

# Artist's Statement

My thinking behind the Knowledge Makers design was drawn from a few ideas I read in the Indigenous Storywork article. Archibald (2008) discusses the design of baskets: "I use the basket as one metaphor for learning about stories and storytelling." (p.2). When discussing Holism Archibald explains it "symbolizes wholeness, completeness, and ultimate wellness. The never-ending circle also forms concentric circles to show both synergistic influence of and our responsibility toward the generations of ancestry, the generation of today, and the generation to come" (p.11). My design works off of these two images showing that the Knowledge Makers program is working from the many generations of Indigenous knowledge that came before us and is weaving towards a future generation of Indigenous researchers.

- Levi Glass



Archibald, J. A. (2008). An Indigenous storywork methodology. *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues*, 371-393.



"We all come with a sacred creator within us. You all created who you are and being in this circle today that was your own effort.

When you think about your ancestors and what built your bones and values and you put upon that what you are doing here in education you create a trajectory that is totally unique in the world. You have the ability to make changes. That is honoring the chief in you.

You have permission to be stubborn against systems that humans made, to make your way up this system. Find the words. Be stubborn and do not be bowled over... We have to work together. Think about our traditional roots, think about traditional knowledge. We have got lots of work to do."

-  
Joanne Brown



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## Foreword

The symbol for Knowledge Makers is of a pine needle basket being made – an Indigenous skill, with each piece adding strength and creating the whole; each distinct yet significant. This edition of the Knowledge Makers journal shows us how the potential of Indigenous peoples as researchers is indeed full of distinctiveness and strength.

Knowledge Makers is an interdisciplinary research mentoring initiative based at Thompson Rivers University that supports Indigenous undergraduate students to become researchers. The selected students participate in creating online portfolios and a two-day workshop exploring Indigenous research. They prepare research action plans,

and produce papers for the Knowledge Makers publication. A gathering is held with the university, community, and loved ones in attendance to share the moment when the Knowledge Makers, as first generation Indigenous researchers, receive their first copy of their first publication. And as often happens in Indigenous ways, the first act for each Knowledge Maker is to gift this treasured first publication to their respected ones. We come together throughout the Knowledge Makers journey with the support of our families, Elders, administrators, faculty, staff, and each other, tapping into the potential we have as Indigenous researchers, and the breadth and possibilities of Indigenous research methodologies.



We feel honoured to be in each other's company, and so inspired. From the inaugural Knowledge Makers cohort of 14, each is now a published author, one is completing a research dissertation, six are graduate students, four secured research-related positions (part- or full-time), and one completed an international Indigenous internship. As many as could from the inaugural group came to this year's Knowledge Makers to provide encouragement, and to deepen our sense of strength.

It is a remarkable journey each year to go from receiving student applications, to selection, e-portfolios, workshop, and to publication in less than two months. This year we see even more articles drawing on published research by Indigenous

researchers. Indeed, some of the papers in this journal contain Indigenous-only references. We open with Marina Troke's paper on the critical potency (like 'lightning') of Indigenous researchers being knowledge makers. The following papers then weave together knowledge making on identity, youth, art, research methods, international understandings, technology, social work, e-portfolios, substance abuse, communication, researcher mentoring, culture and politics, tourism, cultural safety, sustainable hunting, achievement in post-secondary education, Secwépemc research, and Secwépemc epistemology. Threaded alongside the undergraduate Knowledge Makers' papers are those from past Knowledge Makers and established Indigenous scholars, further strengthening our expanding Knowledge Makers research

community. We close with Elder Mike Arnouse's words, reminding us that we come from strength; through our work together as knowledge makers we draw on our "original capabilities." It is this collective strength, this potential, that is so present throughout this Knowledge Makers journal. We look forward to the authors and their papers being cited in future publications by others, and seeing Knowledge Makers continue as researchers. The weaving of this basket of knowledge making and knowledge makers is dynamic and advancing. What a treasured gift we have with this edition of the Knowledge Makers journal.



**"This gave me more courage and confidence to explore more research opportunities."**

—

**Knowledge Makers**

**Day 2**

## **Acknowledgements**

We acknowledge that Knowledge Makers TRU is located on the traditional and unceded territory of Tk'emlups te Secwépemc within Secwépemcul'ecw. We are grateful for their hospitality. We acknowledge that First Peoples' fires of authority continue to burn in this land.

We would like to thank the many people who contributed their thoughts, ideas, and support to Knowledge Makers. Thank you Thompson Rivers University for the vision and resources that make Knowledge Makers possible. Our President (Professor Alan Shaver), and Vice-President Academic and Provost (Professor Christine Bovi-Crossen) have provided genuine and meaningful support as we evolve to be a university of choice and opportunity for Indigenous peoples. Our sincere thanks to the TRU Research and Graduate office for providing the idea and resources to make this project possible, and to Professor Will Garrett-Petts and Troy Fuller for your continued and exceptional support. We thank the TRU Elders Mike Arnouse, Doreen Kenoras, and Estella Patrick Moller for their time and wisdom all across TRU and to Knowledge Makers. Thank you to Kukp7i Paul Michel (Executive Director, Aboriginal Education) and his team for their guidance. Misty Antoine, thank you for the many ways that you have contributed to Knowledge Makers. We thank the Aboriginal Student Services team for their guidance and support of the program, in particular Joanne Brown and Vernie Clement. Thank you to all the Deans, faculty, staff and Knowledge Makers 'alumni' who were able to join us this year to provide encouragement and insights. We acknowledge Winter 2016 Knowledge Maker Levi Glass for his talent in designing the Knowledge Makers' artwork (seen on

the cover of this journal and on our hoodies). Thank you to the extraordinary team that brought this publication to print, especially Sereana Naepi, Lucy Kiester, and Riley Iwamoto. Crystalyn Lemieux joined the Knowledge Makers team this year as a visiting Fulbright student scholar. Her leadership and many talents combined with Brian Lamb and TRU-Open Learning to make the Knowledge Makers' e-portfolio possible. Thank you to the support, administration, and catering teams for making sure all that was needed was in place. Knowledge Makers is co-ordinated by Sereana Naepi. Although she would not seek acknowledgement herself, we know that her energy, intelligence, and advocacy as an Indigenous scholar herself makes amazing things possible in amazing ways. We also thank Professor Airini whose unrelenting passion and advocacy to grow Indigenous researchers makes programs like the Knowledge Makers possible.

Finally, we thank the Indigenous students who committed themselves to the Knowledge Makers program. We look forward to hearing about your research journeys in future years.

Kukwstsétselp

Vinaka levu

Fa'afetai tele lava



# Professor Will Garrett-Petts

## Associate Vice President, Research

Last year, on the first day of the Knowledge Makers meetings, we were each asked to reflect on why Indigenous research matters. I remarked that the principles of solid Indigenous research activity, working respectfully and effectively with communities, offer a template for all community-based research activities. Reflecting further on the importance of the Knowledge Makers initiative, I wrote about how, while holding up Indigenous research as a model of best practices, we also need to acknowledge that there is an activist impetus at play, what the intercultural scholar Dylan Rodriguez has called an “urgency imperative.” I concluded that “We at TRU feel that sense of urgency and recognize the need for critique, for pedagogical insurgency, and to ‘denaturalize’ those aspects of the academy that uncritically privilege the status quo or otherwise limit intercultural teaching and learning possibilities.”

Since the introduction of the Knowledge Makers we have celebrated many related research accomplishments, including the appointment of Dr. Shelly Johnson, the first Canada Research Chair in Indigenizing Higher Education. TRU has made the strategic decision to identify Indigenous research in general, and “Aboriginal Understanding” in particular, as a priority area for research, capacity building, and knowledge mobilization. The University recognizes the importance of increasing its complement of Indigenous scholars like Dr. Johnson—to strengthen and sustain research activity for Indigenous advancement. The Knowledge Makers

program embodies these aspirations, providing an important new initiative that expands the network of Indigenous undergraduate students engaging in research at TRU. In addition, Knowledge Makers models possibilities for Indigenized research mentoring. Led through Indigenous expertise, this has been a community initiative enjoying support from across TRU—a holistic effort to strengthen research; beautifully reflected in the Knowledge Makers design by former Fine Arts student and Knowledge Makers participant Levi Glass.

On behalf of the Office of Research and Graduate Studies, it is my pleasure and honor to confirm our ongoing support for the Knowledge Makers Program and for the students it inspires.





# Marina Troke

## Métis Anishinaabe

Marina is a recipient of the Winter 2017 Knowledge Maker award, and holds her BA in English. Marina aims to someday complete a Masters degree. Marina's personal goal is to never stop writing and to watch more horror movies.

"Andrew Farrell who is a queer Aboriginal and performs as a drag queen named Becky wrote the following in "Lipstick Clapsticks" - "Queer Indigenous people worldwide are resisting rigid ideas about gender and sexuality that colonize their bodies and minds." Research represents to me the best way to relearn who we are and learn what is important. Through research we can normalize, decolonize, and provide new information that will accurately, and inclusively represent this world on the edge of important social change. When singular voices speak through research, other voices join the song and in this way we find out that we are not so different after all, and this is the ultimate power - togetherness, family, friendship, and all my relations."

## Dark Horse

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In the early days of my post-secondary education, I submitted a "photo voice" assignment wherein I took three photographs to represent three different concepts, and then explained my reasoning behind the use of each photograph. I remember submitting the assignment, so confident that I had achieved an 'easy A'. I was, after all, a professional photographer who used a powerful camera and was regularly paid for my work. A few weeks later, when the marks were posted, I was dismayed to find out that I had only barely passed the assignment. My mark hovered dangerously close to failing. My instructor attempted to cheer me in saying that perhaps I had simply misunderstood the assignment, and looking back now, perhaps I had.

For the purposes of this article, I will re-examine one of the photographs and concepts I had addressed in this ill-fated photo voice attempt and closely examine the reasoning behind my chosen concept through an Indigenous methodology. I will also attempt to address my feelings, my grief, and ultimately the path of healing that this simple photograph brought into my life, a process that was facilitated and delicately nurtured by my participation in the Knowledge Makers 2017 program at Thompson Rivers University. The concept of self-reflection and journaling is one that is central to my life as a writer, both professionally and personally. I consider this personal reflection to be aligned with the concept of self-reflection and as well with the Indigenous talking circle, except here, instead of speaking to others, I speak only to myself.

For some background, the photograph I used to represent the concept of 'loneliness' was one that I took by accident. I was leaving a paid photography gig at a concert on the lower East side of Vancouver and as I walked through the desperate dampness of East Hastings, passing gaunt faces and lost souls, I spied on the ground some simple graffiti; white against the wet black asphalt, letters spelling out, "I still miss her." I was struck by the pain of this statement, and used my camera to capture this pain.

As I edited the photograph later at home, I found myself ruminating on who the 'her' in that photograph represented. What struck me the most about this photograph is that for me it did not represent grief, at least not as the leading part of the statement. Of course grief is present in the image and in the statement but, for me, this photograph

represented a painful singular loneliness, alienation, and the deafening silence of being alone with only one's own thoughts. I mused that loneliness is an imposition and not a choice. Whoever the 'her' was, she had left or had been taken and whoever was missing 'her' was not doing so of their own free will. Here is where I remained thoughtful on what it was to be truly 'lonely.' I was, of course, writing about my own loneliness, though I did not know it at the time.

Growing up Métis, growing up as a person with a non-visible disability, and growing up queer, left me in the middle ground of many discussions. I was never 'native enough,' or 'gay enough,' and when I gained accommodations at school in my youth for being a disabled student, I never quite seemed to fit the image of someone living with a disability, in that I



did not appear 'disabled enough.' I treaded the precarious ground of these social grey areas existing within an intersection of many identities. A queer Aboriginal performer that I admire wrote, "We might not be as readily present in the elite conversations that conflate, compare, and inflame race and gender divides but we are speaking up" (Farrell, 2016, p. 580). In my own way, and with a small voice at first, I spoke to my loneliness and isolation.

I ruminated on loneliness as a concept but spoke only of how loneliness related to my lived experience, an experience that seemed to be "highlighting that Aboriginal people are often tokenized and 'othered'" (Farrell, 2016, p. 581). I did, and still do, feel 'othered,' held at arms-length by both sides of all of the communities that I clumsily straddle. Though these thoughts remain valid, where I made my error was in the idea that, while I examined my own ontology and epistemology and how it related to loneliness and overlaid the lens of my lived experience to this examination, I had not considered the reaching effects of loneliness and how this related to Indigenous ways of knowing. What also became clear to me upon reexamination of this work is that the Indigenous part of me was also speaking and that, previous to this, I had not been able to hear this voice. This voice was speaking because I was disconnected from my communities and, as such, I was not grounded in anything. My lack of ability to fit into a particular community left me drifting in the wind. The phrase, "all my relations," is applied by Wilson to explain the relational praxis of Indigenous research, in that we are accountable to literally 'all my relations' (2001). But, where were my relations? Kirkness and Barnhardt further define the principles of Indigenous

research to contain, "respect, relevance, reciprocity and responsibility" (2016, p. 1). I know that our lived experience makes up the unique person that we grow into and that this glorious cacophony makes up the static that we find so fascinating as we try, often in vain, to understand each other.

It is here that my realization about the stinging hurt around my near failing grade became apparent. I had spoken with an Indigenous voice around the concept of loneliness and isolation and what it had meant for me as someone disconnected from the communities that I only seemed to half belong to. Brave Heart, Chase, Elkins and Altschul write that, "another part of the process in alleviating the emotional suffering of Indigenous Peoples is validating the existence of not only the traumatic history but the continuing oppression" (2011, p. 287).

This realization also informed me that I spoke on the broad concept of loneliness, and how it related to me and the loneliness that I felt as I walked the middle ground grey area of the system of higher education; never really seeming to fit in with any one group, rather only sort of fitting in, and only for brief moments. I had not defined loneliness in the general sense, but rather in the personal sense. Following my experience with the Knowledge Makers workshop, I changed my language around how I thought of this grade, and though the physical grade remains unchanged and buried deep in my academic history, my own concept about it has altered significantly in informing my own research goals. I spoke to my own experience, my own grief, and

“Being part of this made me more confident. It affirmed this is *my* identity. This is who I am.”

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Knowledge Makers

Day 2

my own trauma, and I had not spoken to ‘all my relations.’ I had not related this concept beyond myself into my community or the institution of higher education.

This of course does not mean that this Indigenous voice of mine should be silenced. Rather, I must gain knowledge around how to best speak from it, and how to incorporate this knowledge and voice into my future research goals. When I reexamine my writing and thoughts around this photograph and this concept of loneliness through the lens of Indigeneity, I am additionally able to see where I missed out on applying the principles of reciprocity and responsibility to my work. What makes the photograph relevant is that I took the photograph. That I even stopped to regard that singular pain in the din of all of East Hastings, a postal code that seems to have pain built into the foundation of the buildings, is remarkable. This is remarkable because many before me may have walked on by. My grandfather, from the side of my family where I claim my Indigenous

heritage, once told me in his soft voice that “grief calls to grief.” As I have been in pain, and as I have been alone, I am better able to see and understand the pain of others, and it is this empathy, this humanity, that gives me the ability to stand in the horrible beauty of the human experience with others, even if I only stand as a silent sentinel.

I think often on the haunting message of “I still miss her” and though I am familiar with the concept, I had not considered that this statement could be one of disenfranchised grief, a grief that is not readily acknowledged or is hidden. Are some losses heard with more resonance than the losses of others? When fentanyl was simply a ghost whispered about the streets of East Hastings, it carried little power, but when it began turning up in the nice house next door, the social climate and commentary of British Columbia changed. Brave Heart et al. acknowledge that, “although alcohol remains the most prevalent substance abused by American Indians/Alaska Natives, there is increasing abuse of drugs” (2011, p. 283). This statement is so evident on even a brief walk through the poorest postal code in Canada where so many of the faces are Indigenous.

In 2016 I lost a former lover to the beast known as fentanyl, and in the time since her passing I have experienced my own disenfranchised grief, a concept that I had read about but not fully understood until it happened to me. An Indigenous scholar by the name of Aileen Moreton-Robinson once wrote that “An Indigenous women’s standpoint is ascribed through inheritance and achieved through struggle” (2013, p. 340). Looking back now, I feel like someone spoke to me with that statement and about their pain and their struggle. I heard the statement, and I laid my own

experience alongside it. I connected, for only the briefest moment, to the author of that statement, and in that moment we shared pain. I take the knowledge of this pain and use it to guide my career because the pain of one should not be singular – the burden is simply too great.

I cannot speak with certainty as to where my desire to create knowledge and enter the research realm will take me. I have always known that I would like to contribute to this knowledge somehow, but it was not until I attended the Knowledge Makers workshop that this was made plain for me. The only way I can ensure that my story is heard, that my voice is validated and normalized, is to use it. Even though I may sing with only my own being, the songs of others like me, on similar paths join with my voice to become a chorus, and with that chorus we can sing in power. I end this reflection with a famous quote from Chief Black Elk, “And when I breathed, my breath was lightning.” With our voices, singing together, as loudly as we possibly can, we will be that lightning.



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# Katrina Boisclair Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia

Katrina was raised within a very connected network of extended family, which has influenced her understanding of her family's context and culture. After three years of nursing school, Katrina has engaged in an exploration of social inequities and their relation to culture and well-being. During her studies, Katrina has developed a passion for mental health, and in the future, she aspires to explore the interconnectivity of cultural context and mental well-being.

"When we act as knowledge makers and share our findings, we enable others to open their minds as well as their hearts to develop a greater understanding of the world at large. Through all our research endeavours, we can strive to create a world where equality and equity are no longer dreams, but aspects of everyday reality."

## Connections

In this poem, I reflected on the first couple years when I first began trying to reconnect with my cultural heritage. After experiencing Knowledge Makers, I felt like I had a new appreciation for my personal context, and it inspired me to write this piece conveying some aspects of my journey.



## Connections

Ripples in the river  
Change the 'me' I see  
Daughter, friend, student  
Faded beliefs of those who came before me  
Still linger  
Respect for the woods, waters, and wisdom of elders  
Shapes the hint of possibility  
Of the 'me' who is Metis.

Leaning into my reflection  
I see  
Shadows in a circle  
Friends, family, elders  
Whispers of the heart  
Embracing a community.  
I hear  
An echo of an ancient song  
The steady beating of a drum.  
With each heart beat  
I feel  
An ancient memory  
From somewhere deep within  
Anchoring my family's past  
To my present.

But distance from the riverbend  
Distances of time and space  
That 'me' fades away in turn.  
Darker, smaller, farther,  
Lost.

# Creating a Voice

## Connecting Art, Cultural Identity, and Suicidality in Indigenous Adolescents

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In this piece, I used fragments of an essay that I had previously written in my schooling. After experiencing knowledge makers, I significantly elaborated on the role of cultural identity and reoriented my essay to focus on the idea of utilizing art as a means of healing.

When the beliefs, values, and traditions of the people are lost, where does that leave the people? Human beings are defined within the context of their cultures because it creates the foundations of their essence as individuals (Usborne & Sablomiere, 2014). Yet, the residual effects of residential schools in Canada detrimentally influenced not only the mental health of the original attendees, but also many subsequent generations (Elias et al., 2012). Diminished sociocultural connections and elevated suicide rates have been continually observed since the implementation of residential schools (Elias et al., 2012). Among Indigenous youth, suicide rates are at least five times higher than in non-Indigenous youth, and multiple programs as well as interventions have been developed to prevent this loss of life (NAHO, 2017). By reclaiming cultural practices such as engaging in traditional art, Indigenous adolescents may be able to empower themselves through reconnecting with their roots and their peoples.

### Historical Context

Oppression has a long-standing history of diminishing the cultural values and traditions of a land's native inhabitants. In Canada, residential schools were used to

separate children from their families and communities in an effort to systemically eliminate all aspects of Indigenous cultures (Lavallee & Poole, 2010). Fundamental elements of cultural identity were forbidden; individuals were separated from everything they knew that defined them as individuals and as communities. Starting from the time they entered residential schools, Indigenous children were alienated from all people who would normally be considered role models of sociocultural expectations (Koepke & Denissen 2012; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Since cultural inquiry was forbidden in residential schools, the passing down of traditional knowledge was diminished, challenging cultural identity formation and mental health of Indigenous populations (Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2011; Swanson, 2010). In Canada, a perpetuating cycle of loss was established that continues to encumber the ability of some Indigenous people from connecting with their cultures.

### Cultural Identity and Indigenous Adolescents

The enduring influence of residential schools has culminated in a sense of cultural distress among many in this generation of Indigenous adolescents, impacting their



ability to support a sense of identity and encourage healthy mental well-being. Adolescence is a time of burgeoning self-awareness; yet Indigenous adolescents have inherited the challenge of developing a sense of cultural identity, which normally acts as protective factor to prevent suicidal thoughts or actions through the provision of emotional and social connections (Wexler & Gone, 2012). According to Erikson, an expert on psychosocial development, adolescents are in a period of identity formation through role experimentation (Leifer & Fleck, 2013). Accordingly, adolescents are especially vulnerable populations within Indigenous populations. Cultural identity influences the ways in which people interpret social expectations of behaviours and values, shaping how they engage with the world (Usborne & Sablomiere, 2014). For Indigenous adolescents, this is especially challenging because of the lingering impact of residential schools. Instead of exploring personal values by rebelling, or conforming to cultural expectations, Indigenous adolescents must first be able to understand their cultural values (Koepeke & Denissen, 2012). The interrelationship between personal and cultural identity further complicates this developmental stage for Indigenous adolescents because they may need to first seek understanding of what it means to be a member of an Indigenous community before they can understand what it means to live within their own skin as individuals. In addition, cultural identity can help develop a sense of belonging (Koepeke & Denissen 2012). Feelings of isolation during the intense emotional conflicts of adolescence can culminate in suicidal thoughts through alienation and a perceived absence of trustworthy people (Elias et al., 2012). Within a society that has a prevalent record of marginalizing Indigenous peoples,

this sense of belonging is important for adolescents, so that they are enabled to appreciate their place in this world.

## **Art and Sociocultural Engagement**

Within Indigenous beliefs health is considered holistic—a combination of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Healing is inclusive of both personal and cultural identity, as challenges supporting these components of self often establish the foundations of poor mental well-being (Lavallee & Poole, 2010). In art, individuals can use their physical bodies to connect with their mental, emotional, and spiritual selves. Since it aligns so well within Indigenous healing beliefs, art is an especially powerful tool in challenging the frequency of suicide among Indigenous adolescents. Through its nature, art provides a unique opportunity to incorporate Indigenous values while supporting a safe and inclusive environment. As such, art can be used as a medium of Indigenous healing by reconnecting adolescents with their cultural identity. Ultimately, art provides an opportunity for Indigenous adolescents to explore cultural beliefs and values while engaging in an activity that promotes healing.

Art corresponds with Indigenous ways of learning, which emphasizes its ability to be used to engage Indigenous adolescents with cultural identity and suicidality. Traditionally, art is deeply intertwined with Indigenous cultures, often conveying inherent values and beliefs (Zubieta, 2016). In a class setting, creating a traditional piece of artwork would serve to allow adolescents to explore their cultural identity with peers also in the

process of learning about this aspect of themselves. Indigenous learning emphasizes learning initially through experience, followed by explorative thinking (Schultz, Walters, Beltran, Stroud, & Johnson-Jennings, 2016). Art promotes this learning style, as individuals are given time to create and fully express their emotions, which can later be contemplated or discussed. Individuals can be given an opportunity to self-reflect as they create their works, as well as a chance to share and vocalize the meaning of their work with other participants (Gwinner, 2016). Since suicide is not often discussed in public settings, providing this opportunity may help Indigenous adolescents understand that they are not alone, and establish a sense of community. Respect for cultural identity can be incorporated into art to promote an environment in which it is not only socially acceptable to discuss suicide, but is a necessary component of addressing change in the prevalence of adolescent suicides in Indigenous youths.

To use art effectively in promoting well-being, a safe environment needs to be created for Indigenous adolescents to engage in conversations about suicidality. However, the topic of suicide is almost universally taboo across cultures (Silverman, Smith, & Burns, 2013). Yet within this silence, there exists a need to create a united voice to shatter it. Since suicidality in Indigenous youth is often a reflection of social and cultural disparities, cultural context is essential in creating change (Wexler & Gone, 2012). Therefore, utilizing traditional Indigenous art may provide an especially positive impact among individuals struggling with both the concepts of suicidality and cultural identity. In combining these topics, an opportunity might arise to address this health disparity. Engaging in

organized events that incorporate suicidality and art are a means of actively counteracting the silence, shame, and isolation that perpetuate suicidality (Silverman et al., 2013). In doing so, a physical, emotional, and spiritual place is created in which the discussion of suicide is considered safe. Art can be used to construct a safe environment to communicate feelings, generate an intangible space to address the disparity around Indigenous suicidality, as well as initiate a sense of connection between Indigenous youths (Silverman et al., 2013). By using art, Indigenous adolescents may learn to cope with their emotions by engaging in an open environment that supports their understanding of what it means to be Indigenous while simultaneously addressing the topic of suicide.

Art is renowned for conveying deeper meanings, and engaging in the production of art that is intertwined with cultural elements may enable individuals to orient themselves to their cultural identities. In art, adolescents can learn how to empower themselves within their cultural identity as Indigenous peoples to openly discuss personal experiences with suicide. Through the creation of art, adolescents can be given an opportunity to express feelings that they have no other way of communicating (Biddle & Swee, 2012; Lu & Yuen, 2012). Sometimes words are not sufficient to describe the emotions that people have regarding suicide, and a creative outlet may enable Indigenous youths to more thoroughly understand their own feelings about it—especially if they have had personal experiences with suicide. Individuals who have either attempted suicide or experienced it within their communities may be able to learn how to manage their emotions through engaging in

art. By reclaiming cultural practices such as engagement with traditional art, Indigenous youth can empower themselves through reconnecting with their heritage (Lu & Yuen, 2012). Reconnecting Indigenous peoples with traditional practices is an ongoing endeavour to establish community bonds, ensure the continuity of these practices, and promote community healing.

## Conclusion

For many Indigenous people, significant barriers still exist in understanding and expressing their cultural roots. Yet, cultural identity is a vital component of human existence that influences lifestyle and self-image (Wexler, 2009). Social factors can inhibit minority groups through longstanding practices of assimilation by the dominant culture (Swanson, 2010). Adolescents are especially vulnerable because they are in a stage of identity development (Leifer & Fleck, 2013). Social support networks formed through community engagement are key interventions to establish safe environments that encourage cultural identity development in adolescents, which help prevent suicide behaviours. Despite the negative influences of residential schools on current generations, this history does not define Indigenous cultures, nor does it have to shape the future of Indigenous adolescents. Through participating in group sessions of Indigenous art creation, these adolescents may discover a sense of empowerment that provides a protective factor opposing the current prevalence of adolescent Indigenous suicidality. The availability of programs that combine the need for an immutable voice regarding the prevalence of suicide in Indigenous

communities with a traditional practice, such as Indigenous art, may challenge the loss of cultural identity and contribute to addressing the suicide epidemic amongst Indigenous adolescents.



"I feel very very proud of everyone who has attended. There has been fantastic insight over the past two days."

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Knowledge Makers

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# Sheila Blackstock Gitxsan, RN, BScN, MScN, COHN, PhD (IP)

Sheila is a Gitxsan woman, a faculty member in the School of Nursing, and a doctoral nursing student at the University of Alberta. She has 31 years of experience working in acute care, rural nursing, Aboriginal health, and occupational health nursing. Sheila's research interests include horizontal workplace bullying among Registered Nurses, Indigenous health, and recruitment and retention of RNs and nursing students. Sheila is currently the Chair of the Indigenous Health Nursing Committee.

## Indigenous Research, Place and Protocols

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The meaning of Indigenous research is derived through partnerships with Indigenous people to meet the needs of their communities. It begins and continues with authentic relationships that embrace 'place' and enact protocols where our peoples are situated. Being an Indigenous nursing academic is an honor and has a responsibility to insure authentic research that respects our lands, traditions, and peoples. Place holds a deep spiritual connection to our lands of origins from the beginning of time and described in our Creation story narratives. In the academy, the notion of 'place' has historical underpinnings to Nightingale's work in the evolution of the nursing profession (Thomas, 2013) that has been translated to unique constituted meanings. Place has been conceptualized as having three distinct but interrelated components: location, situatedness, locus (Carolan, Andrews, & Hodnett, 2006.) These have relevance and meaning for the provision of nursing care to individuals, family, and communities. Place, and the importance

of "change of place", can be interpreted as conceptualizations of tenants of knowledge of the individual, family, community, health, health care provision and environment; captured, translated and woven into a tapestry representative of a story. The story can take on a life of its own being a place in and of itself in a generational and intrinsically lived experience.

### **Place: the Catalyst to Shift the Academic Lens**

Place immersed within research is the embodiment of knowing (empirical, ethical, aesthetic, persona, unknowing, sociopolitical, and emancipatory) in situated cognition (Thomas, 2013). Utilizing storytelling as a format of translating place is a traditional pedagogical method practiced by First Nations. Indigenous research and place has meaning and relevance to nursing curriculum, research, and practice. A story of "place" can capture the pedagogical underpinnings of nursing akin to totem poles representing the knowledge gained

in research and restored, disseminated through stories shared by elders; a fertile soil representative of the knowledge from our Elders and optimal well-being of individual, family, community, and nursing foundational knowledge nurturing and translating concurrently through nursing education and practice. The trunk, stem, branch systems, and environment are representative of the embodiment of knowing and not knowing; situated cognition emancipated through nursing domains representative of holistic nursing education, translated to holistic nursing care. The paradigm of place has meaning to impart foundational nursing knowledge that provides a holistic, meaningful foundation for the provision of culturally sensitive health care to individuals, families, and communities. It is further reflective of culturally respectful, inclusive, and holistic nursing research that informs nursing practice and ultimately the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Using place as a lens means that partnerships and protocols are not rushed for the sake of research agendas or responses to commission reports.

## **Ending Tokenism, Enacting Protocols**

What is tokenism and how can it be averted? Hastily developing Indigenous curriculum content can result in tokenism despite an authentic desire to truly enact a respectful response to the TRC Calls to Action (2015). Tokenism has historically been the hiring of successful candidates who have Aboriginal ancestry into designated positions to supposedly “address racism,” or to bring to the university a single representative of the local Indigenous Nation. It is through tokenism that

Aboriginal peoples are paradoxically excluded from an organization, through this supposed process of inclusion, with inappropriate representation. The intention was to address discrimination of Aboriginal peoples where it resulted in the public perception of the organizations hiring the “token Indian” to doing the ‘right thing’ to insure representation from Aboriginal communities (Vukic, Jesty, Mathews, & Etowa, 2012). Further, enacting a respectful response means the development of curriculum by academics and nursing faculty utilizing a decolonizing framework and reflexivity to engage Aboriginal communities. This requires time to ensure that protocols are followed. Time, viewed through Indigenous Ways of knowing and being, and lens(es) to build partnerships, engage protocols, and honor knowledge keepers. All of which may not reconcile with the Western academic allotment of faculty workload credits, educational program development committees, or course development deadlines inherent within most academic institutions. Reconciliation of the academic processes that require protocols to be followed, the support of academics through enacting consideration of time to build relationships, and the appropriate allotment of workload credits to honor time required for proper engagement is needed. Further, building the capacity of other faculty wanting to weave Indigenous content into their courses respectfully, means that faculty development and support are enacted through bipartite and tripartite agreements in order to sustain the enactment of protocols. Reconciliation of academic processes requires that the researchers themselves are invested in authentic partnerships with Indigenous communities. Partnerships insure mutual research aims are incorporated into ethics proposals

with a foundational understanding that Indigenous Peoples own their knowledge; Indigenous knowledge does not belong to researchers and academics.



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“There are so many different aspects being covered. Thank goodness you guys are taking care of those things I think about as well. My goodness, there is all of us in here willing to tackle it. Thank you.”

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# Mathilda Chillihitzia Nsyilxcən – Upper Nicola Band

Mathilda grew up with a close connection to the land was always fascinated by the history and the story the land told, especially her people's story. Currently she is in her fourth year of university, studying towards her Bachelor of Arts with a major in Geography and a minor in History. Mathilda is hoping to get her Bachelor of Education Degree and teach high school social studies.

"Research is important because it means we are willing to learn more of something and we learn something new everyday."

## Knowledge Keepers Passing Traditional Knowledge from Elders to Youth

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With Indigenous knowledge and culture slowly coming back to the people, there is a new obstacle that is heading our way. The generation of today is starting to lose focus because of ever growing technology. So what helps me, my nieces, nephews, and any generation younger than me to keep living the elder's knowledge and teachings in the modern world? My name is Mathilda Chillihitzia and I am a part of the Okanagan nation. I started learning my culture when I was in kindergarten; I still try to learn something from my elders every time I am back in my community. However, it is getting harder to learn everything from all of the elders as they are slowly passing away. So how can I keep the knowledge that I have learned and will continue to learn with me?

In this day and age modern technology is taking over the world, so we do everything we can to keep up with it. However, our culture and traditions are over a thousand years old and have been passed down from generation to generation. So, with the ever-changing world how can we keep our traditions or culture going? Some of our teachings we can keep with us every day. For example, I was taught by my grandmother not to drag my feet; this was because our ancestors walked this earth unheard to be great hunters, and also because we need to respect our mother earth so we must walk with soft feet. Therefore, when I am walking with my niece or nephew I tell them not to drag their feet, and when they ask why I'll make sure I sit down and tell them what my grandmother told me. But what about the teachings that we don't use every day like our language, singing, or basic knowledge of the land and plants? How will we preserve it?



Growing up, I was one of the lucky few that was taught by my community about my culture and my language (which I know enough of to have a small conversation). I attended camps while growing up, which taught me about my culture. There was one camp I attended that taught everything; we were told to bring nothing but a tent, a sleeping bag, and clothes for two weeks. I showed up and they told us that we had little food for the two weeks so we needed to get out on the land and gather as much as we could before dinner. We set up camp and took off fishing where we caught just enough fish for dinner that night. That night, they taught us how to catch, fix, and cook the fish. We learned a great deal about our culture during those two weeks. Learning those teachings also taught things that we can carry with us every day; for example discipline. Every day we would be woken up by one of our teachers playing drums to signal us that it was time to go for a run and a swim, all before the sun hit the land. It took a lot of discipline to do this each morning. By then end of the two weeks I did not need to be woken up with the sounds of drums outside of our tents. Today I need that discipline to get things like homework assignments done. At the end of it all, I had learned about my culture and I use these lessons in my everyday life. They are a part of who I am.

Not only has my culture taught me things like discipline, protocol, and respect, but it has also taught me how to get through hard times. For instance, being in university you are juggling classes, sleep, health, socializing, and assignments. Over time it all starts to get stressful and you may face the added stress of failing a test or an assignment, and things can happen back in your community that have you all scattered.

Just before I break down and cry, I remember that going to the water or smudging myself can make me feel grounded and more focused, able to finish everything. Or if I am really having a hard time I go for a sweat—sweat lodge is a tradition that has been passed town for generations—to cleanse my mind, spirit, and body.

The other thing to keep in mind is motivation for people to learn, so is there a fun easy way to teach the culture? For example, a Tribe Called Red has reached millions of people with their music that it speaks to youth. They not only promote healthy living through song and dance, but as you will see in their “Stadium powwow official video” (Tribe Called Red, 2016), they promote strong Indigenous leadership. This is great because it gets people interested in the Powwow; we need to get youth, and everyone else, involved





in wanting to learn that enthusiastically about other parts of the culture. I believe we need to show them why it is important first, then we can start teaching them. It's important because, not only are our elders passing away with their knowledge, but our culture is a part of every Indigenous person not matter what nation that is.

The day I learned why our culture was so important was when I was in Australia for a semester back in summer 2012. I was learning all about my culture but never really understood why; I was always taught to respect your elders, but I never questioned why, I just did as they said. My first week on exchange in Australia I was a part of a smoke ceremony at Southern Cross University. The elder that was doing the ceremony started off by playing the didgeridoo then went into a prayer in his language. After he had asked us to grab some of the gum tree branches that were laying in front of us and throw it in the fire that we were all standing around. Then he told us to stand in the smoke and let the smoke cleanse us, then we could step back into the circle. As we did that he

started talking about the land and how we needed to start protecting her. He talked for a few more minutes and I was nodding my head in agreement because I knew exactly what he was talking about. Then he started to shake everyone's hand then he stopped at me and instead of shaking my hand he hugged me and then grabbed my shoulders and said "I know you know what I'm talking about because everything that your people have been through my people have been through too, so are you from Canada or USA?" I told him Canada. He gave me one more hug and then he said something that I will remember for the rest of my life: "Welcome my sister from another country." Right there was the day I realized why I was learning my culture and why it was important, it was like taking a step back and finally seeing the whole picture. I did not see the big picture of the residential schools and my grandparents losing our culture and how import it was to pass it to the next generation. So going to another country that has been though the same experience as our people was a great eye opener.

We need to start getting the youth involved now before all of our elders pass with the knowledge of our people. We can start by first recording our elders on CD or a video recorder so we can have access to the knowledge when we want. Meaning that all the recordings need to be accessible to all community members that are willing and able to learn our culture. Another thing is books; there is a book I brought while in Australia for one of my classes called "Elders Wisdom from Australia's Indigenous Leaders" written by Mandawuy Ynupingu and Loitja O'donghue. It has elders from all over Australia telling their stories of how they learned about healing, the land, hunting, gathering, family, lore and law,

spirit, the sea, and ceremony and song; we can use that book as a template to get stated. There is also an article from Krupnik and Vakhtin (1997) that discusses the documentation of Indigenous knowledge in transition as it is currently shared by modern people. We can start by taking youth to another country and having them experience other cultures first hand, rather than asking them to read a book (which is not a way to teach our culture because that is not how our ancestors learned). You cannot tell someone to read a book on how to hunt, you need to bring the person out and let them learn by trial and error.

We need to start the process before it is too late when it comes to learning and teaching our culture. We need to start taking the necessary steps in getting the process started. Another thing to keep in mind is that we need to work together on helping our youth, and ourselves, learn

“It feels like real friendship in here. It’s nice to not feel like not a minority in a space. It is nice to have a space to talk.”

—  
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and keep our knowledge. One person cannot take the whole project on at once, we need to work as a team. Just like our ancestors, everyone in the village had a job to do to keep everyone well fed and safe. We need to do that now with the youth, but also with everyone learning any culture; every one has a job or a skill that can help improve our future for the better.



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# Trisha Shorson - Knowledge Makers Alumni Tsimshian and Carrier, from the Lax Kw'alaams and Chestlatta band

Trisha April Shorson is a Bachelor of Social Work student getting her Child Welfare Specialization. She is also obtaining her First Nations Studies Certificate and Global Competency Certificate. She plans on working with youth after completing her degree, and hopes to give back to her communities in a positive way. Trisha hopes to pursue research in the near future.

## Experiences in Zambia A Canadian Perspective

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### Introduction

In finishing my fourth year of the Bachelors of Social Work (BSW) at Thompson Rivers University (TRU), I was given an opportunity to go to Zambia for an internship. Once in my internship, I decided to write of my experience. I wanted to compare and contrast the differences of my past practicum and the internship I did in Zambia. I also found it interesting how Zambians experienced a similar Indigenous way of identity as myself.

My opportunity was made possible when I got accepted by Victoria International Development Education Association's (VIDEA) internship program. This was the Indigenous Youth Internship Program that ran from July 20, 2016 to December 5, 2016. As an intern in Zambia, I was based at the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Lusaka, Zambia. This location was YWCA's regional team, and the national office was right next door.

### Third Year Practicum

For my BSW program, I had my practicum at the Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society (KAFFS). My field instructor was the Family Preservation worker. Her work included giving counseling sessions, supporting families whom are working with the Ministry of Children and family Development (MCFD), going to court, and redirecting clients to other programs and resources. The agency used Indigenous cultural practices in the work, and held cultural activities for visitors and clients. While at this practicum I worked with children, youth, adults, elders, and families. There were drumming groups, traditional games, youth groups, parenting groups, public engagement activities, and much more. Throughout my week at this practicum, I worked with the family preservation worker, youth worker, community outreach worker, culture and heritage worker, roots worker, early childhood worker, and prenatal worker. One of my co-workers, who was also a valuable Elder, was also teaching me the local Native language and how to sing in it.

## **Internship in Zambia**

My internship position, as titled in Canada, was a Youth Program Officer for the YWCA. The position tasks were not clearly defined, just that I was to be working under the Youth Coordinator. Once in Zambia, my position required me to work alongside my Zambian coworkers (shadowing). My coworkers worked with cases involving defilement, child maintenance, drug abuse, labour, marital, and/or estate issues. Cases usually involved a child, and, when possible, the YWCA could have a child placed at their Children in Crises (CIC) home for their safety until their case was resolved.

My position in the office later shifted, and I then worked with the Diversion program. This program included working with youth who have committed a crime (as defined by the Zambian government) such as defilement, murder, break-ins, assault, and those who are on probation. Cases involve about six sessions that get the youth to understand what the situation was, how it is wrong, learn about the legal system in Zambia, learn about what the case's implications has on their citizen file, and teach the juvenile to understand their body. The final part of the process was to assess the individual to determine whether they are suitable to being a valuable citizen again. The juvenile would also get chances to do family group conferencing with their probation officer or social worker. The work also includes working with the victim and the juvenile. At the Diversion office, I learned that the legal age to consent to sex is 16 for females. Even if a boy is younger than the girl, and the two were consenting to sexual activity with one another, the boy would still be considered as having committed a crime. This would then mean that the boy would have committed a crime and defiled the girl.

My final position shifted to working with the programs coordinator. This position would be the position that decided the direction of all services and programs run through the regional YWCA. The National YWCA would also give the Programs Coordinator some direction on what the regional office should or can do. In this this position I would help type reports, meeting minutes, and proposals. I also got to meet the YWCA's non-governmental organizations (NGO) partners and future partners. In between the three different office locations that I worked in, I also enjoyed spending time at the finance office with my close friends.

## **Similarities**

In comparing my first practicum and my internship in Zambia, the Friendship center and YWCA both have a collective approach. I remember how even though I was to be working under the family preservation worker at KAFS, everyone had a part in my learning growth. My coworkers also felt that I was helping them learn new things, or that I gave them reminders of information they knew but forgot. It was the same at the YWCA. I first started working with the Youth Coordinator whom had many Zambian interns and volunteers working under her. I later started to work on the Diversion team, which had some members whom were connected to the National YWCA. My final shift in the workplace location was working under the programs coordinator. I got more familiar with everyone in the association when shadowing each worker. I was treated well. My coworkers (my friends) treated me as a learner who needed to be taught by the community as a whole. This was just like my team at the KAFS.

These similarities highlight what I feel is a universal Indigenous value: working for the collective rather than the individualistic.

## Differences

Some differences that I have noticed are that there are no foster homes in Zambia. The CIC in Zambia, Lusaka is only a temporary placement until a child's case goes through court. Either the perpetrator is removed and sent to jail or prison, or the child can be placed with other family members. As a few of my Zambian coworkers have mentioned, highlighted clearly below by one instance of communication:

“People shouldn't be homeless and without supports. There is always some family or relative who should take them in and provide support. There really shouldn't be street children. People who give [children on the streets] change will only encourage those children to keep panhandling. There are resources and supports in place, they just don't go there if they think they can make free money and not have to do anything.” (Personal communications, anonymous, 2016)

Later, in a discussion I had with my Canadian supervisor and Zambian co-worker, we talked about the differences of social work between Zambia and Canada. Zambia has a very different government system with less government run services for the public. They also don't tax their citizens as much as Canada does, and so there is less funding towards public services. Therefore Canada has an ability to put funding towards foster homes, whereas Zambia doesn't. It is also a cultural value that a relative,

if asked to, would just take a child into their home and pay for their education in Zambia (without a thought of what would be given to them). Another thing is that there is a high amount of informal economy in Zambia which is hard to tax and hard to know how much profit is being made.

I also learned that many places in Zambia that provide social support services are funded by NGO's from outside the country. I also found it interesting that the YWCA had ways of doing their own income generating activities. They have their own restaurant and hostel. The agency also had a community hall to rent out, and they had their own school, all at the regional sites. I found this to be different from NGOs in Canada. Most social support services in Canada don't have income generating activities.

## Reflections

Throughout all of my university years, I learned a lot of the histories of the original people who resided in Canada before Europeans came. A lot of this knowledge connected with what I was taught at home. As a Carrier and Tsimshian First Nations person, my mother, father, and grandparents told me stories of their lives and personal experiences. In comparison to Zambia, I am in awe at how people there can maintain their native language. Although they made English their national language, as a way to avoid people being upset over which of the many native languages should be the main one, they all still speak one native language or more in addition to English. Back home, I barely know the Carrier language, and I don't even know any Tsimshian. I know English well, yet I'm

at a loss of identity. In Zambia, they can learn their native language and English.

There is however a trend that is happening in Zambia, one that I understand. It's the divide that happens when youth believe that the societal, valued language is more important, and thus slowly more and more youth can't have a conversation with their Native speaking elders. The child prefers English, and might not know how to communicate with their elders; similar experience that I have had in my own family. Although in Zambia, there is also another trend: children not valuing school, and being unable to speak English or other native languages that would help with trade and business. In reference to loss of ways of knowing, including language, my Zambian coworkers told me about how colonialism has interfered.

I have experienced being Indigenous in Canada, and experienced White privilege in Zambia. This dynamic was very strange to me. I found it really annoying to be treated as either White or Asian. I might have also experienced privilege as a tourist, and I might have been treated well because of this. I also got used to how I was treated in Zambia, and I wouldn't know of any other way. I wouldn't know how it is to be treated by a Zambian as a Zambian. In thinking of experiences, I wonder how many other "Whites" might actually experience a more complex identity than just being seen as "White." I wonder how many people I assumed were "White," but who actually identify as First Nation. I wouldn't know of the privilege I had in Zambia. Like even if my skin is so light in comparison to the general Zambian population, my identity is so much more complex than that (being a Canadian First Nation person).

## Concluding Thoughts

Overall, I want to speak about how I have felt comfort in my own cultural identity being experienced in Zambia. While sharing many stories with my Zambian coworkers, we would learn of each other's Indigeneity and different ways of knowing. Cultural values and values of community were strongly held values by Zambians and myself. The similarities between myself, as a First Nation person in from Western country, and my Zambian coworkers were enormous. Both my positions, at the YWCA in Zambia and at the KAFS in Canada, work with a culturally sensitive practice; I understand how there are many Indigenous nations in a country.

In Zambia, I enjoyed how their ways of knowing and being are similar to how I am as First Nation person. I felt that my Indigenous identity and ways of knowing have been experienced in Zambia. It was like working with a team made of family; my Zambia coworkers took great care of me. Western ways of education are so different from how I was brought up. In the public schools, it was always about my success, and not the success of my family. Zambians, when first meeting me, would always ask how my family is doing rather than how successful I am as a person. This is a way of being I am familiar with: treating one another as family and valuing cultural ways of knowing.



# Dolan Paul Tkemlups te Secwépemc

Dolan is currently in a Bachelor of Computing Science program at Thompson Rivers University and plans to find a career as a Network Administrator.

“Research is important because it has the ability to educate and bring people together.”

## Answering Tech Opportunities for First Nations

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My name is Dolan Paul I am a Tkemlups te Secwépemc, and a father of four. I have matured and been actively involved in and around my community for many years and it is my hope that I have fostered a great connection with my beautiful community. Even though I have spent many years here, it was not until recently that I experienced a moment in life where I felt a better connection to this community. A family member was very helpful in connecting me to my family history and my place in this great tree. Most of my years have been spent involved in several industries where I adapted to many different roles all to support my family.

My previous undertaking was that of a Band Councillor and my portfolio was education. I served my community for a three-year term, and it was here where my passion for technology was highlighted. In my role as a councillor I observed some inequities, and felt this is a place I could further explore. This led to my next step

in life as that of a post-secondary student, attempting to complete something that very few in my family have accomplished.

My transition to school was very tumultuous as I struggled with a number of courses, many of which were subjects that I had not participated in or thought of for many years. I failed a few courses, causing me to doubt my role in the field I had so wanted to explore. My family and supports were instrumental in my decision to continue in my initial direction. During my time as a student I have concluded that increased participation in the technology sector could be very beneficial for First Nations. This involvement could be useful in procuring jobs, building infrastructure for asset management, and fostering structures to develop further First Nation independence.

This matters because technology is a rapidly growing sector that most First Nations communities are ill equipped to engage in. It was discovered in a report



from British Columbia Stats (2015) that there were 86,800 individuals employed in the technology sector; this could open a greatly needed employment resource for many communities, while decreasing First Nations communities financial dependence on resource development industries—which often run counter to stewardship components of Indigenous culture.

Another example of how embracing the tech industry would provide further opportunity for First Nation communities can be seen in how open the tech sector is. With experience in the field you can have the possibility to explore such positions as database administrator, software developer, networks administrator, and web developer. If these positions could be developed and fostered in communities, it could go a long way in creating self-sufficient, prosperous,



and creative communities. According to Hui (2015), “in 2008 there were 85 of 203 First Nation communities that could access a broadband connection, that number has since climbed to 190.” This low number highlights the need for First Nation members to explore the tech sector, as more communities gain access and implement communication protocols and systems. This field could act as a way for communities to be inclusive with other First Nations locally, provincially, and nationally. The ability to find common goals, perspectives, and traditional practices could be invaluable. Not only does the sector help with infrastructure, but also with functionality, which, in turn, reduces unnecessary spending. As First Nation communities grow, so does the risk of cyber-attacks and with these attacks the threat of data loss, monetary extortion, and system shutdown. This means many members could lose or disrupt much needed systems of support. The services to combat these risks are generally contracted to outside resources, and it is seldom that there is a department or person responsible for monitoring for these situations. With an experienced community member handling these and other issues, the vested interest would be greatly enhanced with their own personal experiences.

Many communities are slowly becoming less reliant on outside resources and using their own resources and having educated members would expedite the process. The many challenges that hinder First Nations organizations are: remote locations, inadequate resources, and governmental restrictions. Hui states that the remote locations have hindered a lot of communities, which is supported by the fact that only 118 First Nation communities in 2008 had access to a broadband

connection. This number has increased to 190 in 2015 but it shows how limited and behind First Nations are in regards to advancing members in the technology sector (Hui, 2015). Many governmental rules and regulations have hampered communities in that they are only permitted to provide updates and upgrades to their communities at the behest of governmental agencies. An example of this is how any type of development or upgrade must first get the permission of the “Indian Agent” provincially, and then it must proceed to get the consent of the federal government.

There are sites or organizations that are using technology to advance or foster First Nation ideas and philosophies. The First Nation Technology Council (FNTC), the Knowledge Keepers, and the Aboriginal Business and Investment Council (ABIC) are but a few, and they each deal in different areas. The FNTC has been mandated by the First Nations Summit, BC Assembly of First Nations, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs to address the technology related needs of BC’s First Nations communities. The Knowledge Keepers site provides for instant desktop analysis of potential impacts of industrial development on traditional land use, species habitat, and any areas of importance to a community. This fully customizable referrals, consultation, tracking, and management system is configured to suit and support each community’s specific needs and consultation process. First Nation communities are reliant on outside resources to keep communications and systems relevant. The ABIC’s mandate is to help improve Aboriginal participation in the economy, and promote economic certainty in the province by encouraging economic growth in Aboriginal communities. They hope to accomplish this through connecting

investors and successful Aboriginal businesses, as well as fostering relationships between governmental agencies and other First Nations communities. These are a few of the organizations I have found that will greatly facilitate the transition needed to build a technology sector with the fastest growing demographic in Canada. This active involvement in the technology sector opens the door to many First Nations becoming more active in computing science.

If more First Nations become involved in the tech sector many communities can be better included in technological advancements as well as better involved in services provided to other agencies. Communities could also be better equipped to adapt to organizational structural advancements bringing in cost savings and a vastly expanding field. It could also develop a strong guideline for First Nation organizations to create a more structured and integrative network and infrastructure which saves organizations money. I do my part by actively promoting my field with my peers, sharing knowledge to assist other students, as well as taking Aboriginal training opportunities. I also approach my community office to have open discussions about the opportunities within my field and how it can improve their infrastructure.

By embracing technology First Nations can be better equipped to advance their objectives, policies, traditions, and opportunities. The cooperation of many different levels from community members, band structures, and governmental agencies could make the progression very favorable. I am hoping to be involved with a First Nation organization where I will be immersed in an area where I can gain experience and actively promote my field. I hope with the

support of my peers, community members, First Nation organizations, and most of all my amazing family that many of these thoughts and concerns will one day come to fruition.



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“I’d like to learn more about Indigenous research methodologies. I haven’t really been taught that in the institution before. I have been taught how to be a person of character from the land – caribou hunting, blizzards – native ways of knowing there. But I have never learned native ways of knowing from inside the school.”

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# Associate Professor Natalie Clark

Natalie's research interests are in the area of violence, trauma, youth health within an Indigenous and intersectional framework, sexual exploitation, abuse, rural and remote health, Indigenous health, and girls' groups within an intersectional and violence-informed model.

Natalie's most recent research is focused on culturally safe and anti-oppressive field education for Aboriginal students; as well as creating a youth health research agenda within an intersectional approach including gender, culture, and geography. Natalie is the founder and Director of the Centre for Community-Based Youth Health Research at Thompson Rivers University. Through the Centre she supports research related to youth health in rural communities and small cities in partnership with communities, and youth themselves.

## Raised up as Researchers on the Land

### Xq'wle`w'men – My Berry-picking Basket

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*I was very young when my grandmother taught me how to make a basket. Because sooner or later, we were going to part of the food gathering. They would tie a little basket around a little girl's waist. The little girl might fill it with leaves, or dirt, or anything, but she learned that that little basket was a container and it has to be filled. And she'd go along. The bigger they (the child) got, the bigger her basket would be. And she was made at a very young age to fill one basket before she would go play...*

*(Elder Mary Thomas, 2001, p. 10)*

In this paper I will outline some of my process of "a researcher-becoming." Cherokee Scholar Polly Walker (2013) uses the term "researcher-becoming" to better describe the "constant flux," and, I would argue, emergence of self as researcher in community. My Ex'wle'w'men (the berry-picking basket) methodology is based on my understanding of Secwépemc ontology, and the emergent methods that have been revealed through this process and guided my process. Ex-wle'w'men methodology emerges from my readings and from learning on the land through

which I strove to embody the concepts of xqen'we`n's - to find out; xeqpenwe`llen' - to learn; and exqpenwe`ns - to understand. This Ex-wle'w'men methodology is rooted in a specific space, xq'wle`wten, my berry picking location on Secwépemculecw (the land of the Secwépemc people).

As a form of oral footnoting I recognize my teachers of the Secwépemc language, Kathy Michel, my own notes from my language course with her, Dr. Janice Billy, and my learning from family members including Johnny Ben Jules and Elders Mike

Arrouse. Any mistakes are my own. Oral footnoting is also important in storytelling; the Elders will always share what Ron Ignace calls oral footnoting, allowing them to acknowledge the story as true, and to honor who they learned it from. My research training draws on my own connection and relationships within Secwépemc, as a woman of Métis ancestry, the mother of Secwépemc children, and part of the Secwépemc community, combined with over seven years at TRU and the partnerships I built within TRU and within the community. I know to whom I am accountable, and I know to whom I belong. These relationships define my responsibility and my role within the Secwépemc nation.

The Birch Bark camp I attended was on the land, near the sacred headwaters of the Secwépemc people; a type of land-based university, with a community of Elders, parents, aunties, uncles, and children all learning together. A mine is currently under exploration there, and thus the camp also served as engagement in the very real issues of violence on the land and our role as guardians. The camp included walking and doing, together with storytelling, thus a methodology embodied and anchored by place and ceremony. The seasonal rounds are an integral part of Secwépemc life and are reflected in the calendar. These cycles also apply to research in the preparation and gathering, which are seasonal activities rooted in time and activity.

An essential part of Secwépemc peoples' ways of knowing is through the bringing of the Elders together with the children, as the Elders own thirst for knowledge can inspire the courage "to investigate and experiment, to think and reflect on the past, or natural phenomena

and causes, in searching for medicinal cures, for social and economic cures" (Ignace, 1999, p. 1). The birch bark camp was attended by Elders, children, parents, aunties, and uncles and also included Indigenous peoples from other countries.

## **Emergence: The Return of Secwépemc Research as Healing**

"And the more I learned about my culture, the values, the philosophy of our culture, I never realized how it was changing me. [...] from there on my life totally changed. I began to see my culture from a different perspective. I could see there was a lot in it to offer our people."

(Secwépemc Elder Dr. Mary Thomas, 2001, p. 27).

In this quote, Secwépemc Elder Dr. Mary Thomas tells the story of how she was approached to be involved in research, and specifically to do research with her own people, and how this research project was an essential and important first step in her healing from the impact of residential school and the ongoing colonization of her people.

Thus the concept 'raised up as researchers' is an interweaving of intergenerational teaching, seasonal rounds, walking and being on the land, dreaming, sensing, and listening to spirit. This place-based pedagogy, together with embodied practices and ceremonies such as the berry picking camp I participated in, anchor our knowing. The colonizers interrupted, and continue to interrupt, this process of raising up researchers; scattering this



knowledge through residential schools, ongoing removals through child welfare, criminalization, and adoptions. However, the importance of the spiral resonates here, as the whole of Secwépemc ontology is contained in each ceremony, in each story, and in each teaching that returns. George Manuel with Michael Polsuns (1974) shares that “so long as there is a single thread that links us to the ways of our grandfathers, our lives are strong. However thin and delicate that thread may be, it will support the weight of a stronger cord that will tie us securely to the land” (p. 4). For my children, I am grateful for the connection they have with their Secwépemc grandmothers and grandfathers, and the ways that they are, once again, able to be raised up as researchers on the land.



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# Kelsey Marie Arnouse

## Tk'emlups te Secwépemc band

Kelsey is currently finishing the third year of a Bachelors of Social Work and plans to work in the medical field as a registered social worker. After getting experience in the field Kelsey plans to get a Masters in Counseling.

"As individuals we are resilient, but when we stand together we can make change. Working together we can help dismantle barriers felt by Indigenous peoples through research and advocacy."

## A Critical Analysis of the Relationship between Indigenous Populations of Canada and Social Workers

### Historically, Contemporarily, and in the Future – from the Perspective of an Indigenous (future) Social Worker

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Growing up on a reserve I learned early that social workers were not always welcome or trusted. Therefore, when my path led me to a social work career I felt great internal conflict whether I should follow it. I spent an immense amount of consideration and time before I felt that I was ready to follow the path of a social worker. When the opportunity arose to write this paper I felt it was incredibly important to investigate my initial feelings of distrust towards the profession, and critically analyse the barriers between Indigenous peoples and social workers. For the purposes of this paper analysis will be put on social work's historic role of oppression in Indigenous

communities, the contemporary issues that continue to cause relationship barriers, and what changes could be made to create an enriching relationship for both Indigenous communities and social workers from the perspective of an Indigenous (future) social worker.

Indigenous populations within Canada have some of the highest need for social services, and yet there appears to be an impenetrable barrier between the population and those who provide most social services - social workers (Government of Canada & Statistics Canada, 2015). It is critically important to understand the development of the barriers between

the two groups before their dismantling can begin. This paper will describe initial relationships between social workers and Indigenous populations through the residential school and sixties scoop era, followed by a critical analysis of why barriers and distrust remain in contemporary Canada, focusing on social work systems of child welfare, and Eurocentric education. Finally, recommendations for future practice will be established through the lens of the author, a future Indigenous social worker, followed by future research initiatives.

## Historical Relationships

To understand the distrust and barriers between social workers and Indigenous populations, it is important to understand the historical position of the profession during times of extreme oppression and abuse of Indigenous peoples. Social workers have historically played a large role in oppressing the Indigenous populations; there are many individual cases that could be presented, however, for the purpose of this paper, two of the mass affected cases will be looked at: residential schools and the sixties scoop.

During the residential school era more than 150,000 Indigenous children were taken from their families and placed within church and government sanctioned schools; the purpose was to remove the child's Indigenous culture and westernise them (Kennedy, 2015). While the children were in these schools they were abused physically, sexually, and emotionally (Blackstock, 2008). During the era of residential schools many complaints of abuse and maltreatment were publicised (Blackstock, 2008) and therefore the question arises—where were

the social workers to investigate these claims? The answer is one that is rarely recognised, learned about, or discussed in the profession of social work. During this era, the Canadian Association of Social Workers and Child Welfare Council (CASW & CWC) were quoted as saying "[W]e feel they [residential schools] have a place in a well-rounded system of Indian education..." (Blackstock, 2009, p.29). The reality is that while Indigenous children were suffering through forced assimilation, and their parents through the insurmountable loss of their children, some social workers were perpetuating the system. The roles of the profession varied, but in some cases workers were involved in removing children from their homes to place them in residential schools, and some were sitting on advisory committees for residential schools (Blackstock, 2008). Social workers played an integral role in not only apprehending and moving children to the residential schools but also in keeping them there.

The role of social workers in the residential school system is an aspect that often gets swept under the rug, however, the social worker's role in the sixties scoop is a more published fact. The term sixties scoop refers to the mass removal of Indigenous children from their families throughout the '60s and late into the '80s (Sinclair, 2007). This period saw a shift from taking Indigenous children and placing them in residential schools, to apprehending them and moving them to westernised homes (Sinclair, 2007). The objective was to, once again, remove any Indigenous cultural influence from the child's life (Sinclair, 2007). Children were placed in foster homes or adopted and, in most cases, all ties to their parents and culture were forcibly cut (Sinclair, 2007). Tamara Kulsic (2005) is an



Indigenous woman from British Columbia who writes about her and her brother's experience of being removed and adopted to a western family; "My mother told me, that he was an Apple - You know - White on the inside but red on the outside. She said this like it was her grand accomplishment. "she made him an Apple."" (p. 23).

Much like residential schools, the effects of the sixties scoop are still heavily felt by the Indigenous community. In Canada many adoptees completely lost their sense of culture and any connection to their birth families (Kulusic, 2005). Once again social workers played a pivotal role in the removal of Indigenous children from their families (Alston-O'Connor, 2010). Social workers apprehended, processed adoptions, and moved children far from their reserves in order to remove them from their culture (Alston-O'Connor, 2010). This legacy of involvement remains a barrier for Indigenous populations, particularly those who were affected by the sixties scoop (Alston-O'Connor, 2010).

The Residential school system and sixties scoop era are both relatively recent, with the last residential school closing in 1996 and the sixties scoop era spreading into the late 1980s; the pain that is associated with these events is still fresh (Treaty 6 Education, n.d; Sinclair, 2007). It is vital that social workers understand, respect, and acknowledge the role that the profession has played in the colonization of Indigenous peoples. Historically, the social work profession has been on the front lines, perpetrating many injustices. It is only when there is a thorough understanding of this that the barriers between Indigenous peoples and social workers be removed.



## Current Relationships

The relationship between Indigenous populations and social workers has grown, and some respect between the two has developed. Social workers have made valiant efforts to respect Indigenous culture, and many cultivate reconciliation in their everyday practice. Although contemporary Canadian social workers have recognized resilience within the Indigenous population, some structures of the profession continue to oppress Indigenous populations resulting in a continued strain in their relationship. The mass overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system, commonly regarded as the modern day residential schools, and the Eurocentric training that social workers are required to receive illustrates a persistent barrier to Indigenous peoples of Canada trusting social workers (Knight, 2016).

The overrepresentation of Indigenous children within the child welfare system has been, and continues to be, a point of contention between Indigenous families and social workers. As of 2011 the system is believed to have held more than double the Indigenous children that the residential schools did during the height of their use (The Canadian Press, 2011). The reality is that with the rate of investigation being 2.5 times higher in reported abuse cases in Indigenous families than non-Indigenous children, Indigenous families are being set up to fail (Blackstock, Prakash, Loxley, & Wien, 2005). In addition, Indigenous children are more than twice as likely to be removed from their homes than non-Indigenous children, and children with First Nations status are 15 times more likely to be moved into care (Blackstock et al., 2005). The resulting factors of these statistics is that Indigenous families view trusting a social worker as a dangerous task, and that regardless of the social workers' intentions there is yet another barrier to the relationship (Blackstock et al, 2005). In addition, the individuals running provincial social work agencies prolong the strained situation by allocating funds unfairly: "in 2004 a provincial child welfare authority allocated only 20% of its family support budget to Aboriginal families despite the fact that Aboriginal children composed over 80% of all children in care" (Blackstock, 2009, p. 30). Continuing the barrier to this relationship is the lack of movement seen to rectify the child welfare situation, forcing Indigenous groups to file a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission (Blackstock, 2009). The claim illustrates that the Canadian government is purposely underfunding the child welfare system and that it is resulting in discriminatory practices (Blackstock, 2009). Although

most of these barriers are created at macro levels, it is important that social workers continue to advocate for Indigenous children and that changes are made within the system and within everyday practice.

As the child welfare system continues on a path of cultural assimilation arguably as effective as residential schools, an effectual way to combat this and build advocates is through social work education. However, there appears to be disconnect at the University level on how to train future social workers. Using western knowledge to try and solve a systematic and Indigenous issue shows a lack of understanding of the problem. Many universities do not have Indigenous curriculums, and Indigenous ways of knowing are not respected on the same calibre as western degrees (Jones, 2016). In addition, when Indigenous professors are employed, many feel incredibly constricted by the "white studies system" and believe that they are being forced to teach Indigenous topics in a western way (Harris, 2002, p. 187). The restrictions around how to teach Indigenous knowledge and who is qualified to teach Indigenous knowledge leave a lot to be desired. It is crucial that universities, specifically social work programs, educate students about Indigenous populations, using Indigenous knowledge holders, and do so in a way that corresponds with Indigenous values. It is only then that future social workers will enter the workforce with a deep and thorough understanding of mistakes made in the past and how to move forward from them. In the author's opinion, it is redundant to try and understand an Indigenous issue from a western perspective, even when the roots of the issue grow from colonization.

## Future

In historic and contemporary Canada there are some incredibly large barriers between Indigenous peoples and social workers. These barriers obstruct the right of individuals to self-determination because they create a fear of reaching out for help, even if they want it. For many, this fear and distrust leave them in unhealthy situations and continues an era of colonization. Throughout the research, a list of recommendations was compiled for how to move forward from this distrust and build respectful, trusting, and culturally relevant relationships between Indigenous peoples and social workers. The following is a list developed from a personal perspective of an Indigenous (future) social worker and in no way reflects all changes that need to be made.

The vital foundation for change has three parts: more acknowledgement needs to be made of the social workers' role in residential schools and the sixties scoop, more Indigenous peoples need to be encouraged to pursue social work as a career, and a change needs to be made in how Indigenous knowledge is received in the University setting.

Before forward movement can be made in the relationship, acknowledgement of the past is fundamental. It is important to note that when doing research for this paper the author struggled to find resources that explained the social worker's involvement in residential schools, and furthermore she had not previously learned about this topic through her social work curriculum. One of the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation committee was that "social workers and others who conduct

child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools" and part of this education should be around the role social workers played (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 319). This is crucial so that the same mistakes are not made again. If social workers comprehend how the profession has participated in Indigenous colonization in the past, it will aid in learning from historical mistakes and ensure that they will never become policy again. In addition, acknowledgement of past mistreatment could help to remove contemporary barriers in the relationship between Indigenous peoples and social workers.

In alignment with social worker's recognition of past involvement of colonization, there needs to be an effort made to train and incorporate more Indigenous social workers. With the over-

**"I am with other students and get a new perspective from different programs. This is refreshing to see."**

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representation of Indigenous peoples in the social services systems it is the author's opinion that Indigenous social workers need to be incorporated in similar rates. For example, in 2011 48% of children in foster care were Indigenous, and therefore similar rates of Indigenous social workers should be incorporated into the system (Yukselir & Annett, 2016). This is not to say that non-Indigenous social workers cannot work with Indigenous children, but rather that if the goal of the Indigenous population is to one day govern themselves again, the need for proportional support is necessary. Furthermore, previous research has found that there is a desire for more "social work practitioners from Native communities working in Native communities" and with this a higher level of trust may be able to be formed between social worker and clients (Ives, Aitken, Loft, & Phillips, 2007, p. 16). The higher integration of Indigenous social workers could lead to a more holistic, traditional, and non-western way of approaching Indigenous problems that may not be solvable with traditional social work methods.

The final recommendation is the need for a greater respect of Indigenous knowledge within post-secondary education. Universities have made many strides towards decolonizing their campuses for Canadian Indigenous peoples and minorities in general through ethics, courses, and safe spaces on campus. Although these improvements have made post-secondary school more accessible than ever for Indigenous students, there are still certain barriers that remain (Ives et al, 2007). To begin, materials used in classes are generally from a western point perspective, if it is an Indigenous issue being discussed. The use of these materials de-prioritizes

the need for Indigenous knowledge to be recognized. In specific cases there may be limited resources available due to the use of oral traditions, however, elders or knowledge keepers can be brought in to educate on these topics (Ives et al., 2007).

In addition, there is value behind having an Indigenous professor educate on Indigenous knowledge because they will inherently respect traditional values and knowledge. However, this is often overlooked in universities where western knowledge and degrees, masters and PhD educations are given higher respect and value, regardless of how much Indigenous knowledge the prospective professor holds.

There also need to be more integration of Indigenous practices; smudging, the medicine wheel, and sacred circles are all integral practices in the Indigenous culture. Currently they are often lumped together, when the reality is that each comes from different territories in Canada. This must be explained to social workers so that they can conceptualize that each territory has its own traditions and entering the community with a sense of not knowing is important. The use of an Indigenous knowledge keeper who has specific knowledge of a certain territory could cement this. Each community will have their own traditions and the members will inform the social worker of them. The evolution from colonized western education to Indigenized education is happening, but some additional changes need to be made to how courses are taught and what knowledge is preferred.

## Conclusion

Thus far this paper has discussed the deep-seated distrust between Indigenous populations and social workers and why this distrust remains. The reality is that social workers were not only involved in the residential school system and sixties scoop, but that they perpetuated the tactics of colonization. This explains why historically there were insurmountable barriers between the two groups. These barriers remain in existence because of the systematic prioritization of western knowledge and the continued over-representation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system. Ultimately, the author recommended changes that should be made to the systems, including but not limited to: the encouragement of more Indigenous peoples to go into the social work profession, the evolution away from emphasizing western knowledge in universities, and more

explicit discussions surrounding the role of social workers in residential schools.

In conclusion, the author determined that this paper's analysis of this topic was very broad and that further in-depth research needs to be done on barriers between the social work profession and Indigenous communities, and the prioritization of western knowledge that continues today in Canadian universities. The continued research needs to focus on the future and how these two barriers should be addressed and concrete plans developed. It is important to acknowledge the roles that social workers have played within colonizing Indigenous peoples of Canada and, by so doing, allow empathy and understanding as to why some Indigenous have distrust for social workers to grow.



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# Crystalyn R. Lemieux

## Tlingit- Alaska

Crystalyn grew up in Haines, Alaska and moved to Anchorage, Alaska where she attended the University of Alaska Anchorage and received her Bachelors in Health Sciences with a minor in Psychology. During her undergrad she participated in the First Alaskans Institute summer internship program where she learned about Alaska native history and began to make efforts to reconnect to the native community and Tlingit culture. Crystalyn is currently working on a research project funded by a Fulbright research grant, to do a case study on implementing a cultural identity ePortfolio at Thompson Rivers University. Crystalyn's future goal is to find culturally appropriate ways to support students in reconnecting to their culture.

"The Indigenous Knowledge Makers workshop is an awesome opportunity that is not offered to most Indigenous students attending the university. It has changed my perception of research. I now see research as a tool I can use to support my community. Gunalcheesh-thank you."

## Finding Your Roots

### Reconnecting to Your Cultural Identity Through an ePortfolio

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#### Abstract

The Cultural Identity ePortfolio research draws on identity theory, learning theory, and the benefits of using an ePortfolio. This paper presents ways that ePortfolio assists in identity development. It further explains the value of "knowing thyself" and how that can foster learning, particularly among underserved populations, such as first-generation and Indigenous learners. However, this paper focuses on Indigenous identity, because it is complex. It may be difficult to discuss but is necessary for healthy identity development. Learning theories are included to justify the

importance of including identity in learning spaces. A short review of ePortfolio research explains how identity theory and learning theory applies in ePortfolio projects such as the Cultural Identity ePortfolio. The research project is underway, but the methods and methodologies are included in this paper. The research answers questions regarding students' levels of engagement with ePortfolio, students' knowledge of ePortfolio, motivation to use ePortfolio, the value of ePortfolio, and knowledge of identity development. Lastly, the conclusions made from the literature review are included.

## Introduction

The electronic portfolio (ePortfolio) in this project provides students a space to explore and reflect on their cultural identity. As diverse learners comprise a larger percentage of the learner population, it is imperative that we look to the ways that culture shapes learner identities, and the characteristics they bring to higher education. Many ePortfolio implementations overlook the significance of encouraging learners to consider the ways culture shapes learning identities. Similarly, this paper considers the unique learning opportunities and challenges that diverse learners face in developing their identities.



Identity theories provide the context to explain how complex and controversial Indigenous identity is today. The learning theories offer the logic behind ePortfolio use in courses for identity development. The following is information about the benefits of ePortfolio for learning and identity development. The research project is currently underway, so this paper only presents the methods and methodologies used. Lastly, the paper includes conclusions made from the literature review.

## Literature Review

### Identity theory

Identity development cannot occur until relationships define the individual as part of the group. This means that Indigenous identity was not created until settlers arrived (Weaver, 2001). Other ways peoples' identities are formed through shared characteristics, locality, and feelings of loyalty to a group of people. Identity involves how others view the person and how the person self-identifies. This can create some issues with Indigenous people who self-identify, but are rejected by their community for various reasons. On the other hand, there are some Indigenous people who are accepted and do not know the language or the culture. Some Indigenous peoples might not even care to learn anything about being Indigenous or care whether they are accepted or rejected. This could be due to internalized oppression, which occurs when a person believes and accepts false identities and stereotypes that are imposed upon them (Weaver, 2001). Other influences on identity are the various forms of oppression that occurred in the form of residential schools, polices, politics, and colonization.



Fanon (1967) popularized the colonial identity theory, which states that colonialism negatively effects identity formation and causes an individual to have a negative perception of self. The racism and colonialization directed towards an individual negatively affects the person by devaluing their identity, because it does not conform to dominant culture. The negative effects cannot be reversed until the individual is positively recognized or joins with others to transform the negative identity imposed upon them and develop a culture that works towards developing a collective identity of their own (Frideres, 2008). One way groups develop healthy identities is through sharing a cultural identity. A cultural identity encompasses a shared worldview, values, and beliefs. It can also include race, ethnicity, language, class, education, region, religion, and gender. However, Indigenous people tend to have various groups they identify with. Some Indigenous peoples can experience cultural identity through a sub-identity, such as a band affiliation or a regional identity (Weaver, 2001). It is clear that Aboriginal identity is complex and multilayered. Therefore, this paper does not serve to be a universal definition of Indigenous identity.

The examples shared show how complex Indigenous identity can be, but they do not encompass all the components that influence Indigenous identity. It would not be helpful to define Indigenous identity as it has many complex and historical layers. This paper only serves as a step towards building awareness of the complexities Indigenous learners may experience while exploring their identity. In regards to the current literature on Indigenous identity, it

is necessary to begin these conversations to support Indigenous students who are still developing their identity.

Indigenous students who are still developing their identity may move through Marcia's (1966, 1980), four stages of identity development: The identity achievement stage, which is when a person has done some work to develop their identity and is committed to their choice. The moratorium phase is when people are searching and are somewhat committed to the identity they have explored. The foreclosure stage is when a person is committed to the identity they developed and the person does not do any external work to come to that conclusion. The identity diffusion stage is when a person has not worked toward developing their identity at all. Tzeng and Chen (2012), found students who are creating their identities and working on committing to their choice of an identity are more likely to use ePortfolio to explore their identity development. Therefore, there is a chance to support Indigenous students who are navigating the education system and still working on developing a healthy identity with ePortfolio projects.

### **Learning theory**

Learning theory supports the logic behind using ePortfolio to support students in learning and exploring their identity. Nuygen (2013) positions her research on self-authorship theory; focusing on preparing students for success by encouraging them to create their own identity and to document their learning using ePortfolio. The ePortfolio in this context is about a student's way of knowing what they know. It is important for students to go through the ePortfolio project to develop their self-identity because

identity is developed when it is shared or expressed to others (Nugyen, 2013). A person's identity is flexible and networked and will continue to change because it is constructed from what they have learned, their choices, and whom the person has met (Nugyen, 2013). To give meaning to student's experiences and accomplishments that relate to learning in the classroom.

Graves and Epstein (2011) focused on using narrative theory and sense making theory. Using narrative theory means that, when a student shares their story in relation to the coursework, they are also creating their identity because the student is sharing their perspective (Rosenwald & Ocheberg, 1992). Sense making theory occurs when a student shares their interpretation of what they learned by sharing a life experience that relates to learning objectives. According to Batson (2011), ePortfolio also follows situated learning theory and allows us to measure learning that occurs outside of the classrooms and apart from the professors. Gadamer's theory (1988, 1975), the fusion of horizons, explains the connection with understanding the changes that occur when people experience the unknown through texts, conversations, or experiences. When the unknown is met with being exposed to knowledge, the horizons meet and the person's concept is changed in the process (Nugyen, 2013). The ePortfolio gives narrative to these events and experiences to generate learning opportunities by connecting students with the "unknown" (Nugyen, 2013). Using an ePortfolio is a holistic form of recording a student's education, because it allows the student to document their common intellectual experiences, and links students to learning communities (Penny Light, Chen, & Ittelson, 2012)

## **ePortfolio**

Research on ePortfolio in higher education suggests that ePortfolio provides learners with opportunities to document learning across contexts. Crucial to this is the ability of ePortfolio to enable learners to reflect on learning that happens in a variety of contexts, which can empower them to become active learners (Penny Light et al., 2016). In order to be empowered learners must have opportunities to develop their identity (Nguyen 2013; Barrett, 2004). ePortfolio prepares learners to develop their identity, by reflecting on the ways that their various learning experiences are connected. The central value of the portfolio for learning is that learners are able to develop their reflective abilities over their learning career. As such, ePortfolios are a living portal that allows learners to continuously revisit their thinking in light of new learning experiences (Nguyen, 2013).

While many ePortfolio implementations mindfully build in the time and space for reflection and carefully scaffold the development of folio thinking across courses and programs, they do not often encourage learners to consider the ways that their learning identities are also shaped by their culture. As Indigenous and minority students comprise a larger percentage of our learner population, it is imperative that we look to the ways that culture shapes learner identities, so that students can harness their backgrounds as a way of understanding who they are and the unique qualities and characteristics they bring to higher education. Just as folio thinking needs to be developed over time, so too do cultural identities. This is particularly true for learners who come

“I feel like I need to be responsible and take the knowledge from this circle back to social work.”

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Knowledge Makers

Day 2

from Indigenous or minority groups that have experienced disrupted relationships between their language, land, and culture due to various forms of oppression.

Snider and McCarthy (2013), find that most research is on professional identity and reflection, instead of on cultural differences. There are hardly any studies on how diverse students represent themselves with ePortfolio. Minority students have to constantly make the decision whether to conform to the dominant culture at the institution or continue to make the choice to follow their own culture. The importance of using an ePortfolio in a cultural context is that the project allows students to express more than one culture at a time (Snider & McCarthy, 2013). The ePortfolio can support students who want to include their culture in their learning and course work.

## Cultural Identity ePortfolio Research

The project seeks to develop and validate a platform for Indigenous university students who come from diverse backgrounds to develop their cultural identities and to practice including their Indigenous culture and values into their coursework at the university. Using ePortfolio, the project provides students with opportunities to develop their own intellectual and cultural identities as they document their learning across contexts to develop knowledge, reflection skills, and abilities that foster career success. Importantly, ePortfolio will help students be able to reflect on their learning and see the connections between their education and Indigenous identity. Freeman-Singe, Bastone, and Skrivanek (2014) believe that during an identity shift occurs during high impact activities (e.g. studying abroad, internships, externships, etc.), and that an ePortfolio project can have a similar effect on students. Drawing on identity theory, ePortfolio research, and learning theory, this paper presents ways ePortfolio can assist in identity development and the value that “knowing thyself” can have for fostering learning, particularly among underserved populations, such as Indigenous learners. This research project is focused on measuring a student’s knowledge of ePortfolio, motivation to use ePortfolio, the value of ePortfolio, and knowledge of identity development. This emerging research on the use of ePortfolio to develop cultural identity, builds on the work of Native Student Services at the University of Alaska, Anchorage.

## Conclusion & Future Study

The identity theories shared conclude that Indigenous identity is complex and can be a controversial topic, so there is no definition given in the paper. However, it is important to provide space for Indigenous students to develop and explore identity. The learning theories in this paper show that it is possible to include identity development in learning and in course work. The ePortfolio research in this paper shows that it is possible to tie the identity theories and learning theories together: to use ePortfolio as an approach for exploring Indigenous identity at the university. The Cultural Identity ePortfolio is a project currently being conducted at Thompson Rivers University; which is the product of the literature review and work previously done at Native Student Services at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

Despite the emerging research on the value of ePortfolio in higher education more work needs to be done to truly understand all the benefits of using a Cultural Identity ePortfolio. Even more research is needed to look at ways to foster student success among first-generation and Indigenous learners to mitigate high attrition rates. While many universities are working to address the challenges faced by Indigenous learners, few strategies have emerged that foster the development of intellectual and Indigenous identities so that they are able to successfully navigate their pathway through postsecondary education (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 2011). This research therefore, is both timely and needed.



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# Professor Airini Pakeha and Samoan

Airini researches equity in post-secondary education (policy, practices, teaching), especially how universities can support exceptional levels of Indigenous student success.

## Walking the Talk How to Indigenize Research

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When I was younger my aunty taught me that you can tell the truth of a person not just by how they talk, but by how they walk. In other words, integrity is made apparent by words and actions. In this paper I will explore aspects of the 'walk and talk' of research in universities in relation to Indigenizing knowledge making.

Research excellence housed within universities is a draw for the world's greatest minds, the training of future great minds, and a catalyst for societal transformation. Canadian universities have been called upon to be culturally inclusive (Assembly of First Nations, 2010; Association of Canadian Deans in Education, 2010; Association of Canadian Universities and Colleges, 2010; Battiste, Bell & Findlay, 2002; Paquette & Fallon, 2014; Universities of Canada, 2015). What then might be the next step in the evolution of research, which is located at the very heart of the purpose and future of universities? This paper responds to this question by describing 33 ways to indigenize research.

### **Indigenous Research**

We already know much about the characteristics of Indigenous research nationally and internationally. In Canada we often turn to the framework provided by Kirkness and Barnhardt for academic institutions wishing to develop Indigenised academic initiatives (1991). Four principles would underpin such work: respect (toward Indigenous peoples' cultures, communities), relevance (research that is meaningful to Indigenous peoples rather than the academic and researcher(s) and their own processes), reciprocity (a two-way process of learning and knowledge exchange. Both community and university benefit from the relationships), and responsibility (through ongoing reflection and consultation).

In this way 'Indigenous' in 'Indigenous research' is akin to an adjective or verb, rather than a noun. That is, in reflecting upon 'Indigenous researchers' we are describing characteristics about research rather than about the researcher. This means that Indigenous researchers and non-Indigenous researchers can do 'Indigenous research'. Of critical importance is that Indigenous-related research is in service to Indigenous advancement and encourages the growth of Indigenous researchers.

The definition of Indigenous research is both an established and dynamic field. This paper acknowledges the critical work of scholars who have led the important work to define 'Indigenous research'. For the purposes of this paper Indigenous research is understood to respectfully draw upon this scholarship. To understand 'Indigenous research' is to involve three key dimensions: Indigenous research methodologies and methods, Indigenous-centred subject matter, and impacts on Indigenous communities.

## **Walking the Talk: Actions to Indigenize Research**

Actions have been identified for researchers and universities in support to help Indigenize research.

### **I. Researcher actions:**

- › Indigenous research methodologies and methods
- › Indigenous-centred subject matter
- › Impact on Indigenous communities

### **II. University actions:**

- › Advancement of Indigenous research
- › Quality in Indigenous research

This is a beginning effort to describe actions universities might take to Indigenize research. It is anticipated that researchers, departments, faculties, and universities will devise unique combinations of the actions which will be relevant to the advancement of Indigenized research in distinct contexts. 'Researcher actions' are those practices on which a researcher might focus to improve quality in Indigenous knowledge

creation. 'University actions' are those suggested for application as organizations. Possibilities include restructuring research ethics approval processes, and revising academic standards criteria for promotion and tenure applications.

Further actions are likely to emerge in this dynamic space. One indication that the gathering of research actions has been in service to others will be the welcome creation of iterations towards Indigenizing research in ways that have integrity, and are meaningful and genuinely responsive.

## **I. Researcher Actions**

### **1. Indigenous methodologies and methods**

- › Draw on research methods that are specific to Indigenous cultures, languages, and communities.
- › Research in ways that are meaningful to various ways of grouping Indigenous peoples, for example: Indigenous, Aboriginal.
- › Use research methods and methodologies from studies that may be Indigenous related, Indigenous sensitive, or Indigenous inclusive.
- › Build the capacity and capability of Indigenous peoples in research, e.g. actively involving Indigenous peoples as researchers and research leaders.
- › Conduct research in accordance with disciplinary and ethical standards and the values and aspirations characteristic of the Indigenous region.

## 2. Indigenous-centred subject matter

- › Focus on Indigenous-centred subjects or content.
- › Respond to Indigenous experiences – past, present, and future.
- › Contribute to development in the Indigenous region and advancing global knowledge relevant to Indigenous and diasporic communities.

## 3. Impacts on Indigenous communities

- › Identify innovations and solutions that impact on Indigenous peoples and communities.
- › Aim to deliver benefits that improve the outcomes of Indigenous peoples and communities.
- › Use and devise research approaches that are responsive to Indigenous contexts.
- › Produce knowledge that has an impact on outcomes for Indigenous peoples and others.
- › Explore areas not traditionally considered Indigenous knowledge, yet are relevant to Indigenous development, such as environment, policy, and security.
- › Engage in research dissemination and/or publication broadly and inclusive of processes that give community and/or wider public access to Indigenous research.
- › Recognise that Indigenous research may be transformative, innovative, and adaptive. This includes research that is reflective of the changing realities and globalisation of Indigenous peoples, as well as research which examines the significance of local identities,

cultural ethos, and Indigenous knowledge systems and their roles in sustaining Indigenous communities.

- › Consider the diverse range of discourses, methods and methodologies used by Indigenous-related researchers in their respective research areas.

## II. University Actions

### 1. Advance Indigenous research

- › Welcome research written and presented in one or more Indigenous languages.
- › Grow and recruit Indigenous researchers.
- › Ensure Indigenous leadership at every level of organisational decision-making about research.
- › Establish a means to govern and assess Indigenous research ethics.
- › Encourage enquiry into Indigenous research methods and methodologies, e.g Indigenous research methods course(s), funding and awards for advancing the scholarship of Indigenous research.
- › Expect Indigenous research to provide evidence derived from methods that are robust and that lead to trustworthy (including valid and reliable) conclusions.
- › Affirm that multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary Indigenous research exists alongside single-discipline Indigenous research.
- › Acknowledge that outcomes of Indigenous research may enter the public domain through a wide range of contexts, for example: government policy development, culturally specific





Indigenous spaces and events, the World Wide Web, audio and visual recordings, and commercial design.

- › Plan strategically and operationally for the advancement of Indigenous research, including a focus on outcomes.
- › Promote collaboration within and across research units and universities/ research organisations, in support of Indigenous research.

## 2. Expand understandings of quality in research

- › Assess research quality from a strengths-based view of Indigenous research.
- › Highlight how Indigenous research builds systematically on previous research, is guided by theory, and contributes to knowledge and understanding relevant to Indigenous issues and concerns domestically and/or internationally.

- › Describe how Indigenous research advances modes of practice and contexts of dissemination, e.g. regular institutional reports on Indigenous research methods, initiatives, and outputs.
- › Encourage a broad range of research that reflects the breadth of Indigenous research, for example: presentations at Indigenous community gatherings; oral presentations including those in Indigenous languages and using Indigenous cultural protocols, performance; reports for external bodies, including submissions to government, global organisations such as the United Nations, or research for Indigenous community bodies and nations; new artefacts including material cultural creations, such as baskets, blankets, weaving; and other types of research output, for example, new sustainable fisheries management processes, energy systems, food production.
- › Recognise that Indigenous researchers are highly engaged in meeting community and government needs for oral research reports and presentations on Indigenous development. Repeated invited research presentations around an Indigenous development theme is evidence of meaningful engagement, potential cumulative impact, and regard for the relevance of the research to Indigenous communities.
- › Acknowledge that Indigenous research will include 'standard' quality assured (e.g. journal publications), and non-standard quality-assurance processes (e.g. in communities, culture-specific settings, organisations, and government agencies). A non-standard quality-assurance process in a government agency, for example,

might be that researchers who have relevant disciplinary expertise and relevant Indigenous research expertise independently review a commissioned Indigenous research output.

- › Recognise that research outputs that deal with Indigenous topics or themes of, primarily community-specific, regional or national focus or interest can be of world-class standard, and may rank with the best research of its discipline conducted anywhere in the world.

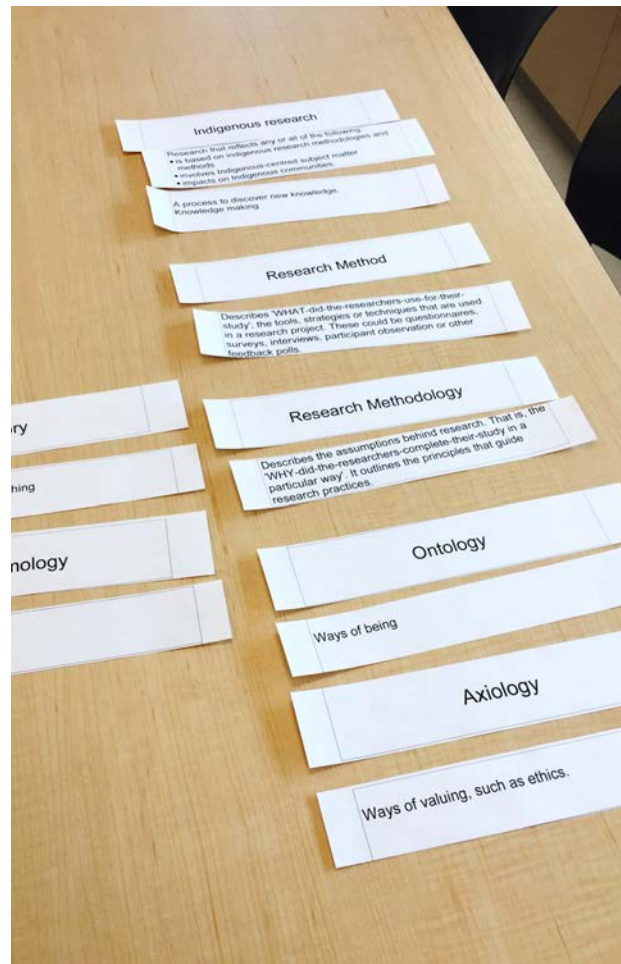
## Outcomes of Walking the Talk

Universities are working to facilitate more research with and for Indigenous peoples and communities. This is about a transformation away from research being done *on* Indigenous peoples, and *for* Aboriginal peoples (with unequal partnerships with researcher communities), to research being done *with* Indigenous peoples in meaningful ways, and to research being done *by* Indigenous peoples. Progress is being made. Indigenous advancement includes an outcomes focus. Key measures of expanded or increased levels of Indigenous university research are summarized in the following table as research outputs, contribution to the research environment, and sustainability indicators.

“I feel very touched that we have been able to gather and share voices in such a dignified way. We come from such different backgrounds and we have been able to reach out and do sharing.”

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Indicator	Outcome
Research Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of peer-reviewed publications, scholarly works, and exhibitions relevant to Indigenizing research, as a percentage of total research faculty.</li> <li>• Number of papers on Indigenizing research presented at regional, national, and international conferences by research faculty and students.</li> </ul>
Contribution to the Research Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and percentage of active research faculty holding external funding (contract and grant) relevant to Indigenous research.</li> <li>• Total dollar amount of Tri-Agency grants and external contracts in Indigenous research, including those supporting students in Indigenous research training.</li> <li>• Number of internal workshops, presentations, and dialogues designed to support the development of Indigenous research capacity annually.</li> <li>• Number of students involved in supervised Indigenous research projects and enrolled in research-based graduate programs.</li> <li>• Number of completed student undergraduate and graduate Indigenous research experience projects.</li> <li>• Number of Indigenous supervisors.</li> <li>• Number of awards for excellence in Indigenous research.</li> </ul>
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous faculty at every level of decision-making on university research.</li> <li>• Number of full professors who are engaged in Indigenous research.</li> <li>• Rank and tenure-status of Indigenous research faculty is at least on par with non-Indigenous research faculty.</li> </ul> <p>The development and implementation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous Research Guidelines.</li> <li>• Indigenous Research Priorities and Action Plan.</li> <li>• Regular review of research practices that work for Indigenous peoples .</li> <li>• Plan for Indigenous researcher development, recruitment, retention and advancement.</li> </ul>

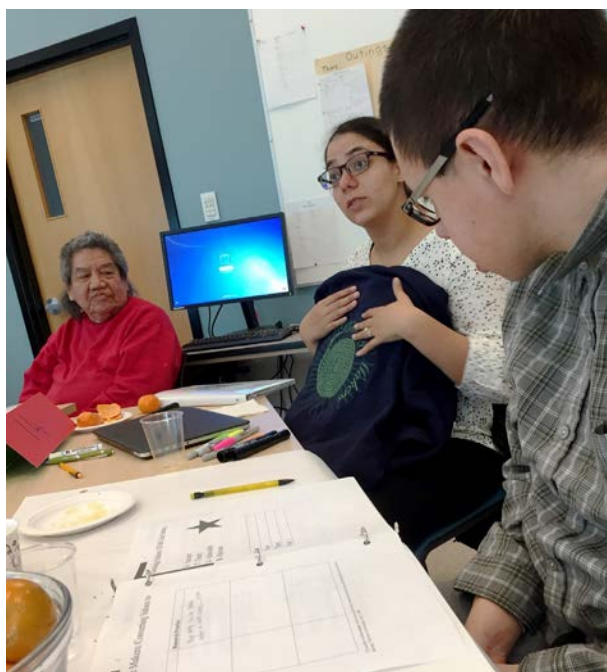
Table 1: Indicators of Indigenized research

## Conclusion

When I think of Indigenous research, I think of research that is principled and practical. I think of research as a form of service, and about integrity as a researcher and as an institution. My aunty would call this 'walking the talk.' This is about Indigenous research being in service to Indigenous development and advancement – economic, social, environmental, and cultural. Indigenous research in this sense is intentional, outcomes-focused, collaborative, value-based, and has a futures focus.

The walk and talk of Indigenous research itself is of critical importance. When research values the Indigenous methodologies and is founded on critical understandings of Indigenous inquiry, there is a break from research dominated by majority interests (Bishop, 2005). This makes possible something of the honest dialogue Paulo Freire called for, even where the voices "bear witness to negativity" (Apple et al., 2009, p. 5). This kind of critical Indigenous lens in research means seeing research as connected to the larger society. Research becomes an action that is about both societal and individual; a process of "repositioning" knowledge making (Apple et al., 2009, p. 3). Research in this sense is a form of service against any drift into collective indifference (Slee, 2011).

As we see more universities beginning to 'walk' with integrity in Indigenous research, the potential for universities to have meaningful impact grows. Community, regional, and national economic and social needs demand expanded understandings of knowledge making. Through Indigenizing research, universities have started creating new actions for scholarly endeavors, and for ways of being and belonging at our universities. Some would say this is long overdue. The university talks for Indigenizing research, yes, and must walk this talk. Yes.

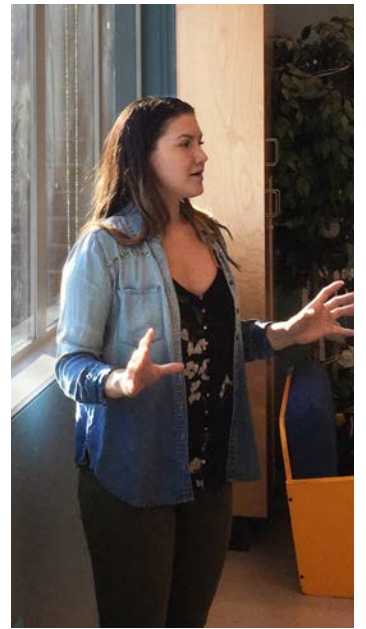


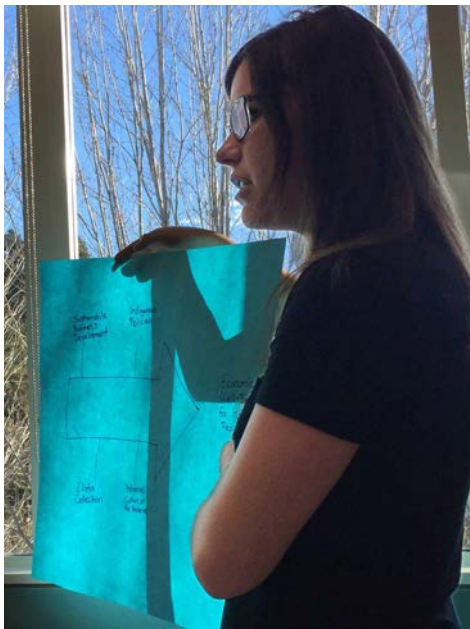
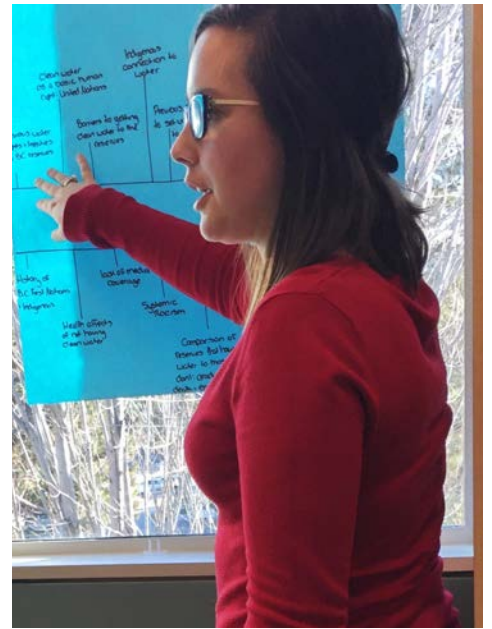
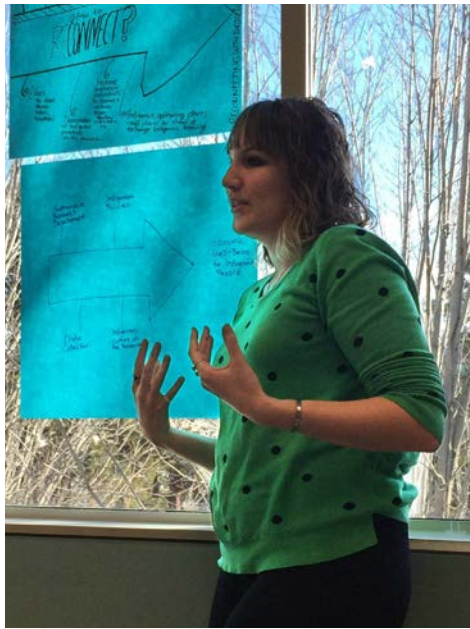
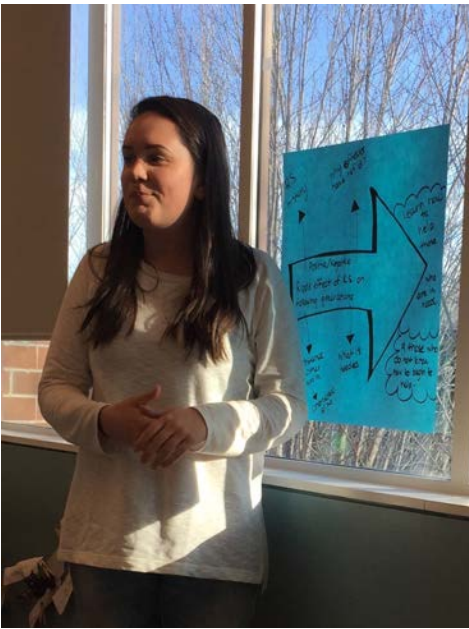
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The key source for this paper is Pacific Research section of the New Zealand Performance Based Research Fund Panel Specific Guidelines (<http://www.tec.govt.nz/assets/Forms-templates-and-guides/PBRF-Panel-Specific-Guidelines-2018-Quality-Evaluation.pdf>). As Chair of the Pacific Research Panel that wrote the Pacific Research Panel Specific Guidelines I give respectful thanks to Drs Yvonne Underhill- Sem, Melani Anae, Karlo Mila, James Prescott, Steven Ratuva, and Colin Tukuitonga.

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# Rhea Manuel

## Neskonlith Indian Band

Rhea is completing a Bachelor of Business, majoring in Accounting. Rhea plans to pursue a career in financial management and/or accounting while applying ethical behavior and respect.

“Indigenous research is a form of preserving our culture and values.”

## The Spirituality Bridge Leading Away from Substance Abuse

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When I was notified that I was accepted into the Knowledge Makers program, I knew exactly what I wanted to write about. Throughout the duration of the program my topic changed approximately three times but stayed in the same area of interest: the interrelationship between the residential school events, substance abuse, and spirituality. I, myself, am guilty of being close-minded towards substance abuse and, very often, turned a cold shoulder whenever I was exposed to people who struggle with these challenges; especially in those who are closest to me. I promised myself I would never become an alcoholic. If I could do it, so could everyone else right? No. I never liked this answer, especially when I reflected upon the previous question. I took the Knowledge Makers program as an opportunity to educate myself in the areas of addiction, why people struggle with addiction, how the residential schools have negative intergenerational effects, and how spirituality is a fundamental

factor of prevailing addiction. This is my personal stake through the Knowledge Makers program and, hopefully, I may be of assistance to someone who shared the same questions as me and my closed mindedness.

### **Residential School Impacts**

I remember in my early childhood participating in a film documenting what had occurred in the Kamloops residential schools, but not understanding what exactly I was doing. Through my research, I found that intergenerational domestic abuse, substance abuse (as coping mechanisms), loss of culture and language, lack of sense of belonging to society were all results of families whose parent(s) or grandparent(s) were exposed to residential schools.

From a biological perspective, research in the area of epigenetics has shed a light on potential mechanism of intergenerational transfer of parental experience on the health



and well-being of children (Hackett, Feeny, & Tompa, 2016). The effect of the experiences of a parent on a child or grandchild may be linked through epigenetic inheritance (Hackett et al., 2016). Epigenetic inheritance refers to experiences and environmental exposures that can change the way your DNA works (without changing the DNA itself) and this could be passed down to your offspring (Episona, n.d.). In other words, the trauma from residential schools that our grandparent(s) and/or parent(s) experienced could be handed down to subsequent generations through our DNA. This could affect how one lives an everyday life; from how he or she demonstrates love, to how he or she handles a stressful situation. For example, for someone who has a grandparent that was exposed to a residential school, they may exaggerate stressful events and not follow through on things such as work, in comparison to a person with a grandparent that was not exposed to a residential school. The disconnection of culture that was carried out by the government of Canada and various churches has resulted in coping mechanisms, such as alcohol abuse, to deal with stressors like powerlessness and hopelessness (McCormick, 2000).

A study by Bruce Alexander conducted in the 20th century, called the "rat park", involved two scenarios: The first scenario had a single rat being put in a cage with nothing but plain water and water that contained heroin; the second scenario involved multiple rats in one cage resulting in interaction and sex, tunnels to run through, balls to play with, plain water and heroin water. In the first situation, the rat consumed large amounts of the heroin water until it died, and in the second situation the rats barely consumed the

heroin water (Alexander, n.d.). Alexander interpreted the results of the study that those who become addicted to drugs feel caged and this is why they continue to misuse drugs. Another interpretation may be that it is the surroundings that make the difference when it comes to misusing drugs or not. It may be that when people who abuse substances are surrounded with people and things that make them happy, they feel less need to use drugs.

Another common physiological component of substance abuse for Aboriginals is the disconnectedness with their cultural values, which is supported by research and perceived to be an important link (McCormick, 2000). Many Aboriginal Elders and healers believe that reconnection to culture, community, and spirituality is healing for Aboriginal people (McCormick, 2000).

## **Spirituality and Healing**

It is thought that differences in value orientations between Aboriginal people and mainstream health service providers lead to different beliefs concerning the causes and solutions of mental health problems (Darou, 1987; McCormick, 1996; Trimble, 1981; Wohl, 1989 as cited in Hackett et al., 2016). For example, the mainstream health providers may not consider the exposure of the residential schools regarding the parent(s) and/or grandparent(s) of the substance abuser to be a contributing factor to their mental illness, or may not share the same level of importance. Another example would be the mainstream rehabilitation facilities versus the Aboriginal rehabilitation facilities. The treatment approaches within Aboriginal facilities would be similar but

more extensive to non-Aboriginal facilities. For instance, the Kackaamin facility in Port Alberni incorporates the historical perspectives, spiritual growth, culture, traditions, and ceremonies, such as sweats, smudging, and ceremonial burnings (Kackaamin FDC, 2017) as an additional layer of non-Aboriginal practices.

During the Knowledge Makers program, Elder Mike Arnouse kept reminding everyone that, whatever you do, you have to incorporate your mind, heart, and spirit to be successful. This implies that spirituality is an essential part of the healing process, and without spirituality the process would be incomplete. Others have referred to the spirituality dimension as the interconnectedness of all things and that the Aboriginal healing approaches involved encompass a wide set of activities, where the substance abusers can experience a healing power of the natural world (Chansonneuve, 2007).

## The Spiritual Bridge

When you visit a doctor for a problem he or she prescribes you medicine, and when you attend a rehabilitation facility they guide you through frameworks that have been studied extensively; these are solutions to problems. The spiritual aspect of healing, and spirituality as a solution to a problem, is often forgotten. However, when one's spirituality is explored in hopes of healing substance abuse and regaining self-identity, it can become a powerful tool that is very likely to be successful. During spiritual exploration you discover yourself, change, and accept a certain responsibility. It is an essential ingredient to the human



soul that creates a sense of belonging to something greater, shifting one's priorities and practices thus diminishing avoidance.

## Conclusion

It is believed that, in attempt to reverse the impacts of residential schools, Aboriginal approaches to prevention and recovery of substance abuse must be taken (Chansonneuve, 2007). Furthermore, to understand the origin of substance abuse in Aboriginal people it is important to consider the history that has had a profound intergenerational effect, the physiological aspects of being caged and disconnected, and, lastly, why spirituality is an essential component of the healing process. With the knowledge that I now have, my mind races back to many situations that I could have handled better when talking to someone who struggles with substance abuse. The beautiful promise of tomorrow assures us that we can change how we perceive and treat all things, people and, most importantly, ourselves.



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"It is exciting to look forward to the future and bringing this experience into my future endeavors."

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Knowledge Makers

Day 2

# Willa Julius

## Métis Nation – Cree, Métis, and Icelandic

Willa is in her third year of nursing school. Willa's areas of interest in nursing include Wound Care and Mental Health. Willa thoroughly enjoys interacting with her patients and loves learning about the rich cultures of wherever she is situated at the time.

"Research is a means of bringing evidence and providing guidance to the discrepancies of the world. We research to find the best solution to everyday issues."

## Communication

### A Reflective Piece

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I am not a nurse yet, but one day I will be. To prepare myself for that day, I would like to make it very clear that there is an aspect of nursing that I feel is still lacking: communication. Communication is such an important aspect of nursing practice, and a key part of a nursing toolkit. With relational practice there continues to be a large need for basic bedside manner and respect. In this reflective article, my aim is to make the reader understand the importance of communication as a cultural, emotional, and mental aspect of healing for the patient, nurse, and nursing student. There is a remedy for this, and that is in the form of the utilization of Indigenous communication frameworks. I would like to note that this reflection will not be using colonial terms such as "reserve" or making statements like "our people."

In Canada, there is a large Indigenous population. Within this population many people who are adult aged, as well as elders,

have suffered trauma from residential schools and colonization. Trauma has caused a multitude of problems. "Because the government's and the churches' intent was to eradicate all aspects of Aboriginal culture in these young people and interrupt its transmission from one generation to the next, the residential school system is commonly considered a form of cultural genocide" (Hanson, 2009, p. 1). Populations who have not experienced parental care eventually become parents themselves and therefore have more difficulties passing culture down to their children. Because of the trauma of residential schools, there is also an increased risk for addiction as a coping mechanism, as many Indigenous peoples have also experienced an increase in alcohol and drug use. It is a vicious cycle that effects children, adults, and elders; there is a large discrepancy in the emotional health of the Indigenous peoples in comparison to "White" people. The entirety of this history has caused something called historical trauma.

“Historical Trauma” (HT) is defined as cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations, including the lifespan, which emanates from massive group trauma (Brave Heart, 2003, 1998). How do nurses and nursing students address historical trauma in their practice? For nurses who don’t understand the history or culture of Indigenous people in Canada there is a significant discrepancy in patient centred care and understanding of Indigenous cultures. For example, many Canadian people still have not been taught about this darker part of Canada’s history. Peoples from other countries may also not know this history; therefore there is a definite need for education of all people and patients on this subject. Historical trauma exists, and because of this fact, there are adjustments I must make upon entering practice in hospitals, especially in Canada. What could a nurse do to understand the difficulties and resilience of the Indigenous peoples of Canada? One could research, but that only gives a broad picture and when you work with one person, there could be a difference in how they were affected. Trauma doesn’t affect everyone the same way. Some patients fail to cope properly, and almost all Indigenous people affected by the residential school system have varying degrees of emotional distress and mental health issues. I feel, as someone who will work with Indigenous patients one day, that the most important aspect of research is to merely ask the patient. Why not just take the time to converse? For this, I feel like there is a very discernable reason.

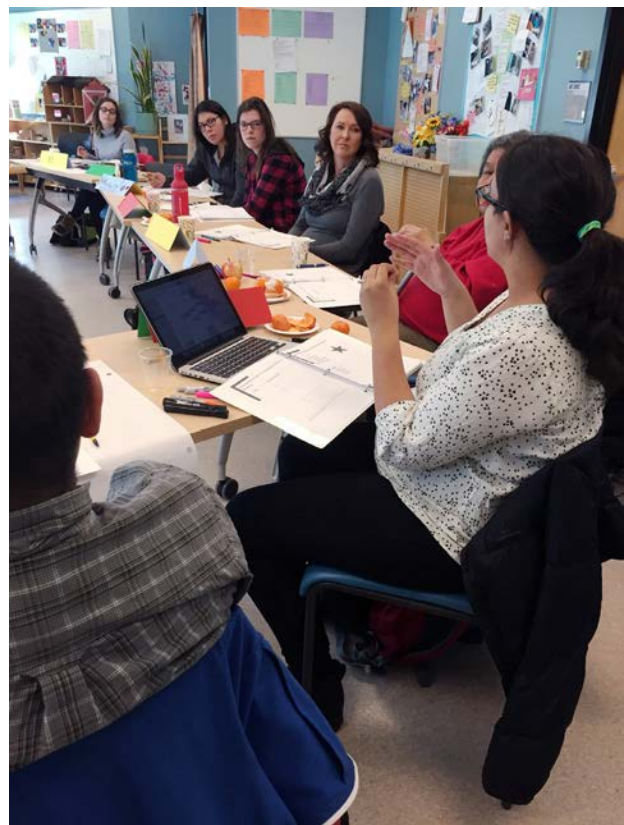
Nurses are already overworked; there is very little time for conversations during the administration of medications. There is complaint from patients about poor bedside manner, but in a ward with 10 patients to

yourself, where is that time we as nurses can spend? It can be difficult to address family of the patient during times of suffering. From my observation, as nurses continue to experience larger and larger workloads, it seems that nurses tire and become too burnt out to communicate effectively with their patients. Without listening to the patient or their family, there is an aspect of healing that I feel isn’t addressed. Like a conversation interrupted, a patient who hasn’t had their emotional needs met may leave without proper closure. A nurse once told me that we “treat the whole patient, and not just the hole in the patient.” To treat a patient is to consider all aspects of their care: family, friends, and the patient themselves. The biggest problem with this is not allowing for the care of the nurse. A burnt-out nurse can’t be an effective listener. Communication is key, but is impossible when you are unable to listen.

In Kelly’s article, “The Palliative care of First Nations People,” a large component that was discussed was communication (2009, p. 295). Common themes of this section of the article expressed that communication needs encouragement, as well as not introducing false hope when speaking to families experiencing the bereavement of a loved one (Kelly, 2009). Families must also be addressed when there is loss, as it is an emotionally charged time. Culture too plays a large role when a family is healing emotionally. To be a truly culturally safe nurse is to allow people to practice their respective cultures without the fear of discrimination or ridicule (Kelly, 2009). Allowing the family to be with the body of their deceased family member is also important. A death is a massive part of the nursing floor, so being a part of the grieving process is a part of the healing process in

this context as well (Kelly, 2009). For this brief time, you could be considered part of the deceased family, as you would have also been there for the death of this patient. How does one cope with such a responsibility?

I also feel that students such as myself aren't set up well for relational practice. Much of our curriculum puts emphasis on the importance of hands on skill. There isn't much of a way of appraising communication in classrooms, and there isn't an absolute way to communicate with a patient. In my studies, a concept arose that interested me. It talked about the concept of engaging the abyss, which to me provides some reasoning to why students and nurses may not communicate effectively. "The abyss is risking being present to the explicit-tacit truth of a situation" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 123). "The abyss" is a construct that nurses use to express some of the most difficult aspects of nursing care: communication with the patients following a loss or a life-changing diagnosis is a hard thing to be present for (Mitchell, 2003). As a student, the insecurities of talking to someone who is elder to you, or by being inexperienced in the field, can cause a rift in practice. The topic of death to many cultures is taboo, and experiencing the death of a patient is a large emotional toll I have felt during clinical practice. With my experience, I have fought with "the abyss," and it takes a toll on emotional well-being in a subtle way. To not step out of your comfort zone is to prevent unease, but there is a chance for regret. Nurses I have spoken with have often reflected on the "what could have been" of certain situations. To engage "the abyss" is to face what causes discomfort and this can have negative repercussions as well (Mitchell, 2003). The key to facing discomfort is having someone to debrief with. I would have never recovered from the traumatic



experience of the death of a patient without a debrief. Death is part of nursing, yes, but having the ability to talk following experiences is so important. Communication of the nurse to other nurses about how they are feeling is also a great necessity to the healing of the nurse and, via a trickle down, will affect the patients as well.

How do nurses, students, and patients all leave hospital at the end of the day feeling emotionally "lighter"? The answer isn't easy, but from my perspective, talking can solve all the emotional baggage felt in a hospital. Students debrief from experiences using reflections and post clinical conference, nurses speak with colleagues and managers about difficult events in their shifts, and patients speak with nurses about their worries and fears. Without these outlets, I have seen fellow coworkers and colleagues

suffer from emotional distress, and eventually disassociation and burnout. Without an outlet there is definitely health risks; I know because I have seen it occur and I have experienced it first hand with my patients, my friends, and myself. Patients give one word answers to questions, and speak restrictively. Other students show less enthusiasm to work and care less when writing papers and studying for tests. I have even seen preceptor nurses stare off into space because of overwork with no debrief; complaint of difficult patients is a common theme I have heard, but there seems to be no chance of debrief or respite.

To conclude my reflection, I want to identify that much of this article comes from personal experience. After speaking with patients, colleagues, and laymen about their hospital experiences, a common theme I have encountered was a lack of bedside manner and communication. In Indigenous communities, there is a lot of communication embedded within culture and there should be freedom to communicate what is required to heal. To be effective as a listener is to let the speaker speak. To be an effective speaker is to engage and communicate to the listener. Reader, even if you are not a nurse or a nursing student, please note that communication is not integral only to nursing; it is a requirement and an insight into the human species and how they function.



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“I see your light  
and our light  
coming together.”

–

Knowledge Makers

Day 2

# Melissa Aird - Knowledge Makers Alumni Saulteau First Nations

Melissa is currently in her last semester of the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies program and has also completed her Aboriginal Studies Certificate. Over the past few years at Thompson Rivers University Melissa has researched issues related to cultural restoration and empowerment based on traditional ideology, such as the intrinsic relationship with the land and how that promotes First Nations' strength and wellness. Looking to the future after graduation, Melissa has been accepted to the University of Victoria's Masters of Indigenous Governance program beginning September 2017. She looks forward to further diversifying her education so that she can obtain a career that allows her to positively impact the world, break colonial discourse, and change the way Indigenous peoples are viewed, respected, and understood.

## Knowledge Makers

### A Stepping Stone Toward Indigenous Student Success

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*"I am homesick for a place I am not sure even exists—One where my heart is full, my body loved, and my soul understood."*

– Anonymous

As an off-reserve Indigenous student I always felt disconnect from my community and traditional ways of being and knowing. This feeling of disconnect was accompanied by the continuity of pressure to dispose of my Indigenous epistemologies during my educational journey because they were not equally viewed by settler post-secondary academia as valid. The Knowledge Makers program forever changed these doubts I had about myself and our people's ways of knowing: we are valid, we are strong, and we are here to stay. The Knowledge Makers program not only celebrates Indigenous epistemologies, but it builds community and connections with other students going through similar situations

and struggles. Rather than feeling like the only Indigenous student in my classes, I now feel a sense of comfort and community on the Thompson Rivers University campus.

The most valuable thing that came from this program was a pride in my history and who I am. It is not often that students get the opportunity to honor their unique histories in their studies, and do it in a manner that is acknowledged as equal to colonial systems of knowing. This is an absolutely revolutionary program in the sense that it celebrates differences in students, and accepts every student's unique interests and academic disciplines from an Indigenous perspective.



“Through my educational journey I look to study, analyze, and provide options in the way First Nation’s people in Canada are viewed, understood, and respected. My research and studies are an act of resistance that challenges colonial discourse and can awaken strengths in First Nations communities. I look to examine normalcy of today and open gaps leading to ideas and new ways of being and knowing as valid and equal. I hope to contribute to First Nations rebuilding their social fabric leading to new levels of confidence and knowledge that will lead to a better tomorrow.”

Some may ask why this idea of Indigenous epistemologies being accepted in University research and academics is so important. It is important because it highlights Indigenous resilience and strength of culture and identity despite years of racist undermining discourse in academics, years of colonialism, and years of intentionally-inflicted intergenerational trauma. This calls attention to the thousands of voices that resonate with love for our Indigenous ways of being, and that honor the years of fighting our elders engaged in to keep tradition alive today. The significance of adopting new epistemologies leads to the expansion of the academy, expanding ways of knowing and generating knowledge, and expanding what it means to be Indigenous researchers working together. We know we are blessed with the opportunity to still be able to share what is left of our culture. I hear this resilience, this resistance, this strength and opportunity for change in Davis’ progressive ideologies, which look to a world that embraces dynamic cultures and is open to change.

“These voices matter because they can still be heard to remind us that there are indeed alternatives, other ways of orientating human beings in social, spiritual, and ecological space. This is not to suggest naively that we abandon everything and attempt to mimic the ways of non-industrial societies, or that any culture be asked to forfeit its right to benefit from the genius of technology. It is rather to draw inspiration and comfort from the fact that the path we have taken is not the only one available, our destiny therefore is not indelibly written in a set of choices that demonstrably and scientifically have proven not to be wise. But their very existence the diverse cultures of the world bear witness to the folly of those who say that we cannot change, as we all know we must, the fundamental manner in which we inhabit this planet.” (Davis, 2009, p. 218)

As the future generation of Indigenous professionals heading out to change the world we live in, it is so important that we have the ability, pride, and strength in ourselves to never lose our unique

Indigenous ties to the world, because if we lose them it is possible they may die forever. In being Indigenous our culture was shamed and degraded for years through colonialism. That time is over, and now is an exciting time for Indigenous students because we have to ability to share our knowledge and unique worldviews without fear of rejection or shame. We are proud and strong, which we have shown through our families' resilience through generations of hurt.

Programs like the Knowledge Makers at Thompson Rivers University give Indigenous students the ability to share their voice and be heard in a meaningful way. It allows for self-pride as well as the making of connections and a sense of safety and community on campus. The most important aspect of the Knowledge Makers program is that it allows Indigenous epistemologies to be accepted and understood in academics today. "Knowledge poses no threat to culture. What's more, these research methods only generate a certain type of knowledge, defined within a specific world view" (Davis, 2009, p. 16). In many senses this program is challenging the disciplinary insight of academics with an interdisciplinary aspect that welcomes a new way to see the world we live in. "All these peoples teach us that there are other options, other possibilities, other ways of thinking and interacting with the earth. This is an idea that can only fill us with hope" (Davis, 2009, p. 2). It's a celebration of the very poetics of human existence and diversity that is both so beautiful and thought invoking. "Both phenomenology and Indigenous scholarship argue that, within the Occidental constructions of the physical world, such analytic and classificatory thinking patterns result in an ontological fragmentation which tends to be minimize

the importance of lived experience" (Elsley, 2013, p. 4). Indigenous epistemologies enunciate the rare harmony between the human soul and the souls of everything that influences the beauty of our existence.

As Indigenous scholars look to their futures, they see a world where their influences and unique epistemologies can invoke change for the better and allow for new worldly perspectives on life and how we live it. "Aboriginal peoples in Canada, and elsewhere, are involved in a foot race: to preserve their cultural knowledge and local, geographic identity before time and assimilationist policies erase the historical threads to their immediate and practicing pasts" (Elsley, 2013, p. 13). In this foot race to preserve and save Indigenous ways of being, programs like the Knowledge Makers program help students to understand their own potential for greatness and change in our world. It gives access to the tools and people needed for success, while simultaneously authenticating Indigenous epistemologies. In celebrating, encouraging, and making resources available the Knowledge Makers



program gives Indigenous students a pride in themselves and their people. It ignites the fire in their souls needed to fight for their rights, their people, and for change towards a better future. It is not often enough that students feel their work and studies can change the world we live in for the better, giving students that realization is an invaluable tool to their success. The Knowledge Makers program opens doors for students that they didn't even know were available to them, and that is so important.

From a personal experience I do not think I would have found my true passions and I would not be heading off to graduate studies in the fall if it were not for the program. It forever changed my life, showing me that its ok to be who I am, and to embody my Indigenous epistemologies in my studies—for that is what makes me and my research different from others. The ability to give students self-revelation and allow them to engage with their passion leads to positive student success.

During programs like the Knowledge Makers, it is important to note that the cultural restoration students receive, allows for them to celebrate their unique Indigenous ties. From this Davis further argues toward society needing to embody a more dynamic perspective so that these unique cultures do not fade away. In allowing cultures to disintegrate and disappear, society is not only losing this culture, but a piece of themselves.

“To acknowledge the wonder of other cultures is not to denigrate our way of life but rather to recognize with some humility that other peoples, flawed as they may be, nevertheless contribute

to our collective heritage, the human repertoire of ideas, beliefs, and adaptations that have historically allowed us as a species to thrive. To appreciate this truth is to sense viscerally the tragedy inherent to the loss of a language or the assimilation of a people. To lose a culture is to lose something of ourselves”  
(Davis, 2009, p. 202)

Society today needs to accept and celebrate the multiplicity of cultures and ways of knowing so our future can break discourse and become a more welcoming and liberated place.

In society today there needs to be more programs like the Knowledge Makers, which invoke change in our world, challenge discourse, and dismantle colonialism in the education system. We live in a world with so many unique and diverse cultures and ways of being, Thompson Rivers University embodies this through programs like the Knowledge Makers by providing a safe place for Indigenous students to engage and embody their culture into academics. By building a more accepting world that is open to other ways of knowing and being, the opportunities and possibilities for growth are endless.



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# Noah Nochasak Inuit, from Nunatsiavut region

Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies. My future plans are to build sea kayak skill capacity on a traditional and business level back home or up north.

“Research is important because it allows finding and synthesizing knowledge to answer or at least make aware of current problems.”

## Conceiving Culture and Politics in Native Northern Communities

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*Then people were coming into town life and dog teams being shot by outsiders. Now we shoot our own dogs.*

What are possible configurations between northern politics and culture in our lifetime? To realize future configurations one ponders past ones. In the 1970s northern natives could get jobs as laborers but today are mayors and lawyers. The future decisions of northern politics and culture has the variables of new leaders, federal government, and their interaction within and to each other to consider. Overall, more native youth graduate than previous generations, yet this success is traded for other successes like time spent on the land. Culture faces a realm of uncertainty as people rooted in cultural experiences die, as social values gravitate towards money. What balance could be struck with authoritative leadership? I foresee three main possible future configurations and this article will outline them.

Political reformation since “coming off the ice” or “out of the bush” has seen Indian

Brotherhood of Northwest Territories, Inuit, Taparit Kanatami, and Pauktuutit proving that northern native organization is possible on all platforms. Colonialism, an initial cause for the move towards native organization, has passed but settler-colonialism has taken its place (Cooke, 2017).

The subtleties of settler-colonialism are easy to miss, because they are settled or sifted into normalised viewpoints that undermine authentic Aboriginal leadership. While those in leadership positions are now Aboriginal themselves, community concerns remain difficult to answer because the Aboriginal leaders enforce Canadian government rules.

There is genuine tension between community needs and rules, and Canadian government needs and rules. As a result Aboriginal community cases are challenged,

sometimes in a manner that evokes small aggression and disrespect. We see lines such as “aboriginal land claims, *if any*” (Kulchyski, 2005, p. 98) [emphasis added] woven into government documents.

Today, and for the foreseeable future, an entrenched, steeped way of native life is juxtaposed against a widespread and seemingly nonaggressive European Colonial power. A culture thousands of years old, that is located far from the dominating power, takes commands from this contemporary settler colonial power.

A lack of control of political placement and a clamp on culture has contributed to increased social problems. In northern communities mental disorders ricochet at close quarters; a reaction to historic evictions from their land. In-depth knowledge of land now includes abuse and hard drinking. The symptoms and impact of this social and spiritual division are far harder to ignore when living in a small northern community than in an urban context. As signalled by Kulchyski: “For aboriginal peoples, the State [Canada] has not been a benign liberal-democratic arena where the nature of their insertion into the body politic as a whole may be freely debated” (2005, p. 245). This is a multigenerational experience of a ‘clamp down’ upon Aboriginal peoples.

Three cultural and political configurations illustrate the critical impact of the insertion of settler colonial power into northern communities. Each configuration reflects practices of culture and politics. Through critical analysis we come closer to understanding how societal arrangements might best enable the potential of the northern peoples to be our own people culturally and politically; to determine our

own lifeways (Metge, 1990) and to exercise genuine Aboriginal governance in service to northern Aboriginal communities.

## **Three Configurations for Northern Politics and Culture**

*“When Nunavut was formed into an independent territory, White government officials felt they had the luxury of not learning the aboriginal language, Inuktitut.”*  
(Nunatsiaq News, 2016)

Past ways of northern Aboriginal living mixed incredible hardship and joy, but also true freedom. In our current ways, there is a sharp incline between tradition and contemporary. There is a cultural and political configuration that combines ancient history mixed into modernism (Kulchyski, 2005). Arguably no one is a complete cultural expert anymore. People are professional Inuktitut speakers, full time hunters, traditional tools makers, but it is difficult in a merged society to find a person that knows them all. Northern native values are a distant second, third, if at all a concern to Canadians.

The first and most ideal possible configuration of politics and culture would see northern natives harnessing their inherent strengths to create a politically complete, self-standing government; one that reflects and enacts the complete ways of knowing and being that are true to northern peoples. In this way, culture becomes a part of everyday lived life. There is no opportunity to exclude culture or language. In this configuration people build kayaks, survive blizzards, hunt caribou, control their education system, crime decreases but also make use of things like accounting. Ethics instead

of numbers would be used to evaluate northern communities. Languages, such as Inuktitut, are readily used in everyday life and culture is dynamic and adjusted. Culture is not excluded, nor wrapped in sorrow and regret. In contrast to the early White government officials we would speak our own words, in positions of authority, in a language such as Cree or Inuktitut.

*The logic of federal government rules, rule.*

The second possible configuration of northern culture and politics sees 'self-government' applied in name, but in practice is about the application of federal



government rules because they are 'logical'. Culture is displayed only from time to time. This is a likely possible configuration because people have been raised in white education and shown by non-Aboriginal workers that 'culture should be there... but not right now because we have more important things to do.' Culture is ridden out for special occasions. In this relationship between culture and politics, traditional culture has a foothold because it has steeped so long in powerful, generational reinforcement that it will never really disappear, but it does not take precedence.

In this case, Marx's modes of production highlights the political relationship. Created objects correspond to needs but organize a hierarchy (Jameson, 1994, p. 61). In this way, Canada keeps producing, and importance is shifted away from cultural values. One is reminded of the film Journals of Knud Rasmussen where the shaman Avva is forced to give up his way for food. Emberley, in her book The Cultural Politics of Fur (1997), highlights the hypocrisies of a structure that for centuries wanted natives to trade hides and then with great moral authority said trading hides is horrific to animal rights. Most likely this was going on while a new road was being built, destroying animal habitat. Perhaps many Canadians would wish to forget this time period, so often brushed over in history class but never drilled into. This one hundred eighty-degree take on fur abruptly removed an external dependency. For reasons like this there must be weariness in accepting what Canada feels like offering the north.

*The erosion of culture. Political leadership and culture transform to something unimaginable today.*

Federal control over Aboriginal culture has been an issue historically, currently, and likely will be in the future. In the third possible configuration between culture and politics, culture erodes and there is no political advancement. The federal government, expecting an adoption of imposed settler-colonial laws and in viewing Aboriginal peoples through Western lens, says northern natives do not know how to look after themselves and have limited economic value. In practice this means that even in communities with Aboriginal decision makers it is not uncommon for southern White workers to be flown for jobs that locals can do. Furthermore, Aboriginal cultures become commodities like every other aspect of social existence (Kulchyski, 2005).

In effect, in this configuration the federal government enacts a one-size-fits-all approach, and it gets to determine what the one size is. Aboriginal culture and politics are subsumed into what Giddens describes as a form of "totalitarianism [that] depends upon societies which the state can penetrate the day-to-day activities" (Giddens, 1987, p. 266).

## **Theorising a Way Forward**

*Positive stories need to become culture's first memory, and ricochet among ourselves.*

Theories are ideas that explain something. This then is my intention: to gather ideas - challenging ideas - that aim to transform how we think about, and enact culture and politics in native northern communities.

I propose an idea of northern culture and politics that is a combination of the

cultural and political configurations. This idea would see both the ideal possible configuration when northern natives harness their strengths to create a politically complete, self-standing government, with aspects of 'self-government' in which there is also the application of federal government rules. There is an awareness at the community level that what exists currently leans toward the latter approach while striving towards the former.

If northern natives were shoved off the land but quickly adapted their societal structure towards political independence, then there is solid evidence for a good future. There are many strongly motivated people who have a clear vision of controlling their own lives. The north has been referred as an economic wasteland, but the natural resources there support more than the population. The people are descendants from those who lived in so-called harsh places where the world didn't want to reside. Those with a strong history of alcoholism coincidentally have a strong history on the land, where they drink no alcohol. In the political leadership, help should go to those within the communities and not just those who fit the criteria boxes that please the state best.

A contributing factor to people coming into town life were dog teams being shot by outsiders. Now we shoot our own dogs. Perhaps most importantly in the road to self-government is that a superiority complex needs to be recognized and removed: if "the people need to be tutored and a political project of consciousness raising to be the achievement of Aboriginal Self-Government, then the battle is already lost" (Kulchyski, 2005, p. 239)

We know that our traditional philosophies and ideologies offer more meaningful approaches to life and community than those offered by outsiders and the Canadian government. In Marie Marule's Pathways to self-determination, she points out the dangers of "uncritically adopting European-Western institutional approaches because of our sense of inferiority (1984, p. 44). The people themselves know, but convincing the people of both the northern and white public to know it is the next step.

Our own people share some responsibility for governance arrangements that compromise northern cultures and politics. While resisting the federal government they have also become accustomed to it. Constitutional protection is essential for self-government to have genuine control. Otherwise it can be overruled by a paternalistic government at any time. Writing tradition and law will help protect our ways because it is the only form Canada takes seriously.

Marx's classifications of society is more established in small isolated communities where people walking are passed by motorized vehicles on the roads, leaving important direct relationships within a community level lost. A native who speaks their language demonstrates power, and with that power, choice.

Many times, one will hear about how culture is valued by northern residents and how it is contrasted by political demands. In the light of the three possible configurations of politics and culture examined in this essay, the Canadian Government should relinquish its tight grip and allow northern natives meaningful decision making in

their own lives. The idea of replacing a thing insinuates a better advancement. The idea of having northern communities control and lead themselves allows that now is the time to replace something created by settler colonialism with something culturally and politically better.

One considers an Ojibway saying: pimaatsiwin. This means living life to its fullest. This is a process that requires Aboriginal northern community leadership. It is only then that pimaatswin will be known and transformation is possible. In the full, complete, and ideal configuration of northern Aboriginal culture and politics we will see that "in being healed, he also becomes a healer."





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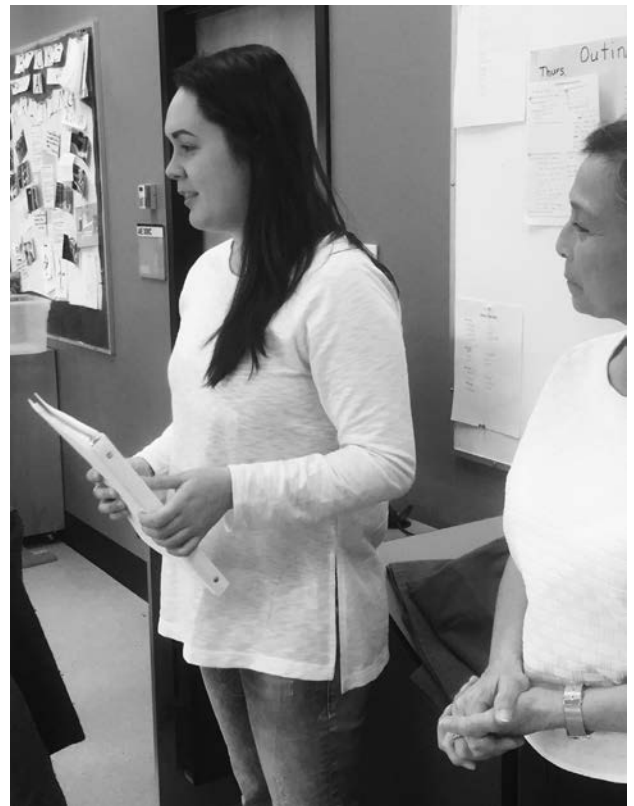
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“You know when you go home to your family and you feel relaxed. That is how [Knowledge Makers] feels – you can be yourself and you’re contributing to something bigger.”

-

Knowledge Makers

Day 2

# Hannah Fregin Haida Nation

Hannah is in her third year of the Bachelor of Tourism Management program and wants to bring more tourism to Haida Gwaii in a way that is respectful of culture and improves the economy of the island. Hannah's goal is to move back to Old Masset and build her own cultural resort, work with the community to improve tourism, and involve locals.

"The Knowledge Makers workshop was an incredible experience where I began to learn the processes of Aboriginal research. While I learned a great deal, I know that I have just skimmed the surface in understanding what it means to research and understand Aboriginal history, culture, and identity."

## Yahguudang - Respect

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My name is Stihl Il Jow, Hannah Fregin from the Tsilts G'itaneen clan in Old Masset. Old Masset Village is my home and where I grew up learning about my Haida culture. My family moved away from Haida Gwaii when I was ten years old. I am now attending university, where I am realizing how important it is to find out who I am, identify with being Aboriginal, and learning more about my Haida background. I am currently attending Thompson Rivers University, and in my third year of the Bachelor of Tourism Business Management program. Tourism has become a passion of mine and I have realized tourism is a tool that can be used to preserve our culture on Haida Gwaii.

### Introduction

This article explores what the people of Haida Gwaii value in their lives, and what cultural perspectives they want to

see within the local tourism economy. Research shows that tourism and hospitality are not new concepts to Indigenous peoples, but Indigenous ownership of these tourism businesses is a new concept (Bunten, 2010). Tourism fits into Aboriginal communities so well because it is not a new practice for them; tourism often thrives when incorporating the values of Aboriginal communities. Results have been found that tourists visiting a Mi'kmaw community are looking to for an authentic Aboriginal experience, to learn about the culture, and for their tourism experience to include Mi'kmaw owned and operated activities (Lynch, Duinker, Sheehan, & Chute, 2009). Another study focusing on tourism development in the Arctic found that personal encounters and learning about the Aboriginal people was extremely important to the tourists (Notzke, 1999). The expectations that came from tourists visiting the Arctic are similar to what the people of Haida Gwaii are looking to improve in their

own communities. Developing and teaching culture, having Haida owned businesses, and giving tourists the correct knowledge of Haida culture, are all elements that the people of Haida Gwaii are looking to improve. Some tourism businesses on Haida Gwaii are working towards being Haida owned or having a strong Haida voice when addressing the culture to tourists, but there are still businesses that are not Haida owned and do not give back to the community. A household survey was conducted in Tache, a Tl'azt'en Territory. The survey asked about ecotourism and most participants viewed it positively, as it involved wildlife and nature, respecting local culture and traditions, and creating job opportunities (Nepal, 2004). Haida Gwaii has a very low population and the majority of the land is untouched, which is one of the main draws for tourists. Having wildlife and nature, local culture and traditions, and creating job opportunities tied to ecotourism, as well as the fact that it is seen as a positive direction from an Aboriginal community suggests that ecotourism could be equally accepted by people of Haida Gwaii.

## Methods

I designed a short structured survey consisting of four questions:

- 1) What is Haida culture?
- 2) What do you think needs to happen in regards to preserving Haida culture?
- 3) How would you like on island businesses to operate in the community?
- 4) Is it important who owns a tourism business on Haida Gwaii?

These questions were open ended and I was looking to receive qualitative responses. The survey was distributed to individuals who are Haida and live on Haida Gwaii or lived there in the past. Participants were both male and female, and the age of the participants ranged from 17 to 52. The survey was distributed by email and by Facebook messenger; passing the questions along to other members of the community was encouraged. The questions focused on culture and business ownership, and I was hoping for participants to express their own values and values they see as important for businesses to incorporate. 67 surveys were distributed and 21 came back answered. In the results of the 16 that had been answered, yahguudang (respect) was a recurring value that came up in the majority of responses.

## Yahguudang – Respect

Growing up on Haida Gwaii I was taught at a young age that the elders get served first, and in a big family it is often the youngest that serves. Today I realize that this really taught me how to be respectful, which is a recurring value through all Aboriginal communities. Respect was mentioned a lot with the participants, the word yahguudang is the Haida word for respect. Survey-respondent Sam had an answer regarding local businesses and how she feels they should operate on island that further explained yahguudang:

“I would like on island businesses to keep in mind that they are on Haida land and they need to be respectful. Yahguudang is an import concept to the Haida people; it is the Haida word for respecting the land, sea, air and everything living. On

island businesses need to find a way to incorporate how they will benefit the community.”  
(Sam, 2017)

The importance of sustainability was also a concern to my survey participants, and the ownership of local businesses not acknowledging the land, sea, and air:

“Businesses need to respect the land, sea, air and people. It’s about respect. Businesses can be successful, but because the market is so small on island; you may need to attract off-island customers, etc. The businesses should strive for profitability with zero effect on the environment and the culture of Haida Gwaii.”  
(Cliff, 2017)

The development of ecotourism and getting businesses to be sustainable and respectful was expressed in the household survey done in Tache. 95% of respondents in this household survey indicated that ecotourism would be good for the community (Nepal, 2004). This result from the household survey fits in to Cliff’s comment; ecotourism is a business that does not leave a mark on the environment. Ecotourism plus sustaining the culture of Haida Gwaii is what the locals are really looking for.

## Youth and Education

The youth are the generation of the future, and it is important that they get the teachings and the knowledge of Haida culture. Many of the survey responses I received stressed rediscovery programs, language classes, and food-gathering



teachings as important to develop in the community. Many participants from the survey expressed that it was important that more classes be introduced to the community. Having a tourism product that requires cultural traditions and language will influence businesses to train locals in delivery of this product. In her survey response Skylar states:

“In regards to the preservation of our culture, I think that the key to keeping a strong culture lies in our youth, and the teachings they receive. Which is why I believe the rediscovery programs are amazing programs filled with opportunity, and a chance to identify with the Haida culture and what we have left of it today.”  
(Skylar, 2017)

Chloe expressed a similar opinion, touching more on what businesses can contribute to the community:

“I would love to see on island businesses be more active in the communities, like the bigger businesses anyways. Helping out the youth and groups that may be happening. Promoting and helping our culture in ways to help even donate their spaces if they can or whatever else they can do to support our programs on island, especially things involving the teachings and learning of our culture. Even for the sports teams on island because it’s important for kids to have those experiences.”  
(Chloe, 2017)

Many that participated in my survey highlighted the importance of creating more opportunities for the locals to learn the language and culture. Ks’aan made a comment that stressed the importance of keeping Haida language alive: “We need to revitalize our language and practice it as a Haida person. Our culture is oral, if the language dies. We die... The language and art is what needs to be kept alive and thriving” (Ks’aan, 2017). Developing Indigenous tourism has had a positive effect on both Alaska and Aotearoa New Zealand’s cultural education programs (Bunten, 2010). Existing knowledge from education programs has benefited the tourist system in these areas, but new knowledge generated in the workplace goes back to the programs.

## Connection to the Land and Sea

The first question asked in the survey—what is Haida culture—really expressed

how the people of Haida Gwaii respect the land and sea they come from. One definition was given simple and powerful, “Haida culture is the people; their creations, their thoughts, their motivations, and how [we] are connected to the land and sea that we live amongst. That is our culture” (Coleman, 2017). Haida culture is described as a lifestyle, full of traditions, art, song and dance, food gathering, the people, etc. Understanding that the Haida people have this connection from where they came, Josh commented on what needs to happen to preserve Haida culture: “Preserving Haida culture starts with preserving the surrounding lands and waters, to ensure the sustainability of the practices of hunting and gathering and how that affects future generations” (Josh, 2017).

Because there is such a strong connection between the people, land, sea, and air it only makes sense that to continue practicing Haida culture, the land, sea, air, and people need to be cared for. This understanding is what the people of Haida Gwaii want the local tourism businesses to acknowledge in the way they operate daily. Zachary expresses how he thinks tourism businesses should interact and contribute to the community:

“I believe any tourism business should be required to have so much of their profits be put back into the local communities to allow growth within those communities. I also think that there should be at minimum a Haida representative within each tourism business, that properly represents what the Haida people stand for and being able to speak up when they believe that what that business is doing is not honoring the Haida Land and culture.”  
(Zachary, 2017)

The “model culture” is a format that some Indigenous tourism businesses have adopted. A “model culture” is when the culture that is portrayed to the tourists in a way that eliminates the hardships of a culture’s past to not make the tourist uncomfortable (Bunten, 2010). I think this is what Zachary was concerned about: not wanting to leave out any information or attempt to only portray the attractive aspects of the culture in benefit of the tourists’ expectations.

## Conclusion

The people of Haida Gwaii feel strongly about their connection to the land, sea, and air, and because of this they are looking for businesses to be respectful of where they are and the culture that surrounds the island. There is a concern for businesses taking more from the land, sea, and air than they need; because of this concern many participants felt there was more need for Haida’s to be business owners. The participants also expressed

“Thank you for everyone being so open and kind, this is a great circle.”

—  
Knowledge Makers

Day 2

how important it is for the youth to have opportunities to learn the culture, so that they can carry on the traditions and values of Haida culture. The youth are the future and there is a lot of improvement needed in providing teachings that will teach the next generation and future generations respect, culture, and connection. As the tourism industry continues to grow, Haida Gwaii progresses forward to adapt to new circumstances. The people of Haida Gwaii maintain their obligation towards their land and culture by providing tourists with the right information to preserve their way of life. In conclusion, my goal is to apply my experience and knowledge in cultural tourism and to build better connections and socio-economic benefits for Haida Gwaii.



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# Sereana Naepi

## PhD Candidate, University of British Columbia, Nakida, Natasiri, and Palagi

Sereana conducts research in higher education looking at how all learners can be successful. She is currently working on how university structures support or hinder Indigenous women to support Indigenous community success.

## The Lessons We Carry with Us

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I have been privileged to be mentored in academia by strong Indigenous women—women who have shown fearlessness and dedication to our communities. Some of them I have known personally, and I have spent many hours laughing, moaning, and plotting with them. Others, I have never met in person but have devoured their words on paper, and put their wisdom on bright post-it notes above my desk – so that on those dark days when the academy seems to be overwhelming, their words remind me that it is possible to thrive in this place. For me, Indigenous research is about these relationships, and it is the knowledge that these women have passed on that enables me to continue on my journey. I want to share with you one of the lessons that these women have taught me over and over again.

During one of my recent PhD talanoa, one of these women told me that the work she does in the academy is grounded in a Samoan proverb “E tau i le alofa i le alofa” or “one reciprocates love with love.” This proverb speaks to how she believes you should be giving of your time and pay, both back and forward, by reciprocating and “serving with reverence to others and

your actions are with love.” This woman had articulated something that other Indigenous women had been showing me through their actions. When I reflect on the research and work that I have done with Indigenous women in the academy, the work has been driven by love for our communities and our desire to see our communities thrive. Our families and communities have shown us love, and one way of us repaying this love is to conduct research that serves them. Indigenous research methodologies enable us to do this. Indigenous research methodologies enable us to use the values that our families and communities have passed to us in service to our communities; they enable us to practice e tau i le alofa i le alofa.

E tau i le alofa i le alofa also ties in with other Indigenous women who have mentored me: those in my family. When I spoke to some of my aunts about what it means to be a Fijian woman they told me “nai tavi ni na marama ena matavuvale,” or that “the woman holds the family” (Naepi, 2016). This means understanding that my actions should be driven by a desire or need to hold the family, and all that this entails. It means that sometimes my research will be

driven by what the family needs, and that “it is the call from my community that must be answered” (Naepi, 2016, p. 12). The reason I say that these two teaching ties together is because we answer the call of our families and our communities because we love them and because of the love they have shown us.

Indigenous research gives us a way to practice both e tau i le alofa I le alofa and nai tavi na marama ena matavuvale within a space that does not always accept us. When I look at the coloured post-it notes that cover the space above my desk and I think about the time I have spent with Indigenous women, I know that it is possible to thrive in the academy as long as we remember those who got us here and the lessons they have taught us.



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“The conversations here have helped me a lot. I kind of knew I wanted to say things and you guys have helped me find words.”

—

Knowledge Makers  
Day 2





# Crystal Weninger Métis/Shuswap Nation

Crystal is currently finishing her undergraduate degree in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. She is also working on her Emergency Nursing specialty through BCIT. Crystal is dedicated to working in her community and making positive contributions to the health of its members.

“Research is our way of knowing; questioning what already exists and then applying that knowledge into our lives.”

## Improving Indigenous Health Outcomes Through a Cultural Safety Approach

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Health disparities and social inequities are visible in most Indigenous regions throughout Canada. Many Indigenous people are negatively affected by the social determinants of health, including, culture, social status, and health practices (Greenwood & Leeuw, 2012). Contemporary health issues continue to stem from historic traumatic events experienced by Indigenous people (McKillop, Sheridan, & Rowe, 2012). Nurses and other health care professionals often attribute these health issues to poor individual patient choices (Doutrich, Dekker, Spuk, & Hoeksel, 2014). These preconceived notions can create poor health outcomes for Indigenous people. To promote and provide safe patient and family centered care, nurses and care providers must overcome these biases (Hart & Mareno, 2013).

As a person of Métis heritage, I have been given the opportunity to reconnect with my own culture and, as I am also a nursing student, education and research has led me to understand the health inequities that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Taking this knowledge to heart, I have a special interest in learning how to improve the health outcomes of Indigenous people. It is my goal to get involved in the community and to make positive contributions to the health of its members. To enact change in the current health status of Indigenous people I believe it is important for nurses and other health care professionals to acknowledge and respect Indigenous culture, and transfer that knowledge towards building trusting relationships with their clients (Bourque Bearskin, 2011).

Cultural safety is recognized as a skill-based tool, used to understand culture, health, and health inequities. This paper reviews the cultural safety framework and its origin. It also discusses the implications for applying cultural safety in nursing practice, focusing on cultural education, and critical self-reflection. The main goal is to identify if the application of cultural safety in nursing practice can help reduce the health disparities experienced by Indigenous people.

## **Cultural Safety**

Cultural safety was developed by Irihapeti Ramesden the Aotearoa New Zealand Indigenous scholar, nurse, and educator. It was designed to address the way in which colonial processes and structures shape and negatively impact Indigenous cultures (Gerlach, 2012). In Canada, the legacy of residential schools has physically and mentally damaged generations of Indigenous people's health (Korpala & Wong, 2015). Indigenous children are born into colonial legacy, which can result in low socioeconomic status, high rates of substance abuse, and increased incidents with criminal justice (Greenwood & Leeuw, 2012). These are all linked to intergenerational trauma associated with residential schooling (Greenwood & Leeuw, 2012). This provokes a negative understanding of access to healthcare and relationships between Indigenous people and health care providers (Beavis et al., 2015).

Evidence shows that Indigenous people suffer from far more health issues compared to non-Indigenous people, resulting in higher rates of mortality and morbidity (Beavis et al., 2015).

First Nations Regional Health Survey found that 63% of Indigenous adults reported having at least one chronic health issue (as cited in Beavis et al., 2015, p. 2) with the most prevalent being hypertension, diabetes, arthritis, and allergies. Inuit people have the highest rate of lung cancer in the world and the rates are continuing to rise (First Nations Regional Health Survey as cited in Beavis et al., 2015, p. 2). Mental health issues are still highly prevalent and results from oppression and profound disruption of traditional lifestyles (First Nations Regional Health Survey as cited in Beavis et al., 2015, p. 2).

Cultural safety is related to critical theory; therefore, it explores power and privilege as a method of deconstructing institutionalised and professional power to learn how they shape the health outcomes of people using or accessing health care (Doutrich et al., 2014). The purpose of cultural safety is to improve the quality of health care and health outcomes by critically investigating colonialism and its effects on contemporary Indigenous health (Gerlach, 2012). It is an approach to cultural education that emphasizes the need of health professionals to be mindful of both the cultural differences that make each individual unique, as well as their own social attributes which may influence them and their practice (Kline, Godolphin, Chhina, & Towle, 2013).

## **Cultural Education**

Cultural safety places emphasis on the need to include cultural education into the nursing curriculum. Education surrounding assimilation policies, intergenerational trauma, Aboriginal title and treaty rights, and issues of self-governance is essential

in minimizing the impacts these themes may have on health outcomes (Mahara, Duncan, Whyte, & Brown, 2011). Through the development of competencies related to postcolonial understanding, faculty and students are given the opportunity to learn and understand the history of Canada and its Indigenous inhabitants (Mahara et al., 2011).

In Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' Calls to Action also supports the inclusion of Indigenous culture into nursing school curriculum:

24. We call upon medical and nursing schools in Canada to require all students to take a course dealing with Aboriginal health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, and Indigenous teachings and practices. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism. ("TRC", 2017, p.7)



Learning more about Indigenous culture and history will bring nurses closer to understanding what has led Indigenous people to their current state of health (McKillop et al., 2012). These efforts are essential in providing nurses with a solid, cultural foundation from which they can provide holistic health care services.

## Critical Self-reflection

Cultural safety prompts nurses to critically reflect on their own culture and beliefs. It inspires nurses to take the time to reflect on who they are and where they came from "Looking to our own broken treaties" (Doutrich et al., 2014, p. 19). Encouraging us to open our minds and our hearts to the overwhelming data that connects power, politics, economics, historical oppression, and health in a personal way (Doutrich et al., 2014). Cultural safety takes a profound exploration of power, and privilege examines how the social determinants of health impact the health outcomes of Indigenous people (Doutrich et al., 2014). Nurses can utilize critical self-reflection to eliminate the habit of making unconscious assumptions regarding "other" people (Gerlach, 2102).

Critical self-reflection is intended to guide nurses to establish, maintain, and sustain a trusting relationship in which the Indigenous client is more likely to have a safe care experience (Doutrich et al., 2014). Informed nurses will also be better able to work with their Indigenous clients toward better health practices in a respectful and non-judgmental manner (Bourque Bearskin, 2011). To be successful, nurses need to continually go through the process of reflection, and allow for a greater examination

of the existing power relationships in healthcare (Doutrich et al., 2014).

## Challenges

The literature identified some barriers to achieving cultural safety. Many nurses in today's healthcare environments are challenged to provide culturally sensitive care to diverse populations (Hart & Mareno, 2013). They may find it difficult to remember the cultural preferences and beliefs of different cultures (Hart & Mareno, 2013). There is also a notable lack of available resources and the lack of training available to learn how to provide culturally safe care (Hart & Mareno, 2013).

## Conclusion

Historical traumatic events and the social determinants of health continue to shape the health outcomes for Indigenous people. It is important as nurses to recognize and understand that these tragedies have had lasting and devastating effects on the emotional health and well-being of Indigenous people. Cultural safety is a skills-based method of understanding culture, health, and health inequities. It can be used in health care to investigate the stemming effects of colonization. Cultural safety encourages nurses and other health care professionals to internally reflect on their own histories and culture, and to acquire cultural education before engaging in relationships with Indigenous people. Acknowledging and respecting Indigenous culture will enable nurses and their clients to work together to build a healthy nation.

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# Rochelle E. D. DeLaRonde

## Tahltan Nation

Rochelle has recently started her fourth of study at Thompson Rivers University. Rochelle is working towards completing the Bachelors of Business Administration Program, with a major in Human Resource Management and a minor in Environmental Economics and Sustainable Development. She hopes to have a career that promotes equality and sustainability.

“I believe that through Indigenous research reconciliation can be achieved. To me it means forgiving the past to heal the future. Working towards building a trusting relationship where we all work together towards the goal of a more sustainable planet. I believe healing comes through education and knowing one’s values.”

## Hunting to Sustain, Not for Game

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### Introduction

Hunting is still an important way of life for a majority of British Columbia’s Northern Rural Indigenous communities. In this paper, the focus will be about why increased Indigenous involvement in hunting regulation is vital to the conservation of the biodiversity within Indigenous traditional territories (LeBlanc, McLaren, Pereira, & Atlookan, 2011). With moose being a signature source of food in many of the annual diets of First Nations families living in rural communities, conservation efforts need to be increased significantly. When taking life from the land, a hunter is meant to do it with the upmost respect for the land, taking only what one needs to sustain. (LeBlanc et al., 2011). In today’s society, hunting has evolved and has become so misconstrued, with many hunters only seeing the trophy or taking from the land in an unethical manner. A higher involvement with

Indigenous communities should be valued in the process of regulating hunting within Indigenous traditional territories (Jacqmain et al., 2012). Such valued involvement with Indigenous people would be:

- › Increasing restrictions to both community hunters and non-community hunters.
- › Allowing for more control in the methods of how moose are being sourced from the land.
- › Creating ways to bring awareness to the importance of hunting sustainably, in efforts to increase the conservation of moose populations.

Indigenous culture has been known to enrich conservation of biodiversity within First Nation territories (LeBlanc et al., 2011). To incorporate this into today’s

conservation efforts BC's conservation biologists need to better understand Indigenous values tied to particular land zones and, more so, Indigenous' territory's ancestral history (Jacqmain et al., 2012).

## Why This Matters

I am focusing on the Skeena region 6, BC and Peace region 7B, BC hunting zones for these are the territories my Ancestors sustained themselves on, and I have observed the struggles moose presently face in maintaining sustainable populations (Government of British Columbia, 2016). Indigenous communities have been dealing with increased efforts of economic development within traditional territories (LeBlanc et al., 2011). When massive economic developments occur it not only decreases moose habitat, but it also increases access for hunters to enter their habitat (Gorley, 2016). For example, logging in Cree land where roads are not monitored or restricted properly allows hunters to easily access moose habitat (Jacqmain et al., 2012). This makes it easier for hunters to have successful outcomes. This matters to me, as an Indigenous person, for I have witnessed firsthand unethical hunting practises, and the lack of respect for what a moose represents. Making me fearful that the values and relationship my Ancestors maintained with the land are not being recognized and utilized in the regulation of hunting. Both the Skeena and Peace hunting zones are extremely vast, making regulation more difficult.

## Personal Experience

In the summer of 2013, I worked for a natural resource extraction company based in the Peace, BC hunting zone. At the beginning of the hunting season I was shocked to see how many hunters had entered the area through the company's access roads. For weeks I saw hunters leave the area after having a successful hunt. It pained me to see how many moose were being taken in such a short period of time. Growing up, I was shown that hunting in my family's traditional hunting territories involved the use of horses to access the land. Now motorized vehicles are commonly used in hunting, creating an extremely unfair disadvantage for moose. One day I stopped to talk with a hunter who had a beautiful fat moose in the back of their vehicle. I asked the hunter where they were from and they replied with "the lower mainland." I then proceeded to ask if they enjoyed the taste of bum guts, moose ribs, or moose tongue. His reaction and response showed just how much of the moose would not be utilized. He had no idea that those parts of the moose are still valued by many First Nations people today. This hunter's lack of knowledge about just how much of the moose can be utilized for sustainability proved to me that there is a lack of respect in present hunters' practices.

## What We Can Do

To achieve optimal sustainability for moose populations, the Indigenous communities of the Skeena and Peace zones need to be involved extensively in data collection, and in the process of creating advanced conservation policies and programs (LeBlanc et al, 2011). There are Indigenous hunters who hunt without valuing the concept of hunting to sustain. For this reason, there needs to be a focus of resources to start programs that give incentives for community member hunters to participate and comply with policy goals (Jacqmain et al., 2012). These programs should work towards the best methods to sustaining the land, which will allow for our future generations to sustain themselves. For example, the Tahltan Central Government (TCG) has invested resources into hiring a Wildlife Guardian. The positions' responsibilities include community education, data collection, and communication of TCG's land use and conservation strategy initiatives (TCG, 2016). TCG also hosts annual wildlife symposiums to reach out to community members to participate in the development of better-monitored conservation regulations and policies (TCG, 2016). Guardian roles like this require government conservation officials and resident hunters to acknowledge and respect the decisions Indigenous communities make in land use conservation strategy efforts within their traditional territories (Jacqmain et al., 2012). Efforts like this are vital to ensure that the Indigenous future generations of the Skeena and Peace zones are able to maintain a respectable relationship their Ancestors before them had with the land and moose.

## International

As I have seen and heard of internationally, there are Indigenous cultures around the world that have lost the ability to sustain themselves through hunting on their traditional territories. Hunting to sustain was once commonly practised by Mayan Ancestors, but presently in Belize hunting is illegal. Leaving Indigenous people unable to practise their hunting traditions. While participating in a field study in Belize, I had the opportunity to gain knowledge about the country's conservation and deforestation issues that have affected the many Mayan tribes in detrimental ways. I was given the opportunity to listen to stories from a couple of local Indigenous people about the struggles faced in keeping Mayan tradition alive. I also heard stories about how their Ancestors' ways of hunting were lost due to loss of habitat and hunting within their territories. This ignited a question for me: how can Indigenous communities, within the Skeena and Peace zones, be leaders in monitoring and implementing hunting regulations to effectively achieve sustainable moose populations for the future generations of Indigenous hunters?



## Traditional Experience

The time I shot my first moose was a learning experience I will never forget. It was a group effort from both my parents and myself. The moose was harvested in the Peace zone. My father explained to me that, when lining up the shot, I needed to be sure to concentrate on breathing and to aim to hit behind the ear of the mighty moose. This lowers the possibility of just wounding the animal, and having to chase it to end the suffering. My mother explained the importance of what a moose represented growing up. My father demonstrated to me how to quietly walk through the forest and what signs to look for when looking for wildlife movement. Once the moose was in my sights I lined up the shot in my scope, I waited for the most opportune time and pulled the trigger. With just one bullet, it happened in an instant; my decision made the mighty moose fall in its tracks. With my father's guidance and teachings, I was able to successfully harvest with minimal suffering to the animal. It was a profound moment in my life, I felt blessed by the Creator to be given such a great gift. My mother taught me how to give blessings to the land for the gift given, and explained the importance of what the moose represented. It included cutting the still warm heart in half, hanging half in the trees for the birds, and the other half was for me to eat. My father taught me the most efficient way to skin and gut. He taught me how to skin without putting too many holes in the hide, and how to carefully guide the knife down the flesh so as to get as much meat as possible. Another teaching I was taught was that a hunter's first moose harvest is meant to be given away, to be shared amongst loved ones. I shared my moose with my family and friends. The first meals from the moose consisted of bum guts,

liver, kidneys, and back strap. Later, the moose's head was roasted over the fire during a family gathering to be shared. I spent hours on the moose, ensuring to work towards optimal utilization; I boiled the tongue for a meal, I made dry meat. I spent hours cutting the meat, and packaging it. All this ensured I brought respect to every moment spent with the moose.

These kinds of teachings are important for hunters to understand and implement when taking from the land. Indigenous communities should also implement these traditional teachings into programs that will educate the future generations of hunters. The lives sacrificed for sustainability must be respected and valued. People should work towards hunting to sustain not for game.



**“It is so refreshing to hear everyone having the values that are so much like mine. Thank you for the space to say what I want to do.”**

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Knowledge Makers

Day 2



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# Associate Professor Dr. Lisa Bourque Bearskin Beaver Lake Cree Nation

Lisa is a member of Beaver Lake Cree Nation, Associate Professor and researcher with the Thompson River University, School of Nursing. After 25 years as a Registered Nurse she began her teaching career working with Maskwacis Community College/Health Center in Alberta, Arctic Nursing program in Iqaluit Nunavut, and the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Alberta where she developed and delivered Indigenous-nursing initiatives. Lisa was awarded her PhD in Nursing in 2014.

## Knowledge Makers Creating Knowledge Sustaining Hope

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*"It begins with human curiosity and a desire to solve problems. It is at its core an activity of hope."*

*(Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, p. 203)*

To see this new program supporting students to use and build from within their own knowledge systems is the epitome of hope. As Tuhiwai Smith explains to be human is to think, to question, and to seek answers through ways of knowing and being in the world. Inherent to Indigenous ways of knowing is a highly practical and intellectual analysis of intertwining experiences that involves a "knowing-ness of the colonizer" (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, p. 8), a recovery of ourselves, an analysis of colonialism, and a struggle for self-determination. I see this Knowledge Makers program as a way to support new Indigenous thinkers and researchers to create their own roadmap to navigate through the personal and collective knowing of each participant. It reminds me of why using an Indigenous research methodology is important to

answering the questions that stem from who we are and where we are from. Witnessing students and faculty working together to honor Indigenous research work that is grounded in the context of self-understanding (Desjarlais, 2011; Hart, 2002; Kovach, 2006, 2009; Kurtz, 2011, 2013; Sinclair, 2013; Weber-Pillwax, 2003 & 2004; Wilson, 2008), is the essence of transformative education. Education and learning that counteracts experience of colonization of Indigenous knowledge systems which have taken on less significance than Eurocentric knowledge (Battiste, 2013; Dei, 1996; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012) is key to re-concili-ACTION. Similarly, Indigenous and non-Indigenous professors who speak of their own experience with regard to the denial of colonialism, and advocated for the contextualization of Indigenous

research by Indigenous researchers with Indigenous peoples will prevent further marginalization (Absolon, 2008; Battiste, 1998, 2013; Hart, 2009; Sockbeson, 2009).

To close, I want to thank the Knowledge Makers for their important inquiries and I hope that it stimulates them to wonder and think more deeply about Indigenous Research Methodologies and to fully embody this experience. As Dr. Weber Pillwax (2003) explained:

“Indigenous knowledge is in our being as lived. It is at the intersection of ontology and epistemology where we need to begin to explore deeply our thoughts, because it is here where the people hold the knowledge. To survive in an academic environment, we do not need to give up who we are to do research with our communities. It is a difficult place and space in which to be situated, but we must forge ahead with critically analyzing our own ways of being in relation to the world if we are to positively impact not only ourselves, but also our communities.”



“I just want to take this knowledge and use it in my future, as a teacher.”

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Knowledge Makers, Day 2

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# Sarah Melnyk

## Métis

Sarah Melnyk is a Métis woman whose ancestral roots stem from Winnipeg, Manitoba. However, she was born and raised, alongside two younger siblings, in a small town named Quesnel BC. She now has the pleasure of calling Kamloops her home and is working towards a Bachelor of Business Administration at Thompson Rivers University. One of her passions is to improve the opportunities for Indigenous people to attend university.

“We are living in an era where truth and reconciliation are finally being faced head on. Research is so important because it is a great way to expand and even develop new knowledge. With Indigenous research comes different world views which privilege holistic connections, reciprocity and spirituality.”

## The Growing Need for Indigenous People to Achieve Post-Secondary Education

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As an Indigenous person of Canada, I have noticed many things in the Canadian culture that could use some maintenance and innovation, especially in the Indigenous sector. I believe that Indigenous people have an abundance of skills and innovative ideas to offer, but are rarely supplied the support or fair chance they need to act upon these talents. In particular, there is one main cohort that I want to draw attention to, which are Indigenous post-secondary students. With help from municipalities and academic institutions, this group could ultimately close gaps that are still prevalent today, and be able to let their Indigenous roots shine throughout their educational life. There continues to be a

great need for universities to become places that meet educational demands while inclusively accepting cultural priorities and growing support for Indigenous people.

Extended research has shown that Indigenous people have rarely been given enough support to truly flourish in their many talents. One report from seven universities across Canada found out that only 68% of students had ever heard of any of the services or supports of any kind at their university (“Retention of Aboriginal Students”, 2007-2009). While that may not seem substantial, it means that 42% of an entire university are not made aware of supports offered; this is especially appalling because almost every single student

needs some kind of support or service in his or her university life ("Retention of Aboriginal Students", 2007-2009).

To make matters worse, many Indigenous students in this report noted racism as a primary hurdle to their success. At Thompson Rivers University, we have a gathering place where all Indigenous people can go to feel at home while doing their studies, but I feel as though many Indigenous people entering their first year of University are not made aware of all the support that the gathering place offers.

Mixing these findings from the universities' research project, I have come to the conclusion that there is more that can be done to aid the Indigenous people on their individual paths to success. A key aspect to fueling their success is making them feel confident enough to face the public, and the widely faced factor of racism creates a barrier for this breakthrough. In addition to feeding them confidence, for them to truly prosper, it is necessary to integrate them into the community and make them feel comfortable there.

The first group that must be supported and promoted are Indigenous youth who are aspiring to go to university and achieve a greater level of knowledge and, in the end, achieve a more influential and higher-paying job. This group of students really resonates with me, as I was the first in my family to attain a post-secondary education. It was a difficult hurdle that I had to overcome to attend a new university and ultimately leave home. My first year I struggled with many normal day-to-day things, I found that I was homesick and very alienated. My marks started to drop and my parents did not understand why as they had never



experienced a situation similar to what I was going through. They did not understand what it was like to be far from home and to have your cultural and socio-economic background separate you from the others attending university. Both my parents had barely passed high school and once finished, they acquired very typical normal jobs that only required grade 12 education and are still working in those jobs today. The fact that both my parents are still in the job as they were when they graduated is really what pushed me to get a post-secondary education. I wanted to be the first generation child to encourage my siblings and others to follow. I wanted to show them that university is not as intimidating

as it once was, and that there are further achievements and accomplishments to strive for. I wanted to set the example that there are people, elders, and academic advisors that will help us achieve our goals while keeping our culture intact.

The Universities Canada study showed that approximately 9.8 percent of Indigenous people between the ages of 25-64 have completed a University Degree, which is substantially less than non-Aboriginal students. Canada as a whole needs to continue to foster and promote opportunities for Indigenous people to be able to reach their full potential, while feeling a sense of belonging at their University. It is far too often that Indigenous students are a minority in a class, if not the only individual. This brings a sense of hindered knowledge and alienation from the rest of society, as it can be very difficult to express a different opinion while in a class where you are the only Indigenous person.

The Indigenous community houses so many brilliant minds with luminous ideas; the country as a whole needs to find ways to encourage this behavior and bring their ideas to fruition. If Indigenous people start interconnecting and forming relationships while in their first year of university or in Grade 12, it could play a vital role in developing a positive and welcoming experience to nurture growth and expansion of Indigenous people attending university.

The Indigenous community has formidable amounts of talent that are going unseen and trying to find ways to be able to provide platforms for all to succeed is what needs to be considered and expanded. Aspiring post-secondary students are the hidden gems of this country and they need more support and promotion in order to increase the growing development of Canada.



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**“It is inspiring to hold these kinds of gatherings together. This reminds me that I am not by myself.”**

–

**Knowledge Makers**

**Day 2**

# Marie Sandy Secwépemc - T'éxelc

Weytkp xwéxweytp, Marie Sandy re nskwékwest. Secwécwepemc-ken ri7. Te T'éxelc re st'7é7kwen, kém'ell ne Tk'emplúps re múmtwen.

Hello everyone, my name is Marie Sandy. I am Secwépemc. I am from Williams Lake Indian Band (T'éxelc), but I live here in Kamloops (Tk'emplúps). I am currently in the DSTC First Nations Language Teachers program, as well as the Bachelor of Education at Thompson Rivers University. I plan on teaching Secwépemctsin (the Secwépemc language) after I have completed my degree, and then tackle a Masters of Education in the near future.

"Research is important because it informs others on your interests and expertise. I love that everyone has their own area of research because I know that I cannot research everything!"

## Ck'úl'ten (The Way We Are)

### A Review of Secwépemc Epistemology

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Secwépemc epistemology has emerged within the academic world, and I have chosen to review a select few papers to highlight Secwépemc Ways of Knowing. As a pine needle basket is woven, beginning with one to three needles tied into a knot, with sequential needles slid into the work and sewn down to support the basket, establishing a common view of Secwépemc epistemology is needed to support me as an emerging Secwépemc researcher. As such, I have selected the writings of a few prominent Secwépemc scholars to ascertain Secwépemc Ways of Knowing. Future Secwépemc researchers will have a reference basis for their own research work. I have chosen three resources to review on the basis that each source comes from the Northern, Western, and Eastern

areas of Secwépemcúluw (land of the Secwépemc peoples). I chose to review from these three corners of Secwépemcúluw because our territory is naturally grouped within these dialectical areas.

I have included Georgina Martin's journal article as my Northern Secwépemc and off-reserve perspective because she was raised in the Northern area but has felt a dissonance, as I have, since she moved away from the community. My Western perspective is the PhD dissertation of well-respected Secwépemc leader, and fluent Secwépemctsin speaker, Ron Ignace. I have included Janice E. Billy's Masters thesis as my Eastern and educational, perspective, which joins well with my own prospective profession. These three viewpoints are the initial knot of my pine



needle basket; their Secwépemc Ways of Knowing are the beginning of my own epistemology and contribute towards a wider Indigenous research field.

Georgina Martin's "Drumming my way home: A Secwépemc perspective" evaluates "Indigenous knowledge systems and pedagogy" (2011, p. 108). Martin represents her own Secwépemc epistemology via her hand drum.

"The hand drum is connected to the land – the hide from the animal and the wood from the tree...The Secwépemc people acknowledge how the animals are sacrificed for the hide and they pay homage to the animal's spirit. The trees are nourishment and they are a representation of rootedness as the roots are held fast to the ground. The trees provide shelter, medicine and transportation. These are all important elements for survival and they are directly linked to Mother Earth... Ultimately, the sacredness of the hand drum commands honor and integrity." (Martin, 2011, p. 110)

Martin was given a hand drum, and realized the responsibility this gift bestowed upon her. She further realized the gift meant much more when she learned from her Cree/Anishnabe friend, "that we are medicine; the hand drum and songs help us extend that medicine to others" (Martin, 2011, p. 110). Martin's exploration of her epistemology did not stop at consulting her own Secwépemc heritage; instead she collaborated with others to inform her own Way of Knowing. Indeed, she recognized the influence of outside influences: "I learned another good way when I became involved in the First Nations



Longhouse Leadership program [which]... is based on the long house teachings for students, staff, faculty, friends, and visitors who are expected to behave responsibly and with propriety" (2011, p. 110).

Martin became fully aware of her own epistemology when reflecting on a keynote address by Linda Smith: "we must look inward to find the answers. This is the splendor of [Indigenous Knowledge] because there is no single directive on how to apply it, nor is there a standard definition describing it... It is important for people to think, feel and do based on their moral ethic and cultural teachings" (as cited by Martin, 2011, p. 111). Martin deduced that her own epistemology was based upon her grandfather's teachings to "never forget where I come from," as well as the Secwépemc hand drum for her spiritual guidance (p. 111).

Ronald Ignace's *Our Oral Histories are our Iron Posts: Secwépemc Stories and Historical Consciousness* fully asserts his Secwépemc identity. Dedicating his dissertation to his great grandparents, the elders who he worked with, as well as his family is not only a tradition of PhD dissertations, but of Secwépemc heritage. We as Secwépemc always gift our first of anything (i.e., first fish, first picked berries, first made drum) to those who have our respect. Ignace recognized his Secwépemc heritage in gifting his first PhD dissertation to those whom he most respected (2008, p. v).

Ron's epistemology emanates through his regular usage of Secwépemctsin, and recognition that he is one of few remaining speakers fluent in the language.

"In my community, I am one of fewer than ten fluent speakers of our language, Secwépemctsin, and one of only half a dozen who WILL speak it....As I am fast becoming an elder myself, I am aware of my responsibility to pass on the stories and history of the past, so that we can better understand the present, and to give us guidance for who we as Secwépemc want to be in the future." (Ignace, 2008, p.14)

Although Ignace has acknowledged himself as becoming an elder, a Secwépemc Knowledge Keeper, he further authorizes his Secwépemc epistemology with support from other fields, "...I will utilize this approach by drawing on different data, including those from the fields of archaeology, linguistics, paleo-ecology, to cross-check and triangulate evidence that derives from oral history sources" (p. 31). Ignace asserts that our elders also knew that Secwépemc knowledge had

to be vetted, though they did so through repeated sharing. Ignace quoted Nellie Taylor as saying "...It was also important for the elders to share each others' knowledge. That was how they learned and built up their understanding. What knowledge they shared had to be exact" (p. 29).

When asking for advice, or in Ignace's case, asking for background knowledge, Secwépemc people always approach interviews first as a chance to visit, and second as a chance to share knowledge. Ignace outlined the interview portion of his research methodology as:

"...very loosely structured, open-ended interviews. They entailed lengthy conversations with individual elders, or in two of the cases, groups of two to three elders, where I asked questions about the life-style and remembrances of subsistence pursuits and community life. By and large I let the elders steer the course of the discussion, indeed I look at my research methodology for the most part entailing the elders telling their stories, carried out in Secwépemctsin. We conducted these in our own language." (2008, p. 42)

In other words, the elders, or Knowledge Keepers, ultimately are the ones who best know how to share the information you are seeking.

"...[I]n the spirit of Secwépemc protocol, it is my intention to do honour to the elders who shared their stories, by recognizing them and acknowledging their contributions. In our Secwépemc ways, we honour (xyemstém) and recognize (sucwentwécwmentem) one another as we share information." (2008, p. 45)

Ignace also states that Secwépemc always acknowledge the identity of the person who shared their knowledge, "...in the spirit of "oral footnoting," to show the sources, and thus the authority, of information that is provided to an audience" (p. 44-45).

His dissertation focuses on Secwépemc stories and the history, laws, and traditions that are embedded within them. His epistemology reflects these stories and his writing reads as though you are sitting down in conversation with him. He says, "I think I have met that litmus test" about Smith's quote of, "intrinsic in story telling is a focus on dialogue and conversations amongst ourselves as indigenous peoples, to ourselves and for ourselves" (as quoted in Ignace, 2008, p. 42). In other words, intrinsic to Secwépemc epistemology is our story telling.

Exploring the use of traditional Secwépemc stories to teach language, Billy's 2015 Masters thesis, examines Secwépemc stories in detail:

"Grounding myself in the ways of stsptekwle [stories] was where I needed to take this journey, so I drew upon my experience of using these stories in an immersion setting to analyze the common features of stsptekwle. Along with my own knowledge of stsptekwle, I also utilized scholarly research on Salishan storytelling to gain a fuller picture of this oral tradition."  
(Billy, 2015, 23)

Billy clearly articulates her Secwépemc epistemology in her findings by passing on Secwépemc history, cultural teachings, and beliefs. She also conveys some important

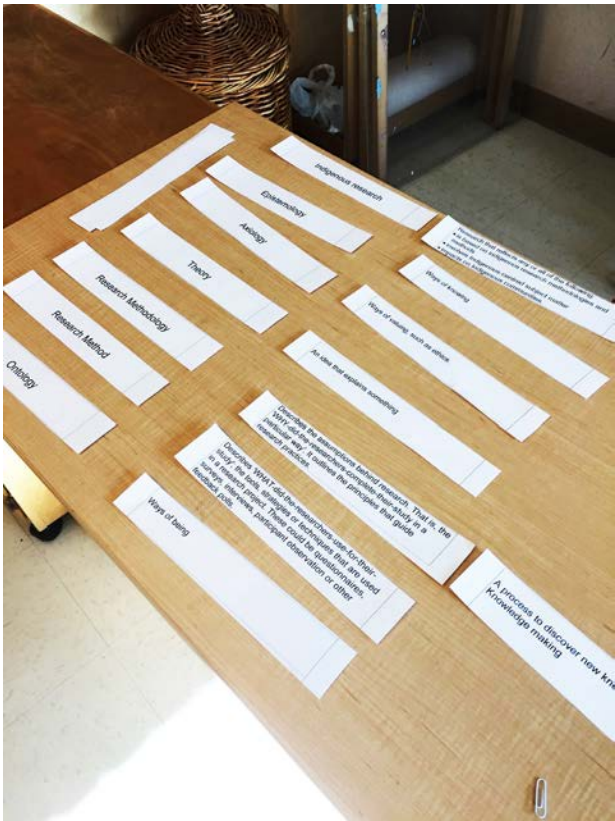
themes in traditional Secwépemc stories and the value of sharing. I mention her final discoveries as her epistemology because she has carried out a common Secwépemc practice—ensuring that knowledge is passed onto present and future generations, and gifting her knowledge to all teachers. "It is important that stsptekwle be treated as more than a mere story being told to the children, but rather, as a vehicle for our collective wisdom to live on from one generation to the next" (Billy, 2015, p. 28).

Billy, as a Secwépemc immersion teacher for Chief Atahm School, honoured her school's core principles of k'welselktnews, knucwetsut.s, mellelc, slexlexs, and qweqwetsin. In this way she also incorporated a wider Secwépemc epistemology. The Secwépemc ideas of "k'welselktnews (all beings are related), ...knucwetsut.s (take care of yourself), ... mellelc (take time to relax; regenerate and enjoy), ...slexlexs (develop wisdom), ... qweqwetsin (humble yourself to all creation; give thanks and gratitude for life)" (p. 32-34) can be interpreted as the epistemology of Chief Atahm School, as well as Billy herself.

Joanne Archibald (as cited in Billy, 2015) says "...[W]ays of acquiring knowledge and codes of behavior are essential and are embedded in cultural practices; one practice that plays a key role in the oral tradition is storytelling" (p. 30). She then goes on to explain that, "Stsptekwle embodies the culture, history, and values of the Secwépemc and therefore is a perfect vehicle for teaching children in a holistic way... Stories reinforce Secwépemc values" (p. 31). As a Secwépemc woman, and immersion teacher, Billy framed Secwépemc epistemology through stsptekwle.

It important to acknowledge that reviewing three Secwépemc scholars does not encompass the entire Nations' epistemology, but it does collate some core Secwépemc values that thread through each scholars' work. To create a stronger review of Secwépemc epistemology, ideally, I would have to analyze a larger number Secwépemc research papers to develop a more comprehensive vision of Secwépemc epistemology.

However, some common themes found within these three Secwépemc scholars' works are the ideas of remembering, gifting, collaborating, reliability, relationships, respect, future-relevance, learning, and gratitude. These are the common Secwépemc ways of knowing that embody Secwépemc epistemology. As I reflect upon the epistemologies of my úq'wi ell smé7stem (sisters and brothers), I realize that I view the academic world through a weaving lens. We all connect, get tangled, break apart, come together, and are all interwoven to create a greater range of knowledge. As Martin explained her epistemology through metaphor, so too will I: "connections interwoven" will be my epistemology as a Secwépemc Indigenous scholar.

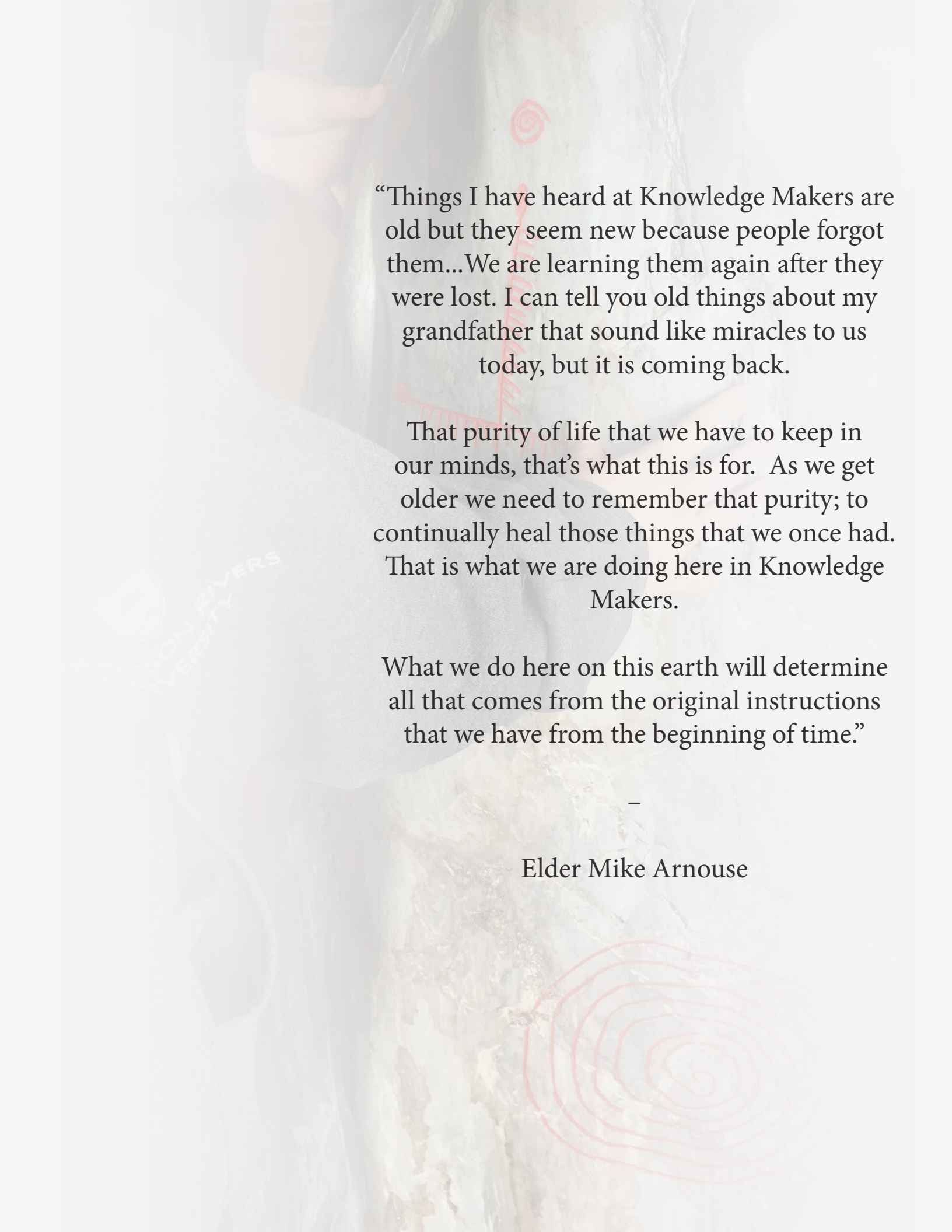


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“Things I have heard at Knowledge Makers are old but they seem new because people forgot them...We are learning them again after they were lost. I can tell you old things about my grandfather that sound like miracles to us today, but it is coming back.

That purity of life that we have to keep in our minds, that's what this is for. As we get older we need to remember that purity; to continually heal those things that we once had. That is what we are doing here in Knowledge Makers.

What we do here on this earth will determine all that comes from the original instructions that we have from the beginning of time.”

—  
Elder Mike Arnouse



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