

# INDIGENOUS PRESENCE



Experiencing and Envisioning Indigenous Knowledges within  
Selected Post-Secondary Sites of Education and Social Work

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## Artist Statement and Biography



Title: Winter Sweat #1, 2013  
Artist: Leah Marie Dorion  
Medium: Acrylic, pumice, on canvas

This visual art representation of the sweat lodge ceremony in the winter demonstrates the beautiful link between this ceremony and the expression of our Aboriginal worldview, whereby we use ancestral cultural practices to understand and connect to creator and all of creation. This ancient ceremony fully involves making mental, emotional, physical and spiritual connection with the four elements of life: earth, air, fire, and water.

The pathway to the lodge is cleared of snow symbolizing the sacrifice and journey many people undertake to attend the sacred sweat lodge in order to seek guidance, spirituality, and clarity.

The lodge is covered in the granny quilts to acknowledge the role of the grandmothers and life givers who originally gave the first teachings to humanity. The frame of the sweat lodge structure itself is a representation of the womb of mother earth upon which we enter for healing and renewal.

The sacred fire, rocks, and wind carry the smoke from the ceremonial fire into the spiritual realm. The bird, bear, deer, and horse tracks honour our clan system. In this artistic interpretation, the three thunderbirds spirits carry the prayers from the sweat lodge further upward to creation. Wind currents are incorporated into this art work to signify how nature can help knowledge seekers achieve balance and clarity regarding decision making.

The sash symbolism (in the wind jet stream) emphasizes that much of Metis worldview contains philosophy and beliefs learned from their First Nations relations. The arrows symbolism features the directional arrow style which is a symbol of seeking higher truth by remaining on the enlightened path through the journey of physical life.

Leah Marie Dorion, Artist  
North Saskatchewan River  
(Prince Albert).

## About the Artist

**Leah Marie Dorion** is a Metis person with cultural roots to the historic Metis community of Cumberland House, Saskatchewan. Born in Nipawin, Saskatchewan she is a passionate interdisciplinary artist and educator. A significant goal in her life is to transfer Elders teachings and traditional knowledge through the generations. She continues to develop and expand her practice as an artist, writer, consultant, and university instructor with the Saskatchewan Urban Native Education Program (SUNTEP). Leah is presently raising her son, tanning hides, taking care of the family pets, growing organic food, and living near Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. For more information about her artist practice visit [www.leahdorion.ca](http://www.leahdorion.ca)



This report is founded upon a belief that Education and Social Work share commonalities in serving Indigenous peoples. Both Social Work and Education share the experience of serving Indigenous children, youth, and families. Both are seeking ways to better respond to the Indigenous community. It is our belief that to better serve Indigenous peoples, both disciplines of Education and Social Work require practitioners who possess a philosophical orientation and practice capacity that respects and actively integrates Indigenous points of view.

Embracing these ontologic understandings, the researchers who completed this report acted upon our shared interest as to how well the professional education of Teachers and Social Workers was preparing prospective Teachers and Social Workers to consider Indigenous knowledge systems in their practice. We questioned what the educators of future Teachers and Social Workers knew about pedagogical inclusion of Indigenous Knowledges. Further, how might their understandings of Indigenous Knowledges translate into their teaching practices? These questions became the focal point of our research project. Our study is an inquiry into how teaching faculty in Education and Social Work programs in select sites in Western Canada view their relationship with Indigenous knowledge systems and the ways in which they are incorporating these understandings into their pedagogical approach as educators.

This overarching curiosity prompted our multidisciplinary and culturally diverse team of researchers to pursue funding from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada to undertake the collaborative research. The research drew upon Indigenist theoretical principles and qualitative research methods to explore the personal, systemic, professional and institutional factors that influence the integration of Indigenous Knowledges into scholarly activities (i.e., research, teaching and service) undertaken by Indigenous and non-Indigenous professorial colleagues in Education and Social Work. Emerging from the 2011-2013 data collection, analysis, and synthesis, this report offers a particular perspective on Indigenous Knowledges and Indigenous Presence in post-secondary sites – it is an accounting of what has been accomplished, a synopsis of the current situation, and suggestions for ways forward.

This cross-disciplinary report gives voice to the 16 tenured faculty members who voluntarily participated in this research project. They reflected upon the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledges in their teaching and academic lives. Their insights are informed by lived experiences derived from academic employment at one of four pre-selected University sites in Western Canada. Whether hailing from Education at the University of Saskatchewan or the University of British Columbia, or Social Work at the University of Regina or the University of Victoria, each member of the culturally diverse participant group had held a continuing appointment at a post-secondary institution with an established history (i.e., >25 years) of offering formal academic initiatives to Indigenous peoples and communities.

### **Method of Meaning-Making**

In this research, the participants' stories are the teachers. To fully animate the relating of these stories in a manner consistent with an Indigenous relational tradition, a conversational approach was used as a dialogic approach to gathering knowledge with the participants. By approaching data collection in a manner consistent with the Indigenist principles of relationality and holism (Perkins, 2007, Brant Castellano, 2000), each participant was prompted to seek out their own contextualized story steeped within the complex relationships of their academic lives.

Thematic analysis was based upon "re-occurring" ideas within the conversations that were tempered with sensitivity as to how these ideas were grounded in

relationship and participants' contexts. Despite the tensions inherent in thematically analyzing stories and the associated risk of representing decontextualized thoughts, this path of meaning-making was selected so as to protect participant identities, to learn of commonalities among storylines and experience, and to pinpoint key messages that could formulate suggestions for a way forward.

Within Indigenous research, the use of visual and experiential representations to assist in the meaning-making and presentation of the data is not uncommon (Edge, 2011; Michell, 2009). As a mechanism for telling the story of this research, the literary device of allegory was deliberately employed to represent holism and relationality in visual and literary forms. The story of this report is told through the allegory of an Indigenous sweat lodge ceremony that explicates the social and spiritual relations and practices of an Indigenous worldview. However, the allegory for our study is not about the sweat ceremony itself, but rather the landscape of a winter sweat. Images associated with this allegory illustrate the various sections of this report.

Many lessons arise from activities associated with gathering together and preparing for entry into a ceremonial setting, and it is understood that the various phenomena that exist external to a lodge also help to animate the activity that happens therein. Consistent with this understanding, the key elements represented by the allegory of the landscape of a winter sweat that appear in this report include:

- The Lodge (Indigenous Knowledges)

*"I take the position in the courses that we're not there to rationalize why we ought to be doing it or even to talk about 'Does Indigenous Knowledges exist?' We're past that. We want to understand what is Indigenous knowledges, how can Indigenous knowledges shape education. To me those are much more interesting and important questions." (13).*

- Fire (motivations and intentions)
- Smoke (relationships and movement)
- Snow (manifestations of academic orthodoxy)
- The Path (possible courses of action)

The unique findings that emerged through the activities related to this research may be witnessed via the direct quotes that are excerpted from the stories of the 16 well-spoken academics that participated in this study. The participants' voices are the greatest gift of this report. Many of these quotes are presented as constituent elements of the themes aligned with the key elements of the landscape of a winter sweat allegory as presented in Chapters 4 - 9. We recommend that readers take the time necessary to absorb and reflect upon these words.

### **What Was Heard**

When considering possibilities, it is incumbent upon us to assert that there is no one correct course of action that should be seen as the panacea prescription for adapting to uncertain future scenarios. Because Indigenous Knowledges are deeply entwined with epistemologies of place, there are infinite ways that may be equally appropriate to inviting Indigenous Knowledges into Canadian post-secondary institutions, contingent upon local circumstances. Discussions on possible approaches to the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledges and an increased Indigenous Presence should involve every campus and include administrators, faculty members, instructors and students who have a stake in the outcome of the dialogue.

The insights of the Education and Social Work faculty who offered their reflections on possible pathways forward for Indigenous Presence within Canadian post-secondary sites are steeped in decades of grounded experience. As presented by the authors of this report, their voices call for:

- Recruiting and retaining more Indigenous faculty and staff within post-secondary institutions.
- Creating ceremonies that invite and honour Indigenous community.
- Demonstrating an understanding of what relational capital means to Indigenous scholarship.
- Giving respect to Elders, Knowledge holders and faculty who fulfill important Oskâpêwis roles.
- Acknowledging and acting to minimize double-duty that some Indigenous staff/faculty face.
- Interrogating and challenging institutional orthodoxy that proscribes social justice.
- Increasing communication between professional bodies and Education and Social Work post-secondary programs.
- Developing and sustaining programmatic approaches to the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledges.
- Instituting a policy response on integrating Indigenous Knowledges.
- Considering how Indigenous programs are administered and delivered through the structures of Departments, Faculties, and Colleges.
- Broadening processes related to performance evaluation.
- Creating opportunities for dialogue on how to imagine and envision Indigenous Presence in post-secondary sites.

As a research team interested in advancing Indigenous education and Indigenous responsive professional practice, we assert that there is a responsibility for university educators in professional practice programs to thoughtfully and intentionally consider Indigenous perspectives and knowledges in their instruction. Indigenous responsive practice for many prospective Teachers and Social Workers begins in Education and Social Work post-secondary classrooms. We contend that an Indigenous presence must be considered in a way that does not fragment the knowledges apart from the community nor the experience of colonization. We believe this is not solely an Indigenous issue for Indigenous faculty teaching Indigenous students in Indigenous classrooms. Rather, this ought to matter to all faculty of diverse positionings who teach courses across diverse populations. The attitude, effort and capacity of the post-secondary professor cannot be understated, for the professor becomes the initial exemplar for the new practitioner.

It is our sincere hope that this report may assist our peers and colleagues across Canada in their deliberations on the degree to which they wish to see Indigenous Knowledges represented within their disciplinary canon and/or an increased Indigenous Presence on their campus. We do this in a spirit of hope for all our children and grandchildren, and that they may someday sit together in a shared ceremony of learning.

*"...how can Indigenous knowledges shape education?" (13)* We too are interested – this is an important and pressing question for us all.

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SECTION ONE







SECTION ONE

**Introduction, Methods,  
and Background**

**CHAPTER**  
**ONE**

*Indigenous Presence: Experiencing and Envisioning Indigenous Knowledges within Selected Post-Secondary Sites of Education and Social Work* is a report of faculty reflections on the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledges in their teaching and academic lives. This report is drawn from the results of a research project within which the participants offered their disciplinary-informed personal reflections and organizational analyses of what it means to respectfully consider Indigenous Knowledges within contemporary Canadian post-secondary education settings. Emerging from the research, this report offers a perspective of what has been accomplished, the current situation and suggestions for ways forward.

The participants' voices that inform this report were offered between 2011-2013 by tenured faculty members who were working at one of four selected sites: Education at the University of Saskatchewan or the University of British Columbia, and Social Work at the University of Regina or the University of Victoria. Each selected site has a minimum of a 25-year history offering formal academic initiatives that involve Indigenous people (for more information on the sites see *Approach to Research* chapter).

This report places the spotlight on research conversations with 16 faculty of diverse backgrounds, including Indigenous, within four specific programs (i.e. two in Education and two in Social Work). As 15 of the 16 voices each had over 10 years of experience as an academic, the narratives herein offer a temporal accounting of Indigenous

Knowledges in post-secondary education that is couched in a wealth of experience. Each voice echoes the heartfelt nature of experiencing and envisioning Indigenous Knowledges in the academy.

### **Who we are and why we were interested**

The authors of this report comprise the investigatory team that conducted the research upon which this report is based. As a research team, our individual personal and professional identities were factors in our interest in this research focus. Like the participants, the research team has diverse backgrounds and, like the participants, each member is professionally associated with Education or Social Work or both. Our research team, primarily comprised of Indigenous researchers, includes: Margaret Kovach (Plains Cree/Saulteaux); Jeannine Carriere (Métis - Cree Assiniboine/French); Harpell Montgomery (Irish Canadian/Mi'kmaq); M.J. Barrett identifies as non-Indigenous; and Carmen Gillies (Métis).

With respect to our disciplinary and professional positionings: Margaret Kovach is a faculty member in Education with a background in Social Work. Jeannine Carriere holds a PhD in Human Ecology and is a faculty member in Social Work. Harpell Montgomery holds a doctoral degree in Educational Administration and is a faculty member in Social Work. M.J. Barrett is faculty in Education and Environmental Studies. Carmen Gillies is a doctoral candidate in Education.

As post-secondary faculty with experience working in our respective fields, we are aware that Education and Social Work share commonalities in serving Indigenous children and youth. Both Social Work (specifically child welfare) and Education share a mode of practice encompassing the facilitation or instruction from a plan (i.e. case plan, lesson plan) congruent with their respective governmental mandates (i.e. provincial curriculum; provincial standards of care). Increasingly, graduates of Education and Social Work programs are being charged with conducting curricular and case planning (respectively) that is inclusive of an Indigenous perspective (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2011; British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development, 2009). This is positive, as sensitive and skilled front-line practitioners (i.e. classroom teachers, child protection workers) can be a significant protective factor for promoting resilience among Indigenous children and youth, if cognizant of this group's particular needs (Johnson, 2008). It is our belief that to better serve Indigenous children and youth, both disciplines of Education and Social Work require practitioners who possess a philosophical orientation and practice capacity that can actively integrate Indigenous ways of being (MacDonald & MacDonald, 2007).

The research team is equally aware of the correlation between a practitioner's ability to serve Indigenous children and youth and the instructional and curricular focus of their university education (Battiste, 2000;

<sup>1</sup> The following use of the term Indigenous aligns with the definition found in Wilson and Battiste (2011): "The term "Indigenous" refers broadly to the international context, and includes all peoples who have the following characteristics: a) priority of time, with respect to the occupation

and use of a specific territory; b) the voluntary perpetuation of cultural distinctiveness, which may include the aspects of language, social organization, religion and spiritual values, modes of production, laws and institutions; c) self-identification, as well as recognition by other groups, or by State

authorities, as a distinct collectivity; and d) an experience of subjugation, marginalization, dispossession, exclusion or discrimination, whether or not these conditions persist. (Battiste & Henderson, 2000, p. 64)." (n.p). For more information on the identity locations of the research team please

see: Kovach, M., Carriere, J., Barrett, M.J., Montgomery, H. & Gilles, C. (2014). Stories of diverse identity locations in Indigenous research. *International Review of Qualitative Research*. 6(4). 487-509

Sexton, 2007; Baskin, 2006). Professional practice education may seem to be, at times, far removed from everyday workplace practice. However, there is a responsibility for university educators in professional practice programs to thoughtfully and intentionally consider Indigenous perspectives and knowledges in their instruction. In particular, an Indigenous presence must be considered in a way that does not fragment the knowledges from the community nor the experience of colonization. This is not solely an Indigenous issue for Indigenous faculty teaching Indigenous students in Indigenous classrooms. Rather, this ought to matter to all faculty of diverse positioning who teach courses across diverse populations. The attitude, effort and capacity of the post-secondary professor cannot be understated, for the professor becomes the initial exemplar for the new practitioner.

### **The research focus**

The research focus of the study upon which this report is based explored the mini and meta-narratives that are at work as Education and Social Work educators attempt to integrate Indigenous Knowledges into instruction. To elicit these narratives, the participants in the study were asked several prompt questions (See Appendix I) that focussed on aspects of academic life that support, impede or simply complicate the relational, theoretical, instructional, organizational and personal factors that they associate with the

integration of Indigenous Knowledges into their professional education programs.

In considering the report, clarification of how *Indigenous Knowledges* is understood by the researchers may be of value to the reader. While the term Indigenous Knowledges was specifically identified in our overarching research question and prompt questions, inevitably the participants in our study often spoke more broadly of Indigenous perspectives that included elements of philosophy, culture, history and community. At the outset of each interview, the research team offered participants a working definition of Indigenous Knowledges as put forward by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (2006),

Indigenous Knowledge refers to the complex bodies and systems of knowledge, know-how, practices and cultural expressions that have been and are maintained, used and developed by local and Indigenous communities, not only sustains the daily life of these communities, but is also a key element in maintaining their identities and building their self-determination. The Indigenous traditional knowledge of Indigenous communities, which reflects their holistic worldview, also contributes to the world's cultural and biological diversity and is a source of cultural and economic wealth for the communities and for humanity as a whole. (p.5)

Given the participants' and researchers' experiences of being in an academy that is not yet free of colonial tendencies, the conversations often shifted towards the more political struggle of anti-colonialism. Because the term Indigenous Knowledges cannot be extracted from their contexts, the report at times uses the term Indigenous presence to more fully capture the totality of the conversations relating to Indigenous Knowledges.

While recognizing the range of philosophical perspectives that value an inclusionary academy, this report attempts to center Indigenous Knowledges and presence. It emerges from a research project that upholds story as source of knowledge and arises from conversations that are informed by life experience. It is a report of the personal subjectivities and institutional cultures that shape, and are shaped, by each other.

## The structure of this report

The report is structured in several chapters. Following this introduction is an overview of the methodology that was used for the research study. The *methods chapter* describes the theoretical approach to the study; the method of data collection employed; information about the individuals who participated in the interviews; descriptive material regarding the selected sites; and the analysis. This chapter also discusses several aspects of this design, including the use of Indigenous principles and theory, the practice of ceremony, the guidance by Cree Elder Joseph Naytowhow, the incorporation of allegory to represent the findings, and the use of Indigenous artwork to assist in the presentation of findings as commissioned by Saskatchewan Métis artist Leah Dorion.

A *contextual framing chapter* follows the methods section as a third chapter. There are many different ways to conceptually frame a research report. This study is no different. Furthermore, there already exists substantial research on Indigenous peoples' involvement with formal education in Canada. Thus, choices of how to proceed were required. To assist in contextually framing this report, the contextual framing chapter relies upon the Indigenous principle of conditions and circumstances, movement and change, and grounded story.

To illustrate the conditions and circumstances and movement and change, the report highlights policy-based and pedagogical shifts within a socio-historical timeframe of Indigenous education in Canada since the inception of Indian Control of Indian Education (ICIE) in 1973. As several studies have indicated, ICIE marks a useful point in Canada's history after which there emerged an increased presence of Indigenous people within formal integrated educational programs (Wilson & Battiste, 2011; St. Denis, 2010).

This section is followed by a review of the theoretical and philosophical orientations as they relate to pedagogies and discourses of Indigenous Knowledges. In acknowledging grounded story, the contextual framing closes with a third section that situates the report within Education and Social Work. This includes a brief, but specific, overview of each of the program sites where the data collection for the study was conducted. By focusing on the specific programs with which the participants were affiliated at the time of their interviews, this report contextually grounds the participants within the history and context of their institutions. In our study, the institutions and the individuals have all had significant experience with engaging Indigenous populations and perspectives. This is not true of all post-secondary sites in Canada.

The central locus of this report is dedicated to the findings (*Chapters Four to Nine*). The findings are presented through a theoretical and contextual framework that uses the imagery of the environments associated with a winter sweat ceremony. The winter sweat is the allegorical structure within which the findings, discussion, and conclusions are all situated. The winter sweat, in its entirety, visually represents a world (i.e. academy or discipline) that respects and responds to Indigenous Knowledges. To assist in organizing the many themes emerging from the conversations with faculty about Indigenous Knowledges in their teaching and academic lives, four aspects of the winter sweat environment were enlisted. The four representational aspects are the *Lodge*, the *Fire*, the *Snow*, and *Smoke*. The *Lodge* represents Indigenous Knowledges itself and how it is understood. The *Fire* represents motivations in engaging with Indigenous Knowledges. The *Smoke* symbolizes the relationality that animates Indigenous Knowledges within these contexts. The *Snow* signifies the places within which conversations of Indigenous

Knowledges are grounded, including the classroom, the university and the disciplines of Education and Social Work.

The final aspect of the winter sweat allegory that was used to assist in the organization of this report is represented as the *Path through the snow (Chapter Ten)*. This allegorical domain enables a discussion of the findings and possible ways forward. Although the development of suggestions for a way forward was one aim of this report, the power of this research lies within the stories of these specific individuals who have, in their own ways, nurtured an Indigenous presence in their professional lives. They have experience. As one participant shared, "*I've been here over thirty years right, in our faculty and I've seen in the early days where we were barely noticeable or on anybody's radar ... but now I would say we have an Indigenous education as one of the priorities of the faculty*" (13). This report is a narrative accounting of those who have been a witness to change. It matters to hear what these individuals have to say. Our study, at its core, is an accounting. We note a partiality to Thomas King's work *The Truth About Stories – A Native Narrative* and find his words have relevance here,

It was Sir Isaac Newton who said, "To every action there is always opposed an equal reaction." Had he been a writer, he might have simply said, "To every action there is a story." Take Charm's story, for instance. It's yours. Do with it what you will. Tell it to friends. Turn it into a television movie. Forget it. But don't say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now. (2003, p. 28-29)



SECTION ONE

**The Approach  
to Research**

**CHAPTER  
TWO**



The study upon which this report is based utilized qualitative research methods, which were congruent with the main purpose of this study: To hear the stories of individual faculty as they reflect upon their relationships with Indigenous Knowledges. This methods chapter is subdivided into several sections, each of which is derived from the research study. These subsections include: a brief overview of the theoretical and conceptual influences in the research design; an accounting of how the participants and sites were chosen for the study; an overview of participant characteristics; a description of the approach taken in gathering the stories; a discussion of the data analysis process used; and a brief commentary on ethical considerations associated with the study and the limitations and delimitations.

### Conceptual and theoretical grounding

This report is theory-guided. In this sense – as described in Ryan, Coughlan & Cronin (2007) – theory is used to frame the study and is included in all aspects of the research design. The theoretical orientation and conceptual design for the study was guided by Indigenist principles. Because research incorporating Indigenist principles is relatively new to the academy, it is useful

to illustrate the ways in which Indigenous theory and worldview influenced aspects of the research design for the study.

**Indigenous theory.** Indigenous theory emerges from an Indigenous paradigm. An Indigenous approach to sharing knowledge is based in oral history and storytelling traditions (Hart, 2002; Youngblood Henderson, 2000; Archibald, 2008; Tuhiwai Smith, 2013) and is collectivist (Deloria, 2004). The relational dynamic between self, others, and nature is central. While a decolonizing perspective may provide a critically analytical framework with which to identify the power dynamics of a research problem, an Indigenous perspective supports a relational conceptual model that moves beyond problem identification to action.

Principles of Indigenous or Indigenist theory were central throughout the research process, from project inception to the writing of this report. Certainly, the focal assumptions of the research project did not include the totality of what is, and/or could be, described as Indigenous theory; however, these were the assumptions that guided the research project. The specific assumptions and principles found in Indigenous theory that influenced this research project include:

- *Relationality.* As stated by Umi Perkins (2007), relationality manifests itself through the concept of “harmony or balance” (p. 64). As inherent aspects of a balanced approach to purposive work, the values of reciprocity and respect were given continuous consideration throughout all stages of this study.
- *Conditions and Circumstance.* The activities of this research project were continually contextualized within a framework that considers history, experience, place and community as central. Local knowledge is valued.
- *Grounded Story.* Interpersonal conversation was upheld as a means for sharing knowledge (Kovach, 2010(a)) and the role of story (Archibald, 2008) was seen as a portal to enhanced understanding. A grounded story is inclusive of the personal theory that

is held as “the pre-existing beliefs and assumptions that a researcher brings to a research project” (Kovach, 2014, p. 98). Through these dialogic methods, this study incorporated a grounded reflexivity that may be found in Indigenous theory.

- *Holism.* This research project was founded on overall assumptions that knowledge is holistic (Brant Castellano, 2000) and diverse. Consistent with this assumption, knowledge can move through thought, art, metaphor, performance, the body, nature, and spirit. Ceremony within research (Wilson, 2008) was valued and practiced.
- *Movement and Change.* The fluidity of movement that occurs within knowledge and relationships was acknowledged throughout this study. As stated by Graham H. Smith, Indigenous theory is change orientated (in Kovach, 2010). In order to accommodate for the natural rhythms of change, an anti-colonial transformative sensibility was embedded in the research purpose, design, and analysis.

As mentioned previously, an Indigenous theoretical framing guided the research. The above assumptions informed the central decision points of the research design, beginning with the principle of relationality in selecting participants and participant sites.

### Sample sites, participants, and ethics

**Pre-selected Sites.** The professional schools of Education and Social Work were selected as the programmatic sites for this research project. The selection of these programmatic sites as the focal points for the study emerged out of the research team’s associations to each of these disciplines. The research team’s relationships with the academic disciplines of Education and Social Work provided motivation necessary to learn more about the supports needed to further facilitate/support Indigenous knowledges within these program areas. Table 1 identifies the programmatic sites from which participant data was purposively sought.



**Table 1: Selected Sites**

University of Saskatchewan	Education <sup>3</sup>
University of Regina	Social Work
University of Victoria	Social Work
University of British Columbia	Education

The rationale for preselecting these specified sites targeted in this study was twofold. Firstly, each of the preselected sites - and by extension the Universities with which they are associated - have a historical relationship with Indigenous peoples. For example, since the early 1970's, the University of Saskatchewan College of Education has been home to an Indian Teacher Education Program (The best is yet to come, 2013). Likewise, the University of British Columbia Faculty of Education has offered a Native Indian Teacher Education program since 1974 (Archibald, 2010). The University of Regina Faculty of Social Work and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations jointly developed an Indian Social Work Program in 1974 (History, n.d.) and the University of Victoria School of Social Work offered its first Bachelor of Social Work cohort to Vancouver Island First Nations in 1986 (Turner, 2005). (More detailed information on each site can be found in *Chapter Three*.) Since the inception of these historic initiatives, each preselected site has fostered its relationship to Indigenous peoples through programs that built upon these early inroads.

A secondary rationale for preselecting the specified sites derives from the personal and collegial relationships that the research team has established with each of the programs. With respect to the University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina, and University of Victoria, members of the research team had existing or pre-existing relationships with the Education and Social Work programs as either an alumnus or an employee (i.e., faculty member) who was then working within one of the preselected program sites. The research team members had an understanding of the contexts of these programs – the challenges, opportunities, tensions, and rewards – in creating programs that upheld Indigenous presence. (The University of British Columbia was an outlier among the

preselected sites as it was not a site where a research team member had an existing or pre-existing formal relationship.)

With respect to participants, the research team had collegial information about the majority of participants such as their names, home departments and research interests. While no members of the research team were in a position of power over any of research participants, the principle of relationality was in effect in that there were pre-existing relationships between the research team and some of the research participants.

**Participant sample**

Participation in this study was entirely voluntary; accordingly, it can be inferred that individuals chose to participate based upon a plurality of diverse motivational factors. Predominately however, the participants in this study expressed an interest in working with Indigenous populations, had experience working with Indigenous populations, or were themselves Indigenous. The participants were selected through a criterion sampling method. The participant criteria outlined in the research plan included: a) Indigenous (based on self-identification) and those who did not identify as Indigenous tenured and tenure-track faculty employed with a university that had been preselected as a program site; b) participants be employed in a currently active instructional role at the time of the interview; and c) requisite experience with developing courses/curriculum for a post-secondary Education or Social Work program.

The research team used the terms *Indigenous* and *non-Indigenous* to denote those participants who identified as Indigenous and those who did not identify as being of Indigenous ancestry. The latter

was not exclusive to faculty of any particular ethnic group. Using this definition, self-identified 'non-Indigenous' participants did not comprise a monoculture identity group. These terms were also used to denote collective groups of participants, based upon their self-selected categorization at the outset of each interview. The purpose for asking individuals whether they self-identified as belonging to an Indigenous group was an attempt to acknowledge that issues of identity location would factor into participant responses on topics related to the centering of Indigenous Knowledges. While the findings of this study do not emphasize a comparative analysis between self-identified Indigenous and non-Indigenous participant groups, cultural belonging was a consistent reference point in individual responses. Given the under-representation of Indigenous faculty across the four pre-selected program sites, there was an uneven sampling of the two groups.

Participants were recruited through letters of invitation that requested individual participation in the research. Electronic letters of invitation were either circulated via a preselected program site's faculty list-serve or by identified faculty liaisons who were then working at a site. After initial contacts were made and indications of interest were received, each prospective participant was contacted to arrange a private interview with a member of the research team. A small gift designed by a Cree craftsman was given to participants to symbolize the relationship of knowledge-sharing and to integrate the practice of reciprocity.

This study involved the participation of 16 interviewees in total across the four preselected program sites. Table 2 provides a numeric breakdown of participants by Province of employment and affiliated program.

<sup>3</sup> This study builds upon a pilot study conducted by Kovach (2010) which focused upon the support required by non-Aboriginal faculty to integrate and enhance Aboriginal knowledges within course content at the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan. The pilot study was completed in April 2010, and only involved participants who identified as non-Indigenous (and not Indigenous faculty). at the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan. Accordingly, the non-Indigenous participants in the 2010 pilot study, were not recruited for this subsequent study.

**Table 2: Selected Sites**

British Columbia	11
Saskatchewan	6
Education	6
Social Work	10

Table 3 offers an overview of aggregated characteristics based upon participant responses to questions posed at the outset of each of the 16 interviews:

**Table 3: Participant Characteristics**

Indigenous	6
Non-Indigenous	10
Tenure	16
Non-tenure	0
Over 10 years	15
Under 10 years	1
Male	2
Female	14

As shown, all participants in this study were tenured and all but one participant had over 10 years of full-time experience within an academic setting. Clearly, the findings of this study emerge from the voices of individuals each of whom possesses considerable experience across a variety of academic contexts.

### Ethical considerations

Ethics clearance and approval was sought and received from each of the four universities that were preselected to participate in this study (i.e. University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina, University of British Columbia and University of Victoria). The study was not considered high-risk as it did not involve vulnerable populations; however, it was important that confidentiality and anonymity be maintained. Every effort was made to ensure identifying information was removed from the data. However, the Social Work and Education academic community is a collegial one, and given that the participant sample was comprised of members of these communities, it is possible that readers of this report may feel they might ascertain the identity of individual research participant(s).

This limitation to anonymity was indicated in the participant consent form and it is clear that interviewees were aware that potential infringements of anonymity were possible. Consent forms were signed at the outset of each interview prior to data collection activities. Each participant had an opportunity to review and edit their own transcribed interview data. For all of the interviews used in the study, transcript release forms were signed. The participants were advised that they could withdraw at any time from the research.

Ethical research that involves Indigenous communities typically requires gaining consent from those communities. In this study, the research team did not enact our research activities within a geographically specific community such as a First Nation. However, an identifiable subgroup of the participant sample was comprised of Indigenous faculty who were employed by post-secondary institutions in Saskatchewan and British Columbia. This subgroup of self-identified Indigenous individuals has no other formal affiliation known to the research team; rather it is a grouping of like-minded people with shared interests. Accordingly, the research team did not seek any specific Aboriginal ethics board approval.

The team consulted the research team Elder in situations associated with the use of cultural representations in the research design. In using the landscape of a winter sweat as a conceptually framing allegory, the research team sought the advice and permission of our Elder. When engaged in activities of a ceremonial nature, local Cree protocol was followed and respected.

### Gathering stories

In the preface to her book, *Indigenous Storywork - Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit, Q'um Q'um Xiiem* (Jo-Ann Archibald) reflects on the practice of storywork. She says,

The Elders taught me about seven principles related to using First Nations stories and storytelling for educational purposes, what I term storywork: respect, responsibility,

reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy. Experiential stories reinforce the need for storywork principles in order for one to use First Nations stories effectively. (2008, p. IX)

Archibald goes on to say,

These seven principles form a Stó:lō and Coast Salish theoretical framework for making meaning from stories and for using them in educational contexts. I learned that stories can “take on their own life” and “become the teacher” if these principles are used. (p. IX)

This report is about listening to story. The principles that guide this approach include the values and practices articulated by Archibald as found within a Stó:lō and Coast Salish theoretical framework – “respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy” (Archibald, 2008). In this research, the stories are the teachers.

To facilitate the telling of the participants’ stories, a series of open-ended, semi-structured interview questions was developed and supplied to each interviewee. Several structured questions relating to participant characteristics were included. (see Appendix I for the complete list of structured and semi-structured questions). In an effort to hear the stories, a conversational approach was used. Different Indigenous researchers, the world over, have referenced conversation as a way of gathering knowledge although referencing this method in differing terms, including: storytelling, yarning, talk story, re-storying, re-membling (Thomas, 2005; Bishop, 1999; Absolon & Willett, 2004). The conversational method is a dialogic approach to gathering knowledge that is built upon an Indigenous relational tradition. Characteristics of a conversational approach used in this study are cited here:

a) it is linked to a particular tribal epistemology (or knowledge) and situated within an Indigenous paradigm; b) it is relational; c) it is purposeful (most often involving

a decolonizing aim); d) it involves particular protocol as determined by the epistemology and/or place; e. it involves an informality and flexibility; f) it is collaborative and dialogic; and g) it is reflexive. (Kovach, 2010(a), p. 43)

Each member of the research team had an opportunity to engage in a research conversation with at least one participant. It was arranged so that each research team member interviewed a participant or participants with whom they were not a colleague. In each instance, the researcher-participant data gathering process comprised one conversation with each participant at a location of the participant's choice. The conversations were recorded through an audio recorder.

### Exploring and organizing the findings

There are multiple techniques to approach the thematic analysis within qualitative research (Saldana, 2009). Depending upon the research question and design, the approach to thematic analysis will differ in qualitative research projects. As a place to start our research team borrowed from grounded theory method to assist with gaining insight from the stories. Miles & Huberman (1994) explain "that from the start of data collection the qualitative analyst is beginning to decide what things mean and is noting regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows and prepositions" (p.11). Similarly, Guba (1990) suggests that the first step in the analysis of qualitative data is to look for patterns or what she describes as "convergence"; this is the task of identifying how the data fits together and how they can be sorted into categories and themes (p. 109).

Individual members of the research team participated in the open coding process. The themes that emerged were initially guided by prompt questions. However the analysis allowed for the exploration of outlier patterns and themes. The coding strategy was emergent with concepts, ideas, and experiences being identified.

The principal investigator held the primary responsibility of completing the second round of coding and categorizing emergent themes so as to fully convey the breadth of story (findings) contained within the research.

In our study we were guided by Indigenist principles to seek out relationality and holism (Perkins, 2007; Brant Castellano, 2000). In doing so we employed the use of story and conversational method to approach data collection (Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2010) in a manner that provided opportunity for participants to seek their own contextualized story steeped in their relationships with their academic life. In wishing to keep the relational 'alive', the second round of analysis employed the following strategy. According to persistent themes grounded in relationship, the second round thematic analysis approach included a technique identified in Ryan and Bernard (2003) as "repetitions" as further articulated here,

Some of the most obvious themes in a corpus of data are those "topics that occur and reoccur" (Bogdan and Taylor 1975:83) or are "recurring regularities" (Guba 1978:53). "Anyone who has listened to long stretches of talk," said D'Andrade (1991), "knows how frequently people circle through the same network of ideas" (p. 287) (p. 89).

We did not use quantification of reference to a topic across interviews to establish a theme per se. Rather we were sensitive in our analysis to themes that re-occurred in specific transcripts as well as across transcripts. In this sense our thematic analysis is based on "re-occurring" ideas within the conversations with sensitivity to how they were grounded in relationship with the participant's context.

We note the tension of thematically analyzing stories that risk representing thoughts disassociated from context. However, we chose to thematically analyze findings in the above mentioned manner for several reasons, including: a) a need decontextualize as a way to protect

identities given the potential sensitiveness of this research; b) an interest in the individual stories in their own right and an equal interest to learn of commonalities among storylines and experience; and c) a desire to pinpoint key teachings that could formulate suggestions for a way forward.

It was at the point of analysis (i.e., post-data collection and first round open coding) that our research team asked for formal Elder guidance. The University of Saskatchewan Principal Investigator, Margaret Kovach, contacted Sturgeon Lake Cree Elder Joseph Naytowhow who was, at the time, the University of Saskatchewan Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP) Elder liaison. In approaching Joseph with tobacco – an accepted protocol in Cree culture when asking for guidance – Margaret shared information about the project and asked for his help in guiding the research team through the next stage (analysis) of the research. The reasons for seeking guidance at this stage were to ensure consistent continuity, common vision, and groundedness as members of the research team worked with the transcribed stories of the participants, as well as to assist us in maintaining an Indigenous lens. Joseph recommended the research project to host a sweat lodge ceremony within which members of our research team members participated. The sweat lodge ceremony was held in March, 2013.

The guidance of Elder Joseph Naytowhow and the collective experience of participating in the sweat lodge ceremony offered research team members much needed grounding. Additionally, the physicality of a Saskatchewan winter sweat offered an allegoric frame for organizing and presenting the themes and categories that emerged from the stories. Conceptually organizing this research into places and spaces typically associated with the landscape a winter sweat (e.g., lodge, fire, snow and smoke) became a way to tell the story of the research with place and Indigeneity. We sought and received permission from the Elder to move forward with the winter sweat allegory.

In an effort to transcend the typical boundaries of textual representation to include that of visual imagery, the research project commissioned a painting by Metis artist Leah Dorion to assist with the findings. The artwork - entitled *A Winter Sweat #1* - captures an allegoric organization that is imbued with First Nations, Metis, and Aboriginal spirit. It is connected to a tribal group (i.e., the research base of the study), and the imagery represents a holistic way of knowing that guided the conduct of this study.

As the research team presented the study's preliminary findings back to each preselected site - and beyond - the imagery of Dorion's *A Winter Sweat #1* has been central to telling the story of the data in a way that honours a mobilization of Indigenous Knowledges. A PowerPoint presentation that incorporates key images from Dorion's *A Winter Sweat #1* has assisted the research team in communicating the messages that emerged from the participants' stories. Within the landscape of a winter sweat allegory, the findings were conceptualized in a way that gives space to individual relationships (mini narratives) with Indigenous Knowledges, and facilitates commentary on the larger organization of the academy and the disciplines of Education and Social Work (meta narratives).

In presenting the data in this report the participants words have been italicized within quotations. This approach has been followed for both 'stand alone' quotations and quotations integrated into text. The quotation is followed by a transcript number in parenthesis. The rationale for this choice is to ensure that the reader is clearly aware which words are from the participants.

### **Limitations and delimitations**

As addressed, the research methodology for this project in qualitative. Within our qualitative approach we contest the desirability of generalizations and instead emphasize contextual narrative and local knowledge (Schwandt, 2007). In seeking greater insight into the complexities of Indigenous Knowledges within the discipline and disciplinary training of

Education and Social Work, as mentioned we included two Education programs and two Social Work programs in four universities. The four sites were limited to the western Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Saskatchewan; the two Provinces within which the research team members were resident. We interviewed individuals employed within the 'home' universities of the research team. However, we ensured that when conducting interviews the researcher did not interview an individual from their home academic unit in which they were then employed.

As we employed a research design governed by Indigenist principles and the value of relationality inherent in this approach, many of the individuals in the participant sample group were known to one or more of the researchers. In several instances, several members of the research team had a past or active collegial relationship with one or more participants. Although we did not seek out only tenured faculty, the participant sample included only those individuals who were tenured. All but one participant had over 10 years of experience. Further, we did not further differentiate our sample in terms of teaching faculty and faculty holding administrative positions. We did not seek a representational ratio between Indigenous faculty to those who did not identify as Indigenous, nor did we strive for any predetermined male/female faculty ratio. We recognize that the findings do not represent perceptions of student experience. However, we did not choose, at this point, to seek a student perspective in this study but chose rather to focus on faculty perspectives. The participant sample did not internationally include individuals who resisted an Indigenous presence. In making the participant site and sample choices we recognize that the interviews are temporally framed and geographically located within a particular place and time and represent the voice of one specific group who support the inclusion of an Indigenous perspective.

Each interview was conducted face-to-face with the research participant. The interviews followed a conversational or story method (Kovach, 2010 (a); Thomas,

2005). This open-ended approach allowed for participants to be self-determining in their approach to sharing their story. We did, however, provide a working definition of Indigenous Knowledges that was shared with the participants at the beginning of the interview as referenced previously in this report. We acknowledge and recognize the subjectivities of interpretation accompanying research analysis and note that meaning-making in research is both science and art.



SECTION ONE

**Situating the  
study in context**

**CHAPTER  
THREE**



The research project that is the subject of this report was situated within a temporal bracketing associated with the emergence and growth of Indigenous presence within post-secondary education in Canada. The temporal bracketing associated with this report begins with the 1972 release of the policy statement *Indian Control of Indian Education (ICIE)* by the National Indian Brotherhood (now the Assembly of First Nations). The Government of Canada adopted this policy statement in principle in 1973. *ICIE* remains a foundational document for First Nations education. In July 2010, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) released a report entitled *First Nations Control of First Nations Education: It's Our Vision, It's Our Time* in which they stated: "First Nations leaders and educators recognize that the underlying principles of the ICIE 1972 policy still apply in 2010 as they did in 1972" (Assembly of First Nations, 2010, p. 3).

Circa 1960 and forward, First Nations students who had previously attended Indian residential schools were finding that educational programming was no longer being provided by the Federally controlled residential schools, but rather their programs of study were increasingly

being delivered through Provincial school authorities (Hawthorne, 1967). Increasingly, First Nations began expressing concerns about the ramifications of this transition for First Nations children, given that Provincial schools did not guarantee learning environments where First Nations values and practices would be respected. First Nations students were entering into new territory (i.e., where educational programs were delivered subject to Provincial authority rather than Federal authority), and the new environment was fostering a new manifestation of Indigenous subjugation. As cited in St. Denis' 2010, *A Study of Aboriginal Teachers' Professional Knowledge and Experience in Canadian Schools*, "when integration of Aboriginal students into public schools began in the early 1960s, Aboriginal students were often "ridiculed and socially isolated" (Hawthorne, 1967, p. 136)." (p. 11). Wanting to alleviate the personal and cultural oppression then being experienced by First Nations students, the 1972 ICIE statement identified that government educational policies that emphasized student integration were in dire need of attention. The authors of the ICIE statement asserted that:

Integration is a broad concept of human development which provides for growth through mingling the best elements of a wide range of human differences. Integrated educational programs must respect the reality of racial and cultural differences by providing a curriculum which blends the best from the Indian and the non-Indian traditions. (p. 25)

As to whose responsibility it was to address issues of integration, the ICIE statement could not have been clearer when the authors indicated that:

The success of integration is not the responsibility of Indians alone. Non-Indians must be ready to recognize the value of another way of life; to learn about Indian history, customs, and language; and to modify, if necessary, some their own ideas and practices. (p. 26)

The *ICIE* recommendations relating to the topic of integration were meant to be applicable to all formal schooling, including: K-12, adult, vocational, and post-secondary. *ICIE* was intended to apply anywhere that Indigenous learners were present. As can be seen within the *ICIE* statement of 1972, and affirmed in the revised 2010 *First Nations Control of First Nations Education*, the integration of Indigenous community and cultural knowledges was clearly envisioned as a centerpoint of First Nations educational policy. Although the terminology used at the time stressed the importance of integration as an objective, the nature of this integration contained specified provisos that clearly articulated that integration did not equate to assimilation.

In hindsight, the term *integration* may have not fully captured the vision as to how to respectfully include Indigenous realities within formal education, as it remains clear that in 2014, those mechanisms that have been implemented to invite Indigenous presence continue to disappoint. However, as the 2013 final report, *Voice, Vision and Leadership: A Place for All*, released by the Saskatchewan Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes for First Nations and Metis people suggests, it is relationality - and not terminology alone - that offers the most promising way forward. The Joint Task Force members state that "...the answer lies in establishing an ethical space that promotes dialogue, a cooperative spirit and respectful relationships among First Nations, Métis and non-Aboriginal people" (Joint Task Force, 2013. p. 70).

The study upon which our report is based was designed to ask faculty members within mainstream universities to assess the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledges in their teaching. Clearly, this is research related to the topic of integration, with a specific emphasis upon the disciplines of Education and Social Work. The research team wanted to understand how post-secondary education - especially Education and Social Work programming and curriculum - has responded to issues relating to the integration of Indigenous presence since

the adoption of 1972 ICIE policy statement. To continue framing this report in a manner that serves the specificities of study, the Indigenous theory principles of conditions and circumstances, pedagogical shifts, and grounded story give this chapter focus and structure.

This chapter begins with bird's eye view of the conditions and circumstances surrounding post-secondary education in Canada as they apply to Indigenous peoples. There are a number of ways that we could have framed the study within existing research, and we chose to situate this study in historical programmatic shifts associated with advancing Indigenous education in post-secondary studies. Primarily, this study has as an aim of change and we wish to highlight the past from which we see this change emerging. Beginning with a statistical portrayal of the landscape and expanding outward, the chapter then highlights several policy and programmatic shifts that have been foundational in forming the parameters of Indigenous integration into contemporary Canadian post-secondary environments. Following that, a commentary on movement and change shifts the focus towards the evolvement of decolonizing and culturally responsive pedagogies within Education and Social Work programs. So as to set the groundwork for the stories of the participants that form the subsequent chapters of this report, this chapter concludes with an overview of the highlights of Indigenous presence that currently exist within the pre-selected post-secondary sites included in the study.

### **Conditions and circumstances of Indigenous presence in post-secondary sites**

Prior to the 1972 Indian Control of Indian Education (ICIE) statement there was no formal Indigenous presence in programs or curricula within Canadian universities or formal education generally. It was not until after the adoption of the ICIE statement in 1973 as official policy that circumstances began to shift. Hence the ICIE statement

has become a social policy benchmark that is referenced by many as they consider issues relating to the integration of Indigenous education in Canada. (St. Denis, 2010; Joint Task Force, 2013). Given that the first university in Canada, Laval University opened its doors in 1663 followed by the oldest English language university, the University of New Brunswick in 1785, one could interpret the integration of an Indigenous presence as constituting a short period of inclusion within a long history of exclusion. However, there have been 40 + years of concentrated effort to gain ground, and this intervening temporal frame allows for a reckoning of "Where are we at, given four decades of effort?"

Quantitative research has assisted in tracking the participation rates of Indigenous students, particularly First Nations, in Canadian post-secondary studies. For example, *The Educational Attainment of Aboriginal Peoples* report of the *National Household Survey* (Statistics Canada, 2011) offers a snapshot of the number of Indigenous peoples in Canada accessing and successfully completing post-secondary studies. The 2011 statistics indicate that 48.4 percent of Aboriginal people have a post-secondary education with 9.8 percent of that group holding a university degree. According to the same source, 64.7 percent of non-Aboriginal people have attained post-secondary education with 26.5 percent of that group having attained a university degree.

In an effort to understand this parity gap, researchers have taken steps to explore this dynamic. A study by the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation (2005) of First Nations peoples on-reserve found that of those surveyed, 53 percent indicated that an inadequate level of government funding for post-secondary education was a barrier. In addition, the report points out that 48 percent of those surveyed indicated that the high school education of First Nations youth did not adequately prepare students for post-secondary education, and 28 percent of those in the study identified that the unwelcoming environments of

university and college campuses toward First Nations posed a barrier (p. 2). An Assembly of First Nations *Fact Sheet on First Nations Post-Secondary Education* (n.d.) cited internal 2005 research establishing that insufficient money and identified personal life circumstances (e.g., pregnancy, addictions, and not being used to living out of the community) as additional factors that contribute to the post-secondary participation rates of First Nations peoples. (p. 2).

With an eye on the burgeoning demographic of young Aboriginal people and in response to perceived opportunities associated with attracting a larger body of Aboriginal students to post-secondary institutions, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) released a study entitled *Redressing the Balance: Canadian University Programs in Support of Aboriginal Students* (Holmes, 2006). This study identified the barriers faced by Aboriginal students in post-secondary studies and provided an inventory of programming geared toward Aboriginal peoples in Canadian universities. Holmes' research documented personal, geographic, socio-economic, historic and educational considerations as contributing to the Aboriginal post-secondary participation disparity. The report offered the following conclusion about Aboriginal student participation upon entry to Canadian post-secondary institutions:

Not only is university participation low in relation to the overall age cohort in the general population, but Aboriginal students in general also appear to do poorly in terms of progression, retention and graduation rates. (Holmes, 2006, p. 14)

More recently, the AUCC released *Answering the Call: The 2010 Inventory of Canadian University Programs and Services for Aboriginal Students*. The 2010 study offered a comparative inventory of programs and services since the AUCC issued their 2006 *Redressing the Balance* report. The inventory of identified programs and services for Aboriginal students includes: support

4 Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, School of Social Work, University of Victoria.

services, off-campus delivery, Native studies programs, graduate programs, student financial aid, governance, and inclusion (p. 7). The *Answering the Call* report built upon the *Redressing the Balance* report, and was expanded to include Aboriginal Affairs within the university and engagement with the general Aboriginal community. In the concluding comments, the 2010 report authors state that although there are challenges and opportunities, they are optimistic in that the “inventory demonstrates how universities are backing their words with actions. Yet, more needs to be done” (p. 27).

In contextualizing what has been done, it is useful to consider the policy and program approaches that have emerged in response to an increasing Indigenous presence in post-secondary sites. We note that this perspective relies largely upon the policy dynamics of First Nations education. In the relating of this policy narrative, we turned to the literature that demonstrates the historic development of specific models for post-secondary Indigenous policy and programming. To situate this discussion, it first must be established that legal and financial authority for the provision of educational programming in Canada lies with the 1867 Constitutional division of powers that enables Canadian Provinces to oversee post-secondary educational delivery, and empowers the Federal government with responsibility over Indians and lands reserved for Indians.

Since enacted in law in 1956, the Government of Canada has assumed responsibility for the funding of Registered Indian students to attend post-secondary educational institutions, however until 1968, the very few Indigenous students who did manage to attend a university or college could access only limited Federal funding to support their education.

With the exception of some Aboriginal teacher education programs that were launched in the mid-1960's in Ontario and the Northwest Territories and which attempted to cater to the needs of Aboriginal students, it is

generally agreed that little in post-secondary education for Aboriginal peoples existed prior to the 1970's (Richardson & Blanchet-Cohen, 2000 p.13)

In 1968, the Federal Department of Indian and Northern Development (DIAND) created a vocational program which also provided direct financial assistance to Registered Indians and Inuit enrolled in universities or colleges (Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, 2007). It was not until 1977 however that a coherent and comprehensive program was created through the *Appropriations Act* by DIAND that allowed for the funding of Aboriginal post-secondary student support programs above and beyond the provision of tuition, books and living expenses necessary to support individual adult learners in their studies (Richardson & Blanchet-Cohen, 2000).

Contemporaneously to the Federal government's creation of funding programs for select individuals of Indigenous ancestry to attend universities and colleges, Indigenous leaders were taking steps to have a much greater say in post-secondary education than was then being provided within mainstream institutions of higher learning. The 1972 *Indian Control of Indian Education* statement called for more than simple funding to individuals as part of a comprehensive post-secondary education strategy for Indigenous peoples. Although focused on the entire educational enterprise as it related to Indigenous children and adults, the ICIE statement called for local control of First Nations education and curriculum development at the university and vocational institute levels.

Some promising successes were achieved as a result of the adoption of the *ICIE* statement by Canada. The postsecondary participation rates of Registered Indians did increase 12 percent between the 1970's and 1990's, and by 1996, the postsecondary enrolment rate for Registered Indians between the ages of 17-34 years was 6.0 percent compared with 10.4 percent

in mainstream Canadian society (INAC, 1997). Clearly, some Indigenous students were beginning to benefit from increased administrative support for their studies as partnership programs between Indigenous communities and colleges/universities were initiated during this period. Additionally, in 1983 the Federal University and College Entrance Program was established to enable Indigenous students lacking university entrance qualifications to gain admission by taking preparatory courses (Canada, Standing Committee, 2007). Under the Post-Secondary Educational Assistance Program, funding from DIAND was made available to all Registered Indians and Inuit who were eligible to attend universities and colleges, although it was recognized at the time that additional funding and student support services would be required from Canada if the post-secondary education participation rate for Indigenous peoples was ever to equal the 20 percent national average rate of adult post-secondary participation of the time. (Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Center, 1989).

In 1985, a report commissioned by the Government of Canada (Neilson Report) initiated the restructuring of Indigenous post-secondary programming and Federally administered programs that targeted individuals were scaled back, and programmatic approaches that encouraged colleges and universities to recruit and retain Indigenous students were ramped up. Consequently by the mid 1990's, Federal policies and budgets began to reflect the recommendations in the Neilson Report (Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Center, 1989).

As the scope of Federal transfer payments to provincial governments expanded to include funding for Indigenous postsecondary programs, the Provinces continued to insist that services targeted to Registered Indians should fall under exclusive Federal jurisdiction, hence the Federal government should bear 100% of the financial responsibility for the provision of educational services to Registered Indians, regardless of whether the individual resided on or off-reserve. In 1989, the Post-Secondary Educational



Assistance Program was replaced by the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) which tightened individual eligibility and restricted direct student funding, and the Indian Studies Student Support Program was established to assist institutions to increase participation of Indigenous students on their campuses (Canada, Standing Committee, 2007). The PSSSP policy for the allocation of monies to First Nations Bands to assist band member post-secondary students is still in effect, and the ISSSP policy continues to provide funding to Provincially chartered colleges and universities for the development of post-secondary programs targeting Indigenous students (INAC, 2000).

### **Indigeneity and pedagogical shifts in formal education**

Amid the policy directives and program initiatives, significant progress has been made towards decolonizing pedagogies within Education and Social Work studies in the past three decades. The increasing numbers of post-secondary teachers and social work educators who have become active in researching and practicing Indigenous-responsive teaching in a variety of contexts illustrates this fact (see Sinclair, 2004; Baskin, 2006; Kovach and Montgomery, 2010; Bishop & Barrymen, 2010; Battiste, 2014). This scholarly activity shows at least three different pedagogical approaches for increasing Indigenous perspectives in advancing Indigenous education in formal education sites. Each of these approaches is founded within decolonizing discourses and motivations.

Decolonizing and anti-colonial approaches in teacher and social worker education have created opportunities for students to consider how social injustices waged against Indigenous peoples have led to Indigenous marginalization. The interrogation of power relationships found within the Indigenous-settler dynamic enables a form of praxis that seeks out Indigenous voice and representation and makes explicit the null curriculum of higher learning (Bruyere, 1998). A decolonizing perspective reminds that western universities hold a monopoly on knowledge

production (Hall, 1992; Newson & Polster, 2010).

For many pre-service teacher and social work candidates who enrol in mainstream Education (e.g. USask) or Social Work (e.g. UVic) programs that ascribe to a social justice or anti-oppressive approach, their coursework may present the first opportunity they will have had in their lives to: a) be asked to examine their social privilege; and b) develop a significant relationship with an Aboriginal person. Upon enrolling in a decolonizing, anti-racist or anti-oppressive course, incoming students are asked to examine their privilege. Research-scholars publishing in Education (e.g., Schick & St. Denis, 2005; Aveling, 2004) and Social Work (e.g., Sinclair, 2004, Harris, 2006; Baskin, 2006) have contributed to the canon of literature in this area. It is in such decolonizing texts and courses that incoming undergraduates may receive their first introduction to an Indigenous worldview. In response to a liberalist non-critical multicultural education theory, Smith (2014) argues in *Confronting race and colonialism: Experience and lessons learned from teaching social studies* that deconstructing privilege is seen as a pathway to dismantling Eurocentric privilege in classrooms and thereby creating space to develop an appreciation for the alternate worldviews that may be expressed in these courses.

The decolonizing, anti-oppressive approach has not emerged without its challenges. Courses that focus upon Indigenous decolonization (as opposed to social justice more broadly) have the potential to be theoretically marginalized in curriculum. Much depends on the instructor's interests, research, and knowledge base. Often, programs or streams geared towards Indigenous students have the potential to include more decolonizing curricula largely because instructors who teach in such streams or programs have experience and knowledge of Indigenous communities. As mentioned previously, the academy's efforts to incorporate Indigenous content into post-secondary education has a history of focussing on developing separate Aboriginal programming (e.g.,

Indian Teacher Education Programs) or taking the stream approach (e.g., an Indigenous Specialization within a Bachelor of Social Work degree program). Such programs offer Indigenous space and have been significant in recruiting and retaining Indigenous students. However, it has largely left the dominant university experience (including that of mainstream students, faculty and curricula) in an undisrupted state (Hesch, 1996). Arguably as mainstream university curriculum is undisrupted, so too is the practice it influences.

Concurrently, there is significant research and writing occurring on the subjects of Indigenous Knowledges and Indigenous pedagogy that is often referenced as an Indigenous worldview or paradigm. An Indigenous paradigm is about intuition and observation and the relational connection to the universe around us as human beings (Dossey, 1985; Cajete, 1999). Knowledge includes oral history and storytelling (Hart, 2002; Tuhiwai Smith, 2013). The relational dynamic between self, others, and nature is central. In 1995, Eber Hampton, a member of Chickasaw Nation, identified Indian education as *sui generis*, "...'a thing of its own kind'..." (p. 10). Indigenous Knowledges are nested within a symbiotic relationality that binds both the experiential and theoretical, contests knowledge compartmentalization, and does not instinctively acquiesce to the constant comparative approaches to knowledge that are found within traditional academic sites. Archibald (1995) further explicates an Indigenous-centered curricular approach as holistic and contextual, emphasizing independence, self-reliance, discovery and respectfulness.

Specific examples of Indigenous centered approaches include Gregory Cajete's science education model (1999) and Glen Aikenhead's Indigenous Knowledge informed approach to science education (2001). Since the 1970's Trent University has integrated Indigenous Knowledges into their Indigenous Studies program. Trent's program is inclusive of experiential and relational methods, inviting wisdom from the community (Indigenous Studies, n.d.).

There are many examples nationally and internationally that explore Indigenous Knowledges within formal education settings (Anuik & Gillies, 2012; Battiste, 2014; Kovach, 2013). Within the literature that centers an Indigenous paradigm, the move toward culturally responsive approaches to education has emerged (Casagno & Brayboy, 2008; Bishop & Berryman 2010). The culturally responsive pedagogical literature is infused with an Indigenous sensibility that includes an understanding of Indigenous culture, language, community nuance, and pedagogical approaches consistent with an Indigenous paradigm (Demmert and Towner , 2003).

Until recently there have been few studies focusing on the actual experience of Indigenous peoples in formal education and how they see decolonizing, Indigenous centered and mainstream pedagogies cohabitating with each other. Several recent qualitative studies of teacher candidates found that integrating an Indigenous Knowledges perspective was complex (Kanu, 2007). In reporting on the perceptions of 2nd year teacher candidates, Deer (2013) found: “What seemed to emerge from this study in regard to knowledge of Aboriginal cultures is the notion that, in some cases, such knowledge can be accessible, whilst in other cases it can be rather inaccessible” (p. 188). The findings of Kovach’s (2010) pilot study of non-Aboriginal post-secondary faculty indicate that Indigenous Knowledges evoke pedagogical uncertainties. In attempting to understand another culture’s perspective, one participant from that study noted that:

And one elder in particular, she was invaluable, she was fascinating and she just kept telling stories about her and her father going whaling and berry picking and trapping and hunting and being out on the land, out on the land, out on the land. And out on the land becomes almost cliché, I think, for a non-Aboriginal person. Because it is like: “ok, out on the land” and we just think “outdoors” and I think we think “physical place” but it was so much more. (p. 17)

In interviewing teacher educators working in an Aboriginal Bachelor of Education program Kitchen and Hodson (2013) found that culturally responsive teaching practices that highlight relational knowing were central to effective teaching practices with Aboriginal students.

Within the milieu of western sites of formal education, the directive on integration that is central to the Indian Control of Indian Education statement does not come easy. The 1972 *ICIE* directive states that integrated educational programming “... must respect the reality of racial and cultural differences by providing a curriculum which blends the best from the Indian and the non-Indian traditions” (p. 25). This is no easy task, given that - as Maori scholar Graham Smith states - there are some competing interests. In deliberating on the act of “conscientization” arising from the literature of popular educator Paulo Freire, Smith differentiates a “conscientization” approach from a decolonizing perspective. “The term decolonization is a reactive notion that puts the colonizer and the history of colonization back at the “center” while “conscientization” and “consciousness-raising” are terms that depict the proactive and positive stance of a Kaupapa Maori approach” (in Rico, 2013, p. 381). Indigenous scholars (e.g., Ermine, 2007) argue for a third space – an ethical space – from which to consider Indigenous perspectives. Battiste (2014) has recently written of trans-systemic education systems.

Issues of power, culture, and reconciliation need to be addressed in pedagogies that impact Indigenous peoples, and each varying approach can be associated with specific situations within which it is most suitable and has the greatest utility. Ultimately, the challenge is to continually bear in mind that Indigenous presence in post-secondary environments requires a philosophical and practice scaffolding.

### **Grounded story and the pre-selected sites of Education and Social Work**

The brutal history of formal education in the lives of Indigenous peoples in Canada

cannot be understated. On May 1, 2014, Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools, was interviewed for the CBC Radio program *The Sunday Edition*. In introducing Justice Sinclair, CBC radio host Michael Enright, read:

As recently as the 1990s, Canada’s government-funded, church-run schools were places where Aboriginal children were, in the words, of the United Church, “victims of evil act that cannot under any circumstances be justified or excused. (Mahoney, 2014, p. 1)

Since the overt violence of an active residential school system has ceased, Aboriginal students have been receiving formal education with First Nations community-based schools or within the public or separate school systems that operate in all Canadian jurisdictions. Since this transition, many Aboriginal students continue to experience a schooling system that does not serve them well. While there have been numerous policy initiatives introduced with an aim to address both Aboriginal inclusion and achievement within K-12 schooling from a number of vantage points (e.g., Mandatory Treaty Education in Saskatchewan or Aboriginal Enhancement Agreements in British Columbia), the statistics are still problematic. As previously mentioned, the 2011 *Canadian National Household Survey* continues to document such troubling statistics as those that describe that 28.9 percent of Aboriginal people aged 25 to 64, have attained ‘no certificate, diploma or degree’ (Statistics Canada, 2011, p. 5).

Social Work has an equally merciless history. Métis Social Work scholar Jeannine Carriere (2005) writes of the ‘60’s scoop, which was a period when many Aboriginal children were apprehended from their homes by child protective services and placed within non-Aboriginal homes. These children were displaced from their communities. This displacement has been referenced as a form of cultural genocide arising from cultural chauvinism (White & Jacobs, 1992). The multigenerational reverberation of

the cultural genocide of the 60's scoop has been long lasting, as evidenced by Carriere who indicates that: "For example, Bagley et al. (8) reported that in Canada in 1981, 83% of adopted First Nations children were placed in Caucasian homes" (p. 545). While there have been numerous policy and legislative shifts within the discipline of Social Work and internal to Provincially-mandated child protective services that were designed address issues associated with the outfall of decades of the wholesale removal of First Nations children from their homes and into State care, the 2011 *National Household Survey* statistics taken from *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit* portray a consistently disturbing representation. This report states that: "Almost half (48.1%) of all children aged 14 and under in foster care were Aboriginal children. Nearly 4% of Aboriginal children were foster children compared to 0.3% of non-Aboriginal children" (Statistics Canada, 2011).

As actualized in accordance with mandates to prepare undergraduate students for professional practice, Education and Social Work educators have - to a certain extent - revised their training practices so as to recognize their respective discipline's culpabilities. Such individuals have concerned themselves with historic complicities, have taken action to unsettle scholarly inertia, and have worked to transform their discipline through their positions as educators. With respect to Education, the 1996 *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP)* offered direction specifically intended to inform teacher training programs. The section of the RCAP report that references the need for improvements to teacher training programs remains a relevant and timely statement that could equally be applied to social work training (as denoted by the terms in square brackets):

Teachers [social workers] cannot convey accurate information about Aboriginal people and instil respectful attitudes unless they have been prepared to do so. In training future educators [social workers], a compulsory component

focused on Aboriginal people will allow students to develop a deeper understanding of what is at stake in their relationships with Aboriginal students [families] and will prepare them to teach [consider] Aboriginal subject matter [experience] (Section 5.6, n.p).

This quote addresses the importance of not only a "compulsory component on Aboriginal people", but also identifies that such training should be delivered in way that will "instil respectful attitudes". The Association of Canadian Deans of Education (2010) *Accord on Indigenous Education* is an example of disciplinary movement intended to ensure Indigenous presence in post-secondary teacher training. Likewise, the Canadian Association for Social Work Education Standards of Accreditation state that:

Social work programs acknowledge and challenge the injustices of Canada's colonial history and continuing colonization efforts as they relate to the role of social work education in Canada and the self-determination of the Indigenous peoples (CASWE, 2013).

Within the larger context of their disciplines, each pre-selected site for this study has a significant history with Indigenous peoples and perspectives. The following offers a brief sketch of the pre-selected sites of this study in specific reference to their relationship with the Indigenous community. The sites include Education at the University of British Columbia and University of Saskatchewan; and Social Work at the University of Regina and University of Victoria.

#### **a) Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia (UBC).**

The University of British Columbia sits on the unceded territory of the Musqueam nation. The province of British Columbia passed legislation to establish and incorporate a university for the province in 1908 and in 1913 the first President of the University of British Columbia was

appointed (*Historical Timeline*, 2011). In its current strategic plan, *Place and Promise: The UBC Plan* (2012), the University of British Columbia has Aboriginal engagement as a focus.

The UBC Faculty of Education opened its doors in 1956 (*History of the Faculty*, 2014). The first formal Indigenous programming in the UBC Faculty of Education began in 1974 with the establishment of the Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP) that led to a Bachelor of Education degree program focusing on elementary education. The first Indigenous faculty to be hired in the UBC Faculty of Education was Verna J. Kirkness who accepted a position in 1980. Kirkness created an Indigenous presence within Education (and the larger university) in a number of ways, including the first Aboriginal graduate specialization program in Education - the Ts'Kel program - and the university-wide First Nations House of Learning (Archibald, 2010). A centre developed specifically to support Aboriginal student learning, the First Nations House of Learning offers services including: First Nations counselor, child care centre, library and Elders program (Holmes, 2006). The House of Learning resides in the First Nations Longhouse, which was opened on the UBC main campus in 1993.

Since 1974, the UBC Faculty of Education has been active in Indigenous Education. The Faculty originally emphasized elementary education and in 2004, NITEP was expanded to include secondary level education (Grades 8-12). NITEP's programming is offered under the auspices of a community/university advisory council. The First Nations Education Council is comprised of "Aboriginal educators, UBC Faculty, coordinator representatives, a BCTF representative, and NITEP student representatives" (*NITEP - About Our History*, 2014, n.p.). The Ts'Kel Graduate program, originally established as graduate degree program leading to a Master of Education Administration, has now flourished into a program that is primarily focused on Indigenous Master and Doctoral students, however Aboriginal students from other UBC departments may complete this

concentration (Ts'Kel Program, 2014). The graduate program is enhanced by the Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE) program launched in 2005 (*Culturally-Grounded Support for Aboriginal Graduate Students*, 2014). The focus of SAGE is the support of Aboriginal doctoral students.

The UBC Faculty of Education is active in community outreach, as demonstrated in such functions as the 2013 *Hands Back, Hands Forward* presentation and dialogue sessions.

In 2013, the UBC Faculty of Education celebrated the Year of Indigenous Education. In alignment with UBC's strategic plan, *Place and Promise: The UBC Plan*, the *Year of Indigenous Education* highlighted Indigenous education as a priority within the Faculty of Education (Year of Indigenous Education, 2014).

Dr. Joanne Archibald, Q'um Q'um Xi'em, of Stó:lō and Xaxli'p ancestry, has been in the position of Associate Dean of Indigenous Education and Director, NITEP since 2005 (*Senior Leadership Team*, 2014). According to the 2014 Aboriginal Faculty Members website, the UBC Faculty of Education includes ten Indigenous faculty, eight of whom are ranked at Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor levels.

### **b) College of Education, University of Saskatchewan (UofS).**

The University of Saskatchewan sits on Treaty 6 territory. The Aboriginal people of this area include the Cree, Dene, Saulteau, Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, and Métis peoples. The University of Saskatchewan was founded in 1907. In its current strategic plan, *Promise and Potential, The Third Integrated Plan, 2012 to 2016* (2012), the UofS has identified Aboriginal engagement as a focus area.

The UofS College of Education was founded in 1927 (*Education*, n.d.). Within the College, there exists four undergraduate programs that have as a focus Aboriginal education. One such program is the Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP)

that was founded in 1972-73 and has been delivering programs for over 40 years (*Indian Teacher Education Program – About Us*, 2014). The Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP) was founded in 1976 as a means to deliver an accredited teacher education program in northern Saskatchewan (Michell, 2013). More recent programs and partnerships include the Aurora College Teacher Education Program (ACTEP) that is based in the Northwest Territories and offers a three-year teacher education diploma program (*Aboriginal and Northern Degrees*, 2014). The Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) began offering a four year accredited Bachelor of Education degree program in partnership with the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan in 1980. SUNTEP is geared toward Métis and non-status urban Aboriginal students (*Aboriginal Research Resources*, 2014).

Aboriginal Engagement was first identified as a focus in the 2003 UofS College of Education 1st Integrated Plan (Battiste, Vizinia, & Steeves, 2012). This focus continues to be emphasized in 3rd cycle of the Integrated Plan (2012-16) of the UofS College of Education. (*College of Education Plan*, 2012). The Aboriginal Engagement focus is consistent with the UofS university-wide planning document, *Promise and Potential, The Third Integrated Plan*, 2012 to 2016. Emerging from this vision, the Aboriginal Education Research Centre (AERC) opened its doors in 2005 as a College of Education research centre. The original goals of AERC were multi-faceted and include, but are not limited to, Aboriginal research project development, conference organization, and the development of an Indigenous PhD program. Within the UofS College of Education structure, several departmental graduate offerings have been developed with specific Indigenous community relevance. In 2013, Educational Administration hired an Indigenous tenure track member in the position of Chair of Aboriginal Education. This department has also begun delivering a course-based Master of Education program to one First Nations community (*Overview of Graduate*

*Programs*, n.d.). In 2010 an Aboriginal Land-based M.Ed. cohort program was established through the Department of Educational Foundations. The Aboriginal Land-based program was the first graduate program at the UofS College of Education to focus on the integration of Indigenous Knowledges, perspectives and pedagogy.

In partnership with the larger university, the UofS College of Education, under the advisement of the Beadwork Committee, has partnered with the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching Effectiveness to bring more awareness of Indigenous peoples, knowledges, and ways of knowing to the University of Saskatchewan. A project entitled Indigenous Voices was developed and piloted in the UofS College of Education, and was made available to the university-wide community in 2013. Through specific workshop activities, the aim of Indigenous Voices is "to assist instructors, departments and colleges that are interested in bringing Indigenous people and perspectives into their teaching, programming, and disciplinary communities" (*Indigenous Voices*, 2014, n.p).

The first Aboriginal academic to be hired by the University of Saskatchewan was Métis scholar Dr. Howard Adams. Dr. Adams completed his PhD in 1966 becoming "becoming the first Canadian Métis to acquire a PhD. In the same year, Adams returned to Saskatchewan and took up a position in the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan" (Laliberté, 2007, n.p). Currently, there are five faculty with Indigenous heritage at the UofS College of Education. This group is comprised of faculty at Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor ranks.

### **c) Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina (URegina).**

The University of Regina has its roots in Regina College "and became a degree granting university in 1974" (*University of Regina Profile*, 2014, n.p). The main campus of the University of Regina sits on Treaty Four territory, and the URegina maintains two satellite campuses in Treaty Six territory. The Aboriginal people of the

catchment area include the Cree, Dene, Saulteau, Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, and Métis peoples. Building long-term relationships with First Nations and Métis communities was first identified in the 2009 University of Regina strategic plan, *mâmahohkamâtowin: Our Work, Our People, Our Communities*, and this relational imperative continues to be reflected in the 2014 - 2019 URegina Strategic Plan that was approved in November 2014. (Strategic Plan 2014)

The University of Regina has a unique relationship with First Nations in Saskatchewan. In May 1976, a partnership between the University of Regina and the Saskatchewan Federation of Indian Nations fostered the establishment of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC). SIFC was an independently administered university-college operating in affiliation with URegina. Two of the initial programs on offer included a Teacher Education program and the Indian Social Work program. In 2003, SIFC officially changed its name to the First Nations University of Canada (*First Nations University of Canada Information*, 2014).

Preceding the formal opening of the University of Regina, the URegina Faculty of Social Work was founded in 1971 and began offering a regular program in 1972-73. (*Faculty of Social Work history*, 2014). In 1976, the existing federation agreement between URegina and SIFC enabled the joint development of an Indian Social Work program now known as the School of Indigenous Social Work (*Master of Indigenous Social Work program*, 2014). Both the URegina Social Work program and the FNUC School of Social Work are accredited separately by the Canadian Association of Social Work Educators, although faculty at both programs participate in the collegial governance processes of their counterpart institution. The URegina undergraduate Social Work degree program is also delivered to students through affiliation agreements with Aurora College in the Northwest Territories and Yukon College in the Yukon, each of which has developed specialized programming that integrates local Indigenous Knowledges into their course offerings and student support

services.

The URegina Faculty of Social Work currently has three faculty members of Indigenous heritage, all of whom are based at the Saskatoon campus. This group includes faculty at the Assistant and Associate Professor ranks.

#### **d) School of Social Work, University of Victoria (UVic).**

The University of Victoria is located on the traditional territory of the WS'ANEC' (Saanich), Lkwungen (Songhees), and Wyomilth (Esquimalt) peoples of the Coast Salish Nation. The University of Victoria received degree granting status in 1963, however its origins can be traced back to Victoria College and its establishment in 1903 (Facts and Reports, 2014). The Strategic Plan for the University of Victoria, makes particular reference to increasing the graduation rates for Indigenous learners (*A Vision for the Future – Building on Excellence*, 2012).

The UVic School of Social Work opened its doors in 1976. The emerging vision of the School of Social Work demonstrates a commitment to social justice, anti-racist, anti-oppressive social work practices, and to promoting critical enquiry that respects the diversity of knowing and being. The School's educational mission is to prepare generalist social work practitioners skilled in critical self-reflection and in working with individuals, families, groups and communities. In particular, the UVic School of Social Work endeavours to prepare Indigenous social workers and child welfare practitioners and emphasizes structural, feminist, Indigenous and anti-oppressive analyses. UVic Social Work aims to share and create collective knowledge and understanding through engaging in critical enquiry and by supporting research and innovative curriculum development at the undergraduate and graduate levels. This is reflected in the practice mission that emphasizes taking action on social justice issues through community change initiatives and anti-oppressive social work.

The School of Social Work is committed

to an Indigenous approach to social work education through its Indigenous Specializations that provide a number of initiatives that are designed to promote Indigenous helping and healing practices and to strengthen collectivity within urban and rural communities. Through a cohort delivery model, the School of Social Work offered a Bachelor of Social Work degree to Vancouver Island First Nations in 1986 and in 1990 a similar arrangement was made with the Northwest Band Social Workers Association (Turner, 2005, p. 426). "An Indigenous advisory council was formed when the Indigenous specializations were first created in 2000" (Advisory, 2014). Currently the Indigenous child welfare undergraduate degree and Master degree programs provide students with the opportunity to explore culturally relevant social work practices.

At the time of this report, the School of Social Work at the University of Victoria had four Indigenous faculty members, three of whom are also greatly involved in administrative responsibilities to support the UVic strategic plan. In 2013, the School of Social Work appointed the Dr. Jacquie Green, Haisla, to the position Director of the School of Social Work as the first Indigenous director of a school of social work in Canada. Dr. Robina Thomas holds a university wide position as Director, Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement and Dr. Jeannine Carriere oversees the Indigenous Student Support Center for the faculty of Human and Social Development.

While there has been progress in Indigenous stream programs, pedagogical shifts and services, efforts toward full-on Indigenous integration within academic sites continue to lag. For example, a reasonable criterion for determining whether a university is Aboriginally engaged is the presence of Indigenous educators. From this perspective the following statement by the CAUT (2010) is disconcerting, "Aboriginal Canadians remain largely absent from the ranks of the professoriate" (p. 1). This statement is based upon a 2006 survey. At the time of the CAUT survey, 2.1 percent of

university teachers in Canada identified as Aboriginal, and there has been no more recent research into this phenomenon. This statistic is considered in light of the four main post-secondary institutions in Saskatchewan (i.e. University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina, First Nations University of Canada and the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology) confirming, “enrolment of aboriginal students has increased 10 to 25 per cent this year compared to two years ago” (‘Go for it’, 2014, n.p.). Certainly, these figures point to a changing academy in at least one province. The CAUT Aboriginal professoriate count and the increasing number of Indigenous students in post-secondary points to the possibility that Canadian academia remains largely unprepared for greater Indigenous presence on their campuses.

SECTION TWO





## Section II:

# Findings, themes and thoughts

The following sections of this report are dedicated to the key findings from the participant interviews. As was described in Chapter 2, the approach to this research utilized thematic analysis. To assist with the representation of the findings, the landscape of a winter sweat allegoric device forms the framework upon which the findings are presented. The elements of a winter sweat that assist in the allegoric representation of the findings include the *lodge*, the *fire*, the *snow*, and the *smoke*. For the purposes of this report, the imagery of the sweat *lodge* represents participant discourses on Indigenous Knowledges itself. The *fire* speaks to the passions and purposes associated with Indigenous Knowledges in post-secondary sites. The blanket of *snow* signifies the contexts of Indigenous Knowledges within this study. The sacred *smoke* denotes the participants' relationships with students, colleagues, and communities that are integral to the sustaining the presence of Indigenous knowledge systems within academic environments.

The overarching research question of this study focuses on Indigenous knowledge systems within Education and Social Work post-secondary classrooms, programs and disciplinary practice. Despite the focus of the study, it became clear that many participants were eager to share their experiences and understandings

of the many wrap-around factors that both hinder and help the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems vis-a-vis post-secondary Education and Social Work. Thus, the conversations moved back and forth between Indigenous Knowledges as a pedagogical paradigm within the classroom to discussions that focused on philosophy and practice with the potential to challenge the endemic eurocentricity of contemporary post-secondary environments. In our study Indigenous Knowledges (and Indigenous presence) arose as a standpoint from which to critique aspects of post-secondary policy, practice and pedagogical convention and consider new possibilities.

Based upon the research team's desire to allow the voices to be heard, the findings rely upon the words of the participants to animate the themed findings. The quotations of the 16 participants interviewed for this study are not presented in association with any pseudonyms, but rather are indicated within the report by transcript numbers that were assigned to each interview. The findings of our report are imbued with participant voices and 'data is the star'. The *path* in the winter sweat representation forms the discussion and recommendations of this report. The presentation of findings for this study begins with a note about allegories.



## The landscape of a winter sweat – an allegory

One of the Indigenous principles guiding this study is a commitment to holism. A holistic perspective assumes that rich knowledge sits in varied places and moves through diverse media. In congruence with holism, the findings of this study are being presented through several means – textual representation, allegory, and art – each supplementing the others. Within Indigenous research, the use of visual and experiential representations to assist in the meaning-making and presentation of the data is not uncommon (Edge, 2011; Michel, 2009). Within qualitative research such representations can take the form of metaphors. Metaphors, as figures of speech, can be used effectively to show the similarities between differing objects or ideas. When used thoughtfully and conscientiously, metaphors in qualitative research help to “...make things cohere; to link parts into a whole” (Sandelowski 1998, p. 379). As with metaphors, allegories are equally useful approaches in qualitative research. Allegory can be described as a narrative imbued with abstract (or not easily discernable) ideas or principles for the purpose of offering a teaching story. Allegory, as with metaphor, is a useful device in research that draws upon Indigenous principles because of its ability to represent holism and relationality in visual and literary forms. It is also non-directive in its presentation.

In this report, the literary device of an allegory is used to represent the story of this research. As introduced in the *Approach to Research* chapter, Métis artist Leah Dorion assisted the research team in representing the allegory of the

landscape of a winter sweat through her artwork entitled *A Winter Sweat #1*. Dorion’s depiction of *A Winter Sweat #1* calls forth memory of a sweat lodge ceremony held in March 2013 that the research team participated in. The actual ceremony was led by Elder Joseph Naytowhow to honour and ground the research. Literally and experientially, the artwork *A Winter Sweat #1* is animated by the individual relationships contributed through the energies of all who participated in the March 2013 gathering.

A sweat lodge ceremony is a useful allegory to explicate the social and spiritual relations and practices of an Indigenous worldview. Those who attend sweat lodge ceremonies may seek counsel for matters which are of important concern. Such matters are often complex and the remedies are not often readily evident. Sweat lodges are places imbued with the spirit of values and practices that underlie good relations. Properly maintained sweat lodges are places for meditation and a place for acquiring knowledge. For those who have experienced a sweat, they will know that there are several rounds with each successive round becoming more intense due to the participants having experienced one or more rounds previously. Each round signifies endurance and with each new round, there is an opportunity for increased healing and clarity.

It is not solely about that which happens within the lodge that encapsulates the entirety of a sweat lodge ceremony however. Accordingly, the allegory for our study is not about the sweat itself, per se, but rather the landscape of a winter sweat. Many lessons arise from activities associated with gathering together and preparing for entry into the lodge;

therefore, it is understood that the various phenomena that exist outside the lodge also animate the ceremony. Thus, the winter sweat allegory for this study includes the dimensions of fire, smoke, snow, and a path. Like an Indigenous presence in the academy, there are many sites involved.

The use of these aspects of the landscape of a winter sweat became the choice of the research team; however, *A Winter Sweat #1* also depicts other possibilities. The sky, the rocks, the wind and Thunder Bird are equally powerful symbols that may also apply to this research. For readers of this report, there is room for other interpretations within the landscape of a winter sweat allegory, and it is possible that evocations arising from interaction with the artwork may evoke further understandings related to this report. Cree knowledges tell us that our subjective knowings are of value.

For this research, the landscape of an Indigenous sacred ceremony as an allegoric device offers possibilities. Right at the start, the reader is immediately greeted with an Indigenous framework from which to consider the stories of the individuals. This act has the potential to awaken an existing Indigenous preconsciousness for some, while proposing an alternative point of view for others. Given the nature of the research conversations with study participants, the landscape of a winter sweat was chosen because it, like the overarching topic of this report, signifies that matters of a multifarious and intricate nature are at hand. Like the findings from the study, there is a path forward; but like any endeavour of great worth, it will not be an uncomplicated sojourn through the snow nor a quick melt.





SECTION TWO

**The Lodge**  
What is meant by  
Indigenous Knowledges

**CHAPTER**  
**FOUR**



*"I take the position in the courses that ... in one hand we're not there to rationalize why we ought to be doing it or even to talk about, "Does Indigenous Knowledge exist?" We're past that. We want to understand, "What is Indigenous Knowledge? How can Indigenous Knowledge shape education?" To me those are much more interesting and important questions." (13).*

How do you personally engage with Indigenous Knowledges in the context of teaching? What do you see as personal challenges in this effort? These were aspects of the study's sub-questions that had particular relevance when the research team first began considering how it may be that Indigenous Knowledges are being taken up within the pre-selected sites. They became focal points within conversations about pedagogy and beyond. When these subjects were broached, the participants offered up their understandings of Indigenous Knowledges. These reflections referenced ontological and epistemological considerations as well as the conditions that justify Indigenous Knowledges as a distinct philosophical perspective. Because of this focus, the themes arising from these conversations were situated within the Lodge of the winter sweat landscape allegory. The Lodge represents knowledge, and in this study it is specific to Indigenous Knowledges. The Lodge is where the

sacred sweat ceremony takes place. It is place where the self, in the company of a collective, can find purification, meditation and wisdom. Those most familiar with Indigenous Knowledge systems have an awareness of the capacity of the sweat ceremony for gaining clarity.

The Lodge chapter includes three categories of themes: common understanding of *Indigenous Knowledges*, *less common discourses*, and *sticking points*. As was previously noted when describing the participant sample for the research project upon which this report is based, the study comprised conversations with participants who are either Indigenous or allies of Indigenous peoples. Thus, participants were not novices to Indigenous knowledge systems and held perspectives gained through lived experience, personal connections with Indigenous people, and/or books, articles, and media resources. Nor were the participants newcomers to contemporary discourses relating to Indigenous academic scholarship.

### **Common understandings of Indigenous Knowledges**

Archibald (2010) suggests that Indigenous scholarship is moving toward a third wave of progression in Canadian post-secondary institutions. Within the history of Indigenous presence in Canadian post-secondary education, much has already been accomplished. One participant reflected that, *"we're able to conceptualize and articulate Indigenous Knowledge as theory, as methodology where we weren't talking about that in the 80's and in the 90's ..."* (13). This statement was affirmed through another participant's comment on days past, when a limited accessibility to Indigenous authored academic resources was the norm: *"I don't think there was ever an excuse but it was harder, you had to really, really, really look and dig out and often it was going to resources written by people like me, white people ..."* (2). Because of their historic positioning with respect to Indigenous programming, the post-secondary programs that serve the professional disciplines of Education and Social Work are, at least minimally, conversant in

discourses of Indigenous ways of knowing and many programs now hold common understandings of this worldview as found in this research and evidenced here:

**Animated Worldview Expressed Through Story.** Within the purview of the common understandings of Indigenous Knowledges, participants raised numerous ontological and epistemological points that coalesced into a theme. In articulating the nature of Indigenous Knowledges, participants offered up insights, such as: *"I don't know if Indigenous Knowledge is a specific kind of thing. I move away from that"* (12) or as stated here: *"It is epistemologically a verb, not just a noun"* (11). As a worldview that is premised on an animated world, Indigenous Knowledges were seen as a unique approach to knowledge. One person spoke of this in this way: *"I'll just take a rock in or something and I'll talk to them [students] about whether this is an animate or inanimate object and the difference"* (8). Whether conceived of as being alive, animate, or not a 'thing', Indigenous Knowledges were not perceived of as being historical vestiges of a retired museum exhibit, but rather they are alive and evolving, *"...it's not fast frozen, by definition it's always changing and expanding"* (9).

Deeply connected to an animated worldview was the intersection of story. Story was viewed as a medium for Indigenous Knowledges. In considering the role of story as part of academic life, one participant felt that *"my PhD work helped me understand a facet of Indigenous Knowledge and the use of stories and how stories shape our knowledge"* and further elaborated that stories are *"a pedagogy of knowledge and a methodology"* (13). In linking the need for academic space within which to further consider story as an important element of Indigenous methodology and pedagogy, this participant was affirming a principle that was articulated by another participant who proposed that: *"I think what we need to do is also figure out a way to give more credit and acknowledgement to oral traditions"* (7).

**Place and Protocol.** Stories, and the relationality that the oral tradition implies, are that which tell of knowledge that is

grounded in place. In this theme, one individual made reference to Indigenous Knowledges and hunting on the land, when commenting that, "... you don't face the moose downwind or nose to nose, you come up behind, that's how they hunt so that's Indigenous knowledge" (10). Another participant spoke of place as integral to an Indigenous pedagogical approach by stating that: "we come to the longhouse for some of the classes which gives a different sense of place. But in some ways, wouldn't it be neat if we could go have a course on the land?" (13). Still another participant elaborated on the impalpable, yet vital, relationship between the land and human community as an important dimension within Indigenous ways of knowing, by stating that: "The whole business for instance of people just being able to go out on the land and what is important in terms of just connecting to earth, to land". This participant further elaborated on community and the "importance of family and just a very different way of being. I think sometimes you have to go there to understand" (7). In summary another participant offered, "Your connections with the land, your connection with other people and then moving up from there, so that basic concept I think is core in Indigenous Knowledges" (2).

**Community.** The centrality of community in Indigenous Knowledges was articulated in a theme. The significance of community was succinctly expressed in the following statement: "I mean its community where I tend to more learn about Indigenous Knowledge" (8). To further illustrate the centrality of community, another participant shared a story of teaching a course in a recreation centre with "a microphone which echoes off the wall, and fifty students wandering in and anybody else in the community... Elders come in and young people, coming and leaving, ... it was amazing" (2). The vivacity of community resists a compartmentalized pedagogical approach, "when we're learning in our own communities it's not about how you sew the drum together but it's about life teachings, it's about values, it's about all kinds of things or anything right" (3). However, rules do exist within this intense vivacity of community, as indicated by the participants in this

study, many of whom had a 'good take' on the importance of following protocols when interacting with Indigenous Knowledges and communities. One participant commented on the protocol of acknowledging territory in the following terms: "I start every course with, that we're on unceded Musqueam land and to acknowledge that and explain to the students what I mean by that" (16). It was seen as important to be aware that "finding out the local protocols for things, that's very important to get ahead of time..." (2), especially given that "every community you'll go into will have different protocols" (4). This participant further suggested that when entering community in a respectful manner, non-members would be well-advised to: "don't be afraid to say I don't know this and I'm looking for guidance and direction" (4).

**The Role of Elders and Knowledge Holders.** In reflecting upon the presence of Indigenous Knowledges within such diverse places as a community, the academy, or within the Education and Social Work disciplines, the role of Elders and knowledge keepers was frequently mentioned and was identified as a theme. Because of their role as knowledge holders, inviting these individuals as guest presenters into classrooms was seen as one way that instructors could assist students in gaining exposure to Indigenous knowledge systems. Participants articulated that "a few years ago I bought in someone to do a button blanket" (3), and "I guess it's tapping in, tapping in to sort of a bigger pool of people who carry Indigenous Knowledge, drawing upon it as a resource. So it definitely influences that way" (8). It was also recognized that despite the intention behind bringing a knowledge keeper into a classroom, the assembled students' understandings of the words of Elders can be 'hit and miss'. For example, "...often people miss the point, because that was a very nice story and so on. But what they're saying through their own experience is: This is how one can live a good life" (11). Bringing Elders and knowledge holders into classrooms also reinforces the values of reciprocity and responsibility that are inherent with Indigenous knowledge systems. The inclusion of the messages associated with inviting and honouring

classroom presenters is equally significant to ensuring that respect for Indigenous Knowledges flourishes. In the words of one participant: "We have that responsibility. We have to respect Indigenous ways of knowing and being. We have to build relationships... and the last thing is reciprocity and giving back. It's my responsibility to give back" (4).

### Less common discourses on Indigenous Knowledges

Among other places, Indigenous Knowledges may be found within the personal, dialogic and relational. The inclusion of human subjectivities complicates objectified learning goals, outcomes, and metrics. They ask for a pedagogic space-time consideration of interpersonal lifelong questions, such as: Who am I? How does my story influence my interpretations? How is my story situated within a community of other selves? While issues of identity within Indigenous discourses are not uncommon, conversations of how identity intersects with the facilitation of Indigenous Knowledges are less frequent. A possible reason for this complexity could be the vulnerabilities that are exposed for those whose lifework takes place in 'expert' centered institutions.

**Embodiment.** The theme of embodied knowledge arose in this category. For some people, Indigenous Knowledges do not conform to objectified knowledge. This became a theme that appeared in conversations with Indigenous faculty. Over the course of the research conversations associated with this study, it became clear that for some participants, Indigenous Knowledges are understood as embodied phenomena. Numerous participants expressed that Indigenous Knowledges are an integral component of identity. One participant expressed it thus: "...it even infuses my work and so it's not that I really engage with Indigenous Knowledge, it's who I am when I engage" (8). As an embodied experience, Indigenous Knowledges were expressed as being akin to one's own breath, one's own body. "... (W)hatever I do – research, teaching – is motivated by my Indigenous history, experience, life. So I don't mark it out as this kind of thing over

here. *It's what I live and breathe and its who I am*" (12). Another participant articulated the embodied aspect of Indigenous Knowledges in the following terms:

*"And so it's not just in my pedagogy, but it is my scholarship, my research and my writing. It is in my committee work. ... And so when I think about the question about how do you bring it into your curriculum, it feels kind of like, you know, how do you say, how do you bring your breath into your work?"* (11).

Phrases such as *"it's who I am"* and *"It's what I live and breathe"* suggest that in an epistemological and ontological sense, some Indigenous Knowledges cannot be abstracted from one's corporeal body. Indigenous Knowledges are carried rather than 'known'. They are understood within a subjective identity. From this perspective, Indigenous Knowledges may be viewed as an embodied experience. Accordingly, the act of bringing Indigenous Knowledges into the classroom becomes performative. As one participant succinctly stated: *"In some ways I see myself as the content, and the process, and the pedagogy - like I am it. I am the pedagogy - I'm performing every day."* (12).

**From the Outside Looking In.** In considering Indigenous Knowledges, a theme of the outside-in dynamic emerged. Searching for an all-encompassing definition of Indigenous Knowledges as an objectified "thing" will likely be disappointing. Because Indigenous Knowledges cannot be fully objectified, gaining understanding through standing outside and observing from a detached distance does not work well. Indigenous Knowledges require an increased involvement of, and capacity for, subjective investment. Calling for a deeply personal approach to knowledge, Indigenous Knowledges may create vulnerabilities for individuals who feel they do not have an instinctive knowledge base upon which they may draw for guidance.

In consideration of voices that did not represent the embodied, intuitive experience of Indigenous Knowledges, several insights emerged that illuminate the challenges associated with the integration of this particular worldview. In the context

of appreciating the mentorship provided by another Indigenous faculty member, one participant self-assessed that: *"...I'm totally a novice. You know I would never ever claim any kind of expertise when it comes to understanding Indigenous culture"* (15). Another participant expressed the frustration of what could be identified as an outsider perspective,

*"So I'm the instructor. I am not an Indigenous instructor. This is not an Indigenous student. We value Indigenous research and knowledge as one of many forms of research and knowledge - it's on the table, but for whom and how? So here's where I get frustrated in research class. And I'd be really interested to know what you think and what comes out of the research. Because this is an ongoing pattern that I don't know what to do with, and I'm still figuring it out."* (1).

Still another participant reflected on the feeling of never quite knowing enough. While describing the personal challenges one participant had experienced, it was shared that: *"... my lack of knowledge or the feeling I have of not being able to help my students because I don't know something or I don't know enough. I really don't know enough. I'll never know enough."* (15).

In conjunction with the dynamics associated with outsider positioning, there was specific commentary on the discomfort of it all. One example has a participant sharing the experience of a pedagogy that is inclusive of spirit: *"Well I've always added a band in there called spiritual knowledge, knowledge that comes from the Creator."* (10). This participant went on to say that when first teaching research, *"we're talking eighteen years ago, being kind of embarrassed to say that being in front of the class, but I got over it and I'm quite comfortable."* (10). Another participant reinforced the idea of dealing with discomfort across the curriculum,

*"...there'd be an expectation that non-Indigenous faculty deal with their discomfort and to feel responsibility to teach Indigenous ways of knowing and by that I mean not giving an article on how Indigenous kids are failing as there's our Indigenous section."* (16).

In concert with embodied and outsider-in positioning, another theme arose within the category of *Less Common Discourses*. This theme/phenomena was articulated by the researchers as an *oskâpêwis* effect.

**The oskâpêwis effect.** This theme referenced an in-between place. Within Plains Cree culture, the (singular and plural) term *oskâpêwis* is used to describe an Elder's Helper at ceremonial gatherings such as sweat lodge ceremonies or feasts. At a sweat lodge ceremony, *oskâpêwis* assist with various aspects of the sweat such as building a fire, keeping the rocks hot, and bringing the rocks into the sweat. *Oskâpêwis* move back and forth between the physical environment outside the lodge, and the ceremonial space inside the lodge. *Oskâpêwis* bear specific responsibilities and the role is significant, but it is a different role from that of an Elder. Often, though not always, an *oskâpêwis* is in training to one day take on knowledge-holder responsibilities, including ceremonial Knowledges. There are deeper teachings around the role of *oskâpêwis*, but what is pertinent to this report is that *oskâpêwis* facilitate and manage the conditions necessary for the attunement of relationships. *Oskâpêwis* do not lead sweat lodge ceremonies, rather they are cultural helpers or facilitators.

Within this study, it became apparent that some individuals enact an *oskâpêwis* function within their academic pursuits. For some, the *oskâpêwis* effect applies broadly to bringing an Indigenous perspective into the campus setting. One participant describes a familiar approach for facilitating an Indigenous viewpoint through the following strategies: *"perhaps co-teaching with an Indigenous colleague, or at least bringing in speakers and people that are speaking from that point of view in terms of their own identity."* (9). Another spoke about inviting local people into campus-based settings when stating: *"I invited someone to teach us about drum making and so its about not only learning how to drum beat, but we had discussions around what does it mean to do Indigenous social work."* (3). In each of these examples, the approach is to offer space for those who may offer a more organic perspective and the instructor functions a facilitator-teacher, rather than as a knowledge holder. In circumstances

when a discussion on Indigenous cultural knowledge is sought, it is not uncommon to see the *oskâpêwis* effect rather than knowledge keeper role enacted. One participant shared their personal rationale as to why this approach may be enacted, in the following terms,

*“And so, so - No, I wouldn’t bring smudging into the classroom because in order for me to do that, I would need to earn the right to what I know. And what I know right now is just so limited because that particular ceremony, a smudging ceremony is something that could take a long, long time to learn because it’s very detailed” (8).*

Inviting knowledgeable faculty or community people who can provide a particular perspective – perhaps an embodied knowledge – is a strategy that is common in many classrooms. The instructor invites a person whom they know, and/or already have a pre-existing relationship. In some cases, the invitee may take the form of an Indigenous faculty colleague, if a particular instructor does not have access to community-based resources. This does not necessarily assume the Indigenous invitee will speak to Indigenous Knowledges per se, but it is a way of inviting Indigenous presence into an academic learning environment that might otherwise seem somewhat sterile. This invitational strategy is widely practiced, however it is not one that should escape a reflexive gaze. One participant commented on the dynamic of particular faculty not wishing to address ceremonial knowledge themselves, by instead seeking to cover off a sensitive topic by proxy in the following terms: *“I don’t need to go sit in your church to understand how to work with you, so I will not share the intimate details of my culture and tradition.” (4).* The desire to avoid becoming anthropologized is strong. As such, there are some faculty who do not wish to speak to all aspects of Indigenous Knowledges and who do not necessarily feel that all aspects of Indigenous Knowledges need to be brought into to academic classrooms.

## **Sticking points about Indigenous Knowledges**

The history of colonialism, the tensions associated with bringing forth a unique and alternate ontology within an established cultural domain, and the affective dimension of Indigenous Knowledges are complicating factors which the academy is beginning to grapple with. Notwithstanding the larger enterprise of decolonizing academia, a number of sticking points were voiced by participants that stem from engaging with the ontology of Indigenous Knowledges. When considering such issues as the effort and responsibility required to undertake this sort of work, and “the whole relationship thing” as it relates to the context and expectations of western cultural practices, it is wise to give pause for thought. The following themes emerged with regard to sticking points.

**‘The thing about relationship-building’.** If individuals have not previously become familiar with the dynamics of Indigenous Knowledges, the desire and effort required to acquaint oneself with these systems of understanding can be viewed as yet another demand to place upon an already overtaxed workload. The time, energy and effort commitments necessary to get up to speed with an unfamiliar topic area within a busy academic life cannot be understated. One participant articulated this dynamic when stating that: *“There’s a burgeoning growth of literature out there ... so I mean even taking time to acquaint oneself with that stuff as the first step to having it inform your research and teaching.” (9).*

In acknowledging that which needs to be done, the matter of relationship-building invariably arises. Those who are better acquainted with Indigenous Knowledges systems recognize the centrality of relationality, and this was clearly articulated by one participant when stating that: *“I’m sensitive to protocol and working through with good relations and taking your time to find out you know, who they are and to build those good relationships; I’ve been at many events now.” (14).* Beyond simply holding an intention to develop better relationships, the actual practice of relationality can be another matter, as demonstrated in the following statement: *“I think it’s*

*really important to work on building good relationships; so I can’t say that I purposely go out and visit communities.” (14).* This participant went on to indicate that: *“I’ve had several links, say with the Musqueam community here, around some activities that we’ve been doing, but through students.” (14).* Another participant who had recently completed a research project involving Indigenous peoples, stressed the importance assuming the responsibility for relationship development.

*“It’s almost like colonization you know. It’s almost like trying to Westernize people in some ways. And so I’m going up there and I’m saying this is what we want and this is how we want you to do it. And they’ll say: ‘That isn’t going to work for us, right. ‘That isn’t going to work for us.’ And... and I’m also wanting it to be done within this particular timeframe, but what is important is to build the relationships. It’s to build trust. To slow down. To sit and have coffee or whatever. Or just sit” (7).*

Relationships - and the time they take to develop and sustain - are not an unknown variable when it comes to working with Indigenous Knowledges, communities, and individuals. The tension that relationship evokes was further described by another participant in the following terms: *“I’m sure there’s some wonderful films - for example, Indigenous films or films based on Indigenous Knowledges - that would be good for me.”* The individual went on to say, *“But how would I find out about them? Like, who is interested in that and how could I do that? So I often would take an easy path and say, ‘Well that can be another year, I’ll do that” (6).* This comment reminds that the ‘next term country’ is an ever-present dynamic for many academics.

**Contradictory spaces and ‘grading’ the relational.** In an environment that upholds a culturally value-laden framework that is not based upon relationality, those faculty members who seek to animate the relational aspects of Indigenous Knowledges may find themselves encountering the felt experience of a contradictory space as was articulated in the words of one participant who commented upon their experience of

teaching an Indigenous-focussed course to a diverse student group,

*"I always preface each course that I teach by saying that you've decided to get a diploma or a degree in an institution that is westernized. Because of that, you have to do things that are westernized. We can bring the Indigenous lens to it but in order for you to get the grades that you need, I have to give you a western grade in this" (3).*

This individual further elaborated by stating that:

*"I also prefaced it by saying that we're in a grey area where, as Indigenous educators and programmes, we're figuring out how to bridge the Knowledges - Indigenous knowledge we're bringing in - and how you evaluate it" (3).*

One participant encapsulated the tension of uncertainty regarding what is 'true' when it comes to Indigenous Knowledges by raising the point that: *"I've got lots of Indigenous textbooks that I've read. But how do you actually do? This individual went on to say, "what are the action steps, what is the validity, how do we understand the criteria for worth in Indigenous Knowledge? Or is it the wrong question to ask?" (15).* Another participant raised a similar sentiment in the following statement:

*"And then I use another example of about how your mother or grandmother, they tell you if you don't wear a hat, you're going to catch a cold. Or whatever. You know, don't go out with wet hair - that's a good one. Don't go out with wet hair because you'll catch a cold. Well that's a myth. So not all knowledge passed down by Elders is good and accurate, so we have to be selective on how we choose them" (10).*

Comments of this nature, beg the question of whether one set of evaluation tools that was designed for use with a particular philosophical approach can apply outside of its established frame of reference. Likely, the aspects of Indigenous Knowledges that may

be currently be evaluated (i.e. commonly held understandings/aspects) within existing student assessment strategies (e.g., measuring comprehension through descriptive and analytical ability) often miss the relational dimension. The articulation of 'why we sit in circle' (i.e., to listen and be heard), matters little if we do not actually practice respectful listening and considerate oratory skills. Relationship building is about bringing in respectfulness and building community. How does one grade that?

### Summary

In summarizing the discussions associated with Indigenous Knowledges that are in line with the representation of the Lodge dimension of this report and the allegorical imagery of *A Winter Sweat #1*, the study participants clearly affirmed several findings. Within the conceptualization of Indigenous Knowledges, typically accepted conditions of existence include the dimensions of story, place, respect, knowledge holders, animated ontology, and relationality. This was confirmed by participants in the study under the category of *Common Understandings of Indigenous Knowledges*. Within the differing contexts of community, academic literature, and the conversations with the participants who participated in our study, the term Indigenous Knowledges has multiple dimensions. But regardless of the variety of interpretations, Indigenous Knowledges represent a distinctive philosophical, ontological, epistemological and cultural way of being in the world that predates Euro-American settlement. The existence of this knowledge system, as with any other, implies that there are specific conditions that justify its existence. In the abstract, these common understandings are generally endorsed as theoretically worthy.

At first glance it may be argued that 'getting on' with an Indigenous agenda is a relatively straightforward proposition given the more abstract suppositions. After all, most educators and social workers would assess themselves as individuals who seek to serve a relationality that honours the dignity of others and recognizes the utility of the learner's story in their post-secondary classrooms. Yet, the actions required to move beyond *common understandings* of Indigenous knowledge systems

towards a perspicuity of the relational dimensions of Indigenous Knowledges is anything but straightforward. Indigenous Knowledges are demarcated by common understandings and, to a certain extent, these can be objectified and abstracted; however, Indigenous Knowledges also invite the nuances, eccentricities, and possibilities of the single self. As one of the research participants stated: *"I'd say it starts there with the idea that no matter who you are in the circle, Cree, Scottish or South Asian Indian, starting with who you are and the Knowledges that come from who you are"(2).* To this extent the ways in which individuals engage with Indigenous Knowledges depends much on their positioning and their movement between positionings – embodied, outside-in, *oskâpêwis* – that have been demarcated as themes in this study.

In considering the *sticking points* when it comes to Indigenous Knowledges, it remains clear that in whatever manner the importance of Indigenous relationality is intellectually understood within academia, the actual practice of relationship-building is slow to shift. The existing academic culture - shaped over centuries by generations of scholars - continually exerts its' self-perpetuating force. Although it is recognized that a relational shift is necessary, the efficacy principle of outcome versus cost always comes into play when it comes to the task of relationship-building. Within the institutional culture of academia, relationality is generally viewed as an activity that taxes existing resources and only provides less immediate outcomes. When translated into the learning environment of academic classrooms, students quickly learn that capability with the written word is most richly rewarded and that grades are the currency by which success is measured.





SECTION ONE

**The Fire: Why  
Indigenous Knowledges?**

**CHAPTER  
FIVE**



*"I believe that you can't bring in anything like Indigenous ways of knowing and thinking and believing or animating - any of that - until people have an idea or an understanding about what it is and why it is that we even have to ask the question, what is Indigenous knowledge?" (11).*

In continuing with the winter sweat landscape allegory, the *Fire* is a critical aspect of the sweat lodge ceremony. The fire, located just outside the lodge, heats the rocks used during sweat lodge ceremonies. An *oskâpêwis* tends to the fire and is responsible for moving hot stones into the lodge for each round. In this study, the *Fire* represents motivation and burns with a passion for justice.

In the study upon which this report is based, the research team sought answers to the question, "What is the relevance to integrating Indigenous Knowledges into instruction and core curriculum?" This research project provided opportunities for participants to reflect upon the question of why it matters to consider

Indigenous Knowledge systems within academic settings. In order to describe why Indigenous Knowledges matter, many of the participants found it useful to contextualize their interview with statements relating to their motivation for undertaking the work in the ways that they do. To a large extent, the conversations that emerged around the topic of "What keeps the fire burning?" were linked to themes relating to social justice and the prospect of a postcolonial world.

In an effort to gain more insight into what motivates Education and Social Work faculty to engage with Indigenous Knowledges, and to illustrate the findings in a fulsome manner, the *Fire* section of this report draws upon the research team's decision to analyse the data by taking into account the perspectives of Indigenous faculty participants in contrast to those of faculty who do not identify as Indigenous. The findings of the *Fire* section are presented in five overarching themes: decolonizing motivations, challenging racism, 'digging down' into decolonization, the ally effect; and establishing a counter-narrative emerging explicitly from both groups.

### **Indigenous Faculty Perspectives**

**Decolonizing motivations.** In reflecting upon their work with Indigenous Knowledges and Indigenous presence, participants spoke of the generalized obliviousness to the racism and colonialism that exists within society, and which functionally maintains the existing standard narratives relating to Indigenous peoples. In reflecting upon the various disciplines with the university, one participant referenced an epidemic of Eurocentric normalization in the university,

*"...there's some society notion in Sociology - maybe even Economics - but basically, they have so normalized their society as it is, that this is the way it is. This is it. And they miss the systemic elements that are part of the whole Eurocentric problem - and that is that they still see and envision Eurocentrism as superior" (11).*

Through the use of terminology associated with a process of unpacking, this participant felt that, "to take inclusion of Indigenous peoples and their Knowledges to the next step within the academy, we had to do some unpacking". In clarifying what needed unpacking, the participant went on to say, "...that unpacking of the Eurocentric paradigms, the Eurocentric frameworks, the Eurocentric theories that have constantly diminished us and created us as 'others'" (11). Succinctly addressing the necessity of first exploring colonial and racist normative assumptions before introducing Indigenous Knowledges, another participant shared:

*"And so I'm afraid of slipping into that idea of 'Oh, let's just be nice to each other.' Because it's so much more difficult than that. Because the way I see it, is that Indigenous people have offered the pipe to non-Indigenous people for five hundred years. And it hasn't made a difference. They don't value it. They don't see us as human beings, to be acknowledged or to be seen as legitimate. So you have to unpack that first" (12).*

The unpacking begins with seemingly straightforward questions that can be posed to students in class, such as: "... How do you know what you know? What is it that you need to un-learn? What is it you need to learn?" (4). Indigenous Knowledges evoke the challenge to unpack, unlearn, and begin acknowledging another perspective as legitimate. In this sense, un-learning is symbiotically connected to the question of "What is it you need to learn?" In learning anew, there is a shift, and an opportunity to challenge racism.

**Challenging Racism.** The resistance to changing the question relating to deficit-based theorizing that arises within classrooms is no different than the resistance that exists elsewhere in the university, the discipline, and society. Being asked to change creates unease. And when the change being sought is associated with the balancing of inequities, it creates animosity toward the less privileged. This animosity is often experienced as a bodily or spiritual violence, particularly for racialized

minorities. Racism, as one participant observed, pervades environments and it requires a foundational - not solely a cosmetic - fix. *"Racism is seen as sort of an individual kind of problem, rather what one breathes. You know that's one of the problems" (11).* This participant further elaborated that: *"It is not about sending individuals off for a course or to a weekend retreat and have them come back and 'Aha, we'll be all better for that.'" (11).*

Given the toxicity of racism that is inherent in spaces founded upon a colonial imperative, it is unsurprising that Indigenous participants in this study reflected on how racism influences their experience of being Indigenous in the academy. As one participant shared, it is a personal experience. *"I had to deal with some issues of triangulation - in terms of students probably unconsciously being racist - and you know, going after me. Challenging me. Attacking me personally. Just because they could..." (8).* Another Indigenous participant spoke of the dehumanizing aspects of racism in the following terms: *"And sometimes I find like that's the position that Indigenous people often get placed in. It's to convince non-Native people that we're human beings. Because that's the degree to which we've been dehumanized" (12).* Still another participant pointed to the need for Indigenous space in their programme, *"To confront the racism - to have that space to work through those angry or sad moments - and look at how ceremony could be part of it" (3).*

## **Perspectives of Non-Indigenous Faculty**

### **"Digging down" into decolonization.**

From our conversations with individuals who did not identify as Indigenous, the theme of decolonization and its complexities arose. Invariably, talk of decolonization included language that clearly linked with the terminology of justice.

Decolonizing work is bound with justice; however, justice – and by association decolonization - is often murky and paradigm dependent, as was reflected in the words of one participant: *Sometimes*

*I think we really have the tendency to have off-the-cuff, 'pabulum' type definitions, without really digging down into 'What is justice?'" (9).* This participant went on to say,

*It's a really complicated process, and part of it is cultural. What is it? Is it a purely western notion? Or maybe different languages, for instance Indigenous languages, can get at it in a more holistic and nuanced way. It includes things like fairness and equality and collective responsibility and engaging with your community and maybe even the political term "citizenship". (9).*

*"What is it [Justice]? Is it a purely western notion?" Yes, in Canada, from a legal perspective, justice is tied to western law. From a social justice perspective it is, more often than not, intertwined with concepts of equity and freedom. It cannot escape a power analysis. Decolonization and anti-colonial work focuses on a particular power relationship that is steeped in the settler imperative. It is about creating space and not necessarily filling space for Indigenous Knowledges.*

Unquestionably, there is a relationship between decolonization, anti-colonialism, anti-racist work, and Indigenous Knowledges. Decolonization is the process of interrogating settler society and reminding us all that parity for Aboriginal peoples has not yet been achieved. However, within the desire to name racism, to strike back against colonialism, and to be an ally, competing interests can emerge between decolonizing efforts and Indigenous Knowledges. Reconciling these competing interests does not always come easily as one participant offered, *"I take the romanticized version of 'Indigenous peoples are our guides' and 'Let's just have a spiritual approach.' And it sort of feels a bit - it's troubling to me..."* This person went on to say, *"I want to put that alongside our Auditor General's report in 2009 that said that none of the municipal or provincial regulations and by-laws around sewage disposal and water management apply to reserves (1).*

**The ally effect.** When discussing the

processes associated with naming racism and destabilizing deficit theorizing, an interrogation of the role of ally was raised as a topic of significance. For some members of the academic community, there is a desire to be an ally to Indigenous peoples. However, as one participant described, ally-positioning can be duplicitous. *"Students often want to go to the downtown Eastside which has a large population of folks that are Indigenous and homeless. It's like, 'Why?' Right? Sort of looking at that kind of saviour thing..." (16).* Interrogating the "saviour thing" was affirmed by another participant who shared this reflection: *"I think for many of us - we've kind of skipped over the being part and gone right into becoming an ally, without knowing about how to be in this place" (5).*

By asking the question, *"How do you be an ally and what does that mean?" (16),* another participant pointed to the action orientation nature of ally positioning. Another participant articulated alliedness by noting that one can demonstrate they are an ally simply by acting as an ally. *"... One of the things we have is this safe space. You've got the triangle or whatever that you keep on your door, so that people would know 'This is a safe person or this place is open and you can come to me' (7).* Having had assumed a position of 'the White House' within one academic setting, another participant further recounted past experiences associated with this form of ally positioning:

*"I know some of my Indigenous colleagues call me 'The White House'. And so if they wanted a white person to talk to a white person about something Indigenous, they would call me and say, 'I can't do this! I will hit them or something. Can you do this? Can you talk white to them?' That has happened three times, and I thought, 'Oh, that felt good - because I can talk white to them about something important" (6).*

In considering the complexities associated with the role of ally, two participants succinctly summarized the situation in the following terms: *"It's to be an ally - but it's still keeping our distance. Being an ally from*

a distance - the heart distance, and the head distance. It's really complicated" (5). Further, the complicatedness of ally positioning was affirmed by another participant who stated: "... for a non-Indigenous person going into grounds as an ally - it's sensitive work personally for me. And it's also work I don't want to fuck up. And so I need feedback" (6).

## COMMON PERSPECTIVE

**Establishing a Counter Narrative.** Among Indigenous participants and those who did not identify as being of Indigenous heritage, the findings showed a common desire toward establishing an Indigenous counter-narrative. In revealing the counter-narrative, one Indigenous participant stressed the necessity of posing crucial questions to students, in order: "...to have them understand what it is that they bring into the colonial analysis picture. What are they resisting or problematizing? What are they speaking against? What is their counter-narratives about?" (11). This participant went on to state that: "Post colonialism and post structural and post modern are areas of theory that connect to our Indigenous Knowledges in a way that helps us to position the counter-narrative" (11). The establishment of a counter-narrative that serves Indigenous people was - for one Indigenous participant - tied to pedagogical purpose as was demonstrated in the following statement:

*"... it's what I am fortified by every day that I walk into the classroom and I see the resistance. When I go into my graduate class, I say: 'My purpose is to change your question.' For too long the questions have been shaped around our failure. We're going to redesign those questions to look at how dominance requires failure and demands failure. Racial dominance. Because the production of inferiority and superiority is interrelated." (12).*

As an ally, one participant spoke about counteracting the deficit theorizing of Aboriginal peoples: "I think one of the best ways that I feel I can facilitate, as best as I can, is to make a conscious effort not to problematize Aboriginal and First Nations people" (10). Situating the deficit

perspective within the field of practice, another participant commented that: "I am very aware in Social Work that for many years what we did is spend a lot of time focusing on negatives ... the stories of Indigenous peoples are always - sort of - very problem based" (7). In reflecting upon the general state of disparity that upholds societal norms, one participant juxtaposed the Aboriginal 'deficit' with that of the mainstream, in the following manner:

*"I try and reframe things and say - 'What would it look like if we challenged the deficit thinking we have about Aboriginal Peoples and turn that around and look at the deficit thinking of the status quo.'" (16).*

## Summary

In summary, the participants in this study viewed Indigenous Knowledges as intricately related to a social justice sensibility that interrogated racism and colonialism in efforts to decolonize the academy. From the vantage point of Indigenous participants, the felt experience of racism based upon their Indigenous ancestry offered personal insight into the toxic and destructive impacts of systemically racialized environments that are often invisible to the undiscerning eye. Decolonizing the academy was viewed as an analytic and action strategy to reveal the value-laden assumptions upon which western post-secondary institutions function, from positions that are nested with that same system. In efforts to decolonize academic spaces, Indigenous participants spoke of challenging racism at myriad levels.

As allies in this study reflected upon Indigenous Knowledges, it was clear that there was an equal interest in decolonizing efforts. Allies spoke about the need to further complicate the notion of justice, decolonization and Indigenous Knowledges. As one participant articulated, "What is justice?" In western society we define justice within a democratic society that is based on the rights and freedoms of human beings. This begs the question - what possibilities does Indigenous

culture offer to a deeper understanding of justice? Another participant struggled with a seemingly competing interest of engaging with philosophy (i.e. Indigenous Knowledges) when inequities abound. In further reflecting upon the passion for upholding an Indigenous presence, participants in our study gave considerable attention to 'unpacking' the role of the ally. What did it mean in the past? What does being ally mean today? How does one be an effective ally in supporting Indigenous Knowledges? As one participant noted, it's sensitive work that's bound with a need for on-going feedback.

Among both groups, a theme of the need to create an Indigenous counter-narrative was evident. There was a recognition of the on-going deficit theorizing of Indigenous peoples as the problem. In both Education and Social Work there has been cannon of literature documenting the negatives of Indigenous life. Both groups were interested in disrupting this standard account and changing the question so as to establish a more balanced, nuanced and honest perspective.



SECTION ONE

**Smoke: Relationality  
of Indigenous Knowledges  
and presence**

**CHAPTER  
SIX**



Smoke is sacred in many Indigenous cultures. For example, among Plains Indigenous cultures, there is a traditional ceremonial practice known as smudging. Where practiced, smudging will often occur before an important event where matters of significance are to be discussed or in ceremony (as in the sweat lodge), or at particular gatherings. Among other things, smudging works to cleanse bodies and spaces from negative energies. For many peoples of the Great Plains peoples, the ceremonial burning of medicinal herbs (e.g., sweetgrass) celebrates the human-plant relationship via smoke that ensues. An Elder or designated individual will lead the smudge. The individual facilitating the smudge allows each person participating in the ceremony to brush smoke over himself or herself. When thus animated, smoke washes over each individual in the circle to cleanse and energize the people and the space. Through the act of smudging, smoke dispels negativity and allows individuals to proceed in deliberations with others from a place of a good mind and heart. Smoke is not static but active. It is animated and fluid. In ceremony, the experience of smoke is both individual and collective. Smoke is sacred.

Within the allegory of the landscape of the winter sweat, as depicted in Leah Dorion's *A Winter Sweat #1*, the swirling animated smoke represents relationships. Arguably, this entire report is about the relationships that inform and define Indigenous Knowledges in Education and Social Work disciplinary presence in post-secondary sites. However, in analysing the data, it became clear that there needed to be specific mention to three particular sets of relationships that gave particular context to the overarching research question of Indigenous Knowledges in both Education and Social post-secondary programs. These relationships include classroom relationships with students, collegial relationships and community relationships. Within these groupings of relationships a number of themes arose.

### **Pedagogical relations of an Indigenous presence: Students**

This category relates to the relational dynamics involved within conversations, movement, and practices of animating Indigenous Knowledges in post-secondary sites in Social Work and Education as these pertains to students. This category identifies several key insights about the pedagogical relationships that surround an Indigenous presence within classroom settings. The perspectives include participant thoughts on Indigenous students and students who are not perceived as being of Indigenous heritage.

### **Classrooms in Transition – A 'New Normal'?**

The emergent imperative towards Indigenous student engagement in post-secondary sites is creating a shift. A number of participant voices suggest that the relationships that define Indigenous presence within classroom settings are in transition. From one perspective, classroom dynamics were perceived in terms of a 'new normal' wherein Indigenous students may feel more welcome through the creation of space for Indigenous worldviews,

*"Last term I had two Indigenous doctoral students. It was great. So I would talk and they had to do a presentation for their methodology*

*chapter for their dissertation.*

*These two students were doing an Indigenous methodology so their presentations were fabulous. They were not the normal 'Here's the purpose, here's the rationale, here's the procedures and steps'. It wasn't that at all, no. It was drumming. I was song. It was a powerpoint presentation, but it had a lot of clips of people talking in it. And it was all about ways of knowing and ways of engaging and using the four R's of research and not just naming the four R's but actually what that means: 'How will I show respect, how will I show relationship, you know how do I show reciprocity?' (15).*

Another participant articulated this 'new normal' in terms of: *"I've noticed a change in the years - it used to be the Aboriginal students would sit in the back and hide and now more and more of them are sitting right up in the front and are more vocal."* This participant went on to say, *"And I think that's positive development, this next generation. So the work on decolonizing and demystifying and celebrating Aboriginal culture and language this past decade is starting to show more students"* (10). Another participant reflected upon change over time when stating: *"I find it's been interesting through the years in that I'm seeing less resistance by the students to take up the Indigenous Knowledges or even anti-racism and I feel that that's just such a positive thing"* (9).

However, several participants also spoke about the change coming at a price for Indigenous students and that classrooms are in transition with one step forward being accompanied by another step back. In reflecting upon thesis supervision with an Indigenous student, one participant shared *"We have to criticize it [student work] and that's against his culture to criticize the work or critique it. Because he has to be able to defend it and here I made him cry."* This participant went on to say, *"I could see a tear in his eye. You know, that's the hard part. But he'd never get through it if he didn't. But now he has this sort of love-hate relationship with me afterwards"* (10). Another participant reflected on a seemingly conflicted academy that has developed alongside

this 'new normal', "I see it with grad students too that are expanding ways of thinking. And on one hand it's 'Oh it's great, you're an Indigenous grad student.' And then on the other hand it's 'Well you're not meeting standards.'"(16).

**Teacher-Facilitator.** In reflecting upon their pedagogical relationships with students, several participants spoke about moving from 'teacher-expert' to more of a teacher-facilitator role. One participant described this dynamic when sharing, "I'll direct them to read Thomas King's book so that they get that sense of where they belong. I see myself as a facilitator a lot. Doing that kind of work" (4). With respect to facilitating knowledges in Indigenous content courses, one participant reflected upon a previously taught class, and offered commentary on the worth and value that Indigenous student knowledge brings to the classroom, "I can think of one fellow in particular, an older Aboriginal fellow who was in my class, and had quite a life story and problems he had overcome in his life. And I mean, I was the teacher at the front learning from him" (9). In further considering the facilitation role, another participant shared insight into facilitating a class and creating space for student knowledge without exploiting Indigenous students,

*"How do I facilitate discussions for Indigenous students? I hope that I take them, I give them my permission as the instructor to not have to engage every time something comes up. I don't look at them and expect that they can comment or something. It's quite a trick because often the people in the class look and, anyway I said 'If you think you know everything about being white, then you'll assume somebody else knows everything about being not white - but guess what, we don't.'" (6).*

Another participant affirmed that asking for Indigenous voice within pedagogical relationships generally requires skill and sensitivity: "I need this to not injure Indigenous students, I need them to hear the voice, I need them to hear the story. But I can't just say, go and interview an Indian person because what happens is that sort of

appropriation of story. This person went on to say, "I am always struggling with that one" (5).

**The Identity Factor.** In reflecting upon students and in particular Indigenous students, participants in the study spoke about the intersection of Indigenous identity with the classroom experience. One participant commented upon the importance of Indigenous stream courses for Indigenous students:

*"I think these IK type courses are really critical for them because the course serves a number of purposes. One is to provide knowledge about policies and history and initiatives, etc. right. And to develop critical thinking. So it's basically educational - sort of the intellectual, if you will -, uses of it. But at the same time, I think because of our history of colonization and the impact on identity that they also serve that important role to help students deal with identity issues" (13).*

The identity factor is always a pedagogical consideration when teaching Indigenous students. A number of participants spoke about the importance of not assuming all Indigenous students have the same experience with Indigenous Knowledges and cultures. For example, as one participant shared, "It's very hard, it's not easy and it's one on one because not every Indigenous person has the same background. And not every Indigenous person comes from a rural area or whatever." (15). This person went on to say, "You can't assume you know anything. So it's like taking that blank slate, 'I don't know anything' approach, but I'm going to try and be as helpful as I can" (15). As the following participant articulates, differing Indigenous students will have different levels of connection with culture: "We have some who are strong traditionally yet of course there are issues in the difference between western and maybe some traditional forms of education." (13). This statement was subsequent to an previous comment that reflected upon the different realities that Indigenous students may experience, "Or at the same time, a student may not know anything because he or she has been adopted

or fostered out or not had the opportunity." (13). Another participant spoke about the dynamics of colourism and "straddling" that can exist among students of Indigenous heritage,

*"One of the things I think I've seen is the students who I think could probably do with a little bit more support are the students who have an Aboriginal look because they stand out, right? I mean, you know with the folks who self-identify as Metis, you know there's a movement back and forth among cultures and there's, to some extent, an assumption of comfort with sort of straddling" (7).*

In reflecting upon varying levels of engagement with Indigenous culture, another participant spoke about the emotional triggers that may arise with students, "It's not a given that Indigenous students have explored Indigenous knowledge. And so for them, often they are feeling really, really - I don't want to say - ashamed". This participant later reflected on the experience of saying that "ashamed" may not be the appropriate word and added, "That's not the word - tentative - about how they go forward. Are they being a phoney? Is it their right?" (4).

#### **The Whole Person in the Classroom.**

As participants reflected upon their pedagogical relationships with students in reference to an Indigenous presence, two distinct focus areas arose. The first dealt with a perceived need to connect and support Indigenous students intellectually and emotionally. One participant put it simply, "I just do what I can to support them because I know that it can be kind of lonely and there's moments where it's frustrating you know, to be an Aboriginal graduate student or PhD student and trying to find your way" (8). Another participant spoke about the role of humour in connecting with Indigenous students, "I never think to talk about humor, but that would be the feedback I get from people, that I'm goofy enough and that's when I probably look to..." This participant went on to describe how humour helped to make a connection, "I'd look over at this one woman [student] especially, and she'd be looking like, I just know there was a connection, with the

rolled eyes. *I don't know if that's facilitating or that's linking or that's making us feel at home together*" (6). One participant referenced the value of simply being there - as a support and advocate:

*"The biggest thing for me in supporting Indigenous students is to be there, and to be there, and to be there and to be there. Just last week the Dean of Graduate Studies said 'You're asking me again for another extension for this Masters student - You've had this student since 1996.' I said 'Yes', and thought 'I'll be here for this student'. He said, 'We can't keep giving extensions.' [I said], 'Yes you can'. Someday maybe, but that person's never going to get through if we say no. There's something about just being there, being there, being there. But not just for a long time, but when they want to and not between nine and five, but being there"* (2).

With respect to non-Indigenous students, the theme of the whole person in the classroom arose in relationship to the deep emotional work for settler students that is associated with unpacking racism and colonialism. This participant reflected that it is hard work for student and teacher when sharing, *"And that process of decolonisation as we called it - the process of us doing that work, that hard work - which is a very, very deep reflective kind of work"* (11). In focusing specifically on student reactions to Indigenous content, one participant reflected upon the necessity for debriefing that accompanies this type of work:

*"When I first started teaching, [name deleted] and I started at the same time. We were teaching different sections of the same course, we met every week after those courses and just debriefed. And a lot of it was about the reaction by students to the Indigenous content"* (14).

The emotionality of engaging an Indigenous presence is evidenced in the experience of one participant who facilitated a class on the deconstruction of Disney movies.

*"You know, 'I [student] love these shows'. And it really hit me in terms of thinking, 'Okay, I really have to deal with the emotion around this and the emotion of the attachment of characters and children'. You know - the noble savage or the beautiful princess - and how that gets reproduced in politics and ways of thinking about educational policy"*(16).

From these participants' experiences of integrating an Indigenous presence into their classrooms, it is evident that teaching this content area evokes both the cognitive and emotive realms of understanding within classroom settings; much of this is associated with the pain that racism inflicts.

**Racism.** In hearing the stories of these participants, it is clear that actions intended to disrupt deficit theorizing and the normative assumptions and practices of racism call for critical self-reflection. And for faculty who engage with the next generations of teachers/practitioners, it is necessary to encourage students to do likewise. In one story, a participant spoke about an early career experience of sitting on a graduate student's committee. When reflecting upon the post-committee conversation with the student, the participant said: *"I look back - I wish I would have spoke more. Then taking that student out for lunch and saying, 'Look, you know this is - this is racism, this is colonial.' So I guess naming it and saying, 'No, you're not crazy.'"* (16). Within the classroom one other participant spoke about the need to talk *"to some of my other colleagues, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, about their approaches to these moments in the classroom and what their experiences have been with students' reactions and resistance"*. This participant further commented that, *"Some of it I would say is flat out blatant forms of racism and when that lands in the middle of your class you have to be ready to take it on right?"* (14). In articulating the connection between the hard emotional work of anti-racism and the student experience of it, another participant stated, *"to me a challenge would be a resistance to looking at - acknowledging*

*and looking at - the impact of colonial violence"*. This participant went on to say that for settler students, this requires an authentic reckoning, *"And I don't think they can really do authentic work without acknowledging and taking responsibility for where you're positioned and understanding the opportunities and the privileges that come your way"* (12).

**"Pure of Heart"? A question of intent and caring.** In reflecting upon pedagogical relations in the classroom, several participants spoke about the importance of student motivations for taking up Indigenous Knowledges and perspectives. Did they care about Indigenous peoples? One participant described being in the presence of students who did not identify as Indigenous and their evident commitment, *"there are non-Indigenous students that care so deeply, that care so deeply about doing this work in a good way..."* This person went on to say, *"I go out of my way to facilitate and to support students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, who truly care about this work"* (4). Another participant shared a comment in relation to non-Indigenous students who choose to take Indigenous courses as an elective. *"So they're not being forced to take a course. They're interested because they already have awareness, they work with Indigenous people or some have a genuine interest just to find out and to become informed"* (13).

However, several participants did acknowledge that while change is happening, there is still a far way to go before all students will be willing and able to demonstrate an ethic of care towards Indigenous peoples. For example one participant reflected upon the range of student motivations over a period of time teaching an Indigenous focused course, *"I've been teaching - I think this is my eleventh year - and in that I am starting to see a little bit of a shift. But every year there are a handful of students that are absolutely keeners and then a handful who don't give a shit."* (4). Still another participant reflected upon some questionable motivations with respect to upholding and respecting Indigenous Knowledges,



*"On occasion there's been a student that's managed to persuade me that they're pure of heart and they really do work from the inside out. But mostly I think they've been opportunistic and say, 'Yo, that's where the jobs are going to be - I'm going to wear my Indian t-shirt'" (5).*

The motivation for why students wish to engage with Indigenous Knowledges had a bearing on the participants' classroom experiences and pedagogical relations with students. It is evidence of classrooms in transition.

### **The collegial relations of Indigenous presence: Faculty**

This category is concerned with the collegial relationships among faculty members as related to Indigenous Knowledges and presence. This category speaks more of relationships between faculty in a general sense as they relate to our study. These themes were not disaggregated. Subsequent chapters of this report speak to larger issues of context (i.e., *Snow*), at which point a more specific discussion on the dynamics of academic home unit (department) relations may be found.

**Mentorship and Support.** A key theme that emerged in the findings related to the role of faculty mentorship as a dimension of upholding an Indigenous presence in post-secondary settings. One participant reflected upon a felt priority as a senior faculty member, *"Okay. I'm going to retire, soon.' In the next I don't know but in a few years. So it is important to think about who's there to mentor others right". (13)* This participant further clarified, *"I'm more attuned to that in trying to put my energies into that working with faculty members who are going to stay here longer, because they're taking over the mentorship in ways as getting others involved" (13).* In a number of instances, participants spoke about receiving mentorship directly or indirectly as referenced in the following statement, *"I've observed her in the way she engages in our department meetings, in our faculty meetings.*

*We had quite a few meetings and preparation of documents and just a lot of kind of informal conversations as well. (14).* The non-directive mentorship was equally noted in statements such as, *"I'm lucky enough to have (deleted name) here who I've consulted a lot with and I have been on committees with (deleted name). More than anything I just try and watch and learn." (16).* One participant spoke about the role that students may enact as conduits for a mentoring relationship with another faculty member,

*"So I knew these two students, while they were taking my course were also taking (deleted name) course. So they invited me to come to (deleted name) course and sit in and listen because he was teaching epistemology, Indigenous epistemology which was going really well with what they were doing in my class which was the methodology part. So that's about another faculty member being open to a faculty member coming in and learning from them" (15).*

In line with issues of mentorship, several participants spoke about supporting each other in different ways, such as witnessing the support given by faculty members not of Indigenous heritage who acted as significant allies in assisting Indigenous colleagues in navigating the academic environment.

Several participants spoke about the importance of having the support of individuals who were particularly astute in how the "system works" as was commented upon by this participant. *"She [faculty member] herself has gained in knowledge of how the system works, so she's someone who has really good advice for me. And I trust her advice. So it does take a while too to figure out who you can trust" (12).* The notion of trust comes through strongly in the above quotation. A couple of participants spoke about the significance of having supportive allies when going through tenure and promotion processes, as was described by one individual who stated: *"I had a non-Indigenous colleague who was my ally that*

*I brought in to speak on my behalf. So those kind of things remind me how important it is to have good relationships with some key people in the university" (11).* With respect to support, another participant spoke of support in the language of advocacy, as indicated in this salient comment,

*"When it comes to tenure and promotion decisions, being at the table and advocating and saying how do we work as a department to present this person, this person's case? One of the things I want to do this year is write more on how the University talks about equity and diversity, but really the boardroom looks no different than the Donald Trump boardroom" (16).*

In discussing collegial relationships, there was evidence of mentorship and support. Equally, there was a perception spoken to in numerous participant statements, that Indigenous faculty assume an invisible workload.

### **Indigenous faculty – There's a difference.**

In reflecting upon the often unrecognized service that Indigenous faculty are involved in, several participants shared numerous general reflections about this phenomenon. One participant commented upon Indigenous faculty being exploited, *"I think the Indigenous faculty are often really taken advantage of - or not being taken advantage of - it's just assumed they're there, so we don't have to do our own work" (16).* Another participant felt that Indigenous faculty were called upon too often to educate others,

*"And recognizing Indigenous faculty that get burdened with way too much educating non-Indigenous faculty. I think recognizing the work they do, recognize the community work and institutionally recognizing what they're doing is scholarship" (16).*

One participant spoke about non-Indigenous faculty needing to take the initiative to learn about Indigenous peoples,

*"I think that might be a better twig for non-Indigenous faculty. To kind of 'twig' - a nice word for kick in the ass - to actually take advantage of the opportunities to learn about Indigenous knowledges and peoples. I do think that we can have the carrots, but we need a few sticks."* (2).

There was also acknowledgement that Indigenous faculty are often sought out from beyond their home university as articulated here, *"I mean when you're an Aboriginal faculty member in an institution. I think you sort of get used to getting contacted and inquiries from near and far"* (8). In reflecting upon collaborative work, that there are assumptions made about Indigenous faculty, *"sometimes maybe people have been interested in approaching me for some kind of collaboration but they have a certain thing in mind - they're wanting to take me up in a certain way which is not who I am"* (12).

With respect to commitment to students, the action of holding ground in support of increased Indigenous presence can carry workload implications for those who make their allegiances clear, as was commented upon by one participant who stated: *"How do you figure out how many is enough? When someone can say 'No'? And yet, how do you say 'No' to an Indigenous student?"* This participant further articulated, *"if you're an Indigenous faculty member and an Indigenous student comes to you and says, 'I've got to have someone who is Indigenous on my committee!' - How the heck do you say 'No'?"* (2). In reflecting on the impact of the additional workload, another participant shared,

*"...like its every year going in and knowing that your starting from the very beginning again. In that sense you kind of wish that people were coming in with a little bit more knowledge about it. Personally in that way, emotionally I guess. It's exhausting and it's to look at the bigger picture so that you're creating space to learn. But at the same time, there are so many people that have no idea. So I think that's a challenging part"* (3).

**Leadership.** Several participants recognized the role of the department and the department head in championing an Indigenous presence, as exemplified in the following statement from one participant: *"You know, I think various department heads too - certain ones - are really keen on doing something. And others may be interested, but have difficulty persuading their department folks to do something"* (13). In terms of the connection between scholarship options and departmental leadership, this participant went to make the following statement, *"...we have an excellent Head of our department who really values our service in concrete ways. So it depends on who the Head of your department is, and ... who you answer to in terms of your academic record, right?"* (15). Another participant acknowledged that decision-making regarding faculty workloads calls for greater flexibility when it comes to supporting Indigenous students and faculty stating: *"How can we be more flexible around amounts of workload so that people get to do what they're good at - and what they feel obligated to do?"* (2). In commenting on the significant role that can be played by those in positions of academic administrative leadership, another participant shared, *"So I suggested we go with Indigenous education first. And I had the support of the Dean and other department Heads."* This participant later added, *"So we're doing that - and with that, I think it became this way to highlight Indigenous education and make it something that everyone should think about"* (13).

**"You're still dealing with personalities".** One participant succinctly articulated that amid the collegial and leadership relationships, there exist intricacies of experience for individual faculty members that influence how they relate to an Indigenous presence in the academy. *"You know, I think we're still building relationships. We're still you know, we're still figuring out who we are, what we believe in. And just like anything, you're still dealing with personalities"* (7). Participants in this study discussed their motivations for decolonizing the academy largely from an ideological perspective. This theme dealt more specifically with the personal situatedness and the interpersonal relationships associated with Indigenous

presence. One participant spoke about a learned distrust arising from the racism endemic to a colonial society, *"I didn't grow up with confidence in the system. I grew up terrified. I mean we were always growing up under threat of being apprehended or accused of something. So I grew up afraid of institutional power..."* This participant further reflected, *"So to imagine that I could come in here and think that it's going to work on my behalf... It's not an easy transition to make, and it's taken me a while to get that"* (12). On the flipside of that experience, another participant acknowledged that trust might not be easy for Indigenous peoples, *"I think I have pretty good respect with my colleagues who are First Nations. I suppose I'm always viewed as a little bit of suspicion. You know, I think that sort of comes with the territory"* (10). When self-situating, another participant offered this insight into their uncertainty of how to proceed in relationships at certain points,

*"I have no idea whether they want me to keep that respectful distance or not. So then I sit having made a couple of comments that I really need your help with this course. Do I follow it up? Do I bug them? I wouldn't do that in a million years if I was scared to death to do because I worry that I'd be looking like some sort of white honky exploitive person. I'm twisted about it. It's not healthy and it's not probably grounded in any reality at all. Probably most of my Indigenous colleagues would be horrified to know that I felt like that"* (5).

Given all of the uncertainties, the interpersonal relationships among faculty are among complex and challenging. For example, one participant commented on the sensitivities that surround interpersonal relationships, *"they [non-Indigenous faculty] wouldn't challenge an Indigenous person even if they don't agree with stuff, not easily, because of not wanting to be perceived as racist"* (7). Another participant reflected upon the difficulty of authentic conversations among faculty within the same department when sharing that, *"I know sometimes I can have much more honest or frank conversations with some of*

my colleagues, including Indigenous scholars, from other institutions that I can have here. Because it's all so tricky, what can I say or they say?" In reflecting on their reasoning for this statement, this participant later offered, "Even though it's not a matter of distrust. It's just... this person really probably can't tell me some of the struggles that are going on because of my location" (14).

Another participant reflected upon the differences in beliefs and epistemic understandings as factors leading to ongoing relational unease, "So what we have to do is accept that where it is right now, maybe neither one has the answer". This participant later added, "We need to work together, to come to a different theory, understanding or methodology that will help bring these together. Because right now it's a push, and it's a pull. It's a drag. It's up against" (11).

**Connection and dialogue.** The theme of connection and dialogue was clearly identified in the conversations with the participants. Several participants referenced a disconnection. In some instances the disconnection was associated with creating boundaries around workload. When a participant was asked about non-Indigenous faculty seeking their counsel, one participant responded,

*"I think that we gave permission for them not to do that (laughter). So I think they're quite comfortable in that and basically coming together as a collective. We teach feminism or we teach critical theories and disability in each of our classrooms, and I don't go running to them for it - so I think it's the same kind of thing" (3).*

In referencing this lack of connectedness, another participant stated that, "I am feeling more and more disconnected from my Indigenous colleagues as more of them are teaching online and we don't cross paths and that's where the conversation's happen for me" (6). Another participant summarized, "I think the non-Indigenous faculty would love to be able to have more connection. Those are hard conversations, like I'm encroaching on something where I don't belong. So how

do we have those difficult conversations." In reflecting on this further, this participant went on to say, "We've tried over time on various things. I think it's just something that comes with time and trust" (2). In context of the desire for connection, it was not surprising that many of the participants expressed a desire for dialogue.

A number of participants articulated a desire for dialogue. In the following instance, one participant spoke about the importance of coming together as a collective to dialogue on Indigenous integration into this participant's program. "But I think what I would like to see is probably opportunities for us as a faculty to come together to talk about intentionally 'What could this look like' rather than leaving it up to us individually to do that" (7). Another participant expressed a similar sentiment when stating, "I would love to have a day of discussion around where we're at for Indigenous and non-Indigenous - and have it small enough so that we can take it away" (6). In considering a dialogic space, the notion of emotional safety arose as identified in the statement of another participant who commented: "I wish there was a way that we can have the dialogue where they [non-Indigenous faculty] won't feel afraid and won't feel like that it's not my place to ask for - and to have - as (name deleted) always says, these courageous conversations" (3). Another participant commented, "But I think that - what my attempt is to do - is to try to find a way where we can have a dialogue about 'How do we bring Indigenous Knowledges safely and productively into the academy?'" (11).

In expressing a desire for dialogue, there was an expressed need for moving the conversation beyond the current limits of collegial conversation. For example, one participant shared this perception,

*"I'm looking forward to ongoing conversations and learnings from your work. As a non-Indigenous scholar who wants to think conceptually about 'How do we do this?' And not just have more flattened conversations about, 'Oh that's great.' And feel like I have nothing to contribute or add or*

*question or ask or converse about. But just how do I integrate some of that into what I do?" (1).*

Another participant commented that, "I'm thinking about Indigenous scholars who really themselves are comfortable in their own skins, open, grounded, solid and who are open to dialogue" This person further added, "And that would be something that I would really like, right? A really true dialogue. I don't see a one-sided coming and telling us what to do that is useful" (7). Another participant commented, "I think we need to actually ask that question broadly to all the faculty in this building and have a conversation, maybe even a retreat but how do we get real?" This participant further explained, "About facilitating Indigenous Knowledges in this faculty? Now this may sound like a dig I guess, but there's not a lot of proactive stuff happening in that Centre for Indigenous ... It's more like, 'You come to us and ask, and we'll help you.'" (15).

Discussions relating to issues of connection and dialogue arose regularly in the participants' reflections and these coalesced into a theme. What this clearly reflects is a desire for more of each other's time. With Indigenous faculty there was an equal recognition that presence in the community was a factor critical to Indigenous engaged scholarship.

### **Narrowing the divide between 'the town and gown': Indigenous Community**

In contemplating the relationships that - like sacred smoke - surround and imbue an Indigenous presence in the academy, issues relating to Indigenous community are critical. Early on in the research process, the research team identified this issue as a focal point for exploration and in order to elicit comments on the influence of community, we asked participants the following question, "What is your role of community relationship in integrating IK and how does your academic institution acknowledge this relational work?" This question drew forth a variety of responses.

**Indigenous community, research and scholarship.** In reflecting upon the Indigenous community outside of the academy, a number of participants spoke about their connections by way of their research and scholarship activities. One participant spoke about a research project involving an Indigenous community and how this grew out of scholarship activities, but was a personal learning experience for the research team. This participant recalled a recently authored article, *“I was saying that one of the things that’s been really good for me is that my co-researchers who are based in [deleted name] have really taught me about Indigenous basics of being and the challenges and just really been patient”* (7). This participant went on to describe how this research and scholarship activity has influenced their teaching: *“And so I have just been this sort of sponge, sort of taking things in. And so when I go into the classroom, I have continued to try to share what I’m learning”* (7). Another participant spoke about research and some of the challenges of conducting funded research with community. On the ‘upside’ this participant stated that this research presented an opportunity for learning about community,

*“Learning how to be with and not put a frame on and having them develop their interest in their research first. ‘Are we answering their questions that need to be answered and are we doing it in a way that is respectful of their knowledge, respectful of their culture?’ But then there’s more. It’s about not just leaving the community at the end. So at the end of your three year grant, you just exit you know. And it’s like ‘What happened? - you know - Where was the promise here?’”* (15).

With respect to research, one participant spoke about the ‘carrot’ that National funding bodies such as the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) have put before academic research with respect to engaging with community generally and Indigenous communities specifically,

*“Well although the pressure is on now right through SSHRC and everywhere now there’s huge community partnerships, so there’s huge pressure to do the community part. And research that’s slapped together and doesn’t have community participation is not getting funded. And I think that the adjudicators are looking at these applications are looking for real participation, not just token participation. Because in my day you could just do token - you could go and call up the Chief and say I’m doing this and this and you know, go and chat with him for a few minutes. And he’d sign the letter, and that was sort of the participation”* (10).

Given the significance of community in Indigenous scholarship, one participant articulated the need to begin to think of community – with the relationality it requires – to be considered as a fundamental part of scholarship. *“To make the changes, we need to also change our way of thinking about our community work and position it as educational scholarship, or as part of the teaching, as part of research. Right? This participant went on to say, “And it is a part of our scholarship. So I think those are kinds of conversations that I think would be important to have”* (13).

**Involving self with community.** A number of participants spoke about how they have sought out or had the fortune to be involved with Indigenous communities in their life. One participant reflected upon an early work life experience that was formative, *“When I first started practising as a social worker, there was an Indigenous social worker which was unusual, out in (name deleted), and she was a financial aid worker.”* This person went on to say, *“She and I had a similar sense of humor so we would partner to go places just to entertain ourselves. So I think she was a first teacher at that level for me.”* (6). Another participant spoke about accepting invitations to be part of community and cultural events, *“Well I’ve always taken advantage of opportunities to spend with Aboriginal and First Nation people on doing sweats and customs and going to events and pow wows”* and went on to add, *“and you*

*know being immersed in the Maori culture for three weeks in New Zealand and taking those opportunities to learn”* (10). One participant simply stated,

*“I think I have been very, very fortunate over my personal and professional life to have been provided numerous opportunities to learn about and engage with Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous people’s cultures, communities, knowledges, ceremonies”* (2).

**Tensions.** One participant spoke about the desire for community accountability. In reflecting upon evidence in tenure applications of faculty members being ‘ouched for’ by community, this participant shared this experience,

*“...people should have a letter in their tenure application from the local communities supporting them - whatever territories you’re on. So, ‘Like Mr. Physics guy, does he even know Chief [name deleted]?’ Not that it had to be Chief [name deleted]. And of course that caused all kinds of discussion or whatever. But there’s something about a sense of accountability to the communities that we work for and with”* (2).

However, while this might show accountability in the academy, this could add additional stress for community. Another participant reflected on the flipside of reaching out to community, *“we say we would like to reach out to the Indigenous community. ‘Oh God’ they are saying, ‘Please don’t reach out to me, I got so many people reaching out to me, I can’t be everything to everybody. Do your own work”* (6).

In considering student perspectives as these relate to community, another participant spoke of the complexities that arise in classroom discussions. This participant references an Indigenous student perspective,

*“...she wrote about how it gets really frustrating to hear about Indigenous knowledge and get it glorified by*

other classmates, where I know that in my community it is this way. Then you have the discussion in the classroom where they're glorifying the ceremony. Meaning that they're talking about, it's easy to bring it back, it's easy to go back to the ceremony, to the language, to the custom. She said: "When you're there it's not as easy as they're talking about" (3).

Another tension relating to university assumptions about the student-community dynamic is that a successful Indigenous graduate will somehow be automatically helping their Indigenous community. This is not this always the case, as was demonstrated by one participant who commented that: "the more of these that go out successful, then all Aboriginal people are successful. It's not what these Aboriginal successes do with themselves in relation to their community - there lies the rub" (11). Notions of success that are routinely applied to Indigenous peoples are very complicated. However, not talking about the complexities allows tensions to fester rather than to be worked through.

As a final note on the tensions of university-Indigenous community relations, this quote from one participant succinctly described how the academy's relationship with community needs to shift towards a relationship of mutuality,

*"It makes my cranky, I think. And I get kind of discouraged by people seeming self-satisfied about, 'Oh Wow, the numbers are up' and 'We used to have just this and now we have this'. I think it's not about the numbers, it's about the community and what the community offers us. But the university as a whole doesn't get how we are part of the community and what the community has things to offer. They always talk about giving back to the community, and I think there are one-way roads quite often and they're paved. There needs to be two-way gravel roads" (6).*

## Summary

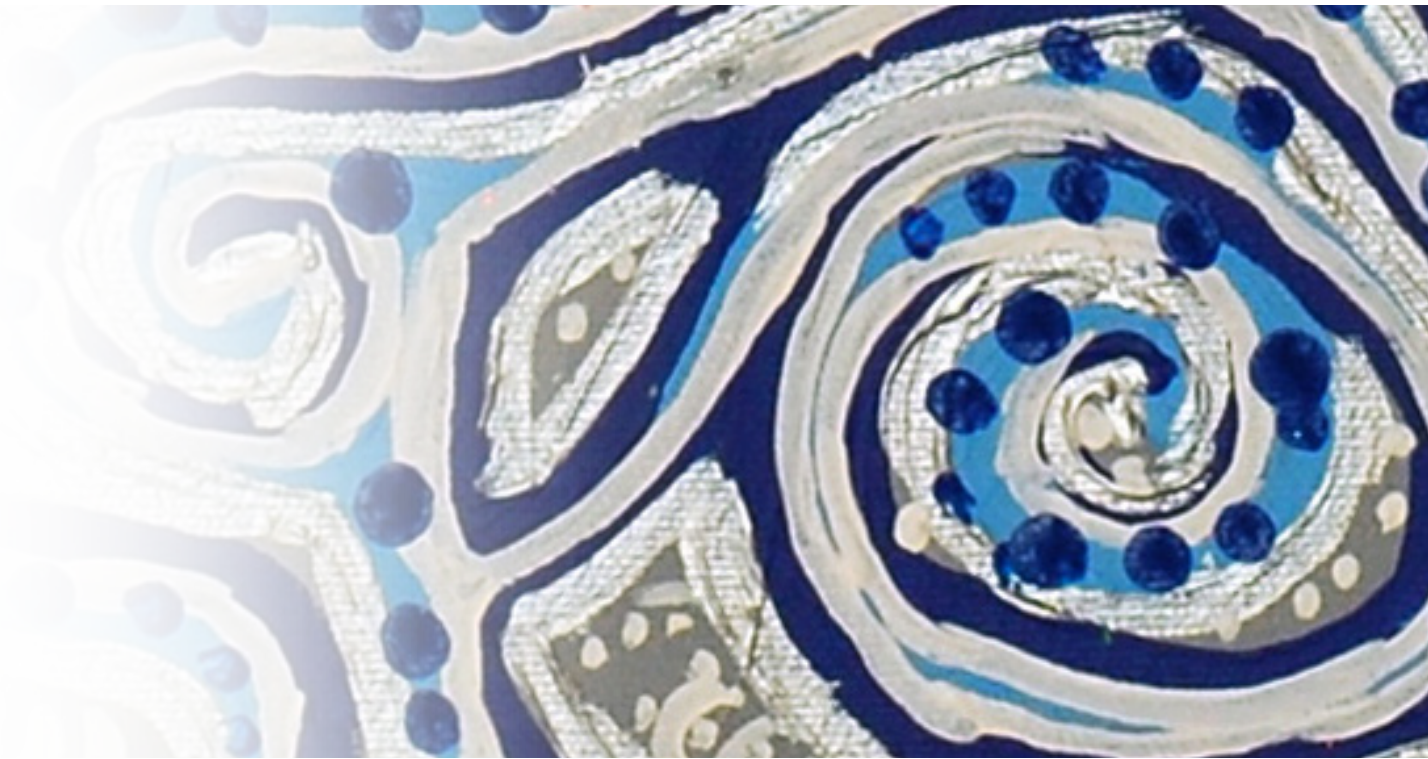
In considering the relationality of an Indigenous presence in the post-secondary sites of Education and Social Work programs, the participants considered classroom relationships with students, collegial relationships with faculty and the role of the Indigenous community. In reflecting upon the pedagogical relationship with students, a theme arose on the dynamic of classrooms in transition. In reflecting upon a 'new normal', several participants spoke about how Indigenous students are looking for cultural inclusion in the classroom and are challenging pedagogical orthodoxies. Within this space is the emergence of the teacher-facilitator that does not exploit Indigenous students but who does allow space for their stories to be part of the classroom discourse. The theme of the "whole person in the classroom" emphasized the cognitive, affective, spiritual and physical dimensions of supporting students. For Indigenous students, this is about being there, about connecting, and about showing sensitivity to the student's life outside the classroom. For students confronted with unpacking racism and eurocentricism, this means supporting them through the emotionality of this work. It was clearly identified that identity and pedagogy intersect in Indigenous student life. There was ample discussion by participants about how classrooms with a felt Indigenous presence fulfill a critical function that enables Indigenous students to explore issues of identity. Within this context, it was articulated by several participants that it is of fundamental importance to not assume that all Indigenous students have the same experience with their culture. The participants in our study also contemplated the dynamics of racism in the classroom and reflected upon self-serving motivations for engaging with Indigenous Knowledges.

When reflecting upon faculty relationships that surround an Indigenous presence, many participants spoke about mentorship and supports that exist. In some cases, it was providing mentorship – in these cases it was most often Indigenous faculty

providing mentorship. However, there was acknowledgment of the role of effective allies. Amid the supportive relationships, participants also recognized that within academic spaces (as in any space) "you're still dealing with personalities". This theme speaks about trust, fear and not really knowing where one belongs in relationship to the other. In reflecting upon the role of Indigenous faculty, insight was offered into the experience of Indigenous faculty as being unique. Participants reflected on the double duty and added invisible pressures of educating peers on Indigenous issues. At least one participant spoke about the assumptions that are made about Indigenous faculty and that Indigenous faculty are there to provide 'on-call culture' services. Several participants spoke of the important roles filled by leadership. In several conversations participants made reference to departmental leadership and choices as being significant factors that influence Indigenous presence on-campus. Many of the participants in this study recognized the politics of Indigeneity that exist throughout the academy, especially as manifested at the departmental level. In concluding the category on faculty, the theme of connection and dialogue arose. There was a desire to be with each other to dialogue on Indigenous Knowledges and an Indigenous presence. However, within this dialogue there was an expressed desire to move beyond "flattened conversations."

Community was perceived as natural and pervasive within Indigenous scholarship, research and teaching. Grounding Indigenous discourse within the local knowledge of the community was not contested. If indeed community is endemic to Indigenous scholarship, this necessitates the establishment of a different way of assessing scholarship than is currently practiced. With community involvement, scholarship must be assessed on process and not solely upon output. This challenges the academy in new and interesting ways. At this point, it was clear that this proposition is accompanied by tensions; although the road may be "gravel", if there is a sincere desire to include Indigenous Knowledges in the academy, this road must be travelled.

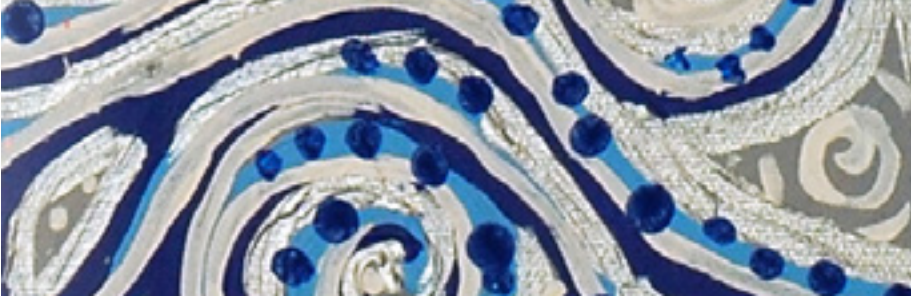




SECTION TWO

**Snow:** Indigenous  
Knowledges in the Disciplines  
of Education and Social Work

**CHAPTER**  
SEVEN



*"I've always told my beginning social work students - and will continue to say to them until the day I die - is that social work is a profession that lives off the avails of human distress. ... The problem with the discipline is the profession, and how we keep arguing: 'Is it the competencies?' Who the hell cares, you know? What is it about the state of one of the wealthiest countries in the world that continues to have no national child care policy, that continues to operate child welfare systems that are absolutely draconian, that continues to do whatever we can to deny the right and responsibility of Aboriginal communities in creating their own child welfare system?" (5).*

In continuing the allegoric reference to the landscape of a winter sweat that is central to the presentation of this report, the following section draws attention to the late-winter *Snow*. Surrounding the *Fire* and the *Lodge* - and at times blanketing it - a layer of snow has the potential to conceal all footpaths and tracks. *Snow* can engulf and conceal. However, *snow* is not immutable to the actions of motivated human beings, and with intentionality and effort, *snow* is a movable prospect and paths can be cleared. From the geographic reference point of the Canadian prairies, it is widely known that *snow* can be perilous, but it also holds properties that can replenish the land. With each spring thaw comes a time for growth and regeneration.

For the purposes of this report, *Snow* represents the participant reflections on the discipline and the university with respect to a presence of Indigenous Knowledges. Many of the elements of context pertain specifically to organizational structures,

institutional policies, and the dynamic of how structure informs culture. In this report, we have divided discussions on *Snow* into three chapters: Education and Social Work Discipline (*chapter seven*); the University (*chapter eight*); and Education and Social Work programs and classrooms (*chapter nine*). The introductory discussion of the dynamics of *Snow* presents the findings and themes associated with the Education and Social Work discipline.

Our research team was interested in the participants' reflections about their respective discipline. As such, we posed to each participant the question: "What do you see as the opportunities and challenges within in your discipline that assist or impede the integration of Indigenous Knowledges into your pedagogy, instruction, and course content?" In disaggregating the data by disciplinary affiliation, our findings draw upon the comments that were shared by the six participants in Education and the ten participants in Social Work at two of the four pre-selected sites. A limitation in the wording of the sub-questions that were posed in conversation with the participants (see *Appendix 1*) was the selection of the word 'discipline' when asking participants about activities associated with the field or the practice of Education and Social Work. The choice of the word 'discipline' may have limited the responses received, as this term can be interpreted in association with a larger disciplinary focus within academia (e.g., sociology, psychology) rather than as the activities typically undertaken by practicing professionals. As such, it appears to be the case that questions directed at 'the discipline' were not always taken as field practice and the comments that were provided often discussed conceptualizations within a

context of the more extensive disciplinary perspective of the field that relates to history, philosophical foundations and practice strategies. However, within the overarching conversations of Indigenous Knowledges, the participants did offer some insights into how they viewed Indigenous presence within their respective disciplines. In considering issues of disciplinary practice, the perspectives of participants associated with Education are presented first, followed by those of Social Work.

### **Themes related to the discipline of Education**

In the conversations held with teacher educators on the subject of the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledges in formal teaching practices, several key themes emerged with respect to actions being undertaken outside of a university setting. These themes spoke to connections with the field on Indigenous topic areas, the influence of professional associations and accreditation, and Eurocentricism within the discipline.

**Connection with the field.** In considering the *connection to the field*, several participants spoke about their connections with practice through various projects, including their own research studies. For example, one participant spoke about faculty-hosted initiatives (e.g., presentations on Indigenous topics), many of which are open to community members, including teachers in the field. This participant stated: "*We're opening it up to the external educational community to get K to 12, post-secondary student involvement, and community involvement in some of our projects*" (13). Another participant spoke about connecting with the field via scholarly research in the following terms: "*I bring my knowledge - based on my research - to provide input to the Provincial Advisory Committee [name deleted]*" (12). Another participant spoke about utilizing Indigenous content and materials that have been developed within the field of practice in classroom settings, by indicating that: "*I also get them [students] to read specific articles and go to websites. Like I have them to go onto the BCTF website and find the curriculum material*



there. And from the Ministry of Education. There's a lot of websites out there now - actually now they have fabulous resources" (14). In referencing community and practice as a resource, one individual referenced the importance of mentors from the field, including Indigenous service users. "So through my students' challenges I've learned a lot. And the clients have been great mentors and teachers to me - I've been doing that work for over ten years" (15).

**Role of Professional Associations.** As with issues related to the general connection to the field theme, the role of *professional associations* was also referenced as a dimension that educators can draw upon to facilitate the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledges into their classrooms. One participant referenced their work with different teachers' associations in the following terms:

*"I've done a lot of work for them. Whether it's whatever initiative they have to promote - Indigenous education or Social Justice within the teaching profession - regularly I go work with them. With the Alberta Teachers' Convention, I presented there and the audience was a good mix of mostly non-Indigenous people"* (12).

In one instance, another participant spoke about accreditation as it applied to a specific program within the larger Education program on offer. This particular accreditation standard spoke to issues of diversity, although the participant did not specify if it was Indigenous-specific diversity. This participant stated that: "the Theories of Counselling course - they've always got to be around diversity. And there may be two or three classes on working with diverse clients. So that's infused in our program - the accredited program" (15). Professional associations do possess a capacity to clear a path for Indigenous Knowledges, and this matters greatly, especially when considering the impact of the teaching profession upon Indigenous children, youth and communities.

**Eurocentricism within the discipline.** In considering the professional discipline, the conversation was largely contextualized within a critique of the profession. One participant succinctly pointed out that one has to consider eurocentricism within institutions, whether inside or outside the academy, in the following terms: "When I look at the University and its structures right now, I think it's a wholly Eurocentric institution which has in it Eurocentric goals" (11). This participant went on to state that:

*"And among those goals, they have - as all institutions do, or at least all Eurocentric institutions do - an aim to create people who will serve the state and be like them. And that imitation and service - whether it is a service to the University or a service to the Provinces and Territories, or service to companies - it's always service. And it's always to them"* (11).

When discussing the self-serving nature of academia, issues of jurisdiction also arose. In reflecting upon an experience of wanting to "do intervention for the kids that have traumatic backgrounds", one participant stated: "They won't let me. They will not let me in schools doing that kind of thing, because they'll say this is the Ministry of Education not the Ministry of Health. Maybe to see their parents after school - but, 'No you're not coming in'" (15). In reflecting on practice, the stories of the participants suggest that a relationship does exist, albeit one that is sometimes strained by normative assumptions of teaching practice. This relationship privileges eurocentricism as well as jurisdictional and practice boundaries that place limits on the prospect of intersectionality of practice across disciplinary boundaries.

### **Themes related to the discipline of Social Work**

When discussing the integration of Indigenous Knowledges into the discipline of Social Work, several participants in the study highlighted the professional Social Work associations that oversee the registration of Social Workers within each Province, and others specifically identified

the National body that oversees the accreditation of Social Work education in Canada. As with the participants whose disciplinary affiliation was with Education, numerous Social Work participants provided a critique of existing Social Work practice and the need to move beyond 'business as usual' approaches to post-secondary programming and curriculum so as to better serve Indigenous peoples, communities and Knowledges.

**Role of Professional Associations.** As with Education, the role of professional associations in supporting and/or constricting Indigenous presence in the discipline arose as a theme in Social Work. In particular, the role of the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work Education (CASSWE) arose. CASSWE is a body comprised of representatives of the schools/faculties of Social Work across Canada. Among other activities, the CASSWE is the body that accredits social work educational programs in Canada. All recognized schools of Social Work in Canada are regularly reviewed to ensure that they meet mutually agreed upon accreditation standards. Within the stated principles that guide the application of the CASSWE accreditation standards - although not a standard itself - reference is made to Indigenous peoples, in the following terms:

11. Social work programs acknowledge and challenge the injustices of Canada's colonial history and continuing colonization efforts as they relate to the role of social work education in Canada and the self-determination of the Indigenous peoples. (2013, p.3).

In reflecting upon a recent visit by the accreditation body, one participant in the study commented upon the consideration of an Indigenous perspective within the CASSWE accreditation standards thus: "I think it's built into the criteria. I don't know if they use the word Indigenous knowledge - they probably don't - in the criteria document for Social Work accreditation" (9). The CASSWE standards document does contain one principle related to Indigenous peoples and one standard related specifically to

diversity, but - as a participant in this study acknowledged - even with regulation the situation is complex.

*"I just came from the Board of Accreditation meetings and the Association is very, very serious around acknowledging, woven into the very fabric of social work practice, Indigenous experience and understanding. But how do we get that?" (5).*

In referencing the capacity of the professional Social Work association to substantially address issues of Indigenous Knowledges, one participant indicated that: *"I think things like conferences and the professional associations, those are vehicles to try and continue the conversation in some way. But they're restricted little boxes, too" (2).* Another participant recognized that there is limited involvement in the professional associations by Indigenous social workers. *"I don't think in our professional association we have very many Indigenous people as members" (6).*

**The problem with Social Work.** Frustrations and critiques of Social Work practice - particularly as applied to Indigenous peoples - were evident throughout the conversations with the Social Work participants of this study. This critique was succinctly framed by one participant who described the discipline of Social Work as a profession that is dependent upon human suffering:

*"I really, really, really want every student to understand the history of First Peoples in Canada and understand the incredible sense of shame and guilt and blame that my profession deserves because of being complicit in all of those experiences" (5).*

Amid the litany of lost opportunities and misguided priorities that were cited by the aforementioned participant, the words of another participant highlighted the impact of government-led approaches that do not assist in reconciliation with the Indigenous community or the reputation of the Social

Work profession within the Indigenous community. One participant reflected on a meeting with the Provincial Ministry responsible for child and family services during which:

*"...we talked about what Indigenous communities need and, 'How would you like to be evaluated?' It's like you decide they were saying to communities, 'What's important to you? Then we, the Ministry, will evaluate you on it'. I felt like they were saying, 'Go out and cut your own switch so I can hit you with it'. And never in the conversation - and I tried a couple of times - could the question be asked, 'What is the Ministry doing? When does the Ministry get evaluated by the delegated agencies? When can we have this mutual bit?" (2).*

*"When can we have this mutual bit?"* is certainly a good question and a seemingly appropriate place to begin repairing damaged relationships. As one participant concluded, *"Social work's not going away so that is the impetus for those of us who want to see it as accountable. If it's not going away, how can we make it at least accountable to its own history" (1).*

**Moving Beyond 'Business as Usual'.** Amid the criticisms, there was a clearly expressed desire to move beyond the 'business as usual' approach. One participant spoke of an alternative approach built upon Indigenous Knowledges and commented on the power of this model. This participant shared the story of involving Indigenous children in care within the Tribal Journeys movement. Tribal Journeys is held every year in the Pacific Northwest, involving (but not limited to). Indigenous peoples from British Columbia, Washington, and Alaska. Indigenous ocean-faring canoes are paddled to selected Indigenous community sites, where the pullers beach their canoes for the night. The coming ashore is accompanied by protocol, songs, feasting, and gift-giving. The participant who spoke to the process of inviting the participation of Indigenous children in care and the positive impact this creates in their lives. *"We have Elders that travel with them, we have*

*children in care now phoning us, when is Tribal Journeys?"* The participant went on to say:

*"The first year we couldn't get any of the children to speak. Last year they took turns with coming into a harbour. They were taking turns standing up, 'My name is \_\_\_ and I'm a child in care.' ... They would introduce themselves. They learnt songs so they could use protocol. But these kids were phoning us. So you know what? - it matters how we do this work. It matters" (4).*

There is a universal human need to feel a sense of belonging, and the importance of having adults who are willing to taking steps to ensure that Indigenous children in care know that they are indeed members of a community cannot be understated. This was recognized in the following statement of one participant: *"Just these kids knowing that they have someone to work with - that they still have a community that cares for them - makes a huge difference" (4).*

Akin to place-based pedagogy, place-based practice was affirmed as an alternative approach to social work practice with Indigenous communities, as was indicated in the words of another participant who stated:

*"I just came from a meeting, and it's around looking at different models of child protection and how you get government onboard for the kind of programme you want to deliver. And I think that it's so often that we come into the bureaucracy to have meetings. We'd go to these places, but they never come in. Could we invite them into the longhouse for eight hours to discuss this? Can we not invite them into a circle where it's going to be about three hours just to talk about this?" (3).*

The possibility that Indigenous Knowledges bring to social work practice is that of centering relationality. In a profession that works with vulnerable populations - often people who are dispossessed and discounted - a practice that highlights

relationship-building creates an opportunity to re-instill a sense of belonging, purpose and confidence in the people it serves.

## Summary

As a research team comprised of Education and Social Work faculty, we were curious about the extent to which the discourse on Indigenous Knowledges was disciplinarily dependent to Education and Social Work. We also wanted to use this opportunity to better understand the politics and pragmatics of the disciplinary divide as it applied to our research inquiry. Insights into the distinctions that exist between disciplinary practices emerged in the voices of many participants, as exemplified through the comments of one participant when offering the following commentary: *"...they all link together, so making disciplines like education; social work is just something somebody did. Like making reservations, it's a false dichotomy."* This participant further added: *"I think it will be interesting in your work with this project whether people see that really differently because of their disciplines"* (6). Many of us involved in this study were equally interested in this question.

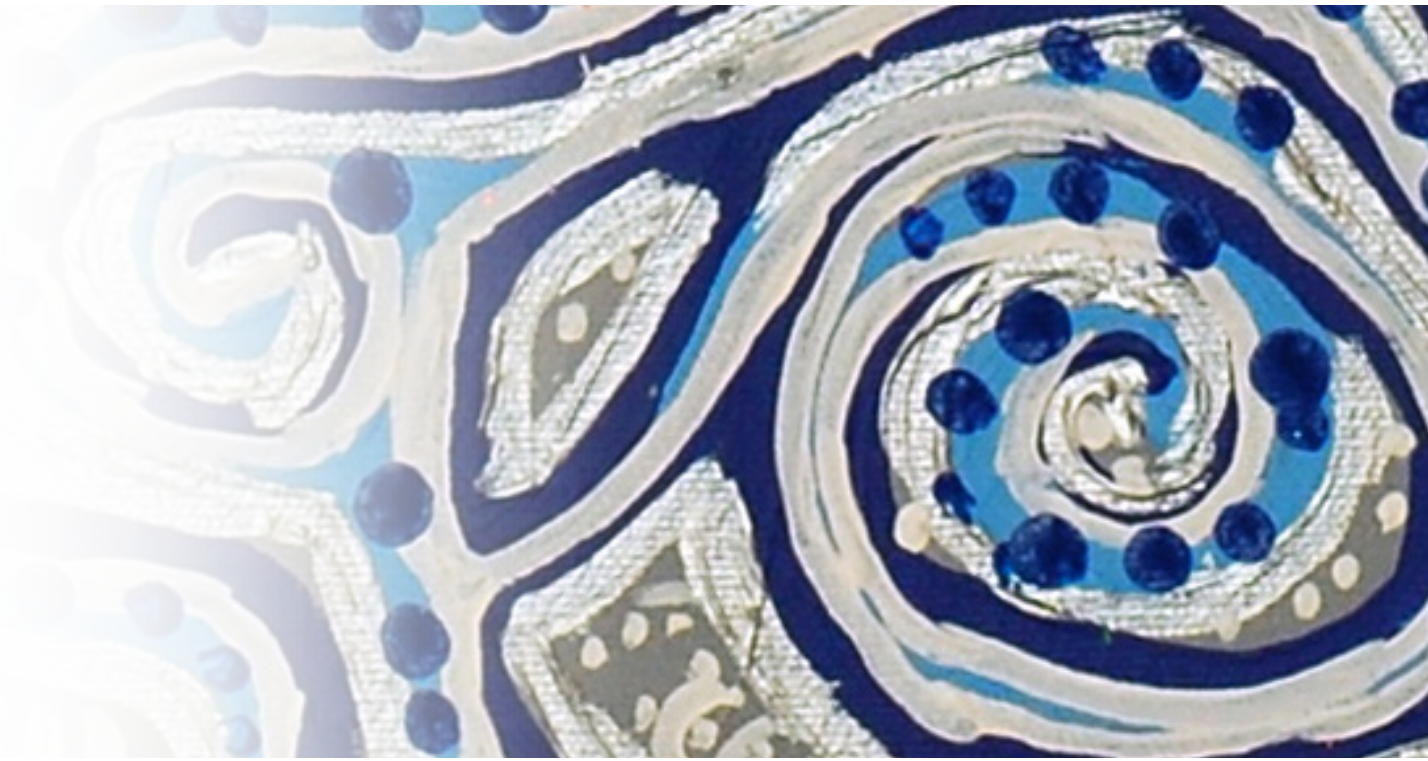
From a disciplinary perspective of Education, participants spoke about the connections that they had with the field. They identified the sharing of relevant Indigenous resources and connecting through research as valuable methods for an exchange between the academic classroom and practice. The sharing of existing materials or those resources that develop out of existing relationships were seen as mutually supportive and positive strategies. Participants from Education identified the role of professional associations. In our study two different professional associations were referenced, based upon the provincial residency of the participant. In British Columbia, the Provincial teachers association is the BC Teachers' Federation, and the First Nations Education Steering Committee is an independent professional association that responds to matters pertaining to First Nations education. In Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation is the provincial professional

organization. Indigenous people have input into Saskatchewan educational policy through a range of processes such as representation by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations on matters pertaining to First Nations education. At least two participants expressed the function of professional associations in supporting Indigenous efforts. With respect to the discipline of Education itself, there was a critique of the teaching profession as being largely Eurocentric-based and manifested within jurisdictional silos that create barriers for communication across disciplines. This was viewed both within the university context and field practice.

In reflecting upon their discipline, Social Work participants spoke of the role of professional associations. Professional associations of Social Work exist in Saskatchewan and British Columbia. In British Columbia, it is the British Columbia Association of Social Work (BCASW) and in Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers (SASW). Both associations follow their own codes of ethics and each offers membership and registration to individuals who meet established criteria. The BCASW has a working committee on Indigenous Social Work associated with it. In conjunction with the Provincial bodies there also exist two National Social Work associations. The Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) promotes social work at a national and international level. The CASSWE is the accrediting body for faculties of Social Work in Canada. Comments on CASSWE accreditation standards beg the question of how an Indigenous sensibility could be woven into standards that were developed to fulfill the interests of a western discipline. Given its regulatory procedures, the practice of Social Work is confronted with regularizing an Indigenous presence – but how far can they go within the limits of their policy structures? In reflecting upon the practice of Social Work, participants were vocal about the complicity of the Social Work profession in causing harm to Indigenous peoples. From this perspective, several participants voiced a need to move beyond 'business as usual' and begin to think about Indigenous practices.

For both professions there was an appreciation for the role and responsibility of the professional associations in advancing an Indigenous perspective within their disciplines. Participants associated with both professions represented in our study saw that there was a connection between their teaching, scholarship and research with practice. Other cross-disciplinary consistencies referenced the disciplines operating in silos and a shared enunciation of curiosity about how different professions - particularly in the helping field - are responding to the call to uphold an Indigenous presence. Given the potential of learning across differences within the familiarity that comes with serving a similar population, one would think Education and Social Work could walk across the disciplinary boundaries and spend more time with each other. It couldn't hurt.

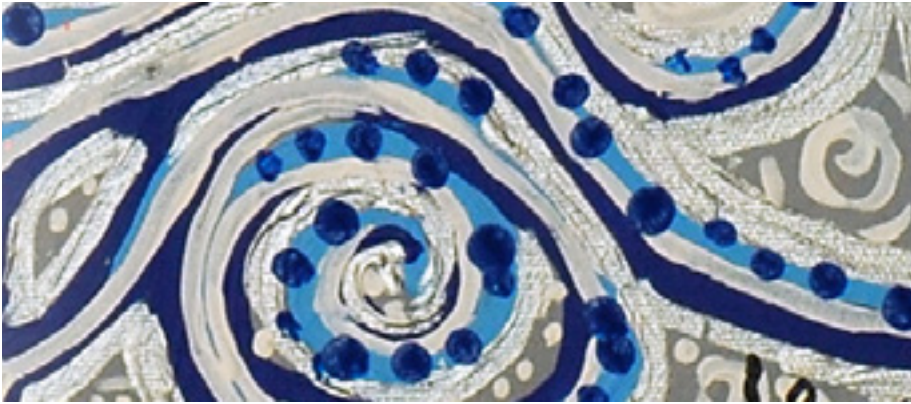




SECTION TWO

**Snow: Indigenous  
Knowledges in the University**

**CHAPTER  
EIGHT**



*"We were having circle discussions and it was [name deleted]'s turn to speak. I know he doesn't mind me sharing this here because we were talking about some of the challenges for Indigenous faculty in the institutions. He said, 'Wouldn't it be nice if Maclean's came up with a category for the most decolonized institution?' We all just chuckled and went right on. And then after, I was sitting there thinking about it and I thought, 'What would that look like?'" (9).*

*"I was actually talking to a friend of mine who's an Indigenous scholar. And I was saying 'I got tenure, now I can start raising hell.' And she said, 'Well but will you?' She said, 'You know what my supervisor told me? Once you get tenure you're so socialized to be compliant, that you won't.' I went home and cried and thought 'Okay.' I thought that I actually want to start raising some hell" (16).*

Further associated with the symbolism of *Snow* introduced in other sections of this report, the findings of chapter eight deal with the academic context and the wider university. In this chapter, the voices of the participants are presented in an aggregated format so as to reflect the broader set of findings that relate to the university culture at large.

One goal of this study was to explore the different dimensions of post-secondary institutions that have impacted, either

positively or negatively, the Education and Social Work participants' abilities to consider Indigenous Knowledges within their academic – and specifically teaching – lives. The research team was interested in identifying and examining meta-institutional factors that influence the uptake of Indigenous Knowledges in post-secondary settings. In an effort to gain insight into the institutional dimensions of the overarching research question, the research team posed the following question to participants: "What do you see as personal and systemic challenges to integrating Indigenous Knowledges into instruction and curriculum?" The following analyses and findings focus on post-secondary institutional culture, policies and programs that frustrate the possibilities of Indigenous presence. When considering their experiences within the overall university, the participants shared many comments on systemic challenges associated with the larger university structure. This chapter includes themes associated with university-wide insights as they relate to Indigenous inclusion.

What is 'culture'? How is it defined? The working definition of 'culture' presented within this report reflects an eclectic theoreticism. In general terms, the authors of this report see 'culture' in a manner as expressed in Prinz (2011) who offers this synopsis: "Herskovits (1948, 17) tells us that, "Culture is the man-made part of the environment," and Meade (1953, 22) says culture "is the total shared, learned behaviour of a society or a subgroup" (p. 2). In addition, we ascribe to the interlocking influences of infrastructure, structural or

organizational patterns, with superstructure (e.g., politics, values and beliefs) that are found within a cultural materialist approach. Further, we understand culture as a set of interrelated dimensions that are inclusive of a holism that is animated by the natural and human world. In summary, when reflecting on the nature of culture of the academy, we espouse a set of assumptions that is demarcated as follows:

- that culture is a social phenomenon;
- that culture is shaped by an interrelationship between individuals and structures;
- that culture is maintained by the values, beliefs, and ideologies endemic in policy and structure;
- that existing structures and policies arise from dominant culture;
- that when left undisrupted, structures perpetuate behaviours and hence culture; and
- that through human agency, culture can shift.

When asked to consider the influence of institutional dimensions as they apply to integrating Indigenous Knowledges, aspects of academic culture arose as themes.

**Established cultural foundations of the academy.** In considering the culture of the academy, there was a clear recognition that Canadian universities are built upon values originating in Europe. One participant commented on "... *the struggle of bringing in Indigenous content and Indigenous programs at UBC which is ... such a 'British' university in many respects, and it has a particular orientation to what counts as knowledge*" (13). Another individual offered a similar perspective, albeit articulated in more general manner: "*And I think that - you know - when I look at the University and its' structures right now, I think it's a wholly Eurocentric institution which has in it Eurocentric goals*" (11). As a result of Western ontological hubris, a risk comes with bringing in alternate knowledge systems, especially one (e.g., Indigenous Knowledges) that has been so laden with deficit theorizing by dominant culture. This point was reflected in the words of one participant who commented on the

merciless push to always conform to the norms of a domineering university culture:

*“So now you’re in the gates, but you’re not accepted unless you do exactly as everybody else does. So structurally, I find that that’s the thing I’ve noticed. And it’s actually something I started writing about just to get through my frustrations on it. I see it with grad students too that are expanding ways of thinking. On one hand it’s: ‘Oh it’s great, you’re an Indigenous grad student.’ And then on the other hand it’s: ‘Well you’re not meeting standards’” (16).*

In examining the cultural foundations of the university and with respect for the need to create more welcoming spaces for Indigenous students, several participants signalled out the graduate thesis defense process as one place where there could be a cultural shift. One participant commented that: *“... the Master’s process - it’s primarily a Western kind of concept. Defense and thesis” (10)*, while another participant questioned the ‘business as usual’ practices and customs associated with thesis/dissertation defenses when making the following comments: *“...we don’t have open defences here. And to me it’s, ‘Why not?’ ‘Why not?’ [name deleted] - they’ve got open defenses. They bring their communities. They bring their Elders...” (8)*. Participants spoke about the academy experiencing a cultural shift but not in the direction of a community-based, ‘for the people’ direction.

### **Neoliberalism and corporate culture.**

Emerging from a Eurocentric paradigm that positions individualism as a ubiquitous cultural norm, many participants spoke of the multiple ways in which a neoliberal individualism is increasingly being entrenched in post-secondary environments. For example, one person alluded to the dichotomy of promoting community-based practices within the current context of heightened individualism that often accompanies neoliberalism in the academy:

*“There is an increasing amount of money going into knowledge mobilisation and in community-based research. But I’m not convinced that the fundamental values that go along with that are being supported. Because of the neoliberal corporate agenda. What’s driving it - I fear - is this sense that university graduates are becoming less and less relevant to the marketplace. We have to make knowledge more connected to the marketplace, and this [neoliberalism] is a strategy for doing that” (2).*

Another participant addressed the individualism inherent in a social Darwinist culture of competitiveness that flourishes in university environments. Neoliberalism in the academy does not squelch the type of individualism that is inherent in the ‘all-star system’ of the academy, as was reflected in the comments of this participant, who stated: *“I think the expectations are the classic same ones: you publish a book - be a world renowned scholar - get grants - be a star. The star...” This participant went on to say, “Yeah being an academic star. Because you become intellectual capital for the university” (14)*. Amid this competitive corporatist culture, one participant appropriately expressed worries about bringing in Indigenous Knowledges in the following terms:

*“I think it [the academy] puts them [Indigenous Knowledges] in an increasingly opportune place to grow and be funded, and to be commodified and assimilated due to the academy. All the good and bad that’s wrapped up in that. And that there’s finally going to be some money - that they’ll be able to do more, write more, engage in communities, develop all that’s going to be good. And along with that is the commodification of it. The control of it. Determining, ‘What are the standards?’ - ‘How are we going to evaluate it?’ - ‘Is it good?’ - ‘What kind of journals are they going to publish?’” (2).*

Alongside the acknowledgement of the existence of a neoliberal agenda within academia that was described by several participants in this study, there were also clearly articulated and hopeful acknowledgements that an Indigenous presence has the potential to equally (if not as forcefully) shift the culture of the academy.

**Transforming the Culture?** The axiom that culture is not static applies equally to academic environments where the shifting of cultural patterns depends entirely upon the presence of individuals who are willing to move forward with change. These individuals must be willing to take on the work that such change will inevitably demand. In light of the academy’s steadfastness in asserting what counts as legitimate scholarship, several participants referenced ways in which some Indigenous academics are expanding notions of what counts as knowledge within academic settings by incorporating their experiences and understandings of community-based practices into their scholarship. In reflecting upon the manner in which community work has been assessed within the tenure and promotion process, one participant indicated, *“I know one of the issues - and it’s not on topic here - but from talking with Indigenous colleagues. That the tenure and promotion process, and expectations, very traditional academic expectations, don’t match onto Indigenous approaches...” (14)*. Another participant succinctly stated that work with community should be considered as a valid form of scholarship: *“When you think of promotion and tenure purposes, well it [community work] can be part of community engagement. Although I prefer to position some of it as that, but not exclusively. Because I think work with community is scholarship” (13).*

Re-imagining a bedrock of academic culture means re-imagining what counts as scholarship and, as this participant noted, it comes down to the people who are making decisions,

*"Again it comes down to the people that are interpreting it, and a change in the culture. You can change the system, but to change the culture? - I don't know. I think it's possible to change it. I think it happens over time - in relations and conversations of changing the culture of the place. We have to have more Indigenous faculty - bottom line - around the joint" (2).*

In reflecting upon organizational policy and the extent to which it reflects the stultifying organizational culture of academia, one participant articulated the importance of Indigenous involvement in Institution-wide planning processes. *"I'm able to sit at the table and I'm reviewing all these plans and saying, 'I don't know about those... How have you conceptualized this Aboriginal engagement thing?' And so - each one I read - I make comments on."* This participant further added that *"systemically it has a lot of impact" (11).*

**University departmental structure.** In contemplating the culture of the university and its openness to an Indigenous presence, many of the research conversations intersected with participant experiences of university structures that give form to cultural norms. In considering the structure of the university, one participant metaphorically described academic structure thus:

*"...one of the things that I certainly always understood since I first started teaching - it's because my Indigenous students helped me to see this - is that a University is the most profound example of the white man's box" (5).*

In visually conceptualizing academia as *"the white man's box"*, the predominance of the compartmentalized structures that sustain academic organizational culture is tangibly brought to the forefront.

The disciplinary silos of the professional practice disciplines are replicated in the organizational structures of post-secondary institutions, as was noted by one participant, when stating that:

*"In terms of limitations of the discipline, I would say it is the silo, the silos. And even in our faculty - there's the curriculum people, there's the [inaudible] studies people, there's the language people. There are territories" (16).*

The existing disciplinary and departmental structures of post-secondary institutions was raised as an impediment to the interdisciplinary nature of Indigenous Knowledges. In regards to the larger university structures, one participant noted the possibility of re-imagining the structural limitations that are currently associated with Indigenous program delivery. *"So that's been difficult. And maybe we're at the point where - I think we have created an ability to have new programs that are much more... That flow across the faculty and... and where we can create an infrastructure for that..." (13).* As hopeful as this sounds, it is also clear that many possibilities are thwarted by existing organizational structures that stymie trans-departmental aspirations, as was later articulated by this same participant who stated:

*"...because normally we'd have to go through a departmental structure, right? A program is in a department... So that's been I think a really difficult systemic issue. It's a big job just to put, in a sense, Indigenous Knowledges into the existing boxes. (laugh)." (13).*

The interdisciplinary nature of Indigenous Knowledges does not fit neatly into departmental structures. This creates friction for Indigenous programming, given that established university culture and structure are built upon a departmentalized design.

**University infrastructure programming.**

In considering the kinds of cultural and structural shifts that need to take root within post-secondary institutions, several participants spoke about different forms of infrastructure and types of programs that would assist. In articulating university-wide support, individuals offered the following suggestions for increased

programs. Beginning with issues relating to the indigenization of on-campus spaces and general programming, one participant indicated that: *"And like the physical infrastructure. We've all got offices and then we've all got boardrooms and then we've got our classrooms - and it's not like we're all out on the land and gathering in circle to get our daily teachings, right" (8).* Another participant spoke about the need to link the Indigenous spaces that have been established on some campuses with actual Indigenous programming, when commenting that: *"On the political side, I don't think [name deleted] has gone far enough with this House. It's a beautiful House, but there's not enough built-in programming" (4).*

In conjunction with Indigenous course availability, other participants spoke about the need for more Indigenous programming generally, as was indicated in the following comment of another participant: *"I think we're starting to do a better job on the student support side, the Aboriginal student center and such" (9).* Another spoke the significance of ensuring that there is Indigenous programming available when stating:

*"I think these [Indigenous Knowledges] type courses are really critical for [students] because the course serves a number of purposes. One is to provide knowledge about policies and history and initiatives and to develop critical thinking. So it's basically educational - intellectual, if you will - uses of it. But at the same time, because of our history of colonization and the impact on identity, they also serve that important role to help students deal with identity issues" (13).*

In considering Indigenous programming and the space and resources necessary for such initiatives, one participant identified the politics of Indigenous programming as being dependent upon the ways in which the structures are set-up to provide these services. This participant noted the importance of not wanting to be perceived as taking students away from Indigenous-specific programs and went on to say, "...



any students that have come here have come here of their own free will and decision. But there's still that issue of treading gently - because 'They've got that program there.' This participant offered a rationale when stating, "And the desire is for it to be a program that's effective and is training Aboriginal people to work with the people" (8).

Along with the availability of Indigenous programming, one participant mentioned the importance of having anti-racism workshops being regularly delivered through teaching and learning centres. This participant's comments began: "I was thinking of the learning and teaching centre here... They used to do the anti-racist round table..." This person continued by stating, "At one point they used to have it where new faculty would be orientated into the territory. But whether they carry it on or not is another story - I don't think that they do" (3).

#### **Performance review and what counts.**

The importance of seeing that junior faculty members including Indigenous faculty achieve tenure was identified as an important consideration for many of the participants (all of whom had themselves already achieved tenure) as was articulated in the following statement:

*"Because we do have the big issue about how to deal with promotion and tenure of Indigenous faculty members, and because we've increased our number of faculty members too. And how to ensure we can help the individuals move along in their promotion and tenure? That's going to be a major, a major challenge for us" (13).*

In reflecting upon the pre-tenure experience of Indigenous faculty, the several participants offered their perceptions of the contradictions and concessions that arise for Indigenous faculty as a result of the current performance review structure. "It's painful to watch some people I know going up for tenure now that are really engaged with community - and thinking, 'I don't know if I want to be here because I can't...' This person went on to say, "It's, if you get tenure, you can go and do real things. And it's asking

somebody to put their life on hold for eight years. For many, they turn their backs on their communities" (16). Another participant articulated the challenges that existing academic processes pose when considering how to appropriately recognize Indigenous-centric scholarship. In this comment the participant speaks of the freedom granted to senior scholars that may not apply to pre-tenure faculty. In referencing a current project, the participant stated, "I know it would be a different report if it wasn't me as one of the people doing it." The participant speaks of practicing an academic choice wherein, "I'm able to put Indigenous stuff at the forefront, but it doesn't bring any pats on the back or anything in credit or merit because it's really invisible work..." (6).

The quantification of achievement has become the fall-back method by which much individual performance is measured within academia. Within this report, issues of quantification were frequently cited by participants as problematic. From the efficiencies of numbers, to the forms that facilitate a quantified assessment of academic life, what follows are the participants' comments on "counting" in the academy.

*"We've just re-written - in our faculty - our guidelines for tenure and promotion - like the standards - to try and include more community engaged, community based, relational work. It's all good. It's all wonderful. I sit on those committees and yes, it is all good. It's all there - and then everybody starts in with: 'How many...?'" (2).*

The preference granted to a counting culture was noted by a number of participants as was reflected in this perspective, "The institution is huge and it likes to count. And if it can't count it, you know measure it, then it doesn't get valued. How do you measure two years of building mutually respectful relations?" (14).

In the reflecting on the endless counting that takes place within academia, several participants reflected upon the organizational culture and collegial

relationships that are implicated in perpetuating this method of assessment. As one participant stated, "I think of the texts we use to represent our work are always very telling. So the Curriculum Vitae we have to fill in - how you show what counts - just by the very nature of the structure right? In further clarifying how the academic Curriculum Vitae enforces a normative way of thinking and being, this participant went on to say, "And it requires you to provide information in bullet points and fill in predetermined boxes, and the list of publications" (14).

As mechanisms for assessing the worth of a faculty member's accomplishments within the academy, traditional forms of evaluating performance remain strong. With respect to the evaluation of written work, the axiom of 'publish or perish' - preferably in refereed journals - continues to prevail. Several participants noted the emphasis on this method of assessing performance. As exemplified by the following statement: "So you know publish or perish? What's ironic about Education is we all talk about collaboration - I'm sure you know this (laugh) - but it's all about publication" (16). This participant went on to describe 'publish or perish' as an assumption-laden process that operates as a form of coded language that situates other academic activities as an inferior class of scholarship that is marked by less intellectual effort and rigour, "I don't want to essentialize it and say, 'Oh you know it's all bad or it's all colonial' for anything that's written in a peer reviewed article, no" This participant concluded their thoughts on this topic by adding, "But I do want to say that to only focus on that, to say that that's the gold standard and that anything else is playing in the sandbox - that's problematic" (16).

Another participant noted how the preoccupation with counting presents difficulties in having relational work count in the same manner as traditional academic outputs, "I think it's more common that community engagement - even though it may be thought of as being important generally in the university - having it count for promotion and tenure? I think it's still a big issue" (13). In further reflecting upon what counts, participants spoke about the significance

of community-based academic efforts and how this type of work often is considered when assessing performance. One participant spoke about being pleasantly surprised in having a conversation with peers about what is valued as scholarship, *“What counts as scholarship? How do we want to take some different ways of being here on campus and making a contribution - different ways that count.”* This participant went on to say, *“It’s like, ‘What counts as scholarship?’ and, ‘How will we assess that in terms of have you got six of these and four of those and one of that?’”* (1). In reflecting on the tenure, promotion and performance review processes one participant linked the changes in these policies to a shift in organizational culture,

*“Yes, I go back to tenure, promotion and annual reviews. It does count all those sorts of things. There are ways. I mean that’s what our new faculty evaluation policy tries to do which sets out for merit that these things should be counted. But it’s hard to quantify something like that. Again it comes down to the people that are interpreting it - a change in the culture”* (2).

Another participant expressed hope that after having been granted tenure, faculty may freely push back in ways they may not have done while in a pre-tenure position. This participant stated that,

*“...once you’re tenured you can kind of push those envelopes a little bit more. You can push those limits - those more previously defined parameters or boundaries - a little bit further and without a huge risk of never being asked back to teach a class (laugh) because you did some wonky circle stuff”* (8).

**Workload Recognition.** When considering the dynamics faced by Indigenous faculty members as they deal with annual performance reviews, several participants gave voice to issues associated with workload. Workload allocation and the recognition of accomplishments are intricately interrelated. The following

commentary gives insight into the workload and resource implications that come with an increased Indigenous presence in campus-based settings. In considering the uptake of Indigenous Knowledges within the university, there was acknowledgment that this would require both energy and time in an already taxing workload schedule. As one participant stated, *“I mean it’s partly [that] people are always on the treadmill of having to prepare the next class or publish the next paper. We all have time pressures, so protecting time to do that sort of thing”* (9). Another participant confirmed that this would require “one more thing” in stating a commitment to an Indigenous presence but also recognizing the pragmatics of the commitment: *“Because once again, I mean we all want to do this, but we also don’t have a lot of time on our hands. So you’re adding one more thing into this professional development for a specific thing”* (7).

With respect to Indigenous faculty, there was a recognition that much of the work that Indigenous faculty undertake to support community inside and outside of the academy is not seen for its worth. When reflecting specifically upon the workload pressures faced by Indigenous academics, several participants offered comments to the effect that, *“I feel that a lot of Indigenous scholars are faced with that kind of double - double duty, double work - kind of thing”* (14). Another person offered, *“I think the Indigenous faculty are often really taken advantage of - or not being taken advantage of - it’s just assumed they’re there, so we don’t have to do our own work”* (16). In reflecting upon Indigenous scholarship, tenure, workload and recognition, another participant poignantly described the dilemma that many faculty experience when weighing possible courses of action:

*“... It’s kind of like being a craftsperson. If you try to get it boiled down to what you get paid per hour, you just become bitter and twisted. I think there could be some people - it won’t be me - that try to push for it to get more credit. I can’t see how you can keep your energy to do it. Because the rewards for doing it are different. It’s on a different merit system than*

*the university has - and so trying to put them together is sometimes like trying to put restorative justice in a regular criminal system. You have to blow one up to have the other one work”* (6).

**Higher Administration Support.** In considering the people who were perceived as being integral to re-thinking university-wide policy and creating a more inviting culture for Indigenous Knowledges and Indigenous presence, many of the participants identified the roles ascribed to senior administrators and departmental leadership as being critical. The following commentary provides insight into what the participants had to say about the role senior administration. In this commentary one participant spoke about the role of the university president in setting a course for a greater Indigenous presence among faculty members.

*“...our President made quite a strong speech at yesterday’s Executive of Council Meeting about that fact that we need to hire at this institution more Indigenous faculty members. About ten percent of our student population now identify, self identify as Aboriginal”* (9).

Another participant spoke about the provost’s strategy for recruiting Indigenous faculty, *“I actually credit [name deleted] who was our provost for ten years saying there are different ways of having knowledges”* This participant further elaborated on this point by adding, *“To the point of saying to Indigenous faculty members who are hired without a PhD., ‘It’s up to you to do this PhD thing. We would give you tenure without it, if you met this other criteria right’”* (5).

In reflecting upon the alignment between senior administrative bodies and program leadership and the collegium, one participant shared, *“The President’s trying to do that at an administrative level ... at the Indigenous Advisory Circle.”* This participant recognized this as important work, but went on to offer a disclaimer when stating, *“That’s all good, but it has to seep down to the faculty level and the departmental level*

too. I think that's where we've got a huge way to go" (9). Another participant spoke about the importance of program leadership and the support that can be exerted at the department level, "I mean the dean is so supportive, our current dean. Our former dean also was. So that's been very helpful" (13).

**More Indigenous Faculty.** In reflecting upon the importance of simply increasing the number of Indigenous faculty, the following comments were made by participants: "I think the more we add Indigenous faculty to our slate I think we would be better. Things will move along faster because people will speak out more, et cetera" (7). Another participant reiterated, "Well as I said, there are not enough Indigenous faculty" (2). One participant asked that there be a deep interrogation of university practices, "And really look at what are we doing in those classrooms and how are we attending to power and privilege. And why aren't we hiring more Indigenous faculty members?" (15). Another individual spoke about the importance of having Indigenous faculty involved and supported,

*"First of all, if you have Indigenous faculty colleagues - a lot of units from the University don't, but we're fortunate to have that here - just making sure they're incorporated and involved in the regular mechanisms, the undergraduate and graduate committees, and the performance review committees. Those are the obvious [things]" (9).*

In considering the hiring of more Indigenous faculty, the dynamics associated with the recruitment and retention of Indigenous faculty emerged as a common issue for several participants who indicated that the academia needs to rethink its processes. In reflecting upon retention, one participant spoke about the need to consider the importance of hiring local talent, "We might get people applying from wherever, but maybe we also need to pay some attention to growing and supporting our home grown talent here. And are there ways to do that" (9). Another participant expressed that:

*"...there's way too much focus on recruitment, not enough on retention and experience in terms of, 'How do those students, how do those faculty experience the institution? How do their communities experience the institution?' Not just what does the institution say - 'Hey, c'mon down for a wine and cheese! Good job - you got in the door of our elite institution!' I mean I'm being sarcastic obviously (laugh)" (16).*

In concluding this theme, one participant commented upon the difference that Indigenous faculty make in the daily life of a program, "So definitely having Indigenous colleagues is so important. I mean, I've been here alone with one other colleague for years and years and now there's five of us. It's the coolest thing" (12). A consistent message of this study is that engaging Indigenous Knowledges is a relational proposition, and in order to develop relationships opportunities must be created for reciprocal interaction to occur.

## Summary

In summarizing the findings associated with a university-wide perspective, participants raised themes relating to the established cultural foundations of the academy and how this frustrates the integration of ontologically different perspective. Participants spoke about the implication of neoliberalism and corporate culture further aggravating the potential for Indigenous Knowledges to thrive in the academy on its own non commodified terms. There was also a comments on a shifting academy as a result of new norms prompted by Indigenous scholarship, students and community engagement.

In reflecting upon the culture and organization of post-secondary institutions, participants reflected upon the university departmental structure as impeding the inherently interdisciplinary nature of Indigenous Knowledges. Equally there was reference to the need for more programming to support an Indigenous presence. A theme that was articulated

throughout our conversations with participants was the role of performance reviews and the university as a counting culture. A foundational value that drives academic faculty performance review processes places the method of quantification as the most appropriate measurement by which to evaluate individual achievement. Aligned with this theme, was the theme of workload recognition. The voiced concerns of the participants with respect to workload are clear. There needs to be a reconsideration of what counts for knowledge and how to assess this knowledge and then factor this into faculty workload. It is at this point where the role of leadership in higher administration has a significant role to play in setting a course.

Our study affirms what is known to date: There is a recognition that Indigenous Knowledges exist; there is an understanding that Indigenous Knowledges differ ontologically from western paradigms; and finally that Indigenous Knowledges are not easily institutionalized to fit within the parameters of formal Western post-secondary schooling. It could be argued that Indigenous Knowledges are new to the academy. Conversely, it could be argued that Canadian post-secondary institutions, as educational and knowledge centres, are new to Indigenous Knowledges and thus only now beginning to learn how to accommodate themselves to accept a very different perspective. As referenced earlier in this report, Indigenous Knowledges are, "A whole different ontology, just a different way of being in the world and looking at the world" (1). As another participant reflected, it is quite likely that the academy doesn't quite yet 'get' how much change is necessary for the inclusion of an Indigenous presence that does not require that that Indigenous people turn their backs on their cultures.

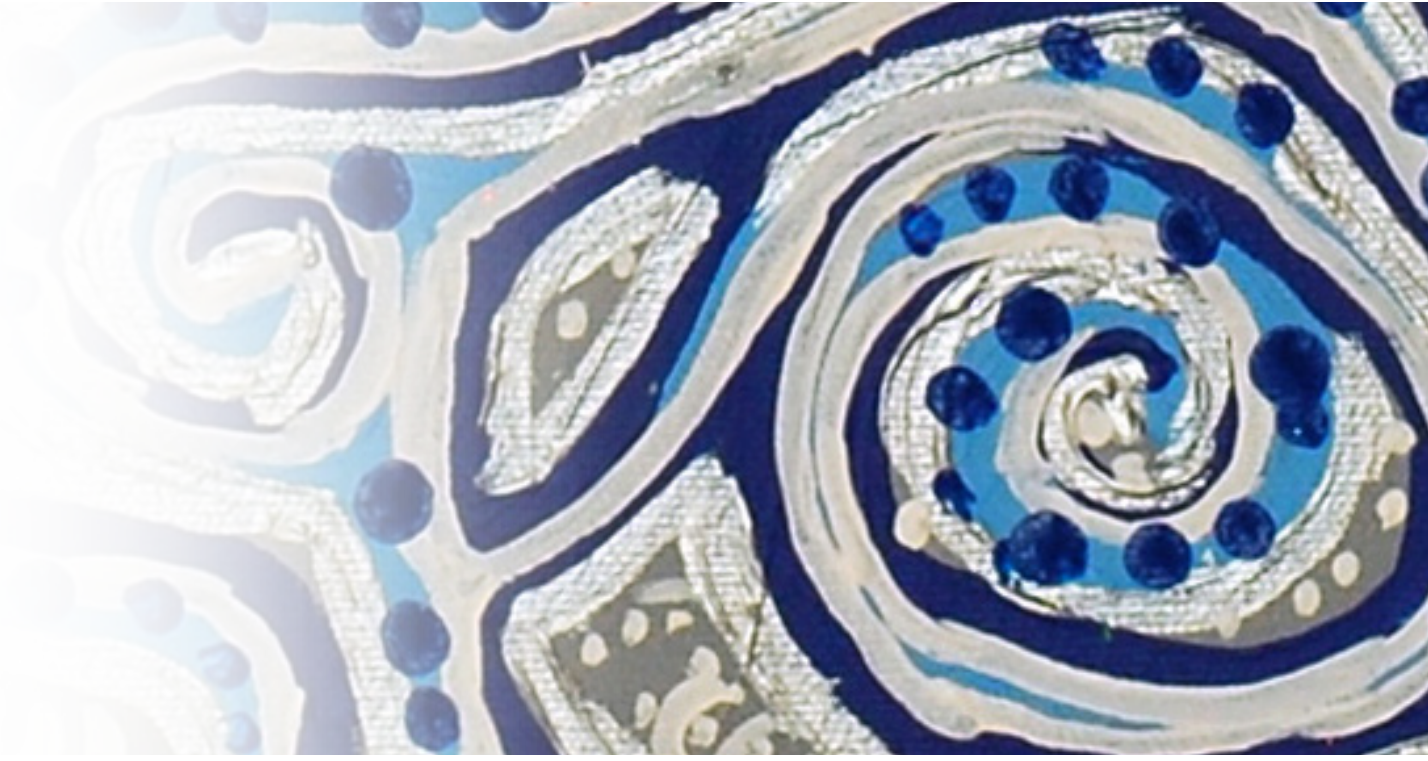
In reflecting upon the inroads and pathways for Indigenous Knowledges in Education and Social Work, this participant indicated that this endeavour must be considered in the larger context of the university culture beyond the 'departmental bubble',

*“Because you live in this little almost protected world of this (deleted) of Social Work ...*

*The individual then commented on the larger academy, And the racism. And the graffiti on the walls. And the lack of inclusion. And the lack of seeing it as a two way street. That is where I see the systemic stuff needs to happen” (6).*

Changing the academy means diversifying its representation. As our study has steadfastly asserted - bringing in Indigenous Knowledges means bringing in Indigenous bodies. The final theme of this chapter was the need for more Indigenous faculty. The participants in this study have attested that moving forward in this direction will require more Indigenous faculty. Indigenous presence in the academy - literally, ontologically, and culturally - depends upon *“more Indigenous faculty - bottom line - around the joint” (2)*. For as Indigenous presence increases within academic settings, there is an increased likelihood of shifting the structures upon which culture can solidify or evolve.

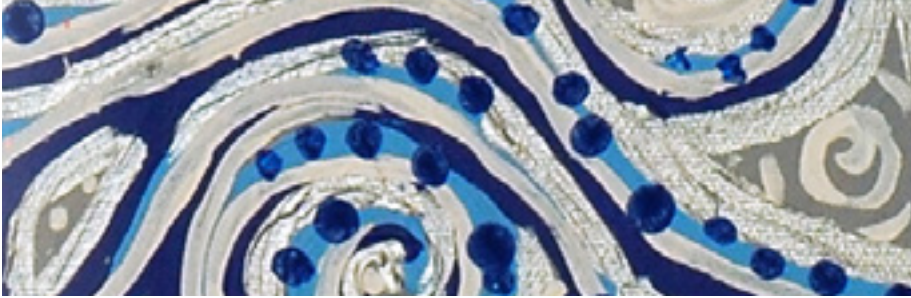
Culture, structures, policies and programs within organizations are symbiotically related. Within academia, a policy shift related to thesis defense processes or recommendation made to university-wide planning communities can have the potential to shift an organization. The fragmentation of Indigenous Knowledges into departmental delivery is currently standard. One option for overcoming the fragmentation of Indigenous Knowledges into departmental siloes attempts to adapt to existing organizational structures by exploring the possibilities of interdisciplinary programming. Such initiatives shift established academic cultural practices.



SECTION TWO

**Snow:** Indigenous Knowledges in  
the Programs and Classrooms of  
Education and Social Work

**CHAPTER**  
**NINE**



*"If Prime Minister Harper is really interested in an apology, then I would think that every university in Canada would make a course in Indigenous peoples a mandated requirement as an introduction to any University program in the country. They require English 110. They require History 110. So, if you're really serious about apologizing, then have something attached to that apology" (12).*

One objective of this study identified the need to explore and better understand the institutional supports and strategies that are required to integrate Indigenous Knowledges into programs and classrooms of Education and Social Work. To further achieve this end, the participants were asked to comment on the supports - including institutional supports - that they see as being necessary conditions for the nourishment of Indigenous Knowledges in their teaching and within the university settings where they work

In this chapter, as with the preceding chapter that discussed issues related to the disciplines, the conversations are disaggregated into Education and Social Work voices respectively. The decision was made to disaggregate the data into disciplines so as to facilitate a cross-discipline analysis and to answer the question of how the discourses found within each discipline might vary from that of another. The research that forms the basis of this report was conducted at pre-selected sites using qualitative methods. As with all the findings presented in our qualitative study, the report does not purport to generalize. We do suggest that the findings can be extrapolated to other scholarly disciplines or sites.

Within the pre-selected sites, the two Education departments function as either a departmentalized College or a Faculty. Both Education programs offer undergraduate, graduate and Indigenous teacher education undergraduate programs and Indigenous cohort graduate programs. With respect to Social Work, the School of Social Work at the University of Victoria offers a Bachelor of Social Work Indigenous specialization and an Indigenous child welfare specialization, as well as a Master of Social Work Indigenous specialization along with their existing undergraduate and graduate programs. The University of Regina Faculty of Social Work has a long-standing affiliation with the First Nations University of Canada Social Work (FNUC) program. The FNUC Social Work program offers both a Bachelors and Masters program in Indigenous Social Work, and the degree granting institution is the University of Regina. Within the overall structure of this report, it may have been possible to situate the role of the department within the section that focus on the university at large or the collegial relationship dynamics section that are located elsewhere in this report. With respect to the Education home academic unit (either departmentalized or non) operating at the pre-selected sites, the home academic unit is integral to the delivery of academic programs because much of the academic programming associated with the creation and delivery of curriculum that speaks to Indigenous issues generally happens within these academic units.

This chapter begins with the findings from Education. The themes are presented under the category of *Education – Programs and Classrooms*. The Education findings are followed by the findings from Social Work. The chapter includes a brief discussion on

cross-disciplinary themes and a concluding summary.

## **Education – Programs and Classrooms**

The following presents the thematically analysed findings that emerged from the voices of participants employed within the Education programs at the pre-selected sites of the study. The section is sub-divided into *Programs and Classrooms*. Themes arising from the findings are identified in each subsection. As mentioned earlier in this report, the term 'program' was selected to describe the disciplinary academic unit. As represented in the participants' voices of this section, the words department, school, faculty and college comprised part of the lexicon they themselves used for describing their disciplinary academic units.

**Significance of Indigenous specific programs.** In describing the Program level themes relating to Education, many of the participants discussed the value and significance of having Indigenous-specific academic programming within the discipline of Education, especially such programs as Aboriginal Teacher Education Programs. One participant articulated this dynamic by stating: *"I think that Indigenous programs, educational institutions, and places like SUNTEP and ITEP can be healing for Indigenous people"* (12). Another individual reflected upon Aboriginal Teacher Education programs as a portal for deepening one's consideration of Indigenous Knowledges when commenting that: *"...my work with NITEP started the pathway for engaging Indigenous Knowledges and I think that my Ph.D. work helped me understand a facet of Indigenous Knowledge"* (13). In reflecting upon early foundations that were established while taking an Aboriginal Teacher Education program before accepting a position within a non-Indigenous-specific academic unit, another individual shared the comment that:

*"I was shaped. I was formed. I was mentored. And I was tutored in my early career by Indigenous organizations and programming. But then I ended up here, and I didn't*

realize being here would take me away from Indigenous programs and people” (12).

**Support of the home academic unit.** As Indigenous Knowledges gain traction in the academy, momentum is building within the discipline of Education to establish graduate programs that focus upon Indigenous Knowledges or Indigeneity. This phenomenon was articulated in the words of one participant who commented upon the work being undertaken at the departmental level to develop and deliver a Masters-level cohort-based program that focuses on Indigenous Knowledges and pedagogy:

*“and that’s a M.Ed. [Master of Education] program. And we’re piloting that. I mean again we took an existing program structure and then said, ‘Okay let’s use that - but we’ll focus on and emphasize, we say, Indigeneity’. And then we’ll take that through the curriculum approval process, so it becomes its own program”* (13).

In going this route, the department in question was moving away from a model that is based upon students having to take specific courses in an existing program to the creation of a program that can stand alone. However in Indigenizing academic spaces, it was recognized that identifying an Indigenous presence as a departmental priority may generate some resistance, “I think we’ve got a lot going on in this [academic unit] in relation to Indigenous education or - Indigenizing the curriculum.” This participant went on to say, “I know that concept is contested. I’ve learned that it’s a bit controversial from my Indigenous colleagues. It’s just on the radar and agenda here all the time” (14).

In considering the significance of the home academic unit, this theme was deeply connected to other themes that were identified within the *Smoke* section of this report that point out the relationality that surrounds members of the same academic unit. In reflecting on the push-pull, back and forth relationality of Indigenous

presence, one participant spoke about the role of faculty meetings as a forum for departmental decision-making: “those aren’t really well attended by Indigenous faculty but more the faculty meetings are maybe one or two of us will be there, but not all five unless it’s a really important meeting.” This individual later acknowledged the tensions inherent in this comment, and added: “Maybe two [Indigenous faculty] at the most at the meetings. And sometimes there’s still tensions around Indigenous... Sometimes it’s hard if you don’t want to get emotional. So that gets hard, but I think for the most part it’s usually pretty good though” (3).

**Interdisciplinary programming.** The development of graduate programs that have an Indigenous focus and yet which are housed within academic units can be problematic as well. This dynamic was described by one participant who was acutely aware of the ‘turf wars’ that can develop within academic environments. Just because one or more academic units embrace the language of interdisciplinarity, does not mean that they will act in such a manner when opportunities present themselves.

*“Well, where does this fit within our [deleted] of Education?’ It doesn’t fit in just one department, it goes across the whole thing. But normally the concentration is from a department and others may join in. But we haven’t had what is called the interdisciplinary infrastructure for dealing with this type of program. Even though we have something that might be called interdisciplinary, it has not had an easy home in the faculty”* (13).

This sentiment was affirmed by another participant, who indicated that there may not necessarily be consensus on whether Indigenous-specific cohorts or programs should be developed: “...some of my colleagues think it should be integrated - we shouldn’t have specific PhD. programs only for Indigenous students” (14).

**Required, Elective or Integrated.** By following a required curricular model, all

prospective teacher candidates within an undergraduate program are required to successfully complete an Aboriginal education course before receiving their Bachelor of Education degree. At the time this research was conducted, one of the two Education sites had recently implemented this curricular model within their academic program. One participant commented thus on the decision to implement this particular curricular model:

*“Now we’re just entering a new phase in our [deleted] of Education where we’re introducing a core requirement - Aboriginal education course - for all teacher candidates. And that started this September. It will be interesting to see the dynamics now, because everyone’s required to take the course”* (13).

When considering the development of any new course, this participant suggested that review processes that are internal to the department could include a criterion wherein “I’d like to see a lens that curriculum goes through. So that whenever a course is proposed or a course is reviewed, we ask, ‘Where’s the Indigenous content? You know - where is it?’” (16). In reflecting upon the possibilities available in Indigenous - specific and diversity courses, one participant made this self-observation, “And in these courses is where I really feel strong in terms of being able to animate Indigenous paradigms or Knowledges” (11).

**Impediments in the course delivery options available.** In thinking about curricular avenues for integrating an Indigenous perspective, several of the participants spoke about the ‘sticking points’ (e.g., the post-secondary curriculum structures) that can frustrate the integration of Indigenous Knowledges. As one participant emphasized:

*“...if we’re talking about thinking about Indigenous Knowledge and developing relationships, you don’t do that in forty hours where you have one week to - it’s a grocery list of topics. It’s like ‘Oh it’s Indigenous week.’ ‘It’s gender week.’ So part*

of it would be the structure to develop courses with Indigenous communities. And partnership - like real partnership. Not, 'Hey come and open the class'. So structure would mean time to do that" (16).

One participant reflected upon decisions made within program planning that arose in relation to Indigenous individuals who had risked bringing Indigenous Knowledges into the academy. In reflecting on the associated benefits and risks, this participant commented that:

"... we talk about Indigenizing the curriculum, how much is this appropriation? How much is this possible - given the dominant Western approach which remains huge and powerful? What happens when you bring an Indigenous approach into this kind of space? Because I've seen it happen a lot - the tendency is towards appropriation rather than a respectful engagement" (14).

One solution may be the possibility of creating co-teaching opportunities that emphasize active engagement with Indigenous community members. However this approach too, is complicated - as demonstrated in the words of another participant who stated, "I would love it if we had courses taught by Elders or co-taught with Elders. And where they're on par in terms of how much they're paid, grading, etc.." This participant went on to say, "I'm not comfortable going to [name deleted] and saying 'Oh will you co-teach a course with me?' - or whatever - when I'd be getting paid more or I would be more recognized for it" (16).

**Pedagogical Strategies.** When detailing the use of these pedagogical strategies, several participants spoke about the use of readings in the courses they teach, as was illustrated through comments such as: "I always include at least two readings on the notion of adult learning from an Indigenous perspective" (14). Another participant spoke of combining strategies such as using readings and bringing in quest speakers, "The other thing is that, through the course not only we do the readings, but I also bring in

people. I bring in people from the community" This participant went on to say, "I bring in people through Skype. I bring in videos and movies and various things to continue to give them this wider picture of Indigenous peoples' experience with colonialism and what they are doing about it" (11).

As with the previous participant, another participant spoke about making use of audio-visual course resources in order to introduce students to the variability of perspectives that Indigenous people hold. "And I like to bring in youth-produced videos. Videos produced by Aboriginal youth." (16). In reflecting upon the wealth of available resources, this participant further added the following comment:

"But the fact is that we have an opportunity to teach courses that we are passionate about, that have Aboriginal content in it, that allow us to draw in Aboriginal and Indigenous authors and writers and books and materials. And you know, no longer we're in the day where we had just one book that everyone drew on. We have just copious amounts of readings now. I'm trying to keep up with everybody. So there is a lot" (11).

For those individuals who are themselves Indigenous instructors and who spoke about Indigeneity as being an embodied state within their own lives, the self becomes the pedagogy. As described by one participant: "In some ways I see myself as the content, and the process, and the pedagogy. Like I am it. I am the pedagogy. I'm performing every day" (12).

Overall, when considering pedagogical strategies for integrating Indigenous Knowledges and practices into classrooms, there was a sentiment that 'Where there was a will, there was a way'. Certainly, it was also recognized that using of less-orthodox methods can produce complications for instructors among their students and colleagues, as was noted by one participant who initially noted that: "I like using circle formations and circle processes in my teaching" and later commented that: "I know I've learned from [name deleted]

some of the ways he's concerned about its appropriation and use without a substantive understanding of its pedagogy and cultural significance" (14). This complexity was also commented on by another participant who was reflecting upon the opportunities to acquire further knowledges that present themselves when considering prospective methods for the introduction of Indigenous Knowledges into classroom environments: "We've got an ongoing series of seminars and workshops on bringing in Indigenous Knowledges into your teaching and into your curriculum in the faculty support unit at the university." This participant later added that: "...what I'd like to be able to do is just maybe get together with a few colleagues - because it doesn't always have to be formal" (14).

Connected with other pedagogical strategies for valuing an Indigenous sensibility in the classroom is the use of assignments. Participants spoke of introducing activities and assignments that are amenable to an in-depth exploration of Indigenous Knowledge systems. One example of participant statements that demonstrate the pedagogic utility of intentionality within assignment setting indicated that: "In the past - sometimes I've asked them to go find out who's land they were born on and are now living on. Where they were born - whose land was that? So they have to do a lot of digging" (14).

## **Social Work – Programs and Classrooms**

As with the section on Education, this section focuses on comments from the participants of Social Work programs in the study. This section includes themes arising from categories of *Programs and Classrooms*.

**Resources to Support Indigenous Programming.** To ensure that the integration of an Indigenous perspective was consistent with what is already known about Indigenous Knowledges, one participant suggested the possibility of integrating a resident Elder in the program. "One thing I'd like to see us do here in the [department] of Social Work is to move towards forming a relationship with an Elder with the faculty" This participant went on to say: "I'd



have to learn more about [how] to go about [doing] that and how to make the approach and how to think about the relationship and such” (9). Concurrent with creating an inviting space for Indigenous Knowledges and ceremonial activity (e.g., smudging), another participant stated: “So we don’t have the money to create a space in each of our faculty centers where it has venting to the outside so that people could go in and smudge” (8).

Supports for Indigenous Knowledges call for the development of infrastructure and relational networks with local Indigenous peoples. This dynamic was emphasized in the words of one participant who commented thus on collegial resistance to “policies around prioritizing sacred space, ceremonial space. So again, it would just come down to people who have resistance to those sorts of new processes and structures” (8). Such resistance may arise from myriad places, as was discussed by another participant who cited possible liability concerns as a reason to go slow on Indigenousization. “We’ve been talking about it again - how do we make ceremony a part of our [program] - because there’s all sorts of liability” (3).

**Indigenous bodies.** If there is not a large Indigenous student population enrolled in courses offered by a department, it can be challenging to make the case for increased expenditures in times of budgetary constraints - particularly if the expenditure is not viewed as furthering academic success or creating administrative efficiencies. In considering the overall student body of their department, one participant expressed that there ought to be more attention paid to the recruitment of Indigenous students. “I think that we should be doing more to embrace First Nations, Aboriginal students in the programs” (10). In line with seeking to recruit more Indigenous students, another participant reflected upon the importance of having a diverse Indigenous student population as a reminder of the necessity of also supporting other students of diversity. “I do think that what would be helpful is to have a really diverse student body. So if we have Metis students and we have some Aboriginal, First Nations students as well, I think that would be

really helpful for us.” This participant further explained why this might be important, “I think it will be helpful for students, because it’s not always a comfortable thing - being the only one” (7).

In considering issues of demonstrating Indigenous presence via the visibility of Indigenous bodies on-campus, it was also pointed out that such strategies ought not to be solely limited to activities aimed at increasing the recruitment and retention of Indigenous students. Indigenous presence within a department is also demonstrated by successfully recruiting Indigenous people to accept a faculty position. This may mean that Indigenous individuals may be entering a faculty position from a different starting point (e.g., as a PhD. candidate) than colleagues who were hired at the same time. And because of pressures associated with career progression towards achieving tenure and promotion, the retention of Indigenous faculty can become an issue. One participant reflected upon this challenge in the following terms:

“... [name deleted] sits on the University committee that’s looking at Indigenous certain curriculum. He’s also doing his PhD right. So you have him on a committee. [Name deleted] doesn’t now have tenure - put her on another committee. While she should be writing, you know. So again, it’s about we need more bodies to be able to move the agenda along” (7).

As presented elsewhere in this report, the imperative to have more bodies on hand to undertake the required work was a consistent theme, as illustrated in the following words of a Social Work participant: “Well as I said, there are not enough Indigenous faculty” (2).

**Evaluating Social Work programs and the matter of accreditation.** Given that every program offering a degree in Social Work at a Canadian university must be regularly evaluated through a process of accreditation, one Social Work participant raised the question of “How Indigenous presence could be evaluated in mainstream programs where a Western

lens prevails?” At present, Indigenous experience is mentioned in the principles of the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work Education accreditation policy document, however this is not represented as a standard to be measured against. In conversation, this participant suggested that establishing appropriate evaluation criteria might be a task for the accreditation board to explore, “That’s a very good point - it needs to be addressed at the level of accreditation board. How do they evaluate programs where there’s a Western lens?” (8). Such comments as these indicate seasoned understandings held by several participants who articulated what they feel are necessary pre-conditions for Indigenousizing an existing academic unit. This participant discussed the process of curriculum review by the Social Work Commission on Accreditation and some of the complexities that arise when a non-Indigenous review body is assessing whether an Indigenous perspective (and especially Indigenous Knowledges) is represented in the curriculum.

“When you have this National set of standards that are enforced by an accreditation body and your accreditation as an institution hinges upon their approval, then things have to look a certain way. So even if we have a course that’s heavily infused with Indigenous Knowledge, in terms of its’ articulation in the documentation, it has to look a certain way. It has to meet these certain criteria. It’s all a Western perspective and it’s within a Western framework” (8).

Despite the pressures that come with external evaluation, the process does compel Social Work departments to regularly self-assess the content of their curricular materials, the efficacy of their program delivery model(s) and the pedagogic methods utilized by their faculty when preparing for an accreditation team visit. The advantage of this sort of self-assessment was spoken to by another participant who commented that: “We just did accreditation. We had a review of our program and where is Indigenous Knowledge in the classroom. And as a [academic unit], I

think it's quite supportive I would say." The participant further articulated how this has made the department more conscientious of integrating Indigenous perspectives, "So what we've been conscious of is making sure that Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous perspectives and values is incorporated in all the classes" (10).

### Pros and Cons of Indigenous streaming.

As with programmatic approaches that aim to integrate Indigenous presence within existing academic unit structures (i.e., Indigenization), an Indigenous stream approach requires a similar allocation of resources. One participant shared: "I think it's quite good. I think the only time that there was some tensions, it wasn't around the Indigenous programs or writing, but it was around implementing anti oppressive and centering difference" (3). Another participant spoke to the importance of an Indigenous presence and program within their academic unit, in the following terms:

*"So on first glance, we have five Indigenous faculty. And we have a parallel or complementary organizational structure to support the work. And we do that on purpose you know. We honour it. We value it. And it costs us money when you think about cost per head for a relatively small group of Indigenous students that we are able to attract for reasons that we've already talked about. It's expensive, but it's expensive on purpose for all kinds of reasons" (5).*

An Indigenous stream model is frequently fuelled by the efforts of Indigenous faculty. In reflecting upon the Indigenous stream model, several participants shared that, although they are supportive of the Indigenous specialization within their program, it is not a concentration that they teach in. One participant stated that: "... it doesn't have anything to do with my reality as an instructor in School" (5), and another commented that: "I have certainly have had Indigenous students in my courses in undergrad and a little bit in the Masters courses, but I don't teach in the specialization" (1). Another participant commented upon the complexities and tensions that can arise

among faculty members regarding the administrative and relational consequences of committing to an Indigenous stream model of program delivery:

*"There still is some sort of sense that when a program like ours has an Indigenous specialization, a Master's program, or whatever - that that's Indigenous faculty's place. How do we keep in and out of our boxes? It's not that we want all white folk teaching in the Indigenous specialization, but we also don't want to ghettoise Indigenous faculty. So I think there's an ongoing tension" (2).*

**Instructional decisions on Indigenous presence.** In hearing the voices from Social Work participants who had experience of working within one or more of these curriculum delivery models, at least two different approaches to integrating Indigenous presence in the curriculum arose. One participant expressed one pedagogic approach to the delivery of curriculum that focuses on Indigenous peoples in the following terms: "I start every course by having that conversation with students. And I talk about the fact that even though there's all kinds of competing oppressions ... I will keep this focused on Indigenous - for always and forever" (4).

Another participant shared a different approach to highlighting Indigenous presence that focuses more specifically on decolonization. "It might mean that we read *Situated Knowledges* by Donna Harway but we put it alongside Linda Smith's *Decolonizing Knowledges*." This participant went on to say that "It might mean that we're reading *Andrea Smith alongside some of the other ways of thinking about sexualized violence*" (1). Resulting from the lack of clarity and the abstractedness that surrounds Indigenous Knowledges discourse in the academy (and because of the Knowledges themselves), several participants expressed hope in the possibility of place-based pedagogy, as exemplified the following statement: "it would be good to host one whole course in community the entire semester. I think that would be helpful" (3). To a large extent, curricular choices on integrating

an Indigenous presence are informed by the range of theoretic lenses within which faculty members have expertise and comfort and which aspects of Indigenous experience they feel is a priority. Given the differing perspectives that do exist among faculty and the institutionally recognized autonomy granted to individual instructors, there can be no certainty that Indigenous presence, let alone Indigenous Knowledges, is being included. As cited by one participant:

*"One of the privileges as faculty members, you walk in the [name deleted] classroom and you close the door and you can do what you want. You know I've had that power and that's part of the responsibility of my position" (10).*

**Pedagogical orthodoxy and the Indigenous-Western chafe.** In line with the theoretical variability associated with the integration of Indigenous Knowledges into coursework, the voices of participants in Social Work spoke about curricular structures and expectations that consistently arise. One Social Work participant articulated these challenges when stating: "So if you're teaching a class on death and dying - then of the twelve classes, do you have one class on Indigenous Knowledge of death and dying? or is it integrated in the whole twelve weeks?" (10). The division of time into semesters or terms fulfills institutional needs, but to what extent do such curricular structures inhibit the integration of Indigenous presence and the provision of student support services for those who seek to better understand the natural rhythms within which Indigenous Knowledges are situated? In responding to the question of how one supports students, a participant remarked on the challenges associated with established grading norms, "You know there's only so much I can do as a faculty member because it's an adversarial grade mark thing you know. And that's a reality" (10). In instructing Indigenous-specific courses, another participant offered the following comment with respect to the curricular limitation that privileges the writing of assignments over other methods of demonstrating subject knowledge: "This is an Indigenous program. It's an Indigenous

course. We're talking about identity - and yet, everything has to be handwritten or typed" (3). One participant clearly articulated a pedagogical strategy that has been useful in classroom as a means of inviting an inclusive presence through granting space:

*"I think the first thing to do is shut up. As the instructor, when you consume every molecule of air in the room or every line of text on the page, there's not going to be room for anybody to acknowledge anybody's knowledge that they already have. So the first thing that I try and do - and this true is in every course that I teach - is to build community. Saying, 'Who are we?' - this is who I am - But who are you?" (5).*

## Summary

By way of a summary for this category on programs and classrooms, we offer a cross-disciplinary comparative of how Education and Social Work are taking up an Indigenous presence in their programs and classrooms. Despite disciplinary historical differences in taking up Indigenous perspectives, the commonalities between the Education and Social Work programs emerged as largely dominant, albeit they were expressed in different ways. Whether in Education or Social Work, the participants indicated that their respective academic units are committed to integrating Indigenous Knowledges into their programs of study. The following is summary of mutual points.

- Across Education and Social Work programming, there is evidence of commitment to both 'Indigenous stream' approaches and 'programmatic' approaches to Indigenization. This consistency does not override an equal commitment to integrating an Indigenous perspective in the general curriculum of each setting.
- Indigenous Knowledges are viewed as having an interdisciplinary nature and the traditional boundaries of 'home departments' can frustrate Indigenous programming.
- The academic units at the front line

of Indigenization have a vested stake in continuing internal conversations relating to Indigenous presence within their programming and curriculum. Departments and faculty make choices and showcase their choices.

- Ideologically and theoretically, some faculty members may see Indigenous Knowledges as a competing paradigm to their perspectives and scholarship.
- Within programmatic and curricular contexts, Indigenous Knowledges are not openly denied; however, they do continue to be contested. Because few in the academy are fully confident in having an understanding of Indigenous Knowledges on their own terms, it is difficult to assess what is being contested.
- Indigenous Knowledges are understood, experienced and taken-up in different ways in the classroom. Because Indigenous Knowledges are often facilitated through resources and guest speakers, much depends on the capacity of the instructor leading the course to be a capable 'oskâpêwis'. If not, the question arises, 'Are Indigenous Knowledges being offered, or is it something else'?
- There is consistency across disciplines on the use of strategies, methods, resources, and assignments that assist instructors to invite Indigenous perspectives. However, different individuals have different experiences of accessing resources and/or capacities to bring in an Indigenous paradigm. Again, this speaks to the instructor's *oskâpêwis* capabilities.

From a cross-disciplinary perspective, Education and Social Work have much in common in upholding Indigenous Knowledges: there is a shared history of being frontrunners in seeking out Indigenous voices; they have increased Indigenous faculty capacity in their programs; there is a history of offering a range of different programming approaches for engaging the Indigenous community; they have experience integrating an Indigenous presence in curriculum and instruction; there has been a history of choices, challenges, tensions, and successes in increasing an Indigenous presence in

their academic units; and finally, both have the necessary experience upon which to consider and imagine the direction of paths that are yet unblazed. Education and Social Work have much to share with each other on this worthy topic. They should talk.





SECTION TWO

**Path:** A discussion and  
thoughts on ways forward

**CHAPTER**  
**TEN**



At this point of the report, we have come to the *Path* dimension of our landscape of a winter sweat allegory. Our study sought greater understanding of how Indigenous Knowledges are becoming animated within Education and Social Work programs. To achieve this aim, we asked Education and Social Work faculty, at select universities, for their perspectives on pedagogical relations in the classroom, relationships with colleagues, their programs, communities of interest and the larger university in relation to Indigenous Knowledges. We have found that Indigenous Knowledges and Indigenous presence were not mutually exclusive.

This concluding chapter discusses the implications of these findings, and offers possible responses to lingering questions that accompany Indigenous presence in post-secondary sites of Education and Social Work – and the university at large. However, prior to moving into the discussion we would like to take a moment to revisit the conceptual framing for this study – the landscape of a winter sweat – to remind that the elements of the winter sweat must be considered as a unified proposition that is made viable through relationships in alignment. So to begin our story...

The allegory of the landscape of a winter sweat is associated with our research teams' experience of participating in a Cree sweat lodge ceremony in 2013. We had scheduled a time when everyone was available to be in Saskatoon and Joseph, our Elder for the project organized the sweat. It took place near Saskatoon in March, 2013. That

year there was a cold spell on the prairies and Saskatoon saw an inordinate snowfall. Because of the weather conditions, it was difficult to find a lodge that was not buried or blocked by snow, including the site where we were to gather. Fortunately, Joseph had connections and we were able to get the road to the lodge plowed. While Saskatoon was experiencing unseasonably low temperature, the day of the sweat was a crisp, sunny prairie afternoon. We were able to gather in ceremony. It was, as said in Cree, *miwasin* (a good place to be). It is the experience and memory of that sweat, the lodge, the Elder, the *oskâpêwis*, the new friends and our relationship with each other, the earth, and the Creator that this experience helped to imbue the research with an Indigeneity and clarify its importance in the effort to uphold Indigenous peoples, cultures and values in Education, Social Work and post-secondary sites generally. After this experience and thinking about our research, it made sense that an allegory of winter sweat on the prairies could help us to represent what we had been seeing as key messages arising from the findings. With Joseph's permission, we sought out Metis artist Leah Dorion to visually represent this experience through her capacity to create artwork. The following are the five aspects of the winter sweat that were called upon in the framing our study.

The *Lodge* represents a place of understanding and being that is consistent with an Indigenous way of being. Our team described the experience of being through words such as unity, holism, healing, prayer,

song, proximity, vulnerability, spirituality, and protocol. The doorway of a *Lodge* is a place of deep commitment. It is a portal and a site - as one our members voiced - "Where you take the leap." Inside the *Lodge* is a place of vulnerability and trust. Upon entry, clarity becomes possible and prayers for others and self are sought. Because of the vulnerabilities that every human being carries, fears come to the surface. The sweat is a sacred place where we tend to our spiritual selves. Time is transcended. In breathing the infused air of the sacred *Lodge*, we inhale Indigenous Knowledges.

For a sweat to occur, a *Fire* must first heat the stones. The sacred *Fire* is built near enough to the lodge to fulfill this purpose. An *oskâpêwis* tends to the *Fire* and stones. Nearby the glowing embers, healing medicines for use within the lodge are prepared. People gather, stories are shared, and prayers are offered. As the *Fire* does its work, the *oskâpêwis* repeatedly moves between the *Fire* and the lodge, carefully transporting the energies which imbue the lodge with their heat. In our study, the *Fire* has already been lit, and it symbolizes the call for a passion to honour Indigenous sisters, brothers and the land. The *Fire* for justice burns.

Above and around the fire, the *Smoke* swirls. It is fluid and alive. *Smoke* is purifying. As the fire burns and heats the rocks, *Smoke* dances with the wind and alerts Thunder Bird to the sacred ceremony-taking place. *Smoke* reminds us of an animated interconnecting and interdependent world of relationships. Sacred *Smoke* helps to clarify and cleanse. *Smoke* brings healing and reminds that we must do our work in away that serves community. Like fire, *Smoke* also contains within it a potential to do harm. Relationships, too, can cause pain. With *Fire* and *Smoke* we must be careful.

When our team gathered for the winter sweat on that March day, the *Snow* was both three feet deep where it lay undisturbed, and packed into six foot high snowbanks that lined the trail that had been plowed for us the night before. The *Snow* was both deep and impacted and by the power of a snowplow - as imposing as it looked, still the

*Snow* was not an immutable and impassible force. We got through. In our study the breadth and depth of the messages on the research topic was dizzying. At time it was if we were attempting to clear our way through a prairie blizzard with increasingly reduced visibility. Periodically, it felt as if Indigenous Knowledges were in danger of slipping away under the heaviness of an unrelenting blanket of whiteness, and sometimes it felt as though we had encountered a miles-thick continental glacier. At these times, our team would remind each other – Snow quiets and melts; it rejuvenates and replenishes. With patience and persistence, pathways can be cleared.

In our research, the *Path* symbolizes intention. Blocked pathways can sometimes mean that intentions have lost their clarity, resistance has become too great, strategies appear to be unknowable or most worrisome – a comfort with inertia has set in. The plowing of snow takes time, skill and relational capacity. When thinking about the *Path*, our research team articulated diverse needs including, knowledge and tools to assist in clearing the way ahead; individuals who are ready to ‘step-up’; motivations to move beyond intentions to action; understandings of the dangers associated with cutting trail; and awareness of the pitfalls of seeking shortcuts. Finally, our research team was clear on this point – in order to get to the lodge, there must be friends who can help clear snow. It is from this place that we conclude our report with a discussion and thoughts for a way forward.

## Indigenous Knowledges

In considering the *Lodge* and Indigenous Knowledges as a focal point, participants in our study articulated a common sensibility about Indigenous Knowledges as flowing from a distinctive worldview. As referenced at the beginning of this report, one participant offered that Indigenous Knowledges are, “*A whole different ontology, just a different way of being in the world and looking at the world*” (1). That Indigenous Knowledges is a distinctive body of thought that is taken-up as such within many academic sites is reflected in an increasing

corpus of literature that transcends disciplines in a multitude of ways. (Ermine, 1995; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Dei, 2002; Deloria, 2006; Baskin, 2006; McCleod, 2007; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Debassigne, 2010).

Yet, we must concede that current scholarly writing on Indigenous Knowledges takes place within academic sites that are not yet free of colonial narratives. Further, it is not news that academia has been sustained by a human culture that valorizes scientific empiricism that as Coburn (2013) states is reproduced through institutional regulation: “Dominant research paradigms emphasize and privilege the role and words of credentialed researchers at certified academic institutions” (p. 60). Within academic culture and the creation of knowledge enterprise, the articulation of knowledge is currency, and the skills associated with the expression of objectified knowledge abound. Despite the utility of these refinements of academic culture, such capacities are less helpful as devices for engaging with the deeply personal and interrelational ways that Indigenous Knowledges demands. Indigenous Knowledges do not fit neatly into existing orthodoxies.

The implication from our research and existing literature confirms that Indigenous Knowledges exist as a form of philosophical perspective taken-up within academic sites. Yet, Indigenous Knowledges also are imbued with the complexity of being an embodied and/or involving a subjective, relational understanding that the self does not stand outside of itself (Simpson, 2011; Cruz Banks, 2010). The research conversations also offered insights that entered the realm of ‘self as a carrier of knowledge’, and many conversations with participants invariably led to questions of: ‘Can all bodies carry Indigenous Knowledges?’ If not, what then? What is the role for individuals who do not embody Indigenous Knowledges? For those who do carry Indigenous Knowledges, do these Knowledges apply in all situations? How might place cause a suppression of Indigenous Knowledge?

The embodied perspective identified here does not assume that simply being Indigenous is the magic ticket. Nor does it bypass a decolonizing ethos that is bodily felt. As Young Leon and Nadeau suggest, “We work with the intention of decolonizing the body as an entry point into Indigenous ways of knowing and one way of revitalizing Indigenous knowledge.” (as cited in Ritenburg et al, 2013, p. 73). An embodied perspective denotes that taking up Indigenous Knowledges does not require requisite knowledge, skill and capacity to respond to the myriad dimensions that Indigeneity encompasses within the classroom (which is often assumed that all Indigenous faculty hold). Nor does it presume that every Indigenous person holds this perspective or embodied consciousness. However, for those who relate to Indigeneity as an intuitive awareness (as was the case for several participants involved in this study), some Indigenous instructors walk into their Education and Social Work classrooms bearing within themselves both the advantages and risks that an embodied positioning brings.

Within the literature we find the focus on positionality and the intersection of identity within Indigenous scholarship. Such literature includes consideration of Indigenous perspectives on insider-outsider positioning (Innes, 2009); Indigenous identity positioning in research (Absolon & Willet, 2005; Kovach et al, 2013; Henhawk, 2013); and collaborations across Indigenous-settler identities (Jones & Jenkins, 2008). Our study tells us that positioning matters in contemplating an Indigenous presence. The findings of this report indicate that Indigenous Knowledges are being taken up by individuals who do not feel fully comfortable upon entering the Lodge and position themselves as an outsider looking in. Indigenous Knowledges apprehend that every human being - him or herself - is imbued with multidimensional capacities that enable multifarious interpretations of any particular subject. Understanding Indigenous Knowledges cannot be fully dissociated from or external to the self, rather they require the examination of a self-in-relationship with one’s human and

natural world.

Between these two places we observed what we have described as an *oskâpêwis* effect resonating for faculty of both groups in this study. Although native language speaker understandings of the Cree term *oskâpêwis* denote far greater dimensions than we represent in this report, we elected to use this term as we could not identify any corresponding term within the English language that could stand-in for the phenomenon that we observed. As used in this report, the *oskâpêwis* effect is about facilitating discussions on Indigenous Knowledges, more than leading them. For example, when faculty invite Indigenous community knowledge holders (i.e., Elders or people who have first hand experience) into their classrooms as guest speakers, they are fulfilling an *oskâpêwis* role. Inherent within this role there is an assumption that the faculty member will have developed a relational capacity through their connection with Indigenous community. However, it is not the case that all Indigenous faculty will have developed such community relational capacity, especially if they find themselves working in an academic institution that is far-removed - geographically or ontologically - from their ancestral homelands. Further, the *oskâpêwis* effect suggests that when choosing to invite Indigenous Knowledges into a classroom, faculty may be leaving decisions about the breadth and depth of what is being shared to the Indigenous community guest facilitator/presenter. Finally, activities associated with inviting Indigenous Knowledges into the classroom via community knowledge holders as guest speakers raises issues with respect to compensation. The *oskâpêwis* effect should be considered in light of such issues as: the nature of the course being taught, the faculty member's capacities and levels of relational capital upon which they can draw, and departmental resources available for the financial compensation of invitees. Because the facilitation of Indigenous Knowledges in classrooms varies in accordance with individual faculty members' *oskâpêwis* capacity, it is clear that integrating Indigenous Knowledges is largely faculty dependent. Given that

there are limited resources available to compensate Elders, the implications of *oskâpêwis* effect suggests a gap.

When the conversations moved to a more candid level, some participants spoke about the sticking points that arise when considering Indigenous Knowledges, such as the tension of working with an unfamiliar paradigm and that time this requires. Opportunities for integrating Indigenous Knowledges within academia are present; however, catalyzing these latencies will require a diversity of approaches and a diversity of bodies. As mentioned previously in the report, CAUT statistics (2006) show that only 2.1% of all faculty in post-secondary institutions in Canada identified as Aboriginal.

One area that did not get a great deal of 'air-time' but we wish to note in our study was the employment of sessional instructors within classrooms where Indigeneity is taken-up. It is recognized that, increasingly, sessional instructors are contracted to teach courses - particularly at the undergraduate level. For example, a 2013 article in *University Affairs* offers insight into the sessional labour force at one western Canada university, "at the University of Calgary, for example, the 529 sessional instructors represent 23 percent of the faculty workforce." (MacDonald, 2013, n.p). No statistics could be found to indicate the numerical representation of Indigenous sessional instructors in Canadian academic settings. Accordingly, how well is the Indigenous embodied perspective being applied among contract teaching staff? With this mind, the implications of our study suggest that overall, there is a need for more bodies of diverse identity locations who are committed to Indigenous Knowledges, as was commented upon by one participant who stated: "*So the opportunities are there. Because I think once you have people who are committed to Indigenous content and knowledge, I think things will move - but you need to have the bodies in place*" (7).

### **Motivations**

In reflecting upon the Fire and the participants' motivations for upholding

Indigenous Knowledges in their academic lives, both the Indigenous participants and the participants not of Indigenous heritage in the study largely gave primacy to the motivational influences of decolonization and anti-racism. Writing by scholars on anti-colonialism (e.g., Fanon, 1967; Said, 1978) have a significant history that largely pre-dates the presence of Indigenous peoples in Canadian post-secondary institutions. Social Work Indigenous scholars (e.g., Sinclair, 2004; Baskin, 2006) have examined decolonizing Social Work education and have stressed the importance of integrating an Indigenous worldview into Social Work training (2006). Indigenous scholars within Education have taken up decolonizing perspectives in their writing, notably Battiste's work. In her writing, Battiste has challenged an unexamined eurocentricism within formal education (Battiste, 2000; Battiste & McConaghy, 2005; Battiste, 2014). Alongside the decolonization scholarship, anti-racist literature by Indigenous scholars have worked to interrogate the racism imbedded with the structures of Canadian schools (St. Denis, 2007; St. Denis, 2010). Allied writing on anti-racist/anti-oppressive education informs our understanding of power and privilege within formal educational experiences (Schick, 2000; Kumashiro, 2000; O'Brien, 2009; Henry & Tator, 2012).

In our study, reflections on racism by Indigenous participants were of an intimate sensibility. Unquestionably, the participants' reasons for enacting anti-colonial/anti-racist pedagogy were indeed societally motivated, however, they were equally personal. They were personal in that the accounts given intoned the price of racism to personal dignity and one's sense of esteem for family, culture, community and Indigenous Knowledge system.

In further exploring motivations for upholding Indigenous Knowledges, the concept of ally was articulated by participants who did not identify as Indigenous. While these conversations were largely about positioning, there also emerged a declarative voice that emphasised critical reflection on what it means to be an effective ally. The



question of “What is Justice?” arose, and subsequently ‘How too, may aspects of justice be culturally biased?’ The notion of allies has been taken up in the literature as an important tool for those who seek to interrogate their own positioning in relationship to power and privilege (Bishop, 2002; Aveling 2004) and is aligned with anti-racist critical perspectives (Schick, 2000; Preston, 2007; Adair, 2008). In our study, there was a sensibility that the full nature of ‘allyhood’ has not yet become fully known.

Paradoxes between pro-Indigenous understandings also arose within this study. Numerous participants acknowledged that anti-colonialism (and anti-racism by extension) are not analogous to Indigenous cultural-centric understandings. While these two positionings sometimes do align with each other, several participants acknowledged that, at times, they can work at cross-purposes. One participant viewed this dichotomy in the following terms: “To me it was - as Graham Smith always said - ‘When you decolonize, you still center the colonizer’ (3). In referencing Smith (2003), this participant was inferring that although related, Indigenous Knowledges and decolonization arise from different focal points.

In thinking through the two disparate approaches that are often allied - but at times competing - another participant noted that:

*“I guess Albert Memmi said, ‘You don’t have a coloniser without a colonised.’ And so we work together in a dance. And when we let go of the coloniser’s power over us, the coloniser doesn’t have that same power over us. And so I’m trying to figure out how all of that works in relation to anti-racism. Because anti-racism seems to stick pretty strongly to notions of racism and I’m trying in my own way to apply an Indigenous paradigm to anti-racism that has come to us through another critical race theory lens. So that’s where I’m at in terms of that. There you go” (11).*

It would seem that one goal of anti-colonial

activism is to create space for Indigenous knowledge systems, yet at times this aim gets lost. The result is that the settler once again monopolizes the relationship. Thus, anti-colonialism, anti-racism, and Indigenous Knowledges are intrinsically bound, but not to the point where they are a facsimile of one another. In an effort to move away from this binary, a desire for new space, a third space or a trans-systemic space (Battiste, 2014) is a theoretical possibility.

As means towards an end of creating Indigenous-friendly campuses, all of these strategies are equally legitimate; however they may take differing shapes depending upon the different minds and bodies of those who support them and whether or not the intention is aimed at disrupting settler dominance, centering Indigenous thought, or destabilizing the binaries between the two. All are likely required to ensure a vigorous Indigenous presence in post-secondary studies and Education and Social Work practice; however there does need to be recognition that such work will require that individuals with differing capacities be accepted as equals around the table. It cannot be assumed that all faculty (Indigenous or otherwise) participating in Indigenous scholarship hold a critical lens, or conversely hold an Indigenous lens or desire for a non-binary positioning. At the end of the day it is, as Deloria (1969) implored in his early writing, *Custer Died for Your Sins*, that the problems and consequently the liberation of Indigenous peoples lies in the realm of ideology. If anything, the landscape of academia is populated by a wide range of competing ideologies, even among ‘friends’. Competing interests can lead to toxic relationships, especially if one perspective/ideology is privileged. Even among the seemingly allied perspectives of anti-colonialism and Indigenous Knowledges, trust doesn’t come easy. This was certainly expressed through the voices of our study.

Participants in our study enunciated a desire for a stronger counter narrative to enable increased learnings that are grounded in Indigenous experience. In framing a counter narrative within the literature,

Indigenous scholars and allies writing in the area of culturally responsive pedagogies have upheld the centrality of culture in resistance and resiliency in education contexts (Deyhle, 1995; Bishop & Barrymen, 2010; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). From a social work perspective, Unger’s (2008) research on resilience and culture among at risk youth populations documents a need for re-framing resilience within the context of the local. Through a global study of 1500 youth, Unger’s research explored the cultural and contextual specifics of resilience. In an effort to understand resilience in the lives of young people across cultures, Unger stated:

*Avoiding bias in how resilience is understood and interventions designed to promote it, researchers and interveners will need to be more participatory and culturally embedded to capture the nuances of culture and context (p. 234).*

Our study was consistent with literature that moves from a ‘blaming the victim’ storytelling of Indigenous peoples towards one that acknowledges the persistent impacts of colonialism. The literature suggests, and the participants of our study insist that understanding Indigenous experience must be locally and contextually understood, rather than resorting to assumptions about who Indigenous peoples are.

Participants spoke of multiple motivators for undertaking their work, including: naming racism through disruption of the normative assumptions and practices of racism; ridding Education and Social Work of deficit theorizing with respect to Indigenous peoples; and in particular interrogating what it means to be allies of Indigenous peoples. Within pockets of Education and Social Work, there is a desire to decolonize and to animate Indigenous Knowledges and to ‘dig down’ into this social justice work. There were voices raised in our study that attested to the complexity of this endeavour, and equally compelling voices that contested the ascription of complexity as being an excuse for avoiding what ought to be a simple social justice imperative. It is a Fire that burns close to the Lodge.

## **All my relations – Students, Colleagues and Indigenous Community**

When asking research participants about their thoughts on pedagogical relations with students with respect to Indigenous Knowledges and presence in their courses, there was significant reference made to perceptions of student experience and/or reaction amid classrooms and pedagogies in transition. The participants' statements demonstrate that increasing attention to Indigenous student engagement in post-secondary sites is creating a 'new normal'. Morrissette, et al. (1993) and Bruyere (1998) writing on Aboriginal social work in mainstream post-secondary sites establish Indigenous voice in Social Work education. The former article establishes the need for a model of Aboriginal education that is relevant to the needs of Indigenous students while the latter (Bruyere) article speaks of the tensions for Indigenous students of "living in another's house." At the time of this research, the participant voices suggest that while the relationships that frame Indigenous presence in classrooms are shifting, it remains an ambiguous and contradictory space at times that promotes a teacher-facilitator approach amid classroom dynamics that often evoke an emotionality consistent with unpacking colonial and racist assumptions and questions about self-serving motivations. What students can expect to find in classrooms with their instructors and peers is not consistent. This in itself creates challenges. In light of this, it ought to be noted that the participants in the study have seen a shift occur over time, and from their perspectives, progress is being made.

In reflecting upon relationships with faculty, much of what the participants offered echoes what is being stated in the existing literature. Of the materials examined, five recent scholarly articles (four of five being qualitative studies) specifically address this topic although not specifically within post-secondary sites (den Heyer, 2009; Kanu, 2005; Mooney, Halse & Craven, 2003; Oberg, Blades, & Thom, 2007; Wotherspoon, 2006). Each study asked for participant experience and was

motivated by an institutional desire (or in some cases, a mandate) to create space for Indigenous Knowledges. In all cases these discussions evoked an uneasiness, with three particular areas causing stress: self-perceived readiness including contending with pedagogical racism that privileges western culture (de Heyer, 2009; Mooney et al 2003; Wotherspoon, 2006); a lack of training (professional development or pre-service) including time for such training (Wotherspoon, 2006); and a lack of institutional support (Kanu, 2005). While there was acknowledgement that shifts have taken place to enable a greater Indigenous presence, it has been a slow-moving process of incremental change with factors, articulated by our study participants, as leadership and 'personalities' determining the pace.

Participants spoke of mentorship and advocacy framed within mutually supportive relationships. There was an acknowledgement that Indigenous faculty are in a unique place at present within Education and Social Work post-secondary studies. However, there was a desire for more connection - more often with Indigenous faculty - and an equal desire to move into more intense and delicate conversations. No doubt this will take diplomacy and trust. Of course, the question arises as to whether there yet exists the requisite trust necessary for such truth-telling conversations?

In reflecting upon community relationships, there was significant discussion of the criticality of community within Indigenous focused teaching and scholarship. The divide between 'town and gown' dissipates in the desire for an Indigenous engaged academia. If indeed, "community is scholarship," such a premise necessitates the establishment of a different way of assessing scholarship than is currently practiced. Ethical Indigenous community scholarship adheres to Indigenous principles of reciprocity and relationship, which manifest themselves in entirely different ways than are established in typical academic Research Ethics Board approval mechanisms. Consequently, the inclusion of an evaluative mechanism that assesses

community as scholarship would require a fundamental re-consideration of the more formulaic, 'X published articles per year for tenure' output approach that is more typical of the counting culture of academia. This would provide a more equitable means to assess performance - not solely for Indigenous academics, but also for those academics who see themselves as public or activist scholars with a strong community-based scholarship. It certainly creates the possibility of a more community-engaged university. Yet in these conversations, what is the community's involvement? What is their capacity to respond? The implications of possible responses to these identified issues suggest that further dialogue and action is necessary to better inform community scholarship across academic settings.

## **The Disciplines, University, Programs and Classrooms**

Neither Education nor Social Work has a history of serving Indigenous children well. In light of these histories, both fields of practice have a stake in helping themselves and their colleagues within their sister disciplines (e.g., Health, Justice, Nursing, Law, Medicine) to consider how it may be that Indigenous and anti-colonial perspectives can become more responsive to the Indigenous community. As such, it is not surprising that there has been much information-sharing between professional practice programs and the various fields of practice. Further, it is not surprising that several participants in this study acknowledged that the professional bodies associated with each have a particular role to play.

In considering the dualities associated with 'Education' and 'Social Work' - for which both terms similarly span across English-language classifications as scholarly disciplines and professions - it is not surprising that overlapping consistencies were observed when analysing the participants' comments, irrespective of their fields of practice. However, when comparing the insights offered by Social Work participants on their field's understandings of Indigenous Knowledges and perspectives to those of the Education

participants, some differences were observed. For example, Education and Social Work have differing perspectives of their field's presence in the lives of Indigenous families.

For Social Work, this professional/disciplinary presence is often more acute, in that the relationship frequently implies a latent possibility of involving mandated services that involve the court system. Social Workers must make critically important decisions on the emotional and physical safety of a child. Social Workers may move in and out of the life of a child or family. Literature on the impact of child welfare in Aboriginal family life is abundant (Sinclair, 2007; Trocme et al, 2004; First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, 2005). In contrast, the professional/disciplinary presence of Educators is typically less acute, in that the relationship often entails a sustained involvement over a child/youth's life for a prolonged period of time. A corpus of literature exists on the intersection of Aboriginal student experience and western formal education (Cajete, 1994; Battiste, 2000; St. Denis, 2007; Ortiz, 2009). The extent to which an Educational presence may be felt in a child's life - in ways not solely focused on curriculum and instruction - depends largely upon each particular teacher.

Because of these differing manifestations of professional/disciplinary presence within the lives of the human beings with whom these practitioners frequently interact, there is a need for some varying, yet discipline-dependant approaches towards integrating Indigenous Knowledges into existing practice frameworks. There also exists ample similarities between the Education and Social Work fields of practice when it comes to the provision of services to Indigenous communities. For example, through formal schooling and child welfare practices, both fields create immediate impacts on the lives of Indigenous children and youth, beginning at the time when services are first implemented. From a cultural perspective, the integration of Indigenous ways into professional practice frameworks is not disciplinarily bound, and

for professional practitioners, it may be the case that a fully-developed Indigenous cultural sensibility and action-oriented capacity may remain constant, regardless of existing disciplinary boundaries in Education, Social Work, Justice, Health and so forth. The participants spoke of the role of professional associations in assisting here. The power of professional associations to inform practice was not understated by the participants, however it was clear that there is not enough conversation on Indigenous presence in the policies, practice and standards of the profession. Rather the communication was largely informational and non-formal.

In our study, the issue of silos and jurisdiction in the professions arose as theme. For Indigenous peoples, funding policies, jurisdictional issues, and the multiple oppressive regulatory challenges associated with everyday Indigenous life do not shift dramatically, regardless of which profession/discipline happens to be providing the social service. Most notably the jurisdictional atrocity that inflicts First Nations people can be explicitly understood through the experience of four-year old Jordan.

Jordan River Anderson, a Cree child from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba was born with complex medical needs. Because of jurisdictional disputes between the federal and provincial government over the provision and payment of services for his medical needs, Jordan was placed for two years in a hospital while the province and federal government argued over who should pay the medical cost. Two years of his short five-year life were spent in the hospital when Jordan could have been at home with his family. In 2007 the House of Commons unanimously passed Jordan's principle. The original spirit of Jordan's principle is that First Nation children can access services on the same terms as other children in Canada. Unfortunately, the implementation of Jordan's principle by the provincial and federal governments, as identified by the Canadian Pediatric Society, has been extremely limited (FNCFCSC, 2014). While this relates directly to practice and not post-secondary institutions, for

our training institutions to be unaware of what continues in practice is not acceptable. For our professional associations to not be involved in a collaborative appeal to resolve issues as this, makes a statement.

In moving from the practice of Education and Social Work to reflecting upon the institutional culture of the university, there was much discussion of modern post-secondary institutions as experienced by faculty. Universities remain a stronghold of a liberal meritocracy (Polster, 2010) with an increasing corporatization agenda (Woodhouse, 2009). The evaluative standards that govern reviews of individual performance are firmly entrenched within Canadian post-secondary sites, and these standards are congruent with the value system upon which this colonial heritage rests. There was ample discussion on the current policy and structures that make push-back efforts challenging. Participants spoke about the eurocentricism of western universities and its ontological privileging of western thought. When referencing the culture of the academy, participants referenced the move toward neoliberalism. Many participants in our study spoke about the pervasiveness of traditional academic culture that is gradually being influenced by corporate agendas, as articulated in Woodhouse's critique (2009). However, there was also discussion of a push-back that is appearing alongside Indigenous approaches to scholarly activity that is evoking a re-imagining of what knowledge is of worth.

In considering Indigenous presence in the academy, the theme of performance review arose. The established processes of tenure and promotion are contingent upon every faculty member's ability to show promise of future achievement (i.e., for tenure decisions) and to demonstrate sufficient achievement (i.e., for promotion recommendations). As specifically articulated in the performance standards documents of each university, the three areas for faculty evaluation typically center on teaching, research and service. Every faculty member is (or has been) evaluated against these time honoured standards by the collegium involving a

peer review process. How community scholarship or relevance is taken into consideration in the peer assessment is largely vague, obscure or invisible within the language of most performance standards, collective agreements, or faculty association policies. Similar to the evaluative mechanisms relating to tenure, the annual review processes used to determine eligibility for yearly salary increments and the granting of special increments associated with meritorious performance are also assessed through a peer review process. It is very competitive, due to the fact that the granting of special salary increments initiates a concomitant financial bonus for those who are deemed to have demonstrated sufficient meritorious achievement over the review period.

Within academia, decisions associated with tenure, promotion, annual performance reviews and meritorious performance are all closely associated with issues of individual financial compensation. In this system, what is valued is monetarily rewarded. However, it is so much more than just a financial matter. Reward affirms what it values and values those that affirm it; and within this reciprocal relationship, the organizational culture remains undisrupted. The culture, policies and practices of the university all work to maintain and perpetuate such mutually reinforcing organizational values. In performance review, the western universities largely remain a counting culture as was articulated by the participants in this study.

It may be the case that, within the organizational culture of the academia where intelligent people abound, there may exist a possibility of re-imagining how scholarly work is actually valued. Perhaps it is not simply that one-system fits all? Re-structuring evaluative processes will require much ingenuity, consultation, and openness to develop processes that move beyond quantification. Clearly - as one earlier participant stated - *"it's about time, in some ways its' also resources"* (7). Regardless of whether sufficient human and financial resources can be brought to bear with respect to this task, one thing is certain when it comes to the processes of faculty

evaluation - at the end of the day *"it comes down to people..."* (2). This is accompanied with a clear understanding, by at least one participant, that systemic change is not a short-term prospect, as evidenced in the following words: *"I think some of the key structures are starting to shift a little bit, but the culture of the academy hasn't moved much. That's going to be a long, long haul"* (2).

In turning to issues related to the programs and classrooms of Education and Social Work, we first must consider some of the implications arising from the categorization of programs. In reflecting upon the program structure of Education and Social Work, both identified the significance of Indigenous focused courses, programs and cohorts. Whether in Indigenous specific courses or programs, participants spoke about the need for resources such as a sufficient budget, human resources (i.e. Indigenous faculty) and the support of the department. In considering some program differences that exist between Education and Social Work, it must be noted that this variability did influence the participant perspectives. For example, every Social Work program is subject to external accreditation reviews on a periodic basis at which time they are required to respond to questions of inclusion. This external review process does not exist to the same extent within Education. Another example of cross-disciplinary variation that had bearing on participant reporting was the varying organizational structures of each of the sites (i.e. department, college, school, faculty) and the implications that the existence of these structures create at each site, as manifested in such areas as academic unit budgets, hiring decisions, curriculum implementation, and workload allocation.

In line with normalized procedures, as those enshrined within existing departmental workload policies, there is also the issue of the steadfastness of organizational culture that reifies established guidelines for tenure and promotion at the academic program level. While the need for Criteria Documents and workload allocation policies that flow from higher administration and collective agreements, a degree of

flexibility exists at the Faculty or College level when it comes to setting departmental standards, so long as the internal standards align with overarching institutional norms. This flexibility may complicate efforts to integrate Indigenous presence within departments where there may be a difference of opinion among those who seek to maintain the status quo, and those who understand the need to alter 'business-as-usual' practices that were established long before the term 'Indigenization' was ever coined. Given this situation, it all comes down to the people in the departments, and the degree of collective will that can be mustered across academic units in making choices to support Indigenous presence on-campus.

The degree to which Indigenous Knowledges become integrated into undergraduate and graduate level classes remains largely instructor dependant within an established academic culture that is increasingly defined by monetary efficiency factors. With such weighty decision-making responsibility riding upon the personal preferences of individual instructors, the influence of the academic culture within their departments and universities becomes a factor with which each individual instructor must reconcile themselves. With respect to the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in resources and pedagogy, academic culture can influence whether inclusion is viewed as normative and necessary, or alien and ad hoc. Sacrosanct aspects of academia were referenced by several participants as representing possible hindrances, as was demonstrated in the words of one participant who stated: *"I do my own thing, it's freedom of... academic freedom right? They may not like what I do, but they don't know what I do unless students tell them"* (15). Another participant affirmed the freedom of tenured academics to exercise a great degree of liberty within their classrooms. As this participant articulated, this freedom may reinforce a downside of the closed-off classroom model with respect to the integration of new perspectives, as exemplified by Indigenous Knowledges:

*"I think for individual instructors in the privacy of your own classroom, you have an awful lot of latitude to bring in and do what you want, right. That's the sort of academic freedom bit. However, it is a constrained box and it is a private box which is something that doesn't excite me. If we're actually going to be transparent and accountable and relational, our classrooms would not be private spaces. Then we might have more of a chance to actually learn from one another and not have to be ... I don't know. I think it would just give us a different kind of accountability that might actually open up avenues for us to learn from one another" (2).*



All aspects of this study including Indigenous Knowledges, motivations, relationships, professional practice and the university converge to rest in the classroom. Envisioning an Indigenous presence in current post-secondary sites of Education and Social Work demands a reflective teaching self that is genuinely involved in a dialectical happening with institution, practice and society. Our study starts and ends with the classroom and the potential for the classroom to shape our society. This section concludes with a poignant quote from a participant in our study,

*"I've been thinking about this quite a bit, around indigenizing – on a grander level – indigenizing the academy. I'm not invested in indigenizing the academy. I'm invested in indigenizing my spaces, my classroom, my office. So when students come here, that I think about Indigenous ways of knowing and being. I think about how to support them, and I think about how to refer them on. In the classroom, I work really hard. It's not maybe so much indigenizing the classroom as it is centering Indigenous ways of knowing and being ... In my introductory course, it's centering Indigenous history - always and forever. Never letting it go out there. I keep bringing it back" (4).*

### Thoughts on Ways Forward

Indigenous Knowledges are alive with possibilities within the post-secondary sites of Education and Social Work. The pathways to these ancient understandings may be activated through language, memories, oral histories, stories, songs, embodied experiences, practices or spiritual meditations that can be catalyzed through ritual, ceremony and disciplined, ethical practice. The very survival of Indigenous peoples is evidence of the resilience of these knowledges and the multiplicity of equally appropriate ways in which such learnings may be transmitted. There are many portals into Indigenous Knowledges, and it is now the case that some Western institutions of higher learning are opening themselves to the possibilities that may accrue through demonstrated inclusiveness. Increasingly, post-secondary students are crossing the thresholds of universities and colleges expecting to access to a more fulsome plurality of knowledges and practices than had been presented to their parents or grandparents.

The variability among the geographic and social surroundings associated with the Universities campuses of Canada drives innovation and fosters creativity. However, the cultural variability within many of these institutions is less diverse, favouring epistemic orthodoxies and adherence to

normative practices that are often replicated regardless of where in the western world the scholar is geographically located. Because Indigenous Knowledges are deeply entwined with epistemologies of place, it is the case that are infinite ways that may be equally appropriate to inviting them into Canadian post-secondary institutions. Discussions on possible approaches to the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledges and an increased Indigenous Presence should involve every campus and include administration, faculty members, instructors and students whom have a stake in the outcome of the dialogue.

In order to help frame some of the dialogue to come, we draw upon the experience and insights of the participants in this study who offered their reflections on possible pathways forward for Indigenous Presence within Canadian post-secondary sites of Education and Social Work. The messages we offer emerged directly from the participant interviews and through the research team members analysis and meaning-making activities.

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#### Indigenous Knowledges is embodied knowledges.

**Response:** More Indigenous bodies.

This means taking deliberate action to recruit and retain more Indigenous faculty and staff, and to develop training programs for administrators, faculty, staff and students that foster an appreciation of the unique role and responsibilities of Indigenous faculty and Indigenous scholarship.

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#### Indigenous Knowledges involve community and ceremony. Community is part of Indigenous scholarship.

**Response:** Create ceremonies that invite community. Recognize the role of community in Indigenous scholarship.

This means assessing the extent to which community and relational accountabilities are integral to Indigenous scholarship. For example, this means re-imagining formal academic policy and processes (e.g.

convocation, thesis defences) of traditional academic practice that exclude rather than invite Indigenous presence.

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### **Relational Capital is the currency of Indigenous Presence.**

**Response:** Demonstrate an understanding of what relational capital means within the Indigenous scholarship including the time it takes to foster it.

This means acknowledging that all faculty and particular those involved in Indigenous scholarship may not have initial relational capital in the localities where they are employed. Fostering this capital is necessary and it often coincides with the pre-tenure experience; however, it is often invisible work. There is a need for this work to be formally recognized when assessing Indigenous scholarship through assessment practices that fit the nature of the work.

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### **The Oskâpêwis Effect – Faculty as facilitators of Knowledge.**

**Response:** Respect Elders, Knowledge holders and Oskâpêwis faculty and recognize that they have differing roles.

This means recognizing that not all Indigenous faculty have as a focus Indigenous Knowledges. For those who do have an interest and capacity within Indigenous Knowledges there needs to be a recognition of how this scholarship is unique and specific and may differ from traditional western scholarly practices. These capacities must be assessed accordingly. There needs to be recognition that those versed in Indigenous Knowledges may not be formally associated with the university (i.e. Elders) and this has implications for compensation and ways in which these roles are recognized.

### **Indigenous Faculty face competing allegiances between community and academia.**

**Response:** Minimize potential double-duty in assignment to duty and administrative service decisions

This means revising existing practices that single-out Indigenous faculty and students to represent all Indigenous peoples for initiatives that are outside of what would normally be expected of any other person in similar circumstance. Recognize that for as much as Indigenous individuals are valued for the diversity they bring to the university, they are also frequently upheld as their community's voice for change within the institution.

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### **Challenging Racism and Eurocentricism is a motivator.**

**Response:** Interrogate and challenge institutional orthodoxy

This means that a necessary aspect of inviting Indigenous presence means a commitment toward righting social injustices through scholarly activities, leadership functions, pedagogical practices and relational activities within the academy. Academic freedom is foundational to full and meaningful public dialogue.

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### **Professional Bodies of Education and Social Work have a role.**

**Response:** Increased communication between professional bodies and Education and Social Work post-secondary programs.

This means more communication between the professional bodies of Education and Social Work and the professional post-secondary training programs for the purposes of strengthening Indigenous presence in both sites.

### **Indigenous Knowledges and Presence thrive in Indigenous program initiatives.**

**Response:** Increase program approach to Indigenous Knowledges

This means continue to pursue existing academic program delivery to accommodate cohorts of Indigenous learners both on-campus and in community-based locales, where sufficient demand exists. A recommitment of support for programs that already utilize Indigenous program initiatives is also important. In providing program delivery to Indigenous learners, curriculum needs to be inclusive of Indigenous perspectives.

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### **Indigenous Knowledges in mainstream classrooms are ad hoc and instructor dependent.**

**Response:** Institute a policy response on integrating Indigenous Knowledges.

This means creating mechanisms to normalize the presentation of Indigenous Knowledges within all courses delivered by regular and contract faculty (e.g., Course Outline reviews, Accreditation standards, Course Evaluations). Resources should be made available that can assist faculty with developing/incorporating appropriate Indigenous materials into course curriculum.

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### **Departmental Structures pose barriers to the interdisciplinary nature of Indigenous Knowledges.**

**Response:** Consider how Indigenous programs are administered and delivered in Faculties and Colleges

This means systematically evaluating (e.g., Academic Program reviews) the efforts being undertaken by each Academic unit, Faculty and College with respect to the integration of Indigenous Knowledges in

curriculum and scholarly activities. Consider the implications of delegating Indigenous Knowledges to specified individuals or departments. Interdisciplinary collaborations should be promoted within institutions with departmentalized Indigenous Studies programs. Efforts to coordinate this process will require resourcing.

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**Tenure and Performance Evaluation processes are inconsistent with Indigenous Knowledges paradigm.**

**Response:** Broaden processes around performance evaluation.

This means finding ways to better assess scholarship related to Indigenous Knowledges and service to Indigenous communities, and give additional weighting to legitimate activities as supported by appropriate evidence. Provide training for, and invite meaningful participation from Indigenous Knowledge holders and/or community representatives in performance review processes, and compensate these participants financially.

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**Further Dialogue on Indigenous Knowledges in Education and Social Work post-secondary programs is desired.**

**Response:** Create opportunities for dialogue on how to imagine and envision Indigenous presence in post-secondary sites.

This means creating dialogue within the professional bodies and academic programs and creating opportunities for dialogue in cross-disciplinary contexts. This includes dialogue at different levels within the post-secondary institutions.

We have highlighted several key messages that emerged from the research. However, the report is rich with insights and there

exist other messages that have not been highlighted. In general what have we learned? If there is a desire to create change and invite and Indigenous presence in academia than this will demand resources – both human and financial – and will require policy shifts and practice change. However, at the end of the day it is people that will make this happen. If embraced within the disciplines of Education and Social Work, and the larger university, an Indigenous presence has the potential invite a relational accountability into academic culture increasingly concerned with efficacies and output. Indigenous presence has the potential to change the academy.

We hold up our hands to those who have shared their story about Indigenous presence in their teaching life. We insist upon the veracity of experience as a way of knowing. We assert the value of story in furthering understanding. We respect story, its power and the implications it leaves in its wake. What will be the story of Indigenous presence in higher learning in the 21st century? Who will tell it? How will such stories shape education?

Ekosi





SECTION THREE



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## Appendix I:

### Structured and Semi-Structured Research

#### **STRUCTURED QUESTIONS:**

- Do you identify as Indigenous or non-Indigenous?
- What is your discipline (Social Work or Education)?
- What is your province of residence?
- What is your gender?
- Are you tenure or tenure-track?
- Years of experience as an instructor (0-5, 6-10, more than 10)?
- Do you have experience integrating Indigenous Knowledges into your course content?

#### **SEMI-STRUCTURED OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS:**

- How do you personally engage with Indigenous Knowledges (IK) for the purposes of integrating into your pedagogy, instruction, course content and assignments?
- How do you engage with the Aboriginal communities and what is the relevance to integrating IK into instruction and core curriculum?
- How do you see yourself as being a facilitator/support to Indigenous students and non Indigenous students in exploring IK in your courses?
- What supports (including institutional supports), materials, relationships, and resources would assist you in nourishing IK in your classrooms?
- How does your relationship with Indigenous faculty, non Indigenous faculty, and administration factor into your ability to integrate IK into your courses?
- What is your role of community relationship in integrating IK and how does your academic institution acknowledge this relational work?
- What do you see as personal and systemic challenges to integrating IK into instruction and curriculum?
- What do you see as the opportunities and challenges within in your discipline that assist or impede the integration of IK into your pedagogy, instruction, and course content?
- Do you have any other comments or recommendations at this time?





