A Girls Who LEAP Exploration of Youth Leadership

by

CYNTHIA LEE

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Supervisor: DR. MICHAEL LICKERS

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COMMITTEE APPROVAL

The members of Cynthia Lee's Thesis Committee certify that they have read the thesis titled *A Girls Who LEAP Exploration of Leadership* and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the thesis requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Leadership:

Dr. Michael Lickers [signature on file]

Dr. Laura Wright [signature on file]

Final approval and acceptance of this thesis is contingent upon submission of the final copy of the thesis to Royal Roads University. The thesis supervisor confirms to have read this thesis and recommends that it be accepted as fulfilling the thesis requirements:

Dr. Michael Lickers [signature on file]

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Abstract

This cocreated research inquiry, which aimed to support young people in reclaiming their voice and authority as knowledge holders and leaders in their community, explored the question: How do young people in Girls Who LEAP (GWL) organization understand leadership? Using a decolonized methodological approach pairing Indigenous methodology with youth participatory action research, this inquiry engaged 18 young people. Data were gathered through narrative métissage, sticky notes, and sharing circles. Given the relational approach of engaging the community was foundational in all aspects of this inquiry, a community inquiry team and youth research advisory team were critical in this study. Key learnings highlighted the relationships between adult-youth mentor relationships, experiential learning, cultivating a sense of belonging and the impact of values identification in youth leadership development. The recommended call to action from the young people includes the creation of a new GWL youth leadership framework to be implemented by the organization.

Key words: youth leadership, student voice, experiential learning, circle of courage, leadership as listening

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This process was undoubtedly the most challenging thing I have ever done during a tumultuous and unprecedented period in my life. In my moments of doubt and darkness, I am grateful to have found support from the people I hold dear, who continually pushed and grounded me in knowing that I was doing the right process for myself and the community I am part of.

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List of Abbreviations

GWL   Girls Who LEAP: Lead to Empower & Act with Purpose Society

IBPoC   Indigenous, Black, or people of colour

IM   Indigenous methodology

PAR   Participatory action research

REB   Research Ethics Board

YPAR   Youth Participatory Action Research

YRAT   Research youth advisory team

Personal Prologue

I would like to start with a poem the Girls Who LEAP (GWL) young people created:

I am a seed in a pot.

Ready to grow,

My soil, my healthy relationships

My water, my passion

My sunshine's my support.

The environment I grow in is my community

It may be dark or light, good or bad

But with my soil, water, and sunshine

I am empowered

I am . . . healthy and strong

— (H, L, M, S, T, T)[1]

This thesis was guided by my hope to honour and acknowledge voices that are often

overlooked, yet they are the same voices that are expected to lead in the future. Young people in

the world matter (Beattie, 2012; DeJonckheere et al., 2017; Fine, 2014; Lickers, 2016, 2017;

Liebenberg et al., 2020; MacNeil, 2006). These future leaders must be nurtured and fostered, and

their voices and perspectives need to be heard (Fielding, 2004; Fielding & Bragg, 2003; Lickers,

2016; Mitra, 2006; Serido et al., 2011). In 2018, 15- to 29-year-old people represented 19.2% of

Canada's population, representing over 7 million young people across the country (Statistics

Canada, 2019). As researchers begin to seek out young people's voices, their wisdom and

perspectives are finally being recognized in the research field (Fielding & Bragg, 2003; Fine,

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[1] Participants have granted permission to be cited for this poem using their initials.

2012; Lickers, 2016; MacNeil, 2006; Mitra, 2006; Serido et al., 2011). I have spent my entire career working with young people in school and community settings, seeking to amplify the voices of young people and tapping into their boundless potential. I believe young people have unique wisdom that needs to be shared with the world. They have a willingness and desire to question, learn, and unlearn in a time that needs shifting. I have seen young people thrive when given the opportunity to use their voices to lead and implement change in their communities. As Fine (2014) explained, "Youth involvement in community organizing is a growing movement in which young people learn organizing and advocacy skills to mobilize their peers and others to take some form of social action" (p. 834). My goal has always been to create spaces for young people to thrive and to be heard; this thesis was no different. I chose to go on this research journey with the young women I am privileged to be in relation with, to cocreate a youth leadership framework focused on their knowledge and learnings. As Wilson (2008) wrote, "if research doesn't change you as a person, then you haven't done it right" (p. 135). As the young people had foretold in their poem, like seeds in a pot ready to be nurtured by water and sunshine, I hope this research process will allow the young people and me to grow together.

Chapter 1: Focus and Framing

The action-oriented research project explored young people's understanding of leadership and the cocreation of a youth leadership model based on a two-eyed seeing approach, which bridges space for Western and Indigenous ways of knowing, with the Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people in the Girls Who LEAP: Lead to Empower & Act with Purpose Society (GWL) organization. This research utilized a combination of youth participatory action research (YPAR) and an Indigenous methodological approach that engaged female identifying young people in the GWL organization to empower them through the research process. The research project explored three objectives. The first objective was to understand how the young people in the GWL organization understood and experienced leadership. The second was to find out how the organization and young people can embrace Indigenous ways of knowing and leadership models moving forward. Lastly, this research asked the young people to cocreate a GWL youth leadership framework based on the learnings from this research process. My main inquiry question for this thesis was as follows: How do young people in Girls Who LEAP organization understand leadership? To supplement this inquiry, the following subquestions guided my inquiry:

1. How do young people[2] in GWL engage in leadership?

2. How is leadership knowledge being transferred to the young people in GWL?

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[2] This thesis uses the terminology *young people* instead of youth to describe people ages 12–26 years. The purpose is to recognize the capacity and authority of young people in equal standing to adults, classifying them in the same terminology.

3. What are Indigenous ways of knowing or epistemologies that have and can be shared with the young people in GWL?

4. How might the GWL organization integrate Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous leadership into a youth leadership model?

Significance of the Inquiry

The purpose of this thesis was to walk alongside the young people in this organization to cocreate a youth leadership framework that best serves the GWL community. This thesis project aligned with the core pillars and mission of the GWL organization, which is to mentor and empower female-identified young people as leaders by developing life skills, building meaningful connections, and purposefully impacting their community (GWL, n.d.). The mandate and mission of the GWL organization align with the core principles of YPAR that seeks to empower and create change-oriented solutions for and by young people (DeJonckheere et al., 2017; Fine, 2012; Kornbluh et al., 2015). The organizational values are based upon four constitutional pillars: leadership, empowerment, action, and purpose (GWL, n.d.). The first is to "build leadership skills and the capacity with the purpose of encouraging life-long engagement in community and mentorship" (GWL, n.d., Constitution section, para. 1). The second pillar is to "empower female-identified youth with the confidence, life skills, and tools to propel them on their journey ahead" (GWL, n.d., Constitution section, para. 2). The third pillar is to "instill the concept of taking action by nurturing youth ambassadors towards effecting impactful change in their own lives and the lives of those around them" (GWL, n.d., Constitution section, para. 3). The last pillar is to "provide opportunities to explore the true purpose of being an active leader

that is empowered to create impact with . . . [their] their community locally, nationally, and globally (GWL, n.d., Constitution section, para. 4).

I believe all four pillars were met through this research process as this inquiry sought to create a youth-informed and designed leadership framework that works best for this community. Ultimately, this research sought to develop the capacity of young people in the organization as another means of community engagement and development alongside their regular youth programming.

The All My Relations: Səẏeṁstəxw Sye'yə Project connects GWL young people with holistic physical, mental, emotional, and cultural and spiritual opportunities by introducing Indigenous teachings in each of the organization's programs (M. Tshan, personal communication, July 27, 2021).[3] All My Relations acknowledges people are all connected, and Səẏeṁstəxw Sye'yə is Həṅq̓əmiṅəṁ for "respected friend," reinforcing that non-Indigenous allies are also walking this journey alongside Indigenous people (M. Tshan, personal communications, July 27, 2021). This foundation has empowered and created future systematic changes. I believe the outcomes of this thesis research will supplement the GWL program by providing another means to empower the young women in cocreating a youth leadership framework based on the Indigenous teachings they have already been learning in the programs. At the onset of this inquiry, the president of GWL informed me of the cultural disconnect that urban Indigenous youth experience, as many grew up in the city away from their respective nations (M. Tshan, personal communication, July 27, 2021). By providing opportunities to

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[3] All personal communications are cited with permission.

engage in cultural sessions with cultural facilitators, Knowledge Keepers, and Elders, this research and GWL provided a foundation to share Indigenous teachings and views that can be woven into a leadership framework that impacts the future of not just the Indigenous young people but all young people in the GWL community. I found working with the Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people in cocreating a GWL youth leadership model to be impactful, as the young women modelled the way they want their community to walk.

Organizational Context and Systems Analysis

GWL is a non-profit, volunteer-run society that promotes local, provincial, national, and global social changes by fostering community engagement and providing mentorship and early intervention for marginalized female-identifying inner-city youth. The self-identifying young women in the organization include Indigenous, two-spirited, LGBTQQIA+, non-binary, vulnerable youth in the Downtown Eastside and Grandview Woodlands neighbourhoods in Vancouver, which is on the unceded and traditional territories of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and Səl̓ílwətał Nations. This area was the lowest socio-economic urban neighbourhood and had the highest Indigenous urban population in 2016 in Vancouver, per the Canadian census and 2020 City of Vancouver social indicators. Within the organization, Adult mentors, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers are community members who have previous connections to the young people in the organization, an invested interest in serving the GWL community, and are important internal stakeholders. Every adult member of the organization, including members of the board of directors is an active mentor, facilitating programs and special events with the young people all year round. As I write this final report, I currently sit as

the secretary on the board of directors of GWL and am an active mentor who facilitates youth

mentorship programming throughout the year.

Within the organization, the GWL has structured an Intergenerational Mentorship

Pathway to support the development of the young people in the programs (see Figure 1). The

young people are divided into three tiers of programming: the intermediate tier represents young

people between Grades 7 and 8, the junior tier represents young people between Grades 9 and10,

and the senior tier represents young people between Grades 11 and 12. The three tiers are

supported by alumni representing the young people who have graduated high school, are

between 18 and 26 years of age, and are still connected to GWL programming. The alumni

groups encourage previous participants of programs to remain engaged with the organization as

they transition from participant to adult mentor roles. Using this multi-tiered mentorship model,

the organization connects female-identifying young people from Britannia Secondary School

with pre-teen girls in feeder elementary schools to a larger community support system that

consists of alumni, adult mentors, and supportive community members.

Figure 1

GWL Intergenerational Mentorship Structure

Diagram with concentric circles labeled from outermost to innermost:
- Community (Elders/Knowledge Keepers, Community Members) — Community allies and supporters
- Mentors — Adult GWL mentors
- Alumni — Transitioning students out of highschool
- Seniors — Grades 11-12
- Juniors — Grades 9-10
- Intermediates — Grades 7-8
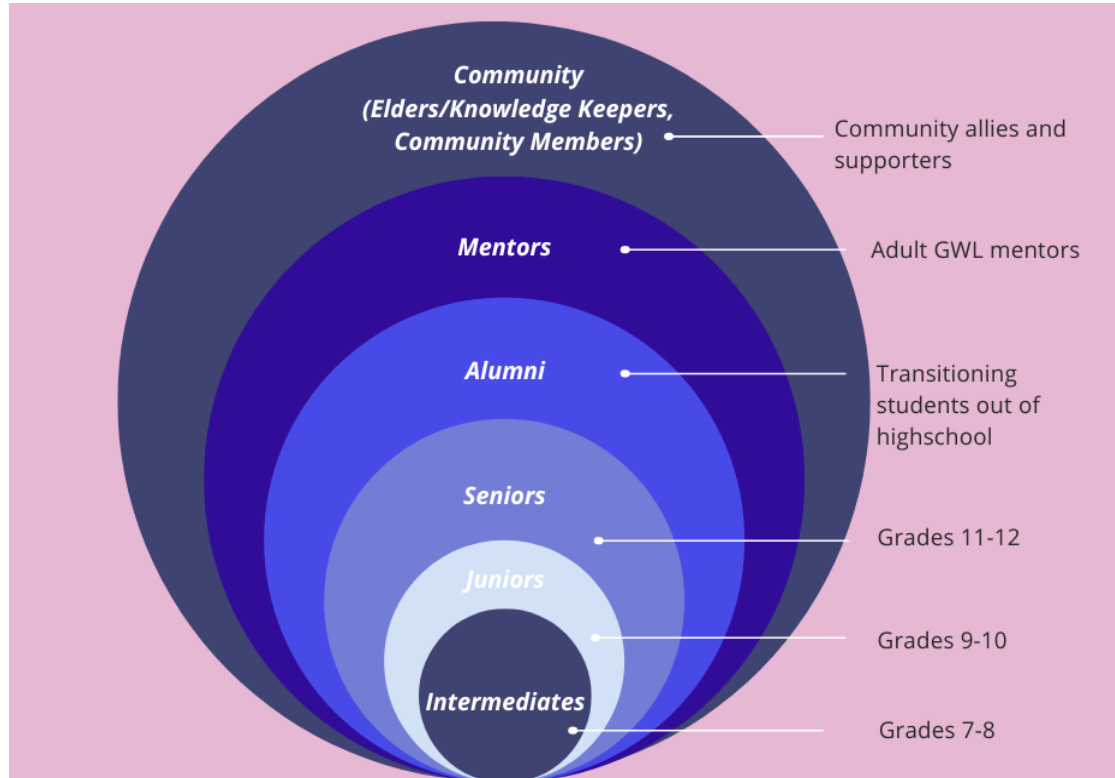
Note. GWL = Girls Who LEAP: Lead to Empower & Act with Purpose Society.

Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into six chapters.

Chapter 1: Focus and Framing discussed the audience to the research study. It introduced the reader to the significance of inquiry, research questions, and systems analysis of the organizational partner for this research. Chapter 2: Literature Review explores literature related to the foundational topics of this research, including leadership, Indigenous leadership, youth leadership, and youth voice. Chapter 3: Methodology outlines the methodological approaches chosen for this research, provides an overview of the data harvest methods, and outlines the overall research design. Chapter 3 also introduces the research youth advisory team in this inquiry and shares how they helped cocreate this research process. Chapter 4: Inquiry Project Findings presents the wisdom and findings of the young people involved in this research.

Chapter 5: Inquiry Implications and Scope and Limitations explores the findings of this research in relation to the literature and offers the study conclusions as well as the scope and limitations of the inquiry. Chapter 6: Inquiry Recommendations and Implications reviews a new GWL leadership framework cocreated by the young people for the final recommendations in this study. It also details organizational implications and implications for future inquiry, closing with the final overview of this thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

I conducted a review of relevant literature to understand how leadership has been conceptualized and interpreted by scholars and how leadership theories have factored into youth leadership development. For the purpose of this study, I chose to investigate the following four topics for my literature review: leadership, youth leadership, Indigenous leadership, and youth voice.

Leadership

A consistent area of contention in leadership literature has been finding a definitive definition of leadership. Alvesson and Spicer (2014) stated, "The term leadership is seductive, has a strong rhetorical appeal, and is therefore heavily overused" (p. 40). However, for the past century, the definition of leadership has remained ambiguous amongst scholars, with various interpretations and theories evolving interchangeably (Alvesson & Spicer, 2014; Avolio et al., 2009; Dugan, 2017; Fertman & van Linden, 2016; Jackson & Parry, 2018; Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). The question remains, what is leadership, and how is it enacted and practised? For this literature review, I examine the history of Western mainstream leadership and explore various definitions of leadership that influence youth leadership models and applications.

Traditional leadership theories focused on the power and influence of individuals over a few or a group; this field of leadership was primarily focused in organizational and managerial settings (Mortensen et al., 2014). Early leadership theorists focused on the great man theory of leadership (Stogdill, 1974). These theorists posited leadership qualities were innate in individuals and leadership skills could not be taught (MacNeil, 2006). The next iteration of leadership developed was the trait theory, which presented the notion that leaders needed to possess specific

characteristics that designated individuals as reputable and efficient leaders (Stogdill, 1974). A significant shift occurred with the introduction of the behavioural perspective of leadership. As Mortensen et al. (2014) argued, "This perspective addresses leadership actions and examines what exemplary leaders do by focusing on observed behaviour" (p. 116). With the behaviourist leadership phase, leadership expanded from simply looking at a leader's characteristics to examining how their behaviours affected their relationships with others (Yukl, 2008). The next shift then arose in contemporary leadership theory, in which scholars began examining the contextual perspectives of leadership (Bass & Bass, 2009; Dugan, 2017; Jackson & Parry, 2018; Mortensen et al., 2014). New theories of leadership, transactional, adaptive, transformation, authentic, servant, contextual, cross-cultural, collaborative, relational, and so on, have evolved within the leadership field. One can investigate scholars such as Rickets and Rudd (2002), Bass and Bass (2009), Alvesson and Spicer (2014), Dugan (2017), and Jackson and Parry (2018), who have examined the evolution of leadership theories in their research. These contemporary leadership theories highlighted the relational aspect of leadership instead of the traditional individualistic approaches that centred on the individual leader. It is within these contemporary adult leadership theories of transactional leadership (Dugan, 2017; Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013; Warrilow, 2012), transformational leadership (Bass & Bass, 2009; Burns, 1978; Choudhary et al., 2013; Dugan, 2017; Heifetz & Linksy, 2017; Stephens et al., 1995), and servant leadership (Choudhary et al., 2013; Greenleaf, 1977; Greenleaf & Spears, 2002; van Dierendonck, 2011), that various scholars have linked to youth leadership application and theory (Brumbaugh, 2013; Fertman & van Linden, 2016; Libby et al., 2006).

In recent shifts, researchers began exploring how leadership could be taught and sought to explore the complexities of leadership practice and purpose (Avolio et al., 2009; Bass & Bass, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Senge, 1994). Avolio et al. (2009) claimed, "leadership is no longer simply described as an individual characteristic or difference, but rather is depicted in various models as dyadic, shared, relational, strategic, global, and a complex dynamic" (p. 423). Researchers, thus, began to examine various intricacies of leadership that went beyond individualistic articulations of leader qualities and incorporated theories that explained the collaborative and reciprocal approach to leadership (Jackson & Parry, 2018). Scholars moved from seeking to understand individualistic leadership characteristics to explain the dynamic process of leadership and, more recently, exploring identity, purpose, and context of leadership practices and application (Jackson & Parry, 2018). Scholars such as Jackson and Parry (2018) posit this type of leadership as "an interactive process involving leading and following within a distinctive place to create a mutually important identity, purpose, and direction" (p. 9). Jackson and Parry (2018) further built off Grint's (2005) book *Leadership: Limits and Possibilities,* suggesting six lenses, or six *P*s, to consider when examining leadership:

Leadership through Position: WHO has the formal power to create leadership?

Leadership through Person: WHO has the informal power to create leadership?

Leadership through Process: HOW is leadership created?

Leadership through Performance: WHAT is achieved through leadership?

Leadership through Place: WHERE is leadership created?

Leadership through Purpose: WHY is leadership created? (p. 8)

It is through these lenses that I have taken into consideration when examining how youth leadership is conceptualized and practiced in my study.

Indigenous Leadership

In addition to the growing field of leadership, research on Indigenous leadership is becoming more extensive than ever. In this section, I use the terms Aboriginal and Indigenous leadership synonymously, depending on how the authors have used the terminology in their works. As with mainstream leadership, finding a common perspective on Indigenous leadership is difficult, as scholars considered context and place when examining different Indigenous leadership practices (Kenny & Fraser, 2012; Voyageur et al., 2015). Lickers (2016) stated, "The theories, techniques, lessons learned, and research all vary, yet all share the common theme that there is no one, single perspective on Indigenous leadership because of the diversity that is evident within Indigenous populations" (p. 14). In this section, I explore literature that outlined themes within Indigenous leadership theories and highlighted how they may differ from mainstream Western leadership theories. Additionally, I focus on two Indigenous leadership models, the circle of courage and deep listening and leadership model, consistent with the current GWL leadership developmental approaches.

Although researchers have generated literature on leadership for well over a century, much of it reflects Eurocentric or Western conceptions of leadership (Julien et al., 2010; Voyageur et al., 2015). As Indigenous leadership is continually explored, there is a distinct difference from mainstream Western leadership, which emphasizes a collective approach to leadership that fosters a commitment to community (Gambrell, 2017; Gladstone & Pepion, 2017; Kenny & Fraser, 2017; Kotowich-Laval, 2005; Voyageur et al., 2015). The differences between

Indigenous and non-Indigenous leadership are one of the focal themes in many studies as researchers attempt to understand Indigenous peoples' perspectives on leadership (Julien et al., 2010; Kenny & Fraser, 2012; Kotowich-Laval, 2005; Lickers, 2016; McLeod, 2002; Voyageur et al., 2015). Julien et al. (2010) presented six themes of Aboriginal leadership practices that were distinct from mainstream Western conceptions of leadership: leadership within all, the centrality of spirituality, communication through stories and symbols, the importance of longer-term implications of leadership, circular approach, holistic perspective, the role of gender in leadership style. Additionally, Julien et al. (2010) commented,

> In essence, the Aboriginal view of leadership can be seen as a series of concentric rings, joining together in such a manner that each aspect of leadership is connected to all other aspects of leadership. Aboriginal leadership is driven by spirituality and by an understanding of how preferences will affect future generations. Mainstream leadership can be characterized in a much more linear fashion where hierarchy, clarity of roles and a sense of mission that focuses predominantly on the benefit of the individual and the organization are valued. (p. 123)

The emphasis on understanding how leadership will affect future generations is what stood out to me when reviewing Indigenous to Western leadership literature. When reviewing Indigenous leadership literature, implications are explored in relation to understanding how leadership affects not just the immediate outcomes but the long-term implications of leadership in the community and for generations to come (Julien et al., 2010; Lickers, 2016, Voyageur et al., 2015). Furthermore, embedded in these Indigenous leadership perspectives is the importance of Indigenous paradigms, highlighting the necessity of relationships, reciprocity, and inclusion in

leadership theory (Gambrell, 2017; Gladstone & Pepion, 2017; Kenny & Fraser, 2012; Voyageur et al., 2015; Wilson, 2008). Scholars such as Gambrell (2017) articulated a shift from viewing leadership through an individualist perspective to perceiving leadership through a community-oriented perspective. Her work has identified the four principles of the Indigenous collectivist mindset theory of "We Are All Related, Through Stories, Everybody has a Gift, and Involve the People" (Gambrell, 2017, p. 26), which describes the impact of viewing leadership from a community lens. Additionally, Voyageur et al. (2015) articulated Indigenous leadership practices "place the emphasis on community and collective perspective rather than autonomy and single point of view" (p. 6). Overall, much of the literature has noted the importance of community and collective practice in Indigenous leadership practices (Bear, 2000; Julien et al., 2010; Kenny & Fraser, 2012; Kotowich-Laval, 2005; Voyageur et al., 2015).

To highlight the importance of community in Indigenous leadership, I explore two Indigenous leadership models, the deep listening leadership model (Brearley, 2015) and the circle of courage (Brendtro et al., 2002), for the rest of this literature review. These models are deeply reflected in the spirit of how GWL has based their youth leadership development and were, therefore, an important starting place for this study.

Deep Listening and Leadership Model

Brearley (2015) described a community leadership model that incorporates the Indigenous concept of deep listening, which is defined as "a way of learning, working, and togetherness that is informed by the concepts of community and reciprocity" (p. 91). Within her work, Brearley noted how the concept of deep listening was introduced to a cohort of researchers by a Ngangikurungkurr Elder, Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, from the Daly River in the

Northern Territory in Australia. The deep listening and leadership model began as a culmination

of stories and insights gathered in the Deep Listening Project to envision how Indigenous

wisdoms could be translated into contemporary leadership practices (Brearley, 2015). Within this

community leadership model is the recognition of a shared leadership model that emphasizes

collaboration amongst different leaders to address complex issues faced today. Leadership is tied

to a specific responsibility and ownership in the community, in which various leaders are seen

serving a unique purpose toward people. It is the recognition that leadership is a communal

responsibility that should allow for the development of new leaders with different expertise to

create a sustainable community (Brearley, 2015; Brearley & Hamm, 2013). Furthermore, rooted

in this model of leadership is the importance of developing relationships and the accountability

of listening respectfully and responsibly in leadership practices (Brearley, 2015; Brearley &

Hamm, 2013). Effective community leadership in this model is the ability to become present in

the relationships one makes with oneself, to each other, and to the environment (Brearley, 2015;

Brearley & Hamm, 2013). This leadership model calls on people to look within and see how

their leadership practices can open up space for genuine connections to emerge (Brearley, 2015).

Overall, respect, reciprocity and relationships are the foundational values that connect deep

listening and community leadership.

The Circle of Courage Model

The circle of courage is a model of youth empowerment referenced by various scholars in

relation to Indigenous as well as Western youth leadership development studies (Dickey, 2019;

Fulford & Thompson, 2013; Kress, 2003; Lickers, 2016). Brendtro et al. (2013) created this

framework from Indigenous child-rearing philosophies to provide an alternative to education and youth development:

> The Circle of Courage is a model of youth empowerment that identifies the four vital signs for positively guiding youth through Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity. These growth needs are essential for well-being, being innate and a natural part of human development. In the simplest terms in order to thrive, young people must have opportunities to experience each of the aspects of the circle. It is within the community that these beliefs are enshrined and where the benefits of such a model will enrich the lives of all members. (p. 67)

This model was illustrated by a Lakota Sioux artist George Blue Bird, utilizing the medicine wheel model as the base for this model of child development. Brendtro and Brokenleg (2019) explained the significance of four and why the medicine wheel was used as the model framework for the circle of courage:

> The number four has sacred meaning to Native people who see the person as standing in a circle surrounded by the four directions. . . . We propose Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity as the central values – the unifying theme – of positive cultures for education and youth work programs. We believe the philosophy embodied in this Circle of Courage is not only a cultural belonging of Native peoples, but for all the world's children. (p. 15)

Moreover, based on Indigenous philosophies for nurturing the next generations, this wholistic model addresses Coopersmith's (1967) four basic components of a child's self-esteem

needs: significance, competence, power, and virtue (Brendtro et al., 2002). Brendtro et al. (2013) explained,

> Traditional Native educational practices addressed each of these four bases of self-worth: (1) significance was nurtured in a cultural milieu that celebrated the universal need for belonging; (2) competence was ensured by guaranteed opportunities for mastery; (3) power was fostered by encouraging the expression of mastery; (4) virtue was reflected in the pre-eminent value of generosity. (p. 45)

Brendtro et al. (2013) further articulated that these four basic needs were often unmet in Western society and consequently placed young people at risk in their communities and society. The development of the first need of belonging is vital for young people to develop connections and respect for something outside of themselves (Brendtro et al., 2013). This comes from young people developing bonds and appreciations with and for places and people in their lives and community. It is within this need that young people begin to demonstrate the value of care as they begin creating connections to something outside themselves. The next need, mastery, represents the need for young people to be able to feel a sense of accomplishment that leads to the development of self- confidence and agency (Brendtro et al., 2013). The premise is that achieving mastery will lead to young people wanting to pursue new learnings and opportunities, even at the risk of failure. This sense of accomplishments achieved here will encourage young people to reach personal goals and create personal motivations. The third need, independence, is connected to the notion that young people need to be able to develop a sense of agency through their ability to make personal actions and choices (Brendtro et al., 2013). Thus, leading to the development of self-autonomy and personal responsibility in their actions. Brendtro et al. (2013)

posited the development of independence combats feelings of powerlessness and helplessness as young people are empowered to build agency and voice. The last need, generosity, is related to the ability of young people to make contributions to the larger community in their lives while developing the ability to care for others (Brendtro et al., 2013). Young people are encouraged to develop their sense of sharing and community responsibility, which consequently increases their sense of self-worth and self-esteem (Brendtro et al., 2013). As young people begin to make contributions to something outside of themselves, they may gain a greater sense of purpose and develop a further connection to their community. Overall, Brendtro et al. (2013) noted the importance of balancing these four basic needs to allow for proper youth development.

Youth Leadership

Jackson and Parry (2018) suggested, as scholars, "we research leadership primarily because we want to make a difference by promoting a better understanding of leadership, which we hope will lead to better leadership in practice" (p. 4). While adult leadership has evolved over the century, youth leadership literature is still considered a new field that needs further study (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007; Kahn et al., 2009; Lickers, 2016; MacNeil, 2006; Mortensen et al., 2014; Redmond & Dolan, 2016). Nevertheless, similar to adult leadership theories, there are many different definitions of youth leadership in the literature. Fertman and van Linden (1999), early youth leadership scholars in this field, defined youth leadership as "a set of skills and attitudes that can be learned and practiced, and that all adolescents can develop these skills and attitudes" (p. 10). They asserted how youth leadership development could be broken into three stages: awareness, interaction, and mastery. Fertman and van Linden (1999) further theorized the combination of transactional and transformational leadership models in developing youth

leadership, highlighting essential values guiding young people's development in each leadership model. In contrast, MacNeil (2006) defined leadership as "a relational process combining ability (knowledge, skills, and talents) with authority (voice, influence, and decision-making power) to positively influence and impact diverse individuals, organizations, and communities" (p. 29). In another study, Libby et al. (2006) stated, "A full definition of youth leadership must encompass values, power and action; without power sharing, a theory of change, and action, youth are not exercising leadership, but taking steps to plan and implement activities prescribed by adult" (p. 23). Various authors have emphasized the lack of conceptualized youth leadership theories and instead cited how much of youth leadership has simply been the implementation of adult-theory-based leadership in youth programming and education (Brumbaugh, 2013; Klau, 2006; Kress, 2006; MacNeil, 2006; Mortensen et al., 2014; Redmond & Dolan, 2016). Moreover, youth leadership scholars have highlighted three key themes that much of youth leadership literature continues to address in studies. First is the need to define youth leadership from a youth-informed standpoint (Archard, 2013; Dempster & Lizzio, 2007; Kahn et al., 2009; Libby et al., 2006; Lickers, 2016; McNae, 2010; Mortensen et al., 2014). The second theme is the critique that youth leadership literature has focused mainly on building young people as leaders of the future without emphasizing their present authority or capacity in society (Kahn et al., 2009; Kress, 2006; Libby et al., 2006; MacNeil, 2006; Redmond & Dolan, 2016; Ricketts & Rudd, 2002; van Linden & Fertman, 1998). Third, scholars have emphasized the need for meaningful actions and experience in youth leadership (Archard, 2013; Kahn et al., 2009; Libby et al., 2006; Lickers, 2017; MacNeil, 2006; Mortensen et al., 2014). For the remainder of the review, I investigate how scholars explored these three themes in youth leadership.

Youth-Informed Definition of Leadership

Youth leadership literature has expanded in the recent decade; studies investigating youth voice, students' perceptions of leadership, and approaches to teaching leadership have come to the forefront of society as scholars search for positive youth leadership approaches (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007; Libby et al., 2006; McNae, 2010). However, as McNae (2010) described, the majority of studies are focused on university students seeking to establish prescribed university leadership characteristics or skillsets. There is still limited research on youth leadership development from the perspectives of high school students (Archard, 2013; Dempster & Lizzio, 2007; McNae, 2010). In reviewing the literature on youth leadership (Archard, 2013; Dempster & Lizzio, 2007; Kahn et al., 2009; Libby et al., 2006; Lickers, 2017; McNae, 2010; Mortensen et al., 2014), I found scholars asked the following questions: How do young people conceptualize leadership? What actions of young people can constitute leadership actions? Where is youth leadership enacted? How is youth leadership different than adult leadership? While these questions are essential in articulating the impact of youth leadership, there is a need in literature to investigate these standpoints from the perspective of young people (Archard, 2013; Libby et al., 2006; Lickers, 2016; MacNeil, 2006; McNae, 2010; Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). Young people construct ideas differently than adults, as they carry different contexts and worldviews. As Mortensen et al. (2014) contended,

Adults wield much more power and authority than youth, and, consequently, adult leadership theories often emphasize these types of roles. Without that power and authority, youth must construct a different definition of leadership for their current role in society, suggesting youth may think about leadership differently than adults do. (p. 452)

Moreover, studies are finding that using youth-informed definitions of leadership to guide leadership development approaches may increase the buy-in from young people to engage in their leadership development (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007; MacNeil & McClean, 2006; Mortensen et al., 2014). The new wave of contemporary scholars on youth leadership is now recognizing the need for research to be based on young people's perceptions and voices. As Wilson (2008) explained, "There is a need for each person to develop his or her own relationship with ideas and to therefore to form their own conclusions" (p. 94). Two studies are particularly noteworthy to this research, as they both explore the conceptualization of youth leadership from female youth-informed research: the works of Archard (2013) and McNae (2010). Archard (2013) investigated the understanding of leadership by highlighting female youth from female students in Australia. Archard's (2013) youth-informed definition of leadership found "students viewed leadership as the active process of working with others in a positive way" (p. 336). McNae (2010) found positive impacts of cocreating leadership programming between adults and youth. Both authors illustrated the importance of including young women's voices in leadership learning and conceptualizations of youth leadership approaches (Archard, 2013; McNae, 2010).

Youth as Future Leaders

Related to the lack of experiential learning noted in youth leadership is the tendency for youth leadership to focus on young people as "future leaders." Scholars have critiqued youth leadership development insofar that it focuses only on the ability of young people to learn the content of leadership skills presently without acknowledging their ability and authority to lead in present times (Brumbaugh, 2013; Kress, 2006; Libby et al., 2006; MacNeil, 2006; Redmond & Dolan, 2016). Kress (2006) explained, "One of the great barriers to cultivating leadership among

youth is the treatment of them solely as the 'next generation.' As a result, youth often fail to see

themselves as actors in decision-making processes today" (p. 54). This lack of power and

authority in youth leadership is an area of concern often cited in youth leadership literature.

Scholars in the field of youth leadership are questioning if young people are genuinely exercising

leadership opportunities, or if they are only acting upon adult-prescribed activities (Kress, 2006;

Libby et al., 2006).

Experiential Learning in Youth Leadership

Much of the literature highlighted the importance of experiential learning in youth

leadership and the need to provide genuine leadership opportunities for young people to practice

leadership skills in real-life contexts (Kahn et al., 2009; Kress, 2006; Lickers, 2016; MacNeil,

2006). As Kolb (1984) described in his work, learning is "the process whereby knowledge is

created through the transformation of experiences" (p. 38). The lack of opportunities young

people are given to meaningfully apply learnings to activities is a crucial challenge noted in

much of the youth leadership literature (Kahn et al., 2009; Kress, 2006; Lickers, 2016; MacNeil,

2006). Consequently, youth leadership development focuses on learning about leadership theory

without application and the ability to put those learnings into practice (Kress, 2006; Libby et al.,

2006). Khan et al. (2009) explained, "Adult leaders often teach young people how to be a certain

type of person, rather than equipping them with the tools and presenting them with the guided

experiences through which to discover their potential and engage with the community" (p. 23).

Leadership development programs and initiatives must go beyond training and learning about

leadership and incorporate experiential learning. As Lickers (2016) explained in his study,

"Youth must have an opportunity to learn about and practice leadership by being placed in

situations in which they can explore and experience various leadership competencies and strategies" (p. 34). Leadership development needs to provide opportunities for young people to develop their voice, influence, and decision-making ability (Kress, 2006; MacNeil, 2006). As MacNeil (2006) suggested, youth leadership needs to consider how young people can influence and affect peers, organizations, and communities by developing practical, real-life application skills and knowledge. Youth leadership development must provide meaningful opportunities for genuine leadership practices and skills to be developed and applied.

Youth Voice

To end this literature review, I examine youth voice as it relates to positive youth development in youth leadership. Youth voice and student voice have been synonymously interchanged in academia to describe the importance of respecting the ideas and opinions of young people in decision-making processes that impact their lives and communities (Beattie, 2012; Fielding, 2001, 2004; Mitra, 2005, 2006). For this literature review, I use the term youth voice throughout this discussion.

There is growing traction within the literature recognizing the difference in perspectives between young people and adults (Evans, 2007; Mitra, 2005; Robinson & Taylor, 2007). Studies have shown young people conceptualize issues and ideas differently than adults (Fielding & Bragg, 2003; Salisbury et al., 2019). There are many positive associations attributed to youth voice and positive youth development. First, a sense of agency is created as young people can speak from their perspectives and opinions (Fielding, 2004). Fielding (2004) noted, "Students tend to see the world of school differently to the way adults see it and, even if they identify similar issues as being of particular importance, invariably they will have different

understandings of their nature and significance" (p. 307). Scholars emphasized how youth voice could positively impact their involvement in social change opportunities for young people (Beattie, 2012; Dempster et al., 2011; Fielding & Bragg, 2003; Mitra, 2006; Salisbury et al., 2019). Literature also suggested finding one's voice in schools and communities leads to a growing sense of self-agency and identity in the world, significantly impacting young people's development as social citizens (Ranson, 2000). As Ranson (2000) stated,

> Defining quality of citizenship will be the capability to find voice which asserts one's claims and enables the learner to enter a dialogue with others, to reach shared understanding and agreement about how to resolve problems which are common to all in the public sphere. (p. 268)

Consequently, scholars noted a correlation between young people finding voice and feeling a greater sense of self-understanding and accountability in the issues and community that affect them (Ranson, 2000; Salisbury et al., 2019).

Although youth voice has made significant traction in the academic field (Fielding & Bragg, 2003; Mitra, 2006; Robinson & Taylor, 2007; Salisbury et al., 2019), young people are still searching for meaningful participation that moves beyond the acknowledgement of ideas and opinions (Evans, 2007; Fielding, 2001; Serido et al., 2011). Beatie (2012) articulated, "Students tend to be passive recipients of their education, assuming few decision-making roles. Uniformity and obedience are highly valued by adults" (p. 158). There is a need to move beyond the tokenistic gesture of soliciting youth voice without further involvement in decision-making processes. When considering youth voice, scholars have posited the importance of meaningful engagement from young people, which involves active participation in developing solutions that

affect their lives (Fielding, 2001; Salisbury et al., 2019; Serido et al., 2011). As Serido et al.

(2011) stated, "Youth voice requires active involvement in planning, implementing, and

problem-solving during their experiences" (p. 45), which enables young people to take

ownership and problem solve when given the opportunity to engage in platforms of interest.

Impact of Youth-Adult Partnerships in Youth Voice

Scholars have documented the role of supportive adult relationships as an essential factor

in recognizing youth voice (Fielding & Bragg, 2003; Mitra, 2005; Salisbury et al., 2019). As

Evans (2007) described, "When young people interact with adults who value their voice as they

participate in community, they begin to use their voice in powerful ways" (p. 702). Young

people begin to feel empowered as their voices are acknowledged and supported by adults.

Serido et al. (2011) noted the importance of positive relationships with adults as a way "to foster

a sense of self-worth and a sense of well-being in young people, crucial factors in a young

person's development" (p. 47). Likewise, Kress (2006) argued,

> Youth leadership efforts must focus on creating environments in which youth matter and
>
> are part of a supportive group that knows them well enough to recognize the optimal zone
>
> where they can achieve more only with help from other people. (p. 54)

Various scholars have asserted, when youth feel their voices are heard, they are more inclined to

take ownership and participate more meaningfully in school and community (Fielding & Bragg,

2003; Mitra, 2005; Ranson, 2000). Kress (2006) posited, "If an adult is oriented towards serving

as an expert, rather than facilitating the construction of knowledge, it does not seem likely that

they will work effectively in partnership with youth" (p. 51). School or program engagements

become valued as young people build confidence for community participation (Evans, 2007;

Salisbury et al., 2019; Serido et al., 2011).

Conclusion For Youth Voice

The literature on youth voice related directly to my research purpose. Young people can

generate knowledge that should be factored into youth development theory (Evans, 2007;

Fielding & Bragg, 2003; Mitra, 2006; Salisbury et al., 2019; Serido et al., 2011). As young

people are engaged in schools and programs in their communities, youth voice becomes crucial

to their positive development. Youth leadership models consider how youth voice is being

incorporated into youth leadership development applications moving forward. Adults and

communities must encourage young people to take ownership of their voices and actions

(Fielding, 2004; Serido et al., 2011).

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter outlines the cocreated design of this research that employed a decolonizing methodological approach that combines Indigenous methodology and YPAR. I begin by describing the two-eyed seeing approach to this study and answer why I chose to use an Indigenous methodology, especially locating myself as a non-Indigenous researcher. I then describe the importance of utilizing a YPAR approach for this study. Finally, the overall research design follows as I describe how this research was conducted and analysed.

Decolonizing Methodology – Two-Eyed Seeing Approach to Research

As a non-Indigenous researcher, I have grappled with the question of whether I could employ an Indigenous methodology (IM). As Held (2019) commented, "What is the role of non-Indigenous scholars in Indigenous-centred research as Chilisa, Major, and Khudu-Petersen (2017) ask" (p. 3)? Latulippe (2015) questioned, "To what extent can the non-Indigenous, Western-trained researcher engage in IRP [Indigenous research paradigm] and forge a cross-cultural or mixed methodological approach" (p. 5)? Guided by the question these scholars have posed, I decided to use a decolonizing approach to my research. As Colbourne et al. (2020) explained, the decolonizing approach enables Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers to "assert the value of Indigenous knowledge traditions and promote mutually responsible and reciprocal relations" (p. 70). From this perspective, I chose to employ a decolonizing methodology that combined the two-row wampum and two-eye seeing approach as "a framework and method for reconciling the use of Indigenous ways of knowing and knowledge with western, Eurocentric methodologies and methods" (Colbourne et al., 2020, p. 71). The two-row wampum paradigm was first introduced to me by Dr. Michael Lickers, the Indigenous

Scholar in Residence at Royal Roads University. He described the Haudenosaunee principle

behind the two-row wampum agreement as an approach to demonstrate how Indigenous and

non-Indigenous peoples could interact and move forward on the same path while respecting each

other's ways of being and knowing (M. Lickers, Mohawk-Six Nations of the Grand River,

personal communication, October 3, 2021). The two-eyed seeing approach is based on the

teachings of Mi'kmaw Elder and Knowledge Keeper, Albert Marshall (Bartlett et al., 2012;

Colbourne et al., 2020; Wright et al., 2019). Bartlett et al. (2012) explained,

> Two-Eyed Seeing is the gift of multiple perspectives treasured by many aboriginal
>
> peoples and explains that it refers to learning to see from one eye with the strengths of
>
> Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths
>
> of Western knowledges and ways of knowing, and to using both these eyes together, for
>
> the benefit of all. (p. 335)

It is through this approach that I grounded my research in utilizing both IM and YPAR for the

basis of this study. Employing this combined methodological approach has allowed me to

explore a mixed paradigm of Western and Indigenous perspectives as a researcher.

Indigenous Methodology

Central to this thesis is the community that I am in relation to in this research project;

vital to this research is the cocreation of the study with the young people involved in this

exploration as well as the inquiry team that supported the participants and me. Within the study,

a majority of the participants, my organization partners, and all members of the inquiry team

identified as Indigenous and shared Indigenous worldviews. Additionally, the non-Indigenous

young people in the organization have consistently been introduced to Indigenous worldviews in

the program and expressed an interest in further exploring Indigenous worldviews through the possibility of this research. As a result, in considering a final methodological approach, I wanted to respect the wishes of the young people and my supporting team members in employing a methodological approach aligned with their worldviews. It is their voices and epistemological beliefs that I sought to capture in this research. For these reasons, I chose to use an IM based on Kovach's (2010) and Wilson's (2008) paradigmatic approach to research. Kovach (2010) stated,

> Indigenous methodologies are a paradigmatic approach based on an Indigenous philosophical positioning or epistemology. Thus it is not the method, per se, that is the determining characteristic of Indigenous methodologies, but rather the interplay (the relationship) between the method and paradigm and the extent to which the method, itself, is congruent with an Indigenous worldview. From this perspective, one could argue that the focal discussion of Indigenous methodologies ought to be a deep concentration of worldview or paradigm. (p. 40)

I was also cognizant of Kovach's (2010) description on how decolonizing methodology "centres the settler discourse, whereas an Indigenous paradigm centres Indigenous knowledges" (p. 41). This was discussed with my organization partner, inquiry team, and research youth advisory team, and we came to a consensus about presenting Indigenous paradigms and knowledge at the forefront of the research process. Ultimately, it was important to all of us that we explore this research centred on Indigenous paradigms and thus use an Indigenous methodological approach to supplement the YPAR methodology.

Throughout the research, I referred to Wilson's (2008) three critical principles of respect, reciprocity, and relationality when taking an Indigenous methodological approach to this thesis.

Wilson (2008) explained how the methodological approach "needs to be based in a community context (be relational) and has to demonstrate respect, reciprocity, and responsibility (be accountable as it is put into action)" (p. 99). It is this principle of relational accountability that guided my research process. Kovach (2009) noted the importance of honouring Indigenous knowledge systems in academia. In addition, Kovach (2009) explained how "Indigenous methodologies prompt Western traditions to engage in reflexive self-study, to consider a research paradigm outside the Western tradition that offers a systemic approach to understanding the world" (p. 29). As a non-Indigenous researcher, I tried my best to respectfully understand and honour Indigenous frameworks and methods within my research as I learned how to properly engage with the practices and protocols. Additionally, as a non-Indigenous researcher, it was important for me to acknowledge if and when I made mistakes along the way, as I tried my best to learn and move forward with each teaching. There is much that I do not know, and I am committed to an ongoing journey of learning that took me through this study and will continue beyond. Throughout the research process, I have centred the knowledge I have learned from the community that has welcomed me. I am grateful and privileged to have had the opportunity to learn from the Indigenous Elder, Knowledge Keeper, and my colleagues during this journey and hope to honour their voices and wisdom to the best of my ability.

Youth Participatory Action Research

YPAR is a youth-centred participatory action research that utilizes an iterative process of inquiry and action to promote the "power and sociopolitical voice of marginalized groups" (Kornbluh et al., 2015, p. 870). Participatory action research (PAR) is a research paradigm emphasizing collaboration between local communities and researchers to produce social change

outcomes. YPAR researchers promote the same core principles of PAR: self-reflection, collaboration, a dialogic approach, and the cocreation of learning and action (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). Furthermore, YPAR research rests on the underlying epistemological assertion that young people can generate knowledge (Kornbluh et al., 2015). I chose this methodology because it aims to promote youth empowerment and transformative change in communities through an action-oriented process (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). Under this methodology, my study intended for participants to be involved in every aspect of the research process. The purpose was to engage young people through the creation, design, facilitation, data collection, analysis, and knowledge exchange and dissemination of the study. YPAR was well suited for this research, as one of the core principles seeks to create change-oriented solutions that intend to empower and transform the lives of young people (DeJonckheere et al., 2017; Kornbluh et al., 2015). This principle aligned well with the GWL constitutional pillars of leadership, action, empowerment and purpose, and the organizational mandate to empower the youth through opportunities and mentorship. In exploring leadership with the young people in this study, I chose YPAR as a vehicle to facilitate the intentional coconstruction of knowledge, action, and community organizing with the young people. This journey also aimed to help promote their sense of agency and self as leaders in their communities.

Locating Myself in this Research

Absolon and Willet (2005) explained, "To locate is to make claim about who you are and where you come from, your investment and your intent" (p. 112). Locating myself was essential as I sought to take ownership and accountability in my work and relations to the young people I

work with, the community I hope to build, learn and unlearn with, and, lastly, as a second-generation Chinese Canadian female settler and ally. Wilson (2008) stated,

> The source of a research project is the heart/mind of the researcher, and "checking your heart" is a critical element in the research process. The researcher ensures that there are no negative or selfish motives for doing the research, because that could bring suffering upon everyone in the community. A "good heart" guarantees a good motive, and good motives benefit everyone involved. (p. 60)

My purpose for this research was to go on an explorative journey alongside the young people in a search to understand leadership through their eyes. The motive behind this goal was for young people and me to grow and learn from each other as we shared stories and learnings along the process. Wilson (2009) spoke of the importance of relationality in research, which is one of the foundational principles that drew me to take on an IM for my research. My relations with the organization, the young people, and the community were the main reasons this study was successful, and I want to express my gratitude to the people who have given me the gift of time, space, and stories. Rix et al. (2019) stated, "Relationality is that researchers, as knowledge producers in relation, are in themselves accountable for maintaining healthy relationships with communities, environment, and ideas that they are researching" (p. 260). As I entered this research, I had to consistently hold myself accountable as a researcher to the community I was a part of, understanding the privilege granted to me. I was cognizant of my self-location and consistently reflected on my relationship with the young people, place, and community. I wanted to ensure the research would give back to the community in a meaningful way as the participants, inquiry team members, and I journeyed together in the process. Working with the

community and the young people to create the research design and intended outcomes enabled a process that allowed the community to hold me accountable. I had to answer to them about every study design choice, finding, and recommendation within the research project. I was intentional about working with community members on my inquiry team, the young people on the research youth advisory team, and the organizational partner at every stage of the research to ensure that I recounted their knowledge and stories honestly and from their worldviews.

Bannock Babes, Research Youth Advisory Team

The primary purpose of this research was to empower the GWL young people in this study. I tried to provide as much authority and power to the young people in this research process as they were comfortable receiving. As a result, six people within GWL formed a research youth advisory team (RYAT) for this inquiry. The RYAT met seven times to help codesign all research sessions for this study. At the first session of the formation of this collective, the young people were given the opportunity to create a group name for themselves, and the formation of the Bannock Babes, the RYAT, was created for this study. I confided with the Bannock Babes at every stage of this research process, and they were a vital part in keeping me accountable to the community and the young people involved in this research. These young people were the driving force behind the research questions, choice of methods, piloting the methods, sequencing of the methods, data analysis, and recommendations. Lastly, honorariums were given to the Bannock Babes for their participation in this study as a means to show my gratitude for the time and knowledge given to this research. All Bannock Babe members signed a privacy agreement and consent form prior to taking part in the research (see Appendix A).

Inquiry Team

The Masters of Arts in Leadership program at Royal Roads University requires an inquiry team to support the completion of a student's thesis project. My inquiry team provided guidance and support on the research design, while also performing assigned roles and duties assigned to support the young people within the organization during this research process. All inquiry team members signed the Letter of Agreement for Inquiry Team Members prior to the start of the research (Appendix B). My inquiry team included Montanna Howe, a GWL board director, teacher, and active mentor in GWL programming, and Toni Gladstone, another GWL active mentor and an Indigenous enhancement teacher in the Vancouver School District. Additionally, Toni was the point person who connected me to the Knowledge Keeper involved in this study. The inquiry team assisted my research and helped to recruit and support the Bannock Babes in the GWL organization, review the methods and questions during the research design, analyze the data, and provide inputs to the desired outputs for this research.

Involvement with Elder and Knowledge Keeper

Elders and Knowledge Keepers are an essential part of Indigenous culture because of the role they play in community and the traditional and cultural knowledge and customs they hold and impart to the community (Archibald, 2001; Lavallée, 2009; Lickers, 2016). Lavallée (2009) explained Elders and Knowledge Keepers "carry the traditional teachings, the ceremonies, and the stories of all relations" (p. 27). In her editorial article, Archibald's (2001) shared, "In my many talks with Chief Khot-LaCha, he reinforced the importance of seeking Elders who has acquired traditional knowledge, especially traditional ecological knowledge, and those who took on the important responsibility of teaching the younger generation" (p. 1). For my research to be

carried out responsibly, especially as a non-Indigenous researcher striving to employ an IM approach, it was important for the research to engage with a Knowledge Keeper or Elder to ensure that the work was aligned with Indigenous knowledge and that the process was done in a good way. Additionally, GWL programming regularly engages Elders and Knowledge Keepers in programs with young people throughout the year and was a natural process for this study. It was also important for this research to create space for the young people to learn Indigenous leadership directly from a Knowledge Keeper or Elder in the community. Lickers (2016) explained this importance in his Indigenous youth leadership study, stating, "Elders and community representatives integrate Indigenous leadership philosophies and ideals into their teachings. Through experientially learning activities, youth gain insightful experience and knowledge about leadership from an Indigenous perspective" (p. 27). For this process, I asked for support from my inquiry team member, Toni Gladstone, who was already in relations with a Knowledge Keeper in the community. She invited the Knowledge Keeper into this study to help support this process and to engage with the young people who would be engaged in this study. It was also beneficial to have a Knowledge Keeper who was already connected to this community, and who already had relationships with some of the young people in the research prior to this inquiry. Additionally, to show my appreciation and gratitude for the Knowledge Keeper's time spent on this project and with the young people, I offered gifts and an honorarium as part of this process.

Data Collection Methods

In this study, I employed qualitative methods that were participatory and aimed to create generative dialogue and reflexive-based conversations and stories. The data collection methods

chosen for this study were narrative métissage, sticky notes, and a sharing circle. As I employed a combined YPAR and IM approach, I codesigned and cofacilitated all methods with the RYAT, the Bannock Babes, and in consultation with the inquiry team. Additionally, as I was working with young people, it was important to seek out research methods that participants would be familiar with and comfortable engaging in. One of the guiding principles I wanted to explore in all my chosen methods was storytelling. Many researchers have noted the power of story in Indigenous epistemologies (Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2021; Lavallée, 2009; Lickers, 2016; Wilson, 2008). Kovach (2021) described, "Within Indigenous societies, story and knowing have been tightly bound together as a legitimate form of understanding since time immemorial" (p. 157). The purpose of this research project was to create opportunities for young people to create, share, and learn from stories, themselves, and each other. As Kovach (2021) explained, "Story nurtures relationships. Story kindles reciprocity. Story compels responsibility. Story thrives when there is respect. Story is a gift. And in research, this changes everything" (p. 156). Overall, I wanted to highlight the transformational process of story in different research methods, which enabled the young people to sit in stories and reflect on the learnings that surfaced.

Project Participants

The GWL young people are 99% Indigenous, Black, or people of colour (IBPoC) ranging from the ages of 11–25 years and representing over 25 nations across Canada and the world. GWL offers programs to more than 120 young people, and more than 30 adult mentors support the programs. For this study, my team engaged 18 young people in the organization. All participants were between the ages of 13–22 years. Participants were both Indigenous and non-Indigenous and all female-identifying young people. Table 1 breaks down the participant

involvement throughout the project. It was important for me to honour that knowledge comes

from people of all ages and not limit participants' ages in the study. Furthermore, I wanted to

ensure that the voices from each tier of young people in the GWL organization would be

represented for this research. As a result, within the research, the young people had

representation from each of the different youth tiers in the GWL organization.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Attribute and Involvement

Participants	Research Design Sessions	Narrative Métissage	Sticky Notes	Sharing Circle	Action Planning Sessions
9 – Indigenous	3	9	9	9	2
7 – Non-Indigenous	3	9	9	7	3
16 – Total	6	18	18	16	5

Participant Recruitment

For this research inquiry, participants had to have been part of the GWL programs for a

minimum of 1 year and actively engaged in weekly sessions since the beginning of the school

year in September. The organizational partner had outlined these criteria as a preference at the

beginning of the research design. The Bannock Babes were responsible for recruiting fellow

young people into this study. My original intent was for me to invite prospective participants to

join the study; however, as an active mentor in the GWL organization, I had a perceived power-

over relationship with the young people in the organization. To mitigate this power-over

relationship, the Bannock Babes and I decided all invitations, participant acceptance, and

withdrawals would be assigned to the members of the Bannock Babes, as they were deemed

peers and of equal power relations to all prospective participants in the study. I informed

participants the project's purpose through a research letter of participation (Appendix C)

detailing the project's scope, design, and outputs. Bannock Babes gave the letter to prospective

participants in hard copy form during weekly programs for interested individuals to take home to

their parents or guardians. The Bannock Babes told interested participants to connect with a

RYAT member to confirm their participation in the study. I noted in the participation letter that

all interactions involving withdrawal would be dealt with by a Bannock Babe member, as I

sought to mitigate my power-over conflict of interest. Additionally, the young person could

withdraw without concern of their relationship with me or with inquiry team members. As

participants' ages ranged between 13–22 years, GWL and Royal Roads University required

signed consent by participants and their parents or guardians for all participants under the age of

18 years (see Appendix D).

Study Conduct

The Bannock Babes and I conducted this study in four parts: In Part 1, my inquiry team

helped me recruit six young people who formed the Bannock Babes, my RYAT, to help with the

research codesign. In Part 2, the Bannock Babes, inquiry team, and I held gatherings with 18

youth participants who engaged in three data-gathering sessions. In Part 3, I held

postengagement sessions with the Bannock Babes and the inquiry team to analyze the data

gathered. Lastly, in Part 4, I held two action-planning engagement sessions with the Bannock

Babes to analyze the data, review findings, and create recommendations from this study.

Part 1: Codesign with Bannock Babes and Inquiry Team

The codesign with Bannock Babes, the RYAT, was one of the most integral parts of this research. As a researcher employing a combined methodological framework of YPAR and IM in this study, it was vital for me to have young people as the guiding voices for this research design. Fostering relationships with the Bannock Babes and engaging them in multiple sessions to build relations during this process was a crucial aspect of holding myself accountable to the community and the prospective young people I was hoping to engage in this study. As a result, my inquiry team and I met with the Bannock Babes in four separate sessions to create the research design. The first introductory session introduced the research process and the research idea to the young people. The aim was also to understand what the young people wanted out of this research journey. For every session, we began the session with an opening circle to give each person space to share whatever was needed so that they could start in a good way. In the opening circles, each person was invited to share their name, where they came from, how they identified, what brought them to the specific day's workshop, and how they felt in the moment. We closed each session with a meal together to ensure that we were ending in relations with one another. Starting and ending each session in "a good way" was one of the teachings I have learned in the community and from an Elder. This was important for me to carry forward in every interaction I had with the young people in this process, whereby we ensure that each person feels whole from beginning to end in all of our interactions with one another.

For the second research design session, my inquiry team and I presented the Bannock Babes with a methods menu (Appendix E) that outlined the potential methods that could be chosen for the research. The session started with an opening circle. The purpose of this session

was to introduce the methods through active experimentation so that the young people could experience them all before deciding which method to choose for the research design. After working through the methods, we asked the Bannock Babes to discuss which methods they preferred. The Bannock Babes also considered and finalized the sequencing of the methods for the research during this session. The young people discussed how they wanted to start the research study with personal reflections looking inwards to begin the research and slowly transitioning to thinking outside of themselves and alongside their peers. As a result, the sequence of the chosen methods started with a narrative métissage session, then followed with a sticky notes session, and ended with a sharing circle. Additionally, in this session, the Bannock Babes finalized the research session outline and questions (Appendix F), in which they detailed how they wanted to open and close the research project. The Bannock Babes decided to open the research process with a cultural session with our invited Knowledge Keeper, Amanda White of Haida Nation; this cultural session was not recorded, as it did not contribute data to the inquiry. The Bannock Babe team thought it would be best to open with a meal and a circle session with Amanda to begin good relations for the rest of the research project.

In the third and fourth research design sessions, the Bannock Babes reviewed the final research design methods and questions and they practised facilitating the data-gathering methods. An essential aspect of the research was to create youth-informed research questions, as the methods were designed for young people. I was cognizant going into this research that the original wording of my inquiry questions would have to be simplified and rewritten in a form that was jargon-free and easy to understand for the young people answering the questions. For this reason, the Bannock Babes helped formulate the final questions in the engagement sessions.

We dedicated 3 hours to workshopping the creation of the final research questions in the final planned research design days. Additionally, I intentionally made time for the young people to practise conducting the methods to ensure that they felt comfortable facilitating the larger study group. The purpose of these sessions were to help build the confidence in the young people as they practised and became more comfortable with the research process.

Part 2: Gatherings With Participants

Circles. Within the GWL organization, circles start and end every session with the young people. This practice continued in the research when the Bannock Babes and I met with participants at every engagement session. We used circles in every engagement session to bring the collective together and set the intentional space we wished to hold for each other in our gatherings. Gathering in a circle is an act of ceremony based on the ideal of respect, in which individuals hold space for everyone to be heard and supported (Lavallée, 2009; Wilson, 2008). The circles grounded us in relationships with one another as equals and helped set the tone that we were coming together as one community in this study. In the opening circles, Bannock Babes invited participants to share their names, where they come from, how they identify, what brought them to the specific day's workshop, and how they felt in the moment. Finally, we ended the sessions with a closing circle that asked the participants to give one reflection word for the day and a chance to share any remaining thoughts that needed to be spoken.

Opening with Cultural Session. To start this research properly and respectfully and in line with Indigenous ways of knowing and customs, the Bannock Babes and I opened the research session with a land acknowledgement, a meal together, and had our invited Knowledge Keeper to open our relations in a good way with a circle session with her. Appropriate cultural

protocols were observed before each engagement session began, with the offering of gifts of

tobacco and a blanket to our invited Knowledge Keeper upon her arrival. It was important for us

to begin the engagement with everyone with a meal to create a sense of belonging and relations

before starting officially into the research engagement sessions. After the meal, we began our

time together by opening with our invited Knowledge Keeper to start the session together. This

time was set aside to give space to the Knowledge Keeper to share what she felt was important

with the young people. Again, Bannock Babes opened in a circle and allowed everyone to share

who they were, how they identified, and how they felt in the moment. Afterwards, the time was

given to the Knowledge Keeper, who shared stories with the young people about her experiences

growing up in her community and the impact of strong female matriarchs (Amanda White, Haida

Nation, personal communication, March 26, 2022). Amanda spoke of how leadership was taught

and modelled to her in her upbringing and opened herself up to the young people to ask

questions.

Narrative Métissage Research Session. The first engagement session with the young

people was the narrative métissage method. This method was chosen for the first data-gathering

session with the participants. This arts-based method of inquiry invites individuals to share

personal narratives while interweaving stories (Etmanski et al., 2013; Lowan-Trudeau, 2012).

This method enabled facilitators to invite individuals to coconstruct knowledge about

themselves, each other, and the larger community (Bishop et al., 2019; Lowan-Trudeau, 2012). It

is "a way of merging and blurring genres, texts, and identities; an active literary stance, political

stance and pedagogical praxis" (Chambers et al., 2002, para. 1). The Bannock Babes chose this

method due to its focus on reflexivity, storytelling, and deliberately interweaving stories to create

knowledge and connections and because they felt it was most conducive to personal reflection. They also liked how the method employed both singular and group-based participation. They considered how their fellow young people would be guarded at first and required time alone in their reflections and ideas before they would be comfortable sharing with the larger group. The Bannock Babes chose this method to explore data regarding participants' understanding of what leadership meant to them and to investigate their experience in enacting leadership in the GWL community.

The Bannock Babes started this engagement session by explaining the method to the group and then read out an example of forms of métissages the young people would create together. The Bannock Babes gave participants time to write about how they had experienced, learned, and enacted leadership in their lives in the first narrative métissage. In the second narrative métissage, the Bannock Babes asked the GWL young people to answer the question: what Indigenous ways of knowing might you want to include in a future GWL model? The participants were given a set time for a free writing period while listening to the music. The Bannock Babes chose to play classical string instrumental pop music covers. The intent was to have familiar music that made them feel safe and comfortable but to not distract the young people with lyrics during their period of reflective writing. Participants were then invited to re-read what they had written in their reflective pieces, decide what parts they would like to share in the next stage of the method, and strike out anything they wanted to keep to themselves. The Bannock Babes then organized participants into small groups to share their narratives and interweave their stories into a single piece they would be comfortable sharing with the larger group. The method closed with the group coming together in a circle to share their woven

métissages and having a space to share how they felt participating in the process and what surfaced as themes. At the end of the session, the narrative métissage pieces and personal reflection sheets were returned to each participant to review and strike out any data they did not want included in the research.

Sticky Notes Research Session. The Bannock Babes chose the second method of sticky notes due to its familiarity with the participants and the potential of generating dialogue and discussion. For this session, the young people explored leadership values they appreciated in leadership styles and leaders they looked up to and wanted to emulate. For this session, the Bannock Babes organized participants into three groups. Each group had five separate flipchart papers around the room with the following questions:

- What values do I see in leaders I appreciate?

- What values are important to think about when leading others?

- How do I want to lead others?

- How do I want others to lead me?

- What values do we want the GWL leadership framework to have?

Participants were told to take time to reflect on their own experiences in life or to recall from moments of observation and write down their thoughts on the question on sticky notes. Each participant received a stack of sticky notes so they could record many thoughts as they wished on each flipchart paper. Once everyone felt satisfied with their notes, the small group came together and read the responses and then engaged in dialogue and story with one another. The two inquiry members and I wrote field notes during this process while the Bannock Babes facilitated the discussions. Each group rotated to the following flip chart paper until all groups

had discussed all questions. The Bannock Babes then brought the collective together in a larger

group and discussed their experiences with the method and themes highlighted in their group

dialogues.

        Sharing Circle Research Session. The Bannock Babes thought it was best to end the

research in sharing circles as this gave participants the opportunity to speak from the heart and

head most freely. Wilson (2008) explained how circles "are based upon the ideal of respect for

participants in the circle, where everyone has a chance to speak and be heard" (p. 41). Two

participants decided to not take part in this session; therefore, 14 participants attended the final

session. The Bannock Babes organized participants into two sharing circles and facilitated the

session. They explained the significance of a sharing circle and shared the principles that the

circle held (see Appendix E). The purpose of this method was to explore leadership experiences

and assumptions that young people faced. At the beginning of this study, I had no intention of

exploring leadership assumptions, as I believed it beyond the scope of this study. However, as I

was working with the Bannock Babes and designing this inquiry, the topic of leadership

assumptions and perceptions on youth kept emerging in conversations. The Bannock Babes

specifically asked for a space to "vent" about how leadership assumptions played into their

leadership perceptions. They were motivated to explore leadership assumptions put on young

people as young female leaders in their community. As I sought to explore the issues young

people put forward in this study, the Bannock Babes and I decided to include a final sharing

circle session in our leadership exploration to ask what leadership assumptions youth see and feel

when exercising leadership in school and community. While four adult mentors and I attended

this session, as the Bannock Babes wanted to hear the perspectives of adults in this session, adult

attendees' answers were not included within the data coding and analysis. To ensure that the young people's voices were centred in this session, the adults spoke last in the circles and allowed for the young people to share the first two rounds of each question before they would respond. The Bannock Babes and I recorded the session using a voice recorder, and the sharing circle lasted for 44 minutes. The audio file was downloaded and saved onto my desktop computer and uploaded to Otter.ai online for transcription.

Part 3: Data Analysis with the Research Youth Advisory Team

After the gathering sessions from the three research engagement sessions. I held a research session with the Bannock Babes, where I facilitated a session on data analysis and coding. During this session, I introduced the Bannock Babes to the different software and data analysis methods I used to analyze the data from the study: Delve coding software, Microsoft Excel sheets, and Otter.ai transcriptions. The Bannock Babes reviewed all the data from the study and my initial coding for the research, and then proceeded to code the research data. I then cross-referenced the newly coded data and with the themes that surfaced from my original data to arrive at the study findings and conclusions.

Part 4: Action Planning Post Engagement Meeting

In the final phase of the research, I facilitated an action planning post engagement session with the Bannock Babes. During this meeting, the group formulated the recommendations they wanted to implement after reviewing the findings and conclusions from the study. In this meeting, the Bannock Babes and I utilized the YPAR methodology by engaging in decisions about future changes. Together we cocreated the GWL Leadership Framework discussed in

detail in Chapter 5. It was also during these sessions that the Bannock Babes reviewed and verified all written study findings and conclusions for this thesis.

Data Harvesting

All parts of the study were audio recorded. Additionally, inquiry team members and I wrote observation field notes during the methods included in the data. I used the software Otter.ai to transcribe audio files and then printed the data transcriptions for youth participants to review their own words if they chose to. This process ensured transcripts accurately reflected the participants' meanings and enabled individuals to strike out content they did not feel comfortable sharing. All creative pieces produced during the methods were digitally copied (with participants' consent) and given descriptions provided by participants. The copyright for all creative products remains with the participants and the GWL organization. I ensured all data collected were stored appropriately in a password-protected hard drive and hard copies of data were secured in a locked cabinet in my office.

Data Analysis and Validity

Data analysis in action-oriented research is unique as it utilizes a collaborative and participatory approach with its participants and actively involves the community members or stakeholders in the data analysis process (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). Throughout the process, I addressed the four aspects of Chilisa's (2012) definition of validity and reliability by establishing procedures and strategies to meet the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of this study. I relied on researcher reflexivity and triangulation to meet Royal Roads University's reliability and validity requirements. I used triangulation to address the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of this research. As Chilisa (2012) described,

triangulation "is based on the assumption that the use of multiple methods, data sources, or investigators can eliminate biases in a study" (p. 167). Additionally, triangulation ensures that the variables and findings studied are consistent and that researchers are disciplined in their efforts to collect, analyze, and interpret data in study (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014; Salkind, 2010). For this study, I employed methodological triangulation through the design of the various methods of narrative métissage, sharing circle and sticky note. Additionally, my data analysis was informed by both a member of the inquiry team and the Bannock Babes. Triangulation enhanced the credibility of my research study by utilizing multiple methods and observers to analyze the research data. It allowed for a deeper understanding of the research questions by providing multiple contexts and sources to examine. Moreover, it provided more opportunities to explore multiple realities by providing perspectives from both the RYAT and the inquiry team on the questions examined in this research project. These processes were vital to the reflexive nature of the research to ensure my biases were checked, as reliability and validity of data can be increased through data triangulation.

Rigour and Trustworthiness

To ensure I upheld the principles of rigour and trustworthiness in this qualitative research process, I worked closely alongside my inquiry team, the Bannock Babes, and participating young people in all stages of the research inquiry. I conducted peer debriefing and member checks with the Bannock Babes and study participants. My inquiry team, the Bannock Babes, and I conducted the data analysis in four phases. The first analysis phase began with member checks with the participants reviewing their stories and themes found in the data engagement sessions. The participants completed this directly after each research session, as facilitators

offered them time to strike out any comments they wished to keep confidential and then discuss any themes found during the research sessions. I included inquiry team members' fieldnotes as part of this initial phase. Within my research, I conducted the initial thematic analysis of the data individually first. I then tasked an inquiry team member and the Bannock Babes to further analyze the data as a second layer of analysis that I then cross-referenced to develop findings and themes. In the next phase, I cross-analyzed the pooled data from the first two phases taken from the participants, the inquiry team, and the Bannock Babes. The final phase involved bringing my collected findings to the Bannock Babes and the inquiry team to ensure that I presented the data accurately to their intentions.

Ethical Implications

My research complied with the Royal Roads University (2020) *Research Ethics Policy* and the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018). To ensure I adhered to the ethical standards for research being conducted in Canada, it was imperative for my research to meet the three core principles outlined in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement*: respect for persons, concern for welfare, and justice (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018).

Respect for Persons

Under the principle of respect for persons in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018), the researcher has a moral obligation to respect the autonomy of participants and those who may have impaired or diminished autonomy. A mechanism that I used in my research to adhere to this principle was the collection of free, informed, voluntary, and ongoing consent. As my research involved young people, informed

consent was critical at every stage of the study. I obtained ongoing consent to ensure participants' comfort levels remained respected and addressed. Before starting each research engagement session, the Bannock Babes and I clearly informed participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any time should they feel uncomfortable in the process. As stated earlier, participants who decided to withdraw during the research project were able to inform a member of Bannock Babes (the RYAT) and withdraw without any harm or fear of consequences.

Concern for Welfare

According to the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018), concern for welfare requires a researcher to ensure there are no exposures to unnecessary risk and to minimize risks within the research. As a researcher employing a YPAR methodology with youth participants, I carefully considered the risks and potential benefits of the research as it related to my youth participants. As some participants were under the age of 18 years, I ensured all adult research members and inquiry team members, myself included, had completed the vulnerable sector check and criminal record check prior to the start of the research. I included this information on all consent forms given to the participants. The welfare of a participant includes any impact on their physical, mental, and spiritual health. To safeguard the potential impact on participants' health, I engaged two active mentors in the GWL organization to be members on my inquiry team to ensure youth participants felt safe and comfortable with all adult research members. Additionally, I asked the GWL president, Bannock Babes, and the Knowledge Keeper in the study to support the participants throughout the research if issues arose. Additionally, as my research involved Indigenous participants, I ensured my research integrated the First Nations Information Governance (n.d.) ownership, control,

access, and possession principles (see also Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018).

Lastly, as I employed a YPAR methodology, I needed to consider additional ethical implications

to ensure that participating in this study did not place the involved young people in undue risk or

harm to themselves, their families, schools, and communities (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014).

Justice

The *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018)

defined the principle of justice as "the obligation to people fairly and equitably" (p. 8). For this

research, the Bannock Babes accepted GWL participants on a first-come, first-serve basis. In

conducting this research, the Bannock Babes and I purposely sought representation from all

youth tiers of the GWL organization to ensure equitable representation throughout this research

process.

Overall, I ensured the research process and related actions did not disempower the young

people (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). Throughout the research process, it was important to

be cognizant of my reflexivity as a researcher as I continually reflected upon Best's (2007) four

principles, which I believe should be considered in any methodologies working with young

people:

1. A sustained concern for and consideration of the complexities of power and
   exploitation in the research encounter.

2. An acknowledgement of the connection between power and knowledge. Such an
   acknowledgement requires that we recognize that the accounts we provide shape and
   construct reality as much as they describe it. Youth researchers play a significant role

in shaping the social experiences of children and youth through the discursive

constructions or accounts we provide.

3. A desire to conduct sound ethical research that empowers youth and children and to

    find ways to improve the conditions under which their lives unfold.

4. A commitment to radical reflexivity that interrogates the varied points of difference

    that intersect in our own lives and those we study. (p. 9)

I found the formation of the RYAT and inquiry team to be imperative to ensure I abided

by the three principles of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (Canadian Institutes of Health

Research et al., 2018) throughout my research. I leaned on them to guide the research process

and to ensure that the research design and implementation posed no potential risk or harm to

prospective participants.

Challenge with Ethical Review Board

I found the Royal Roads University Research Ethics Board (REB) process to be the most

challenging stage of my study due to the scope of my study and the methodological approach of

my research design that employed combined principles of IM and YPAR. From the start of my

research conceptualization to the final stages of the REB process, I was made aware of the

barriers that lay ahead of my prospective inquiry. The REB quickly raised concerns over the

level of objectivity I held and noted the power-over relationship with the prospective young

people in the research. Unfortunately, these concerns were in direct contrast to the Indigenous

paradigms of reciprocity, respect, and relationship accountability that I wanted to honour

throughout my research process. As Wilson (2008) explained,

If the researcher is separated from the research and it is taken away from its relationships,

it will not be accepted within an Indigenous paradigm. The research will not show respect

for the relationship between the research participants and topic . . . rather than the goals

of validity and reliability, research from an Indigenous paradigm should aim to be

authentic or credible. By that I mean the research must accurately reflect and build upon

the relationships between the ideas and participants. (p. 101)

I had to convince the Royal Roads University REB that my acknowledged relations in my

dual role as a trusted community member and researcher was a benefit to the research as opposed

to an area of concern. During this process, I leaned on Wilson's (2008) six questions when

considering an Indigenous research paradigm for my research reflections:

1. How do my methods help to build respectful relationships between the topic that I am
   studying and myself as a researcher (on multiple levels)?

2. How do my methods help to build respectful relationships between myself and the
   other research participants?

3. How can I relate respectfully to the other participants involved in this research so that
   together we can form a stronger relationship with the idea that we will share?

4. What is my role as a researcher in this relationship, and what are my responsibilities?

5. Am I being responsible in fulfilling my role and obligations to the other participants,
   to the topic and to all my relations?

6. What am I contributing or giving back to the relationships? Is the sharing, growth and
   learning that is taking place reciprocal? (p. 77)

These questions helped guide my research back to its purpose, and affirmed that I was keeping my research accountable to the young people I was hoping to work alongside and to the community I sought to support. It also provided a reference to articulate the need for my research to adapt to Indigenous paradigms based upon my research design and methodology, which created a pathway forward during this process.

Inquiry Outputs

At the onset of this inquiry, I hoped to achieve three outputs through this capstone. This final thesis is the first output, which, once approved, will be published through Royal Roads University. The second output is a new cocreated GWL youth leadership framework designed by and for youth as a foundational framework for the GWL leadership and mentorship programming. This foundational framework will be introduced in future GWL programs and may lead to a GWL leadership workbook. Lastly, the primary purpose of this thesis was the journey that each young person took throughout this research process. In conducting my research, I introduced this academic experience to young people to understand how they could inform and codesign a research project from conception to implementation. The growth and journey together has been one of the most rewarding takeaways from this research as the inquiry team, Bannock Babes, youth participants, and I sought to provide opportunities to empower the young people in the organization.

Contribution and Application

I frame this section from Cheryl Heykoop's focus of "what I expect," "what I would like," and "what I hope" with regards to a capstone project (C. Heykoop, personal communication, July 20, 2021). What I expected was to contribute a youth-centred and designed

youth leadership framework for the GWL organization. I wanted to go on this journey with the young people to explore their understanding of leadership and to cocreate something meaningful and tailored for the community. I hoped that this process would be engaging and transformational for me, my team, and my participants as we learn and come together in this project. I hoped to also emphasize the importance and strength of youth voice and youth agency in literature as well as design-making for leadership frameworks.

Chapter 4: Inquiry Project Findings

In this chapter, I present the learnings from the insights and perspectives of the 18 female-identifying young people who gave me the privilege of listening to their stories and experiences. This chapter is grounded in the young people's voices as this research intended to acknowledge their knowledge and perspectives. As a researcher, it was important for me to give voice to the young people by sharing their exact words in the study; therefore, throughout this chapter, I present the young people's words in *italics*. Quotations from specific individuals will be referenced by research session code followed by an attributed number to maintain participant anonymity: NM1 through to NM16 referring to data captured during the narrative métissage method, SN referring to the sticky notes method data, and SC1 through to SC16 for data captured during the sharing circle method.

Study Findings

As a researcher working alongside the young people, I had explicitly stated my intent to share their words in their form and vocabulary at the beginning of the study when we commenced on this journey together. Furthermore, the Bannock Babes reviewed and validated all of these learnings data dissemination sessions to create and share my findings with the group, inquiry team, and organizational partner. The following findings emerged from the knowledge and wisdoms shared in this study:

1. Young peoples' leadership understanding: *Leadership is listening, leadership through empathy, and leadership is tied to acts of service.*

2. Leadership Values that stood out to Young People: *Community and family, trust and understanding, care and kindness, and authenticity*

3. Role of Mentors in Youth Leadership Development*: "Trickle-down effect"*

4. Leadership learned through experiential learning and modelling

5. Tensions navigating leadership development as young people

6. GWL young people's connection to Indigenous ways of knowing and learnings in leadership development in GWL

Finding 1: Young People's Understanding of Leadership

Leadership is Listening. "We have three ears to listen with, two on the sides of our head and one in our heart" (Archibald, 2008, p. 76). One consistent theme in the study was the importance of listening in the young people's conceptualization of leadership. The young people frequently noted the importance of listening when defining and explaining leadership. As one young person noted, "*Leadership is listening with empathy*" (NM4). Another young person defined leadership by stating, "*Leadership means listening to understand and not to respond*" (NM11). The value behind listening first as a leader was integral for the young people as they described the need to understand where people are coming from and how they might think in a situation as a leader before they could try to take any actions to lead. As one young person expressed, "*You can't lead if you haven't listened first—that's not leading, that's telling other people what you want*" (NM5). Another participant shared, "*The quality I have of being a leader is listening and to be understanding as the most important values to being a leader*" (NM9). The majority of the young people frequently expressed their understanding of leadership as a relational process built upon listening first to build mutual trust and understanding. Several of the young people spoke of the challenges of communication in leadership when there is a lack of mutual understanding between the leader and those they are trying to lead. One young person

shared, "*Communication is great, but if you don't have understanding, communication doesn't always work*" (SH6). Additionally, the majority of the young people spoke of their experiences in which they had observed adults or peers lead in mainstream hierarchical leadership styles that did not respect all perspectives. They spoke of their displeasure of being led without being heard and acknowledged. Furthermore, they described good leaders as individuals who took the time to understand and acknowledge what is being told to them. One young person explained, "*A leader can also be a person that others go to talk to because they are good listeners*" (NM10). They drew from their own experiences of having mentors and leaders taking the time to listen to them and providing a space for them to feel heard. During the sticky note session, a young person described the importance of taking time to develop leadership skills, stating, "*When someone is leading me, I want them to understand what I have to say and not rush through things*" (SN).

Being present in one's interactions and leadership practices was one of the lessons that the young people noted through their interactions with Elders and Knowledge Keepers in the community. It is essential for people to listen with their whole being, showing whoever they are, ensuring that their voice and space are respected fully in their interactions. In this way, people are creating mutual trust and space for each other in their interactions and the community. Furthermore, a lesson learnt from Knowledge Keeper Amanda White, of the Haida Nation, is the importance of learning through stories and being present with any community people are a part of. She shared stories of her past, recounting the significance of learning in the moment with her community, by watching, listening, and learning through hands-on experience. One of the lessons she recounted was how leadership to her started with the first two letters "L for listening" and "E for Empathy"—people must listen with both the head and the heart (Amanda White of

Haida Nation, personal communication, March, 26, 2022). As noted in the fieldnotes of the study, leadership started with listening with both the head and the heart, as individuals needed to understand the different perspectives and to ground themselves in knowledge, place, and understanding before they could respectfully move forward. Overall, various young people spoke about the responsibility and accountability of listening when put in a leadership position; they voiced how it was essential to understand the different viewpoints of people they are leading before being able to properly lead responsibly.

Leadership Through Empathy. Related to the theme of leadership as listening were the responses that spoke about leadership through empathy. A majority of young people spoke of their appreciation of leadership in nonconventional manners, which credited leaders who led from behind and through empathy. The idea of leading from behind focused on a leader's interpersonal abilities that focused on a leader's ability to take a step back to assess their interactions with others and lead through "*quiet leadership*" (NM2) and leading through empathy. As one young person explained, "*A leader won't always lead by being loud and very interactive but by being quiet and understanding*" (NM2). The idea of leadership through empathy focused on individuals taking action in smaller everyday acts to ensure that those they were leading would feel supported and empowered. Associated with the idea of leading with empathy was the notion of a leader having the ability and awareness to step aside in situations. As a young person shared,

> *Sometimes it's not your job to lead, but to just listen and be an ally and an accomplice.*
> *You can use your unearned advantages that put you in power to amplify voices that need*
> *to be heard instead, you can step back and listen.* (NM5)

Leadership from this perspective calls for leaders to know when to step aside for others to step up. Several of the young people spoke of the importance of knowing when to be vocal as a leader in front or when to lead in a way that allowed themselves to just support one another. They talked about the importance of knowing when to speak up and when not to. Leadership through empathy and quiet leadership was described as a means to amplify and empower the voices of individuals they wanted to support and lift up.

Leadership is Tied to Acts of Service. At first, many young people spoke about their understanding of leadership in formal settings in relation to work and school such as, school projects, student council, organized community events, or sports teams. However, as the conversations deepened, I noted how many young people spoke about leadership as different skill sets that would help them take action in everyday life situations, from school to family to community endeavours. A few young people shared that leadership situations are developed and enacted in everyday situations, in which leadership skills could be helpful in any aspect of life, in informal or formal settings. Leaders were described as individuals who "*always step up whenever they are needed, even if they can only help a little bit they are still there*" (NM12). Another one young person shared,

> *I have experienced [leadership] in different settings whether through work, leadership involvements and other ways like basketball. Leadership is everywhere and there is no good or bad leadership, it's in the way of taking action or doing something upon it.* (NM13)

For many young people, leadership was how someone took action alongside another individual. One young person described how she enacts leadership in family settings: *"I have experienced*

[leadership] when I'm dropping off my siblings off to daycare on my way to school with my sister. When my mom is showing me and my siblings things you need to learn" (NM4). Within the study, participants frequently described leadership as a way to help another individual or community: *"Leadership is when someone takes a step up to help others"* (NM12). Many young people described leaders as those who supported the development of peers and students in younger grades. Another described how leadership happens when someone helps out with things:

> *Leadership is when someone takes a step up to help others. They take charge in certain situations. If someone needs help with something there's usually someone there to take the lead and say, "Hey, can I help you?" So nobody is alone in any situation.* (NM12)

A common theme found in both sessions was how young people equated leadership to acts of service that individuals choose to support in the community. For many, the purpose of leadership was tied to community responsibilities and to the ability to make positive change in their community through supportive interactions with peers or community.

Finding 2: Young People's Values Exploration of Leadership – Community and Family, Trust and Understanding, Care and Kindness, and Authenticity

The young people in this study designed a values exploration to understand what values were important to them when considering leadership. The participants were asked what values they appreciate in leaders they look up to, how they want to lead others, and, lastly, what values they want a future GWL leadership framework to have. During the sticky note session, the young people drew upon each other's stories and experiences that linked to their understanding of leadership. The values identification and exploration during the sticky note session was an integral piece of connection and learning for the young people as they could reflect upon

personal values tied to their understanding of leadership. The following are the main values

connected to the young peoples' understanding of leadership.

Community and Family. Through group dialogue in the sessions, all the young people

shared that much of their experience of learning leadership was tied to community and having a

sense of family in the GWL community. Leadership was intrinsically tied to a sense of belonging

in the community. When speaking and writing about their leadership understanding, community,

and family consistently surfaced as influencing how young people understood leadership and

how they wanted to apply leadership. The majority of the young people spoke of acts of services

in the community as a means to exercise their leadership capacity. Community and family were

also the main sites of leadership learning for many of the young people. When given the

opportunity to describe when leadership happens, one young person explained,

> *All the time. Maybe you won't be the main person but being a leader is an everyday*
>
> *thing. It's behind the scenes and all around. Being a leader is an honour to be a leader*
>
> *because you are given the strength that other people don't have and you guide and*
>
> *support them selflessly and honourably.* (NM8)

In defining leadership and describing personal understandings of leadership experiences,

the young people consistently spoke about the responsibility of leadership toward their

community and the desire to help others.

Trust and Understanding. The words trust and trustworthy were some of the most

consistent values that young people brought up when discussing leadership values. Many young

people spoke of the need for a leader to be trustworthy for them to be comfortable being

mentored and led by them. As one young person explained, *"The two main values that I see in*

the leaders that I appreciate are trust and flexibility. Personally for me, if I don't trust someone I will not open up to them" (SN). The young people discussed the experiences they encountered when dealing with different leadership styles and leaders. Every participant spoke about the need for a trusting relationship to be established in leadership situations. For example, one young person stated that leadership "*requires a connection to those that are leading and having someone you can depend on"* (SN). A young person also shared, *"If you don't have that consistent leader to trust, then there is no point"* (SN). In all the field notes, I noted how the notion of trust was tied to the importance of relationship building in leadership. To the majority of the young people, being a leader was characterized by their ability to build trusting relationships with the people they hoped to lead.

Care and Kindness. Young people shared the importance of care and kindness as values they wanted to be portrayed in leadership styles they wanted to emulate. One young person stated, *"Without caring, it is hard to be a good leader"* (SN). Kindness was a value noted in all groups and discussions in the different sticky notes groups. In some discussions, there were confessions of how care in leadership was often overlooked as a value in traditional leadership views. For example, one young person shared, *"I think caring can be underestimated in leadership"* (SN). While another young person addressed how *"sometimes kindness can be equated with being a pushover, but you can be kind and firm and fair"* (SN). Moreover, another young person explained, *"I think sometimes leadership is not associated with the word kind or care"* (SC9). As a group, during the sticky notes session, the young people noticed *"We want to be led with kindness"* (SN). Additionally, a young person noted, *"I would hope to be cared for;*

therefore, I would want to lead with care" (SN). Care and Kindness were mentioned in relation

to leading with empathy and compassion for others when considering leadership acts.

      Authenticity. The young people in the study spoke on the value of authenticity in

leadership roles, *"to be true, unapologetically themselves"* (NM11). Participants attributed two

different meanings to the word authenticity: the first being the ability to understand oneself and

their unique gifts, and the second being the ability to lead in a way that suits an individual's gifts

and self. As one young person explained, *"Everyone here is a leader in their own way"* (NM14).

The young people recognized the need to acknowledge different leadership styles to find one that

suited their personality most. They spoke about wanting to learn more about collaborative

leadership models that reflected a more democratic way of leading with people and not for

people. Moreover, they spoke of their appreciation of the mentors in their lives that fostered a

space that allowed for safe exploration and observations of leadership skills and desires. The

young people expressed their desire to acknowledge diverse leadership styles that would better

match the individual's personalities. Finally, there was a recognition that leadership models

needed to consider an individual's unique skills and context when leading. As one young person

stated, *"I really think there are different types of leadership styles, with different ways to lead"*

(SC4). Another young person explained, *"There are many ways you can lead, by listening, doing

as you're told and doing important stuff you are supposed to do"* (NM15). In their narrative

métissage and sharing circle sessions, young people spoke of the benefits of having different

leaders of different abilities coming together in collaboration. The young people saw the

differences of abilities as a strength in the community, as different leaders would fill different

gaps when collaborating together.

Finding 3: "Trickle-down effect" – Role of Mentors in Youth Leadership Development

 Mentors and Leaders in Their Lives. An emergent theme that the study repeatedly came across was the benefit of young people being able to see the pathway of intergenerational growth in the GWL programs. The young people spoke about the developmental pathway of leading in GWL, or as they called it the *"trickle-down effect . . . junior→ senior→ alumni→mentor"* (NM6), as an empowering leadership model that they appreciated. Many young people frequently spoke about their appreciation of mentoring and accessing opportunities to lead across all ages in their peers from Grade 7 to older peers who have graduated from the same high school to then come back and support as alumni volunteers. In the narrative métissage session, the young people were asked to reflect and write about their understanding of leadership and how they best learn leadership. Many young people spoke about the influences of mentors and good leaders in helping them understand leadership. They further discussed the impact of seeing adult mentors model various leadership styles that they would then try to emulate. My field notes revealed most young people described the influence of mentors and good leaders in their lives that affected their perception of leadership. One young person explained, *"How you start to mimic them and pick up a lot of their traits. . . . More accepting, they can help you come out of your comfort zone and inspire you to also become a leader"* (NM6). Another young person shared how *"having a good mentor/leader in my life affects me a lot, as it shows me what to do and not do. Surrounding yourself with good people and leaders/mentors for me is fundamental in my life to help me grow"* (NM15). Another theme touched upon was the positive impact of observing and shadowing mentors when the young people were discovering their leadership. A young person explained how having mentors in her life

sets an example for how you lead knowing what kind of style or certain tasks can develop your leadership. I feel that also having a good leader/mentor that has been through the process of finding their own leadership allows [you] to help your development and journey through that. (NM13)

The relationships fostered with mentors encouraged young people to step out of their comfort zones and gave them the confidence to explore their leadership journeys. As one young person shared, *"Personally a mentor figure has brought out my diverse, capable side who is brave enough to unlearn and accept failure"* (NM11). The majority of young people shared this sentiment as they spoke of the benefits of observing mentors and the power of watching leaders accept mistakes through a process of learning and unlearning. They spoke of their comfort level in having opportunities to lead alongside adult mentors and being comfortable with making mistakes as they knew that guidance and support would be readily offered to them.

Relatedly, many young people noted the importance of seeing various leadership styles by different mentors as well, insofar that it validated a recognition of different leadership styles working for different people. For example, one young person explained the impact of seeing mentors during weekly programs, noting that she learned from

mentors leading each Wednesday/Friday/power sessions. I watch other people lead and I tend to copy one thing they do and change it a bit to make it my own way to lead. So I learn by watching and listening, then make it my own. (NM2)

Observing different leadership styles in the same setting allowed the young people to appreciate the diversity of leadership styles. It also encouraged the young people to have confidence in themselves and be comfortable with their unique leadership styles. In my field notes, I remarked

on the benefits of having a variety of mentors to interact with, as the young people reflected on the strength of having multiple mentors to go to for different needs and strengths.

      Values influence. Young people in this research found having mentors and leaders in their lives created a *"mirror effect"* (SN) in influencing the leadership style and values that they embrace as a leader. A young person shared,

> *I think depending on the leadership in your life, it might affect your values because it*
> *could be a mirror effect. If they are older than you, you may automatically see them as a*
> *higher status and copy their leadership style rather than owning your own style, you have*
> *to be the same.* (NM7)

A young person shared how these relationships have *"shaped who I am. By having these great role models/leaders, it's helped me grow into the person I am today and has helped to develop my beliefs and values"* (NM14). Another young person shared her thoughts on how shadowing mentors or leaders in her life affected her behaviours:

> *If you have a good mentor/leader then you will try to be the best version of yourself as*
> *you don't want to let them down and all your values will be good values. You will*
> *collectively grow as your leader will try their best to get you out of your comfort zone.*
> *Development—you are always trying to be the best version of yourself, so development*
> *will come naturally without even thinking about it. As an example, I would've never been*
> *able to lead the way I am if it weren't for my amazing leaders in my life.* (NM2)

A third person spoke on the impact of mentors and leaders in her life:

> *[It] sets an example for how you lead knowing what kind of style or certain tasks can*
> *develop your leadership. I feel that also having a good leader/mentor that has been*

through the process of finding their own leadership allows to help your development and

journey through that. (NM13)

For some young people, values identification was more attainable as they observed and emulated the values of their mentors.

Finding 4: Leadership is Learned by Experiential Learning and Modelling

There was a level of uncertainty amongst the young people when they were first asked how they learned leadership best. The first response a young person said was, *"I don't know. Practice, Trying things. Watching other leaders and figuring out what makes them have an impact and trying to find those qualities"* (NM5). However, after looking at the data and reviewing my field notes, it was clear that most young people shared the importance of experiential learning and modelling.

Experiential Learning. There was a consensus in the data that explained how young people learn best through experiences and by leading through actions. Many of the young people in the study discussed the importance of experiential learning and spoke positively about the opportunities to enact leadership skills in real-life situations when asked how they learn leadership best. Participants spoke about the benefits of being in a supported space and opportunities to enact new skill sets and leadership styles that they wanted to figure out for themselves. The majority noted the importance of learning from mistakes and having the ability to try new skills in the supportive environment GWL offered. A young person explained,

I learn best through trial and error. Although leadership is not a science, but it takes a

great deal of experiment. By working through a plethora of leadership traits I've

admired, I've learned to execute in a similar way. With this, I have adjusted qualities to

my own style. (NM11)

The young people noted the importance of *"venturing out and trying new things"* (NM3).

Another described how, "*I learn leadership skills the best by actively doing something with a*

demonstration or just being told to do something, in potlatch, then working from there, then

growing and developing off what I was put in" (NM8), or by *"watching other people lead and*

copying what they do and make it your own" (NM3). Finally, through group dialogue during the

sticky notes session and the sharing circle conversations, young people discussed the power of

learning through mistakes and the importance of unlearning in their experiences of leadership

opportunities. Learning through experience was a vital way that many found foundational in their

leadership development.

Learning Through Modelling. In relation to experiential learning, the young people

spoke of the influence of having supportive leaders or mentors to help guide their practical

applications of skills or, as they called it, *"Practice with guidance"* (NM17). As one young

person explained,

> *For me, I think I learn best through experiences and connecting with people as well as*
>
> *reflecting on myself. From experiences, I am able to learn and grow and develop my*
>
> *skills more. As well as other people can see the skills that you may already have, need to*
>
> *learn or are learning. As well as they can point out what as well.* (NM13)

Young people noted how leadership skills were not formally taught in school; instead,

much of it was learned through observation and in community. Actively witnessing other

mentors and leaders enacting leadership practices was a common theme expressed by multiple

young people in their narrative métissage reflections. One young person described,

> *The way I learn leadership skills the best is more visual. I like to learn when I see*
>
> *someone else do it. I don't like to hear people tell me how to do it, I have to physically*
>
> *see it in person. Also, it's good because then I can follow, then become one of the*
>
> *leaders.* (NM12)

Many participants agreed with this sentiment in the group dialogues during the sticky note

session. A common strategy mentioned in the narrative métissage was how most of the young

people would identify who they considered a leader in their life and then try to emulate qualities

they appreciated in their own leadership development. Another young person expressed,

> *I learn leadership skills the best by seeing someone else have the same leadership style as*
>
> *me and then I realize that's how I lead. . . . I like seeing how others lead first to know the*
>
> *comfort level other people have.* (NM7)

Another young person stated, *"I learn leadership skills best by having my own role models and*

mentors learning and showing me" (NM14). The importance of having adult mentors in learning

leadership practices is noteworthy, as almost every young person in the study expressed their

appreciation of learning from the mentors modelling their own unique styles. They spoke of the

benefits of being empowered to lead alongside mentors, as enacting leadership practices beside

someone was less daunting of a task. As one young person stated, *"I feel I learn leadership skills*

best when I'm with other people and leading alongside them" (NM15). Young people noted the

security they felt with their mentors and that the level of trust was essential in allowing them to

feel comfortable in trying new skills and experiences. Moreover, it encouraged them to model what they had learned and seen from the mentors.

Finding 5: Tensions Navigating Leadership Development by Young People

As the young people explored how they understood leadership, discussions of leadership assumptions became a focal point during the sharing circle research session.

Gender and Leadership. Gender was a topic that emerged as a significant point in the sharing circle when the young people were describing their leadership experiences. They vented about social perceptions on how female and male leaders are perceived differently and how these judgements made them feel. Many young people spoke about the disadvantages of being female in leadership perceptions and agreed that male counterparts would automatically be accepted or expected to be a leader over females. One young person shared, *"I think that if people see you as a boy, they call you a leader, and they call you assertive, so responsible. And then if you're a girl, you're bossy, and you're mean, and it's the same actions"* (SC6). Another young person shared her thoughts,

> *I think most people think women are weaker and they can't be assertive, like guys like just maybe because the voice is deeper or something and like sound more like I want this, and women seem like they can't but most of them can.* (SC13).

The young people spoke of the natural inclination of projecting males to be leaders, whereas females were not given the same opportunities. As one young person noted, *"I've heard that males have to be leaders, because they seem more assertive and dominant than like females may feel when they're leading"* (SC2). Another participant shared,

Boys are the ones who, like, grow to be the leaders; whereas, for women are like

mentally, like, very much submissive, like seen but not heard. . . . It's like everywhere,

like within our society and like media. . . . Yeah, there's just a lot of stereotypes and

gendered leadership. (SC6)

The young people discussed gendered leadership perceptions and the frustrations of

stereotyping male and female leaders. A few spoke about a double standard in attributing and

celebrating different leadership traits to female and male leaders for similar actions. One young

person shared, *"I think if you are the only female in a group of males and you're trying to do a*

leadership thing, you will more than likely be judged and they'll think of you as less" (SC2).

Overall, the young people expressed their frustration with the perceived gendered leadership

assumptions, which are especially prevalent in their experiences as young, female-identifying

people. As one young person expressed, *"I think leadership shouldn't really be more gender-*

based, it should just be about the leader itself, and what their skills, what they want to bring, and

what are the things that they want to learn" (SC1).

Adult Perceptions of Young People Exercising Leadership. Several young people in

the study experienced and expressed frustrations toward adults who perceived leadership in one

way. In the conversations, young people spoke of how the majority of adults only valued

assertive, delegative leadership styles, which was presented as the singular model to lead from.

One young person explained,

I feel like adults think that there's one type of leader and that the only kind of leader that

there can be. That's the delegating leader, the one that's leading the pack. But we realize

that there are different kinds of leaders. Like there's the listener, there's the helper . . . and yeah. (NM3)

Another young person shared her thoughts on how some adults in her life did not expect her to be a good leader because they were not exhibiting *"mainstream, typical"* (SC2) leadership traits of leadership; she explained how *"some adults will be like, they're not really assertive, I don't know if they can be a good leader, be like a strong, assertive leader"* (SC2). In my field notes, I recorded the frustrations young people shared about adults in their lives in school who only valued one leadership style over others. One young person explained, *"They [adults] have their expectations of what a quote-unquote leader is, or they realize that not everybody leads the same way and not everybody responds to leadership the same way"* (SC10). In addition, an interesting finding from the young people was their perception of the difference in how adults and young people view leadership outcomes. A few young people noted how they felt adults viewed leadership as a fixed process that sought to overcome a solution or end goal. Whereas, for many of the young people, leadership was viewed as an ongoing process of learning that had no end. One young person explained,

> *Not jokingly, but I would say that there's a difference in terms of youth leadership and like adult leadership. I would say that . . . all, leadership is like a growth process. But I would say that they think that adults are already . . . at the end of their leadership, they know what they're doing, and youth are still in like a growth process, and that, you know, eventually when they get to adults, they'll . . . magically find the answer. But no, that's not that's not true. We don't find the answer of what leadership is when we get to adults.* (SC1)

Overall, many young people shared similar thoughts during the sharing circle as they spoke about the constrained views that adults had on leadership as opposed to how young people view leadership.

Leadership as a Future Endeavour. In describing how the young people would enact leadership practices and skills, many young people spoke of the development of becoming a leader as a future state they would seek to step into once they were older. Although they spoke of their own leadership experiences in the community, in sports or schools, there was a hesitancy in acknowledging their leadership authority when asked directly. Furthermore, young people expressed frustration with adults not perceiving them as leaders in the present time. They described how adults did not see them as current leaders and spoke of a lack of authority and power they had when exercising leadership. One young person explained,

> *[Adults] will always see themselves as superior because they are older and never see youth as a leader until they're close, older in age. So if you're like a teenager, you'll never be seen as a true leader in some adults' eyes until you turn like 25, maybe even older.* (SC2)

These frustrations described by the young people in the sharing circle were a prevalent barrier to young people's leadership development in school, as it hindered their ability to believe in their capabilities as leaders in school settings.

Finding 6: GWL Young Peoples' Connection to Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Learnings

One of the questions explored in this study was what Indigenous ways of knowing or Indigenous leadership models did young people in GWL know and would be interested in incorporating in a future GWL leadership framework? When reflecting on their knowledge of

Indigenous ways of knowing, the young people identified a desire to engage and learn more from community Knowledge Keepers and Elders in the community. The young people spoke of how an Elder's learnings were different from what they learned in school. They described how it was a different learning process and teaching style that they enjoyed. One young person explained, *"I really enjoy when Elders come in. It's so much better, and I think we learn more from them than we do from teachers"* (NM12). The storytelling aspect that struck the young people the most. The young people spoke positively about learning through the stories the Knowledge Keeper and past Elders told in GWL cultural sessions and how they appreciated the reflective nature of the interactions. Moreover, there was a consensus desire to engage with Elders and Knowledge Keepers in future GWL sessions and events for further learnings and teachings.

Additionally, during the study, many young people spoke of the circle of courage model and medicine wheel perspectives as their connection to Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous leadership models that they would like to continue incorporating into a GWL leadership model. The circle of courage model is an Indigenous leadership model that GWL introduced into programs prior to this research. In 2019, GWL came together with Knowledge Keeper Yolanda Skelton, from the Gittxan Nation and the House of Hax-be-gwoo-tw of the Fireweed Clan, to design a button blanket based on the Circle of Courage model, and this left an impact on many of the participants. One participant shared her story of her experience creating the blanket,

> *When we created the blanket the teachings that were shared heavily impacted the energy that was put into the blanket.*
>
> *Growing up on my mother's side we learn the most from our matriarchs.*

In ways I believe this ties in to the creation of our button blanket.

The animals: Whale Raven Eagle and Wolf

Represent who we are as a community and who we strive to be when I was sitting at the table watching everyone work on the blanket.

I remember feeling as if I was a little girl back at home in potlatch with my grandmothers.

Everyone was so focused and dedicated to this blanket that energy alone is sacred.

Since we made this blanket during Covid-19 it prevented any cultural practice from happening. It made me feel like part of me was lost; now I think back to when the blanket was being made and how I felt safe at home and warm and joyful just as I do when I am at potlatching with my grandmothers.

This blanket just goes to show how important community is and how one little thing like a blanket can make such a big impact.

— (K.A.)[4]

Almost all young people mentioned the circle of courage model as a leadership model they would like to move forward with in a future GWL leadership framework. As one participant described,

I think having the circle of courage will make a good base for the model as it's something we do without knowing. As some of our mentors have gone through what we are doing but they left to go find themselves then eventually came back (wolf). We are a family here

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[4] This participant granted permission to be cited for this story using their initials.

at Girls Who LEAP (killer whale). In Girls who LEAP all of us eventually learn independence and will gain the ability to go off and explore (eagle). Finally, mastering our mentors give us many different opportunities to learn new things and give us time to master them but also the opportunities to learn new things and give us time to master them but also the opportunity to say no I don't want to do this again but at least we tried it (raven). (NM10)

Moreover, participants spoke about their connection to the model and how they can identify which stage they are currently being developed in. As one young person shared, "*Circle of Courage, this is the bigger picture sense where you can see the progression and I feel it's already a model we can use already and each individual is in different stages of the circle of courage*" (NM4). Furthermore, young people expressed an appreciation of how the values that are important to GWL were already tied to the circle of courage model. Additionally, many young people referenced the medicine wheel perspective as a framework that would be beneficial to the GWL leadership model. One young person stated,

> *I would want to include maybe the medicine wheel in a future leadership model for GWL. I really liked the concepts that you need balance and if one part isn't balanced then you can't be a whole person because part of you is missing. It's a way to check in with yourself, which I really like.* (SC1)

Young people expressed an appreciation for using the medicine wheel perspective as a tool to help check in with themselves, asking, "*How are you in mind, body, spirit, emotions?"* (SC3). Young people identified further exploration into the models as something they would welcome in future sessions.

To end this section, I would like to present the collective métissage passages created by the young people. As shown in Figures 2 to 6, these passages share young people's understanding of leadership.

Figure 2

Collective Narrative Métissage Passage 1

Leadership

Listen to understand, but not to respond
Do not impose too much power, but open
Up responsibly and naturally like a flower

Learn through trial and error, leadership
Is like an art & science, no terror

A good leader is diverse and capable,
But brave to accept failure when they're unable
They give optimism and direction
But they do not expect perfection

Figure 3

Collective Narrative Métissage Passage 2

What is Leadership

Compassion for others
It being for others more than the leader
Acceptance of flaws and limits, and fault
Taking responsibility for other
Sharing power with others

Learning from others. Both good examples and bad examples
By following those leaders
Stories shared with us

Fluidity, empathy, authentic, trust, curiosity, risk-taking, honesty, follow through!
Vision, patience, knowing own limits, owning fault, conflict management,
boundaries, integrity

Being open to constantly learning

In crisis
When a situation is unfair or unjust
When there is opportunity for growth
When it is needed

Figure 4

Collective Narrative Métissage Passage 3

Leadership

L – LISTEN KINDLY
E – ENCOURAGE GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT TO EVERYONE
A – ASSERTIVELY TAKES ACTION
D – DIVERSE & DETERMINED WITH DRIVE
E – EMPOWERS EVERYONE
R – RESPECTS OTHERS

Figure 5

Collective Narrative Métissage Passage 4

Leadership

Leadership to us is to step up in times of need, treating each other like equals,
Being empathetic and being selfless with no ego involved

We have experienced leadership at link crew, LEAP, Cultural events, potlatch.
We see leadership with our families and mentors at GWL

We learn leadership skills best by visual learning and being treated like equals

Having leaders in our lives, it affects our growth because when you grow up with a leader
You start to adopt their leadership qualities also with the positive outcomes of that leadership
You start to model their behaviour for someone else

Trustworthy, funny, selfless, no ego, observant

Everyday. You don't have to be the main person but leadership comes in multiple ways.
Helping, listening, speaking.

Figure 6

Collective Narrative Métissage Passage 5

Leadership When Faced With a Bear

Leadership in many ways
In the back, back of the pack, doesn't want to face the bear,
but guiding people with instructions from afar
Adapting to the situation, wants to lead and utilizes their resources
Learn by mistakes
Followers, part of the team but not taking initiatives
Curious learner, and wants to face the bear

Chapter 5: Inquiry Conclusions and Scope and Limitations

This chapter synthesizes this cocreated research project with the young people in response to the overarching inquiry question: How do young people in Girls Who LEAP organization understand leadership? This project was also guided by the following subquestions:

1. How do young people in GWL engage in leadership?

2. How is leadership knowledge being transferred to the young people in GWL?

3. What are Indigenous ways of knowing/epistemologies that have and can be shared with the young people in GWL?

4. How might the GWL organization integrate Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous leadership into a youth leadership model?

In this chapter, I present the conclusions cocreated with the Bannock Babes and present the GWL leadership framework that is based upon the findings and conclusions in the study. I also discuss the scope and limitations of this inquiry.

Study Conclusions

Five study conclusions emerged from the study findings, relevant literature, the insights and voices of the young people, and my own observations from this study:

1. Young people developed a sense of belonging in youth leadership through the GWL mentorship pathway.

2. Engagement with Elders and Knowledge Keepers is integral in teaching young people Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous leadership.

3. Experiential learning opportunities are an essential component in youth leadership development.

4. Youth leadership is not a one-size-fits-all model; youth leadership needs to allow young people to explore various leadership models for leadership development and learning.

5. Young people can develop self-awareness through values identification and practising youth leadership.

Conclusion 1: Young People Developed a Sense of Belonging in Youth Leadership Through the GWL Mentorship Pathway

As previously discussed, the intergenerational mentorship pathway is unique to the leadership development of the young people in GWL. This pathway enables the young people to see the leadership growth of their peers at various stages in the organization as they develop their leadership journey. One of the philosophies that GWL mentors espouses is "you cannot be, what you cannot see" (M. Tshan, personal communications, July 27, 2021). The young people in the study shared the positive impact of seeing peers and mentors move through the GWL leadership pathway from the different tiers of junior, senior, alumni, and finally mentor. GWL young people are taught and shown that leadership can begin at any age and are given opportunities to empower themselves and their peers. The sense of belonging fostered in this pathway is vital in building self-esteem and confidence in young people as leaders. It provides the motivation and buy-in for young people to believe in their own development as leaders. Moreover, scholars have discussed the correlation between young people's ability to foster a sense of self-worth and well-being as a result of having positive caring adults in their lives (Evans, 2007; Kress, 2006; Serido et al., 2011). In a study evaluating outcomes for adult volunteers and youth in leadership development programs, Jones (2009) concluded young people were significantly more confident

in their ability to serve as a leader in communities when adult support was present in their youth-led collaborations. As Jones explained in his study, "Evidence also revealed the importance of adults providing critical support to youth so that young people have opportunities to hone in on their skills and are not beset by frustrations that may arise in the decision-making process" (p. 250). This sentiment was found as a theme in the three different research sessions in the study as a significant impact in the young peoples' leadership development. The sense of belonging that mentorship relationships fostered was impactful in the young people's leadership development. The guidance and support from the mentors was crucial in building the self-confidence of the young people as leaders in the community. Additionally, the ability to see the generational growth of their peers and mentors strongly impacted and empowered the young people in their leadership journeys.

As previously outlined in the study findings, every young person has unique gifts that are awaiting to be developed. The conditions that allow this development is key in youth leadership development. Youth voice and youth–adult relationships are essential conditions that foster a sense of belonging when developing young people as leaders. The young people in the study highlighted the positive impact of having caring mentors in their leadership journeys. They also relayed the ability of being pushed out of their comfort zones by these caring adult mentors in safe spaces that allowed them to learn from their mistakes. The ability to try and fail with support was instrumental for many of the participants in the study when they reflected on their own leadership development. Serido et al. (2011) supported these claims by stating how caring adult relationships set a foundation that enables youth "to explore new interests and discover their talents working with adults who are there to acknowledge their successes and to encourage them

when they fail" (p. 48). The adult–youth relationship fosters a safe space for experiential learning and application of leadership skills that leads to more involvement from the young people. This is further supported by the literature, as scholars discussed the benefits of young people surrounding themselves with caring adult relationships as a means to encourage buy-in and meaningful engagement in leadership development (Evans, 2007; Fielding & Bragg, 2003; Kress, 2006; Salisbury et al., 2019; Serido et al., 2011). As this study has shown, the ongoing relationship is instrumental in youth being able to find their voice as leaders and thus develop a stronger sense of belonging.

Conclusion 2: Engagement with Elders and Knowledge Keepers is Integral in Teaching Young People Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Indigenous Leadership

The majority of the young people in the study spoke of the impact they felt when they were able to learn from Elders when listening to stories or working on GWL community projects. Participants spoke about the positive learning experiences they received from past cultural sessions with Elders in the GWL organization. In addition, they shared their desire to engage with Elders and Knowledge Keepers further to learn about Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous leadership teachings in the future. As Lickers (2016) shared in his study of Indigenous youth leadership development,

> Elders are vital and critical to the discovery and/or rediscovery of the methodology of Indigenous leadership. Elder does not necessarily mean "old people"; it means those who have "knowledge of," which in some cases is why we use the term knowledge keepers. In Indigenous leadership, the knowledge keepers of the history (many Elders/Knowledge

Keepers, know much more than history) need to be found and consulted and engaged with to teach the lessons. (p. 120)

Furthermore, the young people stated how their engagement with Elders and Knowledge Keepers presented a different way of learning that many appreciated in their leadership development. Learning was done through listening to story and then taking the time to reflect on what they heard and felt. Archibald (2008) explained this process of meaning-making through storytelling:

Elders will not explicate the term's meaning because they assume that you know or feel that you ought to know what they mean. If you do not know what they mean, then there is an expectation that you will take responsibility for finding out. . . . One reason for this relates to making meaning from stories, a process that involves going away to think about their meaning in relations to one's life. (p. 90)

Having continued engagements with Elders and Knowledge Keepers has allowed the young people to learn in a different way than they have been accustomed to in school. Moreover, this study has shown how learning through stories has been an impactful way of understanding leadership. As Bear (2000) articulated, "Storytelling is a very important part of the educational process. It is through stories that customs and values are taught and shared" (p. 81). Hearing stories from Elders and Knowledge Keepers has allowed the young people to learn Indigenous leadership paradigms and Indigenous ways of knowing. The continued engagement with Elders and Knowledge Keepers in future GWL cultural sessions will allow for more exposure to different Indigenous learnings and paradigms in their leadership development.

Conclusion 3: Experiential Learning Opportunities Are an Essential Component in Youth Leadership Development

In exploring how young people conceptualized leadership in this study, a significant area of learning in this study was the importance of learning through experience or as the young people in the study described "learning by doing" (SN). Youth leadership development should incorporate experiential learning opportunities that allow for young people to develop their leadership knowledge and skills. In the stories shared by young people, meaningful opportunities to exercise agency and leadership skills were the most impactful for the young people in realizing their potential as a leader. Participants in the study highlighted the significance of learning through actions and the benefits of having the ability to apply skills and leadership styles that they had learned in real-life contexts. This supports Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (p. 41). Kolb's (1984) theory proposed a learning cycle that consisted of four phases: (a) concrete experience, (b) abstract conceptualization, (c) reflective observation, and (d) active experimentation. This cycle of learnings mirrored how the young people described their process of gaining leadership skills. Participants spoke about their increased confidence and motivation toward leadership when they had hands-on opportunities to engage in meaningful actions that provided a sense of agency and voice. Moreover, Kress (2006) highlighted this process in youth leadership development, stating,

> Experiences are transformed by the individuals who participate in them, development
>
> occurs when a person is at a level that she or he can only achieve with help from another
>
> person, and we can learn from observing others and their actions. (p. 49)

This was found in the study, as multiple young people spoke of the benefit of learning through actions and community experiences with the support of their mentors alongside them. Various studies have articulated the need for youth leadership to provide meaningful and authentic opportunities for young people to apply their skills (Kress, 2006; MacNeil, 2006; Redmond & Dolan, 2016). Hands-on experiences of community projects, volunteering as leaders for afterschool programs or cofacilitating GWL programs were some of the meaningful opportunities that GWL young people had spoken positively about in their leadership journey. As supported by the literature, youth leadership development needs to encourage authentic and meaningful opportunities that allow young people the ability to practise and demonstrate leadership within their contexts and realities (MacNeil & McLean, 2006; McNae, 2010).

Conclusion 4: Youth Leadership is Not a One-Size-Fits-All Model; Youth Leadership Needs to Allow Young People to Explore Various Leadership Models for Leadership Development and Learning

For the young people in the study, leadership comes in many forms and how it is enacted is subjective to the leadership style that matches the individual and their unique gifts. In their study, Mortensen et al. (2014) highlighted similar findings identifying how "youth have unique perspectives on leadership that emphasize multiplicity, suggesting anyone can be a leader and there are many ways to be a leader" (p. 453). Incorporating young people's views of leadership is vital in understanding how GWL can motivate young people to become future leaders. Dempster

and Lizzio (2007) explained in their research, "There is an identifiable gap in our knowledge of students' understanding of leadership and how they see, experience and interpret it in different situations" (p. 279). Various studies have described youth leadership as the development of set behavioural traits prescribed from adult leadership theory (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007; MacNeil, 2006; Mitra, 2005). As a result, youth leadership development focused on youth modelling specific behaviour traits and strategies that were developed for adult outcomes. However, as this study has shown, young people conceptualize leadership in nonhierarchical and unconventional ways that differ from adult-prescribed youth leadership theories. Moreover, it is important to recognize young people have different skill sets that fit different leadership models and styles that require different conditions of development. The study uncovered varying leadership understandings within the young people. Each conceptualization of leadership differed based on the individual's lived experience, cultural identity, and values. Within this study, many of the young people spoke of their appreciation for non-Westernized approaches to leadership, citing their preference for relational leadership models that incorporated empathy, listening, and Indigenous leadership approaches. The knowledge gleaned from this study and the literature explored demonstrate a recognition that youth leadership models should not prescribe to a definitive one-size-fits-all model but instead encourage young people to explore a variety of leadership models in their developmental journeys. As this study has shown, young people seek out different leadership approaches searching for leadership models that best suits their worldviews and values. As Wilson (2008) described, "There is a need for each person to develop his or her own relationships with ideas and to therefore to form their own conclusions" (p. 94). Youth leadership development should allow young people the space and time to engage various

leadership models that encourages them to find a model best suited to their self-identified values and worldviews.

Conclusion 5: Young People Can Develop Self-Awareness Through Values Identification and Practising Youth Leadership

This study identified self-awareness through an exploration of values as a vital step in youth leadership development for many of the participants. Young people clearly described developing a sense of self as they explored their leadership journeys through the values identification and exploration session. The activation of voice through the exploration of values in this research project provided many opportunities for youth to begin conceptualizing themselves as leaders. This idea is supported by Young's (1990) study, as this author identified cultural values orientation as a critical feature in Indigenous leadership. As one of the storytellers in Young's study stated, "Individuals who have the opportunity to explore their values and how their values inform their thoughts and actions will, given the opportunity, also develop understandings about how other forms of leadership operate" (p. 55). Young found the exploration to be an impactful mechanism for the young people to learn about how they conceptualized leadership. Moreover, conversations that stemmed from the values exploration of leadership supported a reflexive process that encouraged an investigation into how they wanted to show up as leaders in their community. As Evans (2007) posited, "An opportunity to have a voice in contexts also builds young people's identity as a relative equal in the community and helps develop an expectation for active participation as the norm" (p. 700). The values exploration provided young people an opportunity to find their voice and identity in their leadership journey. If GWL wishes to approach youth leadership development as a means to

develop authentic leaders, young people need to be able to conceptualize what is meaningful to them as leaders as they begin to step into roles as leaders in their community.

Scope and Limitations of the Inquiry

This research project utilized a decolonizing framework that combined Indigenous Methodology with a YPAR methodological approach. The foundation of the design was relational, utilizing a cocreated process with young people to explore leadership through their eyes. It provided the opportunity for young people to come together to learn from each other, share insights, and cocreate meanings and actions to support the growth of the GWL leadership pathway for the future. The aim of this study was to answer the main inquiry question: How do young people in Girls Who LEAP organization understand leadership?

The findings and conclusions from this study represent the experiences faced by female-identifying young people specifically connected to the GWL organization. As a result, the study findings are not generalizable to young people beyond this organization. Additionally, limitations in this study include the participation of only female-identifying participants and does not present a collective understanding of leadership from all genders. Further, this study solely captured data from urban young people, excluding perspectives of leadership from nonurban and rural young people.

As a non-Indigenous researcher employing an IM, my perspectives and frame of reference may have been a limitation for this study. However, I did my best to mitigate this by putting the voices of the participants first as well as collaborating and engaging with members of my inquiry team and Bannock Babes and ensuring engagement with a Knowledge Keeper within this study to ensure that Indigenous perspectives were guiding the research. Additionally, as an

active member within the GWL organization and as the lead researcher of this study, my point of view, understanding, perspectives of the data gleaned could be considered as both a strength and limitation to this study. Moreover, my relationships with the young people could be seen as a limitation as a researcher. To mitigate the impacts of my positionality in the research and to ensure the trustworthiness of the data and findings, I engaged the RYAT, the Bannock Babes, and the inquiry team in the data collection and analysis phases of this research to check any biases that may have been present in these processes within the study. Moreover, I chose to share data in the participants' words as much as possible, using direct quotations within the analysis and study findings to ensure proper representation of the young people's wisdoms, voices, and perspectives.

Chapter 6: Inquiry Recommendations and Implications

This concluding chapter presents the final study recommendations for this inquiry based on the study findings and conclusions found in the previous chapter. I discuss the organizational implications and implications for future inquiries related to this study and end with a summary of the thesis.

Study Recommendations

For the study recommendations, alongside the young people in study, I explored the creation of a GWL leadership framework as the final recommendation of this research project. It is important to acknowledge that the initial research set out to explore how GWL could incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing into a leadership model; however, during the research design process, it became clear that the young people were focused on learning how they understood leadership for themselves and what conditions enabled them to foster positive leadership development as the main inquiry in this research. As a result, the original intent of inquiry became the focus of the last subquestion, guiding the future state of the organization, which in turn lead to the cocreation of a GWL leadership framework as the recommendation for this study.

Proposed GWL Circle of Courage Leadership Framework

To introduce the new GWL leadership framework, I would like to share this cocreated story from the GWL President and young person describing the meaning behind the four animals of the killer whale, raven, eagle, and wolf in the GWL circle of courage youth leadership framework (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

Cocreated Story Explaining the GWL Circle of Courage

> ***GWL Circle of Courage***
>
> *Families come in different shapes and forms.*
>
> *Our GWL journey together like the makings of our button blanket to share in the teachings of our Elders and cultures. We gather like a killer whale pod; traveling long distances and from all depths of the world. Like a family rising through the waves of storms and challenges, the comfort of our pod gives us confidence and power to look within ourselves.*
>
> *Flying above the ocean, we see our cousin the raven who has landed on the shores to learn the tricks of the human. The raven brings gifts of creativity and curiosity. Her mischievous self brings magic and fun to learning. Through the raven, the human learns to conquer its transformational stages of life.*
>
> *The raven often flies alongside the eagle who teaches us strength and intelligence. The eagle is our courageous sister that takes off freely in its own journeys and adventures. Often, the eagle finds independence by finding love and balance within herself. The freedom to soar through new heights and explore new worlds gives the eagle different views and perspectives into humankind.*
>
> *As the eagle lands back on Mother Earth, she is reborn into a wolf seeking the comfort and strength of its community. The wolf is a humble auntie that is strong and powerful on her own but shows her greatest strength in a pack. The strongest wolf is often not at the front of its pack but at the back, protecting its weakest and oldest members. Such generosity comes from our teachings that have been imparted from our days as a pod. Like the whale, the wolf continues to raise her next generation and remains as a pack for the entirety of her life.*
>
> *Under the full moon, the wolf howls at the whale in greeting.*
>
> *— (K.A & M.T.)[5]*

Figure 8 depicts the new GWL leadership framework derived from the foundations of the circle of courage model, which participants identified as their guiding Indigenous leadership model of choice. The Bannock Babes and I cocreated this framework during the action planning session with the support of the President of the GWL. This GWL circle of courage leadership

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[5] These participants granted permission to be cited for this story using their initials.

framework will be tailored to the GWL community and be utilized in future GWL leadership programming. This newly designed framework expands on the original model and incorporates youth-defined definitions of each of the circle of courage quadrants, youth identified core leadership values found in the study, and, lastly, youth-informed core competencies found in Figure 9.

Figure 8

GWL Circle of Courage Leadership Framework
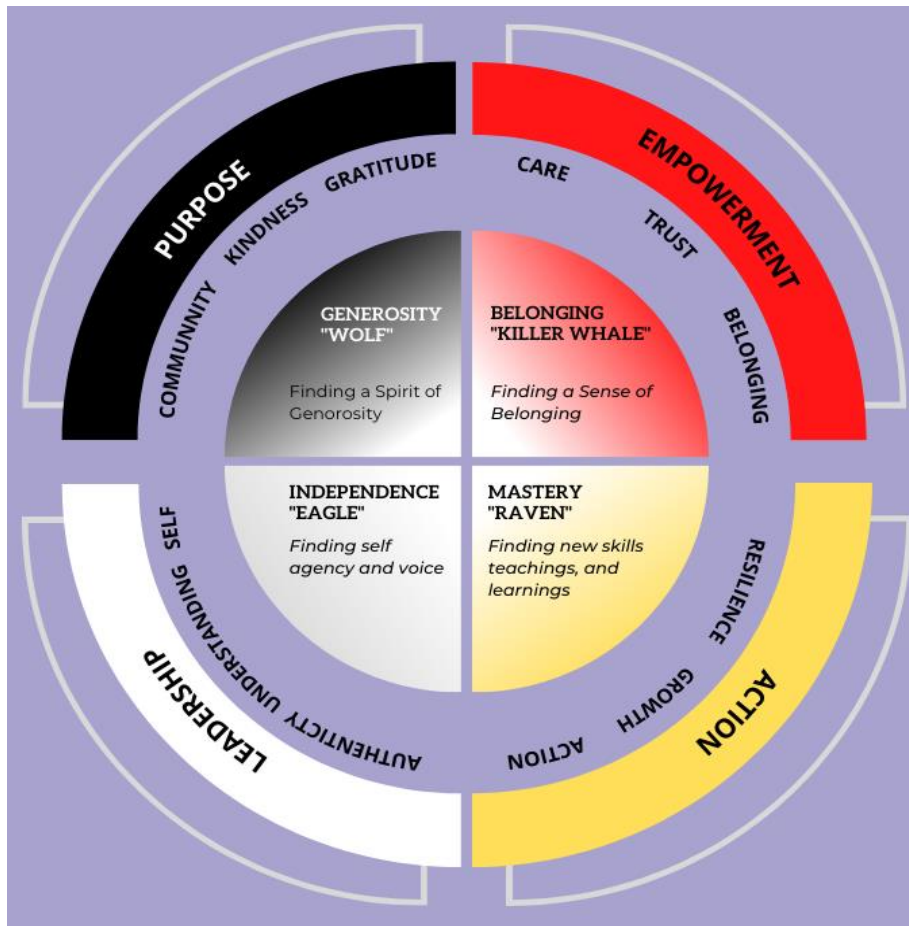
Note. Adapted from the Circle of Courage as described Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steve Van Bockern in *Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Futures of Promise* (3rd ed.), 2019, Solution Tree. Information at https://www.reclaimingyouth.org.

Figure 9

Proposed GWL Leadership Framework with GWL Pillars

GWL Pillar	Circle of Courage	Core Values Explored	Identified Competencies
Purpose	Generosity *"Learning to give back with no expectation"*	- Community - Kindness - Gratitude	- Learning about one's community history and needs - Understanding community value systems - Forming relationships with community members - Finding volunteer opportunities in the community to support - Showing gratitude to community and community members
Empowerment	Belonging *"You feel a part of something and feel welcome in the community"*	- Care - Trust - Belonging	- Understanding support systems and fostering relationships with them (peers, mentors, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, community members) - Formation of mentor-youth relationships - Exposure to cultural learnings from Elders, Knowledge Keepers, cultural facilitators - Identifying safe community spaces - Learning how to be in relation to others and to place
Action	Mastery *"Process of trial and error with support. Learning how to do things with support"*	- Resilience - Growth - Action	- Identifying new skills that one wants to develop for growth - Participating in experiential learning experiences - Learning to ask for help and being vulnerable - Defining personal resilience to oneself - Collaboration projects with mentors and peers
Leadership	Independence *"Being able to make your choices and make your own mistakes without as much a safety net and learning to get up after falling"*	- Authenticity - Understanding - Self	- Exploration of sense of self through self-reflective work - Personal values identification - Exploring different leadership models - Engaging in leadership opportunities that exercise agency and voice - Stepping out of comfort zone in self-initiated opportunities - Identifying personal goals and purpose

Note. GWL = Girls Who LEAP: Lead to Empower & Act with Purpose Society.

Building from an inward to outward approach. The conception of the new GWL model came from the foundation of the circle of courage model that participants identified as a framework they would like to build upon. As discussed previously in the literature review, the circle of courage model presented four quadrants of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity (Brendtro et al., 2013). During the action engagement session, the young people defined their own definition of each quadrant, as seen in Figure 9, which in turn guided the creation of the associated identified competences that would guide the leadership development in future GWL leadership programming.

Generosity – Finding a Spirit of Generosity Drives the Purpose

Finding a spirit of generosity was linked to data that showed an affiliation between young people's conception of leadership and a responsibility to provide acts of service in the community. Participants identified community, kindness, and gratitude as key core values that informed this quadrant, as individuals would be encouraged to understand how generosity has been built in the community and contributed to their growth as leaders.

Belonging – Finding a Sense of Belonging Leads to Feelings of Empowerment

As discussed in the inquiry findings, an emergent theme surfaced in young people's discussions regarding the importance of cultivating a sense of belonging in youth leadership development. This stage of youth leadership focuses on individuals building rapport with adult mentors and fostering a sense of connection with people and with their community that will allow successful development of leadership skills.

Mastery – Finding New Skills, Teaching, and Learnings Brings Opportunities for Action

Mastery is linked to the data that showed the importance of learning through experiential learnings and guidance with the support of mentors. Participants identified resilience, growth, and action as the key values that are experienced and learned through their interactions with new skills, teachings, and learnings in different opportunities.

Independence – Finding Self-Agency and Voice Fosters Ones Leadership

It is important to facilitate young people's journeys through reflection-based activities and creating spaces for young people to develop their authentic selves as a precursor to leadership development. Authenticity, understanding, and self are the core values that guide this quadrant of development. Young people are encouraged to investigate their personal identity through meaning making and reflections from leadership opportunities.

Circling the core of the GWL leadership model are the main values found from the research sessions in this study. For the young people, the values identification work is the beginning of the leadership development process, as individuals are asked to define how each value resonates with their own identity, goals, and purpose. It is for this reason that the Bannock Babes and I have identified main values that each quadrant should explore in the GWL framework. Moving outward from the centre are the leadership values from the study participants. The Bannock Babes identified these values during the action engagement session. As discussed in the Study Conclusions section, identifying values was an integral step in engaging young people in their leadership development in this study and was a meaningful way for the participants to engage in discussions and stories with one another. Moreover, the self-reflexive work of the values exploration was a critical process of how young people self-

conceptualized themselves as leaders. Finally, encircling the outer layer of the model are the GWL pillars of leadership, empowerment, action, and purpose. As highlighted by the young people and the president of GWL, these are the four pillars that the GWL community is built upon. Therefore, when creating this new leadership framework it was vital for the young people to identify the organization's foundational pillars alongside the quadrants.

Organizational Implications

In this research, the Bannock Babes and I codesigned the youth leadership framework, created for implementation for the GWL organization to put forward in future leadership programming. The hope is for the organization to allow self-identified young people in the GWL organization to take a larger role in decision-making and leadership development planning alongside the adult mentors in future GWL programs and projects. One of the results that has taken into effect in the organization after this study was the opportunity for young people in the senior or alumni tier to take a lead in the intermediate tier programming that serves the Grade 8–9 programming. As a direct result of this study, two Bannock Babe members have taken on leadership roles in facilitating and programming all intermediate programming for the foreseeable future with GWL. Prior to this research, these roles were held by adult mentors. Lastly, this research process further reiterated the strength of engaging an intergenerational support network with the inclusion of young people, mentors, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers in future GWL projects and will look to continue creating this synergy in projects and programming moving forward.

Implications for Future Inquiry

The study showed the strength of working alongside community and young people in gaining a better understanding of youth leadership. Utilizing a two-eyed seeing decolonizing methodological framework of YPAR and IM presented a unique research approach with young people that future inquiries could replicate. Furthermore, the cocreated youth leadership framework could inform future youth leadership development literature. Lastly, there was no participation in this research from male-identifying participants. Further inquiry is needed to understand the experiences of male-identifying youth participants in the community to understand their perspective on youth leadership.

Thesis Summary and Conclusion

When this research process began, it was important for me as a researcher in community to follow the learnings of the community and in the footsteps of the young people in this study. As a result, it was paramount that I allow the young people in the research to guide this research project from beginning to end. Therefore, this cocreated action research inquiry explored the question, "How do young people in GWL organization understand leadership?" The inquiry utilized a decolonized methodological approach pairing IM with YPAR to engage with young people in the GWL organization. Foundational to this research was the relational approach of engaging the community in all aspects of this research from design to implementation to final recommendations. This was possible through my engagement with a RYAT, the Bannock Babes, and the research inquiry team. During this cocreated research process, the Bannock Babes and I engaged 18 Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people in a decolonizing, relational codeveloped exploration of their leadership journeys. Key learnings highlight the relationships

between adult–youth mentor relationships, experiential learning, cultivating a sense of belonging, and the impact of values identification in youth leadership development. The recommended call to action from the young people includes the creation of a new GWL youth leadership framework to be implemented by the organization (see Figure 8). Overall, this research aimed to support the GWL young people in reclaiming their voice and authority as knowledge holders, leaders, and changemakers for their community and future generations.

Throughout this research process, I was guided by Wilson's (2008) statement, "If research doesn't change you as a person, then you haven't done it right" (p. 135). This research process was a learning journey for everyone involved, from the study participants, the inquiry team, the Bannock Babes, my organizational partner, and finally to me. We committed ourselves to explore our understanding of leadership and to find an actionable pathway forward that would guide change in the future generation of young people in the GWL organization. I would like to end this thesis with the words shared by the President of GWL, Mitra Tshan:

> As an urban nation, we as leaders strive to create a place of belonging for our youth in the city where they can continue to practice culture and develop toolkits to empower their lives and those around them. Our youth draw from their experiential learnings to develop capacity and find purpose in contributing back to their community. The strength and resiliency of our GWL community come from within our youth and mentors despite systemic barriers, stereotypes, age, differences, lived experiences and cultural practices from over 25 different nations around Turtle Island and the world. (M. Tshan, personal communications, October 26, 2022)

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Appendix A: Research Youth Advisory Team Privacy Agreement

GWL Leadership Journey: A Youth Leadership Framework created by Young People

As co-researcher in this research project, I understand my responsibilities concerning the confidentiality (to keep information private) of any research data collected by the project.

I will respect the confidentiality of those who participate in the research even when it seems difficult. I will hold all information that participants tell me – either as a response to direct questions or as volunteered additional information – in complete confidentiality unless something that has been shared places the young person or another in serious harm. If so, I will inform the participant and will respond adhering to ethics and legal reporting requirements.

For example, I will not talk about who has, or has not, participated in the research during any stage of the project. I will not discuss general or specific research findings with anyone other than Cynthia Lee, Mitra Tshan, Montanna Howe or Toni Morrison.

It is acceptable to discuss my work, including general information or concerns with Cynthia Lee, Mitra Tshan, Montanna Howe or Toni Morrison.

I, _____ (print name), have read and agree to this Confidentiality Agreement.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

If under the age of 18, please also fill out below:

I, _____ (parent/guardian), of _____

(print participant name), have read and agree to this Confidentiality Agreement.

_____   _____   _____
Parent/Guardian Name   Parent/Guardian Signature   Date

Appendix B: Letter of Agreement for Inquiry Team

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for a Master of Arts in Leadership Degree at Royal Roads University, Cynthia Lee will be conducting an inquiry study with Girls Who LEAP (GWL) to explore the creation of a GWL Youth Leadership Framework with the young people of GWL. You can confirm the student's registration at Royal Roads University by contacting the Program Head, Dr. Niels Agger-Gupta at [email address].

Inquiry Team Member Role Description

As a volunteer Inquiry Team Member assisting the student with this project, your role may include one or more of the following:

- Providing advice on the relevance and wording of questions and letters of invitation,

- Supporting the logistics of the data-gathering methods, including observing, assisting, or facilitating dialogues in small or large group workshops, taking notes, transcribing, reviewing data analysis, and/or reviewing associated knowledge products to assist the Student and GWL youth leadership framework.

- In the course of this activity, you may be privy to confidential inquiry data.

Confidentiality of Inquiry Data

In compliance with the Royal Roads University Research Ethics Policy, under which this inquiry project is being conducted, all personal identifiers and any other confidential information generated or accessed by the Inquiry Team will only be used in the performance of the functions of this project and must not be disclosed to anyone other than persons authorized to receive it, both during the inquiry period and beyond it. This agreement covers recorded information in all formats. Personal identifiers include participant names, contact information, personally-identifying turns of phrase or comments, and any other personally identifying information.

Personal information will be collected, recorded, corrected, accessed, altered, used, disclosed, retained, secured and destroyed as directed by the student, under the direction of the Royal Roads Academic Supervisor.

Inquiry Team Members who are uncertain whether any information they may wish to share about the project they are working on is personal or confidential will verify this with Cynthia Lee, the Student.

Statement of Informed Consent (I have read and understood this agreement.)

_____ _____ _____

Participant Name Signature Date

If under 18, please have your parent/guardian sign the following consent:

_____ _____ _____

Parent/Guardian Name Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Considerations for the Use of Inquiry Teams in Engaged, Action-Oriented Inquiry

Role of Inquiry Team

The inquiry team is comprised of volunteers who assist the researcher (student) with the inquiry project and whose involvement may enhance engagement of organizational stakeholders toward the change goals, and ownership of the project outcomes.

Inquiry team members are not considered Research Assistants (i.e., it is not an opportunity to delegate the administrative tasks required to complete the capstone); rather, they are people capable of supporting the student, and performing assigned roles and duties required to mobilize action during and beyond the inquiry project. Duties completed will be under the direction of the student and inquiry team members will be fully briefed by the student as to how this process will work, including specific expectations.

The inquiry team members:

- Support the student so that the inquiry acquires some degree of legitimacy and sustainability in the organization;

- Advise the student on organizational norms and protocols

- Access expertise or technical resources needed to conduct the inquiry, and/or access parts of the organization or resources that the student cannot acquire on their own

- Serve as a neutral third party to bridge actual or perceived power-over relationships or conflicts of interest with potential participants (if applicable);

- Provide an external set of eyes to help mitigate research biases; and

- Assist with progression of findings to recommendations and implementation steps.

In partnership with the student, duties for inquiry team members may include:

- Reviewing draft questions, methods, and overall capstone design;

- Promoting collaboration and support for the inquiry and recommendations with key stakeholders;

- Participating in a pilot of draft methods to check timing or ensure the questions are clear;

- Acting as observer, note taker, and/or co-facilitator in data gathering activities; or

- Working with student during data analysis stages.

An example of activities may include:

- Act as an advisor, identifying potential areas of bias in questions and data analysis; · Pilot test and finalize method questions;

- Send/receive invitations;

- Plan logistics (e.g., booking venue and setting up space, if there is a specific reason why you can't do this yourself);

- Gather data including note taking on flipcharts or recording observations; facilitating or co-facilitating the method; or

- Review data analysis process and draft findings and/or recommendations.

Appendix C: Research Letter of Information to Participate

Project Title: A Girls Who LEAP Exploration of Leadership

Dates: March 25-27, 2022

What is this research project about?

The goals of this research project are:

1. To learn about how young people in GWL experience and understand leadership
2. Explore Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous leadership models
3. Create a youth informed GWL leadership model based off the learnings from this research project

Who is supporting this research?

I, Cynthia Lee, am conducting this inquiry in part as my capstone for a Masters in Leadership degree at Royal Roads University (RRU). My credentials with RRU can be established by contacting Dr. Niels Agger-Gupta, Program Head, MA-Leadership Program, School of Leadership Studies: [email address]. This research project has been approved by the RRU Research Ethics Board. This project is also being supported by the Girls Who LEAP Society."

A GWL Inquiry Team will assist my research by offering guidance on the recruitment process for this project, reviewing the methods and questions, and providing input to desired outputs for this research project. All members of the Inquiry team have completed their Vulnerable Sector Check/Criminal Record Check. As the main researcher, I have also completed the Vulnerable Sector/Criminal Record Check.

The Inquiry Team for my research consists of:

- Mitra Tshan, President of GWL, Montanna Howe, Board of Director of GWL, Toni Gladstone, GWL Mentor, Research Youth Advisory Team Members: xxx (Main contact of Advisory), xxx, xxx, xxx, xxx, xxx, xxx.

Why am I being invited to this research project?

You are being invited to take part in this research project because you are a young leader who has wisdoms, insights and lived experiences to offer this project and its potential impact.

What does being involved in this research project mean?

Being involved means taking part in planning, dialogue and engagement to inform the research. Also, you will take part in **3 sessions between March 25-27, 2022**, where you and other young people will come together to use art, technology, and play to help me understand more about how you experience leadership and what it means to you. The research will consist of three engagement sessions: (1) narrative métissage session, (2) sticky notes session, (3) Sharing Circle

session. We will also hold a session to open the research project with a Knowledge Keeper to begin.

What should I consider while deciding if I will choose to participate?

This research project is about your experiences, so you may be invited to share your thoughts and ideas. This could be exciting and fun, and it's important to know that it also could be emotional. Your ideas and thoughts are important.

Being involved does not mean that you have to participate in every activity. If you feel uncomfortable at any stage, please let me know and you are free to leave. If you wish to withdraw in advance of the session, please contact a member of the Youth Advisory Team. Participants may choose to withdraw may request their data be removed from the inquiry, as well as any record that they participated.

If you share anything with us that causes us to worry about your safety or the safety of others, we will not be able to keep that information confidential and we will need to tell someone who can support to respond.

Will the study help you and others?

It is my hope that you will create new relationships. I also hope that your ideas and thoughts about your experience can help support young people in reclaiming their roles as storytellers, leaders, knowledge holders, and changemakers.

Who will see the information collected about you?

The information you share during the workshop will be audio recorded and you will be given the opportunity to review your own transcripts to strike out any information that you do not want shared. We will also use art and technology as ways for you to share your own stories about your experiences.

Your name will not be used in any reports related to the research project, unless you and your parent guardian have consented to this. We may also want to share some of your art, images, videos that you create, and again, your name will not be used unless you want it to. I will also check in with you to ask permission before further use or publishing anything you create. I will send a draft and final report to you and all other participants for comment and your own records.

In addition to submitting a final report to Royal Roads University in partial fulfillment for a Master of Arts in Leadership degree. The research results will be published in public outlets that will be published in RRU's Digital Archive, Pro-Quest and Library and Archives Canada. The results might also be disseminated at public and academic conferences and presentations.

Confidentiality:

Please note that your valuable ideas and opinions will appear in the report itself. However, no personal information such as your name or personally identifiable information will be used to attribute those comments to you.

Due to the nature of the possible group-based methods, it is not possible to keep the participants' identities anonymous from those participating (such as the researcher, facilitator, or other participants).

Conflict of Interests

My inquiry team and I are actively involved in the GWL organization as volunteer adult mentors in programs and may have personal relationships with prospective participants that results in a power-over relationship with prospective participants of this study. As a result of this, we will be engaging a Youth Advisory Team that consist of representatives of the young people in the GWL organization to help support prospective participants from entering this study. Should any conflict of interest arise during this project they will be addressed as per organization policy with the support of the Youth Advisory Team, GWL President, Mitra Tshan, team agreement, to be requested to support.

What will happen to the data in the research

All data collected during the project will be maintained in confidence any hard copies (e.g., consent forms) will be stored safely in at the office of Face of Today in a secured locked cabinet. Electronic data (such as electronic consent forms, notes, transcripts or audio files) will be stored on a password protected computer. Electronic backed up of data will be stored on an encrypted memory stick and stored safely at the Face of Today office. All identifiable raw data will be destroyed one year after graduation from Royal Roads University, unless agreed to by the participants for future use.

Acknowledgment of Research During Pandemic

This research will be following all health guidelines, restrictions, and safety protocols to ensure the safety of participants during the pandemic. All participants and research members must be fully vaccinated and show proof of vaccination passport prior to research session.

Do you have to be in the research project?

You do not have to participate in this research project. Even if you say yes to it now, you can change your mind and can quit at any time. If you decide not to participate, it will not affect your relationship with me or anyone involved in the research.

Procedure for withdrawing from the study

Participation in this research is voluntary, and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time. If you do decide to withdraw, please contact a member of the Youth Advisory Team please see below for contact details.

What if you have questions?

You can always ask questions about the research project. If you think of a question later, you can contact me, a member of the Youth Advisory, my organizational partner, Mitra Tshan

- Contact Member (email: [email address]; phone number: [telephone number])
- Contact Member (email: [email address]; phone number: [telephone number])
- Members of Research Youth Advisory Team (Names) – emails: [email address]

Please keep a copy of this information letter for your records.

Research Consent Form for Participation

By signing this form, you have read the information letter for this study. Your signature states that you are giving your voluntary and informed consent to participate in this project and have data I contribute used in the final report and any other knowledge outputs (articles, conference presentations, newsletters, etc.).

- I consent to the audio recording of the research sessions on March 25, March 26, and March 27, 2022
- I consent to quotations and excerpts expressed by me through the 3 research sessions to be included in this study, provided that my identity is not disclosed
- I consent to the material I have contributed to and/or generated (e.g., flipchart/whiteboard notes, sticky notes, visuals or drawings, either hard copy or online) thorough my participation in this study
- I commit to respect the confidential nature of the 3 sessions by not sharing identifying information about the other participants

Risk Acknowledgement of Participation During Pandemic

I consent to participate in this research and understand the risks of participating during the pandemic. I absolve Royal Roads University and Girls Who LEAP Society of any liability in the event that I contract CoVid-19 as a result of participation in this research

Statement of Informed Consent

I have read and understood this agreement.

_____   _____   _____
Participant Name   Signature   Date

If under the age of 18, please also fill out below:

_____   _____   _____
Parent/Guardian Name   Parent/Guardian Signature   Date

Appendix D: Research Consent Form for Participation

By signing this form, you have read the information letter for this study. Your signature states that you are giving your voluntary and informed consent to participate in this project and have data I contribute used in the final report and any other knowledge outputs (articles, conference presentations, newsletters, etc.).

- I consent to the audio recording of the research sessions on March 25, March 26, and March 27, 2022

- I consent to quotations and excerpts expressed by me through the 3 research sessions to be included in this study, provided that my identity is not disclosed

- I consent to the material I have contributed to and/or generated (e.g., flipchart/whiteboard notes, sticky notes, visuals or drawings, either hard copy or online) thorough my participation in this study

- I commit to respect the confidential nature of the 3 sessions by not sharing identifying information about the other participants

Risk Acknowledgement of Participation During Pandemic

I consent to participate in this research and understand the risks of participating during the pandemic. I absolve Royal Roads University and Girls Who LEAP Society of any liability in the event that I contract CoVid-19 as a result of participation in this research.

Statement of Informed Consent

I have read and understood this agreement.

_____   _____   _____

Participant Name   Signature   Date

If under the age of 18, please also fill out below:

_____   _____   _____

Parent/Guardian Name   Parent/Guardian Signature   Date

Appendix E: Methods Menu

Discussion to have with Youth Advisory Team before we go into methods:

❖ Considerations to think about when implementing Indigenous research methods to ground our interactions with good practice and intentions:

Talk about each of these reflexive questions

Wilson (2008) proposed multiple questions that a researcher must ask themselves prior to implementing an Indigenous research method:

- How do my methods help to build respectful relationships between the topic that I am studying and myself as researcher (on multiple levels)?
- How do my methods help to build respectful relationships between myself and the other research participants?
- How can I relate respectfully to the other participants involved in this research so that together we can form a stronger relationship with the idea that we will share?
- What is my role as researcher in this relationship, and what are my responsibilities?
- Am I being responsible in fulfilling my role and obligations to the other participants, to the topic and to all of my relations?
- What am I contributing or giving back to the relationship? Is the sharing, growth and learning that is taking place reciprocal? (p. 77)

❖ We will discuss the importance and power of stories and storytelling

Methods Menu for Bannock Babes

Sharing Circle

Group Method: minimum 6 to circle

Equipment needed: talking stick, an environment that allows circle gathering that allows social distancing, voice recorder

Description: This method gathers information on a specific topic by gathering stories through sharing circles. Essential to this method is the ability for each participant to hold space within a trusted circle and to be able to share their stories in whichever manner they choose to take their stories. This method is "based on the ideal of respect for participants in the circle, where everyone has equal chance to speak and be heard" (Wilson, 2008. P.41)

Key Principles to consider when applying this method:

- Holding Space for one another
- Deep Listening

- Speaking from the Heart
- Spontaneity

Preparing your circle:
- Individually: take a moment to select an object to hold when it's your turn (optional): consider selecting an object which helps you feel grounded and/or connected to your heart
- Collectively: decide on the order of speakers and arrange the circle accordingly. Take note of who is coming after you, so you are prepared to speak their name when your turn is complete.
- Collectively: review the principles of the Talking Circle together before you begin

Instructions During the Circle:
- Only the person holding the 'talking stick' speaks
- Share in your own way: speak from your experience or heart. There is a guiding question posed for this circle below; however, please speak whatever is in your heart, whether it pertains directly to the question or not.
- There is no need to respond to anyone else's words
- Engage in deep listening: listen to hear vs. listening to respond
- If you do not wish to speak when it is your turn, say "Pass" or "Come back to me" and then the name of the person coming after you
- When it is your turn, take the time you need to. Silences are welcome!
- If you complete the circle before the time is up, you can keep going around until the group
  (R. Nelems & M. Lickers, personal communication, July, 13, 2021)

<u>Sticky Notes</u>

Group method: No minimum or maximum

Equipment: sticky notes, flip chart paper, pens, felts,

Instructions:

1. Put five flipchart papers around the room with the following words or questions:
   a. Leadership is…, I experience leadership by…, My values are…, What is this research project about…., Why am I here…, What do I want out of this journey…
2. Ask the participants to take a moment to reflect and write down their thoughts on the question on sticky notes.

3. Each participant will get a stack of sticky notes, and they can put up as many thoughts as possible on each of the flipchart papers.
4. Once everyone feels complete, we will break the group into three groups and get them to read out the responses and engage in dialogue.
5. Each group will rotate to the following flip chart paper until all groups have discussed all questions.
6. We will then bring the collective together and discuss themes that individuals observed and discussed in their group dialogues.
7. There will be one inquiry member in each group writing notes during this process.

Narrative métissage

Group method and personal reflections: Groups of 3

Equipment: paper, pens, pencils

Description: This arts-based method of inquiry invites individuals to share personal narratives while interweaving stories with others. Through this method, the shared narratives unfold a process that invites individuals to co-construct knowledge about self, about each other, and the larger community (Bishop et al., 2019; Lowan-Trudeau, 2012).

Instructions: We may use this method to seek data regarding participants' understanding of what leadership means to them or use it to investigate their experience in enacting leadership in the GWL community.

1. Explain the method to the group, and the facilitators will read out an example of a métissage we have created.
2. Give the participants a set time for a free writing period while listening to the music of their choice.
3. Participants will be invited to re-read what they have written in the end and decide what parts they would like to share
4. Once the free write period is finished, participants will randomly be put into groups of three to share their narratives and try to interweave their stories together into a woven piece that they would be comfortable sharing with the larger group.
5. The method will end with the group coming together to share the woven métissages (stories) and
6. We will debrief how participants felt during the process and what they found out as themes.

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<u>Photovoice</u>

Individual and then group debrief

Equipment: disposable cameras, flip chart, pens, paper

Description: Photovoice is an engaging way that enables participants to document a research question through photography. This method has been used often with young people to explore social change and as a means to capture the lived experiences of participants (DeJonckheere et al., 2017; Evans-Agnew & Rosemburg, 2016; Palibroda et al., 2009).

Instructions:

1. Each participant will be given a disposable flash camera that they will be asked to take pictures regarding a question related to the research topic.
   a. Ex. How do you enact leadership in your community?
2. Participants will be taught how to use the camera, debrief the question at hand and then given an allotted time to go out in their community and document their answer through photography.
3. A following meeting will occur, where my inquiry team and myself and inquiry team members will facilitate group discussions following the sharing of the photographs. Emergent themes and shared meaning will be the focal point of discussion.

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Appendix F: Research Outline & Questions

> **Opening: Land Acknowledge, Lunch, Cultural Session with Knowledge Keeper (Circle)**

> **Engagement Session A: What is leadership, where do you see it exploration:**
>
> **Method: Narrative Métissage**
>
> **Friday, March 25 (1:30–3:30 pm)**

Questions:

Part 1:

- What is leadership? How have you experienced it, seen it?
- How do you learn leadership?
- Who do you see as a leader in your life?
- When have you taken a leadership role?

Part 2:

- What experiences have you had in GWL that have introduced you to Indigenous ways of knowing?
- What are Indigenous ways of knowing that can be shared with GWL young people and can be integrated into a GWL youth leadership model? "if we had a way of introducing leadership to girls 5-10 years from now…"

Narrative Métissage Instructions:

Group method and personal reflections: Individual & Groups of 3   **Equipment:** paper, pens, pencils

Description: This arts-based method of inquiry invites individuals to share personal narratives while interweaving stories with others. Through this method, the shared narratives unfold a process that invites individuals to co-construct knowledge about self, about each other, and the larger community (Bishop et al., 2019; Lowan-Trudeau, 2012).

Instructions: We may use this method to seek data regarding participants' understanding of what leadership means to them or use it to investigate their experience in enacting leadership in the GWL community.

1. Explain the method to the group, and the facilitators will read out an example of a métissage we have created.

2. Give the participants a set time for a free writing period while listening to the music of their choice.

3. Participants will be invited to re-read what they have written in the end and decide what parts they would like to share

4. Once the free write period is finished, participants will randomly be put into groups of three to share their narratives and try to interweave their stories together into a woven piece that they would be comfortable sharing with the larger group.

5. The method will end with the group coming together to share the woven métissages (stories) and

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Engagement Session B: Leadership values exploration

Method: Sticky Notes

Saturday, March 26 (9:30 am–11:30 am)

Questions:

1. What values do I appreciate in the leaders?
2. What values are important to think about when leading others? Why?
3. How do I want to lead others? How do I want others to lead me?
4. What values do we want the GWL leadership framework to have?

Sticky Notes Methods Instructions:

Group method: No minimum or maximum **Equipment:** sticky notes, flip chart paper, pens, felts,

Instructions:

1. Put five flipchart papers around the room with the main questions.
2. Ask the participants to take a moment to reflect and write down their thoughts on the question on sticky notes.
3. Each participant will get a stack of sticky notes, and they can put up as many thoughts as possible on each of the flip chart papers.
2. Once everyone feels complete, we will break the group into three groups and get them to read out the responses and engage in dialogue.

3. Each group will rotate to the following flip chart paper until all groups have discussed all questions.

4. We will then bring the collective together and discuss themes that individuals observed and discussed in their group dialogues.

5. There will be one inquiry member in each group writing notes during this process.

Engagement Session: How have you experienced Leadership? Leadership Assumptions

Method: Sharing Circle

Saturday, March 27 (9:30am–11:00am)

Questions:

1. How have you experienced Leadership

2. What are leadership assumptions you see and feel?

3. Do young people view leadership differently than adults?

<u>Sharing Circle Instructions:</u>

Group: minimum 6 to circle

Equipment needed: talking stick (token), an environment that allows circle gathering that allows social distancing, voice recorder

Description: This method gathers information on a specific topic by gathering stories through sharing circles. Essential to this method is the ability for each participant to hold space within a trusted circle and to be able to share their stories in whichever manner they choose to take their stories. This method is "based on the ideal of respect for participants in the circle, where everyone has equal chance to speak and be heard" (Wilson, 2008. P.41)

Key Principles to consider when applying this method:

- Holding Space for one another; Deep Listening & Speaking from the Heart; Spontaneity

Preparing your circle:

- Individually: take a moment to select an object to hold when it's your turn (optional): consider selecting an object which helps you feel grounded and/or connected to your heart
- Collectively: decide on the order of speakers and arrange the circle accordingly. Take note of who is coming after you, so you are prepared to speak their name when your turn is complete.

- Collectively: review the principles of the Talking Circle together before you begin

Instructions During the Circle:

- Only the person holding the 'talking stick' speaks
- Share in your own way: speak from your experience or heart. There is a guiding question posed for this circle below; however, please speak whatever is in your heart, whether it pertains directly to the question or not.
- There is no need to respond to anyone else's words
- Engage in deep listening: listen to hear vs. listening to respond
- If you do not wish to speak when it is your turn, say "Pass" or "Come back to me" and then the name of the person coming after you
- When it is your turn, take the time you need to. Silences are welcome!
- If you complete the circle before the time is up, you can keep going around until the group

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Session Engagement: Closing (not part of data)

Sunday, March 27 (10:30am–12:00pm)

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1. What was found from the previous days? (Group Discussion)

2. Sharing Circle
   a. Question: How can you see yourself leading in the community?

3. Story: Self-Reflection on this journey (will be a takeaway journal entry)

4. Closing Circle
   a. One word reflection on your experience with this research
   b. project