastal highway, demolishing buildings and causing local evacuations in Keweenaw County. At first, I thought the "ice wave" was causing havoc in the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community where we were scheduled to conduct our final nDigiStorytelling workshop and that we would have to cancel it. After repacking nDigiChidi, we drove across the highway near the hotel to offer asema (tobacco) to Lake Michigan for our continued journey north and for the individual's homes that were being hit by

massive icebergs. I was ready for whatever was meant to happen. Luckily, for us, our research site was in Baraga County, which is one hour south.

As we were driving under a canopy of northern hardwoods along a single-lane highway, Clara and Carmella saw the dark brown wings and white tail feathers of a Great American bald eagle. We stopped *nDigiChidi* alongside the road so Linda could offer *asema*. Afterwards, she showed me her Facebook post: "We saw a bald eagle so we know it is going to be a good time here!" At 4 p.m., after eight-hours of driving, under overcast skies, we arrived at our final research site in Baraga, Michigan, on Sunday, May 4, 2014 (see Figure 5.2)

Figure 5.2. L'Anse Bay near Baraga, MI (Final Study Site). (Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*).



nDigiStorytelling at Ojibwa Casino

The Ojibwa Casino in Baraga, Michigan, is one of two casinos owned and operated by the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (see Figure 5.3).



Figure 5.3 Ojibwa Casino in Baraga, MI (Final Study Site). (Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*).

As a tribal enterprise, it provides services and local jobs at the casino-hotel-restaurant resort. R.D., one of the local leaders who helped us recruit and plan for two KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshops. Our team determined it would be a good meeting location because

it was centralized, had a large conference room, food services, lodging, parking, and Internet accessibility.

Upon arrival, we unpacked everything from *nDigiChidi* into our separate hotel rooms at the north end of the building. Then, we made our way to the Chippewa Conference Room near the Lucky 7 Restaurant. We were scheduled to meet the KBIC *nDigiStorytellers* from the November 2013 workshop.

Follow-up Sharing Circle With Fall 2013 nDigiStorytellers

We rearranged the large conference room by placing a couple of long tables and chairs on one side of the room where we planned to share a meal together with everyone in attendance.

Then, we grouped a set of chairs on the other side of the meeting room where we would have a sharing circle to listen to everyone's "post-six-month" experiences and reflections.

nDigiBrother Donnie was the first to arrive with his granddaughter, then Jerry Lee and his wife. Finally, Carrie and R.D. arrived. We gave everyone hugs and introduced them to Clara Fernando. Then, we asked everyone to order dinner off the Lucky 7 Restaurant menu. We were told Janice wouldn't be present because she was having an early Mother's Day event with her family. Someone called Marty to remind him about the meeting, and he showed up shortly afterwards. We gifted everyone with specially wrapped bags of blue corn from the Southwest (and a bag of "glutton free" ginger cookies for Marty). They were small gifts to remind them that, with their help, we were getting closer to better understanding our "digital storytelling recipe" for Indigenous peoples. Afterwards, we asked everyone to move to the group of assembled chairs and we asked permission to audio record the meeting. All the nDigiStorytellers and their invited family members joined the sharing circle, including Tim, who was a friend and

houseguest of Jerry Lee and would be one of the new *nDigiStorytellers* at the second workshop that would start the next day.

A lot of the group discussion focused on the *story-sharing* of their digital stories over the past six months, which is the topic of Carmella Rodriguez's complementary dissertation.

However, there were post-workshop reflections about the *story-making* that were shared by various individuals, which is the topic of my dissertation. For example, Jerry Lee mentioned, "the most powerful thing for me was the healing that Janice got and the years she had been holding that [grief] in there." Everyone agreed, especially Donnie who said, "Her being my sister, I lived and seen it." During the evening sharing, Carrie also reflected about her own post-workshop healing. She said:

I don't think [my family] understood the emotional war that was going on inside me at that time, so to tell my story and to use pictures and to put it into this type of visual story they could understand was good. It was hard for them me being a recovering IV drug addict. It was hard for them to know what that was like or to understand it at all . . . that was my purpose for making it . . . to kinda give hope and help people who have a similar problem know that you can ask for help and you don't have to live with the shame and guilt. It was great! I didn't know I was doing that and I didn't know that was happening.

Carrie continued:

It made things clearer. I hadn't really thought about that moment, but to sit down and go thru the moment a year and a half later. It did a lot for me. I re-felt the feelings and it made the experience a lot clearer about what was going on. It was therapeutic, actually! Now even still seeing it. . . . I still get tear-eyed. I still feel how I felt even then and it helps me grow every time I look at it. The video I chose to make is about how I committed to my recovery. It's my moment! The story I picked was my moment! It is important to me and now I will have it forever in a video!

The opportunity to gather the first group of KBIC *nDigiStorytellers* for an evening sharing circle about what they "think" and how they "speak" about the journey of their life's path and how *nDigiStorytelling* became part of it was a powerfully insightful moment. A more in-depth discussion of their shared "lived experiences" as revealed through an "*nDigiStorytelling*"

ceremony" is included in the following chapter, "Creating space for an Indigenous approach to digital storytelling." After everyone had a chance to share, we returned to the makeshift dinner table and shared a meal together, which included a lot more storytelling and laughter. Finally, after all our plates were empty and to-go containers filled, we hugged everyone goodbye for the evening.

Preparing the Spring 2014 nDigiGarden

While all the KBIC *nDigiStorytellers* and their family members returned to their nearby homes, Linda, Clara, Carmella and I began setting up for the second KBIC nDigiStorytelling workshop. The Chippewa Conference Room in the Ojibwa Casino is a large meeting room with no windows. It had fluorescent overhead lighting, stiff-backed meeting chairs, long beige eight-foot tables, a partitioned room divider, and two entry doors on each end that opened into a long hallway that connected the casino with the restaurant and hotel areas. Its furnishings and ambiance provided a stark contrast to the three cabins on Huron bay where we were *nDigiStorytelling* for our pilot study. However, the Chippewa Conference Room had two positive attributes: first, it was presentation/video-ready which meant we only needed to hook up our laptop computer to access the projector on the ceiling and we only needed to push a button to roll down the large white projection screen. Second, it was easily accessible to KBIC tribal members who would poke their heads into the room to catch a glimpse of the *nDigiStory* examples we were screening, or who would bring photos and music that were needed for the new nDigiStorytellers. Often, we had two to three KBIC nDigiStorytellers (Donnie, Jerry Lee, and Marty) who would join us for lunch or stop in during a work break.

We pushed together two long tables up against the wall for coffee/snacks, arranged a "circle" of chairs, and formed another makeshift dinner table on the north end of the room. Then

we arranged a set of tables and chairs into a U-shape on the south end of the room as a work space for our new set of *nDigiStorytellers* and their *nDigiHelpers*. We decided we would voice record in one of our hotel rooms on the other side of the building, far away from the casino with all its clanging bells and clinking coins. We did not bring in all our suitcases loaded with laptop computers and other digital storytelling equipment. We decided to wait until the next morning when we brought Carmella's Keurig gourmet coffee pot and coffee, bottles of water, a Kleenex box, and some fresh fruit and other snacks. Since we were in an indoor meeting space with smoke alarms, we also made sure we were allowed to smudge with sage—one of the four sacred medicines used by the *Anishinaabe* and other tribes—to purify our minds, bodies and spirits. The other three sacred medicines we sometimes use in our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops are tobacco, cedar, and sweet grass.

At out first facilitators debrief, I asked our *nDigiHelpers* to consider whether or not the "place" where we hold our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops can affect the process. Linda, who was an *nDigiHelper* during our pilot study at Aurora Borealis Resort commented:

It probably adds to the camaraderie that is there, but I think too we are going to make it safe for them. It is up to us. We are the environment versus the cabin or here [the casino]. We are the ones that have to adapt and, I think, we are the ones who are making it comfortable for them so that they can open up and talk.

In order for us to be fully charged and ready to be *nDigiHelpers*, we needed a good night's rest. Thus, we all said our goodbyes and retreated to our hotel rooms.

Spring 2014 nDigiHelpers

Linda Woods and Clara Fernando (see Figure 5.4) were the *nDigiHelpers* who assisted us at the May 2014 planting of *nDigiSeeds* in Baraga, Michigan, and as well made their introductory statement about their digital storytelling experience.



Figure 5.4. Spring 2014 *nDigiHelpers* Near Baraga, MI. (L-R: Clara Fernando, Carmella Rodriguez, Brenda Manuelito, Linda Woods). (Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*).

Linda Woods. In the fourth chapter of this dissertation, I included a more extensive "portrait" of Linda since she was one of our *nDigiHelpers* at our pilot study at Aurora Borealis Resort in Skanee, Michigan. To review, Linda is an *Anishnaabekwe* (Odawa woman), grandmother, retired Air Force veteran, powwow dancer and an *nDigiDreams*-trained digital storyteller. She is also a member of our co-research team who we call *nDigiDreamers*. At the opening day of the work, Linda introduced herself with the following words:

Boozhoo! [She introduces her clans and Indian name in *Anishnaabemowin*]. My other name is Linda Woods. I grew up in Peshawbestown, a long time ago. We all have a journey and we all have a story to share. I have another two or three of them, actually, inside me now. I am a veteran and I served in the United States Air Force for almost four years. I also have 44 years sobriety. It has been a long journey and I am still growing up. We had a fun time coming up here on Saturday and I am real honored to be here again. We work with a lot of folks. Arlene and I usually work together. We have some of it pretty much down pat, but it is the fine-tuning part.

During the second KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, we realized how invaluable Linda Woods was to our team because of the matriarchal role she played as an older *Anishinaabe* woman who had years of professional and personal experience in recovery. She always knew exactly what to say and when to say it. For example, on the first day of the workshop, she told the small group of Native men in recovery sitting in the room:

Sobriety teaches us that it's okay to laugh, that it's okay to cry. You can feel the pain and then get to move through it, right? And then a new awareness comes on. It's like I still have these aha moments and I am like, "Whoa, I can't believe that, where was I when that first happened?" Maybe I am reading The Big Book or something. It'll be like, "When did they put that in there?" [Everyone laughs.] Like you said R.D., sometimes you are not ready for certain things, and then when we are we start reaching out and we start waking up again.

Clara Fernando. Clara is one of our Laguna Pueblo *nDigiSisters* whom we met in 2009 at our first *nDigiStorytelling* workshops in Laguna, New Mexico. Shortly afterwards, due to the need to advocate for her fellow artisans, she created another digital story to convince state authorities to keep the I-40 Interstate rest area open when they considering places to cut the budget. I can remember her telling me a story about her second digital story and how she felt it had influenced the decision-making process: "The State Engineer, who was a woman, closed her notebook and looked at me straight in the eye and said, 'We can find other ways to cut the budget. This rest stop will remain open!" Clara attributes this change to the very powerful personal stories and perspectives she was able to share through digital storytelling.

Clara has long dark hair that drapes over a matching ensemble of clothes, shoes, and purses. She is a strong and hardworking Native woman who is constantly straightening equipment and hauling large Pelican suitcases for us, without being asked. She is a loving mother to two beautiful boys and is the middle daughter of a large Laguna Pueblo family, whom I have found to be some of the most generous and kindest people I have known. Like many of our *nDigiSisters* who have worked alongside us over the years, Clara has become close to Carmella and me, and we have shared many family and personal stories with each other. We invited Clara to become one of our *nDigiHelpers* because Arlene and Terri were unable to attend the second KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, and I knew we needed "another helpful hand," because Carmella and I were not only facilitating a digital storytelling workshop, but also conducting dissertation research in Northern Michigan. Clara introduced herself to the second group of KBIC *nDigiStorytellers* by sharing her experience making digital stories:

My name is Clara Fernando. I come from New Mexico, the desert, and all this water is beautiful. I am so thankful to be here. I am also an artist. I do pottery and jewelry. I sell by the roadside out there and I help my community. I do advocacy for the community, for children, for the school. Most of my time is spent, if not working, in non-profit groups—

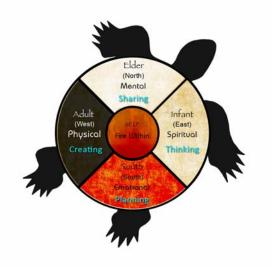
establishing parks, rehabbing traditional homes for the elders. I do a ton of things everyday to try to bring my community together and it's difficult at times. I started in 2010 doing these [digital] stories and I had little knowledge of computers. At this point, I have done three to my credit—two of them on my own. It's fun and it's exciting and I am here to help you. I am happy to be here, so thank you.

Regarding the number and levels of digital storytelling workshops, we have worked alongside Linda Woods in four *nDigiBasic* and with Clara Fernando in five *nDigiBasic* and one *nDigiAdvanced* workshops. Both *nDigiSisters* are very fun-loving, women who are deeply committed to *nDigiStorytelling*; we knew they would enjoy getting to know each other while working with us in Baraga, Michigan.

Anishinaabe Four-Directions Approach to Digital Storytelling

In my fourth chapter, I described how *nDigiDreams* has taken the standard digital storytelling process and framed it within an Indigenous framework (i.e., the Four-Directions Approach to Digital Storytelling) that is culturally appropriate when working with Native

Figure 5.5. Anishinaabe Four-Directions approach to digital storytelling. (Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*).



peoples in our workshops. As mentioned, our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops move through a "cycle" that explores all parts of our beings—mental, emotional, physical and spiritual—as we co-create *nDigiStories* in a four day period. In accordance with our Indigenous teachings and

practices (see Figure 5.5), we move in a clock-wise fashion from East, to South, to West, to North.

First, we "think" about our story idea and write our scripts; then, we "plan" our shot lists and prepare our storyboards by gathering our media; next, we "create" or bring our story to life by recording our "living breath" and editing our final movies. Finally, we "share" our completed *nDigiStories* on the last day of the workshop with a small group of peers and helpers before we take them home or share them at a community-wide *nDigiStorytelling* workshop held on May 5–8, 2014 in Baraga, Michigan, for three tribal members from the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) and one tribal member from the Sault Ste.Marie Band of Chippewa Indians. I will begin with a "portrait" of each of the four *nDigiStorytellers*, and share their reason(s) for attending the second KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop in order to make an *nDigiStory*. In the following pages, I will also share the voices, experiences, perspectives, and visions of four *nDigiHelpers* who were thoroughly involved in the process.

Aambe! (Let's go!)

Day 1: Waabanong (East)—Thinking

May 5, 2014. On Monday morning, we arrived early to set up the refreshment table, select digital stories to screen, and greet the new group of KBIC *nDigiStorytellers*. The first individual to arrive was Tim, who lives in Marquette, Michigan, over 70 miles east of Baraga. He attended the follow-up sharing circle on Sunday night and was staying at Jerry Lee's house for the week. He shook hands with all of us and then said he brought a draft of a script that his wife helped him type it up. He seemed curious and interested in what we were about to do. Afterwards R.D. came in; he is one of the local leaders who helped recruit individuals for the

first and second KBIC nDigiStorytelling workshops. He greeted us with a big smile and quick hug, then mentioned he had recruited a retired female elder, who worked at New Day (Oshki Gijigad) Residential Treatment Center, but that she recently became sick and would most likely not come to the workshop. He appeared mildly disappointed, but we told him not to worry because it would all be fine. Then the *nDigiHelpers* started setting up the laptop to the projector and organizing workshop materials and other equipment when Robert, a KBIC tribal member, arrived with a box of pictures under his arm. Since Robert, Tim and R.D. knew each other well, because they all sat on the Four Thunders Drum, they quickly delved into sharing stories about being outdoors fishing. Finally, the last individual who was expected to arrive was Don who came in with a spiral notebook and an envelope filled with photos. When I went to shake his hand and introduce myself, he confided he was a bit nervous and didn't know if he could make a digital story. I assured him he would have all the help he would need and to just relax and pour himself a cup of coffee before we began. Then, I went to introduce myself to Robert who was sitting at a table preoccupied with sorting through his family photos. Like Don, he admitted he was nervous but that he was more concerned with not having the "right" story to tell. He said he had been "thinking about a story long and hard" and wondered if he could do a story that didn't focus on recovery, per se. I told him he could tell whatever story he wanted. He proceeded to tell me one when I urged him to wait until we were all together in a story circle where everyone would have a chance to hear his story idea too. He agreed. Then he told me, "I'm pretty pumped" and smiled. After we gathered a few of the guys who were smoking cigarettes at the entrance of the casino next door and everyone grabbed a fruit or cup of coffee, we sat down at the U-shaped tables for introductions and to discuss our collaborative research project.

Spring 2014 nDigiStorytellers

All of the KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* participants were provided with a pre-workshop packet and an agenda (see Appendices C and E); the information was the same for both the pilot and final studies except for the date and location of the two workshops. We reviewed our schedule for the week to ensure everyone would be able to attend the entire workshop and that is when we learned: Robert, the young male in the group, took off from his construction job for the week, that Tim and Don were retired, and, that R.D. was considered "on training." As with the first set of KBIC *nDigiStorytellers*, we also learned the second group had multiple family and community responsibilities to juggle during the week such as afternoon school programs, meal planning, Monday night football, Gamblers Anonymous meeting, and drum practice.

We asked each KBIC tribal member to share a few words of introduction and to describe how they first heard about the KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop and what made them decide to make a digital story at this time.

Don. He is a middle-aged man with long wavy hair, a mustache, and a goatee. He has travelled extensively on his Harley Davidson bike and lives in Baraga, Michigan, where he recently volunteered as the "firekeeper" at a summer KBIC powwow. He has two grown sons; one visited him unexpectedly during the week. Don sits on the Four Thunders Drum like all the rest of the individuals in our second KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. He is a quiet, thoughtful and respectful man who knew a lot of local family history. In his introduction he said: "Hello, my name is Don. I grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and came up here in the 90's. R.D. asked me to participate in this. I got a little bit of a story. As far as technology goes, I don't enjoy computers or all that other stuff. That's it!"

Carmella explained how we have had other individuals come into our digital storytelling workshops with little to no computer experience, but that we help them through the entire process. She also explained how important it would be for them to make all the editorial decisions since it would be their story, and that we intended to let them "drive" as much as they were comfortable with.

Robert. He is a young man in his early thirties with two daughters and a wife. He has long dark hair that he either lets hang straight or pulls back into a ponytail. He is easy to talk with and has lots of different interests; he is also very articulate and introspective for a young man. Robert was eager to learn as much as he could about digital storytelling so he could use it within his own small business that focuses on teaching others how to make and shoot bows.

Robert has been a head male dancer and arena director at the KBIC powwow and he has learned to create his own regalia and beadwork designs; he also creates his own bows, arrows and quivers. Robert works in the construction trade and is an avid hunter and fisherman. Robert introduced himself to the group as follows:

Hello, I'm Robert. Everyone else calls me RayJac. I'm here because R.D. asked me to be here. When he told me what was going on, I saw it as another way to help out all individuals that might need help down the road someday. I'm hoping by me being here that I can help them out, because it's kinda sad seeing our people suffering from all these diseases like drug addiction and everything else. I'm hoping this [digital story] will help them out

R.D. He is the KIBC Substance Abuse Program Outpatient Director and a current KBIC Tribal Council member. He is a tall *Anishinaabe* man who often had to lean down to talk to his mostly short Navajo, Pueblo and Odawa *nDigiHelpers*. Everyday, he wore various pairs of Nike N7 running shoes, Native-designed foot wear, and a black baseball cap that had an Ojibwe medicine wheel design on the front and a small eagle feather fastened on the back. As mentioned previously, R.D. is one of the individuals responsible for recruiting KBIC tribal

members for the two *nDigiStorytelling* workshops in this study. He was slated to participate in the first KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop in Skanee, Michigan, but at the last minute he was unable to attend. In his introductory statement he explained why: "I wanted to do mine, but I wasn't ready. I knew that it wasn't the right time for me. I just didn't feel totally honest, because I wasn't." He pointed out a slogan he often uses in his counseling work—"addictions do not discriminate"—then discussed how he had recently developed a gambling addiction himself and went into treatment for his "cross addiction" when we had the first KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop at Aurora Borealis Resort. He added,

You know, I'm not superman. I don't have a cape, but I feel ready now. I'm not ashamed about it and I'm not embarrassed. It was a humbling experience. I have 23 years of sobriety and, I am ready now!

Carmella shared that we recognize that there is a "right time" to do digital stories and that every person knows if and when they are ready and that they will know which personal life story to tell. We all acknowledged his strength and honesty and thanked him for being one of the local recruiters and organizers.

Tim. He is in his early 60s and is recently retired from working at the Saint Mary's Hydro Power Plant in Sault Ste. Marie (locally known as "the Soo"), Michigan. He is a Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa Tribal member who lives in Marquette, Michigan. Tim is a fun-loving and tenderhearted Native man who has provided Native cultural teachings to area schools and tribal youth programs. He too is an avid fisherman, especially now that he is "officially" retired. His love for fishing was always being displayed on his caps and t-shirts that had fish, poles, lures and short slogans that read: "Fillet and Release" or "Gone Fishing." A few times during the week Tim would bring in a small bag of fish eggs or homemade fish cakes to share with others in the workshop and he was always the first one to arrive in the morning. He told me he was always an

early riser because of all the morning shiftwork he used to do and, of course, that is when he enjoyed fishing the most. He was a very patient man, much like my father, who always seemed to be quietly waiting for the rest of the *nDigiStorytellers* to gather in the morning or after breaks. Tim introduced himself in his Native language then switched into English. This is part of what he said:

I'm Black Squirrel from the Wolf Clan and my tribe is Sault Ste. Marie. My English name is Tim Derwin. After seeing some of [the digital stories], I'm just excited. I don't even know how to get it started, but I think this would be great for our tribe as well. I think it's a great thing! You know, I'm not much into technology. As you can see, I've got a flip phone and I don't text, but I do value the computer. [He paused.] I've been clean for 22 years. [He softly cried then took a moment to compose himself.] I never apologize for my tears. I learned a long time ago that those tears are a gift from our mothers and from women. I'm glad to see there are four women here today to help us through this program, because you guys are strong. Women are held in really high regard to me. For those reasons, I'm excited and hopefully this will be another part of my healing process too. I'm really looking forward to doing it and getting it out there and being able to share it with everybody. Hopefully, it will help somebody besides myself. Thanks for coming and thanks R.D. for inviting me to come and to be a part of it. *Miigwech!*

Introduction to *nDigiDreams* and the Research Project.

After all the *nDigiStorytellers* and *nDigiHelpers* had a chance to introduce themselves, Carmella and I introduced ourselves in the same manner as we did at the first KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. Then we began to further explain how we came upon a tool called "digital storytelling" and how we both intuitively knew it would be something good and positive "for our people" so we Indigenized it into something we call *nDigiStorytelling* and travel broadly to share it with others. Finally we explained, much like we did at the first KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, how we were trying to figure out *our* "digital storytelling recipe" and that we needed their help to understand what we do, how we do it, and why Native people, like themselves, are interested in attending our workshops to *make* and *share* digital stories within their communities. If they decided to participate, we told them the research project would

involve asking them questions at different points in the *nDigiStorytelling* and recording their thoughts and experiences through interviews and participant observation. After a short discussion, we proceeded to provide an introductory power-point presentation on our Four-Directions approach to *nDigiStorytelling* and then we took a morning break.

A few of the men stepped outside to smoke a cigarette while others of us went across to the nearby restroom or down the hallway to get a free cold fountain drink from the casino beverage station. During the break, Carmella and I spent time meeting with each individual to discuss risks and benefits and whether they would be interested in participating in our study by agreeing to sign an informed consent (see Appendix F). We explained that whether or not they decided to participate in our community-based participatory research project that they could still make a digital without any fee or obligation. Every person provided full written consent and agreed to participate in both our dissertation research projects. Since we also planned a community-wide *nDigiFest* on Friday, May 9, 2014, we also made sure they were interested in screening their forthcoming *nDigiStory* at this future event.

Opening Prayer

After everyone returned from the break, we gathered together to offer a prayer for the *nDigiStorytelling* work we were about to embark upon. I offered Linda some *asema* (tobacco) to do the opening prayer since she was the elder amongst us. First, she decided to burn sage in her abalone shell bowl and "smudge" everyone in the room with her golden eagle feather (see Figure 5.6). Afterwards, she held the *asema* in her right prayed in *Anishnaabemowin* (the Ojibwe language) and English. Then she took the offering outside and put it down on the earth for all of our prayers to be heard by the Water Spirits and Thunder Beings.

Figure 5.6. Linda Woods' eagle feather and abalone shell for smudging. (Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*).



Screening of *nDigiStory* Examples

We were now ready to watch a handful of *nDigiStories* that were released to share in our workshops with others. As discussed above in the fourth chapter, by screening various *nDigiStory* examples, the new *nDigiStorytellers* begin to see, hear and understand how digital stories are used to share important turning points in a person's "lived experience." They also begin to see and understand how individuals combine together their personal voice with photos, short video clips, music and sound effects into a 3–5 minute mini-movie. The first one we screened was Linda's first *nDigiStory* titled, A Gift of Love, about her journey to sobriety and healing (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhdIvEJMpsg). Afterwards, Linda shared a few words about how she experienced her *nDigiStoryMaking*:

When I first worked on my story, like I said last night, you really get into the details of it. It's like a project. You start something and you want to see it to the end. You want to see what it looks like and that's what kinda kept me going. I didn't cry until I saw it up on the screen. I've never seen it at all. I mean, I've heard my story and I've told my story many times, but I never saw it and felt it and that's when I started crying. I still cry today when I see it. . . . So, our stories are moving! Our stories are like that. It is moving out there somewhere, and if it helps someone along the way, well, yay! So I am really happy to be here so we can do this together!

On the first day of the workshop, we also showed two more digital stories from ATR's "Sowing Seeds of Recovery" program. The first was Tony Davis' titled, "Tony's Song" which can be found at: (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABNO8zkccoI). In it, Tony shares a personal story about how he found his sobriety through Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) that led

him back into his traditional ceremonies. The second was Chris Ballew's titled, "White Lightning" which can be found at: (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bsRCmoUTsRE). In it, Chris discusses his own recovery and growth through treatment, A.A., and traditional ceremonies. Since at least three us were involved in the making of the two above *nDigiStories*, we were able to provide comments about how each *nDigiStoryteller* made their mini-movie from beginning to end and how it has been shared with others.

On the morning of the second day, we screened three other digital stories: one about a Native homeless vet in Montana who is in recovery from drugs and alcohol; another about a young Native male in Arizona who used to drink alcohol until he remembered his parent's teachings; and the third about a Native woman in Minnesota who survived Heptitis C through traditional medicines. Finally, we selected two more *nDigiStories* to screen on the morning of the Day 3 that explored "lived experiences" in other tribes and with other topics: one was about a middle-aged Shoshone male teacher from the Wind River Reservation who shared his passion for running and youth in his community; and the other was about an older Laguna teacher who is passionate about transmitting the Keres language to children in their school program.

As each day progressed, the *nDigiStorytellers* could begin to see, hear and understand how *nDigiStories* evolve from a one-page script, to a shot list, to a storyboard and, then to an edited final movie. Tim commented:

The topics are different from what we are doing, but it still gets across a great message. It is good to see that it is not all about addiction stuff. It is good to see that there are also other parts of our lives that are positive and good.

Then, he asked what other types of *nDigiStories* we have done and I replied:

We have done digital stories on diabetes, tobacco prevention, cardiovascular disease, cancer; cultural sustainability and language revitalization; suicide; the importance of higher education; traditional ecology and climate change. Whatever the need is, we try to help. Sometimes we have developed digital stories to complement written health and wellness curricula and another time we used it as part of an evaluation tool.

R.D. asked if it were possible to get copies or links to all the *nDigiStories* we had that deals with alcohol recovery for his substance abuse program at KBIC. I told him we were in the process of cataloging all our *nDigiStories* and, with that topic in mind, we would first need to explore which *nDigiStorytellers* signed a release; then we would verbally contact them to double-check that we had their permission to share their personal story with his program. I told him 99% of them well most likely agree, but that showing respect was a very important value of ours work and guides our decisions, because most *nDigiStories* are so deeply personal. Indeed, there is interest in our work and Carmella and I have thought hard and discussed openly, with our growing *nDigiFamily*, our intent to find a respectful and culturally appropriate manner to share all the hundreds upon hundreds of co-created *nDigiStories* more widely. Most of all, we are still praying about it. One of the ways we have started screening "released" nDigiStories is by developing tribally-driven and tribally-based *nDigiFests* that usually includes a handful of local *nDigiStorytellers* who sit or stand in a half "circle" to talk about the *making* and *sharing* of their first 3-5 minute *nDigiStory*. The other half of the "circle" are their families, friends and co-workers who are watching and listening them "practice" teachings of the Seven Grandfathers—bravery, humility, honesty, wisdom, truth, etc.

Spring 2014 nDigiStoryCircle

After another break, we regrouped at the "circle" of chairs in the northern part of the Chippewa Conference Room. We closed the two entry doors leading into the public hallway and turned down the lights. We asked everyone to get whatever snacks or drinks they needed and/or to bring a draft of their script, if they had one. As with all our workshops, we set the "ground rules" for our *nDigiStoryCircle* and described how the process compared to "talking and sharing circles," which they might have attended. The *nDigiHelpers*, all women, scattered themselves

across the "circle" as if forming four points of a contemplative shield that would protect and encircle the Native men who stepped forward to share a story that would help another in their KBIC community. Before we started, we asked if we could take a "mock" picture of the *nDigiStoryCircle* and everyone agreed (see Figure 5.7). It was a unique request because we never take photos, videotape or record this part of our *nDigiStorytelling* ceremony.



Figure 5.7. Beginning the Spring 2014 *nDigiStoryCircle*. (Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*).

I asked for a volunteer to go first and Tim raised his hand. In this second KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, Linda was holding her golden eagle feather and she offered it to Tim to hold and he reached out for it gladly. Depending on tribal norms and group interest, we will either pass an eagle feather in an *nDigiStoryCircle*, or we will not. Also, we might wait to offer a prayer at the beginning of the *nDigiStoryCircle* instead of at the start of the four-day workshop, or we might not. Very rarely have we not ever offered a prayer for support and guidance in our *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, especially within a tribal setting. Most often I will discuss this matter, beforehand, with the local organizer who most likely will understand local cultural protocols and practices and we will decide upon on the best course of action.

As I mentioned earlier, Tim was eager and ready to press on when he walked in the door that morning so after he took the eagle feather, he took a deep breath in then let it out before he began to read his draft script. He got choked up while reading some parts his story and cried freely when telling other parts. Since he was the first to go in the *nDigiStoryCircle*, I only imagined he was showing the other *nDigiStorytellers* how open and deeply authentic a human

being could go within the "circle" that was recently created and being held by those who sat next to him—brothers from his Four Thunders Drum family and sisters from his newly growing *nDigiFamily*. After Tim was finished and we had a chance to ask experiential, spatial and relational questions that connected him back to past "lived experiences" when he was engaged and *not* engaged in drinking behavior. After he felt ready and confident to get into the second draft of his script (which was actually his first as I will discuss later), we took a break for lunch.

Without delay, Donnie, Jerry Lee and Marty, three *nDigiStorytellers* from the first workshop, and Paul, who is Donnie's nephew and a member of the Four Thunders Drum, all came into the room as if someone had just rang a lunch bell. *nDigiDreams* paid for each new digital storyteller's lunch by having them order off the Lucky 7 Restaurant menu. Our meals were served at the large "dinner" table we set up in the conference room. Immediately, there was a lot of joking and laughing among all the people gathered at the table and shortly after the food arrived the men began talking about Lake Trout and fishing, again. The Four Thunders Drum also told a story about how several of them recently loaded into a KBIC passenger van for a 2,500 mile round trip drive to Denver, CO to attend the annual White Bison Wellbriety conference and they shared all the playful antics that happened along the way.

After lunch, the new *nDigiStorytellers* and their *nDigiHelpers* gathered back into "the circle" to finish discussing their story ideas. The men shared freely about their families growing up and how they survived alcohol, drugs, and everything else that comes to our reservations. Although they were not members of one extended family, like at the first workshop, they were all Native brothers who sat on the Four Thunder Drums together. This meant, at some level, they knew each other's work and extended family networks.

Instead of writing notes in my turquoise *nDigiStoryCircle* notebook, which I usually do, I just sat and listened intently because I noticed many of the other *nDigiHelpers* were already doing so. Often, we will ask permission to take hand-written notes because they help us remember important parts of their story or idiosyncratic words or phrases *nDigiStorytellers* use to describe a specific moment and sometimes these can be woven into their first script. This active listening allowed me to more fully witness each person's hands and body movements. For example, I noticed how each person held Linda's eagle feather in the *nDigiStoryCircle*. Two held it in their right hand, another in his left. While one was talking, he kept slowly caressing the eagle feather from its stem to its tip. Then there was another person who held the feather upside down between his thumb and forefinger and gently twirled it. As I closely watched the eagle feather, while someone was talking, I could see it come alive and carry a person's "breath of life" deeper and further down the path.

I also began to notice each person's breathing patterns and what parts of their stories brought them to tears and what parts made them laugh or sigh deeply. Sometimes when there were long drawn-out pauses, I found myself breathing into the silent space for them. A Kleenex box was present, but no one used it until the end of the *nDigiStoryCircle*, which lasted almost four hours.

We closed "the circle" by letting everyone know to respect each person's life story and confidentiality by leaving whatever was said inside "the circle," except for that part which will make it into their first digital story. We gave everyone a hug, secured our equipment, then went to our hotel rooms to rest and relax before dinner.

Day 1: Facilitators' debrief. We met in corner booth at the Lucky 7 Restaurant in the Ojibwa Casino for dinner and our evening facilitator debrief. It was not as quiet and private as

"The Nurturing Lodge" where we often sat and debriefed during the first workshop, but at least we did not have to hear over pots clanging in the kitchen while one of us was preparing a meal to eat.

Clara pointed out that two of the men became sober through AA while the other two became sober through finding their culture. Linda commented how she could tell which ones were in Alcoholics Anonymous (A. A.) because of the way they told their story. She explained:

I have been taught in A.A. you are supposed to tell: what it was like, what happened, and what it is like now and you can do that in two minutes, or five minutes, or 15 minutes or an hour. In A.A., that is how you tell your story.

We talked about the length of time it took for some individuals to share their story while others did it more briefly. We also discussed how we noticed a difference with the level of sharing among our *nDigiStorytellers*. We agreed that those who have been in long-term recovery makes it easier for them to share because, as Linda says, they are used to sharing either in AA meeting or through our cultural practices, like sweat lodges and healing ceremonies, where individuals often engage in deep introspection and life reviews. Carmella stated:

Overall, I think it was fun for them to have that beautiful time to tell their story. Normally, it would take an hour or two to go through the story circle, but I think we have to find the nugget in their life when everything changed. Sometimes it takes time for them to dig down into their past, but when they find that turning point, we can build upon it.

I added:

I think there's a clear balancing act in pulling out the story that THEY want to tell and going to the transitional moments that THEY want to say, but using our skills to build that story so it is a really interesting story.

Since all of us have experience working with Native digital storytellers, we know how important it is for each person to "own" their own story, voice, and script. Sometimes after the

nDigiStoryCircle we'll ask them further questions like: when did this happen? Or, how did that make you feel? Carmella offered:

Sometimes they'll hit it on the head because they'll take you to that place. They will take you by the hand and you will see it and smell it and taste it in your mouth. Whatever it is, those are very descriptive moments.

I mentioned to the *nDigiHelpers* how I purposefully decided not to take notes, but decided to actively listen and how it made me notice different things like a digital storyteller's breathing patterns and body gestures. I tried to explain how I also noticed each person had "a certain look in their eye" when they were doing a life review:

Brenda: I think they all did it, except for Tim who was reading his script, but when he put his paper down, it happened. It is a look that we probably all have when our mind is travelling and going way back in time. It was interesting to watch! The carpet in that room also had this intense pattern that seemed to help them travel back in time. I saw a lot of them staring at it. Yeah, there was this distant look in their eyes when they were looking into their past. It was like they were looking out a window, but not seeing what was there.

Linda: It is like looking at nothing!

Clara: It is like daydreaming!

Brenda: Yeah, something happens to their eyes when they are traveling through time and space.

I asked our *nDigiHelpers* to share their feedback about working with all men. I told them this was a first for *nDigiDreams* and that I felt that I had witnessed some deep sharing of their lives. Linda replied:

Well, I think they were being prepared for one thing. R.D., Jerry Lee, and even Marty and Carrie last night said they trusted you and they conveyed that to these guys. Also, they all have long-term recovery and they've learned to trust and respect women. Our [Ojibwe] culture says to respect women. . . And, with the prayers, I think, Spirit was already working on them. . . Our people [the Ojibwe] used to have clan mothers and we governed the tribes most of the time or they would consult with the women. It's different from patrilineal societies I have worked among in the Western states.

Carmella surmised:

I wanted to add something to that. I was thinking about Janice and how last night Jerry Lee and Donnie talked about how they were impacted by her level of healing. Donnie said, 'Well, she's the matriarch and she helps everyone and she's always around.'

Linda added: "So they were watching out for her." Carmella continued: "So they were watching out for her and if she could go through this and come out of it telling that story about her self-healing and her family healing, then the guys definitely knew about us and trusted us."

We ended our facilitator debrief by talking about which digital stories we would screen the next day and how we would start with a morning check-in. I asked Linda if it would be appropriate to ask each of the men to offer a prayer each day and if I could just give them some tobacco to do it and she said, "yeah, perfect, perfect." I realized, in that moment, that I have been among my *Anishinaabe* relatives enough times to also learn some of their cultural ways too.

Day 2: Zhaawanong (South)—Planning

May 6, 2014. In the morning, we arrived early to make the coffee and to set up work stations with an assigned laptop computer. We roll them around in two black Pelican suitcases; it used to be one big one, that is when I used to tease airline baggage attendants I was a magician. Our laptop computers are called *nDigiFireBox* 1, 2, 3, etc. We gave them this name because of the crystal light they emit to help heal people through the stories they write and the movies they make on the machines.

Tim told me he used to work the early shift at the electric generating plant on the Sault Ste. Marie River and he always gets up at 5 a.m. That explains why he was always the first one in the room ready to get going. That morning I decided to go into the casino to grab me a quick cup of coffee while ours was still brewing. I ran into Don near the entryway smoking a cigarette. He smiled and motioned for me to come over by tilting his head back. I did. Then he said:

I wanted to tell you something. I want to apologize. R.D. told me there would be a lot of sitting in this workshop and working at a computer. I almost didn't come because I have a bad back and all this sitting doesn't help. I want to apologize because it is hard for me to sit still. I have to get up and move around or I'll get stiff.

I told him not to worry and to take as many breaks as he needed. I told him the most non-stop sitting happens in the *nDigiStoryCircle* and then, Afterwards, everyone is working at their own pace and can get up and move around when they need to. I asked if he wanted us to bring in a different chair for him, but he declined. Within our four-directions approach, we know we are dealing with the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual sides of all our participants and try to help them through each, especially if any concern comes up.

After I got my coffee and Don finished his cigarette, we returned to the conference room. R.D. and the other *nDigiHelpers* were all in the room, except for Robert, who didn't come in until we were doing our morning reflections. Clara and Carmella were looking at photos we took of the *nDigiStoryCircle*. They were telling R.D. about all the orbs we saw on our drive to Baraga, MI and showing him pictures on Carmella's camera that showed two orbs around him in the *nDigiStoryCircle* on the first day of the workshop. Clara said her son told her "white orbs mean ancestor spirits." R.D. found it interesting because he said his *Anishinaabe* name is "Spirits All Around." While R.D. started to tell a story about his ancestors, I saw Linda getting her eagle feather out and beginning to "smudge" off the other *nDigiStorytellers* and their laptop computers so I went over to help her.

We asked for a volunteer to do the opening prayer for the day and Tim immediately said he would do it. I gave him some *asema* (tobacco) and he began praying in *Anishnaabemowin* (the Ojibwe language) and English. When he finished, we asked our *nDigiStorytellers* to share their reflections about the *nDigiStorytelling* process up to this point. We told them we wanted to

know what they were thinking and feeling as they left the digital storytelling workshop last night or as they were preparing to come in this morning and that they could share whatever they wanted.

Morning Reflections: "I Am Not that Person Anymore"

Tim started out first by stating, "I really enjoyed process. It was well-organized and well-run and I think we stayed on task pretty good." I thanked him for his prayer and jumping in to start the morning reflection session.

R.D. was next. He shared his initial response about process (see Media 5.1):

For me it was emotional. I don't like it, but I am not that person no more. You know, when you guys came in November [2013] you did it with the other five and they all clicked and they all got closer. It was a good thing. You know, we are doing a lot of sharing here and it is a good thing. I know this is going to turn out nice, but, being an addict, I want things done right away. I can't wait for the finished product.



Media 5.1. R.D. morning reflection. (Used with permission of *nDigiDreams*). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/-fEnIOIUDvo

Robert came in while R.D. was talking and slid quietly into his chair. When R.D. finished, he apologized for being late. He said he slept through his alarm clock. I told him Tim did an opening prayer and that we were doing morning reflections—it is a way for each person to check-in and share what they thought and how they felt about the *nDigiStorytelling* process up to this point. I asked for another volunteer and Robert asked to go next. He said (see Media 5.2):

I'm not going to lie. I was as nervous as hell. I did not know what to expect here, but after sharing some of my story I began thinking about how many people were in my life today and when I was younger. Old memories started triggering left and right. . I called up my mom. I said, 'Hey, lets go thru some of those photos together.' She said, 'Yeah, yeah, I'll get the box ready.' I thought she had this little box [he uses his hands to show a

small size]. Well, she ended up having a big box full of photos [he opens his hands and arms wide]! We went thru the whole thing and by 3 o'clock we got through most of it. I think by doing this I could get a lot closer to my family again.



Media 5.2. Robert morning reflection. (Used with permission of *nDigiDreams*). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/Y5jPmh2UPe4

Don was the final *nDigiStoryteller* to share his morning reflections with the small group. He stroked his goatee and leaned forward in his chair and said (see Media 5.3):

I too was exhausted last night like R.D. The night before I had a lot of trouble sleeping. I had a lot of thoughts going through my mind, but like Tim said, 'It was a good exhaustion.' I felt grateful. It's been so long time since I've drank that I tend to forget how horrible my life was when I was drinking. And, to think about people who may do this and where they are at and how crazy and impossible it seems to get away from that life, you know, because I thought it was impossible and here I am today, so many years later, without alcohol. And to have brothers who share the same road with me, makes me proud and hopeful. That maybe this and all our stories can touch somebody and give them hope because I was pretty hopeless then. I didn't like the way I was living and I didn't know any way out. It is somewhat a miracle that we're here telling the story about how we changed our lives or how Creator changed our lives for us.



Media 5.3. Don morning reflection. (Used with permission of *nDigiDreams*). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/KktdDOuP6ZQ

Then, I asked the *nDigiHelpers* to "share one word about how they feel today, the second day of the workshop." Linda's word was "tired." She said she sometimes can't sleep in hotel rooms and didn't get to bed until late. Clara said, "Excited. I'm really excited to get going." I said, "Really excited." I told them I was ready to get through their scripts and find that story

they want to share. Finally, Carmella's word was, "Lethargic." She added: "I have been eating too much gluten, lately, and it kinda makes me feel tired and a little lethargic. Yesterday, I had a hard time because I was eating fish sandwiches and mashed potatoes. I'm really grateful for your stories we heard yesterday and I can see how powerful they are. *Mitgwech*! [Thank you.]"

After the morning prayer and reflections, we turned our attention to screening a few more *nDigiStory* examples from the "Sowing The Seeds of Recovery" program (http://www.atrhealingcircle.com/sowing-the-seeds-of-recovery).

Scriptwriting: "I Think It's a Pretty Cool Process"

In the scriptwriting process, we take individuals where they want to go and we help them in whatever manner we can. For example, Tim mentioned his vision is slightly impaired and so we set the font size larger on his Microsoft Word document. And, Don alerted us that he had some back problems and that working at a computer with his arms forward might be painful, so we asked if he wanted to get started with his script by writing in longhand (see Figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8. nDigiStorytellers scriptwriting in Spring 2014 workshop. (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).



For those who have never been formally trained to write high school or college essays, they tend to be the easiest to work with because they are not always "thinking" about their script. Instead, they tend to keep closer to their "feelings" and use more analogies and descriptive words and sentences. Again, we encouraged the second group of *nDigiStorytellers* to not concern themselves with word length or writing conventions, in the beginning, but to just get down on paper "the story that only they can tell."

Since we had enough *nDigiHelpers* to assign one to each new *nDigiStoryteller* to help them with their scriptwriting, we took this route to develop the first drafts of their scripts. After a while, Carmella and I will usually read through a version of everyone's scripts and provide additional feedback until we get to a final draft that will be printed and read out loud into a microphone in order to make a voice recording for their digital story. The scriptwriting process took the entire second day. As mentioned in the fourth chapter, during scriptwriting, our experienced *nDigiHelpers* engage in an iterative process that involves checking story sequences, asking for descriptive details, and fine-tuning sentences to bring out the "real" lives, experiences, dreams, thoughts and visions of our Native men in sobriety.

In the following pages, I provide a description of how each *nDigiStoryteller* experienced the process of scriptwriting. I include comments and observations by the *nDigiHelpers* who were in the Spring 2014 *nDigiGarden* helping to weed, transplant, and protect words and sentences to create final story scripts. I also include segments from the post-script interviews I had with each person.

Tim was the only individual who brought a working script to read in the *nDigiStoryCircle*. What was unique and intriguing about Tim's script was that he said his wife, who is a teacher, helped him write the script he brought on the first day of the workshop. He described his pre-workshop writing process to me:

I wrote my first script out over a few days. I was taught that as long as you feel good about what you're doing just keep doing it. So, I just kept rewriting it and then something would change and I would stop and a couple of days later I would go back to it again. My wife Peggy typed it out the night before I left.

When I asked about what he thought about the scriptwriting process in our nDigiStorytelling workshop, he told me his final version was somewhat similar to his first. He explained how his wife not only typed it but also rewrote parts of it. He said: Yesterday, when I called my wife to talk, I told her I read the script and noticed there were parts where she tried to straighten my words. I told her how I tried to put it back into the kind of words I would say and how you girls want me to change everything back.

I asked: "Do you understand why we do that? He replied, "Yeah, because it is me. I don't know if I, or if she, put them in her words, but it changed my thoughts. I think maybe she changed some of that stuff to protect me or to not make it be quite as bad." Linda helped Tim with rewriting his script to reflect his personal speech and nuances in his delivery (see Figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9 nDigiHelper Linda working on script with Tim. (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).



Tim continued:

To me it was hard compressing it down to those 500 words or whatever we were trying to get it down too. It was kinda frustrating. I say frustrating because this is the way it is, this is the way I write, and that is the way I thought it should have been. When we got to the end of the finished product, it was just more focused! I guess I was trying to tell my whole life story in five minutes and it ain't going to happen. [He laughs]. I had to leave a lot of stuff out. The frustrating part is I didn't know I was going to get it down, but it worked out really well and I think it is a pretty cool process.

Tim also shared a realization he had during the scriptwriting process:

It happened when Linda asked me: "How was it like in your family? What did your parents do?" There were some things I wrote that seemed more complicated, than they actually were. Like I thought that drinking was a big problem in my family, but as we started going through my script I realized my mom and dad didn't go to jail and I never saw my parents fight in all the time I was growing up. [Alcohol] never affected my dad's job. He worked at the same place a long, long time and he always went to work. So that made me wonder: why was I such a big alcoholic? It was an addiction. I got addicted to it and I was not a social drinker. I drank for one reason . . . just to get drunk and I didn't stop until everything was gone and I couldn't get any more.

Linda was Tim's assigned *nDigiHelper* and she shared more about the process they went through together on the second day.

He had a script already and Tim took charge and jumped on the computer to type it over. He did not copy it verbatim, but added his own words. The first draft of his script was 800 words and then we went sentence by sentence. At times I would ask him to be more descriptive in his statements. For example, he wrote: 'the priests were harsh.' I'd ask him to tell me more and he'd describe how they made him kneel on pencils, not for a little while, but for along time. He also told me how there were other things they'd do too like spank him and make him eat Ivory soap. I told him, "There! Write that in your script."

Like most seasoned digital storytellers, Linda began to not only hear and read what Tim was writing in his script, but she also began to notice when he got quiet or shifted his body while reviewing a section in his script. She said she asked: "what happened there?" And, he began to explain how that was the time he began missing a lot of family time because "he was out drinking with his buddies." She said he realized that that was "the pivotal moment" in his life and which led him to his sobriety. Upon realizing that moment, Tim said he wanted to title his movie, "AHA Moment."

At one point in Tim's scriptwriting, Linda said: "Something happened! He lost his cursor. He highlighted a certain part of his script and then in the next moment it was all gone! It disappeared! He lost quite a bit. I tried to help him restore it." Linda explained how they were able to retrieve some of it, but not all. I remember her getting up at that point and burning some more sage to "smudge" their laptop computer off. Often, that is what we will do in our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops when the keyboard freezes, the Internet is slow, or the computer screen gives us an "error" message. It always seems to make everything flow easier!

In my post-script interview with Tim, I asked him how it feels to share parts of his life story in this manner. He responded:

Good . . . in this manner . . . and, scary. I'm hoping people aren't going to react to it. I'm not so much worried about how the guys or the community who are going to see it will react. I'm going to show it to my family, my brothers and sisters. They are all going to see it and I'm wondering how they are going to accept it and how they will feel. Like I said, it has been a release. It feels good to me to get some of that stuff off of me and to

be able to show it openly. Not to be proud of it, but to be proud to be able to *share* it. Now, that's a big step!

Tim continued:

Just by talking about it openly and expressing it and speaking and writing and talking to everybody about it—was good. We are always afraid of criticism and what people are going to say and think, eh? Well, here I don't feel that with any of you guys and nobody is here to judge me about how my life was. We are just here getting the story out. I think it is cool and I enjoyed it!

Carmella helped R.D. with his first draft. She said when she sat down with him, she asked if he wanted to sit at the computer and he said, "No way!" She responded, "Do you want me to type for you?" He said, "Okay" and then she told him, "We'll start the script wherever you want." Afterwards, Carmella said:

He started talking verbatim, like in the story circle. He went from dot to dot and when he tells his story he likes to speak in details. When it was, the exact date, and how much time elapsed. It had to be precise. Not two weeks, but one and a half weeks.

Carmella said she typed as fast as she could without thinking or saying anything.

Afterwards, they went back and pulled out a few more details and tried to "massage" the script down. In the beginning, it was 1,500 words. At a certain point, Carmella told him, "you know what is happening here? You have two stories in one." She said they were both important stories to tell—one was about growing up with alcohol abuse and recovering from it; and, the other was about a recent gambling addiction and how a person can become cross-addicted. She said she offered him the option of doing two digital stories. She explained, "I think it will be okay if you have two stories. You will focus on the alcohol one and we will help you with the gambling one so you don't get too stressed out." He agreed. Carmella continued: "So we started looking at both scripts and editing it down and he got the hang of it. Then, he started directing me. He got excited! He wanted to have a finished script by the end of the day." Like Marty in

our first workshop, Carmella said R.D. knew what he wanted to keep in and what he was willing to let go.

During the post-scriptwriting interview, I asked R.D. to share his thoughts and feelings about the process. He concurred with Carmella:

It was tedious to break it down smaller to 400. There was some stuff that was hard to take out and we only had so much time. I didn't want to take anything out. I wanted to keep everything in. I had 1,500 words to start out with, now we are down to 630. [My story] is not as thorough as it would have been, if I used everything, but it keeps the message. It is interesting how [Carmella] showed me how it is done. We do it a sentence at a time and I try to describe what it looked like or how it felt.

Afterwards, I asked R.D. if he thought digital storytelling could help other people he works with who are in recovery. He said:

Yep, it would help them a lot! Like yesterday, we all shared a lot and it helps me to talk about it, again. It helps me to sit and write about where I was at and where I could be. It is a good reminder! I think seeing my digital story will be a good reminder for me. It is what I need every once and a while, instead of taking things for granted which I do once in a while.

Robert wanted some assistance with typing his script so we assigned Clara to be his *nDigiHelper*. He said if he were to attempt it himself, he would have to use two fingers and it would take him all week. Sometimes writing parts of your life story into a digital story can be emotional. Clara said this is what she noticed when she was helping Robert. She said:

He was still very emotional. He still breaks down. He'll stop, take a breath, and we'll go on or we'll take a break. The emotions and anger are still there, but he just wants to keep going and do the work.

As Native digital storytellers we are very mindful about the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual toll that our workshops can take on an individual, now and then. We look at *nDigiStorytelling* as a ceremony. As *nDigiHelpers*, we have all sat through Native ceremonies. We know how to use our prayers and how to create a nurturing place and a trusting presence to help guide a "relative" forward to do their own self-healing. We have seen and felt it happen in

our Native ceremonies; similarly, we see and feel it happen in our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops. We also know when and how to respect a person's decision to change course or step back and we honor a person's decision when they want to "keep going and do the work."

While Don was writing his script longhand, I floated between *nDigiHelpers* listening to them work with *nDigiStorytellers*. I also read through final scripts and provided everyone with feedback. When I was helping Robert with his, I noticed he had family spilling out of the box he had next to him on the table. He would pick up one of the photos, look closely at it then set it down. He did it while I was asking him to describe details in different parts of his story. When I conducted a post-scriptwriting interview about his experience, he said:

Robert: I started thinking about things I hadn't talked about in years. It was coming through the writing. I started to ask myself curious questions. How did that happen? Why is this process different from counseling? It is different from going to Marquette.

Brenda: What is different about it?

Robert: Repeat, again.

Brenda: You probably told parts of your story in different ways during counseling.

Robert: Yeah.

Brenda: What is different about this process?

Robert: I am touching base with when I could first remember alcohol being around to the last time I consumed it. I am actually thinking about, you know, all the little details that I used to do instead of being rushed in a one-hour session with a counselor. Here I was able to think about the first taste and why I did it. It tasted like crap! Then, after I sipped on it a couple times, it felt funny.

Brenda: That's interesting about the time difference—counseling is usually a one-hour session and here we spend a whole day on it. That's a lot of places and memories to talk about. I noticed you had your photos here and you kept looking at them. Did it help you with your script?

Robert: As I was putting my story together and we were skimming through things, I'd think, 'Hey this is around that era!' I have not seen these photos in years and I was able to place them at different parts of my story. I was able to remember a little more from my past. I guess I was trying to put it all together. Basically I was connecting dots!

The scriptwriting process *nDigiStorytellers* go through is not only a way for individuals to look back at their lives, but it also helps them understand and better appreciate their present life. Robert explains:

For me, the process felt relieving because there isn't a whole lot of people who know my side of the story. There were things I have left out for years—the first time I had a sip of beer, how far I allowed myself to go with the drinking, how I let peer pressure in. It's funny to look back at what I said and then to read what I have written here. It is kinda nice to know I survived it all. Those were hard times for me. Now, look at me, I have made so much out of those memories. It is almost as if I could see how my rebirth, if you want to say it that way, was taking place to help me become the person I am today. I have somebody to go to talk. Today, I have my wife, my mom, my sisters and my brothers; back then, I didn't have too much and I was trying to hide myself most of the time with drugs and alcohol.

Like Robert, Don mentioned he typed really slow. He showed me a few notes he jotted down in a spiral notebook. I told him he could start his script by writing it in longhand and that I would help him type it up. Don was very methodical in his scriptwriting. He would write a few sentences. Take a long pause, stroke his goatee, take a sip of coffee, then, write some more. Every now and then he would get up to stretch his legs and smoke a cigarette next door in the casino. He worked hard writing in solitude, much like I remember Carrie did during the first workshop.

After Don spent some time writing his script in longhand, Clara sat down and typed it up on the computer for him. Then, I sat down with him sentence by sentence and began flushing out the details. When I asked Don about his thoughts regarding the scriptwriting process, he commented, "It was easier for me to tell it than to write it down." He explained:

It was a little harder to put my story into written word. It was a little harder to wander off task, I guess, with the writing versus the speaking. Some of the things that I said in telling my story kinda lost their meaning in my writing. It feels hard to go thru a linear piece. It seems like a lot of work. Maybe it was a little more challenging because of my lack of computer skills.

When I worked with Don on his script, I discussed how people process their story differently. I told him some people are more visual and show their story through photos, while others are great orators and can use their voice to weave different strands of their life together into a complex and beautifully designed basket. Don replied, "Yeah, it is definitely telling than writing for me. He said he had told his story many times in A.A. meetings and to Father John, but "by writing it down I am finding a little insight into different things in my story like the relationship I had with my mother."

During the second day of the workshop, the *nDigiStorytellers* were eager to get into their scripts. They seemed more relaxed with themselves and each other. However, you wouldn't think that if you heard them joking throughout the day. At one point, Tim remarked, "we need to bring in a massage table because my brain is hurting." Then, Don said, "Earlier, I suggested sitting in a hot tub." Still later, Don quipped, "I haven't worked this hard since seventh grade!" Afterwards, Robert chimed in, "I thought I was coming here to relax and have a vacation!"

At lunchtime, Donnie and Jerry Lee joined us at the large "dinner" table and they shared their own memories about writing a digital storytelling script. There was lots of laughter, support, and camaraderie. The scriptwriting took a little longer than expected, but we knew we would not begin to record voices until the next morning. After almost everyone was done late in the day, except for R.D.'s second script about his gambling addiction, we showed the *nDigiStorytellers* how to create a shortlist.

Day 2: Facilitators' debrief. After all the n*DigiStorytellers* quickly left at 5:00 p.m., most likely to go fishing for smelt, Clara, Linda, Carmella and I quickly plopped into a chair around the large "dinner" table. Some of us kicked off our shoes, while others left back to their room to change into comfortable clothes. Some of us ate our leftovers from lunch, while others

ordered a fresh dinner off the restaurant menu. We were each taking care of our own needs after being *nDigiHelpers* all day long. Like always, we easily delved into our facilitators debrief and began talking about scripts and the scriptwriting process. It is always "a teaching moment" for Carmella and I to share a little more with our *nDigiHelpers* about how to work with a digital storytelling script, for example, Carmella explained:

Sometimes when I'm working with scripts I will take one little sentence and show how it can be changed to have more effect. I'll say to them, 'let me read this to you. Listen to the beat.' Then, they'll say, 'Yeah, I hear it. I like that!' I tell them that we don't like to tell the whole story up front, but that we work *to build* the story. We'll start to move back and forth with their script and they'll get all excited.

Linda remarked, "It's like a dance!" and Carmella and I both smile and nod our heads in agreement.

I interjected about how funny it was, for me, to hear a room full of male *nDigiStorytellers* compare the word counts in their scripts by the end of the day. Tim started by saying, "We have 400 words!" R.D. said, "We have 650!" Then, Robert shouted, "We are at 900 words." A little while later he teased, "And, we are *still* at 900 words!" I said it made me wonder if they did that when they all went fishing together, that is, if they compared the sizes of the fish they caught at the end of the day. In all the hundreds of digital storytelling workshops we have held, I can't think of one that was all Native men.

After we spent a little time picking up the room and putting away the equipment, we went back to the "dinner" table to finish our facilitators debrief. I began by telling the *nDigiHelpers* how exciting it was to see a young Native man who enjoyed working with his hands—making arrows, sewing quivers, and beading medallions. I said, "We come from an oral tradition and we do a lot of things with our hands like talking, weaving, basket making and now digital storytelling!" Linda said in her language they have a term called *Ekinoomaaged*. She said, "In

English the word means teacher, but that sounds kind of flat. English has robbed us of the beauty of our language." She continued:

What it really means is a person who shows you how and that is how we learn. To me, that is what you are doing here too. You are showing how to put [digital stories] together and the people are having a part in doing this and creating it. As Native people, that is how we really learn. Show me how to do it and I can do it, but don't just read it to me out of a book.

This method of teaching is very important in our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops. It was especially useful for Robert who told us later one day:

I don't do so well with books [laughs]. If somebody is telling me something, I can get it. Or, if they're showing me how to make something, you know, doing some sort of hands-on-experience, then, I can pick it up right away! But if you put a book in front of me, it's like, I'm not comprehending it.

As with all our conversations, a person's comment will make us think about other stories. I told a story about a former colleague and friend of mine who is a Yakima woman and how she told about surviving cancer multiple times in her digital story. Like Robert, she did a lot of work with her hands—she hand-carved wooded saddles and sewed fully beaded buckskin covers onto them. I told them that after she finished making her first digital story, she told me that typing on the computer keyboard became like "a buffer" for her. She said it made her able to get through her *whole* cancer-related story in one sitting. She said she has never done that before; she has never told anyone her *whole* story, not even her mom.

In our facilitator debrief that evening, we engaged in a lengthy exchange about how laptop computers can be a spiritual healing experience for some individuals. The following excerpt is from a dialogue we had about the much larger *nDigiStorytelling* process we are all engaged in:

Clara: What I really think is happening is that in the oral [delivery] there is so much emotion in your voice and sometimes it's hard for people to talk, but when you're writing it is a step in making it real and actual. You can touch it and see it. I think the computer

almost takes some of the emotion away because it is so technical to do it as opposed to writing it.

Carmella: I think it is like looking through a lens of a camera. It is like everything becomes hyper-focused and everything around you, which includes feelings and emotions, becomes blurry. You don't hear your phone go off. It is almost like you have been inside a part of the computer, right?

Brenda: Yeah.

Carmella: How much does this *nDigiFireBox*, which is part crystal and part sand, absorb the energy and emotion that is coming from you? In this sense, it is so spiritual because it makes a connection to place, land, water, orbs and whatever. You become part of the spiritual and natural elements used to make this computer.

Linda: And, it works because our lives and stories are also spiritual. All of this came from the Creator, otherwise, why would we be smudging them down? We believe there are spiritual things in the story and we are working hand-in-hand with the computer, even if we lose stuff, there is a reason, right?

Brenda: Yep.

Linda: [Digital storytelling] opens the door for more healing. What I think these guys are going through is that it is opening their hearts, their lives, including their families and their culture. I think because we see it as spiritual; that is what makes this whole process dynamic and powerful.

We finally closed our conversation by starting to plan for the next day. Based on the contents of their scripts, we decided upon a set of *nDigiStory* examples to screen. We were tired at the end of the second day, but we were in sync. We know when this happens because we start to finish each other's sentence. Below is an example of how we ourselves have come to describe what we do in a four-day *nDigiStorytelling* process:

Brenda: It is like a wave! First the story is spoken and then all the sudden there is another wave that comes—the script writing!

Carmella: Because once you have the script,

Linda: that is the heart, the absolute heart.

Carmella: Yeah, it is conceived in the story circle, then the heart starts growing and beating. Once [the story] hits voice recording, it is birthed. The spirit comes spilling out and the vibration of it is now a part of everything around it. It is alive and it is vibrating,

Linda: like our regalia!

Day 3: Ningaabi'anong (West)—Creating

May 7, 2014. Unlike at the first KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop at the Aurora Borealis Resort, where I could smell the air and feel the wind beginning to turn cold, in the Chippewa Conference Room I had no clue what the weather was doing outside because there were no windows. However, when I walked in, I still used those same senses to smell the coffee percolating and to feel the excitement stirring in the room. Tim, R.D., and Linda were all happy and laughing. On the long eight-foot table near Tim's workspace were raw fish eggs and fried fishcakes that he brought to share with all of us. As I began pouring my first cup of coffee, I overheard the guys talking about smelting nets and gallon buckets. It appeared many of them went fishing last night. In fact, we were waiting for Robert to arrive; I heard he was out fishing late, again.

R.D. brought in a bright orange Nike shoebox and a large photo album full of his family photos. Eventually, he sat down and began looking at them with Tim. "Here is my mom and dad when they got married." Tim would say, "Holy cow, is that your dad?" Pretty soon Don brought over his yellow Kodak envelope with family photos and began showing them too. Carmella and I stepped over to look at them too. Finally, Robert came in with his photos and his drum.

I got everything started by welcoming everyone and telling them what our next steps were—gathering media and voice recording. Linda began "smudging" everyone clock-wise around the room. She did our laptop computers too; she joked, "They need a little help because they want to update in the middle of our stuff." Tim replied, "I can relate to that. All my hard work is gone! I was saving it, but then all the sudden it was gone!" When Linda completed "smudging," we asked for one of the *nDigiStorytellers* to offer a morning prayer and Don

stepped forward. I gave him some *asema* and he said one of the most beautiful and humble prayers I have heard one of our participants pray. He took us on a journey of gratitude "for another day of life so that we may be decent human beings for our future generations."

Morning Reflections: "It Was a Good Exhaustion!"

On the third day of the workshop, we asked the *nDigiStorytellers* to speak with us about their thoughts and feelings at this point in the process.

Tim shared:

I was exhausted, again, yesterday, but it was a good exhaustion. To me, it was a faster day yesterday than the first day because we were so focused on trying to get the script down to a proper size. Last night, I didn't think so much. I was excited to get the process going again. I was looking forward to coming today and to keep it going. I really enjoy it!

Robert said:

Like my brother there, who said he was mentally tired. I was like that too, when I got home. I thought about sitting on the couch and, you know, watching tv and stuff. Then, I thought, 'No, I got to get out and go relax.' I went down to the creek about ten minutes after I left this class and I got a fish. I ran back home and put it on the grill. I was with my wife and daughters and we were loving it. We were laughing and having fun and, for me, that helped me get over being mentally tired. It felt like I was letting out more energy. I was not thinking about this. I wanted to let what we had done here be fresh today. Like my brother, I also went fishing last night, but I stayed out a little later than I wanted to [he laughs]. But, it was worth it for me! And, yes, I swear I'll set the alarm clock for tomorrow! I am having fun!

R.D. offered:

I was tired, too. When I got home, I took a nap but in the back of my mind I knew I wanted to go fishing and we did! Me and my boy! We didn't catch nothing but it was good exercise. It was a good day. I was looking forward to today and, hopefully, Friday at 6 o'clock will be here. [He is referring to when the community screening or *nDigiFest* will take place].

Don was the last to provide his input. He candidly stated:

Going though this process, for me, is kinda rough. I am surprised. Yeah, I got some physical things going on from sitting in a chair for eight hours a day and I am kinda tired by that. But, when I was going through photos last night, some of that was kinda getting sticky. I am surprised. I was going to bed thinking about this and early this morning I was thinking about it. I don't know. It is kinda like something I closed the door on 20

years ago, but I am reopening it now and looking at it. I guess it is emotionally draining for us all to go back and look at past behaviors in our lives and to see how alcohol has played into our lives and into our parents lives and their parents before them. They are all learned behaviors and it creates a lot of sadness, but if this [digital story] helps one person, it is a positive thing. I was always taught "for the people," so *Chii Miigwech* [Thank you very much] for enduring or doing "for the people." Aho!

As mentioned previously, our team of *nDigiHelpers* are older seasoned digital storytellers. Carmella and I have worked with over a thousand Native people within our workshops and we are able to address many things with our own innate wisdom and spiritual gifts and resources. In the second *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, we had a certified substance abuse counselor (Linda) with us, and a local tribal leader (R.D.) who could provide anyone of us with immediate access to a 24-hour outpatient counselor at KBIC. To date, *nDigiDreams* has never had to bring in a professionally trained Western counselor to work with any person or to address any issue within our digital storytelling workshops. I attribute this to the manner Carmella and I "walk in this world" and to all the prayers and intentions we always set down before we leave on any journey to help another person turn a part of their precious life story into a digital story.

After all morning reflections were shared and a few more *nDigiStory* examples screened, we asked all the *nDigiStorytellers* to finalize their scripts and that we would start lining them up to voice record. We reminded them to take their jump drive, two copies of their scripts and their drum, if they brought one. We told them the next two days would go really fast and to take as many breaks as they needed, but to keep moving forward as quickly as possible, with their *nDigiHelper*. Since some of them were finished with their final script, we showed them how to search, download, resize, scan and rename their photos to create a storyboard (see Figure 5.10).

Figure 5.10. R.D.putting together storyboard for his *nDigiStory*. (Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*).



Gathering Media: "The Right One!"

Gathering media for a digital story is always fun and interesting for me. Sitting beside someone with a shoebox, manila envelope, or plastic bag full of photos allows me, as a Native digital storytelling, the opportunity to really get to know a person and their family better. The visual images always leads me into a deeper discussion with the digital storyteller because they want to explain to me not only who is in the photo and when it was taken, but they often share circumstances, emotions, and stories that happened around the particular photo that cannot be seen without a storyteller to share some insights. Personal photos that people bring and share with each other allows our Native community members, families, and perhaps drum families a chance to get better acquainted with each other (see Figure 5.11). It gives us a chance to reestablish ancestral ties, retrace our family histories, and reconnect with physical places and spaces across our sacred homelands.

I often notice our *nDigiStorytellers* get heavily involved in looking for "the right" photo. Sometimes they will seek out family and tribal archives, other times they will work with what



Figure 5.11. Spring 2013 nDigiStorytellers looking at family photos. (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).

images are available to them. It can either be a frustrating or hilarious journey searching for images for a digital story. For example, for some of the digital stories in the second workshop, Linda and Tim were looking for a photo that would show the abuse he suffered in boarding school. As they were searching the Internet, they absentmindedly put in the search terms "spanking nuns" and they got a set of images they did not anticipate. It was a moment I will never forget because of the look on their two faces that day and the laughter that ensured afterwards.

When I asked each *nDigiStoryteller* to reflect with me about their gathering media process, they had mixed feelings and reactions. For example,

Tim said:

It was a hard thing to do—to find "the right" photo that would strike you and fit in. You guys sent out a thing that said bring some photos. I could have brought more, but hindsight is 20/20. Like these guys are at home and can get theirs while it takes us a lot more work to search for more photos [on the Internet]. It's like you want the pictures to tell a story in "the right" way.

At the end of the third day, Tim and I talked more about the photos he used in his nDigiStory. I asked him how it felt looking at the ones he managed to gather together and bring to the workshop in the clear plastic bag he had. He said:

You know, it just brought up a lot of old feelings and old memories—good, bad, happy, sad. . . . I have photos all over the house like a photo gallery with hardly any spots left on the wall. As a child, I remember being with mom and dad and we would get together and pull out a box of photos. We would start looking at them and it would spark memories and conversations about times in the past. The pictures were of good times. You don't normally take pictures of bad things.

When I asked Tim if he had any insights about his life through looking at different photos for his digital story, he said, "Yeah, I realized something about the pictures of my younger ones growing up—my son playing ball or my daughter's first play in school—that, I wasn't there. It was a good time, but it was also a bad time because I wasn't in those pictures because I was at

the bar with those guys drinking." Earlier I mentioned, Linda said this was "the pivotal moment" in his life and when he became sober.

Making an *nDigiStory* allows others to look inside yourself, at life experiences (i.e., attending boarding schools and living in foster care homes) that you might have never shared with others. For example, Tim said he is always "telling his grandkids stories about when I was growing up, but this will tell a different side of my life." He said he thinks his wife and his sister-in-laws "will be a little shocked" because "no one really knows my story except my personal family." Tim predicted he will probably be asked questions about his story, but he knows he is "ready to talk about it at a more personal level."

R.D. had a similar experience looking through his photos. He pointed to one in his photo album that was "the pivotal moment" when he stopped abusing alcohol because of how it made him feel inside:

Like that one there, that's really sad. That's when I was still drinking. That's when she told me, "hey we were at the store, my son he was waving and you didn't wave back." I just felt really bad and I said, "Alright, enough is enough!" You know, like I said, I was homeless, jobless, family less. Enough is enough! I just didn't want him fatherless. That was what was going on at the back of mind.

He continued, "Yeah, with all the stuff I know now, it would be totally different. You know, people wish they could redo things. Like this was a good time [he points to another photo], I was sober and we were out fishing and having a good time." Unlike Tim, R.D. had a lot of different family photos to choose from but still he wanted to find "the right one" to put into both his digital stories. He wanted to be respectful of his relationships with those around him; thus, R.D. would choose certain group photos over others.

Perhaps Don was the most sensitive about not trying to blame anyone or be disrespectful with his digital story. On the first day of the workshop, I remember him pulling me aside to

show me a photo of his mom. He asked if he could take out his mom's face on the photo, even though everyone knows his family in town. At the end of the workshop, as we were polishing the final movies, I asked him if he still wanted to take out his mom's face and he said, "No. I'm okay with it, now." When I asked what changed, he said:

Well, these digital stories are about being honest with your life. I can't go back and change things. It is what it is and I'm okay with that. At first, I was a little apprehensive about telling my story, my family business, because in my recovery I told myself I wasn't going to blame anybody but myself. I wasn't gonna blame my mother or father or anybody else. I made the choice to drink. I didn't want to be disloyal or disrespectful to her by telling my story, I guess.

In the morning reflections, Don mentioned that the time he spent going through personal family photos was a deeply emotional experience because it opened doors into his past which he had kept shut for years. Photos do that to us—they can bring us great sadness, but they can also bring us great joy. At the end of the third day, we needed to find a photo of Don riding his Harley to put at the end of his movie. Carmella and I suggested that he go get his Harley so we could shoot a video of him "coming back home." He really liked the idea. Soon afterward, Don came back decked out with leather boots, chaps, jacket and gloves. Carmella said she set up her video camera on US 41 where the on a small hill where she could see the highway coming down and swinging north around the crystal blue waters of L'Anse Bay. The wind was cold, the sun was setting, and they only had one take. When Carmella placed the video at the end of Don's digital story and showed him it for the first time, she said, "His face lit up! It was as if the enormous smile and joy he was feeling replaced all that sadness he had experienced earlier. It felt, to me, like that was his moment of liberation. In that one video he saw himself living free and being sober." Carmella said that earlier in the week, Don told her he had a schedule conflict with the Friday community-wide screening because he was invited to attend a fundraiser for an independent film called, "Mutt," which was shot in the Upper Peninsula and had cast members

from the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, including himself. She said after he saw his final movie, he told her he made up his mind that he would rather screen his digital story with the rest of the KBIC *nDigiStorytellers* than attend the other event.

On the first day of the second *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, Robert came into the Chippewa Conference Room with a box of photos under his arm. Throughout the week, the photos never left his side. In his morning reflection on the second day of the workshop, Robert mentioned spending hours combing through a big box of family photos with his mom and how it brought them closer. When I asked him to share more thoughts about how it felt looking for photos for his digital story, he said:

It made me feel good going through this stuff. [Mom and I] talked about a lot of things that I don't really like bringing up, like my grandma and grandpa passing away from my dad's side. And, how my grandma, from my mom's side, passed away before I was able to pick up the language from her. My grandma spoke fluently. While we were talking about that, my mom said, "Wait one second," then, she brought out another box. She had my grandmother's [audio] tapes that she used to record herself speaking the language. There were books in there I had never seen before that my grandmother helped write, too.

In other digital storytelling workshops we have held, we have heard similar stories about individuals finding rare family photos, audiotapes, and video when they were gathering media for their digital story. For example, in an *nDigiBasic* digital storytelling workshop, in 2009, an *nDigiStoryteller* from Neah Bay, Washington found an audiotape of her late mother and uncle who recorded their songs on Frances Densmore's wax cylinders in the early 1900s. The Tribal Historic Preservation Office at the Makah Cultural & Research Center had repatriated ethnographic and historical materials from the Smithsonian Institution and another *nDigiStoryteller* in the workshop was able to help her locate the song she wanted. Carmella and I were able to help her put it into her *nDigiStory*. To watch the excitement on her face and tears begin to fill her eyes, when she first heard her them sing, was very touching and memorable.

After my interview, Robert and I continued to talk and share stories about growing up in our families and how we see some of our childhood interests become our passions today—being outdoors and shooting bows for Robert and teaching and making digital storytelling for me. As with many of our *nDigiStorytellers*, if we talk long enough we sometimes come upon someone we know in common. It is uncanny. For example, I found out Robert liked to watch "Dual Survivor" on the Discovery Channel and I told him I personally knew Cody Lundin, the former co-host of the reality television series who is also a survival instructor at the Aboriginal Living Skills School (ALSS) in Prescott, AZ. I told Robert that in the early 1980s I used to play softball in Laramie, WY with Cody's mom Sharon and that every now and then I will make a point to visit my two friends in Northern Arizona. When I met his wife Olivia, later that afternoon, he was excited to share that story.

Voice Recording: "It Feels Good To Get It Out"

On the third day of the workshop, after we finished morning reflections screened the last set of *nDigiStory* examples, and finalized all the scripts, we told the *nDigiStorytellers* we would begin voice recording. Earlier in the morning, we set up one of our hotel rooms at the north end of the complex. We unplugged the refrigerator and phone, closed the window shades to the parking lot, and put a "do not disturb" sign on the door. When each *nDigiStoryteller* arrived he ensured they turned off their cellphone and removed any jackets or jewelry that would make any noise. We always have a glass of water for them to drink, a box of Kleenex and throat lozenges to use after recording. Sometimes, when we have to voice record in one of our hotel rooms, we will "smudge" the room. If there are smoke alarms too close for comfort, we will use a small bottle of homemade liquid sage or cedar spray. For *nDigiDreams*, it is important that we try "to hold the sacred space" we created in the large meeting room where we gather together each day.

Our focus in our digital story voice recording sessions is to let each person's "sacred breath" become a healing for them on their good path of life that begins and ends with *Mino Bi-maadiziwin*. At the second workshop, before we started lining them up to voice record, Linda reminded her *Anishinaabe* brothers:

Remember how we talked about the script and how that is the heart of the story? Well, the recording is the breath of your story and spirit. That is when your digital story will really, really come alive. It is beautiful and you'll feel a sense of "wow," so look forward to that moment.

Tim was always the one to volunteer first. He went to the voice recording room with Linda, who was his assigned *nDigiHelper* throughout the process. Carmella was waiting for the two of them when they arrived—her laptop computer was sitting on a small table next to her microphone and there was an empty chair waiting for the first *nDigiStoryteller* who was ready to get through the next step of "creating" their digital story. When I asked Tim what he thought about the voice recording process, he said:

It was the first time I ever heard myself and I am 57 years old. I've never heard myself other than on those video cameras hollering at my kids to look over this way. This is the first time I heard myself speaking. It's kinda weird hearing your own voice. It's different!

Tim introduced himself in *Anishnaabemowin* (Ojibwe language) and then switched into English. We asked if he felt there was a difference in speaking and listening to his voice recording when he did that. He replied:

Oh yeah, because those words mean a lot to me. Our language means a lot to me and it makes me proud to be able to even speak a little bit of it. You know, there's some pride in there in being able to do that, because a lot of our people can't. I've been speaking and introducing myself for so long that I'm comfortable with it now, but you know, it's just different. I have a different feeling when it comes out.

He continued:

Yeah, maybe it comes from how I've always been taught. When we speak our language, our ancestors, and those in our spirit world know what we're saying. They only

understand our language, so it's important that we speak it and introduce ourselves with it so that they can understand what we're saying and who we are.

In the second workshop, R.D. and Robert were the other two individuals who introduced themselves in *Anishnaabemowin* (the Ojibwe language). Indeed, if you listen to all the digital stories we completed in both workshops, there is a distinct difference in how one speaks their Native language and how we hear or feel it come across, even if we do not speak the same language.

Robert was the second individual to record his voice and he brought his hand drum with him. All week long, under his breath, I would hear him quietly singing songs. After he voice recorded, Carmella asked him to share his thoughts about going through the process. He stated:

I'm not going to lie. It scares me going back that far and describing my past and stuff. It's a lot different seeing it on paper and then hearing it. I tried to put as much emotion into it as I could without killing it. And to hear it coming from a computer, I could feel the emotion and, for a second, I actually felt like crying because I could hear my voice. It's definitely a different trip [laughs] hearing my voice for the first time on audio. I've done tape cassette recordings and little apps with my phone to remember song lyrics, but recording my voice is definitely a new experience for me. I'm hoping I can do more [digital storytelling] down the road. You know, whether it's doing something about alcoholism, drug abuse, or, in my case, with bipolar. I'd like to bring it out to the community. Maybe someone day I can include this with the things I do on a normal basis. I love drumming. I love singing. I love to dance. I love hunting, fishing, and anything to do with the outdoors.

When Robert finished his voice recording, Carmella asked if he wanted to sing a song for his background music. He stood up, grabbed his drum, then all of the sudden his mind went blank. Carmella said he stood there quietly thinking, then, he said, "I have learned, literally, thousands of different songs, but I can't seem to open up my stingy hole to get a song out [he laughs]. It's difficult." Carmella said she eased his tension by getting him to talk about the first song he ever learned to sing. He replied:

The first song I sang was actually a butterfly song for my class. It was one of the hardest songs to learn because that was my first time attempting to sing and drum. I was

trying to get the right tone and drum beat so that it sounded. I still don't have the tone voice or the rhythm of my voice is not quite there yet, but I'm working on it. And, for as long as I can stand or speak I'm going to continue working on it until it's time for me to go home.

Eventually, Robert recorded the White Eagle song for his background music. When I asked him how he finally decided upon a particular song to sing for his digital story, he told me the following:

When I was doing the audio with Carmella, she made a statement that was kinda funny. She said [digital storytelling] was kinda like giving birth. As soon as she said that, I thought about my first born. When she was in her mother's womb, she was always around the drum. I brought her with me everywhere—to different powwows and different drum sessions. When my daughter was born, one day she was crying like a normal newborn does and I picked up my hand drum and I began to sing her the eagle song and almost immediately she stopped crying. I must have sang that song for nearly an hour and when I stopped I looked down at her and I could see this big smile coming on her face. It's kinda like this [digital story] is my baby. I started it and it is starting to grow before my very eyes like my daughter is, right now. It is a heartwarming experience for me to actually do this.

Background music for the digital stories is very important. There are stories behind why people choose a certain type of music or song or recording artist for their digital story. As mentioned earlier, when we speak in our Native language there is a distinct difference one feels and hears in the digital stories. This is true when we also sing in our Native languages or deliver songs that we have written and composed ourselves. If *nDigiStories* are for *Healing Our Communities One Story at a Time*®, then, tribally-specific music, words, and rhythms must be chosen carefully for the person making the digital story and/or for the person listening to the story.

Don was the third *nDigiStoryteller* to record his voice in Room 121. When we asked him to share what he thought about the voice recording process, he said:

It was good. I had no problem. It feels good to get it out, you know, I've been sitting on it for 10 days since R.D. asked me. It's good to get it out, you know. I guess I'm not speaking just about the voice, but the whole process. It's good to put it into words and

make like a hardcopy to share. I'm just gonna let it fly! If it helps somebody, I'll be filled with gratitude.

He added:

I also want to say that you guys, you girls, are very professional at what you do. There is a lot of time for laughing and joking, but you keep us on task. You have a good balance and I appreciate that. You do it in a good way, you know, not too firm, but not too lax . . . I also think you have a good combination of people—you guys come from out West and then you have Linda who is from this area and kinda in the substance abuse field. I don't know if I should share this, but I felt safe with you guys. It's what you convey and why people come up to you. People are looking for safe places to share some ugly truths, you know, whether it be with drugs, alcohol, sexual violence, physical violence. They need to feel safe.

R.D. had two digital stories to record voice narration for and Carmella asked him to start with the shortest script first—the one about gambling addiction. Afterwards, he recorded his story about recovering from alcohol and drugs. R.D. seemed the most interested in watching Carmella edit out long pauses, deep breathes, and other audio disturbances from his voice recording. She had him listen to the edited audio clip and asked him what he thought, he said, "Good, I like it!" Afterwards, R.D. began asking questions about the microphone. He liked that it hooked up to a USB port on a laptop computer. When Carmella asked him if he ever recorded his voice before, he said, "Nope, nope, not at all." Then, he went on to tell her how much he wanted to get his digital stories done so he could use them in the community. He said:

Our digital stories show how powerless and unmanageable people can be with addictions. They don't care. I didn't care about drinking and drugging. I want to share my story like the first crew did: Janice, Donnie, Marty, Jerry Lee, Carrie. You know, it's going to be here forever. It's a good thing. It's good to show how we all survived.

By the third day of the workshop, everyone was busy finding or shooting photos and video, recording their voice and music, and creating storyboards. We ordered lunch off the Lucky 7 Restaurant menu and everyone gathered around the "dinner" table to share a meal together and visit with each other, including Donnie, Jerry Lee, Paul, and Marty. Someone knew it was Don's birthday and managed to quietly send a card around for everyone to sign. Don and

I were working on his laptop looking for photos, when the impromptu "Happy Birthday" singing started and Carmella brought a cake with candles to him to blow out. I looked at Don and said, "Don't look at me," because that morning he told me it was his birthday, but to not dare to tell anyone.

At 5:30 p.m., the only two individuals in the Chippewa Conference Room were Robert and I. Tim finished his storyboard, with the help of his *nDigiHelper* Linda. They both looked exhausted so I told them to leave and take some extra "time out" to relax or take a nap. R.D. left to go to his office to get a copy of his substance abuse certificate and other pictures off his work computer's hard drive. Carmella went to videotape Don on US 41 riding his Harley, and Clara went to her hotel room to call her two boys to visit before they went to bed.

At 6 o'clock that night, Jerry Lee and Paul, Janice's son that works at the New Day Treatment Center and sits on the Four Thunders Drum, came in looking for everyone. Jokingly, I said, "Are we keeping your fisherman?" Paul answered, "Nah, we just wanted to tell you we put some fish on the grill." Jerry added, "Fresh rainbow trout. It'll be ready in a half hour." Immediately, I called and text all the *nDigiHelpers* to tell them about our wonderful dinner invitation. Everyone was excited to go because we knew we needed to get out of the Ojibwa Casino-Restaurant-Hotel complex to go someplace different and eat something new and, we knew there was no better place to do that than with a local family eating fresh caught and prepared food.

Dinner on the L'Anse Indian Reservation and the Four Thunders Drum Practice

nDigiChídí had two escorts to Paul and Jessica's place, where the gathering was taking place, to ensure we did not make a wrong turn. When we arrived, there were small kids jumping on the trampoline and cars and trucks parked everywhere. We followed Tim inside and greeted a

dozen KBIC community members—the hosts Paul and Jessica and their youngest daughter and her boyfriend, Jerry Lee and Cindy and their daughter and granddaughter, and Robert and his wife Olivia and their two daughters. We went around the room and started shaking everyone's hands; some of them I met before, while others I only recognized from family photos or digital stories. Don stopped in for a brief visit before he went to meet someone for his birthday dinner at a local restaurant.

After we took off our jackets, Paul invited us into the kitchen and showed us a 42" grilled trout stuffed with potatoes with sides of steamed corn and broccoli. We each made a plate and Jessica handed us a glass of mint-jasmine tea. We all easily slipped into various conversations with our new KBIC *nDigiFamily*. We talked about the upcoming July 2014 powwow, early childhood education on the reservation, and how we could fit in a tour of the area before the community-wide *nDigiFest* that started on Friday night at the Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College.

Pretty soon the guys began talking about calling Junior, Donnie's son, to bring The Four Thunders Drum over so they could sing some songs for us (see Figure 5.12). They started moving chairs and couches toward the center of the living room. Donnie appeared out of know where with a bag of drum sticks in a Pendleton bag. The next thing you know, they began singing and everything around us began resonating with the drum. It was very powerful and moving!

Figure 5.12. The Four Thunders Drum Group practice. (Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*).

Paul said the singers on The Four Thunders Drum know 130 songs with no repeats and as our *nDigiBrothers* began drumming and singing, he would lean over and tell us, "This is called the Eagle Watches You Everywhere." Or, he'd say, "This is my uncle's favorite song." I asked Paul if we could take photos and videos of The Four Thunders Drum because I knew they would have a place in some of the digital stories we were making at the Chippewa Conference Room. He said it was "okay," and without skipping a beat all the *nDigiHelpers* were standing around the drum with their IPhones and cameras. Within minutes, I saw Carmella, Linda, and Clara sending their first uploads to their Facebook accounts. Everyone was joy-filled!

We could have stayed all night, listening to The Four Thunders Drum, but after I saw the clock and noticed it was 10 p.m. I started putting on my jacket and the others followed suit.

Then, we all stood up in unison and began shaking hands and hugging our *nDigiFamily* members goodbye as we danced out the door.

Day 3: Facilitators' debrief. I put in the key and started *nDigiChidi*, then, we just sat there in silence still feeling and listening to The Four Thunders Drum inside. It was a wonderful evening and we were all speechless. Imagine that! Not one of us had a story to tell. As we were driving back to the Ojibwa Casino, we all began seeing flashes of white light on the horizon followed by a long deep earthy rumble—it was the Thunder Beings telling us they heard the prayers Linda offered the morning we first arrived to Baraga, MI, the sacred homelands of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community.

When pulled up to the hotel entrance, before Linda and Clara went to their rooms, we expressed gratitude for the wonderful evening and beautiful day we shared with them. I, myself, didn't feel like rushing off to our hotel room so I asked Carmella to sit outside with me a bit longer in the "Elders Only" Parking Lot under floodlights that washed out the starry night skies.

Before I could say anything, I just sat there breathing in our ancestor's prayers and blessings and feeling deep gratitude for being able to do *nDigiStorytelling* "for the people." Then, I turned to her and asked, again, "How do we capture the *whole* story? How do we write it all up? To me, it is one of those things that in order to understand it you needed to be here with us." Carmella deftly replied, "It can't just be a report! It has to be more of a visual thing that we can show ... so they can feel and really understand it." I nodded my head in agreement. Then, I reparked the van and we went into the hotel. As we were walking past Clara's room we decided to knock on her door because we know she is always up late talking on the phone or Facebooking her friends and family. She opened the door and within minutes we were talking about what happened that night and telling all kinds of stories, again.

Brenda: I remember when we first went out to Laguna and everyone was looking at us thinking, "who are these people?"

Clara: Yeah. I thought that myself! I almost didn't come back either, on the second day. I didn't get any of the [pre-workshop] information [because I was a last minute replacement]. I was just lost. Then, I remembered my sister had a lot of pictures and I told myself, "I can do this!"

Brenda: Yep, now, you are with us for life, nDigiSister!

Day 4: Giiwedinong (North)—Reflecting

May 8, 2014. On the fourth day of the workshop, Robert was the only one in the room when we got started. Don text Carmella and told her he would not be able to make it that morning because he "was feeling under the weather," but that he would try to make it in later in the afternoon. R.D. and Tim came in after we got our workshop started.

Every day during the *nDigiStorytelling* workshop we had a KBIC tribal member, who works at the casino, pop his head in the door to see what we were doing and to see how far we got each day. Sometimes he would bring in photos for others to use or show us popular vacation spots his family enjoyed like Hawaii and Florida. One time, he told us he wished he could have

been in the workshop too. This time he poked his head in the door to tell us he heard a lightning bolt hit a tree in L'Anse, a nearby town on the other side of the bay. He said it blew their power out. Immediately, I thought to myself, "Yep, there was a whole lot of power moving around the rez last night, especially in that living room with The Four Thunders Drum."

We usually don't screen n*DigiStory* examples on the last day of our workshops because everyone is anxious to get started with editing their movies. We asked who would like to say an opening prayer for the day and Robert stepped forward so I gave him some *asema* (tobacco) and he offered a beautiful prayer for everything we were trying to accomplish that day.

Morning Reflections: "Let's Do It!"

Robert was the only *nDigiStoryteller* in the room to do a morning check-in. He said:

I am a little bit nervous because this little bit of film I have been working on here I want to dedicate to one of my friends who committed suicide. The family called me last night and I explained to them what was going on and I asked them if they could be [at the community screening called an *nDigiFest*].

He explained how he wanted to put his friend's picture at the end of his movie before his credits to "honor" their friendship, but he wanted to make sure that the family would be okay with it because his friend died two years ago and they were still grieving and healing. I encouraged Robert and told him, "I have found that digital stories can be a way of helping others heal and that they can help show gratitude to those who touched our lives and those whom our lives have touched too." Linda added, "because of your intention, it comes from a place of love, I think they will see it as a heartfelt gesture, because it comes from that place of love."

When R.D. and Tim arrived, I asked how they were feeling and they said they were both excited to finish their digital stories as soon as possible. They both chimed in unison, as they clenched their fists, "Let's do it!" We started to show them how to edit left-to-right and frame-by-frame (see Figure 5.13).



Figure 5.13. nDigiHelper Linda video editing with Tim. (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).

Editing Final Movies: "It's Powerful!"

After everyone finished their storyboards, we started helping our *nDigiStorytellers* put together their rough cuts. Since Linda and Tim had already finished his storyboard the day before, they put their headphones on and started quickly putting everything onto the timeline. Tim was letting his "computer guru" lead the way as he watched her through each step.

Robert let Clara do the same with his movie until he started catching on. Clara explained their collaborative process for me, "Robert actually did a lot of the editing and was a quick study once I showed him how to edit pictures and do the timing. He's extremely intelligent and manipulated the [software] program with ease."

Since Don was out sick and Carmella was putting together "music mixes" for everyone that morning, I began helping R.D. put together his first digital story. Like Robert, after I put everything on the timeline and showed him how to sync photos with his voice, he began to catch on quickly.

When we make digital stories with others, we give our Native digital storytellers as much assistance as they want and we ask as many questions as we can about how they want their final movie to look at the end. It is important that they retain the power and authority to make all final decisions about their digital story. They will decide which font style they want to use for their title, captions, and credits and they will choose various transitions, visual effects, and

pan-and-zooms to add to their digital story. If their final movie gets too "visually busy," since most people who have never made a video before enjoy adding lots of movement and effects, we will remind them to remember their message. Everything they add to their story must help "tell the story," (i.e., photos, video, music, sound effects, transitions, pan-and-zoom effects, and text).

At lunchtime, we ordered our final meal from the Lucky 7 Restaurant and ate it at our workstations. Robert's wife came in and sat next to him while he was polishing his final movie. He asked her if she wanted to see his digital story and she said, "Yes." I gave them a splitter and two headphones and they watched it together. I noticed tears well up in her eyes as I was sitting next to them syncing Don's photos with his voice. When Robert's movie was over, I asked, "Well, what do you think?" She softly said, "It's powerful!" Robert smiled broadly and then they both got up and went outside for a break.

Around 2 p.m., when everyone was hyper-focused on finishing their digital stories and it was hard to get anyone to move or blink an eye, a staff member came in and asked if he could close the partitions because he needed to set up for a meeting on the north end of the Chippewa Conference Room. Immediately, the *nDigiHelpers* started collapsing down the snack and beverage station on the long table and moving it onto a small cart in the room we were in. Then, we turned our attention back to getting the movies done before the end of the day. One by one, we started exporting the final movies and burning DVDs. Finally, we pushed the button to lower the large projector screen at the front of the room. We screened three of five movies at the end of the day—Tim's, Robert's and one of R.D.'s.

Local Screening: "Maybe I Can Save One More Life Out There!"

On the last afternoon of our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops, we usually have a local screening with the small group assembled. We ask each person to introduce their movie to their

first audience and to tell us a little about what they thought about the process now that their movie was completed. We tell them that when they are finished talking and want to show their movie, they just need to tell us: "Roll it!" Before they begin their movie introduction, we give them a gift, an *nDigiBand*, a leather wristband that reads: NDIGISTORYTELLER. I asked, "Who would like to go first?"

Robert did. He stood up and said the following about the process and his first *nDigiStory* (see Media 5.4):

This week was very exhausting [he laughs], not so much physically but mentally. When R.D. first approached me, I hemmed and hawed. In the process of getting photos together and telling my story, I really started going back in time and reliving the memories I forgot all about. I started thinking about one of my friends who passed away and I wanted to honor him by making this video. I hope maybe it can help someone, maybe I can save one more life out there. Roll it!

Robert nDigiStory



Media 5.4. Robert *nDigiStory* (Robert Rajacic, 2014). Permission granted by storyteller through informed consent and verbal confirmation (see Appendix H for full transcription). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/qGV2czpyVoI

After Robert's movie ended and we finished clapping, R.D. immediately said, "That was awesome! I am speechless." Tim added, "Very impressive!" Then Robert looked over at R.D. and said, "When you watch it on the big screen, you notice all the little things going on. I was laughing when it got to that video where we were hugging and you grabbed my ass." Everyone laughed. R.D. wanted to screen his first *nDigiStory* next (see Media 5.5). It was the one about gambling addictions. While his DVD was loading into the projector, he expressed how he was feeling at the end of the four-day *nDigiStorytelling* process:

This week has been overwhelming—good and bad. [Laughter]. I still don't like thinking about those younger days and it's hard to believe it's going to be 23 years [of sobriety] soon. [He tears up and pauses]. I'm speechless. I got this one done, but the next one I think is going to be a little tougher. I was glad to do it with these guys. I know the last group would have been awesome too. And, working with you ladies has been great! Roll it!

R.D. First nDigiStory



Media 5.5. R.D. First *nDigiStory* (R.D. Curtis, 2014). Permission granted by storyteller through informed consent and verbal confirmation (see Appendix H for full transcription). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/vpBryGhH8_4

We all clapped again and R.D. said he liked seeing his movie on the big screen. He commented, "It's a lot different from just seeing it on here [he points to his computer]. It's nice. I liked it a lot! I hope it helps somebody. It was a hard humbling experience, especially working in the field and being a counselor, but I'm only human." Linda told R.D.: "That took a lot of courage, not many people like you are speaking up. I know of three people that your story can help." Carmella added: "I think it is a really important story and the timing is important. It's amazing the impact that these three minutes can have. It took you four days to make this," she continued, "like you said one time, 'some people think four days is a lot, but if you think about how long you devoted to drinking, say, 20 years, you can devote four days to create a story to help someone else." Linda quickly added, "Yep, you're carrying the message."

Before Tim introduced his digital story (see Media 5.7), Robert and his wife excused themselves because they had to pick up their two young daughters. Tim stood up from where he had been sitting all week and provided the following reflection (see Media 5.6):

When R.D. asked me to be a part of this, I went back and watched those films [on the ATR website] just to get an idea of what he wanted. I thought, "Good gravy, this is going to take four or five days to make this 3-minute film? How can that even be?" [Laughter]. It just didn't seem like it would be that hard of a project. Being kinda ignorant to the technical field, I had no idea, I guess. So I just thought I'd come up here and dink around. It was a lot different than what I expected, but now that I've gone through it, I have a much bigger appreciation for anyone who deals in this type of work . . . You know, this thing brought up those Seven Grandfather teachings—honesty, humility, bravery—those things all came up this week, which is great! I could this in with all those things we get from those grandfathers.



Media 5.6. Tim pre-screening reflection. (Used with permission of *nDigiDreams*). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/gyKKx0h1Fq4

Tim nDigiStory



Media 5.7. Tim nDigiStory (Tim Derwin, 2014). Permission granted by storyteller through Informed Consent and Verbal Confirmation (see Appendix H for full transcription). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/Bps7id50hW0

After a couple more rounds clapping and hugs all around. R.D. did the closing prayer before everyone left for the evening. We were done. The process was completed, at least, for some of the *nDigiStorytellers*. We agreed we would spend part of the next day finishing R.D.'s second digital story and, hopefully, Don would be back to finish his.

Closing Circle

We began to pick up the room; it is usually a mess on the last day as we run here and there adding "music mixes," splitting video, burning DVDs, backing up files, and signing release forms. We were getting ready to debrief, when Carmella and I asked if we could include Eva.

Although she is sometimes not able to fully participate in our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops, she is always a phone call, text, or Facebook post away.

At the first KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop at Aurora Borealis Resort in November 2013, she skyped with the *nDigiHelpers* one morning before we got started. Linda called her and said, "*Boozhoo* (Hello)!" Immediately, Eva asked, "Are you all done with the stories?" We said we have two more to finish polishing, but that we wanted to invite her into our closing circle, if it was a good time for her. Eva replied, "I would love it!" Then, we each took turns expressing ourselves. Carmella said, "I'll start! She opened the circle with the following comments:

We spent a lot of time in the story circle in the beginning. It was different for us, because it was all men. They were very warm and very welcoming and it seemed we just laughed non-stop throughout this process. The guys shared a lot of beautiful things with us—that they felt safe and trusted us. They also gave Linda a very big complement. It was beneficial to have somebody here that is part of the family, an *Anishnaabekwe* who knew a lot of knowledge about who they are and their teachings. Everything was bright, humorous, and balanced and we just complemented each other a lot.

I went next. I told Eva how we were building momentum in the community and how

Carmella and I went to check out the gymnasium for the community screening called an

nDigiFest with Jerry Lee and when we walked by a woman on the sidewalk, he said, "These are
the nDigiStorytellers!" and she replied, "Oh, yeah!" as if she heard about us. Eva teased,

"You're famous!" Linda quickly adds, "Believe me, we are!" Then, I became a bit more serious.

In the closing, I just want to say how wonderful it was to be around all these beautiful men and to see them crying like my father used to do. He was a gentle, loving man and would tear up a lot. I felt like I was around my fathers and it felt really good. I found out there are definitely some peaks and valleys through the process and it was hard to navigate through all my questions because the process seemed to be going really fast, but we tried to document everything. I think we have some really rich stuff. I'll end by saying, "I'm so glad I met all of you, love and gratitude for this miracle team of healing and this circle."

Linda let out a big sigh then said,

Well Eva, my dear friend, I'll tell you what, we have been on so many, many adventures. How can it get any better? I just don't know, really, honest to God, we've gone through a lot. I'm so honored to be here with our relatives. When we were here in November, the biggest impact that was made back then was Janice's healing—to see her laugh, smile, skip and run. She was just so free and that rubbed off on her son Paul, the quiet guy who doesn't say much. Well, he was joking, and cooking us fish and every time they sang a song, he'd tell us what they were singing. We were in his home last night and it was very warm and welcoming, just absolutely beautiful! It was meant to be and it makes me appreciate men that are so good, so spiritual.

Clara was tired and she said her mind was not very focused, but she wanted to share a few words with everyone, especially Eva. She paused and teared up then said:

I wanted to share how beautiful this community is and how it feels so good to go somewhere and automatically be accepted. I know that you have paved the way for that to happen, and I'm so thankful for all your knowledge and for bringing me here to experience this. I will take this back home to my family and to my community. I see a lot

of possibility here. I met some amazing tribal leaders and community members who are just outstanding in their roles. [Pause].

It's always hard to talk at the end of these workshops, because there is such emotion going on—your happy and sad, not really sad, but the emotion takes over. I just can't express how much I learn every time I'm with Brenda and Carmella and, now Linda. All the teachings I learned I could never probably pay enough for someone to teach me, because it's beyond the books, it's beyond life. It's that spirituality that we all carry, that we share, that we enjoy with each other. It's what makes us Indigenous people and we need to keep that fight, that spirit alive . . . no matter what. [Pause].

I was just so impressed with the drum, with the fact that the men cooked for us, and drummed for us, and explained the songs to us. To me, that is such an honor where we come from. To have men treat you with that respect. And for them to just welcome us so easily into their hearts and share their love of this life with us is purely, purely a spiritual experience and I'm so thankful. That is all I have to say right now.

Finally, Eva shared her feelings and thoughts in our closing circle:

I wasn't able to go last time, either, and I kind of lament that. I always think, "Wow, I could be there!" I can imagine being at Paul's house with their drum. I saw your photos on Facebook last night. Wow, that is awesome! I love going there. KB [Keweenaw Bay] people are so welcoming. I can feel the joy. I can feel the excitement and the love. I know a lot of folks that you've been working with. I've known them for a long time and I love them dearly. They are just amazing people. It's just like your mom said, BK, it's all going to be all right and it's all going to be beautiful!

After we gave each other a big hug physically and through the phone line to Eva, we packed up the room in a hurry. We were supposed to meet Jerry Lee and his wife to drive to Houghton, a nearby town to pick up supplies for the *nDigiFest*. I was tired and it was all a blur, that is, what we bought and how we paid for it. I just remember loading bags in the back of the car trunk and sitting in the back seat with Carmella and Clara, as Jerry Lee drove us back to Baraga. I remember seeing Jerry Lee's *nDigiBand* swinging from his rearview mirror, lights glaring off the speedometer on his dashboard, wipers squeaking back-on-forth on the front windshield, and the smell of the rain in the Northern Michigan woods. I remember missing the Southwestern desert and my dear mom and I wondered if she would ever return we me one day to meet members of this beautiful tribal community—my KBIC *nDigiFamily* (see Figure 5.14).



Figure 5.14 KBIC nDigiFamily at May 2014 nDigiFest (L-R Backrow: Don, Jerry Lee, Donnie, Marty, R.D., Robert, Tim; L-R Frontrow: Brenda, Linda, Janice, Carmella, Clara). (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).

Day 5: Polishing the Last Two nDigiStories

May 9, 2014. It was a sunny beautiful day in Baraga, MI. The evening rain cleared the air and everything smelled fresh and green. Unfortunately, Carmella and I were not able to spend the day riding around the area with the "KBIC tour bus" with Linda and Clara because we

needed to finish polishing two more digital stories—Don's first one and R.D.'s second one.

While we were waiting for our *nDigiStorytellers* to come in, I started scanning more photos for R.D.'s movie and Carmella was working on their "music mixes."

We heard that Robert went back to his construction job and Tim was with Jerry Lee taking our *nDigiHelpers* around the KBIC reservation. It was a much quieter day and everyone was working at a much slower pace, probably because Carmella and I were tired from working hard all week and R.D. and Don were fighting colds.

Before lunch, while I was syncing R.D.'s second movie with him, Marty came in the room. He asked, "Where's that lady who's the artist?" I told him Clara went on a "rez tour." He pulls out a chair and sits down at the table next to R.D. He sits there a while and then R.D. takes off his headphone and they begin talking. I overheard Marty talking about a packet of beads he wanted to show Clara. I didn't want to be rude and ignore them both, so I pulled off my headphones and tell him Clara should be back soon. I asked to see the packet of beads he had. Without thinking, I opened the small envelope that had "Rattlesnake beads" written on the cover. As a beader myself, my mind began to wonder, "Hmm, are they tubular beads? What do they look like?" When I opened the envelope, I heard a noise that made me scream and jump back from the table. That was the first time someone pulled a prank on me in a workshop—leave it up to my *nDigiBrother* Marty. A couple months ago, I found a small envelope at the Phoenix International Airport that read: "One Dozen Rattlesnake Eggs. CAUTION: Keep in cool place to prevent hatching."

After we were almost done with the movies, Linda and Clara walked in the door laughing at pictures they took of the people and places they visited, for example, a nearby waterfall, floating icebergs on Lake Superior, the KBIC ceremonial and powwow grounds, and the senior

citizens center where they met an Elvis impersonator. They asked us if we needed any help.

Carmella told them she was almost finished with Don's digital story and that she needed help to start getting ready for the *nDigiFest* at the Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College. She told them she'd meet them in their hotel rooms soon to show them what to do.

The event was scheduled to start at 6 p.m. in the gymnasium at the local community college. Finally, I helped R.D. finish his second *nDigiStory* and then I quickly headed across the parking lot to the event. At the request of our community organizers (R.D. and Jerry Lee) and with permission from our KBIC *nDigiStorytellers*, we screened ten *nDigiStories* co-created in the Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 *nDigiStorytelling* workshops. Carmella Rodriguez's complementary dissertation describes this event since it focuses on *the sharing* of the KBIC digital stories. Besides the above *nDigiStories* above the KBIC Spring 2014 *nDigiStories* include (see Media 5.8 and 5.9):

Don nDigiStory



Media 5.8. Don nDigiStory (Don Stolp, 2014). Permission granted by storyteller through informed consent and verbal confirmation (see Appendix H for full transcription). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/zfKvPLydB9E

R.D. Second nDigiStory



Media 5.9. R.D. second *nDigiStory* (R.D. Curtis, 2014). Permission granted by storyteller through informed consent and verbal confirmation (see Appendix H for full transcription). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/oYMll86zBQA

Epilogue

On the following morning, we stopped by the Chippewa Conference Room in the Ojibwe Casino where we held the Spring 2014 *nDigiStorytelling* Workshop. It had transformed into a KBIC Tribal Council meeting. It was an open meeting and Jerry Lee invited us to stop by for a little breakfast and say goodbye, again, to everyone. Two of our *nDigiStorytellers* (Donnie and R.D.) sit on the council and several others also sit on The Four Thunders Drum. The four of us, Clara, Linda, Carmella and I, sat at the back of room sipping our coffee and eating fresh melon slices. All of the sudden, we raised our heads in unison and watched an individual from the second *nDigiStorytelling* workshop walk in the room. He was standing taller and looking "lighter." We all noticed it! When he saw us, he immediately came up and hugged us all.

The Spring 2014 *nDigiSeed* was planted and we continue to nurture and watch the digital storytelling movement grow in the KBIC community!

Creating Space for an Indigenous Approach to Digital Storytelling

When you were born and took your first breath, different colors and different kinds of wind entered through your fingertips and the whorl on the top of your head. Within us, as we breathe, are the light breezes that cool a summer afternoon, within us the tumbling winds that precede rain, within us sheets of hard-thundering rain within us dust-filled layers of wind that sweep in from the mountains, within us gentle night flutters that lull us to sleep. To see this, blow on your hand now. Each sound we make evokes the power of these winds and we are, at once, gentle and powerful.

Excerpt from poem by Luci Tapahonso (1991, p. 19)

A couple weeks ago, I spent time with my family on *Diné Bikéyah* ("Navajos" land) because we were getting ready to have a ceremony—gathering together all our offerings for those who would help us with their prayers and songs; shopping for healthy delicious food and cooking it; finding all our ceremonial attire (moccasins, skirts, shirts, and turquoise jewelry); and, preparing the *hooghan* (home) where it would take place (sweeping the earthen floor, dusting the windows, and stacking the wood nearby). To say the least, all of us were tired long before the all-night prayers got started. Like all things that happen in a good way—we thought about it, planned it, and brought it into life. After it was over, at dawn the next morning, when we finished offering tádídíín (corn pollen) to our Díyín Diné'e (Holy People), we went to put on a pot of coffee and knead the dough for the fry bread. We were talking and laughing about the depth and beauty of what we had just experienced together. We were filled with happiness that everything turned out "just right." It was a beautiful ceremony! As I sat there with my mom and a handful of my sisters, brothers, aunties and uncles around me, I felt physically exhausted, but spiritually ignited. That is when I heard my quiet wise *shimá yazhí* (auntie) look over and tell me, "That was a beautiful ceremony you had for your mother, shi yazhi (my child). It was just

simple and short—that is how they tell us to do things. You don't have to go all out; just keep it simple, and it'll turn out good and beautiful."

In this chapter, that is my goal: to create a space for simplicity and clarity to occur so that my readers, like my relatives above, can sit quietly inside "the circle" and continue deepening into the words, thoughts, feelings, and experiences I shared in the two preceding chapters, the "nDigiStorytelling ceremony."

In this chapter I will review the purpose of my study and discuss my findings through an Indigenous epistemological framework—that of the *Anishinaabe* people who were my co-researchers, and from that of my own *Diné people*. More specifically, I will explore how this unique approach we created—called *nDigiStorytelling*—became a source of dynamic, creative, and integrative healing, liberation and transformation for those *nDigiStorytellers* who engaged in the process. Finally, I will explore how this study can help to fill the literature gap in digital storytelling, Indigenous film, historical trauma, and Indigenous resilience.

As mentioned several times throughout this manuscript, this study is one of two halves that make a whole: the first half is my own exploration, which is about the *nDigiStoryMaking* process. And the second half is Carmella Rodriguez' which deals with the *nDigiStorySharing* aspect. Since we view our *nDigiStorytelling* work within a social justice and change framework, there can be no other way to ignite a grassroots Indigenous digital storytelling movement than to make our personal lives and stories reach back into our communities, tribes, and Nations; thus, our complementary dissertations work together to explore the making and sharing of *nDigiStories* within one *Anishinaabe* community in Northern Michigan.

Reviewing the Purpose of the Study

In this study, my purpose was to examine the process of digital storytelling from an Indigenist perspective grounded in Indigenous epistemologies. As discussed in my first and introductory chapter, "Indigenist research . . . takes us into the heart of the Indigenous struggle" and "focuses on lived, historical experiences, ideas, traditions, dreams, interests and aspirations, and struggles of Indigenous [peoples]" (Rigney, 1999, p. 117). I cannot imagine a more fertile ground to plant and grow *nDigiSeeds* of healing and hope than within the hearts, mind, bodies and spirits of a growing cadre of *nDigiStorytellers* who still live, work, play, laugh, love, pray within our sacred homelands. And, I cannot imagine a more healing wind to spread *nDigiStories* across our ancestral homelands where many of us still hold sacred our families, communities, mountains, land, air, water, and Holy People and where many of us are combining ancient teachings with new technologies to (re)store, (re)claim, (re)vive, and (re)member. At the "heart" of our sacred homelands, our families, our communities and Nations sits an Indigenous paradigm, coming out of an ancient oral tradition, that understands reality as centered on direct experience, dreams, visions and other embodied ways of knowledge production.

In this present study, I was interested in better understanding the emotional, physical, spiritual and mental transformations that occur within our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops. I want to better understand how it is that Native people think about their story ideas and decide which ones to tell and how they engage with each other in an *nDigiStoryCircle*. I also want to better understand how they "experience" writing their one-page scripts, speaking their voices into a microphone, gathering their photos and music, and watching their completed *nDigiStories*.

Based on my own almost ten year *nDigiStorytelling* practice, with the last six years being under the auspices of *nDigiDreams*, I was particularly interested in exploring three specific areas of

inquiry: 1) the *making* of *nDigiStories* and how the four-day process helps Indigenous peoples "think" and "speak" about their lives; 2) whether self-reported healing and liberation occur and, if so, at what point in the process; and, 3) what happens when a person taps into their Indigenous knowledge system or language to make an *nDigiStory*.

Revisiting the "Three Sisters"

In the second chapter here, I discussed an emergent research design that I have called the "Three Sisters"—Indigenous methodologies, community-based participatory research and portraiture. In this section, I will briefly discuss the combined approach I took to gather the material presented in my fourth and fifth chapters.

Indigenous ways of knowing or epistemologies sit at the center of Indigenous methodologies and can be described as—relational, interactional, holistic, inclusive, animate, cyclical, fluid and ceremonial (Kovach, 2009). Basically, it is about approaching everything we do from the core teachings of "our people." For myself as a *Diné* woman, Indigenous methodologies represent the "corn" or in this case the "cornstalk" and is the "First Sister," which is my methodological approach. Community-based participatory research (CBPR), summarized as respect, reciprocity, and relationality (Weber-Pillwax, 2001), represents the "bean" and is the "Second Sister," my strategy of inquiry. A "bean" spirals around the branches of the corn, making its way up the center cornstalk from the earth to the sky. Finally, portraiture represents the "squash;" it provides the thick groundcover to prevent weeds from coming through and is considered the "Third Sister," my method or technique. Portraiture uses "thick description" to capture the essence and resonance of lived experiences to create an aesthetic whole (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). By combining the "Three Sisters" in this study, I came to a deeper understanding of the *making* of *nDigiStories* by, with, and for "our people."

From nature we know that the ultimate stage of development for a cornstalk is the spreading of the *tádídíín* (corn pollen) that represents good health, good blessings and good life. In the next chapter I will share the "pollen" from the matured cornstalks we planted in our *Anishinaabe nDigiGardens* during November 2013 and May 2014 and Implications for Research **Deciding How To Interpret the** *nDigiSeeds* **We Planted in Northern Michigan**

In this study, six individuals from our community-based participatory research team (Arlene, Eva, Linda, Terri, Carmella and I), whom we call the *nDigiDreamers*, gathered for three days during May 12–14, 2014, the week following the second planting (see Figure 6.1). We came together at the home of Eva Petoskey in Peshawbestown, Michigan, to have a conversation about the work we did together planting *nDigiSeeds* in two Keweenaw Bay *nDigiGardens* (November 2013 at Aurora Borealis Resort in Skanee and May 2014 at the Ojibwa Casino in Baraga).



Figure 6.1. nDigiDreamers working together to interpret our findings. (Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams).

Since 2011, we have gathered on the ancestral homelands of the Grand Traverse Bay of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians multiple times to dialogue, eat, pray, cry, work, laugh, think, and plan together. This time was no exception. For three long days, we spent time reviewing the *story-making* and the *story-sharing* processes, that is, the planting of *nDigiSeeds*. We were talking and looking at our Fall 2013 harvest and the May 2014 harvest. We talked about what the *nDigiHelpers* experienced, observed and understood as they were planting over the four-day

process in each *nDigiGarden*. And, we reviewed videotapes of the "pollinating" that occurred within the community screenings called *nDigiFests*, as well as the ten completed *nDigiStories* created by nine *nDigiStorytellers* in two four-day workshops. Like loving, caring, compassionate and attentive *nDigiGardeners*, we picked up "the squash," looked closely at it, smelled it, then carefully placed it back down on the deep, rich *Anishinaabe* soil to pick up another. Our goal was not to categorize and label what type of squash was in our *nDigiGarden* or to determine how many and what kind of *nDigiSeeds* we planted. Instead, we wanted—first to do what we imagined our ancestors did before us when they tilled and planted gardens to survive and thrive—to step back and appreciate the "longer and broader view." This means we wanted to "interpret" what we found in our *nDigiGarden* by better understanding and feeling the beauty and power and sacredness of the Indigenous landscape and teachings that held the delicate succulent plants.

To reiterate, the findings I present cover two four-day *nDigiStorytelling* workshops implemented over a six-month period (the first in November 2013 in Skanee and the second in May 2014 in Baraga) as described in my fourth and fifth chapters. What we determined was that the first step of "interpretation" should be to explore "the portraits" by privileging the *Anishinaabe* way of knowing. Then, to deepen my own understanding, I shift into "interpreting" "the portraits" by exploring the idea that *nDigiStories* are "living breath," our bodies are "sacred beings," and computers are "today's healing instruments" that can help provide healing, liberation and personal and cultural transformation.

Mino Bi-maadiziwin and the Seven Grandfather Teachings

In the opening chapter I introduced a concept called "fourth world theory," that is "theories, strategies and analysis strongly rooted in the values, knowledge, philosophies"

(Simpson, 2008, p. 15) that put liberation and resurgence as our highest priority—sometimes called the "lighting of the eighth fire." Our *nDigiDreamers* understand that this understanding lies at "at the heart" of our work together. In this section, I will summarily describe *Mino Bi-maadiziwin* and the Seven Grandfather teachings of the *Anishinaabe*. Then I will show how this Indigenous framework lies at the heart and is embedded within the voices and digital stories of the Keweenaw Bay *nDigiStorytellers*.

There are many, many levels to understanding the term, *Mino Bi-maadiziwin*, and no individual like myself could ever profess to know them all. However, I am grateful for my *Anishinaabe* co-researchers (Arlene, Eva, and Linda) who generously provided Carmella and me with the opportunity to sit, learn, and talk with them about their sacred and beautiful teachings, called *Mino Bi-maadiziwin*, the "Good Life." Arlene sent me the following discussion of the word, *Mino Bi-maadiziwin* that she received from Rhonda Hopkins, a language specialist with the Grand Traverse Bay of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians:

Mino means *good* (state of being), now you can take the *min* from the preverb of *mino* and that is the "seed."

Bi-maadiziwin means "life," remembering the *bi* part is addressing the "spirit." The *maadizi* part is the "movement." Think about it, what gives you life? Well, you can't have "movement" without something that gives you that life so you can equate that to your breath, your heart, from everything that is within you. The *win* part makes the whole word a noun.

It would be fair to say *Mino Bi-maadiziwin* means the "Good Life."

Within this framework sit The Seven Grandfather Teachings" of the *Anishinaabe*, a set of teachings about how human beings are to "walk" in this world (see Figure 6.2). A broader



Figure 6.2. Seven Grandfather Teachings of the Anishinaabe.

discussion of these two *Anishinaabe* frameworks can be found in Edward Benton-Banai's *The Mishomis Book: The Voices of the Ojibway* (1988). In the next section, I will now take this Indigenous epistemological lens to look through "the portraits" I described in earlier in the fourth and fifth chapters.

Exploring Our Keewenaw Bay nDigiGarden

To begin, I would like to provide some overall details regarding the planting of *nDigiSeeds* at Keweenaw Bay. There were a total of nine *nDigiStorytellers*—five in the first workshop and four in the second; two KBIC females and three KBIC males in the first, and three KBIC males and one Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa Indian male in the second. Of the nine total *nDigiStorytellers*, in my best determination, I found out that all but one sat on The Four Thunders Drum; all but one had been in recovery from alcohol and drugs for over a decade or more; and, all but one were members of extended families. In addition, four of the men were former or present KBIC tribal council members, two of the men were present or former construction workers, and two of the men were retired. Of the KBIC women, the elder female was retired but was still active across the community and appeared to be related or know everyone we met. Regarding their occupations and livelihood, of the nine *nDigiStorytellers*, four

KBIC men worked at New Day (*Oshiki Gijigad*) Residential Treatment Center or for the KBIC Substance Abuse Outreach Program, and one KBIC woman worked at New Day too. Regarding their use of computer technology or experience making video, of the nine, four *nDigiStorytellers* had little or no computer experience, and only one KBIC female said she had used a video-editing software program called Microsoft Movie-Maker before. Finally, regarding voice recording, of the nine, only two KBIC *nDigiStorytellers*, one male and one elder female, had experienced professionally recording and listening to their voice on public radio; and, three male KBIC *nDigiStorytellers* used personal hand-held devices (i.e., phones) to record themselves and hear their voices back in the form as singing or talking.

Based on "the portraits," let me make some general remarks about how the nine
nDigiStorytellers "experienced" two "nDigiStorytelling ceremonies" held at the Aurora Borealis
Resort (the Pilot Study in November 2013) and the Ojibwa Casino (the Final Study in May
2014). Overall, every Native digital storyteller experienced their respective KBIC
nDigiStorytelling workshop in a manner that was unique to their needs, dreams, desires, and life
journey; and, they used various terms to explain their thoughts and feelings regarding the overall
process and the individual activities within it. For example, phrases used to describe their
overall experiences for the nDigiStoryMaking process included: "healing," "one of my dreams
come true," "exhausting," "grateful," "overwhelming," "a lot different than I had expected,"
"speechless," "intense," and "awesome." When asked what they felt or thought before coming
into the nDigiStorytelling workshop, some individuals said "nervous," "scared," "excited,"
"hope," "ready;" one said he thought it could be "part of [his] healing process," and another said
he "didn't know what to expect." When asked on the first day what they wanted to achieve by
attending the workshop, of the nine nDigiStorytellers, all of them said in various ways and on

different days that they wanted to "give back," "share their story," "help somebody besides myself," or "help out all individuals who might need help down the road."

At different stages of the four-day workshop process, there were a diverse number of thoughts and responses depending on a person's "experience" speaking, writing, voice recording, surfing the Internet, and using video-editing software programs, and how they "experienced" different days in the process. For example, after the *nDigiStoryCircle*, on the first day, several of the Keweenaw Bay *nDigiStorytellers*, upon their return the second day, said they: "really enjoyed the process," "felt it was emotional," felt "it was a good thing," felt "grateful," felt "[that it] triggered old memories left and right, "felt a sense of relief," "felt joyful, "felt all those feelings coming back," or "felt that we all had a little bit of treatment saying our stories." During scriptwriting (usually on the morning of the second day), several of the Keweenaw Bay *nDigiStorytellers* said they felt: "it was a faster day [scriptwriting]," "excited to get going again," "it was so healing," "exhausted, but it was a good exhaustion," "it was awesome," "[it was] kinda rough," and that "it had been a release." Others said the scriptwriting process: "felt more focused," "scary," "kinda frustrating," kinda "hard compressing it down," "[felt] good to get some of that stuff off of me and to be able to show it openly," "[felt] it was a different kind of stress," "[was] tedious to take [the script] down smaller, but it kept the message," "surprised" and "sad." After gathering images, their own photos as well as others off the Internet, Keweenaw Bay nDigiStorytellers said they felt: "that it was kinda sticky," "like I was connecting the dots," "like I was reliving memories I forgot all about," "[that] it was a hard thing to find 'the right' photo," and "[like] it brought up a lot of old feelings and old memories—good, bad, happy sad." A few said they "really enjoyed it," and it made them feel "a lot closer to family." After finishing their voice recording, Keweenaw Bay nDigiStorytellers reported: "it was different," "it

became very real to hear myself say my story back to me," "I almost felt like I was listening to someone else's story," "[it felt] very strange to hear your own voice come back," and "relief [it was] happening." Others added: "telling it and listening to myself was kinda surreal," "[it was] kinda weird hearing your own voice," "it was good to get it out," and "[it was] good, no problem."

There were no consistent ways the "nDigiStorytelling ceremony" was experienced by each person. How could it be? However, if you take a closer and deeper look at the Anishinaabe soil where we planted our nDigiSeeds, you begin to see the Seven Grandfather

Teachings—wisdom, love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility, and truth—everywhere you look. For example, the actual words showed up in one-page scripts (see Appendix H) and these Anishinaabe teachings were translated into attitudes and behaviors each person practiced each day of the workshop and also in how they spoke about their lives, their families, and their communities. In fact, the older male Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa Indian nDigiStoryteller made this point before he screened his final movie on the last day of the second KBIC nDigiStorytelling workshop. He said, "It just seemed that what we did is deal with our Seven Grandfather Teachings—honesty, humility, bravery. They all came up this week, which is great! [Tim teared up and paused]."

Uncovering the "Living Breath" of nDigiStorytelling Through Mino Bi-maadiziwin

As mentioned above, *Mino Bi-maadiziwin* means the "good life." It focuses on "movement" that gives life such as breathing and a heart beating. If we begin to explore this raised row in our *Anishinaabe* garden, we begin to notice in "the portraits" (described in the fourth and fifth chapters) how "movement" in "the form of life" was everywhere—in the whirlwind on the water near the Aurora Borealis cabins, in the Thunder Beings echoing across

L'Anse Bay, in Janice's deep breaths she took after reading her script while she was listening to her playback, in Robert's voice singing in Room 121 at the Ojibwa Casino the same song he used to sing to his first born child, and in the butternut squash soup bubbling on the stove in "the Nurturing Cabin." Life and movement was everywhere!

During our dialogue on May 12–14, 2014, the *nDigiDreamers* talked about this idea of digital stories as "living breath." In fact, Eva began talking about how when we take a deep breath that we pull up air from our deepest core up past our heart to make speech. She said there is a word in their language for "taking your breath" and how that is related to talking.

Afterwards, Arlene researched the term with Rhonda Hopkins and shared the following email:

Now the word *gaa-giidigo*, "talking." As you know, from your helper sheet which I provided for you *gaa* is past tense and *giigido* is the 'talking.' Language is so common-sense, *giig* is the movement forward, so when you talk you are moving forward from the things in your heart; [they] come forward through your words.

Somewhere in our conversation Arlene thought about "childhood stuff" in her own life experience, and she said she was told to do her healing by water. She said she had to "talk what you are feeling" by water. She said she remembers another time she was finishing a ceremony when something remarkable happened which she equated with digital storytelling:

I saw my life being a movie and I could freeze frame it; I had to go and see that and I had to cry and I prayed with the water and they showed me the movie of my life. I had to talk out loud. [They say] the most powerful prayer is to sing a song.

After we entered another lengthy discussion about water—how we are born in it and how nearly all the major systems in our bodies need it—we began talking about tears and emotions and began talking about crystals and spirit healing. As you can imagine, through talking, listening, feeling, and thinking, for three days, we were peeling back layers of the "nDigiStorytelling ceremony." Together, we felt restored through our own experiences and by watching and listening to nDigiStories and videotapes of the two nDigiFests where nine

beautiful and strong Keweenaw Bay human beings, messengers, and warriors were showing us how they made pathways back to sobriety.

Let's look at places in "the portraits" where a metaphor like "water"—significant in all Indigenous teachings—is especially useful in understanding the healing aspects of an individual's story. Consider that water at the top of a lake is clear and smooth and as you go deeper it becomes muddled and thick (including less energetic) until you resurface. From this small frame of reference, we could hear terms being spoken by the middle of the *nDigiStorytelling* process related to water: "It made things clearer," "It took just these three days for me to go where I have never been before," "I am actually thinking about all the little details," or "When we got to the end of the finished product, it was just more focused!" Clarity, focus, and details are important on any journey of exploration to the depths of your human being.

Next, if we explore "the portraits" presented in earlier chapters, we begin to understand how we move with, speak from, and talk about our visceral bodies that embody historical trauma or enact resilience. Recall in my introductory chapter, Cherokee writer, activist and performer Qwo-Li Driskill (2008), who wrote: "If colonization is a kinesthetic wounding, then decolonization is a kinesthetic healing" (p. 15). As we watched people speak about their "experiences" in the four-day *nDigiStorytelling* process, we saw one female KBIC *nDigiStoryteller* say, "I might feel nervousness and anxiety a little bit, but I know right here [she points to her heart] that this is a good thing and it's going to benefit a lot of people and I'm going to do the best I can [making it]." Later, she also shared: "[So] when you write it on paper you actually look at it. It's not just up there anymore [points to her head]." Finally, one *nDigiHelper* said: "Instead of holding [my story] out there [she holds her hands away from her body], I brought it in here [she gestures toward her heart)." When we explored this "raised bed" within

the Keweenaw Bay *nDigiGardens*, we began to notice other statements that referred to physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual release: "It feels good to get it out," "I didn't know what was going to come out," "Some of it was getting kinda sticky," "It feels good to get some of that stuff off of me," or "It just needs to get out." As a *Din*é woman who understands complex Indigenous healing systems and how holistic healing occurs, I definitely find this to be a topic that I would like to explore more in-depth, in the future.

Finally, it is significant that *all* the KBIC *nDigiStorytellers* were in multiple years of recovery from alcohol and drugs and apparently all were involved in their community or practicing their *Anishinaabe* teachings or on the "Red Road," a term used to describe a person's recovery journey from addictions through the practice of Native ceremonies and spirituality. As mentioned in my second chapter, Morgan and Freeman (2009) state: "When healing is viewed as a gift that must be shared it becomes empowering and moves people to their own power, in the sense of self-liberation from obstacles to their well-being" (p. 90). First, let's consider the *nDigiStorytellers*' view of the "good life" journey or the "Red Road." As mentioned previously, Mino Bi-maadiziwin is about movement through time and space, and I can imagine other dimensions too, but that I will not discuss here. In our May 12–14, 2014 conversations, Eva suggested the journey of "good life" is not linear but "three dimensional, like a sphere" and that it has a quality that "comes and goes." She continued, "[it is always] "moving," and has "inner and outer parts of it [that are] all spirit." Indeed, the Keweenaw Bay nDigiStorytellers spoke about their lives as journeys. Here are some of their statements as they were examining their "lived experiences" through *nDigiStorytelling*: "Wow! It's like I've been on a journey," "It's funny to look back," "It is kinda like I closed the door, but I am reopening it now and looking at it," "It seemed like I closed the door on it and I never thought I would have to worry about it

anymore [because] dealing with this week reinforced I was healing pretty good." At least two scripts make this point. For example, one older male *nDigiStoryteller* said: "I left a trail of guilt, shame, embarrassment and dysfunction;" while a female KBIC nDigiStoryteller boldly stated, "I looked back, but I ain't going back!" Also some of the titles for their nDigiStories expressed "movement" that was "inside moving out," for example Don's title, "Alcohol the Wrong Road," Carrie's "Starting Within," Janice's "Grief's Healing Journey," or Marty's "Crawling, Walking . . . Soaring." (Though it is beyond the scope of this study, I can only imagine how many other titles of *nDigiStories* would include this same idea of "journey" if we were to search the 1200 stories we have co-created over the last eight years). The most important point to make here is that Mino Bi-maadiziwin, like the concept Hozhó for the Diné, exists in every living entity, which, in essence, completes a natural cycle that ends (and begins) in balance, harmony and goodness. Thus, those that made the journey have never left it. Where we went, was to the bottom of the ocean to bring "gifts" back for the people; thus, I call our Keweenaw Bay *nDigiStorytellers* our present-day messengers who are showing us how to "walk in a good way." Arlene once mentioned in one of our meetings that according to the Anishinaabe teachings, "true wisdom" arises "when we can actually hear and listen to a person's story and learn from it and not actually have to walk thru it." Or, one could say, dive to the bottom of the ocean to find the "gift" called life. Donnie, in the first KBIC nDigiStorytelling workshop also stated insomuch when he said about his peers, "you can't walk for them, [but] you can show them." This understanding can mobilize an entire community of Indigenous peoples who are "miracles" or "survivors." Some KBIC *nDigiStorytellers* stated: "It's amazing what we survive out there;" "It's good to show how we all survived;" "It is very hard to live here. Why I am surviving is beyond me, maybe it is for me to share my story to let our precious Indian people know [that] no

matter *what* life has done to you [you can survive]." There is a "longer and broader view" of the "good life" or *Mino Bi-maadiziwin* that is happening within our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops and within this group of KBIC *nDigiStorytellers*.

Our four-day "nDigiStorytelling ceremony" helps our nDigiStorytellers create clear insights and deeper holistic healing. We are learning we can have our story—about grief, trauma and alcoholism—without being our story. For example, when Jerry Lee reflected upon parts of his life story during his nDigiStoryMaking process he reached a deeper level of grief and acceptance. He shared (see Media 6.1):

I didn't know that I was holding that in for all these years. It wasn't that I was miserable. It's just that I never talked about it with anybody and I don't even think in treatment. I was in treatment when we did the Johari Window and I did my fifth step. And, what I talked about during this process, that first relationship, that wasn't brought up. I didn't want to go there so I just closed the door and I said, 'Just seal her up and you don't ever have to worry about it again. That parts done!' But then I kinda realized now going through this that I should have talked about it years ago. I felt I was pretty good in my life, but now there's [he taps his heart with his hands] maybe a little bit of heaviness there that I really didn't relate to the relationship I had or the lost of it. I think maybe that was it. I learned there are different degrees of grieving. Like I mentioned earlier, I didn't know that I grieved longer and harder for that relationship, I think, than I did when my mom and dad walked on. Throughout this whole process you guys made it easy. I thought I was whole before, but I think the circle is really, really complete now.



Media 6.1. Jerry Lee pre-screening reflection 2. (Used with permission of *nDigiDreams*). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/a_-oRcbbcUs

The foregoing analysis is only a small piece of how to "interpret" the present study through an Indigenous epistemological framework. That, to my knowledge, has never been done before with digital stories or digital storytelling workshops held with Native peoples. It is a focus I would like to explore within future *nDigiStorytelling* workshops. The literature I explored in the second chapter was a good background, like a substrate with a garden. However,

coming from an entirely Indigenous perspective in our "interpretation" was significant because it provided much-needed nutrients and minerals within our *nDigiGarden*. In essence, all of us--*nDigiDreams*, the ATR team and all nine Keweenaw Bay *nDigiStorytellers*--were co-researchers tilling the soil and planting *nDigiSeeds* together. There was immense generosity in the sharing and exchange of our ancestral teachings and philosophies that brought enormous dew, sunlight, blessings and deep understandings about planting *nDigiSeeds* in the fertile sacred homelands of the *Anishnaabeg* (the people).

Uncovering the "Living Breath" of nDigiStorytelling Through Hozhó

Using my own understanding and experience of *Diné* healing traditions, and coming from a philosophical framework based on hozhó described in the first chapter, I intend to show how I can take one small piece of "the portraits" from the fourth and fifth chapters, which describe the KBIC nDigiGarden and transplant it into another Indigenous garden called Diné Bikéyah ("the Navajos land"). In the opening chapter, I explained how I began considering digital stories as a "living breath" (air) that comes from a person's inner being or hwíí sizíinii (spirit). To review, I explained how our *Diné* epistemology begins with the assumption from direct experience that everything in the cosmos is connected and that all physical bodies and minds are expressions of a deeper spiritual essence that cannot be fully conceptualized in terms of an individual person. Thus, like the *Anishinaabe* and other Indigenous peoples (and some philosophies such as Buddhist and Taoist), our mind, body and spirit are intrinsically related with the cosmic whole. Similarly, we have an understanding that all primordial life-giving forces in our *Diné* cosmos are defined by a natural order of beauty, harmony and goodness called hozhó. Then, I stated that according to our *Diné* teachings, thought is the inner form of speech, and speech is the outer from of thought (Witherspoon, 1977). Finally, I explained that a person's speech or language

carries sacred air, wind, energy and life. Thus, a person can re-establish themselves and the world around them by the act of speech, which is a condition of health, wellness, beauty, and harmony symbolized by hozhó. To put it more succinctly, our traditions are remarkable for the view that we can breathe *hozhó* back into ourselves and make us whole through speech, song, and prayer. Consider in the fourth chapter when Eva argued that because of inter-generational trauma, "Many people, Native people especially, have experienced a loss of their voice" and "[w]hen people begin to find their voice their spirit is liberated and they can begin their walk of personal and collective liberation." Now, consider that in our *Din*é teachings, we have a deep understanding about the human body. For example, when we look at the whorls on our fingertips, on our toes, and on the top of our heads, we know they are places were the "breath of life" or "living breath" (air) entered us (Schwarz, 1997). And, at the tip of my tongue is a sacred place where I put my tádídín (corn pollen) to pray, or if I look in the mirror into the irises of my eyes there are rainbow-colored crystals. Therefore, from a *Diné* perspective, in my imagination, "lost voice" can be retrieved by placing the whorls of our fingers (air) on a computer keyboard; typing the sacred words that we spoke from the tips of our tongues in the nDigiStoryCircle; and allowing the tséghádí'nídíní (rock crystal) in the computer a chance to interact with the tséghádí nídíní (rock crystal) that the Diné believe lies within the center of our minds and the center of our irises which are rainbow-colored ones. Thus, in our "nDigiStorytelling ceremony," from a *Diné* perspective, "lost voice" can become retrieved and our personal and cultural identities strengthened. This is one of the reasons we "smudge" our computers and call them our nDigiFireBoxes.

My grandfather, when asked, explained the details of healing as follows:

The computer is also like a crystal, that machine and every machine that's out there; they have been put together by fire, air, water and earth, if you think about it. Inside the computer, there's a *tséghádí'nídíní* (rock crystal) inside it. So the screen is like the brain and there's a right hemisphere and left hemisphere [i.e., a binary code of 1's and 0's represents computer processing language]. So these hemispheres are like cornfields, both sides, and everything put into the computer is like a cornfield. It is like a seed of corn. Everything is captured inside there and inside [your] brain is also the "seed of word." So the seed will go into the ear [and] into the brain [and] that's planted inside. So that's how it works. So in order for this seed to grow and to have a harvest time, you got to keep it nice and clean. If you don't keep it nice and clean, if you contaminate it, let's say, if you're a human person who drinks alcohol, you're going to kill that seed and you will have no harvest time (O. Detsoi, personal conversation, June 16, 2014)

Later, my grandfather explained that the *tséghádí nídíní* (rock crystal) within our mind, when we get emotionally charged, light up or get on "fire" and a person's eyes will tear (water) to cool it down. I have seen this happen many times within our *nDigiStorytelling* workshops. I have seen *nDigiStorytellers* looking into the computers and typing details of their life journey and when they will read or see something it will make them cry (water) to cool down the *tséghádí nídíní* (rock crystal) in their minds which can get overcharged with negative thoughts and emotions.

Now if we return to some of the "experiences" KBIC *nDigiStorytellers* were having it begins to get more interesting. For example, they said they wanted to: "get it out," or that it felt "kinda sticky," or they were "stuck," or just wanted it to "come out." In our *Diné* traditional healing system we understand that "matter" can become embedded in our bodies and we have healers who help to "pull it out" or "suck it out." Imagine for a moment that inter-generational unresolved or present-day grief becomes lodged in an *nDigiStoryteller* and through the four-day process that person begins to think, speak, and write about "the good, the bad, and the ugly." Imagine if the person has a "release" and sheds tears when she or he writes or reads back their script on the computer, or hears his or her voice "come back" to her from speakers on a computer, or watches their finished *nDigiStory* projected on a screen. Possibly that is when

healing occurs, when a person's grief, shame, guilt, and hurt "flys out," gets "unstuck" and gets "released" and why one person is skipping down a wooden ramp and another is standing taller.

Thus, in my imagination, computers, which the *Diné* call *béésh ntsikeesí* (the metal that thinks), can be used as "today's healing instruments." Given this teaching from my grandfather, one can imagine what I will be thinking about when I continue working with *nDigiStorytelling* scripts, voice recordings, editing movies using headphones and splitters, and all elements of the *nDigiStoryMaking* process.

In this discussion, I am reminded about what Donnie, who records his songs into his phone or tape recorder, said:

I remember when I was young and they told us how to remember a song and to this day [he whispers], "don't use a recorder." But nowadays we have that and I'm sure if our ancestors had that they would have used it too. We have a word for that *waywayzha*, "they did the best that they could with what they had."

The *nDigiDreamers* are doing the best we can with what we have, that is, an ancient understanding about the phenomenal world around us and a little modern technology (i.e., a laptop computer, a microphone, digital camera and scanner). Thus, from our practice and research, *nDigiStorytelling* is one more path that can offer healing, liberation and personal and cultural transformation.

Addressing the Literature Gaps

Through this discussion of two n*DigiStorytelling* workshops, then, I have explored a different methodological approach using the "Three Sisters" and I have examined how, as Indigenous peoples, we can apply our unique epistemological frameworks to better understand *nDigiStories* as "living breath" and *nDigiStorytelling* as "ceremony." I am humbled by this inquiry, recognizing that the material I have discussed so far only scratches the topsoil within our Keweenaw Bay *nDigiGardens*.

Regarding digital storytelling, as a *Diné* woman, I have an entirely different perspective about this participatory media approach; however, this Indigenous knowledge production is for the same original ends—social justice—but most often takes place within Indigenous sacred homelands for healing, liberation, and transformation.

As mentioned previously, hundreds upon hundreds of our *nDigiStorytellers* are present-day warriors and messengers who are sharing their life experiences to help guide some of our relatives back home to the "center" of life. They are Native people living, breathing, speaking and being, Mino Bi-maadiziwin, the "good life." This "longer or broader view" does not focus on "looking back," but always knowing we are in the center of this dynamic, eternal, third dimension we call "life." In fact, my study indicates nDigiStorytelling could help show the diverse complexities of historical trauma and inter-generational unresolved grief among our Native people by incorporating this holistic healing tool to "map" trauma narratives or to deliver "talking circles" at a different level. Within my own imagination and from my own practice of almost ten years of *nDigiStorytelling*, I do not speak only about "soul wound," but also "soul wind," and I do not not only consider and speak about "historical trauma," but also "historical greatness." Indeed, the concept historical trauma was useful when it was first conceived over 30 years ago, but I think it is time for Indigenous researchers to "look forward" to explore the hózhó (beauty) that exists within us and all around us and that we must understand that we can use our "living breath" to breathe goodness, harmony and health back into ourselves, our families, and our communities. This is what our *nDigiDreamers* are doing and there is no doubt why *nDigiDreams* was called "back home" by our people, and why our co-research has taken place within the beautiful, sacred Anishinaabe homelands instead of inside the Western hegemonic institutions where I heard, read, and saw what was being said about "our voices" and our "lived

experiences." I've moved from these Western hegemonic institutions where the production of knowledge has slowly moved toward a term called "Indigenous resilience." But when I began to read and study these interpretations during my literature research phase, I began to wonder, would it take 30 more years to truly gain ground? Although historical trauma and Indigenous resilience, both focus on "key informant" interviews and "the gathering of narratives," for me, these data collection methods are still too strident, because far too often the "living breath" of our people are being coded as "data," "phenomenon," and sometimes they are still viewed as "artifacts."

Finally, there is still, for me, a rich curiosity about the future of Indigenous film as I watch Native peoples tap into "crystal" technologies to explore aesthetic sovereignty within our sacred homelands. This reflects a human path without "resisting" or "fighting against" but "drawing within" to tap our source of strength to be of service to others. The area of interest (I wouldn't go so far as stating "gap") I am trying to address is the idea that recorded voice is "living breath," which cannot be sold without the expressed permission of the *nDigiStoryteller*; and media knowledge production in the form of *nDigiStorytelling* is, ultimately, about Native survivance and resurgence that I will discuss in the final chapter.

Conclusion

I have always and will always enjoy sitting, listening and conversing with my *Anishinaabe nDigiSisters* and Carmella as we explore the "thick groundcover" within our Keweenaw Bay *nDigiGardens*. We have so much we can learn from each other. What we experienced together over these last couple of years, I have tried to "interpret" in written format in this manuscript. And I can imagine talking to others—somewhere at an "Indigenous farmers market" on Turtle Island—about the few succulent "squashes" we have been able to pick and

examine. In the next and last chapter, I will explore what could happen if we have an abundant harvest and our "cornstalks" begin to tassel and travel widely.

Implications for Future Research and Conclusions

There is a *Diné Hózhoojí Sin* (Blessingway song) that enjoins us to look, live, speak, sing, and walk in beauty every day. As one of the leading Native digital storytellers in the United States, our Navajo way of being admonishes me to continue to think, plan, create, and reflect upon all the beauty that surrounds our *nDigiStorytelling* practice and to dream about all the beautiful ways our *nDigiFamily* and *nDigiStories* will continue to grow and spread. The next time I return to my grandfather's *hooghan* (home), I will ask him to bring out his *tséghádí'nídíní* (crystal), again, to see what our ancestors are telling us. And, when Carmella and I return to meet our *nDigiDreamers*, I am certain we will walk, talk, laugh, eat, play, and dream up boundless creative, emotional, and spiritual work together. For example, an *nDigiStorytelling* Visual Logic Model that has been co-conceived, co-written, co-edited, and co-produced by the *nDigiDream* Team (see Media 7.1). In 11-minutes, this short video captures the power, beauty and impact of our *nDigiStoryMaking* and *nDigiStorySharing* processes which can also be gleamed by reading both mine and Carmella Rodriguez's lengthy dissertations. The video begins with grounding our *nDigiStorytelling* in the original teachings of the *Anishinaabe*.



Media 7.1. nDigiStorytelling visual logic model. (Kashata, Petoskey, Woods, Tavenner, Rodriguez, Manuelito, 2014). Permission granted by the co-producers (see Appendix I). This can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/1Q0pHtRsX1k

nDigiStorytelling: Spreading "Pollen" for Survivance

The fires have been lit; our *nDigiSeeds* have been planted.

Native resurgence is happening across all our sacred homelands and it includes a new wave of *nDigiStorytellers*, "Indigenous meaning makers," who are talking about their "lived experiences," writing "awesome" scripts that are being created into *nDigiStories* that are emotionally and spiritually alive and breathing and being shared across the globe. The courage, wisdom, and humility come from our Indigenous teachings. The "pollen" that is spreading is survivance (Vizenor, 2008)—creating spaces and places for creativity, synthesis and renewal. In my imagination, the "pollen" of *nDigiStories* made within an "*nDigiStorytelling* ceremony" connects us to our ancestors, our sacred homelands, diverse languages, unique cultural and spiritual teachings; and, connects us to future and generations who are yet unborn. Every living entity is basic goodness, balance and wholeness. *Mino Bi-maadiziwin. Hozhó.*

Implications for Future Research

A future direction for this work is to understand *nDigiStorytelling* more deeply by exploring this idea of kinesthetic healing for renewal and "historical greatness." We will continue with the *nDigiSeeds* that have been planted in the Michigan sobriety movement and spread it into trauma and grief work and we will begin to tell stories about "cross addictions" through the making of multilayered *nDigiStories* that thread together stories of alcoholism-gambling-overeating, for example. Since "liberation" and "transformation" can sometimes occur within four days, instead of 45 days of treatment as an *nDigiStoryteller* noted in the opening chapter, we would also like to find ways to take *nDigiStorytelling* into residential treatment and domestic violence centers, foster homes, and prisons. Of course, we would continue to explore this as two parts of one whole: the *story-making* and the *story-sharing* processes. Finally, the *nDigiDreamers*, Eva in particular, would like to continue to develop an Indigenous change

model that privileges our way of thinking and being through *Mino Bi-maadiziwin* and the Seven Grandfather's Teachings.

Reflections From a Native Digital Storyteller

There are many other places across Turtle Island the "pollen" of nDigiStorytelling needs to spread. As always, Carmella Rodriguez and I will listen to the winds, see the ripples on the water, and hear the heartbeats of Mother Earth to find the places we need to go to plant more *nDigiSeeds*. Of course, as always, our ancestors will "gaze back" through crystal, fire, and water to show us the way. I remember one day when I told myself, "Yeah, I could make digital stories with Native peoples for 20 years." It has been 10 years since I heard and watched my first digital story and almost seven years since I started making them full-time with Carmella Rodriguez under *nDigiDreams*. I also remember the university research settings who wanted to better understand digital storytelling by "measuring" why and how they worked with diverse populations in urban and rural health care settings. I still remember the day I said, "Okay, you figure it out while I leave and start from the other end. It'll take you 5–8 years to find your grant and get to your outcomes and published conclusions. I can't wait. My people can't wait. My plan is to make digital stories with as many Native peoples and communities who are interested and from my experience of doing that I will draw my own conclusions. Then, one day in the future we will meet half way and we'll compare notes about what we both know."

One of the first people who understood what Carmella Rodriguez and I were doing was *Yup'ik* elder and traditional healer Rita Pitka Blumenstein, a member of the International Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers (https://www.facebook.com/13GrandmothersCouncil). We met Rita at the Alaska Native Health Consortium (ANTHC) in Anchorage, Alaska in 2008 when she came to a digital storytelling workshop we co-facilitated for the organization's staff

and community health workers (see Figure 7.1). During the story circle, she was the last one to share her words, stories, and wisdom. As soon as she held the eagle feather, she looked at Carmella and I and told us a story (see Figure 7.2).



Figure 7.1. Carmella and Brenda with Grandma Rita Blumenstein and ANTHC Digital Storytellers. (Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*).

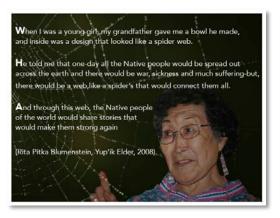


Figure 7.2. Grandma Rita Blumenstein remembers a childhood story. (Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*).

Then Grandma Rita looked back at us and said, "This is it! This digital storytelling is like the spider web! You girls go out and help our people." I will always remember Rita's story and enthusiasm because they ignited something inside me. Within a year, I quit my job at the University of Washington and started training and consulting in digital storytelling with a focus on Indigenous peoples and communities.

My almost 10-year practice and this dissertation have both deepened my understanding about the "living breath" and healing spirit of *nDigiStorytelling* and *nDigiStories*. There is no doubt I have been changed by the making and sharing of *nDigiStories*, especially the ones that reflect back my own story or that of my brothers, sisters, mother, father, and grandparents or even that of my *Diné* relatives and nation. Over the years, I have written several scripts and finished many digital stories after or between *nDigiStorytelling* workshops about my own life experiences—some of them good and some of them bad—because I deeply connected with

another person's digital story. It was healing and transformative because I took the time to tell my own story too. Over the years, I also continue to learn how to patiently and quietly "sit for" and "breathe for" the handful of Native women and men who's voices are beginning to open and be heard, sometimes for the first time, and who's experiences are not being objectified but simply heard and validated, within a sacred space we create called an *nDigiStoryCircle*. After "sitting and breathing" through hundreds of *nDigiStorytelling* workshops, I know through experience and perspective that we are *Healing Our Communities One Story at a Time*.

Appendix

Appendix A: List of Key Terms

Decolonization

I will use a decolonization definition provided by Wazaiyatawin Angela Wilson and Michael Yellow Bird (2005) in their book *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook*: "Decolonization is the intelligent, calculated, and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies, and lands, and it is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation" (p. 2).

Traditional Healing and Western Medicine

It is important to understand the similarities and differences between traditional healing practices and Western medicine. Generally, traditional healing focuses on the person within the context of their community, rather than on a discreet biomedical sickness. The emphasis is on health, not disease. The power of healing happens when all four areas of our lives (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual) are in balance, as depicted in the medicine wheel or other metaphors in the natural world. In this paper, I will speak about healing, from an Indigenous perspective, as a holistic journey toward connectedness, whole being, and centeredness. I will also briefly share information from our *Dine* healing system and understanding about the human body and movement.

Indigenous

This term refers to the people and peoples who identify their ancestry to the original inhabitants of a particular landmass, for example, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. In this paper, I will interchange the word "Indigenous" with "Aboriginal," "Native," "First

Nations," or "Indian" unless I identify specific nations of people such as the Navajo or *Diné*. In addition, I will use Indigenous as an adjective to describe philosophies or approaches that belong to the original inhabitants, for example, Indigenous knowledge or Indigenous methodologies.

Stories and Narratives

I will use narratives and stories interchangeably. However, it must be noted there are different forms of stories, such as creation and teaching stories; and, there are different kinds of personal narratives, such as those about place, ancestors, spiritual matters, and personal experiences.

Storytelling and Digital Storytelling

In this paper, *storytelling* will be understood from an Indigenous perspective; thus, it will refer to the passing along of oral teachings, medicines, and practices from one generation to the next. When I use the term *digital storytelling*, it will refer to a co-created, community-based workshop practice introduced in the early 1990s by the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS). Sometimes these terms are mistakenly interchanged. Although they may have similar outcomes (i.e., strengthens social networks, entertains, and fosters good feelings), their method and approach are quite different.

nDigiStories and nDigiStorytelling

In this study, I will discuss how Carmella Rodriguez and I have Indigenized digital storytelling and have begun to call our community-based workshop process *nDigiStorytelling* and the digital stories we make in this "four-day ceremony," *nDigiStories*.

Talking Circle and Story Circle

The *talking circle* is an Indigenous practice that allows people to respectfully listen and deeply experience the feelings of others, without interruption. The talking circle takes many different forms, but usually has a few attributes and protocols: 1) it is led by an individual who can help

establish comfort and trust in the process so that others can follow; 2) participants are given the opportunity to "smudge" or engage in a purification ritual before it starts; 3) sometimes "a talking stick," for example, an eagle feather, is used and passed along as each person speaks from their heart; and 4) each person has the responsibility to leave behind whatever is shared in the talking circle when the process has ended. On the other hand, *story circle* refers to a small group process for sharing and receiving input on a story idea or script on the first day of a digital storytelling workshop. Carmella Rodriguez and I have combined both types in our *nDigiStorytelling* work with Indigenous peoples who often need a culturally appropriate and safe environment to recollect first-person lived experiences and we have begun calling our effort *nDigiStoryCircles*.

Appendix B: Invitation to Make an nDigiStory



An Invitation to Make a Digital Story with The Anishnaabek Healing Circle ATR and nDigiDreams November 4 – 8, 2013 Skanee, Michigan

Greetings KBIC Digital Storyteller:

The Anishnaabek Healing Circle ATR is producing a second set of digital stories about recovery: "Sowing the Seeds of Recovery." We would like to invite you to share your story – to become a digital storyteller. You have been selected for this special invitation because we recognize and celebrate your journey towards recovery.

We are excited about this opportunity to provide a hands-on intensive workshop to share various digital storytelling concepts and production processes with you. A group of "digi-story-mentors" will work with you to help you produce a finished 3-5 minute digital movie. The story-making process will take three full days, followed by a day of "post production" (for anybody who needs more time).

There is no cost for you to participate. We have rented space at the Aurora Borealis Lodge/Resort in Skanee, Michigan (about 16 miles from L'Anse) as the location for the workshop. The resort has space for meeting, working, recording, sharing meals and space for the 6 story mentors who will help you with your story. There is internet connection and room for computers. Experience with past digital workshops has shown us that almost everyone likes to work into the evening and this is an option if you choose. Having a comfortable facility where people can share, work at their own pace, and relax, contributes to the quality of the finished movies. Plan on spending the entire 3 days – Monday – Wednesday: it takes that long to complete the digital story. We'll provide you with lunch and snacks during the day. We will also reimburse your mileage to drive to/from Skanee every day.

On Friday, November 8, you will be able to invite your family and friends to a lunch and community screening of the finished stories. This will take place in either L'Anse or Baraga (RD Curtis is helping to find a good location for the screening). On Friday you'll also have a chance to share your thoughts about the story-telling process with nDigiDreams and the other story-tellers in a final talking circle.

Access to Recovery KBIC Digital Storytelling Workshop — November 4- 8, 2013 Times and Days:

8:00 am- 5:30 pm Monday, November 4, 2013 8:00 am- 5:30 pm Tuesday, November 5, 2013 8:00 am- 5:30 pm Wednesday, November 6, 2013

8:00 am - 4:00 pm Thursday, November 7, 2013 (if needed to finish individual stories)

12:00 pm - 4:00 pm Friday, November 8, 2013

Location: Aurora Borealis Resort, 13110 Borealis Road, Skance, MI 49962 (906-524-5700)

Located about 16 miles from L'Anse. Please plan to carpool with the other story-tellers to hold costs down, if possible. We will reimburse mileage after the workshop is complete.

Logistics: RD Curtis is your KBIC contact for questions: (906-253-8121)

Terri Tavenner is your ITC/ATR contact for questions: 906-632-6896, ext. 129

or cell 906-440-4932)

Trainers and Story-Mentors:

Your trainers are nDigiDreams consultants:

Brenda Manuelito, Education Director and Workshop Co-Facilitator, nDigiDreams Carmella Rodriguez, Instructional Designer and Workshop Co-Facilitator, nDigiDreams Your Advanced Story-maker Interns are:

Linda Woods, Arlene Kashata, Terri Tavenner, Eva Petoskey

We look forward to seeing you soon! Email me or call if you have a question or want further details: Terri Tavenner, ATR Associate Director, ttav@itcmi.org, 906-632-6896, extension 129

Appendix C: Pilot Study Informed Consent

Informed Consent Form
For Brenda Kay Manuelito
Individualized Learning Achievement – B, Pilot Study
Antioch University, PhD in Leadership & Change program
October 2013

The title of the Individualized Learning Achievement Pilot Study is: The Making of a Digital Story

The name and contact information of the facilitator/researcher: Brenda Manuelito, bmanuelito@antioch.edu, (520) 591-9986 cell

The purpose of the Individualized Learning Achievement Pilot Study:

The purpose of this Individualized Learning Achievement Pilot Study is to explore how American Indian, Alaska Native and First Nations communities are using emerging technologies such as digital storytelling to share lived experiences and how movie viewers perceive the digital stories that are publicly screened. The storyteller has the power and authority to produce and edit their digital story, own it, and decide if they want to share it. Outcomes from the pilot study will be shared with the storytellers and communities that are interested in organizing or participating in digital storytelling workshops.

The requested time requirement:

The time requirement involved, at a minimum, about one to hours in a public setting. The public events will be recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy of the information. If additional follow up is required, with your approval I will schedule additional time.

The protection of privacy:

With your permission, information you provide will be included in a written and/or video format as part of my Individualized Learning Achievement and, if you agree, I would like to incorporate the same information into my doctoral dissertation. I'm also seeking permission to include our work in my future presentations and publications.

Risks & Benefits of participation:

The risks to you are considered minimal; there is a chance that you may experience emotional discomfort in the reflection of the digital storytelling process. Participating in the reflexive process may help further understanding of your lived experience and open dialog with community. Additionally, it may help ignite ideas for community programming that involves digital storytelling.

There is no financial remuneration for participating in this organizational change project. You may discontinue participation from this study at any time without negative consequences. Should you withdraw, information provided by you will be withdrawn from the pilot study.

If there are any questions, concerns or complaints about the organizational change project, please contact: Dr. Carolyn Kenny, IRB Chair, Antioch University, PhD in Leadership and Change Program, ckenny@antioch.edu, Telephone: 805-618-1903

Please sign the informed consent form, indicating that you have read, understood and agreed to participate in this Individualized Learning Achievement Pilot Study and future sharing of what we have learned in subsequent gatherings.

Name of Facilitator/Researcher (Please Print)	
Signature of Facilitator/ Researcher	
Date	
Name of Participant (Please Print)	
Signature of Participant	
Date	<u> </u>

Appendix D: nDigiStorytelling Information Packet

Sowing the Seeds of Recovery Making a Digital Story

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE WORKSHOP:

A "digital story" focuses not only on a recording of a first-hand personal story about a life experience you had or are having, but uses personal photos and music that you own or someone you know owns and who has given you permission to use. If you have time, please try to find media that is royalty-free.

GOAL: Learn how to create a 3-5 minute digital story from a first-person point of view.

OBJECTIVE:

Create a story script about 3-4 paragraphs long or approximately 350 words.

Record voice narration.

Create a rough-cut movie with narration and photos.

Create final movie with titles, transitions, effects, credits, and music.

Final movies will be screened at the end of the last day of the workshop.

DIGITAL STORY EXAMPLES:

Please make sure to review examples of digital stories, under the "Stories" tab of our website at www.ndigidreams.com. They were created in previous nDigiDreams training workshops or as one-on-one consultations and are provided to show you the variety of ways you can create a powerful, emotionally compelling story using your own life experience, unique voice, and personal photos and music.

Also, please go to the Anishnaabek Healing Circle ATR website at www.atrhealingcircle.com to see "Sowing the Seeds of Recovery" -- Anishnaabek people in Michigan who are in recovery. We would like to add your story to these.

WHAT TO BRING TO THE WORKSHOP:

- Script: Think about the story idea you discussed with Eva Petoskey, Terri Tavenner, Arlene Kashata or Linda Woods regarding their Access to Recovery Program; your digital story should focus on a personal reflection or experience that only you can share and that will help others; prepare a 3-4 paragraph draft of your story (either hand-written or typed) which will be shared in a "story circle" at the workshop.
- · Pictures : 20-25 personal photos or images related to your story idea (see below)
- · Music : personal or non-commercial and copyright-free (see below)
- · Optional: Jump Drive (used to transfer files)

Photos and Images:

If you download photos or other images from the Internet make sure the size of the image is at least 640 x 480 pixels. This means, make sure you do not download "thumbnails," but that you download full-size images. Any photo under 350 pixels will be problematic. The best photos are ones you have taken yourself. If you download images from any website(s), write down where you retrieved your images so that it can be referenced in your closing credits. If you look for images on the Internet, choose "Creative Commons" sites, if possible.

Appendix D (continued)

Below is a list of royalty-free image websites:

http://www.morguefile.com

http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons

http://images.fws.gov/ http://images.google.com/

http://memory.loc.gov

http://creativecommons.com

http://commons.wikimedia.org

Music:

If you plan to use music in your digital story, it is best to choose instrumental music and bring it on a CD or flash drive. If you bring your own music, try to bring several songs you like so you have choices to choose from to include in your digital story. Some digital storytellers also create their own music at the workshop by singing or bringing in their drum, gourd or flute.

A digital music library will also be available for you to review, if you do not bring any music. If you download music from the Internet, make sure you write down the website(s) where you retrieved it.

Below is a list of royalty-free music websites:

http://www.freeplaymusic.com

http://www.archive.org/index.php

http://www.partnersinrhyme.com/pir/PIRsfx.shtml

Scanning Photos and Other Images:

Bring to the workshop photographs, artwork, or any images (for example, news clippings or other material relevant for your story) that will fit on a flatbed scanner. If you choose to scan *beforehand*, use 150 dpi and higher and scan each item as a single image in the JPEG (.jpg) format. The screen size should be at least 640 x 480 pixels. It is ok to have a bigger pixel size, bigger sizes are great to create pan and zoom effects. Bring your scanned images on a CD or <u>flash drive</u> or just bring in the original prints and images and we will help you scan them in the workshop.

It will be important that each of you come prepared to work hard in order to complete a 3-5 minute digital story within the allotted time frame. The workshop will start promptly at 8:00 a.m. each day of the workshop.

Appendix E: nDigiStorytelling Workshop Agenda



An Invitation to Make a Digital Story with The Anishnaabek Healing Circle ATR and nDigiDreams November 4 – 8, 2013 Skance, Michigan

Greetings KBIC Digital Storyteller:

The Anishnaabek Healing Circle ATR is producing a second set of digital stories about recovery: "Sowing the Seeds of Recovery." We would like to invite you to share your story – to become a digital storyteller. You have been selected for this special invitation because we recognize and celebrate your journey towards recovery.

We are excited about this opportunity to provide a hands-on intensive workshop to share various digital storytelling concepts and production processes with you. A group of "digi-story-mentors" will work with you to help you produce a finished 3-5 minute digital movie. The story-making process will take three full days, followed by a day of "post production" (for anybody who needs more time).

There is no cost for you to participate. We have rented space at the Aurora Borealis Lodge/Resort in Skanee, Michigan (about 16 miles from L'Anse) as the location for the workshop. The resort has space for meeting, working, recording, sharing meals and space for the 6 story mentors who will help you with your story. There is internet connection and room for computers. Experience with past digital workshops has shown us that almost everyone likes to work into the evening and this is an option if you choose. Having a comfortable facility where people can share, work at their own pace, and relax, contributes to the quality of the finished movies. Plan on spending the entire 3 days – Monday – Wednesday: it takes that long to complete the digital story. We'll provide you with lunch and snacks during the day. We will also reimburse your mileage to drive to/from Skanee every day.

On Friday, November 8, you will be able to invite your family and friends to a lunch and community screening of the finished stories. This will take place in either L'Anse or Baraga (RD Curtis is helping to find a good location for the screening). On Friday you'll also have a chance to share your thoughts about the story-telling process with nDigiDreams and the other story-tellers in a final talking circle.

Access to Recovery KBIC Digital Storytelling Workshop — November 4- 8, 2013 Times and Days:

8:00 am- 5:30 pm Monday, November 4, 2013 8:00 am- 5:30 pm Tuesday, November 5, 2013 8:00 am- 5:30 pm Wednesday, November 6, 2013 8:00 am - 4:00 pm Thursday, November 7, 2013 (if needed to finish individual stories) 12:00 pm - 4:00 pm Friday, November 8, 2013

Location: Aurora Borealis Resort, 13110 Borealis Road, Skange, MI 49962 (906-524-5700)

Located about 16 miles from L'Anse. Please plan to carpool with the other story-tellers to hold costs down, if possible. We will reimburse mileage after the workshop is complete.

Logistics: RD Curtis is your KBIC contact for questions: (906-253-8121)

Terri Tavenner is your ITC/ATR contact for questions: 906-632-6896, ext. 129

og cell 906-440-4932)

Appendix F: Final Study Informed Consent

Informed Consent Form
For Brenda K. Manuelito's
Dissertation Study
Antioch University, PhD in Leadership & Change program
May 2014

The title of the Dissertation Study is:

The Making of Digital Stories Among American Indians in Michigan

The name and contact information of the facilitator/researcher:

Brenda Manuelito, bmanuelito@antioch.edu, (520) 591-9986 Cell

The purpose of the Dissertation Study:

The purpose of this dissertation study is to explore the making of digital stories within an American Indian community in Michigan. During the four-day digital storytelling process, I would like to understand how participants experience the workshop from beginning to end. My goal is to better understand how our nDigiStorytelling workshop impacts each participant's understanding about themself and their life journey—from the story circle to recording voice to the screening of their final movie.

The requested time requirement:

The time required to conduct this inquiry will occur throughout the scheduled four-day digital storytelling workshop at various intervals that could last, at a minimum, 15-20 minutes each. A total of approximately two hours during the four-day workshop will be involved. With your permission, these process interviews will be recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy of the information. If additional follow up is required, with your approval I will schedule additional time.

The protection of privacy:

With your permission, the information you provide will be included in a written and audio/video format and if you agree I would like incorporate that same information into my doctoral dissertation. I'm also seeking permission to include our work in my future presentations and publications.

Risks & Benefits of participation:

The risks to you are considered minimal; there is a chance that you may experience emotional discomfort in the making of your digital story. If this occurs, counselors are available 24 hours a day through the New Day Residential Treatment Program (906-524-4411) and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Outpatient Treatment Program (906-353-8121).

Participating in the hands-on self-reflexive media process may help further understanding about yourself and your life's journey. The digital story you make belongs to you. If you choose to share it, the digital story may help ignite ideas for community programming that involves digital storytelling.

There is no financial remuneration for participating in this dissertation study. You may discontinue participation from this study at any time without negative consequences. Should you withdraw, information provided by you will be withdrawn from the dissertation study.

If there are any questions, concerns or complaints about the dissertation study, please contact: Dr. Carolyn Kenny, IRB Chair, Antioch University, PhD in Leadership and Change Program, ckenny@antioch.edu, Telephone: 805-618-1903

Please sign the informed consent form, indicating that you have read, understood and agreed to participate in this dissertation study and future sharing of what we have learned in subsequent gatherings.

Name of facilitator/researcher (please print)	Signature of facilitator/researcher	
Name of participant (please print)	Signature of participant	_
Date	_	

Appendix G: Interview Guide

The Making of Digital Stories

The following questions will be used as an interview guide for conducting individual and group interviews with digital storytellers at different intervals of the digital storytelling process:

nDigiStorytelling Process Interviews:

Post story circle/script writing:

- 1. What did you experience speaking your story out loud in the story circle?
- 2. What are you experiencing now as you write your story? Do you notice anything different?
- 3. Why did you choose this story to share in a digital story format?
- 4. Is this the first time you told this story?

Gathering media (photos/music):

- What are you thinking and feeling as you begin to gather photos for your digital story?
- 2. Are there any memories about your story that come up for you when you look for or at photos?
- 3. If you decided upon music, what made you select it for your digital story?

Post Voice recording:

- 1. Is this the first time you have recorded and heard your voice?
- 2. How did you feel recording and listening to your personal voice telling this part of your life story? If you recorded part(s) of your story in your Native language, why did you decide to do this?
- 3. Was there any part of the voice recording that made you feel differently?

Editing roughcut/final movie:

- (Completion of Roughcut) What thoughts or feelings came up for you as you started to edit your digital story?
- (Completion of Final Cut) Did making this digital story bring you new insights about yourself or your life's journey?

Post Digital Storytelling Screening:

- In your introduction to your first screening of your movie, you mentioned you experienced XX in the process, could you please tell us more?
- Did you notice any changes in yourself as a result of going through the nDigiStorytelling process?
- Did your relationship with other individuals in this nDigiStorytelling workshop change as a result of going through the process together? If yes, please describe.

Appendix G (continued)

- 4. Through this four-day process you created a digital story about a part of your life's journey. You own it and you will decide how to share it. How does that make you feel?
- 5. Do you have any questions you would like to ask?

nDigiStoryteller Morning Reflections and/or Check-in:

Each Morning of the four-day nDigiStorytelling process:

- (Days 1-4) How are you feeling today on the X day of the digital storytelling workshop?
- (Days 2-4) Did anyone experience anything after you left the digital storytelling workshop yesterday and before you came back this morning? If so, please explain.

The following questions will be used with digital storytelling workshop facilitators in a group dialogue process:

Facilitators Debriefs:

Each Evening after four-day nDigiStorytelling process:

- Days 1-4) Tell us what you each experienced and observed in the digital storytelling workshop process today (i.e., did you notice any changes in the individuals or group?)
- If you were working with a digital storyteller(s) tell us anything that surprised you that came up during the process and when (i.e., digital storytelling reactions to reading their story out loud, emotions upon seeing certain photos, thoughts about new stories to make, etc.).

Appendix H: KBIC nDigiStory Scripts

Nii Wabakwe Omaa Akii - Donnie's Script

As the youngest child of ten, I felt like an only child. My mom was a big influence with our culture. My dad tried to make me do everything right. I couldn't wait for my older brothers to come home from the service; they were my heroes. At first it was a happy arrival but then it turned into a war zone. The fighting woke me up and I'd sit in my bed to block it out. Often they took me to the bar and I stayed waiting in the car for them, watching them beat up other guys. I remember my brothers saying, "Come here boy, let me show you how to fight."

I did not drink when my mother was alive because I didn't want to disappoint her. When I was 16, my mother died . . . they gave me a valium because I was so shocked and heartbroken. The little pill made me feel better. I smoked marijuana to soothe my pain then later started drinking. When I was out partying and cheating on my wife, I thought I was king.

I was eighteen when my first beautiful girl was born. That night I was celebrating, got drunk and almost crashed my brother's car. My handsome son was born 13 months later. I had a beautiful family. I tried to sober up several times for them, but couldn't. I spent time in jail for fighting and hurting others.

In 1990, my beautiful Indian baby girl was born. She was two when her mother left me; we divorced. I continued the pattern with women and tried to sober up in AA many times, but had trouble with the 'higher power thing.'

I was invited to a ceremony and while singing, I remembered dad told me I was supposed to sing and dance for the people. The drum, the singers, the women singing and the people in the community are my Higher Power. This was my spiritual awakening and Anishnaabeg Bimadizi is what I was supposed to do. Many spiritual gifts have come my way since I became sober. My three children and the six grandchildren are the greatest gifts the Creator has blessed me with.

I remember being in Lodge the day before Father's Day. I could see in the Lodge as if it were daylight. I felt the woman spirit very strong all around me. Why? The next day my baby girl and her boyfriend came by. She gave me a father's day card and wrote "congrats on being a grampa." I looked at her and in that moment it hit me. I said, "I know, it's a girl, she came to me in lodge last night."

I have been sober now for 12 years and this is the most beautiful time of my life, the relationships I have with my family is beyond belief. My siblings are all sober now; they are all my heroes. Today, I am dancing and singing for the people: they are my Higher Power.

Starting Within – Carrie's Script

"In life, every ending is just a new beginning."
My ancestors are people who had profound wisdom and great strength. Against all odds, they never gave up the struggle. They always held onto hope.

Unfortunately since birth, alcohol and drugs were not new to me. I was born a generational alcoholic/addict. My addiction began with alcohol and ended with me alone in a jail cell, an IV drug addict. My history of addiction was full of failed attempts. Recovery was not new to me. In that jail cell I reflected on my past and the person I had become. Nine treatment centers, numerous jail stays, and 4 beautiful children without a mother. I had no job, no car, and no education. My marriage was a wreck. I was hurting the people that meant the most to me. I was exhausted and broken. I felt worthless, hopeless, and lost. I was empty inside.

I started to pray like I had done many times before and suddenly I stopped. I was filled with a mix of great suffering, heavy despair and deep pain. I began to cry. At that moment I gave up faith and condemned myself to die a junkie. I believed I was one of the constitutionally incapable people the program talks about, and I would never have happiness again. I would never achieve successful recovery.

How did my ancestors do it? I knew I came from a long line of survivors. I remembered that I had greatness within me too; I just needed to look inside. I began thinking about my children and how much I loved them. "How did my selfishness affect them? What would they DO without a mother?"

I started to pray again, I prayed to my ancestors. Help me! Help me find to the strength inside. I prayed for direction and I surrendered my will. Right there and then, I refused to let drugs and alcohol take my life.

I left that jail cell filled with hope, faith and love. I looked back, but I ain't going back! I began to grow and eventually bloom. I kept my faith, no matter how difficult things got and I became rigorously honest in every part of my life. Today, I am a recovering alcoholic/addict but I am also so much more.

"And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom."

Crawling, Walking . . . Soaring – Marty's Script

Grandma taught me how to pray and always fixed me up after hurting myself from playing outside. I saw an ambulance in the yard. It was the last time I saw her. Two years later, I remember pouring cereal and I had to push all the beer bottles off the table to make room for my bowl. When grandma was here I never had to worry about things like that. I was only seven and I felt an unsettling feeling inside. Something was wrong. I was the oldest

and mom said, "you have to look out for your younger brother and sisters." Who was going to look after me? Most if not all my relatives used alcohol.

My sister and I were sent to a Catholic boarding school. I felt lonely and the nuns were so mean to us. We came back home and Mom said, "This is Gary." I was confused, what happened to my dad?

Our house had burnt down so we had to live with my Aunt. My first experience with alcohol was when my cousin gave me drink of vodka and nothing happened. He made me drink the rest, about a pint. I got sick and couldn't walk. I was worried I was going to get in trouble, but I didn't.

We moved back and forth between the Rez and Milwaukee and between Milwaukee and the Rez. In the city, because I was Indian, I got to participate in drumming and dancing and exhibitions for other schools. I started learning about my culture. I discovered that dancing took me away from all my worries and chaos, even if it was for only a moment.

I started playing basketball and drinking alcohol when I was eleven. Because of the Freedom of Religion Act of 1978, our culture was growing rapidly in our community. I danced and sang whenever I had a chance. Mom couldn't take care of us, so all of us kids had to go into a foster home. I stopped dancing.

I stayed in sports because it gave me a sense of accomplishment and self-worth. By the age of 16, I was a chronic drinker but stayed in school, me, my brother, and sisters have been through foster homes and were now part of the heavy drinking on our rez.

By my early twenties, I been to treatment 4 times and had two kids. Because I had tried so many times to quit, I was convinced that my drinking was never going to stop. Black outs got worse, I made several trips to the hospital because of my drinking. Several times I looked over the bridge and thought about suicide, I didn't want to die but I didn't want to live either.

I woke up in jail again not knowing how I got there. Finally I surrendered to the disease. Feeling guilty, hopeless, scared, and alone for so long, I just gave up. I didn't worry about drinking or not drinking anymore. I didn't care what other people thought of me. I agreed with the judge to go to treatment even though I knew it wouldn't work. Instead of the sheriff dropping me at the treatment center, he dropped me off at the corner and said the judge isn't going to make me go to treatment. I was 27 years old, freezing, standing in the rain . . . and I had a choice to make . . . a two and ½ mile walk in the rain to the treatment center or ½ block to the bar.

I chose to go to treatment. I would prove that it didn't work for me and then I could sit at the bar with no guilt. The only way I could prove this was to follow everything by the book. Secretly I prayed I would be wrong. 40 days later I was about to graduate and it hit me. Something happened along the way, something had changed. Why did I feel so free and confident? I realized that the one key ingredient that was missing in my life . . . in anything

I did, was honesty, which had nothing to do with anyone else, only me. I also realized if I practice honesty daily, all obstacles in life are possible to overcome.

The same day, I entered treatment; I was invited to a sweat lodge and back into my culture. After twenty years it's hard to believe I graduated from high school, attended four plus years of college. I am a certified substance abuse counselor. I'm married and have four kids, two grandchildren, sing on the drum, and participate in ceremony and even go to church once in a while. I am dancing and singing again.

Grief's Healing Journey – Janice's Script

I am Miigizi Miigwans Que-Janice Shalifoe. I grew up with my mom and dad with 10 siblings in Beartown. At the age of 6, I lost my Grandma Shalifoe, at the age of 8 I lost my third grade friend and at the age of 11 my Grandma Charlotte died tragically. I cried and cried and cried . . . especially for my Grandma Charlotte.

After I graduated from high school, I moved to numerous cities. I had my first child at the age of 21. I returned home. About a year later, I got married and had three more children. My life was nuts! More dishes to wash, more food to cook, kids getting sick and lots of chaos from drinking and fighting.

In 1966, a fire took the lives of my first three children with one survivor. I lived in a grief-dazed world for days and months and quit drinking for a couple of years. I felt I did not want to live anymore. During this time I found out I was pregnant with my daughter. I had a spiritual experience with her birth because I almost died. I was ready to go home, but the Spirits sent me back to take care of my baby. 16 months later I gave birth to my son. In honor of the children I lost, I gave their middle names—Jean, Louise and Paul—as my baby's first names.

Due to the tragedy I felt I did not deserve any more children and was not a very good mother at times. Trying to numb my grief I began using alcohol sporadically, gambling and eating compulsively. In 1978, I quit drinking. Al-Anon and Overeaters Anonymous gave me my first touch of hope again. In 1985, I ended my marriage of 23 years. Whatever I could get to, I would do it to address my grief, depression and compulsive over-eating. In 2006, OAHOW became my extended family. They give me the courage, strength and hope to live my life without the overwhelming daily depression. I was set free and made living amends to my children so that I could be the mom I always dreamt of being. On my healing journey, I let go of my Catholicism to follow my traditional Native way of life. I dance at pow-wows, attend ceremonies, feasts and celebrations. I also belong to the Four Thunders Drum as a woman singer.

Today, when depression or loss occurs, I just have to hear the songs of the Four Thunders Drum, pray to the Creator and work my OAHOW program to feel better.

Due to OAHOW and my traditional culture, I live a good life with a loving heart. I sing traditional songs, I dream and follow my intuitions, and I love to attend sacred ceremonies. Chi miigwech Gitchi manido for true abstinence in my life.

Today, my prayer is to live in peace and harmony with all my relatives, to seek my Creator and to live free of all addictions.

Full Circle – Jerry Lee's Script

I was blessed growing up with loving, caring parents in an alcohol-free home. I give thanks every day for how the Creator kept me from witnessing firsthand the evils and pitfalls associated with alcohol.

My first experience with alcohol came at age 14. Friends "introduced" me to a friend of theirs and within a couple of months, their friend Alcohol became my new best friend. Before I realized it, ALL of my goals and aspirations for high school went out the window.

For the next 20 years, I left a trail of guilt, shame, embarrassment and dysfunction. However, I remember my mom and dad nagging me about getting an education. My certificates and degree are the few positives in my early life. In 1984, I graduated from Haskell Indian Nations University.

I was a functional drunk. I could hold a job, so I moved east to Washington D.C. and worked for the BIA in the Records, Forestry and the Procurement Departments. I left the BIA and started truck driving. When I messed my leg up in a bar brawl and could no longer drive trucks, I moved back home to Michigan, had my leg repaired and never returned to DC. Losing a job I was passionate about was still not enough to put the bottle down.

In the years I had been away from home, my brothers and some family members had begun to sober up. They had homes, cars, and families, and I wanted that too. "Just put that beer down," my brother told me. I didn't.

A year later, my sister introduced me to a woman. For the first time in my life, I knew what love was about. Prior to this, all I wanted from women was companionship for weekends or one night stands.

I also found out how a relationship with a woman would interfere with my relationship with "my new best friend." I started to get resentful and it wasn't at the alcohol. One night, she told me she needed to say something to me, and she would never say it again. She said, "Your drinking scares me!" The next morning, I woke up and she said, "Do you remember what I told you last night?" "Yeah, you said my drinking scares you." "Anything else?" "No." "Right! You passed out while we were talking."

[One year later]

I came home on a Friday with \$900 in my pocket. I ended up in Swede's Bar on Monday morning, hung over and broke. I looked in the mirror and saw nothing. I called Mike at New Day Treatment and said, "I'm done, get me in there." He told me to be there on Wednesday. I charged a case and went home for one last drunk. I popped one and stared at it for a long time. "What the heck."

I dumped my best friend Alcohol, but harder than dumping the booze was losing my first real relationship. That was the roughest time. I kept thinking about that simple profound statement. Within a year of completing treatment I got a Dear John letter. I felt like I'd been kicked to the curb.

How do I deal with this? I took a ride. [Driving Sequence]

My best decision was not picking it up again.

Today . . . I have come full circle. I am an administrator at New Day, the same treatment center where I started my recovery. I have a beautiful wife, 5 grown children, and 14 and three-quarters grandchildren. We provide a loving alcohol-free home for them. If I had never gotten sober, I would never have heard my granddaughter sing the White Eagle song. That's the same first Ojibwa song I learned.

aha -Tim's Script

Boozhoo! [Introduces himself in Anishnaabemowin.]

Amuck aday agee da moo inii indignacause myingnum doodum bawiting indungaba. My English name is Tim Derwin. I am black squirrel from the wolf clan and am Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa. I have been married to Peggy for 37 years. We have a son and daughter, and 5 grandchildren.

I was born 57 years ago to ERNIE and TILLIE DERWIN. We always knew that we were native but we did not live in a traditional way. We were Ojibwe from my Mishomis on my father's side and German from my mother. I went to a Catholic school and it was 8 years of hell.

When I pass on to the spirit world I will be in a great place because I have already done my time in hell. I was punished and humiliated by spankings, kneeling on pencils, and eating a lot of ivory soap. I learned to hate the Catholic religion.

I remember spending a lot of my childhood with my Mishomis and Nokomis. I loved being outdoors hunting and fishing with my Mishomis. I did not learn any native teachings. My Nokomis was from the boarding school era when many of our people were told not to be Native . . . but we knew we were. My parents are in the spirit word. I miss them. My father was very funny and a good provider. My mother was a loving homemaker. I have 2 brothers and 3 sisters. Despite being a very close family, alcohol was a big part of our life. I was 16 the first time that I used alcohol and drugs and continued for the next 25 years. My addiction got so bad that I was missing a lot of family gatherings. Spending time with

my fellow drinkers was more important. Our 13-year old son started getting into trouble. My wife knew some native students and asked if he could attend the drumming. One day he asked me, "Dad how about coming with me to drumming?" I said sure. I thought it was just another opportunity to drink. Then he said, "You know, Dad this is a traditional drum and to be involved you have to be sober." At first, I thought "no way" but after some thought, I felt sad and ashamed because he had to ask me to be sober.

This was my AHA moment. Enough is enough. Him asking me to do this was important. I went feeling confused, scared, and still in denial. All these kids around the drum were sober. At first I went for him, knowing nothing about sobriety, but since, I have learned that I must do this for myself. I have been clean and sober for 22 years. The red road has taken me on many beautiful paths, and it has made me a better husband, father, and Mishomis.

I am involved with our traditional culture. I love and respect this way of life. I have chosen this beautiful way of life and would love to see more of our people do the same.

Alcohol the Wrong Road – Don's Script

Alcohol was a thief of my happiness. I let him in and made him my friend. I went to him for comfort and he gave it . . . temporarily.

My mom drank beer every day and took me with her to the bars. Now and then, she'd make me drink some of her beer. I'm not sure why, maybe it was so we wouldn't like it when we grew up.

I was a very good student in elementary school, but I was ridiculed for wearing shabby clothing and being Indian. You see, in Milwaukee, everything wasn't integrated until 1969. But, even then, I still felt like I was on the outside looking in . . . when I was with the white kids, I was "the Indian," when I was with the skins, I was too light.

I either joked with or physically fought those who made me feel inferior. In my report cards, my teachers always checked that I had "behavioral problems." Instead of focusing on my straight A's, my mom would sit me down and ask me over and over, for what seemed like hours: "Donald Francis, why are you such a bad boy? Why can't you behave?" Seeing my mother drunk, I said to myself, "I'll never drink!"

In junior high, rebellion took over and things got worse . . . I would do anything to stay out of school . . . I'd hang out in apartment hallways, laundromats, and the library . . . anyplace to stay warm.

At 14, I started to smoke pot and cigarettes. During the mid-70s... I started doing LSD and other drugs. I also started drinking a lot. I hung out with older kids who had cars, money, drugs, and alcohol to help me escape.

I was good at it . . . at escaping, at partying. It was "normal." Everybody I knew did it. Yet, there was still that voice inside me saying, "Hey, I thought you said you'd never drink."

This led to 20 years of a horrible life filled with drunkenness, violence, and guilt. My life sucked BIG TIME . . . I wanted out of it, but didn't know how.

One day, while in court, a lawyer asked, "Do you have a problem with drinking?"

"Well, this is my 8th DWI . . . I think so."

"If you want help, I can help," he said.

After that, I got popped again. Another DWI. This time I reached out to the lawyer. I asked him, do you know a good psychologist? Because I think I need psychological help. He chuckled and said, "If you stop drinking . . . all your troubles will go away!" I thought, no way, just to quit drinking, I'm in too much trouble.

A few weeks later, I started attending meetings while in jail. 90 meetings in 90 days! When my first son was born, I started thinking that I didn't want him to go thru the same hell as I did. It was a strong motivator to quit.

A month into my sobriety, while I was walking around the city I heard a voice say to me, loud and clear. "Hey Don, you don't have to drink any more!"

That blew me away! I stopped and thought, "Wow, I don't have to drink any more?" In December 2014, I will celebrate 23 years of this new way of life! I recognize alcohol for what it truly is . . . a thief. I am no longer letting it rob me of my happiness! I am . . . A TRUE HUMAN BEING.

This is where I belong . . . and this is what I was always looking for.

Sacred and Sober – Robert's Script

Boozhoo! Beemoisaii magizi diizhnikos, wabshka miiangan dodem My name is Robert Rajacic. I grew up in Michigan. Alcohol was always around. When I was eight, I accidentally tasted my first beer. I remember being at camp with my little brothers, we got thirsty, and opened a can that looked like soda. After our first few sips, we started feeling a little funny . . . we liked it. My dad found us drunk as hell. "What am I going to do, your mother is going to kill me." When I woke up he said, "Don't tell your mother what happened! Brush your teeth, your breath smells." I didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

During family parties sometimes fights would break out, and I would start drinking whatever was left over. Four years later my dad left after a fight, and it hurt me, like it was MY FAULT.

At 16, he called me. "Hey, sonny boy!" I broke down and smashed the phone. I started drinking and mixing drugs. A week later, I got caught stealing and was fired! Angry and frustrated, I started physically and verbally abusing others until mom sent me away for two weeks. When I came home, my stuff was packed in garbage bags. I felt unwanted and unloved. So, I moved in with my sister.

Something I never thought would ever happen did...my dad moved back. I was angry ... I panicked... I ran off and got drunk. After sobering up, I talked to him. With tears in his eyes, he said, "Bobby boy, I'm sorry." We both broke down and hugged each other.

My addiction continued until August 23, 2004. I looked at myself in the mirror. I didn't recognize myself. It slowed me down, but I didn't stop til my senior year. Since I was a young boy, school has always been my "safety zone"—I always had good grades and excelled in sports.

To graduate, I had to complete a senior project. Growing up, I danced at our summer powwows, but I knew very little. That's when the drum called me, that's it, the drum. I'll do my project on it!" I found a local medicine man who agreed to help me on one condition. He said "This is an alcohol and drug free drum"...hum, okay.

After school, I spent weeks looking up information and talking to my mentor. I started recognizing the people around the drum, people who had been a part of my life. They were the ones that taught me to be Anishinaabe. I began to learn songs and the rhythm of the drum. We laughed, made jokes and enjoyed our time together . . . I liked it! When I introduced my senior project, my teacher had tears in her eyes. She told me, "Robert, it was beautiful to see you learn your culture and hear your voice on the drum . . . it really moved me."

Today, I walk the Red Road by sitting on the drum and dancing in the circle. I married my high school sweetheart, Olivia and we have two beautiful daughters.

Recently, I was diagnosed with bi-polar. I take my meds and attend a men's group. When I work with my hands, making bows, fletchings, beadwork, and leatherwork, I feel at peace. By talking about it and recognizing it, it helps me realize it is a part of who I am.

My dream is to build an indoor archery range to teach people of all ages how to shoot. I think it helps people relax and focus on the task at hand—I know it helped me.

It's okay to ask for help
We're not perfect, but can grow one day at a time.
I offer tobacco and give thanks for one more day of sobriety. Miigwech.

Beware of Cross Addictions – R.D.'s First Script

Boozhoo! [Introduces himself in Anishnaabemowin.] My name means spirits all around, and I am Bear Clan. My English name is R.D. Curtis. My 26 year-old son, Ty, my 8 year old son, Robert, and their mother, Helen, are very important to me. I love them dearly.

On May 26th, 2014, I will have 23 years of sobriety. It was a long road to get there. I'm a certified alcohol drug counselor. I help people get into treatment and teach them about alcohol and drug education. I remember my counselor telling me, "People who have addictions can become cross addicted. Meaning that if you have been an alcoholic, you can easily be tempted by anything else, gambling, overeating, smoking, etc.

In 2010, I threw in the first twenty, and I could walk away. Then I started throwing the second and third twenty, and I couldn't stay away. I became preoccupied with gambling. A year later, I was still working for KBIC, elected on tribal council, and appointed as Chairman of OHA Housing. I looked for every opportunity to get to the casino as an excuse to distress my busy life.

As I became more preoccupied with gambling, I chose to walk away from the drum and ceremonies. The drum is sacred. I knew what I was doing wasn't right, and I didn't want to disrespect the drum, our ceremonies, or our people.

I became powerless with my gambling addiction; I was dishonest with Helen about the amount I was spending and the time I was gambling. My experience of being an alcoholic taught me that if I kept on gambling I would loose everything.

I accepted I had a gambling problem. It took courage to admit it; I wanted to do something about it. I tried outpatient counseling, but it didn't work because I needed more than outpatient. I found Project Turn-About which is a residential program for gambling and also substance abuse treatment. I completed the thirty-day program. It was the best thing I ever did for my gambling addiction.

My counselor discussed my preoccupation with gambling and asked that I find something else to do that I enjoy. I started fishing and hunting again, and I love it!

I'm making strides to get back to my traditional ways, the drum and ceremonies. I attend AA regularly and started a GA meeting on Monday nights. Fortunately, my first addiction taught me how to recognize a second addiction, and I could get help before it could destroy me. If gambling is a second addiction or even a first, there is hope and there is help. If I can do it, so can you.

Addictions Don't Discriminate – R.D.'s Second Script

Boozhoo! [Introduces himself in Anishnaabemowin.]
My name means spirits all around, and I am Bear Clan. My English name is R.D. Curtis.

The first time I got drunk was in elementary school, with my cousins in Zeba. We bought a bunch a beer and I got really sick, I didn't like it. The cops came and we got into trouble. I was really scared; gram shook her head and said she was disappointed. That bothered me. I started smoking marijuana before 8^{th} grade and drinking in the 9^{th} grade. I quit school in the 11^{th} grade and moved in with dad. Drinking progressed and I even drank with him.

When I was 16, we both went to treatment at New Day. I went to AA and listened to everybody. They lost their families, jobs, and freedom. I didn't loose anything. I took off and bounced around and finally moved in with gram.

I went to jail when I was 18 for assaulting my dad. As soon as I got out, I started drinking heavily. I terrified gram during a blackout, and during the next one, I woke up to bars. Gram didn't want anything to do with me.

I needed treatment and started immediately at New Day. Who knew, walking out of the elevator, I would meet the future mother of my boys, Helen. After treatment, I stayed clean for almost two weeks. I didn't listen to my counselor, and I gave into peer pressure. I didn't want to be labeled as stuck up or too good.

I kept on drinking, got my head sliced and almost lost my life. I entered treatment a third time. I took off again, moved to Kansas and eventually moved back to Michigan and hooked up with Helen. She got pregnant and we got married. My son, Ty, was born two days before I completed treatment the fourth time.

I stayed sober for two months but then started drinking heavily. I regret putting Helen through mental, verbal, and physical abuse.

We split, she took off for school, and I left for treatment again.

Helen's car pulled up to the grocery store. I was buying alcohol with a buddy and she saw us. My son, Ty started waving at me from the front seat. I ignored them. A couple days later, Helen told me, Ty was so happy to see me and because I didn't acknowledge him, he was heartbroken. I was tired of being sick and tired.

I was homeless, jobless, familyless and in and out of jail many times. I was a chronic alcoholic and a drug abuser. My heart was broken too. I wanted Ty to have a good father. Even though I was doing it for him, I knew I needed to do it for myself first.

I went into treatment for the sixth time at re-entry half-way house in Kingsford, MI and completed 8 months.

At New Day, I saw Mike Jenson for aftercare outpatient treatment and eventually started working there with Mike's help for three years. I really liked working at New Day because helping other people reminded me of the way I used to be.

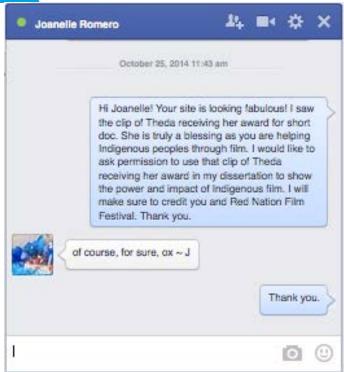
After I sobered up, I started fishing, hunting, and getting into the traditional ways. Ten years later, I started drumming. I was around good people and I felt good emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually.

In 2003, I started working at the KBIC SAP outpatient department. Within two years, I became a certified alcohol counselor. I'm helping my community, and I attend AA meetings regularly. I have a second son, Robert, who was born on March, 2nd, 2006.

Addictions don't discriminate; they don't care about your age, race or gender. But there is hope — if you put half the zeal into your recovery as you did your drinking, life will be good, one day at a time.

Appendix I: Copyright Permissions





Re: Catching Up and Permission Request

Luci Tapahonso

Sent: Monday, February 9, 2015 9:29 PM

To: Brenda Manuelito

This message is high priority.

On Feb 4, 2015, at 10:26 AM, Brenda Manuelito < bkay4@ndigidreams.com > wrote:

Ya'a'teeh Shizeedi Luci,

How are you doing? This is Brenda Manuelito writing from hot and sunny Tucson, AZ. Although we had a lot of rain the this past month, the Sonoran desert has quickly soaked it up! I was in Naschitti/Gallup area last week and the wet snowy slush was all around. It was nice, but cold! It has been a long time since we have spoke or seen each other and I hope this email finds you and your family doing well!

Luci, I am writing today to kindly ask your permission to include some of your poetry in my dissertation. In 2010, I started another doctoral program at Antioch University in their Ph.D. In Leadership and Change program and I recently finished writing my dissertation on the digital storytelling work I have been doing for the past several years with my consulting and training business called nDigiDreams. It has been really exciting work that has taken me to many different tribal communities and I have had the pleasure of working with many beautiful people—creating and sharing nDigiStories.

At the beginning of Chapter 1, I use an excerpt from "This is How They Were Placed Here For Us" from your book Blue Horses Rush In (p.39-42, 1997) and at the beginning of Chapter 6 I use an excerpt from "Shaa Ako Dahjinileh Remember The Things They Told Us" from your book Saanii Dahataal The Women Are Singing (p.19, 1993). As I was researching copyright permissions, it appeared you own the copyright to these poems. Is this correct? If so, could I kindly have your permission to include these two pieces in my dissertation? A confirmation email from you to do so would meet my permission requirements and will be included in my Appendix when I submit my "open access" dissertation to Antioch University and to OhioLINKS. I am finalizing my manuscript now and hope to submit it within the next two weeks.

Re: Catching Up and Permission Request

Luci Tapahonso

Sent: Monday, February 9, 2015 9:29 PM

To: Brenda Manuelito

This message is high priority.

Dear Brenda,

How nice to hear from you. I hope you are well.

Yes, you may use the works you listed. Please send all works in MLA bibliographic form so that I can add them to my files. As well, send necessary permissions. I would also look to see a draft of your dissertation.

Thank you and I hope you come home soon. I miss Tucson but am happy to be near Shiprock and my family and Ke'.

I'll wait to hear from you on this project.

Hozho,

Luci Tapahonso
Professor
Poet Laureate Navajo Nation
Department of English
MSC03 2170
1 University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131-0001

Tapahons@unm.edu

Subject: RE: Permission to Include nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in Our Dissertations

From: "Eva Petoskey"

Date: Fri, February 13, 2015 9:47 am

To: "Carmella Rodriguez'" <crodrigo@ndigidreams.com> (more)

Options: View Full Header | View Printable Version | Download this as a file | Add to Address Book

I give Carmella M. Rodriguez and Brenda K. Manuelito permission to include the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in their dissertations?

Eva L. Petoskey, MS Director, Anishnaabek Healing Circle Access to Recovery Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan 2926 Ashmun Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

> Carmella M. Rodriguez nDigiDreams, LLC

> > Subject: RE: Permission to Include nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in Our Dissertations

From: "Arlene Kashata"

Date: Fri, February 13, 2015 9:38 am

To: "Carmella Rodriguez" <crodrigo@ndigidreams.com> (more)

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Good afternoon,

Yes you have my permission to use the Visual Logic Model in your dissertation.

Miigwetch!

Arlene Kashata

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> Date: Fri, 13 Feb 2015 09:32:18 -0800
> Subject: Permission to Include nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in Our
Dissertations
> From: crodrigo@ndigidreams.com
> To:
> Hello ladies!
> Thank you for co-producing the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model. Great
> minds, compassionate hearts and an abundance of creativity can create a
> beautiful and meaningful outcome.
> During the nDigiStorytelling "story-making" and "story-sharing" study we
> asked verbal permission to include the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic
> Model in our dissertations and everyone agreed.
```

> We are asking you the same question in an email so we may include a > written response in the Appendix section of our dissertations indicating > your approval.

> Do you give Carmella M. Rodriguez and Brenda K. Manuelito permission to > include the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in our dissertations?

> Thank you and have a beautiful day! > Carmella and Brenda

> >

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Subject: RE: Permission to Include nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in Our Dissertations
                          From: "Linda Woods"
                          Date: Fri, February 13, 2015 11:26 am
                            To: "Carmella Rodriguez" <crodrigo@ndigidreams.com> (more)
                        Options: View Full Header | View Printable Version | Download this as a file | | View as HTML | Add to Address Book
of course, that's why we did all that hard work... you guys are awesome!
> Date: Fri, 13 Feb 2015 09:32:18 -0800
> Subject: Permission to Include nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in Our
Dissertations
> From: crodrigo@ndigidreams.com
> Hello ladies!
> Thank you for co-producing the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model. Great
> minds, compassionate hearts and an abundance of creativity can create a
> beautiful and meaningful outcome.
> During the nDigiStorytelling "story-making" and "story-sharing" study we > asked verbal permission to include the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic
> Model in our dissertations and everyone agreed.
> We are asking you the same question in an email so we may include a
> written response in the Appendix section of our dissertations indicating
> your approval.
> Do you give Carmella M. Rodriguez and Brenda K. Manuelito permission to
> include the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in our dissertations?
> Thank you and have a beautiful day! > Carmella and Brenda
                           From: "Terri Tavenner"
                           Date: Fri, February 13, 2015 3:09 pm
                             To: "'Carmella Rodriguez'" <crodrigo@ndigidreams.com> (more)
                        Options: View Full Header | View Printable Version | Download this as a file | | Add to Address Book
Yes, I give Carmella M. Rodriguez and Brenda K. Manuelito permission to
include the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in their dissertations.
Terri Tavenner
----Original Message----
From: Carmella Rodriguez [mailto:crodrigo@ndigidreams.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2015 12:32 PM
Subject: Permission to Include nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in Our
Dissertations
Hello ladies!
Thank you for co-producing the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model. Great
minds, compassionate hearts and an abundance of creativity can create a
beautiful and meaningful outcome.
During the nDigiStorytelling "story-making" and "story-sharing" study we
asked verbal permission to include the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model
in our dissertations and everyone agreed.
We are asking you the same question in an email so we may include a written
response in the Appendix section of our dissertations indicating your
approval.
Do you give Carmella M. Rodriguez and Brenda K. Manuelito permission to
include the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in our dissertations?
Thank you and have a beautiful day!
Carmella and Brenda
```

Re: Permission to Include nDigiStorytelling Visual Logi... nDigiDreams



Carmella Rodriguez

Sent: Saturday, February 14, 2015 12:53 AM

To: bkay4@ndigidreams.com Cc: crodrigo@ndigidreams.com

I give Brenda K. Manuelito permission to include the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in her dissertation.

Carmella M. Rodriguez nDigiDreams, LLC

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