April 17, 2017

Dear Conference Participants,

My name is Jean-Paul Restoule, Associate Professor in the department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education (LHAE) at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). I am writing to invite you to participate in research supporting the project titled: Kimaacihtoomin e-Anishinaabek kikinoo'amaakeyak: Inspiring teachers to include Aboriginal histories, knowledges and perspectives in their classrooms.

**Purpose of the Research**

The Kimaacihtoomin e-Anishinaabek kikinoo'amaakeyak: Inspiring teachers to include Aboriginal histories, knowledges and perspectives in their classrooms project officially began in September 2016, and builds on research that started in 2007-08. Growing from the Deepening Knowledge Project, the research has focused on bringing Indigenous worldviews and perspectives into the Initial Teacher Education program at OISE. Continuing this important work, this project focuses on what strategies educators such as yourself bring to the classroom to implement Indigenous knowledges and practices. Speaking to both in-service and pre-service educators, *the goal of this research is to gain information from the participants in order to find ways that are effective in increasing the presence of Indigenous histories, perspectives, experiences and cultures into teaching practices across all grade levels in Ontario.*

Part of this research project will be collecting data at the Kimaacihtoomin e-Anishinaabek kikinoo'amaakeyak: Beginning to Teach in Indigenous Ways Conference. You will have the opportunity to participate in one of four research collection sites, which will be experiential breakout sessions: a guided writing group, a role play group, a visual art mapping group, or a talking circle group. This is an invitation to participate in one of these four research collection activities. Should you feel comfortable and interested in taking part in one of these sessions, you will be provided with a consent form for one of the four sessions. If you do not wish to participate, you may avoid attending any of the four sessions and join our workshop session in the afternoon. There will be a space at OISE in room 6-259 for those that do not wish to participate, but would like to discuss their teaching practices.

**[1] Guided Writing Group**
Participants of this research group will be involved in a guided writing activity. We will work individually through a guided remembering to reflect through writing to examine the multiple ways in which you use Indigenous perspectives in your classrooms, as well as the supports you utilize and barriers you encounter in this work. As a participant in this group, you will be asked a series of questions to reflect on your teaching practices and will create meaning through story telling in the written form. We hope that this process of storytelling will act as a self-reflective tool and will encourage you to explain what your ideal classroom would look like.

Because writing can be an emotional process, we want to encourage participants to only share stories with us that they feel comfortable with. You have the right to not answer any question during the activity or withdraw your participation at any time. Your part in the research, if you agree, is to submit your written work upon completion, which if you consent to, may be used for dissemination on our blog. This blog is accessed worldwide by educators, and our hopes are to share educator’s journeys teaching Indigenous knowledges and strategies. Every effort will be taken to ensure that your written responses are anonymous and cannot be traced to you, your school, or your community.

**[2] Role Play Group**
In this roleplay workshop, participants will explore the some of the opportunities and obstacles that arise when attempting to bring Indigenous content into schools and classrooms. Participants may choose roles they have played or have met with previously while attempting to “teach in an Indigenous way.” The group will be given or asked to contribute their own scenarios in which the work of “infusion” may be challenged. As these familiar scenarios unfold some of the positions and complicated underlying issues of those involved will surface. Group discussion will hopefully reveal successful ways of dealing with obstacles and moving forward toward the goals of inclusion and greater understanding of all those involved in this work.

Should you feel uncomfortable during the role play activity, due to emotional stress while discussing or thinking about your experiences, you have the right to not participate in a particular activity during the session or to withdraw your participation at any time. This session will be audio and video recorded and transcribed. If you consent to it, your video recording may be used on our blog, so your identity may not remain anonymous. If you do not wish to allow your videos on the blog, you may still consent to the videos being used in the research process. If you consent to the research process, but not the publication of your video on the blog, every effort will be taken to ensure that your responses are anonymous and cannot be traced to you, your school, or your community.

**[3] Visual Art Mapping Group**
Participants of this research group will be involved in using visual mapping methods. We will work in groups of 4-5 members to develop relational and resource maps that illustrate the available human, material, communal, intellectual, spiritual, and other resources available to the people in our lives, schools, places of work, and communities. The purpose is to reflect upon the essence of how these resources and relationships enable us to provide Indigenous perspectives in our sites of practices, as well as discuss what hinders the process of doing so. You will be provided with commonly used items to construct our visual maps, such as paper/ fabric scraps, magazines, and newspapers. This mapping activity is meant to be used as a springboard for interview questions and so the aim of the visual maps is to provide a space for participants to tell their stories in relation to wider contexts. The activity will also provide opportunities for people to reflect about issues of identity, the shaping of their relationships, and influences on their lives, as well as to reflect upon how we might continue to take up Indigenous perspectives in classrooms.

You have the right to not participate in a particular activity during this session or to withdraw your participation at any time. This session will be audio recorded and transcribed. If you consent to it, your visual map may be used on our blog. If you do not wish to allow your map to be published on the blog, you may still consent to the map being used in the research process. Every effort will be taken to ensure that your responses are anonymous and cannot be traced to you, your school, or your community.

**[4] Talking Circle Group**
Participants in this research group will be involved in a sharing circle where we will discuss the barriers and supports to including Indigenous perspectives in our work as teachers. The purpose is to reflect upon the essence of how these resources and relationships enable us to provide Indigenous perspectives in our sites of practices, as well as discuss what hinders the process of doing so. Sharing circles have a protocol that will be explained to participants. All participants will have an opportunity to speak to the topic presented by the circle facilitator but may also choose to pass if they feel. We will move around the circle more than one time and as many times as our meeting time permits with knowledge building with each successive round.

The circle will be recorded but once transcribed the audio files will be deleted and any material that can identify participants will be modified to protect anonymity. Of course we can not guarantee anonymity as other circle participants may recognize you but all participants will be requested to respect this anonymity at the outset of the circle process. We are holding this circle to learn more about the resources teachers draw upon to support themselves in the work of teaching Indigenous perspectives as well as how to help teachers overcome challenges to doing this work well. In addition to eliciting stories about how to help teachers which we hope to share more widely, we hope that the process of participating in the circle in itself provides teachers with support and ideas for moving forward in your practice. There is a chance that you may feel uncomfortable during the session, due to emotional stress while answering questions.Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw without penalty at any time and your data will be removed from the study.

If you have any questions about the project or this current study supporting the project please contact me by email or phone (provided below).

Sincerely,

Jean-Paul Restoule, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

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