

Front Line Staff, Advisors, and Student Services



Pulling Together

A Guide for Indigenization
of Post-Secondary Institutions

Professional Learning Series



Pulling Together: A Guide for Front-Line Staff, Student Services, and Advisors by [Ian Cull](#), [Robert L. A. Hancock](#), [Stephanie McKeown](#), [Michelle Pidgeon](#), and [Adrienne Vedan](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted.

Artist Statement

Inspired by the annual gathering of ocean-going canoes through Tribal Journeys, ‘Pulling Together’ created by Kwakwaka’wakw artist, Lou-ann Neel, is intended to represent the connections each of us has to our respective Nations and to one another as we Pull Together. Working toward our common visions, we move forward in sync, so we can continue to build and manifest strong, healthy communities with foundations rooted in our ancient ways.

Thank you to all of the writers and contributors to the guides. We asked writers to share a phrase from their Indigenous languages on paddling or pulling together...

‘alhgoḥ ts’ut’o ~ Wicēhtowin ~
kən limt p cyʕap ~ si’sixwanuxw ~ ʕihšʕ ~
Alh ka net tsa doḥ ~ snuhwulh ~
Hilzaqz as qíḡuála qúsa mánáḡuala wíwúyalaḡsm ~
k’idéin át has jeewli.àat ~ Na’tsa’mahṭ ~
S’yat kii ga goot’deem ~ Yequx deni nanadin ~
Mamook isick

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Project Steering Committee

Verna Billy-Minnabarriet, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
Jo Chrona, First Nations Education Steering Committee
Marlene Erickson, College of New Caledonia, BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Coordinators
Jan Hare, University of British Columbia
Colleen Hodgson, Métis Nation British Columbia
Deborah Hull, Project co-chair, Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training
Janice Simcoe, Project co-chair, Camosun College, I-LEAD
Kory Wilson, BC Institute of Technology

BCcampus

Dianne Biin, Project Manager and Content Developer
Michelle Glubke, Senior Manager
Lucas Wright, Open Education Advisor

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- Ian Cull holds the appointment of associate vice president, students, at the Okanagan campus of the University of British Columbia. He is an Anishinaabe person, and member of Dokis Indian Band located on the Dokis Indian Reserve in Ontario, Canada.
- Robert Hancock is Cree-Métis from Treaty 8 territory and English. He earned a PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of Victoria, and serves as the LE, NONET academic coordinator in the Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement.
- Stephanie McKeown immigrated to Canada from England in 1980. She has been working in educational research and measurement for over 25 years, and is currently the director of planning and institutional research at the Okanagan campus of the University of British Columbia.
- Michelle Pidgeon is of Mi'kmaq ancestry from Newfoundland and Labrador and is currently an associate professor in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University, with expertise in the areas of higher education and Indigeneity.
- Adrienne Vedan is Okanagan and Shuswap and a member of the Okanagan Indian band. She is the director of Aboriginal programs and services at the Okanagan campus of the University of British Columbia.

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Please note, sections 1 and 4 of this guide include information from the [Curriculum Developers Guide](#).¹

Notes

1. Curriculum Developers Guide: <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationcurriculumdevelopers/>

Overview

Purpose of this guide

A Guide for Front-Line Staff, Student Services, and Advisors is part of an open professional learning series developed for staff across post-secondary institutions in British Columbia.

Guides in the series include: [Foundations](#);¹ [Leaders and Administrators](#);² [Curriculum Developers](#);³ [Teachers and Instructors](#);⁴ [Front-Line Staff, Student Services, and Advisors](#);⁵ and [Researchers](#).⁶ These guides are the result of the Indigenization Project, a collaboration between BCcampus and the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. The project was supported by a steering committee of Indigenous education leaders from BC universities, colleges, and institutes, the First Nations Education Steering Committee, the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association, and Métis Nation BC.

These guides are intended to support the systemic change occurring across post-secondary institutions through Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation. A guiding principle from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada process states why this change is happening.

Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity. (2015, p. 3)

We all have a role to play. As noted by Universities Canada, “[h]igher education offers great potential for reconciliation and a renewed relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada.” (2015) Similarly, Colleges and Institutions Canada notes that “Indigenous education will strengthen colleges’ and institutes’ contribution to improving the lives of learners and communities.” (2015) These guides provide a way for all faculty and staff to Indigenize their practice in post-secondary education.

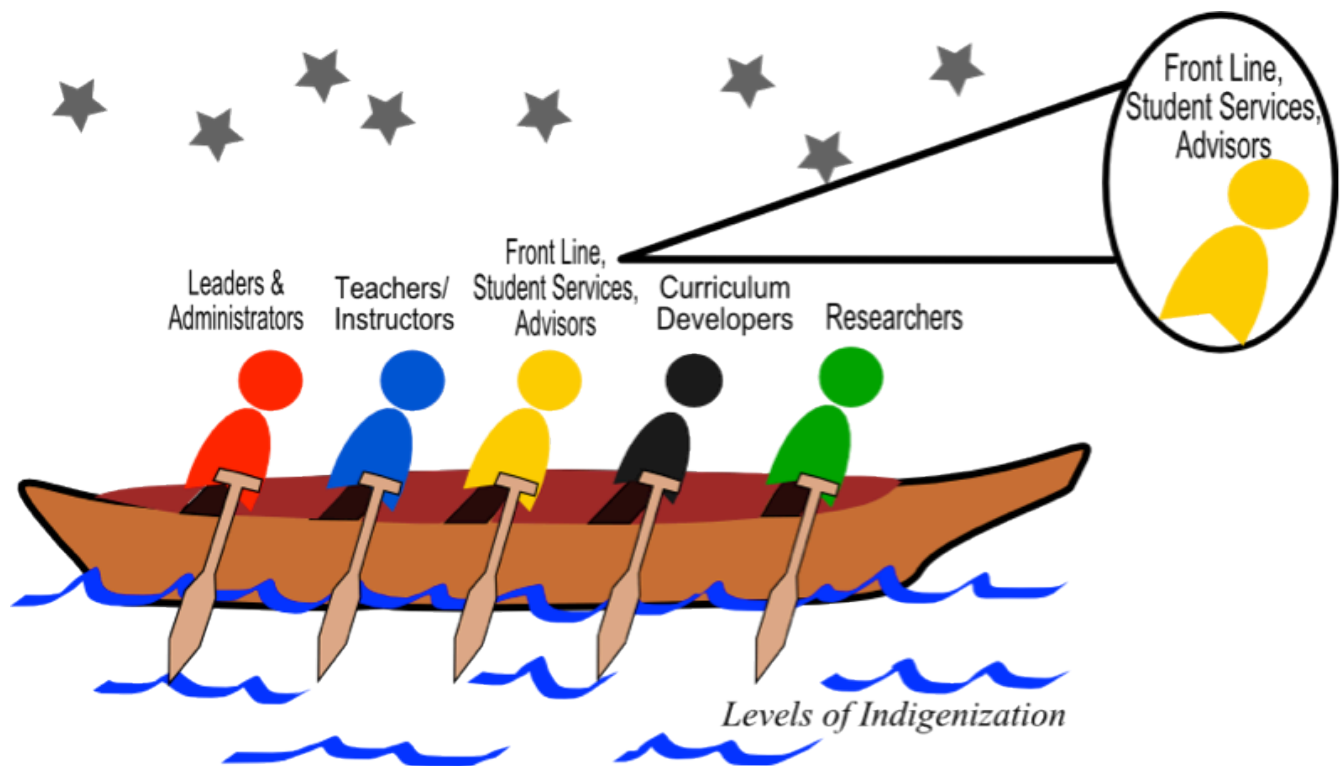


Fig 0.1: Pulling Together: A Canoe Journey Story.

The Indigenization Project can be described as an evolving story of how diverse people can journey forward in a canoe (Fig 0.1). In Indigenous methodology, stories emphasize our relationships with our environment, our communities, and with each other. To stay on course, we are guided by the stars in the sky, with each star a project principle: deliver holistically, learn from one another, work together, share strengths, value collaboration, deepen the learning, engage respectfully, and learn to work in discomfort. As we look ahead, we do not forget our past.

The canoe holds Indigenous Peoples and the key people in post-secondary education whose roles support, lead, and build Indigenization. Our combined strengths give us balance and the ability to steer and paddle in unison as we sit side by side. The paddles are the open resources. As we learn to pull together, we understand that our shared knowledge makes us stronger and makes us one.

The perpetual motion and depth of water reflects the evolving process of Indigenization. Indigenization is relational and collaborative and involves various levels of transformation, from inclusion and integration to infusion of Indigenous perspectives and approaches in education. As we learn together, we ask new questions, so we continue our journey with curiosity and optimism, always looking for new stories to share.

We hope these guides support you in your learning journey. As open education resources they can be adapted to fit local context, in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples who connect with and advise your institution. We expect that as more educators use and revise these guides, they will evolve over time.

How to use and adapt this guide

A Guide for Front-Line Staff, Student Services, and Advisors explores relationships between the institution, students, and Indigenous communities. These relationships are interconnected and are guided by shared values of Indigenization to both improve the educational and employment experiences of all students, faculty, and staff across the institution. It also explores how Elders, Indigenous community members, and community education partners are heard and included in the educational experience. This guide reflects a holistic way to serve Indigenous students.

This guide can be used as part of a learning community or in a group learning experience, adapting and augmenting it to include Indigenization pathways at your institution for Indigenous students and communities.

The *Guide for Front-line Staff, Student Services, and Advisors* is not a definitive resource, since First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives and approaches are diverse across the province. We invite you to augment it with your own stories and examples, and, where possible, include Indigenous voice and perspectives from your area in the materials.

To learn more about Indigenous-Canadian relationships since contact, please see the [Foundations Guide](#).

Note: For a technical description of how to adapt this guide please see [Appendix C](#).

Attributions

Fig 0.1: Pulling Together: A Canoe Journey Story, Front-line, Student Services, and Advisors emphasis by Dianne Biin is used under a [CC BY 4.0 International Licence](#).

Notes

1. Pulling Together: Foundations Guide: <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfoundations/>
2. Pulling Together: A Guide for Leaders and Administrators: <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationleadersadministrators/>
3. Pulling Together: A Guide for Curriculum Developers: <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationcurriculumdevelopers/>
4. Pulling Together: A Guide for Teachers and Instructors: <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationinstructors/>
5. Pulling Together: A Guide for Front-Line Staff, Student Services, and Advisors: <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfrontlineworkers/>
6. Pulling Together: A Guide for Researchers, Hiłk'ala: <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationresearchers/>

Introduction

As a staff member working in the front lines of a public post-secondary institution, you spend key moments with Indigenous students as they prepare to enroll, look for assistance and services during their time in programs, and seek information for transition between programs and institutions. While service to students is paramount, there are critical times when you also:

- Help Indigenous students feel a sense of welcoming and belonging
- Share information to best inform their choices
- Support their capacity to navigate the necessary systems
- Refer them to supports that are culturally and situation specific
- Help them move to the next stages of learning to meet their vision of success
- Show compassion and actively listen during interactions
- Support students so they feel confident to move onward

Since the release of the 1990 Green Report,¹ public post-secondary institutions across the province have sought to transform systems and processes to be inclusive and respect the diverse needs of Indigenous students and community educational partners. This strategy has also spread across the country; Colleges and Institutes Canada initiated the [Indigenous Education Protocol](#)² in 2014 and in 2015, Universities Canada released [Principles on Indigenous Education](#)³ to support institutional structures and approaches to support Indigenous self-determination and strengthen relationships.

Many Indigenous students are first-generation learners at post-secondary institutions, and their interactions with front-line staff and service providers inform how they share their experience with their family and community. One negative experience can cause harm and mistrust. Positive experiences help Indigenous students feel respected and help to build their trust with staff and faculty. This can lead to future generations wanting to further their post-secondary education. This guide is an opportunity for you to better understand Indigenous students and to figure out ways both you and your area or department can work to ensure supportive student experiences. By pulling together we can facilitate student success and contribute to long-term improvements for all Indigenous students and communities.

Notes

1. The “Green Report” is the Report of the Provincial Advisory Committee on Post-Secondary Education for Native Learners. It provided a comprehensive look at Indigenous training needs in post-secondary education and its 21 recommendations ranged from developing Indigenous advisory boards to providing culturally relevant student services for Indigenous students.
2. Indigenous Education Protocol: <https://www.collegesinstitutes.ca/policyfocus/indigenous-learners/protocol/>
3. Principles on Indigenous Education: <https://www.univcan.ca/media-room/media-releases/universities-canada-principles-on-indigenous-education/>

Section 1: Understanding Decolonization, Indigenization, and Reconciliation



Fig 1.1: First Peoples House, University of Victoria.

Attributions

Fig 1.1: [First Peoples House, University of Victoria](#) by [US Embassy Canada](#) is used under a [CC BY 2.0 Generic Licence](#).

Culture is based on beliefs, values, economic status, perceptions, and actions and is influenced from what you learned from your family, your community, and society. Intercultural learning is a way to hold more than one view in an equitable way. How you perceive other cultures and the ability to view from a different culture takes personal reflection, education, and conscious effort. While there is no way you can totally understand another's culture, you can be aware of your own culture and your position in a growing relationship.

As you work through this section, take a moment to reflect on the following questions:

- What do you hold as important when you work with students?
- Do you sometimes not understand why an interaction with a student goes the way it does? Is it because of miscommunication or a cultural misconnection?
- Do you take the time to try to see a situation from another viewpoint?

Purpose of this section

This section is intended to help you develop an understanding of the meaning and importance of Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation, and how you can participate in Indigenization at your institution. We explore the following topics:

- Decolonizing and Indigenizing as an unlearning and relearning process
- Pathways toward reconciliation
- Becoming an ally

This section can take up to two hours to complete.

Note: The sections “Decolonization and Indigenization,” “Pathways Toward Reconciliation,” and “Becoming an Ally” include information that was originally used in the *Curriculum Developers Guide*.

Decolonization and Indigenization

If we want to contribute to systemic change, we need to understand the concepts of decolonization, Indigenization, and reconciliation.

Decolonization

Decolonization is the process of deconstructing colonial ideologies of the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches. On the one hand, decolonization involves dismantling structures that perpetuate the status quo and addressing unbalanced power dynamics. On the other hand, decolonization involves valuing and revitalizing Indigenous knowledge and approaches and weeding out settler biases or assumptions that have impacted Indigenous ways of being. For non-Indigenous people, decolonization is the process of examining your beliefs about Indigenous Peoples and culture by learning about yourself in relationship to the communities where you live and the people with whom you interact.

We work in systems that perpetuate colonial ideals and privilege Western ways of doing. For example, many student services use forms and procedures instead of first initiating relationships with students. This is a colonial process that excludes rather than includes. Also, how libraries catalogue knowledge is Western and colonial.

Decolonization is an ongoing process that requires all of us to be collectively involved and responsible. Decolonizing our institutions means we create spaces that are inclusive, respectful, and honour Indigenous Peoples.

The call for decolonizing education and including Indigenous ways of knowing and being in education was first articulated in 1972 in [“Indian control of Indian education” \[PDF\]](#)¹ by the National Indian Brotherhood (now the Assembly of First Nations).

“We want education to give our children the knowledge to understand and be proud of themselves and the knowledge to understand the world around them.” (p. 1)

Indigenization

Indigenization is a collaborative process of naturalizing Indigenous intent, interactions, and processes and

making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts. In the context of post-secondary education, this involves including Indigenous perspectives and approaches. Indigenization benefits not only Indigenous students but all students, teachers, staff members, and community members involved or impacted by Indigenization.

Indigenization seeks not only relevant programs and support services but also a fundamental shift in the ways that institutions:

- Include Indigenous perspectives, values, and cultural understandings in policies and daily practices.
- Position Indigenous ways of knowing at the heart of the institution, which then informs all the work that we do.
- Include cultural protocols and practices in the operations of our institutions.

Indigenization values sustainable and respectful relationships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities, Elders, and organizations. When Indigenization is practiced at an institution, Indigenous people see themselves represented, respected, and valued and all students benefit. Indigenization, like decolonization, is an ongoing process, one that will shape and evolve over time.

Indigenization is not an “Indigenous issue,” and it is not undertaken solely to benefit Indigenous students. Indigenization benefits everyone; we all gain a richer understanding of the world and of our specific location in the world through awareness of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. Indigenization also contributes to a more just world, creating a shared understanding that opens the way toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. It also counters the impacts of colonization by upending a system of thinking that has typically discounted Indigenous knowledge and history.

Notes

1. Indian control of Indian education: <http://www.oneca.com/IndianControlofIndianEducation.pdf>

Decolonizing and Indigenizing as an Unlearning and Relearning Process

Recognizing the historical and contemporary colonial systems and practices within our educational institutions and broader society requires all of us to self-reflect and think about the impact of colonization. It also requires us to help influence change in the broader systems and societies within which we operate. “[I]nstitutional reform must be undertaken on multiple levels, by all peoples in the academic community, and result in a dramatically different structure, relationships, goals, and outcomes” (Pete, 2016, p. 81). We must go beyond having “decolonization as a metaphor” (Tuck & Yang, 2012) but as conscious, living part of our lives.

Working together encourages us to think of decolonization as a reciprocal partnership required for Indigenous people to participate meaningfully in the opportunities offered by our institutions. This means examining how students come in to institutions, how they move throughout the supports, and how to support positive transformation and self-determination.

Pathways Toward Reconciliation

Reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem – it involves all of us.

– Chief Justice Murray Sinclair (CBC, 2015)

Reconciliation

Reconciliation is about addressing past wrongs done to Indigenous Peoples, making amends, and improving relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to create a better future for all.

The work of Indigenization is a growing focus in this era of reconciliation, which has been driven forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), a multi-year investigation of the residential school system. The TRC gathered information in a variety of ways about the historical and contemporary injustices toward Indigenous Peoples from across the nation. The release of the *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling the Future: Summary of Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission* in June of 2015 marked an important moment in the history of Canada. In the context of reconciliation, Indigenization is one way in which we can contribute to working toward a stronger shared future as Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

The report, with its 94 Calls to Action, emphasizes the need for education to play a key role in service of justice and resurgence of Indigenous Peoples, and Indigenous communities are looking at post-secondary institutions to be leaders in responding to the TRC Calls to Action and in working to support Indigenous education in meaningful, concrete, and sustainable ways. Essential to this work is placing Indigenous perspectives at the centre of the work being done, or, as Marie Battiste has said, “Nothing about us without us” (quoted in Cote-Meek, 2017). It means we are moving towards processes of truth and reconciliation and transforming the educational system into spaces that are inclusive, respectful, and honour Indigenous people.

Given the colonial context of Canadian education, there is work to be done to decolonize our policies and practices to de-centre Western approaches and being to re-centre Indigenous ways of knowing, being, learning, and teaching. Mindful of the need for truth and reconciliation, this work is guided by a relatively straightforward question:

Are we making the institution a better place for those who come after us?

While the recent context of reconciliation has brought new levels of attention to this work, we acknowledge the long history of Indigenous faculty and staff and allies in supporting Indigenous students and advocating for change within institutions, and respectfully working to empower Indigenous communities.

Moving Forward, Reconciling Intent, Purpose, and Practice

Moving forward means ongoing self-reflection and assessment of one's own individual roles and responsibilities to supporting Indigenous students, and the following sections will guide you through this process. Moving forward also must come with clear financial and human resources support to provide ongoing professional development opportunities and targeted hiring practices.

When surveyed, BC Aboriginal post-secondary coordinators indicated that hiring Indigenous people in student services and other front-line services as the most supportive way to help with Indigenization in an institution.

Front-line services also require a way to transform institutional culture so the values of Indigenization continue. Too often, champions who initiate Indigenized practices and relationships are recognized as innovators to the department and institution; very rarely do these practices and relationships become common procedure or guiding policy. When the champion retires or changes jobs, the practice and relationship ceases. Staff engaging in this decolonizing, Indigenizing, and reconciliation practice need to be supported in their intentions, and they need to have space and time to discuss the challenges and celebrate areas of growth and success.

Becoming an ally

Acknowledging the overt and systemic forms of racism and discrimination within public post-secondary institutions is a core part of decolonization. It's also important to understand that by shifting individual mindsets and practices, we can make structural changes in institutional cultures, policies, and programs, thus Indigenizing the institution and ourselves. Becoming an **ally** is an important practice that addresses how to do this.

An ally is someone from a privileged group who is aware of how oppression works and struggles alongside members of an oppressed group to take action to end oppression. Anne Bishop explains:

Allies are people who recognize the unearned privilege they receive from society's patterns of injustice and take responsibility for changing these patterns. Allies include men who work to end sexism, white people who work to end racism, heterosexual people who work to end heterosexism, able-bodied people who work to end ableism, and so on. Part of becoming an ally is also recognizing one's own experience of oppression. For example, a white woman can learn from her experience of sexism and apply it in becoming an ally to people of colour, or a person

who grew up in poverty can learn from that experience how to respect others' feelings of helplessness because of a disability.

If you are a non-Indigenous person engaged in the work of Indigenization, you can better understand your role in this movement as being an ally to Indigenous people. An ally:

- does not put their own needs, interests, and goals ahead of the Indigenous people they are working with.
- has self-awareness of their own identity, privilege, and role in challenging oppression.
- is engaged in continual learning and reflection about Indigenous cultures and history.

Summary

Positioning yourself to support the transformation of services and supports for to Indigenous students and Indigenous communities is guided by national processes, provincial priorities, and relationships in your region. Together we can look at how to create an opportunity for privileging Indigenous ways of doing and being to better serve and support Indigenous students and communities at our institutions.

Activities

Activity 1: Locate yourself

Type: Individual

Time: 30 minutes

After reading this section, consider the following questions:

- How does your personal background and identity impact your knowledge and experience of Indigenous Peoples?
- What is your current relationship to Indigenous Peoples?
- What changes do you want to make in my relationship to Indigenous Peoples?
- How do you view your role in Indigenization at your institution?

Activity 2: Journey towards decolonization

Type: Individual

Time: 30 minutes

Watch this five-minute video entitled *Keep Calm and Decolonize. Walking is Medicine*.¹ Legendary filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin shares a story of decolonization from the Nishiyuu walkers.

- Why is it important to have decolonization as part of our work in responding to the TRC's Calls to Action?
- What work can you undertake to decolonize your practice and views?

Activity 3: Building allyship

Type: Individual

Time: 1 hour

Read the following three blog entries:

[Becoming an Ally](#)²

[Overcoming the Fear of Being Called a Racist: White Student Affairs Professionals Working for Racial Liberation](#)³

[White People Owning our Whiteness & Resistance](#)⁴

- What are three intentional practices you could engage in to build/enrich ally relationships with Indigenous colleagues, faculty, Elders, students, and community members?
- What is the current representation of Indigenous educational leadership and staff at your institution? In your department?

Notes

1. *Keep Calm and Decolonize. Walking is Medicine* video: <https://youtu.be/qxDfIdliAg>
2. *Becoming an Ally*: http://www.becominganally.ca/Becoming_an_Ally/Home.html
3. *Overcoming the Fear of Being Called a Racist*: <http://convention.myacpa.org/houston2018/overcoming-fear/>
4. *White People Owning our Whiteness & Resistance*: <http://convention.myacpa.org/houston2018/white-people-owning-whiteness-resistance/>

Section 2: Who are Indigenous Students?



Fig 2.1: The Tlicho Drummers and the Yellowknives Dene First Nation Drummers.

Attributions

Fig 2.1: [ACS_6712 \(Large\)](#) by [artic_council](#) is used under a [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 Generic Licence](#).

Introduction

Students enter our space and are free to be who they are – without teaching, answering, debating, dialoguing 500 years of colonization. More physical (and mental) spaces need to be like this.”

– Vanessa McCourt (2018, p. 14)

Identity grounds us, it guides us, and it gives us a foundation of who we are and what we can do. Every day, Indigenous students interact with staff in student services, academic advising, libraries, bookstores, and counselling services. This section considers ways we can ensure that we respect Indigenous identities and provide an environment that is accessible, inclusive, and safe for all students. We look at the diversity of Indigenous students and how their identity is often threatened by stereotypes and myths. We also explore Indigenous ways of knowing and being. To be an ally, it is helpful to understand how Indigenous students’ needs and worldviews differ from other student populations.

Purpose of this section

In this section, we look at how diverse Indigenous post-secondary students are. We also look at how education and experiences can form long-lasting relationships and positive experiences in post-secondary education. Topics include:

- Indigenous student diversity
- Myths that impact Indigenous student experience
- Indigenous ways of knowing and being

This section will take two to four hours for group activities and individual exploration.

Indigenous Student Diversity

Indigenous students attending BC post-secondary institutions represent over 600 distinct **First Nations**, **Métis**, and **Inuit** communities from across Canada. Many institutions also recognize Native Americans as Indigenous students. Indigenous student enrolment is increasing, and these students approach post-secondary through two streams:

- High school graduates (in 2015/16 the [Ministry of Education reported \[PDF\]](#)¹ 64 percent of Indigenous students completed high school, an increase of 7 percent in the past six years)
- Non-traditional students (mature students without Grade 12 credentials who are upgrading their high school marks)

Indigenous students are also parents and community leaders with a great breadth and depth of life experience. Some students will come to post-secondary institutions confident in who they are as Indigenous people; they have grown up within their culture, understand their language, and are strongly affirmed in their identities. Others, due to systemic impacts of colonization, such as residential schools, the 60s scoop, intergenerational trauma, and lost family histories, will come to post-secondary education in search (or even in denial) of their Indigenous identities. Indigenous identities are further complicated by where students grew up. Whether a student grew up in an urban centre or rural community or off-reserve or on-reserve will have an impact on their Indigenous identity.

Support services within post-secondary institutions

Keeping this diversity in mind, providing culturally relevant support services is critical to Indigenous student success. Many of the post-secondary institutions have either departments or Indigenous academic coordinators or advisors² for students to connect and interact throughout their enrolment and completion of programs.

The role of the an Indigenous academic coordinator has not always been easy to define as Janice Simcoe from Camosun College noted in 2002:

From the first days, we realized that the position of First Nations coordinator is a challenging one. It is one thing to say that these positions were supposed to support student success. It was quite another to define what that meant and develop ways to do it. We needed to examine the academic, financial, social, and cultural needs of the students we had been hired to support, and establish or learn ways to help them meet these needs.

That was, and continues to be, an extraordinary challenge ... Over the years we have evolved. There were only about nine of us at that first gathering. Now there are at least 52 people in the system who have official responsibility to promote First Nations student success. (Ministry of Advanced Education, p. 1-2)

Today Indigenous academic coordinators or advisors support Indigenous student diversity by meeting them where they are at in their cultural and community identity. Students will seek out different things; for instance:

- Students learning more about who they are as an Indigenous person will often seek cultural supports for their personal journey to make a deeper connection to their culture or understand what it means to be Indigenous.
- Students secure in their cultural identity will seek a feeling of community, and make the Indigenous student services department their culturally safe home away from home.

If your campus has an Indigenous student services department, the advisors or coordinators in this department can be a great support for Indigenous students and for anyone wanting advice about Indigenous issues. It's important to keep in mind that people working in Indigenous student services are often very busy as the holistic services they provide also includes connecting with Indigenous communities; depending upon how many Indigenous advisors and coordinators are in your institution, you may or may not have a delayed response to your requests.

Notes

1. Ministry of Education Report: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/ab_hawd/Public.pdf
2. The BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Advisory (BCAPSA) is a network of advisors and coordinators from across the province who provide services and supports to Indigenous students and work with Indigenous communities.

Myths that Impact Indigenous Student Experience

Indigenous students are not always in culturally safe spaces on campus. The concept of [cultural safety](#) recognizes that we need to be aware of and challenge unequal power relations at all levels: individual, family, community, and society. The reality is that many Indigenous students experience racial [microaggressions](#) daily and this ongoing harm creates feelings of isolation and unwelcomeness. A racial microaggression is a “subtle behaviour that [conveys] hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to persons of marginalized groups” (Shotton, 2017, p. 33). Negative messages are based on myths and stereotypes. Below are a few common misconceptions to dispel as you work with Indigenous students and build your allyship.

Indigenous students get 100 percent free education

Not all Indigenous students receive funding. There is a federal funding program called the [Post-Secondary Student Support program](#),¹ but only status First Nations and Inuit post-secondary students are eligible for funding under this program. This program is underfunded, with little budgetary increase since the mid-1990s. This causes First Nations and Inuit-designated organizations, who administer the annual allotted funds to their membership, to ration who, how, and what is funded. For example, some eligible students will have just their books and supplies paid for while others will get their tuition if they enrol full-time. Some programs may not be eligible for funding, including any continuing education programs and some online programs. For those students who must relocate to attend college or university, costs such as housing, day care, and transportation, are often not covered. Métis and non-status First Nations students are not eligible for Post-Secondary Student Support funding, so they must seek student aid, scholarships, and bursaries. Métis students can also apply to Métis Nation BC for post-secondary funding through its [Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program](#),² which is funded by Employment and Social Development Canada. Moreover, BC First Nations who have signed modern treaty agreements (for example, Nisga’a First Nation, Maa-nulth First Nations, Tsawwassen First Nation, Tla’min First Nation) no longer have access to the Post-Secondary Support Program and may or may not be able to provide post-secondary funding to their members. For more information about funding programs for Indigenous students, please see [Appendix B](#).

Indigenous students are “underprepared”

Not Quite. Many Indigenous students are the first generation of learners to attend a post-secondary institution,

so they may not know the processes involved in enrolment, transition, and graduation. Some students may need academic support to transition to the post-secondary classroom (for example, they may require tutors or academic support for numeracy, literacy, and technology); however, many will come fully prepared academically.

Students of mixed ancestry are Métis

Not all “mixed blood” people are Métis. The Métis are members of an Indigenous nation with roots in the North American fur trade. While some of their ancestors are European, the salient characteristic of Métis identity is based on shared histories, cultural practices, and community life. A person is Métis because they are descended from Métis ancestors and recognized by Métis relatives and communities, not because they are of mixed ancestry (Hancock, 2017). For further information, please see the [Métis Bibliography \[PDF\]](#),³ a supplement developed for the Indigenization Project.

If you’ve met one Indigenous student, you’ve met them all

Not true. Indigenous Peoples’ experiences cannot be homogenized; therefore, each student must be understood in relationship to their cultural identity, diverse spiritual practices, and experiences. For example, not all Indigenous people come from poverty, suffer from violence, or have lived on reserve. Understanding students’ socio-political circumstances is helpful in your role as an ally and service provider as is understanding the effects of colonization, residential schools, and other complex systemic issues facing Indigenous Peoples. However, we should not assume all students come from the same circumstance and that Indigenous people are all harmed.

Indigenous students are “spiritual”

Indigenous students are culturally diverse. Not all Indigenous people have the same spiritual practices. For example, not all Indigenous Peoples take part in smudging ceremonies or pow wows (these are primarily practiced on the prairies), and not all Indigenous people participate in feasts and potlatches (these traditions are practiced by Indigenous Peoples on the Northwest Coast). Spiritual practices are influenced by worldviews, language, and practices. Also, the effects of colonization, such as residential schools, mean some Indigenous students also practice faith-based religions either alongside or separate from their traditional cultural practices. Spirituality must be thought of as diverse as Indigenous Peoples themselves and we can’t make assumptions about what role spirituality plays in an Indigenous person’s life without knowing the individual.

Notes

1. Post-Secondary Student Support program: <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100033682/1100100033683>
2. Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program: <https://www.mnbc.ca/directory/view/342-ministry-of-employment-training>
3. Métis Bibliography: <http://solr.bccampus.ca:8001/bcc/file/c0a932f4-8d79-4d3d-a5d4-3f8c128c0236/1/FINAL%20Metis%20Bibliography%20for%20Indigenization%20Guides%202017.pdf>

Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being

While there is great diversity among Indigenous Peoples, there are also some commonalities in Indigenous worldviews and ways of being. Indigenous worldviews see the whole person (physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual) as interconnected to land and in relationship to others (family, communities, nations). This is called a **holistic** or **wholistic** view, which is an important aspect of supporting Indigenous students. The Canadian Council of Learning produced *State of Aboriginal Learning in Canada: A holistic approach to measuring success [PDF]*¹ to support diversity of Indigenous knowledges from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives. Across all three of these perspectives, relationships and connections guide the work of supporting Indigenous students.

The Indigenous wholistic framework² (Figure 2.2 below) illustrates Indigenous values and ways of being and the direct relationship and connection between academic programs and students services in supporting Indigenous students. Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) first provided post-secondary institutions with the 4Rs to supporting Indigenous students: **r**especting Indigenous knowledge, **r**esponsible relationships, **r**eciprocity, and **r**elevance. This was further elaborated by Pidgeon with the Indigenous wholistic framework, which is just one of many models that have been used to think about the wholistic student experience, particularly Indigenous student success (Pidgeon, 2012, 2016a). This framework is not meant to be a model that treats all Indigenous Peoples as the same but a model to show how the diversity of Indigenous understandings of place, language, and cultures relates to the individual, faculty, and community, both institutional and Indigenous communities within and outside the institution. An Indigenous learner who is balanced in all realms (physical, intellectual, spiritual, emotional) and empowered in terms of who they are as an Indigenous person has their cultural integrity (Tierney & Jun, 2011) not only valued but honoured as they go through their post-secondary journey.



Fig 2.2: Indigenous wholistic framework.

This Indigenous wholistic framework provides guiding principles to ensure post-secondary institutions become accessible, inclusive, safe, and successful places for Indigenous students as follows:

Respect

- Encompasses an understanding of and practicing community protocols.
- Honours Indigenous knowledges and ways of being.
- Considers in a reflective and non-judgmental way what is being seen and heard.

Responsibility

- Is inclusive of students, the institution, and Indigenous communities; also recognizes one's own connections to various communities.
- Continually seeks to develop and sustain credible relationships with Indigenous communities. It's important to be seen in the community as both a supporter and a representative of the institution.
- Means understanding the potential impact of one's motives and intentions on oneself and the

community.

- Honours that the integrity of Indigenous people and Indigenous communities must not be undermined or disrespected when working with Indigenous people.

Relevance

- Ensures that curricula, services, and programs are responsive to the needs identified by Indigenous students and communities.
- Involves Indigenous communities in the designing of academic curriculum and student services across the institution to ensure Indigenous knowledge is valued and that the curriculum have culturally appropriate outcomes and assessments.
- Centres meaningful and sustainable community engagement.

Reciprocity

- Shares knowledge throughout the entire educational process; staff create interdepartmental learning and succession planning between colleagues to ensure practices and knowledge are continued. Shared learning embodies the principle of reciprocity.
- Means Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are both learning in process together. Within an educational setting, this may mean staff to student; student to student, faculty to staff; each of these relationships honours the knowledge and gifts that each person brings to the classroom, workplace, and institution.
- Results in all involved within the institution, including the broader Indigenous communities, gain experience in sharing knowledge in a respectful way.
- Views all participants as students and teachers in the process.

Through this model, front-line staff, advisors, and student services professionals can begin to see the depth and breadth of relationships to support the whole student.

Attributions

Fig 2.2: Indigenous wholistic framework by M. Pidgeon is used under a [CC BY 4.0 International Licence](#).

Notes

1. *State of Aboriginal Learning in Canada: A holistic approach to measuring success*: http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education2/state_of_aboriginal_learning_in_canada-final_report,_ccl,_2009.pdf

2. Pidgeon intentionally uses the “w” in holistic for the Indigenous wholistic framework to reference the whole person. Absolon (2009) and Archibald et al. (1995) also intentionally use the term “wholistic.”

Summary

Sharing the 4Rs as key principles in the Indigenous wholistic framework shows the heart of Indigenous education in that it connects the physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual realms of a student to their families, their campus community, their Indigenous communities, and beyond. Awareness of student diversity is decolonizing and debunks popular misconceptions and stereotypes about Indigenous Peoples. This awareness helps lessen the potential for microaggressions, thus creating a culturally safe environment for student success. The following activities are self-reflective and let you compare current ethical practices to Indigenizing your practice.

Activities

Activity 1: Building a wholistic practice

Type: Individual

Time: 1 hour

Looking at the Indigenous wholistic framework and the guiding principles, reflect on the following questions:

- How can you use the 4 Rs (respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility) to better serve and honour the culture of Indigenous students?
- How do you see the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs of Indigenous students and communities being helped (or hindered) at your institution?
- What areas of growth and development can you identify for yourself?
- What ways can you further your professional development? (Who can you turn to for support?)
- What resources do you need? What books, workshops, online guides, or communities of practice can help you to gain this knowledge?)
- What aspect of the whole student do you engage in your practice? How could you engage with the other aspects?

Activity 2: Dispelling stereotypes and addressing microaggressive behaviours

Type: Individual

Time: 1 hour

Watch the two-minute video [Wab Kinew Top 5 Stereotypes toward Indigenous Peoples in Canada](https://youtu.be/20EmLfHTVlw)¹

Read:

- Lenard Monkman CBC News (2016) “[Debunking the myth that all First Nations people receive free post-secondary education](#).”²
- Heather Shotton (2017). “[I Thought You’d Call Her White Feather](#)”: Native Women and Racial Microaggressions in Doctoral Education.³ *Journal of American Indian Education*, 56(1), 32-54. (Note: you’ll need a JStor institutional account to download this article.)

Questions:

- What are three new ideas about Indigenous student experiences that you have gained from reading the resources and watching the videos?
- What else do you need to know?
- How will you go about to seek answers to these questions?

Activity 3: Working in a culture of support

Type: Group

Time: 1 hour

- Discuss how you would create a culture of support where you can challenge assumptions and biases in the work of your unit.
- Build examples of promising practices at your institution that can help your unit further serve Indigenous students. Consider campus environments, spaces, and cultures; policies; programs; websites; curricula; pedagogies; academic programs; and student services.
- Read the [ACPA Ethical Principles and Standards \[PDF\]](#)⁴ and create an ethical code of conduct for working with Indigenous students in your unit or program.
- Once your team or unit has developed some ideas on how it can create a culture of support, develop a strategy for sharing reflections on how well you are living up to this ideal, both individually and as a group. Discuss ways you can hold each other accountable for meeting this goal.

Notes

1. *Wab Kinew Top 5 Stereotypes toward Indigenous Peoples in Canada* video: <https://youtu.be/20EmLfHTVlw>
2. "Debunking the myth that all First Nations people receive free post-secondary education" <http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/debunking-the-myth-that-all-first-nations-people-receive-free-post-secondary-education-1.3414183>

3. "I Thought You'd Call Her White Feather": Native Women and Racial Microaggressions in Doctoral Education:
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/jamerindieduc.56.issue-1>
4. ACPA Ethical Principles and Standards: http://www.myacpa.org/sites/default/files/Ethical_Principles_Standards.pdf

Section 3: Understanding Indigenous Worldview Values to Better Support Indigenous Students

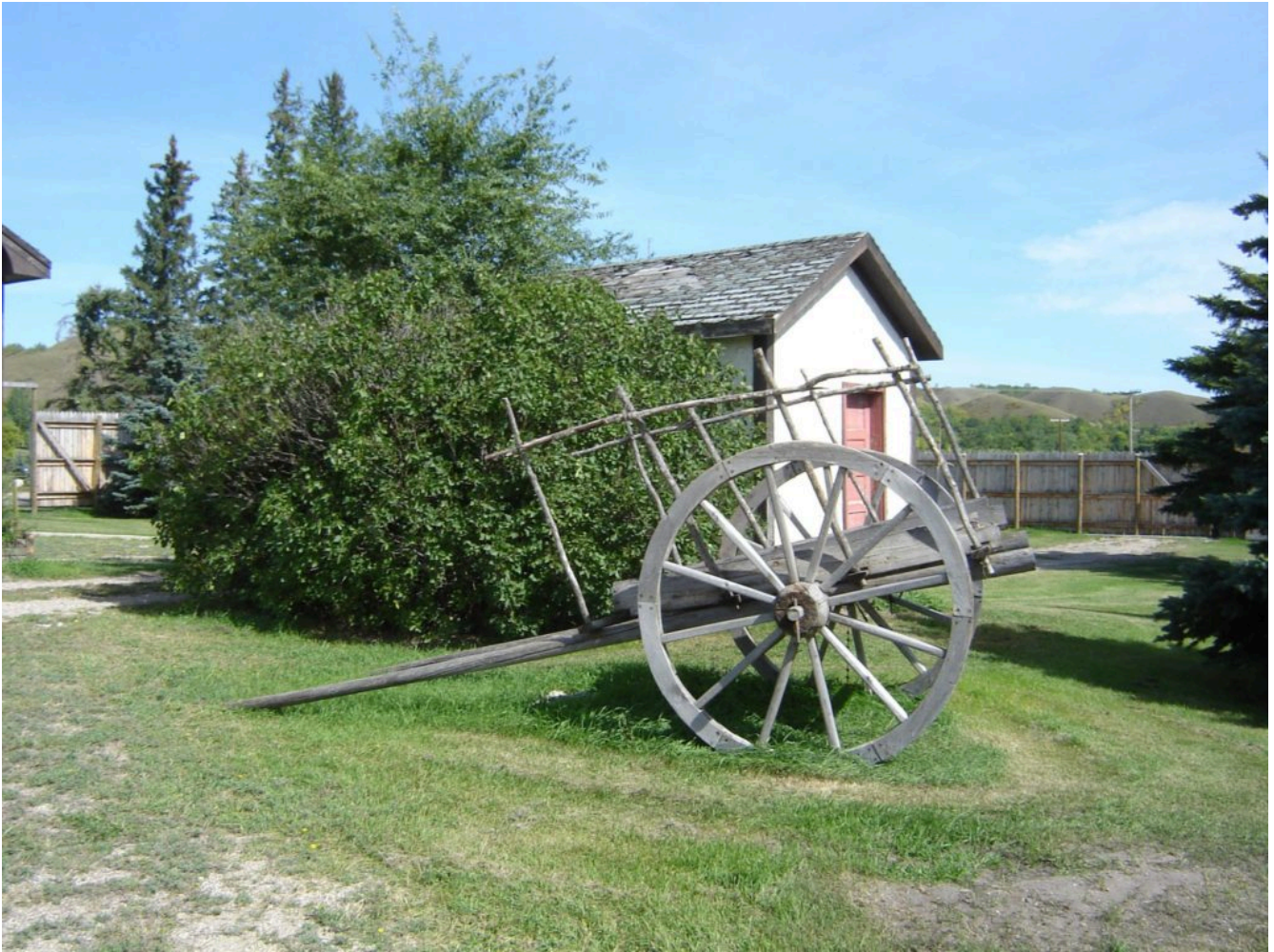


Fig 3.1: Red River Cart at RE-built fort at Fort Qu'Appelle Saskatchewan.

Attributions

Fig 3.1: [Red River Cart](#) by [ShriMesh](#) is used under a [CC BY-SA 3.0 Unported Licence](#).

Introduction

The Indigenous goal of living ‘a good life’ is sometimes referred to ... as striving ‘to always think the highest thought’... Thinking the highest thought means thinking of one’s self, one’s community, and one’s environment ‘richly’ – essentially, a spiritual mindset in which one thinks in the highest, most respectful, and most compassionate way, thus systemically influencing the actions of both individuals and the community.

– Gregory Cajete (2000, p. 276)

Purpose of this section

This section provides an overview of the values in an Indigenous worldview, including:

- Land and traditional territory
- Elders
- Language
- The learning spirit

This section also includes Indigenized integral competency self-assessment to help us acknowledge these values in services and supports for Indigenous students, Indigenous staff, and Indigenous community partnerships.

This section will take four hours to complete as you’ll be conducting a self-assessment

By understanding and acknowledging Indigenous principles of holism and inter-relatedness, we can:

- Understand the importance of land to Indigenous self-identity
- Recognize the roles of Elders in service delivery
- See how revitalizing and using Indigenous languages creates transformative spaces

Land and Traditional Territory

Land is central to the identities and ways of life of Indigenous Peoples, and relationships to the land should be at the core of Indigenous services and programs.

The phrase “We will always be here and we are not going anywhere,” demonstrates Indigenous Peoples’ resiliency and perseverance in the face of ongoing colonization and their deep connection to the physical and metaphysical worlds that are in relationship to land, sea, and sky. This relationship is commonly expressed as, “We belong to the land, the land doesn’t belong to us,” foregrounding the idea that our role is as stewards for coming generations. There are over 30 distinct [First Nations of British Columbia \[PDF\]](#)¹ whose territories transcend Western geopolitical borders.

It now a common practice at public and private institution events, important meetings, and in formal documentation, to acknowledge an institution’s relationship to traditional lands and territories in which the campuses were built, as appropriate to the specific location. A helpful resource is the [Guide to Acknowledging First Peoples and Traditional Territory](#)² from the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT, 2017). It includes the territory acknowledgements of post-secondary institutions across Canada and states:

While acknowledging territory is very welcome, it is only a small part of cultivating strong relationships with the First Peoples of Canada. Acknowledging territory and First Peoples should take place within the larger context of genuine and ongoing work to forge real understanding, and to challenge the legacies of colonialism. Territorial acknowledgements should not simply be a pro forma statement made before getting on with the “real business” of the meeting; they must be understood as a vital part of the business.

Notes

1. First Nations of British Columbia: <http://moa.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/SchoolProgram-FirstNationsMap.pdf>
2. Guide to Acknowledging First Peoples and Traditional Territory: <https://www.caut.ca/content/guide-acknowledging-first-peoples-traditional-territory>

Elders

Elders are very important to Indigenous communities as they are central to keeping traditional wisdom and cultural knowledge alive and passing it forward. Their “credentials” are not determined by a university or other institution, but by their people and other knowledge holders, based on their lived experiences and their recognition as keepers of knowledge.

Elders are closely connected to land, language, and culture. Their insights and guidance shape the mission and programming of Indigenous units and departments, and institutions as a whole. Their involvement – and often, simply their presence – supports students, staff, and faculty, both in terms of the relationships they uphold and as role models of their cultural and emotional support and physical presence.

Ideally, Elders’ guidance touches all levels of the institution from the senior administration to the day-to-day experiences of students.

Language

Languages contain and reflect unique and distinctive ways of understanding and relating to the world around us, and they are central to understanding expressions of Indigenous identity and community. In British Columbia, there are 34 distinct and diverse languages spoken across the province as well as the Métis languages Michif and Chinook jargon. To see the distribution of languages, please see the Museum of Anthropology [BC First Nations Languages map \[PDF\]](#)¹(version 4, 2011).

Great harm was caused to Indigenous languages by the assimilative policies of residential schooling and other forms of colonialism. Decades of damaging policies resulted in a significant decline in speakers of many Indigenous languages, to the point that many languages in Canada currently have no living fluent speakers. Today many Indigenous communities are working to revitalize their languages. [First Voices](#)² through the First Peoples' Cultural Council supports language revitalization through an online archive and teaching resource.

Notes

1. *BC First Nations Languages* map: http://moa.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/Resources-BCFirstNations_Languages.pdf
2. First Voices: <https://fv.nuxeocloud.com/>

The Learning Spirit

Learning for Indigenous people is not institution specific and goes beyond formal education; rather, it is lifelong, place-based, relational, experiential, communal, and purposeful. Indigenization of post-secondary institutions and systemic change means we create different spaces for these gifts to be shared and learned.

Mi'kmaq scholar, Marie Battiste defines the **learning spirit**:

What guides our learning (beyond family, community, and Elders) is spirit, our own learning spirits who travel with us and guide us along our earth walks, offering us guidance, inspiration, and quiet unrealized potential to be who are. In Aboriginal thought, the Spirit enters this earth walk with a purpose for being here and with specific gifts for fulfilling that purpose ... Our individual gifts for fulfilling our purpose are expressed in ourselves, in our growing talents, and in our emerging of shifting interests (p. 15).

As more and more Indigenous students enter post-secondary institutions, we need to examine processes of reclaiming culture and reframing identity and relationships through the services and supports offered across the institution to ensure transformation can occur and there is joy in learning.

Indigenized Integral Professional Competency Self-Assessment

On our journey of decolonization and Indigenization, it is helpful to self-assess our own intentions and behaviours within the post-secondary institution. The Indigenized integral professional competency self-assessment below is a tool you can use to identify your strengths and areas for development in working with Indigenous students and communities.

How it works

In each quadrant of the Indigenized integral professional competency, the competencies are clustered by proficiency level; general skills and knowledge, interactive competencies, and self-mastery. As you read through the self-assessment, please rate your competency level using the following rating scale.

Table 1: Competency Rating Scale

Rating	Description
0	I have no knowledge or experience of this and would need guidance or training to achieve it.
1	I have very little knowledge or experience of this and would need some guidance or further training to achieve it.
2	I have enough skill and/or knowledge to do this confidently on a regular basis without any support.
3	I am very confident I can do this and feel I have developed such a high level of knowledge and/or experience that I could help others do this also.
n/a	Competence not required for my job role.

Once you have completed the assessment, review your answers for the competencies you rated:

- “0” or “1” flag those as areas for development and training.
- “2” indicates that you’re meeting the competency.

- c. “3” means you have exceeded the competency and are able to support and develop others in this area.

For more information about the framework that was used to create this self-assessment tool, see [Appendix A](#).

Indigenized integral professional competency self-assessment

Bear (Intention)



Learning goal: Understand your responsibility to develop an appreciation for Indigenous Peoples’ ways of knowing and how decolonization and Indigenization benefits all students.

Learning outcome: Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of acknowledging Indigenous Peoples and place, of the historic challenges for Indigenous Peoples with respect to education, and how you in your role can mitigate these systemic barriers.

Table 2: Bear (Intention) Self-Assessment

Area	I am able to:	My rating (scale of 0 to 3)
General knowledge and skills	Welcome Indigenous perspectives to expand my own understanding of others.	
	Formally acknowledge the territory(ies) that my institutional campus(es) are built upon.	
	Identify the services and resources available to Indigenous students on my campus and within my community.	
Interactive competencies	Demonstrate approachability and openness to Indigenous ways of knowing and being.	
	Demonstrate awareness of, and responsiveness to, challenges and systemic barriers faced by Indigenous students.	
	Generate, and when appropriate, implement solutions to mitigate these challenges within my designated area of responsibility.	
Self-mastery	Seek opportunities to make connections and strengthen relationships with Indigenous students and Indigenous community members.	
	Demonstrate awareness of, and responsiveness to, how colonization and systemic barriers have an ongoing influence on the policies and practices that shape my role.	
	Actively participate in policy and practice change that aligns with Indigenous strategic priorities for my department/institution.	

Raven (Behaviour)

Learning goal: Engage respectfully with Indigenous students and communities. Respond appropriately to particular circumstances of Indigenous students and actively work to remove systemic barriers.

Learning outcome: Acknowledge personal and professional responsibility in fostering a positive learning environment for all students. Use self-reflection to gain insight, self-understanding, and awareness of one's self and one's role in relation to engaging respectfully with Indigenous students and communities.

Table 3: Raven (Behaviour) Self-Assessment

Area	I am able to:	My rating (scale of 0 to 3):
General knowledge and skills	Recognize the importance of fostering intercultural engagement among Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, faculty, and staff.	
	Share information within my institution, and beyond, to inform current and prospective Indigenous students of the array of services, programs, and supports available to them at my institution.	
	Demonstrate awareness of, and responsiveness to, verbal and nonverbal communication across cultures.	
Interactive competencies	Engage in self-reflection and recognize the strengths and limitations of one's own worldview on my communication with others.	
	Examine my own personal beliefs about experiences of trauma and reflect on the impact these have on your interactions with Indigenous students, colleagues, organizations, and systems.	
	Generate ideas for resources, spaces, and approaches that promote dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, staff, and faculty at my institution.	

Area	I am able to:	My rating (scale of 0 to 3):
Self-mastery	Collaborate with Indigenous colleagues and students in support of decolonization work to identify and overcome the systemic barriers for Indigenous students faced at my institution.	
	Prioritize welcoming and respectful learning environments on my campus(es) through the implementation of programs, services, support mechanisms, and spaces dedicated to Indigenous students.	
	Actively promote the importance of Indigenization of curricula (including co-curricula and extra-curricular) through responsive programming, orientations, and instruction.	

Wolf (Community)



Learning goal: Build relationships with community partners and service providers.

Learning outcome: Apply respectful communication skills with students and communities through meaningful engagement and informed action and recognition that oral history is valid.

Table 4: Wolf (Community) Self-Assessment

Area	I am able to:	My rating (scale of 0 to 3):
General knowledge and skills	Appreciate the importance of Elders and community involvement in programs and services offered on and off my campus(es).	
	Recognize and value the significant roles and voices of Indigenous students and people in my community.	
	Demonstrate the awareness of the relationship of my institution and community Indigenous advisory committees.	
Interactive competencies	Identify Indigenous programs and services offered in my community and understand how to refer students to these resources.	
	Demonstrate mutual respect for different ways of knowing and recognize the contributions made by Indigenous people on my campus(es) and in my community.	
	Actively seek opportunities to foster a reciprocal relationship with Indigenous students and Indigenous students services on and off my campus(es).	
Self-mastery	Provide opportunities for non-Indigenous students to build awareness and knowledge on the realities, histories, cultures, and beliefs of Indigenous people in Canada.	
	Consider priorities raised by Indigenous students and Indigenous community members when developing unit operations and practices.	

Area	I am able to:	My rating (scale of 0 to 3):
	Actively promote partnerships among educational and local Indigenous communities to maintain an open, collaborative, consultative, and reflective process on the specific needs of Indigenous students.	

Salmon (Systems Fit)



Learning goal: Know how to value Indigenous expertise, knowledge, practices, and how to provide a culturally safe environment for Indigenous people.

Learning outcome: Understand how policies and systems can better include Indigenous perspectives and principles.

Table 5: Salmon (Systems Fit) Self-Assessment

Area	I am able to:	My rating (scale of 0 to 3):
General knowledge and skills	Respect the practices, customs, values, and norms of Indigenous persons, cultures, and backgrounds.	
	Develop awareness and sensitivity of Indigenous cultures at my institution and understand the diversity of Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia and Canada.	
	Recognize the role of post-secondary institutions in facilitating access and enabling a supportive learning environment for all students.	
Interactive competencies	Develop human resources strategies that increase the number of staff and faculty, applying to, hired at, and retained at my unit/institution.	
	Develop and sustain formal relationships with Indigenous communities to transform the physical place and infrastructure of the campus to reflect Indigenous people and honours the relationship with Indigenous people and their communities.	
	Raise awareness among government partners and stakeholders of our institutional commitments to and the importance of investing in sustainable initiatives that advance post-secondary opportunities for Indigenous youth.	
Self-mastery	Advocate for Indigenous students and programs from an informed position.	

	Develop fiscal plans and policies that ensure Indigenous programs, students, and concerns are adequately supported.	
	Demonstrate cultural acumen to lead institutional change as a non-Indigenous person.	

Summary

“Thinking the highest thought” in this section explored some key Indigenous worldview values. Relationships and interconnections to place (the land), our relationships with those knowledgeable and helpful (Elders), and the ways in which we communicate (language) all demonstrate Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. Keeping Indigenous values centred in your self-assessment takes time and concerted effort but it leads to an Indigenized service that benefits all students who come to your institution. Using these values, the framework and self-assessment tool and framework look help us understand Indigenization of self, processes, and systems in an interconnected and relational way.

Activities

Activity 1: Thinking spatially

Type: Individual

Time: 30-60 minutes

Download and read the 2005 article from Yuchi scholar, Daniel Wildcat, “[Indigenizing the Future: Why We Must Think Spatially in the Twenty-First Century](#).”¹(*American Studies*, Volume 46, no. 3/4.)

Reflect on:

- Where is your campus located and on whose territory is your campus built?
- Have you heard or witnessed oral history of the traditional territory? How did it make you feel? What drew your attention?
- How did you or your family come to be on that territory? Remember your first experience on the land that made you feel connected.

Activity 2: Elders as strength builders

Type: Individual

Time: 1 hour

Read the chapter by Alannah Young Leon entitled “Elders’ Teachings on Leadership: Leadership as Gift” from the 2014 [Living Indigenous Leadership: Native Narratives on Building Strong Communities](#).²

Reflect on the following:

- Who are the Elders that work with your institution?
- Who are the key contacts in your institution for working with Elders?
- How have you previously interacted with Elders?
- In what aspects of your work do you see Elders being helpful?
- How would you respectfully engage with Elders?

Activity 3: Language revitalization as an act of reconciliation

Type: Individual

Time: 30 minutes

Read the June 2016 article “[Revitalizing Indigenous Languages is Key to Reconciliation](#)”³ from the *Policy Options* online journal.

Reflect on the following:

- What languages are spoken by the community or communities on whose territory your institution is built?
- How can you engage with and support language use in your role?
- How can you support language retention and growth?

Activity 4: Exploring the Self-Assessment Tool

Type: Individual

Time: 1-2 hours

Complete the Indigenized Integral Professional Competency Self-Assessment Tool.

- Name three key competencies you scored high and explore ways to meet competencies that received a low score.
- What is your personal action plan for Indigenizing your practice and building competencies? Explore the opportunities for learning about Indigenous experiences and relationships at your institution and build this into your professional development.

Notes

1. Indigenizing the Future: Why We Must Think Spatially in the Twenty-First Century: <https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/5841?show=full>
2. *Living Indigenous Leadership: Native Narratives on Building Strong Communities*: <https://www.ubcpres.ca/living-indigenous-leadership>
3. Revitalizing Indigenous Languages is Key to Reconciliation: <http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/june-2016/revitalizing-indigenous-languages-is-key-to-reconciliation/>

Section 4: Toward an Indigenized Student Services



Fig 4.1: UFV – Metis Nation-BC Joint Project Announcement.

Attributions

Fig 4.1: [UFV – Metis Nation BC Joint Project Announcement-10](#) by [University of the Fraser Valley](#) is used under a [CC BY 2.0 Generic Licence](#).

Introduction

Purpose of this section

This section explores the interconnections of Indigenous education to serving Indigenous students and communities and how you can make a difference at your institution. Topics include:

- Indigenization and institutional interconnections
- Building responsible relationships
- Promising practices and policies to support student transformation
- Exploring ways to advocate and inspire others

This section will take one hour to complete.

Note: The sections “Building responsible relationships” and “Becoming an advocate” include information that was originally used in the *Curriculum Developers Guide*.

Indigenization and Institutional Interconnections

Indigenization in practice is deeply grounded in the traditions and cultural protocols of the traditional landholders that an institution is built upon; it is informed by the diversity of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit of Canada.



Fig 2.2: Institutional interconnections to Indigenization.

Figure 2.2 provides the institutional interconnections to Indigenization. It shows that individuals within the

institution have specific roles and responsibilities that are interconnected to their unit/department/centre goals and purpose. The focus and practices of the department are then influenced by the institutional leadership, such as direct supervisors, senior executive and other community partners. The relationships that an institution, unit, and staff have with local Indigenous communities and organizations within and outside the institution are important. In fact, Indigenization of cannot occur without these critical relationships informing each step and the entire educational process.

Attributions

Fig 2.2: Institutional Interconnections to Indigenization by M. Pidgeon is used under a [CC BY 4.0 International Licence](#).

Building Responsible Relationships

We can accomplish so much more working together than working on our own. This is true for teams, units, departments, and institutions. It is important to be engaged in working for the common good, within the considerations of decolonization and Indigenization, and to recognize our individual and institutional role in ensuring responsibility and accountability.

A key principle of decolonization and Indigenization is that each person within an institutional community is responsible to these relationships. Every front-line staff member and student affairs professional is accountable to their unit and director, who are then accountable to the senior leadership. The interconnections of the relationships we have working within an institution and across the British Columbia post-secondary system is critically important to improve Indigenous student success in this province.

Recognizing that each of us is part of the relationship towards truth and reconciliation, we can enact it through our participation and active engagement. This engagement builds upon the concept of reciprocal relationships. As defined by Verna Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt (1991), we “are in a position to create a new kind of education, to formulate new paradigms or explanatory frameworks that help us establish a greater equilibrium and congruence between the literate view of the world and the reality we encounter when we step outside the walls of the ‘Ivory Tower’” (p. 12). Essentially, these reciprocal relationships create opportunities for learning between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people that improve understanding and inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing and being within the academy. In ways similar to the [TRC \(2015\) Calls to Action \[PDF\]](#),¹ this collective reciprocal responsibility ensures that we are all part of the journey as a community.

Connecting with others working toward Indigenization

You can find others in your institution who are working toward Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation, and build connections between your existing communities and create new and different relationships. Many post-secondary institutions have Indigenous plans or strategic documents that describe their commitment to Indigenization. These plans vary widely from institution to institution, and some institutions are working on new or revised versions. There may be opportunities to get involved in this work where your perspective as a front-line worker is important to share.

Notes

1. TRC (2015) Calls to Action: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

Promising Practices and Policies to Support Student Transformation

Many post-secondary institutions have developed policies, procedures, and practices to Indigenize their institutions. We have compiled a list of key policies and procedures developed at institutions in BC and Canada. The list is organized into physical, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional supports. These examples simply illustrate some ways we can Indigenize the institution with policies, procedures, and practice, which vary from institution to institution as they are based on the local relationships and partnerships with Indigenous communities.

Physical

The following procedures and practices reflect how physical space and access within the institution accommodates Indigenous people. This includes how to work respectfully with Indigenous knowledge authorities and provides and supports culturally safe and relevant spaces for shared learning.

Table 1: Physical Policies, Procedures, and Practices

Institution	Policy/Procedure/Practice
University of Lethbridge	<p>Procedure: Sweat Lodge Ceremonial Procedures and Location Map¹</p> <p>The University of Lethbridge has developed procedures for Sweat Lodge ceremonies. They require that a staff member book the space 10 days prior to the event to allow time to obtain the required approval from the City of Lethbridge Fire Department. They also require that at least one staff member attend the ceremony. The booking form is the contract for service, liability, and safety. The website also provides clear policies and information about the lodge size and location.</p>
University of Victoria	<p>Practice: Payments to Indigenous payees²</p> <p>At University of Victoria, the Accounting Department has developed a process in conjunction with the Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement to ensure that payments made to Indigenous payees are completed in a culturally sensitive way. There are procedures and guidelines in place and steps that staff need to take to facilitate this goal.</p>
University of Northern British Columbia	<p>Policy: Smudging and other ceremonial use of smoke [PDF]³</p> <p>This policy provides guidelines to facilitate Aboriginal traditional, ceremonial, and pedagogical events while adhering to the British Columbia Tobacco Control Act (RSBC 1996- Chapter 451) regulating smoking in workplaces and in post-secondary educational institution. The university must comply with the law.</p>
Vancouver Island University	<p>Procedure/Practice: Faculty Letter of Agreement for Elders-in-Residence⁴</p> <p>This agreement recognizes and affirms the Vancouver Island University Elders-in-Residence as gifted faculty who provide a unique and highly regarded knowledge contribution to VIU and the VIU community. It gives specific procedures about how Elders are compensated for their knowledge.</p>

Intellectual

The following policies and practices relate to the processes of student admission, transition, and completion. They also show the interconnections between departments and other institutions.

Table 2: Intellectual Policies, Procedures, and Practices

Institution	Policy/Procedure/Practice
University of British Columbia	<p>Policy: Aboriginal Admission Policy⁵</p> <p>UBC may consider applicants who do not meet the current competitive admission cut-off set by the individual faculties and schools, but who meet the University-wide academic minimum of 70% for first-year programs or the grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale for applicants applying from a recognized post-secondary institution. Applicants must also satisfy program pre-requisites set by the individual faculties and schools.</p>
University of British Columbia and Langara College	<p>Practice: Aboriginal Transfer Program⁶</p> <p>This practice ensures that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students who complete the program requirements at Langara College will be guaranteed admission with certain degree programs at UBC's Vancouver Campus.</p>
Simon Fraser University	<p>Policy: Aboriginal Undergraduate Admission Policy⁷</p> <p>Simon Fraser University's admission policy takes into consideration an Indigenous applicant's educational history, cultural knowledge, work experience, educational goals, and other achievements. This information is reviewed by a three-member committee composed of participants from Indigenous student services, the specific faculty applied to, and University Admissions.</p>
College of New Caledonia	<p>Policy: Aboriginal Education and Services [PDF]⁸</p> <p>The College of New Caledonia has had a policy in effect since 1999 that states the college "recognizes and supports First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in their goals of self-determination. CNC recognizes that the learning environment is enriched by diversity, and will specifically include Aboriginal cultures. CNC will actively work with Aboriginal people to identify and respond to their needs."</p>

Institution	Policy/Procedure/Practice
University of Lethbridge	<p>Policy: Aboriginal Education⁹</p> <p>The primary objective of the University of Lethbridge’s Aboriginal Education policy is to “re-invigorate, reaffirm, and strengthen the university’s historic commitment to Aboriginal peoples, re-establishing Aboriginal education as a core priority of the University...”</p>
Camosun College	<p>Practice: Indigenous Limited Priority Admission process¹⁰</p> <p>At Camosun College, the BC Human Rights Tribunal process for priority admissions to select programs. “... offers priority seating for qualified Indigenous students in Nursing, Practical Nursing, and Early Learning and Care. Five per cent of the seats are set aside for Indigenous students to help meet critical health and child care needs in urban and rural Indigenous communities.”</p>

Spiritual

The following policies and practices support the cultural identity of Indigenous students. This may also include how to include Indigenous community resources and look at ways for Indigenous cultures to be welcomed into the institution.

Table 3: Spiritual Policies, Procedures, and Practices

Institution	Policy/Procedure/Practice
BC Institute of Technology	<p>Practice: Traditional Sweat Lodge Ceremonies¹¹</p> <p>BCIT holds monthly Sweat Lodge Ceremonies. Their website states, “The Indigenous Services department exclusively welcomes BCIT staff and students to join us in our sweat lodge ceremonies...NOTE: All participants are asked to refrain from drugs and alcohol four days before the ceremony. Questions? Please come in and ask at Indigenous Services.”</p>
University of Lethbridge	<p>Practice: Blackfoot and First Nations, Métis and Inuit Protocol Handbook¹²</p> <p>University of Lethbridge has created a handbook that provides guidelines for faculty, staff, students, board, and senate members when incorporating Blackfoot and other First Nations Métis and Inuit (FNMI) cultures into activities or ceremonies on campus.</p>
Lakehead University	<p>Policy: Indigenous and Aboriginal Cultural Ceremonies Policy¹³</p> <p>Lakehead University in Ontario has created a policy to show that they respect and support the Aboriginal tradition of smudging that includes the use of four sacred medicines (sage, cedar, tobacco, and sweetgrass). Lakehead University recognizes and supports Aboriginal traditions practised on campus by Aboriginal students, faculty, and staff in classrooms, student gathering places, offices, cultural events, and meetings in various locations throughout the university.</p>
Northwest Community College	<p>Policy/Practice: First Nations Council¹⁴</p> <p>Northwest Community College created a First Nations Council in 1996. The First Nations Council focuses on student advocacy, program promotion, curriculum design, cultural issues and content, program and education service evaluation and will assist Northwest Community College in improving its relationships with First Nations communities in the Northwest college region.</p>
Camosun College	<p>Practice: Convocation Regalia¹⁵</p> <p>Camosun College’s graduation policy recognizes traditional dress: “you are a member of an Indigenous nation, the military, or are from another country, you may choose to wear your regalia, uniform, or national dress in place of the traditional graduation gown.”</p>

Emotional

These policies and promising practices explore the emotional and cultural supports available to Indigenous students throughout their educational journey.

Table 4: Emotional Policies, Procedures, and Practices

Institution	Policy/Procedure/Practice
Justice Institute of BC	<p>Practice: Elders-in-Residence program¹⁶</p> <p>The Justice Institute of BC has an Elders-in-Residence program. “Elders in Residence dedicate the majority of their time supporting and encouraging Aboriginal students and providing a cultural connection to them on their journey. They are also available to students, their families, and JIBC’s faculty and staff.”</p>
Vancouver Island University	<p>Practice: Elders Protocol¹⁷</p> <p>VIU has an Elders-in-Residence program that recognizes the important role Elders play. “They provide counselling, support, and guidance to all students at VIU. You will often hear the students referring to the Elders as ‘Auntie’ or ‘Uncle,’ which is a sign of both affection and respect. Vancouver Island University Elders are active in a variety of areas encompassing student support, classroom instruction, teaching traditional protocols and cross-cultural sharing.”</p>

Notes

1. Sweat Lodge Ceremonial Procedures and Location Map: <http://www.uleth.ca/policy/sweat-lodge-ceremonial-procedures-location-map>
2. Payment to Indigenous payees: <http://www.uvic.ca/vpfo/accounting/resources/indigenous-payment.php>
3. Smudging and other ceremonial use of smoke: http://www.unbc.ca/assets/policy/facilities/smudging_and_other_ceremonial_use_of_smoke_policy.pdf
4. Faculty Letter of Agreement for Elders-in-Residence: <https://www2.viu.ca/HumanResources/VIUFA/contents.asp>
5. Aboriginal Admission Policy: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=2,14,0,0>
6. Aboriginal Transfer Program: <http://transfer.aboriginal.ubc.ca/>
7. Aboriginal Undergraduate Admission Policy: <http://www.sfu.ca/students/admission/admission-requirements/aboriginal-admission-policy.html>
8. Aboriginal Education and Services: www.cnc.bc.ca/Assets/Exploring/Services/Aboriginal+Resource+Centre/Aboriginal+Education+and+Services+Policy.pdf
9. Aboriginal Education: <http://www.uleth.ca/policy/aboriginal-education-policy>
10. Indigenous Limited Priority Admission process: <http://camosun.ca/learn/school/indigenous-education-community-connections/students/health-seats.html>
11. Traditional Sweat Lodge Ceremonies: <https://www.bcit.ca/indigenous/sweatlodgecerem.shtml>
12. Blackfoot and First Nations, Métis and Inuit Protocol Handbook: <http://www.uleth.ca/policy/blackfoot-and-first-nations-metis-and-inuit-protocol-handbook>
13. Indigenous and Aboriginal Cultural Ceremonies Policy: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/policies/human-resources/cultural-protocol-policy>
14. First Nations Council: <https://nwcc.bc.ca/about-us/explore-nwcc/first-nations-council>
15. Convocation Regalia: <http://camosun.ca/events/grad/before-grad.html>
16. Elders-in-Residence program: <http://www.jibc.ca/about-jibc/office-indigenization/elders-residence-program>
17. Elders Protocol: <https://aboriginal.viu.ca/elders-viu>

Becoming an Advocate

Now that you have completed this guide, you have a responsibility to share your knowledge and experience with others. As you go about your work, consider ways in which you can bring Indigenous ways of being into your organizational culture, such as acknowledging the lands during in-person meetings or conference calls or creating opportunities to collaborate on Indigenous-led work. How might you advocate for Indigenization in your policies and procedures (for example, in regards to payment of honoraria or hiring policies)? How might you support Indigenization of your physical workspace (for example, through inclusion of Indigenous art or recognition of lands)?

Summary

In this final section you saw ways to weave together the principles of Indigenization into institutional practice. This weaving of knowledges and practice requires commitment, partnerships, and relationships. The policies and practices are just a few examples of how Indigenization has been integrated and infused into institutional culture.

Exercises

Activity 1: Building holistic services

Type: Group

Time: 2-8 hours

1. Discuss how your unit/program area supports the holistic needs of students.
 - What connections or resources do you need to be able to support the cultural integrity of Indigenous students?
2. Create a shared document of resources for your unit that focuses on serving Indigenous students to support your work and the work of other units and departments at your institution. Based on the Indigenous wholistic framework (in section 2), identify:
 - recommendations to make improvements in each of the four realms (physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual); and
 - how you can use the 4Rs (respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility) to inform and shape
 - staff practices
 - policy changes
 - institutional culture to better support Indigenous students

Activity 2: How do relationships support success?

Type: Group

Time: 30 minutes

Take a moment to reflect and explore the following questions:

- Who at your institution is also undertaking decolonizing or Indigenizing work?
- What relationships do you currently have at your institution that you find helpful in supporting student success?
- How do these relationships help you support Indigenous students?

Activity 3: Supporting relevant and responsive staff

Type: Group

Time: 30-60 minutes

- How does policy and practice, in your unit and institution, help or hinder staff in serving Indigenous students?
- What three changes would you recommend to improve the services the unit provides to Indigenous students?

Conclusion

Creating space for Indigenous Peoples and communities to engage in learning requires a lot of unlearning and relearning of historical harms and how institutional racism has been normalized. We can all play a role in Indigenization and work to provide better access for Indigenous students, include Indigenous worldviews and perspectives in our systems, and provide welcoming spaces for all students.

We hope you have found this guide helpful in your own journey to better support Indigenous student success. When we pull together, we move forward with purpose, honour, humility, love, and respect.

In concluding, let's consider the words of Angus Graeme, president of Selkirk College:

What does Indigenization look like in 25 years? I believe that for a college to be successful, Indigeneity will be so engrained in the governance, operations, courses, programs, and services at the college that the term *Indigenization* will no longer be needed. Indigenous students will be confident and successful, proud of who they are, and proud of their cultures, traditions, and languages. We will have increased the number of faculty and staff who identify as Indigenous. The college will be a vibrant place of learning. Wouldn't it be amazing if 25 years from now (if not sooner!) the president of the college were an Indigenous person and a Selkirk College alumni? (Harrison et al., *Leaders and Administrators Guide*, 2018)

Additional Resources

Articles (journals)

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Online resources

- [Aboriginal Student Transition Handbook \[PDF\]](#)¹
- [Draft Standards for Indigenous Services](#)²
- [Aboriginal Undergraduate to Graduate Transition Project](#)³
- [Documents on Aboriginal health services in Vancouver \[PDF\]](#)⁴
- [On Racism and White Privilege](#)⁵
- [Reconciliation Begins with Me: Community Action Toolkit \[PDF\]](#)⁶
- [First Nations Pedagogy](#)⁷
- [Indigenous Student Success in Higher Education: A Personal Perspective](#)⁸
- [Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Rubric \[PDF\]](#)⁹
- [Intercultural Resources](#)¹⁰
- [Self-reflection Rubric \[PDF\]](#)¹¹
- [Enhancing Indigenous Student Success](#)¹²
- [Listening and Learning to boost Indigenous student success](#)¹³
- [Kinàmàgawin: Aboriginal Issues in the Classroom](#)¹⁴
- [What I learned in class today: Aboriginal issues in the classroom](#)¹⁵

Other student development models

- [Family Education Model \[PDF\]](#)¹⁶ (Heavy Runner & deCelles, 2002)
- [Indigenous Student Success \[PDF\]](#)¹⁷ (Pidgeon, 2008)
- [The 4Rs \[PDF\]](#)¹⁸ (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991)
- [Home-Going](#)¹⁹ (Waterman, 2017)
- [Student Development in College](#)²⁰ (Evans, et al., 2009)
- [Ecological Systems Theory](#)²¹

Notes

1. Aboriginal Student Transition Handbook: <https://www.uvic.ca/services/indigenous/assets/docs/Aboriginal%20Student%20Transition%20Handbook%20Final.pdf>
2. Draft Standards for Indigenous Services: <https://www.uvic.ca/services/indigenous/facultystaff/standards-services/>
3. Aboriginal Undergraduate to Graduate Transition Project: <https://www.uvic.ca/services/indigenous/facultystaff/standards-services/>
4. Documents on Aboriginal health services in Vancouver: <http://www.sanyas.ca/downloads/companion-document.pdf>
5. On Racism and White Privilege: <https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/on-racism-and-white-privilege>
6. Reconciliation Begins with Me: Community Action Toolkit: http://reconciliationcanada.ca/reconciliation-begins-with-me/downloads/CommunityActionToolkit_KitchenTable.pdf
7. First Nations Pedagogy: <https://firstnationspedagogy.ca/index.html>
8. Indigenous Student Success in Higher Education: A Personal Perspective: <https://youtu.be/snhSBDpT0B8>
9. Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Rubric: <http://web.uri.edu/assessment/files/Intercultural-Knowledge-and-Competence-Rubric.pdf>
10. Intercultural Resources: https://intercultural.trubox.ca/ii_resource/
11. Self-reflection rubric: <https://learnweb.harvard.edu/wide/courses/files/rubricthroughlines.pdf>
12. Enhancing Indigenous Student Success: <https://www.univcan.ca/media-room/publications/enhancing-indigenous-student-success-canadas-universities/>
13. Listening and Learning to boost Indigenous student success: <https://www.universityaffairs.ca/news/news-article/listening-learning-boost-indigenous-student-success/>
14. Kinàmàgawin: Aboriginal Issues in the Classroom: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ISWRz_D8Jo
15. What I learned in class today: Aboriginal issues in the classroom: <http://intheclasse.arts.ubc.ca/video/>
16. Family Education Model: <http://pieducators.com/sites/default/files/Student-Retention.pdf>
17. Indigenous Student Success: https://www.tru.ca/__shared/assets/Pidgeon_2008_indigenous_theorizing_of_success_and_retention23640.pdf
18. The 4Rs: <http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education2/the4rs.pdf>
19. Home-Going: <https://urresearch.rochester.edu/fileDownloadForInstitutionalItem.action?itemId...>
20. Student Development in College: <https://www.amazon.ca/Student-Development-College-Research-Practice/dp/0787978094>
21. Ecological Systems Theory: <https://www.psychologynoteshq.com/bronfenbrenner-ecological-theory/>

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Glossary of Terms

ally: someone from a privileged group who is aware of how oppression works and struggles alongside members of an oppressed group to take action to end oppression.

cultural safety: the recognition that one needs to be aware of and challenge unequal power relations at the level of individual, family, community, and society. In a culturally safe learning environment, each person feels that their unique cultural background is respected and they are free to be themselves without being judged, put on the spot, or asked to speak for all members of their group.

decolonization: the process of deconstructing colonial ideologies of the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches. Decolonization involves valuing and revitalizing Indigenous knowledge and approaches, and weeding out Western biases or assumptions that have impacted Indigenous ways of being

First Nations: the accepted term for people who are Indigenous and who do not identify as Inuit or Métis. Today there are around 630 First Nations in Canada.

holism/wholistic view: An Indigenous worldview that sees the whole person (physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual) as interconnected to land and in relationship to others (family, communities, nations)

Indigenization the collaborative process of naturalizing Indigenous intent, interactions, and processes and making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts. In the context of post-secondary education, this involves including Indigenous perspectives and approaches.

Inuit (singular Inuk): an Indigenous group living in the Arctic regions of Canada, Greenland, Alaska, and Russia. Historically they were referred to in Canada as “Eskimos” or “Esquimaux,” but this term is neither accurate nor respectful and should not be used.

learning spirit: the entity that guides learning (beyond family, community, and Elders). It is an Indigenous concept that spirits travel with individuals and guide them, offering, guidance, inspiration, and the unrealized potential to be who we are.

Métis: a distinct Indigenous group with formal recognition equal to that of the First Nations and Inuit. Their ancestors were French and Scottish men who migrated to Canada in the 17th and 18th centuries to work in the fur

trade and who had children with First Nations women and then formed new communities. The families and their descendants were most often referred to as Métis (from the French for “to mix”).

microaggressions: brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights, invalidations, and insults to an individual or group because of their marginalized status in society.

reconciliation: addressing past wrongs done to Indigenous Peoples, making amends, and improving relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to create a better future for all.

Appendix A: Indigenized Integral Professional Competency Framework

The Indigenized integral professional competency framework (the framework) provides the foundation for the self-assessment in Section 3 of this guide. The self-assessment is a new tool developed for this professional learning series, so it does not have a history of testing and revision. However, you can adapt and modify the assessment to suit your institution's priorities on Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation. The framework follows the format of the Indigenized integral model (intention, community, behaviour, and systems fit) while the competencies amalgamate and sort other competency models for post-secondary service professionals.

The framework provides staff in post-secondary institutions with the tools to assess their levels of competency working with Indigenous students and communities. It's an opportunity to systematically measure a level of baseline professional competency and skill for monitoring, as well as to regularly track competency levels for professional development.

This framework is informed by and reflects the following models and scholarship:

- [Indigenized integral model \[PDF\]](#)¹ shared by the Indigenization Project Steering Committee (2017) as the framework for the learning series
- Scholarship of Pidgeon (2018, 2016) and others
- [ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies \[PDF\]](#)²
- [CACUSS Student Affairs and Services Competency Model](#)³
- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's \(2015\) Calls to Action \[PDF\]](#)⁴

Holism guides our perspective on students and student development and differs from traditional views of student development theory and the role of the institution. The CACUSS Competency Model has “student-centred and holistic” as a value (defined as one that “recognizes and values all aspects of a student's life including physical, intellectual, financial, spiritual, emotional, personal and social” [CACUSS, 2017, p. 7]).

The framework measures three areas of professional competencies for working with Indigenous Peoples and

community partners: general skills and knowledge, interactive competencies, and self-mastery. These three levels provide front-line staff, advisors, and student services staff with the ability to self-reflect on their current knowledge and create a learning plan to deepen their understanding and change their practice to be more holistic and balanced for all students who seek services and support at post-secondary institutions.

General skills and knowledge: encompasses a foundational knowledge and understanding of Indigenous Peoples and territory on which your institution resides. This foundational competency will also include knowledge of Indigenous history and impact of colonization, the connection to land, and responsible relationships along with an understanding of the rich diversity of Indigenous Peoples, ways of knowing and being, and languages across BC and Canada. General skills will include the ability to identify on- and off-campus resources for Indigenous students as well as the relationship of the institute with local Indigenous communities.

Interactive competencies: measures your capacity to assess the ability to provide services to Indigenous students and to understand the systemic barriers faced by Indigenous students. Individuals will be able to identify ways to mitigate systemic challenges within the scope of their role and authority. Engage in trauma-informed practices and build relationships with Indigenous colleagues, Elders, students, and Indigenous community members.

Self-mastery: is your deep level of self-awareness and practice. Individuals will be proficient in providing guidance to other units in ways of respecting Indigenous protocols and ways of being within the academy. Additionally, you will demonstrate ongoing commitment and responsibility to decolonize and Indigenize policies and practices across the institution.

The framework explores individual intentions and behaviours within a community and institutional system. Each aspect of the framework (intention, behaviour, community, and systems fit) helps individuals assess their own professional understandings and competencies to decolonize, Indigenize, and reconcile services to Indigenous Peoples. Each aspect does not run sequentially, so when you do the self-assessment and realize there are gaps in your perceptions and knowledge, you can focus on an aspect of the framework and then move to another aspect.

Bear (Intention)

Proficiency level	Self-assessment criteria
General knowledge and skills	<p>I am able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the territory(ies) my institutional campus(es) is built upon. • List the services and resources available to Indigenous student on my campus and community.
Interactive competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on my understanding of systemic barriers to Indigenous students and identify ways to mitigate these challenges within the scope of my role and authority.
Self-mastery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how colonization and systemic barriers an ongoing influence on the policies and practices that shape my role and reflect on how I can within scope of authority contribute to improvement.

Raven (Behaviour)

Proficiency level	Self-assessment criteria
General knowledge and skills	<p>I am able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize the importance of fostering intercultural engagement among Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, faculty, and staff. • Share information within the institution, and beyond, to inform current and prospective Indigenous students of the array of services, programs and supports available to them. • Demonstrate awareness of, and responsiveness to, verbal and non-verbal communication across cultures.
Interactive competencies	<p>I am able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in self-reflection and recognize the strengths and limitations of my own worldview on my communication with others. • Examine my personal beliefs about experiences of trauma and reflect on the impact these have on interactions with Indigenous students, colleagues, organizations and systems. • Generate ideas for resources, spaces, and approaches that promote dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, staff, and faculty within the institution.
Self-mastery	<p>I am able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with Indigenous colleagues and students in support of decolonization work to identify and overcome systemic barriers for Indigenous students. • Prioritize welcoming and respectful learning environments on campus through the implementation of programs, services, support mechanisms, and spaces dedicated to Indigenous students. • Actively promote the importance of Indigenization of curricula (including co-curricula and extra-curricular) through responsive programming, orientations, and instruction.

Wolf (Community)

Proficiency level	Self-assessment criteria
General knowledge and skills	<p>I am able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify on-campus Indigenous student resources. • Explain the importance of Elder and community involvement on campus. Describe the relationship of the institute and local Indigenous community. • Recognize and value Indigenous student voice.
Interactive competencies	<p>I am able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify off-campus Indigenous service providers and knowledge of how to refer students to off-campus services. • Describe the relationship of the institution and community Indigenous advisory committees. • Evaluate my own role and my department's role in creating reciprocal relationship with Indigenous student services and Indigenous students.
Self-mastery	<p>I am able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply priorities voiced by Indigenous students and Indigenous community to unit operations and practice. • Demonstrate an open communication process where feedback is reciprocal and provides institutional engagement and reflection.

Salmon (Systems Fit)

Proficiency level	Self-assessment criteria
General knowledge and skills	<p>I am able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop cultural agility and intercultural competency when working with Indigenous Peoples. • Understand the diversity of Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia and Canada.
Interactive competencies	<p>I am able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop human resources strategies that increase the number of Indigenous staff and faculty, applying to, hired at, and retained at the institution. • Develop and sustain formal relationships with Indigenous communities to transform the physical place and infrastructure of the campus to reflect Indigenous people and honour the relationship with Indigenous people and their communities.
Self-mastery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know how to advocate for Indigenous students and programs from an informed position. • I am able to develop fiscal plans and policies that ensure Indigenous programs, students, and concerns are adequately supported; and can demonstrate cultural acumen to lead institutional change as a non-Indigenous person.

Notes

1. Indigenized integral model: <http://solr.bccampus.ca:8001/bcc/file/c0a932f4-8d79-4d3d-a5d4-3f8c128c0236/1/Audience%20Profiles%20portrait.pdf>
2. ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies: <http://www.myacpa.org/docs/acpa-naspa-professional-competency-areas-short-versionpdf>
3. CACUSS Student Affairs and Services Competency Model: https://www.cacuss.ca/Student_Affairs_and_Services_Competency_Model.html
4. Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (2015) Calls to Action: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

Appendix B: Funding and Programs for Indigenous Students

There are specific funding programs and initiatives that support Indigenous student access to post-secondary education. Check the Aboriginal/Indigenous service unit webpage of your own institution to access information about awards, bursaries, and scholarships available to Indigenous students. Below are federal and provincial programs for Indigenous students:

- [Federal post-secondary funding for First Nations and Inuit students \(Indigenous Services Canada\)](#)¹
- [Provincial post-secondary funding for Inuit students](#)²
- [Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy \(ASETS\)](#)³
- [ASETS funding for Métis students](#)⁴
- [Aboriginal Emergency Assistance Fund](#),⁵ available at all British Columbia public post-secondary institutions:

Notes

1. Federal post-secondary funding for First Nations and Inuit students: <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100033682/1100100033683>
2. Provincial post-secondary funding for Inuit students: <http://www.bcaafc.com/index.php/youth-education-fcf>
3. Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/indigenous/aset.html>
4. ASETS funding for Métis students: <https://www.mnbc.ca/directory/view/342-ministry-of-employment-training>
5. Aboriginal Emergency Assistance Fund: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/stories/financial-assistance-program-supports-aboriginal-students>

Appendix C: Adapting this Guide

What is Pressbooks?

Pressbooks is a web-based authoring tool based on the WordPress authoring platform. If you've created a website using WordPress, you'll find some similarities working with Pressbooks. Pressbooks allows you to create content once and publish it in many different formats. These export formats enable the resource to be easily imported and edited in different platforms such as WordPress, Wikis and even learning management systems. The formats appear at the bottom of the web version of the resource to allow other users to easily export and adapt the resource. These features will allow the resources we are developing to be used, adapted, contextualized and localized by different institutions and communities. Pressbooks will make the resource more available to different users by giving them the option of accessing it on the web, on their mobile devices or print it out as a PDF document. By designing each part of the resource as a standalone guide institutions will be able to select and adapt the sections to use, edit and adapt for their context. These features will allow the resources we are developing to be used, adapted, contextualized and localized by different institutions and communities.

Export formats

Print PDF	Allows documents to be easily shared while retaining the same visual formatting. It is page-oriented and has a static layout. Print PDF optimized for printing
Digital PDF	For digital PDF distribution
xHTML	This format allows the resource to be used and edited in different systems
WordPress XML	These files can be imported into WordPress and the resources can be easily adapted into an interactive website.
EPUB	EPUB files are designed for portability. These files are used for most eBooks and other eReaders. The point of these files is not to provide editing capability, but to deliver a comprehensive package that contains all elements of a book including text and images — like a zipped package — to a device for reading.
MOBI	For Kindle eReader

Ways that I can adapt this guide

Pressbooks is available to staff and faculty at all post-secondary institutions in B.C. on the [BC Pressbook site](#).¹

This allows each institution program or course to copy this guide into your own instance of Pressbooks and adapt it to include local content, context, and resources. You can then export the guide you have created into any of the different formats above. You can also import this guide into your local instance and revise it, localize and adapt it there. This will also enable you to add multimedia or even interactive components.

Notes

1. BC Pressbooks: <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/>