

## History of the IQ Articles

I started writing Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit ( IQ ) articles to keep my office colleagues informed about the north/arctic, to make them feel more welcome, to answer some of their questions, to encourage second language learning and to enrich cultural activities that staff are required to do as a department. As an IQ coordinator, I'm responsible for coordinating IQ activities for my department. Because my colleagues and I travel quite a bit, it's difficult to convene all Qikiqtani School Operations staff together at one time. Articles seemed to be the temporary band-aid solution to providing required office IQ understandings. These articles cost next to nothing besides my time and effort.

The IQ articles are written in English as they are geared toward an English speaking audience. Some of the articles have been translated into Inuktitut, by request. Most of my writings are edited by those who are in a better position to use English more effectively than someone with English as a second language; for this, I'm extremely grateful. The initial idea to share my thoughts was aimed at the newcomers. However, I found out later that these articles also help others. I know that all new government employees benefit from reading about the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. The theme based articles help long term government employees understand more about their region. School principals find them useful for their teachers. The younger Inuit in the Nunavut Government departments understand more about their culture, and mention that they feel better about being an Inuk after reading the IQ articles: their self-confidence seems to have been boosted. I did not expect this when I started. People close to my age recall things they had forgotten when they read the articles. They often offer tips to enrich what I write.

I'm sure that outsiders sometimes feel that they are intruding in the lives of the local people. This is a normal feeling. Local people also feel that they are intruding in the lives of the newcomers. It is always best if both groups make things easier for the other, as they have to live side by side. Both cultures have a great deal to offer the other.

Southerners/newcomers have a greater appreciation for the Inuit if they have a better understanding of the culture/language/north/arctic/community. Lack of knowledge can result in lack of respect for another. It's great to know why people do things, and how, without criticism. These articles will promote understanding and clarify misunderstandings for newcomers.

Sharing my Inuit culture with others has helped me to better understand who I am, where I came from and where I may be going. I now have a greater appreciation for Inuit and for myself. I have gained a further appreciation for the English language and Western culture through sharing and self-examination.

Knowing the two principal languages has helped me to better represent my colleagues regarding IQ in the workplace. My English skills have helped me to better understand the European way of life, whereas my Inuit culture has helped me to strengthen my own. Both languages/cultures are equally important, and yet unique.

Much of what I write is written from my personal perspective which others may not agree with. What I write is mostly based out of Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet), Tununig region. What I write about may not exist in some communities. There may be some animals that are not seen in certain areas. It may be about plants that only grow in certain places. I may write about mountains around Pond Inlet; I only write about things that I know.

I find writing in English difficult as I struggle to find proper words to describe my thoughts. However, writing the IQ articles in English has helped me to improve my English and my writing skills; for that, I'm grateful! There may be some areas of the articles where things may not make sense due to the fact they have been thought out using my first language and then written down in my second. For this, I apologize.

When I write, I try to make the articles short so that readers don't lose interest. I normally make them 1 or 2 pages long. Too much information can be overwhelming for people who are new to a culture. When people lose interest, they may neglect what is important. Shorter articles are more effective for most people.

Readers find the IQ articles informative, interesting, educational and fun to read. Once in a while, I'll add little bit of humor to keep them interesting. Humor keeps the reader interested and to look forward to the next one. Humorous material is usually remembered. I get a great deal of encouragement to keep writing. I enjoy sharing what I know.

In addition, I hope to encourage others to write about Inuit, language and culture- from an Inuit perspective. A great deal of written material has been produced about Inuit by people who became 'experts' after a quick visit to a community. We need more material for Inuit, by Inuit, to properly represent the arctic/north. I'm hoping that this material can be modified to use as a learning resource in the classroom.

I would also like to see Inuktitut translations so that the articles I have written so far can reach a wider audience. You never know, perhaps my articles will one day be translated into other languages and benefit others as well.

Since the government of Nunavut encourage its employees to learn Inuktitut and about the Inuit culture, I'm confident that these IQ articles can help. I would encourage all Government of Nunavut employees to read them. In fact, if I was in an administrative position, I would direct

all government employees in my department to read the IQ articles/ as a 'must', and to have discussions about them.

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