

# ***Learning by Doing***

“To learn  
***the way of becoming***  
an Inuk,  
that is the reasons they came.”

- *Arsène Ivalu, 1996*  
*on summer land skills camp\**

\*SOURCE: Inullariit Elders Society Files, 1993-1997. Quoted in *Critical Inuit Studies*. Ed. Pamela Stern and Lisa Stevenson. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006) 141.

# Learning

- The Inuit knowledge system is known as *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* (IQ)
- IQ is literally translated as “*that which has long been known by the Inuit*”

- This IQ knowledge system is composed of many parts:
  - Traditional practice of learning by:
    - developing skills through practice, effort, and action
  - Problem solving in real life situations
  - Inuit spirituality
    - a close relationship maintained with the land
    - a philosophy of interdependence between humans and nature
  - Long-standing codes of behavior based on Inuit values and practices
    - communicated to youth through songs, stories, legends, and direct modeling of behavior

# Interdependence

- *Sharing* is necessary for the physical and social welfare of the community
- Respecting each other's specific skill set
  - Women generally make tents / men generally make tools
    - HOWEVER: skills are not gender-specific, many men can make clothes, and many women will hunt

“We always had a special occasion called the *Naittuqsliqtuq* towards the end of summer where everyone gathered together to pick and choose the caribou skins they needed for the winter to make complete caribou outfits and generally celebrate the successful and enjoyable season. My parents would prepare everything for the event and lay out all the caribou skins, which had been caught over the summer, and every individual picked what they liked; even the people who never went hunting caribou got to pick. That was the meaning of the word ‘helping each other’”.

- Nathan Qamaniq, Amitturmiut\*

# Learning By Doing

- Observation
- Repetition
- Understanding

# Learning by Doing: *Observation*

- How to behave
  - “Good” vs. “Bad” – learning by watching others
- How to interact / live in community
  - Socialization of children through example
    - Eg. A child is selfish, he/she is chided within earshot
- How to survive
  - Living on the land, learning by experience
  - Following inuksuit, recognizing hunting patterns

# Learning By Example

- Observing behaviour / relationships:
  - Examples set by Elders, parents, siblings
  - Interactions between family members, community members act as model for children
- Observing skills:
  - Eg. watch skinning by father, learn sewing from mother
- Observing surroundings:
  - Knowledge of the land / weather by attention to inuksuit or types of clouds, for example

# Learning by Doing: *Repetition*

- Children acquire skills by repeating what they see
  - Follow parents, Elders, community members
- By repeating tasks, they:
  - Learn new skills
  - Improve techniques so that they are able to assume their roles in the community

# Learning By Doing: *Understanding*

- Values
  - Learning from Elders / legends / family
- Relationships
  - Learning from each other / community living
- The land
  - Living on the land and adapting with the environment

# Components of Learning by Doing

## Elders:

“We gravitate to them, not just because of how much knowledge they have but, rather, because of how they share that knowledge with the community.”

- *Prof. John Colton, Acadia University*

- Leadership: Guidelines for living *with* the land
- Community Influence
  - Source of knowledge, advice, history

## Work Ethic

- Incredible efforts made by all in the communities in order to survive

# IQ in the Classroom

- Blending of the old with the new
  - Incorporate traditional “Learning By Doing”
  - Encourage Inuit culture and language
  - Prepare students for higher learning
- “Pijitsirniq” (to serve)
  - “The education system should serve the communities, and not the other way around” \*

\*SOURCE: Sarah Minogue, “IDEA slams Education Act Omissions” *Nunatsiaq News* January 2006

# IQ in the Classroom

- Lessons built around everyday experiences and activities
  - A sled or “*qamutik*” can be a very important classroom tool: it can be used to teach about history, as well as physics, or mathematics.\*

\* SOURCE: Nunavut Curriculum - [http://142.206.72.67/02/02c/02c\\_supp/02c\\_supp\\_001\\_e.htm](http://142.206.72.67/02/02c/02c_supp/02c_supp_001_e.htm) - Feb. 14th/07

*The **knowledge** and **principles** that have evolved in communities over thousands of years must be sustained **through education.***

*Only then can we continue to truly appreciate heritage and culture.*