

Community-Based Aboriginal Curriculum Initiatives: Implementation and Evaluation

1. Summary of Proposed Research

a) Elaboration of research problem: The primary goal of the project is to examine the impact of Aboriginal cultural instruction in selected schools in terms of learning, school attendance, and retention of Aboriginal students. The research involves assessing the effect of bringing Aboriginal artist-educators into participating schools, with particular attention to cognitive skills, cultural awareness, psychosocial development, identity, and self-esteem of Aboriginal students. The project will involve both quantitative and qualitative methods in a longitudinal follow-up design that spans five years. The hypotheses is that exposure to Aboriginal culture in the school will improve Aboriginal children's cultural awareness and identity, and that, in turn, will increase the personal relevance and importance of the school, which then will translate into positive school-related behaviors and achievement. The secondary purpose – community development – is specifically related to the enhancement of skills and talents of community members.

Culturally inappropriate curriculum, low representation of Aboriginal mentors and teachers in schools, and financial barriers to extra-curricular activities often lead to alienation among Aboriginal students and their parents. This alienation is evidenced by poor attendance and dropout at an early age by the Aboriginal student and reluctance by the parents to communicate with and visit the schools their children attend. The systemic insensitivity and discrimination has a “cumulative deficit” effect; Aboriginal children and youth develop low self-esteem and a negative cultural identity because they perceive school and society as sources of disenfranchisement rather than of empowerment.

b) Contribution to advancement of knowledge and the wider social benefit: The literature indicates that there is a positive association between cultural instruction and academic achievement. While episodic classroom visits tend to marginalize Aboriginal people and their experiences, we anticipate that ongoing integration of Aboriginal artist-educators into schools will have a positive effect on Aboriginal students in terms of improved attitudes toward school, enhanced academic performance, and desire to complete their education. The program of delivery – planned and implemented by the research team, participating schools, artist-educators, and research assistants, with input from partners, Elders, parents, and other community constituents – will be accompanied by a mentoring and a formal assessment process. Both of these processes will involve an integrative approach during which the researchers and all other constituents contribute their skills and knowledge for the benefit of Aboriginal children, youth, and communities by enhancing the education of Aboriginal students in the areas of cognitive skills and psychosocial development, including self-esteem and positive cultural identity.

This project will enhance the skills and knowledge within communities, resulting in sustainable community capacity building. Findings will provide a template for culturally relevant curricular materials and program evaluation that can be used in other schools and communities. Aboriginal artists will be supported within a network of community relationships that communicates the importance of the Aboriginal experience. People from many organizations will collaborate, “working for kids and communities,” sharing resources and expanding cultural awareness. Community-based researchers and artist-educators who have benefited from this mentoring will be able to implement grassroots educational initiatives and activities that will contribute to the growth and sustainability of their communities. This project will encourage a sense of belonging, as well as pride of identity, in Aboriginal communities. Children and parents will dream of greater achievements in inclusive, validating schools and neighbourhoods that work together, strong in the knowledge that it really does “take a community to raise a child.”

2. Detailed Description

• Relevance, Significance

The Aboriginal population has the fastest growing youth segment in Canada, with 40.4 percent of the Status Indian population being under 19, compared to 25.2 percent of the general population in the same age group (Statistics Canada Report, 2001). Statistics Canada projects nearly a 60 percent increase in the Status Indian population by the year 2021, from its current population of over 730,000. In Manitoba, in 2002, there were 150,040 Aboriginal people (includes Métis, Registered Indian on- and off-reserve, and Inuit) or 15.4 percent of the population (only Saskatchewan has a higher proportion of Aboriginal people). At the same time, the non-Aboriginal population is aging and retiring. The conclusion is clear: the education of Aboriginal youth is vitally important in that these young people will play a major role in the social and economic future of the country, either positively or negatively, depending on our successful attention to their needs.

Canadian society continues with systemic discriminatory practices that constrain the gifts that Aboriginal people can give to the Canadian community. While growing in numbers, Aboriginal people continue to be the most disadvantaged minority group in the country (Comeau & Santin, 1995; Centre for Aboriginal Health Research, 1998), with unique challenges to psychosocial adjustment and identity development (Arnett, 2004). The school system is not a statistical exception; research data show poor academic performance, low self-esteem, and high dropout rates for Aboriginal students (e.g., Brunnen, 2003; Hawthorne, 1967; MacKay & Myles, 1995). Although we have developed an awareness of the inappropriateness of “blaming the victim” (Ryan, 1973), stakeholders in education continue to face challenges in finding meaningful, effective ways to restructure education to serve Aboriginal students.

Education, or more precisely the lack thereof, is also linked to increased representation in the youth criminal justice system. Recently, a Legal-Aid lawyer noted that, of the young people currently incarcerated at his local youth correctional facility, not one was going to school at the time of their arrest (Healey, 2004). Notably, Canada has a history of higher youth incarceration than any other country in the Western world (Department of Justice, Canada, 2002, p. 2). Manitoba, the site of this Community University Research Alliance (CURA), brought 83 youth to court out of every 1000 in 1998-1999, more than any other Canadian province (p. 5), with the Aboriginal population being over represented in that number (Chartrand & Whitecloud, 2001). The Youth Criminal Justice Act (2003) puts far more onus on communities to support their youth than did the previous Young Offenders Act (1984). Although recent statistics indicate that fewer youth in Manitoba are being incarcerated (Egan, 2004), there is no research indicating evidence that these young people are making healthier life-choices, such as staying in school. This community-based CURA initiative will allow Aboriginal youth in reserve and public schools to access positive resources, for example culturally relevant education, in order to develop a healthier lifestyle, resulting in fewer youth “choosing” unhealthy and/or criminalized activities.

There are a number of studies that support the positive association of cultural and arts curriculum initiatives with improved academic achievement of Aboriginal students (e.g., Barnhardt, 1999; Bell, 2004; Deasy, 2002; Fiske, 1999; Fuzessy, 1998; Smith, Leake, & Kamekena, 1998; Slaughter & Lai, 1994; Styles, 1997; Winner & Hetland, 2000; see also Cornett, 1999). For example, participation in heritage language and cultural programs has been associated with decreased drop-out rates (Styles, 1997), increased attendance rates (Smith et al., 1998), and improved academic performance (Slaughter & Lai, 1994). Barnhardt (1999) found that Aboriginal students attending a native heritage language school had higher achievement scores than those who did not attend such a school. Similar results were found by Bell and his associates (2004) in their study of ten schools with integrated Aboriginal curriculum. Morin (2004), in her review of nineteen studies of the influence of arts education on academic outcomes, reports that such programs enhance spatial-temporal reasoning skills, understanding of structures and

structural relations, object relations, and computer programming and planning activities. Analysis of the research also showed a positive relationship between making music and spatial-temporal reasoning skills, as well as an association between the introduction of drama and improvement in language arts, including oral understanding of stories, reading readiness, reading achievement, and writing. More importantly for our purposes, this relationship held for both general and at-risk student populations and, particularly, for students from low-income backgrounds. In recognition of such research, and in response to need, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (2004; 2003; 2002) and Manitoba Advanced Education and Training (2004) are emphasizing attention to culturally relevant curriculum for Aboriginal students. Many of these studies compare schools with and without arts and cultural programs; few compare the impact of these programs on an on-going, long-term basis, with attention to formative curricular improvement. In this proposed CURA project, we will assess academic and social outcomes over a five-year period, with new student participants entering school each year of the study. The cross-sequential longitudinal design will allow the assessment of both short-term and long-term developmental changes in the child as a consequence of exposure to a culturally sensitive arts-based curriculum.

This project, in its methodology, recognizes the need for attention to community talent and community development. A program of artistic teaching presentations, integrated with the curriculum in a scheduled series of learning experiences, well planned with learning outcomes and an ongoing evaluative process, will lead to lasting systemic improvements in cognitive and psychosocial development and self-esteem, as well as to enhancement in community development and improvement in social relations among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. The salaried support of the community artist-educators (e.g., singer-songwriters, authors, painters, sculptors, craftspeople, actors, and puppeteers) will be provided by grants from the Canada Council for the Arts, Manitoba Arts Council, ArtsSmarts, Learning Through the Arts, and Artists in the Schools, as well as other funding agencies. The artistic cultural curriculum initiatives will include a research component that requires continuous input and support from the people within Aboriginal organizations and associations, participating schools and their communities, and university faculty members. The SSHRC/CURA grant will provide the funds for the development and the on-going assessment of the curriculum initiatives and the research activities around student learning outcomes, student retention, and effects on psychosocial development, self-esteem, and positive identity.

The researchers are aware that funding from agencies other than SSHRC is needed to support the daily classroom teaching/workshop fees for the artist-educators themselves. While SSHRC does not provide the financial support for the artist-educator's salary, this SSHRC/CURA grant will provide funding that will assist with the solicitation of that support, as well as with the artist-educator's research assistance toward the improvement of their own pedagogical approach, and the study of the effects of their work on student achievement and psychosocial development. To that end, and to support the research component itself, which includes community development, twelve undergraduate students and three master's students will be hired as research assistants at any one time, with turnover expected as students complete their academic programs. All of these research assistants will be of Aboriginal ancestry, all connected to the field of education, and all with a vested interest in sustaining this initiative in their communities in southwestern and west-central Manitoba. As much as possible, the people involved will be recruited from the local area and will have plans to stay in the area. An Aboriginal person will be hired as the administrative assistant, with the intention that this person would also continue in a position relating to such work after this particular project. Thus, we would seek to realize sustainable changes in the schools and communities, changes that would provide long-term support for Aboriginal children and youth.

• **Explicit objectives and outcomes of the research**

The methods for addressing the following objectives will be detailed in the section after their listing. All objectives are reciprocally related, with one another and with expected outcomes, the latter of which are

directly related to community development. The major objectives of this CURA research project are:

1. To increase academic motivation, including increasing positive attitude toward school and a sense of belonging to the school year;
2. To increase student retention in school, including increasing course completion, decreasing drop-out rate, and increasing graduation levels;
3. To improve student school performance, including enhancing academic achievement and student involvement in all aspects of school (e.g., extracurricular activities, musicals, governance); and
4. To increase psychosocial development and cultural identity development, including attention to future goals and plans, social and cognitive development, and decision-making and problem-solving skills.

In terms of community-based outcomes, the benefits will be tracked and noted within the research reports. We expect enhanced educational and cultural awareness in the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population through exposure to Aboriginal culture (e.g., singing, storytelling, painting, drama). Secondly and perhaps most importantly, we expect increased parental involvement in schools, evidenced by the presence of parents at artistic school presentations and encouraged by continuous parental dialogue in response to the cultural curriculum initiatives. Collaboration with agencies and organizations will foster community development and growth, will encourage a variety of partnerships among educational institutions, and will enhance Aboriginal decision-making and input in administrative areas of education.

• Key Research Activities, including attention to strategies and methodologies

This project is being developed as an integrated community effort with reference both to planning and to participation in the learning initiatives. The proposal-writing process involved workshops and meetings that honored the collaborative and reciprocal mentoring intentions of the project itself. Participatory, engaged decision-making included university researchers and delegates from all of the partnering organizations in this study (many of whom have also become research co-applicants and collaborators). These people, the large majority being Aboriginal, have attended one or several of the five planning meetings (April 13, May 6, May 25, June 22, July 16) and one or more of the five CV writing workshops (June 7, 16, 17, & 28, & July 9), and/or have had individual and/or small group meetings with the research applicant. During the planning meetings, small group dialogue ensued around each required focus area of the research proposal application, followed by dialogue with the whole assembly (all recorded in minutes). Telephone calls, and e-mail messages and attachments (individually and using a list-serve), have served to keep people informed and to integrate their suggestions into the proposal.

Based on prior research into alternative schools by the applicant (supported by the office of the Vice-President, Academic and Research), plans for inclusive school-based cultural curriculum initiatives evolved into the establishment of an Aboriginal Curriculum Initiatives Committee (ACIC; original members included the applicant of this research proposal and members and/or representatives from the Brandon School Division, Sioux Valley First Nation, West Region Tribal Council, the Aboriginal Education Directorate, and the Brandon University Northern Teachers Education Program). In a series of meetings, the ACIC outlined plans for a pilot project in which Aboriginal artist-educator Mr. Don Freed would work in selected public schools and a band-controlled school. As plans and dialogue evolved, the larger “action and research” oriented SSHRC/CURA project was designed. Upon approval at the Letter of Intent stage of the SSHRC/CURA application, the Aboriginal Curriculum Initiatives Committee (ACIC) became a larger working committee, the Community-Based Aboriginal Curriculum Initiatives Committee (CBACIC), which has collaborated in the writing of this CURA proposal. If a CURA grant is awarded, an advisory committee will be selected from the membership of the CBACIC, currently a group of over fifty people from all partnering organizations (See Section #6, Partnerships and Alliances).

In terms of the pilot project, the applicant and Mr. Don Freed collaborated in the successful writing of Canada Council for the Arts (\$12,000) and Manitoba Arts Council (\$4,000) applications for grant funding to support the artist-educator's work in the classroom. Three schools were visited during a one-month period, one school at Sioux Valley First Nation and two schools in Brandon with a high percentage of Aboriginal students (three more schools will be visited in the fall term, with the original three schools revisited; all schools want to create their own CDs). Mr. Freed's in-school work has been monitored and assessed in participating schools. Data collection methods included observation, as well as focus group and selected individual interviews with students, teachers, and administrators in the participating schools. In five focus groups with 28 children from Kindergarten to Grade 6, students described the class activity as "awesome." They liked "putting music with songs," "learning from songs" about relevant aspects of their lives (e.g., "not to be a bossy sister") and from the songs Mr. Freed sang and explained (e.g., about pioneers, buffalo, wolves, winter roads, Indian legends). Sioux Valley Dakota First Nation, Grade six student, Koda Tacan, told a newspaper reporter of the song his class wrote about a mythical half-man, half-horse that was believed to be living on the First Nation, adding, "When Don came in we were always happy. Everyone started showing up at school" (Pritchard, 2004, p. A-3). The class activity involved cooperative learning as "everyone participated in constructing songs, singing, experimenting with instruments," as well as performing their songs in a school concert. Students developed skills and learned about abilities of classmates (e.g., "good singers, interesting ideas"), and all would like "more time to learn and make more songs." The three focus groups with teachers provided an equally positive response, as they underscored Mr. Freed's ability to connect with students and involve even the most withdrawn children. Aboriginal students in inner-city schools were able to identify with the cultural content in Mr. Freed's songs developed with children in Native communities, and non-Aboriginal students learned about meaningful aspects of Native culture from the songs. Similar to students, teachers said that more time should be devoted to artist-educator activities. Mr. Freed's work provided another lens for curricular material (e.g., "it was something that added to what we were working on") and "what was going on in children's lives right then." The response to this artist-educator activity was overwhelmingly positive, with suggestions to enhance subsequent program development.

The five-year Community-Based Aboriginal Curriculum Initiatives program will involve both an action research and a formalized data-collection and evaluative component. The process of the research and its methodological description follow.

(1) At least ten participating schools will be selected from southwestern and west-central Manitoba, with all Aboriginal community and public schools in the area being invited to apply. Consideration for selection will include the following criteria: a) permission of the Chief and Council and/or permission of the Educational Authority (in Aboriginal communities) or the public School Division to participate in the project; b) balance between band-controlled/public, First Nation/Métis, rural/urban, southwest/west-central catchment areas; c) description of the school, including an approximation of the percentage, current and projected, of Aboriginal students; d) stated commitment of the school administration and staff to the project and its objectives over the five-year span of the project; e) details of the ability of the school, overall, to participate in the project, including stated agreement for support of professional development in order to integrate the contributions of the artist-educator within the curriculum; this commitment will include a letter from the teacher-leader who will assist in the coordination of the project attesting to their understanding of and commitment to the project; f) availability of a community-based (or close-by) undergraduate research assistant who will devote their project time to that school. The Selection Committee will consist of the applicant, the co-applicants, four collaborators (alternating), the administrative assistant, and two members of the CBACIC. The applying schools will be shortlisted. Members of the Selection Committee will visit the schools and, using analysis of information gathered from participant observation and from meetings/interviews with administration and staff, will make the final selection of the participating schools.

(2) Student research assistants will be chosen using a selection process. That process and the details of the students' research work are elaborated in Section #7: Training (Role of Students).

(3) The CURA applicant will be responsible for making the official, although not likely the first, contact with each suggested artist-educator. Each artist-educator will be assisted by a master's level research assistant (with researchers providing guidance to the assistants) in completing a professional résumé and/or portfolio that will be submitted to the Selection Committee (membership as previously elaborated). Consideration for selection will include the following criteria: a) demonstrated skills and talents of the artist-educator; b) balance of that applicant's skills and talents so as not to involve excessive repetition (e.g., not all painters); c) confirmed willingness of the artist-educator to visit all participating schools; d) commitment of the artist-educator to participate in professional development, particularly to enhance the "educator" component of the artist-educator's talent; e) willingness of the artist-educator to participate in the writing of grant applications that will support their in-school work; f) perceived commitment of the artist-educator to school and community development; g) clean criminal records and child abuse registry checks; and h) evidence (e.g., letters from Elders) that the person is an appropriate role model for students. Using a scaffolding approach (heavy to lighter support as expertise grows), the research team will assist the administrative assistant and the research assistants, who will do the majority of the work into researching and soliciting funding to support the salary for the classroom activities of each artist-educator, the latter of whom will also assist with that process.

(4) A teacher-leader from each school, required to coordinate the school-based activities, will be expected to register for an intensive one-week professional development in-service at Brandon University in late August, as well as to attend on-going professional development meetings throughout the year. As such, these people will be designated as "research personnel and support staff" and will receive some compensation (elaborated in Section #8, Budget Justification). Artist-educators, who will also receive that designation, will attend these professional development sessions (as will research assistants, as elaborated in Section #7, Training, Role of Students), with their attendance financially supported within the research expenses of this CURA grant funding. As well, because artist-educators are solicited on an on-going basis, their professional development will be purposefully continuous in nature and will include one-on-one and in-school professional development with researchers and coordinating teachers, observation and mentoring in classrooms, and meetings with the school administrators and the teachers prior to and during the artist-educator's work in the classrooms. Applications from those wishing to be coordinating teacher-leaders will be shortlisted and the candidates interviewed by the Selection Committee. As part of their role, all coordinating teachers will be expected, subsequent to their own intensive professional and simultaneous on-going professional development with the researchers, to help the artist-educators, the research assistant(s), and their school colleagues when the artist is working in their school and classrooms and when the assessment of the program is being conducted. Each year, the coordinating teachers will submit annual progress/journal reports. Coordinating teachers may change every two years, in order to give more individuals the opportunity for that teacher-leader role.

• Strategies and methodologies, including justification of choice and explanation of specific instruments and procedures

(5) Artist-educators will engage in their work in classrooms in the participating schools. The research team will participate in in-school curriculum action research using a collegial approach that allows for mutual skill and knowledge transfer. The various researchers have different roles in the project; not everyone's support will be lent directly within the classroom (see Section #5, Description of Team, and Section #6, Partnerships and Alliances, for elaboration). Ongoing documentation and assessment of artistic curricular materials and their integration into the larger curriculum will be included as an integral

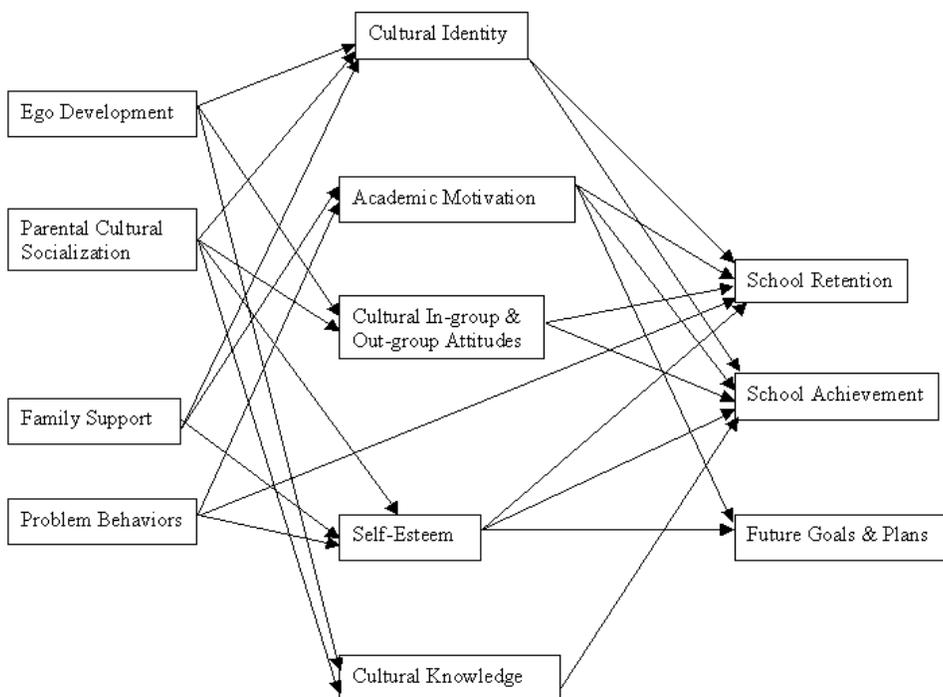
component of the project. The leading expertise will be offered by certain of the co-applicants and collaborators, the staff of the schools involved in the project, and with the assistance of the Aboriginal artist-educators themselves. All participants in this CURA research initiative (the research team; research assistants; school administrators; classroom teachers; curriculum developers and assessment people at the band, school division, and provincial levels; students within the schools; and community members) will be invited to contribute their suggestions for curricular improvement relevant to the project. In other words, although the artist-educator may be skilled in a particular medium, they will be assisted with the manner in which that medium might be developed and used to enhance the education of Aboriginal children and youth.

(6) Evaluation and assessment: Information about students will be gathered with attention to: a) increased cognitive development and student learning outcomes in relation to the curricular objectives; b) improved school attendance and retention; and c) positive changes in cultural identity, academic motivation, cultural in-group attitudes, cultural knowledge, and psychosocial development, including self-esteem. The data related to assessment of the curricular materials, as outlined in the former section, will be connected to the measurement of student learning outcomes. Information from all student participants will be analyzed using a cross-sequential longitudinal design. In addition to quantitative methodologies, the researchers will also gather qualitative data in the selected schools. Focus groups and selected interviews with teachers, students, support staff, parents, and community members will pertain to the perception of student self-esteem and increased capacity to make healthy life choices. Results of data analysis, including participant observation and focus group interviews, as well as the supervision of the artist-educator, will guide the mentorship of current working artist-educators and teachers, and the soliciting of future artist-educators. Elaboration of the model used follows.

a) Psychological Model: *At the heart of this proposal is the hypotheses that exposure to Aboriginal culture in the school improves Aboriginal children's cultural awareness and identity, and that, in turn, increases the personal relevance and importance of the school, which then translates into positive school-related behaviors and achievement.* To assess this hypothesis, cultural identity and awareness,

and knowledge will be placed within the context of developmental and social psychological distal and proximal factors known to influence, directly or indirectly, outcome variables of interest: school achievement, attendance, and hope – children's future goals and plans. Based on cognitive developmental (e.g., Loevinger, 1976, 1998; Selman, 1980) and psychosocial theories (e.g., Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1966, 2002; Phinney, 1992; Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992), hypothesized relations

Figure 1: Structural Model Relating Distal and Proximal Variables to Outcome Measures



between proximal, distal, and outcome measures are given in Figure 1.

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At the distal (more distant) level, we see *level of ego development* (the degree to which an individual is developing an integrated and coherent sense of self), *parental cultural socialization* (importance parents attach to the transmission and continuation of Aboriginal identity to future generations), *family support for school-related behaviors*, and *current level of problem behaviors* as predictors of proximal variables and as possible direct predictors of outcome measures. Our focus on these variables as “primary causal” factors stems from the association of these factors with both proximal and outcome variables. Sellars et al. (1998) report positive associations between cultural identity and academic achievement among African-American children, positive relations between family support and school outcomes (also see Connell, et al., 1994; Luster & McAdoo, 1996), and negative relations with problem behaviors (also see Schmitz et al., 1999; Nelson & Crick, 1999). In the proposed model, distal variables are related in psychologically meaningful ways to five proximal variables: 1) *level of cultural identity* (degree to which Aboriginal children identify with their cultural group membership); 2) *academic motivation* (identification with and desire to succeed at school); 3) *cultural attitudes toward ingroup and outgroup members*; 4) *self-esteem*; and 5) *cultural knowledge* (children’s knowledge about customs and practices of Aboriginal people). As was the case for distal variables, relations between proximal (closer) variables and school outcome measures enjoy empirical support. Sellars et al. (1998) report that adolescents who strongly identified with their African-American heritage did better at school than did those who were not strongly identified, and Corenblum, Annis, and Young (1996) found that Aboriginal children who had more positive attitudes toward ingroup than other-group members, attributed the task success of in-group members more to ability than luck. While the causal role of self-esteem in facilitating school success is ambiguous, the role of self-esteem as mediating between distal variables and outcome measures is better established (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Voh, 2003).

b) Measures and Instruments: To assess the impact of Aboriginal artist-educators on measures of Aboriginal children’s *school retention, academic achievement, and future goals and plans*, the project will utilize both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. While the reliability and validity of measures assessing academic achievement, as well as ego-identity development, cultural identity, self-esteem, and attitudes toward ingroup and other-group members is well established (Corenblum & Annis, 1993; Gfeller, 1994; Harter, 1982; Sellars et al., 1998; Westenberg, Blasi, & Cohen, 1998) and, in some cases, used successfully with Aboriginal children and adolescents (Corenblum, 2003; Fryberg & Markus, 2003; Newman, 2004), other measures, such as parental cultural socialization, cultural knowledge, and family support for school-related behaviors will need to be developed. To accurately capture the meaning of these constructs, focus groups consisting of parents, teachers, and Elders will be convened in each community. Participants will be asked to discuss, for instance, what parents and Elders say to children about being Aboriginal, what being Aboriginal means, how it is revealed in behaviors and attitudes, and how a person comes to identify themselves as an Anishanabee or as a Métis person, for example. From these focus group discussions, instruments measuring parental cultural socialization, cultural knowledge, and family support for school-related behaviors will be developed.

c) Assessment Schedule: Assessment procedures involve the following: i) about six weeks prior to the start of the program, children in selected schools, will, as a baseline measure, complete assessment scales of the variables as listed in Figure 1; ii) in addition, twice a year during the five years of the program, quantitative measures will be used to assess both short and long term impact of the intervention of cultural curriculum initiatives on outcome variables; iii) during the artist-educator stays and shortly thereafter, focus groups composed of students, teachers, parents, and Elders will meet to discuss the classroom presentations, and through the discussion, spontaneous measures of self-esteem and attitudes toward school and school-related issues will be gathered and feedback will be solicited for improvement

of the program. The former quantitative assessments will take place separately from the latter more qualitative, dialogic approach in order to avoid any carry-over effects that might arise from the

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discussion of improved cultural identity and issues surrounding both school achievement and community development.

• **Time Frame for Research Program**

Year 1 (beginning) (Nov.-Dec. 2004 – August 2005, to align with the school year)

- organization of CBACIC into an advisory committee
- advertising and hiring of administrative assistant and 3 master's student RAs
- search funding sources for artist-educators
- select artist-educators and schools to participate in the project
- advertising and hiring of 12 undergraduate RAs (2 on-campus, 10 community)
- assist artist-educators with résumés, portfolios, and grant writing
- organize evaluation battery, including focus groups with selected schools/communities to develop new measures and pilot test them (continuing into fall 2005)
- organization of database for longitudinal tracking
- professional development institute in August in preparation for the school year

Year 1 (ongoing) (September 2005 – August 2006)

- administration of baseline evaluation battery in school classes
- baseline and ongoing data collection from school records; information collected at exam times and throughout the school year
- artist-educators rotating in schools
- focus groups and interviews with students, teachers, parents, community members
- follow-up evaluation in schools
- scoring data, data entry, preliminary analysis, and report writing ongoing
- ongoing attendance at conferences and writing of reports, newsletters, and journal articles
- professional development institute in August in preparation for the school year

Year 2 (September 2006 – August 2007)

- administration of evaluative measures in schools, including new cohorts
- collection of school records, observation information ongoing
- support and curriculum development in schools and communities ongoing
- follow-up evaluation; focus groups and interviewing in schools and communities
- data coding, data entry, data analysis, report writing for individual schools and overall
- dissemination of findings in communities and elsewhere; symposium/showcasing in Dauphin.
- professional development institute in August in preparation for next school year

Year 3 (September 2007 – August 2008)

- same as Year 2 with more focus on data analysis, report writing, dissemination
- dialogue and plans ongoing regarding future of the project, particularly sustainability after formal project is completed

Year 4 (September 2008 – August 2009)

- same as Year 3
- planning Celebrating Aboriginal Education Conference
- continued dissemination of findings: writing of papers and a book with chapters on all aspects of the project

Year 5 (September 2009 – August 2010)

- same as Year 4, plus more extensive data analysis
- host Celebrating Aboriginal Education Conference; children and communities celebrate their achievements

- continued dissemination of findings and writing of papers and book
- final report to CURA

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3. Communication of Results: Integrated with the research will be continuous dissemination activities that involve knowledge transfer. Because of the inherent importance of the community-based approach to this research initiative, it is difficult to determine precisely the amount spent on communication of the research; however, we have included an estimate of \$216,000, which is elaborated in Section #8, Budget Justification. The SSHRC/CURA grant will be noted in all communications. Direct knowledge transfer will occur primarily in the schools and communities within which the research takes place and will benefit both the students and the community, as local capacity will be expanded to meet local needs. Curricular materials will be developed for use in all schools within and beyond the Manitoba's southwest and west-central catchment areas. Schools will be encouraged to share their knowledge with colleagues in other constituencies through regular meetings, in-services, and through networking. Curricular materials will be reviewed and disseminated by two major partners in this project – the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre and Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. The annual meetings of the Community-Based Aboriginal Curriculum Committee (CBACIC) will also include a media portion that invites local and national television, radio, and newspaper journalists who will report on the initiative. Just as our first Aboriginal artist-educator, Mr. Don Freed, was himself highlighted on a CBC National News documentary that featured his work with Aboriginal students to create “Our Very Own Songs” and within recent newspaper and television reporting on our pilot project, this comprehensive research study will solicit ways to publicize the initiative, thus increasing the breadth of our work and encouraging other communities to contact us for information and advice.

Beyond the annual reporting of the project's progress to the Community-Based Aboriginal Curriculum Initiatives Committee (CBACIC), to the public, and to CURA during each year of the project, community *public symposia* will allow the research team to communicate the progress of the initiative and its associated research. That *symposium will travel to each participating community* to allow for ease of attendance by community members. In that fashion, the communities will be honoured for their dedication and participation in the project. The *applicant, co-applicants, collaborators, and research assistants will also deliver presentations, workshops, and papers*, at local, provincial, and national, as well as some international conferences and meetings that will detail the initiative and its ongoing evaluation. Researchers may choose to participate in more local and provincial institutes and conferences (and thus more conferences in total), but everyone will be expected to present for at least one national-level conference during the course of the project. The *school-age students*, who are the focus of this project, *will also be encouraged to take part in this process, in community and conference panels*, for example. As well, *participating schools*, including teachers, students, research assistants, *and community members will participate in public presentations, arts exhibits, and cultural displays and performances from their particular school*. The research team, all participating communities, and the CBACIC will plan and host a *Celebrating Aboriginal Education* conference in the fifth year (in Brandon, MB), as well as a smaller institute in the second year (in Dauphin, MB), that will allow for the showcasing of this and many other local, provincial, and national initiatives in Aboriginal education. The *development and dissemination of curricular materials* will be ongoing. A major edited work, *in book form*, will be made available to the public. As well, *articles will be submitted* to a variety of newsletters and journals that will be accessed by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal audiences, including academic scholars and practitioners; this includes non-refereed journal publications that may be more readily accessed by community members, as well as peer-reviewed scholarly journals. All research assistants will be expected, as part of their professional development, to contribute both to the book and to newsletters and journals. In the variety of methods thus noted, both this initiative and the communication of its results will involve knowledge transfer that is expected to result in second-order, systemic change in the

educational opportunities for Aboriginal children and youth, as well as for the communities in which they live.

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5. Description of Team

Dr. Betty Abigosis, an independent researcher in education and governance, will assist with teacher/artist-educator interfacing in the west-central area, where she lives in a reserve community. *Dr. Helen D. Armstrong*, with extensive experience in education, business administration, and community development, will direct the research project and participate in field-based research; she will mentor all participants, coordinate summer professional inservices, and supervise completion of university courses for credit. *Mr. Eugene Blackbird*, an artist and Director of Education at Keeseekowenin First Nation, will assist with artist-educator mentoring and classroom interfacing. *Dr. Barry Corenblum* will create an evaluation model to test the effectiveness of the artist-educators on school-related outcomes and indices of psychosocial development; as well he will conduct field research. *Ms. Dorothy Church*, *Ms. Erla Cyr*, and *Ms. Delvina Kejick*, all Aboriginal counsellors and or home/school liaisons, will assist with school-based research in the southwest Manitoba urban area. *Dr. Samuel Corrigan*, an experienced and respected scholar in Aboriginal communities, will mentor student assistants. *Mr. Frank Deer* will offer his guidance in the areas of effective research practice and academic writing. *Ms. Noella Eagle*, a school principal, will assist with school-based research and teacher/artist-educator interfacing in the southwest area. *Mr. Aldin Foy*, a strong Aboriginal leader, will assist the project in meeting the needs of urban Aboriginal people. *Dr. Barbara Gfellner* has experience in longitudinal research, as well as social-cognitive, ego, and cultural identity development; she will work on program evaluation and conduct field research in the schools and communities. *Dr. Shelley Hasinoff* and *Dr. Ken Horton*, provincial evaluation consultants with expertise in quantitative research, will assist in the design and implementation of the evaluation aspects; they will also assist with data analysis and ongoing improvements in evaluative strategies. *Mr. Lorne Keeper*, an experienced Aboriginal educational administrator, will help to direct the

project and coordinate the curricular activities and their dissemination, with support from other staff from the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, particularly assisted by his colleague in Research and Development, *Ms. Florence Paynter*. *Ms. Nellie Kopitz*, a Métis scholar, will mentor students and speak to the needs and interests of Métis people. *Prof. Julie Ann Kniskern*, an experienced teacher and curriculum consultant with acclaimed field-based work with northern Aboriginal

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communities, will assist teachers and artist-educators with curricular integration. *Ms. Leah LaPlante*, a strong and respected Métis leader in the Manitoba Métis Federation, will help direct the project, particularly addressing Métis needs. *Ms. Gail McDonald*, a school-based administrator with experience in working with Aboriginal students, will assist with school-based teacher/artist-educator interfacing in the urban Brandon area. *Ms. Lorraine McKay*, an Elder with many years in student support, will assist with student and researcher mentoring. *Dr. Donna Michaels*, with extensive school administrative experience, will coordinate research in the Brandon urban area. *Ms. Georgina Nepinak*, Director of Post-Secondary Education with the West Region Tribal Council, will assist with school-based research and mentoring of student research assistants. *Ms. Sherry Peden*, *Mr. Brian Ranville*, *Ms. Sandra Malyon*, and *Ms. Kandy McCorrister*, all of the Brandon University Northern Teachers Education Program (BUNTEP), will assist with curricular integration and student support. *Ms. Denise Préfontaine*, a skilled community arts coordinator with Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism, will assist with artist-educator mentoring. *Mr. Leon Simard*, with years of experience working in and conducting field-based research with Aboriginal communities, will oversee and advise the work in all participating schools, and do field research. *Mr. Vince Stoneman*, as Director of the Program for the Education of Native Teachers (PENT), will assist community-based undergraduate research assistants, many of whom will be PENT students. Mr. Stoneman, Ms. Westasecoot, and the BUNTEP collaborators will coordinate course credit sought by undergraduate students for their research work. *Ms. Brenda Wastasecoot*, of the Brandon University First Nation and Aboriginal Counselling (FNAC) program, will assist student researchers, who may also be FNAC students. *Ms. Jennifer Woodbury* and *Ms. Cathy Mattes*, of the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba, will mentor artist-educators and exhibit the work produced in the schools.

6. Partnerships and Alliances

An alliance is crucial for this program of culturally based curriculum initiatives. The complexity and the enormity of the challenges of Aboriginal youth alienation and school drop-out requires “all hands on deck.” People who address such a crisis need the strength of the community pulling together to sustain their own strength for the challenging work. When the CBACIC working group addressed this section on Partnerships and Alliances, there had, over the course of many meetings, developed a strong bond among the people who had gathered. One participant noted that he felt that this – spreading his arms to take in our group – was his community, his family. This cohesive collaborative approach to the project is necessary because, as another member put it, “We are never going to solve the school attendance problem unless the whole community is involved.” Thus, in our group, there is a strength that has grown, a determination that has been nourished while working together to develop a program that will address the complex issues that challenge our Aboriginal children and youth. Our young people must know that everyone is working for them. Our goal is to make a difference – Working for Kids and Communities. Our CBACIC is a social action alliance, in the most positive sense of the phrase. Its members are dedicated to the communities involved in this program. Believing that “it takes a community to raise a child,” this project allows us to organize our roles with reference to the wisdom, knowledge, and expertise of the many professional people involved in this project. The overarching goal of positive community development will be realized only with the mutual mentoring of many people – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal – who are joining together in this initiative. We expect to continue as partners in education with the participating communities long after the five years of this project have elapsed.

In terms of activating the partnership, and integrating the expertise of both academic and non-academic sectors, the participating schools, ten in all (five from each of southwest and west-central Manitoba), will be divided into two learning communities, as will the researchers, with one team overseeing the schools and research from southwestern Manitoba and the other team overseeing the schools and research from west-central Manitoba. While all researchers will have input and may work in all of the participating schools, the working model below outlines the assigned learning communities. Academic

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researchers are identified with an “A” and community researchers are noted with a “C.” (The contributions are elaborated further within this section and within Section #5, Description of Team). It is noted that in a research project of this nature, community researchers, who may also be academics, may outnumber the researchers from academe, in recognition of the wishes of the Aboriginal communities to influence the nature and the direction of the research, as well as in recognition of the cultural needs of this particular CURA research project. It is also noted that the applicant, with the assistance of the CBACIC, solicited the participation of many professional people who have the expertise, working together, to complete the research for this project. People of Aboriginal ancestry, noted with an asterisk, intentionally comprise the majority of the project research team (22 of the 33 researchers on the team).

Applicant, Helen Armstrong (A) and Co-applicant, Lorne Keeper* (C)

Southwest co-applicants: Barbara Gfellner (A) & Leon Simard* (C)

Southwest collaborators

Dorothy Church* (C)

Sam Corrigan (A)

Erla Cyr* (C)

Noella Eagle* (C)

Aldin Foy* (C)

Delvina Kejick* (C)

Sandra Malyon* (A)

Gail McDonald (C)

Lorraine McKay* (A)

Donna Michaels (C)

Sherry Peden* (A)

Denise Préfontaine (C)

Brian Ranville* (A)

Jennifer Woodbury (C)

West-central co-applicants: Barry Corenblum (A) & Leah LaPlante* (C)

West-central collaborators

Betty Abigosis* (C)

Eugene Blackbird* (C)

Frank Deer* (A)

Shelley Hasinoff (A)

Ken Horton (A)

Nellie Kopitz* (C)

Julie Ann Kniskern (A)

Cathy Mattes* (C)

Kandy McCorrister* (C)

Georgina Nepinak* (C)

Florence Paynter* (C)

Vince Stoneman* (A)

Brenda Westasecoot* (A)

The following organizations will be involved as formal partners with this research initiative. Listed in alphabetical order, the contribution of each partner will be noted.

1) *The Aboriginal Education Directorate (AED)*, an arm of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth/Manitoba Advanced Education and Training has a mandate to improve Aboriginal education, and will assist with staff/in kind funding. Some of its initiatives have already included field-based studies in Aboriginal schools. One of its Aboriginal researchers, Leon Simard, is a co-applicant. His research work with the AED will extend to encompass this project, and he will spend significant time working with the schools and overseeing the program.

2) *The Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba (AGSM)* has shown the work of many Aboriginal artists, reflecting their goal of 30% of their exhibits being work by Aboriginal artists. The Director, Jennifer Woodbury, and the Métis curator, Cathy Mattes, will mentor the work of Aboriginal artists, with assistance toward developing their medium and their careers. The Art Gallery will exhibit the work of both artist-educators and students from participating schools.

3) *The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC)* is a vital partner in this research in that their mandate involves programs and policy development for all First Nation people in Manitoba. Shirley Fontaine, the

Manager of Education Institutional Development, has taken a substantial role in the development of the direction of this proposal. She will continue to serve as a valuable liaison to guide the program so that it honours the mandate of the AMC – promoting First Nation control and jurisdiction of First Nation education.

4) The *Brandon Friendship Centre* serves to welcome and to meet the needs of Aboriginal people living in towns and cities. They will assist the project with staff expertise, as well as with venues for meetings.

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Nellie Kopitz of the Friendship Centre, also a graduate student at Brandon University, will represent the Friendship Centre, along with the Director, Gail Cullen. The Friendship Centre will serve as a knowledgeable partner with its many current initiatives in Aboriginal education, governance, and health; our project will serve their mandate.

5) The *Brandon School Division* will assist with expertise, as well, perhaps, as serving as a site for the research in one/some of its schools. The school division has a large percentage of Aboriginal students and is concerned with current dropout rates. Several school division personnel are research collaborators; Dorothy Church, Erla Cry, and Delvina Kejick are school counsellors and/or home/school liaisons; Gail McDonald is a principal in a school with a high percentage of Aboriginal students, and Donna Michaels is the superintendent/CEO of the school division. Dr. Michaels will provide time for teachers to become involved in the program work, and she will spend as much time as possible with classroom-based mentoring and supervision.

6) The *Brandon University Northern Teachers Education Program (BUNTEP)*, a community-based teacher education program, will lend expertise in communities. Some of the students in that program may serve as research assistants, thus mentoring them into their chosen profession and supporting the work of BUNTEP. Several knowledgeable staff will assist with students' professional development and teacher/artist-educator interfacing work, including Sandra Malyon, Brian Ranville, Kandy McCorrister, and Sherry Peden. Ms. Peden is co-writer of the *Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives Into Curricula* document coming from the Manitoba Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth (2003).

7) The *Council of Indigenous Elders* will lend advice. The research team will seek guidance from the Elders on a continuous basis. The President of the Council is Mr. Norman Fleury, who is also the Coordinator for Michif Languages for the Manitoba Métis Federation. Mr. Fleury travels widely to meet his obligations to speak with the people. He will represent the Elders and help to guide the project. The Secretary of the Council of Indigenous Elders, Lorraine McKay, is a research collaborator.

8) *Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism*, a department of the Manitoba provincial government, will lend expertise. Their mandate supports cultural programming and celebration. Denise Préfontaine, as a Community Arts Consultant, will assist with teacher-artist-educator mentoring and interfacing. Tanis Wheeler, Senior Aboriginal Cultural Advisor with the Department, will assist in the direction of the project in consultation with the Minister's office.

9) *Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth*, a department of the Manitoba provincial government, will lend staff expertise and funding, where possible. This research project focuses attention to all six educational priorities addressed in the department's *Agenda for Student Success* (2002). Dr. Ken Horton and Dr. Shelley Hasinoff of the Evaluation and Assessment Branch are collaborators in the research, assisting with the evaluative components. Ms. Diane Cooley and Ms. Anne Longston of the Programs Branch, the latter also the Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, will assist in integrating the work of the artist-educator with the school curriculum. Dr. Gerald Farthing, the Acting Deputy Minister of Education, will continue as a source of sage advice, as he has been throughout the proposal writing stage.

10) The *Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC)*, as the provincial headquarters for the development of First Nations curriculum, under the auspices of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, will lend expertise with the initiative, particularly in the person of Lorne Keeper, who is Executive Director of MFNERC and a co-applicant on the project. Curricular materials will be developed and disseminated with the help of MFNERC curriculum and arts staff, for example Florence

Paynter, a collaborator, and Doreen McPherson, who coordinates MFNERC's Artist-in-the-School programs.

11) The *Manitoba Indian Education Association* will lend expertise. Its mandate involves supervision of and assistance of First Nation secondary and post-secondary students, some who may serve as research assistants in this project. The Director, George Desnomie, an experienced and wise administrator, will advise the program and the research assistants.

12) The *Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF)* will lend expertise, especially in the person of the project co-applicant, Leah LaPlante, Vice-President of the Southwest Region of the MMF. A strong leader, Ms LaPlante will work to address the needs of Métis youth and to access funds for our program, if possible, through the educational mandate of the MMF. Our project supports that mandate, and Ms. LaPlante has been a committed, enthusiastic participant in the development of our research proposal.

13) The *Program of the Education of Native Teachers (PENT)* will lend expertise, and some of the students in that program will serve as research assistants. The Director of PENT Vince Stoneman, a collaborator on the research team, will mentor PENT student researchers and supervise classes that the students might take as credit for their work, as well as assist with research team/community liaising. This CURA program will nourish new Aboriginal teachers in Manitoba communities.

14) *Sioux Valley School*, the closest Aboriginal community school to Brandon, will assist with continuous advice. Noella Eagle, a collaborator, formerly a Chief at Canupawakpa First Nation, is principal at Sioux Valley School. The school participated in the Don Freed pilot project and is anxious to continue with cultural programming. The recently elected Chief of Sioux Valley First Nation, Vince Tacan, has supported and worked with the applicant of this project on other research endeavours, including presenting in her university classes, most notably connected with the needs of Aboriginal youth coming before the court system (during Mr. Tacan's former job/role as Aboriginal court worker).

15) The *West Region Tribal Council* has a mandate to assist communities with education and development. Representatives will lend expertise, and selected schools in the region will serve as sites for the research. As well, several Aboriginal people from that area will serve as research collaborators; Betty Abigosis, Georgina Nepinak, and Eugene Blackbird are all educators with extensive experience teaching and administering in Aboriginal schools. Mr. Blackbird is also an accomplished artist.

All partnering organizations have lent advice at the SSHRC/CURA grant application stage, with many having representatives attending the five CBACIC planning meetings and, if a representative joined the research team, attending some CV writing workshops, as well. If the grant application is approved, the Community-Based Aboriginal Curriculum Initiatives Committee (CBACIC) will reconstitute its working-committee status, which included several people from each of the partnering organizations, to become a senior advisory committee. As such, it will likely consist of one elected or appointed delegate from each of the partner organizations (more partners to be added as we progress); that delegate will not be a formal researcher (as noted, many members of the research team are also members of partnering organizations). Annually, the applicant, co-applicants, collaborators, research assistants, and the administrative assistant will be required to submit activity/progress/accountability reports to the CBACIC and then to present those reports orally within two weeks after their text submission. The applicant's report, written with the input and assistance of co-applicants, will assume an accountability statement, which will include budget reconciliation. All of the reports that are submitted to the CBACIC will also be submitted to CURA within the June 30 annual report time frame, and will be made available to the public. The annual meetings with the CBACIC, to be held in Brandon, Manitoba, in years one, three, and five, and Dauphin, Manitoba, in years two and four, will also include public presentations by the research team for interested community people (business meeting in morning and public presentation, including CBACIC people, in afternoon). It is hoped that CURA personnel will be able to attend, conducting a portion of the mid-term review within the research community. Community public meetings or symposia, including displays of student work, chaired by the local coordinating teacher and research assistant with help from school students, will also be held annually in each community that has

a participating school. The applicant, several co-applicants and collaborators, and the research assistant(s) from that community will attend those meetings in order to report on the project and to solicit suggestions and input from community members for improvement (Other dissemination plans for the research were elaborated in Section #3, Communication of Results). In that fashion, the direction of the project will be continuously influence and directed in response to the needs of the communities that it serves, and with attention to the mandates of all partnering organizations.

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7. Training (Role of Students)

Research assistants will be chosen using an application and selection process, which includes the following criteria: a) Aboriginal ancestry; b) enrolled in a program of post-secondary education; c) possessing excellent oral and written communication skills; d) living on or in close proximity to the communities that have participating schools; e) possessing professional compatibility with the objectives of the research; f) displayed ability and willingness to participate in the project over the length of their academic career; g) displayed ability to work with others in a team-learning environment; h) active involvement in and dedication to the community and its people; i) clean criminal record and child abuse registry checks; and j) evidence (e.g., letters from Elders) that the person is an appropriate role model for students. Applicants will be short-listed and interviewed by the Selection Committee and two members from the relevant community (especially with reference to community-based undergraduate research assistants). All research assistants will participate, with the coordinating teachers and artist-educators, in a one-week summer professional development workshop with the research team and other mentors as deemed necessary. The research assistants, as well as other participants, will learn, for example, how to support the artist-educators, including how to interface between them and the teachers; how to create and supervise in-school artist-educator itineraries; and how to gather other information that will serve to guide the ongoing placement and integration of the artist-educators into the schools. Further, they will learn to serve as field researchers. Student assistants will be scaffolded in the support they offer to the research components of the project, engaging in more complex research duties as their skill level increases. They will learn, for example, how to gather and to use baseline data to track student progress. Further, the two university-based undergraduate research assistants will help with the collection and coordination of data for subsequent analysis, thus adding to their ability to assess their own students when they become teachers. Using their community development and in-school project work as the basis of study, the undergraduate research assistants will be encouraged to enrol in an elective university course (e.g., 02:381, Teaching of Aboriginal Studies; 02:383, The Strategies for Teaching Aboriginal/Métis Children), with some of our university faculty researchers as their instructors of record, for example some research collaborators from BUNTEP, and the Director of PENT, Vince Stoneman.

Master's level students will be selected with the same process, albeit in recognition that their studies may require them to be located in Brandon. The primary focus of the master's students – grant solicitation to support the salary for the in-class work of the artist-educators, and data entry and analysis – will be mentored by the applicant and co-applicants. Masters' students will work with both groups of five schools and, thus also, with both groups of one university-based and five community-based undergraduate research assistants. They will assist the community-based undergraduate assistants with the placements of artist-educators, classroom teacher/artist-educator interfacing, and school-based research. All research assistants will be encouraged to use aspects of the research project to inform their university course work and research projects and theses, perhaps by registering in some of the same courses suggested for their coordinating teacher-leader counterparts (See Budget Justification, Section #8).

Artist-educators will also do research work by assisting with grant solicitation and participating in professional dialogue with teachers concerning the students' cultural and educational development. They will engage in the one-week professional development in-service and continuous school-based

professional development. An allowance for that work is elaborated in Section #8, Budget Justification. The administrative assistant, who will be mentored by and teamed with the applicant, will hold a full-time salaried position. This mature person will also satisfy most of the criteria for the selection of research assistants, as well as being skilled in the use of computer technology and word processing. Their professional capacity will be enhanced by increased collaboration with the research team and visits to the participating schools, with the hope that they will continue with similar work after the project.

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8. Budget Justification – Funds requested from SSHRC

1) Student salaries and benefits / Stipends

a) Undergraduate: Each of the ten participating schools will have one undergraduate research assistant; as well, two on-campus undergraduate assistants will be hired (for a total of twelve assistants).

Community-based student research assistants are necessary in order to scaffold community research skills and talents, to become acquainted with applications for research funding for the artist-educators, to assist artist-educators and co-operating teachers with their day-to-day needs within each school, and to assist with school-based data collection. Two on-campus research assistants will help with artist-educator grant solicitation, and data collection, entry, and analysis.

The hourly wage for undergraduate research assistants will start at approximately \$8.50 per hour and increase each year for students who continue with the project, allowing the average wage for student assistants (both on- and off-campus) to be approximately \$10 over the time of the project (inclusive of holiday pay and benefits). *Each year after the first year, with its initial starting-up estimate of \$18,000 (approx. \$10 hour x 5 hours weekly x 30 weeks x 12 students = \$18,000), will see both new and more experienced research assistants; thus the estimate for the second to fifth years of \$21,000 (approx. \$10 hour x 5 hours weekly x 36 weeks x 12 students) remains the same.*

b) Graduate: Master's level student research assistants will have primary responsibility for researching and applying for the funding to support the salary for artist-educators' work within the schools (the artist-educators will assist), and for data entry and analysis. This responsibility requires that the graduate research assistants become conversant with the whole area of grant funding, continuously searching for new sources of funding for the artist educators, and with quantitative and qualitative research methods. The applicant and co-applicants of this CURA project will oversee and advise the process with these students, who will start immediately upon receipt of the CURA grant so that they might become acquainted with funding requirements and the application processes for the artist-educators. Each master's student assistant will be paid approximately \$15 per hour (inclusive of holiday pay and benefits) over the five-year project. *Thus, the annual expense for each of the three graduate students will be approximately \$10,000 (approx. \$15 x 16 hours per week = \$240 per week x approximately 42 weeks = \$10,080), with a total amount for the three students of approximately \$30,000.*

2) Non-student salaries and benefits / Stipends

a) i) This project will require substantial work and dedication from in-school staff. The extra work from one key teacher-leader in each school will be funded with an honorarium/stipend, in recognition of the required time to supervise the in-school administrative details and to act as the interfacing lynch-pin between the teacher colleagues and the artist-educators. The coordinating teachers will be classified as "research personnel and support staff" in order that they might receive some monetary recognition for their work. It is hoped, and will be suggested, that the coordinating teachers use a portion of their honorarium/stipend to apply for credit for one or more graduate university courses from Brandon University (depending upon the hours of their participation) over the course of the five-year project. The education classes may be courses in either the Department of Administration (01) or Curriculum and Instruction (02) (e.g., 01:527, Development and Administration of Aboriginal Education in Canada; 01:561, Current Issues in Aboriginal Education; 02:584, Curriculum Development in Rural, Aboriginal, and Northern Schools; and/or 02:585, Aboriginal Language and Culture). Those classes will be coordinated and supervised by the applicant (as Chair of the Department of Administration and

Educational Services and the instructor of a number of graduate courses), as well as by other qualified on-campus university researchers (e.g., Prof. Julie Ann Kniskern) involved in this project. For class credit, the coordinating teacher might submit a journal that relates the learning process that resulted from at least 150 logged hours of work toward the project (approximately equivalent to 36 contact hours in class + 108 hours, using the “three-hours-of-work-required-out-of-class-for-every-contact-hour-in-class” formula), supervised and reviewed, as noted, by the university instructor-of-record.

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The annual stipend for a cooperating teacher will be \$500, thus requiring \$5,000 each year for the total of the ten participating schools.

ii) The approximately five Aboriginal artist-educators who will be engaged in the ten schools in any given year will be expected to participate in on-going professional development that will improve their cultural curricular initiatives. Artist-educators are not certified teachers; they will need assistance with interfacing with teachers to help develop pedagogical approaches and techniques that allow for the maximum student potential to be realized. Given those additional expectations and the work needed to meet them, each artist educator will be allowed a \$2000 annual professional development allowance, for a total of **\$10,000** (\$2000 x 5 artist-educators), to be accessed as the artist-educator logs on-campus and in-school professional development (to be supervised by the applicant and coordinating teachers).

iii) The administrative assistance work involved in this project is substantial. An excellent, mature, full-time person, skilled at multi-tasking, will serve to integrate and connect the work of all university and school and community-based participants in this research. That person will serve as integral support for the research. Given the skill and maturity level required for such a position, *an averaged annual salary of \$35,000 is quoted*. This individual will visit each participating community in order to become familiar with the initiatives in the schools, further to inform that person’s work and secure their commitment to the project.

The total amount in non-student salaries and benefits (not counting RTSs) is, thus, **\$5,000 + \$10,000 + \$35,000 = \$50,000**

b) Research Time Stipend (RTS): A research project of this size requires significant time, both for its direction and administration, and for the research itself. The applicant will be required to mentor heavily in the areas of grant research and applications for the artist-educators, and research methods and academic writing. The university co-applicants will require substantial time to complete assessment portions of the research. The applicant, thus, requires two Research Time Stipends (RTSs) each year (with one-half of each from SSHRC and one-half of each from Brandon University), with the two university co-applicants each requiring one RTS each year (with one-half from SSHRC/CURA and one-half from Brandon University), for a total of *four RTSs being required within this application per year, for an estimate of \$8,400 per year*, each for SSHRC/CURA and for Brandon University.

3) Travel and subsistence costs.

a) This project requires substantial travel for the *applicant and team members* because the research areas include a large percentage of southwestern and west-central Manitoba. Many of the partnering organizations will help to support the research costs of co-applicants and/or collaborators from their organizations with in-kind and staff contributions that will cover the cost of travel and staff time. Over and above that external support for trips, it is assumed that other university and community researchers will make twelve “one-day equivalent” trips per year to each participating school (several school visits may be included on one trip, saving mileage, but adding hotel; one vehicle may be taken on each trip, thus saving on mileage; hotel rooms will be shared, where possible). *On average, then, \$45,000 per year will be required for travel to and work within the participating schools themselves* (twelve “equivalent-one-day” trips to each school per year x ten schools at an average of \$375 per trip [travel, hotel, and per diem] = 45,000). In addition, *the applicant and/or co-applicants will be required to travel to Winnipeg, on average four times a year, to meet with partnering organizations, at a cost of \$250 per trip for a total of \$1,000 per year*. The costs of the travel for school visits for the administrative assistant will be \$500

annually (no mileage as shared travel with applicant or co-applicants), and has been collapsed within the travel expenses of the team members. In addition to regular travel for in-school research, members of the research teams will travel annually to each participating community to inform the community of the progress of the research and to solicit their input and suggestions for improvement. The cost for travel to those symposia meetings, at one meeting per year, will be \$5000 (\$500 x 10 communities), and has been

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collapsed within the \$45,000 travel budget. Each participating school community will be expected to provide the venue and the food for their annual meeting/symposium.

As well, the project will budget \$12,000 annually for local, provincial, and national conference presentations, with the applicant allowed one co-authored conference presentation annually (a larger national- or international-level conference), with at least nine additional annual conferences available for the co-applicants and collaborators (approx. \$1,200 x 10 conferences). As well, \$4,000 will be earmarked annually, after the first year, for international conferences (two annual conferences allowed at approx. \$2,000 per conference for each of two people = \$16,000), with the assumption that the results of this research will be beneficial for international audiences. All researchers will be expected to collaborate with at least one other researcher for their conference papers and presentations (with at least one person from the “community” if an “academic” and vice versa; all conference teams should have at least one Aboriginal person). An upper allowance of not more than \$1,200 is available for each in-country conference for applicants, co-applicants, and collaborators. The calculations thus allow for ten in-country conferences per year (one for the applicant, nine for the co-applicants and collaborators), and four international conferences over the five-year project.

The travel costs will, thus, total \$45,000 + \$1,000 + \$12,000= \$58,000 per year for the applicant and team members for Canadian travel and \$4,000 for international travel.

b) i) While the majority of student travel, in terms of mileage, will be included within the estimates for applicant and team member travel (as vehicles will be shared, as will hotels, when possible), there will be some additional travel for the master’s and on-campus undergraduate student assistants. As well, there will be some travel expected of the community-based undergraduate student assistants as they participate in summer professional development workshops and annual reporting meetings to the CBACIC. The *three* expected trips a year at \$200 each trip for the ten community-based undergraduate students, equals \$600 for each community-based undergraduate student assistant. *Five* trips are expected for the two on-campus undergraduate students each year, for a total of \$1,000 for each on-campus assistant (\$200 x 5 trips). Thus, \$6,000 (\$600 x 10 students) is allowed each year for undergraduate community-based research assistant travel and \$2000 (\$1000 x 2 students) each year for on-campus undergraduate research assistant travel, for a total of **\$8,000** for undergraduate student travel. Masters’ students will each need approximately four “one-day-equivalent” trips per year, which equals approximately **\$2,400** for their travel each year (12 trips x \$200 – 4 annually for each of three master’s students).

ii) Some travel is required for the professional development activities of both the coordinating teachers and the artist-educators (both who have classified as “research personnel and support staff” for expense purposes). Given the distances, a travel allowance of \$150 is budgeted throughout the year for the coordinating teacher from each participating school and for each of the five annual artist-educators. As well, both groups will attend a week-long summer professional development institute, with travel costs estimated at \$300 for the week for each person. Brandon University will provide free residence housing for coordinating teachers, research assistants, and artist-educators. *A total of approximately \$6,600 (approx. \$150 + \$300 x 10 teachers and \$150 + \$300 x 5 artist-educators) in travel funds is needed annually to support the coordinating teachers and artist-educators.*

Total student and support staff travel will thus be \$8,000 + \$2,400 + \$6,600 = \$17,000 annually, with \$10,000 being budgeted during the start-up year, as there will be little travel by student assistants from January to August (month of first professional development institute held at Brandon University).

4) Other expenses

a) Professional/technical services. It is expected that we will need the assistance of a statistician for consultation in the use of complex structural models with extensive longitudinal data, given the five-year cross-sequential research design. *We have allowed \$3,000 each year for these costs.*

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b) Supplies. We will have significant paper, photocopying, telephone, postage, and other consumable costs, including in-school research materials, estimated at **\$5,400 for the first year and \$5,600** for each succeeding year. Note that we are including some of the artist-educators' curricular materials and connected school supplies, as those materials are needed in order to support the research.

5) Non-disposable equipment

a) Computer hardware. It is estimated that we will need six computers (three of them laptops), one for the administrative assistant, three for master's students, and two for undergraduate students. Brandon University has committed two of those needed computers. *Four computers will cost \$8,000.*

b) Other. We will need a high-quality laser printer for \$1,000, a scanner for \$200, statistical software for \$4,000, and access to a granting library data base for \$1,000, for a total of **\$6,200**.

6) Other expenses (Specify)

Workshop meetings/symposia: Each year the research team will meet with the CBACIC and with the public to give an annual report of the research. Travel expenses of the partnering members of the CBACIC will be covered by the partners, as part of the partners' contribution to the project. Annual meetings will be held in the facilities of some of the partnering organizations, and thus meeting accommodation will not involve any cost. During the second and the fifth years, especially during the final year, a larger symposium and a conference will be held that will allow for the showcasing of this and other initiatives in Aboriginal education. As well, at the same time, coordinating teachers, research assistants, and artist-educators will first attend the annual meetings, and then participate in the one-week professional development that will support their in-class work. It is estimated *that the annual costs for meetings and professional development will be \$3,000*, with the hope/expectation that there will be some carry-over each year so that the final conference might be more elaborate in nature, thus allowing \$15,000 for meetings and symposia for the entire project. The estimate of \$3000 covers the food needed for the entire week, with Brandon University providing free residence accommodations. The researchers will provide the professional development for no fee, other than for the sessional lecturer stipend that they may receive from Brandon University as payment for teaching the graduate class for those coordinating teachers and research assistants who register for graduate course credit for their professional development (elaborated earlier in this section).

7) Communication of Research Results

Drawn from the budget justification, the funds used directly for dissemination purposes will include annual Canadian conference travel (\$12,000 x 5 years = \$60,000), international conference travel (\$4,000 x 4 years), annual meetings with the CBACIC and professional development (\$3,000 x 5 years = \$15,000), and annual community symposia (\$500 x 10 communities x 5 years = \$25,000), for a total of \$116,000. Because this project involves continuous communication of results, other funds, which cannot easily be delineated, will be used to communicate new knowledge. Every visit to the schools by the research team is a collaborative exercise in the exchange of knowledge; every professional in-service for artist-educators, coordinating teacher-leaders, and research assistants involves a communication of research results. The development and dissemination of curricular materials, some with the artist materials as noted in the section on supplies, involve a communication of results. With that integration of

research and its communication inherent within this project, we include \$216,000 for Communication of Results (\$116,000 clearly designated, and \$100,000 for “inherent nature” of the project).

9. Competitive Quotes: N/A

10. Letters of Confirmation: Attached please find 16 letters, one from host institution Brandon University, and 15 from partnering organizations.