

## ASKING QUESTIONS

I would not blame, nor would I need to forgive, the reader who, upon near completion of this book asks “this is all fine and dandy, Gale, but who are you, as a white woman, to be talking about Indigenous ways of knowing, an Indigenous worldview, or even the struggles of Indigenous students with mathematics?” This is a question that MUST be asked and addressed. As I noted in the beginning, what I have presented here are only *my* interpretations, *my* understandings, and *my* actions related to those interpretations and understandings of my experiences and of what others have written about these topics. I claim no indigeneity, only a great desire to support all students in learning mathematics and in making mathematics accessible for all.

I have not, however, merely ploughed on without seeking advice and feedback from Indigenous scholars, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers, and their feedback have consistently been that the work I am doing is good work; it is important work. I have learned so much, and hope to continue learning, from everyone I have sought advice and critique from. Further, I have learned that in order to do good work in this field, asking questions is of greatest importance.

And in learning to ask questions, I have also learned to ask questions that are reflective not only of the knowledge I seek, but of who I am seeking it from. As I reflect back on my colleagues not being able to tell me what First Nations and Métis ways of knowing mathematics are, I realize now that no one really knows the answer to that question. Mathematics (as we know it in Western society and as it is taught in schools) is not an isolated category of First Nations and Métis knowledges. Mathematics is part of the many contexts in which First Nations and Métis knowledges exist. The question that I needed to ask was instead “what are First Nations and Métis ways of knowing?” and this is the question to which Leroy Little Bear’s answer started me on a journey of understanding.

