



Beyond Inclusion

Métis (in)visibility in Manitoba's Education Policy Framework

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Abstract

In 2022, the Province of Manitoba introduced *Mamàhtawisiwin*: the wonder we are born with, an Indigenous education policy framework. *Mamàhtawisiwin* emerged from extensive community consultations and collaboration with Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers, educators, and stakeholders. While this collaborative development reflects a commitment to honouring Indigenous voices, its limitations in authentically representing Métis, Inuit, and First Nations priorities underscores the need for a different approach to Indigenous education frameworks. I argue that the framework's use of "Indigenous" risks erasing the distinct priorities of the Métis and that the framework's representation of Métis identity as mixed-race overlooks Métis nationhood and self-determination.

Keywords: Métis education, Indigenous curriculum, policy

Introduction

In 2022, the Province of Manitoba's Department of Education and Early Childhood Learning released an Indigenous education policy framework titled *Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With*. This document and the accompanying toolkit laid out what the authors called a conceptual foundation and a conceptual framework for implementing an Indigenous-inclusive education system. Since its release, it has been taken up by school divisions across Manitoba, with specific divisional support positions created, required training for teachers, and the inclusion of *Mamàhtawisiwin* in hiring processes across the province. While *Mamàhtawisiwin*

fills an essential role in requiring all teachers and administrators to include Indigenous world views in teaching, the document does not adequately represent the diversity of Indigenous perspectives in Manitoba and overstates its capacity for Indigenous representation. In this article, I use content analysis to demonstrate the unequal inclusion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives in the document. From my own identity as a Métis scholar, I closely examine the depth of inclusion of Métis peoples, histories, cultures, and contexts. First, I introduce myself as an Indigenous scholar, discuss Métis-specific scholarship, and introduce the *Mamàhtawisiwin* framework document.

Situating myself

As a Métis scholar and citizen of the Manitoba Métis Federation, I strive to hold myself accountable to my people and my community, and part of that accountability is sharing who my family is and where I come from. My family were assigned scrip in St. Andrews and St. Johns, Manitoba, and as the city of Winnipeg grew up around us, we became and remain urban Métis people. Winnipeg is an urban Indigenous space, with paved roads marking routes that Red River Carts once travelled (Ferland, 2023). My scholarship and life are centered in Winnipeg, and I understand myself, Métis education, and community mobilization through the lens of this place.

Métis-specific versus the Indigenous umbrella

A combination of factors, including the quantity of scholarship and sanitizing by publishers, has meant that Indigenous scholars often have their work subsumed under the Indigenous umbrella (Forsythe, 2022). In the last 10 years, there has been a significant push toward Métis-specific research methodologies among Métis scholars. In fact, it has become easier to publish nation-specific scholarship in a variety of fields (Forsythe et al., 2025). At times, there can be value in connecting the issues and priorities of several nations under the umbrella term “Indigenous.” When collectively fighting for recognition of Indigenous human rights at the United Nations, for example, that term has helped unify and amplify the voices of Indigenous peoples around the globe. However, the complexities of individual nations' experiences, histories, and priorities are lost in this form of Indigenous umbrella inclusion. The priorities and distinctive culture and histories of the Métis nation are often subsumed by the term “Indigenous,” which is frequently (and incorrectly) used as interchangeable with “First Nations.” One example of this is the frequently heard phrase “Indigenous and Métis,” which others Métis people, situating us outside of the definition of Indigenous in which we rightly belong.

The Mamàhtawisiwin Policy Framework

The release of the *Mamàhtawisiwin* policy and related documents followed the Government of Manitoba's review of the education system in March 2021 and the accompanying Bill 64: the Education Modernization Act. This review was commissioned in 2019 with a promise that an “independent review” would consult with the public at large, including “students, parents, educators, school boards, academics, Indigenous organizations, la Francophonie, municipal councils, professional organizations, the business community and all Manitobans” (Province of Manitoba, 2019, para. 6). Bill 64, which emerged from that review, “aimed to reform nearly all

aspects of education in the province” (Janzen & Heringer, 2023, p. 548) but was met with resistance from educators across the province and was eventually abandoned by the Progressive Conservative government (Bees, 2024; Campbell, 2023, 2026; Fraser, 2024).

The *Mamàhtawisiwin* policy framework was developed between 2015 and 2021 through community consultations with dozens of people, including “Elders/Knowledge Keepers, students, teachers, superintendents ... administrators, early childhood representatives, and community partners” (Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning [MEECL], 2022b, p. 1). Two authors from a research and consulting firm are credited with the framework document, but no project lead is identified aside from the early leader Chuck Bourgeois, who left the project in 2017. Ten Elders/Knowledge Keepers are credited in the text: two Métis, four Ininew, two Anishinaabe, one Anisinine, and one Dakota. Additional credit for creating the policy is given to several bodies under the Government of Manitoba, including the Indigenous Inclusion Directorate Advisory Council, along with individual schools and student representative bodies.

Part of the criticism of Bill 64 stemmed from treating students across the province as “homogenous, and as valued only through [their] productivity and future profitability” (Janzen & Heringer, 2023, p. 562). The language of homogeneity (applied to *all* students, not just Indigenous students) was also reflected in the press release for the launch of the *Mamàhtawisiwin* policy framework, with the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning, Wayne Ewasko, stating that the release of this document is part of the commitment of the government “to building an education system where all Manitoba students succeed, no matter where they live, their background or their individual circumstances” (Province of Manitoba, 2022, para. 2). The launch of the framework in April 2022 was accompanied by an announcement of \$1.6 million in funding to increase the numbers of Elders and Knowledge Keepers in classrooms from kindergarten to Grade 12 (Province of Manitoba, 2022).

The framework draws on several well-known Indigenous education frameworks to guide and shape the document, with the authors noting that *Mamàhtawisiwin* is “based on core concepts, including the Circle of Courage, the Honourable Murray Sinclair’s four guiding questions,^[1] and how those questions connect to balanced wellness and students’ sense of belonging, meaning, purpose, and hope” (2022a, p. 15). The Circle of Courage refers to a model developed by Martin Brokenleg, Steve Van Bockern, and Larry Brendtro (and credited to Brendtro in *Mamàhtawisiwin*) “for nurturing all children in a climate of respect and dignity,” including the Spirit of Belonging, Spirit of Mastery, Spirit of Independence, and Spirit of Generosity (Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 2003, p. 23). These four spirits are situated on a medicine wheel image created by George Blue Bird (Lakota from Pine Ridge) and each corresponds to a quadrant of the medicine wheel. The Circle of Courage is intended to be a child-rearing framework that can guide and nurture youth of any ethnic background to be grounded in who they are and to feel capable of achievement. The other core concept mentioned, Sinclair’s four guiding questions, also appear in a medicine wheel image and discussed alongside the terms belonging, meaning, purpose, and hope. The sense of these four quadrants connects very clearly to each quadrant’s Circle of Courage descriptions. Where *Mamàhtawisiwin* refers to belonging as “how learners are connected with family, community, and culture” (MEECL,

2022a, p. 15), the Circle of Courage describes belonging as “the universal longing for human bonds ... nurtured by relationships of trust so that the child can say, ‘I am loved’” (Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 2003, p. 23). Both definitions centre on how the learner is connected through relationship with others.

The policy framework aims to “support the holistic achievements of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners by assisting Manitoba educators in incorporating Indigenous pedagogy, languages, and culture into their teaching and practices” (MEECL, 2022a, p. 7). This incorporation centred on four strategies in the document: 1) authentic involvement, 2) putting students at the centre, 3) understanding world views, values, identities, traditions, and contemporary lifestyles, and 4) inclusive and culturally safe learning environments. The Circle of Courage and Sinclair’s four questions are evident throughout the document; the strategies are represented by a medicine wheel, with authentic involvement associated with the colour yellow and the eastern doorway, through to an inclusive and culturally safe learning environment represented by the colour white and the northern doorway. The medicine wheel is a symbol of different First Nations, but the term itself was first used by white anthropologists in the late 1800s and early 1900s after visiting a stone petroglyph in Wyoming (Grinnell, 1922). However, that petroglyph did not include the four quadrants with which we are familiar. The more common iteration of the medicine wheel, which grew in popularity in the 1970s and as white people took up Indigenous spirituality, comes from the 1972 book *Seven Arrows*, which is based on Dakota/Lakota/Nakota teachings (Jenkins, 2004). More recently, the medicine wheel has been widely used as a symbol to apply to and resonate with all Indigenous peoples.

Mamàhtawisiwin is also framed by seven guiding principles that appear throughout the documents:

1. Shared understanding of the Rights of Indigenous peoples developed (recognition of Indigenous Peoples in the Constitution Act, 1982),
2. Knowledge of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit world views held and valued by all educators and learners (acknowledgement of the holistic philosophy of lifelong education),
3. Respect for diversity (respect for Indigenous Peoples’ diversity in Manitoba),
4. Student-focused systems (responsive to Indigenous learners’ strengths; innovative approaches and methodologies),
5. Shared responsibility across systems (inclusive, consultative, and inter-ministerial approach),
6. Shared accountability (recognition of Indigenous Peoples in the Constitution Act, 1982), and
7. Equity within systems (equitable access to quality education)

(MEECL, 2022a, p. 20).

The *Mamàhtawisiwin* framework assigns two actions to each of the four strategies (authentic involvement, putting students at the centre, understanding world views, values, identities, traditions, and contemporary lifestyles, and inclusive and culturally safe learning environments). The actions are “promote Elder, Knowledge-Keeper, and community involvement” and “promote parent, grandparent, and extended family involvement” (authentic involvement), “respect and listen to students” and “employ a holistic approach to supporting students” (putting students at the centre), “teach true history,” and “incorporate cultural teachings, experiences, and Indigenous languages” (understanding world views), and “demonstrate respect for world views, values, identities and traditions” and “value and celebrate differences” (inclusive and culturally safe learning environment). The framework then includes ways that various stakeholders—students, teachers, school-based support teams, school leaders, school division/district leaders, and MEECL— can address each of these actions in their work.

The framework itself is only seven pages, with the remaining pages of the document dedicated to a glossary of terms and several appendices. The authors note that *Mamàhtawisiwin* “is not a curriculum nor is it intended to produce standardization, but rather to encourage adaptation and enhancement appropriate to the local context” (MEECL, 2022a, p. 23), and the authors encourage teachers and school leadership to use the framework as a starting place to “plan and articulate commitments and actions relevant to their local situation” (MEECL, 2022a, p.23). The *Mamàhtawisiwin* document was released along with another document titled *Tools for Reflection, Planning, and Reporting*, which provides one tool for school divisions/districts and one for schools. These tools ask school divisions/districts and schools to measure their success in moving along a continuum from Exploring to Emerging, then Evolving, and finally, Embedding for each of the four strategies in the framework. There are also areas for reflection, so those utilizing the assessment tool can write directly in it about their own division’s, district’s, or school’s progress along this continuum and growth areas. The framework also indicates that other tools are forthcoming.

Analysis of the *Mamàhtawisiwin* Policy Framework

The mixed methods inductive content analysis deployed here examines both what is being said (through a frequency analysis of term use) and the stories that are told within the document about who Métis people are (through a relational *sitting with*). This approach is informed by critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2010; 2013), which presupposes that policy is part of a “discourse understood as an element or ‘moment’ of the political, political-economic and more generally social” (Fairclough, 2013, p. 178). Any curriculum is not neutral and must be situated within the “culture, history, and social interests out of which it arose” (Apple, 1993, p. 232) and take responsibility for the reinforcement of some perspectives and marginalizations of others. Simultaneously, the value of the stories being told and the ways that Métis voices are carefully (or not so carefully) treated happen through story and relationship (Fowler, 2023). Guided by tenets of multiple “listeenings” of a text as delineated in a voice-centred, relational approach to analysis (Gilligan et al., 2026), I visited with the framework and listened to both what it told me and the stories it invoked in me as I read.

My analysis of *Mamàhtawisiwin*, its accompanying tool kit, and the summary was completed in three phases. I conducted an initial read of the document and toolkit to map out what was being said at a general level and to identify its structure and the authors' priorities. Next, I searched the framework document to identify the frequency with which several keywords were mentioned: Métis, First Nations, Inuit, treaty, treaties, and scrip. Finally, I sat with the document and looked for the stories told in it, completing several close readings of the document to examine how Métis peoples, histories, and knowledges were discussed and to identify the narratives being told and retold about the Métis. These varied analyses provide a detailed understanding of the word choice in the document, the discourses at play, and the impact of those stories.

Findings: Word choice

The initial lens of analysis was word choice, to identify precisely the authors most spoke about. Given that the word "Indigenous" was in the title and thus on the footer on each page, as well as throughout table headers, that term appeared to a disproportionate extent. After removing those formatting details, title pages, acknowledgements, and references, I was left with 15,216 words to analyze.

The first analysis focused on the frequency of use of specific terms, beginning with "Indigenous" and "Aboriginal" and including others, such as "Indian" (see Table 1). I also noted at this time how often the phrase "First Nations, Métis, and Inuit" was used, as it is an all-encompassing term that is intended to be (and is regularly used as) inclusive of all Indigenous groups in Canada.

Table 1.
General Term Frequency

Term	Frequency
Indigenous	224
Aboriginal	71
Indian	99
"First Nations, Métis, and Inuit"	28
First Nations*	46
Métis*	42
Inuit*	13

*Refers to the term used alone, outside the phrase "First Nations, Métis, and Inuit."

In scholarship and education in Canada, the term “Aboriginal” has fallen out of use, replaced by “Indigenous.” In *Mamàhtawisiwin*, Aboriginal was used most often when discussing its legal use as part of the 1982 Constitution Act and other policies. Similarly, “because of its offensive and negative connotations, Indian is only used in quotations and in reference to the Indian Act and other historical documents and institutions” (MEECL, 2022a, p. 10). Indian, although used only in such documentary and historical contexts, was nevertheless invoked 99 times. Meanwhile, Indigenous, even with the removal of the footers and repeated instances of the document title, was used 224 times. Finally, Aboriginal and “First Nations, Métis, and Inuit” were used 71 and 28 times, respectively.

Next, I looked at the frequency of each individual term under the Indigenous umbrella in Canadian contexts: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. As noted, I did not include instances when these terms appeared as part of that phrase. While Table 1 may suggest that First Nations and Métis appear almost with the same frequency, it is also important to note *where* (i.e., in what sections of the document) these references occurred: the main policy framework section, or the subsidiary glossary and appendices. Table 2 demonstrates the frequency by section.

Table 2.
Term Frequency by Document Section

Term	Frequency		
	Policy Framework	Glossary	Appendices
First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (<i>n</i> = 28)	13	2	13
First Nation(s)* (<i>n</i> = 46)	16	14	16
Métis* (<i>n</i> = 42)	9	10	23
Inuit* (<i>n</i> = 13)	6	6	1
Indian (<i>n</i> = 99)	22	17	60
Treaty or treaties (<i>n</i> = 32)	8	12	12
Scrip (<i>n</i> = 7)	1	0	6
Disc numbers (<i>n</i> = 0)	0	0	0
Total (<i>n</i> = 268)	75	61	132

Terms that refer only to First Nations peoples (First Nation(s), Indian, treaty) appear 45 times in the policy framework section, 43 times in the glossary section, and 83 times in the appendices. Meanwhile, Métis-specific terms (Métis, scrip) appear 10, 10, and 29 times in the three sections, respectively, and Inuit-specific terms (Inuk/Inuit, Isumaqsayuq) are found 6, 6, and 2 times in the three respective sections.

As noted above, the umbrella terms “Indigenous,” “Aboriginal,” and “First Nations, Métis, and Inuit” were used a combined 323 times in the *Mamàhtawisiwin* document, which implies that it was written with all three Indigenous groups at the centre; however, in practice,

First Nations-specific terminology is used more frequently. Additionally, there is a tendency in the document to conflate “Indigenous” with “First Nations” as if they were interchangeable. For example, in the timeline on page 14, a bullet point reads: “‘Indian Rights for Indian Women’: Indigenous women were fighting for the reinstatement of their rights after losing them when they married a non-Indigenous man.” This conflation of “Indigenous” with “First Nations” perpetuates the idea that the two words are synonymous, thus erasing Métis and Inuit perspectives.^[2]

I also examined the frequency of use of “treaty” or “treaties” with “scrip” and “disc numbers.” These terms were chosen because of their specific reference to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit experiences of colonization, respectively. Of all policy language specific to a group discussed in this document, 82% referred to the First Nations-specific experience of “treaty” or “treaties.” While it is essential to include representation of First Nations-specific experiences, legislation, and histories in Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum, the stark underrepresentation of Métis and Inuit perspectives needs to be addressed if we are to claim that the document represents all Indigenous peoples in Manitoba.

Findings: Stories told within Mamàhtawisiwin

Word choice is important, but so too is the way that words are used, as are the stories told about Indigenous Peoples. As I read through the documents, I noted any names mentioned, their frequency, and their identities. I also made a record of specific organizations mentioned and scholars cited within. The Assembly of First Nations was named 11 times among the provincial Indigenous organizations and governing bodies, the Manitoba Métis Federation 7, and the Manitoba Inuit Association 2. Twenty people were mentioned by name in the framework document, of whom 10 were First Nations, 2 Métis, and 8 non-Indigenous; none was Inuit. The two Métis people referred to were Louis Riel (eight times), and the president of the Manitoba Métis Federation, David Chartrand (seven times).

Métis-specific stories told

The narrative of who the Métis are and what teachers should know about Métis culture and history when planning how to include Indigenous content in their classrooms is quite limited in *Mamàhtawisiwin*. In the document’s main body, there is some Métis-specific discussion. For instance, in addressing the diversity of Indigenous people in Manitoba, the authors note that 40% are Métis, with a paragraph following that explains the emergence of the Métis people:

The Métis people originated in the 1700s when French and Scottish immigrants, brought to Canada to work in the fur trade, married Indigenous women such as Cree and Anishinaabe (Ojibway). The Métis Homeland includes the three Prairie provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta), as well as parts of Ontario, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, and the northern United States. Their descendants formed a distinct culture, collective consciousness, and nationhood. Louis Riel is Manitoba’s Father of Confederation bringing Manitoba into Canada in 1870. Canada has the only

constitution in the world that recognizes a mixed-race culture, the Métis, as a rights-bearing Indigenous People (p. 11).

Many Métis scholars have written about the reduction of Métis nationhood to “mixed ancestry” or “mixed race” (Adese et al., 2017; Andersen, 2014; Vowel, 2011). Gaudry and Leroux (2017) decried the “tactical use of long-ago racial mixing to reimagine a ‘Métis’ identity that prioritizes mixed-race ancestry and disregards the historical development of Métis peoplehood” as dangerous (pp. 116–117), which not only allows for non-Métis people with mixed ancestry to claim membership in our community but also disregards the Métis as a “self-governing Indigenous nation that predates the formation of Canada” (p. 118). The authors of *Mamàhtawisiwin* seem to contradict themselves in describing the Métis as having nationhood “moments” before relegating the Métis to a “mixed-race culture” and offering no citation for either claim.

Most storytelling about Métis people happens in Appendix A: History of Ongoing Colonization, in “The Métis Experience” section. It begins with a repetition of the paragraph from page 11 shared above, describing what the authors claim is the origin of the Métis. Riel’s birth and education are then outlined, followed by several paragraphs that touch on Riel’s life, interspersed with a description of colonial land purchases and the Red River Resistance. Riel is said to have fled and is then looked to by the Métis “for assistance in obtaining title to their land, leading to the 1885 Northwest Resistance during which the Métis were overcome by the Canadian army” (p. 40). This overly simplistic retelling of the Northwest Resistance neglects to include the battles in which Métis and First Nations peoples repeatedly defeated the Canadian troops who significantly outnumbered them; nor does it address the final battle in Batoche in which 50 Métis fought against nearly 900 Canadian soldiers for four days before running out of ammunition (Teillet, 2019). The discussion of Riel’s life concludes with the statement that “Riel gave himself up for trial and was hanged in Regina in November 1885” (p. 40), failing to acknowledge the public requests for leniency that were ignored by the Canadian state.

It is interesting, then, that although hanged by the Canadian state, Louis Riel is called a “Father of Confederation” three times in the *Mamàhtawisiwin* document (twice in the body of the document, and once in Appendix A). The remaking of a Métis revolutionary to be not only complicit in but an enthusiastic proponent of the creation of the Canadian state is an attempt at making Riel’s legacy legible to the Eurowestern gaze. As Slowey (2017) makes clear, “Canada’s Confederation documents were written in a colonial era in which the ‘Fathers’ of Confederation worked to unite a nation and build a country that was predicated on the displacement and dispossession of Indigenous peoples” (p. 82). The implication that Riel was a peer and colleague of John A. Macdonald and company—rather than their enemy—sanitizes the story of Métis resistance. Riel is thus not only brought into the mythos of Confederation as a partner but is also co-opted by the discourse of paternalism and white male superiority that pervades the creation of the country called Canada. It is an untenable move that shifts Riel from being a leader of resistance against confederation to being Confederation’s champion.

What are the impacts of the stories being told in Mamàhtawisiwin?

In the *Mamàhtawisiwin* materials, Métis stories and experiences are erased or absorbed under Indigenous umbrella narratives (Forsythe et al., 2025). It is nothing new for Métis stories to be treated in this way. Poitras Pratt (2021) writes that the neo-liberal education system “deliberately erases, subsumes, or demonises the Métis” (p. 384), which contributes to a general “lack of awareness of who we are as a people” (p. 383). Forsythe (2022) also discusses Métis erasure, stating that “educators lack a basic understanding of who the Métis are, despite the scholarship produced by Métis” (p. 94). This lacuna directly impacts students in classrooms, who are taught a sanitized or surface-level understanding of Métis identity, nationhood, culture, and history. These limited grasps of Métis people emerge in *Mamàhtawisiwin* through retelling Métis-as-mixed narratives and also through the prioritizing of Métis men.

Twice in this framework document, the ethnogenesis of the Métis nation is attributed solely to “French and Scottish immigrants” who “married Indigenous women such as Cree and Anishinaabe” (MEECL, 2022a, pp. 11, 39). All the Métis named, discussed, or cited in *Mamàhtawisiwin* are men.^[3] Combined with the focus on the fur trade and the death of Louis Riel, the framework document erases all stories of Métis women and Two-Spirit, trans, and non-binary Métis. Additionally, the narrative of Métis as mixed has been pervasive in both media and scholarship for years. Andersen (2014), in his foundational work on Métis peoplehood, wrote that crediting the creation of the Métis nation to this mixing is “an example of the Métis being misrecognized as a hybrid off-shoot of two races—“Indian” and “white”—rather than as an Indigenous people” (p. 6). The Métis-as-mixed narrative serves to undermine the indigeneity of the Métis and, by extension, Métis claims to land and resources as an Indigenous people. Instead, we (including curricula in Manitoba and elsewhere) should be moving toward telling narratives of Métis nationhood and self-determination.

What, then, is the impact of the narrative of Métis-as-mixed and the prioritizing of Métis men in frameworks like *Mamàhtawisiwin* and other curricular documents released by governments? While we will not know the impact of this particular document for several years, we do know that teachers who are unfamiliar with Indigenous perspectives and content will often take the path of least resistance (Restoule & Nardozi, 2019), whether that be minimal inclusion or inclusion of only the stories that are presented as examples within curricula.

To be fair, the *Mamàhtawisiwin* document does not purport to be an all-encompassing guide to Indigenous peoples, but rather as a framework for Indigenous inclusion which will “[assist] Manitoba educators in incorporating Indigenous pedagogy, languages, and culture into their teaching and practices” (MEECL, 2022a, p. 7). I ask, then – why are we limiting ourselves to inclusion as the goalpost? Inclusion has been a focus within the academy for several decades, with the addition of Indigenous content, scholars, or programs used to check a box (Pidgeon, 2016). Now, I join the call of other Indigenous scholars (e.g., Forsythe, 2022; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; O’Sullivan, 2015; Poitras Pratt et al., 2021) to move past this shallow inclusion and toward a radical recreation of educational spaces to centre Métis, Inuit, and First Nations peoples in authentic and meaningful ways.

Conclusion

I want to note a small caveat that is perhaps so obvious as to be unnecessary: Indigenous inclusion is essential, with Indigenous inclusion meaning the presence of Indigenous histories, cultures, perspectives, stories, and peoples. While Indigenous educators and non-Indigenous educators who work hard to be allies to Indigenous peoples have been using Indigenous inclusion strategies for decades, we need to recognize that many educators still do not incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing into their classroom or school environments. Perhaps some of these suggested actions will create pathways for change for educators and administrators who did not previously value this inclusion or know how to begin to implement it. In these cases, the *Mamàhtawisiwin* document can represent a starting place. That is certainly better than *no* framework at all.

Even so, as I have tried to demonstrate, there is real danger in the oversimplification of Indigenous histories and cultures. A teacher with little understanding of the many differences between Indigenous Peoples' histories, cultures, and priorities might not understand that not everything in this framework applies to all three recognized Indigenous groups in Canada. By leaning on shared First Nations teachings like the medicine wheel, for example, the *Mamàhtawisiwin* document chooses to engage in pan-Indigenous discussion. While there are Elders named as partners in the document from many nations, there is actually no discussion in the framework of where the Medicine Wheel teaching actually comes from. In one instance of the Medicine Wheel image's use on page 21, two Elders are named in the caption as having provided "Teaching and colours," but there is no mention of the Nations to which those two Elders belong. Other pan-Indigenous stories are also shared, like Indian Act policies, the residential school system, child welfare legislation and its impacts, all of which harmed and continue to impact First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, if in different ways. The nuances of these stories are missing from the glossaries, which share just enough history that educators without an understanding of the distinct experiences of different nations might not look further for more information and instead rely solely on what is in the document itself.

It is also important to note that most of the stories told about Indigenous peoples in this document are deficit-based stories based in trauma and oppression. While an understanding of the histories of this country is essential for all educators and for all students, I also hope that my own children have the opportunity to see their community and culture shown as joyful, vibrant, and resilient, and not only as the target of oppressive governmental policies and land thefts.

However, to be shown as joyful, we must be shown in the first place. As discussed above, the vast majority of content in the *Mamàhtawisiwin* framework centres on the histories, experiences, and cultures of First Nations people. The umbrella term "Indigenous" is the most frequently used terminology in the document; "Métis become invisible under the umbrella term [Indigenous], as our First Nations relatives often eclipse us" (Forsythe, 2022, p. 109). Many educators and scholars treat the terms First Nations and Indigenous as interchangeable, not realizing Indigenous (in the Canadian context) must include all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. As a Métis scholar, I advocate for the precise naming of nations' teachings and for re-naming this document as a First Nations-inclusion framework. That is not to say that Métis people do not

have deep and lasting relationships with First Nations historically and today or that one cannot be both Métis and First Nations; those separations are colonial impositions that disrupt the ways in which we relate and engage with one another. However, the assertion that this document is meant to improve inclusion of all Indigenous peoples in Manitoba's schools implies that all Indigenous peoples are represented by and in it.

Mamàhtawisiwin centres on the goal of achieving an “Indigenous-inclusive education system” but does not stop to examine the limitations of inclusion as a goal for Indigenous education. I urge Manitoba's legislators and curriculum developers to move away from Indigenous inclusion and toward a radical recreation of curricula to not merely “add in” Métis (along with First Nations and Inuit) content but to develop a curriculum that genuinely emerges from our nations' histories, cultures, values, and understandings. Through a disruption of spaces (Delgado & Forsythe, 2025) and deepened inclusion of Métis histories, cultures, languages, governance, and world views, these policymakers can shift the trajectory of classrooms across the province and ensure a different kind of learning experience for future generations of Métis students.

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[1] The four guiding questions that the late Senator Murray Sinclair often shared are “Where do I come from? Where am I going? Why am I here? Who am I?” While the *Mamatiwisiwin* document attributes them to Sinclair, he said in a radio interview that he encountered them in his studies at the University of Manitoba and also heard them from an Elder at the World Assembly of First Nations (CBC Radio, 2020).

[2] I have not written here about the absence of Inuit content in this document, but I hope an Inuk scholar does, as Inuit exclusion under the umbrella of pan-Indigeneity is also deeply important to address.

[3] That is not to say that women of other communities are cited frequently; of the 21 people named in the document, only 4 women are mentioned: one non-Indigenous and three First Nations.

Biography

Lucy Delgado, PhD, is a Two-Spirit Métis woman, born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba and a citizen of the Manitoba Métis Federation (Two-Spirit Michif Local). Lucy is Canada Research Chair in Michif and Two-Spirit/Indigiqueer Education as Wellness and an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba.

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