

MERN

Manitoba Education
Research Network
www.mern.ca

Connecting research in education  to policy and practice

Research Profile

The Kenanow education program was established to ensure its graduates fully understand the teachings of the Seven Grandfathers, the foundations of Anishinabe pedagogy, as well as teaching methods that engage all students. They will know their roles as teachers in developing different

programming and delivery models to schools in the North, and in bringing a renewed sense of commitment, passion, and *Mino Bimaadiziwin* to their students. This provides future teachers with a solid foundation for teaching in the North, and prepares them for full certification to teach in Manitoba.

Kenanow is the first Faculty of Education to have been envisioned, planned, and operated based on the guidance and wisdom of the Council of Elders at the UCN in northern Manitoba. The Council of Elders chose the Kenanow Learning Model as the framework for its teacher education program to create a new foundation that looks to the past, present, and future for the education of northern and Aboriginal students. This decision was made based on the understanding of our responsibility to extend traditional knowledge to future generations in the form of Aboriginal educational research, curriculum development, and implementation.

In 1972, a group of Elders wrote the position paper *Indian Control of Indian Education*, which stated: “Unless a child learns about the forces which shape him: the history of his people, their values and customs, their language, he will never really know himself or his potential as a human being.” This is a vision of an education system that begins with the teachings of the land, engages students in meaningful educational experiences, and allows them to communicate their learning in their own language as well as English. The Kenanow Learning Model is one example of this vision in action—a vision that has yet to be fully actualized, but one that is proving to be richly successful where it has been implemented.

For more information about the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program, courses, and opportunities, contact

Angela Ballantyne-Sinclair
Kenanow Faculty of Education Administrative Assistant
Telephone: 204-627-8805 in The Pas
Toll-free: 1-866-627-8500, ext. 8805
Website: www.ucn.ca

Implementing the Kenanow Learning Model

By WabWahbigiinoojii/David B. Anderson

Instructor in the Kenanow Faculty of Education, University College of the North, and with the Aanda Wiinjigewin Graduate Program, Seven Generations Education Institute

Aanii, Tansi, Boozhoo. WahWahbigiinoojii
indizhnikahz. Mukwa indodem. Dene/Anishinabe
Indow. Niizhoh Mide Inini.

In my work in various communities as a teacher and as a consultant, I have listened to many Elders and learned the ways of knowing held by Anishinabe across this land. This includes the Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers, which inform us of the values and ideals for living together. These teachings have been adopted by the University College of the North (UCN) as its Values Statement, and they have been integrated into all its programs of learning.

In my present position at the Kenanow Faculty of Education at the UCN in The Pas, we implement the Kenanow Learning Model, which is a traditional Aboriginal educational approach based on what the Seven Grandfathers taught us. Translated from the Cree, *kenanow* means “all of us who are here.” The Kenanow model is based on the kinship system, which envisions “all of us who are here” and all things together functioning in an organic system. It teaches identity, belonging, community history, the roles and responsibilities of families and communities, and the process of handing down this knowledge to future generations.

Profile WabWahbigiinoojii/David B. Anderson

While walking the path of an Aboriginal man, I found my way to the Three Fires Midewewin Lodge. Here, I became immersed in the Midewewin, which is traditional knowledge that has passed among several Aboriginal groups in North America. Mide practitioners are ranked by “degrees,” and I have recently begun my learning as a Second Degree Mide.



I have worked to develop curricula that are founded in the teachings of the Anishinabe, and have researched and written about the impact of schools and the work of teachers who are trying to include Aboriginal perspectives in their teaching. I have also collaborated with Anishinabe communities to develop a new education system controlled and planned by the Anishinabek.

I continue to learn from the Elders who share their concerns about their children and grandchildren. I learn from the teachers whom I work with as they engage in learning how to make significant changes in their teaching and their classroom. My current writing includes sharing the vision for education that can be found in Aboriginal teachings – that is, an education that respects children and prepares them to live *Mino Bimaadiziwin*, the Good Life.