



Ontario Native Literacy AGM & Conference
“Creating a Future with Teachings from the Past”

FINAL REPORT
PREPARED BY
ONLC STAFF
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Ontario Native Literacy AGM & Conference

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Background:

ONLC is a not for profit, charitable organization that was incorporated in 1988 and is governed by an elected Board of Directors following a policy governance model. Primary funding of ONLC is provided by the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities. ONLC is the support Organization for the Indigenous Stream and has the distinct honor to be the only provincial support organization in Canada focusing on Indigenous Literacy.

The principles of ONLC are;

- A community-based and learner-centered approach to literacy skills development that allows the learners to set learning goals and ensure respect for, and empowerment of the learner;
- A culturally based approach to teacher that respects the learner and honours previous experience and prior learning;
- Literacy training should recognize the importance of Indigenous languages and traditions as well as the cross-culture diversity within Indigenous communities;

Some of the priorities that ONLC focuses on are; ensuring timely and appropriate training for Indigenous Stream Literacy Practitioners, developing and sharing culturally-relevant resources that support Indigenous literacy initiatives, advocacy for better understanding of Indigenous literacy issues and the fundamental needs of Indigenous programs such as stable funding, adequate facilities and appropriate, culturally-sensitive resources, researching potential gaps in the delivery of Indigenous literacy services and developing strategies to respond to them, and pursuing field development projects that advance the aims of the ONLC and benefit Indigenous literacy and skills upgrading programs.

The annual conference allows an opportunity for administrators and front-line workers, not only in literacy but other service areas such as employment and social services, to collectively focus on professional development, strengthening understanding as well as sharing best practices and networking with their colleagues.

ONLC is a robust organization that continues to provide culturally relevant training and resources for Indigenous and non-Indigenous practitioners and learners to assist in reaching their desired goals.

This annual gathering of the Board of Directors, staff and adult Literacy Program Practitioners is hosted annually throughout the province of Ontario at various locations.



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Purpose of this Report:

This conference/AGM report was generated to provide an overview of the events and activities that took place during the three-day event. An overall conference evaluation was completed at the end of the gathering. The result of those evaluations will be shared here and could possibly offer valuable information and direction to the planning committee for the next annual event. This report is simply an additional resource tool that may be used in the process of looking back and assessing successes and shortcomings of this event. The information contained in this document should be used as a source of reference only.

Conference Overview:

“Creating a Future with Teachings from the Past,” was the theme of this year’s 31st annual conference, which was held from May 30th - June 1st, 2019 at the Six Nations Community Hall, Ohsweken, ON.

This theme was chosen based on the after affect of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. After many conversations the questions of “What do we do now? Where do we go from here?” kept coming up. That’s when it was decided that we need to help our learners and practitioners take back ownership of our teaching from the past and create a future that is beneficial to all, this help to guide the direction for planning and organizing the event.

The focus was placed on ensuring program practitioners were well equipped to support and facilitate the learning of a very diverse client base. Keynote speakers were selected based on their ability to inspire and encourage with wisdom and experience in the areas of traditional knowledge, educational and political.

As noted in the previous years report, future events of this size and length may require a professional coordinator or event planner and more volunteers, as office staff is quite busy with daily tasks and administrative obligations.

Again, ONLC chose to host this professional development conference/AGM independent of a partner as in years previous. The reason ONLC has chosen to forego any partnerships is to have the focus be entirely on relevant Indigenous content and how to incorporate it into programming that satisfies all ministry requirements.



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Conference Highlights:

1. Each day of the conference was started with a keynote speaker that was chosen for the Indigenous wisdom they each carry for both Indigenous education and traditional knowledge. Each speaker conveyed their personal experiences as well as their professional knowledge that they have acquired through their journeys in life. All keynote speakers were very inspiring and hopefully left participants eager to share their knowledge.
2. The first day of the conference workshops was to showcase some of the new resources produced by ONLC this fiscal year. This opportunity allowed participants the chance to see firsthand from the authors how each resource was designed to be used within the Indigenous stream literacy programs.
3. More hands-on art-based workshops were added this year to promote self-care for practitioners, and to demonstrate how traditional skills such as traditional basket weaving and ribbon skirt making can be incorporated into classroom activities that can help to build literacy and numeracy skills in learners.
4. An intimate screening of the documentary *Rumble: The Indians that Rocked the World* with producer Time Johnson and Juno Award Winning Recording Artist Derek Miller at the beautiful newly opened The Gathering Place by the Grand, located on the Six Nations Reserve.
5. On June 1, 2019 ONLC had their 31st Annual General Meeting at the Six Nations Community Hall. At the AGM, ONLC gave recognition to long-time board member Sarah Stocker who has decided it was time to leave the board after many years of service. We wish Sarah luck on her future endeavours.
6. The board also welcomes new board member Ladeanne Debassige from Kenjgewin Teg. She comes with much experience and her profile will be in the upcoming edition of the newsletter.



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Keynote Speakers

Elva Jamieson



Elva is from the Cayuga Nation of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory and belongs to the Wolf Clan family. She has sat as a Faithkeeper since she was a teenager. Elva strongly believes in ceremony and its ability to help us adapt to different changes we experience on our Life Path. Although she has the ability to conduct a range of traditional healing services on a holistic/spiritual level to help guide people toward their personal healing, she considers herself a “Plant Person.” Elva had been taught local traditional medicines through her mother who was also well-known for her indigenous knowledge of plants and their use. Elva has incorporated all this knowledge toward her commitment to preserve our languages, culture, spirituality, and to reawaken the Onkwehonwe faith in their ability to heal themselves.

Bryan Bellefeuille



Bryan is Anishinaabe of Nipissing First Nation. He is a faithkeeper, a grass dancer, and a traditional fisherman. Bryan graduated from the Schulich School of Education at Nipissing University after completing an undergraduate in Mathematics. During his time enrolled he was invited to speak at the Perimeter Institute of Theoretical Physics regarding Indigenous Mathematics, as well as attend a session of the same topic at the Fields Institute of Mathematical Sciences. Bryan has also been working with First Nations people within the Ontario and Canadian Criminal Justice system for over four years as a Gladue Report Writer. During the same time Bryan was part of the team that edited the Ontario curriculum for Grade 10 History in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Actions number 62 & 63

Cathie Jamieson



Cathie is a member of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) and is a member of the Bear Clan. She is an elected Band Councillor for her nation since Dec. 2015. Councillor Jamieson was born and raised in the MCFN. She graduated with an Honors Bachelor of Arts Degree and diploma specializing in Art & Art History from the University of Toronto and Sheridan College. By exploring the concepts of Indigenous identity through historical and contemporary representation, Councillor Jamieson has developed a unique understanding of the relationship between the history of people and art. Her multi-disciplined approach enables her current position within the political framework of First Nation governance. She is particularly interested in understanding the systems of intergenerational influences that impact First Nations communities and goes back to the community framework to throttle forth change.



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Entertainment



This year ONLC was fortunate enough to have an intimate and private screening of the documentary **“Rumble: The Indians that Rocked the World”** with an introduction of the film by producer Tim Johnson and Juno Award winning artist Derek Miller.

RUMBLE explores how the Native American influence is an integral part of music history, despite attempts to ban, censor, and erase Indian culture in the United States.

As RUMBLE reveals, the early pioneers of the blues had Native as well as African American roots, and one of the first and most influential jazz singers' voices was trained on Native American songs. As the folk-rock era took hold in the 60s and 70s, Native Americans helped to define its evolution.

Father of the Delta Blues Charley Patton, influential jazz singer Mildred Bailey, metaphysical guitar wizard Jimi Hendrix, and folk heroine Buffy Sainte-Marie are among the many music greats who have Native American heritage and have made their distinctive mark on music history. For the most part, their Indian heritage was unknown.

RUMBLE uses playful re-creations and little-known stories, alongside concert footage, archives and interviews. The stories of these iconic Native musicians are told by some of America's greatest music legends who knew them, played music with them, and were inspired by them.

Tim Johnson



Tim Johnson, conceptual author and executive producer of the Canadian Academy of Cinema and Television, Sundance Film Festival, and Hot Docs award-winning documentary RUMBLE: The Indians Who Rocked the World, is an experienced education, museum, and arts executive who recently helped lead the development of two public memorials of national significance that honour First Nations' contributions to Canada.



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Derek Miller



Two-time JUNO winning singer/songwriter/guitarist Derek Miller from Six Nations of the Grand River is a journeyman musician with eclectic taste and a knack for guitar-oriented roots-inflected rock with a pop sensibility. With his unique take on roots rock, and soul-stirring blues, Derek Miller is a force of musical nature.

With 17 albums to his credit, Miller has shared a stage with artists such as Blood, Sweat & Tears, George Thorogood, Smokey Robinson and The Neville Brothers. Canada's Olympic Committee, wanting an artist that reflected Canada's roots, hired Miller to rock the crowds alongside Eva Avila and Nikki Yanofsky at the Closing Ceremonies of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics.

In addition to recording with Willie Nelson, Buffy Sainte-Marie and Daniel Lanois, among many other talented artists across the globe, Derek has also recorded for the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian, resulting in the 2016 JUNO-nominated album *Rumble: A Tribute to Native Music Icons*. Most recently, Buffy asked the guitarist to play on her 2015 Polaris prize and Juno-winning album *Power in The Blood*.

Honouring of Gifts to Practitioners: Rumble Movie and Lesson Plans

Each ONLC Indigenous stream practitioners in attendance were gifted with a copy of the film *Rumbled*, along with lesson plans and ideas of how to incorporate this film into their programs that promotes Indigenous artist and their contribution to the music industry and how the film can be used to further develop literacy skills.



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Summary of Conference Workshops

Over the course of May 30 and May 31st, 2019 there were 21 workshops held to showcase the significance of “Creating a Future with Teachings from the Past.” Along with these workshops, 14 presenters shared their experiences and knowledge on numerous topics cover everything from addictions to Indigenous land-based methodology. There are as followed;

Thursday May 30, 2019

Began with Rainbow Meditation with Christine Porter

- grounding you, and preparing you of how you should approach your day

Opening by ONLC staff Alisha Thomas-Hill

Keynote speaker - **Elva Jamieson**

- She spoke on family, Indigenous methodology, used the metaphor of strawberries to promote wholistic wellness.

Workshops

“The Realm of Indigenous Literacy” - Bonnie Jane Miracle
Bringing Indigenous knowledge/teachings and applying that to western education.

“Let’s Build a Sustainable Food System” - Judy Rueben
Participants learned how to create a sustainable food source and incorporate it into their programs to further engage learners.

“How to Create a Learner Plan” - Alisha & Charity
Participants learned how to create a learner plan that addresses specific learners needs and learning styles using the Ontario Adult Learning Curriculum Framework.

“Literacy of Traditional Clothing” - Connie Thomas
Participants learned about traditional clothing and how to incorporate the skills need to enhance their literacy and numeracy skills.



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“Indigenous Cultural Toolkit” - Yuma Hester

Participants learned how to create a cultural toolkit that could be used to introduce traditional knowledge into the classroom.

ONESTEP “Ontario's Employment Service Transformation: What to Expect”

Participants learned about the upcoming changes that will take place within the ministry and where LBS stands within that framework. Resources were provided as well as a hands-on activity that help participants gain a better grasp of what is coming down the pipelines.

“Blended Learning” - Linda Wright

Participants learned how to incorporate the digital curriculum using the OALCF.

“The S.T.E.A.M Method and How It Can Work for Adult Learners” - Judy Rueben

Participants learned how to use the STEAM Method and how to create a curriculum using that method.

“New Indigenous Stream LBS” - Alisha Thomas-Hill & Charity Beland

Participants were walked through ONLC newest resource for new Indigenous stream practitioners entering the world of Literacy and Basic Skills.

Friday May 31, 2019

A Rainbow Meditation with Christine Porter was supposed to take place but due to mechanical troubles that delayed the arrival of the shuttle bus it was decided to forgo the meditation session and keep the agenda on time.

Keynote Speaker - **Bryan Bellefeuille**

- Spoke on the importance of educations and the importance of carrying on traditional ways and the importance of finding a balance between the two.

Workshops

“Indigenous Land Based Learning” - Andrew Judge

Participants learned about Indigenous Methodology and how to use the earth as a teaching resource. And an important way of thinking when it comes to language, of always knowing that a language does not die, but goes ahead and we must catch up to it.



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“Revitalizing Literacy DO12T” - Linda Wright & Evan Hoskins

Participants used technology, such as digital programs and a 3D printer to create artwork and how it can be used to build literacy skills.

“Canvas Painting” – Jennifer Lickers

Participants learned a brief history of indigenous art, both historically and contemporary and how it can be incorporated within a curriculum. Each Participant completed a piece of artwork using acrylic on canvas.

“Understanding Addictions” - Six Nations Mental Health & Addictions

Participants learned to understand addictions and how to approach learners that may be struggling with addictions.

“Budgeting with Crafts” – Alexandra “Gabby” Rosetta

Participants learned to design and use tools to create jewelry on a budget that can be used as a learning module using the OALCF.

The entertainment portion of the evening was held at the Gathering Place by the Grand. Participants were treated to acoustic set by Juno Award winning artist Derek Miller and a brief background of how the film *Rumble; Indians Who Rocked the World* along with producer Tim Johnson. Once the film was set up by our guest dinner was served. While participants enjoyed their meal a screening of the film *Rumbled* was shown.

Saturday June 1, 2019

Annual General Meeting

This year we were sad to see one of our long-time board members Sarah Stocker resign from the board. ONLC CEO Michelle Davis gifted Sarah with a beautiful shawl and thanked her for her years of dedication to improving the literacy skills of our Indigenous learners. As there was now a seat available for a new board member ONLC welcomed Ladeanne Debassige from Kenjgewin Teg as our newest board member. She comes with much experience and her profile will be in the upcoming edition of the newsletter. We also heard of the accomplishments and challenges of ONLC for 2018-2019. And the membership also was pleased with a very clean audit yet again.



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Around 10:00 a.m. the meeting was put on hold so that board members and participants were able to indulge in a delicious brunch, buffet style with an omelette bar provided by CA catering.

Once participants were finished eating, our final keynote speaker Cathie Jamieson spoke on her experiences in the western education system, and the many challenges she faced as a young indigenous woman. She gave hope and encouragement that our Indigenous Educational Institutions are aspiring to change some of the grim social statistics through education of all people including our own. Her inspirational talk carried the strong message that we as Indigenous peoples have been resilient and will continue to be, through a strong system of education that combines a deep understanding of our history and where we need to go from here.

Ms. Jamieson was presented with a beautiful hand-crafted basket made by workshop facilitator Kim Atkins as a thank you for sharing her experiences with us and inspiring our practitioners.

Continuing with AGM, CEO, Michelle Davis was pleased to announce that ONLC now has its own publishing company, Turtle's Back Publishing, which will be headed by Alexandra Rosetta. Ms. Rosetta is a graduate from the University of New Mexico with a major in Professional Writing. She began her course of study as a high school senior and that is where she grew to understand the importance of grant and proposal writing and the ability to persuade an audience and conduct decisive research as a major part of development for a company, organization and community.

Coming from a culturally-based community of Santo Domingo Pueblo (Kewa), Ms. Rosetta has been able to create a purpose for her writing. Even though English is her second language she has excelled greatly through her speaking and writing skills. She chose to become a Professional Writer so that she can return knowledge and help her community as well as other First Nations Communities.

The knowledge she has gained through her minor degree of Native American Studies and working as technical writer/editor with High Water Mark, LLC the past 4 ½ years has given her a thorough understanding of grants, treaties and agreements writing. Along with her Pueblo identity, it also gave her a better understanding of how to use her writing skills for the betterment of Indigenous communities. Ms. Rosetta not only brings experience and knowledge with her, but she is able to come from an Indigenous perspective that will be greatly utilized in her new position. Congratulations and we look forward to seeing Turtle's Back Publishing flourish.

As one of her first duties Ms. Rosetta gave an overall summary of the events from the conference. Sadly, it was also announced by ONLC CEO Michelle Davis that after this year the ONLC conference will be held every two years instead of annually due to the



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amount of work, hours of planning and financial obligation that it takes to put on every year, but she reassured practitioners in attendance that there are plans to hold workshops via webinars and possibly mini workshops throughout the province to keep our practitioners up to date.

To wrap up the conference/AGM ONLC staff Alisha Thomas-Hill did a short closing in the Mohawk language.

Overall Conference Evaluations and Comments:

Overall conference evaluations were distributed in the registration package and handed in at the end of the conference. Approximately 40 % of all participants responded. Many participants left early for travel reasons (catch a train, plain etc.) but did send comments in the way of emails. These are also added at the end of this section. When the conference came to a close on Saturday June 2nd, 2018, we asked the conference attendees to fill out a final evaluation. Those who did not complete this part of the evaluation are exempt from this section, those who did complete it have their comments written below. This evaluation is based around the entirety of the conference.

How satisfied were you with the registration process?

1 2 (2) 3 (2) 4 (1) 5 (15) n/a

How satisfied were you with the conference materials provided?

1 2 3 4 (5) 5 (14) n/a

Overall, how satisfied were you with the speakers/workshop presenters?

1 2 3 (1) 4 (6) 5 (12) n/a

How satisfied were you with the conference facilities?

1 2 3 (1) 4 (5) 5 (13) n/a

Was the content of the conference session appropriate and informative?

1 2 3 4 (5) 5 (14) n/a



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How was the organization of the conference?

1 2 (1) 3 (2) 4 (7) 5 (9) n/a

How would you rate your meal?

1 2 3 (2) 4 (6) 5 (11) n/a

Comments:

- I loved every aspect of the conferences including the Rainbow Meditation
- The building one beautiful
- I found the –Onestep – “Ontario's Employment Service Transformation: What to Expect” very interesting and informative
- Unclear registration + late to find out made it a hectic process. Once here this was fantastic and went this every year.
- Well organized, problems that arised were fixed without causing confusion. I was comfortable and well fed, miigwtch!
- Loved the Skirt Making but not enough time to finish project. Rhonda was so wonderful to help me finish the skirt while I had to attend a workshop
- Registration where it states hotel would be covered, it was not covered, for 3 guests with 2 rooms we spent close to \$1,000.00 dollars. That really confused us. Thanks.
- Enjoyed the conference. Some workshops had late start. Be nice if some icebreakers included to become familiar with other participants.
- Well planned + delivered. Excellent topics, speakers, food + entertainment
- Hot lunch would be nice.
- Every aspect of the conference had flow + relevance for me.
- The conference was wonderful

How would you rate Friday nights entertainment?

1 (2) 2 3 (1) 4 (2) 5 (12) n/a (2)

Comments:

- The entertainment was a great finish to a long day. It was nice to have the opportunity to learn more about culture
- I really enjoyed the documentary video on “Rumble” as well as the beautiful dinner. Very interesting, I loved it
- I could not attend
- Enjoyed the film and music



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- So enjoyed the few songs that we heard from Derek Miller. What a great soul and musician! Rumble was a compilation of some of the indigenous artists I have heard over the years. So great to hear the New Orleans indigenous artists.
- Last year's entertainment was great, this year it wasn't what I expected.
- Loved this film. Information + valuable
- Would never have watched movie – awesome addition to conference
- Thanks for a copy of Rumble!
- Too short. Not well organized. Tablecloths?
- Documentary was good but as “entertainment” could have been more entertaining. Felt bored at points & tired
- Sorry to have been too late to see the music performance

Were you satisfied with the keynote speakers; Elva Jamieson, Bryan Bellefeuille, Cathie Jamieson?

1 2 (1) 3 (1) 4 (5) 5 (12) n/a

Comments:

- I loved Elva's story of the Strawberry Teaching
- I really enjoyed the information about “Traditional Indigenous” math
- Very informative and very knowledgeable
- Very interesting that gave me new perspectives for future learning
- Each one had a different perspective of indigenous culture, learning and spirituality. So much knowledge that it doesn't already fit into 1 hour they had to speak.
- All were good, Bryan was amazing.
- All brought valuable stories and perspectives
- Inspirational, down to earth + informative
- Enjoyed how Bryan related it all back to literacy and the work we actually do.
- Stimulating, informative + inspirational
- The keynote speakers were incredible

Do you feel the length of the conference was good?

Yes (17) No (1) n/a (1)

Comments:

- For people with food intolerances if you're unable to provide food for them, in the future I would just tell them to bring their own food.



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- Yes, I thought the length of conference was good
- I would like a week so every workshop could be attended, but this was great too
- A little too early in the morning
- I was starting to lose my energy by Friday night until I saw Derek Miller and Rumble. Music energizes me!
- I think the set-up last year was more maintainable for individuals attending the conference.
- Sorry to hear the news that next year will be online
- First time attendee and I was very happy to be here
- Combine AGM to Friday and end conference Friday night – eliminate Saturday.
- I felt like the night with entertainment felt long because we watch a documentary. It also started very early. Shuttle for 7:30 with conferences start at 10 long wait time in between. With my van on time.
- Sorry to hear conferencing will happen only every 2 years.

Would you recommend the conference to others?

Yes (19) No n/a

Comments:

- It is a wonderful learning experience and an opportunity to build relationships. Special shout out to Davis for driving me to the train station!
- I would absolutely recommend this conference to anyone new to Literacy and Basic Skills helps adhere understanding how to help students reach milestones, attain their goal paths and how to run programs throughout the academic school year to support our students reach and attain their goal paths.
- I am a little upset I heard we will not do this annual. I feel we should, with a more advance plan/notice we could get more centre here. We, like everyone else, need to keep our skills up to date, and share best practices, network. We have almost zero other opportunities to gather for this. I can help with planning, if you want to have help, I have a long background in event planning
- I really enjoyed Christina Porter and our session, I recommend having her for the next conference or another indigenous seer/healer
- Sad to hear that conference would no longer be annual. Particularly troubling in these particularly uncertain times when solidarity becomes more important
- The main hall was quite cold and it took me a while to warm up a Thursday night but a hot bath helped at the hotel. Thank you for the opportunity to join this totally relevant conference on native literacy and so much more!
- Thank you for all accommodations. It's been a great few days with lots of knowledge. Chi-Miigwetch
- Addictions workshop very valuable. We need more intensive training in this area. A chat board for LBS practitioners could be valuable
- Very enjoyable! I facilitate a staff-forged workshop on resilience and second-hand trauma, and would like to offer it to you for next time. Thanks!



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- Good job!
- Let's look at performance management. Miigwech!
- I enjoyed myself thank you for the experience teaching were all very good and useful.
- Missed having vendors + outside activities.