

# How to Approach First Nations for Research and Business

## Protocols and Principles



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A presentation by

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# Outline

- Learning Objectives
- Did You Know...?
- Cultural Differences
- Key Notions, Strategies, and Cultural Protocols
- Best practices for Conducting Research with Indigenous partners
- Ethical Protocols for Projects involving Indigenous Partners
- Review
- Further Reading
- Internet Resources

# Learning Objectives

- To understand cultural differences between Indigenous peoples and other Canadians
- To learn about the paradigm shift in Indigenous research
- To appreciate alternative conceptions of pace of change
- To understand how to work collaboratively with Elders
- To learn best practices for approaching Indigenous peoples for purposes of research and business

# A Note on Terminology

- In Canada, the terms “Aboriginal” and “Indigenous” are used interchangeably to refer to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples
- “Indigenous People” also includes international Indigenous populations such as the Maori in New Zealand and the Sami in Finland

# Did you know...?

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- Indigenous peoples used their knowledge of the land to develop safe trails that became the basis for many present highways
- The Inuit people have no words for “time” or “history” – a long tradition of storytelling maintained their traditions and culture
  - <https://www.itk.ca/about-inuit>
- There is no word for “Goodbye” in the Stó:lō language of Halq’emeylem – *Kwe’tslo:me* means “I will see you”
- That when building business and research relationships with Indigenous peoples it is important to attend traditional ceremonies such as the First Salmon ceremony

# Did you know...?

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- Indigenous place names in BC include:
  - *Squamish* (mother of winds)
  - *Kamloops* (meeting of water)
  - *Chilliwack* (going back up)
  - *Lillooet* (wild onions)
  - *Qualicum* (where you find dog salmon)
- Indigenous research today is more of a **method** of study than an **area** of study
- Cultural activities central to many Indigenous societies, such as the Potlatch and Sundance, were banned from 1884 to 1951

# Did you know...?

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That the abundant ponderosa pine of the southern BC interior has traditionally been used by the Okanagan people to make dugout canoes



Source: [http://www.cbt.org/BasinHistory/assets/slideshows/FirstNations/FirstNations\\_Kayak.jpg](http://www.cbt.org/BasinHistory/assets/slideshows/FirstNations/FirstNations_Kayak.jpg)



# Canoes

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## Traditional use Birch Bark Canoes



Source: [www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com)

## Contemporary

- Racing – See CTV report documenting a seventh generation family of paddlers determined to keep Coast Salish canoe culture alive

<http://bc.ctvnews.ca/more/first-story/never-get-out-of-the-canoe-1.1385712#ixzz2jdVA8NCG>

# Traditional Buckskin clothing

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## Traditional



[www.traditionalaboriginalclothing](http://www.traditionalaboriginalclothing)

## Contemporary



# Moccasins

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## Traditional



## Contemporary



# Cultural Differences

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## Traditional Indigenous

1. *Interpersonal relations & affiliations are key*
2. *The group is important*
3. *Co-operation and personal humility is valued*

## Mainstream

1. The focus is on completing tasks & achieving goals
2. The individual is important
3. Competition brings out the best in people, confrontation is acceptable & individual initiative is valued

The following 5 slides are adapted from *Aboriginal Awareness Workshop: Guide to Understanding Aboriginal Cultures in Canada*. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

# Cultural Differences

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## Traditional Indigenous

4. *Patience & avoiding criticism are highly valued to preserve personal and group honour & dignity*
5. *Intuitive, creative, holistic, problem solving is valued*
6. *Inaccuracy is accepted*

## Mainstream

4. It's OK to be impatient for change, criticism & confrontation are acceptable in order to "get the job done"
5. Rational, logical, linear problem solving is valued
6. Accuracy is valued

# Cultural Differences

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## Traditional Indigenous

7. Harmony with nature is valued
8. Patience, co-operation & group harmony are valued; life's details are placed in the context of the life cycle
9. Information & ideas are dealt with in the possible context

## Mainstream

7. "Mastery" over nature is valued
8. Important to complete tasks within set time frames in order to achieve desired goals
9. Tasks are compartmentalized & considered one at time

# Cultural Differences

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## Traditional Indigenous

10. Several suggestions may be offered simultaneously, and all are considered; to be unclear is tolerated

## Mainstream

10. A number of facts directly related to the issue at hand are presented, with the emphasis on solutions; to be unclear is not well tolerated

# Cultural Differences

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## Traditional Indigenous

10. Face saving – avoiding personal or collective embarrassment, loss of dignity & disharmony – may be a priority
  - ▣ Individuals may avoid direct criticism, disagreement or unsolicited suggestions; find confrontation intolerable; prefer indirect methods of giving & receiving direction; & exert & expect emotional self-control & restraint

## Mainstream

10. Short-term confrontation, embarrassment, conflict & loss of dignity and harmony, may be acceptable in order to resolve a problem
  - ▣ Individuals may criticize; accept being criticized; openly disagree; offer unsolicited suggestions; and express anger, frustration, disappointment or enthusiasm



# Who is an “Elder”?

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## For Indigenous Communities

- Someone who has earned their place & contributed significantly to the spiritual, cultural or everyday life in their community
- Recognition as an elder does not come automatically with age
- An “elder” is like a library and young people seek their advice
- Usually lives with children and/or grandchildren

## For Mainstream Communities

An Elder is someone who

- Is getting older
- Has retired
- Lives alone (“Empty nest”)
- Has no children

# Key Notions about Indigenous People

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- Not all Indigenous communities are alike
- Each Indigenous community has different needs based on size, geographical location (urban or rural), available resources, & degree of isolation
- As a result of the residential school system, the “60’s Scoop” and other colonial policies, Indigenous communities and individuals may be at different stages of learning and re-learning their culture & traditions
- Indigenous peoples lived in collective societies that were based on holistic and interconnected relationships with all living things
- Significant cultural differences exist between mainstream Canadian society and First Nations, and among First Nations

# Key Strategies

## Building Respectful Relationships

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- Take the time to get to know the Indigenous communities you will work with
- Even though you may have considerable experience working with one First Nation (which will be helpful), you will still need to do some work to get to know other First Nations that you may have to work with
- Meet the local people, not just official “leaders”, and get invited to ceremonies, and listen, watch and learn
- Attend or volunteer at an Indigenous festival, Pow-Wow, or other traditional gathering
- A good place to start is in your own backyard: what Indigenous community(ties) live close to you?

# Key Strategies

## Building Respectful Relationships

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- Check out your local Indigenous community's website
- The Federal Government of Canada has basic information about Indigenous communities in Canada – check out the Website for *Virtua*, the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada Library Catalogue
  - ▣ <http://virtua.inac.gc.ca/cgi-bin/gw/chameleon>
- Think of how you can help celebrate National Aboriginal Day on June 21<sup>st</sup>
  - ▣ Check out the video: <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100013248/1100100013249>

# Cultural Protocols

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- Food is an integral part of creating a working relationship with Indigenous peoples – a meeting, gathering or ceremony will usually start with a meal
  - ▣ Sharing food is critical to developing a relationship before decisions are made
  - ▣ Bring a gift or “food” for the table
- Know and thank the host who invited you and acknowledge the traditional territory you are in
- Acknowledge both elected *and* traditional leaders – the host can help identify those in attendance
- Asking permission to take photos is important as many ceremonies and or gatherings do not allow photos or recordings

# Conducting Research with First Nations

## A paradigm shift

- “A significant element of the solution [to the costs of social problems facing Indigenous peoples] is the need to shift the research paradigm from one in which outsiders seek solutions to ‘the Indian problem’ to one in which Indigenous people conduct research and facilitate solutions themselves.”
  - ▣ SIFC, “A Brief to Propose a National Indigenous Research Agenda,” (May 8, 2002), p. 1

# Conducting Research with First Nations

## Best Practices

- Recently, there has been a clear shift in how research has been understood & organized in relation to Indigenous peoples
- Indigenous people & communities were once seen as interesting research *objects*
- Now they are regarded as *researchers & research partners* conducting research within an Indigenous knowledge tradition using both
  - ▣ Indigenous methodologies and
  - ▣ Traditional western methods

# Indigenous Methodology: Restoring

*Restoring well-being – Spiritually, Emotionally, Physically & Materially*

- Restorative justice programs which apply concepts of the “healing circle” & victim restoration are based on Indigenous approaches
  - ▣ These programs sometimes employ public shaming as a way of to provoke individual accountability & collective problem-solving
  - ▣ In the Navajo system, an “offender” is described as someone who acts as if he had no family
  - ▣ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission which involves *sharing, testifying, remembering, restoring* – all traditional indigenous methods
- Holistic Indigenous programs emphasize healing – not just individuals, but communities as well – rather than punishing
- Adapted from *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research & Indigenous peoples* (1999) by Linda Smith



# Conducting Research with First Nations

## Best Practices

- Non-Indigenous researchers are seen as equal partners rather than “external experts” in
  - ▣ Developing new understandings of Indigenous knowledge
  - ▣ Ensuring that research directly benefits Indigenous nations & communities
- Indigenous research is thus more a *method* of study than an *area* of study
- Indigenous research derives from traditions of thought & experience developed among & in partnership with First Nations in Canada & other parts of the world

# Research Involving Indigenous Peoples

## Characteristics

Researchers working with Indigenous Communities need to

- Ensure that Indigenous communities benefit from research findings
- Move away from a persistent emphasis on the “negative” in Indigenous research
- Involve Indigenous people in directing research on Indigenous issues
- Build up a pool of Indigenous partners to take on this research work
- Respect Indigenous knowledge traditions & the knowledge held by Indigenous Elders
  - ▣ Adapted from McNaughton, C. & Rock, D. (2003). *Opportunities in Aboriginal Research*.

# Indigenous Research Topics and Themes\*

## Land and Resources

- Resource sharing: what has worked over time
- Status of reserve lands, access rights, & expropriation
- Understanding traditional ways of land and natural resources stewardship
- Traditional fisheries
- Developing approaches to natural resource development that minimize impacts on the ecosystem, society, workers, health, traditional Indigenous activities, etc.
- Traditional land use documentation focusing on understanding principles of ethno-geography & defining cultural landscapes in the North

\*As identified by Indigenous people themselves in McNaughton, C. & Rock, D. (2003). *Opportunities in Aboriginal Research*.

# Protocols – Working with Indigenous Peoples

## A University's Guidelines

- For projects involving Indigenous, First Nations, Inuit, & Métis peoples, the researcher must
  - ▣ Seek community engagement in the research
  - ▣ Respect Indigenous, First Nations, Inuit, & Métis governing authorities
  - ▣ Recognize diverse interests within communities
  - ▣ Respect community customs and codes of practice
- In collaborative research, intellectual property rights should be discussed by researchers, communities, and institutions
- *Adapted from the University of the Fraser Valley's Policy 54, Section 5.4*

# Challenges

## For Outsiders Working Collaboratively with First Nations

- Learning how to work respectfully with elders and traditional leaders
- Accepting alternative conceptions of pace of change
- History of the sponsor institution/company
- Local & regional history of Indigenous – non-Indigenous relations
- Complexity of politics of the local First Nation(s)
- Diversity of opinion in Indigenous communities about sharing traditional knowledge
- Our own assumptions about community change

# Challenging our Own Assumptions

## Outsiders Working Collaboratively with First Nations

- The greatest challenge to working collaboratively with First Nations is not posed by the institution/company we work for or the community but rather by our ***own deep-seated assumptions about change, efficiency and the nature of decision-making***

# Review

- It is important to be aware of cultural differences and protocols when working with Indigenous peoples
- While Indigenous people & communities were once seen as interesting research *objects*, they are now regarded as *researchers & research partners*
- Indigenous people have identified several key research themes and topics involving land and resources
- Companies, universities, and other institutions have established protocols and principles for working with Indigenous peoples
- Outsiders working with Indigenous communities face a number of challenges

# Critical Thinking Questions

- In order to work collaboratively with Indigenous groups, why is it essential to be cognizant of cultural differences such as the value Indigenous people place on maintaining personal and group honour/dignity?
- Why do you think that historic government policies, such as the *Indian Act* provisions banning traditional Indigenous ceremonies, might pose an obstacle to working effectively with First Nations today?
- What are the potential benefits of having Elders involved in research and business collaborations with First Nations?
- In the Navajo justice system, why is an offender thought of as someone who is acting as if he had no family?



# Aboriginal Peoples & Forest Lands in Canada

by Tindall, D.B., Troster, R.L. & Perrault, P.

## Collaborations & Joint Ventures

- This excellent book, published by UBC Press in 2012, devotes 6 chapters to recent collaborations and joint ventures between non-Indigenous interests and First Nations



ABORIGINAL PEOPLES  
AND FOREST LANDS  
IN CANADA

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# Further Reading

- *Aboriginal Awareness Workshop: Guide to Understanding Aboriginal Cultures in Canada*. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.
  - <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/83431/publication.html>
- McNaughton, C. & Rock, D. (2003) *Opportunities in Aboriginal Research*. SSHRC: Ottawa.
- Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*. Zed Books: London & New York.
- *Guide to Relationship Building. 1.1 Working with First Nations*. Federation of Canadian Municipalities.
  - [http://www.fcm.ca/Documents/tools/cipp/CIPP\\_Toolkit\\_Unit\\_2\\_EN.pdf](http://www.fcm.ca/Documents/tools/cipp/CIPP_Toolkit_Unit_2_EN.pdf)

# Internet Resources

- *Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami* represents 55,000 Inuit living in 53 communities in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Northern Quebec & Northern Labrador
  - <https://www.itk.ca/about-inuit>
- *Never get out of the Canoe*, CTV report documenting a seventh generation family of paddlers determined to keep Coast Salish canoe culture alive
  - <http://bc.ctvnews.ca/more/first-story/never-get-out-of-the-canoe-1.1385712#ixzz2jdVA8NCG>
- Promising Approaches for Collaboration with First Nations on MPAs in BC
  - [http://cpawsbc.org/upload/First\\_Nations\\_MPAs\\_Summary\\_Report\\_Oct2009.pdf](http://cpawsbc.org/upload/First_Nations_MPAs_Summary_Report_Oct2009.pdf)
  - [http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/apply-demande/background-renseignements/aboriginal\\_backgrounder\\_e.pdf](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/apply-demande/background-renseignements/aboriginal_backgrounder_e.pdf)
  - <https://www.itk.ca/about-inuit>

# Internet Resources

- McNaughton, C. & Rock, D. (2003). Opportunities in Aboriginal Research. SSHRC (Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council).
  - [http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/apply-demande/background-reseignements/aboriginal\\_backgrounder\\_e.pdf](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/apply-demande/background-reseignements/aboriginal_backgrounder_e.pdf)
- 27-minute documentary exploring a collaborative venture between 3 First Nations, municipal government and private industry in developing waterpower on the Kapuskasing River in northeastern Ontario
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Os3ZA1N5AV4>
- Virtua, Aboriginal Affairs & Northern Development Canada Library Catalogue
  - <http://virtua.inac.gc.ca/cgi-bin/gw/chameleon>
- Video on National Aboriginal Day (June 21)
  - <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100013248/1100100013249>