

# Artist's Statement

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

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



*"We're not asking you to be knowledge takers. We've got our knowledge holders with us. You're going to work with the knowledge holders to make knowledge that can be shared, and it needs to be shared back to those people who gifted it to you in the first place. That is the first step of reciprocity."*

-  
*Dr. Sereana Naepi*

## Editors:

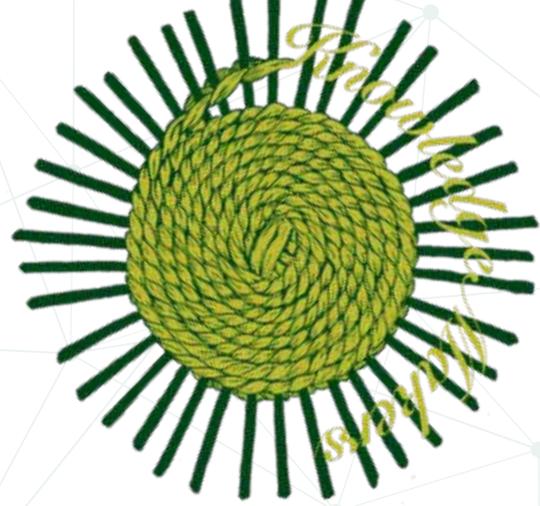
Dr. Sereana Naepi – Thompson Rivers University  
Jana Chouinard – Thompson Rivers University

## Associate Editors:

Bonnie Scherer – Thompson Rivers University  
Professor Airini – Thompson Rivers University

## Graphic Designer:

Thomas Sandhoff – Vida Creative Media



# Knowledge Makers 2019

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## FOREWORD

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

Knowledge Makers is an interdisciplinary research mentoring initiative based at Thompson Rivers University that supports Indigenous undergraduate students to become researchers. The selected students participate in creating online portfolios and a two-day workshop exploring Indigenous research. They prepare research action plans and produce papers for the Knowledge Makers publication. A gathering is held with the university, community, and loved ones in attendance to share the moment when the Knowledge Makers, as first generation Indigenous researchers, receive their first copy of their first publication. And as often happens in Indigenous ways, the first act for each Knowledge Maker is to gift this treasured first publication to their respected ones. We come together throughout the Knowledge Makers journey with the support of our families, Elders, administrators, faculty, staff, and each other, tapping into the potential we have as Indigenous researchers, and the breadth and possibilities of Indigenous research methodologies.

We feel honoured to be in each other's company, and so inspired. Since its inception four years ago Knowledge Makers has had 56 participants from 30 nations, of whom two have been National Scholarships winners (SSHRC), one has received a SSHRC research grant (\$50,000), fifteen have been research assistants, six have received Graduate Research Scholarships, four have continued to Masters, one has completed an International Internship, two have gone onto Post-Baccalaureate Studies, one was awarded an Undergraduate Research Experience Award Grant (TRU), and two have presented at international conferences. What began as an undergraduate initiative now includes three Knowledge Makers Circles – undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral.

It is a remarkable journey each year to go from receiving student applications, to selection, e-portfolios, workshop, and publication. This year we see even more

articles drawing on published research by Indigenous researchers. Indeed, some of the papers in this journal contain Indigenous-only references and one references all of the Knowledge Makers articles from previous years.

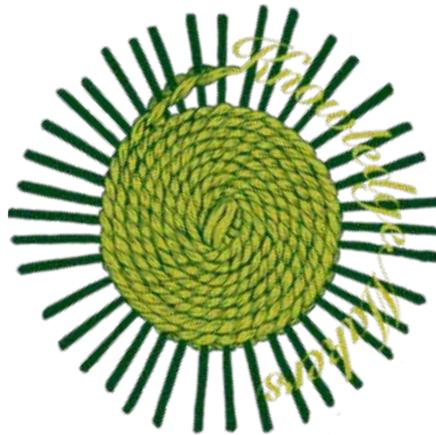
We open with Sandra Bandura, who reflects on the words of the Knowledge Makers who came before her and the lessons that they offer: “they are the front line, the leaders and the inspiration for me and others. By using their voices, I demonstrate the idea of interconnected knowledge and our connection to each other.” We then share our thoughts on dismantling the Eurocentric foundations of social work, addressing the racism inherent in the justice system, and the impact of colonisation on language retention. From there we discuss the loss of medicinal plants, responses to microaggressions, seeking justice for our communities, healing from addiction, and residential schools. We reflect on our family histories and how they tie to the wider colonial project, the failure of the justice system to uphold the honor of our families, and we ask Thompson Rivers University to uphold their commitment to Indigenous learners.

We close with Stephanie Tour and her reflections on learning to ‘jig in both worlds’ as she balances Indigenous knowledge-making and the academy.

In recognition that this is our fourth journal and therefore representative of a completion of the first cycle, our Elders have provided stories and reflections of Knowledge Makers. Their articles are transcriptions of conversations with them and hold wisdom that will be useful in guiding our knowledge makers in years to come. You will also find poems from Secwépemc professor at TRU, Garry Gottfriedson and articles from Indigenous academics.

This has been a major journey that, as always, is a privilege to share with everyone.

We look forward to the authors and their papers being cited in future publications by others, and seeing Knowledge Makers participants continuing as researchers – strong in identity and purpose. The weaving of this basket of knowledge-making and Knowledge Makers is dynamic and advancing. What a treasured gift we have with this fourth edition of the Knowledge Makers journal.



*Sereana Naepi, Jana Chouinard, and Airini*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

**W**e would like to thank the many people who contributed their thoughts, ideas, and support to Knowledge Makers. Thank you to Thompson Rivers University for the vision and resources that make Knowledge Makers possible. Our President (Professor Brett Fairburn) and Vice-President Academic and Provost (Professor Christine Bovis-Cnossen) have provided genuine and meaningful support as we evolve to be a university of choice and opportunity for Indigenous peoples. Our sincere thanks to the TRU Research and Graduate office for providing the idea and resources to make this project possible, and to Professor Will Garrett-Petts and Troy Fuller for your continued and exceptional support. We thank the TRU Elders Mike Arnouse, Doreen Kenoras, Estella Patrick Moller and Dr. Margaret Hyslop for their time and wisdom all across TRU and to Knowledge Makers. Thank you to Paul Michel (Executive Director, Aboriginal Education) and his team for their guidance. Misty Antoine, Didi Ledohowski, and Tina Matthew, thank you for the many ways that you have contributed to Knowledge Makers. We thank the Aboriginal Student Services team for their guidance and support of the program, in particular Vernie Clement and Shawna Walker. Thank you to all the Deans, faculty, staff, and Knowledge Makers alumni who were able to join us this year to provide encouragement and insights. We acknowledge Winter 2016 Knowledge Maker Levi Glass for his talent in designing the Knowledge Makers' artwork (seen on the cover of this journal and on our hoodies). Thank you to the extraordinary team that brought this publication to print, especially Jana Chouinard, Bonnie Scherrer, Thomas Sandhoff and Sereana Naepi. The legacy of Crystalyn Lemieux (a visiting Fulbright student scholar) with her leadership and many talents, combined with Brian Lamb and TRU-Open Learning, means that the Knowledge Makers e-portfolios continue. Thank you to the support, administration, and catering teams for making sure all that was needed was in place. Knowledge Makers is co-ordinated by Jana Chouinard. Although she would not seek acknowledgement herself, we know that this program would not be possible without her careful guidance and support of students and faculty involved in Knowledge Makers. We thank Sereana Naepi and know that her energy, intelligence, and advocacy as an Indigenous scholar herself make amazing things possible in amazing ways. We also thank Professor Airini whose unrelenting passion and advocacy to grow Indigenous researchers make programs like the Knowledge Makers possible. Finally, and most importantly, we thank the Indigenous students who committed themselves to the Knowledge Makers program. We look forward to hearing about your research journeys in future years.

~

*Kukwstsétselp*

*Kinanâskomitin*

*Vinaka vaka levu*

*Fa'afetai tele lava*

# Professor Will Garrett-Petts

Professor & Associate Vice-President,  
Research & Graduate Studies

## MAKING KNOWLEDGE, *HERE*

As an “open access research university” TRU occupies a unique position, one where we are committed to a principle of *inclusive excellence*. Conventionally, we think of excellence in terms of work that is exceptional, that stands out; but, too often in universities “excellence” is defined by a process of fitting in. Inclusive excellence instead expresses a willingness to engage and learn from *and value* diverse ways of knowing—to recognize a continuum of excellence that ranges across disciplines, practices, cultures, conventions, and traditions.

The notion of inclusion is especially challenging, for although it sounds benign and positive, it may also imply and perpetuate existing systems and assumptions of power: to include is a gesture of generosity; but, by conventional definition, it is a gesture made by those with the power to include. If, however, inclusion means shared power and shared participation, if it means a willingness to learn from one another, *together*, it is the right direction to take.

The Knowledge Makers takes us in the right direction. Knowledge Makers demonstrates that excellence is not an exclusive spot on a graph; it is a place, and many are qualified to occupy it.<sup>1</sup> In its mission to empower students as researchers, a active knowledge makers, the program embodies principles of inclusive excellence, confident that making knowledge will be reciprocally beneficial for students, teachers, and mentors alike. Redefining knowledge-making as collaborative, placed-based, inclusive, and culturally-informed expands understandings of university research and may well take us closer to knowing what it means to learn and teach and create new knowledge *here*—in relation to this land and peoples.

Thanks to the Knowledge Makers, we are rethinking what it means to know and to make knowledge, and to be a university, here.

**Endnote:**

<sup>1</sup> A variation of this redefinition of excellence was introduced and discussed at a recent meeting of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Leaders, National Library of Canada, December, 2018.

“Thanks to the Knowledge Makers,  
we are rethinking what it means  
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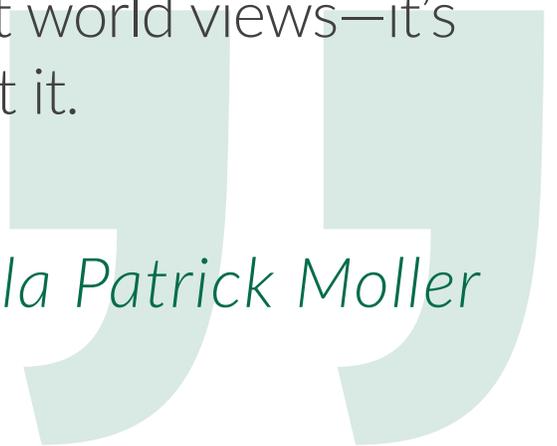
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Professor Will Garrett-Petts



When I encountered [the West], it was just a conflict of my own world view of what women were because coming from a hidden matriarchal society it was difficult and when I talked about our ways I often got into trouble because it was direct...the men...the white people...the white men felt like it was a direct attack on their world, and so for me it was, “What is the problem?” But now I know it was just world views—it’s just how you go about it.

~ *Elder Estella Patrick Moller*



# Sandra Bandura

## Qayqayt First Nation Master of Education

*"Indigenous knowledge is recognizing that we are all connected, and we must honour that connection. Indigenous knowledge guides us on the path we walk."*

## TRU WARRIORS OF KNOWLEDGE

### Dedication

This paper is written to express appreciation for my Indigenous family at Thompson Rivers University, for their guidance and inspiration on my very intense journey towards discovering my Indigenous voice. And I hope this paper will honor their words and teachings. "When knowledge, like two rivers, comes together, the output can be amazing" (Paul, 2018, 53): these words from Lyle Paul capture what these students have given me. As I read each paper, my worldview shifts and connections we all share are revealed.

I would like to officially thank my parents (for making me), my children (for grounding me), my brothers (for always being there, and making sure I can take a punch), and my husband (for putting up with me). And all of them for teaching me that love is the foundation of everything.

And Lisa Bourque-Bearskin and the Elders at TRU, for sharing their knowledge, amazing energy and love.

### Introduction

Canada's policies related to Indigenous people were immoral and devastating (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). As the truth is exposed it can be hard to see beyond the destruction, which is why I decided to explore how we are moving forward with the help of amazing people like the Knowledge Makers. I needed to focus on the positive that exists.

This paper will highlight the work of the Knowledge Makers. The style and tone of the paper are intended to give the reader a glimpse into the continuous narratives that invade my brain. I have not written an actual paper before. How is that possible? My post-secondary education is an undergrad in Mathematics and a diploma in Civil Engineering. I never could follow the rules that were imposed by colonial writing, so I quit writing...until now.

Indigenous research requires you to be part of the research: "Every time we think, use reason, and figure, emotion is tied to that process; therefore, it is impossible to be free of emotion and subjectivity in research" (Lavallee, 2009, 22). In order to guide you through my subjective thought process, I employ some unique writing, punctuation, and narrative styles. I occasionally speak to the authors of the papers, use brackets where APA says "No brackets!!" and the parts in italics are questions I often ask myself or asides to specific Knowledge Makers. Occasionally, my wording may border on inappropriate. Read it as humorous; we need to laugh. The award-winning Thomas King, author of the book *An Inconvenient Indian*, was quoted in an article about Indigenous people's humor: "I think humour is a way to keep ourselves from going absolutely crazy...I think part of it is simply a survival strategy" (King in Israelson,

2018, n.p). I also use ellipses as pauses, time to sit with the words. Unconventional punctuation and a storytelling tone have been used by other Indigenous researchers (Ahenakew, 2016; Kuokkanen, 2011; Laval-lee, 2009).



I hope I can share the admiration I have for the Knowledge Makers (KM); they are the front line, the leaders and the inspiration for me and others. By using their voices, I demonstrate the idea of interconnected knowledge and our connection to each other. Marie Sandy says it beautifully: “We all connect, get tangled, break apart, come together, and are all interwoven to create a greater range of knowledge” (Sandy, 2017, 106). I am grateful for the opportunity to spend this time with the words of Indigenous TRU students. And I hope to capture the strength of these students and their contribution to knowledge. This paper will start with the students like me, who shared their experience figuring out what this Indigenous journey entails. Then it moves to the protectors of our people and their community’s knowledge. The paper will finish with the students that are learning to play the colonial game, the ones that will go into the lion’s den. I recognise that I cannot know where each student will end up, but I do know that they are at least thinking and watching in these places.

### Where I am

In order for the reader to understand my position at this time, I will start with a little about where I am. I am currently on a journey to

reconnect to my past, which I have discovered means “reconnecting to all.” I once told Auntie Estella (TRU Elder), “I feel like a toddler, holding on to your leg and peeking out at the world.” A battle between fear and curiosity, but in her presence, I was safe to explore...a little. I feel like a teenager: ready to speak, recognising pieces (and injustice) but not able to see the full picture. So, while you read my paper, I ask you to please acknowledge this place I come from, and that I may be missing parts of the big picture. I fully expect to read this in a year and shake my head a bit. Even though as a human I am well into adulthood, as an Indigenous person, I am still young.

Aaron Reginald Thomas Fredborg says, “The real education starts with coming to terms with what is going on inside oneself and accepting what is looking back at you in the mirror” (Fredborg, 2018, 10).

I used to say, “I am exactly what the residential schools and the whole colonial system wanted to accomplish.” No connection to culture and fully integrated into dominant society, or like that John guy, the First Prime Minister of Canada, said, “The great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion as speedily as they are fit to change” (MacDonald, 1987 in Montgomery 1965) Well, Johnnie, I am not “pumpkin spice latte” integrated but I am often told, “You are not like them [a native].” I wear my Indigeneity but being told I am not “like them” created a conflict that left me feeling I did not belong anywhere. We will touch on the offensive “you are not like them” narrative again later in this paper.

The residential schools and the colonizing forces did not count on our resilience. We are going to reclaim what was lost. Now, I see myself as a sleeper agent, a warrior in the system, and I am waking up. The dynamic Roxie Defant describes it perfectly, even outside of social work: “We are on a journey towards a deeper level of self-awareness and reflexivity in social work practice, and across all our Indigenous nations, we are finally waking up” (Defant, 2018, 109). When I realised that

being Indigenous was with me all along, like Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz, my situation changed. I am not integrated... I am infiltrating. And Indigenous people are everywhere. We are social workers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, politicians, teachers, anything and everything. We are everywhere and we want better for our land, and all people. We know that the path of the colonizers is destruction, and we may be the only ones to lead this world out.

Our journey will be led by those of us who are exploring our identity. There is safety in numbers, and I am grateful for the voices of others in this place.

## KM as an opportunity to explore ourselves

*I have to admit...I am pretty lost. What does it mean to be Indigenous?*

I am starting to build a picture of what it means to me, but it is like I only have the outside of a puzzle; I think I can see a picture, but I am not sure. Coming from a mathematics background, I like everything to be well-defined. So, I am grateful that Trisha Shorson (2016) explores the names we are given in her paper *Identity Politics: Indigenous or Aboriginal*. I love Jordan Robinson's definition: "To be Native is to protect the land as if I were an extension of your soul; to cry when a patch of grass is pulverised, or a tree is butchered without gratitude" (Robinson, 2016, 46). How Jordan defines "Native" makes sense to my heart but Melissa Aird's description of being Indigenous is the reality that I have experienced. She highlights a sad truth of being Indigenous in Canada when she writes, "Our culture was shamed and degraded for years through colonialism" (Aird, 2017, 72). We are currently trying to untangle the damage done from the shame we were forced to wear.

I grew up hearing racist narratives about Indigenous people. If it is unclear what these narratives are, take a peek at comments on articles related to Indigenous issues. The comments can be so terrible that places like the CBC have stopped allowing comments on articles about Indigenous issues (McGuire, 2015). In order for people to

perpetuate racist myths in my presence they will say, "But you're not like them [a native]." And unfortunately, my experience was not unusual; Jayne Wenlock was also exposed to jokes and racism, that were followed by, "I do not mean you or your family" (Wenlock, 2018, 81). She was expected to take insults in stride. These narratives have shaped the way I have moved through the world, and not in a positive way.

*When we do not have a community where do we go? How do we connect? How do we all heal from colonization?*

I am a member of Qayqayt First Nation (New Westminster). We are the only band in British Columbia without a land base. According to Indigenous and Northern Affairs, we have 14 members (2019). I cannot go home, which is why I am so grateful for the community at TRU. Garnet Dirksen understands the longing for a home community: "I think it can be difficult for Indigenous students not already very involved in their communities to become a part of one, and even make connections with other Indigenous students" (Dirksen, 2016, 77). *Yes, Garnet, it is difficult...and can freeze us*. With no direction forward, I was frozen for years. I could not even identify as Indigenous until I got my status, and then I had a card to connect me to being an "Indian."

When reading some of the KM articles, I related to other students' disconnection from their Indigeneity. Levi Glass (2016), Marina Troke (2017), and Melissa Aird (2017) also speak of this disconnection, of not being connected to their communities. Marina concludes that it has left her feeling "not grounded in anything" (Troke, 2017, 9). Melissa chose an anonymous quote that captures our shared longing: "I am homesick for a place I am not sure even exists – one where my heart is full, my body loved, and my soul understood" (Aird, 2017, 70). Levi shares, "Since childhood I have wanted to be part of a community, especially one I shared an identity within; out of this absence I have felt a lack of a true identity." (Glass, 2016, 14). There are pieces of us that are missing, and we are not sure where to even start looking for them.

The loss of our language, culture, and land is felt even with those who have had access to family and community. Charmaine Peal speaks of growing up in her community with her family and access to her culture but is still affected by the loss we all feel; she writes, “My heart aches knowing I am not fluent because of colonization and residential schools” (Peal, 2018, 88). Trisha Shorson echoes Charmaine: “Back home, I barely know the Carrier language, and I don’t even know any Tsimshian. I know English well, yet I’m at a loss of identity” (Shorson, 2017, 28). No matter where we are in our journey, we experience some loss and disconnect. The damage was created deliberately by colonization.

There are no easy answers; the oppression of our people has been going on for so long. The vibrant, brilliant Jeffrey McNeil Seymour, a Tk’emlupsemc Land and Water Defender who last Fall was called to provide expert witness testimony at the hearings into the missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, trans and two-spirit people of Canada in Iqaluit, Nunavut, says, “Seek council of people you regard highly, and let go and lean in to this wonderful journey we get to take together: we are all just walking each other home” (McNeil Seymour, 2018, 27). I have been privileged to be able to seek his guidance and the guidance of many others at TRU. *Jeffrey, I miss your guidance, and just being in the same space as your energy. (I tried to find an adjective that described your energy, but no word in English can do you justice.)* I can say with great confidence the Indigenous community at TRU has given me room to explore who I am. Aboriginal Education, the Gathering Place, Knowledge Makers, Indigenous professors and students have provided a place to do the most difficult learning I have ever done, despite taking every upper level Mathematics course at TRU except one; learning how to “be” has been more challenging.

Other KM have experienced the support of the TRU Indigenous community. Rhyannon Garant (2018) gives thanks to the Indigenous women of TRU, and her experiences with some professors: “For instance, sometimes it all begins with a professor’s kind words of encouragement that can make all the difference in the course of one’s leadership journey”

(Garant, 2018, 75). Several students speak of how the KM program and Indigenous research empowered them (Aird, 2016; Oke, 2018; Mattice, 2018). Roxie Defant also recognizes the power of the community, stating, “I started as a nation of one, but today I am a nation of many” (Defant, 2018, 110). Because of the Indigenous people at TRU, I also feel part of a nation.

## Knowledge Makers have amazing ideas for Indigenous people and their communities

Our communities are powerful, and there are students that are working to ensure the development and protection of our people and communities.

Many KM recognize the importance of their education, and how it is related to their ability to support their communities and families. “Aspiring post-secondary students are the hidden gems of this country and they need more support and promotion in order to increase the growing development of Canada” (Melnik, 2017, 101). This quote from Sarah Melnyk is completely correct - our students can do amazing things if they have access to education. For example, a human who I am thrilled to know, Dolan Paul (2017), sees how technology can be a path to self-sufficiency and economic stability for Indigenous communities. Dolan’s computer science peer, Gabriel Archie (2018), plans to use his computer science degree to hold on to culture. He would like to create the Seklep (coyote) using his programming skills and Artificial Intelligence. *Gabriel, that is so cool!* I imagine the Seklep could teach all sorts of lessons to people (or companies) that need some guidance. Melissa Aird (2016) advocates for a mandatory Indigenous course at TRU, which would close the gap related to people’s knowledge about Indigenous people and, hopefully, fight the false narratives. Lyle Paul gives guidance to facilitate our understanding of others to improve learning and communication, observing, “Understanding that not one person can see what we see, will allow us to see not only linearly but holistically” (Paul, 2018, 54). Their visions of future education and employment give me hope for humanity.

There are students fighting to save Indigenous knowledge and using that knowledge to

improve life for all. Mathilda Chillihitzia (2017) offers several pathways to ensure the continuation of knowledge from Elders to youth. Ryan Oliverius states “For thousands of years First Nations people have lived in sovereignty, with a form of jurisdiction over the ownership and use of the lands and natural resources” (Oliverius, 2016, 84). This knowledge is something Sonya tsi7i7ilt Charley would like to share: “Fortunately, all the knowledge that has been passed down to me from ren kwsè-seltkten (my relatives) still remains within me, so not all is llgum (lost.) There is still much to educate myself about First Nations and the issues we face in today’s society” (Charley, 2018, 37). Theresa John (2018) supports the idea of using a Balhats systems for the Dakelh people to assert control over their own lives. *Theresa, you would be thrilled to know there was a news release on February 7, 2019; the BC Government and the Wet’suwet’en Hereditary Chiefs will be meeting in March. The Wet’suwet’en Hereditary Chiefs are hosting a Balhats to have discussions and share information (Government of BC, 2019).* It is incredible to see some movement in the existing systems but we must remain vigilant because the government has not earned our trust.

One of the most painful realities for Indigenous people is the loss of their culture, language, and knowledge; luckily, students are working

to remedy that loss. I love how the lovely Marie Sandy (2017) weaves the knowledge of three Secwépemc Scholars: Georgina Martin, Kukpi Ron Ignace, and Janice Billy. The way Marie captures their knowledge and their voice is beautiful. A friend, classmate, and incredible human, Charmaine Peal (2018), has several ideas about how the education system can protect and preserve her language. I am confident if she is given the resources to

work with, she will be successful. Crystalyn R. Lemieux (2017) has the brilliant idea of using e-portfolios to help Indigenous people explore their cultural identity. I know that these are just a few of the people working to save what was lost. *Thank you, to all of you doing this work.*

Indigenous knowledge has the power to support us in all aspects of our lives. Aaron Reginal Thomas Fredborg explores using Indigenous teachings to improve our wellbeing: “The Seven Teachings are lessons to which all individuals can relate. Each provides important knowledge that has the potential to improve the inner balance of an individual” (Fredborg, 2018, 9). Other students are focusing on our emotional wellbeing and integrated Indigenous knowledge in order to live a healthy, authentic life. Katrina Boisclair (2017) wants to use Indigenous art as a way to empower Indigenous teenagers and, by extension, hopefully prevent suicides. Rhea Manuel (2017)

**“I can share the admiration I have for the Knowledge Makers; they are the front line, the leaders and the inspiration for me and others.”**

—  
Sandra Bandura

promotes aboriginal approaches to prevention and recovery of substance abuse. Crystal Weninger (2017) wants to use cultural safety to improve health outcomes for Indigenous people. Erin Chillihitzia reminds us of our duty to each other: “Indigenous people hurt together, as brothers and sisters, so I cannot sit in the chair and pretend your story doesn’t impact me as we work together in this journey” (Chillihitzia, 2016, 64). The

introduction of Indigenous knowledge into my life has given me strength to deal with emotions and a place to hold difficult emotions.

The following KM understand that the journey within ourselves leads to understanding others. Nursing student Jayne Wenlock (2018) shows us the power of self-reflection and how to apply it so personal biases do not affect your work, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Another nursing

student, Willa Julius, gives us advice that can be applied to all that we do: “Reader, even if you are not a nurse or a nursing student, please note that communication is not integral only to nursing; it is a requirement and an insight into the human species and how they function” (Julius, 2017, 69). I feel that so many of the conflicts and problems we currently have could be solved with the knowledge of how to communicate with each other in a genuine way. And we must know ourselves before we can understand others.

We can be grateful to the other students that have voices across all different fields of education and employment. Roxie Defant is an amazing human, with whom I have had the joy of spending time. *(It was very lucky for TRU*

*that we didn't meet sooner.)* I feel very confident that Roxie will ensure the authenticity of any work related to decolonization and reconciliation; she writes, “I have strongly conflicting emotions tied to these two popular words: the social worker in me wants to believe that the hype surrounding decolonization and reconciliation embodies the power to facilitate meaningful and sustainable social change that leads us all towards the path of new-found relationships based upon compassion, equity, and respect...but the intuitive Indian in me? She knows better” (Defant, 2018, 108).

Roxie is right; all of the buzzwords - “reconciliation,” “decolonization,” and “indigenization” - are just words until we start seeing the results. We also have another social worker student, Kelsey Marie Arnouse, who will hold the social work field accountable: “It is vital that social workers understand,

respect, and acknowledge the role that the profession has played in the colonization of Indigenous peoples” (Arnouse, 2017, 39). I had the privilege of working with Kelsey, and I am completely confident she will make a significant difference. I am thankful that we have students like Kelsey and Roxie who will keep important issues at the forefront of their professions, but this is a responsibility we all share. Until our society recognizes the importance of being compassionate, equitable, and respectful to all (including the environment), we must continue holding the people with power accountable.

There are KM standing up to protect our environment. I have had the opportunity to navigate Indigenous research with the remarkable Janna Wale. Janna has recommendations for the future preservation of wild salmon. Her article is not only about salmon; it reinforces awareness that everything is connected (Wale, 2018). Rochelle E.D. DeLaRonde (2017) would like to protect the animals with whom we share this earth, and she presents several ideas based in Indigenous knowledge to preserve the moose populations in the Skeena area. The environment is the foundation of our lives, despite the narrative that values money above all. We know the truth: without the environment, we have nothing. *Capitalists, come on...how do you not see the problems related to how you “value” things?*

Tourism can either be a curse or an opportunity for Indigenous people. So, I am thankful for Hannah Fregin (2017), who reached out to her Haida community with a household survey to discover their of tourism. And the student Janelle Lapointe will ensure the authenticity of tourism experiences. I am confident in her ability to approach tourism “in a way that does not compromise our values and land for quick economic gain” (Lapointe, 2018, 32). *Janelle, thank you. I have seen your passion and commitment to our land; tourism had better be ready to make real change.* Tourism is a possible source of economic stability. It is important to guarantee it does not become appropriative and/or controlled by people who do not understand the importance of the land and culture.

These KM are on the ground in communities; the ones who follow are doing their work in the colonial system.

“I once told Auntie Estella (TRU Elder), “I feel like a toddler, holding on to your leg and peeking out at the world.” A battle between fear and curiosity, but in her presence, I was safe to explore...a little.”

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Sandra Bandura

It is vital that social workers understand,

## Knowledge Makers holding colonial systems accountable

These KM understand the colonial systems, and how to use them to our benefit and keep the government and other colonial structures accountable. These are the students that are preparing to walk into the belly of the beast and use colonial weapons to ensure Indigenous people are heard and recognised. In the future, I see my path as joining these students, so that when I have a seat at the table I do more than check off a box (Ahenakew & Naepi, 2015; Naepi, Stein, Ahenakew & Andreotti, 2017; Pidgeon, 2016).

It is important to have Indigenous leaders, in both colonial systems and Indigenous communities. Noah Nochasak (2017) proposes a way forward between northern culture and politics. The Indian Act has been controlling us since its creation. Dionne A. Mohammed (2016) understands the Act and its effect and relationship to the leadership in Indigenous communities, allowing her to navigate the colonial systems. Alma Charlene Casey wants to empower Indigenous women: “Aboriginal women can reclaim their individual rights and become the future leaders, warriors and healers that they were meant to be” (Casey, 2016, 53). We must have warriors everywhere to make real change. But whether authentic change is possible within the colonial structure is a question to which I do not know the answer. Jaqueline Mattice expresses a feeling I also share when she writes, “I often feel mistrust in the Canadian government today because they continue to mistreat Indigenous people as though they are not important and their lives are expendable by, for example, taking away our fishing and hunting rights” (Mattice, 2018, 20). So, participating in a system that has continually oppressed us can be a difficult road to choose. But on September 25, 2018, when Romeo Saganash said, “Trudeau doesn’t give a f\*\*k about Indigenous rights” in Parliament, I understood the importance of Indigenous politicians within the Canadian political system (Saganash in Bonokoski 2018). That day, I heard my voice in Parliament.

Canada’s laws have been and continue to be used to oppress Indigenous people. I

look forward to the work of KM like Charlotte Munroe who would like to use Indigenous ways of knowing as the foundation of the change she wants to see: “I am interested in the area of Aboriginal Title and Rights as it pertains to the Canadian Legal System” (Munroe, 2016, 38). Marcus Wally Scherer (2016), another student with whom I am so thankful to have had the opportunity to connect, would like to continue his education in law. Marcus will use the law to protect the environment and says understanding and protecting the land is “essential to my moral being” (Scherer, 2016, 6). Marcus will be in good company with Celeste Graham (2016). She expresses her wish to apply laws for our benefit in the future, stating, “I would be able to empower those who share my culture and concern for the environment to stand up, and fight for the sake of the land and their culture” (Graham, 2016, 32). I have great respect for those willing to learn to play the colonial game for the good of all people.



We must ensure that truth is available and framed from an Indigenous perspective. Jason Johnston (2016) wants to do exactly that. Jason wants to ensure that tourism is “authentic” by harnessing the power of research. *(I always think that research is our way of trying to communicate with dominant culture; they do not listen to us unless we can prove what we are saying. Ugh...we always need*

a piece of paper before someone will even consider listening.) He writes, "Taking control of our own authenticity as Aboriginal people is another way we can move towards righting the wrongs imposed on us through colonialism and ensure our culture survives and thrives on our own terms instead of being

steered by individuals outside of our cultures" (Johnston, 2016, 58). Anastazia Munroe can speak to the invisible losses suffered by Indigenous communities: "...for Indigenous peoples, the indirect consequence of western economies focused on resource extraction is the creation of invisible losses" (Munroe, 2018, 99). The brave student, Ashlie Daniels (2016) is willing to go to the dark place of racism in order to bring it in to the light.

Ashlie, this work is so needed, ask if you need others to hold this difficult work along with you. She would like to "record the lived experiences of Aboriginal peoples in Kamloops and the racism they encounter, and also provide some possible tools for effectively coping with these experiences" (Daniels, 2016, 29). Erin Chillihitzia (2016) makes the case for using Indigenous worldviews with Indigenous families and provides a critique of currently favored Narrative theory. Trisha Shorson knows the power of words; they create the narratives that shape the world. Trisha challenges and explores the use of the words Indigenous and Aboriginal, arguing that "Knowing the difference between terms can empower and can help give a direction for positive change" (Shorson, 2016, 69). These KM are unpacking colonial systems and rebuilding within an Indigenous world view.

The knowledge of the colonial system is a powerful tool. And these students know how important it can be to learn the game. Because this is the world we live in...for now.

**"Every one of us in post-secondary education is, by definition, a leader. And as Indigenous leaders we have responsibilities to all people."**

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Sandra Bandura

## Final Thoughts

Every one of these KM has given me hope and inspiration. Some I know personally, and the rest I wish I knew. Every one of us had a journey that led us to the Knowledge Makers program. I may have given the impression that being a student at TRU is all sunshine and rainbows. It is not. I have taken this opportunity to take time to appreciate my peers. This is not the world I normally live in. I need to ground myself in hope. Connecting with the work of the KM gives me hope.

We should always remember, many people (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) will not make it to post-secondary education. Whether we are here by luck or by working unbelievably hard, we have a chance to build a better world. But with power comes responsibility and we must fight the colonial narratives that say, "If you just work hard, you will be successful," "Success is measured in dollars," and use "them" or "those people" when referring to marginalized groups. Every one of us in post-secondary education is, by definition, a leader. And as Indigenous leaders we have responsibilities to all people; their success is our success. We fight colonialism by always remembering; we must lift others with us; we must unravel and destroy the oppressive narratives and structures. Everything is connected; so, wherever we do our work, we are still working together.

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#### Endnotes:

<sup>i</sup> Pumpkin spice lattes (PSL) have evolved into more than a drink; they are seen as a status symbol. "...PSL cultural movement as a stereotype tethered to discussions about white female identity and consumerism."(Hau, 2016).

<sup>ii</sup> The seven teachings: Courage – Bear, Humility – Wolf, Love – Eagle, Honesty – Sabe, Truth – Turtle, Wisdom – Beaver, Respect – Buffalo (Fredborg, 2018)





# Ta Moko

Ta Moko, you awaken me  
on a Secwépemc full moon  
night ablaze with need  
my skin remembering  
the hands that tell  
the story of my being  
my reason for being  
compelled to relieve the itch  
my skin peeling black flakes  
my struggling eyes  
adapting to dimness  
but my vivid mind  
sees the man  
I now call brother  
the gift, the exchange  
hongī, greenstone and brotherhood

constant as waves  
rhythmic on the Pacific  
living song  
frozen in my lungs, until  
the moist breath of the ocean  
tempers my skin  
we are brothers  
north and south  
bound by hemispheres  
invisible lines  
and the Pacific Ocean  
Maori and Secwépemc  
the waters, the mountains, the genealogy  
nose to nose  
heart to heart  
I embrace you

**Garry Gottfriedson**  
Secwépemc

Garry Gottfriedson wrote this poem during a trip to Aotearoa, New Zealand with Knowledge Makers who presented at the International Indigenous Knowledges Conference.

# Professor Rod McCormick

Kanienkehaka (Mohawk)  
British Columbia Innovation Chair in  
Aboriginal Health & Director of All My Relations

## BECOMING A COYOTE: MY 27 YEARS AS AN INDIGENOUS ACADEMIC AND RESEARCHER

Last summer TRU hosted the National Gathering of Graduate Students through TRU's Ombaashi Network and the CIHR Institute of Indigenous Peoples Health. I was asked to provide a keynote presentation for the gathering that would be of interest to an audience of Indigenous students who aspired to be health researchers and academics. I chose to tell the story of my own journey as an Indigenous researcher and academic. My talk was called: "Becoming a Coyote: My 27 years as an Indigenous Academic and Researcher". As many of the students in the audience said that they found it helpful I thought I would share some of the messages from the talk in this year's Knowledge Makers journal. The coyote is considered by Indigenous peoples of this land to be a trickster or transformer. A stylized coyote sculpture can be found on the top of the building that houses the Ombaashi network and the All My Relations centre. The coyote sculpture created by artist John McEwen watches atop the House of Learning Building at the TRU campus in Kamloops. It is perhaps ironic that a sculpture on top of a building (which was given an Indigenous name for school), was created by a non-Indigenous artist. But then again irony is one of the teaching tools of the coyote. There might be many things that the Coyote is trying to teach TRU and it is up to each individual student, staff and faculty member to figure that out for themselves. When I first started my academic journey at UBC the newly formed First Nations House of Learning sold sweatshirts and jackets with its logo which was a stylized house comprised of ravens. On the coast the raven is known as a trickster and transformer. I gifted many of my non-Indigenous

colleagues with these sweatshirts which they proudly wore not knowing that the attractive Indigenous artwork on the clothing had a subtle message. We the Indigenous students and faculty at UBC were secretly transforming the institution from a non-Indigenous space into an Indigenous space. Transforming the research establishment was not and is not an easy task. It requires the wisdom, humility, sense of humour and trickiness of the coyote. Likewise the journey of becoming an Indigenous researcher and academic in the very colonial spaces that we work also requires coyote skills, gifts and attributes.

For the remainder of this article I will talk about a few of those gifts/attributes. The trickster Coyote reminds us not to take our selves too seriously; he loves to humble the proud. Coyote doesn't do this in a mean way but does so with humour. The Coyote standing at the very top of the House of Learning at TRU can help us to see the big picture and can provide us with a different perspective. Many times in my career I struggled with incidents of injustice and racism. Thinking like the Coyote helped me to see the humour in such incidents and/or put them into perspective. I am often reminded from my Iroquois teachings that what we do is for

**"Transforming the research establishment was not and is not an easy task. It requires the wisdom, humility, sense of humour and trickiness of the coyote."**

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Professor Rod McCormick

seven generations from now. Admittedly I have at times grown impatient and have had to be subversive in my efforts to transform the academy and research funding bodies. Blame my coyote-ness if you must. A colleague/mentor of mine from UBC who is a giant in Indigenous education used to tell us Coyote stories which she later included in her PhD dissertation. Dr. Jo-Ann Archibald (Stó:lō Nation) received this particular story from yet another Indigenous professor and colleague, Dr. Eber Hampton (Chickasaw Nation). I hope I have done justice to re-telling your story, Jo-Ann and Eber.

Old Man Coyote was on a long journey and had just finished a hard day of walking. He decided to set up his camp for the night and to have his supper. After supper, he sat by the fire and rubbed his feet, which were

tired from a full day of walking. When he looked at his moccasins, he noticed that there was a hole in one of them. He looked for his bone needle to sew the moccasin, but he couldn't find it in his bag. Old Man Coyote started to crawl around on his hands and knees around the fire, hoping

to see the needle. Just then, Owl flew over to Coyote and asked him what he was looking for. Coyote explained that he couldn't remember where he put his needle. Owl said that he would help Coyote look for it as he had very good vision especially at night. After he flew around the fire a few times, he told Coyote that he didn't see the needle and if it was around the fire, he would have spotted it. He then asked Coyote where he last used the needle. Old Man Coyote said that he used it a few days ago, maybe thirty or forty miles north of here, when he had mended a rip in his jacket. Then Owl asked him why he was searching for the needle around the campfire. Old Man Coyote said, "Well, it's much easier to look for the needle here because the fire gives off such good light, and I can see much better here (Archibald, 1995).

Traditional stories can have different meanings for listeners. The meaning I derived from Coyote's apparent silliness was that researchers should not be looking for answers where it is convenient but must instead be prepared to venture into the dark at times to find what they are looking for. Indigenous research cannot occur in university offices as we need to go where the phenomenon we wish to study is currently happening. Sometimes that journey requires courage and stubbornness. In addition, if we are humble then we are also genuine. I have slowly learned that all trusting relationships, including research relationships require genuineness. Being genuine, authentic, and transparent might make us vulnerable but it can also be seen as respect for the other person(s). Another teaching I obtained from Coyote is that we are not on our journey alone. Coyote stories always include different animals that are able to assist coyote in finding what he seeks or what he learns to know. In the competitive culture of academia it may seem strange to ask others for help or to share resources with others. I was secretly pleased when I was finally in a position in my career to provide resources and help to help senior academic colleagues who denied such help to me when I was a junior faculty member. Self-preservation was the value that they tried to instill in me. Their efforts were in vain-blame coyote once again. A final Coyote teaching I wish to share is that our career paths-like our lives, are not straight paths. One can argue that there are no straight lines in nature-just the illusion of straight lines. It makes some people sleep better at night to think that they are in control of where they are going with their lives but coyote teaches us that too is an illusion. In the words of the American story teller and academic Joseph Campbell: "If you can see your path laid out in front of you step by step you know it's not your path. Your own path you make with every step you take".

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## Rayell (Tekwét Kwe) Sellars-Sarnowski

Secwépemc-Tsilqhot'in  
Eskétemc, Tl'etinqox, & Xats'ull  
Bachelor of Social Work

*"Indigenous knowledge is sacred and ancestral, yet fluid and always adapting. Indigenous research is just that, utilizing knowledge passed down through generations, but always accepting of new discoveries. But always remembering that we acknowledge humility in our role as researchers, which humbles us and reminds us that we do not know everything and that's okay."*

## Tiffany Gray

Cree-Third Generation Polish Settler  
Bachelor of Social Work

*"Indigenous Knowledge is an ongoing understanding of various Knowledge. Indigenous knowledge making holds the ability to develop relationships with those who hold different worldviews and construct meaningful dialogue to create solidarity or understanding of the interconnected realms. To me, it is a foundation for unlearning and learning 'new' epistemologies while holding reciprocity, humility, respect, and ongoing lived responsibility. Overall it can be used to maintain accountability in learning; from past down oral teachings and promoting ongoing research in seeing interconnectivity."*

**ME7 T7EK-KT NE NEXLÉWSTEN (WE WILL CROSS OVER A BRIDGE): NÉKEM AND NÎSOPAYIHCIKEWIN (CHANGE AND BRINGING TWO THINGS TOGETHER AS ONE).**

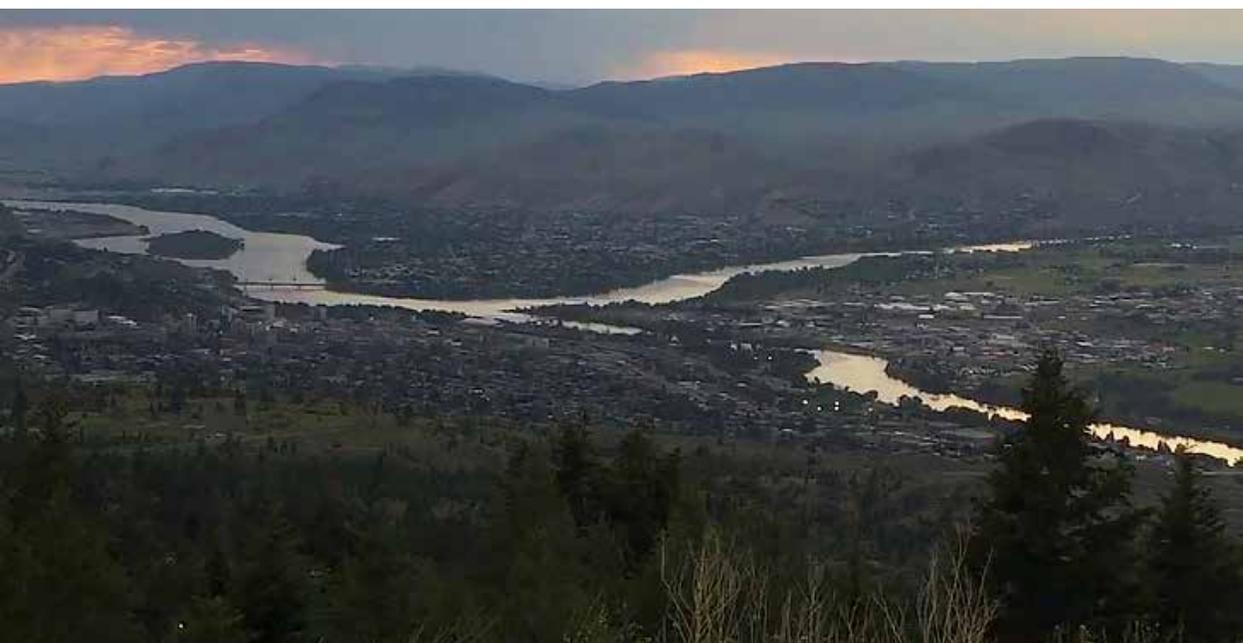


Photo credit:  
Tiffany Gray

**The literature we have chosen to integrate into this article reflects the author's positioning's during their processes of coming together and learning to understand one another. They are meant to guide the reader's perception of the author's emotions or mindset related to the following text, in conjunction with the pursuit of social justice in the recurrence of a common bias of decolonized practices within social work. Often issues of assimilation or perception of de-colonized practices have been discussed academically; however, feelings and emotions are lost in translation. These quotes hope to connect the reader to the author's transcendence of colonial pedagogy in social work education.**

Weytk, Tekwét Kwe ren skwest. Secwépemc-Tsilqhotin te Esketemc, Tle'tinqox, elle Xatsull. Hello, my name is Tekwét Kwe (Calm Water), and my Western name is Rayell. I am Secwépemc-Tshilqotin from the Esketemc, Tle'tinqox and Xatsull Nations. I was raised predominantly in the Esketemc territory throughout my life until recently. I have now been residing in the Tk'emlups te Secwépemc ne Secwépemc'ul'ecw. I have had the honor to participate in cultural teachings from my grandparents and great-grandparents. Growing up I was able to witness and participate in ceremonies. Acknowledging this, I am grateful to have received these teachings, and to continue learning, as they have guided me through my journey towards education. Entering into to the social work program, the exploration of critical reflexivity and social location was endlessly fascinating. It was was then that I began to untangle what it meant to be Indigenous in the Western world. I began to recognize the influence of dominant discourse on society as a tangible concept. I was exposed to literature solidifying Indigenous person's experiences of being "othered" in post-secondary institutions. I also became very unwell holistically, always searching for an answer to rid me of Eurocentricity in my education and my 'self'. I was constantly studying under deficit-based models and feeling I was one person stretched in multiple directions of being. From one perspective, I felt extremely privileged, from another I felt I had to be oppressed. Deficit-based models were dictating the way I saw myself, and pushed me towards believing the world was unfixable. Entering into the role of a researcher, I began searching for restitution of my identity. After delving into the world of Indigenous literature and ways of knowing, I became to understand that my holistic wellbeing was fragmented by the dominant Western perspective of education. Other ways of knowing fostered resiliency and alignment of my identity as an Indigenous person within the educational system. Moving forward, unsettling the mind and dominant structures is central to social work education. This can only be done by acknowledging and challenging the systems we are in. Kukstemc to the many people who have influenced my path and supported me in my journey to myself.

Tanisi, my name is Tiffany Gray. I am a two-spirit, Cree-third generation polish settler, who has been residing on the unceded territories in Tk'emlups te Secwépemc ne Secwépemc'ul'ecw, for the past three years. I have been engaged in learning and unlearning with the land and peoples to understand and strengthen my knowledge as an Indigenous persons. I was raised in the foster care system off-reserve in so-called Alberta, and I'm in an ongoing process of learning my several identities and origins of locations among Turtle Island. I am honored to have lived within my traditions as much as I can. My teachings primarily come from Beaver Cree, Blackfoot and Plains Cree teachers whose knowledge have been passed down. I continue to grow my spirit and drive through a variety of ceremony practices such as sweating and working with natural medicines. I have been studying for a Bachelors of Social work at Thompsons Rivers University and have recognized the importance of partnership and the much-needed inquiry into what solidarity making is. The need to bridge Indigenous pedagogy within Eurocentric colonial forces needs to be further understood as to uphold social justice initiatives within social work. Working in relations with people on its face appears to be a simple solution to building healthy balances. However, since enrolled in a dominate well-known 'helping profession' I have come to recognize a problem with Indigenous studies as being framed in deficit or fear-based model, which may have the potential to drive people away from working with different Indigenous bodies. I say kinanâskomitin to the rivers and ancestors that have brought me to the confluence and allowed me to learn with others and to share in new waterways. I also want to Kukwsts'etsemc to the Secwépemc ne Secwépemc'ul'ecw peoples for teaching me the importance of Ally ship and mutual understandings. All my relations to the glaciers of our ancestors that flow into the rivers, trees, animals and overall atmosphere so that they can guide us to where we are now. Remember our grandchildren who have and are crying with the rivers. In our future, I hope we build alliances, have reciprocity, and allow people to tell their own truth as true knowledge. I hope that we all speak different languages and bath in an understanding despite our differences. Thank you to Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour for teaching me about resurgence.

*With our alliances and differences, it is our understanding and spirits that drive us to bridge the gaps within Western pedagogies and Indigenous ways of knowing within social work.*

**M** *ee*ting together and having an open dialogue, we discussed; anti-oppressive, cultural competency, and Indigenous approaches within our social work program. In our conversation and investigation, we concluded some aspects caused discomfort. Typically Indigenous studies are framed in a Eurocentric paradigm, that have produced deficit models requiring; “anti-oppressive or cultural competency” approaches to be taught which still pull people apart. These anti-oppressive approaches or founding principles in social work were justified assuming learners are not from ‘diverse’ cultures, creating unexpected identity confusions or forced assimilation. The author’s individual, yet collective experiences of unsettling pedagogy confirmed this phenomenon. Upon literature reviews and recognizing a call from Knowledgmaker Kelsey Arnouse (2017) to address the further “prioritization of western knowledge that continues today in Canadian universities,” we present the following.

Current social work principles acknowledge the ‘actual’ harms perpetrated through cultural genocide that has been forced onto self-identified Indigenous persons. The harm is often understood as a historical injustice. Yet, there is little recognition of how the long-term harms of cultural genocide have been bred into the inequitable structures within social work education. Currently, mainstream education cyclically adopts a Western culture over Indigenous knowledge. Applying a deficit-based model to systemic epistemology of Indigenous ways of knowing. The need to dismantle Eurocentric ways of knowing are crucial to avoiding ‘othering’ or ongoing systemic violence. The authors suggest that creating relationships, and reciprocity challenge the hegemonic ways of being which have the potential to build solidarity and further social justice work eliminating essentialism and honoring differences.

Furthermore, misleading promotion of anti-oppressive practices within social work curricula may leave student members feeling disconnected from their intersectional identities. An aim is to recognize the resiliency in maintaining

integrity throughout the ‘unsettling’ process. Holistic Frameworks and narratives provide an understanding of various individual perspectives that may describe the existence of cultural displacement. Implications of this study may include understanding the impacts of the cohesion of hegemonic practices on the individual. Leaving self-identified Indigenous students to attempt



to dance within the structures themselves. The authors suggest utilizing Self-In-Relations reflexive dialectical method or un-learning as a guiding principle in meaningful practice. Following with the ability to adopt circle work which promotes empathy or new perceptions within the social work profession and ongoing social justice initiatives suggesting solidarity.

*“The literature we have chosen to integrate into this article reflect the author’s positioning’s during their processes of coming together and learning to understand one another. They are meant to guide the reader’s perception of the author’s emotions or mindset related to the following text, in conjunction with the pursuit of social justice in the recurrence of a common bias of decolonized practices within social work. Often issues of assimilation or perception of de-colonized practices have been discussed academically; however, feelings and emotions are lost in translation. These quotes hope to connect the reader to the author’s transcendence of colonial pedagogy in social work education.”*

*I've walked these hallways  
a long time now  
every September closed doors  
stand at attention  
like soldiers*

*guarding fellow inmates  
guarding footnotes  
guarding biases  
as I walk by ...*

*My fellow inmates  
they paste us prehistoric  
standing in front of us  
as if I am not there too  
as if I wouldn't know  
what they think they show  
showing what they don't know  
they don't know what they show  
they take my Cree for their PhD's  
-Emma LaRocque p. 321-322*

Historically, cultural assimilation was used as a tool of social, legal and economic division that resulted in hierarchies and long-term adversities (Feir, 2016; Thobani, 2007).



The use of racialization to dehumanize Indigenous peoples and migrants ensured success in maintaining power (Feir, 2016; Thobani, 2007; Feir, 2016). Educational institutions may be a tool in this. Prah (2016) explains educational institutions have been shaped by Western European values which lead to racist and colonial legacies (p. 26). Knowledge Production according to Eder and Reyhner (1988) was used as a form to civilize the Indian and make money for the school business programs. Schooling or education is a way of assimilating people (p.29-30). Historically, writer Ahler (1988) explains that due to old assimilation policies and known injustices on the Indians and the

1960's Civil rights movement multicultural cultural curriculum was of high interest and became dominated into mainstream culture (p.55) Although recognizing multicultural curriculum as important allows for an understanding of differences at the time it still created injustices. The curriculum of 'safe' multicultural practice is still being used today in the helping field as knowledge is being built for others by others.

The social work program at Thompson Rivers University uses theories that come from an understanding of cultural competence and/or anti-oppressive practices. Canadian systems defined by Canadian Nationalism produces privilege and uttering of marginalization upon Aboriginals, migrants, and other Diverse populations which lead to disproportionate representations (Feir, 2016, p.7). While the teaching used in the program contribute to a "safe method," they may be unknowingly taught through a dominant lens. Writer Burgess (2016) further reiterates this by stating, western education systems primarily reflect Eurocentric ideologies where 'Othering' of different pieces of knowledge, cultures, and peoples continue (p. 110). Furthermore, the harms of this "can lead to student underachievement and/or social marginalization" (Burgess, 2016, p. 110). Personal ideologies shape our definition of practice. However, the influence of dominant discourse on professional self-identification is never challenged and accepted as the standard (Baskin, 2016, p. 102). The ability to learn curriculum is important, yet, individual conceptualization of knowledge from personal experience is not valid if constructed in western paradigms. Burgess (2016) further explains that within learning institutions, the conceptualization of converging Indigenous and non-Indigenous is neglected; resulting in students misalignment between cultural pedagogy and professional pedagogy (p. 110). While this deconstruction of dominant influences in social work education may suggest integrating Indigenous knowledges into social work education, this may further Westernize knowledge (Tamdgidi, 2012, p. 11). The harms caused by utilizing only dominant discourses is experienced by these writers in the institution.

*An institution that has told of violent  
stories and harms of Our People.  
An institution that has told  
others of Our People  
An institution that has grouped Our People  
An institution that has forgotten Our People  
A trickster that opens its arms to Our People  
A trickster who says;  
Welcome  
Bathroom doors covered in binary  
signs ripped to divide  
Rowed seating and instructors questing Indians  
Kind gestures--- motioning---that group  
Glancing over we are missing some  
You have worked so hard- they say  
Welcome for Our People*

Contemporary literature displays how this impacts postsecondary students and faculty. Educational institutions attempt to maintain 'cultural inclusivity' or 'cultural safety' in practice has resulted in utilizing Indigenous pedagogy as 'contributions' to mainstream literature. Fylkesnes (2017) describes how cultural diversity results in 'epistemic violence' by allowing racialization through 'Othering' (p. 31). Othering is a hidden process further separating Western pedagogy from Indigenous pedagogy, causing gaps created by the pathology of Indigenous persons and ways of being. Almost fetishizing the Medicine wheel and Indigenous values. In what other ways are Western pedagogies held over Indigenous pedagogies? Osanloo, Boske, and Newcomb (2016) found that macro-aggressions result from and are maintained through microaggressions; purposeful and deliberate communications meant to create longitudinally debilitating and depressive results within public forums (p. 6). While the institutions are striving for decolonial practices, they are unknowingly continuing the cycle of colonizing by fitting

**“Dominant society’s  
cyclical portrayal of  
what knowledges are  
deemed adequate  
continue to define  
whose voices are right.”**

—  
**Rayell Sellars-Sarnowski  
& Tiffany Gray**

Indigenous values into their colonial systems. Rivers & Ross (2017) acknowledges that when accounting for diversity, it's usually perceived as homogeneity (p. 9). With the vast amount of diversity among First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, the utilization of one group that speaks for all creates a blanket statement. This conceptualizes a singular Indigenous identity, typically included as an afterthought to Western perspectives.

With these conceptualizations, there are considerable identity fractures created for self-identifying Indigenous students. Impacts to student's holistic wellbeing is created through identity misalignment caused by aforementioned pathologizing discourses. Rivers & Ross (2017) reiterates that a student's level of anxiety equates to feeling noticeably different within education (p.9). These identity misalignments are subtly motivated by the adoption of Western discourse as the guiding principles of society. Therefore, holding Western knowledge as the standards for education. James (1999) proposes a 'crisis of representation' that refers "to the problems of legitimacy that science and knowledge production are facing in the

contemporary world[s]" (p. 36). Dominant society's cyclical portrayal of what knowledges are deemed adequate continue to define whose voices are right. With these cycles of colonial abuse within education, the authors experienced impeding conceptions of their own Indigenous identities. These acts of assimilation call for personal conceptualization of knowledge making, relationality within this

and accepting of each other's pedagogies. Promoting positive wellbeing and evoking Self-compassion. An institution that portrays or does not allow for cultural differences to be held as a standard or as equally necessary for frameworks, houses room for harm to diverse students and faculty.

Your People have seen so much  
 Your People gave up your lands  
 Your People are so... hurt I  
 was told you are... lost  
 Your people... they are so smart  
 Tricksters  
 Welcome  
 You have made it to this place  
 Rowed seating- no talking about our differences  
 Kind gestures - asking for single knowledge  
 Glancing over- you are not forgotten  
 You have worked so hard  
 Welcome  
 This is your standard

Currently, university education systems continue to withhold Eurocentric standards as the dominant discourse. Baskin (2016) reiterates this by acknowledging, "education, like social work, has more often than not been our enemy, a major arm of colonialism" (p. 36). Social work education utilizes approaches to lessen this, but ultimately does not address Indigenous ways of knowing as being "othered." The Canadian Association for Social Work Education's (2014) standards for accreditation aims to "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" (p. 3). While acknowledging history is the first step towards 'decolonizing' education, the current guiding policies for social work education itself is still a colonial force. Another requirement for accredited social work programs includes that, "social work programs acknowledge the importance and complexity of Canadian society, including the dynamics affecting Anglophone, Francophone, Indigenous peoples, and newcomer populations" (CASWE, 2014, p. 3). The Canadian Association of Social Work Education's (2014) Standards for Accreditation also positions one of its core learning objectives to include: "Social work students acquire ability for self-reflection as it relates to engaging in professional practice through a comprehensive understanding and consciousness of the complex nature of their own social locations and identities" (p. 10).

Current core learning objectives are inclusive of a reflective approach for students to explore their social location and how their professional practice may be influenced by identity factors.

*My feet were hugged tightly by moccasins, as I ran through the forest taking in the scenery around me. I played in the mud, climbed trees and laughed with my cousins all day. Nature holds my feet firmly to the ground, and I connect with Mother Nature. Whom has a pulse that beats strongly and guides us through hardship. She takes away my pain, she listens to my prayers, and cleanses my soul of the darkness tainted by our societies greed.*

Untangling individual pedagogies is integral to repositioning dominant Eurocentric discourses; however, these policies do not reflect education's inherent Western values. In turn, disregarding pedagogical misalignment caused by Western discourse utilized by universities further causes misalignment. CASWE (2014) maintains that programs should also ensure, "social work students have relevant knowledge and skills to actively promote empowering and anti-oppressive practice" (p.12). As previously discussed, approaches such as an anti-oppressive lens, "are grounded in Western worldviews, thereby limiting them in working with Indigenous peoples and communities" (Baskin, 2016, p. 78). The dominant cultures in social work follow the Canadian Association of Social Work Code of Ethics (2005) that values respect for diversity and the inherent dignity and worth of all persons (p.4). However, teachings of Indigenous ways of knowing are perceived as contributions, despite meeting the standard of educational requirements. Currently, it appears the policy guiding social work education, as well as the approaches utilized are limited in providing students with alternate ways of knowing. The United Nations (2008) Declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples outlines that, "Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories, and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information" (p. 7). It is apparent

that CASWE strives to be inclusive with the perceived history of colonial violence. This also aligns with the Truth and Reconciliation (2015) Call to Action for, “developing a culturally appropriate curriculum” (p.2). The inclusion of colonial violence role is beneficial, but the need for policy to reflect its contributions to an imperial system is still needed. Carrière & Peacock (2015) suggest:

*In order to uphold our Indigenous values, we need to pay attention to our traditional protocols and ethics and remember that these have guided us from time immemorial. As Indigenous social workers, we need to separate our personal standards from our Western standard (p. 293).*

The review of current policies and standpoints are still needing more revision.

Despite the ongoing learning required within accredited social works professions these writers recognize that un-learning or dismantling colonial selves can cause discomfort due to shame or fear. Although the importance of seeing colonization as a dual relationship within the colonial structures requires a dominant force to have power or control over the claimed disadvantaged ‘others.’ Manuel and Grand Chief Derrickson (2014) explain colonization as a complicated relationship, but simple to understand if you know that dispossession, dependency, and oppression are the consequences that are produced between the colonizer and colonized (p.298). Two people or forces are needed in the narrative of colonization to feed the capitalistic consumption of colonialism. Therefore to become a colonizer, one must have been colonized. Both self-identified Indigenous peoples and non-indigenous individuals should explore dispossession and dependency and have respect for one another’s truth. Although recognizing the injustices on the land which is a form of violence needs to be further understood to have a more in-depth reflexive relational approach when understanding ongoing violence between the colonizers and colonized. Metis scholar Jean Graveline (1998) explains that eurocentric worldviews are rooted in harmful pedagogical institutions that innately produce oppression.

Thus education is a colonial tool whose consciousness feeds the oppressors (p.26). Recognizing that eurocentric colonial worldview influence hegemony and create unknown or known harm, Graveline (1998) suggests reflection on regulated knowledge and culturally accumulated language is essential in understanding “eurocentrism as an approximation of reality rather than... accurate” (p.31). Historically, colonization was predominantly perceived through assimilation or as harm being done to the Indians, found throughout such history of residential schooling. Nevertheless, in contemporary times colonization is often seen as an artifact that has been put onto Indians... yet colonization is a current and real force. Arguably colonization affects far more people than just Indigenous people. Authors Tuck and Yang (2012) remind people in Decolonization is not a metaphor that “settler colonialism is built upon an entangled triad structure of settler-native-slave, the decolonial desires of white, nonwhite, immigrant, postcolonial, and oppressed people, can similarly be entangled in resettlement, reoccupation, and reinhabitation that actually further [creates] settler colonialism”(p.1). Having the ability to be uncomfortable or to recognize human injustices make room for meaningful interactions and challenge’s the ongoing hierarchical narratives for self-identified Indigenous peoples and settler Individuals. Scholar Yip (2005) suggests reflection as a critical analysis of one’s own assumptions to underlying practices and importance in situating and, identifying existing knowledge while challenging assumptions to make anti-oppressive environments that acknowledge or resolves past harm or poor physical and mental health of social workers (pp.780-703). Nîsopayihcikewin is a Cree term that

**“There is little recognition of how the long-term harms of cultural genocide have been bred into the inequitable structures within social work education.”**

-  
Rayell Sellars-Sarnowski  
& Tiffany Gray

means bring two things together to form one. Nékem is a Secwépemc word meaning to change something. Both Nékem and Nisopayihcikewin are required in bridging Indigenous pedagogy and Western practices together to make better social justice initiatives. Graveline (1998) suggests the use of circle work to open dialogue is a place to start in building relationships they write:

*The Sacred Circle*  
 Honoured by most Tribal peoples of the Earth  
 On the Plains named the Medicine Wheel.  
 Symbolic of Wholeness and Completion  
 Mother Earth in her Roundness...  
 Fullness...Abundance.  
 Four is the Sacred number  
 Four seasons in the cycle...  
 Four elemental powers  
 Four races of humanity...  
 Four laws of living in community  
 Four Directions of the Medicine Wheel. Weaves  
 the Web of Interconnectedness with all  
 of Creation  
 Between those who have gone before...  
 those who will come after.  
 Circle is a container for energy...  
 we Share together  
 Strengthening... Healing each of us... Together.  
 Helps us continue with or struggles  
 As we "walk or talk" each day  
 Honouring our selves... All others  
 The Ancestors... Mother Earth (p.70-71)

These authors acknowledge that many social workers might have fear in adopting Indigenous ontologies due to appropriation however as people cannot own a circle or an individual's knowledge, they suggest social work practices take on circle works and an understanding of true ongoing un-learning for practitioners.

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This is inspiring, community-building, and equips us with the tools we need to go out and do research on what matters to us and our community.

~ Student Reflection  
Knowledge Makers 2019



# Elder Uncle Mike Arnouse

## Adams Lake Indian Band

### CONVERSATIONS WITH THE ELDERS

There was a process for everything. About going into the mountains and fasting and praying and stuff like that. Because the life that our own people live is spirituality, and it's really hard to explain what spirituality is because it's exactly what it is. And we carry one in each one of us, no matter what part of the world you come from—they all talk about a soul, or we call it seméc. And that's why we remind a lot of our young people is that you should know lots about the spirit because you carry one inside of yourself. You carry a heart and a mind and a spirit. That's some of the most important things that you should know about yourself. They draw it on a board like the four quadrants, and that's where you're supposed to have it—in here—inside of you.

Shouldn't have to draw them but we have to draw them now because our people have lost it...to live it...about your heart and your mind and your spirit. And some of the words that come out from the older sometimes, this day and age, is one of the hardest things to do is to work together now with the heart and mind and spirit...to have them work in harmony. We think that we can live in just the knowledge of our mind but that's only a small part of it. Like science will teach you to take all of frogs together right from the biggest part of it to the tiniest little part of it. But that's it. There's no more. Our teaching, there's more to it than that. And you can't learn it in just one sitting

even. You've got to go explore it yourself when you go out on the land and step on the earth sometimes with bare feet. Let the wind blow through your hair and let the sun shine on you. It will help you realize that you were also created and belong in that circle with them other four-legged and the ones with the feathers. They're all related that way because a human being thinks we're the centre of creation and

we're not. If the plants or the feathered ones or the four-legged ones or the ones in the water or any of the others—the air or anything like that should disappear, we wouldn't last very long. But if the human beings should disappear, everything would have flourished. Like that at one time this land that we're sitting on was a paradise just a few hundred years ago. Now we can't

even drink the water out of the rivers—we see things floating down it. Unfortunately you have to go into town to buy water. To me, we were told that we do things backwards but I'm beginning to think it's the opposite.

**“We think that we can live in just the knowledge of our mind but that's only a small part of it.”**

—  
Elder Uncle Mike Arnouse





We need to bring the metaphysical back. Because if we look at problems, in my field of psychology, they're seen as biological or experiential, primarily. And for most Indigenous cultures, it is biological, experiential, and metaphysical...and you can't leave the spiritual component out of it. And I think that western culture for some reason separates that.

~ Prof. Rod McCormick



# Jana Chouinard

## Onion Lake Cree Nation Knowledge Makers Coordinator

### FOR THE PASSION OF LEARNING

One time my mom bought my sister and me a French-braiding tool made from hard plastic and sponge. It looked like a ray of sunlight that a child would draw of a setting sun, disappearing over a mountain range. The individual rays, lined with sponge, provided “grip” between which the strands of hair were woven. It soon became a popular device in our household. It required both my sister’s and my cooperation to use it. The sponge often tangled our fine hair as we struggled to make the tightest French-braids. Only tight braids were the best braids. Once we got the hang of the weaving and adding new strands as we progressed, the plastic claw became less and less necessary to assist with our work of art.

The journey of attaining higher education is similar to the sunray claw guiding my weaving as a little girl. Universities and professors set out the guiding frame and the responsibility is on the students to weave our own success. The power and advantage behind our goals is perseverance. We just have to find our niche; this is where the difficulty begins.

Aboriginal learning includes a ‘seek and observe’ approach. We are told as children, “Watch, see what I’m doing? Do you understand? You try.” This idea is not unique to the world; the Aristotelian Socratic method is similar. It posits that learning takes place through conversations and application of knowledge. Unfortunately, universities do not follow either of these models. Much of the teaching involves absorption of information rather than discussion. Students are rewarded for correctly regurgitating facts. It is indoctrination rather than enlightenment. Research has shown that even though “...

universities offer courses on research methods, there is no guarantee [that] students will be taught or evaluated on their competencies and skills in communication and conflict resolution skills” (Ninomiya and Pollock, 2016, p. 35). Despite knowing that this is an issue, universities still teach in this way. Not only does this not work for the students at large, it fails to address the inherited learning styles of Indigenous students.

Addressing this gap can be daunting. It is now required to include Indigenous history in the elementary school curriculum, and while this should have a net positive outcome, it rather burdens the system in fear, fear of how these topics and questions will disempower the educator with not knowing the final answer. But it is ok not to know. This discomfort in unknowing provides avenues for further research and conversation. A literature research review found that “a number of factors appear to impact the success of indigenous students [and] the most crucial factor is one of support” (Milne et al., 2016, p. 393). Support can mean providing safe spaces for discussion, freedom of thought and expression, respect, and equity in learning. Encouraging the growth of Indigenous students through discussion and acknowledging history in the classroom is a start. But the framework for their weaving must first exist.

What Knowledge Makers provides for students at TRU is the opportunity to open the door to self-discovery and reflection—the plastic sunray piece that guides our movements. It allows students the space required to encourage new forms of thinking and ways of knowing and weaving our thoughts. What we are or are not taught in our childhood is

of great importance in shaping our morals and values as we grow, both physically and mentally. Today, there are courses that young academics enroll in only to find that the politics and philosophies that are taught are limited in their diversity of thought rather than a framework that facilitates personal growth. It has been shown that “goal setting intervention[s] produce improvements in academic success among struggling university students” (Morisano et al., 2010, p. 261). The two-day intensive Knowledge Makers workshop shows students how to set the goals for their own personal research for submission. This goal creates a sense of freedom as it empowers students to explore topics of their choosing, while providing the framework to weave successfully. There are no wrong answers. Rather, there is relationship-building and teamwork—arguably two core competencies of a healthy community - and drawing on our inherent learning style as Indigenous peoples.

Working with the students as they prepared their articles for submission this year demonstrated how encouragement and motivation can be key factors in molding our leaders for tomorrow. The dedication and effort that each student showed is poured out on these pages. As they continue to grow and set additional goals for their long-term success, we hope that the experience of participating in Knowledge Makers will stay with them.

The plastic tool that guided my tiny fingers as a young girl was relied upon for a short period of time. The support structures that assisted with my educational endeavours were required for a lot longer. Be patient. Be kind. Share your story.

Kinanâskomitin.

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Aboriginal learning includes a  
‘seek and observe’ approach.  
We are told as children, “Watch,  
see what I’m doing? Do you  
understand? You try.”

-  
Jana Chouinard

## Elizabeth D. W. Spike

St'at'imc, Nlaka'pamux, German descent  
Bachelor of Fine Arts

*"Knowledge makers are the ones who will write and allow the next generation to know the past, present and future knowledge. It is a way to keep our youth wanting to learn more and grow as Indigenous knowledge makers. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this amazing journey to grow with more knowledge and understanding as an Indigenous person."  
KUKWSTUMCKÁLIAP (thank you to more than one person)."*

## WHAT COLONIZATION HAS DONE TO MY LIFE. MY STORY

### **Kukwstumúlhkacw Cá7a Kúkwpí7**

We Thank-you High Creator

### **Tákem i wa7 matq. tákem i wa7 saqw**

Everything that walks, everything that flies

### **Tákem i wa7 nqáylec múta7 tákem i wa7 ri7p lti7 tmicwlhkálha**

Everything that Swims, and Everything that grows on our land

### **Wa7kálh xzumstúm i skelkla7lhkálha**

We honour our ancestors

### **Ca7a Kúkwpí7 szúhmintskacw i qu7lhkálh. i sa7lhkálh. i supumlhkálh. múta7 tákem i ucwalmícwa**

Creator, protect our water, foods we eat, the air we breathe, and all Native people

### **Cá7a Kukwpí7 snimúlh i ucwalmícwa i wa7 tsúwa7su**

High Creator, we are the people of the land that belongs to you

### **Snúwa7 ti wa7 nilhmintumúlhas**

You are the one that watches over us

### **Cá7a Kúkwpí7 kalh sawwentsín kweskácw tsunam entúmulh ti nřakmenlhkálha múta7 nřekmenlhkálh**

High Creator, we ask you to guide us to live our own way of life and traditional laws

### **Tay. Snúwa7 ti sa7xa7 kalh xátmiñem ku su papt wa7 ullusmíntumin**

Hey. You the supreme Being we want you to always be among us,

### **Kukwstumúlhkacw Cá7a Kúkwpí7**

Thank you High Creator

### **Áma s Tsíl.has**

Amen

would like to take the time to say “thank you” to my elders back home in the St’at’imc Territory: Grandpa Ronnie Lester, Late Grandpa Eddie Napoleon, Bucky John, Laura Grizzlypaws, and many others who have helped me throughout my life. Many of the teachings that I have learned were from my grandfather Ronnie Lester. Thank you for taking the time to teach me the songs, dances, and love for our culture and traditions; without these teachings I would not have been able to walk and live a healthy life balance in this Settler Society. Bucky John,

for teaching the language and allowing us to grow and retake our voices back as Indigenous people of this land, and for helping me with the translations of the prayers from St’at’imc to English: thank you. Thank you to my family for always standing behind me in my choices in the path I walk: the choice to live a clean, sober life, and to make sure I give the best life for my daughter, so she can have a great road ahead of her as she learns to know the culture, language, and ceremonies that we are bringing back after they were stolen from us.

**Oh Nkúitenlhkalha**  
oh Great Spirit

**Qanímenskan ta qwalútswa lhélta kékema**  
Whose voice I hear in the wind

**Nilh ta súpswa wa7 máwals ta tmícwa**  
Whose breath gives life to the world

**Qanímenstumc**  
Hear me

**Cw7it i tsmáit.swa pápla7lhkan tu7**  
I come to you as one of your many children

**Kwíkwskan. qíqelíhkan**  
I am small and weak

**Xátminlhkan ta gélgelswa múta7 léxlex**  
I need your strength

**Slhíkskan matq ta á7ema**  
May I walk in beauty

**Tsicwalústumckacw kwens átsxnan i megmágalus ta tsatséqwsnama**  
Make my eyes behold the red and purple sunset

**Xzúmstum tákem íwa skúicitumúl hacwa**  
Make my hands respect the things you have made

**Múta7 i kékana7lhkalha kws kalánmintsin**  
And my ears sharp to hear your voice

**Múzmitstumc zwátenan**  
Make me wise so that I make know the things

**Tsunámenacw i stsmáit.swa**  
That you have taught your children

**I tsunáncálswa wa7 légwenacw lki kék7a múta7 i pétskelha**  
The lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock

**Máysents kwens gélgel cw7ays kwens xáwenam i snukwúnukwa7lhkalha**  
Make me strong, not to be superior to my brothers, but to me

**Nilh s7ents ta wa7 múzmit**  
Able to fight my greatest enemy: myself

**Máysents kwénswa wa7 skwíil tsíla ts7ásas**  
Make me ever ready to come to you with straight eyes so that

**Nmáwala tsíla lts7ásas kacíma ta snéqwema**  
When life fades as the faded sunset

**Ts7áslhkan máwal esnúwa**  
My spirit will come to you without shame

**Tákem i nsnekwúnukw7a**  
All my Relations

Lakota Chief Yellow Lark (1887) Translated into St’at’imc by Bucky John

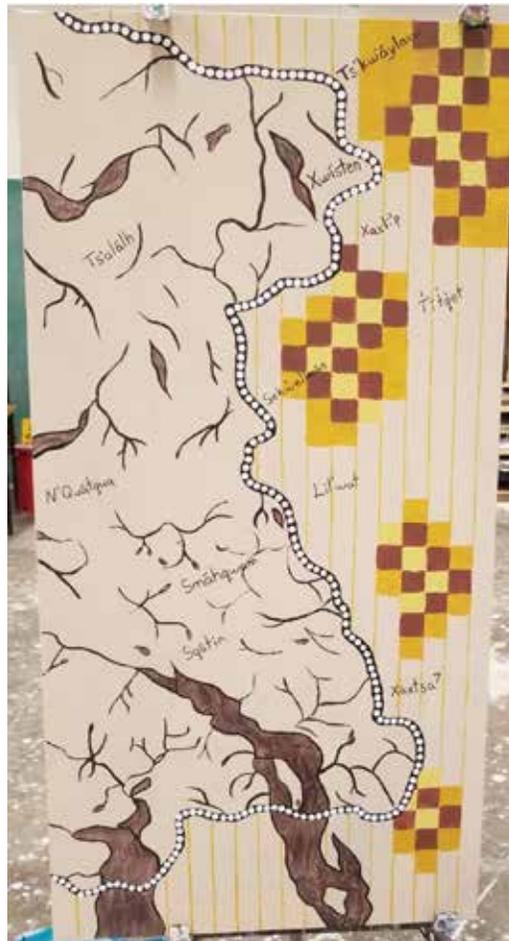
Today I would like to share my journey with you, as I think it is important for us as Indigenous peoples to take back what was taken from us through colonization and genocide. If we can learn our language and practice our ceremonies (naming ceremony, coming of age ceremonies, and so on), we will be returning our knowledge to the rightful keepers of this earth: the next seven generations to come.

Colonization began when the first visitors landed on Turtle Island. It was difficult for the Indigenous people and the settlers to communicate because they had two very different languages. The Indigenous people were then forced to learn the language of the settlers; this was the start of the colonization of the Indigenous people, and the only language that was to be spoken was English. The language the Indigenous people spoke was a way of thinking and being. Margaret Kovach says, “Language matters because it holds within it a people’s worldview. Language is a primary concern in preserving Indigenous philosophies” (Kovach, 2010:59). Colonization affected every aspect of the Indigenous people’s lives; not only Western science had placed a significant role in changing the face of Indigenous knowledge systems and the people themselves. Indigenous people, their language, and their cultural beliefs were discriminated against in a public atmosphere.

The Indigenous people of Canada have been taking action, calling on the Federal government to make a bill that the Aboriginal Language Act has to be followed in our every day life and also in the law of Canadian government (Canadian Heritage, 2019). On December 6, 2016, the Prime Minister acknowledged that the Government of Canada had enacted the Indigenous Languages act, and worked with the Indigenous people to help preserve, promote, and revive the Indigenous languages in Canada. On June 15, 2017, the Canadian Heritage, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Métis Nation of Canada launched the co-development of Indigenous languages legislation and agreed on a collaborative engagement process. Aboriginal language rights are reinforced

by the Treaties and the Indian Act; Indigenous people have the right to use and speak their languages in everyday life. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and their communities. There is funding for Aboriginal languages to be taught and learned again before they become extinct as “Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them.” (Government of Canada, 2015: n.p)

I remember when I was younger, I did not know my Native Language while I was in elementary school they started to teach St’at’imc to the children starting in grade 1-7. Parents had a choice of which language, French or St’at’imc, they wanted their children to learn. I am thankful that my parents chose St’at’imc as it opened so many doors into my culture; I could sing more songs, I could introduce myself, and I was also taught how to harvest our traditional foods.



**St’at’imc map painting with abstracted cedar weaving work by Elizabeth Spike.**

I was able to learn St'at'imc right up until grade 10, but when I entered grade 11, I had a difficult decision to make. I needed to choose between English and graduation, or St'at'imc. It was one of the hardest decisions I have had to make in my life. I broke down in the Principal's office, crying so hard, as I knew that I needed to choose English so that I could graduate and not be left behind.

Once I graduated from high school, I lost my language and I lost myself. I could not even remember how to speak the simple words. I started to drink; honestly, I am deeply sorry that I touched the alcohol. During this time, I did not speak my language, did not practice sweats, and minimally engaged in traditional dance. But January 2019 marked one of the best choices in my life: I am now five years sober. I have found myself again in our traditional ceremony and language, and in our elders.

Although I know many of our traditional songs and dances, I want to learn more of my culture again; I want to use

the language again. Coming to university has offered me the opportunity to incorporate my culture with my art and engage with my language once again. I want to major in St'at'imc Language in my Bachelor of Fine Arts studies. Thompson Rivers University has offered this opportunity to re-engage with the language through their Introduction to St'at'imc course. I am truly thankful to have been given the opportunity to re-learn my language. Fine Arts provides space for me to use my traditional knowledge of the land, and our traditional teachings from cedar weaving to maps, language, and beading. At university, I am able to push back against colonization by using my language and culture in my coursework. It is not only important that I express my language and culture at university but also that I express it for the next generations to learn. They will be the ones to carry our sacred ceremony, our songs, our dances and language once we are gone from this world.

I had our daughter, Yawhunudaih, in December 2016, and when she was four days old we brought her to the sweat lodge. All the elders prayed over her in the lodge, asking the creator to watch over her in her long path in life, to have a good, healthy life. My family and I were involved in a tragic accident shortly after; however, Yawhunudaih was unharmed, and to this day I truly believe that the prayers in the sacred lodge were what saved my daughter and all of us three weeks after she was born. It deepened my belief in our traditional ceremonies and our traditional protocols. I was thankful that the creator and my ancestors were watching over us when we got into that accident. I want to continue teaching my daughter how important it is to attend ceremony, and to make food offerings to our ancestors every once in a while, or when we have a big feast to acknowledge our ancestors. It is important to carry on these simple teachings to the next generation as it breaks the cycle of colonialism. We need to start teaching the younger ones our ceremony, language, songs, and dance. They need to know who they are and where their people come from, to be proud to say, "Yes, I am Indigenous."

**Yawhunudaih dancing  
Traditional St'at'imc songs.  
Photo Credit:  
Remington John**



We have chosen to give my daughter a traditional name. She received two traditional names, one from each side of her family blood line. Her first name is Yawhunudaih; this was given when she was born and is from her father's bloodline. Her second name, Xe7xezep, was given to her in a naming ceremony that was held in my traditional territory. Before giving birth to my daughter we asked our elder grandpa Ronnie Lester how to take care of the afterbirth. He told me, "To make sure she knows where she comes from, place it in the mountains and say a prayer so your child will know where her roots are, her bloodline is, and where she can always return home." This was one of the many teachings that had been lost in my territory, and I am grateful that my grandfather listened to my question and that he now knows that I want to continue our sacred teachings of the St'at'imc people. When the time is right, our daughter will be given a woman's name once she goes through the coming of age ceremony. I am still learning about this ceremony; I am taking back what our people have lost, learning and teaching it to the next seven generations to come, as this is how we will push back against colonization.

Together, the St'at'imc have been engaging in the celebration of our communities. In the last 100 years the St'at'imc people started to host a Unity ride; this ride brings all eleven communities together for a big gathering (Tškwáylaxw- Pavilion<sup>1</sup>, Xaxlíp- Fountain, Sekwélwás- Cayoose Creek, Títget- Lillooet, Xwísten- Bridge River, Tšalálh- Seton, N'Quatqua- Anderson Lake, Lilwat- Mount Currie, Xáxtsa- Douglas, Smáhqwam, Sqátin-Skookumchuck). The communities take turns hosting the St'at'imc gathering each year. I have had the honour of going on the ride a few times already and hope to continue to do so in the future. The Unity ride allows people to come together and to run/ride. It is a 12-day journey from the top of the territory to the community that is hosting the gathering that year. Once the runners and riders make it to the gathering place, then all the people gather and celebrate for three days. While on the journey I was able to learn horsemanship, leadership, patience. Many of the people that

join in the Unity Ride/Run are youths. This ride has always been drug- and alcohol-free, giving the younger generation an opportunity to learn horsemanship, leadership, responsibility, and caring for others and animals. In the last few years the ride has grown, and we have started to invite other local nations to come take part in our journey to be one with each other: *unity*. Unity is when all communities and nations stand as one, believe in our traditions, and always respect each person and animal, and all living things on this earth. Without unity, a community cannot stand and fight or believe in what is right for the nation of the people.

Although we have experienced and continue to experience colonization, we still walk on the lands that our ancestors walked before all of us. As my journey has shown, when we practice our language and culture we are stronger, and it is our responsibility as knowledge keepers to keep passing our wisdom and the lessons we have learnt on to the next seven generations so that we will not lose our way as Indigenous people. I pass on our teachings to my daughter so that she does not lose her identity. I ground my daughter in our ways to guide her and help her along the journey. This will make her a strong Indigenous woman like all the women who came before her. Yawhunudaih will be able to pass this knowledge down to the next seven generations after her and they will be stronger for it. Yawhunudaih and her generation will be leading the next spiritual ceremonies and gatherings, and they will know where their roots and where their bloodlines come from; they will take back our ways and our land. They are the next knowledge makers.



**Yawhunudaih with great grand parents Ronnie and Norma-lee Lester just before her naming ceremony. 2016**  
Photo credit:  
Elizabeth Spike



**St'at'imc Untiy Ride & Run 2010.**  
Photo credit:  
Elizabeth Spike

**Kukwstumúlhkacw Cá7a Kúkwi7**

We Thank-you High Creator

**Tákem i wa7 matq. tákem i wa7 saq̄w**

Everything that walks, everything that flies

**Tákem i wa7 nq̄aylec múta7 tákem i wa7 ri7p lti7 tmicwlhkálha**

Everything that Swims, and Everything that grows on our land

**Wa7kálh xzum̄stúm i skelkla7lhkálha**

We honour our ancestors

**Ca7a Kúkwi7 szúhmintskacw i qu7lhkálh. i sqa7lhkálh.****i supur̄mlhkálh. múta7 tákem i ucwalmícwa**

Creator, protect our water, foods we eat, the air we breathe, and all Native people

**Cá7a Kukwpi7 snimúlh i ucwalmícwa i wa7 tsúwa7su**

High Creator, we are the people of the land that belongs to you

**Snúwa7 ti wa7 nilhmintumúlhas**

You are the one that watches over us

**Cá7a Kúkwi7 kalh sawwentsín kweskácw tsunaṁ entúmulh****ti ntákmenlhkálha múta7 nxeḱmenlhkálh**

High Creator, we ask you to guide us to live our own way of life and traditional laws

**Tay. Snúwa7 ti sa7xa7 kalh xátmiṁem ku su papt wa7 ulúsmíntumin**

Hey. You the supreme Being we want you to always be among us,

**Kukwstumúlhkacw Cá7a Kúkwi7**

Thank you High Creator

**Áma s Tsíl.has**

Amen

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**Credits:**

- › First Prayer translated into St'at'imc by Bucky John
- › Second Prayer Lakota Chief Yellow Lark (1887) Translated into St'at'imc by Bucky John
- › Help with language from Ronnie Lester, Bucky John, First voices app
- › Many of the knowledge given was spoken to me as I grew up from Ronnie Lester, Bucky John, Laura Grizzlypaws, and many other elders who have already passed.

**Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> I have included the English names so that when you drive through these areas you will recognize the territory.

# Elder Estella Patrick Moller

## Nakazdli First Nation

### CONVERSATIONS WITH THE ELDERS

We all gathered in the Science building. It was so neat. Dr. Dickinson was in there. And then there was a big kerfuffle because students felt the energies of the Science Department. So one morning I came into work here and Joanne says, "We need to smudge the Science Centre." And I look at her and I say, "Oh, ok." And she grabs me and we take off. Walking there in the snow I saw in my mind's eye, like a vision, of a little snake. And I thought, "what the heck?" So I thought, "oh ok, we're walking into something." And so we walked in, the door was open so we walked in and I could hear the rattle snake. I thought, "Oh, what's he scared of?" And so I looked around and here was a big stuffed owl—just dominating the whole room, you know how they are. And I said, "Oh, look at the owl and where the other noise is coming from, in one of the drawers here"—there were hundreds of drawers. I said, "In one of the drawers there's a snake there." Of course it was dead, but I said, "He was rattling because he was scared because he eats them." I said, "Before we even smudge, let's fix the room up." So she called security or housekeeping, I'm not sure what they call them. But anyways, they come in and they say, "What are you guys doing here?" And I said, "We're cleaning the place up." Joanne just wanted to stuff the owl in the box and I said, "No, all it needs is to be in a secluded area." So we choose the top of the stairs coming from another area, but three steps down there's an alcove so we put him in there. And the whole place the energy changed, just like that. And Joanne said we solved the problem, and I said, "Yes but we

need to appease everybody else too," so we smudged the place down. And I asked all the animals and stones and wood and rocks, I said, "You guys need to get along together. You all belong together. Here, we don't eat anybody!" And Joanne was looking at me and I said, "What? Its true—we don't. We cooperate." It was so funny. Anyways, we cleaned it up. And the guy says, I need to get a ladder. I said, "Just use a chair...here, I'll hold it." And they did. By the time Dr. Dickinson joined us it was clean and couldn't understand what happened. So it was fun. And the native students know danger. But the other students didn't have a clue. So

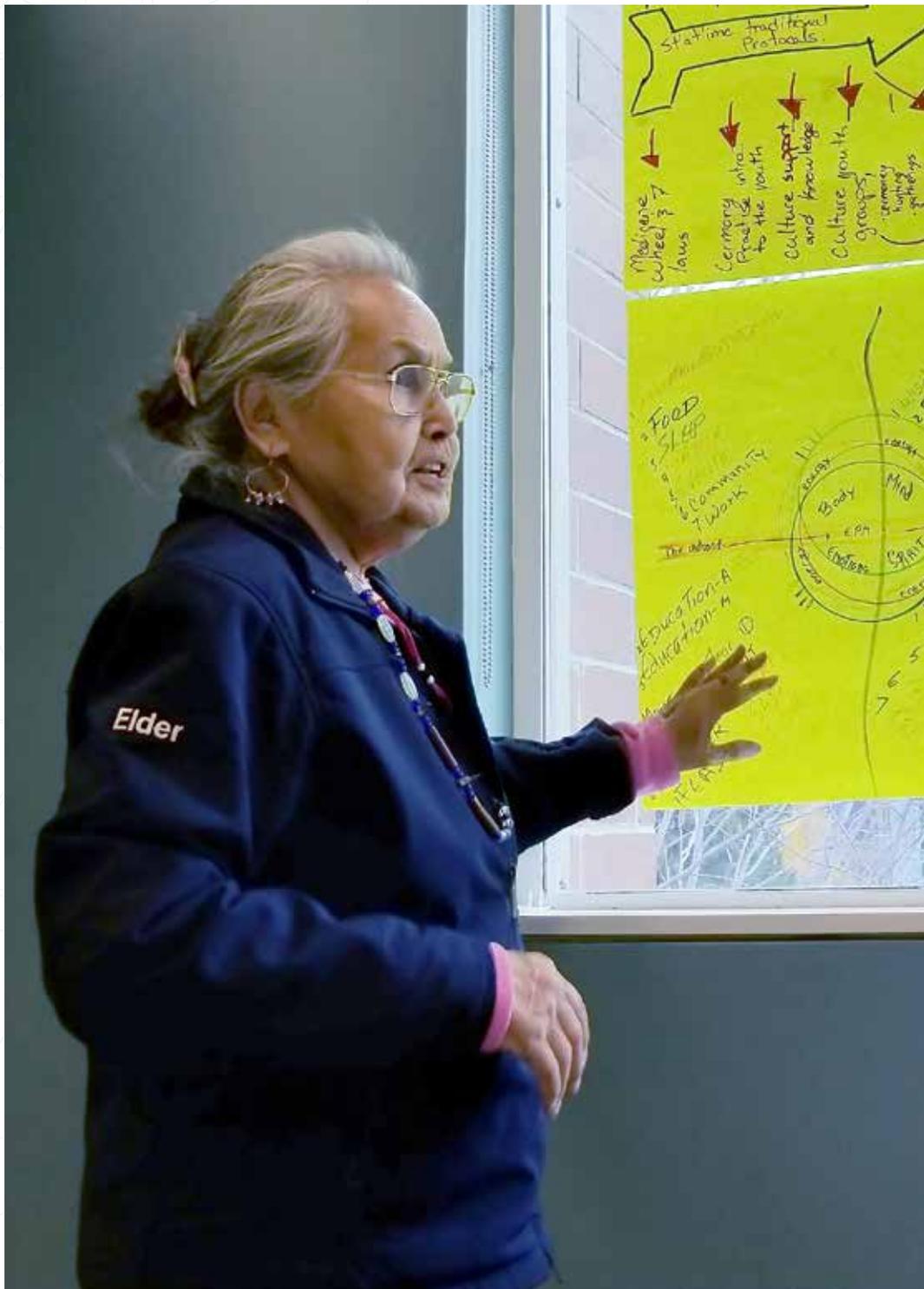
**"Some of the students had to learn to deal with their nightmares. Because nightmares are depictions of intense fear."**

—  
Elder Estella Patrick Moller

that was...just stuff like that. So now when I talk to Science people, biology and environmentalists, so just be aware and do go mixing up the medicines. And so they said, "How do you know that?" I said, "Well, you have to know that all predatory birds eat snakes. And no matter how big the snake is, they're terrified of the predators." I mean, even the little hawk can grab the rattlesnake

and fling it around until its dead. There's ways of grabbing them. So it's just that first year that's so much knowledge. Some of the students had to learn to deal with their nightmares. Because nightmares are depictions of intense fear. The first year I had to deal with students having nightmares of the little animals chasing them. I said, "Well, ok... let's make those little animals metaphors for something." The biggest fear we have is English. We all speak English but its not our

first language so we tend to feel unsafe in it. And so if you're afraid of English, all the little animals would represent that. And so I said, what you can get through with the fear of English is to just open the dictionary... any page...choose just one word and say oh, ok. Choose that word. Use your finger and choose a word. So, what is that word? You read the correction. The correct way of saying it and you know what it means. No more fear. You know one English word.



# Maria Collins

Métis  
Bachelor of Science

*“Indigenous knowledge is worldwide; however, it specifies to local information verbally passed down and shared among individuals.”*

## THE LOSS OF MEDICINAL PLANTS

### Introduction

Globally, there is an ever increasing urban sprawl and growth of technology, moving further into remote parts of the world, disrupting the natural flow. Removing species from the environment is negatively affecting biodiversity around the globe. Industrial harvesting of pleasurable flora for medicinal and commercial use, leaves behind a massive loss of habitat and wildlife. It is important to have indigenous plants for cultural and medicinal purposes, as well as to sustain a healthy ecosystem. “These systems of medicine have given rise to some important drugs still in use today”, writes Ameenah Gurib-Fakim (2005), for medicines found in pharmacies are derivatives of species of plants or animals from specific locations (p. 5).

Practices and strategies for sustainable reproducible food and medicines through communication and exchange of knowledge is essential for the future harvesting and use of medicinal flora. It is time to consider the needs of the wild and not the needs of mankind. Indigenous people have a holistic approach to medicinal species of plants. Showing respect to the ecosystem from which you take your food and medicine is key. “Losing local population is a prelude to extinction”, (BBC Radio, Neal Razzel Presenter, 2019), and when a species of plant is removed from the ecosystem, so is the culture and biodiversity associated with it.

### Methods

I used a few different form of research for this paper. To gain a better understanding of the views of Indigenous people, I arranged meetings with local Elders in the community. The highlighted the importance of culture that goes along with medicinal plants and the holistic way of gathering them. Next I checked out library books to further the research. And finally I went online to read scientific papers, and journals.

### The Loss of Medicinal Plants in the Area

Thinking about home, the Canadian population relies heavily on grocery stores and pharmacies, and has little self-reliance or independence. For instance, the Indigenous boreal Canadians have identified 546 medicinal plant species, most commonly “with the highest number of species being used for gastrointestinal disorders” (Uprety et al, 2012, p. 5). These people have a way to help with indigestion in their own backyards, free from preservatives and other additives. With the effects of colonization, negative environmental impacts in our neighboring communities have been documented by Elders in the area, as noted in *Secwépemc People and Plants: Research Papers in Shuswap Ethnobotany* (p. 347). Locally, the major loss of medicinal plants has been due to a variety of factors such as ranching, urbanization,

industrial forestry and mining (Mary Thomas et al. 2016), as well as wildfire, and insect infestation (Stats Canada, 2006). Modernization has made it difficult for communities to gather their medicines.

Ranching and agriculture have resulted in the depletion and extirpation of native plants, and have contributed to the loss of estuarine habitat. Livestock are notorious for overgrazing, and a study by Raymond E. England and Antoon Devos (1969) states that “the overgrazing and wallowing by bison may also have produced conditions favorable for the ‘invasion’ of the grasslands by woody vegetation. The invasion of the grasslands by woody vegetation would provide cover and browse for wapiti, deer, and moose” (p. 93). There is an increase in vegetation, but it is a more flowered and less grass-like type. This changes the ecosystem and allows for more ungulates to come to graze and that entails more predators. This overgrazing of an area reduces the amount of medicinal plants such as stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) or miner’s lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*), and their survival rate during the winter. Both plants are used in the Secwépemc territory.

Encroachment on wild areas due to urbanization is an endless problem in growing cities. The intensive use of trails by cyclists, hikers, and motorized vehicles results in the spread of vicious invasive plant species, especially when the user is not diligent in cleaning their gear. These invasive plants choke out the native plant species until they can no longer grow. This diminishes the amount of medicines available in the area.

Industrial logging leaves behind a clear-cut block with little to no root systems, and there is no canopy to protect the plants below. This creates a fragmented forests and access roads provide wildlife corridors. Consequences of complete tree removal include: erosion, nutrient loss, and loss of carbon storage potential. The loss of pine trees in the area from logging and forest fires also is a concern to the Secwépemc community. Pine needles are used for cultural as well as medicinal purposes.

Mining in these natural areas also creates a disturbance of land and causes water and air pollution. Massive land disturbances result in a

loss of biodiversity of medicinal plants as well as removal of access to sacred land. Without access, gatherers cannot obtain their natural medicines from the local area. Access is not the only problem; complete removal of medicinal plants is also a factor.

Wildfire and insect infestation are mostly caused, or spread by humans. In addition to the native pine beetle, shipments being received in Canada from abroad also carry pests. Insects infestations are not the only threat; wildfires also destroy large areas in a short period of time, removing everything. Wildfire is mainly caused by human activity like camping, off-roading, or smoking. The culture of Indigenous people lives within the medicine and the holistic ways of gathering it.

### Cultural impact on the community

The cultural impacts of deforestation, agriculture, industry and urban sprawl on the surrounding Indigenous communities include the loss of sacred land, medicinal resources, and culturally significant species of plants. Such losses have impacted the ability of Indigenous people to harvest enough healthy food and medicines from the land.

Urbanization and population growth have resulted in a large number of people moving into rural areas which reduces access to sacred areas of the Indigenous people. For example, the leasing and purchasing of Shuswap Lake, has restricted the Secwépemc people’s access to previously owned land. Without land rights, the community can no longer gather medicines along parts of the shoreline.

Agriculture and ranching have hindered the ability of Indigenous people to gather medicinal plants, and other harvesting. The pollution that industry carries with it has decreased the abundance of medicinal plants in the Secwépemc territory (Dr. Mary Thomas, 2016). Deforestation and habitat loss, along waterways have created erosion and have contaminated the water. This creates an unbalanced ecosystem, and an unstable future for the plants growing in such areas.

Cattle will eat native vegetation preferentially over grasses. This reduces the native plant species availability in the following year due to overgrazing. Prolonged hoofing of

cattle has another impact on the community: the intensive traffic affects the soil through compaction, making it harder to break up and use the digging stick to find root vegetables (Thomas et al. 2016).

Culturally significant plants, such as birch, have also been on the decline because of the logging industry. Logging reduces biodiversity and builds roads which provides more easy access into the bush than is necessary. The increase in forest explorers is accompanied by the increase in off-road vehicles and disturbance of the natural flow of things in the forest. In British Columbia, the standard forestry practice is to clear-cut and replant a single-species forest, selecting for fast growing softwood tree species. This practice can result in the loss of plants and wildlife in the area, which decreases biodiversity. In the Secwépemc community, Dr. Mary Thomas (2016) has observed that “squirrels used to be much more common in the Wap Valley area, before the hazelnut bushes were cut down during clear cutting” (p. 359). This example shows how a decrease in unique food sources for small animals can result in an ecosystem imbalance, affecting those predators who rely on critters as food sources. Without food, larger animals will move into new territory. This multitude of changes can be very destructive to the community and environment in which the medicinal plants grow.

### Environmental impact

The negative impact society has on the environment and wildlife is a major problem. Every living creature needs a home, and when a habitat is taken away so is their home. The loss of habitat has a negative effect on biodiversity, states Lenore Fahrig (2003). This means that without an appropriate niche for an animal, there will be a decrease in the variety of species present. When one system fails, the rest will follow. Those who depended on the wild game for sustenance, will be affected if there is enough disturbance in the habitat of their game.

Andy Hector and Robert Bagchi (2007) state that “ecosystem multifunctionality does require greater numbers of species” and “Different species influence different functions”

therefore, greater biodiversity has a positive effect on the surrounding productivity of flora and fauna (p. 3). For example, the red squirrels’ response to the spruce cone failure of 1964-1966 in Alaska, was to survive off the previous years hidden cones along with eating mushrooms in the summer, and spruce buds in the winter. The spruce buds did not sustain the red squirrels for long; they required the cones to survive through the winter months. In turn, predators who relied upon squirrels as their primary food source were also negatively affected. The mass extinction of insects is increasing at an alarmingly fast rate, 75% from 1989 to 2016, according to BBC. This is a major concern because medicinal plants as well as food are made with the help of insects, as well as the decomposition of waste (BBC Radio, Neal Razzel Presenter, 2019). This problem needs to be addressed. It affects everyone, starting from the bottom of the chain moving up, from the producers to the consumers. Henry Gholz (2012) states that “reduced biodiversity affects ecosystems at levels comparable to those of global warming or air pollution” (p. 1), which reinforces the message that people must take into consideration where the products they use daily are coming from.

“The gardener must be observant and patient with the work being done; it takes time for the garden to grow.”

Maria Collins

## Changing our impact

“Traditional foods, due to their connectivity with cultural practices and traditional knowledge, impact not only physical health, but also emotional, mental and spiritual health” (Elliot et al, 2009, p. 4). Growing your own food or supporting local producers is much more environmentally friendly, and sustainable. Gathering medicines and preserving them for later use is also worthwhile to reduce our impact on the environment. In order to restore these plants and surrounding habitat, people must be taught or reminded how to respect the wilderness as it was respected in the past. In 2018, on Vancouver Island a medicinal plant walk took place at WSÁNEĆĆ and at other Indigenous communities. During a walk, students are taught through story telling “the spiritual relationship with the plant and the traditional protocol for collecting the plant” (Bagelman 2018, p. 6). Then, “while sharing food, the young participants also learn and practice the cultural protocols around eating and feasting: often an elder will give thanks for the food and young people will serve elders first before eating themselves” (Bagelman 2018, p. 6). This lesson is an essential guide to the next generations understanding of how things came to be. Following an Elders’ footprint is the proper way to go about foraging, and to learn the traditional ways of being.

In *Secwépemc People, Land, and Laws* the authors claim that foragers must actively look after their land area to maintain an abundant source of flora for the following season. This means a person must take time to care, and weed an area with a digging stick or by hand, before there is enough space for the desired plant to grow. It also states that it is necessary to realize a mother root from a daughter root, and leave the mother root so that future generations of plants can grow. Recognizing these small signs while in the outdoors is important to preserve a medicinal plant species. The gardener must be observant and patient with the work being done; it takes time for the garden to grow.

Monitoring is necessary to have a trend line of the impact in active and post active logging and mining sites. Adaptive management on active picking sites of medicinal plants is

also recommended by Thomas et al. (2016) to monitor the impacts of harvesting on the ecosystem. Changes to current practices are needed to improve the negative impact of overharvesting, wildfire, and drought.

## Conclusion

Yucwmiina (look after the land) as the Secwépemc people would say, take care and respect Mother Nature. The cultural identity of the people who live on the land relies heavily on the medicinal plants that grow in the local area. Sharing knowledge between communities and engaging all members will build a better understanding of how best to enable species growth, and will generate more ideas about sustaining a healthy ecosystem in our community. Teaching the next generation about previous mistakes and accomplishments will allow for the growth and sustainability of the people. Remember, the land teaches us.

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I don't think I could have done research without the support and inspiration provided in these workshops. It helped me feel like I had more of a community at TRU.

*~ Student Reflection  
Knowledge Makers 2019*



# Airini, & Sereana Naepi with Will Garrett-Petts, Jana Chouinard, & Nic Mason

## OUR WORK TOGETHER: KNOWLEDGE MAKERS

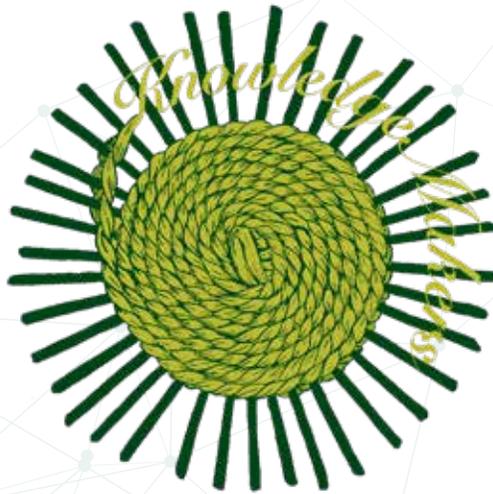
*"We all come with a sacred Creator within us. You all created who you are and being in this Knowledge Makers circle today that was your own effort. When you think about your ancestors and what built your bones and values and you put upon that what you are doing here in university, you create a trajectory that is totally unique in the world. You have the ability to make changes. That is honoring the Chief in you. You have permission to be stubborn against systems that humans made, to make your own way up this system. Be stubborn and do not be bowled over...We have to work together. Think about our traditional roots. Think about traditional knowledge. We have got lots of work to do. (Joanne Brown, Knowledge Makers, Winter 2016)"*

### Knowledge Makers<sup>i</sup>

We start the morning with quiet, some food and a hot drink. We say first hellos to one another and see the group forming for the first time as one by one we arrive. The Elders were there first though. They have been ready before this beginning and they have been waiting. This is important work. There are Elders, professors, students, administrators, support staff around. A few husbands, wives, and partners. A few young children. There are linking double doors between classrooms. They are opened wide. We see the room next door with a circle of desks, and chairs in front in an inner circle. There are symbols around the room – a map of Secwépemc Nation, bark baskets, a pine needle basket, the poster of First Peoples Principles of Learning, the artwork *The Elders are Watching*. The Elders move to the front door

to the new room. We gather behind. Some of the senior scholars and community members can be seen moving to the back. Things become silent. A humming, tapping drumming begins. Smudging sage is lit. A reminder of women's moontime is murmured. Elder Mike taps the heel of his eagle-headed walking stick and walks forward with our Elders Doreen, Estella, and Margaret. We smudge too, if able. We follow slowly, in the direction of Earth's rotation. We pause when the Elders pause. We move forward when the Elders do. We enter the circle of chairs walking again the full circle to vacant seats. No one cuts across the circle. Everyone moves together and is learning through watching. We know there is a pattern to all of this, but no one holds a program in their hands. A few nods to confirm. A few gentle smiles and hand movements to reassure where to be. We remain standing. The words and prayers from the Elders begin. Knowledge Makers begins.

Welcome. Weyt-kp. Knowledge Makers is a collaborative teaching initiative where Indigenous students learn how to research, and how to publish research, as Indigenous researchers. Based at Thompson Rivers University, we bring together up to 15 Indigenous undergraduate students each year from across the university to learn how to 'make knowledge' through a multi-modal approach. Since 2015, close to 40 university leaders, Elders, faculty, staff, and community members have contributed to this non-credit, four-month annual program. As the Indigenous research culture grows we have expanded the Knowledge Makers to include Circles for undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral research.



The symbol of Knowledge Makers is a traditional Secwépemc Nation craft of the pine needle basket. We have this in mind as we share the context for Knowledge Makers Indigenous research mentoring, the Knowledge Makers project goals and program, and the impacts of Knowledge Makers on student learning. Knowledge Maker Levi Glass (2016) created this symbol to incorporate two elements: that Knowledge Makers is both about the many generations of Indigenous knowledge that came before us, and that our work together is weaving a future generation of Indigenous researchers.

### The Context for Knowledge Makers

In higher education research nationally, Indigenous peoples continue to be under-represented as research students, graduates, and faculty. While there is some progress, our higher education system underserves Indigenous peoples, both in meaningful practices and outcomes, and in the pace of change towards indigenized universities. Universities have a key role in transforming research and teaching to advance Indigenous knowledge within universities and communities. Knowledge Makers helps make that transformation happen. The program increases the number of published new Indigenous researchers. They learn how to research as Indigenous researchers, instead of being the subject of research. Through the Knowledge Maker study awards the students are supported for further university studies. Their articles expand the body of Indigenous-led knowledge in academia.

Knowledge Makers provides strengths-based approaches that align with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and the Universities Canada Principles on Indigenous Education. Higher education is critical for the promotion of Indigenous peoples' rights and interests in research training and production. Having Indigenous knowledge lead a researcher mentoring program is a step towards implementing the provisions of the UNDRIP. Becoming researchers helps re-establish Indigenous peoples' own "scholarly authority over their own knowledge systems, experiences, representations, imaginations and identities."<sup>ii</sup>

The TRU Research and Graduate Office provides funding for the four-month Knowledge Makers program. Uses of resources include people (Elders, program coordinator, speakers), facilities, web-platform, and journal publication. This is action towards reconciliation. We remember that in 1970 when our original institution Cariboo College was founded, we were based at Kamloops Residential School. We relocated in 1971. The Residential School closed in 1977. Each year University leadership supports Knowledge Makers in words, in person, and financially. There is a sense of this being the moment waited for, as Associate Vice President Will Garrett-Petts says:

*Reflecting on the importance of the Knowledge Makers initiative, I've come to recognize that in addition to holding up Indigenous research as a model of best practices, we also need to acknowledge that there is an activist impetus at play here, what the intercultural scholar Dylan Rodriguez has called an "urgency imperative." We at TRU feel that sense of urgency and recognize the need for critique, for pedagogical insurgency, and to "denaturalize" those aspects of the academy that uncritically privilege the status quo or otherwise limit intercultural teaching and learning possibilities.*

Led through Indigenous expertise, this is a whole-of-university initiative—a holistic, timely effort for reconciliation.

## Knowledge Makers: Program Goal and Description

Knowledge Makers is an investment in the work of future Indigenous researchers, and the publication of Indigenous research. Students apply to the Knowledge Makers program. Once accepted, each student begins the multi-faceted fourth-month program of learning described below.

**1. One-on-one meetings, individualized Research Reading Folders, and formalized mentoring:** Students meet with their university-based Knowledge Makers Program Coordinator, one-on-one, to begin building a working relationship, and to discuss their own ambitions, community affiliations, and areas of research interest. A sustained practice of mentoring begins from this time between dedicated Indigenous academics and each Knowledge Maker student.

**2. e-Portfolio:** A 'landing place' for Knowledge Maker students to formulate and share their research journeys alongside other interested students, with their family and community members, and for wider institutional representatives. Knowledge Maker Defont wrote there:

*I am from the Skidegate Band of the Haida Gwaii First Nation, I am of the Eagle Clan, my family name is Brown, and we are represented by the houses of the Moon and the Killer Whale. I was born and raised in the inner city of East Vancouver, it is my home. I am a fourth year social work student who believes I can accomplish absolutely anything I set my mind to; I have a laundry list of what I plan to pursue after graduation: I will achieve my PhD, I will teach, I will work front line on the Downtown East Side, I will go into Psychology, I will be a free-range social worker, and so much more. (Defont, 2018)*

Guiding Questions 'provoke' and inform each student's reflections and sharing (via their e-Portfolio) about people and communities motivating them to pursue excellent research. Many Knowledge Makers develop other online media exploring their (evolving) relationship with Indigenous research.

**3. Workshop:** Three weeks after their initial meeting with the Knowledge Makers Program Coordinator, all Knowledge Makers

attend a two-day university-based workshop with Elders, Indigenous faculty and staff, post-graduate students, and people from within the institution or community who support their learning journey. This workshop environment is intentionally created as an Indigenous space. The room is entered into through ceremony, Elders are not only present but involved throughout the two days, it is hosted entirely in circle, and there is shared agreement and understanding of the goals to be collectively achieved over the two days.

**4. Journal Article Publication:** At the end of the two-day workshop, Knowledge Makers receive a formal Call for Papers from the Knowledge Makers Journal Editor. All students must submit their article within two months of this call.

**5. Celebration:** The Celebratory dinner is an emotional night where Knowledge Makers, families, and wider community members share their journeys. An Elder welcomes and acknowledges the territory, guests, and students' families. Each student is given their Knowledge Makers Journal and study award as an investment towards future studies. Consistent with Indigenous practices, this first journal is given to a family member, friend, or mentor. For many Knowledge Makers, this Celebration represents a significant and affirming marker in their own future learning journeys. It is an inspiring night with tears and smiles as Indigenous undergraduate students say, "I am a Knowledge Maker."

Beyond the initial four-month program, Knowledge Makers research mentoring continues:

**6. Reciprocity:** Knowledge Makers 'alumni' return to mentor new Knowledge Makers. They share their experience in the program, and encouragement. This practice is consistent with the Indigenous values of reciprocity and service.

**7. Expanded Indigenous mentoring opportunities:** (a) *Undergraduate to PhD:* Knowledge Makers Indigenous researcher mentoring circles now happen at undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels to provide sustained researcher mentoring; (b) *National and International conference presentations:* Knowledge Makers alumni participate in research conferences to share their research; and (c) *Knowledge Makers five-country international*

*mobility network*: Knowledge Makers can now take part in international Indigenous student knowledge exchange - travelling, often with Elders, between Canada, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, and Mexico.

### Elders' leadership

*I realized a long time ago every human being is the same - we all develop our mind, our body, our spiritual self ... It is okay to be different. It is okay to think differently, to believe differently, and to be The Real Me, and to not hide The Real Me... Keep going (Elder Estella Patrick-Moller)*

Our TRU Elders are a deeply significant part of the Knowledge Makers Circle. They share thoughts on student projects, talk one-on-one with students, and provide cultural guardianship. The students feel they can be their 'Real Me' with the Elders. Their presence is always acknowledged as enabling and vital: "I don't know how I would get through university without Elders to remind me where I am coming from. Just because I am not learning it in school doesn't mean that it isn't there" is how one Knowledge Maker explained the significance of having Elders at the 2017 workshop. There is a mutual feeling of good coming from Elders and Knowledge Makers being together. At the closing of the first workshop Elder Mike Arnouse shared these words with the Knowledge Makers:

*Sometimes you find a place and it reminds where you're going. You put a notch in the tree to remind you and your children who follow after you. I thank you all. You have put a notch in my heart to remember.*

### The Impacts of Knowledge Makers

*"I have never taken part in such a wonderful indigenous space. Focus groups, yes for the Indigenous perspectives. But to share our dreams and goals for Indigenous peoples? I am going home and tell my Dad."*

Prof. Rod McCormick describes the ripple effect of Indigenous research. As a pebble dropped in the water creates interconnected circles, so too can Indigenous research create ripples of positive energy to "communities, nations and to all of creation." The ripples, the outcomes, from Knowledge Makers during 2014-2019 include:

- › **56 Indigenous students, from more than 30 Nations and Bands**, have trained as researchers.
- › The **Knowledge Makers Journal** has been established, with an editorial board. The journal publishes annually in hardcopy and electronically (<https://knowledgemakers.trubox.ca/knowledge-makers-journal/>). 64 articles have been published. Consistent with the metaphor of basket weaving together, each journal includes new researchers, along with established scholars.
- › **Knowledge Makers alumni** have attracted success as researchers: two National Scholarship winners, one SSHRC research grant winner (\$50,000), 15 Research Assistants, six Graduate Research Scholarships, four continued to Masters, one International Internship, two Post-Baccalaureate Studies, one Mainstream Undergraduate Research Grant (TRU), two presented at the International Indigenous Research Conference (New Zealand, 2018).
- › Knowledge Makers **Indigenous researcher mentoring circles** have been established at undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels, to further advance research skills.
- › Through the **Knowledge Makers five-nation international Indigenous mobility network**, Knowledge Makers travel internationally and host visiting Indigenous students.
- › **Journal publications** about Knowledge Makers teaching and learning: 13. Five are co-authored, and five are by Knowledge Makers.
- › **Conference presentations**: six.

A research plan was created to identify promising practices arising from Knowledge Makers. We use both qualitative (student evaluations) and quantitative (outputs and outcomes) data to inform Knowledge Makers.

## Profound impacts

*"I feel good that there is a place where I can research, where there is a place where the ideas to better the environment is possible; I feel like our future is in good hands. Sitting here and talking about [research] makes me feel good about the future."*

Beyond the measures there are profound impacts. Knowledge Makers have shared that learning to be an Indigenous researcher is significant: "Being part of this made me more confident. It affirmed my identity. This is who I am" (2017:10). They have also shared that it gave them confidence in research: "This gave me more courage and confidence to explore more research opportunities" (2017:4). The Knowledge Makers program also gives students a sense of hope: "Coming here made me think well maybe we can change the face of Canada...We have a lot to teach the world" (2016: 16).

When the students join the Knowledge Makers circle it is the first time they have been in a university classroom in which every student is Indigenous. They look around and see four Elders with them throughout this university program. They see Indigenous and non-Indigenous working together. They meet strong Indigenous scholars. The workshop teaching practices are indigenized, strengths-based, and respectful. We pause to welcome and acknowledge visitors. We stand for prayers. We work hard. We share food together, attending to the Elders first. Knowledge Makers contributes to strategic priorities for Indigenous advancement. More profoundly, students report this program transforms how they see themselves: from being subjects of research, to leading research.

## Connecting students to their research 'DNA'

*"It's not often you get to sit down and look around and feel that sense of identity. I think that in essence that we are survivors – our people made it through disease, assimilation. We are the product of the first generation of those forced into residential schools... For us to sit here today it feels so very powerful. I feel connected to past generations who were not able to see what we have become. I feel we need to make our lives count for everyone." (Knowledge Maker)*

Knowledge Makers re-minds us that Indigenous peoples are already strong, intelligent, bold makers of knowledge. It is in our DNA to research. We were this way generations ago and we still are today. Students report that becoming skilled in research in the Knowledge Makers context transforms their identity within higher education. We see this in the Knowledge Maker quote at the beginning of this section. There is a change in self-view from "a passive to a principal role as activists engaging in a counter-hegemonic struggle..." (Smith, p.170).

## Conclusion

Knowledge Makers students have been called to honor the Chief within, and to work together to move up the system of university education. Collaborative teaching in Knowledge Makers creates the needed indigenized space where Elders, the university community and the wider community teach alongside one

another, increasing understanding about what it means to research and to be an Indigenous researcher. Three themes are emerging of collaborative teaching practices that serve Indigenous student researchers:

*Indigenous research community:* Creating an Indigenous research community is critical for building a culture of research among Indigenous peoples. The task is to create spaces where Indigenous researchers are able to publish and engage in knowledge exchange.

*An outcomes focus:* Teaching for Indigenous researcher advancement is most effective when using outcomes measurements that are meaningful to the Indigenous students, and that are collaboratively developed with the students and their communities.

*The importance of being Indigenous:* This strengths-based approach to indigenization focuses on Indigenous potential as a catalyst for universities' practices that can benefit many.

**"Knowledge Makers re-minds us that Indigenous peoples are already strong, intelligent, bold makers of knowledge."**

-  
Airini

We see Knowledge Makers as a call to action that has generated collaborative teaching new to the academy and that continues to evolve. Every Indigenous student with the potential to design and lead research deserves the chance to do so. This story of Knowledge Makers is about how we are helping make that happen, knowing there is more work ahead:

*Think about our traditional roots. Think about traditional knowledge. We have got lots of work to do. (Joanne Brown)*

## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> Thompson Rivers University is located on the unceded territory of Secwépemc Nation within Secwépemcul'ecw. We recognize that this territory has always been a place of teaching, learning and research.

<sup>ii</sup> Smith, L.T. (2017). Indigenous peoples and education in the Pacific region. In *State of the World's Indigenous peoples: Education*. NY: United Nations. Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, p.169.

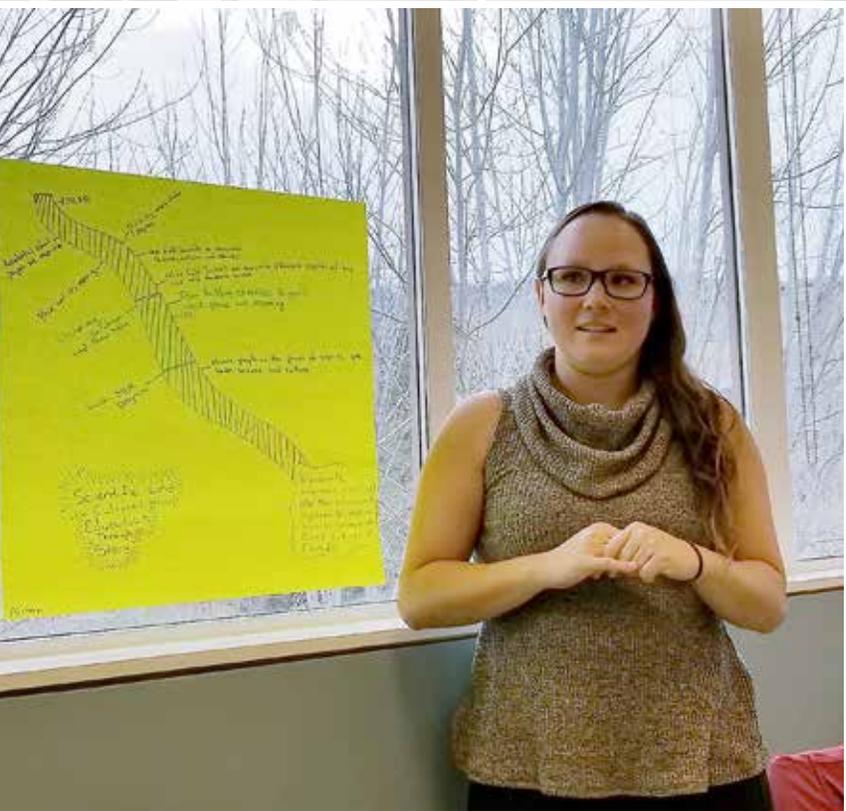




The ideas of the participants and lessons from our facilitators really helped me rethink what I knew about research and gain a greater appreciation for the work we are doing.

*~ Student Reflection  
Knowledge Makers 2019*







**RAMLOPS KNOWLEDGE MAKERS** SAT OCT 23

**WE'RE A SAFE SPACE!** **AWAKENING THE SPIRIT** **"NO ONE HAS INDIGENOUS WOMEN ANYTHING!"** **IS IT LOST LANGUAGE?** **IS IT LOST STORIES? ARE THEY TRANSDUCIBLE? OR THE STORIES FROM INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA?** **I WANT TO FIND MY LOST LANGUAGE. WILL I FIND IT IN COMICS?**

*"We cry salt tears because we're apart of the ocean and another earth"*

*I feel intimidated to do research for the community, because I don't feel culturally apart of it. Is my interest in art useful? Is it needed? What kind is wanted?*

**SPRIT COMES INTO OUR WORK WHEN WE DON'T EXPECT IT.**

*SPRIT IS A COMMUNITY FINDING A NEED. FRIENDS AND FAMILY CONNECTIONS SET YOUR SPIRIT ON FIRE AS YOU GO ALONG!*

**GOOD STRONG MEDICINE IN THE CREATOR**

**DO IT IN A WAY YOU WANT TO BE TREATED, THANKFULLY.**

*WHY DO I DO MY RESEARCH? WHAT DO I WANT TO EXPLORE AND SAY? WHAT DO I WANT TO ACHIEVE? WHAT IS MY MISSION? WHERE AM I GOING WITH MY WORK?*

*I want to look into artistic connection between groups. The need to gather information of oppression and connection. Transformation of indigenous unity and community.*

**SELF-LOCATE IN YOUR RESEARCH. WHO ARE YOU?**

*THE THINGS YOU SAY MATTER TO THOSE AROUND YOU, YOUNGER THAN YOU, SHOWING YOURSELF WITH NEAR.*

**WHAT IS YOUR STREAM?**

*OF KNOWLEDGE*





Hearing the stories and opportunities that my fellow Knowledge Makers want to bring forward is amazing. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this opportunity.

*~ Student Reflection  
Knowledge Makers 2019*



## geraldine jules

simpcw nation  
visual arts

geraldine jules is a two-spirit fine artist and professionally trained graphic designer. raised by their loving, swiss immigrant parents, they grew up disconnected from traditional native teachings. through the spiritual practice of fine art, geraldine is forever searching for their identity and their place in these two worlds.

*assisting our children and our children's children in the ongoing journey of native-youth-identity is what creating new indigenous knowledge means to me.*

## XTS'NISEM

***i find it a personal mission to use my artistic licence in expressing myself fully with the written word; thus, capitalization and proper colonist grammar are secondary to the shared knowledge and messages written in this article***

xts'nísem is a zine comic about a group of native teens who are searching for their purpose in a small world not made for them. they wear masks in an attempt to express themselves and bring them closer to forms of personality and by extension their identities, but they couldn't be further from finding either. this comic is the first volume of several expansions that present contemporary groups of native adolescents who struggle with the same loss of identity and purpose -- teenagers who unknowingly crave justice for the severed identities they can't find on their own; taken from them without reasons why

a story rarely found within the context of native-youth-identity is underrepresented to groups of native youth that have been torn away from their culture through intergenerational strife. identity, and native youth identity in its truest existence, is foremost lost in what we hope to begin uniting one another under native pride. what native pride can we share with those who never knew what it meant to them other than the status card that sits in a wallet --

in my experience, like many other contemporary native youth who live off of the rez without immediate teachings or creator's love in their lives, I didn't grow up in my culture because I was stolen from it when I was born

in the journey to fill an emptiness I couldn't fill, I amazon-ordered a dvd copy of smoke signals. what had helped native cultural identity itself thrive for a moment of time in the far reaches of popular media of the early 2000s also alienated me further from everything I thought I knew about myself that could have been tried and true. it's aged well, like a fine whiskey, that movie, and has timeless humour and emotions that resonate with that generation of natives that, given the time, has already grown out of context for the generation afterwards. the level of disconnection and culture shock made me recess into what I knew was real in my life, and that real-ness was even more colonized filters on what I "kind of was" and "who I'm expected to be." native youth creating and voicing their own version of what native pride means to them will generate new paths for positive culture reclamation and reconciliation

Zine culture is subversive. it grants ease of access to those who distribute their creations to their readers but also gives cherished liberty to both the creativity and content.

it appeals to minorities first and foremost because of the alternative ideas - the bigger, down-to-earth, niched ideas - that feed and thrive on subverting colonized visions generated by an enveloping popular colonial culture. it's a positive medium on the right track to finding an increasing amount of native-oriented content and storytelling. Zines are a channel in which stories rarely told can find a voice - and with shared voices of languages being reclaimed and narratives being revisited, we can translate oral traditions into new traditions - combinations limitless and immense freedom in what remains unspoken in new generations of native youth

by generating a media that speaks to these stories - there can be positive integration of storytelling tradition and contemporary youth culture by exploring the Zine as a way for native youth to communicate their narratives to those who never knew they shared the same story -

additional resources that delve into the related themes of this project:

- › Buchwald, B., Chock, T., Manuelito, B., Montgomery, M., Nass, C. (2012) *The Native Comic Book Project: native youth making comics and healthy decisions*. *Journal Of Cancer Education: The Official Journal Of The American Association For Cancer Education*, Vol. 27 (1 Suppl), pp. S41-6. doi:#10.1007/s13187-012-0311-x
- › 'Dakwakada Warriors' by Cole Pauls, <http://tundrawizard.tumblr.com>
- › Friesen, J. W., Friesen, Virginia, L.F. (2006) *Canadian Aboriginal Art and Spirituality*. Calgary, AB: Detselig Enterprises Ltd.
- › Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, <http://mny.ca/en/>
- › Spiers, M. B. (2014). Creating a Haida Manga: The Formline of Social Responsibility in
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“zine culture is subversive. it grants ease of access to those who distribute their creations to their readers but also gives cherished liberty to both the creativity and content. it appeals to minorities first and foremost because of the alternative ideas - the bigger, down-to-earth, niched ideas - that feed and thrive on subverting colonized visions generated by an enveloping popular colonial culture”

-  
geraldine jules

## Tenessa Gagnon

Onion Lake Cree Nation  
Bachelor of Fine Arts

*“To me, Indigenous knowledge is sharing what we know as Indigenous peoples. We learn from one another and our generations before, not only to better ourselves, but to make a better future. Knowledge can mean something different to each individual; by giving everyone a voice, we learn from every perspective.”*

### MODERN RACIAL SLURS: HOW THEY AFFECT OUR CURRENT SOCIAL STRUCTURE

**T**ānsi niwahkomākantik. Tenessa Gagnon nitisiyihkāson. Onion Lake ohci niya. Welcome friends and family. My name is Tenessa Gagnon, and I am from the Onion Lake First Nation.

This paper proposes the benefits of having Aboriginal education available to youth within the education system, in an attempt to deconstruct the subconscious colonial construct that is enforced in school environments. These constructs created a gap between myself and my Caucasian peers, with a combination of dissociation from being off territory; my relationship with culture was complicated. Using my personal experiences as a narrative, I break down the negative effects of not educating our youth to be respectful of diversity. Without this mutual respect and basic knowledge, colonization has evolved into microaggressions, which, everyday verbal or non-verbal slights, snubs or insults - whether intentional or unintentional - which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target a person based solely on their marginalized group membership. These microaggressions are a result of social darwinism; Herbert Spencer’s “survival of the fittest” affirms the belief that a group of people are more “fit” than others and therefore superior (Spencer in Yazzie, 2000, 42). It justifies colonial power and the control of resources and people. I share my personal experiences in the hope of deconstructing this

subconscious entitlement that can negatively affect the growth of young Aboriginal peoples and their relationship with culture. By allowing the reader to empathize and understand that these predetermined social constructs exist, reconciliation can begin and hopefully correct everyday verbal slights, snubs, or insults.

In an age of cultural appropriation and social justice warriors, people sometimes argue that their microaggressions and behaviour are justified and accepted because they have ethnic friends. Confronted with the idea that you cannot be racist if you interact with those of another race, and without facts to support a different opinion, arguing seems ineffective; you feel forced to comply with their opinion, thereby conforming to the aftereffects of social darwinism (Yazzie, 2011, 42). These social standards create a domino effect on how Aboriginal youth interact with their Caucasian peers, unintentionally building a gap between the students that can remain into adulthood. As they have been habituated to a colonial environment, we cannot hold students liable for actions that have been ingrained for years; we can only re-educate. Indigenous education is about learning relationships in context. This context begins with family, extending into the clan, community, and tribe, and finally all the world (Cajete, 2000, 182). It was my intent to follow these teachings, but without mutual respect, it is difficult to communicate. The goal of Indigenous education is to perpetuate a

way of life through the generations, and the purpose of all education is to instruct the next generation about what is valued and important to society. Cajete argues that “[g]iven this orientation, children are the most important focus of Indigenous education” (2000, 184). Integrating Indigenous teaching methods into the education of younger generations builds relationships between ethnic groups and is a stepping stone on the path of reconciliation. Ignorance is a learnt behaviour; by educating others to respect diversity, we teach a new, respectful behaviour and deconstruct the aftereffects of social Darwinism. Deconstructing learnt behaviour in the generations following colonialism can be difficult because people often do not see themselves as racists. An argument I often hear is that time is a differentiating factor; some people may argue, *we were not directly involved with the colonization of Canada, why should we pay for our ancestors’ actions?* Not wanting to be seen as racists, they misconstrue the idea of reconciliation, and while defending their actions, unintentionally dictate what someone should or should not be offended by. Who are these people? They are often male, usually Protestant, and wealthy; determining that we are “inferior” justifies their urge to dictate how we react. Sara Hunt expresses the same discomfort: “My ethical responsibilities emerge from complex relationships rooted in my social and political position as a Kwakwaka’wakw and a member of my family, while I’m simultaneously bound to institutional ethics that have a set of concerns altogether different from indigenous ethics” (Hunt, 2014, 28). This invisible gap is forming for individuals of all ages and environments.

I grew up surrounded with Aboriginal children my age. From kindergarten to sixth grade, I lived in an Aboriginal housing complex. Growing up and going to school with the friends I made in this complex, I become accustomed to their immediate acceptance of my background. Unaware of how fortunate we were, and with power in numbers, our band of friends made it through kindergarten to grade six sheltered from intolerance. However, in the winter of grade six, my mom announced to my brothers and I that we were going to move. We could finish the year at

our school, she reassured us, but in the new year, we would be switching. Saying goodbye to our complex, we moved across town and away from my childhood friend’s. My new school was predominantly Caucasian and for the first time I learned what it was like to be seen as different. I had no words to describe the comments my classmates would make, I only knew that I was confused; my other friends never made me feel self-conscious about being dark-skinned. They had no education about Aboriginal peoples, so they were curious; I did not see them as racists. Finally, I was so uncomfortable with the questions that I stopped giving them answers, and finally, they stopped asking. At the time I did not understand what moments like this could do to our relationship with culture. Marie Battiste explains, “Aboriginal researchers educated in Eurocentric institutions is an awareness that the absence of Indigenous Knowledge and teachings prevents the unravelling of racial and colonial myths about Aboriginal people that have damaged Aboriginal knowledge systems and discovering ways to deal with the tragic legacy of assimilation in our histories” (2000, 124). This reasoning can also be applied to social scenarios with young people, just on a smaller scale; without an educated perspective, these aggressions continue.

By the end of elementary school, I had made new friends, the questions had stopped, and my ethnicity became something which I only talked to my family about. Institutions do not prioritize educating students on cultural diversity, so that responsibility falls onto the shoulders of Indigenous students. With no support system in place to assist with these questions and situations, they are left to defend themselves against these social aggressions. According to Battiste, “Learning and the control of education in exclusive knowledge societies have gone hand in hand with serious inequality, exclusion, and conflict exemplified in aborted achievements in schools, lack of self-esteem, fragmented identities and self awareness” (Battiste, 2018, 124).

These habits continued into high school, as I kept the friends I had made in elementary school. I strategically separated them from things having to do with my culture out of fear that the microaggressions would start again.

Once my post-secondary education began I started to become more comfortable with answering questions, educating and correcting instead of walking away. This confidence grew because of the mutually respectful learning environments that have been developed by previous Indigenous scholars. Researching and learning different Indigenous methodologies has broadened my knowledge of what research can be, encouraging learners to look through the eyes of their people, thereby creating different approaches and attitudes when examining potential research ideas. Looking at it from a new perspective, and guided by the research of other Indigenous scholars, I have developed a new perspective that is closer to who I am, and I have become closer with other Indigenous scholars who are experiencing these same things. By sharing our stories with one another, we validate that racism has evolved, and can evolve; by teaching Aboriginal education methods, we can counter microaggressions. The goal of Indigenous education is to perpetuate a way of life through the generations, and the purpose of all education is to instruct the next generation.

Conversations about prejudice and discrimination are complicated; no one wants to be called racist. Microaggressions can lead to racism, but if addressed, this can be corrected. These aggressions do not come just from Caucasian peoples; one can be a member of any ethnic group but still make comments that make others feel uncomfortable. Because of my friends and where I went to school, I became mocked by the ones I left behind. They insisted that because I left, I had become an “apple”: red on the outside but white in the center. I felt inadequate, and it made me want to keep these two parts of my life separate. I allowed someone else to define what it is to be Indigenous to me, a definition which I now believe is pliable.

The Oxford dictionary definition of Indigenous is “originating or occurring naturally in a particular place;” this definition, though correct, is a broad term used to categorize our ethnic separation in predominantly white communities (Indigenous, n.d.). Franke Wilmer defines Indigenous as peoples with a traditional-based cultures, politically autonomous before colonization and who, in the aftermath

of colonization struggle for the preservation of their cultural practices (Wilmer in Corntassel, 2003, 75). Corntassel uses Franke Wilmer’s (2003) definition of indigeneity:

1. With tradition-based cultures;
2. Who were politically autonomous before colonization;
3. Who, in the aftermath of colonization and/or decolonization, continue to struggle for the preservation of their cultural integrity, self-reliance, and political independence by resisting the assimilationist policies of non-states. (78)

To me, this is problematic. I would suggest that an additional premise be added to include peoples who have yet to discover their Indigenous heritage. A basic generalization of Canadian history fails to include Indigenous people out of this scope. They need to be included. In Canada, Aboriginal identity is monitored by blood percentage, which causes tension between communities and among Indigenous people, dividing those who grew up immersed in the culture, and those who may not know their heritage and are afraid to ask. The World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) passed a resolution stating that “only indigenous peoples can define indigenous peoples” (Corntassel, 2003, 75). If this is the case, someone who is Indigenous can argue that you are not Indigenous because of who you surround yourself with. Fragmented identities developed, and students are again left without a support system in place to deal with these negative social interactions.

In my experience, skin colour invokes an assumed understanding when it comes to Indigenous education, as a dark-skinned woman raised in a white dominant culture, it made it difficult to approach other Indigenous students who grew up together. The gap in my education of background was surprising to my peers and left me feeling inadequate.

I am an Aboriginal woman from Onion Lake Cree Nation but I reside on Tk’emlups territory. I was not raised on my nation, which was not uncommon but affected my relationship with my culture. Cree people are nomads, having no permanent residence and travelling from place to place. Though

I have lived in Kamloops, British Columbia, for 20 years, I felt linked to my nomadic heritage. My childhood consisted of road trips all across Canada, medicine gatherings, powwows, and visiting family. From the ages of five to 12, growing up off-reserve, my family made sure I had a connection to our history. Living in Kamloops, I was raised around the Tk'emlups peoples, but because this was not my reserve, I developed a sense of dissociation. Lack of knowledge made me feel inadequate. Because of the value placed on blood percentage in Canada, there is an exaggerated separation between people, where those with higher percentages hold status, and those with lower percentages are looked down upon; you are not just Aboriginal.

Growing up, I observed that if you were Aboriginal, you interacted with other Aboriginal people, and if you were Caucasian

you interacted with other Caucasian people; there was no in-between. I was afraid to learn about my culture from different types of Indigenous people after my experiences when I was younger. Interracial racism was always an obstacle but was never addressed, and as I grew older in the Tk'emlups environment I realized culture was a collective, not a separation; the fear I felt previously was something I later learned my peers suffered from as well. Having a term to describe these feelings makes it easier to explain to people what their words can do, even if unintentionally. Microaggressions are derogatory and hostile, but if defined and explained, we can use them as a tool to educate and correct derogatory behaviour.

Kinanâskomitin, hiy hiy.  
Thank you, everyone.

**Self Portrait (A)**



**Self Portrait (B)**



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## ARTIST STATEMENT: TENESSA GAGNON

When a viewer sees a self-portrait, they often expect to see a physical representation of the artist. Never considering what is behind the image, we place value on how we want people to see us, rather than who we are. By presenting a self-portrait in a medium that can be reconstructed in numerous ways, it begins the conversation about how we can change what we want others to see, whether that be the order the frames, or if they build a cohesive image for the viewer. Instead of presenting what is palatable to

the majority, this allows me to present what I want--whether that's how I see myself everyday (Self Portrait A), a more complicated perspective of myself (Self Portrait B), or the text that makes up the background. Each variation of the piece allows me to be more or less intimate with the viewer, deciding at the time what I am comfortable with. Exercising boundaries as well as showing vulnerability, my self-portrait is not just a physical representation of myself, but a way to express numerous perspectives of my life.



Through laughter and tears we were able to weave our knowledge together to strengthen and guide one another during each step.

~ Student Reflection  
Knowledge Makers 2019



## Kelly Stanley

Frog Lake First Nation  
Bachelor of Arts (Sociology)

*"Indigenous research is important as it allows our voices to be heard, is from our perspective, and helps to educate the generations yet to come."*

### MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN

#### Dedication

First and foremost, I would like to dedicate this paper to my parents, Darcie and Fitzgerald Stanley. Despite the challenges and struggles they faced as young parents, they never gave up and provided their nine children with a loving, happy home. I am extremely thankful and fortunate to have grown up with both parents and I admire their love and commitment to one another. Without my parents, I would not be where I am today. They inspire me to never give up and persevere through any troubles I have and will continue to endure throughout my lifetime.

Tansi! My name is Kelly Stanley. I originate from the Treaty 6 Territory of Frog Lake First Nation in Alberta. I grew up in a big family consisting of seven brothers and one sister. My Father is from Frog Lake First Nation and my Mother is from Little Pine, Saskatchewan. I was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Both my parents are Plains Cree and I am a proud Plains Cree Indigenous woman of Turtle Island.

Knowledge Makers provides increased opportunities for the Indigenous students at Thompson Rivers University. When I was first approached about Knowledge Makers, I was intimidated when they explained what the program entailed. I almost chose not to go through with the writing process because I was unsure of what the outcome would be. I spoke with a couple other Knowledge Makers

prior to making my final decision, deciding that I would continue with the program, despite my fears and worries.

When we started the Knowledge Makers workshop, I knew right away what I wanted to write about, or I thought I did. As the day progressed, I found myself unable to open up about my topic of choice. I could tell others what I wanted to write about, but when it came to discussion, I was unable to contain myself. It was then that I knew, the topic I had chosen was not what I should put my focus on, but what led up to my decision. I was asked during the workshop why I wanted to raise awareness of this specific topic. I redirected my research from 'Justice for All' to 'Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.' I want our peoples' voices heard!

Indigenous women and girls are only two percent of the population in Canada, but they represent 16 percent of the women who are murdered or go missing (Palmer, 2016). I want to raise awareness of this issue because enough is enough. The only way you can get an audience or convince someone to listen is by having someone with power/control be the voice so they can grasp people's attention. In order for the person in power to capture the eyes of an audience, they need real survivors, real victims, and real stories, because audiences love authenticity and truth. Think of it this way: when you wake up in the morning, you turn

on the radio or the nearest broadcasts available and listen to the latest “news” in society. Once the information reaches an individual, it is like a domino effect that tends to progress throughout the day. The growth of social media has meant that everybody is engaging in the news and that it follows people around all day as notifications pop up on their phones.

The media portrays radical questioning of the humanity of Indigenous peoples. One reporter, Tristan Ahtone (2016), said, “The only way Indian people make the news is by the WD4 rule, which is they have to be warriors, drunks, dying, dancing, or drumming.” This is the same media that consistently portrays Indigenous peoples as being less worthy of life than other human beings. This is not new, as Maldonado-Torres (2016) outlines that the first act of colonization was to create a logic where it was possible to ‘discover’ an already occupied land. In order to do this, colonizers needed to follow “radical questioning about the humanity of colonized humans” (2016, p. 68); this decision to see colonized people as not people, or as a different class of people, continues to impact Indigenous people today, as evidenced by the way in which media portrays the value of Indigenous lives.

This past year we all watched the media portray a white land owner as being well within his rights to shoot and kill an Aboriginal youth, claiming that he was protecting his farm lands (Finn, 2018). What kind of world do we live in where white farmers can murder Indigenous people and get a slap on the wrist? Not only did Gerald Stanley walk away freely, but so did Robert Pickton, who butchered 49 women at his farm near Vancouver, British Columbia (Baynes, 2018). How can you justify 75 years behind bars over many, many innocent lives that were inhumanly taken away? In 2024, this monster will be free to roam society again (Whyte, 2017). Yet, if roles were reversed and it was an Indigenous man who committed the same horrid crimes, he would never see the light of day again. How can you justify this?

However, since the beginning of the Colten Boushie and Gerald Stanley controversy, there has been a drastic change in the way the media has portrayed this story. Some claim Gerald did no wrong, while others, such as the Supreme Court of Canada, now insist

that it “cannot be reasonable to kill another merely to prevent a crime which is directed only against property” (Flynn, 2018). Every individual has their own views and perspectives, but early in the media coverage of this case, all fingers pointed to Colten Boushie as being in the wrong; however, how can one be in the wrong when one is unconscious? Colten was asleep during this tirade.

It is ironic that the media plays out another scenario: Aboriginal land owners protecting ancestral, traditional lands being forcibly removed by heavy armed military and tactical units by white people (Whyte, 2017). The same white people who thought that the white farmer was well within his right to kill for his land, want the government to forcibly remove, and even kill, Indigenous people for protecting their land. Illogical, to say the least. Journalist Tristan Ahtone (2016) observes:

*The limited amount of coverage that was done on the Dakota Access pipeline issue at least awakened a lot of America to the fact that American Indians still exist and are still there and are still fighting the same battle that they’ve been fighting for the last few hundred years. What the media is missing right now is that this will happen again. This will happen somewhere else in the country and, because there’s not a particularly good grasp of what the issues and history are that made this particular incident happen, that they’re going to miss it when it happens again.*

Canada has had a long-standing problem with both societal and institutional racism against Indigenous peoples, especially within the justice system. Numerous national inquiries, commissions, and investigations have all concluded that every level of the justice system has failed Indigenous peoples. More recent inquiries indicate that racism against Indigenous peoples is particularly problematic in police forces in Canada. Yet, despite all of this, little has been done in Canada to act on the recommendations (Palmater, 2016), demonstrating that the justice system, like the media, fails to see Indigenous lives as mattering.

I was once told that fear is built-up anger, so whenever you are angry you should ask yourself, “What exactly are you afraid of?” Writing this paper did just that. I did not want

to do it. Writing about a topic that hits home is hard. It makes me angry and upset, and I cannot bear the thoughts that still linger in the back of my mind, but I always tell people you have to conquer your fears no matter how much it kills you. Had I not included my paper in this year's Knowledge Makers, no one would know why I chose not to do it. No one would be aware of the current turmoil that is being faced back in the prairies besides the minimal information in the media surrounding this topic. As mentioned earlier, people listen to real stories from real people.

On 17 August 2014, Tina Fontaine's body was pulled out of the Red River in Winnipeg, Manitoba, eight days after she had been reported missing (Palmater, 2016). Tina Fontaine, of Sagkeeng First Nation, was murdered in 2014. Shortly before her death, police found Tina in the company of a 53-year-old intoxicated man, and despite running

her name through the system and presumably noting that she was a child in foster care, they released her. She was later found unconscious, taken to hospital, and released once again in the care of Child and Family Services (Razack, 2016). How is this acceptable? This is just one account, but there are many similar others. In one such case, a Cree woman, Cindy Gladue, bled to death from wounds inflicted by Bradley Barton, a white man who paid Gladue for sex. Barton was acquitted of all of the charges (the case is on appeal), and the excessive violence so routinely meted out to Indigenous women was simply put down to rough sex gone too far (Razack, 2016).

Sadly, Indigenous women are seen as vulnerable, easy targets for abductions, rape, abuse, and so on. In order for outsiders to understand the reasoning behind certain situations faced by our people, they need to be educated more on the history; still, today, generations to follow are dealing with the repercussions of assimilation. We have faced a loss of language, culture, spirituality, beliefs,

ceremonies... the list goes on. Many outsiders do not understand that, yes, it happened years ago, but it still affects us today. It is like breaking your leg; even when you are able to walk again, the pain and aches still linger for the rest of your life. Except in this case, it is a broken culture. People tell us to simply 'get over it,' but how can we, as Indigenous people, get over something that is still relevant in today's society?

Currently, I have a friend in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, who has been missing since 10 July 2018. At first, the family and friends of

my friend suspected she was hiding out with unsafe people, making reckless decisions, but now, at the fresh start of a new year, she is still missing. I often see posts on social media of searches and gatherings to help locate her, but rarely do I ever see authorities involved. It sickens me to know that they completely do not care. When did enforcing oil and gas into the ground become more important than a human being? It is seen everywhere. The police have no problem jumping to fight and harm innocent people trying to save the environment rather than trying to help hurt souls find their loved ones. There is no love for humanity anymore, or at least for the majority of humanity. It is easy to put blame or hate

**“In order for outsiders to understand the reasoning behind certain situations faced by our people, they need to be educated more on the history; still, today, generations to follow are dealing with the repercussions of assimilation.”**

—  
Kelly Stanley

on one another, but what does that accomplish? It merely adds more blame and hurt to the equation. We do not want to retaliate or hurt anymore; we just want to bring our sisters home and have closure and justice.

The media impacts how we develop a cultural understanding of the systems in society. Experiences such as the Colton Boushie case, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, the Pipeline controversy: they are not just experiences, they are more than what the media portrays. This is part of who we are, our ontology, our community. This impacts our relationships and our ways of moving forward. Until an understanding is reached that our intelligence is tied to our land, our culture, our language, until this is really accepted, how can government legislation and systems change for the better? When my community gathers together, we take pride in our culture. When one falls, we all fall. We are connected with one another, and that is what separates us from the settler's perspective. Our identity is connected, not just with each other but with the earth, land, water, and place in time. When my community addresses these issues, we ask how we can do better as a community; we treat the whole community, we use our ceremonies as a source of healing. This collective cultural identity helps us address the question of how we can do better, not only for Indigenous communities, but for humanity worldwide.

Hiy-Hiy,  
Kelly Stanley

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“Our identity is connected, not just with each other but with the earth, land, water, and place in time. When my community addresses these issues, we ask how we can do better as a community; we treat the whole community, we use our ceremonies as a source of healing.”

-  
Kelly Stanley

# Janna Wale

Gitxsan Nation  
Natural Resource Sciences  
Knowledge Makers Alumni, 2018

*“Indigenous research for me means the opportunity to connect to my identity as one of the strong and resilient Gitxsan. As well, it has helped to guide my undergraduate thesis from a different perspective, enabling me to find my own Indigenous voice within research and academia.”*

## HGLUU WIST (LITTLE ROOTS)

*Among other qualities, [Indigenous people] as a whole possess a voice that soothes and calms the whole being.*

Archibald 2008

*Isn't it funny how day by day nothing changes, but when you look back everything is different...*

C.S Lewis

**A** perception is defined as a way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something. A mental impression. A state of being or process of becoming aware of something. Perceptions are influenced by the media, by governments, and even by friends and family in your everyday lives.

Ama silhk'swa, ahm wil'a wina, Janna wa'y, Gitxsan Ni'y, luu' amahl good'y win' gya'asm. Hello, good afternoon, it makes my heart happy to see you. My name is Janna Wale and I am of the Gitxsan nation. I was born in Cranbrook, BC, to a Gitxsan and Irish father and a Western European and Métis mother. I was born into a family of storytellers. We share, we listen, we reflect. In the telling of my own story, to quote Smith et al. (2019, p. 64), “I intentionally narrate as I would when I am home, a think aloud on paper.” To understand where someone is coming from, I think you need to understand who they are, and go from there. The experiences documented here are my own, shaped by who I am and the contexts of my everyday life. I hope that by telling you my story, my lived experiences, together we will be

able to work towards a future where perceptions around Indigenous people and their place in both the resource sector and within higher education are positive and understood as a necessity.

Growing up, my sister and I always knew that we were Indigenous. I do not ever recall having a sit-down discussion about it, or why we did things that some of my friends' families did not do; that was just the way it was. It was not something we talked about or learned in school. It was just a part of who we were, who we are, and who we are becoming. I am blessed with a large and close-knit family, most of whom are also First Nations or identify as Métis. Like me, my cousins are of mixed descent. We identify as Indigenous, but also lay claim to non-Indigenous ancestry. Keeping this in mind, the perspective I offer you is similar to that of many mixed-descent people: looking white but being Aboriginal, also known as white-passing. To quote one of my favorite articles also offering this perspective, “You see that white background this text is written on? I'm about three shades darker, maybe two” (Burden, 2017, np).

Despite being lily-white (as my father calls me), I have the privilege of knowing what it means to food fish the way my ancestors did for generations. I return to my community and am able to take part in traditions and cultures that are as old as time, to gather huckleberries for jam we would eat over the winter. Unfortunately, I also know what it is to be the subject of indirect racism and discrimination. I overhear

conversations about “those natives,” my family, my ancestors. I know what it is like to be unable to form a meaningful connection with my grandfather, who was subject to the effects of amalgamated school and residential school by proxy. I do not know how to speak Gitksan, the language of the Gitksan. Most of what I know of that side of my heritage I have learned in the past few years. In the same way, I know very little about my Métis heritage. When asked, my grandmother speaks about the shame her father felt at being Métis, growing up in a time when he would have been treated as a second-class citizen. During my whole childhood, my experience in the BC education system failed to help me come to terms with any of these things.

Things were different when I was growing up. Even though it does not seem that long ago, keep in mind that the last residential school in Canada closed the year I was born. As a kid, of course, I knew nothing about that. I did not know why Grandpa did not really talk to us. I do not think I even heard the term residential school until I was in the ninth grade. Things like that just were not talked about. What was talked about, however, were things that I somehow failed to associate with myself. We learned about Christopher Columbus the Explorer, bringing salvation, technology, and Thanksgiving dinner to the Aboriginals. As far as I can remember, that was my only reference point for my Indigenous identity.

As I got older and went to high school in Kamloops, we did start to hear more about it. Unfortunately, the other kids my age would make offhand comments and I would have no idea how to respond. If it came up in conversation, I might add that my family was Indigenous, but if it did not, I felt like an imposter identifying with all of the trauma, the horror, as well as the stigma associated with being of Indigenous descent. Even if I was not an imposter, would anyone believe me? I looked exactly like all the other kids my age in the predominantly white town of Kamloops. We learned about the reserves, the alcoholism and the poverty, never about the cultural connections to the land, to each other, or all the beautiful pieces that make up the proud Indigenous peoples of Canada. And with that, entire generations down to my own have a warped perception of what an Indigenous person is and has to offer to society today. And why wouldn't we? We were never taught.

Fast forward a few years, and I am studying Natural Resource Sciences at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, BC. I have a deeper appreciation and understanding of my Indigenous identity. I am actively trying to learn and understand more. I have been hired and fired from projects based solely on my identity as Indigenous, regardless of my credentials. I know more, I have experienced more, and I am aware of the perceptions surrounding Indigenous people in my field of study. I now also actively self-identify as a member of the proud Gitksan nation.

Since the Truth and Reconciliation commission of 2015, I will admit that things have changed. There is much more attention brought to Indigenous people, Indigenous rights, as well as the changes we want to see moving forward. However, universities have been slow to respond. At the beginning of my degree program, Indigenous people within the context of natural resources were a footnote. In the last few years, a verbatim message at the beginning of class was introduced, a pre-approved territory acknowledgement, a single slide in the massive powerpoint of notes. This is more than it used to be, and I am deeply appreciative of professors and teachers who go beyond this; your efforts and respect are very much appreciated, but have people's perceptions changed alongside the new development of this corporate approach to celebrating Indigenous people within western society? I have been mulling over this question for the past while.

Here, I offer you a retelling of my work experience this summer. This summer reaffirmed in me that we are indeed making slow progress in educational curricula and in corporate offices; however, the general public has yet to show a response to these changes. I successfully was hired back on to the company I worked for last year, with amazing people and a wonderful supervisory team. I was excited for another season of work, and even contacted some researchers about doing my honours thesis about clam growth while I was living on the coast for my summer job. If that had panned out, you would not understand me so well, and I would have a very different project in front of you.

My role this summer was as an interpreter: I selected a topic at the beginning of the summer, and throughout the rest of the work term I gave formal presentations and interacted with guests,

chatting and answering their questions about my chosen topic. Since this was my second summer in the same position, I was pleasantly surprised when I noticed a topic with Indigenous roots: the Clam Gardens maintained by the Coast Salish peoples. New to the program, as well, was a required territory acknowledgement that was approved by management and was to be repeated, verbatim, at the beginning of each presentation. Having so far experienced only indirect racism to this point in my life, I selected this topic and was extremely excited at the chance to talk to the public about our history and a subject about which I am passionate.

Little did I realize that this summer was going to be, by far, one of my most eye-opening and life-changing. Consequently, I did not pursue the clam honours thesis, and instead selected a topic focused on how Indigenous content in higher education might change people's perceptions about Indigenous people in the natural resources. Let me tell you why.

In my presentation this summer, I felt it was important to do the territory acknowledgement, but also to do an introduction in Gitsenimx. I practiced and practiced. I also felt it was important to discuss reasons why the Clam Gardens needed to be restored, listing residential schools, cultural banning, and commercial fisheries as reasons rather than glazing over them. The responses that I received from the general public were incredibly polarized. Many people were absolutely thrilled to see the inclusion of more Indigenous content, and gave me strong positive feedback for inserting so much of myself into my presentations. People were hungry to know more, and I did my best to answer their questions and to encourage their curiosity. Those were the kind of people that kept me going throughout the summer. In equal parts, I received an overwhelming amount of negative and racist feedback, centered around my own identity or around the content that I was presenting.

Near the completion of the work term, management asked me to keep a record of the comments that were being made to me, and I have attached these comments as an appendix for those who are curious. Unsurprisingly, some of these comments targeted the disconnect that people saw in me with their perceptions of Indigenous peoples. I was educated, smiley,

self-identifying and above all else: lily-white. I was not the Chief in full regalia you see on the news, the Indian in the old western movies. I was just like you, therefore I must not be like them. Once again, to quote the CBC, "But we are your doctors, your teachers, your neighbours, your friends, your gym buddies, your cab drivers. We are here today. And we are not going anywhere" (Burden, 2017, np).

So there you have it. You know some of the context around what makes me who I am, my experiences as a child that have led me to this point in my life, and more recently, how I began to think seriously about changing people's perceptions of Indigenous people. Specifically, how including Indigenous knowing and being into the natural resources science sector might be able to change the perceptions of future resource managers, who will be directly working with Indigenous communities and stakeholders. This summer, the amount of discrimination and racism shown by the general public demonstrated to me that something needs to be changed. If ignorance is the root of our problems, education is the solution. If we begin to make changes in the perceptions of our professionals and our most educated, I believe those changed perceptions will ultimately integrate themselves into the general public.

Indigenous people inhabited North America for thousands of years and, as such, have vast amounts of traditional knowledge surrounding ecological phenomena and biological systems. The way we as resource managers include these ideas into our professional lives may very well be the key to prospering relations with so many diverse and distinct nations, as well as a path forward through the uncertain environmental future.

My Hgluu Wist, my little roots, will grow deep and strong and will ground us as perceptions shift begin to shift and we are able to create and share knowledge together.

Hamii'yaa.

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We yearn in many different yet similar ways to find healing from past destructive forces. May we learn to make time to re-search, to re-member wise ways of our ancestors, of other living beings, of this incredible resilient earth that has many lessons in the four directions and four seasons.

~ *Dr. Elder Margaret Vickers Hyslop*



## Juanita Lindley

Upper Nicola Band – Syilx (Okanagan)  
Master of Education

*“To me being Indigenous means we are born into a responsibility of upholding the agreements found within our captiwkl (creation stories) the direct relationship we have with the land and is not understood until we go through our healing ceremonies; we are not separate or nuclear without connection in this world. We are the land.”*

### A NARRATIVE OF HEALING, EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP

#### Healing, Education and Leadership

I was born a granddaughter to the late Laura Manuel and the late Lottie Lindley, in the fall of 1978. I come from two large families in my community within the Upper Nicola Band. As a baby I was given the name Pa? Pa?cela when I was born because of my chubby cheeks. I was told as I got older that my name does not have a literal translation, but rather relates to the feeling you may have when you hold a baby. I spent so much of my life ashamed of that name and thought it meant I would never be seen as an adult. I was so embarrassed by the sound of my name and its meaning. I never shared that name or introduced myself by it, ever. I did not realize that I harboured a deep-seated internal racism that kept me separated from my identity and culture. I denied who I was without knowing that later in life I would come to understand how my name was interconnected with my purpose. Looking back now, it seems as though I did not understand then that I was always just a breath away from myself.

I am the first-born grandchild to my maternal family. My mother was a young woman when she had me. She did the best she could with what life had dealt her. She was also the eldest of her seven siblings, and of the three who were forced to attend residential school.

I will not go into their stories but rather will share some of my own perspective of what it was like for me growing up in-between

the broken hearts of my families. As a result of my parents' traumatic life experiences, I did not grow up in an environment with a mother and father. I never knew my parents together. When I look back now, I refer to feelings of being the other, because I often felt misplaced or as if I was an exception in my families. I spent a lot of time as a child not knowing what was happening around me. I did learn at an early age not to ask questions, to do what I was told, and to keep secrets. I learned how to exist in chaos by becoming a good listener, and how not to get in the way. I was also never around anywhere long enough to get too attached or involved, although it was always enough to keep me yearning to fully belong.

All through elementary school these feelings would keep me from making friends and trusting adults. I can remember a day in grade three when I was told in front of everyone that I was holding up the class from learning to tell time. I was taken to the Special Ed class in front of all my peers and removed from the classroom. That day, I stopped being willing to learn; eventually I would drop out of high school in grade nine. Funny how, in my adulthood and active addiction, these same traits became behaviors I would use to keep distance from loved ones and to stay disconnected. Later in life, this became a huge awakening for me about acceptance and understanding how my painful experiences

transform into knowledge; as Battiste (2013) shares, “We must make meaning and skill of our experiences in our life story in order to find passion” (p. 182). I would eventually follow that path to find purpose and meaning.

I stayed away from Pa? pa?cela (that little girl in me) for most of my life until I became more aware of where my shame was coming

“My name has been passed down to me, binding me to my ancestors and tying me to the land where there is no separation between me and my ancestors.”

-  
Juanita Lindley

from and what colonization meant in my life. Through my healing and sobriety I began to understand that my identity has always been in my name, my belonging has always been in my name, my purpose has always been in my name. My name has been passed down to me, binding me to my ancestors and tying me to the land where there is no separation between me and my ancestors. My inner knowingness and purpose place me as a part of the whole story, as an

individual and in connection with all creation (Armstrong, 2007). Through these eyes of reclamation I see that in my life of being the *Other*, I was also the one who knew things from a “between” perspective. Between families, between culture and religion, between right and wrong, between being the favourite or the forgotten. I learned to see that on the other side of every experience there is a deeper teaching. It was only after my healing journey began that I was able to see my time as the *Other* was over, and I was moving into my purpose of learning to build bridges to help others heal.

Leroy Little Bear talks about the teaching of Interconnectedness and how all things are related and intersected by using the metaphor of the web of life. In my story, it would be

hard to claim that I was alone or not learning, even through the pain. The intergenerational trauma of the Residential school built so many barriers within, making it hard to see that we as a family all had our own traumas and stories from which to heal. The collective experiences we have in life shape us like the water can smooth a jagged stone over time (Little Bear, 2013, p. 79).

I used to feel like being left with my grandmother was a punishment because I thought she was mean; what I would not give for just an afternoon with her today.

I remember a story about my grandmother, the late Laura Manuel, and me as little girl. I was four years old and we were scraping hides to make buckskin. It was a warm day in the late Indian summer in Quilchean. The overpowering stench of that wet deer hide could not be muted by the familiar smells of hay bales and wet leaves. I can recall the sounds of flies and the threat of bees buzzing nearby, and her voice, stern and crisp: “Hold this end high as you can with all of your might, don’t you drop it and get it dirty. I am going to wring this end out!”

She, the source of where I belong and am bound to, my gramma, had a way about her that was strict and direct. The moments when she would kiss the top of my head or whoosh me as she stroked my hair were rare and would keep me chasing those feelings for a lifetime. It was not until later in my life that I would come to understand she was that way because of her residential school experience. The ways she expressed her love and concern were fragmented by slivers of anger and hollowness. I learned over time that many of my people who also attended residential schools suffered from the same loss of connection to the people they love, along with the loss of roles and identity. Not knowing how to parent their children, or how to cultivate and maintain healthy relationships: these are only a few ways of capturing in words what has been taken from my family and people.

As I grew into a young woman who experienced many traumas of my own, I was unsure of how to talk about it, never mind how to feel about it all. At a young age I found that when I used alcohol, I was

someone different, someone who could talk and did not have problems. This rapidly grew into a habit and the weekends turned into years (Coyhis, 2002).

I had a moment with my grandma in the last year of my active addiction when she was diagnosed with cancer. I can remember it so vividly; we were at the hospital where I was visiting her, chatting, and my grandad asked me, “So are you living on the reserve now?”

I barked back in such a judgmental tone, “As if!”

My grandma’s words felt like a strike across the face I will never forget: “Don’t you ever think you’re better than anybody who is drunk on a street corner simply because you can buy your Goddamn booze, you are no better than anyone. It’s when you think you are that makes you worse off than they are!” I did not understand what she meant that day in the hospital until years later, when I would come to recognize what she was saying to me: that when I put myself above others in judgment, I become the pitiful one by not knowing who I am. That material things and status are all meaningless when you do not remember who you are or where you come from (this is a reference to cultural identity and being tied to the land, something we have been raised knowing in my family). I have become very familiar with this lesson many times on my journey.

After a few more attempts to gain sobriety through treatment and counselling, I finally gained the understanding that my traumatic experiences were what was ailing me. Because I am the first generation after the Residential school era in my family, my direct relationship with education was not a healthy one. It was only when I gained this understanding that I was able to sustain myself, but not without suffering many losses, such as my marriage and broken trust with my children and family (Mate, 2008, p.128). I made a decision to return to school when I was 30 years old. I achieved my grade 12 and then pushed through to obtain a Bachelor of General Studies in 2012 with a specialization in Chemical Addiction and a certification in Substance Abuse Counselling. I then

made the decision to go further with my education to support my vision to create programming for sustainable after-care from residential treatment of substance abuse.

I have begun to see my educational journey begun as a part of the larger picture. My lived experience as it exists in me is relevant and is knowledge. That is what I will be taking with me from this Master’s program; I have shared my Indigenous ways of knowing and being in a Western academic system, while continuing to heal from the brokenness of formal education and reawakening my learning spirit.

During my journey of self-reconciliation, I have come to understand that those moments in time we carry with us are a part of the whole picture. That little girl who was seeking approval and who was too young to understand that her grandma’s hurt was hurting her, and the intergenerational trauma we were both born into through colonial acts of separation; we were being held together, like that wet deer hide became a metaphor of perseverance through pain.

It was because of her subtle yet courageous acts that I am able to stand here today. I am so grateful for my grandma who was brave enough to hold me accountable in the last days of her life; my sobriety is a pledge to her and my education a gift to my people.

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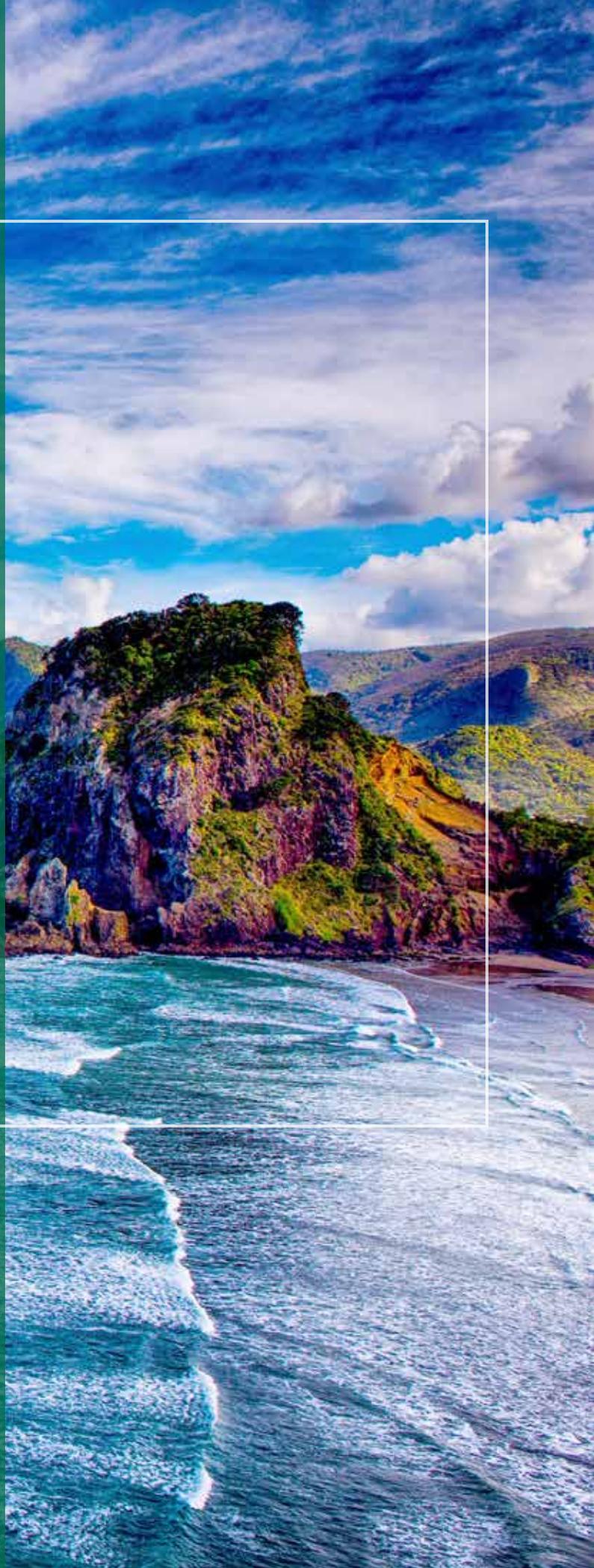
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# Aotearoa

Aotearoa, there is prayer  
on the beach at Piha  
where I washed my heart  
and arms in the salty sea  
the black sands warming  
my feet wandering the caves  
returning to the doorway  
drawn into the drumming  
of whitecapped waves  
I threw my head back  
in pure joy searching  
the sky, the sea and this beach  
knowing  
I will return to you - Aotearoa

**Garry Gottfriedson**  
Secwépemc

Garry Gottfriedson wrote this poem during a trip to Aotearoa, New Zealand with Knowledge Makers who presented at the International Indigenous Knowledges Conference.



## Elder Doreen Kenoras

Adams Lake Indian Band

### CONVERSATIONS WITH THE ELDERS

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**M**y name is Doreen Kenoras. First I am an elder of the Adams Lake Band, one of the 17 bands that make up the Secwepemc Nation. Also I've been an Elder at Thompson Rivers University for the last six years. I enjoy my work and I enjoy sharing my knowledge. The question comes to basket-making. My mother Catherine Calhoon Kenoras, originally from the Skeetchestn Indian Band married into the Adams Lake Band when she was nineteen, learned how to make birch bark baskets just by watching. Watching and asking questions. Back then there was no lessons on making anything. You have to observe. And for many years I took my mother out when it came to getting the bark and getting everything needed to make birch bark. Respecting the land and all of the stuff we took from the land, there was a respect to that because every time my mother would offer tobacco for taking stuff off of the mountain. And respecting and just taking what was needed. For everything that my mother had done, it was a certain season to do all this work. Once we gathered all the things we needed and right now I can just talk about the birch bark baskets because that was what was taught to me. When we gathered all of the stuff we needed to make the baskets we'd all sit together in the evening

as a family. And most of the stuff I watched my mother do I remember as a young child. I remember sitting and watching her. And all the years that I watched my mother and I was the one who took her out on the seasons to get everything that was needed. And all the years I watched her make baskets everything that was taught, it was done as a family unit. After a busy day we'd all sit in the living room. My mother would sit in her special chair and in front of her was all her work. All her basket works that she wanted to get done. And she'd get it all together and put it aside. Everything was done in different stages, especially the birch bark when you take it off the tree, you have to form it into the basket right away otherwise it curls up fast. So that was stage one. She would sit down and form her baskets and get it ready for the next step. After forming the baskets and setting it aside, she would get her cedar roots done. There was a lot of work to get that done. The splicing, cleaning the cedar root, then preparing it. My mother was very meticulous in the preparation of everything. So I watched her many hours prepare everything. And just by observation, I've learned how to make a birch bark basket, just by observation since I was a baby. I'd say since I was three even until an adult.

**“To me, the things that I’ve learned I pass on because that is how our knowledge can be trickled down to our younger generation.”**

-  
Elder Doreen Kenoras

Everything that I've learned in making any kind of baskets is my observation and that is birch bark, pine needle and cedar weaving. It's by observation and self-teaching myself how to do this work. I open up my door as an Elder when I come and I have what I call a talking piece at the table and right now the talking piece I have at the table is a pair of moccasins. They took time out and they want to learn something. I bring the products in and it encourages the students to sit and talk and to want to learn as an elder I wasn't even taught how to make a basket I just observed how it was done. I self-taught

myself how to make a basket which today I know I can teach because I had done all the work and I know I can teach how to make a basket. I sat with elders and learned how to make a pine needle basket and the things you learn that you can pass on is important. To me, the things that I've learned I pass on because that is how our knowledge can be trickled down to our younger generation. I don't keep it inside me because I'm willing to share everything that I've learned. If I haven't learned how to do certain things, I'm willing to learn just so we can work together and pass that knowledge on.

“I am very proud of this program. One reason is that it's going to be publicized. There is so much knowledge locked up that has been marked as confidential... as you go forward, remember the 4 R's: research, respect, receive, and respond. Hold up high and I am very proud. Kukstemc.”

—  
Elder Doreen Kenoras



## Alison Jonsson

Métis  
Bachelor of Science

*"Indigenous knowledge is the heart of our communities. It can be expressed in historic stories, biological understandings, as well as pride. Our stories and our knowledge make us who we are. They make us all Indigenous."*

### ABUSE AND EDUCATION: THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM OF CANADA

Aboriginal communities across Canada have experienced one of the largest cultural genocides in the world. The Government of Canada declared that Indigenous students were to attend residential schools aimed at Europeanizing the culture of the students in order to grow and become "proper" members of society. These schools were established all across Canada, with the first being built in 1884, and they lasted for over a century, with the last one closing in 1996 (Rose, 2018, pg 350). The goals of the system were to "educate Aboriginal children and assimilate them into Euro-Canadian ways of life" by teaching them to be more civilized (Gebhard, 2017, pg 4). The methods used to educate the students proved to be less than ideal as the children faced cruel punishments, hard labor work, sexual assault, and neglect. The negative effects of these schools have only recently been made known to the general public, and a call to action for reconciliation has been made in attempt to heal the affected communities and to remove the racism the colonizers inflicted on the world.

The residential school system of Canada was an attempt to "civilize" the Indigenous communities that already lived on the land and give them a "better" life. Canada was not the only country to set up schools for Indigenous students; The United States, Australia, and New Zealand all had their own versions of the residential school system (Rose, 2018, pg

349). All of these schools were administered by the European colonizers. The first half of the residential school's lifetime was cruel and harsh, but the Aboriginal communities faced a positive change in practice during the latter part of the nineteenth century: "rather than children attending residential schools, an on-reserve day school, or nothing, children started to be integrated into public schools starting in the 1950s," which gave the children a choice (Feir, 2016, pg 4). The act of sending a child to a residential school was a last resort for most families. The majority of the students who attended residential schools came from areas where other schools were not available (Canada, 1970, pg 103). Some parents sent their children to the schools because they struggled to feed and care for them, while other students were orphaned by their parents and had nowhere else to stay.

After World War II, many Indigenous students had the option to go to day schools, residential schools, public schools, or private schools. The government continued to build more day schools and, according to a 1950 annual immigration report, "the enrolment at residential schools decreased slightly from that of the previous year but there was an increase of 1,582 in the day school enrolment"; this showed that "there has been a total enrolment of 3,111 pupils since 1947" up until 1950 when this report was written (Canada, 1950, pg 17). The number of students attending the

residential schools decreased over the last half of their existence. Poor curriculum, abuse, and children missing their families were all a source of decline for the schools. With more day schools becoming available, the colonizers had less of a chance to attempt to remove all aspects of Indigenous culture.

Although day schools allowed students to go home every day, there were still students attending residential schools. In British Columbia during the 1967-1968 school year there were a total of 12 residential schools with enrollment of 8,206 students; eight of these schools were Roman Catholic, two were Anglican Church, and one was run by the United Church (Canada, 1970, pg 108). The schools were used as tools to destroy Indigenous culture and replace it with the European way of life. They were administered by different churches that were established by the Canadian Government (Gebhard, 2017, pg 4). Upon entering the schools, the students' names would be changed if they were too complicated or too "savage" sounding, and some students were referred to only as numbers (Rose, 2018, pg 350). Priests would oversee the running of the schools and were deemed responsible for the children. Not all schools were run by the churches, some were run by the federal government, but the situations there were not any better. Hatred and punishments for any acts of Indigenous culture were common in both types of schools to cleanse the students of their so-called savage ways.

The education of the students was meant to teach them culture and manners in order to live a better life, but the system failed the students. The curriculum consisted of formal religious instruction, memorization, and hard labor (Gebhard, 2017, pg 5). The children used altered educational textbooks that hid their culture's identity and ignored their history altogether (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, pg 127). The schools were underfunded which made getting the appropriate supplies difficult, leaving the schools unable to follow provincial curriculum (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, pg 122). Although the curriculum was negatively depicted in most papers, it was stated in the 1950 Indian Affairs

Annual Report that "During the year a supervisor of physical education and recreation was appointed and a program initiated at various reserves and schools," and that "Several school teams made a splendid showing in ice hockey, with bantam, midget and juvenile championship resulting" (Canada, 1950, pg 19). The children were able to take out some frustration with physical activity, but this did not help their education overall, and as they got older their learning environment diminished by half.

Older students would practice a half-day learning environment. They would learn the school's curriculum in the morning, then proceeded to work labor jobs for the remaining half. These jobs consisted of "hard labor for the boys and housekeeping chores for the girls" (Gebhard, 2017, pg 5). According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, half-day education "refers to the system under which older students took academic classes for half the school day and vocational training for the other half" as a way of making it sound like a co-op program (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, pg 133). Parents of the older children that were being directly affected were frustrated. They sent their children to school to learn European ways, but students ended up doing labor and chores they could have been doing at home. This was not a secret to the government either: "Indian Affairs was quite well aware of the fact that the schools were offering little in the way of real vocational training," but nothing was done (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, pg 133). The children were punished if they refused to do the labor work or if they attempted to run away. Students caught complaining in their own language about the labor would be subject to disciplinary actions.

Students were not able to speak their own language, and were punished when caught doing so. The majority of young students attending the schools did not know how to speak English. This resulted in most students having to repeat grades one and two until their English was adequate (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, pg 110). It did not take long for the schools to become English speaking only: "By the 1920s, the policies were firmly entrenched in law, and the system of

residential and day schools well established in their task of replacing Aboriginal language and cultures with Canadian language and culture” (Fontaine, 2017, pg 187). The schools that were run by the federal government would punish any student speaking a language other than English (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, pg 127). Although most schools did not allow any language other than English, some schools would use the language as a way to corrupt parents. A few schools that were run by churches would teach the children how to pray in their own language because “Aboriginal languages remained part of the missionary toolkit in a broader campaign to win not only Aboriginal children but also their parents to Christianity and away from traditional beliefs and culture” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, pg 127). They were still not allowed to speak any language other than English at any other time. The system opted for a method of teaching by punishment, but the severity varied from school to school.

Discipline was enforced differently at each school. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission report of 2015 tried to piece together the events that took place over the 112 years the schools were open. Punishments varied; stealing a chocolate could leave a child in isolation for a week at one school, but the same crime would result in a light smack on the wrist at another. Discipline for the students was at most times difficult; “the line between corporal punishment and physical abuse was too easily crossed,” causing abuse to be a topic that was discussed in great detail in most papers (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, pg 368). Children were consistently beaten for anything from throwing snowballs, to running away (Rose, 2018, pg 350). The abuse at the schools was so severe that it scarred these children into their adult years and has affected their children in turn. Today there are thousands of former residential school students still trying to forget their past. Teachers and supervisors of the schools treated the students more like criminals than actual children.

The abuse at the schools came in a variety of forms. The Truth and Reconciliation report has multiple accounts of students being abused physically, mentally, and sexually. The

report states that “Abuse was widespread throughout the residential school system,” and “A significant percentage of the acts of abuse were of a serious nature with potentially lifelong impacts” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, pg 411). The students, both male and female, faced sexual assault, mostly by dormitory supervisors. Abusers would bribe students into their rooms using candy, television, or even promises of letters from home (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, pg 414). Students stayed quiet and suffered through these experiences because they did not understand what was happening. The children would block the abuse out for as long as possible. The mental abuse the children faced included mocking of their culture, being told lies that their parents were alcoholics, and being made to believe that they were lesser beings due to their race. The abuse was consistent and relentless, and there was nothing the children could do at the time.

The abuse in the schools was mostly ignored at that time, and serious measures to address the abuse have only been in place in recent years. At the time, principals, parents, and the government all failed to take students seriously if they tried to tell them about sexual and physical abuse. In recent years “more than \$2,690,000,000 in compensation has been awarded to former residential school students” who survived sexual assault (Rose, 2018, pg 350). Only a small number of students have been compensated appropriately as many of the abusers have passed away (Rose, 2018, pg 350). The stories in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s report of the abuse demonstrate clearly that the children were treated with the least amount of respect possible. The Indigenous students were strong and could bear most punishments and abuse, but at times it became too much and they would attempt to run away and find their families.

Students attempted to run away from the residential schools for various reasons. Most students ran away because they felt overworked or unfairly treated, or they simply did not like being at the schools (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, pg 341). Some schools had so many runaways

that the principals ignored them, and “many Indian affairs officials did not believe that principals provided proper notification when a student ran away” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, pg 341). Some students were never located and it is unclear if they survived the experience or not. Regarding runaways, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report found that “the fragmentary nature of the records often makes it difficult to make a final determination as to any specific children’s fate” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, pg 364). Police and principals did not take these situations seriously; “perhaps because they are Indians, no one seems to care very much” (Adams, 2016, pg 20) Students that did return faced severe punishments at the hands of the adults assigned to care for them.

Children of the residential schools were strong and stubborn Indigenous people. The children knew they were being treated unfairly, and some went to extreme measures to try to make it home. Children would try to return to their families, some attempting to travel hundreds of kilometers. Most students were caught and punished, but in some cases, children died trying to make it home. Many of the children running away were young and inexperienced. It was crucial that they were reported missing early enough to find them. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission report has over 15 stories of children dying of exposure after running away.

One famous incident was the death of Charlie Wenjack, a student at Cecilia Jeffery Indian Residential School in Kenora, Ontario (Adams, 2015, pg 20). The Presbyterian church ran the school where 150 Aboriginal students lived with only six adults to take care of them (Adams, 2015, pg 20). Charlie decided that he was going to run away with two other boys to find his family. The three departed the residential school where they enlisted the help of a Mr. Benson to find the uncle of one of the boys (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, pg 348). Charlie left his friend’s uncle’s house to find his family on his own. Twelve miles down the road, Charlie was found by Canadian National Railway workers. He had died from exposure from the cold weather (Adams, 2015, pg 22).

Charlie’s death caused an outrage and people wondered why his disappearance was not reported by the school.

The Indian Affairs Department went to great measures to make sure Charlie was brought home and cared for (Adams, 2015, pg 22). Many other students who died in the school did not receive the same attention and were buried in unmarked graves outside the schools. The principal of Cecilia Jeffery, Charlie’s three sisters, and his mother went with Charlie’s body to his home town where he was reunited with his father (Adams, 2015, pg 22). His father felt the school had betrayed his child and “He buried Charlie, his only son, in the tiny cemetery on the north shore of the Albany River” (Adams, 2015, pg 23). Charlie’s death was the first case that was given public attention and a full inquest was held to determine what caused him to run away from the school. The jury decided the schools were not being run properly and “they suggested that the school be staffed adequately so that the children could develop personal relationships with the staff” to avoid future runaways (Adams, 2016, pg 23). This was one of the first eye opening stories from within the schools where the general public was made aware of the conditions these children were enduring, and it sparked a change.

In recent years, stories from within the schools are becoming known to the public through education. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s report was drafted in an attempt to compile all information into one document that spanned nearly 4000 pages. In 2008, Stephen Harper made a statement of apology to former students on behalf of the Government of Canada (Gehbard, 2017, pg 5). After this apology, the government stated that “the work of the TRC spanned 2008 to 2015 and included gathering statements from 6750 witnesses as well as a wide range of other activities” in order make it right (Johnson, 2018, pg 5). The report answers the big question: how does Canada move forward and attempt to fix what has been done? The government had made policies that aided in the cultural genocide, making it sound as if it was in the children’s best interest. For example, with regard to the manner in which children were taken away from their homes, “the policy

framed Aboriginal homes as dangerous, and claimed that the separation from deleterious home influences was necessary” for their future (Gebhard, 2017, pg 5). This makes it difficult for the residential school survivors to forgive the Canadian government. Many students lost siblings and friends while parents lost their children to the horrors of the school.

Canadian people and the Indigenous communities determined that these stories needed to be told through education. It took many years for the public to become aware of the abuse and “in 1990s, government and churches began to acknowledge the system was inherently wrong and misguided, and the violent project began to receive widespread attention” (Gebhard, 2017, pg 6). This attention resulted in the need for reconciliation, which “is about developing mutual respect, reciprocity, and a recognition that we are all interconnected in this process of healing which requires all of us learning from our shared past” (Boffa, 2017, pg 2). The government hopes that education will be the key to reconciliation and “Recently released recommendations for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) include calls for action for education for reconciliation” (Gebhard, 2017, pg 3). These actions included the history of the residential schools being taught from kindergarten to grade 12, with proper teacher training on the subject (Gebhard, 2017, pg 3). Education is a powerful tool that can help heal the pain of the schools’ history for all Canadians.

It is undeniable that the residential school system failed Indigenous communities and their children. The children were physically abused on a daily basis, some were sexually assaulted, and all were spiritually abused. The lifelong effects of these schools on the adult survivors is only now being recognized. Most survivors are still afraid to tell their stories for fear of humiliation. Languages have been lost, stories have been forgotten, and the once proud culture has been diminished from within. The goal of the residential school system was to bring culture to the “savage” communities that lived on the land before the colonizers. It is now known and recognized that the abuse and neglect within the system was savage, not the students. It took many

years for the Canadian people to acknowledge and become aware of what these children were going through, but as awareness grew, the voices of the children were heard, and it was the start of reconciliation. Now only education and time can heal the wounds created by the Canadian government and its residential school system.

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# Justin (Thunder Sky) Young

Anishinaabe  
Transitions Day Coordinator

## A CONVERSATION WITH THUNDER SKY

*Justin and Sereana walked the round just as Knowledge Makers did at the Knowledge Makers workshop and Justin shared his thoughts on making knowledge.*

### I am Anishanabe My name is Thunder Sky

So is this... I guess one of the things that I'm really trying to work at is finding different ways of learning. Trying to connect it to who I am as a learner and what it is that I can grasp. Because right now I feel like sometimes I don't fit in. I don't fit in to the university. That doesn't make me stupid but sometimes it makes me feel small and insignificant because I feel like everybody here... sometimes I get that feeling everybody knows. It's like they are on a pedestal, all of the deans and the doctors. But I get that sometimes; I feel like they've earned their right to be at that spot because they stayed up all night, struggling through papers or meetings. And they fought their way, tooth and nail, to show that they have a right to speak now. Bow to them, listen to them, hear them. But when you really think about it, they're human beings that have followed a path that has been laid before them, and they have just done their best to walk it as well as they can; so have the people before them and so will the people behind them. And that's good.

But I feel like I want to create a new path, and that's the challenge. I want to create a new path: a way of how are you and who are you? And what is important about your way of understanding the world that we live in? What is important about who you are as an individual?

What is the knowledge that you bring from your life experience, and how did you create your thoughts and your feelings? The human being, I find, is so fascinating. There's such a wealth of knowledge in every single one of them. And if we could tap into them and hear them, and just sit with them and spend time with them, imagine the knowledge we could gain. Rather than being above them, telling them, "This is what you need to," we could instead be together, saying, "This is what we can do."

How can we sit together in a circle and learn together? How can we create these beautiful relationships with each other and through this trusting bond create this beautiful essence called group wisdom? And how can we tap into that? Because having many perspectives on one issue will teach us so many other ways of looking at it, thus creating an open mind, open heart, open connection to each other. And then we will be able to see each other, feel each other, live with each other and be with each other, rather than against each other. You know, it doesn't matter what race you're from. It doesn't matter where you come from in the world. We're human beings.

I feel like we're connected in so many ways. How can we harness that, as opposed to sitting in a room in a university classroom

**"I feel like I want to create a new path, and that's the challenge. I want to create a new path: a way of how are you and who are you?"**

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Justin Young

where you're lectured to by a professor who has fought tooth and nail to get to the front of the room, with all their books and all their papers, all their marking? They fought tooth and nail to get to that position so that they could tell everybody what they did, and then tell them this is how you have to do it: come here, stand here.

But what if you say, "Let's pull away the desks. Let's pull away the front of the classroom. Let's turn this into a space of connection, where each of us has a place. We've come from our life and birth until now to make it to this moment, this place, to sit here and share with each other who we are. And then we get to know who we are."



But let's bring up topics that we can discuss. How can we look at them through our lens? How can I take this moment in my life to pay attention to what you have to say? How can I learn to hear you rather than listening for my time to speak, how can I learn to hear you so that I can get the most out of this conversation? So I can take with me the gift that you're bringing? Rather than trying to own my ego, I can be with my spirit. We can connect in a spiritual way.

If we can learn through experiencing each other in these moments, maybe then we can really have a connection, a true human connection that is not only between you and me and everybody in this room, but that is truly connected to the universe. It's truly

connected to Mother Earth. It's connected to all the animals and the plants, and we re-ignite that connection that we are not above. We are not greater than. We are with. And if we connect in that with-ness, that with-ness, maybe then we'll start taking care of our home. Maybe then we'll start building our home better for our children. Maybe then we'll start seeing each other and feeling each other and hearing each other. Maybe then we'll have a better world to live in.

But I know that it has to start with me. And I must find a way to fit into the box or create my own circle. Or just be me, Justin Young. Pinaysi Keeshik. Be me. And then I can do my best to make it easier and be more supportive for my daughter. And maybe then I'm thinking beyond myself and my daughter and her children. Maybe then, I'm thinking of the seven generations about which they teach us. Maybe then it's not so much about my ego. It becomes my connection to spirit, connection to people, connection to our family as human beings.

I feel like the more that we awaken, the more we awaken from within, the more we connect with what's around us, and then we start noticing some people who might not be awakened yet, and they're struggling, angry, or hurt, or bumping into the wall over and over, trying to find themselves, or find their way, trying to fit into everything. I'll go try to encourage them. Hey, let's make a ladder. Or, hey, let's get a sledgehammer and smash some holes through this. You know? Or, hey, let's find another way, let's sit down and just talk. What's going on? What's happening? What's your why? What's going on for you? I could really hear them, then I might be able to learn more. What's that person got? What's that for?

Then we all become teachers and students, it becomes the heart that beats in our chest, the mind that thinks, guides us. Spirit that takes us to places we've never been and we trust, trust to follow it. Be in a new place, new way. Just believe in ourselves enough to show up every day, no matter what, no matter how hard it may be. Keep on keeping on. Just go with love, because that's what we're ultimately are, is love. All of us.

## Kelly Therrien

Métis  
Bachelor of Arts

*“Indigenous knowledge to me is the nature of existence based on our connections past, present, and future.”*

### WHERE WATER MEETS LAND

#### Dedication

This story is written with a deep sense of gratitude for my family, past and present, who provided me with an enduring connection to the natural world. My Knowledge Makers journey was full of creativity, connection, and discovery inside and out.

I give sincere appreciation and respect to our elders. Our elders hold the wisdom of ways forgotten and it is time for us to rise and make these visions reality. To share our truths, to reconnect, and to pass on this knowledge to future generations.

#### Acknowledgment

The information I write is heavily based on oral stories passed down through the generations. I have verified some of the details through research into the historical points, but unfortunately, not much is yet written on my Indigenous women ancestors who became partners with non-Indigenous men. I share my stories with utmost respect for these brave women, so that their voices will not be forgotten.

“The European view sees individuals as separate and detached, while it perceives the land to be alienable, material, private property. Thus, the Western view of land is anathema to the First Nations' view which is holistic and inseparable from the identity of the people themselves.” (Elsy, 2013, 43)

#### Where Water meets Land

As I sit at the water's edge on the banks of Cooney Bay, I feel the vibrations of Mother Earth echoing through me. This quiet space so rich with family history reconnects my mind and soul. Have you ever really felt the sensations that lie deep within? Go back, *way back*.

Before the innocence of childhood, before the wounds and scars added layers of doubt or shame. Can you go back even further where sensations become feelings and feelings slip into vibrations? It is at the banks of the waterways where water meets land that my heaviness slips away. As I breathe in this space, time loses meaning and I sense the world that once was. This land shares with me the stories of my family that inhabit this space. To the right of me I can see depressions in the long grass where a trail leads into the fields. A broken-down fence marks the burial grounds where some of my ancestors reside. An old, ghostly juniper tree hangs over the grave

“As I breathe in this space, time loses meaning and I sense the world that once was. This land shares with me the stories of my family that inhabit this space.”

—  
Kelly Therrien

stones that are weathered and crumbling with age. Like a secret, my secret that I dare share. So close to Kamloops but almost forgotten in time. This area has not changed much since I was a young girl, but I imagine a time where the lake, rivers, and creeks were lit by campfires spread along the curving shores. A time long before these lands were occupied by foreign settlers, and long before the outbreak of plagues and diseases that wiped out so many. What was it like to arrive in an area untouched by the modern-day rush, the earth undamaged by these fast-paced times? How satisfyingly hard would it be to create your vision in an untouched world? Sitting on these banks with the water effortlessly rolling past, it is here where I begin to share with you the story of my ancestors and my dream of a better tomorrow.

Marie Tatzansas was a Carrier woman born in the early 1800s, before the Fort George Indian Band was officially established in 1892 as the Lheidli T'enneh First Nations. She was a woman belonging to a territory that sprawled across BC, covering 4.3 million hect-

ares and over 9000 years of recognized Indigenous history (Lheidli T'enneh, n.d.). Only in the last 200 years has this area, where the Fraser and Nechako rivers join, been colonized, starting with settlers from the fur brigade. Joseph Allard worked for the fur brigade of the North West Company before the Hudson Bay Company took over in 1821 (Morse, 1968). He worked as a voyageur on the BC waterways, maneuvering a fully packed 25-foot canoe while delivering goods

from fort to fort. Picture, if you will, a stocky but muscular man thrusting his paddle back and forth, from side to side while navigating the capricious waterways. He paddled for up to 18 hours per day from east to west then back again. The fur trade set up posts in Fort George and Fort Alexandria situated along the

Fraser River in Central B.C. (Morse, 1968). Joseph Allard was stationed almost immediately to these western New Caledonia posts. It was not uncommon for foreign men to claim Indigenous women, and it was this first wave of interracial unions that provides part of my lineage today. In my overly romanticized and highly colonialized mind, I imagine the steady beat of the drum. The drum calling to the fixed rhythm of the paddles, pounding down the waterways towards the land where my ancestors met. Like the entwined circles on the Métis flag, two worlds join. Color lines blurred, and identities changed, forming a combined culture like when two rivers meet. During this time, if Indigenous women married non-Indigenous men, they no longer maintained some of the rights they once had. This was further exacerbated as time went on. The Indian Act of 1876 clearly defined this marginalization of Indigenous peoples, particularly Indigenous women who married non-Indigenous men. These women were no longer considered people with rights; instead, a woman was made to hide behind her husband's identity. These acts of cultural discrimination created generations of silence, shame, and denial still seen today. Giving a voice to these women assists me with recovering my lost self. As I sit in the stillness on the bank of the water's edge, this truth overcomes me and brings with it a sense of great sadness and shame. Joseph and Mary Allard eventually resettled in the Chimney Creek area just south of Williams Lake after retirement from the Hudson Bay Company in 1860. They worked the land and started a family. They had two daughters, Elizabeth and Lizette Allard (Thomson, 2016).

It was here by the water on the banks of Cooney bay that Elizabeth Allard resided for most of her physical life. Elizabeth, also known as Betsy, married Charles Thomas Cooney in 1873 (Norfolk, 1979). They acquired land on the outskirts of Kamloops, an area called Tranquille, named after Chief Tranquille, Secwépemc name Pacamoos (Piqwemus) (Ignace, 2018). Together they raised 10 children and looked after the land. In 1907, the government approached them to turn their land into a tuberculosis sanitarium. They turned their farm into a self-contained agrarian community that housed and treated over

**“These acts of cultural discrimination created generations of silence, shame, and denial still seen today. Giving a voice to these women assists me with recovering my lost self.”**

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Kelly Therrien

600 tuberculosis patients (Norfolk, 1979). My great-grandmother and many of her siblings became nurses and they combined traditional Indigenous and colonial medical therapies to treat patients from around BC. They used elements of the natural world as part of the restorative practices, such as utilizing the outdoors as a place of healing. Pictures are now hung in the old sanitarium nursing station showing patients bundled up outside on cold days to kill off this disease. Healthy, locally grown food was harvested on the land and prepared daily. Living life at a slower pace was also an essential custom, to give their bodies time to rejuvenate and recover. During this time, racism was rampant, and the government refused treatment to many Indigenous people. Today, statistics reveal Indigenous people with tuberculosis far outnumber other cultures (Canadian Public Health Association, 2019). After Betsy's husband died, the BC government bullied her into selling their land for much, much less than it was worth. Betsy, in honor of her family, demanded that the cemetery of the Cooney family remain intact and be maintained in perpetuity (Norfolk, 1979). The cemetery, decorated by the long-standing juniper tree, reminds me of how important it is that this history be remembered. Keeping culture and identity alive through stories of these lived experiences creates commonalities that unite us. These oral stories keep our traditions and culture alive.

Tranquille, now called Padova, was reopened in 1959 to treat mentally ill individuals due to overcrowding at Essondale and Woodlands (Norton, 1999). Filtering down my Cooney lineage, my great-grandmother worked as a nurse in Tranquille along with advocating for the vulnerable. Ethel Wilson, my great-grandma, was a descendant of Annie from the Lillooet Indian band and daughter to Johnny Wilson, a.k.a. "The Cattle King." She was born in 1900 and lived until 1999. Ethel, known to many as Effy, was recognized as a distinguished medicine woman, using earth's natural offerings to heal and provide. She was a private woman, especially regarding her past, but my close relations recall many good times. They would gather and harvest distinct herbs, fungi, and plants from our Westbranch and Kleena Kleene ranches to

make various ointments and teas. Coffee cans and glass mason jars filled with these healing treasures littered our pantries and shelves. There are stories of searching for yarrow, a white weed that grew abundantly in the cow manure to be boiled down later on the old wood stove, and that had many healing uses including for skin irritations and psoriasis. The very bitter husham berries, sometimes called soapalali berries, we used for replenishing our systems. A lot of the plants that grew wild had multiple purposes and Grandma Effy, like a dictionary of the natural world, shared her traditional wisdom. The land provided delicious nutrients such as shaggy main or puff ball mushrooms. The kinnikinnick plants formed pretty pink buds, such a sweet delicacy in the summer months. The pig weed was used like spinach. In the boggy ground surrounding the underground spring, the very best watercress would grow in the spring and summer, but we would have to be very careful not to get sucked in by the quicksand. This area was always fenced off, so the animals would not get stuck.

You can find this ranch if you follow the highway west of Williams Lake, a road that, when I was much younger, was a bumpy dirt road that followed the Chilcotin River and ended in Bella Coola. Once you see the start of the Coast Mountains and pass the Klinaklini river, turn right onto an old dirt road now named after my grandparents, "Bittner Road." In 1962 my family moved from Westbranch to Kleena Kleene. They resided in a simple log cabin which, in the 1800s, was a hideout for a member of the Dalton Gang. Five kids lived in a one-room shack and shared a single outhouse. Farther down the dusty road my grandpa built the homestead that will forever be considered home in our hearts. I wish I could convey to you the feeling of arriving at this sacred land. No words and no language will ever do that justice. As I sit at the water's edge on the banks of Cooney Bay, I remember the comfort, the excitement, the gratitude that I felt when returning home. Like an old favorite song.... The beating of the drum, the rhythm of the paddle. Music was always part of our lives. It seemed like each family member had their own musical gift. An old, green radio that sat on the kitchen table played

favorites such as Jim Reeves, Dean Martin, and of course Grandpa's favorite song to sing, 'Ghost Ryders in the Sky' by Johnny Cash. If this kitchen could share the memories, the laughter, the stories... while Grandma cooked on the old wood stove. I was not born until 1975 but I am grateful to have been part of the culture and excitement that came from this social time. The first feast after a long hunting trip into the mountains, the transformations of outbuildings such as cabins and fences being built, the feeding and nurturing of animals, the gathering of plants and mushrooms that grew wild in this area, and the cultivation of our huge gardens that provided so much. Balance in life seemed instinctual here; hard work mixed seamlessly with family time and social gatherings. I remember the rodeos, dances, potlucks, and an intermittent but endless parade of visitors.

My romantic notion of homesteading in the wild is overtaken by the truth of the daily battle. The land provides all that is needed but the grueling, hard work that it takes does not come easy. The stories passed down by my ancestors share the truth of surviving the elements. The long, cold winters kept most families hostage for months at a time. One Christmas the weather reached minus 60 degrees Celsius and an eerie fog spread over the land. At this temperature the animals' ears and tails would start to freeze off so extra feed needed to be provided. Before the introduction of plumbing and electricity (which for the Chilcotin was not that many years ago) my grandparents built an outdoor meat house where we hung our meat from the rafters. Winter was a blessing for this situation, keeping the meat from spoiling as long as the bears, cougars, wolves or coyotes did not get to it first. Ice blocks were brought up from the lake and covered with sawdust during the warmer days. Hunting was essential in keeping our family fed. The animals and land were respected, and we used much more than just the meat of the animal, making our presence on the land barely known. The antlers were used for tools and weapons. The hides had many purposes depending on the animal, such as pack boxes for the horses which would be tied on with diamond hitches before the long hunting trips. The Chilcotin progressed very

slowly. Visiting here was almost like walking back in time. Life was busy and there was always work to be done. You could feel a sense of purpose, like the water's current continuously moving forward, because quitting was not an option. Throughout the generations both land and water were the building blocks of survival. Choosing the right piece of land with a water source was the foundation for endurance. This can be seen on a map where my ancestors dotted the waterways throughout BC.

There is something magical that happens while I sit on the banks of the water mesmerized by the continuous flow. I am able to connect back to times long ago, as a little girl watching my grandma spin her wool. My Grandma Bubby, Effy's daughter, raised sheep, harvested the wool, then designed and made warm clothing for her family. She took good care of the animals, gently shearing the wool. She spent days carting and cleaning it. Perhaps using the wool from her own sheep made her feel more in touch with her ancestral traditions of living close to the land. I remember her hands, so deliberate while winding and teasing out the pieces before placing them on her spinner. Each piece with its own unique properties, like our ancestors, each one adding to the layers of culture and identity, making it stronger with each spin. She would use her spinning wheel endlessly, letting her fingers and feet follow a distinct vibration like the beating of a drum, the rhythm of the paddle.

Sometimes I feel lost in the present, in this time of societal excess. It is only when I go to the water's edge, away from all my perceived responsibilities, that I allow myself to connect to a greater power that seems forgotten in my daily battle. The motion and sounds of the water realign the fluids in my body. As the water touches the land and gently shapes the landscape with ease, I am reminded of the similarities throughout my body keeping me alive. How easy it is to forget this connection to Mother Earth and all that she provides. The quiet allows me to hear and smell and feel a sense of gratitude and belonging, while guilt washes over me at the disconnect in my daily madness back home. I can feel the knowing course through me like the soft whispers of the wind. The rhythm of

the paddle, the beating of the drum. How fast the world has changed. Our battles now are not against the elements to stay alive. They are battles for a way of life forgotten by the frantic desire to have more, to do more, to be more. Unsatisfied no matter how much we acquire. It is here by the water's edge I am reminded of the simplistic beauty of being connected, belonging to a greater power, acceptance in its purest form. How lucky I am that I can still feel the ontology of my ancestors deep within me. The respect and gratitude for the earth, the air, the water, and the generations of change. One big swirl of motion that connects us all. It is by the water's edge where land meets water that wisdom washes over me and I can see clearly and feel deeply. This is not my knowledge. This is the knowledge of time, along with the stories and traditions passed down, to be shared and felt by anyone brave enough to slow down. Time has changed. It is no longer measured by the seasons that inform us of preparations to be made; time has taken on new meaning, measured by how little we have. A time when we should be healing the earth of the damage done. People around the world already feel this to be true, but perhaps having ancestors with a deep connection to land and water makes this certainty more evident. Our brave brothers and sisters battling to protect this earth. The heroes, our ancestors and our elders, sharing the truths and bearing the brunt of the past ugliness. We become stronger, our minds, our bodies, our connections to the earth. The knowing that resides deep within, a connection we feel when we are brave enough to slow down and listen.

*Drifting within the echo of another world*  
Where water meets land the soft, stirring stillness sweeps through me like the beating of the drum, the rhythm of the paddle.

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“These oral stories keep our traditions and culture alive.”

-  
Kelly Therrien



Entering into the circle I immediately felt at home and each person sitting with me instantly became my family.

~ Student Reflection  
Knowledge Makers 2019



# Katisha Star Rose Paul

WJOLELP and Státimc  
Bachelor of Arts, Major in Geography

*"We sit in circles to see each other as we talk because we must know where the worlds are coming from in order to understand the words themselves. We have been talking, sharing, laughing and crying all our lives to express who we are and what we understand the world to be. In our ideas, twirling in the air, dancing with each other to one heartbeat that allows us to learn and encourages us to teach. Knowledge is beautiful and beauty is everywhere."*

## X<sup>w</sup>WELMƏX<sup>w</sup> TEN: THE MOST RESPECTED BEINGS WITH OMITTED RIGHTS, HOLDING RESILIENCY

*In honor of the missing, murdered, accused, abused, and hurting x<sup>w</sup>welməx<sup>w</sup> ten of Turtle Island. We raise our hands to you, to honour your lives and love shared.*

*Huy ch q'u*

*Kukwstum'ckálap*

*Thank you*

We are the X<sup>w</sup>welməx<sup>w</sup> of Turtle Island who share the same respect for our *ten* because we know that we would not be able to walk this ground if they did not carry us, guide us, and protect us. Most X<sup>w</sup>welməx<sup>w</sup> nations, such as the Musqueam people, are matriarchal, meaning that all of the teachings, ceremonies, and songs are carried by the *ten* and can only be passed down the bloodline of the *ten*. Women are held at the heart of the X<sup>w</sup>welməx<sup>w</sup> people, but since the first steps of colonization by Europeans in 1492, X<sup>w</sup>welməx<sup>w</sup> females have been degraded, sexually assaulted, abused, forgotten, and disrespected by the foreign laws that have overpowered the X<sup>w</sup>welməx<sup>w</sup> traditional laws of the land.

Canada prides itself on justice and equality, but where has the justice system and government placed the human rights of X<sup>w</sup>welməx<sup>w</sup> *ten*? These rights certainly are not in the hands of the ones they are meant to serve and protect. The rights of X<sup>w</sup>welməx<sup>w</sup> *ten*, even

as human beings, have been stripped away from us, so in this paper I am going to explore the written legislation of Canada, discrimination against X<sup>w</sup>welməx<sup>w</sup> *ten*, and the actions or lack thereof to protect the X<sup>w</sup>welməx<sup>w</sup> *ten*. I intend to answer two questions among the many that have been left unanswered:

1. What key factors contribute to the human rights of the X<sup>w</sup>welməx<sup>w</sup> *ten* being disrespected and undervalued?
2. What must Canada do in order to give respect and equality back to X<sup>w</sup>welməx<sup>w</sup> *ten*?

The phrase "X<sup>w</sup>welməx<sup>w</sup> *ten*," from the Coast Salish Territories' language, will be used throughout this article in place of the words Indigenous women out of respect for the territories in which my roots are embedded. I respectfully acknowledge that it is not just X<sup>w</sup>welməx<sup>w</sup> *ten* who suffer discrimination and inequality; *meh* also have a long history of being mistreated by the justice system and government, but my primary focus will be on the *ten*.

**X<sup>w</sup>welməx<sup>w</sup>:** Meaning people of the land.

**Ten:** Originally means mother, but in respect I am using the word in replace of women.

**X<sup>w</sup>welməx<sup>w</sup> *ten*:** For the purposes of the paper, this phrase translates into Indigenous women.

**Meh:** Translates into father, but will be used in the place of men.

## Laws of the People, Not of the Land

As X<sup>welməx</sup> we have always developed our own laws for the protection of the land, meaning each rule and what would now be called policy that we have followed since time immemorial.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms of 1982 (CCRF) clearly lays out the equality rights of all Canadian citizens by stating that:

*Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability (s. 15, p. 1, 1982).*

Unfortunately, from the time the Constitution Act of 1982 was written, these rights have not extended a helping hand to the X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten*. The CCRF of 1982 also declares that all citizens have “freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication” (s. 2b), which has since been used by X<sup>welməx</sup> to give rise to an ever-growing power, our intellectual beings. Intellectual beings refers to a part of the X<sup>welməx</sup> that has always been with us, but has just recently begun to be recognized by Western society. It is our knowledge that has been passed through generations, stemming from the land and waters that guide us.

Even with the two essential rights expressed above, women and children who suffer abuse from the police, family, and strangers do not report the incidents because they fear that they will not get the justice they need and that reporting will only make their situations worse (Palmater, 2016, p. 267). X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten* are skeptical of the protection they are promised because of cases held against them that prove that the police and legislature discriminate against them, not only because they are X<sup>welməx</sup>, but also because they are female (Palmater, 2016, p. 270). Such cases will be discussed later in this article.

The Indian Act of 1876 was written with the pure intent to assimilate and cause a cultural genocide of the X<sup>welməx</sup>. There

were many things morally wrong with the Indian Act, such as the fact that it controlled *ten* who were incapable of fighting against the legislation simply because it was made impossible for any *ten*, especially single *ten* with children, to obtain a proper education. From 1876, women were stripped of their status if they married a non-X<sup>welməx</sup> or divorced a X<sup>welməx</sup> *meh*, while a *meh* could marry anyone he chose without losing status (Barker, 2008, p. 261). The Indian Act of 1876 was brutally disrespectful, and the amendments leading to and including the Indian Act of 1985 also continued to discriminate against X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten* on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex, and age.

How is it, then, that we as Canadian citizens carry on our days knowing that the legislation that rules us blatantly disregards an entire demographic? It would be naïve to assume that the government is anywhere close to making the rights of X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten* a priority when they have already worked so hard to create an intricate justice system that does its best to undermine and disregard the needs of X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten*.

## An Image Attracting Discrimination

Because X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten* have been portrayed as items that can have their value taken away and given back with the existence or nonexistence of men by their side, society has been made to unconsciously believe that X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten* are not equal. X<sup>welməx</sup> people hold *ten* in the middle of the ceremonial circles alongside children because being closer to the heart of the nation brings more protection, but since Western views have invaded the minds of the X<sup>welməx</sup> *meh*, the level of respect shown to *ten* by *meh* has plummeted.

In the report done in the Canadian Women Studies, called *Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada*, they claim, “Around the world, inequality between men and women in terms of wealth, social status, and access to power has created barriers to women seeking protection of their rights” (p. 107). It is clear that it is not just within X<sup>welməx</sup> society that men are regularly viewed as being superior to women. In fact, the idea of patriarchy is incorporated into

every Canadian institution, legislation, policy, and household. *Ten* of all colours are seen as inferior and that, in addition to the fact that X<sup>welməx</sup> people have been considered “savages” since the beginning of colonization, creates a system of intersectional discrimination. Since colonization, Western views on power have influenced the *meh* warriors, the protectors of the X<sup>welməx</sup> people, to push the *ten* aside and leave them to be abused, denied of their rights, and disrespected (*Stolen Sisters*, 2008, p. 110).

The writer of the *Stolen Sisters* article states that the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women of Canada has become a phenomenon because *ten* no longer feel as though their lives are worth protecting. Being taken away from their homes to go to residential schools, having their children ripped from their arms to be placed into foster care, and having their families separated during times like the Sixties Scoop has left many *ten* wandering the streets with no sense of culture or home (*Stolen Sisters*, 2008, p. 109).

A study conducted by Kristen Gilcrest found that missing, murdered, and mistreated X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten* are 3.5 times less likely to receive media coverage compared to white women (Gilchrist, 2010, p. 373-385). When the X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten* are described in the papers they are usually depicted as “low lifes,” promiscuous and weak, while white women are painted as sweet, loved, and hard-working (Palmer, 2016, p. 270). The X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten* are more than these descriptions, they are more than statistics, they are more than one of the over 4000 names listed (Tasker, 2016): they are our grandmothers, moms, sisters, aunts, daughters, and friends.

## RCMP: Resting Constables Mistreating our People

The biggest factor leading to the lack of respect towards X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten* are the actions, or the lack of actions, taken by the RCMP. Cases such as Tina Fontaine’s prove that the lives of X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten* are wasted space to the government, legislature, and police forces. In 2014, Tina Fontaine, a 14-year-old girl from Sagkeeng First Nation, was raped, murdered, and dumped into a river by a 53-year-old man; this young girl’s fate could

have been prevented if the police had taken care of her properly (Palmer, 2016, p. 260). Hours before her murder she was found by the RCMP who, under legal obligation, should have taken her to family services, but instead they placed her back on the street because she was a X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten* (Palmer, 2016, p. 261). The two officers on duty were not charged for being a part of Tina’s death; instead, one was put on suspension without pay and the other remained on active duty.

In 2011, another case took place in Manitoba where constable Kevin Theriault took an intoxicated X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten* off the street, placed her in a cell, and then hours later took her home with him to engage in what he called a “personal relationship” because his senior officer told him, “You arrested her, you can do whatever the fuck you want to do” (Palmer, 2016, p. 277). It was not until three years later that Theriault was punished, ever-so strictly, with seven whole days without pay.

The examples of misuse of power by police officers against X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten* are endless, and more often than not the officers are described as being loyal, hard-working, and even heroes rather than being called what they truly are: criminals (Palmer, 2016, p. 276). With so many RCMP officers being set free for charges against X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten*, it makes sense that *ten* are reluctant to report any abuse or mistreatment to the men and women who have been ignoring their rights.

## S’iwesá:yhem: Teachings For the Ones Who Hold Power

X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten* have nowhere to go because of all the power, legislation, undesired stereotypes, and history set against them. The traditions, morals, and love that emphasize the need for respect have been a part of the X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten* identity for thousands of years, but where is the respect now?

Being X<sup>welməx</sup> *ten*, my grandmothers, mother, aunts, cousins, sisters, friends, and myself have all experienced the disrespect described throughout this paper in one form or another and it is time for more to be done in order for the future generations to have their rights respected. We need to begin with the homes of our people, meaning that we need

**S’iwesá:yhem:** Means teachings for the children, with us, in our respected generations being the children.

to go back to our old matriarchal ways in order to restore respect for our X<sup>welməx</sup> ten again. The X<sup>welməx</sup> meh need to be reminded of traditional ways of being warriors, and since it is the 21st century, ten should always remember that they are warriors too. The legislature needs not only to write laws for the X<sup>welməx</sup>, but there needs to be reform in which X<sup>welməx</sup> are properly represented by having a fair ratio of seats in the federal government. Allowing more X<sup>welməx</sup> to have a direct say in the legislation and policies that govern us will give the X<sup>welməx</sup> ten a chance to feel truly safe and protected by the government. As noted by Palmater (2016), the RCMP needs to have better anger management training and be trained on X<sup>welməx</sup> culture and history (p. 266). Teaching the officers, sitting government, and society about the real lives of X<sup>welməx</sup> ten, showing them the beauty of our life-givers and the strong backbones of our X<sup>welməx</sup> people, will foster an overall respect for us.

The ten who are denied their fundamental human rights are stronger than they are depicted by others to be and their lives are finally being acknowledged and saved, not just by the men, police or government, but we are being saved by the resilient ten who stand next to us with our hands raised high, smestiyexw glowing and voices harmonizing.

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“How is it, then, that we as Canadian citizens carry on our days knowing that the legislation that rules us blatantly disregards an entire demographic?”

-  
Katisha Paul

## Justine Manuel

syilx nation  
Bachelor of Arts

*"Indigenous knowledge comes from countless organic ways of knowing and being that were passed down from generation to generation. Indigenous knowledge is inclusive and is embedded in core values that comes from the land and our oral history, that's been alive since time immemorial. It is the platform that guides the people to live in a good way: emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually."*

### A PERSONAL JOURNEY OF AN INDIGENOUS WOMAN'S PATH TO BUILDING AN EMPIRE OF KNOWLEDGE IN A COLONIAL STRUCTURE

**way x̄ast s̄x̄əl̄x̄ʕalt  
iʔ skʷist q̄ʕwaʔqʷislaaqin  
nsc̄amaʔ skʷist Justine Manuel  
kn tl spaxmn  
kn tl syilx nation**

Hello, good day

My Okanagan name means Morning Star

My English name is Justine Manuel

I am from spaxmn

I am from the sqilx nation

This paper will exemplify and illustrate why meaningful relationships with Indigenous people are important and are required for reconciliation, and how reconciliation will involve education. It will entail a self-reflection on a personal journey involving growth and better understanding. I am passionate about Indigenous issues and part of my journey is finding puzzle pieces to add to our current foundation of creating meaningful change for First Nations people. Since I was young, I was told that I needed to learn how to walk in both worlds. There is not really a rule book or an outline on how to do so, but it is a part of self-discovery. This paper will discuss the challenges of walking in the world of academia as a First Nations woman, and the need to implement Indigenous ways of knowing and being through that process. Some of us are aware of the issues that are slowly being addressed today such

as government to government discussion, education on Indigenous history, and how to indigenize education for First Nations students. Through the process I am finding a lack of meaningful movement on the ground, and I argue that we can do better as a country, a province, a community, and a university.

Currently, I am pursuing my undergraduate degree at Thompson Rivers University, studying for my Bachelor of Arts. I am a third-year University transfer student from Nicola Valley Institute of Technology. At NVIT I was in pursuit of my Associate of Arts Degree - General Studies. I always knew that I would eventually want to further my education to a Bachelor of Arts degree. At NVIT I learned more about the history of Canada through an Indigenous lens. Topics focused on genocide, colonization, and oppression that have occurred and are still happening today, and how we now know this as "normal."

When the colonizers came to Canada, they only saw what they chose to see. They saw people whom they decided to label as "savages," as uncivilized things, not even humans, but things. Ever since they settled in Canada and established their framework of a power of government, we as First Nations have been living in shackles. We live in a society that dictates the power, the privilege, and the right. We as Indigenous people are still fighting today for the right to have a say in the way we are governed,

branching out to all elements of life, land, earth, water, fire and how that can be broken down into Education, Governance, Health, Natural Resources, Social Development, Land Claims, Title and Rights. Throughout our education, we are told about history, but what they do not tell you is that it is not the full story. It is up to us to critically think about the history and the stories that have been written and told by non-Indigenous people about Indigenous people.

Looking at and assessing what has happened over the last 100 years, it could be argued that the majority of things and people have been colonized in some way. Indigenous people have suffered mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually through this process of colonization. Indigenous people used to be free human beings, living their lives the way they chose while still being governed by traditional law that has been embodied since they were born. The problem is that colonization has become so prevalent and so strong in our everyday lives, some of us are not even aware that colonization is now known as “the norm.” Colonizers believe that they have the right to hold power and control, making decisions on what type of person they approve of in this stolen country. The control of individuals begins with education; it was dictated to all people in Canada once settlement in the “new world” solidified. Education requirements for First Nations children began in the country in the 19th century, giving the “opportunity for a better life”:

*When Canada was created as a country in 1867, Canadian churches were already operating a small number of boarding schools for Aboriginal people. As settlement moved westward in the 1870s, Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries established missions and small boarding schools across the Prairies, in the North, and in British Columbia. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015b).*

Many Indigenous students' first experiences of education were negative ones, in residential schools where the aim was not actually to teach students, but to ensure that the schools could be operated with minimal support from the Government:

*The educational goals of the schools were limited and confused, and usually reflected low regard for the intellectual capabilities of Aboriginal people. For the students, education and technical training too often gave way to the drudgery of doing the chores necessary to make the schools self-sustaining. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015b).*

As we grow up we are first brought to pre-school, then kindergarten, continuing up to graduation with a diploma. Jobs require a high school diploma at a minimum, but in order to have a strong career, a university degree is expected. I grew up being told that I needed to finish high school and it was strongly recommended that I attend University or College to obtain a well-paying job. I attended NVIT, which was a great experience as it is a true representation of indigenization of the institution. Pidgeon (2016) makes note of this in her article, *More Than a Checklist: Meaningful Indigenous Inclusion in Higher Education*:

*It is important to acknowledge the Indigenous institutes, such as Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT), the En'owkin Centre, Gabriel Dumont Institute, and other Indigenous institutions operate under an Indigenous governance framework, with Elders and Aboriginal senior leadership. Their entire institution from policy to program development and pedagogical practice imbeds and honours Indigeneity. (p.82).*

From my personal experience, I felt that NVIT created a welcoming vibe and positive energy with a community-based approach. The staff and teachers are very supportive, and you truly feel like you have a connection to your professors and the material they are teaching. The teachers talk about history and ensure the First Nations aspect is covered adequately. I enjoyed learning and felt inspired to continue my studies. As my time at NVIT was coming to an end, I decided to attend TRU. My first year at Thompson Rivers University was a struggle and I questioned myself many times, asking if university was the right path for me. Am I an academic student? Am I meant to learn in classrooms with a colonial structure? Or am I meant to have life experience and work various jobs, learning new skills and eventually moving up in the organization to pursue

what I really want to do? Barnhardt (as cited in Malatest and Associates 2004) explains how the transition to university can be experienced by Indigenous Students:

*Students must acquire and accept a new form of consciousness, an orientation which not only displaces, but often devalues the worldviews they bring with them. For many, this is a greater sacrifice than they are willing to make, so they withdraw and go home, branded a failure. Those who do survive in the academic environment for four or more years often find themselves caught between two worlds, neither of which can fully satisfy their acquired tastes and aspirations, and therefore they enter into a struggle to reconcile their conflicting forms of consciousness. (p.241)*

I am an Indigenous student caught between the benefits of decolonization and the realistic roots of indigenization. I am skeptical of the concept of “indigenization” because the process takes so long. I feel like we have been in the process for a long enough period of time to ask, what has the university really done? I feel like not a lot has been done. Why is it such a process? Sometimes I want to change this whole system. I feel like this whole system is f\*cked. Look at the state of the world now; look at what capitalism and greed have brought us, the current state and condition we are living in. Sometimes I feel like there is so much that needs to be done and I want to be a part of it all. But after a while, since this whole system has been created, I wonder, where do we begin? Can we actually change anything? Will we actually see a different world for the next generation?

I have experienced the process of making change, and the small steps toward indigenization at Thompson Rivers University. I chose TRU because it was closest to home and I thought the Bachelor of Arts - General Studies was an adequate starting place. I did not expect to experience such a drastic change of culture. I was able to transfer a majority of my credits to TRU and was hoping to start my third year of University with my transfer credits. One of the issues I experienced was losing some transferrable credits. They were not accepted due to TRU policy as TRU had no way to identify if some of my Anthropology or History courses qualified as “writing intensive.”

In turn, I essentially had to start with a lot of first-year courses with my major in Political Science and Economics. This felt discouraging and I did not appreciate having to restart my education. Coming from an indigenized school to a colonial structure was challenging. Even though TRU claims to be “indigenizing,” I feel it is not happening fast enough. I understand there are some things that TRU offers as a means of indigenizing the student experience, but it is not enough for me as an individual.

The current efforts that I am aware of are as follows: the Cplul'kw'ten Gathering Place, Orange Shirt Day, Aboriginal Awareness Week, TRU Traditional Powwow, and a few activities offered throughout the year. And my favorite is when, on the first day of class, the professor says, “I'd like to acknowledge that we're on the unceded territory of Secwépemculecw,” then moves on with the rest of the course syllabus.

While the acknowledgement may be a step in the right direction compared to where we have come from in the past, I agree with Pidgeon's (2016) argument that,

*While more institutions are honouring of territory at formal and public institutional events, they can do more to ensure that the day-to-day operations of an institution, particularly related to Indigenous matters, honour and follow Indigenous models of governance (e.g., Aboriginal advisory committee; Indigenous leadership positions) and policies (e.g., Aboriginal strategic plans or specific policies). (p.82)*

My question remains, how many students actually understand what it means to acknowledge the territory, the significance and importance of knowing who was here before the institution? My guess would be very few. And I would like to see more engagement and accountability to that term from the instructors and anyone else who reiterates that statement.

On the TRU website we have a page dedicated to Aboriginal people and here we find background information on how TRU is indigenizing itself, on how our Indigenous staff are working to create a positive learning experience for First Nations students. Here we see the following from the Response to the Recommendation to Universities by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee:

#### #4 Curricula Development

TRU is currently in the process of institution wide Indigenization. An important aspect of Indigenization is the development of Aboriginal curricula and TRU has learned that the curricula need to be relevant, respectful and powerful. In that vein, curricula development has been increased in Leadership and First Nations Language. (Bovis-Crossen & Michel, 2015:6).

This coincides with the TRC Recommendation 62.

ii: "Education for reconciliation: Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms."

In all my courses I have felt that, when discussing Indigenous issues, the professors do not do these topics justice, and all professors should be held accountable for having more knowledge and education on Indigenous issues. There needs to be a space that allows for professors to learn about the history in-depth and how it relates to the First Nations surrounding Thompson Rivers University:

*Indigenization of higher education is part of this reconciliation and to move forward, all involved- Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal need to consider what Indigenization means. For example, as Indigenous researchers, faculty members, students, Elders, and staff bringing our knowledges, practices, and ways of being into this colonial space must honor and respect who we are as Indigenous peoples. Non-Aboriginals seeking this "Indigenization" of their institutions must understand what Indigenization really means, and that Indigenization cannot be defined or bounded by their expectations of what it should mean. Indigenization provides insight into Indigenous envisioning for the educational experiences for the next seven generations. (Pidgeon, 2016)*

Let us ask ourselves, is acknowledging that you are on unceded land enough? What does that even mean, to be unceded? To me, this is a perfect opportunity for an educating moment to let Canadians know the history

of the land, the history of Kamloops and what has occurred in the past, and what is still happening today. When we talk about indigenizing TRU, what are we actually trying to accomplish when the professors are not adequately representing the objectives? To me, it is important to have professors who are educated because they are mentoring us, inspiring us, and encouraging us to a fulfilled career and academic journey. Personal relationships in the classroom and the goings-on in the classroom set the tone for our future thought and process. On more than one occasion I have experienced a lack of knowledge or appreciation from professors when I do speak out about Indigenous perspectives. I experience it as not being received in the same manner of importance as other global issues. I find there is a lack of education within the classroom when I hear students understanding and having empathy for foreign countries but not for Canada, let alone Kamloops, BC. To me, that says there is something wrong. Indigenous issues and history need to be taught adequately within classrooms. Where and how is this actually being addressed in TRU's commitment to reconciliation?

When we discuss sensitive topics, I feel that people do not want to hear the truth. We are afraid to really speak the truth and instead have to frame it in a "politically correct" manner that does not necessarily represent the true history and impacts. Perhaps it is the lack of understanding people have about the impact of colonialism and how those colonial structures impact Indigenous peoples today. When we talk about reconciliation and indigenization, I feel there needs to be a safe space for all people to discuss these topics, especially for First Nations students because it directly impacts them. I feel professors are holding back, either from lack of knowledge and understanding and perhaps because they have to represent the University in a non-biased way. We need to have space to truly say how we feel as Indigenous students and I personally do not always feel safe to speak in those classrooms. And perhaps that is my own personal feeling, but this is my experience as a student at TRU. If an Indigenous student is experiencing this at TRU, how is the institution adequately indigenizing itself?

I have heard other Indigenous students state that TRU is not really indigenizing itself. True indigenization is important because if TRU is claiming to be the top University of choice for Indigenous students, then it needs to be represented fully.

I am comforted to know that I am not alone when having these questions and thoughts throughout my university experience. I have asked myself many times, just as Ray Barnhardt asks, “Can institutions change? Or more importantly, can Aboriginal students maintain their own cultural integrity when they enter the walls of the academy? It is arguably a balancing act that needs to become a more stable ebb and flow.” Pidgeon (2008) makes reference to Ray Barnhardt’s 2002 article, “Domestication of the ivory tower: Institutional adaptation to cultural distance.”

My hope is to have a fully developed Indigenous voice for the future generations who attend university. My son will graduate high school in 8 years and I want to be able to feel confident that university will be a positive experience for him.

As a means of education and fulfilling TRC Calls to Action, Thompson Rivers University has placed Indigenization Awareness as a part of the workplan and implementation:

#### *#5 Indigenization Awareness*

*TRU has learned that Indigenization needs to be a fundamental aspect of our strategy moving forward. Thus, it is part of our 5 Strategies in 5 Years initiative. Indigenization is conducive to increasing Intercultural Understanding at our University. Events related to our Indigenization efforts, are the Aboriginal Awareness Week, Elders Luncheon, Metis Cultural Celebrations, Orientation and First Friends Feast. (Bovis-Crossen & Michel, 2015:6).*

What is indigenization? What are its benefits? Should we even bother? The colonial structure has hurt us so much and why should we give them a chance? I feel at times that they do not deserve it. We look at the government today and see there is not a lot of trust in that relationship. We see there is a gap, and part of that is the “divide and conquer” tactic that still occurs today.

Sometimes it is difficult, even being a student, not to get emotional about this history and this legacy we have been given. It affects us in a very strong way. It has a huge effect and impact. Indigenizing and decolonizing. Indigenizing needs to happen in a good way and with the understanding that indigenization looks different to different nations and individuals. So, what is this new topic called indigenization, and what are we doing as individuals to ensure that indigenization is happening in a positive way? Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) describe the types of indigenization as follows:

*The three meanings—Indigenous inclusion, reconciliation indigenization, and decolonial indigenization—exist on a spectrum. On one end of this continuum, the academy maintains most of its existing structures while assisting Indigenous students, faculty, and staff in succeeding under this normalized order, and on the other end, the university is fundamentally transformed by deep engagement with Indigenous peoples, Indigenous intellectuals, and Indigenous knowledge systems for all who attend. (p.1)*

There is a large difference between an indigenized approach and a colonial approach. At NVIT I studied a variety of subjects and had a strong interest in Anthropology and History. I felt the teachers did a good job at indigenizing the material and gave a lot of information on colonial impacts. I felt a lot of anger when learning about the truth behind Canada and the genocide that has occurred. There is a common opinion that genocide is still happening in Canada. It has been masked so well that we perceive it to be normal. Maybe it is not as extreme as the smallpox and influenza epidemics, but the current issues we see today are just as deadly, issues such as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (Baum, 2018), high numbers of Indigenous children in foster care (Edwards, 2019), and the arrest and mistreatment of peaceful protestors (Associated Press, 2017). Learning and knowing the history and seeing what is occurring today brings up a lot of negative feelings of anger and sadness. But I have found the courage and awareness that this topic is deeply intertwined in my life.

The issues we see today can be compared to what Pidgeon (2008) refers to as symbolic violence in terms of the education system being created without meaningful consultation and representation from First Nations people:

*The treatment of Aboriginal peoples in Canada with regard to educational policies and their implementation can be looked at as a form of symbolic violence. For example, while education for non-Aboriginal students is a provincial responsibility, Federal jurisdiction of Aboriginal education has often excluded First Nations participation in critical policy and decision making at the provincial level. (British Columbia Human Rights Commission, 2001)*

This brings us back to the TRC Calls to Action. Thirteen of the Calls to Action are said to be implemented at TRU, focusing on Education, Nursing, Law, Business and Language. Unfortunately, this does not represent all programs throughout TRU. If responding to the Calls to Action for reconciliation was a true objective for TRU, we would see this throughout the University. Perhaps there needs to be more dialogue within the classroom. Perhaps there should be more than two monuments throughout TRU to symbolize the presence of Secwépemc traditional territory. Perhaps there should be written pieces next to the symbolic figures on campus. Especially for our international students, currently there is no solid action being taken by the institution as a whole. However, TRU Aboriginal Education works in partnership with TRU World to share information with international students. It is my recommendation that more initiative be taken by the institution overall.

As outlined in the earlier quote from Gaudry & Lorenz (2018), there are three types of indigenization, and I agree that “when it comes to institutional practice, we suggest that academic institutions have only started the implementation of the least transformative of these visions.” From what I understand and experience, TRU is currently focused on Indigenous inclusion which is only the beginning.

If we are to have meaningful reconciliation it should be done in a timely manner, sooner rather than later. In my own experiences with decolonization and indigenization, I find there is confusion between the benefits and

the downfalls. My goal is to find a better solution. In writing this paper, I have realized that those solutions look different for everybody.

What efforts toward decolonization can I make? What efforts toward indigenization can I make? And within that, how can I create space for flexibility? To accept that there is a space for both, and maybe that is when we are walking in two worlds. The goal is for individuals to ask themselves, what does indigenization mean? What is decolonization? How can we do our best to take those steps that are best suited for us as individuals? How can we bring that to a community level? How can we bring that to a collective level of change? Of movement? Of ownership, of using our voice, and ensuring that it is represented in a meaningful way?

As an Indigenous woman, I have found education to be a challenging experience at times. Learning to walk in both worlds has been a legacy that has been passed down from previous generations. One of the struggles I have had is recognizing and coming to terms with the colonial traits and skills I have gained throughout my time on this earth, being trained to think and operate like a *sceme*<sup>7</sup> in order to survive and stay above water, and sometimes letting the Indigenous aspect go because the world is moving so fast. I have recognized behavior and habits in myself such as judging others because they were not being decolonized enough, repeating the patterns that were passed down from generation to generation as a result of residential school. Colonization has disconnected us from our land, our language, our cultural teachings, our family. We have lost so much knowledge from our ancestors. There have been many times of self-doubt and questioning if this journey is even worth it. Is this going to benefit my future? How will I ensure that I always remember my roots to my family, community, and nation?

As I look at the current state of the country we now know as ‘Canada’ I see the colonial structure intact and standing strong. Colonialism, a strong framework that was designed to withstand anything. Many times I have had every intention of decolonizing everything I come into contact with, of sharing my perspective on the need and the importance of decolonization because of the

current state of colonization within our Indigenous communities. And then I am brought back to earth and ask myself, who am I to judge anyone and their journey? I am learning that there are other perspectives and better ways to communicate a message, a need, a dream. Learning how to be a leader, to bring like-minded people together and continue ahead with the search for meaningful and realistic solutions.

It has been said many times from different parts of the community, that we as Indigenous people have a role and a purpose here on earth. We have a mission to fulfill. One of the realities to which we must succumb in order to be successful is learning how to walk in both worlds. When we talk about learning to walk and live in both worlds, we are referring to the “Western colonized world” and, most important, maintaining a connection to our true self, our true world of “Indigeneity.” Navigating these paths and finding a way to intertwine them together can be challenging.

“Interviews conducted, and literature reviewed for this study demonstrated that whenever Aboriginal students are given control of their own programs or institutions, there have been higher rates of success in Aboriginal enrolment and graduation” (Malatest and Associates, 2004:28). While I

understand that there may be barriers to obtain this at an institution like Thompson Rivers University, it is something officials should consider if TRU is being branded as the “University of choice” for Aboriginal students.

The frustrating truth is that we want to change the system, but in order to do so, we need to fight through the colonial approach. If we want to have more land use, we have to make a case through the colonial court system. If we want to have more Indigenous learning concepts, we have to go through a colonial process to make a change. In order

to maintain our own traditional laws, we have to go through the colonial law system to get recognition.

What upsets me the most is that there have been numerous studies about the history of First Nations Peoples in Canada. We know what has happened; it has been recorded, it has been documented, it is being taught in college and university. If we know this has occurred, why are we still allowing this to happen? If we know this was wrongful, why do we continue to live in this system? I feel there is enough evidence to say that what has occurred is a violation of human rights and we, as the original peoples, should be the ones who get to take this country back. And that is the responsibility we as academics take on our shoulders as we become educated: to contribute to the solutions and be the change we want to see.

At this time, I would like to acknowledge the good work TRU has taken part in,

and I want to make an important note that this paper is not directed to any individual at Thompson Rivers University. I would like to acknowledge all of the small victories that have been set in place in creating a space for First Nations students at Thompson Rivers University. I would like to acknowledge the support that is available for Indigenous

**“The frustrating truth is that we want to change the system, but in order to do so, we need to fight through the colonial approach.”**

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Justine Manuel

students at TRU, the elders, the Cpul’kw’ten centre. I would like to acknowledge the individuals who work to support First Nations students at TRU. My intent is to identify the current state of TRU and how I experience it as an individual First Nations woman. I am advocating for more meaningful steps toward an indigenized institution for our future students. Finally, I would like to thank Knowledge Makers for giving me the space for my voice to be heard and I would like to reiterate this is solely my personal experience with indigenization.

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# Stephanie Tourand

Métis Nation of British Columbia  
Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies

*"I view Indigenous knowledge as looking through the world not as it is fed to us today, but tapping into the knowledge of ancestors, to view things in a way that makes more sense in our own geographies. It is looking more holistically at problems and incorporating the ideas of our communities and the whole of Turtle Island to provide an alternative to the knowledge systems forced upon us."*

## JIGGING BETWEEN BOTH WORLDS: MY PROCESS OF LEARNING TO BALANCE ACADEMIC AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE-MAKING IN RESEARCH

### Introduction

As my undergraduate degree requires me to write and defend a thesis, I have spent the last year examining the process of doing research by an Indigenous person, for Indigenous people, learning how others have worked on decolonizing our academic methods, methodologies, and ways of knowing, and what the balance looks like for me to walk in two worlds. This piece describes my process of learning different knowledge-making practices, as I wrestled to find the balance of traditional and academic knowledge-making to create my final thesis. I learned to embrace that wrestle for balance, and as I will describe later, learning how to hop in and out of worlds to create an intricate jig became the metaphorical driver of how I wanted to examine and communicate my research.

To provide context, I want to share a little bit about the subject matter of my thesis. I want to look at environmental sustainability and ways we can practice stewardship in the housing system on reserves. I think environmental sustainability is more than just protecting Mother Earth; it is also protecting that sacred part in ourselves. "In Indian country, ecological and cultural restoration are intimately entwined and vital to the health and well-being of Native American communities" (Nelson, 2008, p.88). Indigenous people have shared values, spiritual

connections, and cultural stories imbedded in Mother Earth; protecting our mother means protecting the umbilical cord that binds us to her as an intimate link. As explained in Elsey (2013), First Nations peoples in British Columbia are enfolded into the landscape, creating this holistic view of unity with the land as extension of oneself or one's family. Understanding that ecological sustainability is vital for sustainable culture, health, spirituality, and basic survival, it is becoming a priority for many nations. I will present the argument that we should start implementing sustainable values into reserve homes in modern ways to help heal Mother Earth, but also to improve our connections to her as we modify or tear down these literal colonial structures to make room for more awareness of the environment within our homes.

In my thesis, I examine the current state of housing in Indigenous communities in Canada and discuss any problems that might be prevalent (e.g. overcrowding and the potential health risks it could cause, ways in which the historical implementation of colonial style homes clashed with the Indigenous lifestyle and environmental conditions, etc.). From there I want to examine current usage of sustainable building practices in local communities and the feasibility, environmental benefits, and impact on citizen well-being these technologies could have if they were to be more widely implemented.

The housing crisis on reserves continues to be a major problem with no clear solution; I believe this needs to be addressed using more creative ideas to help increase the wellbeing of our Indigenous peoples.

The state of one's housing situation can greatly impact one's life outside the home (with overcrowding leading to more tension or fighting, mold leading to health issues, and so on). I think that if people want to address some of the complex problems faced by people on reserve, it makes the most sense to start with making sure they have a solid home.

### Situating Myself in My Research

I believe that sharing the story of my journey will help provide context into the experiences and mindsets that I have brought into my research, and that have resulted in my using "jigging in both worlds" as the perfect metaphor. As stated in Cameron et al. (2014), situating oneself in the context of the research is an inherent part of the process when using an Indigenous research method.

Currently I am in my fourth year at TRU in the Interdisciplinary Studies program. Throughout this program I have developed a more holistic view of academia and the need to integrate all views of a complex problem to create better solutions.

I have a passion for improving communities and want to accomplish this through a career in community planning. My goal, once I get my Bachelor's degree, is to get into the Community and Regional Planning program at UBC with a concentration in Indigenous Community Planning.

Despite my Métis heritage, growing up I was more immersed in a Pan-Indigenous community as I spent a lot of time at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology and with members of Merritt's surrounding bands. Although my home culture was also influenced by the values instilled by my mother's Ukrainian and English grandparents, I started learning how to "walk in two worlds" from a young age. I completed my Associate of Arts degree at NVIT and really learned how to view academia and the world from both Western and Indigenous ways of knowing. Almost every class I took incorporated Indigenous stories, or opportunities to study Indigenous issues.

Since then, I have been on the board of my local Métis society, been involved in an Indigenous economic development summit, and worked with both local bands and Community Futures of Central Interior First Nations.

My ideas for my thesis were heavily inspired by two sources. The first is a video lecture by *Waziyatawin, Regenerating the Roots of Indigeneity: Resurgence & Resilience in Troubling Times* (2016). She speaks on the process of building a home made of earth and the importance of powering down in the face of today's problems. My second inspiration is a book called *Original instructions: Indigenous teachings for a sustainable future* (Nelson, 2008), which talks about reconnecting to our eco-spiritual values and using re-emerging Indigenous knowledge to create a more sustainable future by adapting and utilizing the lessons and practices of our past.

I think these two sources communicate something really important. I believe it is vital to look at the wisdom of our ancestors and the scientific advancements of today and find a way to create better communities and better homes in harmony with Mother Earth, and maybe even in better harmony with each other.

### The Process of Integrating Different Methods/Methodologies

In my work, I do not want to just grow and heal myself; I want to write something that can be a tool to help other people grow and heal as well. I think that by adding to the ever-growing body of Indigenous research, we are creating a powerful shift greater than the individual nuggets of knowledge. Dawson, Toombs, & Mushquash (2012) compared articles incorporating Indigenous research methods and found the greatest distinction of Indigenous-focused research is that it "cannot only reveal knowledge, but also decolonize, rebalance power, and provide healing" (p.12). My thesis, though limited in time, scope, and resources as an unfunded undergrad thesis, has these desires at its core. The goal is to inspire healing: healing of people, of ecosystems, of myself in the process, and to inspire this healing using materials and methods that go beyond the Western ways of knowing.

I want to integrate stories and wisdom that have been shared and recorded by Indigenous knowledge-keepers with Western research and utilize a Two-Eyed Seeing approach. This approach aims “to see from one eye the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing, and to see from the other eye with the strengths of Western Ways of Knowing, and to use both of these eyes together” (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012, p. 355). This two-eyed seeing has also been referred to as walking/dancing in both worlds, or shapeshifting (Hunt, 2013). Several scholars have created more formalized process frameworks for decolonizing research (see Bartlett, et al., 2007 & Smith, 2004); however, as my thesis did not involve interviews or in-depth case studies, I used a more informal method for engaging with my research. Most importantly, I wanted to create something that could be of use for me in providing knowledge and skills for future endeavors, and for challenging my own way of knowledge. I sought to fight the daily struggle “to reclaim and regenerate one’s relational, place-based existence by challenging the ongoing, destructive forces of colonization,” a method used in academia to challenge the conventions of higher research and help make room for future Indigenous research, and to contribute actual, practical information that someone in the field or looking to make a change in community could utilize (Cornassel, 2012, p. 88). My focus was on mindset, intent, and utilizing different kinds of knowledge to create a more decolonized piece. I wanted to make sure my end recommendation supported Alfred’s (2009) objectives for Indigenous resurgence, including increasing presence on the land and restoring land-based practices, increasing traditional diets, increasing traditional knowledge transmission, strengthening familial activities and restoring community social systems, and implementing sustainable land-based economies. I believe my ideas can contribute to all these objectives directly or through community collaboration on a project.

Nelson (2008) suggests that “the metaphoric mind is the first foundation of native science” (p.6). Hunt (2013) explains how many Indigenous scholars have used stories, art, and metaphor as important ways to transmit knowledge, and how these have become

generally accepted in scholarly work when used in the right contexts. Patterson-Naepi’s (2018) use of “masi methodology” as a navigational metaphor was influential in how I wanted to approach my topic. I knew it was important to keep Mother Earth at the core of my research. Healing Mother Earth will heal communities; connecting with, protecting, living in harmony with, and relearning from our mother needed to be a constant theme throughout my paper.

However, while our metaphorical mother is reflected in my paper, it is not the central metaphor I want to employ in my work.

In Hunt’s (2014) article on ontologies, she describes the dance she has to perform, a subtle dance between two worlds to synthesize her dichotomous roles of Indigenous and scholar in a way that integrates the ethics of both groups and can be heard as legitimate while embodying both roles. The way she used this dancing metaphor made me think of my own experience of dance, in particular, the dance of the Métis People, the Red River Jig. The Jig embodies what I want my research to achieve. The Red River Jig is a hybrid of powwow footwork and Scottish dancing. Some rules of powwow are copied, as well; as with Grass dancing, footwork done on one foot must be copied on the other. However, the steps are done in tune to the fiddle music. The fiddle has no set beats and will switch between “low” and “high” sections at uneven, and seemingly random, intervals. A traditional jig step is done during the “high” section, and fancy steps are executed during the “low” section. The Jig seamlessly blends conventions of Western and Indigenous dance, with aspects of one or the other showing through at different times, creating something unique that recognizes merits of both traditions but incorporates them into something new that does not confine itself to the expected. While doing the Jig, which

**“As I jig, and focus on planting my foot down into the Earth, I want to make sure that my footsteps are imprinted into our Mother with both intention and an open flexibility.”**

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**Stephanie Tourand**

admittedly is not my strong suit, dancers are never quite certain when the fiddle will change from high to low (in most cases) and thus must stay in tune with what is happening in the music, listen for hints that a change is about to happen, and stay adaptable enough to suddenly switch to where the music takes them. The Jig also brought communities together; it is an activity that requires energy and brings positivity, and once was an opportunity for communities to spend time together. It was also an inclusive activity: though the Jig is unquestionably Métis, elders say that when dances were held, First Nations and settlers alike would show up and take up the dance.

The Jig is how I want to focus my thinking; my hopes are to appropriately mix teachings and conventions to develop a body of research that at times may lean more heavily on Western research or Indigenous knowledge, but that blends seamlessly into something that is an interweaving of concepts, creating something beautiful that feels right. As I jig, and focus on planting my foot down into the Earth, I want to make sure that my footsteps are imprinted into our Mother with both intention and an open flexibility.

Once I became confident in the metaphor and formatting I wanted to use in my work, I also wanted to undertake a self-examination of the language I use. Wording can



have subtle contexts or unintentionally continue colonial discourse. Language choice can also be a significant part of decolonizing research. Of course, research and academia that use Indigenous languages are ideal in that re-searching for knowledge we have lost. As stated by Battiste (2018), unique knowledge systems are imbedded in Indigenous languages which “hold many of the requiring awareness of the science of ecology and the environment, as well as sustainable economic development through knowledges and creative traditional

arts and crafts” (p. 124). Though my research will be done in English, it is important to recognize that worldview is greatly affected by the language used, and I will never have the same understanding of a place’s teachings as a native speaker from that place. However, I still wanted to be conscious of the language I used. Bartlett et al. (2007) demonstrate the importance of choosing words carefully in their work on decolonizing diabetes research. Western terms for health are avoided in order to create a more holistic understanding of the well-being of participants and communities. Using this example, I want to make sure that my words are chosen carefully and to consider how they may shift the reader’s mindset into a more colonial thinking pattern.

## Concluding Reflection

Going into my research, I was worried about the dangers of my writing about local reserve systems without being a band member. I have spent time working and staying on reserves, engaging in conversations with and sharing with local band members, and learning about some of the nuances of specifically interior BC reserves. However, I grew up as a Red River Métis, and as much as I have immersed myself into connecting with Indigenous peoples of this area (with my partner and his family having grown up here on their own land, and my job taking me to Indigenous communities across the Interior), it still felt like it might not be my place to comment on what is happening close to home. Several things eased this feeling and made me feel like my work was purposeful. First, as was discussed at our Knowledge Makers workshop sessions, Indigenous research should be done in response to an identified community need, as a form of service to the community. Looking at the BC interior, I see several bands dedicated to building solar and wind energy systems, a movement of tiny houses in response to Big Oil, and renewed interests in incorporating traditional practices into everyday living. On a larger scale, many individuals and communities are using both traditional housing and the latest technologies to protect Mother Earth and incorporate traditional teaching in the context of modern society. There is a desire there, and some even view Indigenous Knowledge as the “last hope in implementation of a sustainable

future” (Settee, 2008, p. 45). Knowing there is a desire was the first step in easing my mind. The second was using the above mindset and methodology to guide my work. Arming myself with the knowledge of different ontological and epistemological works on Indigeneity, and learning how other Indigenous researchers danced that line of decolonization and scholarly convention, has helped to assure me I am doing this in the right way and that my intentions are not misguided. Making sure things are done in a good way is important, but I have learned to push past that and recognize that I am enough. All Indigenous peoples need to work together to overcome the onslaught of hurdles we continue to face.

I want to engage in Indigenous research both to normalize Indigenous knowledge and epistemology in academic settings, and to heal myself in actively engaging with information in the way that felt most appropriate to me. Building on the foundation laid by Indigenous scholars before me, I have the opportunity to use their work as precedent to nudge at the norms and boundaries of academia and question the way we learn and engage with research. I view it as a responsibility to continue to poke holes in the Western conventions so that future learners will have even more ability to engage in academia in ways viewed as “not legitimate” today. I hope that as I continue with my research I will be able to add to that effort, moving the boundary another millimetre and creating just that little bit more room for other ways of knowing in the formal education sphere.

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When I sit around that circle I learn more about keeping our Mother as pure as we can. Whether it's science, whether it's geology, whether it's any kind of science, you study it because it's about Mother Earth. They don't teach too much about keeping Her pure. It's more and more about taking everything out, mining and about cutting the trees down and abusing the water. And that's where the love comes from. We've got to love keeping Mother Earth pure.

*~ Elder Mike Arnouse*



**O**ogami, Creator, thank you for this opportunity to live on this earth. Weget ganu da wun, my heart longs for You to bestow wisdom that is creative, that promotes inspiration to flow like the rivers. We yearn in many different yet similar ways to find healing from past destructive forces. May we learn to make time to re-search, to re-member wise ways of our ancestors, of other living beings, of this incredible resilient earth that has many lessons in the four directions and four seasons. May we as humans learn to respect the four parts of ourselves: our body, mind, soul, and spirit.



### Dr. Elder Margaret Vickers Hyslop

These are the days to research all that has been passed down for generations.

As we make time to research, we sharpen our awareness of the signs of the four seasons, gifts of the four directions and the awareness of our body, mind, soul, and spirit to guide us into deeper levels of knowledge that create a way for wisdom, to know how to transform ourselves.

Spring is like our childhood, full of energy and growth. Summer is like our young adulthood, blossoming into another dimension. Fall is like our golden years, harvesting all the goodness of life experiences. Winter is the time to slow down, digest all the goodness

and pass it on to the next generation as we prepare to 'sleep.'

Don Miguel Ruiz has gifted us a Toltec wisdom book, *The Four Agreements*, which offers "a powerful code of conduct that can rapidly transform our lives." These teachings can provide direction for those who are seeking more knowledge that leads to wisdom. The Four Agreements are: Be impeccable with your word; Don't take anything personally; Don't make assumptions; Always do your best.

My hope is that others may seek a similar intense practice of self-inquiry that may lead to inner transformation for self, and become another guide for others to follow.



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