


An aerial photograph of the UBC Vantage College campus, showing a dense forest of trees with some autumn-colored foliage. The campus is situated on a peninsula, with the ocean visible on both sides. In the background, the city of Vancouver and distant mountains can be seen under a clear blue sky.

# Infusing First Nations politics in an Academic English course at UBC Vantage College



Jennifer Walsh Marr  
 @MarrWalsh  
#IdleNoMore

# Vantage College



- Vantage mandate
  - Innovative
  - “living lab” of best practices
- Student profile:
  - Academic streams
  - Student language proficiency
  - Admission requirements
- Course load

# Vantage Arts student schedule

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
08:00							
09:00				<u>GEOG 121 V01</u> HENN - 201 (Sep 8-Dec 4)	<u>VANT 140C V04</u> BUCH - D229 (Sep 8-Dec 4)		
10:00		<u>POLI 100 V01</u> CEME - 1204 (Sep 8-Dec 4)	<u>LLED 200 V01</u> AUDX - 142 (Sep 8-Apr 8)			<u>VANT 140C V04</u> SWNG - 408 (Sep 8-Dec 4)	
11:00			<u>PSYC 101 V01</u> HENN - 202 (Sep 8-Dec 4)		<u>PSYC 101 V01</u> HENN - 202 (Sep 8-Dec 4)	<u>VANT 140C V04</u> DMP - 201 (Sep 8-Dec 4)	
12:00							
13:00				<u>GEOG 121 VT1</u> MCLD - 220 (Sep 8-Dec 4)		<u>GEOG 121 V1D</u> FNH - 30 (Sep 8-Dec 4)	
14:00			<u>POLI 100 VT2</u> SCRF - 204A (Sep 8-Dec 4)				
15:00		<u>ASTU 204A V03</u> SWNG - 305 (Sep 8-Dec 4)		<u>ASTU 204A V03</u> SWNG - 305 (Sep 8-Dec 4)		<u>ASTU 204A V03</u> SWNG - 305 (Sep 8-Dec 4)	
16:00					<u>PSYC 101 V1E</u> GEOG - 214 (Sep 8-Dec 4)		

# Context of the VANT 140 Arts Course

- 3 credits over 2 semesters
- Coordinated with Poli 100 and VANT 140 colleagues
- 3 disciplinary topics:
  - Political Science
  - Geography
  - Psychology
- 50 minutes per week
- SFL & genre informed
  - Situated *in* the discipline
  - Not “divorced from the real work of the academy” (Spack, 2004)

# VANT 140 Learning Outcomes

- disciplinary-specific texts
- identify language patterns
- reflect and revise
- self-directed learning
- specialist or non-specialist audience

# Critical discourse analysis

“...to understand what makes texts meaningful, to demonstrate how texts achieve certain social ends, to show how they are implicated in the enactments of status and power in society”

(Moore, 2007, p. 51)

“...encourage multilingual students to look at the text/context connection in a different way. Texts are not simply context-bound or context-sensitive. They are context-transforming. It is for this reason that students should not treat rules and conventions as given or pre defined for specific texts and contexts. They should think of texts and discourses as changing and changeable.”

(Canagarajah, 2006, p. 603)

# Critical CBI/CLIL

“students develop...a grasp of the ways in which language is used to warrant knowledge claims within the discipline”

(Airey, 2016, p. 96 )

“...both teachers and students learn to unpack how knowledge supporting different positions is produced, maintained, or transformed and to employ empathy, openness, and tolerance when confronting ideas different from our own.”

(Kubota, 2003, p. 208)

# Rationale for First Nations focus

- Authentic texts
- Poli Sci 100: deeper understanding of the idea of nationhood, sovereignty, power
- Engagement in critical pedagogy (Kubota, 2003)
- Larger discourse around Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Indigenizing curricula, UBC Time & Place
- Agency as instructor



# Language & Content Integration

Reflection

Vocabulary building

Text organization patterns

Explicit & Implicit  
Explanation

Passive voice

Spoken & Written language

Denotation & Connotation

Evaluative language

The "Idle No More" Movement: Paradoxes of First Nations Inclusion in the Canadian Context.

From Cyberspace to Offline Communities: Indigenous Peoples and Global Connectivity. Alternatives: Global, Local, Political.

Comparing State and International Protections of Indigenous Peoples' Human Rights.

Twenty-First-Century Debt Collectors: Idle No More Combats a Five-Hundred-Year-Old Debt.

# Intro to Reflection

- **Task:** “KWL”: What I **Know**, What I **Wonder**
  - First Nations
  - Political Science Academic Discourse
  - not assessed, filed away for term 2
- Rationale for Reflection
- Attributes of successful language learners (Kohonen, 2000)
  - **Task:** What do you think?
- Assessment rubric, Student sample
  - **Task:** features, grade?

# Vocabulary in Context

Many indigenous peoples survive, and some even “thrive,” not solely because they engage in local acts of resistance against globalizing effects but because they **appropriate** global ideas, tools, and institutions to pressure home states into changing their discourse and action toward them.

Some scholars view indigenous peoples’ **appropriation** of global ideas, tools and institutions as part of the “globalization from below” movement.

(Belton, 2010 p. 196)

# Causation: Explicit & Implicit

## Cyberspace

Although cyberspace is not completely unregulated or free from state interference,<sup>21</sup> it is less regulated than other environments and is not bound to a given physical territory or owned by a particular ethnic group or state. For indigenous peoples this is advantageous since it is their identification as indigenous that often hinders their ability to take part fully in state political discourse as citizens. Cyberspace thus allows those who are marginalized to speak more easily in their own voices without having to go through approved representatives or channels. As a result, indigenous peoples may demand boycotts and strikes, alert the world of human rights violations, and share political tactics and ancestral stories without having to be a present, identified body.<sup>22</sup> As Landzelius observes, "the nowhere/everywhere virtuality of cyberspace may mean that groups otherwise far on the periphery of power can nonetheless commandeer information hubs and alliances to gain center stage, in geo- as well as local politics."<sup>23</sup> The Zapatistas are a well-known example of an indigenous group outside of the so-called developed world who used cyberspace to garner support for their political cause and thwart the state's attempt to dominate them.<sup>24</sup>

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# Passive voice

- **Form & Function**

- Prioritizing participants
- Thematic development

- **Task 1:** Compare & contrast two excerpts

- Content
- Organization
- Interpersonal Positioning
- Grammar

Indigenous peoples are making connections and forcing others to contend with them in various locales and in multiple ways. The number of workshops, conventions, and meetings that indigenous groups have put together to inform themselves of issues affecting them is remarkable, and their ability to learn the language of international fora is commendable, as is their ability to persuade institutions to consider indigenous issues. In addition to the PFII and WGIP sessions, indigenous peoples take part in the meetings of the Commission on Human Rights, the World Intellectual Property Organization and the Commission on the Status of Women, and they participated in the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Conference on Human Rights, among other events.

Interactions and connections are being made in various locales and in multiple ways. A remarkable number of workshops, conventions, and meetings have been put together to inform indigenous peoples of issues affecting them, and it is commendable that they have been taught the language of international fora and been able to persuade institutions to consider indigenous issues. In addition to the PFII and WGIP sessions, indigenous peoples have been admitted in the meetings of the Commission on Human Rights, the World Intellectual Property Organization and the Commission on the Status of Women, and they have been included in the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Conference on Human Rights, among other events.

(original and adapted from Belton, 2010, p. 206)

# Passive voice

- **Task 2:** Note Participants...any omitted?

*“Lands are taken, ways of being are threatened, and, in the process, entire communities often become separated from their common past and one another.”*

(Belton, 2010, p. 193)

- **Task 3:** use of “by + actor”

*“Comack observes, “Aboriginal men are regularly stopped by police, sometimes on a weekly basis, and asked to account for themselves” ([36], p. 30 210).”*

(Wotherspoon & Hansen, 2013, p. 30-31)

# Connotation

“Idle No More: Canadian Union of Postal Workers Honors Attawapiskat Chief’s Strong Stand Against the Country’s ‘Moral Bankruptcy’”

“Idle No More’s Thunder Heard Through Walls of Prime Minister’s Office”

“Idle No More Movement Led by Aboriginal Women”

“Harper, Atleo to Meet as Militants Threaten Economy”

“Charges Considered After Idle No More Protest Shuts Down City Bridge (with video)”

“‘Idle No More’ March in Missoula Draws Attention to Aboriginal Rights”

(Morris, 2014, p. 249)



# Return to Reflection: KWL: What I Learned

**Describe your understanding of First Nations in week 2 (you should reference the writing you did in week 2 of the course).**

*“I was quite ignorant about the North American history...I believed that the colonization of Indigenous lands was “for development”...*

*Learning about the violent actions of colonial forces and how North American land was “discovered” was a cultural upheaval of my perception and understanding of the world. I realized how ignorant and uneducated I was...This experience did not only challenge my world- view, but also made become conscious of how the education and in-depth learning on the issues...”*

# Return to Reflection: KWL: What I **Learned**

**Describe your understanding of First Nations in week 2 (you should reference the writing you did in week 2 of the course).**

*“...how First Nation suffer from the unfair treatment. Their land had been taken by western settlers, and their children were forced to study in residential school, which means they were forced to study another languages.”*

“In September, I, unfortunately, had no idea about First Nations and the struggle that they’re still facing against the Western thought. ... my understanding about First Nations and their struggle has taught me how unjust decisions can be taken in order to generate wealth.”

# Return to Reflection: KWL: What I Learned

**Describe your understanding of First Nations in week 2 (you should reference the writing you did in week 2 of the course).**

*“My understanding in the second week was narrower than now. I did not know that First Nations are an active group who defends its rights and pursues for justice. Therefore, I could think that my scope about their situation was quite limited. In my knowledge, they were a kind of passive persons who lived in peace with the government. That idea gave me a false reality of those peoples and the Canadian government policies regarding them. I thought that in Canada there were just the typical problems as that many countries face.”*

“I have learnt about how their title as Indigenous people may in fact be a threat to their sovereignty and peace. Through learning about their movement 'Idle No More', and its importance as a civil society campaign for equal rights and recognition in the United Nations I see the impact it has on the future generations of First Nations and even non First Nations.”

# Return to Reflection: KWL: What I Learned

**Identify, describe and explain the relevance of a feature of political science discourse you have worked with in the course.**

*“One of the major functions of passive voice is to hide the participants. For example “the bill C-45 was violated in...”, the people who violated the laws were not mentioned in the sentence. When newspapers and social medias used the passive voices in this way, they are trying to remove the social responsibilities of participants. When we read sentences written in passive voices, **we need to critically think who are the participants.**”*

*“...there are also various grammatical structures, in the lesson of passive voice and active voice, the **different use of language features can change the interpersonal positioning and how the author want to represent to readers.** Because we can feel the positive and negative thoughts about one historical event, **the different language features and grammatical structures can make readers get different direction of the understanding,** on the other hand, it's also a warning that we need to think about the questions with critical perspectives.”*

“...I learned was the denotation and connotation...It was one of my favorite lesson due to the fact how with regular word we can empower a marginalized group, and also how we can be neutral or aggressive in our writings. For example, reading the headlines on the Aboriginal women, who are leading their movement was very inspiring.”

“It is very important to understand the connotations of some essential words in political science because different words have different personal tends of characters. For example, when using “rudimentary” to describe the needs of indigenous people, it is obvious that it contains something like undeveloped and superiority feeling of the author.”

“One of the key features of political science discourse is the use of active and passive voice. When analysing the Idle No More article and seeing how both of these perspectives come to life, we notice the true importance of how this portrays enthusiasm between the writer and the reader. Jennifer’s example of changing the text from active to passive blew me away. **I always knew that it was fairly straight forward to undermine an achievement simply by changing the way you talk about it**, but never to the extent that was Jennifer showed it to be. This proves a very interesting point in how **individual value and accomplishments can be lost simply through the discourse that they’re discussed through.**”

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# Resources

- Indigenizing the academy: What some universities are doing to weave indigenous peoples, cultures and knowledge into the fabric of their campuses. <http://www.universityaffairs.ca/features/feature-article/indigenizing-the-academy/>
- UBC's Aboriginal Strategic Plan: <http://aboriginal.ubc.ca/strategic-plan/>
- "On whose land we sit": the difference in Indigenous engagement between UBCO and UBC Vancouver: <http://ubyssey.ca/news/on-whose-land-we-sit-the-difference-in-indigenous-engagement-between-ubco-and-ubc-vancouver/?platform=hootsuite>
- Time and Place at UBC: Our Histories and Relations: <http://timeandplace.ubc.ca/>



# Thank you



[jennifer.walshmarr@ubc.ca](mailto:jennifer.walshmarr@ubc.ca)



@MarrWalsh