"You Might as well Call it Planet of the Sioux"[1]: Indigenous Youth, Imagination, and Decolonization[2]

Felice Yuen
Warren Linds
Linda Goulet

Jo-Ann Episkenew
Heather Ritenburg
Karen Schmidt

Abstract

Colonial institutions, such as residential schools, suppressed First Nations peoples' imaginations, punishing those who sought to exercise their imaginations. Creating imaginary spaces is an important aspect of the process of decolonization and includes the reclamation of traditional modes of relationships in new forms, the co-creation of new possibilities, and the transformation of political and personal histories. In this article, we describe a workshop with First Nations youth, focusing on two arts-based activities used to evoke imaginative spaces for First Nations youth to explore, critique, and re-imagine their histories, current realities, and futures in a safe and comfortable environment. The process of imagery and imagining facilitated awareness of things not easily expressed in words as youths' imaginative ideas emerged through their drawings. Through these activities, youth expressed their view of healthy communities that included cultural traditions and leadership. They described leadership as enacting good communication, organization, protection, and maintenance of cultural traditions, as well as providing guidance and defending the rights of the community. These imagined possibilities provided meaningful blueprints that youth can use, alter, and be inspired by as they move towards being leaders of healthy communities.

Keywords: arts-based activities, community-based research, decolonization, Indigenous health, imagination, leadership, self-determination, youth

1. This is a quote from a First Nation youth in the workshop. Although the leadership of this First Nation refer themselves as Dakota, which is the word for themselves in their language, many community members still informally use the term "Sioux." The change in terminology from Sioux to Dakota reflects the community's reclamation of culture and pride in identity.

This is not a conventional research paper that describes our research methods and presents findings. Rather, the purpose is to offer a reflection and share key learnings from the methods we used to learn about youth participants' perceptions of community and community well-being. We argue these methods provide opportunities for imagination and transformation for the individual and the collective. We describe our larger research project, our stance within that research, and situate our research within the literature. After sharing some general findings from the research project, we focus on one particular workshop to illustrate how the arts can facilitate the construction of healthy communities by youth. The workshop we describe combines collaborative activities with the visual arts to create spaces for decolonized moments and insights for healthy transformation in the lives of First Nations youth.

Background

Our research team has been engaged in a multiyear research project that uses the arts, both to develop health leadership among First Nations youth and to create the conditions in which the youth research how the choices they make affect their health. We utilize a variety of interactive approaches encouraging youth to identify problematic issues, which ultimately stem from colonization, while clarifying the strengths of their communities. In addition to recognizing the colonial influence in the experiences of First Nations youth, our decolonizing process involves seeking change towards healthy communities (Kovach, 2009).

Our community partner in this research project is the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council (FHQTC)

Health Services, which provides services to eleven First Nations in southern Saskatchewan. The communities are composed of Cree, Saulteaux, Dakota, Nakota, and Lakota people. Chiefs from these First Nations entered into a research agreement with us in 2009 when we received a CIHR Operating Grant. Our target demographic is youth between the ages of 12–20, and participants are recruited in partnership with FHQTC Health Services and the schools situated on the participating First Nations. Community-specific workshops are delivered at the school while multischool workshops are delivered at one of the more central Tribal Council buildings. Students are given the option of participating in the workshop or opting out; often both teachers and students participate.

Our Community Research Assistant, who works in the Tribal Council Health Services office, provides youth with information about the research project and the workshop in advance. Youth under the age of 16 who choose to participate are given consent forms that they and their parents/guardians sign. Youth over the age of 16 may sign their own consent forms since some youth in that age group no longer live with their parents. The researchers explain the goals of the project and the methods that will be used on the first day of the workshop.

Our research acknowledges that colonization affects the experiences of First Nations youth and considers leadership an aspect of health defined as well-being through the act of self-determination. Like Kovach (2009), we believe that self-determination is a critical component in the process of decolonization. More specifically,

> we see health for Indigenous youth as a decolonizing process in the political act of healing: self through the restoration of autonomous decision making and agency, peer group through development of healthy relationships and shared leadership, and community through co-determined leadership among community members. (Goulet et al., 2011, p. 36)

Colonization seriously affected Indigenous[3] peoples as is evident from the health issues facing First Nations communities and First Nations youth in

Canada (Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2004; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). The consequences of colonization continue to haunt Indigenous peoples today as they heal from the social, emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual trauma of their past (Wesley-Esquimaux, 2007; Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2003). Our research shows that First Nations youth who are embedded in community and family systems damaged by colonialism find it difficult to see themselves as agents of change (Goulet et al., 2009). Colonized relationships continue to reinforce the oppression and marginalization experienced by Indigenous communities (Kovach, 2009). The systemic structure of oppression placed on Indigenous peoples has become normalized because

> within the framework of institutionalized racism and colonization, members of the dominant group are able to misuse their powers, which they have done in so many ways and for some many years, that it becomes normal for them. (Spears, 2006, p. 82)

Changing what appears to be "normal" is a complex and challenging process. For First Nations youth involved in our research, following the crowd can appear to be a better choice than making different decisions that may distance them from peers.

The Research Stance

Acknowledging that research has contributed to the reproduction of colonial relationships by using colonizing methodologies that ignore or minimize the context of culture and history (Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008), we attend to the historical and contemporary context of our work and strive for more equitable relationships through a community-based emergent research process. Emergence, an integral part of our research process, is messy, embodied, and unfolding (Somerville, 2007). We purposefully design our workshops to create relationships with youth where both leadership and the production of knowledge are a shared endeavour (Linds and Goulet, 2010). We use collaborative activities, such as drama and trust games, to draw youth into the process and follow with arts activities to stimulate youths' imaginations and reflection on their lives. The workshop process

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3   The term "Indigenous" is used in reference to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in Canada.

has an initial overall design but is open enough to respond to the directions set by the youths' responses to the process. This often makes the workshop process more "messy" and "organic" than it appears in the linear manner through which we lay it out.

The workshop process encourages youth to be open to new ways of being with one another and to engage in new ways of being in their bodies that include making leadership decisions and stimulating new ways of thinking about the world in a safe environment. At the beginning of our workshops, an Elder from the community begins each day with a prayer in the language of the community. The Elder remains present throughout the workshop, participating in the role of the Elder's choosing. We talk about our norms, including respect for self and respect for others. The Elder asks youth and adults alike to respect the workshop space by turning off and putting away any electronic devices, including cell phones and music players. In the games and other interactions, we do not allow put downs or negative comments about oneself or others. Along with these norms of respect, we encourage equity among participants and the research team by starting and ending each day with talking circles and often use circle formation when we debrief games and activities. These workshop norms and protocols together with the activities create a safe workshop space in which a quality of emergence can flourish. In this research project, emergence as a community-based research methodology permits both a practice and a process of creating new knowledge with the youth.

Colonization confined Indigenous peoples and restricted their physical movements through policies, such as the pass system, and by externalized decision making through federal government and Indian agent control. The historical colonization and continuing ongoing oppression creates a "cage of oppression" (Graveline, 1998, p. 92) where choices are restricted and decisions for action are made by others. Decolonization occurs through the reclamation of self-determination both for the individual and the collective. Because the structures of the activities require physicality, they help youth break out of the "cage of oppression," take self-determined action, and make decisions for themselves.

In our work, we use the term *leadership* not only to refer to a person leading others but also to a person who is leading him or herself, not by following another, but by making a decision about what action to take and taking that action. Games provide a structure where youth can practice making decisions in an artificial, playful space that is not reality, yet is real because they are interacting with other real people. The physical release of the movement combined with quick pace of interaction causes much excitement and laughter, so decision making and actions are fun. Some examples of these games are discussed in the workshop section of this paper.

As leadership and the collective production of knowledge are main aspects in the process of our research, *agency* becomes a critical component of the workshop. Agency is an individual's expression of self-determination and, therefore, is one aspect of decolonization involving "alternative ways of seeing and living in the world" (Brydon and Tiffin, 1993, p. 11).

> Before taking action one must first imagine what change might look like and then, secondly, imagine the steps required to achieve that change, and then have the volition and agency to enact the imagined changes. (Goulet et al., 2011, p. 39)

Driskill (2008, p. 165) underlines that decolonization of bodies, mind, and spirits is "inseparable from sovereignty, self-determination, land redress and the healing of our landbases." Thus, a decolonizing methodology includes resistance to oppression combined with the reclamation of traditional modes of relationships in new forms, the co-creation of new possibilities, and the transformation of political and personal histories. For the youth involved in this project, growth in their sense of agency can help resist the normalization of colonization.

The Workshop

The two day workshop referred to in this article took place with youth in their school at a Dakota First Nation in southern Saskatchewan, Canada. Participants included eight males and ten females who were in the same grade 7/8 class. Participants were recruited in partnership with FHQTC Health

Services and the school the youth attended. Yuen and Linds took turns facilitating the activities. Yuen, Linds, Ritenburg, and Schmidt all recorded observations of participants' responses to the activities. The quotes in this article come from individual interviews with participants.

In the following section, we describe the methods used and reflect on the two activities based on visual arts that enabled participants to interact to imagine, explore, critique, and move towards changing their current realities in a safe and comfortable environment. These activities were designed to provoke discussion about the attributes of healthy communities among the youth and provide a context in which they could imagine and create a healthy community of their own. These imagined communities would be meaningful platforms for decolonization through self-determination and leadership.

The purpose of this particular workshop was to engage youth in a visioning process of their ideal healthy community. The drawings in this visioning process were intended to be a blueprint for future workshops in which these young leaders could consider creating such a community and develop the necessary skills. This process encouraged participants to question habitual thinking and to become aware of their power to be producers, not just consumers, of knowledge and action.

The first day of the workshop concentrated on participants' individual capacities and strengths in community building. The second day continued the reflection on communities as participants considered aspects that support and foster a healthy community, as well as barriers and challenges. As a decolonizing methodology involves giving "voice to things that are often known intuitively" (Smith, 1999, p. 3), the activities used in this workshop were intended to create a safe and supportive environment where youth could openly and comfortably participate in self-expression.

Throughout the workshop, youth participated in collaborative activities such as leadership, trust, and cooperation games. Cooperation and communication games provide a context for relationship building, participation, social learning (i.e., collective action and learning), and the emergence of com-

munity (Yuen et al., 2005). These types of games generally entail collective experiences and collaborative interactions, resulting in shared meanings among participants. Such games are not separate from the methodology of decolonization and are arguably required to establish the foundation for an emergent decolonizing methodology.[4]

One of the games we used to emphasize leadership and decision-making is called "Circle Dash." Participants stand in a circle and nonverbally, through eye contact only, make an agreement to switch places with another person. There is one person standing in the middle of the circle who tries to reach the vacant space before one of the switching pair. It is exciting and risky to leave our safe place in the circle to cross the open space, taking a chance of being "caught," then having to be the centre of attention in the middle of the circle, trying to find a place again in the circle. It is a game that requires the decision to step forward and to take the risk to act. Other games, such as "Whacha doin'?" focus more on the imaginative and creative aspects of decision making. In "Whacha doin'?" the participants stand in a circle. The "leader" is "on stage" performing an action. When one of the participants asks "Whacha doing?" the leader verbally responds by naming an action that is different from the one s/he is performing. The leader may have been acting out brushing his teeth but says, "I'm dancing pow-wow!" The one who asks the questions then becomes the leader, acting out "dancing pow-wow" until another participant approaches to ask "Whacha doin?" The youth love to come up with outlandish actions for each other to perform and enjoy the fun of mimicry. Even though this causes much laughter, the laughter is *with* each other rather than *at* each other through ridicule. The fun and laughter create an atmosphere of freedom — freedom to use their imaginations and to take risks, moving the body in unaccustomed ways.

The Visual Arts Activities

The activities described in this article were specifically used to encourage First Nations youth to reflect on the characteristics of an ideal healthy Indigenous

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4   For more discussion on these games and decolonization, please see Linds et al. (2010) and Goulet et al. (2010, 2011).

community. Participants knew each other prior to the workshop, were often relatives, and certain friendship groups were already established. For these particular activities, participants were invited to make their own groups. Self-selection encouraged an atmosphere where participants would feel comfortable sharing ideas, taking risks, and engaging in a creative process. Participants' experiences and direct quotes from their interviews are used throughout the description of the activities to illustrate the impact of these activities. To ensure confidentiality and in an effort to protect anonymity, pseudonyms are used.

Activity #1: "Rays of Sun"

This activity took place in the afternoon of the first day of the workshop. The purpose was to encourage the discovery of personal strengths and capacities (part one) and the identification of their ideal community (part two). The materials required for this activity were yellow and orange Bristol board, markers and masking tape. The Bristol board was used to create the sun (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Rays of Sun

For the first part of the activity, each participant was given one ray of the sun. They were asked to reflect on their personal talents (e.g., "What kind of sports, instruments, and other activities do you like doing?"), skills and strengths (e.g., "What are you good at?"), and draw these abilities on their ray.

Participants drew their talents and hobbies, such as singing, and photography. One participant was particularly insightful about her involvement in music. Reflecting upon her drawing (Figure 2) Kelly stated,

> When a child takes music lessons, it makes them smarter. So I've done really good with my grades.

Figure 2. Music

All the boys and several girls drew sports such as volleyball, baseball, hockey, and basketball. As Keith emphasized, sports provide him with a venue to feel proud:

> I don't quit; I keep on going and I have that ambition to succeed in them.

Participants also emphasized how sports contributed to their physical well-being and acted as a deterrent to unhealthy behaviours. Trina commented,

> My sports — volleyball, track, hockey, basketball, badminton and soccer — those help me keep in shape and keep me out of trouble.

When asked how he could contribute to his community, Ryan declared,

> [I could] keep kids out of trouble by try[ing] and getting 'em into sports. Anything in sports, and if they don't like it they can switch.

A few girls also drew hearts, Hershey kisses (to represent a kiss), and people holding hands to show that they were good at caring for and loving others.

Several participants drew culturally relevant images. For example, Trina drew a dancing girl with a shawl (Figure 3). When asked to talk about this image in relation to her strengths she replied,

It's pow-wow and it helps me grow stronger ... we dance for all, we dance for the people that can't walk or dance or anything. That's what I like doing, and it's not about competition. I like dancing for the Elders and for the people that can't walk and can't do anything.

Figure 3 — Shawl Dancing

Kelly drew a medicine wheel and an eagle feather (Figure 4). In her discussion of the meaning behind this drawing she said,

I drew that just to know what my nationality is, what my culture is ... and I drew a feather with a black tip because I got an eagle feather fan and an eagle feather plume from my mom when she was dancing as a kid. She gave it to me.... Not many people know this, but I am [this reserve's] Senior Princess. So I travel to different pow-wows and I think I set a pretty good example for the ... reserve. Put out a good image for what our students are — the role models they are. I try my best to help stay in touch with cultural events. I try to help within the reserve.
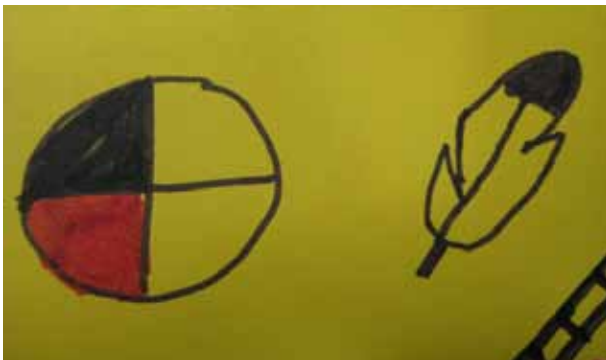

Figure 4. Medicine Wheel and Feather

These cultural images were considered an important part of the participants' identities. Lisa commented,

This [pipe] represents me 'cause I'm a pipe girl for the Sundance ... I think about how much people are proud of me when I dance, and I always love to dance. (Figure 5)
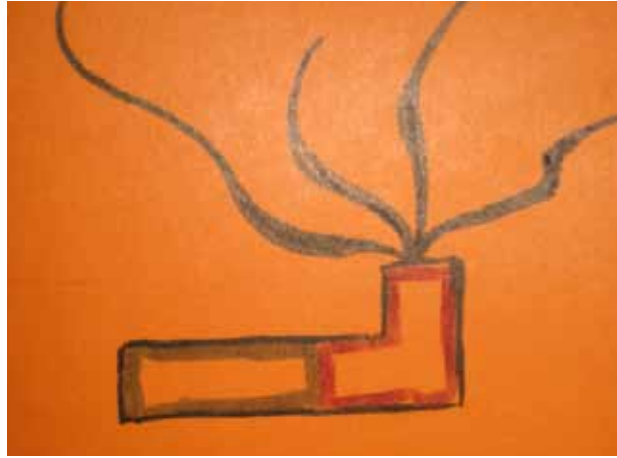

Figure 5 — Pipe

In other words, cultural involvement for these individuals was associated with a feeling of strength, pride, identity, and community.

The second part of the activity involved the youth getting into groups of two or three. Each group was given a pie-shaped piece of the middle of the sun. In each of these groups, participants drew what they thought would reflect an ideal community. Many of these drawings depicted culturally relevant themes such as a teepee and a medicine wheel (Figure 6). Upon the completion of these drawings, everyone gathered for the presentations of each group's ideal community. As each group presented its drawings, its members taped their piece of the sun on the wall. While each group was presenting, the facilitator wrote down key words or phrases that participants used to describe their community (Figure 7). After all the groups had presented the middle of the sun was complete (Figure 8).

On occasion, as the groups presented the ideal community, a discussion would follow. For example, one group's drawing depicted a bow and arrow. When asked what this image represented, a member of the group who drew the drawing an-

Figure 6 — Teepee

Figure 8 — Completed Centre of the Sun

swered "Protection from bad people." The facilitator probed further by asking the group, "Who are the bad people?" This was followed by another participant who replied, "Society. People who are trying to change us and our culture." The participants' responses reveal an understanding of the process of colonization and resistance.

Another group's drawing had a chief (Figure 9). The facilitator asked, "What kind of work would this chief do?" The initial response was that he would be a wise leader. The discussion that followed further

Figure 7 — Our Community

Figure 9 — Chief

explored what it meant to be a wise leader; participants suggested that he would provide structure to the community, stand up for people, lead people, and communicate with others. Interestingly, the drawing and discussion revolved around the chief as a male figure.

The "Rays of Sun" activity served as a first step to thinking about personal strengths and those of the community. It also revealed their awareness of oppression and resistance. While youth began to imagine a community different than their own (i.e., a community whose culture has not been changed by outsiders because they had protection), certain aspects of a colonized community were reaffirmed such as assuming a male figure in a position of leadership and power.

Following the presentation of ideal communities, participants' attention began to diverge and they were eager to move around and stretch after sitting for a long period of time. The facilitators simultaneously encouraged cooperative movement and refocusing as youth were asked to take their sun ray depicting their strengths and get into a line according to height, from the tallest to the shortest, without talking. Once the line was complete, participants were asked to stay in the line and make their way to the centre of the sun on the wall. One by one, each person handed her or his sun ray to the researcher who taped it next to the sun's centre. This way, the sun was created collectively and collaboratively, as participants had to stay together while their sun ray was connected to the sun. This process enabled participants to witness and respect the strengths of their peers as they were attached to the wall. Once the sun was complete, the facilitator emphasized that each person's strengths and talents could contribute to the creation of the community that they desire (i.e., the sun's centre).

Activity #2 — "Planet 51"

This activity took place on the afternoon of the second day of the workshop. Other renditions of this game have been played under names such as "Gilligan's Island" and "Planetarium." The name "Planet 51" was borrowed from the title of an animated movie (Blanco and Abad, 2009) about an astronaut who lands on an alien planet. While the name and creative changes for this game have been made throughout the years, the essence remains the same: participants create a world of their own. In addition to creating their own planet, participants in this workshop were asked to consider aspects required to support and foster community as well as barriers and challenges to community building.

At the beginning of the activity the entire group talked about the movie *Planet 51*. Participants were asked to share the plot line of the story with those who had not seen it. The purpose behind this collective story telling was to continue the premise of collective experiences and collaborative dialogue. The story is about a human astronaut named Chuck who lands on a planet. The aliens on the planet think that he is the start of an invasion and seek to destroy him. With the help of an alien inhabitant called Len, Chuck hides from authorities and discovers a variety of intricacies of the alien planet. At the end of the collective summary of the story, the facilitator poses the question, "If Chuck was to land on your planet what would he find?"

Participants were not asked to answer immediately, rather they were asked to put themselves into groups consisting of 4 or 5 individuals. Each group received crayons, markers, a few pieces of lined paper, and a bristol board. On the bristol board, each group was given the task of generating the name for their planet and a flag representing their planet. Participants were also asked to create drawings that represent the daily life and culture of their planet. Probing questions included, "What is important to your culture? What is your daily routine? What would it be like to experience a day in the life of a citizen on your planet?" On lined paper, group members were to think of one challenge that prevented the citizens of their planet from living their daily lives and then brainstorm ideas that could help citizens overcome the challenge. Some groups worked faster than others and were thus given other tasks such as writing an anthem and a governmental structure.

There were a total of four planets created: (1) Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious, (2) Planet KD[4], (3) Planet R, and (4) Magical World. The characteristics of each planet varied, but all were created with a Utopian ideal. On Planet Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious

the culture celebrated elements that would eman-ate feelings of happiness. As depicted in their flag (Figure 10), rainbows, chocolate (i.e., the *Hershey Kiss Mountain*), music, and fruit were symbols of their culture. More importantly, the planet's cre-ators stressed that it was a place where "losers could be themselves." Planet KD[4] and Planet R were places where ancient traditions and cultures remained in-tact, respected, and undisturbed. For example, as Planet R's creators provided a glimpse in the life of their citizens they stated,

> At age five we teach them how to hunt and by age seven they'll be shedding their first blood.

Figure 10 — Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious Flag

In this way, participants created worlds where issues in their current realities no longer existed and cultur-al traditions prevailed. However, when asked to iden-tify problems, participants came up with problems that reflected their current reality. For example, the creators of Planet Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious highlighted an issue of exclusion and people on their planet being called "losers." It was later revealed the group of girls who created this planet was experien-cing some conflict with another group of girls who were known as "the popular group." When asked to come up with a way to overcome this issue, partici-pants suggested they would encourage the individ-uals who were being excluded to be proud of who they are and assure them that they do belong on their planet. If the "bullies" did not change their ways, they would be sent over to Magical World, which was in-cidentally the planet of the popular group.

Two planets exemplified experiences of coloniz-ation. Planet KD[4] created an issue where invaders

called *Sky People* were killing local inhabitants with disease, while Planet R experienced invaders called Avatars and Oompaloompas who were overpopu-lating their world. Some of Planet R's creators ex-plicitly recognized the parallels between their plan-et's problem and their own experiences of coloniza-tion. While one member of the group was describing the problem to their peers, another group member remarked, "You might as well call it Planet of the Sioux." While it is not clear if this connection was purposeful, it is clear that some participants were aware of the impact colonization still has in their community. In terms of solutions to overcome their challenges, the citizens of Planet KD[4] sought guid-ance from their Orange Tree (Figure 11), which was an important aspect of their culture and something that they worshiped every day. The Orange Tree told them "The Sky People try to learn our ways ... but do not trust them." Listening to their Orange Tree, the people of Planet KD[4] decided to steal the cure from the Sky People and kill them with their special weapon, telekinesis. Planet R chose to try coexistence where the land was divided equally between groups. As creators of this planet explained,

> Our solution is negotiating the sharing and trad-ing of resources and [for each group to] develop our own government. [If this doesn't work], kill off the Avatars and Oompaloompa's government and form a new government.
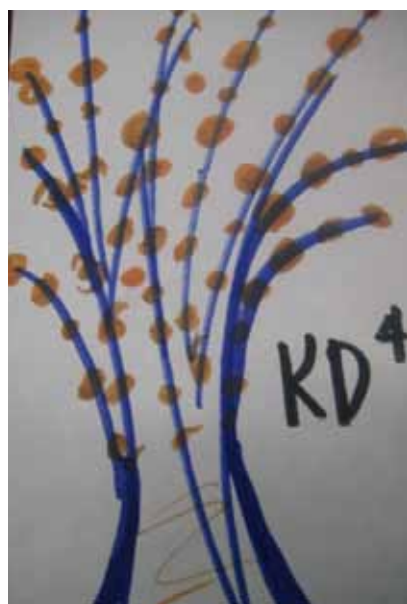

Figure 11 — Orange Tree

As exemplified above, the "Planet 51" activity, subsequent presentation, and discussion of the planets led to moving back and forth from the imagined world and the world of the youth — in other words, from a colonized world to a decolonized world. Planet R taught their children the essential skill of hunting and Planet KD⁴ freely worshipped their Orange Tree on a daily basis. However, at the same time, the threat to existence from Planet R and Planet KD⁴ invaders was similar to the ways colonization threatened the existence of Indigenous peoples through the destruction of natural resources and disease. Therefore, the planet is, and at the same time is not, a Utopian world. The creation of the imagined world involved a language of double seeing as the youth referenced the world they are living in while creating the world of the planet. As Boal (1995, p. 44) explains, "the image of the real is real as image." The "Planet 51" drawings provided a safe context for discussion and for this double language to exist. While creating their planets, youth played, imagined, and ultimately expressed things that could not be said in other ways.

Day-to-day experiences of colonization have become normalized and change is difficult to perceive for the First Nations youth involved in this project. In this activity, through the creation of a solution to their problem, opportunities for change and for challenging the practice of colonization were recognized. Notably, the connection of creating a viable solution to the reality of their communities has yet to be discussed and realized.

Both "Rays of Sun" and "Planet 51" provided spaces for youth to imagine their ideal community and consider what values, traditions, and aspects of daily life would exist. The following section discusses the importance of imagination and its part in the transformation of youth as potential health leaders.

Reflection and Discussion

Our experience is that colonization has affected the imaginations of the youth with whom we are working. As Mussell (2008, p. 331) explains,

> The treatment of Indigenous peoples as *wards of the government* throughout modern history persists into the present.... As people who have not experienced empowerment by discovering who we are, what we are, and who we belong to through learning family and community history as an everyday experience, we live with considerable uncertainty because we lack what it takes to see, understand, and name our internal and external realities. (original emphasis)

Imagination for youth in this project is an experience involving caution, hesitancy, and uncertainty. It is important to note that the norms of respect, equity, cooperation, and trust, continuously practiced and reinforced through games and talking circles, were essential for a safe and comfortable environment for the youth to engage in the workshop activities. The safe space created through the "warm up" activities provided youth with opportunities for creative thinking and use of their imaginations. Importantly, both "Rays of Sun" and "Planet 51" took place in the afternoon after the morning had been spent creating a feeling of trust and strengthening the bonds among the youth participants.

Imagination is a sense, not something separate that occurs in the mind, but in the way people move beyond what is immediately given, to make tentative contact with things that are not directly perceived (Calvino, 1988). The healthy community of First Nations youth, as represented in "Rays of Sun," emphasized the importance of maintaining cultural traditions. Through this exercise, participants also identified critical attributes of an effective leader as someone who provides organization and guidance, defends the rights of the community, protects and maintains cultural traditions, and communicates well. In the work we describe, drawing not only makes thought visible, but also enables imagination to emerge *through* the drawings. This allows individuals to become mindful of things that may not be easily expressible in words, such as what it means to be a *healthy community* and *wise leader*. Using imagery to express something that cannot be presented in other ways allows us to explore opposites (i.e., a decolonized world). The drawing becomes part of a spiral process which sparks our imaginations, enabling us to see new possibilities. The new possibilities provide a meaningful blueprint, which youth can use, alter, and be inspired by as they move towards being leaders of healthy communities.

Decolonization through Imagination

Guerin's (2010, p. 72) analysis of decolonization interventions indicates

> no single intervention can be a magic bullet to right the wrongs that have been inflicted; we must think in terms of multiple interventions across multiple sites over time.

In this regard, imaginative spaces are an important aspect of the complex process of decolonization. Working within the space of imagination becomes culturally transformative as it is a process that enables multiple stories to emerge. When stories are created, the reimagining of history and the future become possible (Chappell, 2010). As Roach (1996) notes: to remember, we must first forget.

Womack (1999, p. 230) reminds us,

> the process of decolonizing the mind, a first step before one can achieve a political consciousness and engage oneself in activism, has to begin with the imagining of some alternative.

This alternative is discovered in imaginary communities and worlds where the effects of colonization are minimized or no longer exist. This creative process was intended to be a blueprint in future workshops, where young leaders could begin considering the possibility of creating such a community and develop the necessary skills. In this workshop it became evident that some participants are aware of the impacts of colonization and the colonized relationship that exists. Future workshops can be used to explicitly explore these issues and emphasize that participants have the power to be producers of knowledge and action that can resist oppressive relationships and ultimately contribute to the transformation of their communities to the ideal ones imagined. Like play, imagination becomes

> a process that explores the relations of power through dialogue, creating spaces for transformation, for new educational and methodological strategies. (Fox, 2004, p. 91)

A distinction should be made here between imagination, which involves individual creativity, and the imaginal, which is far more profound as it involves imagining "hope and transformation" in a shared process (Corbin, 1972 as cited in Bishop,

2008, p. 33). The activities described here provided an opportunity to imagine but, due to time constraints, the workshop did not enable the imaginal (i.e., transformation). Further workshops are required for youth to fully experience the imaginal and engage in acts of transformation by developing healthy relationships and community through co-determined leadership with adults in the community. These workshops will allow youth to endorse, alter, or reject their conceptions of an ideal healthy community as a viable outcome for their own community, and for them to connect the problems and solutions of their planets to reality. In this process, agency is reaffirmed as participants (re)consider their make-believe worlds a reality, and reflect upon the necessary steps and skills to make the change.

According to Thomas and Brown (2007, p. 169),

> The power of the play of imagination is its ability to break traditional frames and dichotomies and allow us to explore a space where fantasy and play are no longer subordinated to reality and work and where we are able to find richer ways of identifying with the other.

"Rays of Sun" and "Planet 51" can be considered a visioning exercise for the transformative process of decolonization and the development of healthy leaders. While some youth were aware of colonization, participants' insights and awareness may increase as they experience transformation and hope through the imaginal. Youth may even start to question ideas developed in the initial visioning process which are based on colonized relationships, such as a male fulfilling the role of chief.

In other workshops we have attempted to link the ideal healthy community to what youth can do to help their community get there. We have found youth often share typical examples of health such as not smoking or drinking, rather than an ideal which was depicted as images of sports or cultural activities in this workshop. While these ideals portray images of health, they also, as some of the youth emphasized, suggest that activities, particularly sports, act as a deterrent to harmful behaviours such as alcohol and drug abuse, and vandalism. These imagined worlds are thus as much as a process as they are an outcome. The activities described in this article can

help youth engage in the process of decolonization by envisioning *and* enacting alternative futures.

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Dr. Felice Yuen is an Associate Professor in the Applied Human Sciences Department at Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec. Her research examines leisure and its impact on community development, healing, and social justice. Recent projects include examining the healing process of Aboriginal women through body mapping (a form of visual arts), and exploring Aboriginal youth health leadership through creative play workshops, the study from which this article is based upon. She has been involved in youth leadership development since she was a youth herself. These opportunities were an inspiration to her academic path and engagement in community-based-research.
felice.yuen@concordia.ca

Dr. Warren Linds is an Associate Professor in the Department of Applied Human Sciences at Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec. His area of expertise is applying Forum Theatre techniques to address issues of social justice. He is a member of the research team in the Canadian Institutes for Health Research funded project Applied Arts with Health, which works on developing health decision-making with Aboriginal youth in southern Saskatchewan, Canada. He is the co-editor of *Emancipatory Practices: Adult/youth Engagement for Social and Environmental Justice* (Sense Publishers, 2010) and *Unfolding Bodymind: Exploring Possibility through Education* (Holistic Education Publishers, 2004).

Dr. Linda Goulet is a Professor in the Department of Indigenous Education at First Nations University of Canada. In addition to teaching Indigenous health education, her areas of expertise are in Indigenous pedagogy and interrogating educational practice for its effectiveness with Aboriginal youth. She has participated in several collaborative research projects with Aboriginal institutions and communities and has published several journal articles and book chapters. She recently co-edited the book *Emancipatory Practices: Adult/youth Engagement for Social and Environmental Justice* (Sense Publishers, 2010).

Dr. Jo-Ann Episkenew is Director of the Indigenous People's Health Research Centre. She has expertise in the study of Aboriginal narratives and theatre and their applications to individual and community health and healing from historical trauma. She is the past-president of the Association for Bibliotherapy and Applied Literatures. She is the author of *Taking back our Spirits: Indigenous Literature, Public Policy, and Healing* (University of Manitoba Press, 2009), a winner of two Saskatchewan Book Awards.

Heather Ritenburg is an arts educator who is the University Research Assistant for the project. She is completing a PhD in dance education at the University of Regina.

Karen Schmidt is the community partner for the project through her position as Health Educator for the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council working out of the All Nations Healing Hospital.