

Indigenous Teaching Techniques in Intercultural Higher Education Professional Development

Facilitators: Mascha N. Gemein, University of Arizona
Julie Vaudrin-Charette, University of Ottawa
Learning at Intercultural Intersections
Kamloops, March 2017
On Secwepemc unceded ancestral land



This research is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

We would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the unceded territory of the Secwepemc (Shuswap) People, who today are a Nation made up of 17 bands. In acknowledging our presence on this land we raise our hands in gratitude and honor the resilience of the Shuswap and all First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in Canada who are continuously fighting and are still considerably impacted by much over 150 years of colonial oppression.

We are honored by your presence here today.

We would like to dedicate this work to honor the living memory of Shannen Koostachin, a youth education advocate from of the Attawapiskat First Nation in Ontario, had a dream: safe and comfy schools and culturally based education for First Nations children and youth. [URL: <https://fncaringociety.com/shannens-dream>]

Ceremony of Introduction

As educators of settler ancestry, we are doing this work because we are committed to equity of access to education, and because we see our responsibility, within and outside academia, to be supportive to indigenous colleagues, communities, and families in their efforts to end the epistemicide of indigenous knowledges, revive their languages, and coexists in reciprocal and equitable ways on this land.

Given our own positionality, our place here today should in no mean be interpreted as expertise in or with Indigenous Teaching Techniques; rather, we are sharing some of the tensions experienced within higher education contexts and teacher candidates in “bringing in” Indigenous knowledges in academia, with the hope that within this exploration we can inform each other’s pedagogical practice. Therefore, all errors are ours and we hope you can let me know if we do cross some ethical boundaries within the work we will do today.

Guided by the resource below, we both introduced more precisely our ancestry and family, the un-ceded and ancestral indigenous lands we have been on, and our positionalities and connections to colonialism, and how all of this informs our practice and inquiry.

Chung, S. (2016) The morning after Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission report: decolonisation through hybridity, ambivalence and alliance, *Intercultural Education*, 27:5, 399-408, DOI: 10.1080/14675986.2016.1240497

[Post-workshop reflections: How often are these introductions present in our educational practices, meetings, etc.? How often are they done by teachers or facilitators and not extended to the participants?]

An inquiry...

CONTEMPLATING : Thinking about contemplative pedagogies as a reference, how are Indigenous teaching strategies and techniques respectfully finding their way into universities' classrooms (and beyond) across disciplines?

ETHICS : Our goal is to support ethical pedagogical practices as we learn to “walk the talk” of indigenizing, reconciling, and decolonizing higher education institutions.

Most literature focuses on Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies within the context of Indigenous educators and students, Indigenous Studies and closely related disciplines, and Indigenous subject matter. The involvement of Indigenous communities, elders in residence, and artists for co-learning and service learning is paramount as is the extended opportunity, if not requirement, to learn about local Indigenous history. How could higher education be Indigenized in other contexts?

Mascha's starting question: how do I open door to indigenous knowledges into Faculty Development (What is my own agency and responsibility to this?)

Workshop Learning Outcomes

Participants will demonstrate their proficiency to:

1. Communicate their positionality in connection to Indigenous pedagogies and teaching strategies
2. Locate their practices with considerations for local and global ethics
3. Reflect on facilitating a talking circle (or one of the techniques presented) in a college classroom
4. Longer-term goal : Advice teaching professionals on the potential application of Indigenous teaching techniques in their practice

Indigenizing our teaching

In line with Pete's (2016) approach to Indigenizing as «transforming institutions», looking at...

- ❖ **Relating.** Considering the role that ceremony may play in your course design, and in department/ faculty norms ;
- ❖ **Contemplating.** Considering arts-based and non-dominant forms of demonstrating understanding, including re-storying, photo essays, performance, reflective writing, etc.
- ❖ **Re/storying.** Naming the dominant worldview; making visible non-dominant worldviews and work toward what Sefa Dei refers to as “synthesizing knowledges.” (p.87)
(and more...)

100 Ways: Indigenizing & Decolonizing Academic Programs | Pete | aboriginal policy studies

«Recognize that Indigenizing our teaching is not just about culturally relevant teaching; indigenizing our teaching aims to challenge the dominant narratives about our collective histories, contemporary aspirations, and challenges. Indigenizing our teaching is also about supporting Indigenous peoples' and communities' goals of self-determination and sovereignty. » (p.85)

In line with Pete's (2016) approach to Indigenizing as «transforming institutions», we may look at new narratives in academia, including arts-based and non-dominant forms of demonstrating understanding, including re-storying, photo essays, performance, reflective writing, etc. (p.87).

100 Ways: Indigenizing & Decolonizing Academic Programs | Pete | aboriginal policy studies <http://fb.me/10qAL66Wb>

Five Ceremonies of Ambivalence

The ceremony of:

How we introduce ourselves ... personal & cultural situation.

Acknowledging land ... the self/group reflection on identity.

Practising inclusion ... reflect upon voice and authority.

Learning Indigenous language ... and how we think and behave.

Reconciliation ... a potential dialogue of co-transformation, of an emerging and unexpected consciousness and agency.

Chung, S. (2016) The morning after Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission report: decolonisation through hybridity, ambivalence and alliance, *Intercultural Education*, 27:5, 399-408, DOI: 10.1080/14675986.2016.1240497

“The purpose of these ‘ceremonies of ambivalence’ are to disrupt, heal, and perhaps celebrate our ambivalent hybridity. The word ceremony is used to inspire the creation of culturally safe places to honour our differences and share our common experiences.”



In this room, you find clusters of printouts following the key terms that are listed here [see separate file with Gallery]. In each cluster, there are resources, synthesized information, quotes, and so forth. In a silent walk of 30-40min, we invite you to silently explore and reflect; you are encouraged to interact with this gallery of sorts using paper, post-its, writing, and drawing, asking, editing, and commenting.

Afterwards, we will gather in a talking circle and share our reflections and questions.



Sotol (“Desert Spoon”) > O’odham: uhmug, umu’k

Related to Beargrass. Produces 10-15 foot bloom stalk nearly every year. Harvesting the stalk when it is dried out doesn’t harm the plant.

Indigenous uses: young flower stalks and seeds as well as roasted hearts could be eaten; leaves used for weaving of mats, sandal, and similar items

> O’odham, Tarahumara, Tepehuan, Apache, and many more

Austin, D. 2010. Baboquivari Mountain Plants: Identification, Ecology, and Ethnobotany. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Photo: Shabs, Stan. 2005. Dasyilirion Wheeleri 2. CC BY-SA 3.0 or CC BY-SA 2.5, via Wikimedia Commons.

Talking Circle: Our talking stick is a smoothened, but untreated piece from the woody, dried flower stalk of a sotol from the Sonoran Desert.

Reading Recommendations

Cajete, G.A. (1994). *Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education*. Skyland: Kivaki Press.

Chung, S. (2016). The morning after Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission report: decolonisation through hybridity, ambivalence and alliance. *Intercultural Education*, 27(5), 399-408.

Ermine, W. (2007). Ethical Space of Engagement, The. *Indigenous LJ*, 6, 193.

Kincheloe, J. L., & Steinberg, S. R. (2008). Indigenous knowledges in education: Complexities, dangers, and profound benefits. *Handbook of critical and indigenous methodologies*, 135-156. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Kovach, M. (2009). *Indigenous methodologies: Characteristics, conversations, contexts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Johnston, B. (1976; repr. 1990). *Ojibway Heritage*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Jonassen, D. & Hernandez- Serrano, J. (2002). Case- based reasoning and instructional design: Using stories to support problem solving. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 50(2), 65– 77.

Madden, Brooke. 2015. Pedagogical Pathways for Indigenous Education within Teacher Education. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 51:1-15.

LaPensée, E. & Noodin, M. Singing Back: Anishinaabemowin Singing Games. *Anishinaabemowin Teg: Aabziitoodaa gdi-nweninaa nji e-shkiniijig: Reviving Our Language for the Youth*. Kewadin Casino Hotel, Sault Ste. Marie, MI, March 30 - April 2, 2017.

Lowman, E. B., & Barker, A. J. (2015). *Settler: Identity and colonialism in 21st century Canada*. Winnipeg, MB: Fernwood Publishing.

Niigaanwewidam J. S. (2013). K'zaugin Storying Ourselves into Life. In J. Doerfler, J. S. Niigaanwewidam, & H. Kiiwetinepinesik Stark (eds.), *Centering Anishinaabeg studies: Understanding the world through stories* (pp. 81-102). East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.

Niigaanwewidam, J. S. (2010). Trickster reflections: Part I. In D. Reder & L. M. Morra (eds.), *Troubling Tricksters: Revisioning Critical Conversations* (pp. 37-). Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier university Press.

Pitawanakwat, B. (2013). Anishinaabeg Studies: Creative, critical, ethical, and reflexive.

In J. Doerfler, J. S. Niigaanwewidam & H. Kiiwetinepinesik Stark (eds.), *Centering Anishinaabeg studies: Understanding the world through stories* (pp. 363-378). East Lansing : Michigan State University Press.

Simpson, L.B. & Manitowabi, E. (2013). Theorizing resurgence from within nishnaabeg thought. In J. Doerfler, J. S. Niigaanwewidam & H. Kiiwetinepinesik Stark (eds.), *Centering Anishinaabeg studies: Understanding the world through stories* (pp. 279-292). East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.

Retallack, J. (1996). The Poethical Wager. In P. Baker (eds.), *Onward: Contemporary Poetry and Poetics* (pp. 293-306). New York: Peter Lang.

Ross, R. ((2014). *Indigenous healing: Exploring traditional paths*. Toronto, ON: Penguin.

Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), 1-40

Thank you!

Contact information:

Julie Vaudrin-Charette, Ph.D. Candidate, Faculty of Education,
University of Ottawa, jvaud073@uottawa.ca

Twitter: @VaudrinJ

Mascha N. Gemein, Assistant Professor of Practice, Office of Instruction
and Assessment, The University of Arizona

mngemein@email.arizona.edu

Twitter: @maschagemein