

Muiwatmnej Etuaptmumk: “Two-Eyed Seeing From Vision to Action”

I want to start this editorial by expressing my sincere gratitude to everyone who has supported the publication of this special issue of *JAED*. I joined the editorial board of *JAED* two years ago, during a time of transformation. Penelope Sanz, *JAED*'s Managing Editor, and I discuss some of these recent changes to the editorial board in this issue's concluding remarks. But in the meantime, I will use this editorial space to frame this issue of *JAED* by exploring the concept of Two-Eyed Seeing and what it means to me.

Today, many academics and practitioners have heard about Two-Eyed Seeing. It is an approach that weaves between Western and Indigenous knowledge systems to create space for collaborative co-learning across different ontologies and epistemologies (Bartlett et al., 2012; Roher et al., 2021). This special issue was inspired by a conference held in Membertou, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, in the fall of 2023. The conference, Muiwatmnej Etuaptmumk: “Two-Eyed Seeing From Vision to Action,” was organized by the Bras d'Or Lakes Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative (CEPI) and its secretariat Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR). The conference's primary motivation was to honour and celebrate the work and words of Dr. Albert Marshall and his late wife, Dr. Murdena Marshall, who were both Elders in Eskasoni, as well as to celebrate their friend and collaborator Dr. Cheryl Bartlett. Being guided by the principles of Etuaptmumk/Two-Eyed Seeing was one of the eight lessons in their collaborative co-learning journey (Bartlett et al., 2012).¹ The presentations delivered at the conference, and the articles in this special issue, demonstrate this lesson's appeal.

Over time, people have interpreted Two-Eyed Seeing in various ways, through their eyes, for their own journey. Personally, I refer to Etuaptmumk/Two-Eyed Seeing as a guiding principle honouring the teachings shared with me by Elder Albert Marshall, Dr. Bartlett, and the network of friends who continue to engage with them.

The Bras d'Or CEPI

When the Integrative Sciences Team adopted Two-Eyed Seeing as a guiding principle more than two decades ago, Elder Albert used the phrase to describe what he was witnessing all around him. At the time, he was working with L'nu Elders Charlie Joe Dennis, Murdena Marshall, Charlie Labrador, and others to transform the relationship between Mi'kmaw organizations and communities and various government departments: the Bras d'Or CEPI is a result of these efforts.

While we have included Senator Daniel J. Christmas' story of CEPI's formation in *Lessons From Experience*, some background context might prove helpful here. The Bras d'Or Lakes CEPI arose in response to a request

by the Cape Breton First Nations Chiefs in 2003. It was envisioned as “lead[ing] a unique collaboration of partners that incorporates both traditional Mi’kmaw and western perspectives in order to foster a healthy and productive Bras d’Or Lakes Watershed ecosystem” (Bras d’Or Lakes CEPI, 2011, p. 3): that is, it was formed to work through emerging social and interjurisdictional tensions to develop an overall environmental management plan for the Bras d’Or Lakes and watershed. Since its formation, CEPI has worked to enact Etuaptmumk/Two-Eyed Seeing by embracing the guiding principles of collaborative co-learning as established by the Integrative Science Program (Bartlett et al., 2012). CEPI continues to regularly host meetings and workshops with the broader local community and government partners from four levels of government—First Nations, federal, provincial, and municipal—to exchange information and stories and to foster collaborative co-learning relationships.

In 2023, CEPI hosted a conference whose theme “Muiwatmnej Etuaptmumk” was a specific response to Elder Albert Marshall’s urgent call to move beyond just talking about Two-Eyed Seeing to enacting it in practice as a collaborative co-learning endeavour, both now and into the future. The conference was a resounding success. Chaired by the Honourable Mr. Daniel Christmas, the three-day event showcased enlightening presentations on integrating Indigenous and Western ways of knowing and doing. All the presentations in the main hall were simultaneously translated into the Mi’kmaq language to facilitate participative dialogue and discussion for all involved. The conference reinforced co-learning dialogue and action and inspired participants to integrate the principles of Two-Eyed Seeing in their professional and personal lives—one attendee described the experience as “enormously provocative,” providing a beacon of hope and a call to action for all those committed to a harmonious and sustainable future in the region. In addition, it was an historic moment for Unama’ki/Cape Breton and for Dr. Elder Albert Marshall and Dr. Cheryl Bartlett, showcasing their vision of drawing on traditional and modern perspectives to solve local, national, and global challenges.

The Articles in the Special Issue

Building on the energy the conference theme inspired, this special issue shares some wonderful and thought-provoking papers, including the work of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and communities of interest who are actively applying the tenets of Two-Eyed Seeing. In this way, we extend the dialogue beyond the conference network to those who wish to share their experiences and research using Etuaptmumk/Two-Eyed Seeing as a guiding principle for your own work.

Lessons from Experience highlights first-person accounts from groups using Two-Eyed Seeing to collaboratively navigate complex systems. Each of the stories refer to and rely on teams of researchers working together, embracing and modelling Two-Eyed Seeing in practice and sharing their stories in their own words. The section begins with Daniel Christmas’ story of CEPI’s journey to collaboration and is followed by a collective reflection on the lessons learned over the course of the partnership between the Unama’ki Institute of Natural Resources (The CEPI Secretariate), Confederacy of

Mainland Mi'kmaq, commercial fisher Darren Porter, Ocean Tracking Network, Acadia University, Dalhousie University, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada-Science (DFO-Science). The project is named Apoqnmaulti'k, which means “we help each other,” a name given by Elder Albert Marshall to signify the partners' commitment to “learning from one another through shared decision-making, dialogue, and mutual benefit.” The section closes with a case study about an Indigenous-led social enterprise in Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation (KTFN), Northwest Territories, by authors Ruby Simba and Maverick Simba-Canadien, who are community members from Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation, and collaborating researchers Laura Rodriguez-Reyes, Charlotte Spring, Andrew Spring, and Jennifer Temmer from Wilfrid Laurier University. The case study describes an ongoing collaboration between researchers and the community to achieve the community's vision of self-sufficiency during a time of rapid environmental change: it shares KTFN's vision of a revitalized enterprise that can bridge economic development needs and secure members' access to food while respecting and protecting their Dene values and knowledge.

In *Lessons From Research*, five academic papers highlight the multiplicity of meanings and methods ascribed to Two-Eyed Seeing. In “Land, Language, and Leadership,” Tara Atleo analyzes agreements between Indigenous, municipal, and provincial governments in British Columbia's forestry sector, highlighting how the language of governance and partnership is used in those agreements. This is followed by a collaborative article written by Ella Henry, Andre Poyser, and Bettina Schneider that explores accountability frameworks in Indigenous financial institutions in New Zealand, Australia, and Canada: the authors discuss three case studies where Indigenous institutions and peoples—specifically First Nations in Canada, Torres Strait Islanders in Australia, and Māori in New Zealand—are creating novel approaches to governance. The third article by Eleanor Anderson applies Two-Eyed Seeing frameworks to tourism programming. While there has been a rise in Indigenous tourism and Indigenous-led tourism initiatives and programs across the country, Anderson argues that mainstream tourism associations should also incorporate Etuaptmumk/Two-Eyed Seeing into their policy and planning processes: for true reconciliation, all organizations must be more deliberate about integrating Indigenous communities from the initial planning stages. Tiffany Sack also uses Etuaptmumk/Two-Eyed Seeing when analyzing codeveloped housing policies in two First Nations communities. She draws on participant interviews with members of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, Quebec, and Potlotek, Nova Scotia, to explore the localized historical contexts of policy development. She also identifies principles for effective policy codevelopment, such as meaningful engagement, respectful dialogue, shared decision-making, and recognizing Indigenous rights and sovereignty. Finally, Kate Kish and Kate Pal consider Indigenous knowledge's potential to (re)shape technical and legal definitions of land. They discuss the opportunities and challenges of using Ecological Footprint and Biocapacity calculators as tools to quantify the availability of ecological assets, using Two-Eyed Seeing to identify the theoretical limitations of existing Biocapacity calculators, and, in the process, presenting an example of how integrating Indigenous understandings of territory, space, place,

and tradition into mainstream research methods can lead to new ways of approaching land claims.

All the articles in *Lessons From Research* demonstrate the places where Indigenous knowledge systems confront and are contested by colonial systems: this is where reconciliation happens. Some of the authors identify as Indigenous and ground their research in communities, while others focus on doing the work to learn from and about Indigenous world views and understand their personal positionality within colonial systems. All articles highlight the depth, breadth, and diversity of economic development efforts in all regions, including treaty territories, where communities and economies continue to adapt and adjust to modernization, political priorities, and climate change.

The special issue concludes with the Book Review section, in which Donn Feir, Dara Kelly-Roy, and Chloe Price review two books by Robin Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass* and *The Serviceberry*. The reviewers highlight the metaphors Kimmerer uses to contemplate an alternative to the dominant Western scientific and capitalist approach that informs our global and interconnected world. In *Braiding Sweetgrass* Kimmerer suggests, through story and analogy, another approach to globalization, one in which the values of collaboration, reciprocity, and sharing dominate, rather than competition, individuality, and hoarding. In *The Serviceberry*, Kimmerer translates these ideas to the field of economic development, focussing on the idea of metaphor as providing another way of viewing the organization and structure of economic models or belief-systems, opening the door for a multitude of ways a manager can “see” the strengths and weaknesses of all models at hand, thereby expanding their knowledge base.

Wela’lioq to the authors who contributed to this special issue and to all the reviewers who provided feedback on the articles along the way.

Mary Beth Doucette

END NOTES

¹ There are eight key lessons in Bartlett et al.’s teachings:

- “1. Acknowledge that we need each other and must engage in a co-learning journey
2. Be guided by Two-Eyed Seeing
3. View “science” in an inclusive way
4. Do things (rather than “just talk”) in a creative, grow forward way
5. Become able to put our values and actions and knowledges in front of us, like an object, for examination and discussion
6. Use visuals.
7. Weave back and forth between our worldviews.
8. Develop an advisory council of willing, knowledgeable stakeholders, drawing upon individuals both from within the educational institution(s) and within Aboriginal communities.” (2012, p. 334)

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