

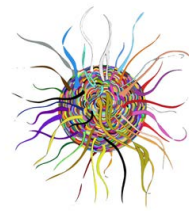


# DIVERSITY CIRCLES



An Indigenous framework for  
diversity and mentorship

I want to give thanks to the ancestors both past and present of the Musqueam, Skwxwú7mesh (pronounced Squamish or Skohomish) & Tsleil-Waututh (pronounced: slay-wa-tooth, also known as Burrard) nations. For their continued perseverance to uphold their teachings, I stand in solidarity with you.



# Introduction



Image courtesy of Andrew Judge



Images courtesy of Western University



Image courtesy of Andrew Judge

Boozoo, Mko Mose Indizhnikaz, Meshekenh n'doodem, d'eshkan ziibi n'doonjiba Anishinaabe inini n'dow. Hi, my English name is Andrew Judge and my spirit name is Bear Walker (Mko Mose), I am Turtle Clan (Meshekenh n'doodem) was born and raised near the horned river (d' eshkan ziibi n'doonjiba) and I am both Irish and Anishinaabe. My dad was born in Thessalon, ON and my Mom was born in Sarnia, ON. I was born and raised in London, ON. I have been working in the area of Indigenous education for the past 10 years. I started by engaging youth at an Indigenous science camp in Wikwemikong, Manitoulin Island, I then began designing, facilitating and implementing mentoring programs for Indigenous elementary and secondary students at the CAMH centre for Prevention Science and I have taught Indigenous studies at the post secondary level for 6 years. My PhD "re-search"has included seeking the re-establishment of gete-Anishinaabe-izhichigewin (Ancient Anishinaabe customs) by articulating the nature of Anishinaabeg mino-bimaadiziwin (living the good life). My thesis is examining how Indigenous University Instructors are impacted by relocating for academic appointments. I do this work ultimately in the hopes that Indigenous students everywhere gain more opportunities to learn the truth about their ancestral knowledge and history in their formal educational years.

For me, the pursuit of Indigenous knowledge and the knowledge of my ancestors has led me on the most extraordinary journey. As I continue to advance in my studies as a doctoral student, I gain a deeper sense of self awareness, as man of Indigenous descent and I constantly battle to decolonize my Eurocentric assumptions concerning the world, cosmos, and universe by seeking the guidance of Elders and wisdom of my dreams for strategies to live Mino-bimaadiziwin.

I feel privileged to be viewing the world using an Indigenous lens and have learned to harness some of the strengths of my Anishinaabeg and Celtic medicinal pasts to help achieve my goals. This incredible knowledge requires a lifelong commitment, it is a commitment to which I remain steadfast.

Each day I continue to be humbled by the teachings of the ancestors and I am always excited to share the little I have learned with anyone interested.

Chi Miigwetch (Big Thanks)



# Diversity, Matters



The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015), states, “The First Nations Education Council estimates that there is a backlog of over 10,000 First Nations students waiting for post-secondary funding, with an additional \$234 million required to erase that backlog and meet current demands” (2015).

Today I'm going to share the reason why I believe celebrating diversity circles matters and how grounding the diversity celebration in an Indigenous knowledge based framework can have transformative impacts for the inclusion of underrepresented students. Diversity, however, is a complicated word so Im going to break it down to ensure that the version of diversity we wish to celebrate and how we can celebrate it becomes clear. I want to note that this celebration of diversity is only the beginning and as these circles strengthen more groups can be welcomed.

# Who exactly are we celebrating?



**Cognitive Diversity or  
Neurodiversity**  
(Such as Autism, Asperger's, ADHD)

**Intercultural Diversity**  
(Cultural, ethnic, and first-language groups,  
including Aboriginal)



**Gender Diversity**  
(Recognition of different gender identities and  
also recognition that some gender groups are  
underrepresented)

## **Cognitive or Neurodiversity**

“The basic premise of neurodiversity is that there is no "typical" mental capacity—no "normal" brain to which all other brains are compared—and because this is the case, we should look at students with autism, ADHD, learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, emotional and behaviour disorders, and other disability categories not in terms of their deficits, but primarily in terms of their strengths.”

This quote comes from the ASCD website whose motto is to Ensure that every child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.

Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct12/vol70/num02/First-Discover-Their-Strengths.aspx>

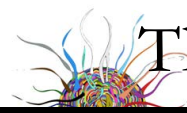
## **Intercultural Diversity**

“In addition to the social, cultural and environmental differences between groups, there is an enormous diversity of values, lifestyles and perspectives within a community or urban Aboriginal population. This diversity makes lumping people together under generic terms like Aboriginal and Indigenous profoundly misleading; nevertheless, most groups share a common social, economic and political predicament that is the legacy of colonization (Kirmayer, Brass & Tait, 2000).

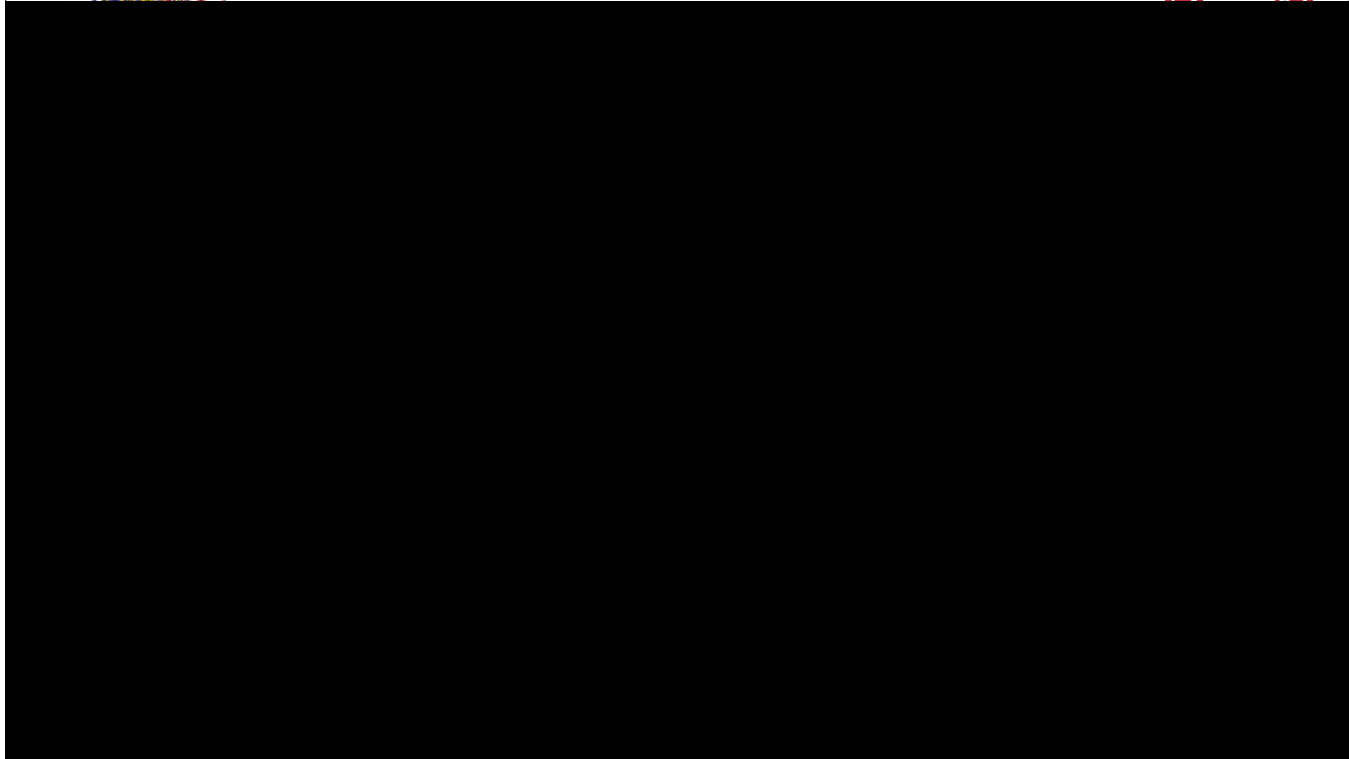
Kirmayer, L. J., Brass, G. M., Tait, C. L. (2000). The mental health of Aboriginal Peoples: Transformations of identity and

community. In L. J. Kirmayer, M. E. Macdonald, G. M. Brass (Eds), (2000). The mental health of Indigenous

peoples. Montreal, QB: Division of Social & Transcultural Psychiatry.



This is why Gender Diversity Matters



Aisholpan, the first Eagle Huntress

All around us the world is changing and I constantly ask myself, will I change with the world? It seems that when I celebrate the gifts of the people around me, the people expressing their gift begin to flourish.

Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFk8XWKDtkA&t=179s>



# Gift Exchange

Amy Fell - School of Business





# Activity #1



**Amongst the people at your table discuss:**

How can your gift(s) contribute to  
celebrating diversity at BCIT and beyond?



Image drawn by Andrew Judge



Image courtesy of Andrew Judge. View of Rainbow, looking east, at sunset, from Temple 4, Dec 19,2016.

## Why using an Indigenous Framework makes sense

Waaskone Giizhikook (Lana Ray) (2012) explains that utilizing Indigenous based philosophical approaches in re-search results in methodological and theoretical convergences. I would add here that using an Indigenous knowledge based framework, based on my experiences doing so adds a sense of unity and togetherness amongst groups with similar goals but varying agendas.

Ray describes the following Ojibway language phrase:

In my home community of Lake Helen Reserve (Red Rock First Nation), the term Kinoo’amaadawaad Megwaa Doodamawaad, roughly translated to mean “they are learning with each other while they are doing” (Cormier, 2009), has emerged as a means of thinking about and engaging in “research”. I have come to understand this term as inclusive and without boundaries. Within this term, concepts such as theory, methodology, method, ontology, epistemology and axiology do not exist as singular entities (p. 96).

The concept ‘to learn together while doing’, as a means to approach ascertaining new knowledge, and in this instance, to celebrate the inclusion of underrepresented groups, is supported by well established Indigenous scholars including Ray (2012), Simpson (2011), Wilson (2008), Kovach (2009) and Rheault (1999) to name a few. This approach to knowledge exchange is accented by the principles of Community Based Participatory Research, as identified by Castleden, et al. (2012), who write, “Within the context of CBPR, how people are involved is as important as who is involved in maintaining a collaborative and respectful re-search project, a focal point of many ethical guidelines” (p. 176). Thus, what we can do, and what has been done in the past successfully is reflect the ancestors teachings of the activity of gift exchange as a means celebrate underrepresented groups. We are picking up the pieces the ancestors left behind on the trail. We are beginning to recognize and honour our own, and each others gifts and strengths, rather than weaknesses and faults. The power of this movement is transformative.

Castleden, H., Morgan, V. S. & Lamb, C. (2012). “I spent the first year drinking tea”. Exploring Canadian university  
Kovach, M. (2009). Indigenous methodologies. University of Toronto Press.  
Ray, L. (Waaskon Giizhigook) (2012). Deciphering the “Indigenous” in Indigenous methodologies. An International  
Rheault, D. (1999). Anishinaabe mino bimaadiziwin (The way of a good life): An examination of Anishinaabe  
Simpson, L. (2011). Dancing on our Turtle’s back: Stories of Nishnaabeg re-creation, resurgence and a new  
Wilson, S. (2008). Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods. Halifax, NS: Fernwood.

researchers’ perspectives on community-based participatory research involving Indigenous peoples. The  
Journal of Indigenous Peoples, 8, 85-98.  
philosophy concerning knowledge, identity and ethics. Peterborough, ON: Debwewin Press.  
emergence. Winnipeg, MB: Arbeiter Ring

Canadian Geographer, 56(2), 160-179.





# What is an Indigenous Framework? And how does it work?



Image courtesy of Dr.Laura Cooper. View of the inside of a rotting tree with its branches spiralling upwards and outwards.

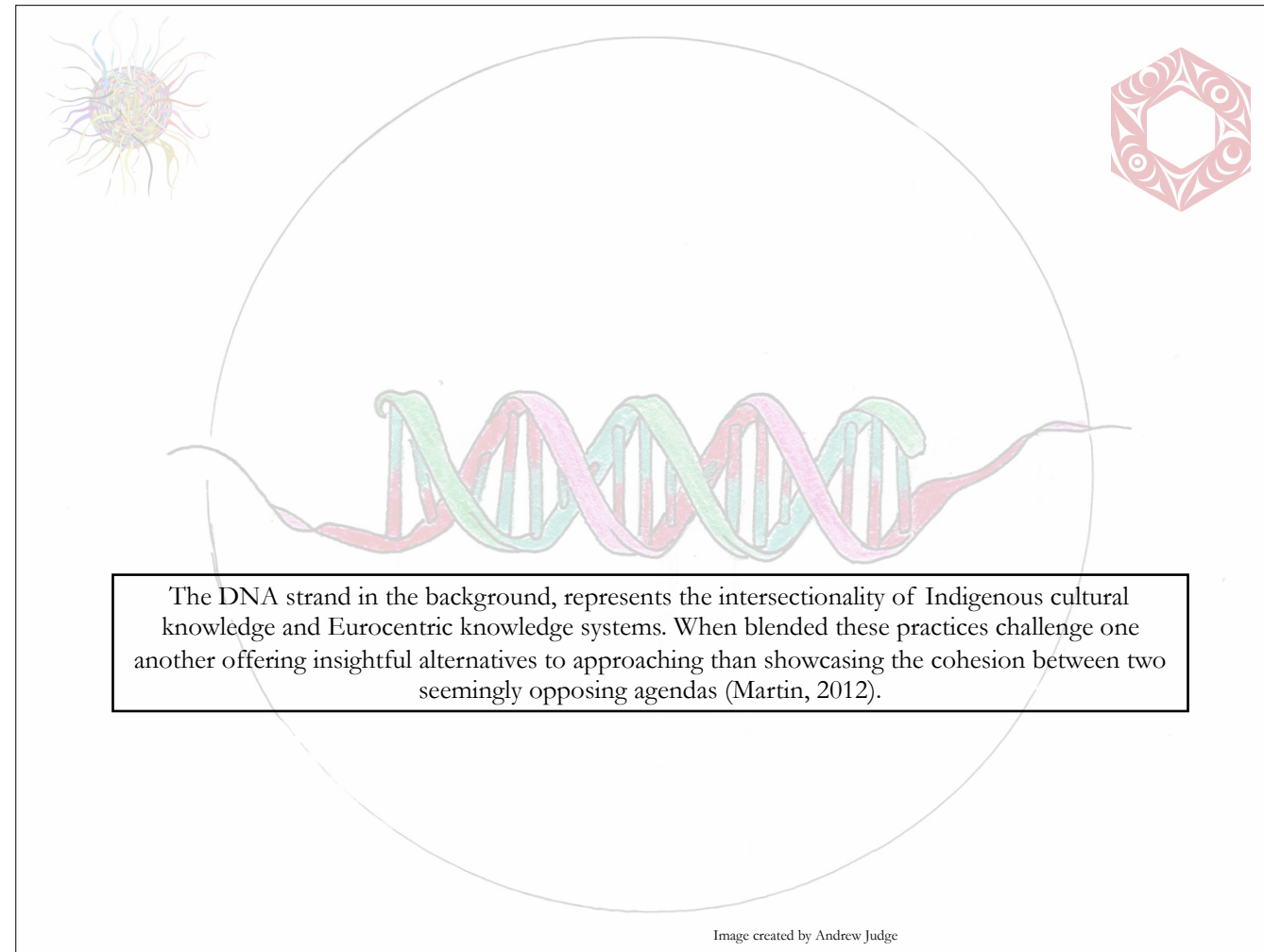
Indigenous people look to the natural environment to gain insight for ways in which to live that honours all that surrounds them.

We are facing a time like no other in history and the centre for biodiversity claims that human activity is responsible for the current mass extinction event that will result in 30-50% of all species of plants and animals disappearing by mid century. Moreover, with rises in loss of speciation on earth the 2016 living planet report estimates  $\frac{2}{3}$  of all plant and animal populations will vanish by 2020.

Humans are merely a reflection of their natural environment. If can celebrate and honour what is within, we will begin to honour what is outside

So, the time to take action to celebrate diversity matters is now!

References  
To learn more about The Centre for Biodiversity see <http://www.biodiversity.org/>.  
Published by the World Wildlife Foundation, a link to the summary of the report can be found here [http://awsassets.panda.org/downloads/lpr\\_living\\_planet\\_report\\_2016\\_summary.pdf](http://awsassets.panda.org/downloads/lpr_living_planet_report_2016_summary.pdf)



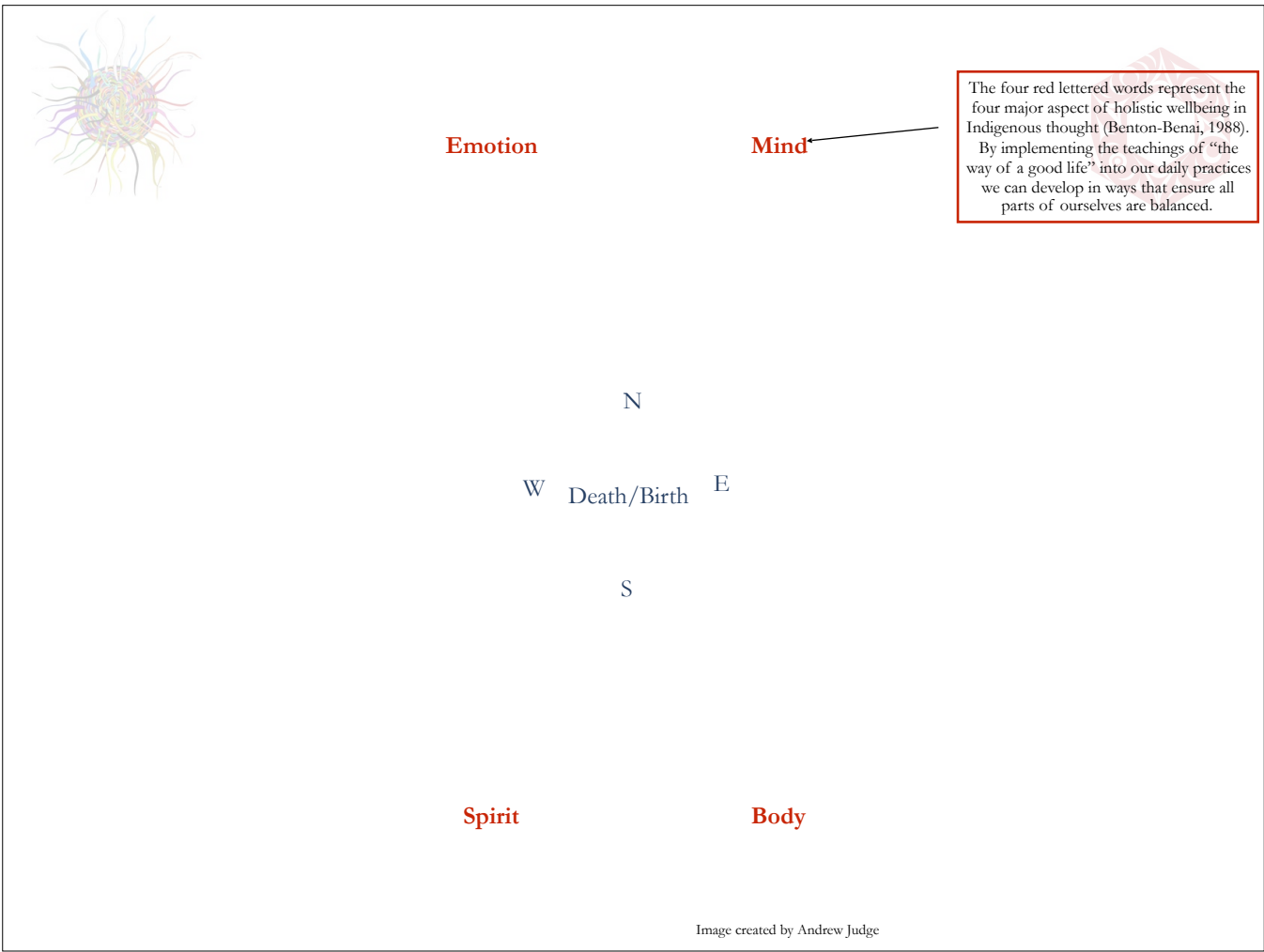
For Indigenous people, “Cyclical themes of growth, renewal and transformation were derived through a participatory process and observation of the natural cycles that occurred in the seasons, animal migrations, life cycles of the human, plant, and animal worlds, and lunar cycles” (Bird, 2000, p.14).

Bird, S. G. (2009). A sense of time a sense of place: Examining Anishinaabe identity development within and between...

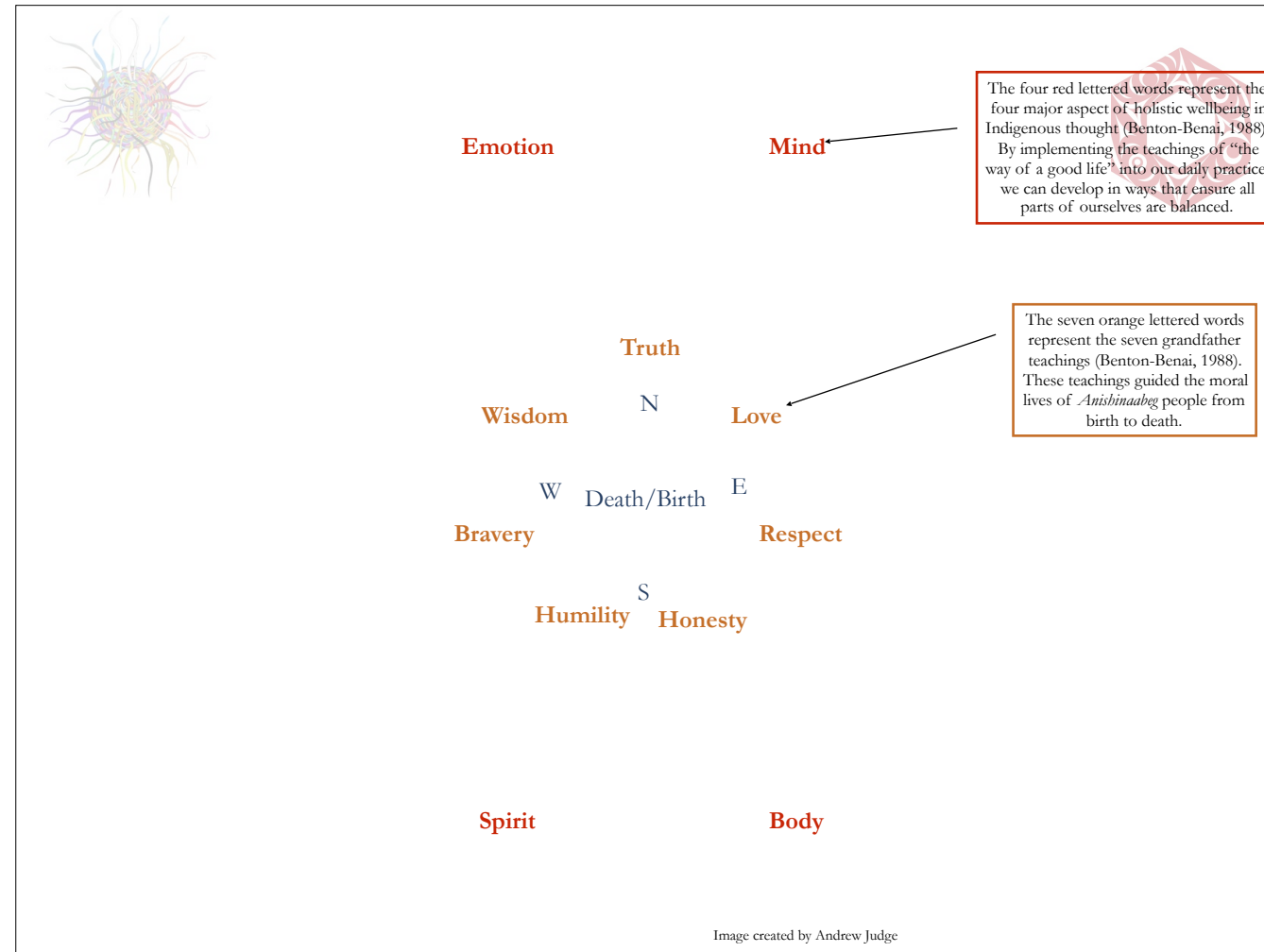
(Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertations and Thesis.



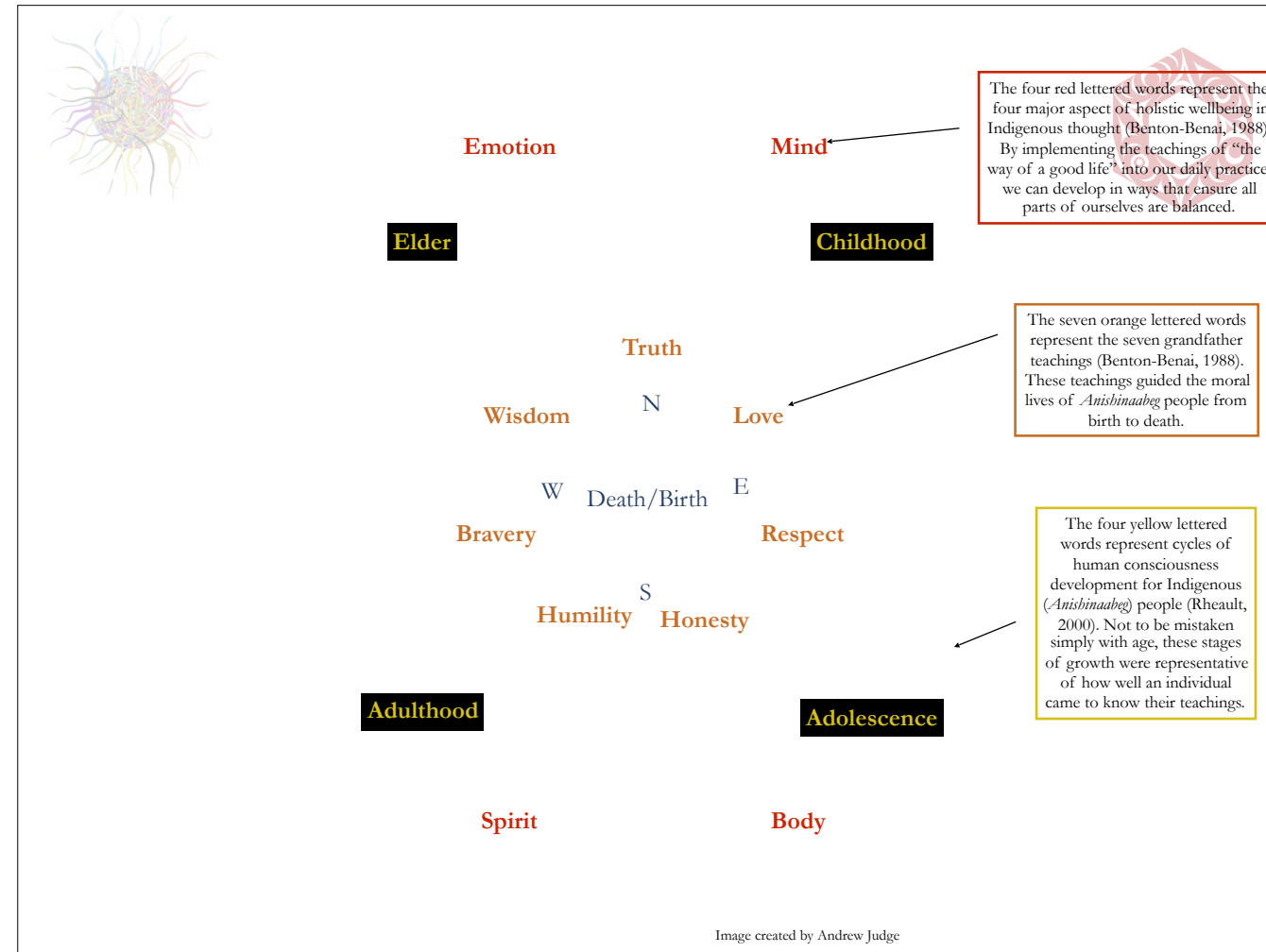
We begin by honouring the four cardinal directions as well as the above, the below, and our centre, which ultimately creates seven directions



Than we honour four major aspect of holistic wellbeing Mind, Body, Spirit, and Emotions.



Next, in correspondence with the seven directions, are seven teachings: Love, respect, honesty, humility, bravery, wisdom and Truth. Each Indigenous people has their own principles of living that guide their action and it is critical to honour the guiding principles of the Indigenous peoples being served in your particular part of the world.



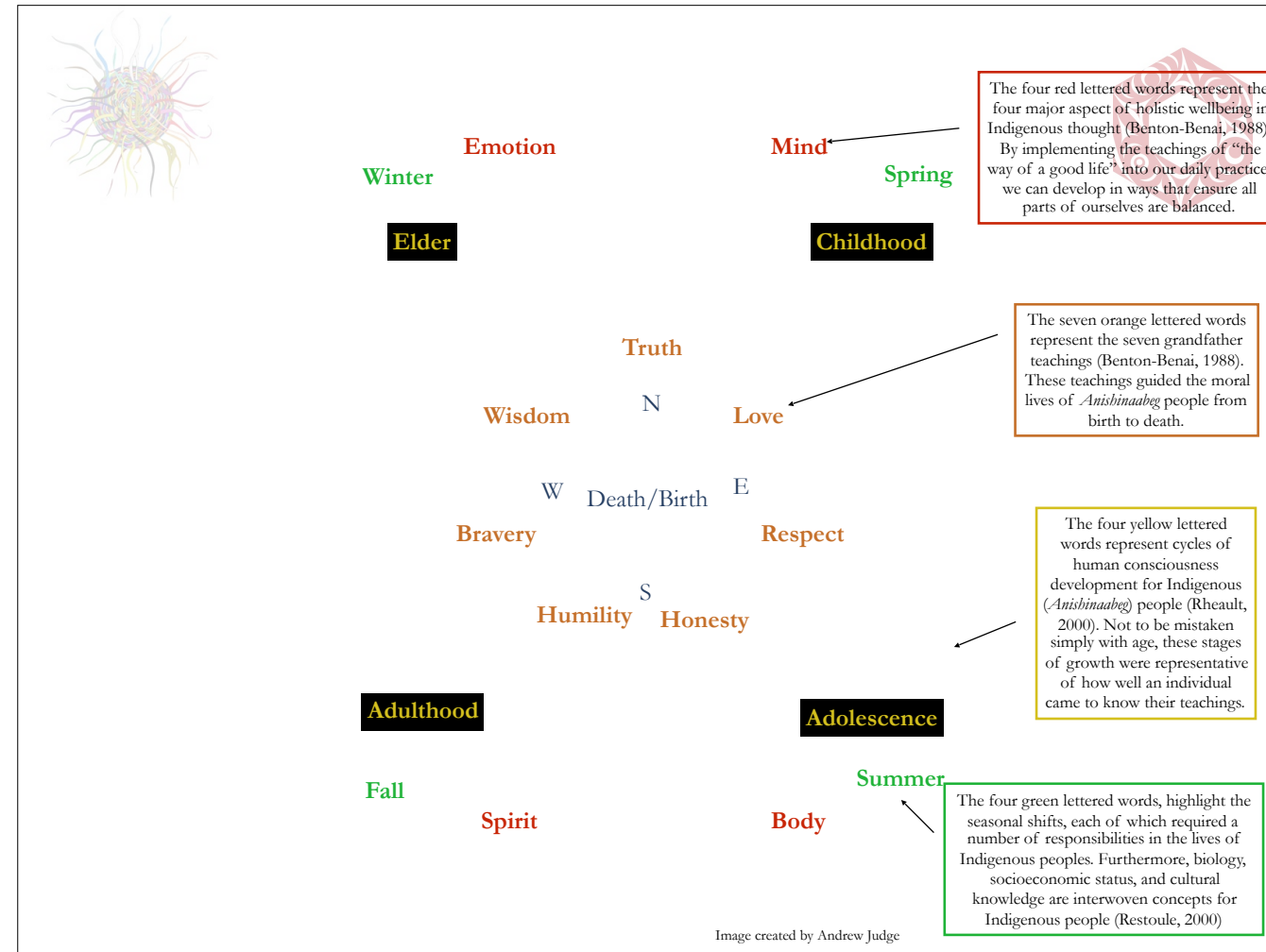
Than, we identify that there are four stages of consciousness development with Elder being the highest stage of consciousness. When wisdom begins to flourish. When, as I have learned, the people can literally survive naked in the natural environment with nothing. It may seem funny or strange to us, but when the French encountered the Odawa people in the Georgian bay area, they described them as the Cheveux Relevés or people with standing hair. Fully naked, healthy, and happy.



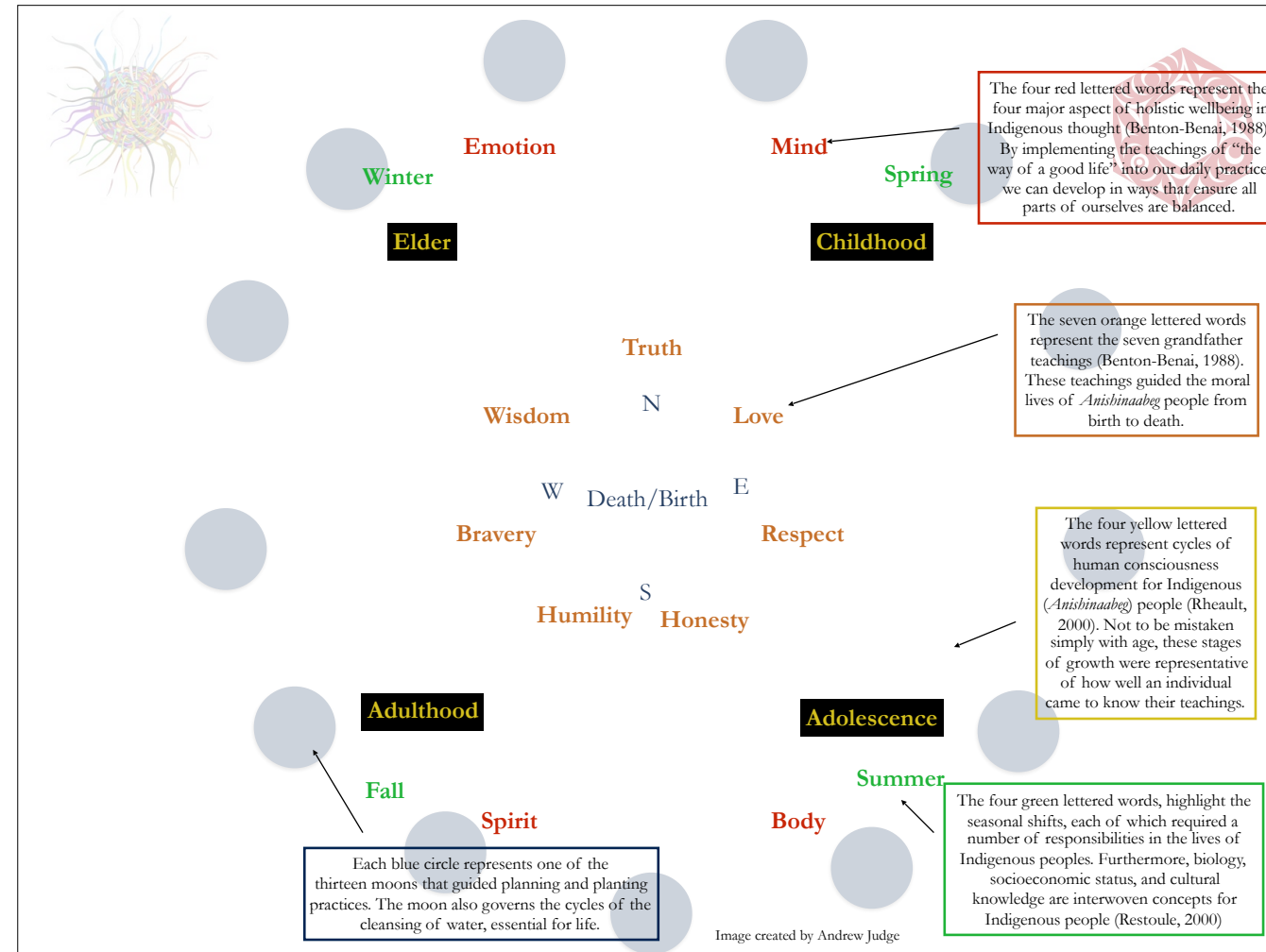


# Gift Exchange

Buddy Cardinal - Access Trades

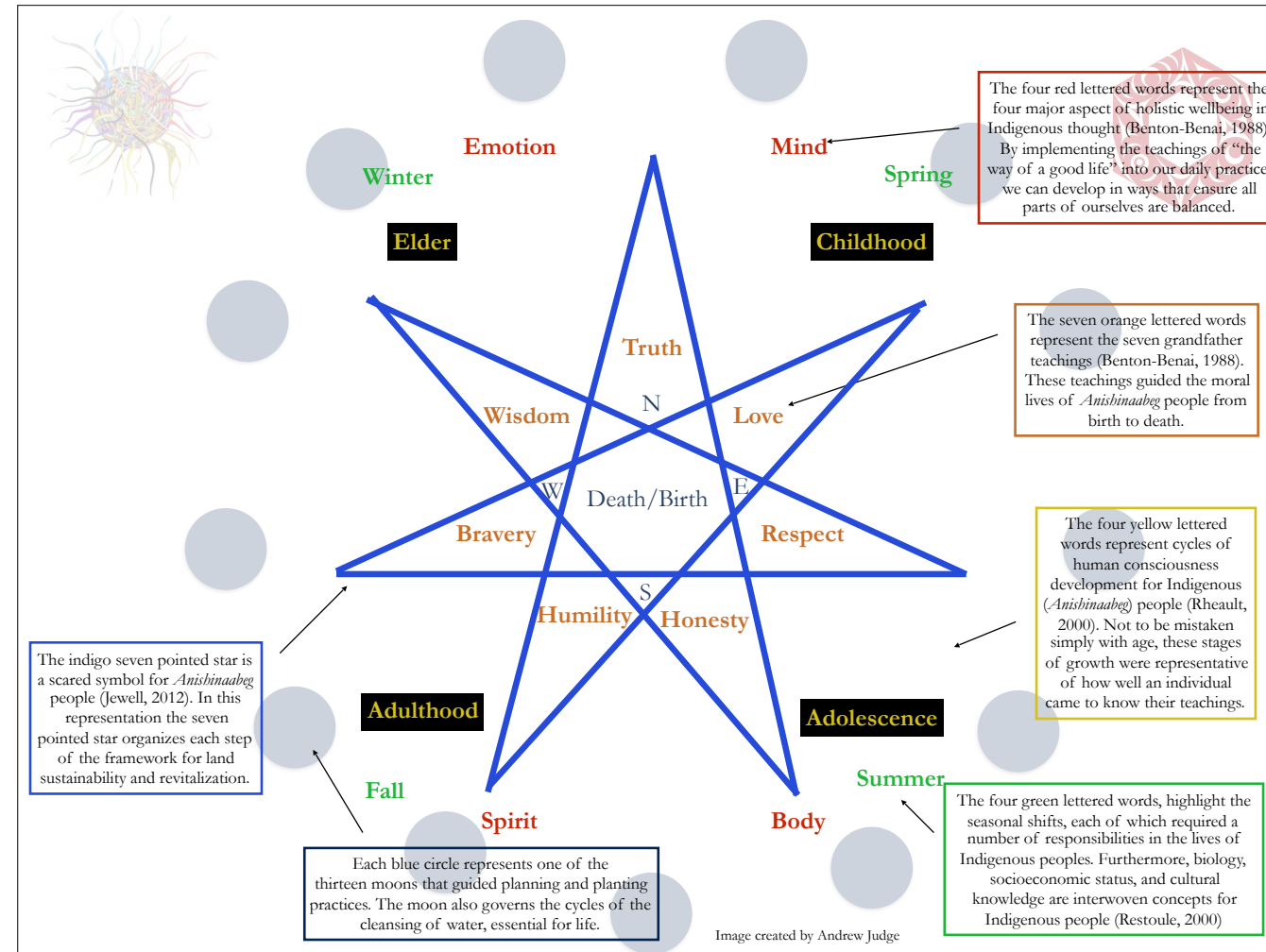


Next, we **celebrate** the four seasonal shifts that the earth makes each year.

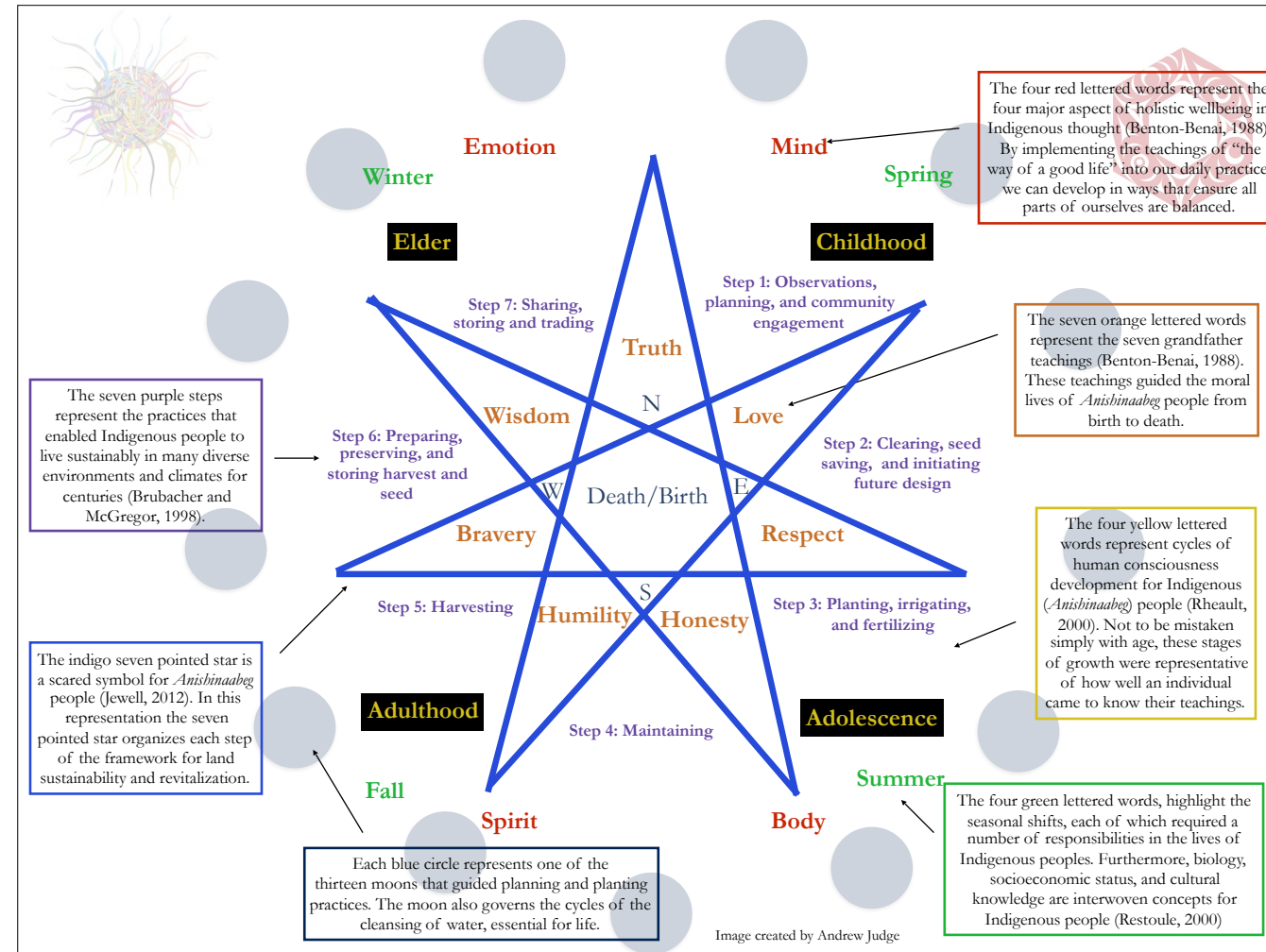


Than, we start celebrating the cycle of the moons. Today is a beginning of a full moon. At this time we begin our preparations for cleansing ourselves and releasing any toxins we’ve held on too since the last full moon. Today also happens to be a penumbral eclipse when the moon passes through earths outer shadow, and also a comet will pass by earth Saturday morning.

Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/full-moon-eclipse-comet-one-night-1.3974424>

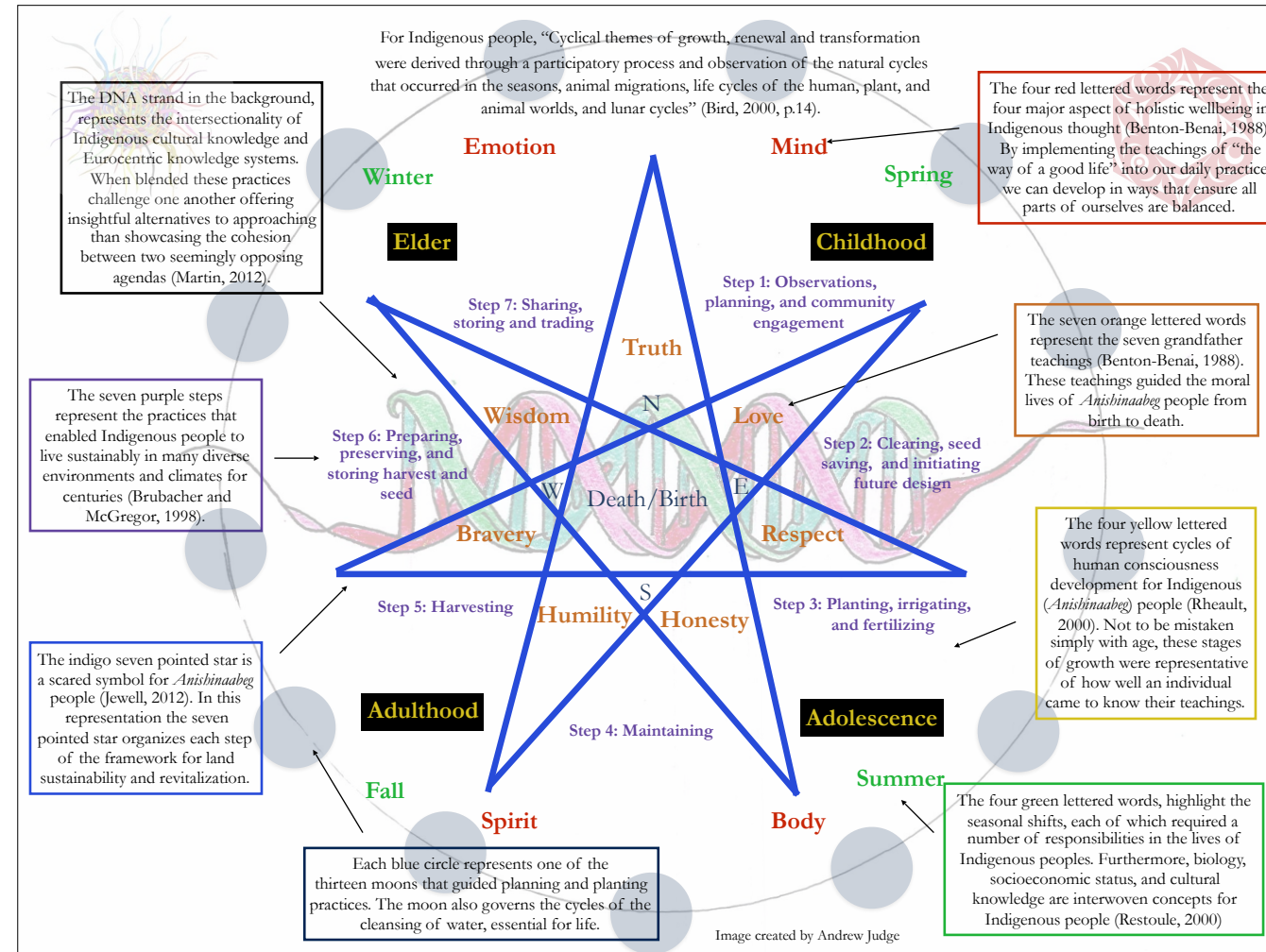


Than, we begin celebrating the diversity of each culture. When I celebrate the uniqueness of the gifts of my neighbours, I start recognizing that their strengths can enhance my own and the community the surrounds us. The key is to recognize my own gifts first.



Finally, based on the practices of Indigenous people around the world we learn the steps that can be taken to achieve a holistic paradigm.

These steps are a whole process in an of themselves, but rely on the previous principles for their activation.



The last piece is to return to the beginning to start the process anew. Each time the process unfolds new knowledge is attained and the ability to connect more deeply grows.





# Gift Exchange

Kathy Musial - Peer Tutor Coordinator



## Activity #2



**Amongst the people at your table discuss:**

What are ways that you can utilize an  
Indigenous framework in your work at BCIT?



Wolverine

Image drawn by Andrew Judge

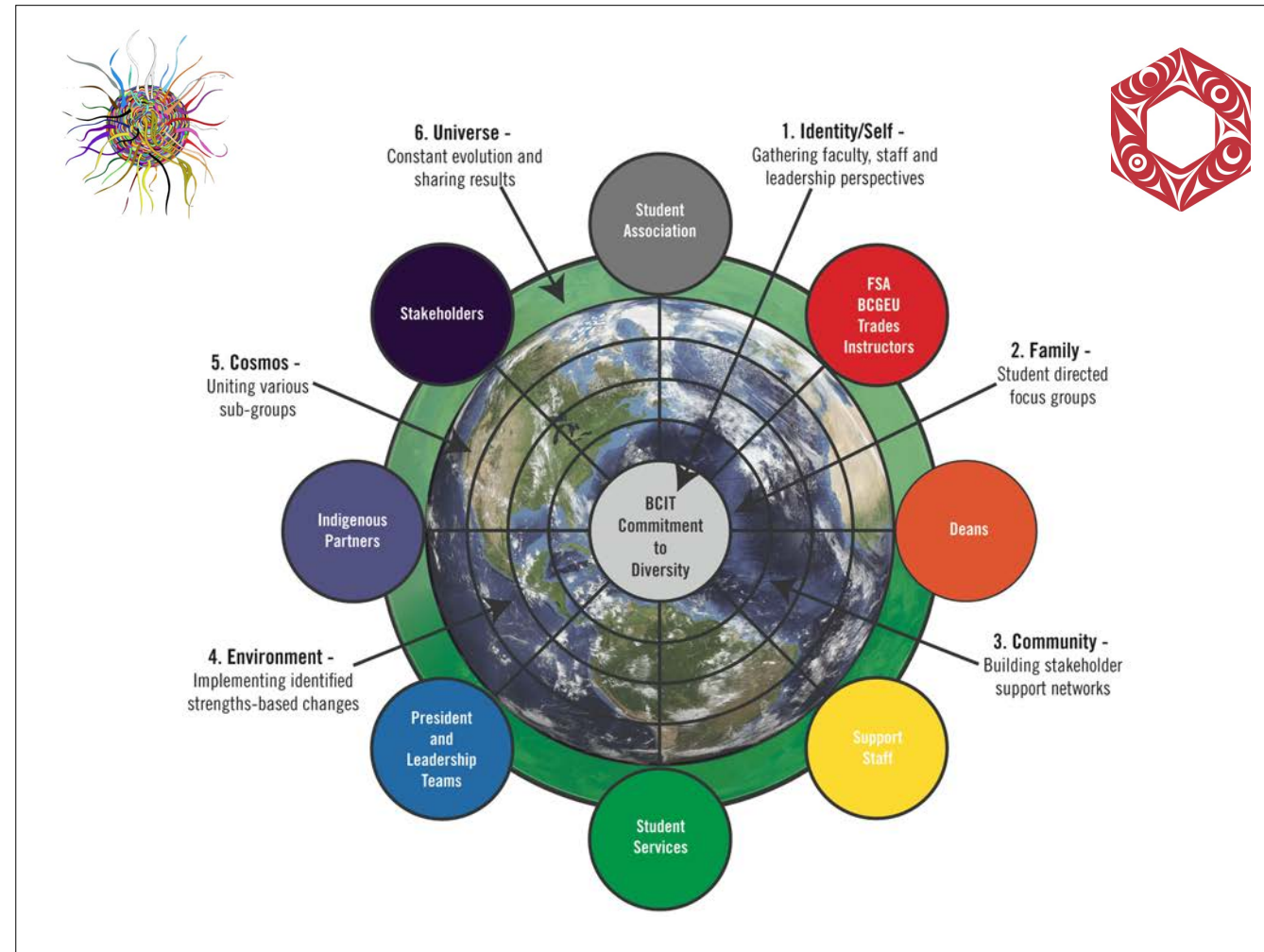


## Assisting Diversity Matters at BCIT Using the Indigenous Framework



Image courtesy of Andrew Judge. View of the man  
made weirs in Capilano river.

At BCIT the SSHRC grant commits to being inclusive, to generating feedback on how best to approach this program using the gifts already present here and to ensure that future generations of under represented students are celebrated.

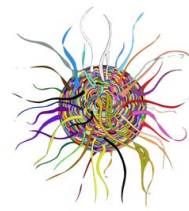


The model is activating across campus, but there is still much work to do.

As staff interested in exchanging their gifts continue to come forward a network will be established and a committee of school representatives dedicated to the ongoing celebration of diversity eventually formed.

Through these examples students will begin feeling safer to identify their gifts relying on the positive examples of leaders, and the community can be strengthened through these relationships.

These relationships will form the backbone of the mentoring or what I prefer to refer to as gift exchange model.



Commitment to  
modelling strengths

The Indigenous  
mentoring or  
gift exchange model



Image courtesy of Andrew Judge. Man catches  
iguana from bamboo tree, before letting him go.

Canada's Aboriginal population is growing at six times the rate of the non-Aboriginal population. According to the 2011 census, 1.4 million people, roughly four percent of Canada's population, identify as Aboriginal. Of these, 48% were under the age of 24. Given these numbers, it is estimated that, in the next 15 years alone, over 300,000 Aboriginal youth could enter the labour force. In May 2009, the Centre for the Study of Living Standards (CSLS) reported that closing the educational gap would lead to an additional \$179 billion in direct GDP growth, and over \$400 billion in total growth over the next 20 years. These numbers suggest that better understanding Indigenous peoples knowledges is critical at this time in our shared history.

Retrieved from <http://cfs-fcee.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2013/11/Factsheet-2013-11-AboriginalEd-EN.pdf> August 30, 2015.





# Utilizing the Indigenous Seeds of Wisdom



Preservation

Cultivation

Propagation

Acclimatization



Image courtesy of Julia Hitchcock

Commitment

Clarity

Competence

Community

Perhaps unique to my story is that while working on my doctoral comprehensive exams I made the choice to directly apply my learning of Indigenous knowledge by lobbying the University to establish an Indigenous food and medicine garden on campus. At the time also I was co-founding and teaching in the first comprehensive community based Indigenous studies program at the local college, in which more than 9 reserves, 26 local organizations, and at least 250 individuals made contributions of sharing their gifts. Additionally, I was leading a group of 15 Indigenous graduate students through SAGE (supporting Aboriginal graduate enhancement) and helped established an Indigenous commissioner position on the (SOGS) Society of Graduate Students council.

This slide identifies just some of the principles I learned through those experiences working with and for Indigenous peoples. These are principles I continued to apply to all that I do...

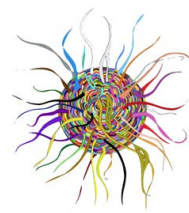
These were the principles which guided establishing the Indigenous Framework.



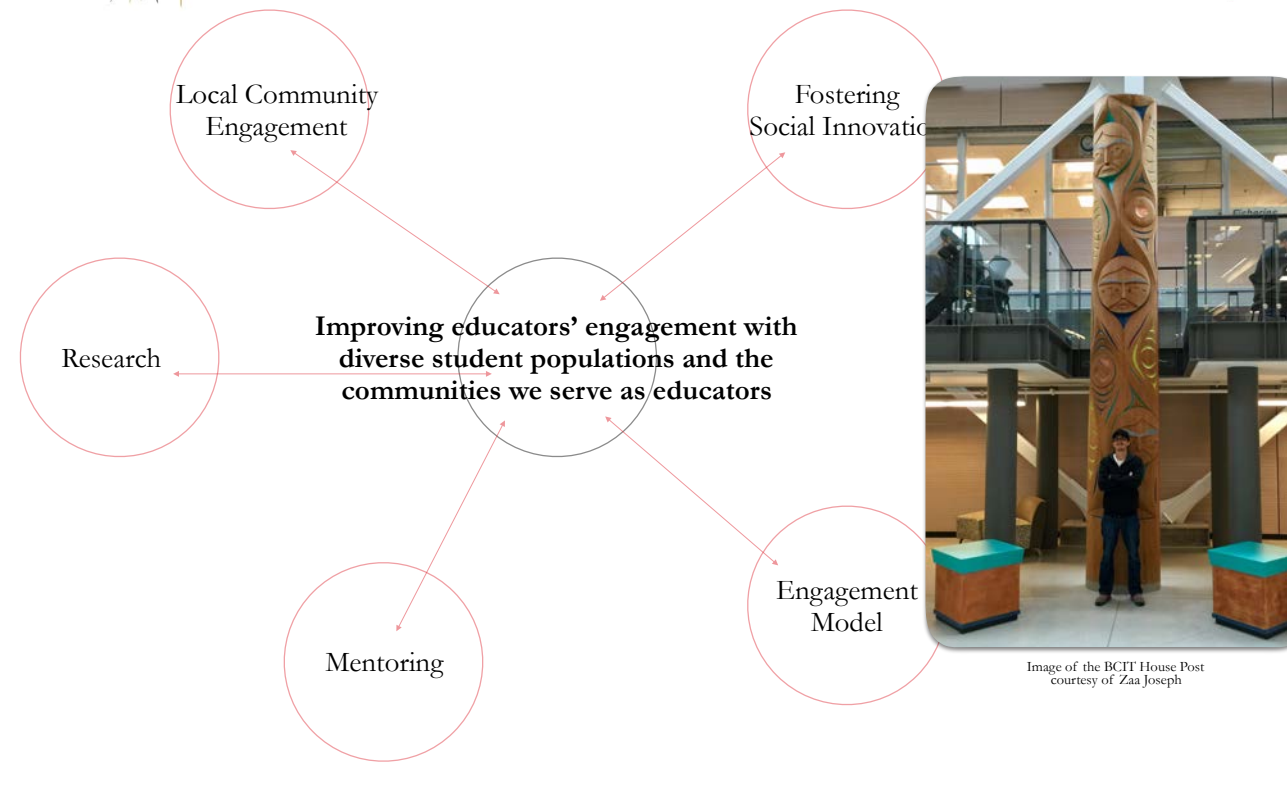


# Gift Exchange

Tye Embree - Recreation Services Supervisor



# Original Diversity Circles Plan



Part of the original plan of Diversity Circles included the five following major parts. Sometimes it is important to look back to know the path forward.

The part relevant today is the **mentoring** section. By creating an environment whereby underrepresented students are celebrated through gift exchanges with those already present in the community relationships with current and future students can be strengthened.



# Wisdom of Community



Images courtesy of Andrew Judge

Building relationships little by little



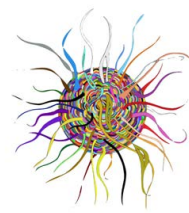
Lumpkin (2001) notes that Indigenous people relied on polyphasic consciousness for their survival. They train to deliberately alter their environments and minds, utilizing all the best resources (sustainably) to ensure their ascendants and a multitude of biologically diverse, yet interdependent species, thrive (Davis, 1996).

Little by little through the recognition and celebration of the gifts within this community safer spaces whereby underrepresented populations can flourish can be co-established.

Relationships take time, energy, and effort, and this is why a long term commitment to this work is essential.

Lumpkin, T. (2001). Perceptual diversity. Is polyphasic consciousness necessary for global survival? *Anthropology of Consciousness*, 12(1-2), 37-70.

Davis, W. (1996). One river: Explorations and discoveries in the Amazon rain forest. Touchstone.



## Example of past successful application

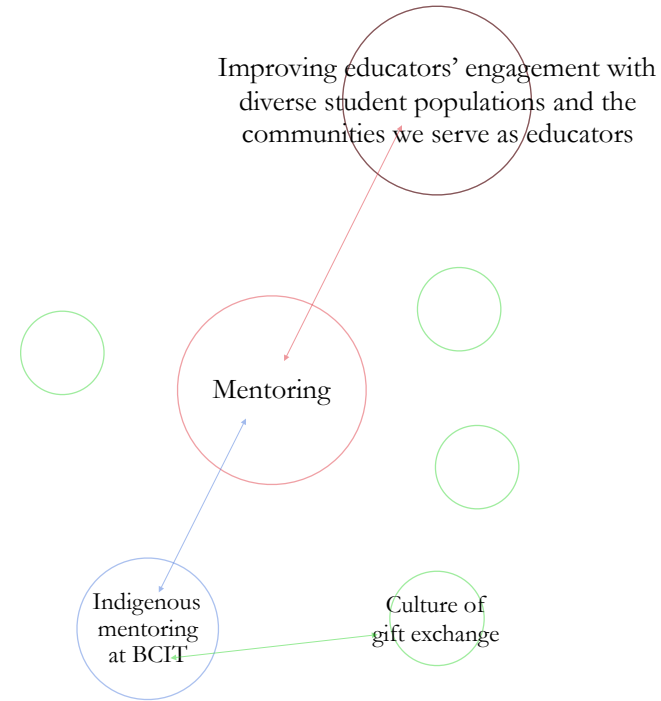


Image created collectively by students and community members at the "Music, Arts and Culture" celebration at Fanshawe College, 2013

In my culture, the abundance of the harvest is celebrated by giving the first harvest away to those most in need

At the music, arts, and cultural celebration at Fanshawe College, which is another example of the successful application of this model, hundreds of people attended. All were invited to celebrate Indigenous culture and leaders from within and outside the community came forward to share their gifts. Secondary and post secondary students, College staff and community members all came together, which ensured that, in this case, Indigenous students were affirmed in their place within the institution.

It will become up to the collaborators at BCIT to decide how they wish to celebrate to fill in the gaps in the this story.



# Gift Exchange

Bhavenna - Program Advising



# Activity #3



Who are the stakeholders?



Discuss amongst your tables and write down who the outside community stakeholders are that can contribute to our collective celebration of diversity





# The power of the gift exchange

Alf Dumont - Aboriginal Services Elder



Like The Rippling Out Of Waves  
From A Stone Thrown Into A Pond



Thank you for your Time  
In kindness and respect

Images courtesy of Ingrid Liepa.  
Mountaintop handstand.

I wish you all the success in your celebration of diversity circles at BCIT