

Teachers and Instructors



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Pulling Together

A Guide for Indigenization
of Post-Secondary Institutions

Professional Learning Series



Pulling Together: A Guide for Teachers and Instructors by Bruce Allan, Amy Perreault, John Chenoweth, Dianne Biin, Sharon Hobenshield, Todd Ormiston, Shirley Anne Hardman, Louise Lacerte, Lucas Wright, and Justin Wilson is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

Artist Statement

Inspired by the annual gathering of ocean-going canoes through Tribal Journeys, 'Pulling Together' created by Kwakwaka'wakw artist, Lou-ann Neel, is intended to represent the connections each of us has to our respective Nations and to one another as we Pull Together. Working toward our common visions, we move forward in sync, so we can continue to build and manifest strong, healthy communities with foundations rooted in our ancient ways.

Thank you to all of the writers and contributors to the guides. We asked writers to share a phrase from their Indigenous languages on paddling or pulling together...

'alhgoḥ ts'ut'o ~ Wicēhtowin ~
kən limt p cyʕap ~ si'sixwanuxw ~ ʕihšʕ ~
Alh ka net tsa doh ~ snuhwulh ~
Hilzaqz as q'igūála q'usa mánáḡuala wíwúyalaʕsm ~
k'idéin át has jeewli.àat ~ Na'tsa'maht ~
S'yat kii ga goot'deem ~ Yequx deni nanadin ~
Mamook isick

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Over the course of a weekend in early November 2017, writers and facilitators created a sacred space in which to discuss, plan, and draft a guide to benefit all teachers and instructors in public post-secondary institutions in B.C. who want to Indigenize their practice and institution. On the first morning, we shared how education shaped who we are, what we do, and why we continue the work. The words shared in circle were inspiring, humble, resilient, and powerful.

Thank you, Creator, for the good energy we held for the weekend and to each other for bringing our best gifts forward. We also want to thank Dianne Biin and Lucas Wright for finalizing our draft. We invite all those who use this guide to openly share it and continue contributing to it. It is our shared strengths that create and hold a space for transformative education.

All our relations.

Overview

Purpose of this guide

A Guide for Teachers and Instructors is part of an open professional learning series developed for staff across post-secondary institutions in British Columbia. Guides in the series include: [Foundations](#);¹ [Leaders and Administrators](#);² [Curriculum Developers](#);³ [Teachers and Instructors](#);⁴ [Front-line Staff, Student Services, and Advisors](#);⁵ and [Researchers](#).⁶ These guides are the result of the Indigenization Project, a collaboration between BCcampus and the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. The project was supported by a steering committee of Indigenous education leaders from BC universities, colleges, and institutes, the First Nations Education Steering Committee, the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association, and Métis Nation BC.

These guides are intended to support the systemic change occurring across post-secondary institutions through Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation. A guiding principle from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada process states why this change is happening.

Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity. (2015, p. 3)

We all have a role to play. As noted by Universities Canada, “[h]igher education offers great potential for reconciliation and a renewed relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada.” (2015) Similarly, Colleges and Institutions Canada notes that “Indigenous education will strengthen colleges’ and institutes’ contribution to improving the lives of learners and communities.” (2015) These guides provide a way for all faculty and staff to Indigenize their practice in post-secondary education.

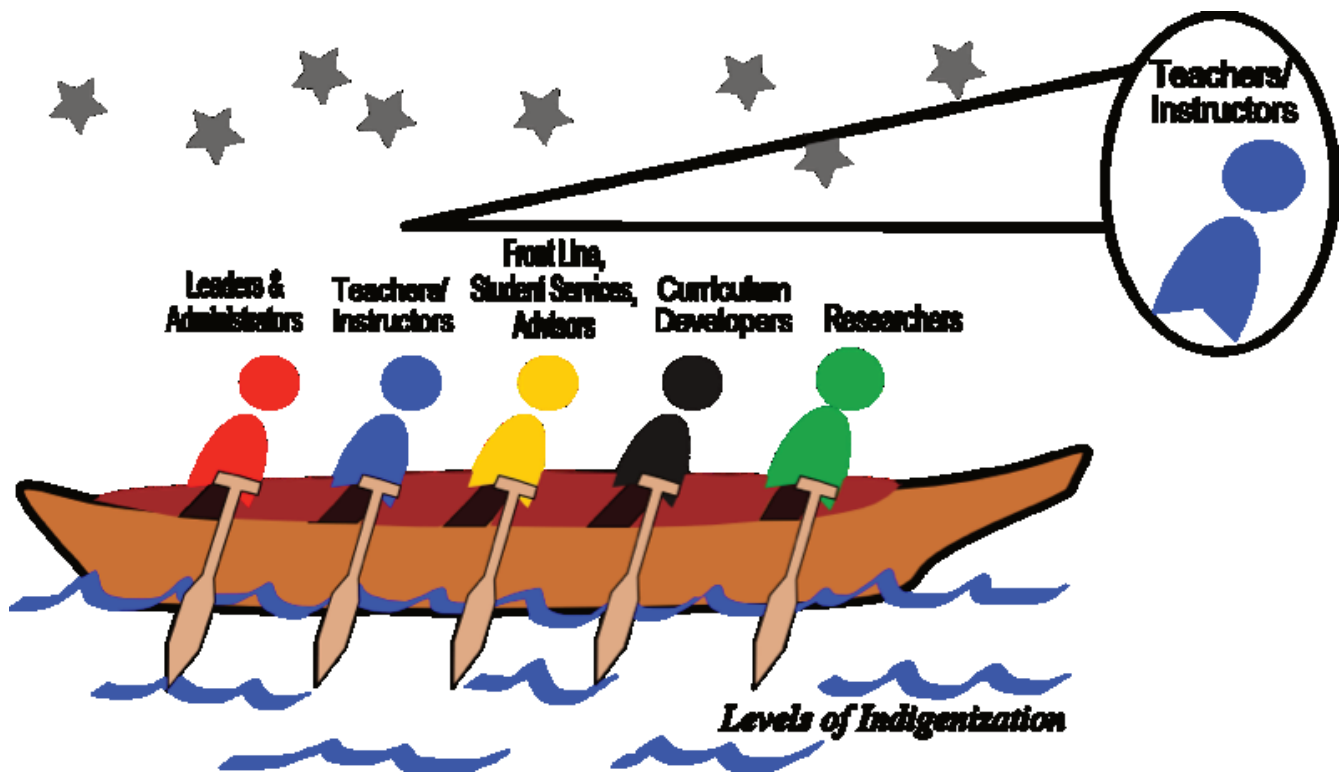


Fig 0.1 Pulling Together: A Canoe Journey

The Indigenization Project can be described as an evolving story of how diverse people can journey forward in a canoe (Fig 0.1). In Indigenous methodology, stories emphasize our relationships with our environment, our communities, and with each other. To stay on course, we are guided by the stars in the sky, with each star a project principle: deliver holistically, learn from one another, work together, share strengths, value collaboration, deepen the learning, engage respectfully, and learn to work in discomfort. As we look ahead, we do not forget our past.

The canoe holds Indigenous Peoples and the key people in post-secondary education whose roles support, lead, and build **Indigenization**. Our combined strengths give us balance and the ability to steer and paddle in unison as we sit side by side. The paddles are the open resources. As we learn to pull together, we understand that our shared knowledge makes us stronger and makes us one.

The perpetual motion and depth of water reflects the evolving process of Indigenization. Indigenization is relational and collaborative and involves various levels of transformation, from inclusion and integration to infusion of Indigenous perspectives and approaches in education. As we learn together, we ask new questions, so we continue our journey with curiosity and optimism, always looking for new stories to share.

We hope these guides support you in your learning journey. As open education resources they can be adapted to fit local context, in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples who connect with and advise your institution. We expect that as more educators use and revise these guides, they will evolve over time.

How to use and adapt this guide

The *Guide for Teachers and Instructors* explores how to Indigenize one's practice by building new relationships with Indigenous pedagogy and knowledge. To learn more about Indigenous-Canadian relationships since contact, please see the *Foundations Guide*⁷ in this learning series.

Essentially, this guide mirrors the structure of curriculum design and pedagogical processes to support learning by focusing on three processes – content, context, and application. Content acts as prior knowledge bridges and explores how we got here today. Context grounds you to recognize, respect and honour Indigenous worldviews and suggests ways to invite into your classroom and practice. Application encourages movement forward by providing tangible ideas and next steps for Indigenization.

This guide can be used as part of a learning community or in a group learning experience, adapting and augmenting it to include Indigenization pathways at your institution for Indigenous students and communities.

The *Guide for Teachers and Instructors* is not a definitive resource, since First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives and approaches are diverse across the province. We invite you to augment it with your own stories and examples, and, where possible, include Indigenous voice and perspectives from your area in the materials.

Note: For a technical description of how to adapt this guide please see [Appendix A](#).

Attributions

Fig 0.1: Pulling Together: A Canoe Journey, Teachers/Instructors emphasis by Dianne Biin is used under a [CC BY 4.0 International Licence](#).

Notes

1. Pulling Together: Foundations Guide: <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfoundations/>
2. Pulling Together: A Guide for Leaders and Administrators: <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationleadersadministrators/>
3. Pulling Together: A Guide for Curriculum Developers: <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationcurriculumdevelopers/>
4. Pulling Together: A Guide for Teachers and Instructors: <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationinstructors/>
5. Pulling Together: A Guide for Front-Line Staff, Student Services, and Advisors: <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfrontlineworkers/>
6. Pulling Together: A Guide for Researchers, Hiłk'ala: <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationresearchers/>
7. *Foundations Guide*: <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfoundations/>

Introduction

Stop walking through the world looking for confirmation that you don't belong. You will always find it because you've made that your mission. Stop scouring people's faces for evidence that you're not enough. You will always find it because you've made that your goal. True belonging and self-worth are not goods; we don't negotiate their value in the world. The truth about who we are lives in our hearts. Our call to courage is to protect our wild heart against constant evaluation, especially our own. No one belongs here more than you....

True belonging is the spiritual practice of believing in and belonging to yourself so deeply that you can share your most authentic self with the world and find sacredness in both being a part of something and standing alone in the wilderness. True belonging doesn't require you to change who you are; it requires you to be who you are.

– Brown (2017, p. 158)

Brené Brown's words resonate with many of the anxieties that non-Indigenous faculty and teachers have expressed to their Indigenous colleagues and others in the hallways and outside the classroom. We often hear, perhaps less eloquently stated, that people are afraid they will make mistakes, say the wrong thing, and offend people, and they question the validity and purpose of their voice in the conversation about Indigenization. From this place of fear, people often want to know “the right way” to teach or wanting to have the checklist or know the best practice that will ensure a smooth delivery of Indigenous content.

Corrine Michel, Secwepemc faculty, and Janice Simcoe, an Anishinaabe educational leader, both at Camosun College, have said (personal communications, 2017), “Indigenization of teaching practice is an ongoing process rather than a start-to-end project. Thus, we need to think in terms of flow and ongoing learning rather than hoping to have a checklist that will guide the process to a finale.” A checklist may function as a life jacket, as it may be a way to stay afloat, but this approach does not provide you with the skills to grow and manoeuvre with this growth. In some ways, the checklist or life jacket is a comfortable safety device that could result in people “starting to drift back to normal practice, a sort of impermanent transformation.”

As Brené Brown calls for us to “share our most sacred self by both being part of something and standing alone in the wilderness,” we are inviting you to come along for this journey by standing beside us but also entering into unfamiliar territory. Along the way and throughout this guide there will be points where you will reflect on

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difficult moments and choppy waters; however, we hope that this guide will provide you with tools, like a paddle, to navigate through it all and strengthen your approach as educators who are part of the team on this canoe journey.

Section 1: Inform – Locating Self and Practice



Fig 1.1: Aboriginal math/English camp.

Attributions

Fig 1.1: [Aboriginal math/english camp](#) by [Simon Fraser University](#) is used under a [CC BY 2.0 Generic Licence](#).

Introduction

In this section, you will reflect on your own identity within the histories of colonization in Canada and acknowledge the perpetuation of these histories. You'll also reflect on ways to engage in decolonization, by recognizing and addressing privilege and power imbalances in contemporary realities.

Purpose of this section

In this section you will locate yourself, your educational experiences, and your practice in relation to Indigenous Peoples, communities, and knowledge systems. Key topics in this section:

- Colonization framework in Canada
- How racism maintains inequity and colonization
- How Indigenous Peoples are reconnecting
- Knowing yourself in relation to Indigenous Peoples
- The need for Indigenizing
- Holding space and humility for other ways of knowing and being

This section should take you 3 (individual) to 11 hours (group) to complete.

Indigenous peoples throughout the world have sustained their unique worldviews and associated knowledge systems for millennia, even while undergoing major social upheavals as a result of transformative forces beyond their control. Many of the core values, beliefs and practices associated with those worldviews have survived and are beginning to be recognized as having an adaptive integrity that is as valid for today's generations as it was for generations past. The depth of indigenous knowledge rooted in the long inhabitation of a particular place offers lessons that can benefit everyone, from educator to scientist, as we search for a more satisfying and sustainable way to live on this planet.

– Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005, p. 9)

We cannot have a conversation about Indigenous Peoples in Canada without drawing on the work of the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission of Canada. This work involved Indian residential school survivors having the courage to tell the truth of what occurred in the schools and how it harmed their adult lives, families, and communities. The process used in the hearings also provided a way for non-Indigenous people to bear witness to the stories. The regional sessions and hearings enabled survivors to come together, to be spiritually and emotionally supported, to offer their testimonies, and to hear one another. The stories of survival, resistance, and healing are now housed in the [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#)¹ at the University of Manitoba and the west coast affiliate centre at the University of British Columbia ([Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre](#)²).

This dialogue must continue in order to ensure that we do not perpetuate othering. As survivors continue their healing process and reconnection with their communities, culture, and identity, Canadians can educate themselves about how assimilative policies and cultural genocide causes and perpetuates power and privilege imbalances and systemic racism across the country.

Notes

1. National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation: <https://nctr.ca/map.php>
2. Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre: <http://aboriginal.ubc.ca/indian-residential-school-centre/>

Colonization Framework in Canada

Not only has colonization been purposefully omitted from Canadian history, but it continues today. Indigenous scholarship and educational reform resulting from the reports of the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada are only now providing a foundation on which these truths can be brought forward. For instance, the *Foundations Guide* and UBC's [Indigenous Foundations website](#)¹ explore and build awareness of the tools used to form and perpetuate disparity and privilege, such as:

- the spreading of disease to wipe out a healthy and thriving population and gain access to a land base
- the stripping of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit rights through policies and legislation, such as the Indian Act, historic treaties, the [Scrip policy](#)² in Manitoba, and [High Arctic relocation](#)³
- assimilation and cultural genocide through the forcing of numerous generations of Indigenous children into the residential school system
- the reserve system, which has affected relationships, consultation, and governance

The effects of colonization on Indigenous communities continue today, as the Indian Act and reserve system still exist. The harm caused by these processes and laws, however, has not extinguished Indigenous Peoples. Rather, the opposite has occurred:

- Indigenous Peoples are among the youngest and fastest-growing populations in the country.
- The apologies for the residential school policy and system and the release of the [94 Calls to Action \[PDF\]](#)⁴ from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are pathways to truth-telling and reconciliation.
- Indigenous land rights and title are being reaffirmed through landmark court decisions, international declarations, and tripartite treaty negotiations.
- First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities are revitalizing traditions and language and building capacity for self-determination.

These paths of resiliency, resistance, reclaiming, and revitalization despite the processes of colonization in this country are becoming more apparent through Indigenous scholarship and engagement with Indigenous activists, knowledge keepers, and leadership.

...who will listen to the trees, the animals and birds, the voices of the places of the land? As the long forgotten people of the respective continents rise and begin to reclaim their ancient heritage, they will discover the meaning of the lands of their ancestors.

– Deloria (1973, p. 300–301)

Notes

1. Indigenous Foundations website: <https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/>
2. Collections Canada Scrip Policy: <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/metis-scrip/index-e.html>
3. High Arctic relocation article: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-get-federal-apology-for-forced-relocation-1.897468>
4. TRC Calls to Action: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

How Racism Maintains Inequity and Colonization

Racism remains the theory, while intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination remain its integral practice. Although race is a false category, theories of racial superiority and discrimination continue to circulate, and critical cultural studies are only one of the many ways disciplinary knowledges are unpacking, acknowledging, and hopefully terminating racism.

– Battiste (2013, p. 132)

Colonization was built on racism. Superiority and inferiority were concepts incorporated into Canadian policy, legislation, and practice, where Indigenous peoples were identified as savages and wards of the state. As settlers came and governments were built, Indigenous Peoples' presence and resistance to assimilation created an "Indian problem" that worked against normalizing a story of Canada as a champion of human rights and a progressive nation. The government's ongoing need to "fix the problem" continues to have far-reaching effects on identity, belonging, and meaningful participation.

For example, the chief and council system imposed by the Indian Act is based on a Western patriarchal model that disregards traditional forms of governance and community wellness. It is a foreign system that conflicts with the Indigenous place-based value of traditional territory and pits families against families. The system is also largely responsible for the lateral violence or intolerance witnessed in Indigenous communities. The "[Crabs in the Bucket](#)"¹ metaphor is one way to describe lateral violence – as resentment and hostility toward self-determination and success.

Another example of the disruption of families and communities through racist policy is the Indian Act's definition of who is a "Status Indian." Status could be lost by enfranchisement, which included enrolling in and attending university, serving in the military, voting in federal and provincial elections, owning land, and marriage between Indigenous women and non-Indigenous men. These and other forms of enfranchisement applied from 1857 until 1985, when they were finally dropped from the Indian Act. Indigenous women and first-generation children had to prove Indigenous ancestry to regain status. Identity as "status" and "non-status" is still disruptive today and limits access to such things as the ability to live on reserve and to receive health care. "Status" students can seek educational funding support from their registered community, while "non-status" students cannot. [Educational attainment data](#)² show that women make up the highest percentage of Indigenous graduates (55%) and over half of

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all Indigenous graduates are “non-status” and live off reserve (Statistics Canada, 2011). There are multiple stories and factors behind these statistics that demonstrate the inequity of the Indian Act.



Fig 1.2: Status identity card.

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Notes

1. Crabs in the Bucket article: <http://www.trueactivist.com/crabs-in-a-bucket-as-an-analogy-for-modern-human-society/>
2. Statscan educational attainment data: http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-012-x/99-012-x2011003_3-eng.cfm

How Indigenous Peoples are Reconnecting

I'm speaking for Okanagan Indigenous peoples in terms of the way we think about land. We never have ever thought of it, I don't think, as anything static. As anything physical. We've always thought about it as a process of interactions, a process of changes and a process that's ongoing ... And so a lot of things that we think about as Okanagan people is how those systems should inform us, in terms of our interactions and the principles that we need to think about and adhere to. In the process of learning in our society, one of the things that we have come to understand is that there always needs to be that connection to and from the individual, and the connection of the family, and the connection to community, and how that intersects to the natural world.

– Jeanette Armstrong (as quoted by First Nations Studies Program, 2009)

In Indigenous epistemologies, interconnections with every living being and with place (the land) provide power and self-determination. They are remembered and passed on through language and stories. Indigenous ways of knowing, being, doing, and relating (epistemology, axiology, and pedagogy) are reaffirmed through resilience of spirit, resilience of knowledge retention, and the ability to share and transfer these gifts to subsequent generations.

These knowledge systems are now being brought into post-secondary education through experiential and on-the-land courses and programs. Course design and delivery rest with the partner Indigenous communities, and the institution creates a space within its programming to enable learning in a different way. Here are two examples of courses that support reconnection with the land:

- Camosun College – IST 250: [QĆÁSET Indigenous Cultural Camp](#)¹: QĆÁSET is a SENĆOFEN word meaning “spiritual renewal.” This course brings Indigenous and non-Indigenous students together to operate within an Indigenous experiential learning praxis cycle: experiencing (engagement in “real-life” learning experiences), reflecting (internalization of the experience), making meaning (analysis of the experience), and acting (application of experience to other “real-life” situations). This course brings together Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and provides the opportunity to engage with Indigenous knowledge systems.
- University of Northern British Columbia – First Nations Studies Program (FNST) [experiential learning courses](#)² (winter, spring, summer semesters): The FNST offers a variety of 100- to 400-level courses,

designed and delivered in co-operation with various Dakelh communities. Each year a different element of Indigenous epistemology is explored, from traditional technologies to environmental stewardship. This four-minute video explores the pedagogy and transformational learning during the first offering in 2013: [Experiential UNBC Course Leads to Cultural Milestone for Northern BC First Nation](#).³

However, Indigenization is more than including courses in programs and content in curriculum. To appreciate why Indigenization is important in education, we need to acknowledge some important political and societal shifts.

Notes

1. QĆÁSET Indigenous Cultural Camp: <http://camosun.ca/learn/calendar/current/web/ist.html>
2. Experiential learning courses: <https://www.unbc.ca/first-nations-studies/experiential-learning-courses>
3. Experiential UNBC Course Leads to Cultural Milestone for Northern BC First Nation: https://youtu.be/KDRa_QRhgfE

The Need to Indigenize

We maintain, however, that recognition of the distinct place of Aboriginal nations in the Canadian federation and accommodation of Aboriginal culture and identity should be regarded as a core responsibility of public institutions rather than as a special project to be undertaken after other obligations are met. Educational institutions have a pivotal role in transforming the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Canadian society.

– Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Final Report, Volume 3: Gathering Strength (1996, p. 477)

British Columbia is the only province that does not have historic treaties within its provincial boundaries, with the exception of Treaty 8 in the northeast of the province. The first modern-day treaties, such as the Nisga'a Treaty and the Tsawwassen Final Agreement, are changing the responsibilities of public organizations, including educational organizations. As public post-secondary teachers and instructors, we have a responsibility to ensure that students have the knowledge and skills necessary to work with and build relationships with Indigenous Peoples and communities. This includes a working knowledge of the changing political and social landscape and emerging and re-establishment of rights and title of First Nations, Métis, Inuit organizations and communities. It also includes incorporating the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous issues can no longer be considered a fringe concern; instead, Indigenous views, perspectives, and self-determination form part of the learning landscape in our institutions.

Knowing Yourself in Relation to Indigenous Peoples

Working through unlearning and relearning the collective histories of Canada is an emotional journey. Non-Indigenous teachers and instructors often feel anger, guilt, and shame for not having known about the atrocities levelled against a population in this country. As well, teachers exploring ways to include Indigenous content have to explore and identify their own perceptions of Indigenous identity, along with their personal biases and prejudices. Susan Dion, a Lenape and Potawatami educational scholar from York University, spent time with non-Indigenous teachers to explore ways to weave Indigenous and Western knowledge systems in a participatory, transformative way (the Braiding Histories project). During her research, Susan realized that teachers' personal biases and prejudices were hindering the way they used or referred to Indigenous pedagogies, such as storytelling:

When teachers take up the task of teaching about Aboriginal people, they are enacting historically structured social forms that organize, regulate, and legitimate specific ways of thinking and communicating. The discourse of the romantic, mythical Other is enacted through the teachers. How and what teachers communicate about Aboriginal people is based not on an arbitrary decision but is established on a long history of how Aboriginal people have been positioned in relationship to non-Aboriginal people. Aware that the discourse of the romanticized, mythical Other is embedded in a teacher's understanding of what it means to teach First Nations subject materials but simultaneously holding a somewhat contradictory faith in the transformative power of education, I realize that accomplishing change calls for a project that will interrupt the dominant discourse and offer teacher and students alternative ways of knowing. (2009, p. 64)

The teacher's understanding therefore positions the Indigenous person as the "perfect stranger," and generates a hands-off relationship with Indigenous Peoples, where Indigenous content is used in a contributive or additive approach (Goulet & Goulet, 2014, p. 20). This understanding perpetuates a dominant view of Indigenous Peoples and disables the ability to respectfully engage and acknowledge Indigenous worldviews in transformational learning. It is not only historical omissions that non-Indigenous teachers have to understand, but also how they hold themselves in relationships and interactions with Indigenous Peoples, knowledge systems, and perspectives. Susan Dion explains:

The fear of offending, the fear of introducing controversial subject material, the fear of introducing content that challenges students' understanding of the dominant stories of Canadian history all support the claim for the position of perfect stranger. Dominant stories that position Aboriginal people as, for example, romanticised, mythical, victimised, or militant Other, enable non-Aboriginal people to position themselves as respectful admirer, moral helper, protector of law and order. (2007, p. 331)

Indigenization can become misguided if educators and instructors are unaware of the ways in which values and beliefs can perpetuate the “perfect stranger” and thus affect meaningful engagement with Indigenous knowledge systems and perspectives in content and practice.

Holding Space and Humility for Other Ways of Knowing and Being

The education system that many of us have been a part of and participated in has created a rewards system for knowing the right answer and being the expert. As Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators begin to collaborate and build spaces for decolonizing and Indigenizing content, practice, and perspectives, an important core competency is humility. The work of Indigenizing post-secondary education requires accepting that there are ways of holding and sharing knowledge and learning and engaging all parts of the human being (spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical), thus moving beyond seeking a singular right answer. The complexity of Indigenization is realizing that there are multiple truths and no single clear answer; so as educators, we need to trust the unlearning and relearning process and be humble while engaging in the process.

We invite you in as a learner, and in doing so we ask you to walk lightly. By walking lightly, you are not only aware of yourself in this learning process, but you are aware of others as well. Here are some ways that you can bring humility into your practice:

- Ask your questions with the understanding that some of the work required to answer them is yours.
- Ask whose truths are valued and represented in your curriculum and discipline, what counts as knowledge, and why this is.
- Be aware of the space you take and the space you give. “Make space, take space” (Janey Lew, personal communication, 2017) entails giving yourself time to explore and appreciate Indigenous worldviews and taking the time to understand and disrupt beliefs and misconceptions.

Professional humility is being aware that we cannot know everything. It opens up our minds and hearts to accepting other ways of doing, knowing, and being so that we naturally create a shared learning space.

Summary

In this section, you have looked at how the history of colonization and its continued effects today affect our professional practice. The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report speaks to the gaps in our collective knowledge as Canadians of how we treated and harmed significant portions of the population. It takes time to decolonize our attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge to a place where we can accept other knowledges as valid, authentic, and meaningful. Accept this as a learning journey and be humble as you acquire this knowledge, as it will strengthen your teaching practice.

Activities

Activity 1: Discussing Indigenous-Canadian relationships

Time: 1-4 hours

Type: Group

Explore the [CBC 8th Fire series](#)¹ and hold discussion groups.

Activity 2: Working through the “perfect stranger” feelings of guilt

Time: 30 minutes

Type: Individual

Watch Susan Dion’s seven-minute video [The perfect stranger: Considering the role of emotions in disrupting the “perfect stranger” position in teacher education programs](#).²

- What resonates for you in this video?
- What is your self-care strategy when working through the emotions of colonization?

Activity 3: Reframing the effects of colonization

Time: 30 minutes

Type: Individual

Watch the four-minute [interview with Leanne Simpson](#)³ on how colonization contributes to violence against Indigenous women and recognition of traditional territories.

- What are some ways in which traditional territories strengthen Indigenous identity?
- How does this view affect your approach to traditional territorial acknowledgements?

Activity 4: Locating yourself within the settler story

Time: 1-2 hours

Type: Individual

Recount and reflect on your family's experiences in Canada:

- Recount your family history in relation to when and how your ancestors came to Canada; if you are Indigenous, describe your Indigenous lineage and traditional place.
- What struggles and opportunities did your family experience?
- What privileges and disadvantages did your family experience?
- How has your lived experience been informed by your family identity?

Activity 5: Exploring Indian residential school history in person

Time: 2-4 hours

Type: Group

Visit [UBC's Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre](#) (in person or online⁴). As you go through the exhibits and experience the interactive displays, consider and discuss:

- Were you aware of this history? To what extent?
- Reflect on your relationship(s) with Indigenous peoples. Do you talk about Canada's colonial history? What did you hear that changed your attitude and belief?

Notes

1. CBC 8th Fire Series: <http://www.cbc.ca/8thfire/index.html>
2. The perfect stranger: Considering the role of emotions in disrupting the "perfect stranger" position in teacher education programs video: <https://vimeo.com/59543959>
3. Interview with Leanne Simpson: https://youtu.be/IiFIgF_OHIM
4. UBC Indian Residential School Centre: <http://aboriginal.ubc.ca/indian-residential-school-centre/>

Section 2: Include – Exploring Indigenous Worldviews and Pedagogies



Fig 2.1: Indigenous graduate reception.

Attributions

Fig 2.1: [Indigenous_Graduate_Reception_2017-115](#) by [University of the Fraser Valley](#) is used under a [CC BY 2.0 Generic Licence](#).

Introduction

Giving yourself time and space to explore Indigenous epistemologies in comparison with your own requires holistic engagement. Some Indigenous core values and principles are shared in this section. They are shared as foundational and not finite; as you work with the Indigenous Peoples in your institution and region, these values and principles will vary.

Purpose of this section

In this section, you will acknowledge and explore how Indigenous worldviews and pedagogy can play a role in your professional practice. Key topics in this section:

- Respectfully opening your mind and heart to Indigenization
- Relevance of Indigenous worldviews
- Responsively creating space for Indigenous knowledge from Elders and other knowledge keepers/authorities
- Reciprocity and multiple ways of “listening” in oral traditions

This section should take you two hours to complete.

Respectfully Opening Your Heart and Mind to Indigenization

A university professor went to visit a famous Zen master. While the master quietly served tea, the professor talked about Zen. The master poured the visitor's cup to the brim, and then kept pouring. The professor watched the overflowing cup until he could no longer restrain himself.

"It's full! No more will go in!" the professor blurted.

"This is you," the master replied. "How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup?"

– Suler (2013)

Two processes are guiding Indigenization in post-secondary institutions:

- Since the 1990s, the provincial government has implemented [frameworks and action plans \[PDF\]](#)¹ to increase Indigenous student success in public post-secondary institutions.
- Indigenous voice and activism in post-secondary institutions have supported the development of principles and protocols, such as the [Universities Canada Principles on Indigenous Education](#)².

These processes have become more prominent since the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report and the 94 Calls to Action. Many of these processes and principles express the need for teachers and educators to unlearn and relearn, as Indigenous history, culture, and current realities are basically unknown and are generally not "seen" (Bopp, Brown & Robb, 2017). It is hard to come to an understanding if you are not willing to "empty your cup" and accept new ways of engaging and relationship building.

Indigenization requires that equitable space for Indigenous knowledges and perspectives be held and explored in the classroom. Many institutions have defined Indigenization on the basis of current, authentic relationships, and there are nuances and different approaches to Indigenization. What a teacher needs to be mindful of is that Indigenizing one's practice is an emotional journey as well as an intellectual examination of how systems of knowledge can complement and coexist in any field of study.

Notes

1. BC government action plan: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/post-secondary-education/aboriginal-education-training/aboriginal_action_plan.pdf
2. Universities Canada Principles on Indigenous Education: <https://www.univcan.ca/media-room/media-releases/universities-canada-principles-on-indigenous-education/>

Relevance of Indigenous Worldviews

A realm that most Indigenous worldviews recognize and affirm is the circles of influence of individual well-being. Through interactions and connections with the world, community or nation, and family, an individual gains strength to form a healthy identity and a place within culture. Indigenous worldviews recognize that the strength of and support for an individual contribute to the wellness of communities, nations, and the land. For educators, a strengths-based approach acknowledges interconnections and intersections of knowledge and practice:

In addition to knowing their students as individuals and configuring instruction to connect with their interests and build on their strengths, teachers who espouse a learner-centred approach typically adopt an outlook characterized by: a willingness to see themselves as facilitators of students' learning rather than autonomous classroom managers; a focus on "setting the bar ever higher" with respect to what students can do rather than on magnifying their awareness of what they cannot yet do (i.e., a deficit focus); an emphasis on promoting student self-regulation and student initiative with respect to their own learning; the more extensive and frequent use of student self-assessment activities; and the ability to nurture reflective learning (including the use of student-generated criteria for assessment).

– Province of British Columbia (2015, p. 48)

While the above quote relates to the role of teachers in K–12 education, it applies to post-secondary education as well. Indigenous worldviews should not only be part of the content that is taught, but be part of a relevant and responsive assessment process as well.

Responsively Creating Space for Indigenous Knowledge from Elders and Other Knowledge Keepers/Authorities

Elders are recognized for their cultural knowledge and wisdom. Their “credentials” are not determined by a university or other institution; their credibility is built on trust gained from community and other knowledge holders, expertise from lived experience and oral transmission of knowledge, and their practice of generosity.

There are Indigenous knowledge keepers who may not yet be recognized as “Elders” but who nevertheless carry teachings and practices and are recognized for their expertise. This includes youth who are fluent speakers, cultural practitioners, and teachers of song, dance, stories, art, and environmental stewardship. Learning from Elders, these knowledge keepers are continuing the transmission, retention, and sharing of Indigenous knowledge systems.

In recent years, post-secondary institutions have been privileged to work with Elders and other Indigenous knowledge keepers in the classroom. For students, having Elders in their classroom creates a place where living knowledge and presence remind them to receive teachings in a loving, caring way. Elders and other knowledge keepers come with a breadth of wellness and cultural connections that aid in transformational learning. Non-Indigenous teachers can facilitate knowledge, but could not and would not necessarily be accepted to shape relevant cultural teachings and Indigenous self-determination themselves.

Bringing Elders and other knowledge keepers into the classroom requires considerable preparatory work, and you will need to be aware of the procedures for working with Elders in your institution. The following protocols and procedures can guide your work with Elders and other knowledge keepers:

- The [Guide for Curriculum Developers](#),¹ another guide in the Indigenization learning series, shares procedures from Royal Roads University’s Working with Elders (see [Appendix F](#) of that guide).
- If you want to interview an Elder for a program or course, you need to accommodate the protection of knowledge systems and practise respectful behaviour. The National Aboriginal Health Organization’s [Interviewing Elders \[PDF\]](#)² provides practical tips.

Below, the College of the Rockies describes its relationship with Elders in the classroom and how the knowledge shared across the institution with students, staff, and teachers is respected.

**“From coffee mugs to compensation”:
Promising practice from College of the Rockies**

College of the Rockies currently employs more than 20 Ktunaxa Nation members on a part-time basis as Ktunaxa Knowledge Holders and Elders. The resident Elders have been paid employees for many years, but we have only recently begun providing financial compensation to other Ktunaxa Elders and experts in cultural knowledge. While the college has always recognized the valuable contributions brought to classrooms and to students by Ktunaxa community members, we wanted to reflect that appreciation through more tangible means. This vision was brought to action in partnership with Ktunaxa Nation Council’s Traditional Knowledge and Language Sector through the development of Ktunaxa 100: Introduction to Ktunaxa Peoples.

“These Ktunaxa community representatives provide integral support to our Indigenous Education Services, engaging in consultations with faculty members along with our resident Elders on how to bring Ktunaxa knowledge and worldviews into courses and programs,” says College of the Rockies’ Indigenous Education Coordinator, Avery Hulbert.

“I feel that Ktunaxa Elder involvement is important because it provides voice for our people and youth can see us in their courses and they want to be here,” adds Ktunaxa Elder k̓ɪk̓aʔi paʔki (Kay Shottanana).

“There are many ways that College of the Rockies and the Ktunaxa Nation work together to support our students,” says Darrell Bethune, College of the Rockies Dean, Business and University Studies. “Welcoming members of the Nation into our classrooms to share their knowledge and history is one way that we live our values and build an appreciation of people, land and culture. I’m pleased that we are now able to recognize the value of their contributions in a more concrete way.”

During the fall 2017 semester, Ktunaxa community members participated in 16 College of the Rockies programs, including hairstyling, nursing, English, and biology.



Fig 2.2: Front row (Left to right): Roberta Gravelle, Laura Birdstone, Kay Shottanana, Pete Sanchez, Dorothy Alpine. Middle row: Amelia Danyluck, Mary Mahseelah, Elizabeth Ignatius, Avery Hulbert (Coordinator), Christopher Horsethief (Indigenous Scholar), Shaunee Murphy (Assistant). Back row: Marie Nicholas, Darrell Bethune (Dean, Business and University Studies), Leeanna Gravelle (Staff, Traditional Knowledge and Language), Marguerite Cooper, Anne Jimmie, Fudge Alexander, Don Sam (Director, Traditional Knowledge and Language).

Attributions

Fig 2.2: Elders by College of the Rockies, 2017. Permission granted to use and share openly.

Notes

1. *Pulling Together: A Guide for Curriculum Developers*: <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationcurriculumdevelopers/>
2. UVic Interviewing Elders: <http://icwrn.uvic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/InterviewingElders-FINAL.pdf>

Reciprocity and Multiple Ways of “Listening” in Oral Traditions

Elder Terry P’ulsemet Prest at University of the Fraser Valley teaches students that we have to “learn to listen so we can listen to learn.” Often the elder will go on and explain that over time we learn to make the connection between the heat and the mind, the mind and the heart. He also tells students that sometimes this is the longest journey, from the heart to the mind. He tells his students – who are very often faculty instructors on campus – this because he recognizes that education has not necessarily prepared us to be “good listeners.”

As an educator I am often reminded that listening with our whole self is not necessarily practised in the academy. I learned this the hard way. One of my instructors in my graduate program pointed out to me that I rarely “spoke up” in class. I reflected upon this feedback and thought of all the times that I was eager to participate in the classroom dialogue, only to be “beaten to the punch” by classmates who either spoke up as soon as one had finished speaking or who seemingly dominated the classroom dialogue (almost always!). This self-reflection led me to understand the different ways I, as an Indigenous person, listen in comparison to many of my non-Indigenous counterparts. I began to recognize that oftentimes people would be preparing what they were going to say while the other person was still talking. While I on the other hand listened, completely listened, and only when one finishes speaking do I think about how I might respond. This is true, I came to learn, for many of the Indigenous students in my classes and at our university.

– Shirley Hardman (personal communication, 2017)

The longest journey you can take in Indigenizing your teaching practice is listening from your heart rather than your mind. Affective listening takes patience, practice, and kindness. In this lecture, [Otto Scharmer on the four levels of listening](#)¹ describes listening from the head to heart as: downloading (“I and me”), factual (“I and it”), empathetic (“I and you”), and generative or emergent (“I and now”). However, these ways of listening happen while information is being shared, so the meaning behind and within that instance of sharing can be lost if it is not wholly acknowledged or filtered by stereotypes and biased judgment. We need to practise silence after receiving knowledge so the meaning can be constructed.

The concept of “listening to hear” is explored in allyship scholarship (McGloin, 2015). When teachers and

students hear stories and different perspectives on racism and colonization, they have to consider how their own perpetuation of colonization affects what is heard, and learning stops if they become paralyzed by guilt and shame:

A productive pedagogical approach therefore is to build into courses a methodology that reminds students – and teachers – that dis-ease can be a valuable starting point for a more healthy alliance with Indigenous people...[L]istening – or hearing – what the “other” has to say, in fact, must be a risk-taking venture in order for a change in thought, perception and action to occur. If we are only to hear what is safe or familiar, there will be no conflict, no “poles of contradiction”, no impetus or motivation for transformation. (p. 276-277)

Listening to hear requires that you hold the information that has been shared in order for multiple meanings to come forward, rather than immediately responding or reacting. What you are hearing are your values, beliefs, and perceptions sifting through the shared information.

Notes

1. Otto Scharmer on the four levels of listening video: <https://youtu.be/eLfXpRkVZaI>

Summary

In this section, you have explored ways to move from an additive approach to Indigenous knowledge systems and perspectives to a strength-based, transformative learning approach. Unlearning and relearning ways to listen helps build a respectful space to bring Indigenous knowledge systems into your classroom. The nuances of carrying and holding knowledge systems alongside, rather than competing, is also a key component of Indigenization. There are times when you, as the teacher, are not the expert. Learning can be a reciprocal process with Indigenous knowledge keepers.

Activities

Activity 1: Incorporating Indigenous worldviews

Time: Ongoing

Type: Group

Form a small peer group of instructors and discuss ways in which you could incorporate Indigenous worldviews in your teaching practice. How are you using relational, experiential, student-centred, narrative, intergenerational, land-based, or other pedagogical constructs from Indigenous worldviews in your classrooms?

Activity 2: Creating space for Indigenous knowledge from Elders and other knowledge keepers/authorities

Time: 25 minutes

Type: Individual

Are there processes and protocols in your institution for hiring Indigenous Elders and knowledge keepers to deliver content? What are they?

Activity 3: Creating space for Indigenous knowledge

Time: Ongoing

Type: Group

Discuss processes and protocols used in your institution to support the inclusion of Elders and knowledge

keepers to share perspectives. Take this one step further and determine ways in which Indigenous knowledge and perspectives can become part of course assessment.

Activity 4: Listening and hearing

Time: 30 minutes

Type: Individual

Reciprocity and multiple ways of “listening” in oral traditions: Elder Terry P’ulsemet Prest at University of the Fraser Valley teaches students that we have to “learn to listen so we can listen to learn.”

Watch Susan Dion’s video, [The Listening Stone](#).¹ Consider the concept of actually listening and hearing. Reflect on a moment in your teaching when you haven’t actually listened and what the impact of this was. Think of an activity or strategy in the classroom that will facilitate not only listening but hearing in both you and your students.

Activity 5: Practising silence

Time: 15 minutes

Type: Individual

Listening and silence are often part of oral tradition. Take 10 minutes out of your day and practise silence. What do you observe? What do you notice? What might silence mean for your teaching practice?

Notes

1. The Listening Stone video: <https://vimeo.com/112712253>

Section 3: Integrate – Ethical Approach and Relational Protocols



Fig 3.1: Dr. Jo-Ann Episkenew.

Attributions

Fig 3.1: [Dr. Jo-Ann Episkenew](#) by [University of the Fraser Valley](#) is used under a [CC BY 2.0 Generic Licence](#).

Introduction

In this section, you will look at ways to facilitate and nurture relationships as an ally of Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy, in order to transform learning for all students.

Purpose of this section

In this section, you will look at ethical practice through the four R's (Respect, Relevance, Reciprocal relationships, Responsibility) and see the importance of holistic learning. Key topics in this section:

- Living in a good way with Indigenous values and beliefs
- Ethical practice in transformational learning
- Understanding territorial acknowledgement as a respectful relationship

This section should take you two hours to complete.

Living in a Good Way with Indigenous Values and Beliefs

More Indigenous people are accessing public post-secondary institutions. They are doing this for reasons that are both similar to and different from those of other students. On the one hand, there is a desire to obtain better-paying jobs or to meet market economy demands. On the other, there is a unique and important part of the journey, which is the need to build on the capability of Indigenous Peoples and to improve the socio-economic conditions of Indigenous communities. As Verna Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt (2001) assert, Indigenous students and communities are seeking an education that will also address their communal need for “capacity-building” to advance themselves as a distinct and self-determining society, not just as individuals. In this context, a “job” may be important, but more as a means to an end than as an end in itself (p. 6).

Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001) shared a series of relational protocols for engaging with Indigenous students, with cultural integrity, in post-secondary learning:

Respect for First Nations cultural integrity:

- There is not one knowledge – this requires that we move away from normalizing a Western approach to knowledge acquisition to accepting and respecting that other knowledges are part of the learning experience (pp. 7–8). This diversity helps all learners.

Relevance to First Nations perspectives and experience:

- Not all knowledge is literate – this requires that we create a space for different ways of learning knowledge in orality and “culturally [accommodating] ... how knowledge is constructed and passed on to others” (p. 9).

Reciprocal relationships:

- Learning is not a passive process of receiving knowledge from the expert or “sage on stage.” Learning and teaching is a two-way process, between the student and teacher, of exploring other levels of understanding. Learning is “sense-making and skill-building through active participation in the world around them” (p. 11).

Responsibility through participation:

- This requires that we shift our practice to working with Indigenous Peoples and communities to facilitate a “more hospitable environment” (p. 13) across the institution, across programs, and in the classroom.

Facilitating and nurturing relationships weaves these protocols together. For educators, relationships with Indigenous communities and lands are an essential part of walking with Indigenous Peoples. As Lorna Williams (interviewed in Ormiston, 2012), Lílwat scholar, states:

The relationship is not only the relationship that we have person to person between the people who are leading the class and receiving teachings in the class, but the relationship amongst the members of that immediate community. As well, what is emergent in a relationship that people find themselves within the space within which they find themselves. And the space is, in this case, not just the university but the land that we're on and the community that we're a part of.

Ethical Practice in Transformational Learning

As you begin to Indigenize your practice, you will hear people sharing their story as a way of introducing themselves, authentically identifying who they are and their connections through kinship ties, and acknowledging their relations and their connection to homelands and the land they may now be on as a guest. This is an approach, a practice, and a protocol for setting up the space in a good way to listen, share, and get to know one another.

Sharing this aspect of who we are and where we are rather than what we do draws attention to how we will approach our work and frame the knowledge we are sharing. Setting up space in a good way for listening and hearing models Indigenous values of kinship ties, land connections, **positionality** in history, and roles in present relations.

In post-secondary classrooms there is often little space in which to know each other in this way. The precedent for this is often overshadowed by what seems like immovable factors, such as too many students, too much to teach, not enough time, and so on. In these classrooms, a student can spend the entire semester sitting behind the same person and never really know them.

Through the process of Indigenizing the spaces we teach in, we are shaped not only by the content that is brought into the classroom but also by the way we interact with one another and share what we know and what we may still need to learn. We need to do this with humility. This is transformative learning.

The work to create these spaces cannot be done solely by Indigenous teachers, Elders, or knowledge keepers invited into your classroom. The richness of the overall learning experience comes through a collaborative and reciprocal effort by everyone in these spaces. Here are some considerations to keep in mind:

- Create an atmosphere where Indigenous land and traditional territories are known about and acknowledged. Conversations about positionality are invited and modelled, and there are opportunities to share what you know and acknowledge what you do not know, openly and respectfully.
- Reflect on how you honour Indigenous perspectives in your classroom. How will you set up the space prior to a visit from an Elder or Indigenous knowledge keeper? How will you maintain this relationship after their visit? Consider ways to reciprocate something of yourself in this visit. How will you give back and reinforce this relationship with Indigenous knowledge systems? Be a mentor and model for students to show how an Indigenous way of being can build good relationships.

- Participate in acts of generosity. Set up the classroom space so that not only are you and students receiving knowledge but you are also thinking about ways to share what you are learning. One way to do this is to ask, what are the responsibilities that we have as a class after a guest visit? Another way is to ask students, what is one thing you have contributed to the class, and what is one thing you will take away with you?
- Model humility. When you create a culturally safe space in which to discuss Indigenous perspectives on contemporary realities, you also create a “brave space” where opposing views can be shared “with honesty, sensitivity, and respect” (Arao & Clemens, 2013, p. 135). This is a vulnerable space for you as the teacher, because you co-create shared learnings based on multiple viewpoints and truths.
- Accept teachings. In a learning relationship, accept your mistakes and be open to receiving guidance from Indigenous colleagues and community educational partners. Guidance can be subtle and may arise as a gentle reminder or kind correction.
- Ensure that Indigenous knowledge systems are included in a way that does not cause appropriation and harm. Appreciating, rather than appropriating, Indigenous knowledge systems “is characterized by a meaningful and informed engagement that includes acknowledgement and permission” (Brant, 2017). This also means positioning Indigenous knowledge systems; so when sharing Indigenous scholarship and stories, state the cultural location – for example:
 - “Micmaq scholar, Marie Battiste, describes cognitive imperialism as ...”
 - “Ojibwe writer, Richard Wagamese, in his book *Indian Horse* explores the ...”
 - “In this Big Thinking talk, Dr. Leroy Littlebear, Blackfoot philosopher and scholar, discusses how Cree metaphysics ...”

Working with Indigenous perspectives and voice in your course and program also involves the inclusion of authentic resources. The *Guide for Curriculum Developers*¹ explores appropriate use of Indigenous knowledge through use of appropriate textual resources. Another resource is the provincial First Nations Education Steering Committee and First Nations Schools Association’s (2016) [Authentic First Peoples Resources \[PDF\]](#)² for K–9 educators. The annotated handbook provides the following definition for authentic texts:

Authentic First Peoples texts are historical or contemporary texts that:

- present authentic First Peoples voices (i.e., are created by First Peoples or through the substantial contributions of First Peoples);
- depict themes and issues that are important within First Peoples cultures (e.g., loss of identity and affirmation of identity, tradition, healing, role of family, importance of Elders, connection to the land, the nature and place of spirituality as an aspect of wisdom, the relationships between individual and community, the importance of oral tradition, the experience of colonization and decolonization); and
- incorporate First Peoples story-telling techniques and features as applicable (e.g., circular structure, repetition, weaving in of spirituality, humour).

When you are including **authentic resources**, please connect with Indigenous colleagues and the teaching and learning centre at your institution to ensure that the materials you want to use have included Indigenous voice and perspectives and are themselves not appropriated writings and knowledge.

Notes

1. *A Guide for Curriculum Developers*: <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationcurriculumdevelopers/chapter/appropriate-use-of-indigenous-content/>
2. Authentic First Peoples Resources for K-9 Educators: <http://www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/PUBLICATION-61460-FNESC-Authentic-Resources-Guide-2016-08-26.pdf>

Understanding Territorial Acknowledgement as a Respectful Relationship

As an Indigenous scholar, ethical practice is rooted in cultural protocols and in this I acknowledge that I have experienced many transformative approaches which reflect teachings from these lands. Therefore, I acknowledge the territories for facilitating and assisting in the development of Indigenous leadership, pedagogies and transformation within academia. The relationships we develop within these territories can assist in spiritual, emotional, physical and mental well-being for students, administrators and faculty. I also acknowledge that it is a form of respect, wherever we live, to find out whose traditional territory we are on because every part of what is now known as Canada is someone's Indigenous traditional territory.

– Todd Ormiston (personal communication, 2017)

Territorial acknowledgements are now being made in many post-secondary institutions across the country. The Canadian Association of University Teachers has developed a living resource called [Guide to Acknowledging First Peoples and Traditional Territory](#),¹ which shows how institutions are identifying the traditional First Nation and Inuit territories they reside upon. As an educator, you play a part in modelling and sharing this learning with students. Meaningful territorial acknowledgements develop a closer relationship with the land and stewards of the place by recognizing the living history and connections of ourselves with other communities. Providing a territorial acknowledgement is protocol. In this [Vancouver Island University welcome video](#)², Snuneymuxw Elder Gary Manson speaks to the importance of protocol when doing a territorial acknowledgement. Acknowledging territory is political, an act of alliance, and a practice for reconciliation.

Learning to do a territorial acknowledgement takes time. You can learn from other leaders and colleagues. As you build connections with the land, you also build connections with and belonging to Indigenous community; it enables you to engage with education and community in the classroom, together. Modelling a territorial acknowledgement for students creates space to talk about systemic change. In his blog, *Liberated Yet?*, Sk̓w̓xwú7mesh-Kwakwaka'wakw educator and artist Khelsilem (2015) shares five tips for acknowledging territory:

1. Elevate Indigenous polity (society, governance, and jurisdiction)

2. Practise unceded territory, don't just talk about it
3. Move the yardstick – centre yourself and your role in the acknowledgement
4. Don't insert yourself into internal politics by only sharing one perspective
5. Make mistakes so you can learn

By providing a meaningful territorial acknowledgment, you are deepening your understanding and incorporation of Indigenous knowledge systems and perspectives in your practice.

Place names tour: Promising practice from the University of the Fraser Valley

Knowing traditional place names is important in building relationships with the places we live and teach from. The University of the Fraser Valley (UFV), in partnership with the Stō:lo Nation, has developed a day-long guided tour for staff, administrators, and faculty to take after they have spent time learning about Indigenous-Canadian relationships and history. The place names tour teaches them what is important in the Stō:lo worldview.

Dr. Sonny Naxaxahats'i leads the tour and sets the tone by sharing a key Stō:lo worldview through a greeting stated at the start of an all-Chiefs meeting by Elder Tillie Gutierrez:

S'olh tmexw te ikw'elo. Xolhemet te mekw'stam it kwelat
(We have to take care of everything that belongs to us)

It reaffirms that Stō:lo People accept responsibility for “everything” living and flowing through the traditional territory.

In the tour, participants learn that some of the English names in the area are translations of the Halq'emeylem names; for example, Chilliwack is Ch-ihl-kway-uhk and Chehalis is Sts'ailes. They also learn that some places describe a geological phenomenon; for instance, Mount Baker is called Kulshan because it refers to the “bleeding wound” at the top of the mountain. (Mount Baker was so named in 1798 by Captain Vancouver. Joseph Baker, Captain Vancouver reported, was the first of his crew, in 1792, to see the mountain.) Understanding traditional place names heightens the meaning and relevance of the traditional territory for UFV staff, deepening their relationship to place and peoples. Shirley Ann Hardman (personal communication, 2017) has said, “I like faculty, staff, and administrators to take the Stō:lo place names tour because it provides critical insights into what is valued by the Stō:lo peoples. It helps people to know that there was a whole world here before the farmers, before Costco and the freeway.”

Notes

1. Guide to Acknowledging First Peoples and Traditional Territory: <https://www.caut.ca/content/guide-acknowledging-first-peoples-traditional-territory>
2. Vancouver Island University Welcome video: <https://aboriginal.viu.ca/>

Summary

In this section, you have explored the four R's – Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, and Responsibility – in relation to creating space for Indigenous knowledge systems and perspectives in your classroom and informing and guiding your practice of Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation.

Activities

Activity 1: Do you practice reciprocity?

Time: 20 minutes

Type: Individual

“Reciprocity is achieved when the faculty member makes an effort to understand and build upon the cultural background of the students, and the students are able to gain access to the inner-workings of the culture (and the institution) to which they are being introduced” (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001).

Reflect on the following questions:

- What role does reciprocity currently have in your assignments, teaching, and relationships with students?
- How might you make teaching and learning more of a two-way process?

Activity 2: Territorial acknowledgement protocols

Time: 1 hour

Type: Individual

Reflect on the following questions:

- Why are territorial acknowledgements important?
- In what ways are territorial acknowledgements a political act?
- Why is there more to making a territorial acknowledgement than just getting the wording right?

Research the protocols for territorial acknowledgement at your institution, organization, or anywhere else where you will be presenting.

Activity 3: Who should teach Indigenous perspectives?

Time: 30 minutes-1 hour

Type: Individual

Read Erica Violet Lee's blog post: "[Indigenizing the academy](#)" without Indigenous people: Who can teach our stories?¹

Reflect on the following questions:

- What unsettles you about this experience?
- What are some ways in which you can recognize this pattern of colonization, and what would you do to disrupt it?
- How do you bring authentic Indigenous voice and perspectives into your classroom? Is there just one way in which you do this, or do you include multiple methods and materials? How do you transfer this learning to your students?

Notes

1. Erica Violet Lee's blog post: "Indigenizing the academy" without Indigenous people: Who can teach our stories?: <https://moontimewarrior.com/2015/11/09/who-can-teach-indigenous-philosophy/>

Section 4: Infuse – Building an Indigenized Practice



Fig 4.1: Traditional Nisga'a house in New Ayanish.

Attributions

Fig 4.1: [Traditional Nisga'a house in New Ayanish](#) by [Hans-Jürgen Hübner](#) is used under a [CC BY-SA 3.0 Unported Licence](#).

Introduction

In this section, you'll see how allies and post-secondary institutions are supporting Indigenization in practice and reciprocal relationships. This is also an opportunity to address your fears about and the challenges of Indigenization.

Purpose of this section

In this section, you will see examples of Indigenization of teaching practice, and you can explore how to be an ally with a good heart and mind. Key topics in this section:

- Exploring institutional and relational supports
- Navigating the levels of Indigenization
- Reciprocal exchanges as an ally, advocate, and supporter

This section won't take you long to read, but the suggested activities are lifelong activities.

Exploring Institutional and Relational Supports

The BCcampus Indigenization project included an [environmental scan \[PDF\]](#)¹ of training offered in post-secondary institutions across the province; it revealed over 40 training events and programs ranging from Indigenous speaker series to blended courses. Almost all training offered some background on historical relationships, and there were a few that delved deeper into ways to support systemic change by using Indigenous pedagogy in teaching practice. Here are some examples:

- [Towards Indigenizing Higher Education video series](#),² facilitated by Thompson Rivers University – Teachers and students share their experiences with Indigenized course content and practice.
- [Reconciliation through Indigenous Education: Massive Open Online Course](#),³ facilitated by the University of British Columbia – This six-week online course explores Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation practices of teachers across the province and around the world.
- Situating Yourself to Indigenize Curriculum program, facilitated by Indigenous educators and curriculum developers at Camosun College – Faculty explore the [Circle of Courage model \[PDF\]](#)⁴ (developed by Lakota scholar and theologian, Dr. Martin Brokenleg) as an Indigenous pedagogical technique to build learning resiliency. The transformative learning model looks at ways of building belonging for students so they can see themselves contributing and learning from one another.

To find out about the supports and learning communities at your institution, start networking with colleagues and attend events. Indigenizing your practice is professional development.

Notes

1. BCcampus environmental scan: <http://solr.bccampus.ca:8001/bcc/file/c0a932f4-8d79-4d3d-a5d4-3f8c128c0236/1/BCcampusIndigenizationSummary.pdf>
2. Towards Indigenizing Higher Education video series: <https://towards-indigenizing.trubox.ca/session-videos/>
3. Reconciliation through Indigenous Education: Massive Open Online Course: <http://pdce.educ.ubc.ca/reconciliation/>
4. Circle of Courage model: https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/cardev/gr9_found/courage_poster.pdf

Navigating the Levels of Indigenization

If you are at a point of Indigenizing your practice, you may still have to face fears and concerns. When developing the framework for the Indigenization project, the project steering committee considered the statements and instances where systemic change is not supported. The committee members then situated them in “levels of Indigenization.” These levels progress from fears to control and then rejection of Indigenization processes. They are not progressive levels, but they show that there are various levels of resistance and barriers to Indigenizing practice, field of study, and institutions.



Fig 4.2: Levels of Indigenization. [\[Long Description\]](#)

Here are some strategies to keep in mind to help you overcome these challenges and barriers:

"I'm afraid to make a mistake"

- Do the emotional labour instead of being politically correct.
- Listen deeply.
- Trust that there are Indigenous people who have the skills to share with you and that you are willing to learn.
- Prepare yourself to conduct the appropriate protocols in their entirety and seek guidance.
- Include appropriate gestures/language of the land.
- Be kind to yourself.
- Ask yourself: What was the first or biggest mistake I made in the classroom? What were the

consequences? What did I do?

- Approach with a “good mind and good heart”; be intentional to avoid tokenism.

“I am not Indigenous. Isn’t it appropriation?”

- Are you appropriating or being appropriate?
- Acknowledge (in your delivery) that others know much more than you; practise humility.
- Always ensure that you acknowledge and properly recognize the sources of your information.
- Be open to being “corrected” and willing to do more research.
- Use guest speakers.
- Practise reciprocity by being a guest speaker for Indigenous faculty you invite into your classroom.
- Ensure that the information and resources you use are authentic.

“I’ll do it if the university/college/institute gives me a course release”

- Indigenous perspectives and content are related to the original course outline.
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous students deserve to be taught this information to allow them to become respected citizens and understand their lived realities.
- In this era of reconciliation, Indigenizing is responsible practice and part of staying current.
- Indigenizing your course content and practice can go into your teaching portfolio, thus contributing to professional practice and tenure.

“I have 13 weeks to deliver all content and can’t include anything else”

- Start small; set some goals and objectives for your course to include Indigenous ways of learning, such as making a territorial acknowledgement and sharing why this is important to you with students.
- Identify some topics that could include local Indigenous communities and adapt your course to include local knowledge.
- Inter-culturalize your “lesson planning”; once you create the space it becomes a natural part of your course delivery.
- Ask yourself: What is my understanding of “Indigenizing”?
- It will take our very best thinking, but we are in the best position to do this thinking/creating.

“I can’t do this myself”

- Take personal responsibility for your teaching practice.
- Devote more professional development time to engaging with Indigenous content and perspectives.
- Meaningfully involve “authentic” scholars who devote their life to inclusive and generous learning.
- Be inclusive of all stakeholders in the area.
- Develop curriculum and policies together.
- You are not alone; you are supported by policy, colleagues, Indigenous people, and educators.
- Look for allies!
- Have a cup of coffee with an Elder or Indigenous instructor to develop a relationship as a start to Indigenize your course
- Read Indigenous Peoples’ writings in your discipline
- Attend Indigenous sections at discipline conferences

Long Descriptions

Fig 4.2 long description: Levels of resistance to Indigenization:

- Fear of the unknown: People saying, “I don’t know what I don’t know,” or “I don’t want to appropriate.”
- Fear of change: People saying, “Yes... but,” or “I don’t know who to talk to...,” or “I don’t have time.”
- Fear of losing control and power: Racism of lower expectations and people saying, “I know, but I don’t care.”
- Resisting process: Overworking Indigenous staff and people taking the “We don’t have enough resources” approach.
- Rejecting and asserting control: Demand constant validation of identity and Indigeneity and saying, “There are limitations to...”

[\[Return to Fig 4.2\]](#)

Attributions

Fig 4.2: Levels of Indigenization by Indigenization Project Steering Committee is used under a [CC BY 2.0 Generic Licence](#).

Reciprocal Exchanges as an Ally, Advocate, and Supporter

As Indigenous People, it is not our responsibility to do all the education. However, our allies need to be kind to themselves, take care of themselves, and receive support, so that they too can continue their important work of helping to educate others.

– Baskin (2016, p. 111)

Throughout this guide we talk about connecting and building relationships; this also applies within your institution and field of study as you examine ways to Indigenize and decolonize and reconcile histories, perspectives, and pedagogies. One of the most powerful Indigenous pedagogies to engage with is storytelling:

In the forward to *Potlatch* [1969], George Clutesi tells us: “This narrative is not meant to be documentary. In fact it is meant to evade documents. It is meant for the reader to feel and to say I was there and indeed I saw.” The power of the storyteller to make the listeners/readers visualize events and feel like they are part of the story is a principle that I have heard from others ... Mr. Clutesi was a very respected orator, artist, and educator. His legacy of knowledge, wisdom, and philosophy has been left to those who take the time and effort to learn from his teachings.

– Archibald (2008, p. 21)

Drawing meaning from and connecting the story with yourself transforms the way you see and respond to past events. Indigenous storytelling places us in a timeframe through which we can experience with clarity. Where settler narrative is absent or lost, Indigenous narrative provides another way of looking at our shared history.

A recent example of holding both narratives together is the “rediscovery” of the Franklin expedition ships. Inuit historian Louie Kamookak worked for 30 years gathering and remembering the oral history based on a story he heard as a youth (O’Connor, 2018). Inuit oral history recounted where the ships and crew were last seen, and these accounts stretch back to the time of the expedition in 1845. “If you take Inuit oral history and combine it with modern science, that’s when the breakthrough comes” (Worrell, 2017). Archaeologists, historians, and the

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Royal Canadian Geographic Society combined their knowledge with Inuit oral history to locate the ships. While the reasons for the expedition were political, the relationships developed were genuine.

Summary

One of the most proactive approaches you can take as an educator is to have an open mind, kind heart, and willingness to continually learn. In this section, you explored examples of Indigenization of practice supported at post-secondary institutions. Indigenization is looking at ways to walk perspectives and knowledges alongside one another. Knowledge systems coexist and create ways for students to engage in content in various ways and at various levels of learning. You are encouraged to always ask, listen deeply, and try to use informed teaching methods in your course/program.

Activities

Activity 1: Creating learning communities

Time: Ongoing

Type: Group

Connect with other faculty across the institution who are exploring ways to Indigenize content and practice. Seek guidance from an Indigenous curriculum expert and network with one another through the semester, term, or year. Share successes and learn from failures. Explore Indigenous pedagogies, such as circle learning, land-based and experiential learning, storytelling, and holistic engagement

Activity 2: Staying connected

Time: Ongoing

Type: Individual

Teaching can be an isolated profession. Taking risks and engaging in different ways of learning requires support. Seek out advice and share your successes with others.

Conclusion

Connections, intersections, and relationships are the strengths of Indigenization. This guide has focused on ways in which non-Indigenous teachers and educators can expand their teaching practice and personal development. Each section of this guide has addressed a realm of Indigenizing:

Inform: Decolonizing one's beliefs takes time; colonization continues today, and truth telling, such as was done through the Truth and Reconciliation process, is the way to overcome intolerance and discrimination.

Include: The other side of unlearning is relearning. Indigenous worldview and knowledge systems are about relationships with the natural world, communities, and families. Educating yourself about Indigenous ways of doing and being involves inviting knowledge systems into the classroom and listening to the generosity of those who share their expertise in multiple ways.

Integrate: To work in a good way with a good heart and mind goes beyond intention. It involves recognizing your responsibility to include authentic information, to carry yourself in a respectful way with other pedagogical practices, and to accept teachings in a non-traditional way. Instead of adding information to your course content, you are now looking at ethical ways of transforming the learning paradigm.

Infuse: We are working in a time when systemic changes in curriculum support and legitimize Indigenous epistemologies and perspectives in higher education. The collaborations, partnerships, and supports are there for you to try, learn from, and use to augment your teaching practice, so that Indigenization becomes a natural way to teach and learn.

This guide is a beginning point; the nuances, beauty, and strengths of local Indigenous knowledge systems and perspectives will transform your practice. You are not alone in the wilderness; there are others who can walk alongside you. Thank you for using this guide. We encourage you to adopt, adapt, and redistribute promising practices to other institutions. Be the change.

Additional Resources

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Glossary of Terms

authentic resources: historical or contemporary texts that are created by or with substantial contributions of Indigenous Peoples, address themes and issues of importance within Indigenous cultures, and incorporate Indigenous storytelling techniques and features (adapted from First Nations Education Steering Committee and First Nations Schools Association, 2016).

Indigenization: a relational and collaborative process that involves various levels of transformation, from inclusion and integration to infusion of Indigenous perspectives and approaches in education.

Positionality: “the notion that personal values, views, and location in time and space influence how one understands the world. In this context, gender, race, class, and other aspects of identities are indicators of social and spatial positions and are not fixed, given qualities. Positions act on the knowledge a person has about things, both material and abstract. Consequently, knowledge is the product of a specific position that reflects particular places and spaces.” (Sanchez, 2010)

Appendix A: Adapting this Guide

What is Pressbooks?

Pressbooks is a web-based authoring tool based on the WordPress authoring platform. If you've created a website using WordPress, you'll find some similarities working with Pressbooks. Pressbooks allows you to create content once and publish it in many different formats. These export formats enable the resource to be easily imported and edited in different platforms such as WordPress, Wikis and even learning management systems. The formats appear at the bottom of the web version of the resource to allow other users to easily export and adapt the resource. These features will allow the resources we are developing to be used, adapted, contextualized and localized by different institutions and communities. Pressbooks will make the resource more available to different users by giving them the option of accessing it on the web, on their mobile devices or print it out as a PDF document. By designing each part of the resource as a standalone guide institutions will be able to select and adapt the sections to use, edit and adapt for their context. These features will allow the resources we are developing to be used, adapted, contextualized and localized by different institutions and communities.

Export formats

Print PDF	Allows documents to be easily shared while retaining the same visual formatting. It is page-oriented and has a static layout. Print PDF optimized for printing
Digital PDF	For digital PDF distribution
xHTML	This format allows the resource to used and edited in different systems
WordPress XML	These files can be imported into WordPress and the resources can be easily adapted into an interactive website.
EPUB	EPUB files are designed for portability. These files are used for most eBooks and other eReaders. The point of these files is not to provide editing capability, but to deliver a comprehensive package that contains all elements of a book including text and images — like a zipped package — to a device for reading.
MOBI	For Kindle eReader

Ways that I can adapt this guide

Pressbooks is available to staff and faculty at all post-secondary institutions in B.C. on the [BC Pressbook site](#).¹

This allows each institution program or course to copy this guide into your own instance of Pressbooks and adapt it to include local content, context, and resources. You can then export the guide you have created into any of the different formats above. You can also import this guide into your local instance and revise it, localize and adapt it there. This will also enable you to add multimedia or even interactive components.

Notes

1. BC Pressbooks: <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/>