

# ***Redefining Success in Inuit Learning Workshop***

Iqaluit, Nunavut  
May 2 - 3, 2007

## **Meeting Report**



# Session Participants

*The 28 participants, the researchers and facilitator involved in the session:*

Sarah Townley Sophie Tuglavina Christine Nochasak	Labrador School Board, Nunatsiavut
Elizabeth Uliut Iksiktaaryuk	Government of Nunavut, Kivalliq School Operations
Nunia Qanatsiaq Darlene Gibbons	Government of Nunavut, Department of Education, Curriculum and School Services Division
Maria Wilson Jesse Tungilik Tracy Brown	Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
Pujjuut Kusugak	Nunavut Department of Education
Liz Fowler	
Pelagie Owljoot Angie Kubluitok Nellie Kusugak Rhoda Ungalaq	Nunavut Arctic College
Melanie Paniaq Heidi Langille	Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
Bernadette Dean	Kivalliq Inuit Association
Donna Ann Rogers	Inuvialuit Regional Corporation
Hannah Uniuqsaraq	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Pasha Puttayuk Harriet Keleutak Parfait Cemé Betsy Annahatak	Kativik School Board, Nunavik
Sheyla Kolola Chirayath Mohanan	Government of Nunavut, Department of Human Resources
Alacie Joamie	Elder
John Biss Sheena Powell Jarrett Laughlin	Canadian Council on Learning
Wenda Watteyne Eric Milligan Katie Burns	Delsys Research Group
Blair Stevenson	Facilitator, Silta Associates



# The Purpose of the *Redefining Success* Iqaluit Workshop

The purpose of this workshop was to bring Inuit from the four Inuit regions together to develop a common tool to measure learning progress for Inuit communities. In preparation for the workshop, the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) put forward a draft *Inuit Holistic Lifelong Learning Model* that was developed as a result of ongoing research and discussion and dialogue with Inuit learning experts. The draft lifelong learning model was used to begin discussions among Inuit participants about issues, content and processes relating to Inuit learning.

This workshop was organized as a response to suggestions from Inuit participants at the first *Redefining Success in Aboriginal Learning* meeting in Edmonton, Alberta, in February 2007. A major recommendation from this meeting was that an Inuit-specific meeting should take place in an Inuit community, bringing Inuit from the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik and Nunatsiavut together to discuss Inuit lifelong learning in general and comment specifically on a draft *Inuit Holistic Lifelong Learning Model*.

Simultaneous translation was provided at the Iqaluit workshop, allowing discussion in both Inuktitut and English. By having Inuktitut as the language of discussion during this meeting, Inuit-specific concepts, terminology and worldviews were more easily shared.



## Objectives

The Iqaluit Workshop had two specific objectives:

- Identify the areas of learning, represented within a draft *Inuit Holistic Lifelong Learning Model*, that foster success for Inuit communities; and
- Identify the indicators that are needed to measure learning progress for Inuit communities, based on a draft *Inuit Holistic Lifelong Learning Model*.



*Draft Inuit Holistic Lifelong Learning Model*

# Discussion Summary

Discussions during the two-day event identified improvements needed for a draft *Inuit Holistic Lifelong Learning Model*. These discussions took place in both Inuktitut and English, during sessions as a whole group and in small break-out groups.

## Key Points

Discussions focused on two key points:

- **Inuit must design** any model of Inuit education themselves in order for this process to be truly representative; and
- **Elders should be present** since they must be involved when language and culture are being discussed.

Based on these points, it was noted that any future model must have Inuit languages and cultures at its base. It was also clearly stated that there are specific differences between “Western” concepts and Inuit concepts of learning.

Much work has already been completed by Inuit on defining Inuit ways of learning and being. Therefore, an Inuit lifelong learning model must be reflective of past and existing projects such as the Inuit philosophy framework *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, the *Inuuqatigiit Curriculum Document*, the *Kativik School Board Mission Statement* and the *Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy*, to name only a few. Throughout the process of referencing these projects, steps must be taken to respect the intellectual property rights of the various Inuit organizations that created them.

*Blair Stevenson, Facilitator*

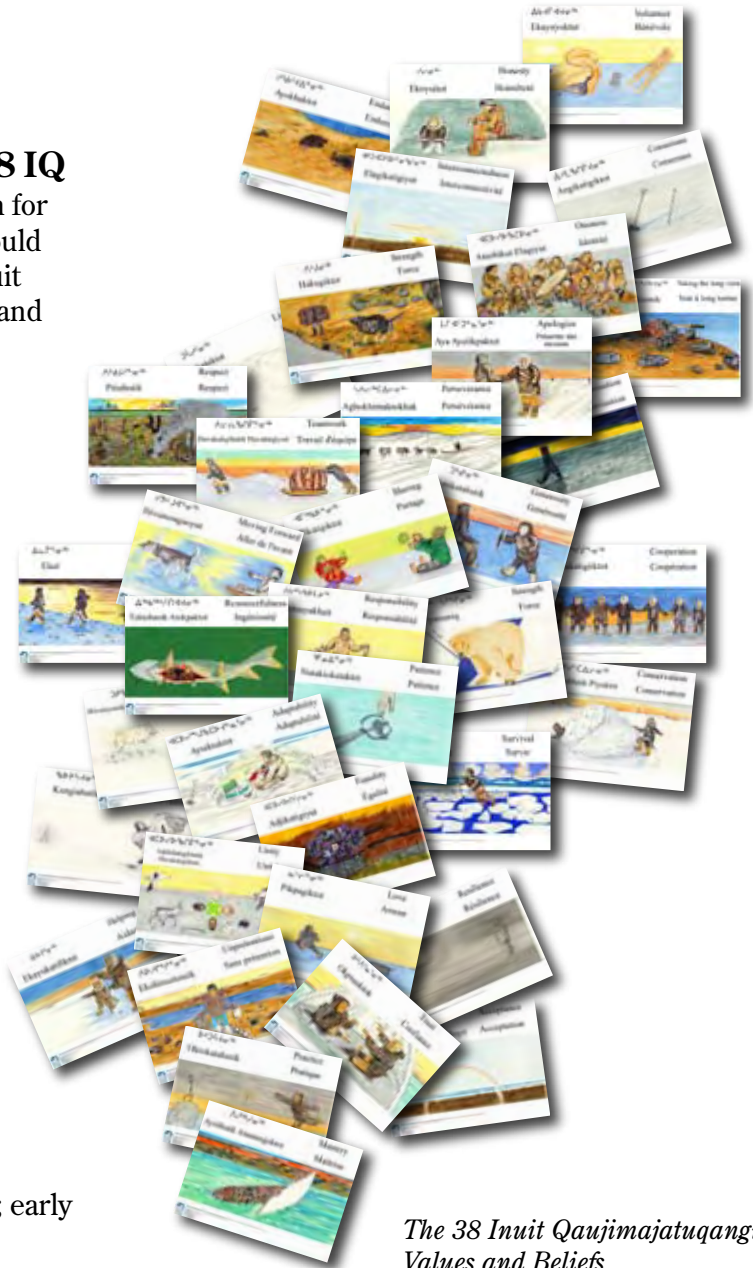
*Alacie Joamie, Elder*



# Specific changes

## Content changes

With regards to content, a large proportion of participants suggested that the eight Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ) guiding principles and **38 IQ values and beliefs** should form the foundation for any model. In this way, Inuit traditional values would be a foundation to a model that would respect Inuit ways of socially interacting, observing the world and communicating both verbally and non-verbally.



*The 38 Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit Values and Beliefs*

*Illustrations by Donald Uluadluak, Arviat, NU*

## Other conceptual content to emphasize included:

- Informal learning throughout our lifetime;
- Home and family life;
- Respect - respecting others, relationships and being compassionate with people;
- “Walking in two worlds” - the traditional and the modern;
- 8 life cycles in Inuktitut: newborn; infants; children; youth; growing adults; adults; elders; and babies again;
- 6 Seasons in Inuktitut: winter; early fall; late fall; early spring; late spring; and summer;
- Hands-on, kinesthetic learning: feeling, observing, and doing actual activities;
- Inuit practice of naming and kinship: e.g., Inuit are given names and learn from others about the characteristics of the person they are named for;
- Persons with special needs and their distinct learning processes;
- Skills development as an important part of Inuit learning and culture (i.e. Inuit survival skills, innovation and tools);
- Raising human beings to become whole and wise persons; and
- “Education is not preparation for life – education is life itself.”



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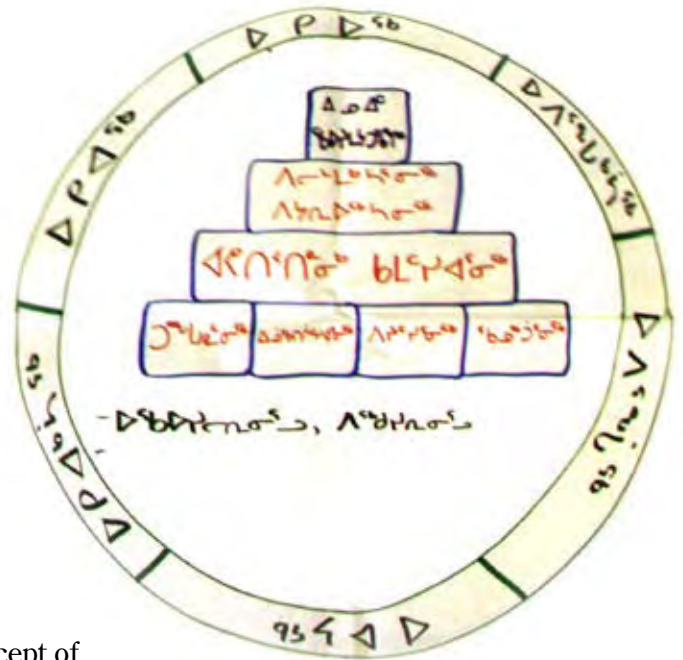
Department of Education

Ilinniaqtuliqiyikkut

Ministère de l'Éducation

# Wording changes

A key point raised many times during the workshop was that any model from Inuit should be formed using Inuktitut terms first rather than English terms to respect the strong oral tradition of the language.



## Other wording suggestions included:

- New title for the model to reflect “from Inuit, not for Inuit”;
- “Knowledge domains” must shift to include a term such as “identity” rather than Western cultural concept of “self,” which is not appropriate since Inuit are taught to think of others first – emphasis on the collective and community, rather than the individual;
- “Processes of learning” should put more weight on “non-school” and “informal” ways of learning; and
- “Determinants” should include more detail of Inuit values such as the guiding principles and beliefs and values inherent in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuktitut terms already in use in other regions;

*Some of the sketches and ideas that emerged from the discussions...*

**“All of our knowledge is held inside of us. ...it’s in our DNA.”**

*Liz Fowler*

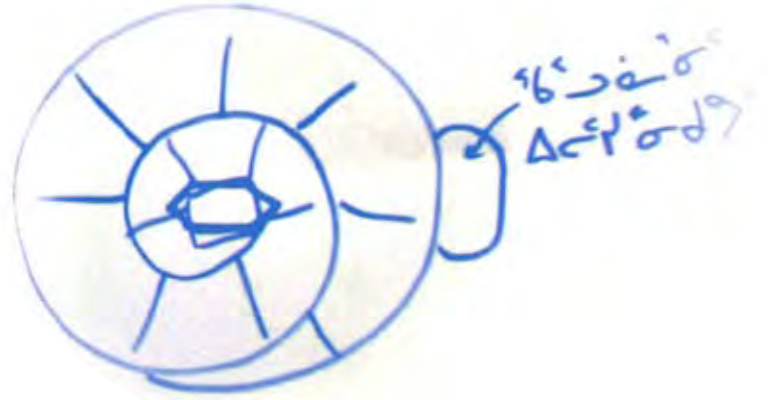
- Terms such as “Political Well-being” and “Stages of Learning” are inappropriate;
- “Wisdom” is a preferred concept rather than “knowledge”;
- Formal learning institutions such as elementary and secondary school and post-secondary institutions should be de-emphasized. These terms could be replaced with developmental stages such as birth, child to adulthood, and elder;
- The English term “spirituality” is problematic as opposed to the term “Inuit values and beliefs;” and
- Add “global awareness” in order to demonstrate the need for an understanding of the outside world.



# Image changes

The following key points emerged from discussions around the image itself:

- The image should be inclusive of all Inuit and Inuit regions, making the “drum” potentially problematic. Some regions do not use the drum or use different drums; the drum was traditionally used only by men;
- The model must have a clearly defined starting point and ending point;
- “Climate” should be emphasized as an important component to any model - “the climate is the boss”; and
- The image should be easily recognizable - “Elders should be able to look at the model and know what it is right away.”



**“Only at physical death do we stop learning.”**

*Workshop participant*



*Some of the sketches and ideas that emerged from the discussions...*

**Other specific changes suggested for a drum image included:**

- Text and images must recognize that the centre of a drum is its weakest point, while the edges are stronger; and
- The drum is missing a drum stick, which is an important part.



# Presentations

- **Development of a high school Inuit studies classroom program in Nunavik**

Presented by Pasha Puttayuk, Teacher, Kativik School Board

- **Development of a high school Inuit studies and Inuktitut classroom program in Nunavut.**

Presented by Pujjuut Kusugak, Teacher, Nunavut Department of Education

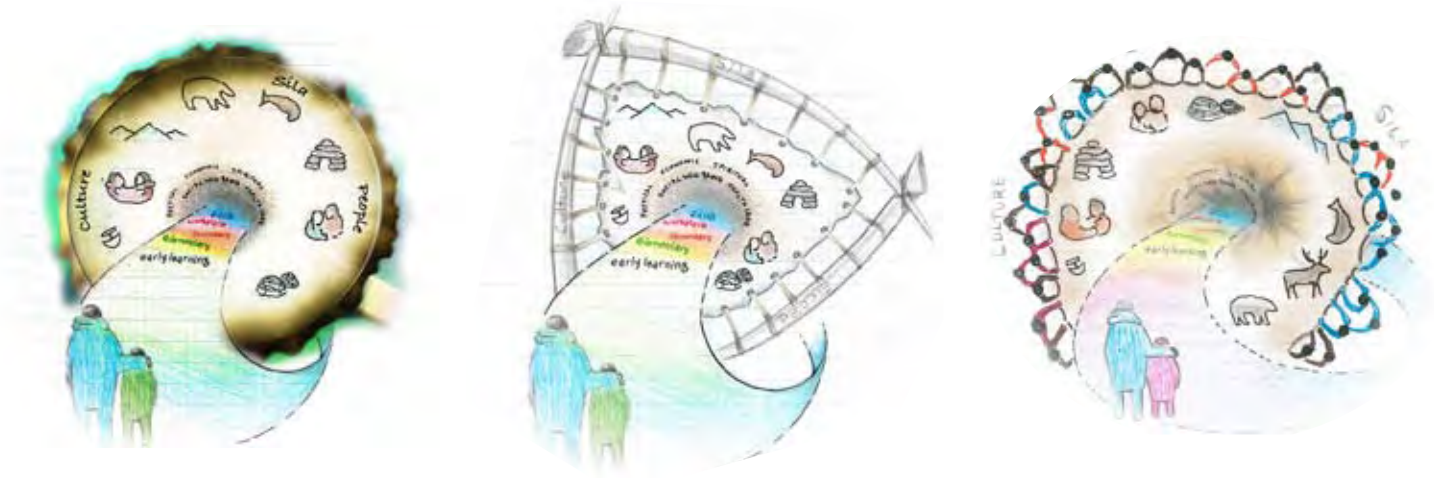
- **Development of an Elders consultation process on Inuit learning and education in Nunavut.**

Presented by Nellie Kusugak, Nunavut Arctic College



*Nellie Kusugak*





Three examples of the learning model variations that were considered

## Next Steps

The following list summarizes the next steps directed to CCL and agreed to by workshop participants.

- A consensus developed that this process was useful and that a workshop report be distributed to all participants as soon as possible.
- Distribute a revised draft *Inuit Holistic Lifelong Learning Model* for regional consultation
- Participants acknowledged that there were many learning model initiatives already in existence in Inuit regions and that the CCL should take these into consideration.
- In order to draw from existing expertise, participants suggested that regions should distribute the draft model for consultations with Elders and other regional representatives. During this consultation period, Elders and other Inuit education specialists would have a chance to comment on the model. Once comments were submitted, CCL would be able to better integrate existing concepts of Inuit learning into future drafts of the lifelong learning model.
- It was suggested that an advisory committee should be formed made up of a small number of Inuit, in order to facilitate the process of consultation and appropriately steer the direction of future work on an Inuit model.

### Revised draft *Inuit Holistic Lifelong Learning Model*

The changes to the revised draft Inuit learning model reflect both the feedback identified by Inuit participants at the workshop, as well as further improvements identified by CCL researchers following the workshop. The next step is to distribute the revised draft learning model to workshop participants to get further feedback before creating a draft *Inuit Holistic Lifelong Learning Model* that can be used for broader discussions among and within Inuit regions.

The following changes were made to the revised draft *Inuit Holistic Lifelong Learning Model*:

- The overall image of the drum was replaced by the image of a community holding a blanket and supporting the journey of lifelong learning for an Inuk learner;
- The 38 Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) values and beliefs were included as a stronger, foundational element of the learning model;
- The “journey of lifelong learning” (or path) was pulled out of the image to give it more importance, and to better visually present the relationships between the life cycle and the “sources and domains of knowledge”;
- The concepts of balancing both “Western” and traditional knowledge, naming and kinship, and the importance of informal learning have all been incorporated;
- Terms have been changed to remove words like “self,” “political well-being,” and “spirituality.”
- The term “sila” has replaced the term “natural world”, as a source and domain of knowledge.