16th Annual Indigenous Graduate Student Symposium (IGSS)

Walking in Two Worlds & Occupying the Third Space: Indigenous Graduate Student Experience

The University of British Columbia & Simon Fraser University Partnership

March 3rd 2018
7:30am–4:00pm

First Nations Longhouse, 1985 West Mall, Vancouver, BC
University of British Columbia

Traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səl̓ílwətaʔ First Nations
16th Annual Indigenous Graduate Student Symposium (IGSS)

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Indigenous Graduate Student Experience

The University of British Columbia & Simon Fraser University Partnership

In envisioning the theme for the 16th Annual Indigenous Graduate Student Symposium (IGSS), we draw on the work of Torres Strait Islander Martin Nakata to explore the third space. We ask presenters to consider the ways in which Indigenous graduate students negotiate the challenges of bringing traditional teachings to scholarship, and the academy more broadly. This conference theme will illuminate how Indigenous scholars are balancing community expectations, and responsibilities to academic work and occupying the third space in doing so. This year, we are honored to have Dr. Leroy Little Bear as the keynote speaker, along with graduate students exploring a range of thought-provoking topics following the theme of walking in two worlds.

Join us as we share ideas, embolden our understanding, and reflect on the contemporary Indigenous student experience.

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Traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səl̓ílwətaʔ First Nations
Keynote Speaker: Dr. Leroy Little Bear

Leroy Little Bear was born and raised on the Blood Indian Reserve (Kainai First Nation), approximately 70 km west of Lethbridge, Alberta. One of the first Native students to complete a program of study at the University of Lethbridge, Little Bear graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1971. He continued his education at the College of Law, University of Utah, in Salt Lake City, completing a Juris Doctor Degree in 1975. Following his graduation, Little Bear returned to his alma mater as a founding member of Canada's first Native American Studies Department. He remained at the University of Lethbridge as a researcher, faculty member and department chair until his official retirement in 1997.

In recent years Little Bear has continued his influential work as an advocate for First Nations education. From January 1998 to June 1999 he served as Director of the Harvard University Native American Program. Upon his return to Canada, he was instrumental in the creation of a Bachelor of Management in First Nations Governance at the University of Lethbridge – the only program of its kind in the country.

After a lifetime of educational service, Little Bear remains a dedicated and dynamic teacher and mentor to students and faculty at the University of Lethbridge. He continues to pursue new research interests including North American Indian science and Western physics, and the exploration of Blackfoot knowledge through songs, stories and landscape.

In the spring of 2003, Little Bear was awarded the prestigious National Aboriginal Achievement Award for Education, the highest honour bestowed by Canada's First Nations community. While his educational achievements are remarkable, Little Bear’s contribution to the First Nations community extends well beyond the classroom. He has served as a consultant to local and national organizations including the Blood Tribe, Indian Association of Alberta and the Assembly of First Nations of Canada. His notable reputation has also earned him a place on numerous government commissions and boards including the Task Force on the Criminal Justice and Its Impact on the Indian and Métis Peoples of Alberta (1990–91). Little Bear’s legal advice is widely sought on such significant issues as land claims, treaties, and hunting and fishing rights.
Shane Pointe is from the Pointe family and is a proud member of the Musqueam and Coast Salish people. He is a highly respected Musqueam community member, ceremonial traditional speaker and cultural educator. He provides protocol and ceremonial guidance for many cultural events – locally, nationally and internationally. He has worked in various capacities such as: Aboriginal Support Worker (AEEW VSB), Trial Support Coordinator for the Indian Residential School Survivors Society, Native Alcohol and Drug Awareness Program worker with the Musqueam Indian Band, in the Longhouse Leadership Program at the First Nations House of Learning (University of British Columbia), and most recently providing support to the Aboriginal Mothers Centre.
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<tr>
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<td>Cultural Preparations (Sty Wet Tan Hall)</td>
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<td>8:00am–8:30am</td>
<td>Coffee and light breakfast (Sty–Wet–Tan Hall)</td>
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<td>Welcome &amp; Witnessing (Sty–Wet–Tan Hall)</td>
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<td>Keynote Address – Dr. Leroy Little Bear (Sty–Wet–Tan Hall)</td>
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<td>Collaborative Graduate Discussion</td>
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<td>10:00am–10:45am</td>
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<td>Session One: Graduate Student Presentations (Various rooms)</td>
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<td>Lunchtime (Sty–Wet–Tan Hall) Poster Presentations &amp; Networking</td>
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<td>Session Two: Graduate Student Presentations (Various rooms)</td>
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<td>Session Three: Graduate Student Presentations (Various rooms)</td>
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<td>3:00pm–3:30pm</td>
<td>Final Witnessing (Sty–Wet–Tan Hall)</td>
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# ORAL AND POSTER PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

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<td><strong>Governance</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
<td><strong>Poster Presentations &amp; Networking</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Session 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Storytelling</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Session 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Conversations and Relations</strong></td>
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**POSTER PRESENTATIONS**

Gary George

Natasha Roudeix
ORAL PRESENTATIONS – SESSION ONE
10:45am–11:45am

Governance (Sty-Wet-Tan)

Decolonizing the Policy Analysis Process
Michelle Buchholz, Masters Student, Public Policy, SFU

Indigenous Parents of Students with Special Needs: The Lived Experience
Melanie Nelson, PhD Candidate, Psychology, UBC

You’ve Got to Paddle Your Own Canoe:
The Effects of Federal Legislation on Participation in, and Exercising of,
Traditional Governance while Living Off-reserve
Ron George (Hereditary Chief Tsaskiy), Masters of Education Graduate, UVic

Third Space (Social Lounge)

A Third Space Home for Hul'q'umi'num' Language Specialists
Samaya Jardey, PhD Candidate, Special Arrangements Program, SFU

Theoretical Soul Fights
Sam Tsuruda, PhD Candidate, Educational Studies, UBC

Journey to Academic and Cultural Balance in Engineering/Science
Kelly Graves, PhD Candidate Civil Engineering, UBC

Curriculum (Boardroom)

Mindful Listening about Readiness, Intake Assessment, and Finding Community:
Indigenous Adult Learners Speak about Returning to School
Francine Emmonds, Masters Student, Educational Studies, UBC

First Nations Education: Curriculum Action Research for Change
Erica Jurgens, Master of Education Graduate, Administration and Leadership, UBC

Creating Space: Conducting Indigenous Centered Research as a Graduate Student
Cheryl Inkster, Masters Student, Counselling Psychology, SFU
ORAL PRESENTATIONS – SESSION TWO
12:30am–1:30pm

**Storytelling (Sty–Wet–Tan)**

**Métis in the Third Space**
*Laura Forsythe, Masters Student, Native Studies, University of Manitoba*

**Sharing of Stories on a Journey Toward Reconciliation**
*Belonging to this Place and Time*
*Kau’i Keliipio PhD Candidate SFU, Colleen Elderton SFU Faculty & Kim Perry Teacher Surrey District*

**Feminine Erasure and Revitalization in the Telling of Syilx Narratives**
*Alexa Manuel, PhD Candidate, English Literature, UBC*

**Ways of Teaching (Social Lounge)**

**Reconciling Education: Does the Blanket Exercise Change Teacher Practice?**
*Stephanie Maki & Carolyn Roberts, Master of Education Graduates, Leadership and Administration, UBC*

**Indigenous Knowledge in Science Education:**
*Transformative Learning and Resource Development*
*Lindsay Heller, Masters Student, Department of Special Arrangements, SFU*

**The Third Space: A Framework for Evaluating Indigenous Language Learning Apps**
*Amber Shilling, PhD Candidate, Educational Studies, UBC*

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ORAL PRESENTATIONS – SESSION THREE
1:45pm–2:45pm

**Conversations and Relations (Sty–Wet–Tan)**

**Uncovering Unmarked Graves at the Brandon Indian Residential School**
*Katherine Nichols, PhD Candidate, Special Arrangements Program, SFU*

**Indigenous Tongues are also Language: Rights Should Live in All Languages**
*Mônica Morales–Good, PhD Candidate, Creative and Critical Studies, UBCO*

**Resilience (Social Lounge)**

**Self–worth: Sources that Aboriginal University Students Pursue**
*Natasha Wawrykow, PhD Candidate, Counselling Psychology, UBC*

**Raven Bringing the Light –Examining the Resilience of NITEP Students**
*Jessica La Rochelle, Master of Education Graduate, UBC*

**Weaving a Link of Resiliency in Aboriginal and Indigeneity:**
*Relating the 4 R’s to the 4 ‘s*
*Suke Padam, PhD Candidate, Education Studies, UBC*
Governance (Sty–Wet–Tan)
Decolonizing the Policy Analysis Process
Michelle Buchholz, Masters of Arts, Public Policy, SFU

The field of public policy influences all facets of life in Canada and across the globe from the community to the national level. Indigenous peoples are scrutinized through the policy analysis process and their perspectives and knowledge are often not incorporated into policies that ultimately affect their lives. This project will examine how public policy processes can include Indigenous voices and incorporate Indigenous knowledge and approaches to governance and wellness in order decolonize the public policy process. The project will also explore the work of various Indigenous scholars and their work to decolonize curriculum and policy, which sheds light on how these methods can assist in working towards sharing space with Indigenous peoples in policy practices in all levels of government. The project also includes a narrative on an Indigenous student’s experience as a student of public policy and her journey to incorporate both cultural and traditional knowledge.

Indigenous Parents of Students with Special Needs: The Lived Experience
Melanie Nelson, PhD Candidate, School of Psychology, UBC

Indigenous parents who have a child with special needs may experience additional stressors compared to non–Indigenous parents when interacting with school systems. There may be incompatibility between culture in the home and the school, constructs in special education may not exist in Indigenous culture or language, some parents perceive assessment as attempted assimilation, and many Indigenous caregivers have previous involvement with residential schools. The purpose of this oral presentation is to present the findings of a thesis exploring the experience of Indigenous parents who have a child identified with special needs in school regarding processes that led to their child’s designation and subsequent navigations of services. Findings support previous research with parents who have a child with special needs, and previous research specific to Indigenous parent experiences. This presentation explores the experience of Indigenous parents and children who walk in two worlds, with powerful parent quotes illustrating differences in worldview.

You've Got to Paddle Your Own Canoe:
The Effects of Federal Legislation on Participation in, and Exercising of, Traditional Governance while Living Off–reserve
Ron George (Hereditary Chief Tsaskiy), Masters of Education Graduate, UVic

My topic addresses the tensions which exist for me, as both an Indigenous graduate and hereditary chief, in negotiating the expectations of academia while remaining true to Wet’suwet’en governance. I found academe to extensively focus on the concise, at the expense of accuracy, while my focus was to maintain my Wet’suwet’en hereditary system which is an oral, transparent, publicly witnessed, and ever evolving living history. This project describes the challenges and impediments members of two clans experienced while growing up and living off–reserve. Based on
shared oral history, our clan realized our off-reserve experience was both positive and negative, as we worked in community to develop potential strategies to continue our hereditary governance system with increased efficiency and unity while we continue, through legislation, to live off-reserve. Consideration that the off-reserve population comprises approximately two-thirds of the Indigenous population in Canada, and has yet to be recognized by government authorities, added legal challenges disproportionate to those of the dominant culture, and to the on-reserve population.

**Third Space (Social Lounge)**

**Journey to Academic and Cultural Balance in Engineering/Science**  
*Kelly Graves, PhD Candidate Civil Engineering, UBC*

For my presentation, I will discuss my ongoing journey to find my space as a female, indigenous, engineer/scientist working on another Nation’s land. For the past 18 months, I have been working on my PhD project studying the physics of Deeks Lake, which is in the traditional territory of the Squamish First Nation. My project has been fraught with issues; however, it has provided great opportunities for personal and academic growth. One of the hardest challenges has been navigating my indigeneity, and figuring out how the aspects that form my identity coexist. My project has provided the opportunity for me to incorporate traditional teachings and ways of being on the Land, and share this with other non-indigenous researchers. This project is expanding the limits of research methodologies and pushing the boundaries of what is expected in my field of study where there are few other examples like this.

**A Third Space Home for Hul’q’umi’num’ Language Specialists**  
*Samaya Jardey, PhD Candidate, Special Arrangements Program, SFU*

This presentation will share the story of one PhD student who walked out of big city living and meaningful employment to return to her birth community to study her endangered heritage language. Simon Fraser University has called for the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action, and the design and execution of the 2017 community-based graduate certificate program in the Linguistics of Hul’q’umi’num’ is in the truest sense an act of reconciliation. The partnership between fluent, knowledgeable first language Elders and a linguistic professor created a Third Space for the participants, themselves language teachers. Examples will be given of: how the respectful blend of Indigenous and academic methodologies invited holistic participation, how the use of ceremony acknowledged the importance of body and spirit learning, and how the appreciation of participant’s gifts, efforts and responsibilities helped maintain a strong heart and mind connection.

**Theoretical Soul Fights**  
*Sam Tsuruda, PhD Candidate, Educational Studies, UBC*

After experiencing the challenges of “grafting” (Ahenakew, 2016) that Indigenous students often face in the academy, it is the tensions of the third space that propelled me to endeavour in a PhD in Educational Studies: I am determined to fight for educational and epistemic equality. In the required courses of my first semester, I have experimented with writing poems and bending the rules of assignments. This process
has allowed for my emotional and spiritual self to grow, along with my mind, through education. Yet reshaping molds and educational norms does not come freely nor without cost – at this year’s IGSS, I hope to present a poem that explores the tensions and reflections of finding solace through poetry in my PhD journey thus far. It is my goal to share a small example of strengths-based resistance that can create big change in existing authentically and rightfully in the third space.

Curriculum (Boardroom)
First Nations Education: Curriculum Action Research for Change
*Erica Jurgens, Master of Education Graduate, Administration & Leadership, UBC*

Responding to Article 13 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (United Nations 2008), this research centred on the mobilization of Indigenous knowledge and epistemologies through the creation of Indigenous curriculum resource materials for an intermediate classroom in a First Nations school. This research addresses the gap between ‘talking about’ Indigenous Knowledges and transmitting Indigenous Intellectualism to Indigenous youth. By integrating four Indigenous philosophical stances: Red Pedagogy, Resurgence, Radical Indigenousism and Sui generis and four Stó:lō principles: s̱xwówxwiyám [Ancient narratives], Shxwelí [understanding of Life-force], Shxwel’méxwelh [Life-ways], Xwel’méwxwel [the Language], a framework for a theoretical model of Indigenous curriculum design was developed. Using Curriculum Action Research (McKernan, 1998), Stó:lō specific curriculum resource materials were created and implemented. This case-study found that the primary factor in successful curriculum design and positive student engagement with the curriculum resource materials was relationship, especially with Stó:lō historian Naxaxalhts’i who has collected many of the s̱xwówxwiyám used in the content.

Creating Space: Conducting Indigenous Centered Research as a Graduate Student
*Cheryl Inkster, Masters Student, Counselling psychology, SFU*

Research highlights the importance and need for Indigenous informed and Indigenous centered research. This presentation addresses the significance of decolonizing research, my journey using Indigenous research methods in Counselling Psychology research, and my MA thesis research. As a new researcher, I experienced a strong push towards Western research methods and knowledge production. In this presentation, I share my experiences of trying to foreground other ways of knowing in order to expand the boundaries of knowledge making in Counselling Psychology research and the important role of mentors in this process. I discuss my experience of pursuing my interests in Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous research methods in my graduate program. The qualitative study I conducted for my MA thesis uses Indigenous Storywork method as described by Jo-ann Archibald (2008) combined with Métis Beadwork method informed by Métis Knowledge Holder and artist Lisa Shepherd to explore the relocation experiences of four female Indigenous youth.
Mindful Listening about Readiness, Intake Assessment, and Finding Community: Indigenous Adult Learners Speak about Returning to School

Francine Emmonds, Masters Student, Educational Studies, UBC

For many Indigenous youth and adults, adult basic education (ABE) courses are a bridge for completion of grade 12. As an adult educator and Indigenous scholar, I seek to understand more of the ABE student experience, within the context of Indigenous research methods of respect and reciprocity. What are the student stories and where are they heard and acknowledged as shared knowledge that empowers student voices? What does it mean to be “ready” to return to school? How is intake assessment received, and what influences do school community and cultural content have upon the well being of the student, and on retention rates and academic potential? A critical exploration from the Indigenous student perspective provides unique insight into how ABE programming is implemented and received. A case study approach framed by traditional Indigenous teachings offers a way to acknowledge the oral knowledge that is given and received within this research.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS: SESSION TWO
12:30pm–1:30pm

Storytelling (Sty–Wet–Tan)
Sharing of Stories on a Journey Toward Reconciliation
‘Belonging to this Place and Time’
Kau’I Keliipli PhD Candidate SFU, Colleen Elderton SFU Faculty & Kim Perry Teacher Surrey District

This presentation is a summary of three perspectives on the journey into Aboriginal Teacher Education, focussing in on how teacher education can address the TRC’s Calls for Action and the BC Teacher Regulation Branch’s (TRB) mandated course for student teachers on First Nations’ Education. We recall that which took place for each of us as we went about our work together, and we note that which has been learned since, all in reflection. Coming from diverse backgrounds and places, we three are all settlers to this land; one of Kanaka Maoli Indigenous ancestry and two of Anglo–European ancestry. We acknowledge that we live on the lands of Indigenous peoples and recognize this privilege comes with responsibilities we have committed to fulfill. Our Kanaka Maoli colleague, now a graduate student, brings attention to a particular third space she occupied in her various roles in a teacher education program.

Métis in the Third Space
Laura Forsythe, Masters student, Native Studies, University of Manitoba

As a Métis woman tasked with identifying the existing Métis–specific programming and gaps in services for Métis students the past year at the University of Manitoba there has been an opportunity to reflect on my entire academic experience. Métis students struggle on campus today for the recognition despite the Indigenous population of the University of Manitoba is 60% Métis. Through storytelling a recollection of my journey taken over four degrees in two institutions I will speak to my
path as a Métis student in academia. Giving time and space to others to share their experiences with occupying the third space as Métis.

Feminine Erasure and Revitalization in the Telling of Syilx Narratives
Alexa Manuel, PhD Candidate, English Literature, UBC

In a feminism centred re–reading of Syilx history and our stories, the captíkwɬ, I noticed the relegation of women to roles of captive or of unnamed relation to the main, male, protagonists. Erasing women’s names from stories effectively reinforces a patriarchal idea that they are not important enough to be remembered. Syilx women today hold roles of political, social, academic, and economical power as we strive towards recognition while embracing our culture. By allowing our captíkwɬ and our histories to ostensibly forget women, we are only drawing from the power of half of these narratives. In this paper, I acknowledge the erasure Syilx women endured and explore ways to further include women in future literatures, including my own role as an Indigenous woman in academia. In recognizing feminine roles within historical narratives, the captíkwɬ, and current Syilx narratives, we can continue to raise women’s voices within contemporary literary society.

Ways of Teaching (Social Lounge)
Reconciling Education: Does the Blanket Exercise Change Teacher Practice?
Stephanie Maki & Carolyn Roberts, Master of Education Graduates, Leadership and Administration, UBC

Stephanie Maki and Carolyn Roberts have just completed their Masters of Educational Leadership and Administration in Indigenous Education (UBC) and would like to share the findings of their Capstone Research paper in an oral presentation format. The focus of our participatory action research, was an examination of the impacts of the Kairos Blanket Exercise on Teacher Practice. The specific areas that we, as researchers were looking at is to see if this tool is successful in shifting educators teaching practice into action, to understand Canada’s colonial history and if this leads to authentic embedment of Aboriginal history and worldview in the classroom.

Indigenous Knowledge in Science Education: Transformative Learning and Resource Development
Lindsay Heller, Masters Student, Department of Special Arrangements, SFU

With the implementation of British Columbia’s new curriculum to include Indigenous Knowledge in all subject areas, there is a significant need for both professional development and teaching resources. This need is particularly strong in science, where Indigenous people are grossly underrepresented in post–secondary science programs and careers. In this presentation Lindsay Heller, a Cree woman and former pharmaceutical research scientist, invites discussion on her graduate research, which explores processes for creating land–based teaching resources while also fostering deeper epistemological and pedagogical shifts with a focus on science education. Simply providing tokenized Indigenous content does not animate the holistic and relational nature of Indigenous ways of knowing which will lead to richer learning experiences for all students and supports healthier relationships with each other a deeper respect for the land.
The Third Space: A Framework for Evaluating Indigenous Language Learning Apps
Amber Shilling, PhD Candidate, Educational Studies, UBC

Technology is creating a new, ever-evolving space for learning Indigenous language and culture. Specifically, mobile technology and the user-friendly, ubiquitous nature of apps offer unprecedented opportunity to engage with community members instantaneously. As app development continues to improve, the myriad choices of apps necessitates the creation of a meaningful framework to evaluate the effectiveness of language learning apps for Indigenous communities. Drawing on second-language learning theory, language revitalization practice in Indigenous communities, and a critical analysis of selected language-learning apps, this presentation will utilize a holistic framework to explore the contributions, challenges, and opportunities of language-learning app use in Indigenous communities.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS: SESSION THREE
1:45pm–2:45pm

Conversations and Relations (Sty–Wet–Tan)
Indigenous Tongues are also Language: Rights Should Live in All Languages
Mónica Morales–Good, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies, UBCO

As of 2015, Mexico has registered 7,382,785 people who speak an Indigenous language. This represents 6.5% of the population (INEGI). Today, in Mexico, thousands of Indigenous peoples are jailed, not knowing their charges due to a language barrier. The State’s failure to integrate the Indigenous population into the legal sphere and provide appropriate interpretation has been cited as one of the primary reasons for the imprisonment of Indigenous peoples (Berk–Seligson 11–6; García 82–5). This reflects the insufficient help available for Indigenous defendants, the lack of interpreters and counsel familiar with Indigenous traditions, and the lack of spaces where Indigenous knowledge can coexist with the national system. The focus of my presentation is the paucity of qualified interpreters the legal system, and safe places for Indigenous peoples to interact with the system. At the core, it is not a matter of certifying more Indigenous interpreters, but also bringing Indigenous knowledge and practices into the justice system.

Uncovering Unmarked Graves at the Brandon Indian Residential School
Katherine Nichols, PhD Candidate Special Arrangements Program, SFU

This paper focuses on deaths and burials of children who attended the Brandon Indian Residential School (IRS), in Manitoba. This presentation will give an overview of the preparations currently underway to begin forensic investigation into unmarked graves on the school property. Locally affected First Nation communities have identified repatriation as the next step moving forward. Using personal research experience as a case example, this presentation will explore the complicated and largely unspoken process of how to begin the conversations that create the opportunities to do meaningful research with a community. From this relational starting point, this presentation details the importance of ongoing consultation and collaborative research
design grounded in the community’s interests, needs, objectives and concerns. In this way, we can begin the process of creating a strong relationship with an Indigenous community, capable of fostering respectful research and building alliances.

**Resilience (Social Lounge)**

**Self-worth: Sources that Aboriginal University Students Pursue**  
*Natasha Wawrykow, PhD Candidate, Counselling Psychology, UBC*

In order to successfully navigate the hurdles of academic life, it is vital that students have access to self-worth domains. Research indicates that access to sources of self-worth can be impaired for Aboriginal students who relocate from their traditional community and are separated from traditional sources of self-worth. Due to the impact that dislocation and/or failed pursuit of self-worth can have on a student’s sense of purpose, motivation, and academic success, this research investigates Aboriginal students’ sources and access to self-worth. A narrative inquiry research design will be used, where participants (N = 8) orally share a written account of their self-worth experiences. A collaborative thematic content analysis, completed by the researcher and participants, will be used to identify themes across participants’ self-worth narratives. This methodology was selected for its fits with the oral storytelling tradition used by Aboriginal Peoples to preserve and share their history, values, and practices.

**Weaving a Link of Resiliency in Aboriginality and Indigeneity:**

**Relating the 4 R’s to the 4 C’s**  
*Suke Padam, PhD Candidate, Education Studies, UBC*

My presentation will examine Verna Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt’s 4 R’s (1991) and how such a framework for Aboriginal, Metis and Inuit peoples emulates a very similar relationship to my Indigenous East Indian perspective, through what I have identified as the 4C’s. Methodologically, my qualitative research examines experiential practices which involve stories, memoirs, conversations and reflections resulting in valuable dialogue among Elders, community members, and related knowledge holders. An analytical auto-ethnographic approach to my research weaves a relational process that attempts to create an awareness of Aboriginal onto–epistemologies with a broader Indigenous worldview. My presentation will address the importance of resilience through a narrative method – my seven-year journey involved FNESC and FNTC-sanctioned travels to many of the 203 First Nation reserves in British Columbia. I draw upon my early Indigenous upbringing and how it appeared to consistently clash with western Eurocentric ideologies. More importantly, I was later able to parallel my very positive and self-reflective experiences drawing upon my association with Aboriginal communities.

**Raven Brining the Light – Examining the Resilience of NITEP Students**  
*Jessica La Rochelle, Master of Education Graduate, UBC*

A central goal of UBC’s Indigenous Teacher Education Program (NITEP) is to foster intergenerational learning by creating and maintaining a community of leaders in Indigenous education. My research study examines the resilience of NITEP students and explores their experiences in the program.
I would like to present my MEd capstone research project in which I determine why Indigenous students choose NITEP and what factors contribute to a positive learning experience and successful completion. I use my position as an Indigenous graduate student to compare the post-secondary experiences of Indigenous students in general and my position as a NITEP staff member to contextualize and interpret student conversations. This capstone research project provides a model of analysis and recommendations that contribute to culturally relevant and appropriate ways to inform academic institutions and programs of the importance of Indigenous identity, culture, and knowledge to educational reconciliation.

**Poster Presentations:**

*Linguistic Biography of a Plurilingual Inuk*

_Natacha Roudeix, PhD Candidate, Cultures and Literacies, SFU_

This poster presentation shows the linguistic biography and the introspective reflections of a plurilingual Inuk speaker based on an interview done with Skype and visual representations chosen by the participant. This study highlights the complex relationships between language, culture and identity. This life story shows the languages representations of an Inuk from Nunavik by exposing all the factors supporting her plurilingualism which are family, school, networks and migration. It aims to better understand the particularities and the processes (code-switching, crossing) of plurilingualism. In fact, do Inuit have a different vision of their plurilingualism and pluriculturalism?

"It's not just a little box...it comes with complications"

*Indigenous Student approaches towards declaring ancestry at university.  
Gary R. George, Master of Education, SFU_

This poster presentation examines Indigenous Identity in Canada at post-secondary institutions. The reasons vary as to why one may choose to declare their ancestry or decline their ancestry in the application process. The factors on this issue are numerous; however, key reasons include historic, personal and political influences.

The 1876 Indian Act categorized Canada’s over 80 different Indigenous nations to three legal categories of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Later categories of Non-Status emerged as a result of the 1982 Bill C-31 legislation. These legal classifications had, and continue to have, impacts on how and why Indigenous peoples choose to self-identify. Self-declaring one’s identity upon entering post-secondary institutions impacts institutional records, statistics, and services and students’ ability to access targeted funding and services. The purpose of this project was to understand the factors and experiences of students, who choose to identify or not in the application process. Seven Indigenous (N=7) students were interviewed for this project in April 2012. The students were drawn from two separate campuses of the same university in Lower Mainland, British Columbia. The issue of self-identification is a complicated issue and not a matter of just checking a box. Participants’ decisions to self-declare was influenced by how safe students felt doing so; others spoke of political motivations (e.g., increase statistics); and more often, the choice was very personal. The findings indicate that universities have more work to do to create environments where Indigenous students feel supported in being who they are.
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