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Arts-based strategies show promise as ways to engage a variety of populations, including Indigenous youth, in HIV/AIDS education and prevention (Flicker et al., 2013; Lys et al., 2016). The arts, such as painting, music, film, puppetry, have long been used in health promotion. They are lauded for their ability to engage audiences. While arts-based health promotion initiatives have become increasingly popular, there continues to be a lack of research on the potential of the “arts products” created through these initiatives on new audiences.

In my doctoral work, I conducted a community-based research study in collaboration with the Labrador Friendship Centre’s (LFC) HIV Project that explored and evaluated the use of participatory filmmaking as a strategy for HIV/AIDS education and prevention for Indigenous youth and Elders in Labrador. We developed and hosted a 3.5-day participatory filmmaking workshop for Indigenous youth in the community of Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Workshop participants included eleven youth, ages eleven to seventeen, and five Elders who self-identified as Indigenous. Participatory filmmaking was used to engage participants and create dialogue about HIV/AIDS, sexual health, and health in general. The participants created four films during the 3.5-day workshop. These 4 films included a 1-minute Claymation film “Our body is a treehouse”, “Tested” a 3-minute film created by 4 youth, “Young Genius” created by 4 youth, and “Condom in Grandma’s Bag” a 6-minute film created by 5 Elders and one youth. Once completed, the youth presented their films to an audience that included other youth, Elders, community leaders, friends, and family.

The findings from a pre- and posttest demonstrated that the youth significantly improved their HIV/AIDS knowledge and attitude scores by 22% and 18% respectively, after the workshop. Interview data suggested that participatory filmmaking provided a good platform for constructive dialogue and engagement among youth, and between youth and Elders. Additionally, youth (and Elders) positioned themselves as educators by making films. Many of the participants thought that their films would be a useful learning tool for other youth, Elders, and community members.

Based on the promising findings from my doctoral study, I would like to continue to investigate the use of the arts in HIV/AIDS education with Indigenous youth. In particular, I would like to examine how the films created by the participants in my doctoral study can be used with new audiences. Additionally, considering that peer education is identified as a “wise practice” for HIV/AIDS prevention among Indigenous youth and with other populations and that the youth in my doctoral study positioned themselves as educators through filmmaking, further research is required to examine the use of participatory filmmaking as a strategy for developing peer leadership (in conjunction with the use of “arts products”) in the context of HIV/AIDS education.

Continuing my community-based research relationships with the LFC, I propose investigating:

- 1) What is the impact of the films created by Indigenous youth and Elders at a participatory filmmaking workshop for HIV/AIDS prevention and education on new audiences?



- 2) How can participatory filmmaking be used as a peer education strategy for Indigenous youth in developing peer leadership?
- 3) What are the experiences of “peer leaders” and “new” peers interacting in an participatory filmmaking and HIV/AIDS education initiative?

The Labrador Friendship Center’s HIV prevention project provides HIV/AIDS education throughout Labrador, including within many of the predominantly Indigenous coastal communities, which provides an ideal context to investigate these research questions.