The Collaborative Dining Table

It was fun to use the editing tools with Preview on my Mac – I had never used these before. In representing the process we are using in the development of a Bachelor of Education: Indigenous Languages program, I prefer to use roles rather than people’s names in an assignment that is being submitted to a semi-public space.

As the development of this program is in response to identified community needs, it was important to have community members advising us at every stage of development. The PAC (Program Advisory Circle) members were selected because of their interest, experience, knowledge, or skills around Indigenous language education. This was the common domain for all participants.

We consulted virtually with others who have developed similar programs in other institutes and/or provinces, seeking their advice on strategies, processes, tips, and lessons learned in the development process. We also consult with the Ontario College of Teachers, to ensure the program we develop meets their requirements for accreditation.

In our own Institute, the Advisor, Dean and Manager of this program have been involved throughout the entire process.

The people involved in this process represent a diverse group. Some hold a lot of cultural knowledge. Others are come with a lot of higher education credentials. They come from several different communities, represent different Indigenous nations, some are urban, some rural. Having this diversity in perspectives is critical in ensuring the program we develop responds to the needs identified by a variety of communities and organizations.

All collaboration was done through Zoom, Micro-Soft Teams, or email. I found the virtual PAC meetings to be the most effective in brainstorming, drafting ideas, and listening to other perspectives. Ideas I hadn’t thought of or considered before were introduced and enriched my own thoughts and perspectives. Follow up emails were useful in unpacking ideas a little further, and in allowing participants to respond at their own convenience.

An image of this collaborative dining table is below. The image is a Photo by [shche\_ team](https://unsplash.com/%40shche_?utm_source=unsplash&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=creditCopyText) on [Unsplash](https://unsplash.com/photos/0dszrg9-V1o?utm_source=unsplash&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=creditCopyText)

I purposefully chose a picture of a table in a kitchen, as the kitchen is traditionally where a lot of preparation work is completed.

