

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

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

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

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

Method of Meaning-Making

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

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

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

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

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

- The Lodge (Indigenous Knowledges)

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

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

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

What Was Heard

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

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

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

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

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

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