

**TRANSFORMING THE ACADEMY THROUGH INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE
AND TREATY EPISTEMOLOGY**

A Thesis Submitted to the Committee on Graduate Studies in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
the Faculty of Arts and Science

TRENT UNIVERSITY
Nogojwanong (Peterborough, Ontario, Canada)

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Indigenous Studies Ph.D. Graduate Program

September 2024

ABSTRACT

Transforming the Academy through Indigenous Governance and Treaty Epistemology

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Since the 1960s, post-secondary institutions (PSIs) across Chi'Mikinaak (the Great Turtle) have been learning how to engage with Indigenous Knowledge Holders and their knowledges in academic programs and research, to decolonize, to support Indigenous-led initiatives, and make systemic, transformative, and reconciliatory change. This work explores what practices support and nurture Indigenous autonomy in relation to Indigenous Knowledge systems in four Canadian, Indigenous-focused post-secondary education (PSE) programs. It considers how to embody and activate these practices as individuals and institutionally, as well as the issues, tensions, opportunities, and prospects for doing so.

Co-learning and co-creating are possible. However, Indigenous autonomy (often framed as control) demands rebalancing and restructuring of asymmetrical Indigenous/settler relations on the land, in governance, in the academy, and settler society. Indigenous inclusion in PSE does not result in structural, transformational, reconciliatory, or Indigenizing change, but rather, Indigenous Peoples say they are constrained within colonial governance structures and frameworks. Thriving prospects for upholding Indigenous relational autonomy and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty in Indigenous programming is rooted in Indigenous governance, which inherently centres local Indigenous Peoples, their lands, knowledges, languages, histories, and spiritualities. It also requires settler peoples "*to Treaty*" their way forward using Treaty epistemologies and ontologies to uphold Treaty values, relationships, and responsibilities, and to create

ethical spaces for Indigenous governance.

The experiences, stories, and understandings of the Traditional Advisory Council of the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program, plus 14 Indigenous Knowledge Holders and 20 settler people associated with three programs at the Chanie Wenjack School of Indigenous Studies at Trent University, as well as insights from Mi'kmaw Dr./Elders Murdena and Albert Marshall regarding the former Toqwa'tu'kl Kijijitaqnn/Integrative Science program at Cape Breton University, ground and guide this work.

The work utilizes transdisciplinary and qualitative approaches, including co-learning, etuaptmumk (the gift of multiple perspectives), Indigenist, decolonizing and settler-colonial theory, within relational and Treaty-based accountability ethics. It draws from Indigenous-centred literature. It contributes to Indigenous, settler-colonial, reconciliation, and political studies; knowledge engagement, translation and mobilization; systemic change; Treaty education; co-learning; transdisciplinary and transcultural education and research; and Indigenous-settler alliances. The findings are relevant to PSIs across Chi'Mikinaq.

Keywords: Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Indigenous Education, Indigenous Governance, Indigenous Relational Autonomy, Indigenous Knowledge Sovereignty, Treaty Epistemology, Treaty Education, Reconciliation, Co-learning, Systemic Change, Indigenizing, Decolonizing, Settler Colonialism, Settler Education, Toqwa'tu'kl Kijijitaqnn/Integrative Science program, Murdena and Albert Marshall, Trent University

GRATITUDE/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wela'liq/Thank you. I offer my gratitude to the land, the waters and all of Creation in Mi'kma'ki, where I live as a guest in unceded, ancestral homelands of the Mi'kmaq. I have been welcomed and treated with kindness. Miigwetch to the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg and Rotinonhsión:ni for surrounding me and others at Trent University with such generosity and sharing your knowledges and teachings with so many.

This is not a journey I took on my own. I dedicate this work to all the Indigenous Elders who have taken such good care of me and been my teachers and mentors, sharing your spirit and knowledges, helping me to flourish and follow my learning spirit: Murdena and Albert Marshall, Gidigaa Migizi (Spotted Eagle)/Doug Williams, Migizi ow-kwe (That Eagle Woman)/Shirley Williams, Dorothy Taylor, Asinykwe (Rock Woman)/Edna Manitowabi, Dorene Bernard, Skahendoweneh Swamp, Roronhiake:wen (He Clears the Sky)/Dan Longboat and Marrie Mumford. Thank you for your love and patience and your humble, steadfast and generous ways. I am honoured to have spent time with all of you. I endeavour reciprocate for what I have learned by giving back to you and your communities, for the health of all our relations and Mother Earth.

Nyawewñha to my supervisor, David Newhouse, for your patience, compassion and optimism which helped me navigate this path. Wela'lin to Patricia Doyle-Bedwell for your beautiful friendship, humble imparting of your insights and for seeing this to the end. Thank you, Don McCaskill, for your wisdom and for believing in me. Thank you to my academic colleagues for your interest and support: Margaret Robinson, Lynne Davis, Amy Champagne, Evelyn Poitras, Celine MacKenzie Vukson, Barbara Wall, Sarah Cullingham, Carly Armstrong, Jane Gray and others. So much gratitude to Jane Affleck for support with copy editing and moral support and to Andrew Glencross for polishing some of the diagrams. To my wonderful friends Gretchen Fitzgerald, Mark Butler and Lucy, Shannon Webb-Campbell, Mitchell Wiebe, John R. Sylliboy, Liz Osawamick & family, Georgie Horton-Baptiste, Colleen Burns, Saskia Roch, Carol Devine, Tiina Hubel, Michael Pettit, The Sarkars, Roger Mullin, Craig Leonard, Aram Kouyoumdjian, Janice and Anita Wing, Coho Harris, Andrea Durphee and Tiffany Morris for helping me along the way! A special thanks to everyone who gave their time, energy and insights through sharing circles and discussions. Thanks to all the incredible faculty and staff in the Chanie Wenjack School of Indigenous Studies. A special nya:wen to Brenda Maracle O'Toole and miigwetch to Jill Thompson. To all the students in classes at Trent, U of T and Dalhousie—I grew so much being with you. Thanks also to my family: my brother Charles, Kelly, Ava and Molly, Ruby Dodge, my father Chuck, Scott Cameron and my Mom. She is not here to see this day, but I know her heart soars for me!

Miigwetch to the generous funders: Trent University, the Ontario Graduate Scholarship Program, and the Weintraub and Moraff families who contributed to bursaries.

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STYLISTIC NOTES

Indigenous Names

I support the resurgence of Indigenous names for individuals, nations, places, and languages throughout this work rather than italicizing words in Indigenous or “foreign” languages. This practice is rooted in the hegemony of settler-colonialism that, as Barokka (2020) argues, contributes to the processes of “othering” and linguistic gatekeeping. Therefore, Indigenous words are not italicized but have English translations in brackets based on the style Anishinaabe scholar Jerry Fontaine used in his Ph.D. dissertation (2013).

Tense

My dissertation uses the continual present in many areas to indicate the continued relevance and impact of knowledges as ongoing, and to honour that knowledges are alive and active as emphasized by many Indigenous Knowledge Holders (Marshall, A. and Marshall, M. 2013; Williams, D., 2013).

Identification of Knowledge Holders and Scholars

I have included information about how Knowledge Holders and scholars identify themselves throughout the work where possible. If it is absent, this means I was not able to locate this information.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Need for Transformative, Systemic Change in the Canadian Academy

Since the 1960s, Indigenous Peoples have been and continue to share their knowledges within Canada's mainstream education systems. Transforming these systems so that Indigenous Knowledges—languages, laws, protocols, histories, and Indigenous connections to land—are respected and recognized as valid ways of understanding the world is one of the many challenges in the process of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action (2015) stress the need for new Indigenous education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples. They emphasize that Indigenous Peoples must lead and control processes of change. Reconciliation includes upholding Treaty relationships, enabling community responsibility, control and accountability over education, and using culturally appropriate curricula and pedagogies. New legislation must recognize the critical importance of education in strengthening the cultural identity of Indigenous Peoples and in providing a better basis for success—on their terms. Control over Indigenous education—in other words, Indigenous autonomy—is linked to Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination (Alfred, 2004; Corntassel, 2012; Deloria, 2003; Doxtator, 2011; Simpson, L., 2014). How can Canada's post-secondary institutions (PSIs) work alongside Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders and respond to the need for systemic, transformative, and reconciliatory change that supports Indigenous autonomy and sovereignty?

Ongoing practices of colonialism, imperialism, and globalization, arising through interlocking systems of oppression and domination, have resulted in Indigenous dispossession and denigration of their lands and waters, attacking the source of Indigenous Knowledge systems (IKS). Historically, this occurred through policies of assimilation and centralization that illegalized Traditional Indigenous governance, languages, and spiritual practices. *Canada's Indian*

Act and Indian Residential School (IRS) system are manifestations of these colonial goals. Colonial, hegemonic power structures have consistently denied Indigenous Peoples access to publicly funded or mainstream centres of knowledge production, at the same time erasing and marginalizing Indigenous historical narratives and knowledges (Simpson, L., 2004; Battiste, M., 2013; RCAP, 1996). This has resulted in devastating impacts on Indigenous lifeways, culture, health, education, governance, political, and economic systems. Contemporary colonial practices and policies continue to uphold systems that support disproportionately high rates of youth suicide, poverty levels in Indigenous communities, violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual (2SLGBTQQA+) people; significantly lower education completion rates for Indigenous Peoples, and approximately 61 First Nations communities living without clean drinking water (Global Citizen, 2021).

Implicated in the legacies, structures, systems, and processes and relations of settler colonialism, Canadian PSIs remain sites of colonial hegemony, in which settlers and Eurocentric knowledge systems continue to dominate, and Indigenous Peoples and their knowledges are excluded and marginalized in decision-making (Battiste, M., 2013; Corntassel, 2012; Coultard, 2014; Meek, 2017; Monture, 1995; Simpson, L., 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012). For example, mythologies that uphold Canada's illegal occupation of Indigenous homelands are prevalent in mainstream education, while Indigenous voices, perspectives, historical narratives, and Treaty understandings are often absent (Barker & Lowman, 2015). This has resulted in a status quo in which most settler and newcomer Canadians lack foundational understandings of "truth" that must come before participating in reconciliation, creating new relationships with Indigenous Peoples and upholding reciprocal Treaty relations, co-learning and co-creation of knowledges (TRC, 2015).

Despite the genocidal impacts of “shape-shifting colonial powers,” significant progress is being made toward the multiple projects of decolonizing and Indigenizing the mainstream Canadian education system, particularly in the last 40 years, and mainstream understandings are starting to shift (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, p. 601). Indigenous Peoples are revitalizing their knowledge systems and reclaiming Indigenous histories, homelands, and lifeways in multiple contexts (Corntassel, 2012; Simpson, L., 2011 & 2014). However, there are fundamental differences in how knowledge is understood—in other words, beliefs about what can be known (ontologies) and ways of knowing (epistemologies)—in an Indigenous context and mainstream Canadian society. As a result, Indigenous learners do not see themselves or their ancestor’s knowledges reflected in the programming, curriculum, pedagogies, professors, and instructors at most PSIs.

Suppression and erasure of IKS in the academy are based on racist and white supremacist assumptions that Eurocentric/settler-colonial scientific thinking is superior, enforced through processes of “cognitive imperialism” that position Indigenous Peoples as “Other” and “strange” to white Europeans and represent them as inferior, uncivilized, and savage in relation to European settlers (Battiste, M., 2000, p. 193 & 2013; Castellano, 2011; Couture, 2011; RCAP, 1986; Simpson, L., 1999). Compounding this, a Eurocentric/settler-colonial education system teaches Indigenous Peoples to “distrust their Indigenous Knowledge systems, their Elders’ wisdom, and their own inner learning spirit” (Battiste, M., 2013, p. 24). When Eurocentric/settler-colonial frameworks are normalized, IKS are vulnerable to being erased, denigrated, suppressed, omitted, marginalized, fragmented, objectified, misrepresented, appropriated, coopted, commodified, taken out of context and taught by non-Indigenous people claiming expertise (Battiste, M., 2013; Cook, 1997; Deloria, 2003; McGregor, 2004; Simpson, L., 2004; TRC, 1996).

Our current global problems, such as the degradation and destruction of land and waters (ecosystems) and other beings, loss of biodiversity, climate change, toxic pollution, unsustainable development, water insecurity, social, racial, environmental, and gender inequality, as well as human health issues (among others), require collaborative solutions from multiple and diverse knowledge systems. Eurocentric knowledges and sciences do not have all the answers. Indigenous Peoples are increasingly recognized for their crucial contributions to ecosystem, environmental and human health, science, history, philosophy, law, political studies, and business. IKS contain ecological and ethical frameworks that have the potential to transform and heal relationships with the land and with all beings (Donald, 2013; Kimmerer, 2013; Marshall, 2013; McGregor, 2004; Miller, 2013; Simpson, L., 2014; Williams, 2013). This recognition by colonial societies that Indigenous Peoples have sustainable knowledges and practices that can be used to address many global problems increases the need for PSIs to interact ethically and respectfully with Indigenous Peoples and IKS, honouring these as equally valid paradigms (Donald, 2013; Marshall, 2013; Newhouse, 2008; Simpson, L., 2004).

To situate ourselves in the current context, it is helpful to consider the Seven Fires prophecy held by Anishinaabeg Peoples of the Midewiwin tradition, which speaks to the various epochs or phases we will go through as peoples on Chi’Mikinak¹ (the Great Turtle, often referred to as Turtle Island), also known as the Americas. The prophecy indicates that we are in the time of the Seventh Fire—a crossroads in human relations and the health of Mother Earth. This time holds the potential for humans from all nations and traditions to come together through respectful relations—for a new people to emerge and for the lighting of the Eighth Fire (Benton-

¹ As suggested by Gitigaa Migizi/Doug Williams, Chi’Mikinak (the Great Turtle) is the preferred name, for Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg rather than Turtle Island (Williams, D., 2018, p. 15).

Banai, 1998). Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe² scholar Leanne Simpson (Alderville First Nation) suggests that as a form of restitution for its historical and contemporary role as a colonizing force, the academy must “become a decolonizing force in the intellectual lives of Indigenous Peoples by joining us in dismantling settler colonialism and actively protecting the source of our knowledge—Indigenous *land*” (Simpson, L., 2014, p. 22). In addition to taking care of the land, transformational change in Canadian PSIs means rebalancing asymmetrical power relations and governance, upholding Treaty relations, and disrupting dominant colonial hegemony. This means countering the forms of oppression that uphold settler colonialism, including all forms of racism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, cisnormativity, and global market capitalism. By creating new relations with Indigenous Peoples that align with understandings of relationality as based on respect and reciprocity, and their priorities within respective homelands, there is potential for settler/newcomer peoples to support and nurture processes of Indigenous resurgence, decolonizing, and healing. Settlers must change their practices as individuals, and collectively at the systemic, institutional level to uphold Treaty relations and values, and to nurture co-learning and co-creation (Alfred, 2004; Bartlett et al., 2012a).

Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Indigenous Knowledges are part of complex, rigorous systems that acknowledge a world in which everything is alive, infused with spirit, interconnected, and interdependent. They are based on thousands of years of acquired ancestral knowledge and draw upon the collective consciousness of a people. In an Indigenous worldview, everything comes from the land—all beings, languages, stories, songs, ceremonies and traditions. In other words, knowledge is rooted in place or place-based. IKS reflect the patterns and cycles of Creation, cosmic order, and

² Nishnaabe is Michi Saagig dialect for Anishinaabe. Michi Saagiig means “at the mouth of the rivers” (Simpson, L., 2017, p. 2). Michi Saagiig are also the people of the salmon (Williams, D., 2018).

the unity of the cosmos (Marshall, 2008; Simpson, L., 2011; Williams, 2013). As expressed in the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework:

[Creation] embraces land, animals, birds, physical elements, air, water, the universe, and all that it is as “relatives”. . . . that are “other than human beings.” They have a distinct purpose, they have a distinct identity, they have a distinct relationship with each other and humans, they have a place of belonging, and their existence has meaning unto themselves and in relation to each other and to humans (Health Canada and the Assembly of First Nations, 2015, p. 5)

Knowledges are continually being created and are constantly transforming. The Eurocentric concept of knowledge is called “coming to know” in Indigenous contexts (Cajete, 2000; Hatcher et al., 2009). Indigenous ways of knowing are spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual and comprise a holistic way of knowing if/when all four are balanced (Bell, 2014; Bartlett et al., 2015; Mumford, 2015). In the words of Mi’kmaw³ Dr./Elder Albert Marshall (Eskasoni First Nation:

First of all, you have to acknowledge that knowledge is alive—it has its own spirit. It will not only transform you but you also have a responsibility with that knowledge. And most importantly, for that knowledge to manifest itself within you, you have to enter into a relationship with it. Because what constitutes wholeness is the spirit has to be intact in you. And where does that spirit get nurturing? It gets it from the language. Where does the language get its nurturing? It gets it from the land. Unless all those are in place, a person cannot be complete or whole. The education system has to be holistic. One way to transform it—the spirit should be nurtured, not compromised (MK, 2013, p. 15).

Knowledge is not an object to be discovered or possessed but is part of living, spiritual, and ancestral relationships. This is challenging to honour within mainstream PSE.

Indigenous Peoples emphasize the need for culturally based education rooted in IKS (Bartlett et al., 2012a; Battiste, M., 2013; Newhouse, 2008; RCAP, 1996). Learning about culture,

³ As per the Smith-Francis Mi’kmaw orthography (1980), Mi’kmaq (the people) is a plural noun referring to the Nation or more than one Mi’kmaw person. Mi’kmaq is also used to signify the language. Mi’kmaw is used as a singular noun or an adjective, as in a Mi’kmaw Elder or the Mi’kmaw Nation (Confederacy of Mainland Mi’kmaq, 2007).

language, and traditions is critical to the well-being, identity, self-worth, and empowerment of Indigenous Peoples (Battiste, M., 2013; Blackstock, 2007; CCL 2009a and b; Castellano, 2011; Couture, 2011). Language is fundamental to a people's worldview and plays a critical role in the transmission, understanding, recording, and expression of IKS (Johnson, 2013; Metallic, 2011; Noori, 2013; Simpson, L., 2011). It is not possible to translate certain Indigenous understandings into English or Eurocentric/settler-colonial understandings (Bartlett et al., 2012a; Metallic, 2011; Noori, 2013).

Part of Indigenous resurgence is "the transmission of Indigenous culture, spiritual teachings and knowledge of the land between Elders and youth" (Alfred, 2009, p. 56). Indigenous Elders and other Knowledge Holders control the transmission methods in their specific homelands (Battiste, M., 2013; Couture, 2011; Ermine, 1995; Metallic, 2011; Newhouse, 2008; Simpson, L., 2011). Knowledge transfer is urgent because many Elders are passing away without having opportunities to pass along their knowledges (APCFNC, 2011; Battiste, M., 2013; Couture, 2011; Porter & Ka-Hon-Hes, 2008; Simpson, L., 2011). Indeed, Elders passing on their knowledges is critical for a successful learning continuum and healthy, resilient communities (Blackstock, 2007; CCL, 2009a). In many cases, Elders are among the last fluent speakers of their languages and keepers of specific knowledges and traditions. As Albert and Murdena Marshall suggest, Elders guarantee the "authenticity, accuracy and sacredness" of Indigenous Knowledge (Marshall & Marshall, 2013).

Many Elders want to share Indigenous Knowledges and engage with mainstream education systems (Cardinal, 2001). They focus on commonalities for the greater good and, at the same time, try to avoid a Pan-Indigenous approach. Elders feel it is critical to be engaged in the transmission, resurgence, and maintenance of Indigenous Knowledges through processes and protocols that they determine (APCFNC, 2011; Cardinal, 2001; Castellano, 2011; Couture,

2011; Kulchyski, McCaskill & Newhouse, 1999; Simpson, L., 2004). Leanne Simpson argues that not adequately engaging with Elders within the academy “actively facilitate[s] the colonization of Indigenous Knowledge and . . . Indigenous Peoples” (Simpson, L., 2008a, p. 79).

Institutional Responsiveness to Indigenous Knowledge Engagement

A debate as to how mainstream academic practices can further Indigenous sovereignty and Indigenous “intellectual sovereignty” and defend Indigenous homelands has been a critical question in the field of Indigenous Studies since the creation of the Indian and Eskimo Studies program at Trent University in Canada and Native American Studies in the United States in the 1960s (Warrior, 2003, p. 1). Ground-breaking Indigenous scholars, including Elizabeth Cook-Lynn (Crow Creek Sioux Tribe) and Vine Deloria Jr., (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe) felt that Indigenous Studies should be an endogenous study from within Indigenous homelands, languages, cultures, and experiences (Cook-Lynn, 1997; Deloria, 2003). They challenged what they felt was appropriation, co-option, and hollow rhetoric in the discipline by settler/newcomer scholars working within Eurocentric academic disciplines, Eurocentric Knowledges systems, and institutions with colonial governance models. While the contributions of settler/newcomer scholars were welcomed, Indigenous scholars stressed that Indigenous Peoples must have control or autonomy and be able to direct their own research agendas (Cook, 1997; Deloria, 2003). In 2015, Canadian universities have committed to implementing the TRC Calls to Action concerning education. Yet the question remains: Can engagement with Indigenous Peoples and their knowledge systems occur within settler-colonial institutions in ways that respect Indigenous autonomy, intellectual sovereignty and other aspects of Nation-based sovereignty?

Current approaches and strategies to making institutions more responsive to the needs of Indigenous Peoples, both ideological and discursive, include Indigenous resurgence, decolonizing, and “Indigenizing.” Tensions exist between Indigenous and settler-colonial

understandings and goals concerning Indigenizing and decolonizing processes underway at contemporary PSIs. Métis scholar Adam Gaudry and Danielle Lorenz (2018) suggest that Indigenization is a spectrum. At one end is Indigenous inclusion, in the middle is reconciliation Indigenization, and at the other is decolonial Indigenization, which includes both Treaty-based and resurgence-based decolonial Indigenization. They suggest the latter two to guide policy and praxis. Treaty-based decolonial Indigenization includes settler peoples as Treaty partners that nurture respectful relationships and co-create new shared ways to live together for future generations. Ultimately, Indigenous Peoples must have autonomy regarding Indigenizing and decolonizing processes to realize Indigenous goals (AFN, 2010; Alfred, 2004; Corntassel, 2012; Coultard, 2014; Simpson, L., 2011 & 2014). The experiences, stories and understandings of Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders on the path to honour IKS in PSE and the issues, tensions, and challenges they encounter have much to offer. Their insights can guide institutional transformation across Chi'Mikinak (Great Turtle) as we collectively learn how to become more responsive to the needs of Indigenous learners and communities, as per the TRC Calls to Action, to uphold Treaty relations and responsibilities and prepare to light the Eighth Fire.

The origin and scope of this research uses a lens of relational and Treaty-based accountability to explore how Indigenous autonomy is respected and supported at two Canadian universities. Relationships with Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders associated with the Chanie Wenjack School of Indigenous Studies (the Wenjack School) at Trent University (Trent), in Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Aki⁴ (Mississauga Anishinaabeg land), and the former Toqwa'tu'kl Kijijitaqnn/Integrative Science (TK/IS) program,⁵ at Cape Breton University (CBU) in

⁴ According to Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe Elder Gitigaa Migizi/Doug Williams “aki” means land in Nishnaabemowin (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe language) In English, he prefers the term Indigenous homelands, rather than territory (Williams, 2013).

⁵ Mi'kmaq for “bringing knowledges together” (IIHS, 2020).

Mi'kma'kik⁶ (Mi'kmaw homelands), where etuaptmumk, a Mi'kmaw understanding of the gift of multiple perspective or two-eyed seeing was put forward, ground and guide emergent understandings. Note that the Indigenous Studies programs at Trent and the TK/IS program at CBU were created before the 2015 TRC Calls to Action and current mandates to “Indigenize the academy” and not in response to these.

In contributing to the reconciliation process, settler peoples such as myself must recreate reciprocal relationships with Indigenous Peoples and confront Canada's structural and systemic problems. In the context of mainstream PSE systems, this involves upholding Treaty relations and responsibilities to Indigenous Peoples in the homelands where we live as guests. Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders dedicate their lives to sharing their knowledges, cultures, and languages and taking care of the youth, the ones who are coming, and Mother Earth—both in their communities and in PSE, despite challenges including lack of meaningful inclusion in governance and policy, ongoing systemic racism, and lateral violence. Engagement with IKS must honour their intrinsic value, integrity, and the intellectual sovereignty of Indigenous Knowledge Holders—to centre and amplify their voices. This is a starting point for rebalancing Indigenous/settler relationships and decolonizing Canadian education systems. Transformative change of colonial systems and structures involves activating, embodying, and advocating for practices that promote Indigenous autonomy and sovereignty of IKS in PSE contexts. My research focus, outlined below, addresses the potential and complexity of such transformation.

Research Questions or Problem

Across Chi'Mikinaak (the Great Turtle), post-secondary institutions are learning how to engage with Indigenous Knowledge Holders and their knowledges in academic programs and research. My work explores the following questions:

⁶ Mi'kma'kik as put forward by Murdena Marshall (1997).

- According to Indigenous Knowledge Holders involved with four Canadian Indigenous focussed PSE programs, what practices support and nurture Indigenous autonomy in relation to Indigenous Knowledge systems?
- From the perspectives of Indigenous Knowledge Holders and settler/Treaty people associated with these PSE programs, how can we embody and activate these practices as individuals and institutionally, and what are the issues, tensions, opportunities, and prospects for doing so? In other words, what is the potential for transformation of mainstream PSIs?

An Evolving Research Question: Indigenous and Colonial Constructs

Conscious of the need to avoid the institutionalization of Indigenous Knowledges through Eurocentric constructs and processes, I struggled to formulate my research questions. They seemed to fold in on themselves, reproducing settler-colonial or Eurocentric constructs and frameworks. Initially, I used “control” as a place marker in my research question—as in, “What practices support Indigenous control of Indigenous Knowledge systems?”—intending that control would be replaced by Indigenous understandings as the research evolved. Below, I offer a discussion of the terms Indigenous, settler, settler-colonial and Eurocentric, as well as how Eurocentric/settler-colonial constructs of control, autonomy, and sovereignty are differently situated.

Throughout this work, I use the term “Indigenous Peoples.” Following the Indigenous rights movement in the 1970s, Indigenous leaders chose this term to identify and unite their communities and represent them in global political forums, including the United Nations (UN). Under international law, there is no official definition of Indigenous. The UN recommends self-identification by Indigenous Peoples as individuals and as accepted by their community as a member, as many Indigenous and human rights organizations indicate. Discussion of Indigenous

Peoples and how they define themselves in relation to their lands since “time immemorial” unfolds throughout this work (Bell, 2014; Cajete, 1994; Marshall, M., 1997). Broadly, the UN suggests that Indigenous Peoples are autonomous and self-sustaining societies that practice unique traditions and retain social, cultural, economic, legal, and political characteristics distinct from those of the larger or dominant societies where they live. Indigenous Peoples inhabited a country or geographical region before the arrival of people with different cultures or ethnic origins. The newcomers became dominant through conquest, occupation, settlement, or other means (United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples, 2006; UBC, 2009). There is no mention of race or blood quantum in this description. Many people prefer not to use the term Indigenous. Māori scholar Linda Smith (1999) problematizes the way the term Indigenous aggregates peoples. In Canada, Indigenous Peoples (historically and often still referred to as Aboriginal Peoples) is a collective name for the original peoples of Chi’Mikinak and their descendants. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of distinct Indigenous Peoples: First Nations (referred to as Indians), Inuit and Métis (Canada, 2023).

Many names are used to describe those who are not Indigenous Peoples in Canada, including “non-Indigenous,” “non-Aboriginal,” “non-Native,” “white,” “newcomer,” or “Canadian.” Based on Paulette Regan’s (2014) use of the term, Barker & Battell Lowman suggest using “settler” as in “Settler peoples” to help us understand our identities and practices as “situated, process-based and pervasive” in Canada and other settler societies such as the U.S., Australia and New Zealand (p. 15). Settler identity is situated in that it is location or place-based within Indigenous homelands where Indigenous nations have a pre-existing and incontestable claim (Barker & Battell Lowman, 2015). Settler identity is complex, in relationship, shifting, lived, embodied, diverse and complicit in settler colonialism (Barker & Battell Lowman, 2015). Use of the term settler “situates non-Indigenous peoples in a structural relationship to the

dispossession of Indigenous land” (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 14) involving “the creation and consumption of a whole array of spaces by settler collectives that claim and transform places through the exercise of their sovereign capacity” (Barker, 2012, p.1). Further, Tuck and Yang assert that settlers make Indigenous homelands their “home and source of capital” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. ?). Indeed, Anishinaabe scholar Cheyanne Witkowicz suggests that settler does not adequately describe relationships with Indigenous Peoples, preferring the term “dispossessor” (C. Witkowicz, Anishnaabe, lives in Odawa/Ottawa, personal communication, 2021). Settler identities and ways of being are said to be “in process” as settlers have diverse cultural, political, economic, religious, and linguistic background and practices and embodied expressions (Barker & Battell Lowman, 2015). In other words, settlers “are variously and systemically positioned according to the shifting terms of State hegemonies” as per the shape-shifting of settler colonialism (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 14). As settler colonialism shifts, so do settler identities and practices. The term settler should be discomfiting, generating “impetus for decolonial transformation through a renewed community-centred approach” (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 2).

Many terms are used interchangeably to describe European-derived knowledges in Canadian contexts, including Eurocentric, Western, Euro-Canadian, European-based, colonial, neo-colonial, settler-colonial and white Canadian (Battiste, 2000; Brunette-Debassige, 2021; Henderson, 2000; Monture, 1995; Simpson, L., 2017). Mushkego Cree and French scholar Candace Brunette-Debassige (2021) describes PSIs as the “Euro-Western settler colonial academy” and uses Western and Eurocentric analogously (p. 26). Aikenhead and Michell (2011) note that “most scientists’ professional culture is Eurocentric in character and can be described as *Eurocentric science* or *Western science*” (p. 22). I use Eurocentric and settler-colonial to highlight systems of knowledge and relations of power and prefer the term Eurocentric over

Western to emphasize epistemologies rather than geographic location. This supports analysis and questioning of the epistemic primacy of Europe and settler-colonial states, including Canada (Çapan, 2018). Eurocentrism is broadly understood as part of political, economic, and cultural structures and systems in which everything is viewed from European or Western perspectives. Within these, it is often assumed that the knowledges, histories, and cultures of Europe, specifically Western Europe or “the West,” are superior to “non-European societies” or “non-Western” (Pokhrel, 2011). Turkish scholar Zeynep Gülşah Çapan asserts that dominant narratives of Europe versus the non-West uphold “a temporal and spatial duality” in which “hierarchies are assigned to the West (rational, modern, developed) and the non-West (spiritual, traditional, underdeveloped),” maintaining Europe as in the lead or the “originator of all developments (democracy, sovereignty, human rights)” and as a separate space in international contexts (Çapan, 2018, p. 2). Many Indigenous and other critical thinkers note how Eurocentric and settler-colonial knowledge systems assume the superiority of European and settler-colonial worldviews, ways of knowing, and values and how these have subsumed the knowledges of many non-European cultures, reshaping these to suit colonial goals (Aikenhead & Mitchell, 2011, Battiste, M., 2000 & 2013; Castellano, 2011; Couture, 2011; RCAP, 1986; Simpson, L., 2017; Henderson, 2000). Sakej Youngblood Henderson (Chickasaw Nation and Cheyenne Tribe) says Eurocentrism is “the twin of the trickster or imitator, or the ‘anti-trickster’ [. . . that] represents a cognitive force of artificial European thought, a differentiated consciousness, ever-changing in its creativity to justify the oppression and domination of contemporary Indigenous peoples and their spiritual guardians” (Henderson, 2000 a, p. 58). As analysis of colonialism has evolved, the structures and systems of settler colonialism (including systemic racism and white supremacy) are revealed as contemporary extensions of Eurocentric

modes of power and epistemological domination. Eurocentric is an older term describing a much more extended historical period.

The concept of control has been part of Canadian and global discourse concerning Indigenous self-determination since the National Indian Brotherhood/Assembly of First Nations' seminal paper *Indian Control of Indian Education*, (1972) and has subsequently been used in *Ownership, Control, Access and Possession* (2007), *First Nations Control of First Nations Education* (2010), the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) (2007), and the TRC's Calls to Action (2015). UNDRIP Article 14:1 states: "Indigenous Peoples have the right to establish control of their education systems and institutions, providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning" (United General Assembly, 2007). The TRC Calls to Action also use the discourse Indigenous "control" of Indigenous education.

Indigenous Peoples express understandings of sovereignty and self-determination in diverse, nuanced ways beyond Eurocentric/settler-colonial conceptions of control and power. During the one-on-one consultations concerning my research direction with Elders/Knowledge Holders on the Traditional Advisory Council (TAC) for the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. Program, Skahendowaneh Swamp strongly objected to the word control. He told me that no one had any control over his Indigenous Knowledge—that he was Indigenous Knowledge (Swamp, 2016). The concept of control was not working well. Shortly afterwards, I considered using autonomy in my question. I affirmed its suitability with other Knowledge Holders, such as Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe Elder Gidigaa Migizi (Spotted Eagle)/Doug Williams (Wshkiigimongaki/Curve Lake First Nation), Anishinaabe Elder Migizi ow-kwe (That Eagle Woman)/Shirley Williams (Wikwemikong Unceded Territory/Manitoulin Island), and Oneida scholar Mark Doxtator

(Oneida Nation of the Thames). The demand for autonomy is part of a larger framework of basic international rights for Indigenous people; autonomy served as a better place marker.

Indigenous Peoples and Autonomy: Insights for a Global Age (Globalization and Autonomy) (Blaser et al., 2010) brings together global Indigenous perspectives on autonomy and globalization and confirms the limitations of a Eurocentric/settler-colonial concept of autonomy for Indigenous Peoples and their projects and visions within settler colonialism. Autonomy comes from the Greek *autonomia*, from *autonomos* “having its own laws,” from *autos* (self) and *nomos* (law): the freedom for a country, region, or organization to govern itself independently. Synonyms include self-government, sovereignty, self-determination, self-rule, home rule, independence, and freedom (Oxford, 2020). In a mainstream context, autonomy is used individually and collectively. At a collective level, this can include nation-states, minority groups within states, Indigenous Peoples, and religious movements. Autonomy is closest to its Greek root at this level (Blaser et al., 2010). At the individual level, according to Held (1995), autonomy has come to refer to “the situations of individual persons and their capacity to shape the conditions they live in” (as cited in Blaser et al., 2010. p. 5). A collective meaning of autonomy began in the seventeenth century, while an individual or personal understanding did not emerge until the nineteenth century (Oxford, 2020). The idea of individual autonomy emerged from rejecting the oppressiveness of medieval European institutions. Both individual and collective notions of autonomy were used increasingly with the rise of modernity (Blaser et al., 2010).⁷

A team at the University of Washington realizes the health of Indigenous communities will not improve if settler peoples are not able to

⁷ For further discussion, Blaser et al. suggest reading works by scholars such as Charles Taylor (*Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, 1992) and Jürgen Habermas (*The European Nation State. Its Achievements and Its Limitations. On the Past and Future of Sovereignty and Citizenship*, 1996), who have traced the evolution of understandings of individual autonomy in European thought.

Recogniz[e] the ethical consequences of imposing a colonized (Western) autonomy on tribal communities who may have a different understanding of collective identity and priorities. Only by openly discussing and being willing to revise what we mean by 'autonomy' can we develop healthy, mutually beneficial partnerships based on trust. (Montgomery & Sharpe, 2013, p. 1)

They suggest Eurocentric/settler-colonial traditions centre on the "rational individual" as the subject of knowing or in research, which is a colonized understanding of autonomy. In contrast, Indigenous Peoples create identity around "we," not "I." They affirm that decolonizing research practices and policies must reflect Indigenous communities' understandings of autonomy.

In their discussion about Indigenous and Eurocentric/settler-colonial understandings of autonomy, Blaser et al. remind us that Indigenous and Eurocentric paradigms diverge based on different epistemologies and ontologies. As Indigenous understandings of being and knowing are based on relationality with all beings, Blaser et al. argue that,

[by] failing to recognize relationality, analysts and commentators often misconstrue Indigenous movements for autonomy. For example, they construct Indigenous Peoples' demands for land in primarily economic or political rather than spiritual and emotional terms. Thus, they fail to recognize that their attempt to classify these demands as economic, cultural, political, or educational results from the very modern epistemologies and ontologies that contemporary Indigenous autonomy movements resist. (Blaser et al., 2010, p. 9)

Furthermore, they state, "Indigenous Peoples' movements and struggles for autonomy seek to bring relationality back to the forefront of human values and practices" (Blaser et al., 2010, p. 9).

Blaser et al. stress that for their knowledges and ways of living to survive, Indigenous Peoples have had to work with understandings and practices and claim autonomy within Eurocentric/settler-colonial contexts. Indigenous Peoples only became concerned with autonomy "after meeting settlers living the ontology and epistemology of the West" (Blaser et al., 2010, p. 7). Indeed, this could apply to all Eurocentric/settler-colonial constructs, including sovereignty, nationhood, governance, power, control, etc. Therefore, it is essential to

problematize these. This clash of ontologies and epistemologies is evident in the Indigenous adoption of the concept of control in *Indian Control of Indian Education* (1972) and other seminal policy papers.

Indigenous autonomy is also revealed as practices occurring at multiple levels or zones “in the level of daily life and often outside of the purview of the state” (Blackwell, 2012, p. 17). In the *Declaration of the Second National Gathering of Indigenous Women* that took place in Chilpancingo, in the state of Guerrero, Mexico, in 2000 (as cited in Blackwell, 2012), they assert that autonomy includes all areas of Indigenous Peoples’ lives as well as respect and recognition of culture, territories, and traditional medicine. For this group, autonomy means “parity, democracy, and equity between men and women, indigenous and non-indigenous, between all human beings, and, above all, that our rights be recognized as the original peoples we are” (p.719). Indigenous women activists in Mexico have transformed rights discourse within many arenas of their lives, thereby “multiplying their zones of autonomy” and creating a “grassroots pedagogy of autonomy” (Blackwell, 2012, p. 720). Their gatherings allow “the most marginalized actors within marginalized communities to make decisions about the parameters and practices of Indigenous autonomy, rather than waiting for the state, or even their leaders, to define its limits” (Blackwell, 2012, p. 720). These Indigenous women are utilizing consultation as a way of consensus-building and meaning-making as part of community-based governance to understand and promote their rights within Indigenous autonomy (Blackwell, 2012).

Kwakwaka’wakw scholar Sarah Hunt and settler scholar Cindy Holmes emphasize that the everyday actions of Indigenous individuals, families, and communities that often go unseen or unacknowledged are as vital to decolonizing processes as blockades, protests, and rallies (Hunt & Holmes, 2015). Cherokee scholar Jeff Corntassel and Kwakwaka’wakw and Snuneymuxw scholar Mick Scow build on these arguments, stressing that everyday actions

express and nurture Indigenous relationships to lands, waters, language, sacred living histories, and the natural world and renew Indigenous communities, peoplehood, and nationhood.

Focusing on “everydayness allows us to see Indigenous relationality in action” (Corntassel & Scow, 2017, p. 58). Furthermore, they state that “daily acts of resurgence, at the community, family and personal levels, can be critical sites of resistance, education, and transformative change” (Corntassel & Scow, 2017, p. 55).

Bringing together diverse understandings of Indigenous autonomy and critical insights about how Indigenous Peoples activate their autonomy—by restoring understandings of relationality to human values and practices through everyday acts of resurgence within multiple zones or sites—helps to shift the emphasis of my research question so that autonomy includes understandings of relationality. I propose Indigenous relational autonomy to describe Indigenous understandings of relationality or relational autonomy. It is important to note that Indigenous understandings of relationality, epistemology, and ontology go beyond humans to include all beings. Centring everyday, multi-sited relationality with all of Creation in discussions about autonomy helps to illuminate generative and emergent Indigenous practices and processes. Indigenous relational autonomy—beyond mainstream notions of autonomy—is akin to the Mi’kmaw understanding of *m’sit no’kmaq* or All My Relations within Mi’kma’ki. Mi’kmaw scholar Stephen Augustine (Elsipogtog First Nation) says *m’sit nok’maq* demonstrates respect for relationships and responsibilities, including Wabanaki and settler peoples, the ancestors, and all beings (Augustine, S., 2016). *M’sit nok’maq* imparts understandings of relationality and L’nu’k epistemology and ontology—of all beings as interdependent and interconnected within the web of life that includes all beings as sources of knowledge. Recentring Indigenous understandings of relationality or Indigenous relational autonomy aligns with my research approach, which is grounded in relationality accountability.

Positionality

Aaniin, Boozhoo. Gillian nindizhinikaaz. Tkaronto (Mohawk for where there are trees standing in the water)⁸, indoojobaayaan. In Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe dialect, this is “Hello, my name is Gillian. I am from Toronto. Here, I share who I am, some of my personal story and lifelong learning journey, and how this relates to my research focus. I do this as good practice within an Indigenous research context as I have been taught by Gidigaa Migizi/Doug Williams, Migizi ow-kwe/Shirley Williams, Albert and Murdena Marshall, and others, as well as in keeping with understandings from a critical theory perspective that teach me to situate myself while doing research and enter into a reflexive process. I am inspired by four fundamental questions for understanding ourselves and finding meaning in our lives—“Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? Why am I here?”—as put forward by many Indigenous Elders, including Albert Marshall and Senator Murray Sinclair of Peguis First Nation.

I was born and spent my first 18 years in Tkaronto, also known as Toronto (Language Hat, 2014), which sits on the Traditional territory of Indigenous Nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabeg, the Huron-Wendat Peoples, the Seneca Peoples, and the Rotinonhsión:ni (University of Toronto, 2022; City of Toronto, 2022). I am a white settler with Scottish, Irish, British, and French ancestry and identify as a cisgender woman. Except for being in Nogojiwanong, “the place at the foot of the rapids,” otherwise known as Peterborough, Ontario, from 2013–2017 while attending Trent, I have lived in unceded in Mi’kma’kik since 2001 (Simpson, L., 2008a, p. 205).

My story is similar to many settler Canadians of my generation. I am a centennial baby, born 100 years after the Canadian state was created. I spent my first 22 years in the mainstream education system in Ontario and Québec. I grew to be an adult with almost no

⁸ DaCosta, 2014.

relationships with and knowing very little about the First Peoples of Chi'Mikinak (the Great Turtle). In my early 20s, I began to learn about some of the devastating impacts of colonization in relation to Indigenous Peoples and the land. Transformative experiences working in the Phanat Nikom refugee camp in Thailand with Hmong Peoples displaced through the Vietnam War, as well as some epiphanies about Canada and the U.S and "Westerners" upon my return, shifted my perspectives and opened me up to a more heart-based, compassionate, and global sense of the world. This led me to pursue a Master of Environmental Studies (M.E.S) at York University. There, I was encouraged by Professors Mary Bernard, Joe Sheridan, and others to turn inward and examine my own culture and my family's relationships with Indigenous Peoples. I was fortunate to have Migizi ow-kwe/Shirley Williams in my cohort at York and to attend many talks between 1992 and 1995 offered around Tkaronto with Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders Lee Maracle, (Sto:lo First Nation), Alex McKay, (Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation), Art Solomon (Anishinaabeg), Deb McGregor, (Whitefish River First Nation), Henry Lickers (Seneca Nation), and Joe Couture (Cree). At this time, I first heard Indigenous histories of Chi'Mikinak and understandings of All My Relations, which encouraged further transformation.

As part of my M.E.S research, I looked into my family history, starting with my grandfathers and their relationships with Anishinaabeg Peoples. I found that neither my parents nor my aunts and uncles knew much about these aspects of their fathers' lives. Oral history was limited. On my father's side, through his father, I am part of the seventh generation of Austins. The first known relative born on Chi'Mikinak was William Wesley Austin (1836–1912), who settled in Eganville in Renfrew County, Ontario. My grandfather, Charles Chambers Austin, spent much of his later years on a small island on Tyson Lake, just east of Killarney Park. He was a bush pilot and co-owner of Austin Airways, which flew into Cree and Anishinaabeg homelands along what is also known as James and Hudson Bay, areas where there was little contact with early

settlers. I learned that the people in these communities knew Austin Airways, as they helped take people to hospitals during medical emergencies, especially women experiencing difficult pregnancies or labour. At the same time, Austin Airways also participated in opening up these homelands, supporting exploration that led to resource extraction, deforestation and development, and dispossessing Indigenous Peoples of their lands and ways of life. My family was also involved in the Austin Lumber Company, which cleared untold acres of forest. I was a tree planter for many years, and I often thought this was part of trying to make reparations. I didn't understand that I was contributing to monoculture forestry at the time. The roots of white guilt grew strong in me, and I struggled to find ways to deal with these feelings as a young woman. I now better recognize that all of my ancestors are complicit in and benefit from Indigenous dispossession and that my family's story parallels the more extensive history of settler-colonial relations on Chi'Mikinak (Great Turtle). I feel it is essential for settler/Treaty peoples to recognize and work with difficult teachings ongoing, to forgive ourselves, and to recognize growth.

On my mother Margaret Cameron's side, her father, Arthur Allison Wishart, was a lawyer and Attorney General of Ontario from 1966 to 1971. His sacred ground was Badjiwanung (Batchewana Bay) on Gichigami (the big sea) on Lake Superior, where he had a cottage, and our family spent many summers with my mother's four sisters, brother, and many cousins. We took the Chi-Jiimaan ferry to Wikwemikong Wikwemikong Unceded Territory (Manitoulin Island) and continued to Badjiwanung (Batchewana Bay). Arthur was made an honorary chief of both communities for his involvement with the Batchewana First Nation and the Garden River First Nation. While there was much family pride about this, no one was able to tell me the stories. I have a black and white photo of Arthur wearing one of the headdresses he was gifted on a wall

in my house. My grandfather was also honoured for his support of Algoma University in Sault Ste. Marie. The Arthur A. Wishart Library at Algoma University is named after him.

Through the generosity and kindness of Elder Betty Pine from Garden River, I learned that my grandfather had been a friend of her father, the late Dr./Elder Dan Pine Sr. (1900–1992), who was an Indian Residential School (IRS) Survivor, a healer, and known for helping the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre (Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association, 2021). Dr./Elder Dan Pine is a descendant of Chief Shingwaukonse of Garden River, who signed the Robinson-Huron Treaty at Sault Ste. Marie in 1850 (Pine, 2021). My grandfather developed a relationship with the Garden River and Batchewana communities and helped them with legal matters. As a lawyer, he was concerned they were getting a bad deal from the government in relation to their land. Betty Pine told me Arthur provided free legal advice and started to learn some Anishinaabemowin while visiting the communities and had also started to learn some songs. My grandmother, Ellen Wishart, hosted me over the summer I started my M.E.S research. I learned that my grandfather had never taken her or their children to the nearby Anishinaabeg communities. He went alone and shared little with her. Only one of my aunts has been to visit these communities. During the time I spent with my grandmother, I also learned about the racist attitudes she held, resulting in her being fearful of going to the “reservation.” At the time, the extent of her racism was a shocking discovery for me.

I learned a critical teaching as part of this journey. Searching for what my grandfather Wishart had done to earn such high regard from these two Anishinaabeg communities, I came to understand that he was not honoured for one particular act but for his relationships—his friendship. I have always wished I could have had conversations with him about his life while I was an adult. He passed over to the spirit world when I was 19. I imagine he would have supported my path and learning, as my parents have always been. Many Indigenous

Elders/Knowledge Holders have told me that my ancestors are guiding me in the work that I am doing now. Amazingly, towards the end of completing this dissertation, my grandfather on my father's side, Charles C. Austin, communicated his love, support, and encouragement to me in transformative and healing ways that helped me move forward in the process.

The urgency of working with Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders intensified while I was the research coordinator of a collaborative, Elder-guided, community-based participatory research process, which involved 23 Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqey, Innu, and Inuit Elders. As part of the *Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Elders Project: Honouring Traditional Knowledge* (henceforth referred to as *Honouring Traditional Knowledge*) that took place between 2009–2011, Elders were consulted as to how they would like to engage in the sharing of Traditional or Indigenous Knowledges for community economic development and research. The Elders want to engage in a “co-learning” journey with Atlantic region universities and make eight recommendations, including a plan for how knowledge transfer from the Elders and respectful inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in postsecondary programming can occur through an Elders lead council (APCFNC, 2011).⁹ While the Atlantic Region Chiefs sanctioned the recommendations at the time of writing 13 years ago (in 2011), these have not yet been implemented.

As part of *Honouring Traditional Knowledge*, I developed loving and trusting relationships with Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqey, Innu, and Inuit Elders/Knowledge Holders and the settler allies who supported the project. Working with Indigenous Peoples and communities is not something that ends when a project is over; it is a lifelong relationship. I have gained insight into the Elders' visions and feel bound through relational accountability to continue the work that we initiated and to act on what I have learned. This shapes my research approach and the

⁹ The APCFNC Elders Project: Honouring Traditional Knowledge (APCFNC, 2011) is also published as a chapter in *Aboriginal Knowledge for Economic Development* (AAEDIRP et al., 2014). I used the APCFNC version for referencing.

evolution of my research questions. Most prominent in this learning journey over the past 17 years is a close relationship that evolved with Drs./Elders Albert and Murdena Marshall of Eskasoni First Nation.

Through my experiences with the APCFNC, I recognize that barriers exist regarding community Elders having autonomy and independence—from all levels of colonial government, governance at the band level, and in relation to PSIs. Layers of complexity related to why Elder-led processes and Elders' knowledges are not supported and threaten dominant systems of power presented themselves. I wondered what was at the root of this resistance to the uptake of Elders' guidance in PSE? What supports might the Elders/grassroots peoples need/want? My questions about Elders' knowledges resulted in my returning to academia. I wanted to be able to deconstruct colonial education systems so that I could better participate in the dialogue and action needed to recentre and create spaces for Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders within the sphere of influence of mainstream PSE systems. While attending Trent, I developed strong relationships with some of the Anishinaabeg and Rotinonhsión:ni Elders who guide the Indigenous Studies programs. I asked members of the TAC if they would consider sharing their expertise in the research process. Over time, my focus evolved to look at aspects of the broader co-learning journey we are all engaged in across Chi'Mikinak (Great Turtle).

I have come to understand that I have responsibilities to act on what I have learned and to reciprocate by giving back to the Indigenous communities I am engaged with within an ethic of relational accountability. My research focus was illuminated by the resilience of Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders, their love and concern for their communities and Mother Earth, their resistance to colonial systems and their abilities to speak truth to power. The guidance, teachings and voices of Murdena and Albert and Gwen Bear and the other Elders, my colleagues John R. Sylliboy (Eskasoni and Millbrook First Nation) and Darcy Pirie (Tobique First Nation), as

well as many other APCFNC staff, came with me on this journey. In short, these relationships, the knowledges and guidance imparted through my web of relations, inspired and made it possible for me to embark on this journey.

Canada as a Settler-Colonial State

Canada has not closed the door on the “dark chapters and shameful chapters of its past” (McIntyre, 2017), as claimed by current (2022) Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, nor, as former Prime Minister Stephen Harper alleged, is there “no history of colonization” in Canada (Wherry, 2009). Canada did not enter into a Treaty with Indigenous Nations but was established through an Act of the British parliament, which implicates Canadians as participants in a settler-colonial state (Venne, 2017). Indigenous Peoples in Chi’Mikinak continue to endure, resist, and refuse the various iterations of 500 years of “extensive and prolonged” colonization, including dispossession from their lands; degradation of their lands, knowledge systems, and languages; marginalization and fragmentation of their knowledges and historical narratives; segregation; experiences of multi- and intergenerational trauma; and assaults on their sovereignty and autonomy through oppressive and discriminatory systems and bureaucratic control (Brunette-Debassige, 2021; Palmater, 2020, p. 8; Simpson, L., 2017). Ideological and structural in nature, these systems are based on values of heteropatriarchy, all forms of racism, European superiority, white supremacy, global market capitalism, cisnormativity, homophobia and transphobia, ableism, and anthropocentrism (Snelgrove et al., 2014; Simpson, L., 2014 & 2017).

The harmful impacts of these experiences are revealed through social indicators, including the highest poverty and suicide rates in Canada; disproportionate and increasing levels of incarceration; disproportionate and growing numbers of children in the foster care system; lower levels of education, employment, and income; high levels of housing and food insecurity or homelessness; and barriers to health care and cultural supports. Indigenous Peoples also

endure the highest rates of violence and death from police (NIMMWG, 2019a); Palmater, 2020). The 2019 National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (NIMMIWG) finds Canada guilty of race-, identity-, and gender-based genocide: “Canada has displayed a continuous policy with shifting expressed motives, but ultimately steady intention, to destroy Indigenous Peoples, physically, biologically, and as social units” (NIMMWG, 2019a). Significantly, this is the first time a national inquiry has acknowledged that Canada’s policies have condoned genocide. Despite these myriad assaults, Indigenous Peoples did not disappear, and Indigenous sovereignty has not been eliminated (Alfred, 2005; Corntassel, 2012; Coultard, 2014; Simpson, A. 2014; Simpson, L., 2017; Wallace, 2013). Indigenous Peoples refuse to give up their lands and are defining and fighting for their rights to govern themselves, and many refuse to be absorbed into the Canadian state (Simpson, A. 2014; Mackey, 2016). As Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson (Kahnawà:ke Mohawk Nation) contends: “this ongoing and structural project to acquire and maintain land, to eliminate those on it, did not work completely. There are still Indians, some still know this, and some will defend what they have left. They will persist, robustly” (Simpson, A., 2014, p. 12). Ultimately, finding ways for Indigenous and settler/Treaty peoples to co-exist peacefully and respectfully is crucial.

David Newhouse observes that “the story of Indigenous Peoples is predominately told through the lens of colonization” (Newhouse, 2016, p. 2). He describes the period from the *Gradual Civilization Act* of 1857, designed to assimilate “Indians” into Canadian society, to the *White Paper Statement of Indian Policy* in 1971, which share the same goals, as the Long Assault. He asserts that during this time, Canada sought to “solve” the “Indian problem” by either moving Indians from their Traditional lands and territories or removing “the Indian” from within the person/peoples (Newhouse, 2016; Simpson, A., 2016). Newhouse prefers to view the history of Indigenous Peoples as “the Canada problem” or, as articulated by settler scholar Eva

Mackey, “the settler problem” (Newhouse, 2016; Mackey, 2016). The current strategy of settler states is to make apologies, “recognizing” Indigenous Peoples and the “historical” wrongs they experienced (Coulter, 2014; Simpson, A., 2016). Newhouse stresses that “the approach to addressing the Canada problem is multifaceted and multi-sited, and it uses multiple strategies that continue over many years” (Newhouse, 2016, p. 4).

Indigenous strategies toward addressing the settler problem involve resistance, confrontation, legal challenges, and decolonizing processes in relation to the Canadian state and its institutions. Others involve turning away, refusing the state, and centring Indigenous resurgence based on political, economic, cultural, and spiritual systems that have the potential to transform relations with Canada, with settler society, and with the land (Corntassel, 2012; Coulter, 2014; Newhouse, 2016; Monture, 1995; Simpson, A. 2014; Simpson, L., 2017). Indigenous resurgence involves activating the ethics and teachings of relationality and relational accountability that arise from place-based forms of knowledge or grounded normativity, generating Indigenous understandings of nationhood, governance, and sovereignty. It goes beyond the borders of colonial institutions to reclaim Indigenous histories, homelands, and lifeways (Coulter, 2014; Simpson, L., 2017). One model exists in the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke refusing state-centred and -recognized forms of identity, rooted in what Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred (Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke) calls Iroquois democracy: “a consensual decision making and participatory political process” based on “accountability to the people and leadership” (1995, as cited in Simpson, A., 2014, p. 44). Indeed, many Indigenous Peoples offer teachings from ancestral knowledges to address the settler problem in Canada and the U.S. (Hill, 2008; Simpson, A. 2014).

Dissertation Overview

This dissertation begins in the east where the People of the Dawn live—in Wabanakik. It then travels west to Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Aki. It is organized into chapters based on a standard social science approach. The chapters build upon each other, deepening discussion. Exploring practices that nurture and promote Indigenous autonomy of IKS or Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty and how these are activated and embodied in the academy is a broad topic. I narrow this by grounding understandings within relationships with specific Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Holders in their homelands.

The introductory chapter provides the context and purpose for the research, shares the research questions, and my relationship to the work or positionality. The second chapter is a literature and oral source review that situates the research focus in the context of current issues framed by Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders and in academic literature. This includes a discussion of colonial systems, the TRC and the process of reconciliation, governance at Canadian public universities, IKS and the academy, contested epistemological terrain and Eurocentric/settler-colonial knowledge domination, confronting racialization, oppression and discrimination and transforming settler consciousness in the academy and knowledge engagement, including Treaty relations, intended to illuminate some of the critical issues and debates in the field. In chapter three, I speak to my guiding relationships, approaches and methods to uncovering knowledges, the scope of the work, my research design, and the ethical considerations involved. In chapters four through eleven, I share findings.

Chapters four and five are rooted in Mi'kma'kik and are partner chapters. Chapter four centres on the legacy of Mi'kmaw Dr./Elder Murdena Marshall and some of her foundational teachings about Mi'kmaw and IKS Mi'kmaw/IKS, offering potential applications of Murdena's wisdom to emphasize Treaty-based approaches for knowing and being within PSIs and settler

society. Chapter five looks at co-learning and *etuaptmumk*, the gift of multiple perspectives or two-eyed seeing, and the journey of the *Toqwa'tu'kl Kijijitaqnn/Integrative Science (TK/IS)* program developed at CBU. Lessons learned concerning program governance and directions for strengthening co-learning and *etuaptmumk* by re-grounding these within Treaty-based epistemologies are shared.

Chapters six through eleven emerge from insights shared by Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders and settler/Treaty people at Trent. Chapter six shares the journey of Indigenizing and decolonizing at Trent, starting with the creation and evolution of the Department of Indigenous Studies, now the Chanie Wenjack School of Indigenous Studies (the Wenjack School). It touches on promising practices related to IKS in the Wenjack School and its programs. In chapter seven, Indigenous Knowledge Holders at Trent share what “Indigenizing” is for them and offer promising practices for nurturing, activating and embodying Indigenous Knowledge autonomy/sovereignty within the Wenjack School, for Trent’s upper administration, the academic senate and board, and strengthening relations with local Indigenous communities. They consider the question, “Who are we Indigenizing for?” and the need to support healing from intergenerational trauma in PSIs.

Chapter eight continues to share guidance from research collaborators at Trent who emphasize the importance of centring *Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg*, their knowledges, language, history, spirituality and land and finding ways to recognize and work with the knowledges of diverse Indigenous Nations. Their strategies include putting land first, elevating and connecting Indigenous governance within the existing colonial system, and shifting to Indigenous governance of Indigenous PSE. *Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe* Elder Dorothy Taylor’s vision of Indigenizing based on the *Odenaabe Zibii* (Otonabee River) and surrounding land, and the essential roles and ties between Elders and youth and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty in PSE,

is highlighted. Indigenous research collaborators indicate how a resurgence of established protocols, ceremonies, and Treaties between Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, other Anishinaabeg and Rotinoshón:ni Nations can support working amongst diverse Indigenous Nations. The significance of IKS's contributions in creating a (w)holistic university, addressing critical local and global issues, and fostering interdisciplinarity and structural and systemic transformation of PSE is emphasized.

Chapter nine provides an overview of the differently situated, Indigenous and settler-colonial governance frameworks and modes of power that co-exist within Trent and the Canadian academy. Indigenous and allied research collaborators discuss how to restructure, reform or transform current university governance and transition towards Indigenous governance within the Wenjack School and other Indigenous programs at Trent. They share insights concerning Traditional Indigenous governance and indicate short-term steps for reforming and restructuring post-secondary education (PSE) governance that involve connecting, enhancing, and elevating Indigenous leadership within current governance structures and frameworks and, ultimately, creating ethical spaces for Indigenous governance of Indigenous PSE.

Chapter ten shares insights from settler/Treaty people at Trent related to Anishinaabe Dr./Elder Migizi ow-kwe/Shirley William's directive that for settler/Treaty peoples, reconciliation "Is our job." The implications of living in a Treaty area and facilitating Treaty relationships in the context of Treaty 20 (1818) and the Williams Treaties (1923) are discussed. Research collaborators share suggestions for curriculum related to Treaty education, pedagogies, and desired learning outcomes, including the transformation of settler consciousness. The voices of youth participants who want Trent to demonstrate more accountability by contributing its strengths in research to the well-being and health of local Indigenous Peoples and by adhering

to practices including transparency, regular communication, and collaborative discussion are highlighted. Challenges to upholding Treaties (and reconciliatory action) include lack of knowledge and education, settler complicity, the reproduction of settler-colonial thinking, and unwillingness to set aside power or mitigate white privilege are outlined. Recommendations are offered about how to reset relationships with Indigenous Peoples and with the land, and primarily, to restore, share, and give back Indigenous land. Research collaborators' insights affirm that coming to know through Treaty and land-based epistemologies offers great potential for transforming settler society and PSIs.

Chapter eleven provides an overview of the research and its contributions. There is a summary for Trent based on the findings from chapters six to ten. This chapter also offers a discussion of how we might *Treaty* our way forward based on Treaty values and instructions. A focus on doing Treaty in Mi'kma'kik and the potential of Treaty epistemology to transform ourselves and the academy is offered. The chapter closes with some reflections on the research and a short epilogue.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE & ORAL SOURCE REVIEW

Overview and Approach

Exploring practices that support and nurture Indigenous autonomy in relation to Indigenous Knowledge systems (IKS) in Canadian PSE programs, how these practices can be embodied and activated in the academy, and in doing so, what issues, tensions, opportunities, and prospects emerge, are, forms the focus of this literature review. I explore literature and oral sources in broad and specific contexts to provide a foundation that includes theoretical frameworks, historical narratives, concepts, ideas, and lines of analysis to support and move readers through the work. I start with foundational understandings of IKS. I then consider the context of IKS in relation to the academy by situating ongoing colonialism and colonial practices in the Canadian context, making linkages between the Canadian state and PSIs and providing analysis. I discuss Eurocentric/settler-colonial knowledge domination in the academy, the need to transform and decolonize mainstream education and create spaces for Indigenous resurgence, models for knowledge engagement, and critical areas for settler education. In synthesizing and considering the many interconnected topics related to this work, I use co-learning and Indigenist approaches by centring the voices and perspectives of Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders and scholars who have illuminated the way. I amplify the voices of Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik of the Wabanaki Confederacy, Anishinaabeg, Rotinoshón:ni (Haudenosaunee), and Cree Peoples, where the research is located. I support their voices with strengths from Settler-Colonial Theory traditions.

We are fortunate to have at least four generations of Indigenous scholars from whom to learn; however, I mention only a few. A first wave of Elder/scholars¹⁰ began teaching and

¹⁰ Joe Couture, Willie Ermine, Leroy Little Bear, Vine Deloria, Jim Dumont, Gregory Cajete, Donald Fixico, Basil Johnson, Jake Swamp, and Lewis Cardinal.

publishing in the 1960s and 1970s, providing leadership and mentorship and sharing within mainstream education systems in Canada and the United States—a second wave of Indigenous scholars built upon these foundations.¹¹ Beginning in the late 1990s, another wave of Indigenous scholars continued the work.¹² Emergent Indigenous scholars continue to enrich the field. As tensions exist between Traditional narrative practices and published scholarly work, a primary criterion for resource selection is the degree to which Elders/Knowledge Holders were collaborative participants in knowledge production. Many Elders/Knowledge Holders also produce grey literature concerning Indigenous education, governance, health, and knowledge engagement at Nation, community, and grassroots levels. Some Elders/Knowledge Holders share their voices in a growing body of written and oral sources that centre their voices produced by Indigenous community and government organizations and government.¹³

I also look to settler/allied scholars who work within diverse critical theory paradigms and are trying to respectfully engage with Indigenous Peoples and their knowledge systems.¹⁴ Again, I am mainly interested in work created through collaborative, co-learning approaches with Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders. Some of this work comes from a community-based participatory approach based on a desire for systemic change and racial, social, environmental,

¹¹ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Gregory Cajete, Marlene Brant Castellano, Marie Battiste, Sakej Henderson, Gerald Vizenor, Pam Colorado, Patricia Monture, David Newhouse, Verna Kirkness, Joanne Archibald, Jean Graveline, and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn.

¹² Margaret Kovach, Leanne Simpson, Shawn Wilson, Glen Coultard, Taiaiake Alfred, Jeff Corntassel, John Borrows, Dale Turner, Cora Weber-Pilwax, Cindy Blackstock, Fred Metallic, Roronhiakewen/Dan Longboat, Adam Gaudry, Susan Hill, and Audra Simpson.

¹³ For example, the Assembly of First Nations, the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs, the Canadian Council on Learning, the Chiefs of Ontario, the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, the Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi Secretariat, Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey, the National Aboriginal Health Organization and the Ontario Federation of Friendship Centres.

¹⁴ Cheryl Bartlett, Marilyn Iwama, Heather Hatcher, Ross Hoffman, Allen Pence and Jennifer Ball, Nancy Rich, Paulette Regan, Adam Barker, Emma Battell Lowman, Lorenzo Veracini, Rick Wallace, and Eva Mackey.

climate and gender-based justice. I also looked to the emerging field of settler-colonial studies that offers strategies towards settler reflexivity and dismantling settler colonialism.

Indigenous Knowledges Systems

This discussion centres the insights and voices of Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders in a broad context and speaks to how IKS are informing PSE. It is important not to seek definitive or essential understandings of IKS, as understandings unfold in relationship with Indigenous Knowledge Holders within unique homelands.

The critical link between IKS and Indigenous resurgence is emphasized by Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe scholar Leanne Simpson (Alderville First Nation) (2008):

The first thing [Indigenous Peoples] must recover is our own Indigenous ways of knowing, our own Indigenous ways of protecting, sharing and transmitting knowledge, our own Indigenous intellectual traditions. And we must bring to practice and live those traditions on our own terms. Recentring the revitalization of Indigenous Knowledge within the knowledge systems themselves provides the only appropriate context for building an Indigenous resurgence. (p. 74)

As the introduction mentions, Indigenous Knowledges are diverse, complex, rigorous and relational systems, reflecting a world in which the universe is alive, infused with spirit, and a beautiful reflection of the Creator (Williams, 2013; Simpson, L., 2014). In an Indigenous worldview, everything is interrelated and interdependent, and there is reverence for the earth as our Mother. Everything has a purpose in the web of life or Creation and deserves care and respect. Peoples are tightly connected to their families, communities, and nations; to their ancestors and future generations; to their lands and waters; and to all animals, plants, fish, and more-than-human beings. Everything comes from the lands, waters, and skies—all beings, languages, stories, songs, ceremonies, and traditions. In other words, knowledges are place-based, rooted in relationship to specific lands, waters, cultures, and communities (Bartlett et al.,

2009; Cajete, 1994; Marshall, M., 1997; Williams, D., 2013; Williams, S., 2013). As Potawatomi scholar Robin Wall Kimmerer shares: “To our people, [land] was everything; identity, the connection to our ancestors, the home of our nonhuman kinfolk, our pharmacy, our library, the source of all that sustained us. Our lands were where our responsibility to the world was enacted” (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 17). IKS reflect patterns and cycles of Creation that are continuous and infinite (Bartlett et al., 2009; Cajete, 2000; Demeyer & Moore, 2013; 2008; Simpson, L., 2011; Williams, D., 2013). These “extend across time and space, subsuming past, present, and future generations and even crossing the boundaries between species,” revealing cosmic order and unity (Elliot-Groves et al., 2020, pp. 159–160). Offering Indigenous Knowledge perspectives on survival and healing during the challenges of living through COVID-19, a team of Indigenous scholars says: “Indigenous systems of relationality are the heartbeat of Indigenous existence” (Elliott-Groves et al., 2020, p. 1).

Based on thousands of years of acquired ancestral knowledges, IKS draw upon the collective consciousness of a people. While Indigenous Peoples share many commonalities in how they construct their worldviews, knowledges, languages, and order, there is also much diversity (Cajete, 1994; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Henderson, 2002). Anishinaabe scholar Nicole Bell (Kitigan Zibi First Nation) explains:

It is necessary to consider Indigenous knowledge as a collection of knowledges from different Indigenous nations. Indigenous knowledge is therefore culture specific, contained within the local knowledge and worldview of the nation. It therefore also has to be ecological, where the knowledge is contained within the land of the geographic location of the nation. Knowledge is also contained within the people of the nation. Indigenous knowledge then becomes personal and generational, as there is a process of generational transmission. Indigenous knowledge is epistemological, in that each nation culturally determines for itself how it knows what it knows. (2014, p. 4)

Wilson (2008) affirms the link between IKS and Indigenous epistemology or ways of knowing: “Indigenous epistemology is our cultures, our worldviews, our times, our languages, our histories, our spiritualities and our places in the cosmos. Indigenous epistemology is our systems of knowledge in their context, or in relationship” (p. 74). While distinct place-based knowledges exist, commonalities resonate across diverse nations within essential understandings and teachings about interconnectivity, relationality, reciprocity, and responsibility between human and more-than-human beings. Humans learn from the world around them—from the seasonal cycles of lands, waters, and sky and other beings (Simpson, L., 2014; Williams, 2013; Manitowabi, 2013; Taylor, 2016). In other words, understandings of kinship and ecological sustainability are intrinsic within a web of relations.

Within Wabanakik,¹⁵ in sharing understandings of m’sit nok’maq/All My Relations, Penawahpskek (Penobscot) scholar Sherri Mitchell imparts that in the Penawahpskek Creation story, Kluskap shot an arrow into an ash tree that opened a door into this world. She says this story teaches Penawahpskek that the ash tree is their kin and should be honoured as such. Today, they continue to weave baskets from its pulp to recognize this relationship, grounded in understandings that they are made of the same elements as the ash tree (Mitchell, 2018). Indeed, human beings and all living things are made of the same foundational materials—stardust and water (Cajete, 1994; Mitchell, 2018). Humans need to maintain relations within their communities, lands, and waters by showing gratitude and reciprocity to other beings through ceremony and offerings (Johnson, 1995; Manitowabi, 2013; Marshall, M., 1997; McGregor, 2010; Miller, 2013; Williams, D. 2013). Cree scholar Dwayne Donald affirms that “[An

¹⁵ Wabanakik means Dawnland. Waban means light or white and refers to the light from the east (sunrise), combined with aki (land). Wabanaki means People of the Dawnland and is also translated as People of the Dawn, or People of the First Light (Joint Economic Development Initiative, 2023).

Indigenous] approach to knowledge and knowing is embedded within an ecological framework guided by an intimate and ancient understanding that the sustainability of human life and living depends on the repeated renewal of good relations with the entities that give us life” (Donald 2013, p. vii). Indeed, *mino bimaadiziwin* (living the good life)¹⁶ depends on establishing and maintaining relationships of interdependency as widely as possible (Miller, 2013).

Métis/Anishinaabe scholar Melissa Nelson shares how *nibi* (water), one of the four sacred elements, is a *manidoog* (spirits), a relative, an Elder, and a teacher (Nelson, 2013). *Nibi* teaches humans about relationships, interconnection, interdependence, and renewal (Simpson, L., 2011). Anishinaabe scholar Cary Miller builds on this, sharing that humans are shown how to survive on the land by *manidoog* (spirits) and living beings, which may be animals or other beings. *Manidoog* impart the principles of *mino bimaadiziwin* (Miller, 2013; Williams, 2013). More-than-human beings also share responsibilities for justice (McGregor, 2010). Mohawk scholar *Roronhiake:wen/Dan Longboat* (Mohawk Nation from *Oshwe:ken*, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory) and settler scholar Joe Sheridan suggest the term “ecology of the sacred” to denote understandings of a relationship with spiritual and intellectual integrity that exists between the consciousnesses of human and other beings in a territory or landscape (Longboat & Sheridan, 2006, p. 365).

As Dene scholar Glen Coultard (*Weledeh Dene First Nation*) imparts that reciprocal relationships informed by the land ideally teach about “living our lives in relation to one another and our surroundings in a respectful, non-dominating, and non-exploitive way” (Coultard, 2014, p. 60). He says an ethical framework is provided by place-based forms of knowledge, which he calls “grounded normativity” (Coultard, 2014, p. 60). This is upheld through values of “reciprocity, respect, non-interference, self-determination, and freedom” (Simpson, L., 2017, p.

¹⁶ Williams, D., 2013.

8). Through processes of grounded normativity, humans learn to enact their unique gifts that come with responsibilities to take care of and ensure the continuation of Creation. They are not first in a hierarchy of beings but dependent on the rest of life for survival. Leanne Simpson (2017) relates that grounded normativity forms the base of “political systems, economy and nationhood,” and it is through these relational and “process-centred modes of living” that Indigenous understandings of nationhood and governance are generated (p. 22).

Social and governance structures in many Indigenous Nations nurture the spirit of interconnectivity and relationality through clan systems. Clans are passed down through the mother or father and are based on animals within a territory (Marshall et al., 2015). Clan members have different responsibilities in relation to other clans. Indigenous Nations make Treaties with each other, with settler nations, and with the animal nations. Together, these practices reinforce kinship and family among beings, help maintain peaceful, reciprocal relations, and keep everything in balance (Simpson, L., 2013a; Williams, D., 2013). As generations of Indigenous Peoples globally and across Chi’Mikinak have been continually teaching for hundreds of years, from Suquamish and Duwamish Chief Seattle (1854) to Albert Marshall to Freda Huson, spokesperson of the Unist’ot’en camp in Wet’suwet’en territories, “everything we do to the land or Mother Earth we do to ourselves” (Marshall, A., 2013; Suquamish Tribe, 2021; Unist’ot’en Camp, 2021).

Indigenous Knowledge Transmission

Indigenous Peoples’ ability to pass on their knowledges and teachings to future generations is vital for Indigenous resurgence and healthy, resilient communities (Blackstock, 2007; Battiste, M., 2013; CCL, 2009a and b; Simpson, L., 2014). Indeed, part of Indigenous resurgence is “the transmission of Indigenous culture, spiritual teachings and knowledge of the land between Elders and youth” (Alfred, 2009, p. 56). An understanding of knowledge comes to

maturity at the end of life when the two most important functions of one's life are fulfilled— passing the knowledge to children and mentoring the middle-aged as they transition to be the next generation of Elder teachers (AFN, 1993). Traditionally, Indigenous Elders and other Knowledge Holders transmit their knowledges orally, through conversations, stories, teachings, and day-to-day practices using their own languages, and controlling the transmission in specific cultural contexts and within their respective homelands (Battiste, M., 2013; Corntassel & Scow, 2017; Couture, 2011; Ermine, 1995; Metallic, 2011; Newhouse, 2008; Simpson, L., 2011; Wilson, 2008). Mitchell imparts that oral traditions were/are emphasized because Indigenous Peoples recognized that unique vibrations have the power to create form and define our place within Creation, not because Indigenous Peoples were/are incapable of written formats. As humans, we need to listen, communicate and understand more-than-human beings to find harmony within the frequencies of Creation (Mitchell, 2018).

Language, which is fundamental to one's worldview, plays a critical role in the expression, transmission, understanding, and recording of IKS (Johnson, 2013; Metallic, 2011; Noori, 2013; Simpson, L., 2011; Wilson, 2008). (In subsequent chapters, there are some examples in Mi'kmaq and Anishinaabemowin.) It is not possible to translate certain Indigenous understandings into English, given the Eurocentric/settler-colonial understandings or worldviews implicit in the English language (Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall, 2012; Metallic, 2011; Noori, 2013). Métis scholar Adam Gaudry suggests that those who do not speak an Indigenous language need to “work to understand the concepts and ways of thinking that are rooted in the language and to mobilize a range of Indigenous-rooted concepts that can represent key characteristics of our worldviews to an English language audience” (Gaudry, 2011, p. 131).

Due to the dominance of the English language in academia, the Canadian academy's structures, systems, processes, and practices pose multiple barriers to using Indigenous

languages, intergenerational knowledge transmission and orality. In mainstream systems where written texts in English are predominant, reading Elders' stories and teachings, etc., in English is not a substitute for an ongoing relationship between learners and Elders and the living nature of Indigenous Knowledges. As summarized in *In the Words of Elders: Aboriginal Elders in Transition*, an early collection of Elders' perspectives from across Chi'Mikinaak, David Newhouse, with settler scholars Don McCaskill and Peter Kulchyski find:

[I]t can take many years of apprenticeship to hear the words of Elders and traditional teachers. These teachings do not come in the prepackaged form to which students are accustomed. Traditionally teachings were not written down but rather given as a "gift" by an Elder within a specific cultural context such as a ceremony, event, or time spent with an individual at a particular stage of his or her development. Frequently individuals receiving the teachings were expected to "earn" them by performing a task or participating in a ceremony such as Fasting, the Longhouse, the Midewiwin Lodge, or the Potlatch. Elders sometimes determined the state of readiness of individuals to hear certain teachings, particularly spiritual teachings. (Kulchyski, McCaskill & Newhouse, 1999, p. xv)

Cree Elder Joe Couture adds, "Elders and their teachings must be experienced in the context of [the oral tradition] so that a 'right' perspective and direction is maintained" (1991, p. 90). He speaks about the "oral, literate mind" and says Elders' teachings are visual or pictorial. Accumulated knowledge, Original teachings, or "perennial experience" from the ancestors is carried forward through oral tradition, and the Elders are able to initiate others into this experience (Couture, 1991, p. 90).

Many Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders have chosen to participate in mainstream education to ensure they are reaching all Indigenous youth and sharing within diverse transcultural contexts. Despite multiple challenges, they see this as part of upholding their responsibilities. As the Indian Residential School (IRS) system (discussed further below) resulted in disruption and disconnection between generations, many Elders find the youth are not

coming to them in their communities (Austin et al., 2014; 2016; Williams, S., 2016). However, Indigenous youth are pursuing mainstream education at a growing rate and will continue to do so. (Indigenous Peoples are growing faster than the rest of Canada's population, with 44% under 25; Canada, 2020.) Cree Elder Willie Ermine says that "Aboriginal education has a responsibility to uphold a worldview based upon recognizing and affirming wholeness and to disseminate the benefits to all humanity" and that Indigenous Peoples' task is to do this for future generations (Ermine, 1995, p. 116). Elders involved in mainstream PSE seek to address the challenges of living in two worlds and think critically about the best ways to share within mainstream systems (APCFNC, 2011; Marshall, 2013). Wolastoqey Elder Gwen Bear says, "Indigenous knowledge isn't only for ourselves because if we keep that knowledge, it only becomes stagnant, and it helps no one. How do we pass it along? We have to look at that question and share those universal ways that we are going to have to develop" (APCFNC, 2011, p. 113). Indeed, Atlantic-region Elders want to engage in a collaborative, co-learning journey with universities to provide direction on ethical engagement and transmission of their knowledges (APCFNC, 2011).

Many Elders have chosen to share their knowledges in written formats, audio recordings or videos, maximizing the use of technology. There are benefits and disadvantages to this. While knowledges may reach a wider group through these media, there are risks in removing knowledge from its direct, interpersonal/relational context. Moreover, while it is growing, academic "peer-reviewed" literature, which includes Elders' voices, is limited, as are other written sources. It is important to note that Elders have their own knowledge validation, or "peer-review" processes based on ancestral and collectively held knowledges. One Elder would never claim to know everything, to hold the "truth" or be an "expert" on any given topic (APCFNC, 2011; Kulchyski et al., 1999; Marshall, 2013; MEW, 2013). As Mi'kmaw Elder Albert

Marshall emphasizes, Elders have unique gifts, strengths, and areas of expertise; each Elder or Knowledge Holder holds one piece of the puzzle (Marshall, 2014).

Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Learning & Teaching

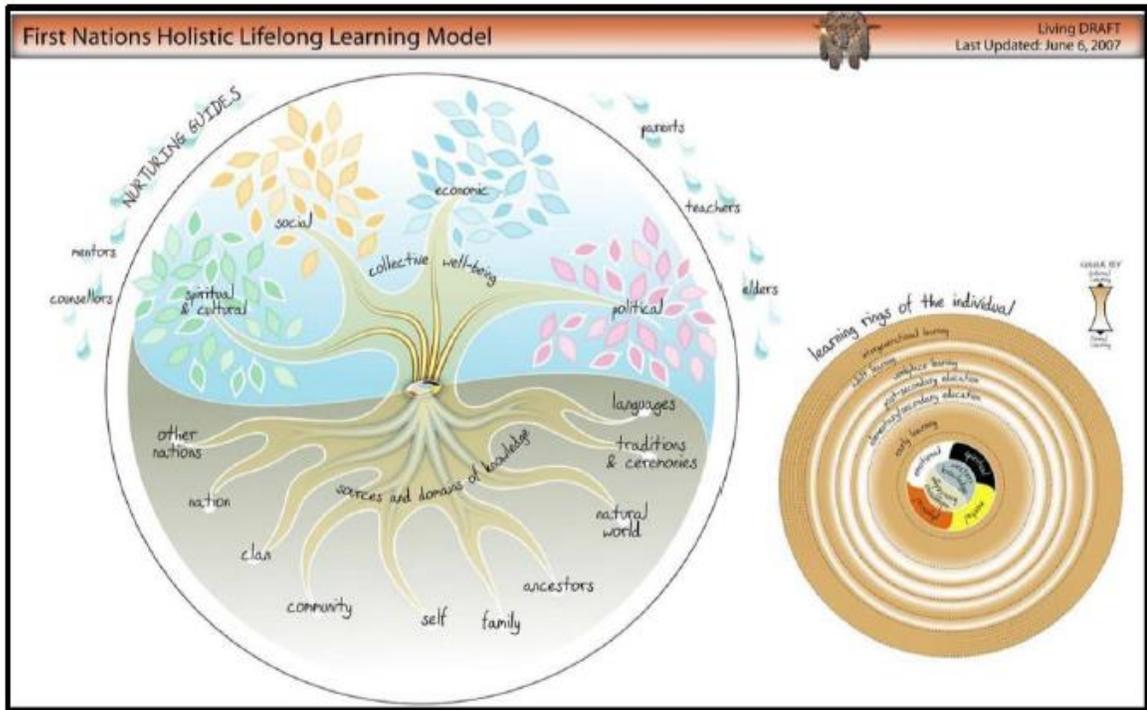


Figure 1: Domains and Sources of Knowledge (CCL, 2009b)

The First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model (Figure 1), developed through a national process by the Canadian Council on Learning (2009b), seeks to depict Indigenous ways of knowing and learning. Relationships are circular, continuous, and (w)holistic¹⁷ rather than linear, separate, and compartmentalized. Knowledge is understood within four interconnected domains or dimensions of learning: spiritual (spirit), emotional (heart), physical (body), and cognitive (mind or mental/intellectual). Each teaching is situated within an interconnected knowledge web, reflecting relationality (RCAP, 1996; Tunison, 2007).

¹⁷ This usage follows Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall, who prefers to keep the "w" as part of the word wholistic to emphasize wholeness.

While “(w)holistic” is frequently used to describe IKS, “seamless” offers an alternative, emphasizing that nothing can stand alone (Tester & Irniq, 2008, p.49).

Indigenous communities and the natural world comprise the Traditional Indigenous “classroom.” In this context, adults are responsible for ensuring that every child learns the specific skills, attitudes, and knowledges they need to survive in everyday life. Education is a continuous process that occurs wherever and whenever needed (CMM, 2007). Leanne Simpson suggests that Indigenous peoples reclaim “land as pedagogy, both as process and context” for Indigenous intelligence (Simpson, L., 2014, p. 1). In other words, as Leanne Simpson (2017) indicated earlier, learning takes place within relational and process-centred modes of living land AND with the understanding that the land and all beings are teachers. Through these processes, Indigenous nationhood and governance are generated within grounded normativity. Indigenous pedagogies are transformative and encourage (w)holistic development. Grounded in Traditional and contemporary land- and water-based practices, they encourage learner-centred teaching through collaborative apprenticeship with Elders and community-based relationships, as well as learning through observation and by doing (experiential learning). This includes learning out on the land from plants, animals, fish, insects, and other more-than-human beings, from spirit beings, from children, through stories and songs, through taking part in ceremony and feasting, and through dreaming, visioning, and self-reflection (CCL, 2009a and b; Johnson, 1995; Miller, 2013; Simpson, L., 1999; Swamp, 2013; Williams, D., 2013; Williams, S., 2015). Mohawk scholar Marlene Brant Castellano adds that the sources of Indigenous Knowledges overlap and interact and that these can be Traditional, as passed down over generations; empirical, as learned through observation; and as revealed through dreams, intuition, and visions, as mentioned above (Castellano, M., 2000).

Indigenous Peoples understand themselves as learners and teachers in knowledge relationships and networks that are constantly transforming. Indigenous teaching methods aim to learn more about oneself and one's role in the cosmos (Cajete, 1994; Ermine, 1995; Simpson, L., 1999). Essential teachings give guidance for how to live in Indigenous homelands and how to be good humans. Being human comes with responsibilities to take care of Creation and to treat all beings with thanks and gratitude. Traditions offer answers to the big question "What is living a good life?" that are "intellectual, spiritual, moral and sociopolitical all at once" (Couture, 2000, p. 163). Teachings impart that we need to continually consider the impacts of our actions today on the next seven generations (Longboat, 2014; Marshall, 2013; McGregor, 2004; RCAP, 1996; Simpson, L., 2014; Williams, D., 2013). Grounded in Indigenous pedagogical and epistemological understandings, Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall says we are all "knowledge navigators," which means there are no hierarchies of knowledges, be they Elder/youth or professor/student or, as Roronhiake:wen/Dan Longboat says, "knowledge facilitators" (Marshall, A., 2013; Longboat, 2017).

Cherokee writer and scholar Thomas King (2003) reminds us: "The truth about stories is, that's all we are." (p. 2). Stories are a central feature of Indigenous pedagogies. Anishinaabe scholar Margaret Noori emphasizes: "Intergenerational ways of understanding are complex, interconnected, and reflected in both Anishinaabe texts of long ago and text being written today" (2013, p. 35). The skilled use of metaphor is something Elders employ so that their teachings will endure over time. Throughout a person's life cycle, the metaphor comes to reveal different meanings at different times. Reflecting on his work with Cree Elder Louis Sunchild, settler scholar Walter Lightning comments: "Knowing full well that their time on Earth was limited and they had the responsibility of passing on the culture and the knowledge to the best of their ability, the Elders would tell these stories in metaphor, because they knew for us to

understand them would take time” (1992, p. 217). The teachings of the Elders were meant to last for seven generations. Leanne Simpson explains: “It is the responsibility of storytellers to plant [stories], like seeds, inside the minds and hearts of our children, with the hope that, under the right conditions, the stories grow and flourish as the next generation carries them through their lives, and then passes the seeds along to the next” (2011, p. 3). Echoing Lighting’s understanding, Leanne Simpson adds that “it can take many years after hearing a story to know the meaning of that story in one’s heart—for it to become a truth—yet the process of it becoming *debwewin* or heart-knowledge is the process of integrating that echo into one’s experience” (2011, p. 104). Anishinaabe scholar John Borrows (Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation) shares that “stories can serve as a foundation and framework for the field of Anishinaabe studies, providing both a methodology and a theoretical approach to our scholarship. They embody ideas and systems that form the basis for law, values, and community” (2013, p. xii). Leanne Simpson builds on this, offering that the Creation Stories are the most important of all stories and set the “theoretical framework” from which other stories, experiences, and teachings can be interpreted (2011). These approaches centre Indigenous theory and ways of knowing in the academy.

Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (Opaskwayak Cree Nation) (2008) offers that ideas are entities with spirit we can enter into relation with. All peoples have a learning spirit that evolves with us throughout our lives, guiding us on our learning journey (Battiste, M., 2000; Tunison, 2003). Building on the work of Offet-Gartner (2003), settler scholar Scott Tunison explains that this “is a conceptual rather than a concrete entity that emerges from the exploration of the complex interrelationships that exist between the learner and his or her learning journey. All beings, both animate and inanimate, colour and breathe life into one’s learning spirit” (Tunison, 2007, p. 10). Engaging within Indigenous Knowledge perspectives in PSE strengthens the

learning spirit of both Indigenous and settler students as (w)holistic learning activates and interconnects all four domains of learning, including spiritual and emotional, which have been neglected in mainstream education (Battiste, M., 2000; Offet-Gartner, 2003; Tunison, 2007; Wilson, 2008). The benefits of land- and water-based, intergenerational, experiential, and transformative learning within Indigenous pedagogies for all learners is becoming increasingly recognized in mainstream education, environmental education, and health in particular (Armstrong, 2017; Battiste, M., 2013; CCL, 2009a and b). One's learning spirit can be damaged by a "lack of identity, lack of voice, and low self-esteem" and multiculturalism activities that distort Indigenous historical narratives and understandings (Tunison, 2007, p. 11). Indeed, Indigenous pedagogies provide strength and healing for Indigenous Peoples in coping with the impacts of ongoing colonialism and learning within colonized classrooms (Bombay et al., 2014; Clark et al., 2014; Cote-Meek, 2014; Marshall, 1991).

Engaging with Elders

Some thoughts on engaging with Elders can help bring together the previous sections concerning IKS. Engaging with Elders is essential for Indigenous education and research. In Traditional Indigenous contexts, Elders have multi-dimensional roles—they are the most significant teachers and spiritual and political leaders. As settler scholars Peter Kulchyski, Don McCaskill, and Onondaga scholar David Newhouse (Six Nations of the Grand River) highlight, Elders are the "historians of the Aboriginal past and the keepers of cultural events and ceremonies. They are teachers, healers, and experts in survival, sharing a worldview based on the knowledge that all things in life are related and are governed by natural laws" (1999, xv). While some aspects of Elders' Traditional roles and responsibilities have been disrupted and devalued due to the impacts of ongoing colonization, Elders continue to enact essential leadership and mentorship roles in Indigenous communities and community-run schools, and as

part of mainstream education systems. Elders' potential roles and contributions are often misunderstood and constrained within Eurocentric/settler-colonial education constructs. To illustrate, the English word Elder is a noun and implies a title; however, having Indigenous Knowledge is a way of being in the world (APCFNC, 2011; Kulchyski et al., 1999). Elders are part of living ancestral knowledge systems and histories based on oral traditions and are essential to Indigenous resurgence and governance. Mi'kmaw Elder Murdena Marshall's teaching on who is and Elder is part of Appendix C.

Colonialism Systems

Here, I centre voices of Indigenous resurgence, resistance, and refusal and apply settler-colonial theory to show how state and education structures and systems are interlinked within settler-colonial frameworks and how ideologies and discourses of settler colonialism and settler society are upheld (the macro level). Readers familiar with the story of colonialism can move forward to The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Process of Reconciliation.

Competing Sovereignties

Indigenous Nations and Canada have competing sovereignties and understandings of sovereignty. Audra Simpson observes: "In situations in which sovereignties are nested and embedded, one proliferates at the other's expense; the United States and Canada can only come into political being because of Indigenous dispossession" (2014, p. 12). Canada's version of sovereignty is imposed and maintained through violence, both actual and symbolic, and through ideologies upheld through its governance, legal systems, and structures. Historically, when Britain negotiated nation-to-nation Treaties with some Indigenous Nations, they acknowledged these Nations' sovereignty and committed to mutually beneficial relations. However, these processes often involved violence, fraud, and coercion, and relations have since devolved. Canada has yet to fully implement the spirit and intent of these Treaties and, as a nation and

state, has no legal basis for sovereignty. It is dependent on lands taken from Indigenous nations—lands that Indigenous nations contest (Barker & Battell Lowman, 2015; TRC, 2015; Simpson, A., 2014; Palmater, 2020).

The Canadian state, or “the Crown,” consists of a constitutional monarchy with a local federal government whose intent is to keep the original peoples of Chi’Mikinak subsumed within a new sovereign society. (The federal government is also described as a party system, a federal system, or a representative democracy.) The Crown’s “fantasy of entitlement” is based on legal assumptions that their sovereignty is “superior, stronger and deeper” than that of Indigenous Peoples (Mackey, 2016, p. 9). While the Canadian Constitution of 1982 says that Aboriginal people have an inherent right to self-government, these rights have been since interpreted as existing only if they can be “reconciled with” Crown Sovereignty (Borrows, 2002, p. 8). Considering this, Leanne Simpson says that Indigenous Peoples must rebuild “radical Indigenous nation-based resurgences” by looking within their own knowledge systems and their own nation-based grounded normativities for ethical, reciprocal governance in relation to their lands (Simpson, L., 2017, p. 48). They must refuse dispossession and reattach themselves to their lands, whether reserve communities or other rural or urban land. The reverse process of Indigenous dispossession is grounded normativity (Simpson, L., 2017). Moreover, while the Crown makes claims, proclamations, and decisions as if it has absolute sovereignty, Indigenous sovereignties and nationhood “remain inherent, fully alive and retained” (Wallace, 2019, p. 13). Assertion of Indigenous sovereignty demonstrates to nation-states that they “possess a precarious assumption that their boundaries are permanent, uncontestable, and entrenched (Simpson, A., 2014, p. 22). Canada’s legal position that Indigenous Peoples must reconcile with the Crown represents a form of settler-colonial solipsism; the state cannot recognize the sovereignty of Indigenous Nations for fear of losing control of the land and its resources.

Consistent with the dominating relations of settler-colonial states, Canada seeks to deter Indigenous resistance to state seizure of land and establish property rights over land and resources by seizing control of Indigenous bodies, and by removing Indigenous Peoples from their lands using various forms of direct and indirect violence, including militarized genocide (Barker & Battell Lowman, 2015; NIMMWG, 2019a; Palmater, 2020). Furthermore, as Coultard argues, dominating colonial power and structures are reproduced within Indigenous/settler relations when land and governance are “restored” through land settlement claims and self-government processes negotiated within the politics of recognition, whereby the Canadian state “recognizes” inherent Indigenous rights to self-government and its own Treaty obligations (Coultard, 2007).¹⁸

Shape-Shifting Settler-Colonial Policies and Practices

An examination of the ongoing legislation, policies, programs, and actions of Canada’s federal government and its associated agencies and institutions demonstrates that, while Canada’s Indigenous/Aboriginal policies “shape-shift” over time, the intent to destroy Indigenous Peoples remains the same (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; NIMMIWG, 2019 (a); Palmater, 2020; Simpson, L., 2018 & 2020; Simpson, A., 2014). Leanne Simpson observes that the state sets up “different controlled points of interaction through its practices—consultations, negotiations, high-level meetings, inquiries, royal commissions, police, and law, for instance, that slightly shift, at least temporarily and on microscales, our experience of settler colonialism as a structure” (Simpson, L., 2017, p. 45). While the state may seem to change how it operates, it uses its “asymmetric power to ensure it always controls the processes” (Simpson, L., 2017, p.

¹⁸ For an extensive discussion on how Indigenous Nations resist state-centred understandings of sovereignty, employing self-recognition in a Canadian and Dene context, see Coultard’s *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (2014).

45). As mentioned, interlocking structural and ideological systems of oppression and domination uphold the structures of settler colonialism. Because they continually operate within these structures and systems, colonial policies, processes, and practices are reproduced in contemporary contexts (Snelgrove et al., 2014; Simpson, L., 2017).

Pre- and post-Confederation, the foundation of Canada's Indigenous/Aboriginal policies, laws, and programs have set out to disavow and eliminate Indigenous governance structures and laws, Treaties with Indigenous Nations, and Indigenous/Aboriginal rights, making the challenges of re-creating these substantial. The main legal instruments in this conquest include the Royal Proclamation of 1763, post-1763 Treaty-making, and early post-Confederation policy, including the *Indian Act* system and the more contemporary IRS system. These policies are interwoven with the lives of settler and newcomer peoples, allowing settlers to benefit from Indigenous dispossession through what Cole Harris (2004, as cited in Mackey, 2016, p. 4) calls "the experienced materiality of colonialism." However, strategies to eradicate Indigenous Peoples as distinct and diverse social, cultural, spiritual, economic, legal, and racial entities or beings have failed (Barker & Battell Lowman, 2015; TRC, 2015; Palmater, 2020). As Audra Simpson observes, "Colonialism survives in a settler form. In this form, it fails at what it is supposed to do: eliminate Indigenous peoples; take all their land; absorb them into a white, property-owning body politic" (Simpson, A., 2014, p. 8).

The *Indian Act* System

Through the *Indian Act* system, Canada endeavours to shape, control, and constrain the lives and opportunities of Indigenous Peoples, federally designated as First Nations Peoples (Inuit and Métis Peoples are exempt from the *Indian Act*). Canada created the *Indian Act* (1876) based on its assumed jurisdictional powers over "Indians and lands reserved for Indians" in section 91(24) of the Canadian Constitution (1867). It seeks to control Indian status, land,

resources, wills, education, and band administration and denies full participation in Canada's political, economic, and social systems. It is also at the root of many enduring stereotypes about Indigenous Peoples (Joseph, 2018). As part of the *Indian Act* system and its efforts to centralize, Indigenous Peoples have endured forced relocation to often remote and economically undesirable "reserves" set aside for Indian bands. Band members possess the right to live on reserve lands, yet these lands are not "owned" by Indigenous Peoples but held in trust for bands by the Crown. Foreign systems of electoral band councils with limited political powers have been imposed to administrate the reserves, denigrating the roles of Indigenous women in governance (Palmater, 2020; TRC, 2015). Indigenous Peoples have also endured forms of cultural genocide, including but not limited to the ban of Potlatch and Sun Dance, the elimination of the buffalo, the enforcement of a pass system to confine Indigenous peoples to reserves in the 1880s, and the forced sterilization of Indigenous women (TRC, 2015).

The *Indian Act* system was designed to "legislate Indians out of existence"—to forcibly assimilate Indigenous peoples into mainstream Canadian society, emphasizing the enfranchisement of Indigenous women so that they would lose their "Indian" status (Palmater, 2020, p. 30). Enfranchisement was used as a strategy to force status Indians to choose between losing their status and receiving certain other rights, such as gaining an education (until 1951), marrying someone without status (until 1985), enlisting in military service (until 1951), and voting (until 1960) (ReconciliAction YEG, 2018; Stonechild, 2006). Under the *Indian Act*, it became mandatory in 1920 for Indigenous children to attend a residential school and illegal to attend any other educational institution (Roberts, 2006). While there have been many amendments to the *Indian Act* since its inception, Canada still has authority over who is an "Indian" and has the rights associated with this status (Canada, 2021; Palmater, 2020). Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. MacDonald, the architect of the IRS system, created the Royal

Canadian Mounted Police in 1873 (RCMP; formerly the Northwest Mounted Police), a paramilitary force based on the Royal Irish Constabulary used against Irish peoples; this police force was used against Indigenous Peoples who refused to give up their lands for settlement and economic development, or who resisted adopting Canadian governance models. Since the twentieth century, the RCMP has been the official police force of the federal government, “thereby claiming authority over Indian affairs and, by extension, Indigenous well-being” (Barker et al., 2016, p.1). The RCMP is frequently deployed to intervene in the social and political affairs of Indigenous Peoples (Eberts et al., 2020).

The *Indian Act* system and affiliated policies and institutions have enabled Canada to pursue a policy of genocide over time so that it would no longer have fiduciary and financial obligations to Indigenous Peoples and so that it could control their lands and resources. With no more “Indians,” there would be no reserves, nor the need to uphold Treaties between the British Crown and Indigenous Nations, or Indigenous rights (TRC, 2015).` A prime example of the shape-shifting nature of Canada’s genocidal policies is the 1969 *White Paper on Indian Policy*, which came forward under former Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and then Minister of Indian Affairs Jean Chrétien. The *White Paper* proposed a reversal of early policy—an end to “Indian” status, the *Indian Act*, and Indian Affairs—as well as eliminating reserves and terminating Treaties (TRC, 2015; Palmater, 2020). Indigenous Peoples would not allow these changes to be made without their consent. Cree leader Harold Cardinal explains: “[the *Indian Act*] is a lever in our hands and an embarrassment to the government . . . we would rather live in bondage under the inequitable *Indian Act* than surrender our sacred rights” (RCAP, 1996, p. 236). While highly controversial, the *Indian Act* affirms the unique relationship between Canada and First Nations Peoples (ReconciliAction YEG, 2020). At the time, Indigenous Peoples stressed that their separate status as Indians and Treaty beneficiaries must remain so that their lands,

resources, and jurisdictions are recognized. While within the framework of colonial recognition, this constitutes part of the current strategy toward rebuilding Indigenous Nations. Palmater (2020) cautions that the Liberal regime continues to pursue the extinguishment of Indigenous rights and title, to deny the return of lands or resources, and additionally, to provide no compensation for loss of use of land or benefit of its use.

The Indian Residential School System

Central to Canada's early Aboriginal policy, the IRS system was created to separate Indigenous children from their families and communities, to disrupt and weaken family ties and cultural continuity and indoctrinate and assimilate Indigenous Peoples into "Euro-Christian Canadian society" (Milloy, 1999; TRC, 2015, p. 6). For over 100 years, between the 1870s and the 1990s, more than 150,000 Indigenous children were in the IRS operated by Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, United, and Mennonite churches—funded by the Canadian government. Indigenous children were often removed against their parents' consent and with the use of force by the RCMP (AFN, 2021; Kampen, 2019; TRC, 2015). Children's daily life was highly regimented in the schools: they were prohibited from using their language and engaging in cultural practices and were severely punished for breaking the rules. Many children suffered from neglect and disease and were inadequately fed, clothed, and housed (TRC, 2015). Many were abused—physically, emotionally, psychologically, and sexually—and some were used in nutritional and dental experiments and as medical test subjects for certain vaccines (CBC, 2013; TRC, 2015). Mortality rates at some of the schools reached fifty percent, and some children

committed suicide while at the schools (CBC News, 2013; Dangerfield, 2018; MacDonald et al., 2014; Milloy, 1999; TRC, 2015).¹⁹

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Process of Reconciliation

The IRS system effectively severed and disrupted Indigenous families for successive generations, leading to devastating loss of culture, language, and ties to the land. Many Survivors found themselves without the knowledge and skills to raise their own families or be in community. These devastating effects of the IRS are far-reaching and have significant multi- and intergenerational impacts on Indigenous communities (Milloy, 1999; TRC, 2015). Many aspects of the IRS system were hidden until IRS Survivors, with great strength, courage, and resilience, came forward to speak of their experiences and tell their stories. Thousands of Survivors sued the churches and the Canadian government, resulting in Canada's largest class-action lawsuit and a \$1.9-billion settlement in 2007. This prompted an apology from then Prime Minister Stephen Harper, followed by the creation of the TRC in 2008 (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2021; TRC, 2015). In 2015, the TRC's final report resulted in six volumes of detailed accounts from Survivors, commentary and analysis of the impacts of the IRS, and 94 Calls to Action for addressing the shared legacy of the IRS. The TRC acknowledges that the IRS system was a form of cultural genocide, as the goal of Canada and the churches was to eradicate all aspects of Indigenous culture and stop intergenerational knowledge transmission and, consequently, the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual development of children (UBC, 2014; TRC, 2021).

Reconciliation between Indigenous, settler, and newcomer peoples in Canada is a critical, continuous, complex, and relational process (TRC, 2015; ITCI, 2018). As per the TRC,

¹⁹ For more detailed accounts of the IRS, please see *Shingwauk's Vision*, by James. R. Miller, and *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986*, by John Milloy.

reconciliation is about:

Establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour. (TRC, 2015, p. 6–7)

Key to this process is upholding nation-to-nation relationships, working on Treaty relations and responsibilities, and respecting Indigenous rights and title. The TRC states: “We are all Treaty people who share responsibility for taking action on reconciliation” (TRC, 2015, p. 12). The focus is on creating actionable change, arguably the most challenging aspect. Strengthening and nurturing respectful relationships, healing for all peoples, and creating new shared ways to live together for future generations is at the heart of reconciliation.

The TRC is a second chance for Canada to move towards reconciliation. The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) of 1996 documented Indigenous voices and histories and the ongoing impacts of colonization, calling for sweeping and fundamental changes that would realign the relationships between Indigenous Peoples, settler peoples, and government. While the RCAP awakened many people to the lived experiences and realities of Indigenous Peoples, only four minor recommendations of the total 404 have been implemented (Canada, 1996; TRC, 2015). The costs of addressing the recommendations were assessed at \$15 billion over two decades (Newhouse, 2016). Accordingly, the TRC commissioners acknowledge that reconciliation will take many years and require “sustained political will” and substantial funding at all levels of government (TRC, 2015, p. 8).

The framework for reconciliation proposed by the TRC’s Calls to Action is to implement the UNDRIP at all levels of government, in Canada’s legal and political systems, its education and religious institutions, and in the corporate sector and civic society (TRC, 2015). As well, the

Doctrine of Discovery²⁰ and terra nullius,²¹ both of which European settlers used to claim “discovered” lands as their own and justify “state-based subjugation” of Indigenous peoples, must be repudiated (AFN, 2021; Stevenson, 2019, p. 1245; TRC, 2015). The UNDRIP affirms the inherent collective and individual human rights of Indigenous Peoples in international law. Despite the emergence of colonial nation-states in the imperialist period of the seventeenth century, UNDRIP recognizes Indigenous governance globally. Adopted by the UN in 2007, UNDRIP marks a fundamental shift in the relationships between Indigenous Peoples and nation-states. It defines a wide range of Indigenous rights related to self-determination, consent to development, culture, political expression, language, education, and childrearing, among other areas. Indigenous rights that may not be acknowledged, respected, and protected within nation-states are included (Stevenson, 2019; UN, 2007). Nancy Stevenson argues that the UNDRIP shifts responsibility from Indigenous Peoples to nation-states to “acknowledge the limitations of their power . . . and if necessary, bring legislation and policy into alignment” (Stevenson, 2019, p. 1245). In Canada, Stevenson says this would require many contemporary policy and legal changes to address Indigenous Peoples’ unequal position, adequately funding Indigenous child welfare, education, and justice and education about IRS. (Stevenson, 2019; TRC, 2015). Indeed, education, public dialogue, and action are needed for systemic and individual transformation. However, as Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2008) contends, state-based Indigenous inquiries that

²⁰ The Doctrine of Discovery in 1493 established a spiritual, political, and legal justification for colonization and seizure of land not inhabited by Christians. Pope Alexander VI issued the Papal Bull “Inter Caetera” to justify Christian European explorers’ claims on land and waterways they allegedly discovered, and promote Christian domination and superiority, and has been applied in Africa, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and the Americas (Upstanderproject, 2021). It was repudiated by Pope Francis in March 2023.

²¹ Terra nullius is a Latin expression meaning “nobody’s land.” Its origin and use stem from public international law in the papal bull *Terra nullius* of Pope Urban II, 1095, which authorized the European Christian States to appropriate territories occupied by non-Christians (Space Legal Issues; 2019).

make recommendations intended to adapt settler-colonial systems to meet Indigenous Peoples' needs are misguided, as they expect Indigenous Peoples to succeed in these systems. Additionally, as the research supporting these larger processes is not fully grounded in Indigenous paradigms, they can end up reproducing systems of oppression (Wilson, 2008). Therefore, it is critical that Indigenous ways of being and knowing be centred and guide reconciliation.

Changing the Education System

The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the TRC, points to education as the key to reconciliation: "Education got us into this mess and education will get us out of it" (NCCIE, 2020). One of thousands of Survivors, Dr./Elder Albert Marshall of Eskasoni First Nation, a former student of the Shubenacadie residential school in Nova Scotia, contributes his insights on the need for transformative, reconciliatory change in mainstream education systems:

The current education system has been designed to completely eradicate who I am and to kill that Indian Mi'kmaw spirit that's in me. But I do know I need knowledge and I need education. But the kind of education I need has to be reflective of who I am as a Mi'kmaq. And that knowledge that I get, that I will receive, I have a responsibility with that knowledge to pass it down so others will benefit from it. . . . The kind of legacy that I want to leave my children in the future generations is one of which they will be able to excel, they will be able to compete without having to worry about is the education system going to further eradicate their selves. (TRC, 2015, p. 197)

Dr./Elder Marshall stresses that within the UNDRIP framework, we need to consider that education means acknowledgement of Indigenous language rights to revitalize and transmit Indigenous languages, as per Article 13:1, as well as supporting Articles 14:1 concerning Indigenous educational autonomy (previously cited), and Article 15:1, which emphasizes Indigenous rights to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories, and aspirations, and the need for states to eliminate discrimination and promote understanding and

tolerance between peoples (United General Assembly, 2007). Twelve of the TRC's Calls to Action address education. As discussed in the introduction, these focus on Indigenous-led and -controlled education, including mandatory courses in health, education, medicine, law, media, and Indigenous languages. As mentioned, the Calls emphasize transformational change that requires new Indigenous education legislation (TRC, 2015).²²

Post TRC: Ongoing Reproduction of Settler-Colonial Frameworks

At the time of writing, it has been eight years since the TRC released its findings in 2015. That same year, the newly elected Liberal government under Trudeau promised a “renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples,” yet the Canadian state continues to impede the advancement of Indigenous rights and condones the annihilation and assimilation of Indigenous peoples (Human Rights Watch, 2018; NIMMIWG, 2019a). Six provinces oppose the implementation of the UNDRIP—Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Quebec, Ontario, and New Brunswick—and are calling for delays. Commissioners Murray Sinclair, Wilton Littlechild, and Marie Wilson are concerned about the slow pace of reconciliation and feel that the federal government should no longer have legislative control and that systemic racism is escalating (The Canadian Press, 2020).

At community events I have attended over recent years, I have repeatedly heard pleas to “stop killing our women, stop taking our children, stop destroying our lands, and give us clean drinking water.” These are just some of the issues that demonstrate how colonial policies continue to be reproduced within Canadian governance and legal structures and systems, as well as through the practices and inactions of settler society, all of which tacitly retain the intent

²² Canada's most recent legislative attempt, Bill C-33, the *First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act* 2014, was opposed by Indigenous leaders, who found that it decreased Indigenous autonomy of Indigenous education (First Nations in BC Knowledge Network, 2014).

to destroy Indigenous Peoples and lifeways. Those looking to learn more about the experiences of Indigenous Peoples that have and currently result from colonial policies and practices could examine the roots of the crisis of MMIWG and Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual peoples, as well as other ways individuals express their gender and sexuality outside heteronormativity and gender binaries²³ (2SLGBTQQA+), Indigenous children in the foster care system, Indigenous child poverty, the lack of clean drinking water for Indigenous communities, and the issue of respecting free prior and informed consent for projects in Indigenous territories.

Mainstream/Public Canadian Universities

Here, I seek to explicate the ways in which publicly funded universities operate within neoliberal, settler-colonial structures and systems, highlighting some of the tensions that arise in the context of universities seeking to implement the TRC's Calls to Action, and in the processes of decolonizing and Indigenizing.

There are direct links between the Canadian state, legal system, and institutions. First, it must be acknowledged that, like all Canadian institutions, universities intrude on Indigenous homelands and profit from these. Therefore, before anything else, universities and settler/Treaty peoples can support decolonizing processes by protecting, sharing, and returning land, the source of IKS, so that Indigenous lifeways, cultures, and futurities can thrive (Simpson, L., 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012). University administration, settler scholars, and staff must address PSIs' pursuit of settler-colonial goals and these contradictory aspects of the academy (Greenwood et al., 2013; Simpson, L., 2014).

Looking broadly at Canadian publicly funded universities, they find their roots in medieval traditions and customs, and are influenced by old and new laws. Puerto Rican

²³ This articulation of what the + means in A+ is from MSVU, 2020.

Chicano/Latino scholar Ramon Grosfoguel (2016, as cited in Brunette-Debassige, 2021) traces how public Canadian universities are part of a network of global, imperial domination transplanted onto stolen Indigenous lands that owe their hegemonic origins to European lands, Eurocentric/Western ways of knowing, and the English language. Based on the work of Grosfoguel et al. (2016), Brunette-Debassige (2021) finds the academy is “positioned as the authority in the production of knowledge and the manufacturing of exclusive forms of social capital that advanced broader imperial and colonial projects; it functioned to serve nation-building, advance economic development, and train civil servants in colonial ideologies” (p. 13). The roles of universities have expanded and evolved over the last 175 years into what Clark Kerr 2001 (as cited in Shanahan, 2019) calls a “multiversity” (Boyko & Jones, 2010). Modern Canadian universities are heterogeneous institutions—social, political, historical, legal, and economic entities that play unique roles in society (Shanahan, 2019). Universities are a collegium, or “community of scholars,” as recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada, and at the same time known as “the academic industrial complex” because of increasing ties to private industries and corporations (Shanahan, 2019, p. 6; Smith & Smith, 2014).

Governance at Canadian universities includes three aspects: first, the legislative framework, i.e., the formal, external legal and regulatory structures established by government; second, the policy framework, i.e., the formal, internal structures created by institutions; and third, what are described as “informal norms and practices”, i.e., the informal “internal structures” that create a lived experience of governance (CUFA BC, 2020, p. 6). While no specific governance structure is mandated at the provincial or national level, broadly, yet with variations across PSIs and jurisdictions, most universities’ policy frameworks operate based on internal structures as depicted in Figure 2. Terminology for these bodies varies provincially.

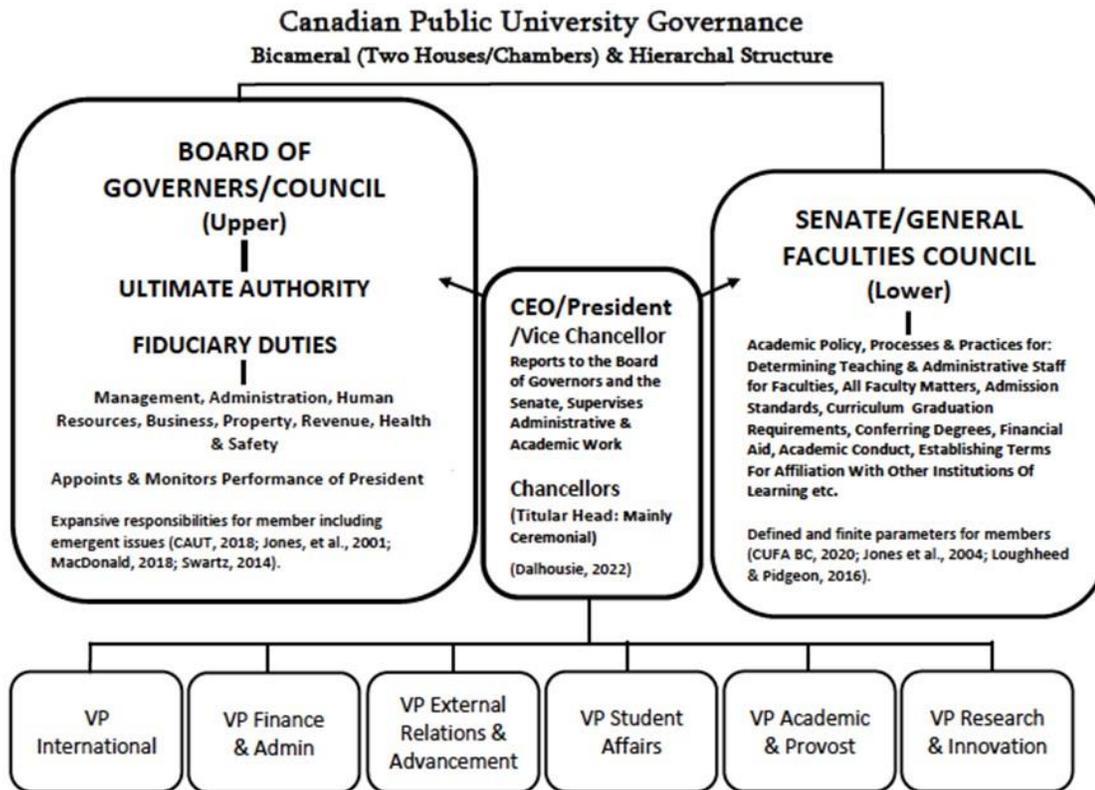


Figure 2: Canadian Public University Governance

Bicameral and hierarchical governance mirrors Canada’s federal government, which has a Senate (upper house) and the House of Commons (lower). This is based on Great Britain’s system, which has a House of Lords rather than a Senate (Our Commons, 2021). Bicameral governance of PSIs is intended to provide autonomy and freedom from government interference, suggested by the Flavelle Commission in 1905–06 (CAUT, 2018; Jones, Shanahan & Goyan, 2001; Loughheed & Pidgeon, 2016; Shanahan, 2019).

University governance depends on board and senate membership. Prior to the 1960s, university boards had no faculty, staff, student, or alumni members and were generally comprised of business and corporate executives. Most universities now include board members internal to the university to decentralize decision-making as recommended by the 1966 Duff-Berdahl report (except for Memorial University in Labrador) (Jones et al., 2001; Boyko & Jones,

2010). Yet, a struggle to uphold collegial governance persists, and undue influence of the political party in power on board members is a concern (CAUT, 2018; CUFA BC, 2020; Brownlee, 2015; MacDonald, 2018; Swartz, 2014). Collegial governance means involving faculty in decision-making over academic affairs at the department, faculty, college, or school level, as well as through the senate and board, and is characterized as akin to representative democracy (CUFA BC, 2020; Shanahan, 2020).

The Settler-Colonial University

Universities are embedded within Canadian legal systems and, in this context, are complicated, hybrid entities recognized as collegial, charitable, and not-for-profit corporations through university-specific provincial or federal legislation, royal charter, or royal proclamation (CAUT, 2018; Jones, Shanahan & Goyan, 2001; Lougheed & Pidgeon, 2016; Shanahan, 2019). They are subject to a wide range of Canadian laws based on their complex status. This complicates understandings of governance and fiduciary duty for board and senate members, among other issues (Shanahan, 2019). While the autonomous status of universities (in relation to Canadian governments) means boards create and govern their own policies, codes, and practices, Canadian law shields university boards' decisions and conduct from review and oversight, with boards acting as quasi-judicial tribunals over their own operations and practices (Shanahan, 2019). If their internal accountability and oversight systems fail, universities are bound to the Canadian court system to seek remedy. As Mohawk legal scholar Patricia Monture (1995) reminds us, Canadian law and education are the two central institutions through which Indigenous Peoples have been colonized and oppressed. Additionally, while university presidents represent only one vote on the board, without continual monitoring by the board and senate, university administrations are known to take direct action (Jones et al., 2001). Both

of these aspects of governance make internal and external accountability processes critical (Shanahan, 2019, p. 5).

Settler-colonial frameworks related to capitalism and Indigenous dispossession have become more visible in relation to the Canadian academy over time. Beginning in the 1970s, the cumulative impacts of neoliberalism—including corporate-oriented government policy, pressures on universities to contribute to regional and national economic development, increased government accountability requirements, and chronic underfunding and shrinkages of government grants—have forced universities to diversify their incomes, compete within the global market economy, and adopt increasingly managerial and business-oriented approaches (Boyko & Jones, 2010; CAUT, 2016; Chan & Richardson, 2012; CUFA BC, 2020; Jones et al., 2004). Humanities and social sciences are the first to receive cuts to balance budgets (CAUT, 2016). In fulfilling increased needs for capital, universities are casualizing academic labour, raising tuition fees, remaking students into consumers of education, commercializing research through private sector partnerships, and moving from liberal education to corporate management models. Many universities, while built on unceded and occupied Indigenous lands, are now profiting through the real estate business, selling “surplus” endowed lands for commercial and residential developments, such as shopping malls, industry or research parks, and housing to grow despite economic restraints, including Trent University (Bula, 2017).

Corporatization in University Governance

The entangled relationship between universities and corporations produces tensions in terms of transparent and inclusive university governance practices. Settler scholar Jamie Brownlee (2015, as cited in CAUT 2016) cautions that multiple processes of corporatization undermine the goals of higher education and that an opaque governance system that allows a small number of individuals to make decisions in a vacuum is at the root of the problem.

University faculty in some provinces find themselves increasingly marginalized from decision-making and “critical institutional oversight,” with the balance of power in the hands of board members and senior university administration (CUFA BC, 2020, p. 7; Swartz, 2014). This is linked to the uptake of practices originating from the private sector, including but not limited to board solidarity, overly broad conflict of interest policies (based on a false dichotomy that assumes that those internal to the university do not share its best interests); faculty restrictions in financial planning and allocation for areas they oversee; closed meetings; and loyalty clauses and non-disclosure policies that limit open and rigorous discussion and interfere with academic freedom (CAUT, 2018; CUFA BC, 2020). Rules of enforced civility are also mentioned as restrictive practices by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT). While diverse and conflicting perspectives are accepted as part of academia, in corporate contexts, these practices may be construed as conflicts of interest (Shanahan, 2019). Furthermore, university boards use *Robert’s Rules of Order*.²⁴ Mi’kmaq scholar Patricia Doyle-Bedwell (Potlotek First Nation) asserts that this format for facilitating meetings marginalizes Indigenous decision-making practices, thus countering decolonizing and Indigenizing at PSIs. New board members, particularly students, can find their voices silenced as they encounter a steep learning curve in becoming familiar with this system (Patricia Doyle-Bedwell, Mi’kmaq, lives in Kijipuktuk/Halifax, NS, personal communication, September 2021).

The relationship between industry, corporate Canada, and the academy also influences university policies and rhetoric. These tend to hold contradictory positions vis-à-vis Indigenous Peoples. This is evident in Universities Canada’s (UC) 13 principles of Indigenous education—the

²⁴ Now in its 12th edition, *Robert’s Rules of Order* was created by army engineering officer Henry Robert in 1876 and is based on the British parliamentary legal system, for the purpose of “bringing parliamentary order” to meetings in the U.S. (*Robert’s Rules of Order*, 2020).

response of 97 universities to the TRC's Calls to Action. These are intended to enhance opportunities for Indigenous Peoples, focusing on Indigenous communities' "goals of autonomy and self-determination," the importance of Indigenous representation in governance, faculty, and staff, and supporting the indigenization of programming, curriculum, and pedagogies. Yet the pre- and post-amble are ideologically and discursively formulated within the "closing the education gap" rhetoric of settler colonialism founded on deficit-based research approaches and an assumption that Indigenous Peoples need to fit into dominant systems, emphasizing the benefit to Canada (UC, 2015). Furthermore, while UC's 2021 principles of institutional autonomy seek to protect the autonomous status of universities from government and industry, both UC statements attempt to normalize settler goals of economic prosperity and champion the role of industry, both contingent on Indigenous dispossession. There is no acknowledgement of how Indigenous lands and resources contribute to Canada's economic success.

"Good" Collegial Governance and Democracy

Collegial governance is considered a feature of representative democracy, positioned as a model of "good" governance and a way to disrupt corporate influence. Practices of collegial governance are exemplified by the university governance model and outlined in CAUT's *Policy Statement on Governance* (CAUT, 2019). For university teachers, collegial governance is equated with good governance, and acting in "good faith" means acting in the university's best interests (CAUT, 2018; CUFA BC). Based on an evaluation of governance structures, the "governing statutes, regulations, by-laws and codes of conduct, conflict of interest policies and other governance rules" (i.e., processes and practices) of 31 universities, as compared with the university governance model, CAUT concludes that corporate practices are not in the interests of the university communities and contradict collegial governance (CAUT, 2018). CAUT proposes that representation, consultation, and bringing together multiple interests must continue to be

inherent concepts of the university board collegial model that sets it apart from other institutions.²⁵

Publically funded Canadian universities are struggling with their role and mission to be democratizing institutions within Canadian society. This role is recognized by Canadian case law (Fallis, 2007; Shanahan, 2020) and CAUT perspectives on governance (CAUT, 2018). Generally, board governance is more restrictive and closed, hence less democratic and collegial, as it moves across Canada from east to west (CAUT, 2018). CUFA BC notes that British Columbia university senates lack representation from equity-seeking groups and local communities, “systemically fail[ing]” to represent their faculty and students, the Indigenous nations on whose territorial lands they operate, and other diverse community perspectives (CUFA BC, 2020, p. 18). While some Canadian boards have Indigenous members, particularly since the TRC’s Calls to Action, out of the 31 universities surveyed, Trent University is the only one to stipulate that there should be an Indigenous member on their board (CAUT, 2018).

Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the Academy

Indigenous Peoples have long perceived, engaged with, analyzed, deconstructed, resisted, and refused colonial ways. They indicate diverse and multi-sited ontological and epistemological strategies towards reforming and potentially transforming the colonial hegemony of the academy and settler society; they also turn away from the academy to rebuild, revitalize, and recentre their nations, sovereignties, and knowledges. This discussion shares some of these diverse perspectives and ongoing projects.

²⁵ An analysis of the fiduciary duty of Canadian boards, *A Corporation and a Community: Fiduciary Duties of University Board Members*, is offered to guide practices (CAUT, 2018).

Colonial Hegemony in the Academy

Within the sphere of power and influence of the academy, when settler-colonial knowledge systems dominate and are normalized—extended through academic governance structures, ideologies, processes, and practices—Indigenous Knowledges are removed from the context of land-based, linguistic, and lived experiences, and expressions of Indigenous relationality and sovereignty. They become vulnerable to erasure, denigration, suppression, omission, marginalization, fragmentation, objectification, misrepresentation, decontextualization, appropriation, cooption, and commodification. Additionally, IKS may be taught by settler people, some of whom claim expertise (Battiste, M., 2013; Deloria, 2003; McGregor, 2004; Monture, 1995; Simpson, L., 2004; Smith & Smith, 2014; TRC, 1996). Mi'kmaw scholar Marie Battiste (2002) (Potlotek First Nation and Mi'kmaq Nation in Maine, U.S.) asserts that IKS have been “systematically excluded from contemporary institutions and from Eurocentric knowledge systems (p. 4). Compounding this, the impacts of internalized anti-Indigenous racism have taught Indigenous educational institutions and from Eurocentric knowledge systems” (p. 4). peoples to “distrust their Indigenous Knowledge systems, their Elders’ wisdom, and their own inner learning spirit” (Battiste, M., 2013, p. 24).

Indigenous scholars recognize how colonial hegemony, as it has asserted itself over time, imposes ideologies and discourses based on white superiority. Indian scholar Vandana Shiva observes a “hierarchy of knowledges” exists whereby medicine and modern agriculture, both dominated by Eurocentric science, are considered superior to other knowledges (Shiva, 2018). Italian scholar Antonio Gramsci’s term “hegemony” (as cited in Martin, 2023) speaks to how a ruling or elite class, such as settler-Canadian society, seeks to establish and maintain control through ideologies and discourses within its dominant narratives. As mentioned, these function alongside settler-colonial structures “economically and politically, domestically and

globally, to maintain unequal hierarchical relations over Indigenous peoples” (Wallace, 2013, p. 21). Palestinian-American scholar Edward Said’s (1978) concept of “positional superiority” may be used to describe social, cultural, and political aspects of white-settler privilege in Canadian society (Wallace, 2013). Foucault (1977) unpacks how power and knowledge have consistently functioned within Eurocentric thought:

What we know and how we know [are] grounded in shifting and diverse historical human practices, politics, and power. There are in the production of knowledge multiple centers of power in constant struggle: through conflict, compromise, and negotiation. . . . whichever group is strongest establishes its own rules on what can be known and how it can be known. A non-power related truth game is not possible; thus, humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination. (As cited in Chilisa, 2012, p.7)

Further, French scholar Michael Foucault (1977) contends that power and knowledge work together as “systems of thought” or epistemologies and ontologies. Referred to as worldviews or paradigms, these are “particularized ways of understanding” known as “discourses and discursive formations,” as well as ways of acting, referred to as practices (as cited in Wallace, 2013, p. 22). Within paradigms, ways of understanding, embodying, and acting influence power relations and outcomes in the world (Wallace, 2013). Indian scholar Vandana Shiva observes that a “hierarchy of knowledges” exists whereby medicine and modern agriculture, both dominated by Eurocentric science, are considered superior to other knowledges (Shiva, 2018). As contestations between Indigenous and EKS play out in the academy, Vine Deloria Jr. (as cited in Smith & Smith, 2014) contends that Indigenous Knowledges and thought not only pose a political challenge to mainstream academia’s notions of “truth,” but also an “epistemological challenge to the institutionalization of truth—namely, the academy” (p. 3).

Processes of “cognitive imperialism,” as identified by Marie Battiste, are assumptions that Eurocentric or settler-colonial knowledge systems are superior to IKS (Battiste, M., 2002, p. 193). Battiste (2013) says this is about “white-washing the mind as a result of forced

assimilation, English education, Eurocentric humanities and science, living in a Eurocentric/settler-colonial context complete with media, books, laws, and values” (p. 26). This originates when Indigenous peoples are positioned as “Other” and “strange” to white European settlers, facilitating projections of being uncivilized, savage, and inferior onto Indigenous Peoples, and their knowledges “disqualified.” (Battiste, M., 2013; Castellano, 2011; Couture, 2011; Greenwood et al., 2013; Paul, 1993; RCAP, 1986). In other words, “whiteness” is embedded within Eurocentric/settler-colonial or settler-colonial knowledge systems. The Canadian academy (and settler society) is also implicated in systems and processes which continue to seek the assimilation of Indigenous Peoples to serve settler goals while professing a desire for a nation-to-nation relationship and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. This is the cognitive dissonance of settler colonialism. As part of the colonization of Indigenous Knowledges, settler peoples gain Indigenous Knowledge for themselves (Genuisz, 2013; Simpson, L., 2014).

Omission & Suppression of Indigenous Knowledge Systems in the Academy

In their attempted epistemological domination of the academy, settler-colonial knowledge systems force learners to adapt and succeed within their frameworks of what can be known and how it can be known. The suppression and omission of IKS excludes (w)holistic, transformative development and crucial spiritual and relational understandings vital for Indigenous well-being and resilient communities. Furthermore, colonial systems may omit processes of relational knowledge creation, production, and validation as grounded in collective, community-based analysis and consensus-building. Additionally, the personal and inward nature of Indigenous Knowledges and the acceptance of disparate and even contradictory perceptions as valid, and in which a multiplicity of truths, positions, and subjectivities are embraced, tends to be denied (Castellano, 2000; Little Bear, 2000; Marshall, M., 1997; Sefa Dei, 2002).

Eurocentric/settler-colonial paradigms and qualitative research are often individualistic and essentialist, propelling a desire for objectivity, standardization, and universal application (Kovach, 2009). Indigenous epistemologies challenge colonial hegemony: as they are not based on contestation over truth, they are often considered counter-narratives or counter-hegemonic (Lawrence & Dua, 2005; McGregor et al., 2018).

From an epistemological and linguistic perspective, translating and textualizing Indigenous languages into English leads to objectification. This facilitates decontextualization, misrepresentation, and appropriation of Indigenous Knowledges. Leanne Simpson cautions that settler/Treaty peoples who are educated to consider literate societies superior to oral cultures can hold the misconception that writing down Indigenous Knowledges will protect them from “being lost.” They don’t understand their living nature and that they adapt and change over time. Additionally, they don’t fully comprehend how much of the meaning and cultural value gets lost when translated from an Indigenous language into English. In highlighting what benefits Indigenous communities, Leanne Simpson asks:

Why are we assuming that written knowledge is better than oral knowledge? Why are we insisting on textualizing knowledge so that it won’t be lost? Doesn't that reflect academic biases? Would it not be better to focus efforts on strengthening the Oral Tradition and Indigenous Knowledge systems at the local level, rather than just writing down the knowledge? (Simpson, L., 1999, p. 67)

Roronhiakewen/Dan Longboat adds that as knowledge is embedded within Indigenous languages, their integrity is impaired when translated into English because of the speed and efficiency of the English language, and by technology. Furthermore, he says that when they interact with other knowledges, Eurocentric Knowledges have a long history of predation (Longboat, 2014).

Anishinaabeg scholars Deborah McGregor (2004) and Leanne Simpson (1999, 2004)

both contend that the process of objectification is reductionist and can lead to the appropriation of Indigenous Knowledges (IK). In attempting to incorporate IK within Eurocentric science and natural sciences, often to address environmental challenges using a “knowledge integration” approach, non-Indigenous/settler scientists and environmentalists (as well as other practitioners) give IK the label “Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK).” As mentioned, when Indigenous Knowledges are written down in English, they become objects. Separated from the oral tradition, Indigenous Knowledges can be stripped of their spiritual properties and reduced to “data,” and they are also vulnerable. Leanne Simpson says constructs of IK/TEK separate the knowledges from “the people, the land, the spiritual realm, oral [and other] traditions and from the values and philosophies that provide its context” (Simpson, L., 1999, p. 6). She notes that when Indigenous understandings are written down in English, this reduces them from a “process to a product,” packaging them and making them more accessible within dominant discourses, which is dangerous when competing interests and value systems are at play. For Indigenous Peoples, the focus is on survival. For colonial society, it may be solely for economic profit, for example, the Tar Sands in Alberta.

As mentioned earlier, another area of epistemological difference relates to individual versus community or collective knowledge creation, production, and legitimization. Within EKS, knowledge or concepts, etc., in most contexts can be produced, created, and legitimized by individuals, as opposed to collectively or through community-based efforts (Marshall, M., 1997; Marshall, A., 2013; Sefa Dei, 2000). Practices and processes of individual knowledge creation and legitimization are codified through intellectual copyright and the notion of academic freedom. Through intellectual copyright law, knowledge may be trademarked through the patenting of seeds, formulas, and even DNA itself, leading to the appropriation, ownership, and commodification of Indigenous Knowledges (Shiva, 2018). These practices are linked to

capitalistic and anthropocentric aspects of settler colonialism and run counter to IKS perspectives. Work in ecophilosophy and ecofeminism has also identified the objectification of natural entities and women as factors in their domination through heteropatriarchy within settler-colonial systems (Evernden, 1993).

Objectification of Indigenous Knowledge/Traditional Ecological Knowledge

As Corntassel, Alfred, Leanne Simpson, Roronhiakewen and many other Indigenous scholars have cautioned, imbalances in power plague approaches to knowledge engagement in which Eurocentric science and other knowledges are considered superior to IK/TEK, and when Indigenous peoples do not direct the process. What is of greatest concern for Indigenous Peoples is that settler-colonial conceptualizations of IK/TEK appropriate the power and disregard the ethical responsibilities inherent within IKS. When Indigenous Knowledge Holders control the transmission of knowledge, these remain intact within oral systems of transmission, as they require “reciprocity and interaction” (Simpson, L., 1999, p. 89). Once separated from Indigenous Knowledge Holders, TEK becomes open to the cultural interpretations of settler society and can result in the degradation, marginalization, and appropriation of IKS (Colorado, 1988; McGregor, 2000 & 2004; Simpson, L., 1999 & 2004).

To put power back in the hands of Indigenous Peoples, Leanne Simpson says that settler-colonial society, including government and academics, must work with Indigenous Knowledges in ways suggested by Indigenous Peoples. They must work with Indigenous and Eurocentric/settler-colonial paradigms as equally significant—in multiple contexts. She makes recommendations for this, summarized here:

Respect Aboriginal Peoples, their knowledge systems, worldviews, values, and ethics and regard them as equal to their western counterparts. This means using Indigenous Knowledge, including Indigenous values and ethics to make decisions. It means developing co-jurisdiction and co-management arrangements that are based on Indigenous environmental philosophies. It

means regarding Indigenous system of management as valid, reliable systems, and it demands a willingness on the part of Euro-Canadian institutions to do things differently. (1999, p. 94)

Leanne Simpson emphasizes using Indigenous Knowledge to make decisions, as opposed to including or trying to fit Indigenous Peoples into settler-colonial decision-making processes. This centres Indigenous Peoples and their knowledges, reorienting frameworks for how things are done.

The Need for Transformational, Structural, and Systemic Change in PSE

Indigenous and other racialized scholars lead the way in critiquing the academy and identifying pervasive issues that require structural, systemic, and collaborative change. As Monture asserted back in 1995, “real change requires a full and systemic institutional response” (p. 67). She has also indicated that “our challenge, and it must be a collective one [between Aboriginal Peoples and Canadians], is to transform educational systems as we know them today” (p. 96). Indeed, Indigenous Elders and other Knowledge Holders have been trying to fit a round peg or circle into a square hole for many years. In the context of systemic transformation, Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders consider how Indigenous Knowledges can guide governance and knowledge engagement, including how to design curriculum, how IKS can be taught, who can teach, and how Indigenous Knowledges can guide daily processes and practices in PSE programs since they first entered mainstream PSIs. In responding to the TRC’s Calls for Action, as a starting point for change, Anishinaabeg scholar Sheila Cote-Meek identifies and recommends simultaneously addressing four intersecting aspects of the academy as a bare minimum: “the systemic under-representation of Indigenous peoples in the academy; providing sufficient resources to any program or change that is put in place; changing the structure by way of decision-making; and changing the culture of the institution” (Cote-Meek, 2017). A model

that considers intersecting aspects of the academy could be expanded to ensure Indigenous Knowledges are grounded in their land- or place-based, lived contexts.

Indigenizing, Decolonizing and Resurgence

Since the 1960s, several Canadian universities have created departments of Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Studies programs within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences or the Humanities. Some have created Indigenous-based programming, particularly in law, social work, health, science and environmental professions, education, governance, arts, literature, and business. However, few of these universities, save Indigenous-controlled PSIs, including University nuhelot'jne thaiyots'j nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills (since 1970), the First Nations University of Canada (since 1976), the First Nations Technical Institute (since 1985), Six Nations Polytechnical Institute (since 1993), and the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning (since 2012) centre IKS to guide practices institutionally (Dechinta, 2021; FNUC, 2016).

First, I will provide some context based on recent commitments made by many universities. Since 2015, many PSIs have committed to and/or taken action to implement the TRC's Calls to Action on education, towards decolonization and Indigenizing, and to make transformative change. PSIs have been updating institutional Indigenous and/or Aboriginal education strategies or plans based on the Calls; increasing Indigenous board and senate appointments; creating Indigenous Vice-President of Academic Affairs positions and hiring Indigenous Peoples to other senior positions; establishing new Indigenous faculty positions in departments across the academy, as well as ensuring new hires focus on Indigenizing curriculum and the academy; increasing the hiring of Indigenous faculty and staff; and creating new Indigenous programs and curriculum, Indigenous student centres and resources, Elder-in-Residence programs, and other Elder supports. There has also been an increase in Canada Research Chair positions through the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada

(SSHRC) and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC). Indeed, some PSIs have created research agendas for understanding reconciliation (Toronto Metropolitan University, 2021). Accordingly, some universities are trying to Indigenize curriculum and pedagogy and have implemented introductory courses with required Indigenous content, including Lakehead University, Laurentian University, Trent University (Ontario) and the University of Winnipeg (Manitoba). The following discussion puts these efforts in context by exploring current theoretical approaches and strategies, both ideological and discursive, towards making institutions more responsive to the needs of Indigenous Peoples, broadly indicated by processes of Indigenous resurgence, decolonizing, and “Indigenizing.”

Decolonizing

An early definition of decolonizing, as articulated by Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith, establishes that it “is about centering our concerns and world views and then coming to know theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes” (Smith, 1999, p. 39).

Marie Battiste²⁶ (2002) expands:

[Decolonization] is a process that includes raising the collective voice of Indigenous peoples, exposing the injustices in our colonial history, deconstructing the past by critically examining the social, political, economic and emotional reasons for silencing of Aboriginal voices in Canadian history, legitimating the voices and experiences of Aboriginal people in the curriculum, recognizing it as a dynamic context of knowledge, and communicating the emotional journey that such explorations will generate. (p. 20)

Strategies toward decolonizing must be part of the process of reconciliation at the state and institutional levels (Brunette-Debassige, 2021; Simpson, L., 2017). Unangan scholar Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang (2012) stress that “decolonization is not a metaphor” (p. 1). Instead, it requires an Indigenous framework and a centring of Indigenous land, sovereignty, and ways of thinking. It

²⁶ As there are two Battistes in this dissertation, Marie Battiste will be referred to by her full name and Jaime Battiste will be referred to as Battiste.

must include conversations about sharing the land in ways that allow for Indigenous lifeways and cultures for future generations. It is an emergent process involving the reclamation of Indigenous histories and homelands, focused on Indigenous sovereignties and futurities (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Corntassel, 2011; Simpson, L., 2014 & 2017; Alfred, 2004). Furthermore, decolonization must not be absorbed into mainstream social justice and anti-oppression projects (Tuck & Yang, 2012). As a counter-hegemonic and self-determining process, decolonizing also links to healing (Cote-Meek, 2013). In the context of the academy, Patricia Doyle-Bedwell asserts:

There is a need for a decolonizing process. Education is not about making us into nice white people. Education is about making us stronger Mi'kmaq. Education has always been about assimilation. I think one of the hardest things is to get people to understand Mi'kmaw culture and the need for it. It's not just a token thing; let's bring in an Elder for fun. It's fundamental to people. That's one of the things I don't think any university gets. (Austin & Sylliboy, 2017, p. 22)

Decolonizing is diversely envisioned within diverse Indigenous contexts, as are understandings of Indigenizing.

Indigenizing

The term or concept of Indigenizing and the movement towards Indigenizing the academy does not resonate with some Indigenous Knowledge Holders and scholars. Indigenizing is a broad term and can be used to promote pan-Aboriginal or pan-Indigenous approaches. However, it is also useful in asserting a direction based on respect for Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledges. An early articulation of Indigenizing involves “carving a space where Indigenous values and knowledge are respected; creat[ing] an environment that supports research and methodologies useful to Indigenous nation building; support[ing] one another as institutional foundations are shaken; and compel[ling] institutional responsiveness to

Indigenous issues, concerns and communities” (Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004, p. 2). Connections can be drawn from this earlier vision to those who stress Indigenous resurgence. The discourse of nation-building relates to Indigenous sovereignty, and similarly, shaking institutional foundations resonates with dismantling settler colonialism. Indigenizing also involves creating and defining Indigenous spaces and processes within PSIs and engaging with Indigenous paradigms and pedagogies (Simpson, L., 2008a; McGrath, 2012).

Many find that the approach that centres on Indigenizing the academy tends to centre colonial states and institutions. Leanne Simpson (2014) suggests that Indigenous peoples should withdraw their collective efforts to “Indigenize the academy” and focus their energies on the resurgence of Indigenous intellectual systems, reclaiming the context that these systems operate within. The project of Indigenous resurgence is Indigenous Peoples’ “original instruction” (Simpson, L., 2011, p. 66). It extends beyond the borders of colonial institutions to reclaim Indigenous histories, homelands, and lifeways, grounded in values and ethics of “interdependency, cycles of change, balance, struggles and rootedness” (Snelgrove, C., Dhamoon, R., & Corntassel, J. 2014, p. 18). Spiritual, political, and social relationships are renewed daily through multiple Indigenous practices and are the foundations of resurgence (Alfred, 2004 & 2005; Corntassel, 2012; Simpson, L., 2011 & 2014). Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred suggests that Indigenous scholars must be “warrior scholars” who speak the truth by honouring knowledges from Indigenous traditional cultures, fighting for sovereignty, and confronting false claims of authority and legitimacy (Alfred, 2004, p. 90). He stresses that this needs to be done on an individual/spiritual level and collectively. Alfred says that Indigenous peoples working in universities can become alienated; they need to remain accountable to the conflicts and challenges faced by their people, in their nations and communities, embracing these struggles within the university (Alfred, 2007). Indigenous resurgence “refram[es] the

conversation around decolonization in order to recentre and reinvigorate Indigenous nationhood” (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 18). Indigenous resurgence theory allows for the potential that settler society can be transformed through practices of listening, learning, and acting— in other words, through anti-colonial resistance (Snelgrove et al., 2014).

While “Indigenizing works hand in hand with decolonizing,” they are distinct projects within which Indigenous and settler peoples engage differently, based on their positionalities and within their respective Indigenous homelands (Pete, 2013, p. 103). In whatever ways Indigenizing and decolonizing frameworks are conceptualized in terms of their complementary and overlapping goals, or their differences, there is concern that they can too easily be co-opted by the neo-colonial university and relegated to the margins (Hill, 2012; Newhouse, 2016). Indeed, decolonizing cannot affirm “settler futurity” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3). Newhouse and others remind us that universities served as instruments of assimilation. He asserts: “If we are not careful, Indigenization can repeat the mistakes of the past,” as Indigenous peoples entered universities for training to enter the labour market, or to meet goals established for them by settler society (Newhouse, 2016). Alfred (2010) imparts that to decolonize,

Canadians and Americans have to sever their emotional attachment to their countries and reimagine themselves, not as citizens with the privileges being conferred by being descendants of colonizers or newcomers from other part of the world benefiting from white imperialism, but as human beings in equal and respectful relation to other human beings and the natural environment. This is what radical imagination could look like. (p. 2)

Doyle-Bedwell observes that the process of Indigenizing is evolving—it is a moving target in terms of documenting its various manifestations (Patricia Doyle-Bedwell, Mi’kmaq, lives in Kjiptuk/Halifax, NS, personal communication, May 2016). Newhouse proposes that there are phases of Indigenization, which are not necessarily linear. These include the participation of Indigenous peoples in the academy, the inclusion of Indigenous cultural practices within

institutions, and Indigenous Knowledge having a place in the praxis of the university through research and teaching, in particular, by engaging Indigenous Knowledge Holders. Newhouse envisions Indigenous Knowledges and Knowledge Holders engaged in multiple departments beyond Indigenous Studies as a progressive phase (Newhouse, 2016). Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) suggest that moving forward with decolonial Indigenization includes both Treaty-based and resurgence-based decolonial Indigenization in policy and praxis. It is evident that tensions exist regarding understandings of how Indigenizing and decolonizing are unfolding at some contemporary PSIs, as these do not always centre Indigenous understandings of sovereignty and relationality. Ultimately, Indigenous Peoples must have autonomy over Indigenizing and decolonizing processes to realize Indigenous goals.

Indigenous Education Policy

Over the last 60 years, advocates of Indigenous autonomy over Indigenous education have proposed multiple strategies towards education that support Indigenous communities and goals. This is evident in the overview of contemporary issues and debates regarding decolonizing, Indigenizing, reconciliation, and Indigenous resurgence in the academy. No matter what policy and discursive shifts are proposed, a recurring concern is that Indigenous power can be diluted within and coopted by dominant settler systems, reproducing settler-colonial goals (Alfred, 2009). Paquette and Fallon's analysis of Indigenous education policy in Canada (as cited in Anuik, 2013, p. 530), begins in the 1960s and finds that "a legacy of failure will endure as long as the central philosophical assumptions (or underlying sociocultural and educational paradigm) of Aboriginal education remain entrenched in mainstream cultural tradition." In contemporizing this discourse, I would say "entrenched within the frameworks of settler colonialism." Paquette and Fallon caution that change does not occur when Indigenous policy development, understandings of policy, and Indigenous educational priorities are not understood by settler

society. Like Blaser et al. (2010), they conclude this stems from conflicting (ontological and epistemological) understandings of the concept of “control” and of knowledge and learning held by Indigenous nations and communities, versus understandings of these concepts held by the Canadian federal, provincial, and territorial governments. Furthermore, even at an Indigenous-led PSI, Cree scholar Blair Stonechild finds that struggles, which almost led to the demise of the First Nations University of Canada, were due mainly to challenges based in a colonial environment (Stonechild, 2013).

Many Indigenous scholars contend that no matter the current post-TRC uptake of renewed strategic plans, mission statements, mandates, committee work, and discussions focused on creating policies towards reconciling, decolonizing, and Indigenizing the academy, doing these within settler-colonial frameworks does not promote a centring of Indigenous land, Indigenous resurgence and intelligence, nor of Indigenous sovereignty and relationality-autonomy (Alfred, 2004; Cook-Lynn, 1997; Corntassel, 2012; Deloria, 2003; Simpson, L., 2017; Tuck & Yang, 2012). While it is critical to emphasize Indigenous Peoples have central decision-making roles in terms of programming, policy, and Indigenizing (Archibald, 2020; Cote-Meek, 2017), this still finds Indigenous Peoples confined to decision-making and policy-making within settler-colonial governance structures. Furthermore, these strategies frame the academy as central—they respond to the power of the academy. Since Monture first called for collective systemic transformation of education systems and justice for Indigenous Peoples, over 25 years have passed. PSIs are still struggling with how to make change; structural change has not yet occurred.

As discussed previously, Wilson (2008) points out that state-based inquiries that use Eurocentric research paradigms and colonial solutions tend to reproduce systems of oppression in policies and recommendations; this also applies at the institutional level. Greenwood et al.

(2013) propose an explanation of how this occurs. They theorize that universities, as “products of capitalist modernity and embedded in and central to colonial projects,” and implicated in neocolonial and neoliberal frameworks, tend to reproduce “structural good intentions” in relations with Indigenous Peoples and Indigeneity (Greenwood et al., p. 382). As within the Canadian state, settler colonialism becomes naturalized and normalized over time within the academy as it shape-shifts, changing appearances without changing the structural dynamics of power that lead to dominating and oppressive settler-colonial/Indigenous relationships. Therefore, university policies not based on Indigenous sovereignty but on “good intentions,” focused on repairing past colonial legacies, tend to produce “a structurally limited decolonization” (Greenwood et al., 2013, p. 385). This is because settler-colonial projects, going back to Veracini’s analysis (as cited in Greenwood et al., 2013), are “primarily aimed at producing the conditions of [their] own supersession”; in other words, settler colonialism declares its passing, rather than proclaiming permanence as it did historically. In this way, policies created with settler-colonial frameworks, whether focused on decolonizing, Indigenizing, strengthening reconciliatory relations, or working towards environmental sustainability, tend to further entrench asymmetrical relations of power through processes that Rose (1996, as cited in Greenwood et al., 2013, p. 385), identifies as “deep colonizing.”

A team of settler scholars, Greenwood et al. suggest that the processes of interrogating, scrutinizing, and unsettling settler colonialism are never complete; they must continue to make visible its hegemonic, naturalized, and invisible (to some) power, and to disrupt and destabilize it. Concurrently, it is important to recognize the limitations of settler-colonial theory, as it can recentre settler colonialism, displacing the voices of Indigenous resurgence, to whom settler colonialism is not invisible nor in the background. It follows that settler colonialists must also become more visible, never be naturalized, and understand their/ourselves and their/our

practices as in process. Strategies towards this are presented in a subsequent discussion. Given this context, the question of how universities might proceed in creating Indigenous-led education policy hints that it involves reimagining relations with Indigenous nations and with the land both ideologically and discursively, nationally and locally, structurally and interpersonally, and collectively and individually.

Indigenous Research

The last two sections about IKS and the academy relate to the emergent fields of Indigenous research and theory and the promise of Indigenous resurgence. Engaging with this vast field is beyond the scope of this work; however, a broad overview assists in providing context for my research findings. As noted, research, as concept and praxis, is inextricably linked to European imperialism and settler colonialism globally (Kovach, 2009; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008). However, in the last two decades, Indigenous scholars began asserting their power—doing research within Indigenous paradigms. Their voices are being heard in global academic contexts without having to justify their perspectives from within dominant discourses (Martin, 2003; Wilson, 2008). The generative and creative forces of emerging Indigenous scholarship is growing prolifically. No longer the objects of research, Indigenous Peoples are resisting colonial pressures and “researching themselves back to life”—reclaiming, renaming, revitalizing, restorying, regenerating, re-creating, decolonizing, and reimagining Indigenous ways of knowing and creating knowledge (Battiste, M., 2002; Castellano, 2004; Geniusz, 2009; Kovach, 2009; McGregor, 2004; RCAP, 1986; Simpson, L., 2017; Smith, 1999). Smith’s 1999 *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* and her vision of 25 Indigenous Projects is a foundational work.

Essential to Indigenous research is that Indigenous Peoples and communities benefit from the research. Indigenous research “prioritizes the aspirations, needs and values of

Indigenous Peoples and knowledges;” commits to “recognizing and supporting diversity and nationhood” and “intellectual sovereignty or self-determination;” and is different from other non-Indigenous approaches to research (McGregor et al., 2018, p. 1–2). Indigenous research focuses energy on Indigenous resurgence as endogenous practice. It recognizes Traditional and contemporary IKS, the value of community leadership and support, and community ownership of knowledge. It has the potential to regenerate and revitalize the lifeways of Indigenous Peoples, communities, Nations, and sovereignties, “along with the knowing that sustains their vitality” (Alfred, 2004 & 2005; Corntassel, 2012; McGregor et al., 2018, p. 2; Simpson, L., 2011 & 2014). Indigenous research is also influenced by the need to survive, resist, and overcome colonialism—“Indigenous survivance,” as expressed by Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Visonor (Visenor, 1999). Indigenous scholars are turning away from, critiquing, and challenging the colonial hegemony, and posing counter-narratives to dominant Eurocentric paradigms that support/ed settler-colonial goals. They “expose epistemic violence,” offering sites of resistance and transformative change (Corntassel & Scow, 2017; McGregor et al., 2018, p. 4).

Beyond categorization, Indigenous research approaches are as diverse as Indigenous Nations. Recall Bell’s (2014) teaching—that knowledges arise from specific homelands, nations, and peoples, and is personal, generational, and epistemological. Indigenous scholars express the diversity and multiplicity of Indigenous theory and intellectual traditions grounded in their sacred histories, ceremonial cycles, languages, and ancestral homelands. Indigenous research methodologies embrace understandings of relationality, respect, reciprocity, and responsibility, and the lived and day-to-day experiences of Indigenous Peoples (McGregor et al., 2019; Wilson, 2008; Simpson, L., 2014). Indigenous scholars are also choosing to combine the knowledges of their ancestors with aspects of critical theory that compliment and align with Indigenous ethical understandings (Wilson, 2008). Ultimately, Indigenous scholars are creating spaces to affirm the

value and significance of Indigenous Knowledges and Indigenous research approaches.

Correspondingly, Indigenous research is diverse and inclusive, embracing multiple forms and styles, such as but not exclusively — narrative, poetic, performative, arts-based, ceremonial, and academic (McGregor et al., 2019).

Indigenous Peoplehood

Recent work reviving an Indigenous concept of peoplehood affirms the sources of Indigenous Knowledges and research in broad Indigenous contexts. The concept of peoplehood, derived from American anthropologist Edward Spicer (1962) and as interpreted by Alfred & Corntassel, asserts an “Indian sense of identity” centred on three key factors: “relationship to the land, common spiritual bond, and language use” (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, p. 608). Cherokee anthropologist Robert Thomas adds “sacred history” as a fourth factor in community relationships and peoplehood, describing these factors as “interwoven and dependent on one another” (Holm et al., 2003, p. 6–7). Cherokee/Creek scholar Tom Holm, along with Diane Pearson and Ben Chavis, feels this model of Indigenous peoplehood has potential as a foundational concept or matrix in guiding Indigenous research and teaching or sovereignty in education: “The matrix itself is universal to all Native American tribes and nations, and possibly to all indigenous groups, and could serve as the primary theoretical underpinning of Indigenous peoples’ studies” (Holm et al., 2003, p. 12). They add that “no single element of the model is more or less important than the others” (Holm et al., 2003, p. 32).

Building on the work of Holm et al., Alfred & Corntassel articulate Indigenous peoplehood as four interlocking concepts: “sacred history, ceremonial cycles, language, and ancestral homelands” (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, p. 609). They expand:

Building on this notion of a dynamic and interconnected concept of Indigenous identity constituted in history, ceremony, language, and land, we consider relationships (or kinship networks) to be at the core of an authentic Indigenous

identity. Clearly, it is the need to maintain respectful relationships that guides all interactions and experiences with community, clans, families, individuals, homelands, plants, animals, etc., in the Indigenous cultural ideal. If any one of these elements of identity, such as sacred history, is in danger of being lost, unified action can be taken to revitalize and restore that part of the community by utilizing relationships, which are the spiritual and cultural foundations of Indigenous peoples. (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, p. 609).

Anti-Indigenous Racism & Multi- and Intergenerational Trauma

The fact that structures and ideologies of the Canadian state and education systems are shared has become a well-trodden theme. In rounding out a discussion of what Indigenous Peoples experience in the academy, it is critical to highlight analysis and strategies for countering anti-Indigenous racism, white supremacy, discrimination, and multi-/intergenerational trauma in PSE. First, understandings of intersectionality and red intersectionality are shared to assist in unpacking racializing and discriminatory processes and unchallenged “cultural” practices and norms that impact Indigenous Peoples specifically.

An intersectional framework for analyzing relations of power originates with the work of Black feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991). Intersectionality merges constructs of identity such as “race,” class, gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, etc., creating a complex picture of identity. It is a mode of analysis that considers overlapping social identities, stressing the need to critique all forms of oppression, discrimination, racism, classism, sexism, etc., and the ways they are interdependent and influence each other to disadvantage Indigenous Peoples and other racialized or oppressed peoples, among others. These are the ideologies, structures and systems that come together to uphold settler colonialism. Intersectionality also reveals how overlapping social identities produce unique experiences, opportunities, and barriers for individuals in their daily lives; as such, it is an effective lens for combatting oppression (UBC, 2021).

While intersectionality is a groundbreaking concept, in my analysis of the literature, and as confirmed through the insights of Indigenous scholars, it neglects to consider some of the historical and contemporary realities and critical aspects of Indigenous power—for one, Indigenous connections to land. Mainstream insights based on intersectionality, along with mainstream literature concerning racism and anti-racism, are not framed by the context of Indigenous dispossession, multi- and intergenerational trauma, and Canada’s complicity in condoning Indigenous genocide. According to Anishinaabe scholar Sheila Cote-Meek (Teme-Augama Anishnabai), Indigenous Peoples in Canada find themselves at the bottom of a “racialized hierarchy,” situated below other racialized peoples. She highlights the centrality of land, asserting that,

Colonizers are most concerned and threatened by Indigenous peoples of the land because Indigenous peoples have real ties and claims to the land and resources. Therefore, as peoples, they represent a significant threat to the colonial empire, and in the mind of the colonist, they must be debased.” (Cote-Meek, 2013, p. 20)

Brunette-Debassige prefers an Indigenous feminist concept of a “red intersectional framework” grounded in Métis scholar Natalie Clark’s work (2016). A red intersectional framework

[d]raws inspiration from the concept of intersectionality but privileges the intersectional realities of Indigenous people at micro (individual) levels, and how they embody multiple, converging, and interwoven identities (i.e., non-binary genders, sexual orientations, races, connections to land, historical trauma, socioeconomic statuses, abilities etc.). These micro realities intersect with macro-structural systems (i.e., hetero-patriarchy, global capitalism, settler colonialism) to create complex experiences of privilege and oppression. (Brunette-Debassige, 2021, p. 66)

Clark’s concept of red intersectionality (as cited in Brunette-Debassige, 2021) uses Indigenous relations with the settler-colonial state as the central point of analysis. As discussed, Indigenous/settler relations have resulted in “disconnections from Indigenous communities, dispossession from Indigenous lands, languages, and ways of knowing, and experiences of

intergenerational trauma” (Brunette-Debassige, 2021, p. 66). These are “unique experiences of disadvantage,” which Clark finds neglected within mainstream understandings of intersectionality (Brunette-Debassige, 2021, p. 66). Further, Lawrence and Dua (2005) note the need to decolonize Canadian anti-racism theory—to integrate settler-colonial frameworks in its analysis as it currently fails to challenge the ongoing colonization of Indigenous Peoples. Placing Indigenous nationhood in the past ignores Indigenous sovereignty. Lawrence and Dua propose that anti-racism theory and activism recognize ongoing colonization as foundational and consider how to theorize within the context of Indigenous sovereignty and restoration of land (2005).

While an in-depth discussion of Indigenous Peoples’ unique experiences of disadvantage related to racism and other forms of discrimination, vis-à-vis the suppression and denigration of IKS and colonial violence in the academy, is beyond the scope of this discussion, emergent work uncovers racism and trauma and the resistance of Indigenous learners. Cote-Meek finds that Indigenous learners come to PSIs “marked and carrying a huge burden of representation,” meaning that they are “racially marked and at risk, a marker that not only inscribes a victim identity but also constructs them as inferior and unintelligent” (Cote-Meek, 2014, p. 140). Cote-Meek indicates that Indigenous Peoples experience violence and historical and multi- and inter-generational trauma daily in PSE and settler society. As discussed, colonial violence disproportionately impacts Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ (NIMMIWG, 2019a). In “colonized classrooms,” Indigenous learners are constrained by racialized constructions of themselves. They can be triggered or retraumatized in learning about ongoing colonization and narratives of how their ancestors, knowledges, cultures, traditions, and languages are devalued (Cote-Meek, 2014).

Mainstream approaches do not frame racism in terms of the ongoing Indigenous dispossession of lands and knowledges, multi- and intergenerational trauma, and Canada's complicity in condoning genocide. It is critical that the standard for confronting and eliminating anti-Indigenous racism in the academy be linked to ending the violence that the most vulnerable Indigenous Peoples—women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples—experience daily in all facets of settler-colonial society. The NIMMWG Calls for Justice use the same points of analysis as settler-colonial theory, stressing that the daily encounters with individuals, institutions, systems, and structures that compromise the security of Indigenous Peoples, and women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people must be addressed with a renewed focus on relationships at both state and institutional levels (NIMMWG, 2019a). This means attending to the factors that have led to historical multi- and intergenerational trauma; social and economic marginalization; disregard for the agency and expertise of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people; and institutional unwillingness to make changes to the status quo by complying with all international and domestic human and Indigenous rights laws. Furthermore, to prevent Indigenous and other racialized students from being further oppressed and marginalized in the academy, the use of Indigenous, transformative, anti-oppressive, anti-racism, anti-colonial, and decolonizing pedagogies; the use of supportive theory to name practices of discrimination; the provision of professional development and cultural safety and competence training for faculty and staff; and the creation of safe spaces aimed at supporting these learners are widely suggested. These are also recommended for all levels of government and in all facets of service delivery, including but not limited to policing, the criminal justice system, education, health, and social services (NIMMIWG, 2019a).

Settler Education/Transforming Settler Consciousness

To contribute beyond Indigenous inclusion and reconciliation Indigenization—toward Treaty and resurgence-based decolonial Indigenization, settler/Treaty peoples have much unlearning and relearning to do. There is the potential to embody something other than colonizing. We can choose new ways of being in relationship with Indigenous Peoples, ways that transform and imagine decolonized futures (Barker & Battell Lowman, 2015). While engaging and consulting with Indigenous Peoples remains critical, it is not the Indigenous Peoples' responsibility to educate us.

Settler colonialism is reproduced and expressed through the beliefs, practices, and actions of settler peoples. Settlers are considered “contemporary colonial shape shifters” (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). Addressing the complex layers of settler consciousness is needed to disrupt the settler-colonial status quo (Davis et al., 2016; Regan, 2010). Settler peoples need to reflect on how their everyday practices and ways of being, as well as their power and privilege, are connected to the Canadian state and are in relationship to Indigenous land. This includes contemplating and understanding how it operates through “settler common sense” (Rifkin, 2013) and “erase[s] Indigenous histories and sense of place” using subtle forms of violence (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, p. 601).

An emergent field asks us to reflect on how settler identity is bound up in national historical myths, and how these serve to maintain and reproduce settler colonialism. Settler identity and consciousness are often bound up in colonial hegemonic frameworks and narratives about Canada and being Canadian (Davis et al., 2016). These are various and may include buying into neoliberal, mainstream frameworks of multiculturalism and equity that erase Indigenous realities (Barker & Battell Lowman, 2015). In this era of reconciliation, settler-colonial society may invest in benevolent, mainstream conceptions of reconciliation that do not include

Indigenous truth-telling, resulting in no change to Indigenous/settler relations (Davis et al., 2016). Many Canadians identify with the myth of Canada as a peacemaker and a state with a strong human rights record, disavowing colonial violence (Barker & Battell Lowman, 2015).

Settlers also experience feelings of “shame, frustration, alienation, and anger in relation to themselves, other settlers and settler colonialism” in relearning histories from Indigenous perspectives and about Canada’s IRS and other acts of genocide (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 6). Margaret Heffernan 2011 (as cited in Davis et al., 2016) names the practice of turning away from disturbing or unsettling truths as “willful blindness.” Settlers also make “moves of innocence” to deny their roles in Indigenous oppression in various ways (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Some of the impacts of the erasure, omission and suppression of Indigenous content and narratives, let alone IK in mainstream curriculum, can be illustrated by how history is taught within settler colonial education structures at all levels. This affects both Indigenous and settler learners. Plains Cree scholar Shauneen Pete (Little Pine First Nation) has found settler students tell “collective narratives” that are “disturbingly similar,” revealing a lack of knowledge about Indigenous Peoples and Canadian history as well as negative racial stereotypes about Indigenous Peoples (Pete et al., 2013, p. 104). She says this is because they have been “structurally denied the opportunity to learn about Aboriginal people because of assumptions that their [highschool] teachers made about what they, as white students, would need to know to be successful” as well as in their families and communities (Pete et al., 2013, p. 105). For example, if they become educators, they need to learn Canada's actual history and include Indigenous content in appropriate ways. The structural denial (or marginalization and erasure) of specific knowledges related to Indigenous cultures and histories, Indigenous histories, Indigenous/settler and Treaty relations, is a feature of settler colonialism. Strategies for settler education and the potential transformation of settler consciousness will be discussed further in the findings.

Knowledge Engagement

In considering how to approach engagement between diverse knowledge systems, Blackfoot Elder-scholar Leroy Little Bear's metaphor "jagged worldviews colliding" helps in navigating the multiplicity of thought worlds or frameworks that exist within neo- or settler-



Figure 3: Knowledge Engagement

colonial contexts (Little Bear, 2000). Figure 3 includes some proposed ways of engaging across Indigenous and Eurocentric Knowledge Systems. The concept of "the middle ground," as put forward by settler scholar Richard White, describes early knowledge engagement, between 1650-1815, in which Algonquins Peoples and Europeans found ways to co-exist by creating new symbols, languages, traditions, and cultures out of their mutual interactions (White, 1991). As noted earlier, Roronhiake:wen/Dan Longboat cautions that Eurocentric/settler-colonial knowledges are predatory: colonial frameworks can override or usurp Indigenous understandings through the speed and efficiency of English and technology. Furthermore, many aspects of Indigenous Knowledges cannot be translated into English (Bartlett et al., 2012a;

Couture, 2011; Ermine, 1995; Metallic, 2011; Porter & Ka-Hon-Hes, 2008). In addition, for settler peoples, the shape-shifting trickiness of settler ways can colonize our minds, inserting themselves daily and pervasively. We can be tricked and tricky. Little Bear says that “no one has a worldview that is 100 percent Indigenous or Eurocentric; rather, everyone has an integrated mind, a fluxing and ambidextrous consciousness, a precolonized consciousness that flows into a colonized consciousness and back again” (Little Bear, 2000, p. 85). A paradigm shift is needed to approach understandings of Indigenous Knowledges for those educated within Eurocentric/settler-colonial frameworks. Gregory Cajete, a pioneer in Indigenous education, shares this insight: “to Indigenize contemporary Western education would require a global transformation of proportions we have never seen (Cajete, 1994, p. 69).

Elder Willie Ermine’s conception of “ethical space” helps conceptualize how Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty can be activated and embodied at PSIs (Poole, 1972). Ethical space is “formed when two societies, with disparate worldviews, are poised to engage each other. It is the thought about diverse societies and the space in between them that contributes to the development of a framework for dialogue between human communities” (Ermine, 2007, p. 193). In reconfiguring ethical and legal principles, Ermine would like us to consider what remains hidden and enfolded between the two societies, and that “recognizing that the Indigenous-settler encounter is about thought worlds may also remind us that frameworks or paradigms are required to reconcile these solitudes” (Ermine, 2007, p. 195.) Ermine forecasts the need for national truth and reconciliation between Indigenous and settler peoples and proposes that Treaties provide models of co-existence for transcultural partnerships based on cooperation.

As noted earlier, knowledge engagement extends beyond thought worlds; it is about power relations. Hence, Indigenous/settler relations require transformative paradigms or approaches that can assist in eliminating colonial violence, rebalancing asymmetrical power

relations, and co-creating futurities in which truth and reconciliation includes all peoples taking care of Creation together (TRC, 2015). These can be found in Indigenous approaches that acknowledge multiple perspectives and the spaces of ethical engagement that provide the models for existing Treaty relations. If centred within PSIs, Treaty approaches could guide ethical engagement with Indigenous Peoples and knowledges at all levels of education, including research and research ethics processes. Indeed, Treaty models can contribute to resolving conflict and restoring relationships with the land and water and all relations (TRC, 2015). There is untapped potential here; yet, while we are bound to the Treaties negotiated with Indigenous nations, settler society is resistant to yielding its power and slow in the uptake of Treaty understandings (TRC, 2015).

Indigenous Governance and Treaties

In concluding this literature and oral source review, I turn to Treaties and Indigenous governance, which will be expounded upon in the findings. As Treaty peoples, we have relationships and responsibilities to peoples, lands, and more-than-human beings. Treaties gave early European settlers and their descendants legal rights to be in Chi'Mikinak (Battiste, M., 2016). Treaty education is needed for settler peoples to develop awareness that where Treaties exist, these agreements are what enable us to be guests living within Indigenous homelands.

Indigenous Peoples look to their own cultures for processes and frameworks of ethical, respectful, relational, and reciprocal knowledge engagement, and in processes of decolonizing and Indigenizing. These come from Indigenous governance systems, which form the basis for Treaty relations with settler peoples and all of Creation. Some settler peoples are starting to wake up to the fact that not only do Treaties allow us to live in Chi'Mikinak (in areas where they are Treaties), but also to guide relations with and responsibilities to all of Creation (Battiste, M., 2016a). Treaties have instructions that can guide knowledge engagement (Ermine, 1995). This

area is rich with potential and largely unexplored. As noted, Indigenous understandings and historical narratives have been omitted and marginalized from mainstream education. Treaty education needs to go beyond colonial interpretations of Treaties as written documents to include Indigenous perspectives of the meaning and intent of Treaties. As Palmater observes, nurturing Treaty relations is a process “that takes time because Treaties between nations are relationships that are unique, organic, evolving, adapting, and enduring” (Palmater 2016, p. 36). The present work will offer some considerations of how embodying and acting on Treaty relations can benefit and contribute to the transformation of PSE, supporting Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty, specifically in Mi’kma’kik and Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Aki, where the present research takes place. This includes teachings from the Peace & Friendship Treaties; the Gdoo-naaganinaa or the Dish with One Spoon wampum; the Williams Treaties (1923); Treaty 20 (1818); Anishinaabeg clan systems of governance, as grounded in natural laws and understandings of *mino bimaadiziwin* (living the good life); and the Kaswentah or Two-Row Wampum (Battiste, M., 2016a; Newhouse, 2008; Longboat, 2014; Simpson, L., 2008b; Williams, 2013).

For example, in Wabanakik, where the Peace and Friendship Treaties (1725–1779) between the Mi’kmaq and other Wabanaki peoples and the British Crown did not include the surrender of either Mi’kmaw land or sovereignty, Mi’kmaq have the right to control their own education (Battiste, M., 2016a). Battiste and Mi’kmaw scholar Stephen Augustine (Elsipogtog First Nation) remind us that Treaties of Peace and Friendship are based on Mi’kmaw Creation Stories, in which the first Treaty is with the animals and teaches responsibilities to family, community, nation, and ecosystem (Battiste, J., 2016). The importance of ethical dialogue in engaging with Indigenous Knowledges in PSIs led the co-creators of the Toqwa'tu'kl

Kjijitaqnn/Integrative Science (TK/IS) program at CBU to emphasize co-learning, which evolves out of Mi'kmaw Creation Stories and Treaty teachings:

Co-learning involves learning from each other, learning together, learning our commonalities and differences, and learning to see how to weave back and forth between our cultures' actions, values, and knowledges as circumstances require. . . . Key visuals can assist in this regard. . . . we have developed [these] to convey concepts and enable on-going and appropriate awareness and application in shifting, evolving, and diverse contexts. (Bartlett et al., 2015, p. 286)

The Mi'kmaw understanding of *etuaptmumk*—the gift of multiple perspectives or two-eyed seeing—was brought forward by Dr./Elders Albert and Murdena Marshall as a guiding principle for bringing together Mi'kmaw and EKS, as part of co-learning. At a basic level, Albert says the following about *etuaptmumk*:

I, you, and we . . . all need to learn to see from one eye with the best or the strengths in the Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing . . . and to learn to see from the other eye with the best or the strengths in the mainstream (Western or Eurocentric) knowledges and ways of knowing . . . but most importantly, we need to learn to see with both these eyes together, for the benefit of all (Marshall, A., 2018)

Recent research evaluating Indigenous and environmental educational programming that seeks to include Indigenous Knowledges makes recommendations regarding knowledge engagement, governance, and other elements of program structure. Regarding knowledge engagement, the findings recommend relationship-building, using guiding principles such as co-learning and co-construction, and developing protocols for working across knowledge systems. Pedagogies that centre Indigenous voices and make visible or de-normalize mainstream assumptions are also suggested. In terms of governance, several practices are recommended: Indigenous-based governance structures (Rich, 2011); collective stewardship from Elders, educators, and Indigenous communities; and an advisory council of stakeholders from both Indigenous communities and the educational institution (Bartlett et al., 2012a). Community-

based programs, cohort learning, and Elder mentorship are also mentioned as promising practices (Minnabarriet, 2012).

CHAPTER THREE: PART ONE - RESEARCH APPROACH

Research Question (s) or Research Problem

Across Chi'Mikinak (the Great Turtle), post-secondary institutions (PSIs) are learning how to engage with Indigenous Knowledge Holders and their knowledges in academic programs and research. This work explores the following questions:

- According to Indigenous Knowledge Holders involved with four Canadian Indigenous-focused post-secondary education (PSE) programs, what practices nurture and support Indigenous autonomy in relation to Indigenous Knowledge systems?
- From the perspectives of Indigenous Knowledge Holders and settlers associated with these PSE programs, how can these practices be activated and embodied in the academy, and what are the issues, tensions, opportunities, and prospects for doing so? In other words, what is the potential for the systemic transformation of mainstream PSIs?

In addressing these questions, I bring together knowledges from Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders and settlers/allies associated with the Chanie Wenjack School of Indigenous Studies (Wenjack School) at Trent University (Trent)—specifically, the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program, the Indigenous Studies B.A. and the Indigenous Environmental Studies and Sciences (IESS) undergraduate program at Trent, as well as the former Toqwa'tu'kl Kijijitaqnn/Integrative Science (TK/IS) program at Cape Breton University (CBU). I consulted with a core guiding group of Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders—members of the Traditional Advisory Council (TAC) for the Trent Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program, and Dr./Elder Albert Marshall. My research focus and design evolved through this collaborative process.

First, I proposed broad areas of focus or sites within the academy that might be considered in relation to the research questions, including relationships; governance and law;

policy; knowledge engagement frameworks, paradigms, or guiding principles; program design; curriculum; pedagogies; criteria for instructors; research ethics; and academic culture. I invited the core Elders/Knowledge Holders to share their insights on these areas and/or propose additional areas, and from there, the research focus was narrowed and refined. Part of the refining process emerged from my proposal defence and involved exploring how Indigenous and Eurocentric/settler-colonial constructs of control, autonomy, and sovereignty are differently situated. Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders at Trent emphasized the strengths of Indigenous leadership related to activating Indigenous ways of being, knowing, learning, and teaching (curriculum and pedagogies). They indicated that support for these is promising. They were primarily interested in looking at the potential for changing and transforming university governance structures, processes, and practices to promote greater Indigenous autonomy and decolonizing at PSIs. This was accompanied by an interest in exploring how PSIs and settler peoples might activate and embody their Treaty relations and responsibilities in alignment with local Indigenous goals and land stewardship; the education of settler society—including learning new ways of being and practices in relation to the land and Indigenous Peoples; and the ways settler/Treaty peoples might implement the TRC’s Calls to Action as related to Indigenous autonomy in education. All of these are indicated as projects necessary for decolonial transformation. Based on these insights, I shifted the focus of my work to address how to move forward in these areas.

Prior to entering into a consultation process with the core group of Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders at Trent, I had been looking more closely at exploring respectful processes for knowledge engagement between Indigenous Knowledge systems (IKS) and Eurocentric/settler-colonial knowledge systems (ESCKS). At my proposal defence, Gidigaa Migizi/Doug Williams shared a teaching related to his concerns about settlers blocking and

harassing Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Peoples harvesting manoomin (the good seed or wild rice) in the lakes within their Traditional homelands. To me, this teaching signalled that I shift my focus on knowledge engagement to include reflection on and analysis of power relations with settler-colonial institutions as well as settler-colonial ways of being, and how these relate to processes of Indigenizing and decolonizing, as well as implementing the TRC's Calls to Action.

The Two-Worlds of Indigenous Studies (Creative non-fiction narrative)

Four floors up above the Odenaabe zibii²⁷ (Otonabee River), in a room with concrete walls, two worlds overlap. This is both Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg homelands and the Olive Dickenson room in the Department of Indigenous Studies at Trent University. On this beautiful fall day, Gidigaa Migizi/Doug Williams, our primary teacher and guide for what we are learning within his homelands and a respected Elder and the Director of Studies for the Ph.D. program, opens my proposal defence with a prayer and passes around a smudge bowl. There are about 20 people in the room. He prays for us in the Michi Saagiig dialect. We are connected in a good way through the smudge. Gidigaa Migizi says some very good words about me, and I feel my bottom lip start to tremble. But I hold back my tears as I am told I have 20 minutes to present my proposed research.

And here the second world sits, imposed upon the once forested land and a river full of salmon. A formal process of the Western academy proceeds, with me, the student, being questioned and given guidance by four people, all with Ph.D.s. They are kind, respectful, and supportive in their questions and during the dialogue that unfolds. However, Gidigaa Migizi is not part of this formal process. Although he has opened the circle, he is not included as one of

²⁷ The Odenaabe zibii is the "the river that beats like a heart." Gitigaa Migizi says ode means "heart," and the word odemgat means "boiling water." When the water boils, it looks like the bubbling or beating of a heart, referring to the rapids along the river (Simpson, L., 2014).

the formal questioners or those weighing in on my proposal. When audience members are invited to comment and after giving other people in the room a chance to speak, this is when Gidigaa Migizi leans forward. “I hate to throw a wrench into this,” he says. “I hear Gillian and others talking about all these wonderful ways we as Indigenous and settler peoples can work together—co-learning, two-eyed seeing, the two-row wampum . . . but I wonder . . . with this new breed of settlers, will these approaches work? I worry about these settlers, with their billion-dollar cottages on our lands, around the lakes so that we can’t go and harvest rice (manoomin) . . . they try to keep us out. Will co-learning work with them?” At this point, he lets his whole upper body slump forward and rests against the table.

After many years, I am still reflecting on his question and his silhouette. And I wonder, how can my interest in co-learning and two-eyed seeing contribute to supporting Indigenous Peoples’ sovereignty in their homelands? In light of what Gidigaa Migizi has shared, I spend the next few years trying to absorb hundreds of years of history and knowledge. I am playing catch up, as all settlers are, and I feel overwhelmed by the task. Perhaps my interest in knowledge engagement comes from my settler ways of being and privilege? I shift directions slightly, knowing that the Treaties offer teachings I need to learn from. After all these years, I wish I could offer him more, offer all my Indigenous friends more. But this is where I am, for now.

Approach(es) and Methodology(ies)

Broadly, my research is transdisciplinary, emergent, and qualitative. Within my unique web of knowledge relations, I weave together multiple approaches through a process of co-learning, within ethics of relational and Treaty-based accountability. My web of knowledge relations has evolved over the past ten years as I travelled back and forth between Mi’kma’kik and Anishinaabeg Aki, with insights gained through reflexive praxis. A transdisciplinary framework “relates to socially relevant issues, transcends and integrates disciplinary paradigms,

[and] includes non-academic actors through participatory research” (Pohl, 2011, p. 620). It also “creates analytic techniques that can meet the challenges of both global and situated knowledges” (Kirby et al., 2006, p. 240). Transdisciplinarity has the potential to nurture diverse forms of knowledge creation and production. It supports engagement with Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders whose knowledges are suppressed and marginalized in PSIs and encourages dialogue across diverse discourses and diverse positions.

An Ethic of Relational Accountability

I am grateful to Indigenous Elders and scholars whose understandings of relationality have grounded and guided my research. I build on the insights of Cree scholar Cora Weber-Pilwax (2001), who emphasizes “relationality” and “accountability” while doing research with Indigenous Peoples and communities. Furthermore, Wilson (2008) says knowledge is relational, needs to maintain relational accountability and depends upon reciprocal and respectful relationships. He says an Indigenous research paradigm “goes beyond the concept of individual knowledge to the concept of relational knowledge . . . you are answerable to all our relations when you are doing research . . . Knowledge is shared with all of Creation” (Wilson, 2008, p. 74). Relationships include those with oneself, one’s family, community or nation, other nations, and all beings (Metallic, 2008; Cajete, 2000; Simpson, L., 2011; Wilson, 2008). Not limited by time, space or place, relationships are spiritual, often extending back to ancestors and into the future to those who are coming (Cajete, 2000). Researchers fulfill their roles and responsibilities through their methodology, which Wilson describes as “the building of more relations” or constructing more “knots” in the web of relationships that produce knowledge (Wilson, 2008, p. 79).

Cree scholar Margaret Kovach further defines relationality, adding that knowledges are “nested, created, and re-created within the context of relationships with other living beings”

(Kovach, 2009, p. 47). A process of reflexive self-study—what Kovach calls researcher preparation, can nurture an ethic of relational accountability. As Métis scholar Nicole Latulippe (2015) articulates:

Naming relationships and accounting for the coming-to-know process prepares the critical researcher for the possibility of working with Indigenous peoples on contested Indigenous lands. It reveals privilege and fosters humility, responsibility, and accountability. Reflexive self-study compels important questions such as to whom am I accountable? To what extent have I been invited to engage Indigenous knowledges and for what purpose? What limits my ability to know? Researcher preparation helps to establish what and how we know, and how relationships can be enhanced across difference. In other words, researcher preparation fosters and strengthens relational accountability. (p. 6–7)

It is within these understandings that I entered into this research process, endeavouring to embody an ethic of relational accountability in relation to all of the Indigenous and settler/Treaty peoples who nurtured this journey and contributed to the process, as well as the families, communities, ancestors, and all beings where the research takes place. This guided my choice of research approaches and methodologies, as well as elements of the research design, and grounds me in my personal ethics and embodiment of everyday practices.²⁸

Co-Learning & Etuaptmumk/Two-Eyed Seeing

I embrace co-learning as it recognizes IKS and EKS as equally significant paradigms requiring new learning by participants within a collaborative journey. I also embrace the Mi'kmaw understanding of etuaptmumk, the gift of multiple perspectives or two-eyed seeing (ISSH, 2016). These resonate with me, particularly in light of my mentors, Drs./Elders Albert and Murdena Marshall, who brought forward etuaptmumk, and Dr. Cheryl Bartlett, who

²⁸ This includes reading, reflecting, having dialogue, writing, taking care of my health, pets and garden, showing up for and giving thanks to my relatives, friends, the land and spirits, walking and working for the water along Indigenous spiritual leaders, praying for strength, patience, and humility.

collaborated with the Marshalls in a process of co-learning for many years (IISH, 2016). In embracing co-learning and *etuaptumuk*, I draw upon and weave together collaborative Indigenist approaches (outlined below) and the strengths of critical theory (CT), including decolonizing, settler-colonial, narrative, and discourse analysis, and participatory research approaches in the social sciences and humanities, where they align with Indigenist approaches to support Indigenous goals toward resurgence, sovereignty, and nation building.

Indigenist Approaches

Wilson, Leanne Simpson, Smith, and Marie Battiste make a generous offer to Indigenous studies scholars, suggesting that an “Indigenist” approach, as opposed to an Indigenous paradigm, can be used by any scholar as long as they follow its fundamental principles. They see these as continually emerging through the collective work of key Indigenous scholars and grounded in Indigenous communities' belief systems, ethics, and realities (Battiste, M., 2013; Simpson, L., 2004; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2007). The principles include respecting all life forms as related and interconnected, honouring IKS as living processes, ensuring the research will benefit Indigenous communities, recognizing that transformation will occur for everyone involved in the research process, and being responsible for this transformation and for research outcomes. Within an Indigenist paradigm, any theories that are developed must be rooted in Indigenous epistemologies and supported by Elders and communities. Researchers should also work as part of a team with the guidance of Elders/Knowledge Holders. Narungga, Kurna, and Ngarrindjeri scholar Lester Rigney, working in an Australian context, puts forward three principles of Indigenist research: the involvement in resistance as an emancipatory imperative, the maintenance of political integrity, and the privileging of Indigenous voices (Rigney, 1999 & 2006). Rigney asserts that Indigenist approaches are critical in addressing significant global issues and challenges affecting Indigenous and settler/Treaty peoples. Indeed, as put forward by

Roronhiakewen/Dan Longboat, Albert and Murdena Marshall, and Bartlett, among others, current global problems such as climate change and the destruction of planetary ecosystems require collaborative solutions from multiple and diverse knowledge systems (Armstrong, 2016; Evering, 2016; Longboat, 2014). Insurgent research promotes accountability to Indigenous communities and relational responsibility (Gaudry, 2011).

As discussed, Indigenous research approaches or methodologies arise from relationships with Indigenous lands. These are based on distinct Indigenous epistemologies that are (w)holistic, place-based, experiential, and personal. Some critical, Eurocentric/settler-colonial, qualitative methodologies are also relational and interpretive, and in alignment with Indigenous inquiry (Chilisa, 2011; Kirby et al., 2006; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). However, they are not based on Indigenous ways of knowing, “in spirit and where spirit derives” (Latulippe, 2015, p. 6). As such, there is a distinction between learned Indigenist philosophy and lived Indigenous methodologies (Kovach, 2009; Latulippe, 2015). Latulippe (2015) cautions that Indigenous approaches are not appropriate for some research. She notes that Kovach suggests researchers practice “epistemological transparency,” so that Indigenous Knowledges and methods are not subsumed by EKS by those using mixed or multiple approaches. These insights are critical in directing settler scholars like myself working within learned Indigenist contexts to try to prevent Eurocentric Knowledge domination, the appropriation of Indigenous Knowledges, and the reproduction of settler-colonial constructs. Indigenous Peoples may share Indigenous Knowledges and ways of knowing within collaborative co-learning contexts or processes with settler peoples. Yet, settler peoples cannot claim Indigenous understandings, especially as individuals working in isolation. This affirms the need for settler peoples to be grounded within an ethic of relational and Treaty-based accountability.

Critical Theory Approaches

My research resonates with critical theory (CT)²⁹ approaches that promote transformative change, including decolonizing, settler-colonial, narrative and discourse analysis and collaborative, participatory approaches. CT is an approach to social philosophy that focuses on reflective historical analysis and inquiry to challenge mainstream society and culture, revealing the “power relationships and hierarchical structure of male-dominated, Euro-American ethnocentricity that is prevalent in most social science theory” (Wilson, 2008, p. 16). Within a CT paradigm, I acknowledge that there is no such thing as “objectivity” in research. As emphasized by Findlay (1997, as cited in Kirby et al., 2006), researchers impose themselves at all stages of the research process, from the questions asked or not asked, to those included or not included, to analysis, representation, and writing. CT views reality as having more than one truth. As such, CT is constructivist, which posits that there are many realities, specific to the people and locations that hold them: “Reality is then what you make it to be” (Wilson 2008, p. 27). Knowledge is not seen as the ultimate goal in either CT or constructivism; rather, the goal is the change that knowledge may help bring about (Denzin et al., 2008; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008). For some critical theorists, the goal is the transformation of capitalist social relations (Grande, 2008, p. 236). Critical inquiry also includes self-reflection (Kirby et al., 2017). Aspects of CT, including decolonizing, race, class, and feminist theory, have been adapted by many Indigenous thinkers to create Indigenous critical theories that challenge the hegemony of dominant colonial society (Denzin et al., 2008; Wilson, 2008). Indigenous CT critiques mainstream positivist and post-positivist approaches (Denzin et al., 2008).

²⁹ With its roots in sociology and literary criticism, CT can include perspectives from postmodernism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, feminism, Marxism, relational psychology, and critical race theory (Chilisa, 2012; Grande, 2008; Wilson, 2008).

Decolonizing

Decolonizing processes support the regeneration and resurgence of IKS and move away from dominant settler institutions, values, and ethics. As Alfred, Corntassel, Dhamoon, Shelgrove, and Leanne Simpson put forward, decolonizing is a critical project for restoring, regenerating, recentring, and reinvigorating Indigenous nationhood. I intend my research to be decolonizing; however, as acknowledged, processes of decolonizing are different for Indigenous and settler peoples. Indigenous scholars have become increasingly concerned about the co-option of decolonization within settler-colonial frameworks (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Simpson, L., 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012). An “ethic of incommensurability” has been identified as existing between Indigenous goals and “decolonizing” social justice projects that are rooted in settler-colonial frameworks (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 4). Central to this conflict is the need for settlers to protect, restore, and give back Indigenous lands and to dismantle settler colonialism. Yet, if solidarity between Indigenous and settler/Treaty peoples is grounded in “actual practices and place-based relationships,” Snelgrove et al. suggest that solidarity may be incommensurable but not incompatible (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 3). To move towards making systemic or institutional-level decolonizing change, as Leanne Simpson asserts, the academy must join Indigenous Peoples in dismantling settler colonialism and protecting Indigenous land—the source of knowledge (Simpson, L., 2014). In my findings, I propose that Canadian PSIs and other state institutions support local Indigenous Nations to protect and restore Indigenous land; and give back land for Indigenous educational practices, community well-being, and Indigenous knowledge sovereignty. At this juncture, I am not personally in a position to give land to Indigenous communities; I hope to do so in the future. Leanne Simpson also highlights research as a site of decolonizing, contends:

Academics who are to be true allies to Indigenous Peoples in the protection of our knowledge must be willing to step outside their privileged position and

challenge research that conforms to the guidelines outlined by the colonial power structure and root their work in the politics of decolonization and anti-colonialism. (Simpson, L., 2014, p. 20)

Based on this, I propose ways that actions to deconstruct and resist research that supports settler-colonial goals can contribute to decolonizing in multiple academic sites and contexts.

Settler-Colonial Theory

Settler-colonial theory (SCT) provides ways to theorize about power that assist in identifying, resisting, disrupting, and dismantling structures and systems constructed within neocolonial, neoliberal, and multicultural ideologies/frameworks in Canada by exposing how these are rooted in the oppression and domination that is part of Indigenous Peoples' everyday realities. There are many bodies of work and frameworks of analysis from which SCT emerged. Here, I acknowledge that I am standing on the shoulders of many, many giants. Settler colonialism is an ongoing system of power, a distinct type of European colonialism contingent on perpetuating the dispossession, genocide, and repression of Indigenous Peoples and disavowing the colonial present (Barker & Battell Lowman, 2015; Simpson, L., 2014 & 2017; Snelgrove et al., 2014). In recognizing that the legacies of colonialism persist, SCT is a critical approach with epistemological foundations grounded in Indigenous and Black critiques of colonialism that originated in the 1970s and are well represented in Indigenous studies. It was Indigenous and Black thinkers who first recognized the limitations of the constructs of colonialism and decolonization in political and geographic areas where the colonizers never left. This includes settler-colonial states such as Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. While Indigenous and Black theorists did not create the term "settler colonialism," some argue that the "post" in postcolonialism applies only to formally decolonized states (Carey & Silverstein, 2020).

Hegemonic in scope, settler colonialism is structural, ideological, and discursive; it constrains, constructs, and represents Indigenous Peoples as inferior and uncivilized in relation to settler peoples (Battiste, M., 2000; Oxford Bibliographies, 2021; Paul, 2006; Snelgrove et al., 2019; Wallace, 2013). Indigenous Peoples are replaced with an invasive settler society that develops its own identity and sovereignty over time (Barker & Battell Lowman, 2015; Veracini, 2010; Wolfe, 2006). This new society becomes “naturalized, normalized, unquestioned, and unchallenged” or depoliticized (Barker & Battell Lowman, 2015, p. 25). Settler Australian scholar Patrick Wolfe (2006, as cited in Barker & Battell Lowman, 2015) emphasizes that settler-colonial invasion is an ongoing structure, not a past historical event. This structure includes ideological frameworks, comprising “cultural norms and practices that develop into institutionalized laws and taboos,” within which codes of superiority, such as white supremacy, come to be enforced (Barker & Battell Lowman, 2015, p. 25; Racial Equity Tools, 2021; Wallace; 2013). Because settler colonialism is structural rather than contingent on a single event, it has outlasted colonialism and European imperialism and extended globally (Hixson, 2013).

As settler peoples have come to stay and are not returning to distant empires, settler colonialism uses specific ideological strategies to normalize continuous settler occupation and reproduce settler systems of power (Veracini, 2010). Permanent claims to the land are made through historical narratives that insist that “history begins with national inception” (Barker & Battell Lowman, 2015, p. 25). Building on his analysis of Frantz Fanon, Coultard asserts that in contexts where colonialism does not depend solely on violence, it is reproduced when able to persuade Indigenous Peoples to “*identify*, either implicitly or explicitly, with the profoundly *asymmetrical* and *nonreciprocal* forms of recognition” either imposed or granted by the settler state or society (Coultard, 2014, p. 15). In these ways, settler colonialism attempts to convince

both Indigenous and settler peoples of its logic so that its practices go unquestioned. Andrea Smith (2012, as cited in Mackey 2016, p.13) calls this “the logics of settler colonialism.”

I find the use of SCT lenses consistent with my positionality as a white settler working towards exposing the roots of oppression and domination in Chi’Mikinak that may not be visible to white-settler peoples. SCT assists in situating colonial systems in Canadian state and PSI contexts as distinct types of colonialism. When combined with Indigenous critiques, settler-colonial theory analysis can uncover sites and practices of potential transformation. However, as Macoun and Strakosch emphasize, SCT is “primarily a settler framework” (2013, as cited in Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 427).

Indigenous scholars have long discussed the central role of land in Indigenous lifeways, as well as settler participation in Indigenous dispossession. In their nuanced critiques of SCT and settler-colonial studies, Snelgrove et al. indicate that it is important to avoid “colonial fatalism” (Macoun & Strackosch, 2013, p. 435, as cited in Snelgrove et al., 2014) that gives life to “structural inevitability,” within settler colonial relations and (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 8). This inevitability tends to enforce a binary between Indigenous and settler peoples, polarizing Indigenous Peoples in positions of either sovereign resistance or of being co-opted by settler colonialism (Macoun & Strackosch, 2013, as cited in Snelgrove et al., 2014). This binary can also result in settler colonialism being treated as a meta-structure, thus denying its contingency on Indigenous dispossession and the interlocking systems of oppression and domination that uphold it (Saranillio, 2013, as cited in Snelgrove et al., 2014).

Snelgrove et al. (2014) recommend that settler/Treaty peoples centre Indigenous voices of resurgence using a relational approach to settler-colonial power and attend to the conditions and contingencies of settler colonialism. If Indigenous voices of resistance and resurgence are obscured and erased, SCT and/or studies and practices of solidarity may overshadow or displace

IKS and Indigenous studies in informing decolonizing processes and may risk reinforcing and reproducing settler-colonial and other forms of domination (Snelgrove et al., 2014). Snelgrove et al. (2014) extend to settler/Treaty peoples the potential to learn from Indigenous relational understandings of governance and knowledge as imagined within Indigenous resurgence theory and embodied through land-based practices. This potential for settler peoples to activate and embody an ethics of relational and Treaty-based accountability resonates with the critical hope that there are potential sites and practices that can transform and decolonize the academy and the Canadian state.

In seeking to maintain and nurture relational accountability, and within Indigenist and decolonizing approaches and the application of SCT, I collaborate with and centre the voices of Mi'kmaw, Anishinaabeg, and Rotinoshón:ni Elders/Knowledge Holders, their knowledges, and lands, and verify understandings at key stages of the research. I also commit to ongoing learning in regard to what it means to embody Treaty relations and responsibilities. This involves supporting Indigenous resurgence, protecting Indigenous lands and lifeways, making reparations by taking care of the land, supporting intergenerational knowledge transmission, transforming settler ways of being, disrupting settler-colonial structures and systems, and rebalancing asymmetrical Indigenous/settler power relations. I believe relational accountability is also Treaty-based accountability. What this means within Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Aki or "Kina Gchi Nishnaabeg-ogaming" (the place where we all live and work together) and Mi'kma'kik is explored in the findings (Simpson, L., 2017, p. 2).

Narrative and Discourse Analysis and Creative Non-Fiction

Narrative analysis centres the stories people tell about their lived experiences. It is a strategy used to uncover how people understand and represent themselves and make sense of their lives. Stories are often interpreted in terms of how they are structured, their content, how

they are performed, and what function they serve (Allen, 2017; Thorne, 2000). I pay particular attention to centring stories and narratives in Indigenous contexts in this work. As discussed, stories can be planted like seeds to communicate key cultural, spiritual, ecological, and political teachings and values through metaphor. In an Anishinaabeg context, the Creation Stories are the foundational, Traditional aadizookaanan (sacred stories) that provide theoretical approaches to Indigenous knowing and scholarship (Borrows, 2013; Genuisz, 2009, p. 10; Simpson, L., 2011). “Dibaajimowinan,” or personal stories, also share and interpret these foundational teachings (Genuisz, 2009, p. 11; Simpson, L., 2011). Storytelling is part resistance and critique of the daily impacts of colonialism and is a process of reimagining and visioning (Simpson, L., 2011; Thomas, 2005). It is critical to honour these aspects of stories and share them in the voices and lived contexts of the storytellers (Thomas, 2005). Many of the Indigenous contributors in this work share stories as foundational teachings, as well as personal stories. I also share short, creative non-fiction narratives or stories to illustrate aspects of the research from my personal and relational perspective.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA)³⁰ merges multiple approaches to examine the ways in which language is implicated in reproducing dominant and oppressive ideologies and structures in trans- or interdisciplinary contexts (Caroll, 2018; Faircloud, 2013; Grimwood et al., 2019; Waugh et al., 2016). According to Waugh et al. (2016, as cited in Shofiatul & Buchori, 2020), CDA works to “determine how language is used, what effect it has, and how it reflects, serves, and furthers the interests, positions, perspectives, and values of those who are in power,” with the view that “discourse perpetuates social patterns like domination, discrimination, exploitation,

³⁰ CDA originated in the 1980s and is based on Marxism, poststructuralism, sociolinguistics, and ethnomethodology (Faircloud, 2013; Grimwood et al., 2019).

dehumanization, naturalization, “common sense” (ideologically driven)³¹ unless its usually hidden effects are exposed so that awareness can bring about “resistance, emancipation, and social action” towards change and social justice (p. 76). CDA resonates with settler-colonial analysis in its methods.

I apply discourse analysis in the tradition of Foucault (1970) and poststructuralism in the ways that these traditions analyze how linguistic representation is produced and reproduced within normative relations and structures of power—in this case, settler colonialism. I do this in ways that aim to centre Indigenous voices and knowledges and through a lens of SCT. I examine the language used to describe race, culture, land, capitalism, more-than-human beings, and, to a lesser extent, gender in texts related to the academy and Indigenous education.³² This method contributes to naming and unsettling the asymmetrical Indigenous/settler relations and other systems of power that uphold settler-colonial institutions and contributes to imagining non-colonizing ways of being and knowing (Carroll, 2018; Grimwood et al., 2019).

Reflexive Praxis for Settler Peoples

As part of engaging in reflexive praxis, I am conscious of my positionality as a Treaty partner, settler-Canadian, aspiring ally, and co-learner. I seek to work in alignment and collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and communities. Reflexivity, or engaging in a critical, reflective, and iterative research process, involves “openly and honestly recognizing one’s location and experiences and deeply considering the implications of one’s power” (Kirby et al., 2006, p. 39). Brazilian scholar Paulo Freire defines praxis as “reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed” (1970, p. 51). Through praxis, oppressed people can acquire a critical awareness of their own condition and, along with their allies, struggle for liberation

³¹ This description of “common sense” recalls Rifkin’s (2013) understanding of “settler common sense.”

³² My consideration of gender and sexuality in this work is minimal.

(ibid.). Praxis is a form of critical thinking in which a theory, lesson, or skill is enacted, embodied, or realized (Gingrich, 2003).

Reflexive praxis involves addressing my power, privilege, and whiteness as a settler Canadian and cisgender woman. First, I acknowledge that I benefit from the structures and processes of settler colonialism that have dispossessed Indigenous Peoples and imposed colonial constructs and narratives of race, gender, class, etc., on Indigenous bodies. Educated within a neocolonial system that erases the histories and knowledges of Indigenous Peoples, I recognize that I have internalized certain narratives, assumptions, and constructs about Indigenous Peoples and about Canada, which I continuously need to bring to awareness and deconstruct. As I learn about the impacts of settler-colonial structures and systems on Indigenous Peoples globally, I need to work towards decolonizing and transforming these systems, using my power and privilege to do so, as appropriate.

Attending to a reflexive process means I need to be accountable and congruent in my words and actions. It also means acknowledging how this research arises out of relationships and is a process of co-creation between myself and the people who have contributed to this work. I embrace suggestions for addressing settler consciousness, such as engaging in place-based relations, decolonizing through vulnerability and humility, and staying with processes of discomfort. Methodologically speaking, this means engaging in a “pedagogy of discomfort” and attending to my own “obscene questions” (Regan, 2010). This has meant taking risks and sometimes living in uncertain, uncomfortable, and painful spaces.

In recent years, through the teachings of Gidigaa Migizi/Doug Williams, Migizi ow-kwe/Shirley Williams, Asinykwe/Edna Manitowabi, Murdena and Albert Marshall, and Roronhiake:wen/Dan Longboat, among others, I have learned more about what it means to think generationally—of the cycles of life, the ancestors, the Elders, the youth, and those yet to

come—and my potential role as I round the third hill in life. As a teaching assistant (TA) in Indigenous Environmental Studies and Science classes, I witnessed Roronhiake:wen/Dan Longboat’s pedagogy and how he modelled this role, emphasizing the need to pass on knowledge and support generations to come, imparting messages to youth about the tools they need to help them on their paths, and how they will envision and take action for our collective futures in ways we cannot yet imagine. Engaging with youth, learning from them, learning together, and seeing them succeed is one of my greatest joys. I have been able to support Indigenous youth in reconnecting with their Elders/Knowledge Holders and encourage settler youth to begin to reflect on and process our collective involvement within colonial systems. Within the university system, as a TA and course instructor, I recognize that I hold power and privilege in relation to students and seek to mitigate these unsymmetrical power relationships by humbling myself, embodying understandings that we are all learners and that knowledge sharing is a reciprocal relationship based on trust. Given our diverse and collective challenges, I seek to create culturally safe spaces and use trauma-informed pedagogies in PSE contexts.

I am grateful to Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, who was my professor at Trent, as well as Indigenous and settler colleagues in the Ph.D. and undergraduate programs, who all played roles in helping me acknowledge the implications of my power and privilege, to develop understandings of how to mitigate and/or apply it when appropriate, in diverse contexts but especially as a settler within an Indigenous Studies program. Leanne Simpson (2013) says that decolonizing is an “ontological shakedown,” and that we can no longer be in the world in the same way once embarking on this process (Simpson, L., 2013b). In order for the Eighth Fire to be lit, she says, “settler society must also choose to change their ways, to decolonize their relationships with the land and Indigenous Nations, and join with [Oshkimaadiziig—the new people] in building a sustainable future based on mutual recognition,

justice, and respect” (Simpson, L., 2008a, p. 14). This is when the colonial regime will loosen its oppression, and Indigenous peoples will be able to revitalize their cultures, languages, and knowledges and rebuild (Simpson, L., 2008a). I have come to understand that I have responsibilities to act on what I have learned—to reciprocate by giving back to the Indigenous communities I am engaged with and to take action within ethics of relational and Treaty-based accountability. I want to contribute to the conditions that will lead to lighting the Eighth Fire. I am continually learning what it means to embody reflexive praxis and actively decolonize.

Community-Based, Transformative, Participatory Action Research

Another approach that lends its strengths to this research is community-based, transformative, participatory action research (PAR). Participatory research derives from CT and takes a constructivist approach. Participatory frameworks are considered complementary to Indigenous paradigms and have been used widely by Indigenous researchers (Colorado, 1988; Kovach, 2009; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008). Transformative, community-based PAR is intended to foster personal and social transformation. The guiding principle for this type of research is “purposive, active engagement and political action by both the research and the researcher” (Chilisa, 2012, p. 235). With roots in the developing world and anti-colonial struggles, Freire is one of the ground-breaking scholars in this area. Based on his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), PAR engages marginalized communities as partners or co-researchers in (as opposed to the subjects of) the research. As such, ownership and decision-making power are shared across all phases of the research; community capacity building is central; learning is understood to happen both ways; and knowledge is co-created between university and community partners (Delemos, 2006). PAR follows an iterative cycle of action, reflection, and making conclusions that shift over time and allow for reassessment, modification, and emergent discoveries (Kirby et al., 2017). The iterative process of the research design using one-on-one guided discussions

with the Traditional Advisory Council (TAC) for the Trent Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program, followed by further one-on-ones based on their initial insights, as well as the creation of the topics and format for the knowledge sharing circles, while guided by relational accountability, was influenced by PAR. The final co-learning circle was grounded in understandings of co-creation.

PART TWO - RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Relational Accountability – Collaborating with Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders

An ethic of relational accountability directs and binds the collaborative research process with Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders engaged at Trent University (Trent) in Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Aki and Cape Breton University (CBU) in Mi'kma'kik. Building strong, trust-based relationships with contributing Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders and being embedded in the Trent Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program facilitated this work. The PSE programs are as follows:

Mi'kma'kik: The Toqwa'tu'kl Kijijitaqnn/Integrative Science (TK/IS) program, CBU:

The TK/IS program, which thrived from 1999–2007, sought to bring Western and Indigenous Knowledges together using a co-learning framework, guided by the Mi'kmaw understanding of etuaptmumk. It was co-created by Drs./Elders Murdena and Albert Marshall, and Dr. Cheryl Bartlett of the Department of Biology, who directed the program from its inception. CBU is located in Unama'ki (land of the fog), one of seven districts in Mi'kma'kik, in Sydney (Cape Breton), Nova Scotia.

Michi Saagiig Anishinaabe Aki: The Chanie Wenjack School of Indigenous Studies, Trent:

The Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program, created in 1999, endeavours to centre Indigenous Knowledge. The Indigenous Studies B.A. program, created in 1969, provides Indigenous theoretical approaches to individual, community, national, international, and global development. The Indigenous Environmental Studies and Sciences (IESS) program, since 2009, has attempted to bring together principles from both Indigenous and Western (neo-European/colonial) Knowledges. These are housed under the Chanie Wenjack School of Indigenous Studies (Wenjack School) at Trent in Nogojiwanong (Peterborough, ON). The

Wenjack School, formerly the Department of Indigenous Studies, evolved into a school in 2018 (Trent, 2021).

The research design for the Trent Indigenous Studies programs and the TK/IS program are different. The scope of the work at Trent reached across the institution and was larger, involving primary knowledge gathering with upwards of 40 people, as well as three knowledge sharing circles with approximately 10 to 13 people in each. The focus on co-learning and *etuaptmumk* and the TK/IS program is grounded in being part of the co-learning-*etuaptmumk* community, relationships with the program co-creators, ongoing discussions and consultation with Elder Albert Marshall, as well as secondary sources. The experiences of some PSIs beyond Trent and CBU are touched on; however, this is beyond the scope of the dissertation and my knowledge networks.

Phase 1: Literature & Oral Source Review

A systematic literature review of academic and grey literature and oral sources related to the multiple dimensions of the research focus was conducted. I embarked on this at the beginning of the research and continued this aspect in parallel with the other research activities. My initial literature review was focused mainly on Indigenous education and knowledge, as well as knowledge engagement. Following two years of teaching an introductory course in Canadian Studies at Dalhousie University, in which I used settler-colonial theory (SCT) to assist learners in reflecting on the Canadian state, I realized this critical lens was absent from the initial review and incorporated it. Reflexive journaling throughout the research process helped indicate adjustments that needed to be made based on emergent insights to expand my literature review.

Phase 2: Gathering Knowledges: The Chanie Wenjack School of Indigenous Studies –
Trent University

*A. Guiding Relationships: Consultation and Collaboration with Key Elder/Knowledge Holders
(February–April 2017)*

I approached five members of the TAC at Trent and Elder Albert Marshall to ask if they were interested in guiding and collaborating in my research process. I entered into the research in a good way, honouring cultural and spiritual protocols for seeking their insights and participation. I was directed by members of the TAC in this, who encouraged relations with plant medicines, ceremony, and prayer as part of the Ph.D. program. Initial one-on-one consultations/guided discussions on the draft research questions, design, and plan took place with the core group of Elders/Knowledge Holders. Throughout the research, I continued to fine-tune the questions and design, consulting, collaborating, and verifying understandings with the TAC members. This included how to structure the dialogue, facilitation, and sharing circles, which format and languages to use, and which approaches to use for analysis, interpretation of findings, and research dissemination. I accommodated emergent directions based on their insights and requests, visiting with them multiple times and reciprocating their time and energy. In this way, we created spaces for co-learning. The discussions served as opportunities to clarify the goals of the research, as well as Elders/Knowledge Holders' understandings and expectations in terms of collaboration and participation. These discussions took place over a meal and were held wherever people were most comfortable.

Members of the TAC during 2017-2018 were all Trent faculty (initial consultations):

- Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe Elder Gidigaa Migizi/Doug Williams (Wshkiigimongaki/Curve Lake First Nation), Chair of the TAC, Director of Studies for the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program and Associate Professor

- Anishinaabe Dr./Elder Migizi ow-kwe/Shirley Williams (Wikwemikong Unceded Territory/Manitoulin Island), Professor Emeritus, Nishinaabemowin language
 - Mohawk Faithkeeper Skahendowaneh Swamp (Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne), Chair of Indigenous Knowledge and Senior Lecturer
 - Mohawk scholar Roronhiake:wen/Dan Longboat (Oshwe:ken, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory) Director of the Indigenous Environmental Studies and Sciences Program and Associate Professor
 - Métis scholar Marrie Mumford, former Canada Research Chair for Aboriginal Arts and Literature and Associate Professor
 - Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe Elder Dorothy Taylor (Wshkiigimongaki/Curve Lake First Nation) Founder of the Sacred Water Circle, TAC since 2018
 - Andy Dufrane, President for the Peterborough & District Wapiti Métis Council, TAC since 2018
 - Betty Carr-Braint (Tyendinaga/Mohawks of the Bay), Administrative support in 2018
- Co-Creators of the TK/IS program:
- Mi'kmaw Dr./Elder Murdena Marshall (Eskasoni First Nation), Associate Professor of Mi'kmaq Studies
 - Mi'kmaw Dr./Elder Albert Marshall (Eskasoni First Nation)

Due to her health, Murdena could not fully participate; however, Albert said she was with us in everything he knows and shares.

Guided Discussions

The guided discussions engaged with Indigenous research paradigms, creating space for personal narratives, oral history, storytelling, and teachings to emerge. During this active

knowledge gathering phase, I was in ongoing communication and consultation with the key Elders. Monthly reciprocal communications with Albert Marshall continued throughout the entire research process. As my friend and mentor, Albert took a keen interest in my well-being and progress.

Guided discussions differ from interviews in that, while there are key questions or purposes for the discussion, the conversation is free-flowing and reciprocal, allowing participants to engage on related topics that are significant to them. These discussions are not entirely unstructured, as researchers might direct the focus back to the main question if needed, but they are open-ended. Guided discussion is what our research team called our sessions with the Elders as part of the *Honouring Traditional Knowledge* and is similar to “research as conversation” or open-ended interview, as described by Jo-ann Archibald (2008, p. 47). I sent out the draft research guide to all contributors prior to our sessions and indicated that feedback on the guide was welcome. The research guide is included as Appendix A. My research questions and plan were shared orally and in a written format. Cultural protocols asking to receive knowledge opened the interactions. The Trent research ethics consent process also took place.

B. Integration & Reflection on Insights from Guiding Relationships (February–April 2017)

Next, I synthesized insights from the key Elders/Knowledge Holders and updated my proposal, using discourse analysis to improve my research questions. I continued to do reflexive journaling on the research process and incorporated initial feedback, making adjustments and expanding my literature review. I revised the discussion guide for the upcoming round of guided discussions with the larger group of Indigenous Knowledge Holders and settler participants.

Feedback on the draft research questions and approach from the six guiding Elders/Knowledge Holders and insights from committee members were considered. This helped narrow aspects or sites of PSE to be addressed. For example, Migizi ow-kwe/Shirley Williams did

not like the term “operationalized” in my draft research question: “From the perspectives of Indigenous Knowledge Holders and settlers associated with these PSE programs, how can these practices be operationalized within the academy, and what are the issues, tensions, opportunities, and prospects of doing so?” She felt it did not resonate with the living nature of IKS. Based on what Migizi ow-kwe/Shirley indicated and following more consideration of the literature, I choose “activate” to more accurately describe IKS in relation to the academy, as well as “embody” to represent potential knowing and acting with one’s whole being or (w)holistic knowing. I also changed the initial wording of “within the academy” to “in relation to the academy” to avoid objectifying the living nature of IKS as if they could be placed within the academy.

C. Guided One-on-One Discussions at Trent University (February – June 2017)

One-on-one guided discussions took place with 23 Indigenous Knowledge Holders and 17 settlers associated with the Wenjack School (40 discussions). Research contributors were selected in consultation with the TAC and described below. Discussions were recorded with permission for my note-taking purposes.

Indigenous Knowledge Holders

Participating Indigenous Knowledge Holders are associated with all of the programs offered by the Wenjack School—one faculty from the Indigenous B.Ed. Program also took part.³³ I anticipated speaking to 15 to 17 Elders/Indigenous Knowledge Holders in my proposal, but this expanded to 23 to accommodate more student representation. In reaching out to Indigenous students, I approached the Trent Native Association (TUNA) and the first- and upper-year student representatives on the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. Council. This round of guided

³³ I do not include the Master’s in Canadian and Indigenous Studies offered in collaboration with the School for the Study of Canada.

discussions included speaking to the five members of the TAC again, as well as two additional Indigenous faculty from Trent; one Indigenous staff member; four Indigenous Ph.D. graduates/candidates/students, and six Indigenous undergraduate students (all of whom have now graduated). The research collaborators are included in Appendix B.

Settlers/Allies

Guided discussions also took place with 17 Settlers/Allies associated with the Wenjack School. This included five members of Trent's upper administration, four faculty, four Indigenous Studies Ph.D. graduates and candidates/students, and three Indigenous Studies undergraduates (all of whom have now graduated).

D. Follow-Up with Traditional Council (September 2017 & October 2018)

I consulted twice, in some case three times with five members of the TAC in the knowledge gathering phase of the research. In September 2017, following the 40 guided discussions, I synthesized initial findings and presented these to TAC to seek input and create space for emerging directions. I also sought their input and guidance on the upcoming knowledge sharing circles. I did further one-on-one consultation with Gidigaa Migizi concerning the focus and format of the knowledge sharing circle for Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders and the co-learning circle. I again followed up by incorporating feedback from the TAC to fine-tune the research questions and design. In October 2018, I presented initial findings from the knowledge sharing circle with Indigenous Knowledge Holders (November 2017) and settlers (December 2017) to the TAC to seek their feedback and prepare for the co-learning circle.

E. Knowledge Sharing Circles at Trent University (November 2017 – December 2018)

Three knowledge sharing circles with Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders, upper administration, and both Indigenous and settler faculty and youth took place in Indigenous spaces at Trent during 2017 and 2018. The circles made it possible to explore avenues for the

systemic transformation of education systems, through the nurturing of Indigenous/settler relationships, collaborative dialogue, and co-learning. Spaces for co-learning were facilitated using cultural protocols of the Elders/Knowledge Holders and considered their needs and energy. Except for three or four settler contributors, the Trent community members with whom I engaged were familiar with Traditional sharing circles through their participation in the Indigenous Studies community. Each circle either opened or closed with a meal prepared by Grandfather's Kitchen, a local Anishinaabe caterer. Meals were co-sponsored by the Office of the Provost and VP Academic and the Office of the VP Research, who responded based on my request to support the research.

Knowledge sharing circles are similar to focus groups. They are based on the practices of Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqiyik, and Anishinaabeg Peoples and are conducted by having one person speak at a time. Cree scholar Lewis Cardinal recounts how his father Don and Elders at the Elders' "think tanks"³⁴ in the 1970s held circles through the Indian Association of Alberta. He says the Elders discussed the issues at hand by going around the circle, each arguing for or against the issue. Elders would paraphrase what the Elder before them had said to make sure they got it right. Then if they couldn't decide on where to go with their recommendations, they would "sleep on it." This would be followed by engagement in personal ceremonies the next morning and the sharing of their dreams with each other (Cardinal, 2001). The Elders I worked with as part of *Honouring Traditional Knowledge* used the same way of discussing issues, coming to collective knowledge on a topic. Albert Marshall explains that because of the collective nature of knowledge, one Elder doesn't know everything and needs prompts to remind them of certain

³⁴ Elders' "think tanks" were sponsored and organized by the former Alberta Indian Education Centre as part of the Indian Association of Alberta from 1971 to 1973 (Couture & McGowan, 2013, p. 142).

things (Marshall, 2013). The circles at Trent allowed for sharing personal stories, teachings, and collective, consensus-based understandings. The three circles are discussed in more depth in the findings. Participants were selected in consultation with the key guiding Elders. I anticipated that the knowledge sharing circles would be led by one of the Elders; however, Gidigaa Migizi suggested that I facilitate the circles. The agendas for the circles are in Appendix D. The circles were recorded with permission for my note-taking purposes.

1. Knowledge Sharing Circles with Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders (November 2017)

Two circles entitled “Indigenous Autonomy of Indigenous Knowledge Systems” for Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders, including youth, took place in November 2017, with four people in the first and 11 people in the second. I brought the insights from the first circle to the second circle. The focus of the circles was Indigenous autonomy of IKS. We envisioned what “Indigenizing” might look like at Trent, Anishinaabeg, and Rotinoshón:ni governance, Trent governance, and what systemic transformation of PSE might look like.

2. Knowledge Sharing Circle with Settlers/Allies (December 2017)

A circle for settlers/allies took place in December 2017 with ten people. The need for settler peoples to self-educate, particularly within Treaty-based contexts, emerged strongly from the one-on-one guided discussions. Based on this, we had a visioning session to consider how we could embark on a co-learning journey that focused on understandings of Indigenous governance and the activation of Treaty responsibilities in relation to IKS, as well as how we could transform the structures, systems and practices at Trent to accommodate Anishinaabeg and Rotinoshón:ni Treaty and governance models.

3. Co-Learning Knowledge Sharing Circle (December 2018)

A co-learning circle with people from the first two circles, Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders, and settlers, took place in December 2018 with 13 people. The circle used a process of co-

learning and co-creation and included Elders/Knowledge Holders, settler and Indigenous faculty, students, and senior administration. The focus of this circle was derived from the main areas identified through the individual discussions and the two previous circles. We had a visioning session to consider how we could embark on a co-learning journey focused on understandings of Indigenous governance and the activation and embodiment of Treaty responsibilities in relation to IKS, as well as how we could collectively transform the structures and systemic practices at Trent to accommodate the Anishinaabeg and Rotinoshón:ni Treaty/governance models.

Phase 3: Gathering Knowledges: The Toqwa'tu'kl Kijijitaqnn/Integrative Science Program, CBU

Since 2007, I have had many discussions with Drs./Elders Albert and Murdena Marshall and Dr. Cheryl Bartlett concerning co-learning, etuaptmumk, and the TK/IS program. Over time, I became part of the co-learning/etuaptmumk community. I have been extremely fortunate to have had these many opportunities to learn firsthand from Albert, Murdena, and Cheryl. Between 2013 and 2020, I took on a more significant role to contribute to the spread of co-learning and etuaptmumk in academic settings. I supported Albert and Murdena when they came to Trent in 2013 as visiting Elders. I also organized and supported several talks³⁵ with Albert, including a week as a visiting Elder for the MASS and IESS programs, the School of Business, and Trent's Elders Gathering in 2018. I did my bimaadiziwin (the good life)³⁶ experience/option as part of the Ph.D. program with Elder Albert Marshall, in which he asked me to understand etuaptmumk in my role as what he calls a "knowledge navigator" from 2013 to 2016. Through these experiences, I came to understand some of the issues, tensions, opportunities, and prospects for working within a process of co-learning and etuaptmumk and

³⁵ At the University of Toronto and Queen's University in 2017 and Humber College in 2018.

³⁶ Gitigaa Migizi/Doug Williams, 2013.

governance of the TK/IS program. Cheryl and the Marshalls (2012a) wrote an article that sums up some of the lessons learned from working within a co-learning/etuaptmumk journey in the contexts of knowledge engagement and governance.

I spent the summer of 2018 in Unama'ki to be able to have regular visits with Murdena, Albert and their family, as Murdena's health was rapidly declining. During this time, I had several informal conversations and a meeting with faculty at Unama'ki College at CBU, who were/are attempting to revive a program grounded in etuaptmumk. They consulted with Dr. Bartlett but did not plan to involve her or Elder Albert in a new program. Complicating matters, David Dingwall, a new president unfamiliar with the TK/IS program, started his term in April 2018. I had intended to do guided discussions and sharing circles with those associated with the former TK/IS program; however, the indication of tensions and complexities between the TK/IS team and current CBU personnel, as well as between the CBU and the Unama'ki communities, signalled that I should adjust my plan. Based on what I have learned from working within complex multi-stakeholder initiatives, such as the Atlantic Indigenous Economic Development Integrated Research Program and its 12-member university partnership, and from being immersed in the co-learning/etuaptmumk community, I came to realize I was not well situated to facilitate work in ways that would benefit the Unama'ki and larger Mi'kmaw communities. This is partly due to my positionality as a settler and as an "outsider" to the CBU community. I also recognized I could not dedicate enough time, energy, and funding to fully engage with the Unama'ki College community as I did at Trent. Perhaps I will engage with CBU if this opportunity arises in the future.

In the fall of 2018, beloved Elder Murdena Marshall passed over to the spirit world. As she and Albert are such strong influences in my learning journey, I decided to reflect and explore the foundations of some of her teachings as related to my research questions and in light of new

understandings of Treaty relations and responsibilities. I chose to explore her circular conception of Mi'kmaw Knowledge systems and her thinking about knowledge engagement between Mi'kmaw/Indigenous and Eurocentric/settler-colonial knowledges. A foundational chapter is based on learning from and acting on her legacy. Regarding CBU, I look at Treaty teachings and Treaty-based epistemology in relation to processes of co-learning and etuaptmunk, as well as university governance for programs such as the TK/IS program that engage with Indigenous Knowledges.

Phase 4: Interpretation and Integration of Findings

Here, I share how I approached synthesizing, reflecting on, interpreting, and integrating the knowledges gathered during this research. In following up on guided discussions and sharing circles, and while absorbing the literature and oral sources, I made notes and memos and did reflective, intuitive, and analytic journaling. My knowledge gathering was also based on informal and formal conversations with both Indigenous and settler colleagues; public lectures and talks; events at Trent, the University of Toronto, Dalhousie University, and CBU; and local Indigenous and other community events in Anishinaabeg Aki and Mi'kma'kik. There were many discussions over food, while walking, harvesting manoomin, canoeing and other land-based activities; before and after water walks and other ceremonial activities; at rallies to protect land and water; and while driving.

As knowledge was gathered, progressive synthesis, verification, and analysis took place to inform subsequent knowledge gathering and interpretation. The initial consultation sessions with the key Elders/Knowledge Holders were used as a primary source of knowledges into which knowledges from the 40 guided discussions were woven. These knowledges then informed the focus of the first two knowledge sharing circles, one with Indigenous Knowledge Holders and the other with settlers/allies. What was shared in these two circles then informed the co-

learning circle. As mentioned, two meetings with the TAC served to share preliminary findings and seek input through collaborative dialogue.

Analysis and interpretation followed an iterative process, which involved repeatedly reviewing and rechecking stories, teachings, personal narratives, insights, and other data until no new themes emerged and the findings seemed to be saturated. As Kirby et al. (2017) suggest, this is a circular, spiralling, and building process. Initial codes were developed based on transcripts, memos, notes, and journal entries. Descriptive coding was assigned to stories, narratives, and bits of information based on a grounded theory approach, cycling between inductive analysis—assigning words or phrases verbatim from the knowledge sources, and deductive analysis—assigning codes from the literature or oral sources. In this way, data informed theory and theory informed data (Kirby et al., 2017). Coding was also assigned based on my research questions and the keywords and phrases in the literature. Determining which codes and themes held more weight was done by privileging and centring the voices and knowledges of Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders. Local Indigenous Knowledges were also privileged and centred. Other ways I analyzed findings emerged after noticing how the three generations who participated in the research had differently situated knowledges and priorities. I looked at the voices and perspectives of youth, emerging and established scholars, and Elder scholars to compare, contrast, and emphasize interconnections across the generations. I did this with the voices of settlers/allies as well. I also considered how power was held differently, for example, by students as compared to professors or senior administration. The lens through which I viewed the knowledges and data has been described.

Similar and dissimilar codes and themes were identified. The assigning of codes was influenced by narrative and discourse analysis. I then looked for patterns and interconnections and verified these with the literature and oral sources as needed. This was done by hand and

using Microsoft Word searching capabilities. Most guided discussions were transcribed verbatim, while some were “purposive,” a term Kirby et al. (2017) use to refer to a general transcription with precise attention to specific segments. The quotations, content synthesis, and knowledges from guided discussions and sharing circles were verified with research contributors to ensure their words and knowledges were accurately represented. The key Elders/Knowledge Holders were involved in ascertaining whether I “got it right” in terms of analysis and interpretation, also known as “member checking,” and they had the final say as to what could be shared in the dissertation (Kirby et al., 2017, p. 285). Member checking and reflexivity, as described earlier, are both strategies for enhancing research credibility and accuracy (Kirby et al., 2017).

Phase 5: Dissemination: Community and Academic

Research collaborators will be consulted on the format and content of academic and community-based reporting, so that Elders/Knowledge Holders and their allies can use the findings to build upon as they continue to embark on their journey with universities.

Ethical Considerations

My choice of topic and research approaches are intended to support Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty in PSE programs and to benefit Indigenous peoples and communities. Here, I outline ethical considerations in relation to the work and how these were addressed. In terms of ethics processes, the research was reviewed by the Trent Indigenous Studies Ph.D. Program Ethics Review Board, Trent’s Research Ethics Board (REB), and the Mi’kmaw Ethics Watch (MEW), a community-based ethics process in Mi’kma’kik.

Research Approach and Positionality

I have considered that there will likely be questions related to my positionality as a settler scholar doing research with and in relation to Indigenous Peoples, in which I insert myself into ongoing dialogues concerning Indigenous Knowledges and the academy, Indigenizing, and reconciliation. Does my research topic and my approach suit my positionality? Do I give the topic the treatment it deserves? How can I ensure that Indigenous communities benefit from the research?

We are all Treaty people, and I need to honour this context for these relations through heart-based, decolonial, reconciliatory, and ethical ways of being to contribute to transforming current relationships between settlers and Indigenous Peoples and with the lands and all beings of Creation. I have endeavoured to choose research approaches and methodologies that honour relational and Treaty-based accountability, reciprocate for knowledges shared, support Indigenous resurgence, benefit Indigenous communities, the land and water and our more-than-human relatives. The research seeks to promote understandings of the intrinsic value of Indigenous Knowledges in their physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions and to support their contemporary use. Any engagement with Indigenous Peoples and their knowledges systems must be based on trusting, respectful, and reciprocal relationships in which I am accountable and responsible to those I work with. As illuminated by many Indigenous Knowledge Holders, knowledge is created out of relationships. The strength of my work is my existing relationships and collaboration with Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders.

Benefits to Indigenous Communities

It is of utmost importance that my work and interactions with Indigenous Peoples and communities result in outcomes that benefit them in tangible ways. Involving key Elders/Knowledge Holders in guiding, directing and corroborating the research at all stages,

especially at the outset related to the topic and approach, was part of applying the fundamental principles of Indigenist research. Knowledge sharing circles were chosen as a method intended to facilitate intergenerational knowledge transmission. The third co-learning circle at Trent was intended to create action-based change that would ripple outwards and influence how settlers/allies at Trent engage with Indigenous Knowledge Holders and their knowledge systems. A co-learning process was used to stimulate action towards upholding Treaty relations and responsibilities, creating spaces that afford greater decision-making capacity within PSIs for Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders and encourage action towards local Indigenous community needs and goals, as well as healing from the impacts of colonial systems for and between Indigenous/settler peoples.

Indigenous Protocols, Consent Process, and Centring Indigenous Knowledges

I consulted a body of protocols and ethics developed by and in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, outlining some promising practices for working alongside Indigenous Peoples in research. This included Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch, the *Canadian Institute of Health Research Guidelines for Health Research Involving Aboriginal People* (2007), the Assembly of First Nations' *Ownership, Control, Access and Possession: First Nations Right to Govern First Nations Data* (2007), and the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* that is part of the Trent Research Ethics Board (REB). I also consulted with the key guiding Elders Knowledge Holders regarding relational research processes within their communities.

As mentioned, invitations to participate in the research, guided one-on-one discussions, and sharing circles involved using spiritual and cultural protocols to respectfully ask to receive knowledge and exchange knowledge, guiding relations in a good way. With Anishinaabeg and Mi'kmaw Elders/Knowledge Holders, this involved the offering of *semaa* (*tobacco*) and

smudging together. For the Rotinoshón:ni Knowledge Holders, I prepared small wampum strings as gifts, as shown to me by Bobby Henry and Jessica Parker. I sought to honour Indigenous ethical approaches within specific homelands. In Michi Saagiig homelands, this meant being instructed through Gdoo-naaganinaa or the Dish with One Spoon Wampum, the Williams Treaties, and Treaty 20, and endeavouring to lead a good life or mino bimaadiziwin within the Anishinaabe Seven Grandfather Teachings. In Mi'kma'kik, the Peace and Friendship Treaties, the Mi'kmaw Seven Sacred Teachings (which are very similar to the Anishinaabe Seven Grandfather Teachings), alongside living within ethics of netukulimk (sustaining ourselves), serve as guides. A Rotinoshón:ni ethic, symbolized by two rows of the Kaswentah, and the principles of the good mind also guided my conduct.

The research consent process honoured ongoing “free, prior and informed consent” as per the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP). Options for oral or written consent as per individual preferences were offered. There was no intent to engage with Traditional/Indigenous or “sacred” Knowledges in this research. As noted above, Elders/Knowledge Holders were consulted as to what could be shared in the dissertation and what format, and they had the final say as to the transmission and dissemination of their knowledges. All scholarship is a co-creation or co-construction of knowledges, and the Elders/Knowledge Holders are credited unless they wished anonymity for all or some of what they shared. The use of translation from Indigenous languages was offered.³⁷

The one-on-one guided discussions took place wherever people were most comfortable. Most often, this was in peoples’ homes, including my home, outdoor spaces where birds and

³⁷ Language holders chose to speak in English for the benefit of the group, except for the opening and closing prayers and some words and phrases they wished to share.

other relatives shared their voices, personal offices, restaurants, and, as a last resort, by phone. Meals that I made or treated people to were shared. I reciprocated for some of the Elders' time by driving them as needed or doing small tasks. Some of the Elders received hand-made gifts after the co-learning circle.

As described, research approaches involved collaborating with Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders within Indigenist processes. This meant that Elders'/Knowledge Holders' knowledges, voices, frameworks, and ways of knowing, learning, and teachings are privileged and centred, including the sharing of stories, teaching, and personal narratives, as opposed to findings being treated as "data," which is what occurs in most mainstream research.

Trauma-Informed Approaches

Some Elders/Knowledge Holders involved in the research are IRS Survivors and second-, third-, and fourth-generation Survivors. Therefore, I used trauma-informed approaches in the event that research contributors were triggered or retraumatized by discussions. At a basic level, a trauma-informed approach is understanding the adverse effects that occur when people are or have been exposed to trauma in their lives (OFIFC, 2016). I checked with the Elders/Knowledge Holders on an ongoing basis to ensure they were comfortable with the research topic and questions. I monitored body language and tone of voice for signs of discomfort. I was prepared to stop discussions if needed. During one of the sharing circles, one of the Elders led the way in modelling how we could hold space for those experiencing ongoing trauma shared through personal stories and narratives. I consulted with Betty Carr-Braint, a qualified cultural counsellor at the First Peoples House of Learning, regarding trauma-informed practices and confirmed her availability as needed. I have ongoing relationships with many of the people I engaged in the research and continue to be present, to listen to and discuss the realities of their lives with them.

Addressing Settler Power and Privilege

I am taking ongoing actions to decolonize and learn at a personal level and to subvert colonial systems. This includes addressing the tendency for settler researchers like myself to try to assert control in research. I have endeavoured to cultivate awareness, reflexivity, and transparency concerning my biases and position of power and privilege and how these might affect the process. I have sought to share power in how I have worked, and ultimately, I intend that the research serves Indigenous goals. My being embedded in Trent's Indigenous Studies program might have been considered problematic; however, no concerns were raised.

In confronting my settler self, I endeavour to understand the complex and multiple struggles that Indigenous Peoples face, including racism, oppression, and marginalization; misrepresentation; and appropriation of their knowledges; and I acknowledge that universities (and settler society) are sites of colonial encounter that are experienced differently by Indigenous Peoples and settler peoples. My journey has involved engaging with emerging directions for reflexive settler praxis through respectful relations and dialogue in which I am a learner, trying to stay grounded in humility, make myself vulnerable and be open to feedback. It also means acknowledging that there is no one "Truth" but multiple "truths"—that processes of knowing are creative, generative, and ongoing. I have actively sought to co-create environments in which Indigenous voices, languages, worldviews, and concerns are central and to contribute to transforming and reimagining Indigenous-settler relationships. I have discussed and sought feedback on these issues with participating Elders/Knowledge Holders. As mentioned, I did reflexive journaling related to these complexities and the work itself throughout the research process.

I need to continue to listen to the voices of Elders and others to listen and learn and creatively honour the transformative process of engaging with Indigenous communities, lands,

and knowledges. Whether working in a community or postsecondary environment, I believe letting my heart guide me is crucial. Weber-Pilwax (2003, as cited in Wilson, 2008) says, "The source of a research project is the heart/mind of the researcher, and 'checking your heart' is a critical element in the research process" (p. 60). The researcher should ensure that there are "no negative or selfish motives for doing the research, because that could bring suffering upon everyone in the community. A 'good heart' guarantees a good motive, and good motives benefit everyone involved" (Weber-Pilwax, 2003, as cited in Wilson, p. 60). My work is within an interconnected web of loving and trusting relationships and heart-based knowing and will continue to be. I am eternally grateful to all the Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders and colleagues for their time, patience, and guidance in supporting my learning. I am open to transformation as I continue down the river of life. I ask for strength, humility, compassion, imagination, and creativity in fulfilling my responsibilities to the peoples in whose homelands I reside.

CHAPTER FOUR: LEARNING FROM MI'KMAW DR./ELDER MURDENA MARSHALL'S LEGACY

Introduction

Dr./Elder Murdena Marshall was a uniquely gifted L'nu³⁸ Knowledge Holder with extraordinary abilities for weaving back and forth between knowledge of her L'nuwey or Mi'kmaw culture, language and spirit, and Eurocentric academic understandings. She had exceptional skills in teaching, storytelling, knowledge translation, transcultural understandings, mentorship, and grief and spiritual counselling. One of the first Mi'kmaw Elders to bring Mi'kmaw Knowledges to post-secondary education (PSE), the learnings generated throughout Murdena's lifetime are foundational to illustrating the challenges and prospects for this endeavour. In restoring understandings of Indigenous relational autonomy, her interconnected teachings comprise foundational practices for nurturing, embodying, and promoting Mi'kmaw/Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty. Murdena passed over to the spirit world in October 2018, leaving an extraordinary legacy—seeds of knowledge that will continue to grow and spread the spirit of L'nuwey Knowledges and co-learning among Treaty peoples in Mi'kma'kik.³⁹

Beginning in the late 1980s, Murdena spent 18 years as an Associate Professor at Cape Breton University (CBU), where she played a foundational role in establishing the first Mi'kmaq Studies program in Mi'kma'kik and the Toqwa'tu'kl Kjjitaqnn/Integrative Science (TK/IS) program. With a Master of Education degree from Harvard University and expertise in five Mi'kmaw orthographies, including Mi'kmaw hieroglyphics, Murdena was exceptional in possessing knowledge of two endangered Mi'kmaw linguistic forms: the healing and spiritual

³⁸ L'nu is the original name of the Mi'kmaq and means "People of the Same Tongue or People Who Speak the Same Tongue. L'nu is singular and L'nu'k is plural (Young, 2020, p. 1).

³⁹ Spelling of Mi'kma'kik from Murdena Marshall, 1997.

verb tenses.⁴⁰ The Mother of the Muin (bear) Clan, Murdena, resided in Eskasoni First Nation, where she and her husband, Albert, had six children, 14 grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren (IISH, 2020). Murdena became a teacher to fulfill her quest for knowledge and to serve Mi'kmaw communities (Hunter, 2001). She was also a spiritual advisor to the Santé Mawio'mi (Mi'kmaq Grand Council) and was often called to the bedside of those crossing over to the spirit world. Murdena was known for her remarkable energy, generosity, and humour. She was many things to many people: "I don't know what my 'job' is—I just know of my commitment to the Nation. I know I have to be there for the people" (Hunter, 2001, p. 43). Murdena stressed that "[Indigenous Knowledge] was never meant to be static and stay in the past; rather, it must be brought into the present so that everything becomes meaningful in our lives and in our communities" (Bartlett et al., 2012a, p. 8). She added, "My training as a First Nations person was to spread this knowledge, spread it as fast as you can, while the language is here" (APCFNC, 2011, p. 93).

I honour relational accountability by reflecting on some of Murdena's understandings that provide a foundation for my learning and this dissertation. I link back to Murdena's teachings in subsequent chapters, in particular the next chapter concerning co-learning and *etuaptmumk*, the gift of multiple perspectives or two-eyed seeing, and the *Toqwa'tu'kl* Kijijitaqnn/Integrative Science (TK/IS) program. In reflecting on some of Murdena's understandings and her influence, I intend to nurture, grow, and spread some of the practices she indicates for respecting the autonomy of Mi'kmaw/Indigenous Knowledges or knowledge sovereignty. I explore how Murdena centres and conceptualizes the interconnections between

⁴⁰ In Mi'kmaw language, the past, present, and future, as well as the healing and spiritual tenses exist. Murdena describes the healing tense as indicating that a person has taken full responsibility for their past actions and in this way are able to heal (Iwama et al., 2009). See Iwama et al., 2007 & 2009 for more on the spiritual tense.

L'nu'k and other Indigenous Knowledges, peoples, land, languages, and spirituality with relational knowing. I also touch on some of the challenges she experienced with the academy and how she approached these. Ultimately, Murdena's teachings emphasize and reinvigorate essential connections between mind (or intellectual) and heart-based knowing (emotional), Treaty-based epistemology, and ethical knowledge engagement. These are critical understandings for settler/Treaty peoples and settler-colonial post-secondary institutions (PSIs) seeking to engage with Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledge systems (IKS).

In amplifying Murdena's work, I prioritize the perspectives of Mi'kmaw and Wabanakik Knowledge Holders. I then seek to connect Murdena's understandings with the voices of diverse emergent Indigenous scholars to illustrate the significance of her wisdom within broad Indigenous, Treaty-based, and PSE contexts. The seeds of Murdena's loving and generous insights and her ability to illuminate Mi'kmaw/IKS will continue to germinate within Wabanakik and other Indigenous homelands for many generations. Her teachings also provide gifts to guide settlers as Treaty people—opportunities to transform settler consciousness to relational or m'sit no'kmaq (All My Relations) consciousness and do our part as good relatives in lighting the Eighth Fire. I hope that reflecting on, interpreting, and nurturing what Murdena has given will lead to new knowledges and ways of being—to bountiful and ethical futures for all Treaty people and for Creation, in ways that cannot yet be imagined.

Fighting Everyday: A Life of Teaching and Sharing

Murdena brought Mi'kmaq Studies into being at CBU. At the time of her arrival, 15 Mi'kmaw students were attending the university. During her tenure, Murdena nurtured Mi'kmaw/IKS and created spaces for these and for Mi'kmaw Peoples in the academy. She mentored the institution, settler and allied scholars to develop respect for Mi'kmaw/IKS. She modelled and embodied understandings and practices for knowledge engagement or sharing

between/across knowledge systems and contributed to growing these understandings. In particular, she advanced relational knowledge sharing in the spirit of co-learning and *etuaptmumk* (the gift of multiple perspectives), both of which emphasize the value of Indigenous Knowledges. Due to her presence, wisdom, abilities, and cultural fluency, the number of Mi'kmaw learners attending CBU grew to 250 by 2000. CBU began offering a major in Mi'kmaq Studies, influenced by Murdena's contributions, as she took on more teaching responsibilities (Hunter, 2001). Mi'kmaw scholar Marie Battiste recognizes the central roles of Murdena and Albert, attributing their work as birthing the Mi'kmaw humanities (Battiste, M., 2016b). Over her lifetime, Murdena also mentored and collaborated with many settler allies. Her 25-plus-year relationship with CBU colleague Dr. Cheryl Bartlett stands out among these. The TK/IS program was developed at Murdena's initiative and was the relational and collaborative work of Murdena, Albert and Cheryl.

Murdena was always ahead of her time, and this presented many challenges. In sharing Mi'kmaw Knowledges, she encountered tensions specific to her community and CBU. In her community of Eskasoni First Nation, she sometimes faced disapproval. At CBU, she worked double duty as an ambassador for her community and as a knowledge translator for settler colleagues and students. It was difficult to balance the many roles and community responsibilities this required. Murdena recounted, "I have always been a fighter, and I have been fighting every day" (APCFNC, 2011, p. 93). In Murdena's early teaching career at the community-run school in Eskasoni First Nation, she received criticism for sharing Mi'kmaw understandings. When Murdena first introduced Mi'kmaw Knowledge to her grade six students in 1985, she found "the whole community was in an uproar. They accused me of bringing back children 300 or 400 years, and 'That thing you are talking about is all gone. We left it'" (APCFNC, 2011, p. 93). In the late 1980s, when Murdena started working at CBU, she felt she had more

freedom to share what she wanted. Yet, she had to navigate multiple challenges in bringing Mi'kmaw/Indigenous Knowledges into the academy, including colonial beliefs about knowledge. As Albert Marshall (2021) recalls, "there was no point of reference" for weaving back and forth between these two worlds. Paramount to her experiences was that faculty and staff at CBU had minimal understanding of or respect for Mi'kmaw or other Indigenous Knowledge systems (IKS) as autonomous paradigms equally significant to Eurocentric/settler-colonial knowledge systems (ESCKS) and minimal understanding of or respect for Mi'kmaw Peoples as knowledge holders. People at the university had little experience with Elders, who, as living sources of Indigenous Knowledges and as spiritual and political leaders—challenge the hegemony of academic experts and the "Western" academy. There was no Indigenous curriculum or critical mass of supportive university colleagues who understood how to work alongside L'nu'k Peoples and knowledges.⁴¹ There was no mandate for truth and reconciliation or to "Indigenize." As Albert indicates there was a lack of institutional support, such as in the form of a department of Indigenous Studies or upper administration experienced with Indigenous-led initiatives. Murdena encountered the devastating impacts of ongoing colonization on Mi'kmaw and other Indigenous Peoples and knowledges in her efforts to bring these to the academy. This was a result of asymmetrical Indigenous/settler power relations and colonial hegemony and the structural, systemic, ideological, and discursive barriers that suppress, marginalize, and fragment Mi'kmaw/Indigenous Knowledges, as discussed.

Murdena deeply considered how best to reach Mi'kmaq whose relationship with their language and teachings have been disrupted by colonialism. In doing so, she had to work around constraints imposed by Eurocentric/settler-colonial conceptions of knowledge within a text-based, hierarchical, and fragmented university environment. In creating a Mi'kmaw Studies

⁴¹ Sister Dorothy Moore (Membertou First Nation) was Murdena's only Mi'kmaw colleague at CBU.

curriculum, Albert recalls the onus was on Murdena to substantiate Mi'kmaw understandings by creating a written curriculum, in an environment in which Mi'kmaw culture was continually being questioned. This required Murdena to spend considerable time on the road, consulting a Senate of Mi'kmaw Elders from the five Unama'kik communities and as Albert articulates, “acting as a conduit for verifying collective ancestral teachings.” Ultimately, Murdena had to make difficult decisions about writing down knowledges that, until that point, had been shared exclusively as oral traditions. Murdena documented some teachings in English, as she felt this was the only way some Mi'kmaq would inherit them since only 25% of Mi'kmaq are language holders (APCFNC, 2011). Mi'kmaw language is threatened, with only 8,145 remaining speakers (Endangered Languages, 2021). She adopted the Smith-Francis Mi'kmaw orthography within CBU programs to maintain and revitalize the language and culture. Murdena explains:

So, when I got to university, I decided to write them down because the only way that you can teach a lesson is to document it. You cannot teach from your head. Everything has to be documented and presented to the academic council, who have to approve it—before you can teach it. But they said, “You have to publish it before you can teach it. That is a protocol here.” So, I wrote them down and my thought about publishing was different than those people. My writings, by publishing them, you put an ownership on them. “Oh, those are mine and you cannot quote from them until you ask me.” And you know that's awful. (APCFNC, 2011, p. 94)

The Unama'ki Elders expressed concerns that written Mi'kmaw teachings would not retain the dynamic and creative nature of oral traditions, would disrupt the spirit of these traditions, and/or make them vulnerable to misinterpretation or abuse (Hunter, 2001; Albert Marshall, 2021). In the end, Murdena received the Senate of Mi'kmaw Elders' blessing to write down some teachings on the condition that she not put ownership on them—that they be used only for education, not to be sold but given to whoever wants to learn.

When Murdena applied for tenure at CBU, she encountered another barrier to Mi'kmaw Knowledge sovereignty: she was told she had not published enough written material. Much of

what she had written did not have her name on it. Murdena stipulated that the teachings belong to the Elders of Unama'ki: "My knowledge is not mine; it belongs to all of us—it's not copyrighted—otherwise, how could it continue?" (Hunter, 2001, p. 46). Murdena affirms and embodies how ta'ntelo'lti'k (the way we L'nu'k are) draws on the collective consciousness of Mi'kmaw Peoples and the community of Elders/Knowledge Holders. It cannot be copyrighted or owned in the ways that these are normalized within mainstream academic understandings. Starting in the late 2000s, Murdena and Albert began to co-publish academic literature with Dr. Cheryl Bartlett. Much of what they generated speaks to the challenges of bringing together knowledge systems through the TK/IS program.

Based on her strength and tenacity, Murdena prepared the ground for many others to follow (APCFNC, 2011). Yet fighting to keep language and culture flourishing, balancing her community and counselling responsibilities, and navigating the university environment took its toll on Murdena:

I have always been concerned about the language. I decided to prepare my education endeavours around language. And the first year I made curricula to teach it. But at the end I was so weak. I had five classes. It drained me out of my own energy and out of my own spunk. Not that I'm bragging that I'm the saviour of the world, but I was able to open some of their minds. When I left, they had to replace me with three people (Heritage Cape Breton, 2012)

When Murdena began to experience health issues in the early 2000s, she retired from CBU. Beyond her work in Eskasoni and at CBU, Murdena contributed to Indigenous community organizations, including the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, the National Aboriginal Health Organization, the Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselling Association, the Native Women's Association of Canada, the Elders' Advisory Council for the Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre, and local and international workshops and conferences. Murdena was recognized for her work, receiving a National Aboriginal Role Model Award in 1996. Along with Albert, she received an honorary doctorate from CBU in 2009 (IISH, 2021).

Murdena's Teachings on Mi'kmaw/Indigenous Knowledge Systems

In sharing what I have learned from Murdena, I focus on her interconnected teachings related to Mi'kmaw/IKS. These are fundamental teachings, central to her legacy and praxis and involve deep reflection, humility, humour, and commitment to sharing knowledge and co-learning. While Murdena's conception of Mi'kmaw/IKS is described in an article co-written by Bartlett and the Marshalls (2012a), Murdena's story of Mrs. Matheson (detailed below) and her diagram of Mi'kmaw/IKS are not in the article. I bring these together, alongside the application of Murdena's teachings by Mi'kmaw scholar Shalan Joudry (Bear River First Nation), for others to build on.

The Story of Mrs. Matheson and Mi'kmaw Medicine

Murdena shared the story of Mrs. Matheson and Mi'kmaw Medicine with the Elders as part of the *Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nation Chiefs Elders Project: Honouring Traditional Knowledge* in 2009. She shared a shorter version in her 2008 workshop on cultural sensitivity and humility for health and healing (Marshall, M., 2008). I also heard Murdena tell this story when she visited Trent University in 2013. The version of the story included below weaves together all three tellings mentioned above.

At a very early age, Murdena lost her mother and was raised by her aunt, Jessie (Sylliboy) Jeddore, who was a well-known medicine woman and midwife in Unama'kik. Murdena considered Jessie to be her mother. Jessie was known as "Taji," which means healthy in Mi'kmaq.⁴² Murdena recounts that Jessie Jeddore healed using her spirituality and mind and through plant and herbal medicines; she delivered many babies and helped many people with various afflictions over the years. Murdena remembers one woman, Mrs. Matheson, from Little Narrows, Nova Scotia, who was living with leukemia. Mrs. Matheson visited Murdena's mother

⁴² This is from Mi'kmaw Knowledge Holder Barb Sylvester of Membertou First Nation.

regularly, and Jessie would make up a plant medicine for her. Murdena says she and the other children would help pick the little leaves of the plant, wash them, and put them in the pot. Then, they would usually run off and play. Her mother would then go into the kitchen to prepare the medicine. Murdena helped her mother pick the medicine until she went away to school. Mrs. Matheson did not pay Murdena's mother but, in return, brought her little gifts like pillowcases.

Murdena's beloved mother/aunt, Jessie Jeddore, died very suddenly in March 1977, shortly after Murdena and Albert were married. Then, in April of that year, Mrs. Matheson showed up at Murdena's house and asked if she could please make the medicine that her mother used to make. She told Murdena, "[your mother] kept me alive for ten years with that medicine. I have leukemia, and she kept me alive, and my doctor doesn't know why my cancer is in recession for so long. I have to have that medicine" (APCFNC, 2011, p. 63). Murdena told her she really did not know how to prepare the medicine; she had only picked the plant, but Mrs. Matheson begged her to try. Murdena told Mrs. Matheson she would think about it. In the end, Murdena decided to try to make the medicine. Murdena called her sister, Diana Denny, to ask for help. She recounts that she and her sister

picked the medicine and washed the medicine and we did exactly how we remembered it. I even threw holy water on it to be extra guaranteed. And when we gave it to her she was oh so grateful. She wanted to pay us for it, and I said, "No, no pay. I just hope this medicine works for you. (APCFNC, 2011, p. 63)

Murdena didn't think much about Mrs. Matheson after this.

Then, sometime in June, Diana called and told Murdena to get out the newspaper and look at the obituary list. Murdena opened the paper, and there she was—Mrs. Matheson. Murdena ran back to the phone, saying, "Nepk'aq, she's dead." "Yes", Diana said, "You killed her." [Laughter.] "If the family comes to sue us, you're the main plaintiff," she said. "Oh Diane, we didn't do anything that bad" (APCFNC, 2011, p. 64).

Murdena says the plant used for Mrs. Matheson grows outside houses—plantm musclioptjij, teluisik (plantain),⁴³ and is good for sores. After reflecting, Murdena remembered that when her mother made the medicine, she extracted the juice to make it, which she and her sister didn't do. They just threw it in and boiled it. Murdena realized she had missed a big step. And she recounts that she didn't care that much about this Mrs. Matheson. Murdena recognizes:

There have to be steps—there have to be processes that we must follow to be happy with ourselves. Ever since then, I have not touched medicine because I don't want to kill another person [Laughter]. It's just something that I decided to keep away from, although I know a lot of medicine. But my bad experience has sort of shielded me away. And I see it that way. (APCFNC, 2011, p. 63)

When Murdena realizes that the medicine has not worked for her, she reflects on her mother's relationship with the medicine and with Mrs. Matheson:

[My mother] has to have some knowledge of that medicine, the physical knowledge of it—amujpa nenk. She has to know what it looks like. Then my mother looking after this medicine for Mrs. Matheson had to have some personal connection to her. So, Mrs. Matheson would come, and they would talk for the whole afternoon and whatever. She had very much respect for that medicine. (APCFNC, 2011, p. 64)

Her mother would say:

Oh my god, you can't curse around the house with this medicine in the house . . . And she has the nucleus or the sacred. She must have realized that this medicine has a spirit, and that spirit has to be sacred. I looked at it and I tried . . . *I worked on it for about ten years trying to figure it out and finally I came up with this* [emphasis added]. (APCFNC, 2011, p. 64)

After this experience, Murdena reflects further on her mother's practices. She comes to see how plants and other beings have spirits and knowledge that may be shared through respectful relationships:

And it's Indigenous Knowledge. And so, all Indigenous Knowledge—all Aboriginal Knowledge and all Traditional Knowledge is like that. You have to know it personally, you have to physically know it, you have to have some

⁴³ Musclioptjij, teluisik is plantain according to Elder Barb Sylliboy of Eskasoni First Nation, 2023.

physical experience with it, and you have to have personal connection to that knowledge. You have to have a lot of respect for it and, most sacredly, you have to know that it is sacred—that it has a spirit and must be protected and taken care of. And that's what we teach with Indigenous science—how to make the connection from recognizing it, to honouring it—and we did. So, it's been a journey—a very, very rough journey. (APCFNC, 2011, p. 64).

A Metaphor for Mi'kmaw/Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Each time Murdena shares her understandings of Mi'kmaw/IKS, the tellings differ slightly. Respecting that every person interprets teachings differently, I bring together four instances in which Murdena shares her conception of Mi'kmaw Knowledge systems (Marshall, M., 2008; APCFNC, 2011; Bartlett et al., 2012a; Joudry, 2016). I try to stay true to the unique voices of each telling by doing a close read of their narratives and acknowledging that my version adds another layer of interpretation. After approximately 30 years of reflection, Murdena documents lifelong understandings of Mi'kmaw/IKS generated out of her experiences with Mrs. Matheson and years of weaving between her L'nu'k and academic worlds (Marshall, M., 2008; Bartlett et al., 2012a). She does this to help Mi'kmaq and other peoples understand each other and co-exist, to expedite transcultural knowing for the benefit of all. To represent how aspects of Mi'kmaw/IKS function, Murdena asks that a diagram with four concentric circles be created with a medicinal plant in the centre, in this case, plantain, (See Figure 4). The circle's outermost layer represents the physical knowledge of plant medicine. The next layer is the personal connection or relationship to the medicine, followed by respect for the medicine, with the spiritual or sacred nature of the medicine in the centre (Marshall, M., 2008; Bartlett et al., 2012a). Murdena says the centre is "the sacred nature of the medicine, the spirit of it" (Marshall, M., 2008, p. 2). She adds: "The innermost circle, wherein sacred knowledge resides, can only truly be understood within the language of the particular Aboriginal or Indigenous Peoples of the area; it is not possible to translate this knowledge into another language;" and

that in Mi'kma'kik, "the knowledge at its core, its heart, cannot be translated out of Mi'kmaq" (Bartlett et al., 2012a, p. 337).

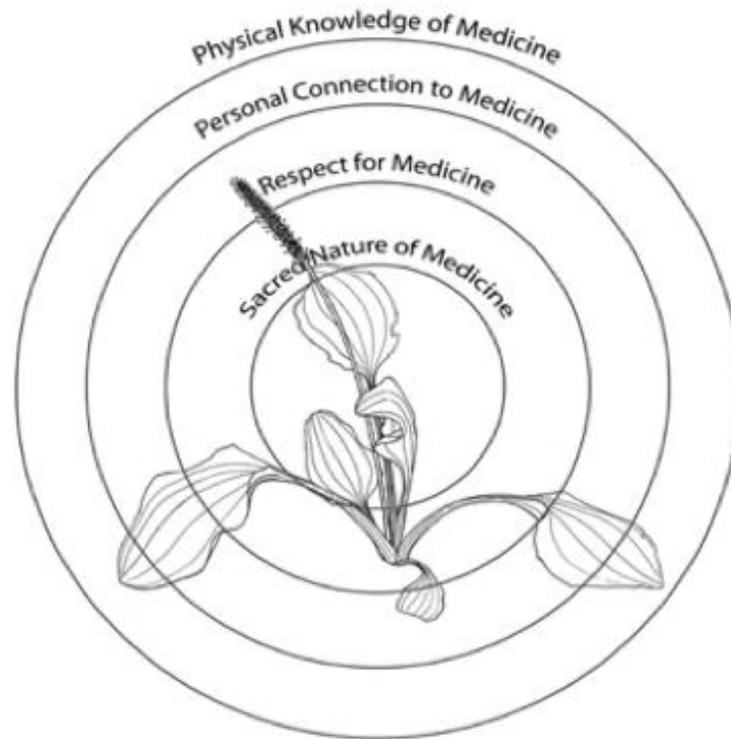


Figure 4: Murdena Marshall's Conception of L'nu'k/Indigenous Knowledge Systems. (Marshall, M., 2008).

Relational Knowing/Coming to Know

I am grateful to Shalan Joudry, who explores Mi'kmaw relationships with *puktew* (fire) in her master's research—interpreting, applying, and revitalizing Murdena's teachings concerning Mi'kmaw/IKS (Joudry, 2016). Shalan is guided by Murdena's understandings to organize knowledge about how her ancestors carried the *ji'koqs*—a way of keeping *puktew* (fire) smoldering to restart *puktew* or carry *puktew* from place to place. Shalan's contributions to Mi'kmaw resurgence illuminate understandings of Mi'kmaw Knowledge systems for future generations. Shalan recounts how Murdena sat with her at the beginning of her work: "This helped me start my journey as a Mi'kmaw researcher with a greater understanding of Mi'kmaw

Ecological Knowledge" (Joudry, 2016, p. 65). In their time together, Murdena affirms that Mi'kmaw teachings emphasize four aspects or dimensions of Mi'kmaw/Indigenous learning: spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical that are interconnected and (w)holistic (Bartlett et al., 2015; Marshall & Bartlett, 2018). She describes the process of learning through a Mi'kmaw paradigm as "*deepening relationships with* [emphasis added]" (Joudry, 2016, p. 30). Murdena describes knowledge as a verb, in constant flux and motion, not a noun, as it is constructed in Eurocentric contexts. Knowledge is "*coming to know* [emphasis added]," not an object of discovery to be "gained" (Joudry, 2016, p. 31); it is not a property or commodity. Knowledge is not independent from teachers and learners; they play a part in learning (Cajete, 2000; Hatcher et al., 2009; Bartlett et al., 2012a; Joudry, 2016; Kimmerer, 2013). As both Murdena and Albert have shared on many occasions, knowledge is spirit. Murdena elaborates:

We know that knowledge is spirit, knowledge is transferrable, all knowledge is. Math, English, and everything is transferrable. If you're successful in one subject, it is very likely that you will be successful in another topic. And so, I learned over the years that it has to be passed—it's a gift. It's a gift from our ancestors this thing called knowledge. Some institutions call it "Traditional Knowledge," others call it "Aboriginal Knowledge"—they put many labels on it. But we must pass it on—we must pass it on, or it will be all gone. There'll be none. So, we teach our children, and we listen to our people and we must try to pass it on—through stories, through hunting, fishing—whatever you do in your daily activities. (APCFNC, 2011, p. 57)

When Murdena sat with Shalan, she drew four concentric circles representing "physical, personal (or mental), respect for (or emotional), and sacred nature of (or spiritual) relationships with the subject of the learning" (Joudry, 2016, p. 30). Shalan calls Murdena's teachings a "metaphor about learning or knowing" (Joudry, 2016, p. 30). I will pause here and integrate Shalan's interpretations of Murdena's teachings with those shared through co-writings by the Marshalls and Bartlett. Shalan and Murdena's interactions reveal that relationships with a subject are vital to knowing AND to what can be known. Through physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual relationships, a knower comes to know physically, mentally, emotionally, and

spiritually. Shalan's interpretation of Murdena's teachings helps to illuminate a Mi'kmaw paradigm—in particular, Mi'kmaw epistemology (ways of knowing) and ontology (beliefs about the nature of existence or reality), as well as the relationship between the two. While I had thought there was a correspondence here, I did not feel I should impose this; however, Shalan and teachings from other Indigenous Nations (to be discussed) affirm these associations.

Physical Relationships

Let us look more deeply at the layers of Murdena's metaphor—physical, mental/intellectual, emotional, and spiritual ways of knowing. Learning begins with a physical relationship/coming to know a subject. This includes what a subject looks like and what is experienced through the other senses. For plant medicine, this might consist of where it grows, how to pick it, and what to do with it, and learning the names and qualities of each plant (Marshall, M., 2008; APCFNC, 2011; Bartlett et al., 2012a). Physical knowing can be nurtured through experiences on the land, such as gathering plants and medicines, berry picking, hunting, and making maple syrup (Bell, 2014). Shalan finds that all the Mi'kmaw Knowledge Holders she engages with share physical knowledge by recounting specific details and by sharing stories about *puktew* (fire) (Joudry, 2016). Murdena suggests that of the four dimensions of knowing, physical relationships or knowledge/coming to know are most easily shared between IKS and Eurocentric/settler-colonial knowledge systems (ESCKS), as they are based on observations and experiences. Knowledge acquired through these modalities is classified in Eurocentric science as empirical knowledge. Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous thinkers also note that observation and experience contribute to their sciences and intellectual knowing (Bartlett et al., 2012a; Colorado, 1988; Kawagley, n.d.; RCAP, 1996).

Mental/Intellectual and Personal Relationships

The next layer of knowing involves developing personal and mental/intellectual

relationships/in coming to know a subject. In this layer of the circle, learners work with mental concepts and ideas to deepen relationships (Joudry, 2016). Murdena's story about Mrs. Matheson suggests that a personal relationship is needed with medicine and with the people you do healing work with. Shalan adds that personal relationships include personal thoughts, experiences, and interpretations about a subject, as well as how individual knowledge holders interconnect with the knowledges of others and within the cosmos, thereby establishing a personal relationship/coming to know with the "whole" that reinforces understandings of interrelatedness. Mental/intellectual capacities are also developed in learning ancestral languages and through integrative learning that explores ancestral teachings alongside Euro-Canadian practices (Bell, 2004).

Emotional Relationships

The next layer of knowing manifests through emotional relationships/coming to know. Murdena says that as these relationships are nurtured and deepened, they lead to developing respect for a subject (Joudry, 2016). Shalan finds that emotional relationships or connections to a subject arise from diverse experiences and emotions that involve coming to understand a subject's power and learning to respect its place in the world. She says that deepening relationships to *puktew* (fire), or any subject, is more than simply a mental exercise of collecting data: "Mi'kmaw research methodology . . . includes invoking the emotional layers of storytelling" (Joudry, 2014, p. 52).

In linking feeling with knowing, I believe Murdena and Shalan refer to the interconnectedness of intellectual and emotional ways of knowing encapsulated in the Mi'kmaw word *mkamlamun* (heart), which is potentially accessible to all peoples. Sable and Francis (2012) offer that "The whole concept embodied in [*mkamlamun*] is better translated [as] heart/mind. When a Mi'kmaw speaks, it is from the notion of mind and heart being inseparable" (p. 35).

Murdena has suggested that those who can come to know through emotional relationships and understandings can develop and cultivate respect for a subject and its uses and teachings (Bartlett et al., 2012a; Joudry, 2016). In this way, Murdena's teachings extend the potential for settler/Treaty peoples to engage in heart-based knowing with all beings. This resonates with Snelgrove et al.'s (2014) indication that settler/Treaty peoples can potentially transform through practices of listening, learning, and acting, develop respect for the land and other beings and come to understand our relations, roles, and responsibilities and as part of decolonizing processes.

Spiritual Relationships

The most profound way of knowing is a spiritual relationship or coming to know.

Murdena has elaborated:

Possessing knowledge which is traditional or tribal, is a mirror image of your own spirituality. There is nothing that we cannot understand this way. Science can explain many things, but in the tribal world, there is another realm. Yet we value knowledge, and we combine it with assistance we seek from the spirit world. One should not be afraid to seek assistance to develop a thought. In our world, you are a physical being and you are a spiritual being. (Marshall, M. 2005, p. 3)

Shalan offers that participating in a sacred fire is a healing relationship and an example of spiritual knowing:⁴⁴

This relationship includes the person's wisdom and ability to envision the many diverse connections with all of life, past, present, and future. These connections and diverse experiences, engaging mind, body, and spirit, endow the person with intuition about the subject—in this case, fire. (Joudry, 2016, p. 61)

Indeed, gifted individuals can access knowledge of the past and future in the sacred realm through prayer, meditation, intuition, ceremony, dreams, and visions (Hoffman, 2013). Leanne Simpson (1999) adds that spiritual knowledge is the "foundation of Indigenous knowledge. . . . It is at once content, context, and process" (p. 61).

⁴⁴ Shalan offers that a spiritual relationship could also be called an intuitive relationship.

Murdena has indicated that what resides at the centre of the circle is "the sacred nature of the medicine, the spirit of it" (Marshall, M., 2008, p. 2). This knowledge cannot be fully understood, except by local Indigenous Peoples in their language (Bartlett et al., 2012a). This implies that people or knowers who are not speakers or do not have Mi'kmaw consciousness may not fully receive Mi'kmaw sacred teachings. Murdena and Albert have explained that from this perspective, non-Indigenous/settler peoples cannot compromise Mi'kmaw spiritual/sacred knowledge because it can't be translated, or its essence will be lost (Marshall & Marshall, 2013). Mi'kmaw scholar Patricia Doyle-Bedwell (Patricia Doyle-Bedwell, lives in Kijipuktuk/Halifax, NS, personal communication, February 2021) asks about the implications: "If we [as Mi'kmaq] do not know our language, does that mean we cannot gain the fullness of Mi'kmaw Traditional Knowledge?" Albert says Mi'kmaw consciousness is passed down through the generations despite the language being dormant, as is the case for many IRS Survivors, second-generation and third-generation Survivors, etc. (Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey, 2013). Other Indigenous Elders affirm that being Indigenous is not dependent on being a fluid speaker (Couture, 1991; Williams, D., 2013).

Sharing Knowledges through Stories

In applying Murdena's teachings to organize the knowledges and practices shared with her, Shalan finds L'nu'k use stories and oral traditions to share all four ways of knowing. She concludes that a "sense of knowing may be conveyed to others more readily and is expressed in the stories" (Joudry, 2016, p. 60). As discussed, stories are central to Indigenous ways of knowing, learning, and teaching. Indeed, within L'nuwey ways of being, stories are the primary vehicle of instruction, guidance, and knowledge transmission and are essential at all stages of development (Marshall et al., 2018, p. 53). As Murdena says,

Stories are everywhere; they are [there] all the time. As a child, if someone else is there with you, they would be telling a story. Stories are not merely narratives

to fill time or lull a child to sleep; they are vehicles of cultural transmission that allow spiritual knowledge transfer . . . along with the emotional (feelings conveyed by the story's narrative), physical (sound vibrations), and intellectual (a traditional teaching). (Marshall A., et al., 2018, p. 53)

Albert adds:

Traditionally, nothing was taught as black and white. Rather, everything was story . . . where you have the responsibility to listen and reflect. This is a much more profound way of learning because you have the opportunity for a relationship with the knowledge. And, furthermore, because you can return again and again to the story or you can hear it over and over, and each time you will find new and richer understandings relevant to your own personal journey, to your growing sense of wholeness and interconnectiveness. (Marshall A., et al., 2018, p. 53)

The narratives shared with Shalan about puktew (fire) move from the past to the present to the future in what she calls "travelling back through time cycles" (Joudry, 2016, p. 46). This aspect of Mi'kmaw storytelling is recognized in work with other Mi'kmaw Elders (Battiste, M., 2000; Sable & Francis, 2011). As Sable and Francis (2011) offer,

When Mi'kmaw Elders tell a story, they seem to spiral inwards from the general to a specific point, then out again, as though creating a landscape out of which something arises. They may also begin at any point in a story. (p. 37)

As noted, Indigenous concepts of time are cyclical, harmonizing with the cycles of nature and revealing patterns and rhythms of birth and death, as survival depends on these understandings.⁴⁵ This is reflected in Elders' stories, in which time has no beginning or end. Furthermore, with awareness of the sacred nature of the world, time and space collapse (Colorado, 1988). Diverse or contradictory perceptions of the same event are often accepted in Indigenous stories, as experiences are specific to the individual (Henderson, 2000). This complements what Albert says about everyone having one piece of the knowledge.

⁴⁵ These include the seasons, animal migrations, the tides, and the waxing and waning of the moon (Sable & Francis, 2011; Aikenhead & Michell, 2011).

Situating Murdena's Teachings within L'nuwey Worldviews

For those who are not speakers of the Mi'kmaw language, how can we immerse ourselves in the understandings Murdena gifts about the heart or spirit of ta'ntelo'lti'k (the way L'nu'k are)? A starting point involves situating Murdena's conception of Mi'kmaw/IKS within a L'nuwey worldview or L'nuwita'simk.⁴⁶ This includes discussing Mi'kmaw spirituality, land, and language and the interconnectivity of these: teachings from the Mi'kmaw Creation Story and of m'sit no'kmaq (All My Relations).

Mi'kmaw Knowledge Systems: Land, Language and Spirit

Mikmaw Knowledge systems are comprehensive and holistic and have spirituality at their core (Cavanagh & Metallic, 2002). Within these systems, the most critical relationship for Mi'kmaq is with their land. The Mi'kmaw Nation, culture, identity, and basis for survival have always been tied to the land (Henderson, 2000; Meader, 2008; Metallic, 2002; Palmater, 2016; Augustine, S. 2016). Mi'kmaw speakers describe the "dynamic linguistic foundations" of L'nuwita'simk (L'nu'k worldviews), how their language comes from their land and teaches them who they are, and about the nature of Creation and their place in it (Battiste & Henderson, 2009, p. 5; Metallic, 2002). According to Mi'kmaw Elder Isabel Knockwood (Sipekne'katik First Nation), the Mi'kmaw language evolved from the sounds of the land, the winds, and the waters (Knockwood, 1994). Weji-sqalia'tiek means "we sprouted from" in the way that plants sprout from the earth. The Mi'kmaq sprouted from their land, Mi'kma'kik:

Weji-sqalia'tiek is about the dynamic interrelationship between the Mi'kmaq and their ancestral landscape—a landscape integral to the cultural and spiritual psyche of the people and their language. . . .[A]s expressed in the Mi'kmaw language itself, this landscape was perceived as sentient, ever changing, and in a continual process of becoming. (Sable & Francis, 2012, p. 18)

⁴⁶ As put forward by Mi'kmaw Scholar Tuma Young, "L'nuwita'simk" is expressed through language, stories, ceremonies, rituals, dances, songs, and chants. These expressions hold the teachings, values, customs, knowledge, and legal principles of the L'nu'k plural (Young, T., 2020).

As described by Sylliboy, in the ecosystem known as Mi'kma'kik:

[A]ll living things or spirits are bound to each other through kinship; microorganisms with other organisms, plants with animals, animals with humans, humans with others under social structures which all move and are related to each other in a state of flux. Their interrelatedness is what determines their well-being and what defines their values and beliefs. The natural order of things is determined by the relations, that sense of interconnectedness, which all living things have with one another based on mutual needs and mutual understandings of their role in their ecological space. (Sylliboy, 2017, p. 75)

The Marshalls acknowledge that an "ecology of the sacred" exists in the consciousness of humans and other beings within Mi'kma'kik (Bartlett et al., 2012a; Longboat & Sheridan, 2006, p. 365). Moreover, they emphasize,

[i]t is important to realize that the Mi'kmaw language comes from the land and that if a person speaks their [Aboriginal] language, their spirit can never be captured. Moreover, our language teaches us that everything alive is both physical and spiritual . . . that everything is interdependent and interconnective . . . and that humans are only a small part of the whole . . . and thus, that everything we do to our Earth Mother, we also do to ourselves. (Bartlett et al., 2015, p. 289)

Acknowledging this interconnectedness and looking at some of the differences between Mi'kmaq and English can help provide further insight into what Murdena means when she says the spirit of Mi'kmaw Knowledge is not translatable—that it cannot be removed from the land, the language, or the peoples. Mi'kmaq is a much more precise and multi-dimensional language than English. One word in Mi'kmaq can create a whole picture that might take many sentences to convey in English. Mi'kmaq is likened to showing a video of reality, while English takes a single photograph (Sable & Francis, 2012). Mi'kmaw scholar Fred Metallic explains that the Mi'kmaw language is verb-based and requires Mi'kmaq to consider the interdependent relationships among sentient beings. The emphasis on relationships means the Mi'kmaq conceptualize beyond an individual or object and instead focus on the collective (Metallic, 2011). This is different from English, which is noun-based. Metallic (as cited in York, 2010) explains that in the

Mi'kmaw language, the action comes first, then the person, which is the opposite of English.

Sable and Francis (2012) build on this:

The verb is where everything happens; it is the focus of the language, with prefixes, infixes, and suffixes added to determine gender, tense, plurality, animacy and inanimacy. This focus on the verb and the "copious" suffixes that can be added to it allow for extraordinary breadth and creativity of expression. It makes the language adaptable, able to forge new expressions to meet life's shifting and unpredictable realities, reflecting the nature of the universe as being in a continuous state of flux, ever changing and non-static. (p. 29)

Murdena adds:

Mi'kmaw language is sacred. . . . The Creator gave it to the mother people for the transmission of all the knowledge our Creator gave to us and for our survival. Our language has its origin . . . in the land of the Mi'kma'kik, and it is here that it must remain to flourish among the people or we become extinct. The sacred knowledge within our language provides wisdom and understanding. It focuses on the processes of knowledge, the action or verb consciousness, and not on the nouns or material accumulation. (Marshall, M., 1997, p. 2)

Murdena also imparts that within Mi'kmaw consciousness, other beings are teachers and sources of knowledge and healing:

In our stories, in our language . . . it is okay to talk to birds. It is okay to talk to trees. It is okay to talk to all beings in our language and sometimes the trees and birds or others even answer you. If you are downhearted or depressed, go into the forest and listen to the trees. You will hear them whisper, hear the sap running. Just try to interrupt the gentle breezes blowing through the boughs! You can actually make yourself feel better through meditation and intensify your traditional beliefs. We believe our Mother Earth is a living example of wise principles, a life-giving Mother, and a healing bounty. . . . And thus, we need to remember the wholesome, healthy consciousness in the teachings from our Elders. (Marshall, A. et al., 2018, p. 51)

These are normal, healthy human capabilities within L'nuwita'simk (L'nu'k worldviews) that

Murdena feels we need to return to (Marshall A. et al., 2018).

Relationality, Respect, Reciprocity and Responsibility

Let us return to Murdena's circle, in which the development of emotional relationships/coming to know or heart-based knowing is represented in the third layer.

Murdena indicates that respect must be embodied for emotional understandings to unfold. Reciprocity and responsibility are essential aspects that go along with respect, as both Albert and Murdena have indicated on many occasions.⁴⁷ A discussion of Mi'kmaw spirituality and teachings about relationality, respect, reciprocity, and responsibility draws from Mi'kmaw Creation Stories.⁴⁸ Recall that Creation Stories are the most important of all stories and set the "theoretical framework" from which other stories, experiences, and teachings can be interpreted (Borrows, 2013; Simpson, L., 2011). Within L'nuwita'simk (L'nu'k worldviews), an understanding of the family is central. The seven members of Mi'kmaq's first family—Gisoolg, the giver of life or the sky, Grandfather sun, Mother Earth, Glooskap, Glooskap's Grandmother, Nephew and Mother, guide the Mi'kmaq in living and communicating with the rest of Creation, living in harmony with their world, hunting and fishing in respectful ways, and performing ceremonies to harvest medicines (Augustine, 2006; Cavanagh & Metallic, 2002). The spiritual relationships Mi'kmaq have with their brothers and sisters—the animals, the plants, the sun, the moon, Kluskap, Mother Earth, and other nations, comprise an "organized, holistic, ecological family" (Cavanagh & Metallic, 2002, p. 13). Extended family also represents a collective knowledge system about the territory and its history (Sable & Francis, 2012).

The essential teachings about relationality, respect, reciprocity, and responsibility shared in Murdena's metaphor about IKS evolve out of the Mi'kmaw Creation Stories and form the foundation for co-existence with other nations, including with European settlers through the Peace and Friendship Treaties (1725-1779) negotiated between Mi'kmaq and other Wabanak Peoples, and Great Britain. Before the ruptures of colonization, as Mi'kmaw scholar Patrick

⁴⁷ Values of relationality, respect, reciprocity, and responsibility are essential within Indigenous cultures and education, as affirmed by many Indigenous Knowledge Holders, including Cree scholar Verna Jane Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt (1997), as well as Sto:lo scholar Jo-Ann Archibald (2008).

⁴⁸ For further knowledge of Mi'kmaw Creation Stories, see Augustine, S. (2016), Cavanagh & Metallic, (2002) and Young, T., (2018).

Augustine notes, L'nu'k "knew the stories of Creation and hence their relationships and their responsibilities" (Augustine, P., 2016, p. 53). The Mi'kmaw Creation Stories teach that the first Treaty is with the animals, and the second Treaty is with the fish beings (Metallic & Cavanagh, 2002). Creation stories impart Mi'kmaw law and governance and are guided primarily by netukulimk, which includes:

Our birth rights (sustainability), what we are taught as Mi'kmaq and our responsibilities as Mi'kmaq. Mi'kmaw governance has always been and still is spiritual, pervasive, and non-coercive. The continuity and authority of this system of governance came from a common bond and common responsibilities. The responsibilities are to family, to community, to nation, and to ecosystem. (Battiste, J. 2016, p. 71)

Alongside netukulimk, L'nuwey ways of being are expressed by the phrase m'sit no'kmaq (All My Relations), which shows respect for all relationships and obligations with every living being within the Wabanakik Confederacy, including settler/Treaty peoples and the ancestors (Augustine, 2016; Marshall, 2020). M'sit no'kmaq reminds us as humans that we are kin with the land, waters, and all of Creation—that we are related to and dependent upon the living world (Young, T., 2016; Marshall, 2020). It also signifies the continuum between humans and other beings (Robinson, 2018). These essential teachings give guidance as to how "to behave as a sacred being living among other sacred beings" and be a good human (Meader, 2008, p. 2). Humans have unique gifts that come with responsibilities to take care of Creation (Marshall, A., 2020; Williams, D., 2013). Elder Albert Marshall explains that the physical and spiritual nature of the Mi'kmaw language teaches speakers that responsibilities come with knowledge—this includes being the eyes, ears, and voice of Mother Earth (Bartlett et al., 2012a; Marshall & Bartlett, 2018). As humans, we need to learn from the seasonal cycles of the land and from all beings, continually considering the impacts of our actions today on the next seven generations and treating all beings with thanks (Johnson, 1995; Marshall, A., 2020; Williams, D., 2013). A recent transcultural collaboration with Elder Albert that includes Shalan and other

Mi'kmaw and settler scholars offers perspectives using the discourse of critical theory, recognizing that m'sit no'kmaq understandings offer opportunities for all peoples in Mi'kma'kik to engage in socially and ecologically just relationships (M'sit No'kmaq et al., 2021).

Murdena and the other Elders who took part in *Honouring Traditional Knowledge* affirm the connections between knowledge, peoples, and land, emphasizing how knowledge is accessed through respectful relationships, protocols, and practices as developed in their unique territories. Murdena provides an example of how respect is cultivated through reciprocity, using protocols and offerings when harvesting a plant or taking an animal for food:

Given the Mi'kma [w] view that all things in the world have their own spirit, and all things must work in harmony with each other, Mi'kmaq show respect for the spirit by extending certain rituals to our interaction with nature. Just as we send off the spirit of our dead with proper ritual and ceremony, we extend a certain amount of recognition of the spirit of the tree, animal, plants and elements we disturb for our own use. When we cut a tree for basket weaving or a Christmas tree, take roots from the ground for medicines or our lodges, there are gestures we must follow to keep our minds at ease. We do not apologize for our needs but accept the interdependence of all things. (Marshall, 1997, p. 2)

Prayers, seasonal ceremonies, and the use of tobacco, which is offered before taking any living being, continually acknowledge and respect the sacred nature of all life and extend reciprocity. Vision ceremonies and the use of the pipe are also used to make a spiritual link between Mi'kmaq and the rest of Creation (Cavanagh & Metallic, 2002). These vary from place to place and from community to community. Mi'kmaw Elder Gilbert Sewell (Pabineau First Nation)⁴⁹ offers the following:

And one of the things we have been asked to do with Traditional Knowledge is that the things pertaining to the people who live there, the practices and what they do remains with the people of that community. And if you want to share in that community you have to ask for permission for that community. . . . And of course it boils down to respect. (APCFNC, 2011, p. 79)

⁴⁹ Elder Gilbert Sewell was part of the Council of Elders of the Mi'kmaq-Wolastey Centre (MWC) at the University of New Brunswick (UNB) from 2014. He crossed over to Creator's Sacred Lodge in 2021 (Perley, D., 2021).

Wolastoqey Elder Gwen Bear (Tobique First Nation)⁵⁰ supports this: "All of us should know about what is developed in each of our territories and how we have to follow certain ways and processes of how this knowledge has to be" (APCFNC, 2011, p. 104). The teachings of these Elders indicate the need for all Treaty people, including those within PSIs, to take direction from and follow the protocols of the Indigenous Peoples in the respective areas of Wabanakik where they live. These give guidance for relational and ethical action.

Situating Murdena's Teachings within a Broad Indigenous Context

Building on the potential applications of Murdena's wisdom within L'nuwita'simk (L'nu'k worldviews), I seek to situate Murdena's circle/metaphor about IKS alongside understandings within a broad, emergent Indigenous context. This is to highlight what is unique about her vision and to illustrate the significance of her contributions to communities and PSIs across Chi'Mikinaq. I propose a circle that integrates complementary and interconnected teachings about Indigenous Knowledge systems from Murdena (2008), Holm et al. (2003), Alfred and Corntassel (2005), Wilson (2008), Bell (2014), and Joudry (2016) that can guide Treaty-based engagement between Indigenous and Eurocentric/settler-colonial knowledge systems and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty in PSE.

First, I look at how circles are used as symbols, metaphors, or representations of a paradigm that contains all the Traditional Indigenous teachings as part of a learning or healing journey (Bell, 2014; Hoffman, 2016; Marshall, M., 2008). In emphasizing the importance of the circle in L'nuwey worldviews, Murdena says they represent patterns and cycles of cosmic order and unity. Circular rather than linear understandings are essential to Mi'kmaw "traditions, thought, and action" (Marshall, M., 2008, p. 3). Murdena also indicates that circle teachings

⁵⁰ Elder Gwen Bear was the first Elder-in-Residence in Atlantic Canada at the of MWC at UNB, starting in 2009 until 2012, when she crossed over to the spirit world.

emphasize the process of coming to wholeness, change, and balance (IIHS, 2020). She adds that spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical dimensions comprise a (w)holistic way of knowing if all four are in balance (Marshall, M., 2008). Circular understandings also apply to how teachings are passed down through the generations through stories and participation in rituals and ceremonies (Marshall, M., 2008). While Murdena does not name her metaphor of IKS as such, circle teachings are sometimes called medicine wheels.⁵¹ There is no right or wrong way of using circles or medicine wheels; each way holds specific meanings for the Indigenous Nations who create them.⁵² They are most powerful when expressed as a "collective of interdependent teachings and practices" and can help learners with ideas that are slightly beyond our range of understanding (Bear, 2010; Bell, 2014, p. 2; Wilson, 2008).

With circle teachings in mind, I link Murdena's insights with emergent Indigenous scholars' insights to bring together their strengths. Anishinaabe scholar Bell's earlier description of Indigenous Knowledge as culture specific, contained within the local knowledge, worldview, and lands of a nation, and as "epistemological, in that each nation culturally determines for itself how it knows what it knows" resonates with Murdena's and other Wabanaki Elders' teachings about Indigenous Knowledge as belonging to local Indigenous Peoples within their lands, languages, and spirituality (Bell, 2014, p. 4). Additionally, understandings reviving an Indigenous concept of peoplehood may be used to further integrate Murdena's vision within broad Indigenous contexts. Recall Alfred and Corntassel's (2005, as built on the work of Holm et al., 2003) proposed model of Indigenous Peoplehood as four interlocking concepts: "sacred

⁵¹ Medicine wheels are named after wheel-shaped stone constructions found on Medicine Mountain, South Dakota (Bell, 2014).

⁵² Some Mi'kmaq and other Wabanakik Peoples have adopted the term medicine wheel in their community-based work (CEPI, 2011; Bernard et al., 2004).

history, ceremonial cycles, language, and ancestral homelands," which Murdena puts in the centre of her circle (p. 609).

Murdena's teachings about a Mi'kmaw/Indigenous paradigm are complimented by the work of Cree scholar Wilson (2008), who thinks and speaks in the language of his ancestors and is one of the first generation of Indigenous scholars to articulate an Indigenous research paradigm within mainstream, English academic discourse. I rely on him for his skill in articulating complex understandings about knowledge, using both the knowledges of his ancestors and the discourses of mainstream academia:

Relationality seems to sum up the whole Indigenous research paradigm to me. Just as the components of the paradigm are related, the components themselves all have to do with relationship. The ontology and epistemology are based upon a process of relationships that form a mutual reality. The axiology and methodology are based upon *maintaining accountability to these relationships* [emphasis added]. (Wilson 2008, p. 71)

Wilson's description of maintaining relational accountability can be equated to what Murdena refers to as developing respect in the third layer of knowing within her circle (Figure 4). Wilson continues:

It's important to recognize that the epistemology includes entire systems of knowledge and relationships. These relationships are with the cosmos around us, as well as with concepts. They thus include interpersonal, intrapersonal, environmental, and spiritual relationships, and relationships with ideas. Indigenous epistemology is our cultures, our worldviews, our times, our languages, our histories, our spiritualities, and our places in the cosmos. Indigenous epistemology is our systems of knowledge in their context, or in relationship. (2008, p. 74)

Wilson's conception of IKS resonates with Murdena's teachings that all aspects of knowing, and while she didn't name them as such at the time, but was aware of—Mi'kmaw ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology are based on relationships or relationality. In terms of a Mi'kmaw articulation, inspired by Wilson, Albert later suggests *wsitqamu'kewe'l penawsinn* (worth of reality; real world; real life) for ontology; *wsitqamu'kewe'l ankitasuaqnn* (the nature

of thinking or thought; for worldly thoughts or knowledge gained throughout your life) for epistemology; ta'n tel mnsnmen kjiji'taqn (how knowledge is gained) for methodology; and kjijitaqn ta'n tel wie'wasitew (worth of knowledge that will be used) for axiology (Marshall, A., & Bartlett, 2018, p. 5).

The importance to Indigenous Peoples of Indigenous homelands, language, spirituality, and history are clearly fundamental tenets of Indigenous teachings across Chi'Mikinaq. A substantial body of literature also shares understandings concerning IKS, paradigms, and ways of knowing, as noted in the literature review. However, I have not encountered a conception of IKS that not only centres Indigenous Peoples, language, and homelands within the spirit of their knowledge (as does the Indigenous Peoplehood model) but also offers a layer of interpretation that integrates Indigenous epistemology—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual ways of knowing—as Murdena does. In other words, Murdena's metaphor brings Indigenous conceptions of peoplehood and identity together with Indigenous ways of knowing. I have created a circle, shown in Figure 5, based on Murdena's (2008) circle in Figure 4, to incorporate the understandings of relational knowing that emerged through Shalan and Murdena's collaboration (in terms of epistemology and ontology) and as affirmed by Bell (2014) and Wilson (2008). It also integrates the four interlocking concepts of Indigenous Peoplehood as per Holm et al. (2003) and Alfred and Corntassel (2005). As Murdena indicates, spiritual knowledges are held by local Indigenous Peoples, within their lands, languages, and—while she does not use these exact terms—ceremonial cycles and sacred histories. This circle weaves in the values of relational accountability, reciprocity, and responsibility, which are activated through emotional relationships and knowing/coming to know to accompany respect and potentially assist in guiding Treaty ethics.⁵³

⁵³ In the centre is a turtle to represent Chi'Mikinaq, Great Turtle or Turtle Island.

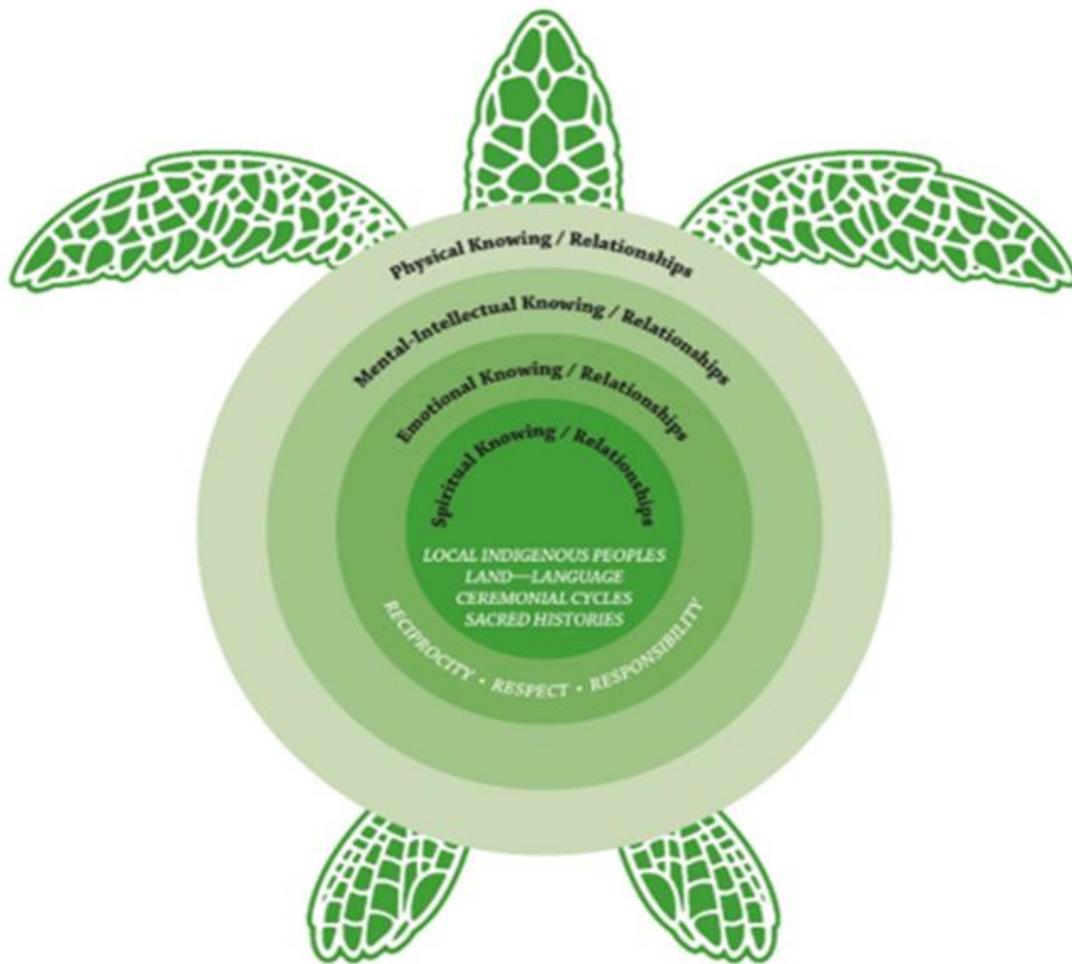


Figure 5: Indigenous Knowledge Systems: Diverse Indigenous Scholars' Insights

In Figure 5, I propose a conception of Indigenous Knowledge systems that integrates diverse Indigenous scholars' insights, including Murdena's (2008) alongside Alfred and Corntassel (2005), Bell (2014), Holm et al. (2003), Joudry (2016) and Wilson (2008). As discussed, Murdena highlights land, languages, spirituality, and histories as essential to Mi'kmaw/Indigenous Peoplehood. In sharing her circle/metaphor of Mi'kmaw/IKS, she restores understandings of relational knowing (Indigenous epistemology) with all beings in Creation. Holm et al. (2003) and Alfred and Corntassel (2005) indicate the Indigenous Peoplehood model has potential as a

foundational concept or model to guide Indigenous theory, research, and teaching or sovereignty in education. Murdena's teachings about relationality and knowing strengthen the proposed Indigenous Peoplehood model, contributing to growing understandings of how Mi'kmaw and other Indigenous Peoples activate Indigenous relational autonomy and how Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty is enacted in PSE education contexts and beyond.

Receiving Murdena's Gifts

With her story about Mrs. Matheson and her subsequent reflections, Murdena shares great gifts. I anticipate that Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous Knowledge Holders will be guided by her wisdom, interpreting and building on it to activate and embody Indigenous relational autonomy and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty within Mi'kma'kik and other Indigenous homelands. In terms of adopting practices that support Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty and coming to embody these, Murdena's practices with her community of Elders/Knowledge Holders as facilitator and conduit provide an example to emulate. By the light of puktew, the fire that Shalan Joudry keeps burning in her work, one application of Murdena's teachings is illuminated. Based on a lifetime of making difficult choices about what to share and what not to share, Murdena also gifts settler/Treaty people and institutions with guidance for co-learning, offering ways to reflect and transform our ways of being and knowing—to better understand ourselves and our place as relatives and learners within Treaty epistemology.

Murdena was a supreme teacher, scientist, philosopher, and healer. She simplifies the essence of transcultural knowing by standing back to observe processes of knowing and interactions across and between Mi'kmaw/IKS and EKS and works to translate ancestral teachings. She not only shares her stories for us to reflect upon but, within the spirit of co-learning, intuitively anticipates the limitations of EKS and accommodates settler peoples' overreliance on intellectual knowing by creating a diagram that attempts to break the whole

down into its parts. Murdena's teachings extend opportunities for settler/Treaty people to re-create our relationships with Mi'kmaw Peoples, with the land, waters, and all beings—not as part of an objectifying process of Othering that positions Indigenous Peoples as inferior and alienates people from more-than-human relatives, but within a multi-dimensional mirror that reflects diverse ways of knowing, a world that mkamlamun (heart-mind) can see. In this way, Murdena indicates how settler/Treaty peoples might come to know at an emotional level, to embody heart-based relationality, to regain (w)holistic balance and heal within ourselves and with the world around us. She offers ways to transform settler consciousness with the potential to enter relational or m'sit no'kmaq (All My Relations) consciousness. From here, we may come to engage with L'nu'k and all beings, activating and embodying the spirit of co-learning and etuaptmumk—taking ethical actions based on Treaty epistemology to honour our relations and responsibilities on the land, in the academy and in settler society.

Let us look one more time at the third layer of Murdena's circle, wherein relationships of heart-based knowing/coming to know are potentially cultivated. While lines are used to represent the rings of the circle, these are not meant to contain the qualities within; this is one limitation of a visual representation. Murdena indicates that traditionally, stories would have been used to share knowledges (w)holistically, and this intentional layering would not be necessary (Marshall & Bartlett, 2018). Imagine these lines as energetic and fluid, enabling relationships to flow with the energies of relationality, respect, reciprocity, and responsibility, grounded in love, the first of the Seven Sacred Teachings,⁵⁴ in what Ermine calls a space of ethical engagement (Ermine, 1995). Multiple teachings dwell in this space for settler/Treaty people to consider. Within this space, as settler consciousness bumps up against Mi'kmaw

⁵⁴ As shared by Murdena, these include love, honesty, humility, respect, truth, patience, and wisdom. See Appendix C.

consciousness (spirit, land, and language) at the edge of the inner circle, relational/emotional knowing may be activated. What does it mean to embody love and respect? How might we reciprocate to our relatives? What are our responsibilities to them? I invite settler/Treaty peoples to consider these questions and teachings in their own ways and to dialogue with each other as we to learn how to move within ethical spaces.

Based on my positionality, I interpret what Murdena gifts us as both an invitation to come into a state of heart-based knowing as relatives, and to respect and honour certain limitations of knowing as settler/Treaty people—in other words, to gently retreat from the centre so as to respect the spiritual leadership of the Mi'kmaq within their lands. As Albert indicates, what is labelled as Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) involves only the three outer layers of knowing (Marshall & Bartlett, 2018). As settler/Treaty peoples, we should not presume that we are entitled to know the spirit of ta'ntelo'lti'k (the way we L'nu'k are)—or that we can know. Perhaps we are invited to engage as colleagues, friends, and relatives? This might come through being on the land and in community, hunting, gathering, singing, dancing, feasting, participating in ceremony, or perhaps engaging with non-human beings? If these invitations are made, we can embrace them. Yet, as Treaty people, within an epistemology and ethic of non-interference, we need to move out of the way as Indigenous Peoples assert their sovereignty on the land, in the academy, and in other multiple, diverse contexts. At the same time, as relatives, we can align with L'nu'k and other Indigenous Peoples, loving them and lending power to resist colonial violence and protect land, water, and all beings.

Centring Mi'kmaw/Indigenous Understandings of Etuaptmumk

How etuaptmumk, or the gift of multiple perspectives, is activated and embodied by Treaty people depends on their positionality. Within l'nuwita'simk (L'nu'k worldviews), etuaptmumk is inherent. It is critical to centre and create spaces for Mi'kmaw and other

Indigenous voices concerning etuaptmumk within PSIs. Mi'kmaw Knowledge Holder Michael Denny (Eskasoni First Nation) shares:

Two-eyed seeing is a way of life. It's something that we can't just turn away from or turn off. It's something we were born to do. I believe that all Mi'kmaw people have this ability. Because we live in a modern society, coming from an older society, you try to blend those two ways of thinking together—to try to make sense of everything in your life, you try to balance everything out. (Marshall & Austin, 2018)

As a former Tui'kn Case Residential School Survivor Team and Cultural Support Worker at the Eskasoni Health Centre, Michael used etuaptmumk to support Indian Residential School Survivors in their healing process, combining holistic practices including ceremony, singing, and dancing alongside Eurocentric-based counselling. Mi'kmaw scholar John Sylliboy (Millbrook and Eskasoni First Nation) explains how within etuaptmumk, L'nu'k use both eyes everyday as they are already speaking and thinking in English (Marshall & Austin, 2018). In his work with the Wabanaki Two Spirit Alliance, the Aboriginal Children's Hurt and Healing Initiative (ACHH), and many other community-based projects, Sylliboy says the etuaptmumk approach "is always from my Indigenous perspective. I wake up in the morning, and I start to think in Mi'kmaq first, then in English, and they are going back and forth with each other, sometimes talking to each other" (Marshall & Austin, 2018).

The TK/IS team asserts that etuaptmumk "enable[s] recognition of IK as a distinct and whole knowledge system side by side with the same for mainstream (western) science (Bartlett et al., 2012a, p. 336). Indeed, as understandings have grown, Sylliboy finds etuaptmumk "expands and demystifies Indigenous knowledge with other knowledge systems, which can translate into collaborative approaches for Indigenous health and well-being" (Sylliboy & Hovey, 2020, pp. 71–72). In other words, etuaptmumk gets its foot in colonial, Eurocentric doors, holding it open for the spirit of Indigenous Knowledges and planting seeds in multiple

and broad institutional contexts. Sylliboy assesses current prospects of PSE institutional-Indigenous partnerships within a co-learning journey:

We don't have that true sense of inter-relationship yet that I think two-eyed seeing will eventually get to. We're not there at all. We're just exploring the first few stages, but we don't have it locked together. Aboriginal people have it locked together. But it's not from the non-Aboriginal, Western academic sense. They have to cross over to learn our part as well. (Marshall & Austin, 2018)

Sylliboy's observations are a reminder that *etuaptmumk* is based on collaboration between peoples and beings. In isolation, individual settlers may not be able to activate *etuaptmumk*. Kijipuktuk (Halifax) Poet Laureate (2016–2018) and Mi'kmaw scholar Rebecca Thomas, Student Services Advisor and Indigenous Supports at the Nova Scotia Community College, reinforces Sylliboy's insights. She says one of the strengths of *etuaptmumk* is that it asserts that other perspectives exist, even if they are not understood:

Two-eyed seeing takes the strengths of both a colonized world and an Indigenous world and asks that the user see through both lenses simultaneously to define success. It is the Mi'kmaw understanding of the gift of multiple perspectives—to see multiple contexts simultaneously. For example, you see Nova Scotia, Nouvelle Ecosse, Canada. We see Mi'kma'kik, Traditional Territory, Turtle Island. It's not either/or—it's both at the same time. (Thomas, 2016)

Thomas believes respect for Indigenous Knowledges might start with the acknowledgment that there ARE other worldviews, knowledges, and multiple ways of knowing as experienced through others' eyes, extending to the awareness that Mi'kmaw ways of knowing are spirit-based, interconnected, and relational (Thomas, 2018). It follows that Indigenous understandings can infuse all aspects of diverse knowledge systems.

Mi'kmaw Creation Stories, Treaties and Treaty Education

As discussed, Murdena's teachings about diverse knowledge systems, (w)holistic (including spiritual) knowing and relational co-existence are grounded in the Mi'kmaw Creation Stories, which later guide the Treaties of Peace and Friendship. Co-learning and *etuaptmumk*

(the gift of multiple perspectives), as shared by Murdena and Albert, are also grounded in the teachings and values of the Creation Stories. Moreover, reflection on Murdena's foundational teachings is essential to the co-learning journey that Wabanaki, Innu, and Inuit Elders have invited Atlantic post-secondary institutions (PSIs) to engage in. Ultimately, Murdena's insights about engaging with IKS can direct learning and interactions on the land, in governance, in PSIs and other colonial institutions, and all aspects of settler society. Murdena, Albert, Gilbert, Gwen, and the other Elders invite us to come into knowing through Treaty-based epistemologies. As part of this co-learning journey, settler peoples must re-educate ourselves concerning Treaties from Mi'kmaw and other Indigenous perspectives, and accordingly, take actions that embody Treaty epistemology, including relational accountability, respect, reciprocity, and responsibility. As Leanne Simpson reminds us, if everyone learned about and honoured the Treaties, there would be no need to keep re-creating new policies, guidelines, and principles in dealing with Indigenous Peoples and their knowledges within Indigenous education and other contexts (2013).

Treaty-based epistemologies hold great potential for all peoples to learn from and be guided by in diverse contexts. I will pick up the threads of Treaty understandings in subsequent chapters and look at how these can be activated in terms of institutional governance. For now, let us say *wela'lin* (thank you) to Murdena Marshall for restoring Mi'kmaw understandings of relationality, co-existence, co-learning, and Treaty epistemology—for fighting every day and guiding our way to a better future. *M'sit no'kmaq*. All My Relations.

CHAPTER FIVE: CO-LEARNING AND ETUAPTMUMK AND THE TOQWA'TU'KL KJIJITAQNN/INTEGRATIVE SCIENCE PROGRAM

Introduction

The Toqwa'tu'kl Kijijitaqnn/Integrative Science (TK/IS) program at Cape Breton University (CBU) was a unique and trailblazing post-secondary education (PSE) initiative grounded in a vision of "bringing together Indigenous and Western scientific knowledges and ways of knowing" (IIHS, 2020). Toqwa'tu'kl Kijijitaqnn means "bringing knowledges together" (ISSH, 2020). Co-created by Mi'kmaw Drs./Elders Murdena and Albert Marshall and Dr. Cheryl Bartlett of the Department of Biology, the TK/IS program flourished from 1999 to 2007, gaining national recognition. In exploring its multifaceted contributions and the insights of the co-creators for moving towards Indigenous relational autonomy and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty in PSE, I touch on its origins and history and situate it within the context of PSE education and governance for Mi'kmaw communities and beyond. I share the insights of its co-creators and community concerning knowledge engagement through co-learning and the Mi'kmaw understanding of etuaptmumk—the gift of multiple perspectives or two-eyed seeing. I consider the issues and challenges they encountered and their "lessons learned" (Bartlett, 2012a). This is followed by uncovering evolving perspectives concerning co-learning and etuaptmumk from Mi'kmaw and other Indigenous Knowledge Holders. Based on Albert's invitation to envision where this collaborative work might go, I propose recentring and re-grounding etuaptmumk within the context of the Treaty teachings and Treaty-based epistemology (as linked to Murdena's teachings on Indigenous Knowledge systems (IKS) from which it was derived. A Peace and Friendship Treaty-based foundation provides guidance towards creating ethical spaces of engagement with the land and all beings as intended by the TK/IK program creators; strengthen mutual trust and respect between Treaty peoples, as per the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action; and address issues related to asymmetrical Indigenous-settler power relations in the contexts of Indigenous-Eurocentric knowledge engagement and PSE program governance.

The Toqwa'tu'kl Kjjitaqnn/Integrative Science Program: History, Impact, and Significance

Reflecting on the origins of the TK/IS program, Cheryl and Murdena often told a story about a conversation they had around a water foundation sometime in the late 1990s. Cheryl,⁵⁵ a settler who grew up in the territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy, governed by Treaty 7 (also known as Alberta), had been teaching biology at CBU since 1989. The story goes that Cheryl asked Murdena for her insights on why few Mi'kmaw students were taking science classes at CBU. With mirth and a hint of a challenge, Murdena replied, "Maybe it's the way you're teaching it" (IIHS, 2021). Murdena was not referring to Cheryl personally but to the mainstream Eurocentric education system. Out of this interaction, a knowledge-sharing partnership between Murdena, Albert, and Cheryl evolved—a relationship spanning over 30 years. Murdena dreamed that mainstream education recognize Indigenous ways of knowing and sciences alongside Eurocentric ways of knowing and sciences (Bartlett et al., 2015). With the involvement of Mi'kmaw Elders/Knowledge Holders from the Unama'ki communities⁵⁶ and core supportive faculty and administration at CBU, Murdena's vision grew into the TK/IS undergraduate program, offered as a concentration within the four-year Bachelor of Science Community Studies degree (BScCS). The TK/IS program resulted in a critical and unprecedented 27 Mi'kmaw

⁵⁵ Cheryl's work with the TK/IS program led to a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Integrative Science from 2002–2016. She was appointed as a Member of the Order of Canada in 2011 for her contributions to developing new approaches for including Mi'kmaw Knowledge systems in science PSE. She is still involved with the Institute for Integrative Science and Health since retiring from CBU in 2012 (IIHS, 2020).

⁵⁶ Pauline Bernard (Membertou First Nation), Diana Denny (Eskasoni First Nation), Lillian Marshall (Eskasoni First Nation), Susie Marshall (Eskasoni First Nation), Katy McEven (Membertou First Nation), Jane Meader (Membertou First Nation), Lawrence Wells (Membertou First Nation), and Veronica (Flo) Young (Eskasoni First Nation).

learners graduating with a science or science-related degree at CBU, while up until 1999, fewer than five had obtained science degrees (Bartlett et al., 2012a).⁵⁷

Co-Learning and Etuaptmumk

In honouring Mi'kmaw and Eurocentric/settler-colonial knowledges as being derived from equally significant knowledge paradigms and systems, and in order to "weave back and forth" or "dance" between these within the TK/IS program, Albert and Murdena suggested etuaptmumk (the gift of multiple perspectives) as a guiding principle for co-learning (Bartlett et al., 2012, p. 336). Etuaptmumk includes Indigenous ways of knowing that involve "co-existence, interrelativeness, interconnectiveness, and community spirit" and help humans reconnect with each other and with Mother Earth (IIHS, 2010; Bartlett et al., 2015). Core TK/IS team members co-authored numerous articles and book chapters. They presented at national and regional conferences to Indigenous organizations and various provincial and federal government departments about their co-learning journey. As a result, etuaptmumk has gained national recognition and seen increasing uptake in research, particularly in supporting Indigenous/mainstream collaborative initiatives in education, health, and environmental contexts since 2012. Etuaptmumk was bolstered in 2014 when the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR), through its Institute of Indigenous Peoples' Health strategic plan, endorsed etuaptmumk in Indigenous health research, encouraging its use to set research priorities and in "determining what interventions are suitable and how they can be implemented at the community level and ultimately scaled up" (CIHR, 2014, p. 6). Gradually, the TK/IS program team expanded slightly beyond Cheryl and the Marshalls, and in 2006, the Institute for Integrative

⁵⁷ Approximately 100 Mi'kmaw students experienced first-year MSIT (everything together) courses (Bartlett et al., 2012a).

Science & Health (IISH) was created as a collaborative research and community outreach entity to expand and promote a co-learning vision grounded in etuaptmumk (Bartlett et al., 2012a).⁵⁸

L'nu'k Learners in Science

To further situate the TK/IS program within a L'nu'k and PSE context across Chi'Mikinak (the Great Turtle),⁵⁹ in the late 1990s to mid-2000s, there was little acknowledgment within mainstream science and science education of the importance of Indigenous Knowledges in science and science-related curricula (Bartlett et al., 2012a & 2015). When the TK/IS program welcomed its first Mi'kmaw students, there was nearly a total absence of Mi'kmaq in CBU's science and science-related programs, as well as a low retention rate that saw Mi'kmaw learners leaving these programs within a few months (Bartlett et al., 2012a). Mi'kmaw community members were highly concerned about these participation rates in the face of increasing needs for Mi'kmaq in health and medical, natural resource planning and management, and science education professions—professions that require a science degree. The goal of the TK/IS program was to reverse this situation and make science curricula more accessible and appealing to Mi'kmaw/Indigenous learners. Until the mid-2000s, the few Indigenous-based degree programs in Mi'kma'kik consisted of the Mi'kmaq Studies and TK/IS programs at CBU and a B.A. in Native Studies offered by St. Thomas University in New Brunswick.⁶⁰ An increase in Indigenous programming, in part responding to the TRC's Calls to

⁵⁸ Dr. Bartlett was the primary teacher for the program with occasional support from the Marshalls. After five to six years, two more CBU faculty, Dr. Anna Marie Hatcher (Biology) and Dr. Rod Beresford (Biology), as well Mi'kmaw Elders/Knowledge Holders and some settlers/allies supported the MS&T courses. As well, four research fellows, including poet Marilyn Iwama, and three post-doctoral fellows and three graduate students, including Shalan Joudry, joined the community. Mi'kmaw artist Gerald Gloade (Millbrook First Nation) and Basma Kavanaugh also provided support. The Institute for Integrative Science and Health website houses more details about team and the many activities of the community (IISH, 2020).

⁵⁹ As put forward by Gitigaa Migizi/Doug Williams, this is an Anishinaabeg name for Turtle Island (Williams, D., 2018).

⁶⁰ St. Thomas University and Dalhousie University began to offer the Mi'kmaq-Maliseet Bachelor of Social Work Program in 2007. Wolastoqey Elder Gwen Bear was the first Elder-in-Residence in Atlantic Canada, starting in 2009 at the University of New Brunswick.

Action in 2015, has seen growing numbers of post-secondary institutions (PSIs) in Mi'kma'kik and Wabanakik begin to offer a minor in Indigenous Studies. However, Indigenous Peoples continue to be under-represented in STEAM programs and those in the health sciences and related fields in PSE as of 2020 (Bartlett et al., 2015; MSVU, 2020).

As Murdena reminded Cheryl, Mi'kmaq ARE the "scientists" of Mi'kma'kik. Over thousands of years, they developed complex understandings of their lands, waters, skies, animals, fish, plants, and other beings—of the cyclical cycles and interdependence of these. These were shared from generation to generation through "highly effective, traditional modes of teaching and learning within stories, ceremonies, and mentoring" (Bartlett et al., 2015, p. 291). However, due to Indigenous peoples being denigrated for centuries, barriers exist in garnering respect for Mi'kmaw/Indigenous Knowledges, including with Mi'kmaq learners.

Murdena elaborates:

We're still trying to make headway—convince children that your knowledge in finding medicines and all you know about habitat for fish, and everything is just as valid as what the biologists do in the aquatic schools. . . . But I do all I can to help the young people come to consensus with themselves. You don't have to abandon your culture to become educated—you can carry the two of them into any institution and come out proud as you went in. But children believe in order for you to be smart you have to speak English, which is not right and not true. (APCFNC, 2011, p. 29)

Murdena adds that survival requires working within both worlds/systems: "We have to adopt the white ways—we have to adopt the education systems. We need it so that we can advance" (APCFNC, 2011, p. 32). Hence etuaptmumk was brought forward by the Marshalls with strategic intent: to support Mi'kmaw youth in developing their identities and strengths as Mi'kmaq, to learn from their ancestors and their ancestral knowledges, and to help them understand that these hold immense contributions for the world. The Marshalls feel Mi'kmaw Knowledges are often thought of as purely philosophical, not fully understanding their practical applications for survival and globally (Marshall, A. 2013). Albert says:

Two-eyed seeing adamantly, respectfully, and passionately asks that we bring together our different ways of knowing to motivate people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike, to use all our understandings so we can leave the world a better place and not compromise the opportunities for our youth (in the sense of Seven Generations) through our own inaction. (Bartlett et al., 2012a, p. 337)

Indeed, etuaptmumk can potentially contribute to all of humanity in how we take care of our shared planetary health and ecosystems.

Program Evolution and Lack of Support

Developing, nurturing, and sustaining an unprecedented initiative such as the TK/IS program required considerable collaboration between Mi'kmaq and university communities, from a knowledge perspective and politically. It was a multi-year process for the TK/IS program to be approved and established. Growing out of a 1997 proposal to a pilot in 1999, it became an accredited university degree program in the fall of 2001, initially housed in the Department of Biology as part of Bartlett's research program. A holistic transdisciplinary curriculum composed of MSIT, or "everything together," science courses was created to emphasize common ground between "Western science and Aboriginal world views" while recognizing and honouring their differences (Hatcher et al., 2009; IIHS, 2021). Manuals for the courses, called "ThoughtTraps," were living documents drafted by Cheryl and incorporating input and feedback from students, Elders, and others within the community (IIHS, 2021). The team drew upon their friend Tewa of Santa Clara Pueblo scholar Gregory Cajete's pioneering work in the field of Indigenous science/knowledge, as well as the seminal work of Indigenous scholars, including Cree scholar Willie Ermine (Sturgeon Lake First Nation), Mi'kmaw scholar Marie Battiste (Potlotek First Nation), Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson, Jo-ann Archibald (Sto:lo First Nation), and many others. MSIT 101/103 "Sense of Place, Emergence, and Participation" looks at the nature of consciousness and creative relationships, in particular pattern recognition in the natural world and the crossing of boundaries between the external (nature) and internal

(consciousness) environments. MSiT 201/203 "Ways of Knowing" explores Mi'kmaw/Indigenous worldviews and concepts, educational foundations, and natural law and interdependence, as well as Western science worldviews, including how the big questions of the nature of the universe are theorized through cosmology, physics, chemistry, geology, and biology (IISH, 2021).

Graduates of the TK/IS program and those who took its courses hold vital positions today, including research scientist, research assistant, school principal, job coach, natural resource manager, nurse, and teacher in their communities (Bartlett et al., 2012a). Mi'kmaq who participated in the program (in whole or in part) can articulate the importance of working within Mi'kmaw/Indigenous Knowledge systems (IKS) and centre these despite ongoing colonial pressures. Mi'kmaw Knowledge Holder Clifford Paul (Membertou First Nation), Moose Management Coordinator at the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR), recounts that as a student in the TK/IS program, he was "able to weave the Traditional Knowledge of my ancestors—the knowledge that came from my lifestyle as a child—into the classroom where they brought in the modern, Western scientific understandings. It allowed me to dance in both worlds" (Marshall & Austin, 2018). Being grounded in a Mi'kmaw consciousness and ethics has guided the Cape Breton Highlands Moose Management Initiative, a collaborative project with Mi'kmaq, UINR, Parks Canada, and other initiatives Clifford and Albert are both involved with (UINR, 2021). UINR uses *etuaptmumk* in creating management plans for moose that are consistent with the concept of *netukulimk*—a Mi'kmaw understanding of sustainability. Clifford explains:

In a lot of our planning, we have to look seven generations ahead to make sure that the decisions we make today are going to positively impact the next seven generations, which is basically unheard of in government, in industry, and learning institutions. So, the Mi'kmaw way of looking at things, we see things in patterns, I look ahead seven generations, but I also look back seven generations as well. Is the work I'm doing today going to make my ancestors proud seven generations back? (Marshall & Austin, 2018)

In addition to being recognized by UINR and the CIHR, etuaptmumk has been included in collaborative environmental planning in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia's 10-year strategic plan for natural resources, land-based summer camps in Nunavut, Mi'kmaw community schools in Unama'ki, species-at-risk draft policy in Ontario, salmon and sustainability research in British Columbia, the International Year of Astronomy 2009, as well as a growing number of Masters and Ph.D. theses (IHS, 2021).

Despite the far-reaching impacts of etuaptmumk, since 2007, no students have enrolled, and the TK/IS program is no longer operational (IISH, 2016). This is due to a lack of sustainable, institutional support at multiple administrative levels, including a commitment to ongoing funding; a lack of understanding and experience in how university governance could support Mi'kmaw Elders/Knowledge Holders and Mi'kmaw/Indigenous Knowledge Mi'kmaw/Indigenous Knowledge autonomy/sovereignty; unresolved university/Mi'kmaw community relations; and university political practices that centre on settler-colonial goals (Bartlett et al., 2012a; Marshall, A., 2021). Nothing like the TK/IS program has been re-created at CBU since Cheryl's retirement and the gradual withdrawal of the Marshalls. Other PSIs in Mi'kma'kik have yet to grow a similar or full-fledged program. Meanwhile, Albert and Cheryl continue to nurture co-learning and etuaptmumk and contribute to knowledge gardening—akin to the "dynamic interplay of seeding, nurturing, and growing information" that comes from taking care of the land—through national and regional initiatives, spreading their insights (Bartlett et al., 2012, p. 336).

Reflecting on Knowledge Systems and Eurocentric/Settler-Colonial Ways of Knowing

In Albert's words, it is helpful to "scrutinize" or reflect on knowledge systems in considering how to work with diverse knowledges. Such contemplation helps digest teachings shared through Murdena's conception or metaphor of Mi'kmaw/IKS and in appreciating how the Marshalls and Cheryl propose weaving between knowledge systems through co-learning and

etuaptmumk. In a mainstream Canadian context where IKS are positioned as "other," and Eurocentric Knowledge systems (EKS) are normalized, it is challenging to recognize and reflect on the features of EKS. The Marshalls and Cheryl, along with many others, find that Eurocentric ways of knowing have diminished the role of subjective personal relationships, respect for living beings, and the realm of the spirit (Aikenhead & Mitchell, 2011; Bartlett et al., 2012a; Evernden, 1993). In contemplating this, we might ask: How do practices with EKS work to diminish IKS and holistic, including spiritual ways of knowing? How have diverse peoples come to see themselves as separate from the natural world and the interconnected ecosystems they are part of, holding anthropocentric views of the world?⁶¹ Some of this has been touched on in the literature review to explicate the ideological processes of cognitive imperialism and settler colonialism. Without an ethic of relational accountability and responsibility towards the land and other beings, many peoples globally are destroying the interconnected ecosystems of which we are a part and depend upon. Acknowledging there is diversity within EKS, I share a broad overview of Eurocentric or Euro-Canadian science,⁶² the dominant mainstream way of knowing relied upon in Canadian settler society, to address the issues posed here. This is followed by looking at co-learning and etuaptmumk more closely.

Eurocentric Sciences

The origin of the word science is from the Latin *scientia*, meaning knowledge, a knowing, expertness, or experience; by the late 14th century, it came to mean collective knowledge (Butler, 2015). In a Canadian context, Eurocentric sciences are also called Euro-Canadian

⁶¹ For an excellent history of this, see work by Canadian philosopher Neil Evernden, *The Natural Alien: Humankind and Environment* (1993).

⁶² I rely on British scholar Glen Aikenhead and Woodland Cree Scholar Herman Michell for their work in bringing together diverse Indigenous and Eurocentric perspectives, and on Wilson (2008) for his strength in knowledge translation to shed light on Eurocentric sciences. Also see Cajete (2000) and Kimmerer (2013).

sciences. This rests upon the Cartesian dualism, which divides the world into two parts: mind and matter/body. As posited by Rene Descartes in Renaissance Europe in 1643, dualism separates the world into physical/material and metaphysical aspects. Euro-Canadian sciences investigate only the material world—matter and energy. In this worldview, human intuition or spirit is part of a metaphysical realm, considered separate from the physical world, and does not interact with it (Aikenhead & Mitchell, 2011). Like Murdena's metaphor, a scientific model is a metaphor for how the physical world works, specific to the culture in which it was created (Aikenhead & Mitchell, 2011).

A fundamental assumption within Eurocentric sciences is that reality, or nature, is knowable. This is supported by a positivist paradigm that rests on the belief that there is one true reality that can be broken down into overriding laws, mechanistic explanations, or theories. Additionally, Eurocentric scientific epistemology is reductionist and assumes the whole can be known and quantified by investigating its parts. This way of knowing separates, classifies, and manipulates the smallest parts, substances, variables, or factors that can be measured, conceptualized, or experimented upon within the material world (Aikenhead & Mitchell, 2011).

In other words, according to Cree scholar Shawn Wilson, "The epistemology that goes with this is that through objective thought, it should be possible to discover this one reality" (Wilson, 2008, p. 36). Empirical scientists investigate reality by gathering data through experiments, field studies (i.e., geological, ecological, and resource management), and quality-control monitoring procedures. These methods are typically used by government, industrial, and medical scientists, who report their methods, results, and interpretations so that others can replicate their work if needed and for validation (Aikenhead & Mitchell, 2011). Aikenhead & Mitchell (2011) say this leads to objectification:

By representing things, events, and people by numbers, the presupposition of quantification encourages some scientists and others to believe that they can

objectify a thing, event, or person by stripping them of their qualitative, human, or spiritual attributes—their intelligible essences. (p. 53)

Peer review and consensus-making in the scientific community also play a role in determining what is considered "scientific truth." Positivists consider the scientific method the ultimate measure of rationality; what is not scientifically provable is not real (Wilson, 2008).

Consensus-making among scientists is thought to lead to a lack of bias or objectivity, which is considered ideal in this community; however, objectivity is not actually possible (Aikenhead & Mitchell, 2011). Wilson suggests that "Newton's law of motion is a good example of an ontological belief in one reality tested through physics experiments to come up with a law that Newton believed was an accurate description of that reality" (Wilson, 2008, p. 36).

Differently Situated Perspectives on Knowing

In contrast to Murdena's teachings on IKS, in which Indigenous knowers are in the centre of the circle, knowers within a Euro-Canadian science model stand outside the circle, claiming a stance of objectivity (Marshall & Bartlett, 2018).⁶³ As noted, Wilson (2008) equates the quantification process of trying to discover "truth," with trying to predict reality. However, in many Indigenous cultures, the mysteries of life, both in the cosmos and within the self, are celebrated (Aikenhead & Mitchell, 2011; Ermine, 1995). According to Wilson (2008),

[t]he notion that empirical evidence is sounder than cultural knowledge permeates Eurocentric thought but alienates many Indigenous scholars. Rather than their cultural knowledge being seen as extra intellectual, it is denigrated. It is the notion of the superiority of empirical knowledge that leads to the idea that the written text supersedes oral tradition. For Indigenous scholars, empirical knowledge is still critical, yet it is not their only way of knowing the world around them. (p. 58)

Denigration of Indigenous Knowledges is compounded by the anthropocentric beliefs of Judeo-Christian religions, which assert that humans have domination over the earth and have special

⁶³ See Marshall & Bartlett (2021) for a visual conception of a Eurocentric/Western Science.

status or are at the top of a hierarchy over other beings, such as plants, animals, and natural elements. As Wilson contends, "Positivism expresses Eurocentric superiority over all other cultures and celebrates the value of power and domination over nature" (Wilson, 2008, p. 58).

Indigenous Knowledges possess inherent worth. When they are set up as less than and/or in binary opposition to Eurocentric scientific knowledges and positioned as if they are in the past, this is not based on the strengths of both knowledge systems but, as discussed, is a result of the racist application of Eurocentric and white superiority. Wilson emphasizes that an Indigenous paradigm needs to be articulated without relating it to other paradigms in terms of knowledge production, creation, and legitimization. Otherwise, we fall "into a mainstream, positivist trap by creating a binary. Although additional paradigms may be useful to support [Indigenous] stance[s], any comparisons will inevitably lead to judgment and subjugation, an 'us vs. them' dichotomy" (Wilson, 2007, p. 194). Moreover, this leads to binary or dualistic thinking rather than ways of thinking that involve multiplicity and fluidity as found within Indigenous paradigms. Privileging Eurocentric epistemologies and beliefs about human dominance restrict the potential to come to emotional, spiritual, and place-based ways of knowing—modes of being and knowing that is part of our essential human nature. Both Indigenous and EKS have their strengths. However, IKS offer epistemological space that honours relationality with all beings. Marie Battiste and Sajej Henderson (Chickasaw Nation and Cheyenne Tribe) (2009) suggest that:

Indigenous Knowledge is more than the binary opposite of Eurocentric Knowledge. As a concept, Indigenous Knowledge benchmarks the limitations of Eurocentric theory and methodologies, evidence, interpretation, and conclusions. It fills the ethical and knowledge gaps in Eurocentric education, research, and scholarship. (p. 7)

In learning to create respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples and moving towards Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty in the academy, settler peoples need to acknowledge how

settler versions of "truth" within EKS impact relationships within and structures of Canadian institutions, preferences for knowledge production and evaluation, and the everyday culture of academia. While knowledge engagement between IKS and EKS is framed as an interface between "Western" or Eurocentric science and Indigenous science within the TK/IS program and the Indigenous Environmental Studies and Science program at Trent University, and in the literature on this topic, engagement can be expanded beyond "science" to include all aspects of IKS and EKS, within transcultural and transdisciplinary contexts—beyond siloed academic disciplines and departments.

Knowledge Engagement: Co-learning and Etuaptmunk

Some of the dynamics of EKS and their applications have been considered. Next, understandings of and experiences with relational knowledge engagement through co-learning and etuaptmunk or the gift of multiple perspectives generated by the TK/IS community are shared.

Co-Learning

Co-learning is a transcultural, emergent, and multidimensional process that involves committing to nurturing and growing respectful relationships, learning from each other, learning together, seeking to understand and work within diverse knowledge systems, and nurturing collaborative and transformative action on behalf of Mother Earth and all beings (Bartlett et al., 2015; Marshall & Bartlett, 2018). The Marshalls and Cheryl situate co-learning within a transdisciplinary context based on Pohl's (2010) understanding. Co-learning grew out of the recognition that diverse knowledges, including Indigenous and Eurocentric, are distinct paradigms/knowledge systems, each with its own ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies, and axiologies. The co-learning community acknowledges the contributions of Ermine (1995) and his explorations of the concept of ethical space between Indigenous and Eurocentric

Knowledge systems (EKS) in the development of co-learning (Hatcher et al., 2009). Being able to see a "big picture" of learning and to put "our values and actions and knowledges in front of us, like an object, for examination and discussion" (Bartlett et al., 2012a, p. 335) or "knowledge scrutinization" (Marshall & Bartlett, 2018, p. 3) is part of a "paradigmatic practice" (Iwama et al., 2009, p. 21). This involves developing "shared abilities to respectfully work" with Indigenous and Eurocentric epistemologies and ontologies, and seeing with the strengths of both worldviews (Bartlett et al., 2015, p. 280). Specific aspects of these "big picture" understandings based on Murdena's metaphor concerning IKS and EKS have been discussed, along with my interpretations of how relations and knowledge engagement might potentially evolve between L'nu'k and settler/Treaty peoples and their respective knowledge systems, based on heart-based knowing and relationality with all beings. Elder Albert affirms that when we put our diverse paradigms and ways of knowing together, we must ensure that "the essence, the S/spirit of our ways, has been respected as we work to balance the energies of those ways" (Marshall & Bartlett, 2018, pp. 3–4).

In introducing co-learning and etuaptmumk, Elder Albert continually emphasizes that "the foundational basis for any relationship is an exchange of stories" (Bartlett et al., 2015, p. 283). Indeed, for Murdena, Albert, Cheryl, and others in their community, this involved many hours of sharing stories over food, tea, and coffee at the Marshall's kitchen table in Eskasoni First Nation. As they developed relationships of mutual trust and respect, understandings deepened and evolved, and more nuanced understandings of co-learning emerged. The core team found that "participants must be willing to **commit** [emphasis mine] to learning together. . . . Moreover, it will be an ongoing journey because nurturing genuine relational and collective capabilities requires generous time" (Marshall & Bartlett, 2021). Learning together involves engaging all four domains of being—physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. Some of the

practices emphasized for co-learning and etuaptmumk include conversations, dialogue, workshops, projects, storytelling, the use of visuals, and knowledge gardening (Bartlett et al., 2015; Marshall & Bartlett, 2021). It is an organic and emergent process based on co-learning involving participatory, action-oriented growing and nurturing of etuaptmumk through projects grounded in unique and diverse place-/territory-based community priorities (Marshall & Bartlett, 2021). The core TK/IS participants note that a co-learning journey offers the potential to embody the gift of humility, one of the Seven Sacred Teachings—love, honesty, humility, respect, truth, patience, and wisdom of both the Mi'kmaw and Anishinaabeg Peoples⁶⁴ (Bartlett et al., 2012a). They find that the etuaptmumk/co-learning community can shrink when participants realize what an evolving journey might require of them.

Collateral Learning

In developing understandings of co-learning, Cheryl and the Marshalls looked to the "science-for-all" movement that seeks to balance the epistemological playing field (Aikenhead & Jegede, 1999, p. 269), the field of concept learning, and the process of collateral learning as put forward by Jegede (1995 & 1997, as cited by Hatcher et al., 2009). Collateral learning acknowledges that learners have different epistemologies, and that "cognitive conflicts" may arise for those learning mainstream Eurocentric sciences depending on their "cultural understandings" or worldviews that need to be addressed and resolved (Aikenhead & Jegede, 1999, p. 271). Ogawa (1995, as cited in Aikenhead & Jegede, 1999) argues for multisience teaching, proposing that learners become aware of their personal and/or Indigenous understandings and the conflicting understandings between knowledge systems to enhance

⁶⁴ Murdena calls these the Mi'kmaq Sacred Teachings as shown Appendix C. According to Gidigaa Migizi/Doug Williams, these are the Kokum Dibaajimowin (Grandmother Teachings). They come from the Grandmothers but are also known as Grandfather Teachings because of their utmost importance. In Anishinaabeg conceptions, bravery rather than patience is considered one of the gifts.

their learning. Aikenhead and Jegede discuss various types of collateral learning and ways for facilitating dialogue across conflicting understandings that could be explored further to enhance co-learning pedagogy.

Etuaptmumk: The Gift of Multiple Perspectives/Two-Eyed Seeing

Etuaptmumk, or the gift of multiple perspectives or two-eyed seeing, emerged as the guiding principle for a co-learning journey; "this was to encourage 'it's us, together' consciousness needed for meaningful collaboration" between Mi'kmaw and settler/Treaty peoples and for engaging with Indigenous Knowledges (Bartlett et al., 2012a, p. 336). A basic definition of etuaptmumk has been shared. Mi'kmaw Elder Barb Sylliboy (Eskasoni First Nation) contributes that "uaptm" talks about seeing, "et" comes from "e'tasiw," which means each and every, and "umk" is the act of. Therefore, etuaptmumk means seeing from two or more perspectives (Barb Sylliboy, lives in Eskasoni First Nation, NS, personal communication, July 2023). As mentioned, etuaptmumk "weaves back and forth" or "dances" between knowledge systems (Bartlett et al., 2012, p. 336). TK/IS program collaborators indicate that in a particular set of circumstances, the strengths of Indigenous Knowledges-sciences are needed, while in others, those from Eurocentric Knowledges-sciences might be more suitable (Bartlett et al., 2012a, p. 336). The Marshalls acknowledge that the gift of multiple perspectives is prevalent among Indigenous Peoples across Chi'Mikinak (the Great Turtle) and that L'nu'k understandings are among many diverse Indigenous views.⁶⁵ (Some of these perspectives are shared in Figure 3). In the east, etuaptmumk was inspired by the late Charles Labrador (Acadia First Nation), a Mi'kmaw spiritual leader, healer, and Chief who said, "Go into a forest, you see a birch, maple,

⁶⁵ This was corroborated by Migizi ow-kwe/Shirley Williams and Skahendowaneh Swamp when I presented on etuaptmumk to the Traditional Advisory Council for the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. Program in 2017.

pine. Look underground, and all those trees are holding hands. We as people must do the same" (Iwama et al., 2009, p. 3).

An example of how Mi'kmaw and Eurocentric Knowledges can effectively combine their strengths is illustrated by how the health of A'se'k (the other room) or Boat Harbour was assessed as part of a collaborative research partnership between the Pictou Landing First Nation Native Women's Group and Dalhousie University—*Our Ancestors Are in Our Lands, Waters, and Air*. The team used the Mi'kmaw understanding of *weji-sqalia'tiek* (we sprouted from the land) to guide how to bring in knowledges and direction from Elders, including stories, oral histories, sharing circles, and documentary film, alongside scientific testing of air, water, and earth (soil), which corroborated community knowledges (HEC Lab, 2021). Coupled with ongoing community resistance, the project contributed to ending 50 years of effluent being dumped by the Northern Pulp Nova Scotia Corporation into the Northumberland Strait and the creation of the Boat Harbour Remediation Project (Nova Scotia, 2021). Mi'kmaw scholar Dr. Diana Lewis (Sipekne'katik First Nation)⁶⁶ explains how, from L'nuk perspectives, "to be healthy, [Mi'kmaq] have to develop the concepts that reflect the way that we look at the world and the way that we look at our land, air, and water" to do *etuaptmumk* (Marshall & Austin, 2018).

Challenges and Lessons Learned on a Co-learning Journey

The experiences and praxis of the co-learning/*etuaptmumk* community have much to offer concerning the tensions and opportunities in supporting Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty in Canadian PSE. Here, I share some of the TK/IS program collaborators' insights around knowledge engagement and issues they encountered related to colonial hegemony

⁶⁶ Dr. Lewis's Ph.D. dissertation, *Tilnuo'lti'k - Weji-sqalia'timk - How we will be Mi'kmaq on our Land: Working Together with Pictou Landing First Nation to Redefine a Healthy Community* (2018) also uses an *etuaptmumk* approach.

within academic governance. As discussed in the literature review and in illuminating some of Elder Murdena Marshall's teachings, Indigenous Peoples are forced to work within Eurocentric ontologies, epistemologies, and Eurocentric structures and systems of power in PSE.

The co-learning–etuaptmumk team recognizes and highlights the limitations of the English language in doing etuaptmumk, mainly as translations from Mi'kmaq can render verb-based and action-oriented processes of l'nuwita'simk (L'nu'k worldviews) into products or objects. Albert and Murdena acknowledge the spiritual nature and healing potential of the Mi'kmaw language and the limitations of English to do more than "gesture in the direction of the spiritual" (Iwama et al., 2009, p. 8). They affirm that Eurocentric ontologies cannot explain Mi'kmaw/Indigenous spirituality (as mentioned in the previous chapter). TK/IS program collaborators recognize potential risks in bringing mainstream sciences into engagement with Mi'kmaw/Indigenous spiritual contexts. They imply that integrative approaches require the rigour of both knowledge systems. Ultimately, scientific approaches must harmonize with Mi'kmaw spirituality and protocols (Iwama et al., 2009).

The TK/IS program collaborators consistently stress the need to do "integrative" and not "integrated" science, to work within diverse knowledge paradigms and not try to merge knowledge systems. They emphasize that etuaptmumk seeks to avoid "a clash between knowledges, domination by one worldview, or assimilation by one worldview of the knowledge of another," (Bartlett et al., 2015, p. 299). This means "modif[ing] research parameters or approach until we reach a harmonious consensus that maintains complementarity without compromising either perspective. If consensus is not possible, research does not proceed" (Iwama et al., 2009, p. 21). Indigenous-settler power relations or the white privilege of some researchers are not considered in the above. I believe reflection on these is critical and strengthens understandings of how to apply etuaptmumk. They also emphasize that if the

"paradigmatic practice[s]" of co-learning are not part of doing etuaptmumk and if timeframes are rushed, cooption of Indigenous Knowledges and "tokenistic" work can result (Iwama et al., 2009, p. 21; Marshall & Bartlett, 2018). While not stated explicitly, I believe this lesson is directed towards settler peoples who cite etuaptmumk in an attempt to tick off the boxes in terms of Indigenous engagement or inclusion or reconciliation without a basis of trust-based relationality and the activation of ethical spaces.

Towards the end of her time at CBU, Cheryl worked with Albert and Murdena to share reflections for weaving or dancing between Indigenous Knowledges and mainstream sciences, putting forward a list of eight lessons learned:

1. Acknowledge that we need each other and must engage in a co-learning journey.
2. Be guided by Two-Eyed Seeing.
3. View "science" in an inclusive way.
4. Do things (rather than "just talk") in a creative, grow-forward way.
5. Become able to put our values and actions and knowledges in front of us, like an object, for examination and discussion.
6. Use visuals.
7. Weave back and forth between our worldviews.
8. Develop an advisory council of willing, knowledgeable stakeholders, drawing upon individuals both from within the educational institution(s) and within Aboriginal communities. (Bartlett et al., 2012a, p. 340)

The first seven relate to knowledge engagement, while the eighth relates to program governance. Lessons one to three have been discussed. The action-based directive of number four will be discussed further. Lessons five to seven have been broadly explored, focusing on Murdena's foundational circle teachings relating to knowledge engagement or weaving between knowledge systems. A wealth of visual and other materials grounded within l'nuwita'simk (L'nu'k worldviews) that can assist further remain available on the [IIHS website](#). Lesson eight, related to governance and knowledge sovereignty, is paramount and discussed further in this chapter.

Re-grounding Etuaptmumk and Co-Learning within Treaty Understandings

The innovative work of the TK/IS program and the Mi'kmaw Studies program at CBU was developed before the current era of truth and reconciliation. These programs also existed before the growing recognition of Canada and Canadian PSE within a settler-colonial context and of recovered Treaty understandings within the Wabanaki Confederacy (Battiste, M., 2016a). As discussed, challenges for co-learning and etuaptmumk concern avoiding the domination of EKS, beyond what is labelled "science," and balancing non-reciprocal and asymmetrical Indigenous/settler power relations in PSE. The insights of the co-learning–etuaptmumk community may be supported and strengthened going forward by drawing from the emerging analysis of Indigenous-settler relations within settler-colonial theory, and as well by recentring and re-grounding co-learning/etuaptmumk within the Treaty and Creation Story foundations from which they originate. Engaging with these two perspectives aids in growing understandings of relational autonomy and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty.

Drawing from the Strengths of Settler-Colonial Theory

In keeping with an Indigenist and co-learning approach, I centre Indigenous critical analysis and look broadly to the strengths of critical theory analysis, both of which reveal how interlocking systems of domination and oppression uphold the structures of settler colonialism. As noted, settler-colonial theory (SCT) provides ways to theorize about power that assist in identifying, naming, resisting, disrupting, and dismantling structures and systems constructed within neocolonial, neoliberal, and multicultural ideologies and frameworks in Canada by exposing how these are rooted in oppression and domination that is part of Indigenous Peoples' everyday realities. These systems include heteropatriarchy; anti-Indigenous, anti-Black, and other forms of racism; white supremacy; global market capitalism; cisnormativity; and

anthropocentrism (Simpson, L., 2014 & 2017; Snelgrove et al., 2014). As the same scaffolding of interlocking systems upholds the structures of public, Canadian universities, they tend to reproduce settler-colonial goals that condone Indigenous dispossession, genocidal intent, and the degradation of Indigenous land and knowledge systems, through their structures, policies, processes, and practices. As discussed, Indigenous Knowledges are vulnerable to erasure, denigration, suppression, omission, marginalization, fragmentation, objectification, misrepresentation, decontextualization, appropriation, cooption, and commodification when removed from the context of land-based, linguistic, lived experiences, and expressions of Indigenous relationality, autonomy, and sovereignty. Because Indigenous understandings, including *etuaptmumk*, are also at risk of knowledge predation within EKS due to the efficacy of the English language, as well as the speed and goals of global market capitalism, knowledge domination and assimilation may be unavoidable within colonial hegemonies. Indigenous Peoples are also vulnerable, experiencing daily and ongoing violence within settler-colonial contexts. Settler-colonial analysis can support Indigenous resistance to settler colonialism, assisting our collective efforts to address interlocking colonial aspects of the academy to make systemic, decolonial, and transformative change in PSE.

The rushed, cooptive, and tokenistic practices identified by the Marshalls and Cheryl (and others) are learned hegemonic practices, normalized within settler-colonial systems. Albert tells me that as a "knowledge navigator," I need to demonstrate that I am well-grounded between Indigenous and Eurocentric worldviews, to make both worldviews meaningful, without compromising either. He adds that I "need to be aware of who I am and what I am doing and conscious of my relationships so that no one must ask, 'Who are you and what is your role?'" (2013). The application of surface-level understandings and hollow rhetoric related to IKS and "Indigenizing the academy" disregards Indigenous Knowledge's autonomy. Countering colonial

hegemony necessitates that settlers and newcomers reject the cooption of *etuaptmumk* and other Indigenous understandings within academia and pick up our Treaty bundles to activate and embody co-learning. To this end, envisioning where the work of *etuaptmumk* and co-learning might go, I look at knowledge engagement and PSE governance through emerging Treaty-based understandings that can guide ethical and reciprocal relations between Indigenous and settler/newcomer peoples and their knowledges.

Treaty Epistemology

I propose that learning through Treaty epistemology, which means being grounded within Treaty relationships and responsibilities, indicates a way for settlers to transform and increase our capacities for respectfully working and collaborating with Indigenous Peoples and with the land. This has been suggested continually by Ermine (1995) and many other Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders, as well as in the TRC Calls to Action. What I offer here is generated from my perspective as a settler living in Mi'kma'kik and is mainly for a settler audience. Murdena and Albert have gifted us many teachings concerning heart-based, transformative learning and ethical knowledge engagement, providing guidance for settler peoples to activate and embody reciprocal, relational, respectful, and trust-based co-existence. As discussed, transforming settler consciousness is one of the first steps toward dismantling settler-colonial structures and systems. This is part of ongoing reflective praxis as grounded in specific Indigenous homelands (Davis et al., 2016; Regan, 2010). Recall that in Mi'kma'kik, spaces of ethical engagement originate from the Mi'kmaw Creation stories and are later shared through the Peace and Friendship Treaties (1725–1779), also known as the Covenant Chain of Treaties, as well as through co-learning and *etuaptmumk* (Young, 2020). It was not until the 1970s that Mi'kmaw perspectives on these Treaties were acknowledged through the tireless work of Grand

Captain Alex Denny, Joe B. Marshall, and many others (Battiste, M. 2016a; Treaty Education Nova Scotia, 2021).

The Peace and Friendship Treaties are some of the most significant nation-to-nation Treaties on Chi'Mikinak (the Great Turtle). They are what gave early European settlers and continue to give their descendants and other immigrants their legal right to be in Mi'kma'kik (Palmater, 2016). Mi'kmaw scholar Pam Palmater reminds us that "the spirit and intent of these treaties were based on mutual respect, mutual benefit, and mutual protection. . . . These agreements applied to both His Majesty's heirs and Mi'kmaw heirs, forever" (Palmater, 2016, p. 14). Through these Treaties, Wabanaki Peoples did not surrender their land or sovereignty but committed to living peacefully with the settlers (Battiste, M. 2016a). The British agreed to protect Mi'kmaw rights, which did not include the gradual restriction of Mi'kmaq from their lands or the degradation of ecosystems (Battiste, J., 2016). Nor was the Crown or any colonial governments granted the right to interfere with Mi'kmaw education. Mi'kmaq have rights to autonomous education based on the Treaties—not just through mechanisms of colonial recognition as per Canada's constitution, but as living and enduring relations within m'sit no'kmaq consciousness (Battiste, M., 2016a). Honouring the Peace and Friendship Treaties means respecting Mi'kmaw political, intellectual, economic, spiritual, and all forms of sovereignty through an ethic of non-interference as individuals, and institutionally. Taking up Treaty relations and responsibilities to guide ethical spaces resonates with a decolonizing ethic to rebalance and heal colonial knowledge domination and power relations with Indigenous Peoples, the lands and waters, and all beings.

I rely on Dr./Elder Albert Marshall, my exceedingly kind, generous, and resilient friend, mentor, and Treaty partner, to teach about ankukamkowe'l,⁶⁷ a Mi'kmaw expression for Treaty.

⁶⁷ Spelling from Barb Sylliboy of Eskasoni First Nation, 2023.

An IRS Survivor whose lifelong partner Murdena asked him to keep going with the work after she passed, Albert's gentle and caring ways disarm listeners, and at the same time, his brilliant intellect, ongoing resistance, and exceptional abilities in speaking truth to power challenge the multiple government, university, and Indigenous initiatives he is involved with. Albert explains how *etuaptmumk* and co-learning are essential to *ankukamkua'tu* (doing Treaty)⁶⁸ in taking care of Creation:

It's an agreement in which two parties agree on how to take care of each other by using the gifts that each party brings. How, in turn, would those two gifts, those two ways of knowing, come together to take care of our natural world—with all of Creation? I think this would be the reason why our forefathers agreed by calling them peace and friendship. None of the language that was used indicated that any of the land was ceded, but rather agreeing that they should try to live in balance and harmony with each other so that together, they could better take care of all of Creation (2019).

Mi'kmaw legal scholar Tuma Young emphasizes that *kisa'muemkewey* (Treaty diplomacy), or "the process of treaty making or treaty diplomacy," is also critical to Treaty understandings.⁶⁹ The interconnections between Treaty and *etuaptmumk* are well recognized within Mi'kmaw consciousness. As Rebecca Thomas states: "Etuaptmumk implies responsibilities for reciprocity, mutual accountability, and co-learning. It is what we tried to build our Treaties on (Thomas, R., 2016).

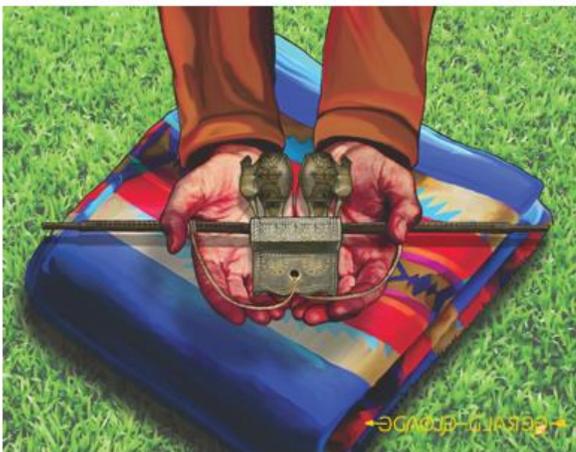
In relation to the action suggested by the Marshalls and Cheryl as part of lesson learned number four, in engaging between diverse knowledge systems, Albert also suggests that he is currently more interested how two perspectives work together rather than the noun *etuaptmumk* (the gift of multiple perspectives). As the Mi'kmaw language is verb or action-based, he says there is a responsibility to take action beyond theory: "We need to use our

⁶⁸ Spelling from Barb Sylliboy of Eskasoni First Nation., 2023.

⁶⁹ Young notes that some Mi'kmaq say *ankukamkove'l*, while others prefer *keta'matultimk* for Treaty or agreement. He prefers *kisaknutmaqan* as he says this means a completed discussion in which agreement or consensus has been reached between parties (Young, T., 2020).

unique gifts to be the eyes, ears, and voice of Mother Earth" (2019). Albert reminds us that a critical activation of the Peace and Friendship Treaties in taking care of Creation in Mi'kma'kik is netukulimk (sustaining ourselves). As established, netukulimk guides Mi'kmaw law and governance (Battiste, J. 2016; Metallic & Cavanagh, 2002). Netukulimk involves activating and embodying respect, reverence, responsibility, reciprocity, co-existence, interdependence, and community spirit (IISH, 2011). Albert says it "takes you into a place where you are very conscious of how the human two-leggeds are interdependent and interconnective with the natural world . . . this philosophy/ideology is so ingrained in your subconscious that you are constantly aware of not creating an imbalance" (IISH, 2011). Albert and Cheryl often speak about how the actions that grow from knowledge gardening are grounded in land-based processes. Knowledge gardening is akin to what Glen Coulthard (2014) calls grounded normativity. Ultimately, Treaty-based paradigms of being and acting are paramount for rebalancing relations.

As we come together as Treaty people, Albert suggests that because these endeavours are challenging and require adaptation, co-learning requires ongoing capacities for l'l'oqaptmu'k



(to visit for renewal in the context of maintaining movement in the direction Spirit intended). He envisions a co-learning pipe, a two-bowled, two-stemmed pipe that might assist Treaty people in balancing the energies of their ways and coming together in spiritual

Figure 6: Albert Marshall's Vision of a Co-Learning Pipe. Art by Gerald Gloade (Millbrook First Nation)

collaboration (as shown in Figure 6). Three dots on each pipe represent air, water, and soil. At the current time, Albert says one of these dots is blocked: the energy coming from ancestors.

The energies of our diverse ways are not yet coming together. When they do, they will need to be nurtured and cross-pollinated. Albert says deep dialogue and listening towards "kisutmauk" (we come to consensus so that we may move forward) is critical for how two perspectives work together (Marshall & Bartlett, 2018, p. 4). Albert offers further guidance on applying our gifts for relational co-existence. He has found that for the Elders/Knowledge Holders, working for the well-being of their communities, transmitting their culture and knowledges, and maintaining the ecological integrity of Mawi-wsitqamuey (All of Creation),⁷⁰ it is like trying to move a heavy sledge. He says the Elders are dragging the sledge, as they must determine where it goes, and settler allies need to do the pushing. As Murdena has shared, non-Indigenous peoples cannot delve into the centre of Mi'kmaw Knowledge systems, yet through reflective praxis and coming to activate mkamlamun (heart-mind), we can grow relational ways and direct our energies into pushing the sledge. In other words, settler allies, when collaborating in the spirit of co-learning, may be guided by etuaptmumk if they are working in alignment with Indigenous Peoples, on initiatives led by Indigenous Peoples. Based on the insights of L'nu'k and other Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Holders concerning co-learning and Treaty understandings, I suggest Indigenous-settler relational and ethical cues be guided by Treaty-based co-learning and etuaptmumk. In this way, we can draw from the strengths of the L'nu'k Creation stories to rebalance asymmetrical Indigenous-settler power relations and relations with the land and other beings and move towards Indigenous relational autonomy and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty in the academy.

⁷⁰ Word and translation from Barb Sylliboy (Eskasoni First Nation), 2023.

Towards Upholding Treaty Ethics in Post-Secondary Institutional Governance

To further envision the potential of the teachings shared thus far, I gesture towards how the seeds of knowledge about *etuaptmumk* and Treaty spread by Albert, Murdena, and the other Elders/Knowledge Holders might be encouraged to germinate (be activated or operationalized) within university structures and systems. Ultimately, this would lead to greater Indigenous Knowledge autonomy and the transformation of PSIs and settler consciousness.

University systems neglect Indigenous initiatives within the hierarchical and shape-shifting nature of colonial hegemony if Treaty relations, responsibilities, and ethics are not upheld. This was the experience of the TK/IS program at CBU. Initially, the support of Jacquelyn Scott, who, according to Cheryl, was an "insightful and community-minded" president willing to direct her vertical and horizontal powers to nurture the program, was instrumental (Bartlett et al., 2017). However, following Scott's departure in 2002, the program encountered multiple challenges, including "inconsistencies and insufficiencies at the administrative, faculty, budgetary, and recruitment levels" (Bartlett et al., 2012a, p. 333). The TK/IS team expressed concerns from 2005 to 2008; however, these went unaddressed and "eventually became overwhelming" (Bartlett et al., 2018). Cheryl had attempted to steward the TK/IS program from within the Department of Biology, funding it through Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grants procured through her position as Chair of Integrative Science. There was no formal departmental support or budget until it was moved to the Department of Indigenous Studies in 2010. However, this shift of program governance did not address the intersecting issues or consider existing relations and configurations in which the co-learning–*etuaptmumk* community emerged.

Beyond these challenges, as mentioned above with program governance, the most significant issues were a lack of understanding and respect for Mi'kmaw/Indigenous Knowledges

as paradigms/systems and a lack of collective Indigenous community stewardship, as stressed in the TK/IS team's lesson learned number eight, which stipulates the necessity for "collective stewardship and participation by interested Elders, educators, and others from the Aboriginal community, alongside constructive and critical institutional input" (Bartlett et al., 2012a, p. 335). The Marshalls and Cheryl find that consultation with Indigenous communities is congruent with the recommendations made in *Honouring Traditional Knowledge* (Bartlett et al., 2012a). Specifically, "PSIs should be compelled to seek guidance from [an] Elders Council to develop appropriate curriculums related to Traditional Knowledge for relevant post-secondary programming" (APCFNC, 2011). This is echoed by Rich (2011), who affirms that Indigenous governance structures are critical for programs that engage with IKS.

While complex dynamics came into play, I believe the structure, practices, and culture at CBU were unable to nurture the TK/IS community because of deep settler-colonial hegemony, which includes racism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, cisnormativity, and global market capitalism. This manifested as a lack of understanding and respect for Mi'kmaw/Indigenous Knowledges as paradigms/systems, coupled with academic gatekeeping used to maintain the supremacy of EKS. Inexperience and/or unwillingness to work with Indigenous communities to support PSE stewardship based on differently situated knowledges and ways of decision-making were also factors. CBU had little experience with L'nu'k Elders/Knowledge Holders, who, as living sources of L'nu'k Knowledges, and spiritual and political leaders, challenge the hegemony of academic experts and the academy. The TK/IS team could not shift these structural and systemic issues on their own. While many seeds of knowledge were planted through the efforts of the co-learning—etuaptmumk community, at that juncture, CBU could not nurture the program to blossom into an ongoing entity. Ultimately, the institution was not able or was unwilling to

transform in ways that could promote either co-governance with Mi'kmaw communities or Indigenous Knowledge autonomy, for that matter.

Moreover, CBU could not recognize the potential within co-learning and *etuaptmumk* to co-generate policies in alignment with Mi'kmaw Knowledge and research protocols and Treaty understandings. These are lessons learned for how to nurture university–Indigenous relations and partnerships, for learning together, and for respecting and creating spaces for Mi'kmaw governance and knowledge sovereignty in policy and praxis, as well as for spreading the teachings of *etuaptmumk* and *netukulimk* (sustaining ourselves). While the university administration was not yet ready, at the same time, Indigenous Elders from the *Honouring Traditional Knowledge* project also felt most Atlantic region Chiefs were not ready to embrace the Elders' vision for PSE fully. Alex Saunders, an Inuit Elder (Nunatsiavut, Labrador), comments, "Neither are the Elders ready, but we have to start somewhere" (APCFNC, 2011). Albert has reflected on this since 2011 and asserts a need for "institutional mechanisms" that ensure Indigenous/university joint advisory committees with Elder/Knowledge Holders as part of the structure and systems of PSIs (Bartlett et al., 2012, p. 337).⁷¹

With a resurgence of Treaty education across Chi'Mikinak, the prospects for creating, funding, and nourishing collective Indigenous community–university stewardship of Indigenous PSE initiatives based on Treaty ethics is promising. This includes bringing diverse knowledges together to take care of Creation—beyond the knowledges of Indigenous elected leadership and university-educated people to include grassroots Indigenous Knowledges. While this is not yet occurring widely in PSIs across Mi'kma'kik, the Mi'kmaq-Wolastoqey Centre (MWC) at the University of New Brunswick (UNB), which created a Council of Elders in 2014 offers one model.

⁷¹ Albert found in 2013 that the Unama'ki Advisory Committee he had served on was cut due to budgetary reasons without his knowledge.

In the current era of reconciliation, the CBU administration would be compelled to nurture the TK/IS program, co-learning, and etuaptmumk as part of implementing the TRC's Calls to Action, yet enforced reconciliation is not meaningful co-existence. There is an urgent need for transformative change, for all PSIs to pick up their Treaty bundles (where Treaties exist).

Through the foresight of Wabanaki ancestors, the Peace and Friendship Treaties ARE the policies and practices needed to work within diverse perspectives as per decolonial Indigenization (which includes both Treaty-based and resurgence-based decolonial Indigenization) (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). Within a Treaty context, spaces for Mi'kmaw and other Indigenous Peoples to enact relational, land-based, and clan-based knowledge governance have opened and are continuing to open up. The addition of Mi'kmaw scholar Marie Battiste (Potlotek First Nation, Professor Emerita at the University of Saskatchewan) as Special Advisor to the Vice President Academic and Unama'ki College in 2021 signifies that perhaps seeds are beginning to germinate at CBU. However, this remains to be seen.

Additionally, the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) Strait Area campus adopted etuaptmumk and brought in Dr./Elder Albert as an advisor for the School of Environment and Technology (Lowthers, 2021). So, too, the Province of Nova Scotia adopted netukulimk (sustaining ourselves) to guide environmental stewardship and professional learning based on etuaptmumk (Nova Scotia Legislature, 2021). These are promising developments; however, Indigenous inclusion in these instances does not represent structural, transformational, reconciliatory, or Indigenizing change but simply the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples within colonial governance structures and frameworks. Perhaps Nova Scotia and the NSCC's adoption of etuaptmumk will encourage a transition towards decolonial Indigenization through Treaty and resurgence-based teachings. After generations of privileging Eurocentric knowledges over others, let the Treaties of Peace and Friendship guide us to support Indigenous and other

diverse knowledge systems through ethics of non-interference, in Wabanakik, and beyond. Let us end colonial relations and knowledge domination in the academy. Wabanaki, Innu, and Inuit Elders have invited us on a co-learning journey. They are hopeful that we can come to respect Indigenous ways of being and knowing and learn how to live together in their homelands. This means respecting Indigenous relational autonomy and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty in the academy. Let us co-create the beautiful, just, and shared futures we can realize as Treaty partners. In keeping with Elder Albert's vision, as grounded in Treaty-based co-learning and etuaptmunk, let us continue to transform, to heal, and to restore balance and harmony with the land and other beings so that the energies of our ancestors may come together to realize our potential as good relatives. M'sit no'kmaq (All My Relations).

CHAPTER SIX: THE CREATION AND EVOLUTION OF INDIGENOUS STUDIES AT TRENT UNIVERSITY

Introduction

In the chapters that follow, we move to Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Aki (Mississauga Anishinaabeg land) and focus on the journey of Indigenous Studies and programming at Trent University (Trent) in Nogojiwanong—"the place at the foot of the rapids" (also known as Peterborough, ON). In this chapter, I share a short history of the creation and evolution of Indigenous Studies and programming. I then highlight some of the strengths, gifts, teachings, and practices engaged by Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders associated with Trent. Through their efforts, they activate, embody, and nurture Indigenous relational autonomy and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty. The story of Indigenous programs and the journey of the Chanie Wenjack School of Indigenous Studies (Wenjack School) illuminates some of the issues, tensions, and opportunities for creating spaces for Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders in post-secondary education (PSE) and is essential in establishing the context for subsequent discussions. In relation to activating, embodying, and nurturing Indigenous Knowledge systems at Trent and in mainstream PSE, Indigenous and settler research collaborators feel it is critical to maintain, strengthen, and revitalize what they identify as exemplary practices. Research collaborators indicate that all programming needs to be sustainably resourced.

The Creation of Indigenous Studies

The establishment of Indigenous Studies at Trent, wherein Indigenous Knowledge systems (IKS) were/are no longer subsumed under the Department of Anthropology, is a significant demonstration of respect and understanding of Indigenous Peoples as having their own knowledges or knowledge systems or paradigms. This development evolved from the energy of Indigenous political action and cultural resurgence in the late 1960s and early 1970s

(Fontaine & McCaskill, 2022).⁷² In 1969, Trent was the first post-secondary institution (PSI) in Canada, and the second on Chi'Mikinaak (Great Turtle), to create an academic department and spaces focused on Indigenous Peoples and knowledges. Co-founded by Harvey McCue of Georgina Island First Nation and Kenneth Kidd, Chair of Anthropology, and supported by Dr. Tom Symons, Trent's first president, the Indian-Eskimo Studies program (now Indigenous Studies) encouraged the establishment of subsequent programs across Chi'Mikinaak. A foundational relationship with Wshkiigimongaki (Curve Lake First Nation, the closest Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe community) was initiated in 1964, when Chief Dalton Jacobs contributed two dollars to start the fundraising that created Trent. Symons believed Trent had a critical mission to contribute to improving the lives of Indigenous Peoples and is revered as an early supporter of Indigenous Studies (Trent, 2017).

Trent has many firsts in creating diverse Indigenous programming, degrees, positions, and spaces.⁷³ In addition to the Indian-Eskimo Studies program (1969), Trent's other firsts include the Department of Native Studies and the Gilbert Monture Natives Studies lounge (1972); the hiring of Elders as professors (1975) and tenure-track Elders (2001); the Elders and Traditional Peoples Gathering (1976); the Indigenous Studies Bachelor of Arts honours program (1978); the Native Management and Economic Development program (1985) and its Council of Directors (1986); the Master of Arts program in Canadian and Indigenous Studies with the Frost

⁷² For a detailed history of Indigenous Studies at TU and Indigenous activism and resurgence starting in the 1960s, see Fontaine, J., & McCaskill, D. (2022), *Di-bayn-di-zi-win (To Own Ourselves): Embodying Ojibway-Anishinabe Ways*. Toronto, ON. Dundurn Press.

⁷³ Some Indigenous spaces/places include Enwayaang (the way we speak together), the First Peoples House of Learning, the Ernest and Florence Benedict Gathering Space, the Mnidoowag A'Kiing (the Spirit Lands), the Jake Thomas Room, the Olive Dickason Room, and the Giizhigaatig (cedar) Room Indigenous Learning Space in the Bata Library.

Centre for Indigenous and Canadian Studies (1985); the Indigenous Education Council (1993); the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program and Traditional Advisory Council and ethics review process (1997); approval for criteria for tenure-track Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and dual tradition scholars (2001); the First Peoples House of Learning (FPHL) (2011); the Indigenous Performance program (IPS) and Nozhem First Peoples' Performance Space (2005); and the Indigenous Environmental Studies and Science (IESS) program (2009), among others. By 2012, Trent's vision statement affirmed: "We foster an environment where Indigenous [K]nowledges are respected and recognized as a valid means by which to understand the world" (Trent, 2012).

History of Indigenous Knowledges at Trent University

Within a mainstream Canadian PSE system, Indigenous programming at Trent endeavours to be grounded in diverse Indigenous ways of being, knowing, learning, and teaching, so that Elders, Traditional People, and other Indigenous Knowledge Holders lead the way. Or, in other words, so that Indigenous Knowledge systems are centred. The nature of this challenge is encapsulated by Cree Elder Joe Couture, Chair of the Department of Indigenous Studies beginning in 1975, who wonders about "bicultural survival," and poses a fundamental question: "How to make sense of Indigenous Knowledges that passes Elders' scrutiny in the academy?" (Couture, 2000, p. 160). Onondagan scholar David Newhouse, Chair since 1993, indicates that department chairs have a long history of being interpreters and that the evolving journey of engaging with Indigenous Knowledge systems (IKS) in the academy has "transformed how research and inquiry, pedagogy, analysis and presentation of data are approached and "how we act as human beings" (Newhouse, 2004, p. 154). He highlights a nuance of this project—the distinction between Indigenous Knowledge systems and Indigenous thought—and stresses that "learning about Indigenous Knowledges is different than learning Indigenous

Knowledges . . ." (Newhouse, 2008 p. 10). Newhouse (2008) frames aspects of IKS for those within a mainstream university context:

The construction of a category of knowledge called "Indigenous Knowledge" is a powerful act of decolonization. It makes visible, in a real and tangible way, the intellectual efforts of Indigenous peoples, in fact, it allows for Indigenous intellectuals and in the process creates something that can be explored by the academy. . . . The desire to use Indigenous Knowledge in daily life creates an intellectual project that can be understood and explored by the university. (p. 7)

As previously discussed, IKS includes dimensions of learning that go beyond mainstream education's focus on intellectual domains. Adding to the complexity of what Couture highlights about Elders' scrutiny, since its creation, Indigenous Studies has held dual objectives of educating Indigenous and non-Indigenous or settler learners (Fontaine & McCaskill, 2022). As the spiritual dimensions of IKS are not readily accepted in mainstream PSE, other levels of education, or Canadian settler society, it is critical to create and nurture spaces and practices so that Elders and Traditional Peoples lead the way.

Another long-standing leader in Indigenous Studies and department Chair from 1980–90, Kapitaht (someone who hears and is also heard and is a bridge between two worlds and a messenger in Cree)/Don McCaskill, a settler of Scottish ancestry, offers that developing relationships is central to creating spaces for IKS. In ensuring Indigenous Elders and Traditional Peoples lead the way, he concurs with Gidigaa Migizi's insights, indicating that the Indigenous Studies community continually contends with an "array of institutional forces." McCaskill says Indigenous Studies faculty wrote many position papers over the years to educate faculty and administration beyond Indigenous Studies concerning protocols for engaging with Indigenous Peoples and Knowledges. He says most Trent administrators "didn't understand us, but they didn't block us or get in our way." McCaskill says everyone who was approached and became involved became very supportive and helped the Indigenous Studies community to change institutional rules. Institutional forces also include ongoing epistemological tensions and

practices that uphold settler-colonial frameworks within other departments where mainstream knowledges tend to dominate, in particular, those related to the master's degree in Canadian and Indigenous Studies offered by Frost Centre for Indigenous and Canadian Studies, in archeology programs, and the department of philosophy (McCaskill, 2017; Williams, D. 2013; Sherman, 2013).

Exemplary Practices in Indigenous Studies and Programming

As discussed, Elders' leadership is fundamental to Indigenous Studies and programming. McCaskill speaks to how Indigenous Studies was grounded in three components when he joined Indigenous Studies in 1972:

One was a solid academic program; second was a cultural component that reflected and understood and was involved in Traditional culture; and third, an applied side, that we are involved with the Indigenous community in various ways, both bringing them in here but also us going out there into the communities so that we would have a—the classic word—"wholistic" education.

The annual Elders and Traditional Peoples Gathering, at which 20–30 Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders participate, has played a significant role for those at Trent and the surrounding region. Paramount in supporting and nurturing relational autonomy and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty in Indigenous Studies is the practice of having Elders/Knowledge Holders as professors and course instructors. This practice signifies respect for IKS as autonomous paradigms equally significant to Eurocentric/settler-colonial systems and for Elder multi-faceted leadership, experience, and knowledge. Indigenous Studies has continually needed to push for supportive practices and policies in this area. A precedent was set when Anishinaabeg Elder Fred Wheatley was hired to teach Anishinaabemowin and culture, and Cayuga Elder Jake Thomas to teach Haudenosaunee language, culture, and history in 1975. Later, Anishinaabeg Elders Migizi ow-kwe (That Eagle Woman)/Shirley Williams joined to teach Anishinaabemowin and Asinykwe (Rock Woman)/

Edna Manitobwabi to teach both language and culture in 2001. At this time, criteria for tenure-track Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and dual Traditional scholars was approved (Trent, 2017). Many people worked behind the scenes to educate and advocate for these nationally ground-breaking criteria related to Indigenous Peoples and Knowledges. Yet, for several years following the retirement of professors Williams and Manitowabi, external and internal forces interfered with hiring tenure-track Elders and communication regarding this. At the time of writing, Newhouse and McCaskill (2022) affirm that this practice is embedded within the system through policy. The hiring of Traditional scholar Elizabeth Ozawamick to teach Anishinaabemowin in 2008 and Moktthewenkwe/Barbara Wall (Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Shawnee, Oklahoma) as a dual Traditional scholar in 2012 are promising. Newhouse adds that an ongoing challenge within the department is to achieve a balance between the number of Traditional and conventional scholars (David Newhouse, Onondaga Nation, lives in Nogojiwanong/Peterborough, ON, personal communication, November 2022). An additional campaign took place so that Elders' Traditional roles be respected. In the 1970s, professors were legally required to retire at age 65. McCaskill went to the VP Academic to explain why this is inappropriate for Elders. Trent and the Trent University Faculty Association (TUFA) subsequently adopted flexible policies for Elders so they could stay for as long as they wanted. Unfortunately, not all administration have supported this as Migizi ow-kwe had to retire at age 65. McCaskill notes that TUFA has been consistently supportive of Indigenous faculty.

As noted, ceremony is critical to Indigenous Knowledges and programming. In other words, ceremony is Indigenous pedagogy (Couture, 2000). Throughout its early years, the Indigenous Studies program was guided by ceremony. McCaskill recounts:

This is how everyone learned alongside the Elders . . . We would hold pipe ceremonies in the lounge with Elders, and the Elders would be the ones doing

the leading, and we would facilitate all that. . . . It made such an impact on the culture of the department.

He adds that at that time, the Indigenous Knowledge core course was all out in the communities with no classroom time. As discussed, participation in ceremony is transformative: it is vital to deepening understandings and coming to respect Indigenous ways of being, knowing, learning, and teaching, including (w)holistic knowing that brings together body, spirit, heart, and mind. McCaskill recalls how Couture felt that everyone who taught in Indigenous Studies needed to understand Indigenous cultures. Couture said, "It wasn't enough to understand it intellectually. You had to experience it because Indigenous Knowledge is essentially an experiential understanding of the world, including in relationship to the land." McCaskill continues:

A powerful Elder has a huge impact. And again, it depends on how you treat them and what role you give them. . . . It wasn't just token, which is what it's become now, you know—smudging and isn't everything nice. It is authority that's key. But authority can't be directly taken by the Elder. That's not their role, so they sit there quietly and can be taken advantage of.

In the 1970s and 1980s, "the authority of those Elders was so strong that we would never make a decision without going to them. Not because they claimed it. Because that is the traditional way."

According to Gidigaa Migizi, Indigenous programming at Trent "waxes and wanes" depending on the administration. While Indigenous programming at Trent has been evolving and adapting since its inception, a constant challenge relates to being fully resourced to support Indigenous pedagogies. Many research collaborators identify insufficient funding as the main reason the Wenjack School community cannot do everything it desires to support Indigenous learners. Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe Elder Dorothy Taylor of Wshkiigimongaki/Curve Lake First Nation says Indigenous Studies has been getting by on *ishkwanjigan* (crumbs or leftovers): "We are able to accomplish a lot with *ishkwanjigan*. But I know we want to go further, and we need

more resources." McCaskill offers additional feedback related to Indigenous Studies' applied aspects—in other words, taking action. In the 1970s, he witnessed how being part of the Indigenous Studies programs meant getting politically involved in issues and projects that affected Indigenous communities. At the time, faculty and students were very engaged in supporting Indigenous resistance to the MacKenzie Valley pipeline, the James Bay hydroelectric project, and mercury poisoning/Minamata disease, and many did work with Indigenous Peoples in prisons and work abroad (NNCIE, 2019). While Indigenous Studies had more funding and external grants to facilitate this in the past, McCaskill hopes those in Indigenous Studies will continue to collaborate in alignment with communities. Despite funding challenges, Leanne Simpson suggests it is antithetical for Indigenous resurgence to rely solely on colonial funding sources (Simpson, L., 2008). Indeed, many in the Indigenous Studies community are resisting settler-colonial systems and working in solidarity with Indigenous communities independently of the Wenjack School.

Gifts from Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders

As mentioned, the community of Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders associated with the Wenjack School is central to how it functions. Here, I highlight some strengths, gifts, and teachings of the people I came to know during my time at Trent, as well as the exemplary practices they embody and activate to uphold Indigenous relational autonomy and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty.

Gidigaa Migizi/Doug Williams

Gidigaa Migizi (Spotted Eagle)/Doug Williams (1942–2022) recently crossed over to the spirit world. This is a considerable loss for Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg communities and Trent. Gidigaa Migizi was a lifelong resident of Wshkiigimongaki (Curve Lake First Nation) and was Maskinooge (pike) clan. He mentored and nurtured over ten years of Ph.D. students, guiding us

to develop our gifts and work together as good relatives. His official role as Director of Studies of the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program was to oversee its cultural and spiritual components. A former Chief of Wshkiigimongaki, Gidigaa Migizi petitioned to have the Indigenous Studies department created and was one of its first graduates. Gidigaa Migizi is recognized as a ceremonial leader and a keeper of the oral history, tradition, and language of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg. Gidigaa Migizi was a hunter, fisher, and activist (Trent, 2022). Leanne Simpson says he is one of the most important Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg intellectuals.⁷⁴ He fought for Anishinaabe rights to hunt and fish and was part of the landmark court case *R. v. Williams and Taylor*, in which his interpretations of Treaty 20 (1818) led to the oral promises to hunt and fish held within the Treaties being reclaimed by Ontario First Nations (Rellinger, 2022; Trent, 2022; Williams, D. 2018).

Gidigaa Migizi's approach to *Indigenous Knowledge* (6600), the core, land-based Ph.D. course, involved welcoming us into his home and community and was transformative. He led us in ceremony, introduced us to many Michi Saagiig Knowledge Holders, took us out to harvest manoomin (the good seed), participate in the iskgamizigan (sugar bush) on his land, and to many sacred areas, including the Hiawatha Serpent Mounds and Kinoomaagewaapkong (the rocks that teach). He shared countless stories of the land, always endeavouring to impart aki dibaajimowin—that the land speaks. In everything, he always credited his ancestors. He told us stories about his formative years, including how he was raised as a shcaabawis (helper) to his great uncles Madden and Makoons. Gidigaa Migizi had deep concerns over development, anti-Indigenous racism, and the heavy policing of his people that restricts their free movement in making a livelihood and taking part in Traditional activities, including ceremony. Gidigaa Migizi

⁷⁴ For more about Williams' personal history and history of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, see his book *Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg: This Is Our Territory* (2018) with Leanne Simpson.

exemplified the power and function of Indigenous storytelling as shared by Métis scholar Judy Iseke (2013):

Storytelling as witnessing and remembering allows engagement with ideas of the past and supports transforming ourselves today. By learning from stories and storytelling, we are a part of the process of recovering from colonization and its effects and of remaking ourselves. In storytelling, we can become who we are meant to be. In the stories we tell of who we are, where we come from, what we understand, and how we belong, we make ourselves and our connections to our world. (p. 573)

Gidigaa Migizi's historical narratives and stories did just this, inspiring Michi Saagiig resurgence, encouraging hope for creating a better world—for transforming and decolonizing—for both Indigenous and settler people. He offers: "It is up to each new generation to reinterpret and to breathe new life into our teachings" (Simpson 2011, p. 3). Gidigaa Migizi was a champion of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Knowledges and Nishnaabemowin (Michi Saagiig dialect) and sought to have these centred at Trent.

Gidigaa Migizi helped those around him see the world through Nishnaabeg eyes and hearts. Through his insights on (Grandmother Teachings),⁷⁵ he encouraged all to follow *minaadedamowin*, meaning the "good, heart, life," which he interpreted as looking at things twice, or standing back when you have a problem to consider. He embodied the first teaching of *saagiidwin* (love), which, as he shared, means "having an open door," or opening up your rib cage and exposing your heart and being vulnerable to another person (Williams, D., 2013). He was kind, gentle, humorous, and a wonderful friend and will be deeply missed. Elder Dorothy Taylor puts Gidigaa Migizi's significance in context:

Elder Doug Williams[ban]⁷⁶ was a child of the Seventh Fire who retraced the steps of the Ancestors and found the wisdom left on the trail. His voice was the

⁷⁵ Gidigaa Migizi (2013) taught that Kokum Dibaajimowinan come from the Grandmothers but also are Grandfather Teachings in terms of how their importance.

⁷⁶ According to Anishinaabe scholar Jean-Paul Restoule (Dokis First Nation), Anishinaabeg speak of those who are now in the spirit world by adding the morpheme *ban* or *pan* to words to indicate something that

drum song we listened to for guidance on our long journey back to balance. His dedication to the Mississauga Nishnaabeg culture and ceremony may very well ensure the lighting of the Eighth Fire. Miigwech. We love you. (Taylor, 2022)

Migizi ow-kwe/Shirley Williams

Migizi ow-kwe/Shirley Williams is from Wikwemikong Unceded Territory on Manitoulin Island and is Bird Clan. She is Midewiwin. Migizi ow-kwe is professor emerita at Trent and is the only Indigenous person on Chi'Mikinak (Great Turtle) to be a full professor as a dual Traditional scholar in recognition of her Indigenous Knowledge, research, and publications. She has an honorary doctorate from Ontario Tech University (2017). Migizi ow-kwe has taught and researched Anishinaabemowin since 1986.⁷⁷ She is an Indian Residential School (IRS) Survivor of St. Joseph's Residential School in Spanish, Ontario.

Migizi ow-kwe's strengths in Anishinaabemowin pedagogy, teaching culture, and making learning fun are well known. Shirley has often been asked, "Are you sure you are teaching in there? Because I could hear so much singing and laughing?" She responds, that is "really Anishinaabeg, we laugh when we learn because we believe that education should be fun." Migizi ow-kwe created an Anishinaabemowin dictionary and is one of the first instructors to adopt computer technology to spread the language. She emphasizes that as Indigenous Peoples, "We are all adaptors." Migizi ow-kwe created online language courses at Trent and a CD-ROM about hockey. She also started a land-based, experiential course, *Anishinaabemowin on the Land* (3851H) in 2016. In sharing language and cultural knowledge, she always credits her parents and Elders.

existed beforehand or is no longer (Jean-Paul Restoule, lives in Victoria, B.C., personal communication, August 2024).

⁷⁷ Shirley's most recent Anishinaabemowin book is *Shoolee: The early years*. (2018). Neganigwane Company, Peterborough, ON.

Migizi ow-kwe says Indigenous People are "going back to the way our systems were because they are finding that this academic system is not working with ours. With the Two Row Wampum—we have mainstream education and Indigenous education." She feels that things at Trent have improved considerably for Indigenous Peoples over the years:

When I first arrived as a faculty member, not many other faculty talked to me because I was different. It was as if they were asking me, "How did you get to belong here?" But I persisted. As Indigenous faculty members, we are making tracks; we have made many changes within the institution.

Besides teaching, Shirley does community work, including organizing Anishinaabemowin Teg (an annual language conference) and started Nibi Emosaawdamajig (Those That Walk for the Water) in the Kawartha region, with Asinykwe (Rock Woman)/Edna Manitowabi and her niece Liz Osawamick, based on the example of Grandmother Josephine Mandamin who walked around all of the Great Lakes. These Anishinaabeg-kwe work tirelessly to share teachings about nibi (water), modelling how we need to sing, pray, and make offerings to nibi as part of women's essential roles and responsibilities. They demonstrate how prayer and love can change the world. Migizi ow-kwe is also an Elder for the Chiefs of Ontario and Aboriginal Physicians of Canada, advising them on health programming. Her efforts to combat systemic racism in the healthcare system resulted in significant service delivery changes in major regional healthcare centres in Sudbury and the Toronto General Hospital (OTU, 2017).

Skahendowaneh Swamp

Skahendowaneh Swamp, is a faith keeper of the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne, chosen for this role by his female matrilineal relatives. He is Wolf Clan. Skahendowaneh father was Jake Swamp was a sub-Chief, known as Rarontanónhna or Caretaker of the Tree.⁷⁸ Skahendowaneh

⁷⁸ Jake Swamp was one of the most respected and honoured Mohawk Iroquois leaders of the past century. A member of the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs for over three decades, he served as counselor, spiritual leader, legislator, and ambassador. During his time at TU, he planted a Tree of Peace

is the first Chair of Indigenous Knowledge at Trent. He stresses that his main priorities are his family, his nation, and the survival of the Mohawk language and culture. He embodies this in his life and does all he can to ensure his children grow up to know who they are. Skahendowaneh indicates that universities need to understand that the energy of Indigenous Peoples needs to go towards resurgence. This aligns with what many other Indigenous Knowledge Holders say about focusing on the work in their communities, and on the land (Simpson, L., 2014; Corntassel, 2012).

Skahendowaneh finds that there are conflicting values related to Indigenous Knowledges (IK) in the academy. Here, he refers to Trent's mission statement, which he feels puts a monetary value on IK. He asserts that no one owns Indigenous Knowledges or Peoples. From his perspective, he witnesses the "academization of Indigenous Knowledge as opposed to Indigenizing the academy." He finds there is tension in terms of what is expected from Indigenous Knowledge Holders in the sphere of the academy. As a faith keeper, he is often required for ceremonies which take many days and nights. He feels criticized by some for missing meetings. Skahendowaneh thinks that there is an assumption that the university owns Indigenous Peoples—a position people get put in as employees. A challenge for him is addressing the feeling that others do not understand his practices in terms of ceremony and oral traditions in research. He also finds that Trent is trying to cater to all Indigenous Peoples, posing difficulties for Knowledge Holders to focus on what they know. Like Migizi ow-kwe, singing or dancing can be heard coming from Skahendowaneh's classroom. His pedagogy includes learning about Traditional cultural objects such as wampum belts, baskets, and lacrosse sticks, and how these are connected to the stories, language, land, history, and teachings. This (w)holistic way of

to spread the message of Peace, Power, and the Good Mind of the Haudenosaunee Iroquois Confederacy (The Tracking Project, 2023).

learning nurtures the process of coming to understand interconnected and interdependent understandings within Mohawk worldviews.

Asinykwe/Edna Manitowabi

Asinykwe (Rock Woman)_Edna Manitowabi is Odawa from Wikwemikong Unceded Territory on Manitoulin Island and is Bear Clan. She is the head woman for the Eastern Doorway of the Three Fires Midewiwin Lodge and a professor emeritus at Trent, and she holds an honorary doctorate from the University of Sudbury (2014). Asinykwe is one of the founders and teachers of Minwaywaygaan Midewiwin Lodge in Manitoba, and she also founded an Indigenous community in St. Charles, Ontario. She is a Traditional teacher, ceremonialist, drum keeper, and grandmother. Asinykwe is instrumental in the resurgence of Traditional teachings and ceremonies and is a researcher of Traditional medicines. She is focused on connecting people to Mother Earth and anchors her work in ceremony. She says, "It is time to come home as a people. To find our way back to our Mother. A place to open our hearts and use the tools we were given to help the land" (Manitowabi, 2021, as cited in Fontaine & McCaskill, 2022, p. 15–16).

Asinykwe developed and taught the courses *Tradition and Culture, Indigenous Knowledge, Indigenous Theatre, and Indigenous Women* at Trent and played a crucial role in developing and teaching in the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program. Her vision created the Indigenous Studies biennial Native Women's Symposium and Nozhem⁷⁹ Theatre (aabaakwad, 2022; Trent, 2022). She also contributed to founding and teaching in the Indigenous Studies undergraduate program at the University of Sudbury. Asinykwe is well known for revitalizing

⁷⁹ Nozhem is a female bear. Edna chose Mkwa (the Bear) for the theatre because she embodies transformation, balance, and knowledge, components of Indigenous ways of knowing (Mumford, 2016).

Anishinaabeg teachings about working with and talking to plants through Anishinaabeg protocols.

Marrie Mumford

Métis-Chippewa and Cree scholar Marrie Mumford has been the Canada Research Chair (CHC) in Aboriginal Arts and Literature at Trent since 2004. She initiated and is the director of the Indigenous Performance Studies program, the first at a Canadian university. She is also the artistic director of Nozhem First Peoples Performance Space,⁸⁰ the first theatre dedicated to Indigenous performance at a Canadian university. Prior to this, Marrie was the first artistic director of the Aboriginal Arts Program at the Banff Centre (1995–2003). Dedicated to the field of Indigenous performance and to innovative ways of conducting research, Marrie works closely with and based on the vision of the Elders/Grandmothers associated with Trent—Migizi ow-kwe/Shirley Williams and Asinykwe /Edna Manitowabi as well as Gidigaa Migizi/Doug Williams, Indigenous scholars and community people to restore and reimagine Indigenous futures.

Roronhiake:wen/Dan Longboat

Roronhiake:wen (He Who Clears the Sky)/Dan Longboat is Mohawk from the Six Nations of the Grand River. He is the founding Director of the Indigenous Environmental Science/Studies (IESS) program and the acting director of the Indigenous Environmental Institute (IEI). He is recognized for his Traditional Rotinoshón:ni Knowledge as the foundation for his teaching and in developing the IESS program. Dan is an inspiring and gifted orator, a visionary leader, educator, and mentor. Roronhiake:wen says he is grateful to carry on the legacy of the late Jake Thomas and does so "strategically so we can share our knowledge and make our presence felt

⁸⁰ Nozhem is the only publicly funded Indigenous performance space in Canada (Trent, 2022).

and the integrity of our knowledge recognized, affirmed and at the forefront" (Longboat, 2017). Dan's master's thesis, *The Indigenous Environmental Education Program: A Model for Learning and Sharing of Naturalized Knowledge Systems* (1998), forms the basis for developing the IESS program.

Indigenous Programs and Indigenous Pedagogies

I highlight the diverse ways Indigenous Knowledge Holders associated with the Wenjack School embody and activate Indigenous pedagogies to centre Indigenous ways of being, knowing, learning, and teaching. Indigenous pedagogies emphasize IKS as lived and are expressions of Indigenous relational autonomy. Broadly, (w)holistic learning that engages with all parts of the self; transformation through participation in ceremony; heart-centred knowing; learning from the land and other beings; and the rigour and creativity of Indigenous Knowledge systems are encouraged within Indigenous Studies, IESS, IPS and the Indigenous B.Ed. Program. Programming centres Indigenous languages, land, Traditional teachings and spaces, and participation in community and other events with nearby Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg and other Indigenous communities. The programming highlights Indigenous resurgence, survivance, and resilience and the contemporary and global relevance of IKS. The courses reflect the (w)holistic nature and breadth of IKS in the diverse areas where Knowledge Holders have expertise, including natural environments, science, health, history, governance, literature, music and theatre, gender, business and management, among others. The scope of subjects is continually expanding as new generations of Indigenous Knowledge Holders emerge. The challenges of working within colonial structures, systems, and practices is ever present, as is finding ways to balance Eurocentric Knowledge domination by continually recentring Indigenous Peoples and Knowledge systems through daily acts of resurgence and rebalancing deep asymmetries. The First Peoples House of Learning (FPHL), developed later, in 2011, to support academic

programming, offers cultural services to support Indigenous students' academic success, personal development, and leadership potential. The FPHL provides academic and personal counselling, coordinates the Elders and Traditional Peoples Gathering and visiting Elders/Knowledge Holders in residence, and the regularly scheduled (weekly and monthly) Traditional teachings and cultural workshops (Trent, 2022).

Indigenous Studies Ph.D. Program

One of the foremost Indigenous Studies programs at Trent, the success of the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program is generated by the energies of Anishinaabeg and Rotinoshón:ni Elders and Knowledge Holders engaging in a resurgence of their cultural practices, who nurture the program and students in close mentorship-like relationships. The program is based on the centrality of IKS as a basis for contemporary scholarship and part of the process of "decoloniz[ing] the academy" (Trent, 2016). Elders and Knowledge Holders continually try to impart and activate understandings of relationality through Indigenous pedagogies. The core Indigenous Knowledge course (6600) prioritizes land, language, ceremonial and community-based ways of knowing and learning, experiential perspectives, oral teachings, and reflective learning. Another aspect of the Ph.D. program that emphasizes Indigenous pedagogies is the opportunity to "apprentice" or work with an Elder as part of the Bimaadiziwin-Atonhetseri:io (the good life) experiential option. While the time frame of this option is based on an academic schedule, it recognizes the centrality of relationships and experiential approaches to IKS in guiding learners. It can bring about transformative learning beyond the Ph.D. program. Another program element that exemplifies Indigenous understandings of relational autonomy and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty is that one of three Ph.D. competency exams is held as an oral exam with the Traditional Advisory Council, where learners are asked to share their understandings of Indigenous Knowledges.

Furthermore, IK is centred in the need to speak an Indigenous language or complete a high-level language course, and the recent dissertation knowledge basket option, which honours diverse artistic, environmental, educational, or other practice contexts. Learners in the program also do a volunteer practicum with Indigenous communities and organizations (Trent, 2022). A significant strength of the program stems from the leadership and guidance of the Traditional Advisory Council (TAC) that oversees the Bimaadiziwin-Atonhetsyri:io option, the volunteer practicum, and the oral exam on Indigenous Knowledge. Research collaborators stress the need for the Indigenous Knowledge course to maximize ceremonial and land-based learning, as exemplified in the program's early days. They also suggest strengthening linkages between the TAC and Elders/Knowledge Holders from students' communities.

The Indigenous Studies Ph.D. Program Ethics Review Process

Research collaborators highlight the critical importance of the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program ethics review process, which is led by Indigenous faculty members, as an exemplary practice supporting Indigenous relational autonomy and knowledge sovereignty that could be emulated across Chi'Mikinak. Indeed, the Trent Research Ethics Board (REB) recognizes the need to take direction from the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. ethics review process before providing additional feedback. Cherokee scholar Jeff Corntassel suggests that ethics review processes are a final frontier in regard to Indigenous Peoples and Knowledges and that REBs are a site of the academy in need of a major overhaul (Corntassel, 2016). Most REBs are comprised of mainly settler scholars not in a position to ascertain whether research benefits Indigenous communities or resonates with Indigenous ethical protocols and relational understandings as grounded in land- or place-based forms of local knowledge. Many issues must be worked out in collaboration with local Elders/Knowledge Holders. This is a critical area for future exploration.

Indigenous Environmental Studies and Science Program

The IESS program is an innovative and multidisciplinary undergraduate program that brings together principles of both Indigenous and Western (Eurocentric) Knowledge systems. It is one of a kind on Chi'Mikinak (Great Turtle). Recognizing "both the strengths and limitations of any single perspective when attempting to understand and address environmental and social issues," it is based on a collaborative partnership between university departments (IESS, 2016). Unique IESS courses, along with courses in Indigenous Studies and Environmental Resource Studies and Sciences, comprise the curriculum. In talking about how to address the issues of our time, Director Roronhiake:wen says that "complex problems demand complex expertise" (Longboat, 2015). IESS professors and teaching assistants (TAs) use pedagogies that integrate diverse perspectives and approaches to provide learners with the necessary knowledges and skills, including critical, creative, integrative, and interactive thinking abilities, to address the complex environmental, health, and social issues facing Indigenous communities, as well as governments, business, industry, researchers, and settler society.

Roronhiake:wen's choice of pedagogies creates opportunities to engage with a new spectrum of tools (Longboat, 2017). He inspires learners from diverse backgrounds students to understand the importance of becoming the best human beings they can be. Roronhiake:wen shares Rotinoshón:ni frameworks—the three "epics" as framed by Rotinoshón:ni scholar Susan Hill (Mohawk Nation from Oshwe:ken, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory) (2008), including the Creation Story or the Original Instructions from Shonkwaya'tihson's (he completed our bodies or Sapling) Kayaneren'kowa, the Great Law of Peace, and Gaiwiyo (the Good Message or Code of Handsome Lake). These teachings must be honoured to repair damaged relationships and benefit Creation (Hill, 2008). Indeed, as an IESS Graduate Teaching Assistant, I witnessed Roronhiake:wen build up feelings of self-purpose and hope like no one else. He says, "Building

on Indigenous ways of knowing helps everyone connect to place and to Creation and also has the capacity to connect people to their own ancestors, knowledge systems, and cultures."

Roronhiake:wen adds that this allows us to have a greater understanding and respect for all four sacred colours of humanity, not just Indigenous—the red, black, yellow, and white. This elevates learners' consciousness so that "they can better see the purpose of their life in the service of Creation or the continuation of life itself—whether it's animals or people or water or trees or whatever they are passionate about" (Longboat, 2017).

Roronhiake:wen developed a Biocultural Framework (Armstrong, 2016), depicted by Figure 7, to demonstrate how culture is inextricably linked to the land and that cultural beliefs, values, and actions are linked to our place and systems of origin. Learners explore these relationships and engage in the process of critical self-reflection. They also develop capacities to critique dominant cultural systems. Learners come to understand the commonalities and diversities among cultures and examine the implications of their own beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviours on the natural world. The framework facilitates (w)holistic and transcultural learning and illustrates the impacts and interconnectivity of negative and positive human behaviours or activities/actions on the environment. For example, current human actions are culminating in global climate change, among other challenges. There are many actions humans can take towards a sustainable, just future with Mother Earth, such as ecosystem restoration.

The IESS community, like that of the former Toqwa'tu'kl Kjjitaqnn/Integrative Science (TK/IS) program at CBU, contributes to emerging pedagogies that seek to work with diverse knowledge systems, including Indigenous, to address global issues. For learners in environmental studies and science, coming to realize the interconnectivity between culture and place helps to transform consciousness, thereby facilitating awareness of Indigenous solutions

as crucial within Indigenous homelands. The IESS program maximizes the use of land-based and experiential learning around campus.

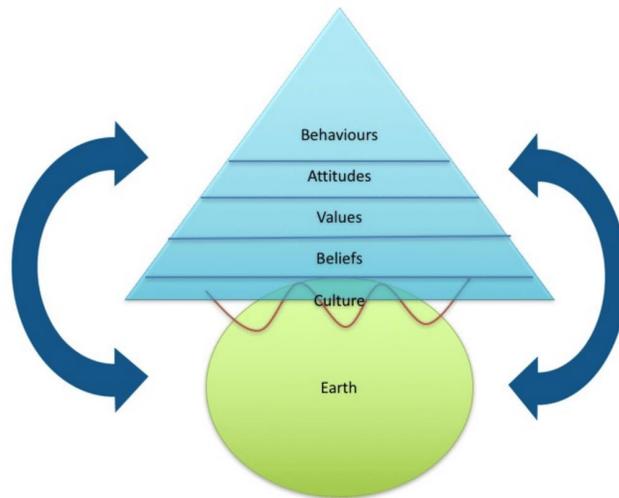


Figure 7: Biocultural Framework

The Indigenous Performance Studies Program and Nozhem Theatre

Through initiatives of the Indigenous Performance Studies (IPS) program and Nozhem Theatre, Indigenous pedagogies derived from art, music, dance, and theatre are thriving. Spaces for these have been/are also created and protected. Director Marrie Mumford recognizes the power of Indigenous dance, theatre, and other performance arts to "address Indigenous community issues of transformation and nation building" using "Indigenous performance practice as a strategy for the transference of Indigenous [K]nowledges, languages, and cultures" (Mumford, 2016, p. 128). Beginning in 2009, the Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Aboriginal Arts and the IPS program focused on naadmaagewin (the art of working together in our communities), inclusive of Indigenous communities globally (Mumford, 2016). Collaborative projects demonstrated the critical importance of land to language, stories, and oral traditions to expressing "a contemporary collective memory of place, regionality, and identity" and

"enact[ing] a new working model for living history research projects" (Mumford, 2016, p. 129). Centring local priorities and connecting art with environmental work through a focus on clean water, IPS program learners participated in a series of intergenerational workshops: Walking at the Edge of Water, Zhishodewe (being at the water's edge), and Babaamikawe (to go about making tracks).

Through the resurgence of Indigenous dance, theatre, and storytelling, learners in the IPS program can engage with pedagogies embodying Indigenous relationships and teachings with their ancestors, the land, and more-than-human beings. Heryka Miranda (Mayan) from Santa Fe, New Mexico, a participant in an international workshop, says she learned how to tune into her "ancestral body-based memory and actively engage in a decolonizing practice in order to enter into a process of recovery and reintegration of [her]Indigenous roots and use it as an incredible resource to create and heal from" (Mumford, 2016). Through the IPS program, learners connect with the power of embodied expression, rekindling heart-based ways of being and knowing and re-establishing balance with the intellectual domains of academic programs.

Indigenous B.Ed. Program

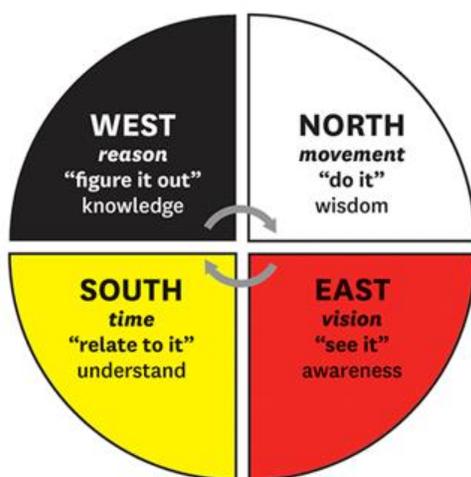


Figure 8: Gifts of the Four Directions

Dr. Nicole Bell (Kitigan Zibi First Nation), Coordinator of the Indigenous B.Ed. Program, says one way of Indigenous is "to make sure that we speak to all parts of our students and we allow them the opportunity to engage with all parts of who they are in education" (Bell, 2017). She challenges herself to "ensure that

I teach my students in a way that engages their minds, bodies, hearts, and spirits. It's that holistic learning model" (Bell, 2017). In the Indigenous B.Ed. Program, learning is grounded within an Anishinaabe Medicine Wheel Framework shown in Figure 8, as shared by Cree Elder Michael Thrasher.⁸¹ In the east is the gift of vision, where one is able to "see." In the south, one spends time relating to the vision. In the west, one uses the gift of reason to figure out the vision. In the north, one uses the gift of movement to do or actualize the vision (Bell, 2014). Bell (2017) says:

I like to get all the way around the wheel, get to the north, which is that place of action. It's where wisdom sits. And it means that you have learned enough, that you are wise about it, meaning that you can now do something with that learning. . . . It's not just theory, it's also practice, it becomes community-based, it becomes learned knowledge. We actually get students doing something with their learning.

Furthermore, Bell has worked to ensure the Indigenous B.Ed. Program maximizes land-based learning opportunities and secured the program's own teaching tipi.

Indigenous Studies Undergraduate Programs

With many diverse offerings too numerous to discuss here, the Indigenous Studies undergraduate degree and diploma programs encourage learners to "recognize and revisit societal assumptions; to analyze and critique current realities; to see where we have come from and where we find ourselves today; to where we would like to evolve and how to get there, with a good mind" (Trent, 2022). Research collaborators mention how the programs support Indigenous youth in finding their paths in life. Due to large numbers in the undergraduate program, learners do not have the same intimate mentorship-like opportunities for working alongside Elders/Knowledge Holders as in the Ph.D. program. This is an area that would take

⁸¹ Bell also used this to guide pedagogy in the Anishinaabe Bimaadiziwin Cultural Healing and Learning Program, an Anishinaabe culture-based school she created and led from 2002–2006.

additional resources to support the large number (100 plus) of undergraduate learners who participate each year.

Insights from Research Collaborators

Research collaborators stress that learning about Indigenous Knowledge systems and through Indigenous pedagogies across disciplines is paramount to the challenges humanity is encountering—to our global, shared futures. IKS are integral to addressing critical local and global issues related to land and water degradation, climate change, human and environmental health, and social, racial, environmental, and gender inequality, to name a few. Engaging with Indigenous Knowledge systems also supports interdisciplinarity, as well as structural and systemic transformation, thereby strengthening mainstream education. They emphasize that exemplary practices at Trent must be maintained, strengthened, and revitalized. First and foremost, this includes the essential leadership of Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders and the practice of having dual scholar tenure track Elders. Key cultural supports include the annual Elders and Traditional Peoples Gathering and the First Peoples House of Learning, as well as ceremonial-, land-, water-, and local community-based pedagogies. Applied learning or taking action that aligns with Indigenous community priorities and Treaty-based education are also mentioned. Collaborators stress the need for a resurgence of guidance based on spirit and ceremony for everything related to Indigenous Peoples at Trent, in broad and all-encompassing contexts, as it was in the early days of Indigenous Studies when Cree Elder Joe Couture was involved. Exemplary practices highlighted within the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program include the leadership of the Traditional Advisory Council, the ethics review process, the Bimaadiziwin-Atonhetseri:io (the good life) option, the oral comprehensive exam concerning Indigenous Knowledges, the Indigenous language requirement, and the dissertation knowledge basket option.

The need for more land- and water-based learning and a willingness for Trent to take action to improve in this area was expressed in all three sharing circles. Dorothy suggests having a ceremony house or a house on the land that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can use regularly. Moktthewenkwe points out, "You can do courses in the sugar bush all year long; being on the land is important and seeing the whole cycle of seasons is crucial, so how do you do that in the confines of the academy, I don't know" (Wall, 2017). She suggests that to increase land-based learning effectively, there needs to be:

Some sort of freedom to restructure—this sounds really big—restructure time and space. . . . We've been talking about teaching lodges that we have here at Trent but also to acknowledge the fact that when you're teaching on the land and when you're teaching in the cycle of the seasons, you can't just spend three hours on Monday afternoon.

Oneida scholar Mark Dockstator adds that Indigenous education means learners being with Indigenous Elders on the land in their communities. He says when Indigenous Knowledge is brought into PSIs, it turns it into something else. He says to do this work, "you have to get dirt under your fingernails." Trent's External Affairs has begun to recognize the need for land-based learning and has been raising funds for more teaching structures on the land. When being on the land or water is not an option, Indigenous-centred programs could benefit from exploring how diverse Indigenous pedagogies can be embodied in classroom contexts. For example, IESS could enhance programming by collaborating with the IPS program, in which learners engage in embodied Indigenous ways of being and knowing, including ceremony, singing, storytelling, and movement.

Conclusion

I have shared the story of Indigenous Studies and the scope of some of the Indigenous programming at Trent in broad strokes. Some exemplary practices for Indigenous relational autonomy and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty have been indicated. This overview provides a context for the forthcoming insights from research collaborators that deepen understandings of the tensions that arise in offering Indigenous-focused programming within mainstream PSE; speak to the process of Indigenizing and decolonizing; assert the importance of centring local Indigenous Peoples and their land, language, knowledges, history, and spirituality, and strategies for activating *aki miiniwaa nibi natam*⁸² (land and water first) in Indigenous programming; move towards greater Indigenous governance of Indigenous programming; and indicate the importance of Treaty understandings, including settlers' Treaty responsibilities in relation to engaging with Indigenous Knowledge systems.

⁸² This translation is from Migizi ow-kwe/Shirley Williams (Wikwemikong Unceded Territory/Manitoulin Island), 2024.

CHAPTER SEVEN: "WHO ARE WE INDIGENIZING FOR?"

Introduction

In this chapter, Indigenous research collaborators envision what "Indigenizing" is and reimagine what it might look like in relation to the Chanie Wenjack School of Indigenous Studies (Wenjack School) and Trent University (Trent). They speak to the complexities and urgency of Indigenizing, decolonizing, and honouring Treaty relations at Trent and broadly at post-secondary institutions (PSIs) across Chi'Mikinak (Great Turtle). I propose Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty as a grounding or anchoring concept to guide Indigenous programming in the academy, to recentre Indigenous Nationhood and resurgence in relation to Indigenizing and decolonizing, based on the insights of research collaborators and as informed by the literature.

What is Indigenizing?

Indigenous research collaborators, including Elders, professors, students, and staff, contributed to a sharing circle in 2017 focused on "Indigenous Autonomy of Indigenous Knowledge Systems." They envisioned what Indigenizing is for them and what it might look like at Trent. The Trent Native Students Association (TUNA) Co-Chairs, who participated as undergraduate representatives, set the tone for the circle. Jaimee Lazore (Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne) with a B.A. Indigenous Studies from Trent, reframed the question "What does Indigenizing look like at Trent?" to ask, "Who are we Indigenizing for?" This is a critical question to ask about Indigenous-centred programming at any PSI. Insights shared around the circle indicate that Indigenizing is a process and a journey. Indigenizing means creating a sense of belonging and community. Juliana Lesage-Corbiere (Batchewana First Nation), also with a B.A. Indigenous Studies from Trent elaborates:

[Indigenizing] first starts off by giving the space and the opportunity to tell our own stories, because often that does not happen. . . . [I]t starts off within ourselves and then within our peers and then within the department and the

communities. Because if we want to go to the communities, we need to start a strong sense of relationship and a community here first.

There is an urgency to decolonize and Indigenize immediately—to stop discussing and to take action and implement. Dorothy emphasizes:

If we are serious about going forward, we should make recommendations for Indigenizing Trent. We should start right away because bureaucracy . . . is very time-consuming. And the Elders say if you are going to do anything that is worthwhile, to contribute to the community, to contribute to lifting up your people, you start the work, but don't expect it to be implemented in your lifetime. But you still go forward and do that work. . . [A]nd so we need to get this process started from words to action.

Skahendowaneh Swamp asserts that Indigenizing is everyone's responsibility and highlights some of the inherent challenges of Indigenizing:

Even within our department, it should be a responsibility that all within that space should be able to do. In that sense, I think we have to look in our own backyard as well because, maybe unknowingly, we have all been colonized, and we all have been carrying it, and it comes out to play in many different ways, whether it is directly known or not.

Indigenizing is revealed as a conscious, daily effort that involves continual rebalancing and reconstructing, often in response to colonial structures, systems and ways of being. Migizi owkwe/Shirley Williams frames the process as "reclaiming our own culture and re-Indigenizing ourselves in order to become who we are as Anishinaabeg." Indigenous autonomy and sovereignty emerge as critical to Indigenizing processes at Trent. Indigenizing must be Indigenous-led with IKS as a foundation. This means putting land first. Indigenizing means a return to Traditional ways of teaching based on the understanding that land, language, and ceremony are sources of knowledge. It involves consultation with local Indigenous Peoples and practical applications of *Indian Control of Indian Education*. It must centre local Indigenous Peoples. There is consensus that because Trent occupies the ancestral homelands of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, their land, water, knowledge, language, and spirituality must be centred

(discussed in the next chapter). At the same time, there is a need to accommodate and make space for the diversity among Anishinaabeg Nations and all Indigenous Nations.

Indigenous faculty are essential to Indigenous programming and Indigenizing. Ensuring that they are well represented is a major concern. Nicole Bell (Kitigan Zibi First Nation), Coordinator of the Indigenous B.Ed. Program, feels Trent needs to do more in this area:

We have one Indigenous faculty in the program. That's me. And I know those students are going to push, and they're going to say, "This is the Indigenous bachelor of education program. Where are the Indigenous faculty? Why are we not being taught by Indigenous faculty?" I know that's going to happen.⁸³

Therefore, Trent must act by honouring the Wenjack School 's 2018 request to hire 10 Indigenous faculty, including Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg People. Yet, as discussed, Indigenizing must go beyond Indigenous inclusion. It means institutional reform and systemic transformation, which often brings discomfort. Research collaborators feel the broad Trent community needs to reflect on how they are doing things at Trent and in settler society—to change relationships, power dynamics, and structures. Indigenizing means understanding ethical spaces and is based on the spirit and purpose of the Treaties and their teachings (discussed in chapters 10 and 11).

Mainstream Post-Secondary Institutions are both Colonizing and Healing

For some Indigenous Peoples, being at Trent has helped/is helping them reclaim or relearn their cultures and histories and uncover their identities. It is also part of a healing path in recovering from the Indian Residential School (IRS) system, as first-, second-, and third-generation Survivors, and also from other daily colonial realities. They say Indigenous-centred PSE has allowed them to pick up their medicine bundles⁸⁴ together and transform feelings of not

⁸³ Métis scholar Mitch Huguenin joined the Indigenous B.Ed. program in 2017 as part-time faculty.

⁸⁴ A medicine or sacred bundle can be a personal or community bundle. Anishinaabe scholar Deborah Danard (2016) says that a medicine bundle is composed of physical, sacred items that help to guide an

being Indigenous or valid enough. Migizi ow-kwe/Shirley Williams says, "We need to help each other to regain all of the things we were forced to lose through colonization and Canada's residential school system." She adds that learning about the impacts of colonial legacies helps Indigenous Peoples understand "why we have become the way we are." Migizi ow-kwe elaborates:

I didn't know that I came to [Trent] to study myself. . . . In order to understand myself, I studied my own people and all the places I fit into Indigenous ways. And when I was learning about myself as Anishinaabeg, I felt good about myself, because for the first time I found my own identity and did a lot of healing.

Nicole builds upon Migizi ow-kwe's comments about the strengths of Indigenous Studies at Trent. She says when she arrived in 1986, there was no theatre or dance program, IESS, or Indigenous education program. There were only two Anishinaabemowin classes. She reflects: "But at that time, what was happening here was awesome" and "filled up the holes in people." She calls it the Swiss cheese syndrome:

We grew up with these holes inside of us. And Trent was and still is a place for those holes to get filled up. So, when I look back 30 years and then at the programs now, I think, "Oh my God, I wish we'd had that when I did my undergrad." I want to acknowledge that kind of growth and the opportunities that students have here now.

Nicole and Dorothy both acknowledge Migizi ow-kwe as someone who helped them learn Anishinaabemowin and along their paths as Anishinaabeg. That three generations of Anishinaabeg and Rotinoshón:ni co-exist at Trent is significant. Indigenous programs benefit immensely from the strengths and influences of their unique generational perspectives and interconnections.

On the other hand, for those who enter into PSIs with their language and culture, PSE and the experiences in this system are part of a colonializing process that they feel takes away

individual. These may be eagle feathers, tobacco, ceremonial pipes, or anything that has spiritual value for the bundle's keeper. Songs, prayers, teachings, dances, dreams, and stories may also be part of one's bundle. The central role of medicine bundles is also part of other Indigenous Peoples' cosmologies.

from their Indigeneity. Gidigaa Migizi/Doug Williams remembers his time in the Trent Indigenous Studies undergraduate program:

I came to Trent to lose my Nishnaabeness. It wasn't a gain, an understanding of my identity. I knew who I was; I fully understood it. So, I lost a lot in terms of practicing a culture by having to join the mainstream, which is what Trent represents.

Gidigaa Migizi indicates that within the mainstream system, the process of Indigenizing is at risk of being co-opted. Furthermore, as the Chair of the Traditional Advisory Committee of the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program, Director of Studies for the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program, and the principal Michi Saagiig Elder/Advisor on many committees at Trent, including the Special Committee on Indigenous Education, Gidigaa Migizi found that the university system continued to be colonizing. He says while he was asked for his input, it was often ignored.

Gidigaa Migizi shares a story about the original vision, planning, design, and building of the First People's House of Learning (FPHL) with the Indigenous sharing circle. He recounts that when the building known today as Gzowski College/Enwayaang (the way we speak together) was being designed in the early 2000s, many people in Indigenous Studies shared a vision that the building would be called the First Peoples House of Learning. They hoped it would have a significant influence in terms of the physical structure and administration of the university. Gidigaa Migizi was part of the design committee. Ontario phased out their five-year high school program during this time, changing it to four years. This meant that a double cohort would be arriving at PSIs in 2003. Universities were funded to accommodate the new cohort and the space required. Gidigaa Migizi says that up to that point, everything was going well, but then Trent physical resources said they had to change everything. They told the committee they had to incorporate a student residence within the First Peoples House of Learning. When committee members asked to see the revised budget, they were denied. Gidigaa Migizi says:

We lost control somewhere in there. . . . This was going to be our building—a space and a home that recognized who we are as Indigenous Peoples, and it was

changed. There was a beautiful entrance we had designed, full of the symbolism of the Anishinaabeg and Rotinoshón:ni People and that was dropped.

Gidigaa Migizi had advised, "Let's not disturb the earth. Let's put it on posts like we used to build. When they built the residence on top of the design, it buried this whole idea. It negated this whole idea of Indigeneity of the building." The cafeteria and Nozhem Theatre (for which Marrie Mumford raised money) came later and were put in amongst the posts. Beyond the design, Gidigaa Migizi points out another problem:

I'm explaining all this because if you are going to Indigenize the academy, look what will happen. Somebody is going to take control out of our hands. And one of the things that has happened with Trent, with Indigeneity, is that they gave it to a few individuals to do it.

Gidigaa Migizi felt there was an unreconcilable and loss of Indigeneity in the design of the FPHL, and Trent as a whole. His story emphasizes issues and tensions regarding Indigenizing at Trent, including how systems operate to uphold individual modes of power; a loss of control over processes, and a lack of inclusion in decision-making for the Indigenous People and communities involved. These systemic issues at PSIs go beyond Trent and will be discussed further.

Support for Indigenous Students

The TUNA Co-Chairs emphasize that in participating in the sharing circles, they speak for many Indigenous youth who may not be heard. They offer insights on the support needed. The Co-Chairs indicate that Indigenous students face many challenges living away from their families, communities, Elders, and other support people, and in particular, not being able to do ceremony with people they trust or spend time on familiar land. Many are single women and single parents. They feel like they are pulled in many different directions at once. Juliana elaborates:

While we are doing this work in academia, we are also doing that work on the land, and we are also doing that work at political tables where our voices are not heard. We don't even have a seat at that table, but we will push ourselves.

So, I feel like we need to acknowledge those students who have five other things going on, you know, raising children, raising their family, raising their brothers and sisters, but also working through that violence and exploitation we have faced. So, I think that's hard to navigate in a classroom.

Indigenous students feel the FPHL offers excellent supports, yet there are 20 students for an appointment. They indicate that many fifth-year students come to a point where they feel Trent no longer has anything to offer them. Some continually contemplate dropping out. They suggest that supports for Indigenous students are needed around the clock, and more supports are needed for graduate students. Echoing Dorothy, Betty Carr-Braint (Tyendinaga/Mohawks of Quinte), former Cultural Advisor/Indigenous Counselor for the FPHL, says there is potential to do more in the Wenjack School and FPHL with adequate time and resources. She says, "Sometimes it does feel like we are running, that we don't have enough time, that we don't have enough resources, but we do the best we can to make sure we help the students in the best way that we can at the time." More funding and resources for the FPHL—for Elders, other counsellors, and other supports—are needed to address the existing gaps. The need for youth to connect with their Elders and do ceremony on the land is paramount.

Healing from Multi- and Intergenerational Trauma and Countering Systemic Racism

Indigenous youth at Trent find that navigating their path at a PSI can, at times, be a challenging, exhausting, draining, and lonely journey that involves healing from trauma and racism. Some stories are shared, followed by strategies for improving their experiences in PSIs.

Juliana says:

It's important to acknowledge that we need to validate our stories, but sometimes, we don't need to validate. We don't need to tell our stories. Because it's hard being in a classroom when we are the walking researched. We are their walking story that they will soon write about.

The sharing circles uncover that the classroom site is specifically mentioned as a "hard" place to be in the context of Indigenizing and Indigenous education. Indigenous learners find their histories and stories are not always shared and taught from Indigenous perspectives.

Juliana indicates:

Just going to the classroom is hard. Just getting up and knowing that you have to go to another class where you know your stories will be told as if they have happened in the past, even though we are going through it right now.

Jaimee elaborates on this same theme:

Indigenous students don't come into [this program] knowing about the trauma that we are going to learn and the trauma that we are going to take from it. And in the last three years of coming here, I am so tired. I go to class, I sit there, and I go home. . . . It's hard to wrap your mind around everything you learn in one sitting. But it's also going home and then learning more, questioning where you come from, who you are, who your people are and what they've gone through. So, it's not just the institution contributing to that ongoing trauma, but it's also about you coming out and having to reflect on it.

Juliana adds:

Indigenizing is acknowledging everything that an Indigenous person/student brings with them, including their family, their community, and their nation. It acknowledges everything, including the histories and the shared trauma. Indigenizing also involves understanding that when Indigenous Peoples are doing [academic] work, we are carrying the trauma, in our own self, on our backs.

Another issue is that Indigenous learners don't feel they have enough input into the content of the curriculum and what pedagogies are used. A key concern for upper-year students is that they have to listen repeatedly to narratives of colonial violence that are triggering. They find that some Indigenous Studies courses are taught for settlers in terms of content and pedagogy. This includes the repetitive nature of some content. They emphasize the need for professors/course instructors/GTAs to be trained in using Indigenous and trauma-informed pedagogies—those who work with Indigenous students in particular. Jaimee frames these issues:

The question that keeps coming back to my mind is, "Who are we Indigenizing it for?" Because there is also a loss of Indigenous community here, and we feel a disconnect because sometimes our courses are taught for the settlers. It's not taught for us. It's taught in a way that we have to learn this trauma all over again. And learn the same things almost every year.

Amy Shawanda (Wiikwemkoong First Nation) with a Ph. D. in Indigenous Studies from Trent

elaborates:

When I started my undergrad, it was a healing path. I don't know how I got through it. But there was light at the end of the tunnel. And then I got my degree. But there was a lot of trauma, and you have to experience that. I did do a lot of counselling. I was putting my professors on the spot. I'd be talking, and I'd just burst into tears, and they'd say, "What's going on?" I'd say, "We're talking about missing and murdered women, and I have to be more careful about my surroundings, where I'm going, what I'm doing, who I'm with, and I usually tell a friend, "Oh I'm going here, I'll be with these people."

Amy adds:

I was presenting a paper—I'm going to cry again—on colonialism and advocacy, and I couldn't even present it because I was too busy crying. . . . I was texting my friend as I was writing this paper, "I can't write this—this is hard for me because it's talking about stuff that happened not long ago. . . . I'm being traumatized. I'm talking about as if it's in the past but it's here. It's happening now.

Furthermore, TUNA Co-Chairs both reported that due to systemic anti-Indigenous racism and encountering microaggressions, Indigenous youth don't feel safe in some spaces at Trent, including spaces designated for Indigenous Studies and Indigenous students in the Bata Library.

When we go to these spaces that are designated for Indigenous Studies, or for students, there are non-Indigenous people occupying these spaces who roll their eyes at us and are passive-aggressive. When we decide to laugh, when we decide to have a conversation, or when we decide to take a break from our work, they roll their eyes and get mad because we are there reclaiming who we are, and we are there being loud and unapologetic. So, I know there are many students here who are facing that type of hurt this year and have been in the past, and I don't know how to fix that. . . . Even when you have designated spaces, they're occupied by other people who don't want you in there, who don't want you to be yourself.

Experiences of Indigenous Learners at Post-Secondary Institutions

Indigenous youth speak about acts of racism, violence, and trauma reinforced through settler-colonial structures, ideologies, and practices. Indeed, Indigenous health and psychology literature uncovers how grief and trauma related to colonial violence are generationally transmitted (Bombay et al., 2014; Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004). First-, second-, and third-generation IRS Survivors in PSE environments have an increased risk of experiencing higher levels of trauma or "vicarious trauma." They can be retraumatized by curriculum that discusses historical abuse, violence, and trauma. Ongoing experiences of trauma from colonization and the horrific experiences of the IRS system inflict a "soul wound," as described by Duran and Duran, (1995), Locust (1998) and Bastien et al., (1999) as cited in Meeks, 2014, p. 29). Until the roots of these wounds are healed, the wounds are passed from one generation to the next (Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004). Therefore, PSE classrooms are potential sites of trauma and retraumatization, particularly in courses in Indigenous, Canadian, and social justice studies, in history, and in any courses that share narratives of colonial history and violence (Cote-Meek, 2014). As evidenced by the students' narratives, for some Indigenous learners, attending Trent is the first time they learn about IRS and other aspects of settler colonialism—in PSE classrooms. They also have to navigate environments in which the reactions and behaviours of settler students who are processing the same content add to their stress. Indigenous learners recount experiencing psychological distress and various emotions, including sadness, anger, shame, and embarrassment; they describe feeling overwhelmed, and as if they are under a microscope. They may respond to colonial and unsafe class curricula and environments by disassociating, spacing out, avoiding class, having what seems to be inappropriate or extreme reactions to class experiences, and/or taking time off from school (Cote-Meek, 2014). Cote-Meek (2014) stresses

the need for educators to consider who their students are, what content is included, and how it is shared.

Indigenous youth at Trent are experiencing interpersonal racism, which operates at the everyday level in subtle expressions to marginalize Indigenous and other racialized peoples; these expressions are identified in the field of psychology as microaggressions (Pérez Huber & Solorzano, 2015). While discriminatory treatment, such as an Indigenous or other racialized person not being hired for a job or being given inadequate medical care, arises out of structural, systemic, and cultural racism, individuals contribute to racism through their everyday practices and choices. These can include pronounced acts of hate and violence, name-calling, slurs, racialized jokes or other forms of discriminatory treatment. Pérez Huber and Solorzano (2015) suggest these are: (1) verbal and non-verbal assaults, often carried out in subtle, automatic, or unconscious forms; (2) layered assaults, based on race and its intersections with gender, class, sexuality, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent, and/or surname; and (3) cumulative assaults that take a psychological, physiological, and academic toll on racialized peoples (p. 298). Anishinaabe scholar Sheila Cote-Meek (Teme-Augama Anishnabai) (2014) finds Indigenous learners experience racist sneers, mockery, and eye-rolling. In a PSE context, Hill, Kim, and Williams (2010) (as cited in Armstrong, 2016) find that microaggressions can include calling on racialized learners to speak to issues as if they should be knowledgeable in all areas related to their ethnicity and identity, such as expecting an Indigenous person to be able to represent the views of their community, nation, or all Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous learners are also put into what Clark et al. (2014) call an "energy-sapping role," in which they feel forced to dispel stereotypical or mainstream assumptions about multiple aspects of their Indigeneity. Sue (2010) notes that microaggressions may originate from "well-intentioned" individuals, professors, or teaching assistants who are in positions of power in relation to students. Microaggressions are

often invisible to the perpetrators, who tend to respond defensively and deny their biases, and are unwilling to discuss discriminatory systems such as heteropatriarchy, ableism, etc., commensurate with settler colonialism. Jones and Galliher (2015) (as cited in Armstrong, 2016) find that microaggressions may include microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations.

Strategies for Supporting Indigenous Learners

To prevent Indigenous and other racialized students from being further oppressed and marginalized within the academy, supports for coping with the multiple impacts of settler-colonialism, healing from multi- and intergenerational trauma, racism and other forms of discrimination must be maintained and strengthened at Trent and all PSIs. Using Indigenous, transformative, anti-colonial, decolonizing, anti-oppressive and anti-racist pedagogies; drawing on supportive theory to name practices of colonialism and discrimination; and having awareness of and using strategies to disrupt systemic racism and microaggressions are all recommended. Additionally, more knowledge and education concerning the multiple challenges faced by Indigenous and other racialized students in PSIs, including professional development and training for all faculty and staff, is needed. Furthermore, creating culturally safe spaces to support Indigenous learners is widely suggested (Battiste, M. 2013; Clark et al., 2014; Cote-Meek, 2014; NIMMIWG, 2019). In 2018, Trent created an Indigenous Required Course. Moktthewenkwe/Barbara Wall recommends that this be restructured for relevancy and the safety of Indigenous students. The above are all critical areas for future research.

As discussed, engaging within their own knowledge systems, with Elders, on the land and water, and with other beings, in community, and enacting cultural and spiritual practices helps to provide strength and healing. Indigenous youth at Trent say they are their own best supports. They emphasize the value of cohort learning and how students who carry the same burden or the same hurt can support each other in reclaiming who they are. Jaimee explains:

That's how I see myself getting through all this—being able to sit down somewhere, at a dinner table, at the library on campus with those students who maybe carry the same burden or the same hurt that I do at times. They are able to understand what I don't understand. They are able to tell me or show me what I'm missing.

Recentre the Needs of Indigenous Students

Indigenous youth would like the Wenjack School to recentre the needs of Indigenous students in discussions, processes, and practices emphasizing first-year learners—to support, nurture, protect, and empower them, as they are our future leaders. Collaborators indicate that the role of TUNA could be enhanced to recentre the voices of Indigenous students and to facilitate more supports and involvement for Indigenous learners. Don recalls that student voices were much more robust in the 1970s and '80s—they had parity with faculty and were included more in the department's governance. At meetings the ratio between faculty and students was 50:50, with one-third of the group comprised of staff. Betty suggests that more formal connections could be made between the Wenjack School, the FPHL, and the student associations TUNA and Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE). She poses the possibility of an Indigenous Youth Council and offers that an Elder or Grandmother could be part of student groups:

I hear you saying, you know you need help picking up your bundles. . . . So, including a Grandmother or Elder . . . is a great way to guide that group of students, to say, "Okay, what's important, how do we do this?" Let's go to our Elder, let's see how we could start to pick up our bundles or pick up our responsibilities. . . . Because that's how you start to build community is to start to reach out, to ask for that guidance. But we don't think of those things until somebody else sees it differently. . . . We don't think of the disconnections until they are brought forward.

Further support for students comes from Nicole, who offers a student-centred Anishinaabeg understanding of the university teaching/research/service model that governs professors. She says this would be similar to an Indigenous community model in which four concentric rings

show children in the centre with the Elders/teachers surrounding them, followed by the women and then the men on the outside ring.

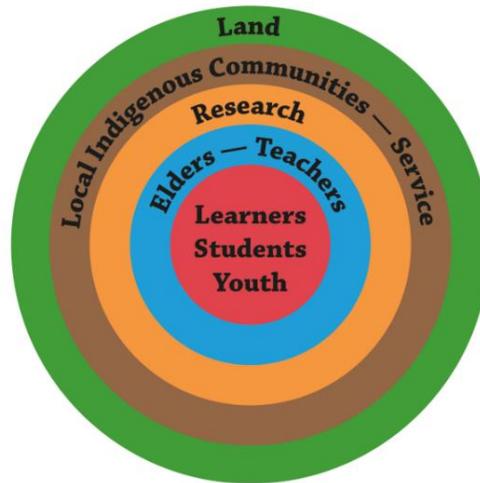


Figure 9: Nicole Bell's Student-Centred Model of Teaching, Research, and Service

Nicole explains:

I have three jobs I'm supposed to do as a faculty person—I'm supposed to teach, I'm supposed to do research, and I'm supposed to provide service. So, I see the students at the centre, and then I see the teaching comes next because we teach the students. That's what we are—an educational institution. Then research comes next because our research informs our teaching that is received by the students, and then the service comes after that.

Nicole says service aligns with the idea of action: "I do my work, I do my theory, I do my thinking in community through the service I do, not just internal to Trent but the service that I do external to Trent, which is working in community."

Conclusion: Indigenous Knowledge Sovereignty(ies)

It is evident that the community of Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Holders at Trent maintains diverse and resurgent practices that support Indigenous understandings of autonomy as relational, what I have termed relational autonomy. The majority feel Indigenous

programming at Trent is moving forward in good ways regarding including Indigenous content and pedagogies. Furthermore, they indicate that IKS make diverse, rigorous, and valid contributions in all fields and sectors, equally significant to EKS. Part of shifting the balance in the academy requires increased engagement with Indigenous communities and Elders/Knowledge Holders and increasing the number of Indigenous faculty, staff, and students to activate Indigenous understandings and pedagogies across all disciplines—and institutionally. Cote-Meek (2017) and Newhouse (2008) both indicate the need for Indigenous ways of knowing to be activated across disciplines and the institution. Research collaborators also suggest that rebalancing means disrupting, reforming, renegotiating, and shifting deep asymmetrical Indigenous–settler power dynamics and knowledge silos upheld by current governance structures, systems, and processes. The subsequent chapters share their insights from research collaborators on what it means to centre local Indigenous Knowledge systems, land, languages, history, and spirituality and to transition towards greater Indigenous governance of Indigenous programming—areas in which they feel Trent and all PSIs need to grow.

Before continuing with collaborators' insights on moving forward, I suggest recasting the conversation to speak about Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty(ies) in the context of Indigenous Knowledge systems and the academy. This responds to research collaborators' question, "Who are we Indigenizing for?"; pulls through threads from Indigenous Elders/scholars in Mi'kma'kik (featured in chapters four and five); and is grounded in the literature concerning Indigenous understandings of autonomy as relationality and of resurgence and sovereignty(ies) (Blackwell, 2012; Blaser et al., 2010; Corntassel & Scow, 2017; Hunt & Holmes, 2015). Focusing on Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty(ies) in the academy emphasizes rebalancing relations away from colonial, hegemonic dominance in PSIs and the Canadian state. Upholding Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty is critical to Indigenizing and decolonizing, and indicates specific actions

for settler/Treaty peoples. Using the discourse of sovereignty emphasizes Indigenous Knowledge systems as emergent living processes activated within cultural, social, economic, political, and governance systems through land-based relations—sovereignties that have not been relinquished and with power at stake. Emphasizing Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty(ies) supports efforts to move Indigenizing processes along the spectrum identified by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018)—from inclusion to reconciliation-based Indigenizing towards Treaty-based and resurgence-based decolonial Indigenizing processes.

Furthermore, as rooted in grounded normativity, Indigenous resurgence indicates relational autonomy and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty (AFN, 2010; Alfred, 2004; Corntassel, 2012; Coultard, 2014; Simpson, L., 2011 & 2014). Underscoring sovereignty also serves to move away from normalizing and objectifying discourses that can turn Indigenous Knowledge into nouns, objects or concepts (in English) that can be neutrally brought in, included in, infused or embedded in or within the four walls of the academy or a classroom. Reframing the process of Indigenizing to emphasize Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty resonates with Alfred's understanding of "warrior scholars" (2004) who fight for sovereignty, and Warrior's concept of "intellectual sovereignty" (2003). It serves to recentre Indigenous nationhood and resurgence in relation to Indigenizing and decolonizing (Snelgrove et al., 2014). Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty(ies) are asserted in relation to the academy through daily, multi-sited practices of relational and land-based Indigenous resurgence within Indigenous homelands, disrupting and renegotiating power relations within PSIs.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CENTRING MICH SAAGIIG NISHNAABEG/LOCAL INDIGENOUS NATIONS

Introduction

This chapter moves from broad understandings of Indigenizing to the specific context at Trent University (Trent), where research collaborators emphasize that direction related to Indigenous Knowledge systems in post-secondary institutions (PSIs) needs to come from local Indigenous Nations within their homelands. Furthermore, they indicate that land should be first in everything that is done at Trent and that institutional resources need to be devoted to Indigenous resurgence that honours land as the source of knowledge. These directives mean centring the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg⁸⁵—their land and water, knowledges, language, history, and spirituality. This is critical to Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty and moving Indigenizing along the spectrum identified by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018)—from inclusion to reconciliation-based Indigenizing towards Treaty- and resurgence-based decolonial Indigenizing processes. Indigenizing strategies must include *aki miiniwaa nibi natam* (land and water first), in this case, the *Odenaabe zibii* (Otonaabe River) and surrounding lands. Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Knowledges are essential for collaborative solutions for local environmental, political, economic, social, and health challenges and climate justice. Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg need to be properly consulted on issues related to land, land-based education and ethical knowledge engagement at Trent. While recognizing the need to centre Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Knowledges at Trent, research collaborators also speak to finding ways to recognize and work with the knowledges of diverse Indigenous Nations. A resurgence of established protocols, ceremonies, and Treaty understandings between Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, other Anishinaabeg, and Rotinoshón:ni Nations is recommended.

⁸⁵ Michi Saagiig means “at the mouth of the rivers” (Simpson, L., 2017, p. 2).

Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg

Research collaborators affirm that, first and foremost, direction needs to come from local Indigenous Peoples within their homelands. As Trent occupies the ancestral, traditional, contemporary, and Treaty territory of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, this means recognizing and centring their land and water, their knowledges, language, history, and spirituality in Treaty-based contexts. The nearby communities include Wshkiigimongaki (Curve Lake First Nation), Alderville First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation, and the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. As such, the voices of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Elders and Knowledge Holders are centred in this discussion, in particular Gidigaa Migizi (Spotted Eagle)/Doug Williams and Elder Dorothy Taylor, both from Wshkiigimongaki. Gidigaa Migizi situates us on the land. He specifies that according to Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg oral traditions, "southern Ontario, particularly the area west of Gananoque and to Long Point on Lake Erie, along the north shore of Lake Ontario and all its tributaries and the rivers that drain into it, is the territory of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg" (Williams, D., 2018, p. 29). The oral stories go back to the ice ages when Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg first moved into the area (Williams, D., 2018). Furthermore, Gidigaa Migizi (2018) asserts:

This is our land. This is our homeland. Everything here speaks to us about our old people. We've been here a long, long time. We were created here. This place is very much part of our soul, very much a part of our spirit. There is archeological evidence that we were here in Ontario 10,000 years ago. . . . Every speck of dust in this part of Ontario has been raised by our feet. We have been all over. No matter where you go. . . . Every geological formation like rocks, every lake that we have, the Great Lakes, Niagara Falls—these all have particular meaning for us. It is in our blood. It is in our genes. (2018, p. 91)

Gidigaa Migizi highlights the critical link between Indigenous land and knowledge and what happens when the academy ignores or denigrates this. He laments: "Indigenous Knowledge is still not considered a valid form of knowledge in many disciplines. There are political consequences for this. These beliefs hurt our people and hurt our relationship to our land. Our

knowledge is just as important as western knowledge" (Williams, D., 2018, p. 11). With these understandings in mind, we turn to insights for centring Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg homelands and knowledges at Trent from research collaborators.

Aki Miiniwaa Nibi Natam (Land and Water First)

During the Indigenous and co-learning sharing circles, Elder Dorothy Taylor adeptly synthesized the discussions, the issues, tensions, and opportunities related to the process of Indigenizing at Trent, and lovingly indicated how to widen the path that has been opened.

Dorothy (not previously introduced) is part of the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. Traditional Advisory Council (since 2016) and has worked at the Assembly of First Nations, the Native Council of Canada, and the Native Business Institute, as well as for federal and provincial governments and Wshkiigimongaki. She has an honours B.A. from Trent. Dorothy is also a longstanding volunteer on the Petroglyph Advisory Council of Wshkiigimongaki. She is known in her community and surrounding areas for upholding her responsibilities to nibi (water) and aki (land) and teachings about the sacredness of nibi. Dorothy is a founder of the Sacred Water Circle (SWC) and brought together spiritual leaders from all over Chi'Mikinak (the Great Turtle) in 2011. She recounts their message: "If we are going to make changes in this world, it has to start with us. Your own heart first has to be in a good way."

In listening to Dorothy and witnessing how she embodies her knowledge and gifts, those in the circles experienced the incredible power, wisdom, heart-based and spiritual leadership, diplomacy, and generosity of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg. Dorothy took care of us in ways that demonstrate all the ways that Elders are known for. I pray that those at Trent come to act on her guidance. It is evident that settler peoples need to accelerate our co-learning abilities to receive and act on what Dorothy and other powerful Anishinaabegkwe offer. Dorothy offers concrete ways to put aki (land) and nibi (water) first: Indigenous resurgence, the process of

Indigenizing and upholding Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty, would be informed and guided by the Odenaabe zibii (Otonabee River) that flows right through Trent's campus, as well as the land surrounding it. Trent named this area Aki Ezhnikaadeg Yaamgak (the land on which Trent sits) in 2022.

Dorothy expands on the relationship between Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg land, language, and knowledges and Indigenizing:

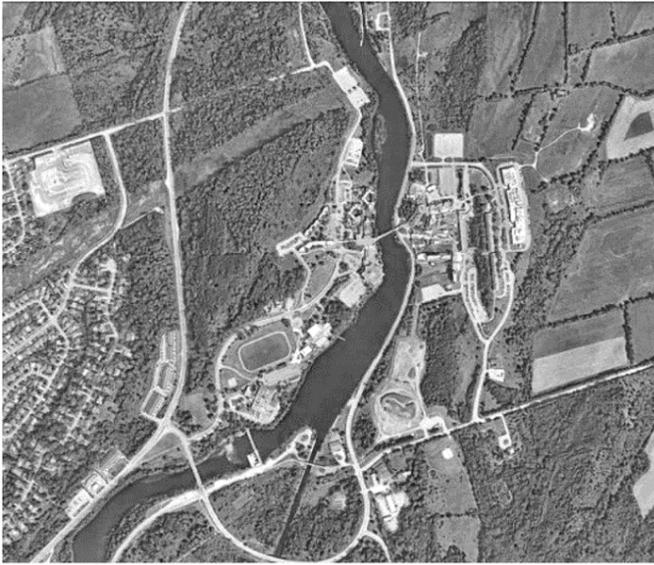
When we are talking about governance and Indigenizing the institution, where I come from is from a Traditional perspective. I think we should focus very much on the land that we are on, and recognizing the land, and naming the land, and making sure it is in the front of everything we do. Because that is where the language comes from, that's where the culture comes from, that's where the people come from, is the land. So, I think we can get inspiration from the land when we are making recommendations in terms of governance.

During the co-learning sharing circle with Indigenous and settler/Treaty peoples, which included key members of Trent's upper administration, Dorothy gifted Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe spiritual understandings related to nibi and aki, outlining their significance in relation to the academy:

Trent is on the most precious land in this area, and the spirits of the land are sitting among us, unseen and guiding us on this beauty path. . . . The fact that we have such a strong Indigenous Studies department is not by accident, and not only from the efforts of the people, the professors and the administration, but actually, the spirits of the land have helped you in that work that you do, truly. . . . The water that goes right through the middle of this campus, Odenaabe—that's translated as the heart water, is very significant to what we present here academically.

Anishinaabeg Elder Asinykwe/Edna Manitowabi also indicates that governance for the land that Trent occupies comes from the animals, fish, bird and insect nations who work together to take care of all relations. Having settler people listen and come to understand aspects of Michi Saagiig or other Indigenous spiritual knowledges and their teachings or messages is a central tension at Trent and all PSIs. Yet Dorothy's message is clear. Indeed, she and many other Elders/Knowledge Holders have repeatedly invited Trent administration to participate in

ceremony and other practices that may help them in coming to respect Michi Saagiig spirituality. Such opportunities for knowing were discussed in chapter four, based on Murdena Marshall's insights.



For those unfamiliar with the campus, Figure 10 depicts where Trent's Symons Campus occupies the banks of the Odenaabe ziibi. Here, TU claims 1460 acres of land, 400 of which are endowment lands. As mentioned in the previous chapter, research collaborators put forward land

Figure 10: Trent University Symons Campus (Google Earth, 2022)

and water-based teachings, teaching lodges, or ceremony houses on the land, as well as teaching in the cycles of the seasons, as exemplary pedagogical practices for all Trent learners. Consensus emerged from the co-learning circle that providing more spaces on the land for Indigenous pedagogies is something that Trent could do immediately. For example, the First Nations University of Canada has a second, land-based campus for this purpose. Indeed, this is how Gidigaa Migizi and Skahendowaneh Swamp (and others) conducted/conduct the *Indigenous Knowledge* (6600) doctorate-level course. Another example is Migizi ow-kwe's and Liz Osawamick's *Anishinaabemowin on the Land* (3851H).

Participating in ceremony as part of course offerings and events hosted through the Chanie Wenjack School of Indigenous Studies (Wenjack School) and the First Peoples House of Learning (FPHL) offers immense potential for fostering relational, heart-centred, and

transformative learning. An example of ceremonial practice in which many in the Trent community have participated is Nibi Emosaawdamajig (Those That Walk for the Water). Being part of the walks, singing and praying for nibi, and taking part in other ceremonies for the health and healing of nibi has awakened diverse peoples in the Nogojiwanong and surrounding areas to activate and embody Indigenous understandings of nibi as a living entity, a relative, a source of intelligence and knowledge, and come to understand the meaning of water as life.

Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Pedagogy

Dorothy's suggestion that the Odenaabe ziibi and surrounding land guide Indigenous education at Trent exemplifies land and water as pedagogy. Drawing on the knowledges of her ancestors and Elders, Leanne Simpson emphasizes that land [and water] are pedagogy—both as process and context for Nishnaabeg/Indigenous intelligence or grounded normativity (2014). They are critical to Nishnaabewin (the practices, knowledge, and ethics that make Nishnaabeg People who they are and construct the Nishnaabeg world) and to generating Indigenous understandings of nationhood, governance, and sovereignty (Simpson, L., 2017). Reinforcing this, Rotinoshón:ni Peoples hold these same understandings about land and water (Hill, 2012; Porter, 2016). Dorothy's suggestion that those at Trent do their work by treating the Odenaabe ziibi as our relative indicates a practice of Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty. It crystallizes the need for all peoples to lead with our hearts, as indicated by the Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders referenced in this work. This is encapsulated by the Mi'kmaw understanding of mkamlamun (heart-mind). According to Migizi ow-kwe, in Anishinaabemowin this is ode-nendamowining. While centring the Odenaabe ziibi in Indigenous education may seem obvious, this has not been emphasized as part of the Wenjack School plan, nor the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan.

Michi Saagiig Nishnaabemowin and History

Centring Michi Saagiig Nishnaabemowin is also fundamental to upholding Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty at Trent, as is centring local Indigenous languages at all PSIs. Recall that Indigenous Knowledge systems contain ecological and ethical frameworks that have the potential to transform and heal relationships with the land and with all beings (Donald, 2013; Kimmerer, 2013; Marshall, 2013; McGregor, 2004; Miller, 2013; Simpson, L., 2014; Williams, 2013). Indigenous languages hold these teachings. Throughout his lifetime, Gidigaa Migizi, as well as other Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders throughout this work, impart that the language comes from the land; the language holds the culture; and teachings about how to live are embedded in the language and the stories (Marshall & Marshall, 2013; Johnson, 1995; Porter & Ka-Hon-Hes, 2008; Taylor, 2018; Williams, D., 2018). In his many roles at Trent, Gidigaa Migizi continually advocated for Michi Saagiig Nishnaabemowin to be centred and emphasized aki dibaajimowin—that the land speaks. His book, *Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg: This is Our Territory*, comes from "within Nishnaabeg intellectual practices. It is born out of a lot of Nishnaabeg thought, remembering, storytelling, years of transferring knowledge from generation to generation, and a long mentorship with Elders who remembered into the 1700s" (Williams, D., 2018, p. 11). It offers opportunities to engage deeply with the stories and history of the land and people.

Gidigaa Migizi says, "The Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg side of the story is almost lost in terms of how the history of Ontario has been told by the mainstream historians" (Williams, D., 2018, p. 11). He finds that academics often view oral storytelling as a weak link to history. In mainstream post-secondary education, "events are interpreted in their own way without regard to our knowledge" (Williams, D., 2018, p. 11). Gidigaa Migizi formerly taught a Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg history course that has not been active for several years. Research collaborators

stress the urgent need for a resurgence of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe history courses and a language course. Indeed, the Wenjack School endeavoured for several years to engage a fluent knowledge holder in Michi Saagiig Nishnaabemowin. This was recently realized with the addition of Jack Hoggarth of Wshkiigimongaki as Anishinaabe Knowledge Chair.

Mino Bimaadiziwin, Creation and Governance

Gidigaa Migizi imparts crucial understandings of mino bimaadiziwin in Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg resurgence. Based on his teachings, Leanne Simpson (2008b) imparts that:

Our ancestors knew that maintaining good relationships as individuals, in families, in clans, and in our nation and with other Indigenous nations and confederacies was the basis for lasting peace. This was the foundation of a set of ethics, values, and practices known as Bimaadiziwin or "living the good life." Bimaadiziwin is a way of ensuring human beings live in balance with the natural world, their family, their clan, and their nation, and it is carried out through the Seven Grandfather teachings, embedded in the social and political structures of the Nishnaabeg. (p. 32)

To reflect on Gidigaa Migizi's guidance, let us consider how he links language and stories:

Old stories we believe are supported by a Manidoog (spirit) that we call Dimbaajimowag. To Nishnaabeg, stories are alive. That is why it is important to carry this knowledge from generation to generation to the next. This is how we transfer knowledge. (Williams, D., 2018, p. 12)

Accordingly, his book opens with the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe Creation story that holds fundamental values and ways of being of the nation. In expanding on the teachings of the Creation story, Gidigaa Migizi shares many examples of relationality—of how to be good relatives in Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Aki—and of humans' place in Creation and of governance. His understandings of mino bimaadiziwin illustrate how it promotes good relations based on interdependent and reciprocal relationships among all beings. Gidigaa Migizi's thoughts often turned to the Traditional food staples of the Michi Saagiig and their very survival. He recounts how his people were/are salmon people who depended on the Atlantic salmon that came up

the St. Lawrence River and spawned in the rivers that flow into Chi'Nbiish (Big Water),⁸⁶ also known as Lake Ontario. The Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg's relationship with their homelands and Traditional foods has been disrupted and destroyed through the onset of settler colonialism and its encroachment on the land. With the building of the Trent Severn Waterway (which runs through Trent), the accompanying flooding in 1844 and 1908, and the series of dams and locks installed that blocked the flow of the Odenaabe ziibi, the salmon and eel that once thrived in these waters were killed off. Another food staple, manoomin (the good seed, also known as wild rice), was majorly impacted. The flooding also buried many graves and sacred areas (Williams, D., 2018).

During the height of the "rice wars" in 2016, settler cottagers perpetrated ongoing racial violence to try to prevent James Whetung of Wshkiigimongaki from harvesting and seeding manoomin where it grew historically on Pigeon Lake, Ontario (Jackson, 2016)⁸⁷. Following these events, Gidigaa Migizi shared a teaching on relationality and local ecosystems at a talk at the Peterborough Public Library (2017). He said there is much to learn from our relatives, the land, the water, the animals, the rocks, and Manidoog (spirits), and that they are our teachers. If humans don't keep their responsibilities to protect manoomin and nibi at Pigeon Lake (and throughout Creation), a Manidoog (spirit) such as Mishibizhiw—the great lynx who protects lakes and rivers—will. Mishibizhiw can use their power for compassion and healing or malevolence; Mishibizhiw is known to punish those who disrupt the balance of the health of nibi (Miller, 2013; Nelson, 2013; Williams, D., 2016). These spiritual teachings of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg are based on natural law, from which no one escapes and have much to offer amid our current climate crisis. For further consideration of teachings related to natural law and

⁸⁶ Williams, D. (2010) as cited in Simpson, L., 2011.

⁸⁷ Pigeon Lake, about 22 km west of TU, is part of the Kawartha Conservation Watershed.

Mishibizhiw, see Anishinaabeg scholar Melissa Nelson's (2013) contemplation "*Will Mishibizhiw Survive Climate Change or Is He Creating It?*"

Nurturing Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe Language Teachers

Dorothy and Migizi ow-kwe share insights concerning the importance of nurturing Michi Saagiig Nishnaabemowin and other Indigenous languages in PSE. Dorothy refers to what an Elder she met on her travels calls "Indian school." This encompasses "learning your language, which is primary, knowing where you come from, your clan responsibilities and the teachings of mino bimaadiziwin (living the good life). It's important for grounding ourselves." Migizi ow-kwe recounts how relearning Anishinaabemowin gave her wholeness: "because the language says what is animate and what is inanimate and teaches all of this knowledge." Migizi ow-kwe began to return to the stories, and to give back to Anishinaabeg People; she developed a dictionary. She wants Indigenous languages to be taught at the university level and says those languages should be equal to French and English as "language and culture are our identity." In creating Anishinaabemowin courses at Trent, even though Migizi ow-kwe was a fluent speaker, she had to return to school to learn how to teach the language. Migizi ow-kwe recommends that PSIs make it easier for fluent speakers to participate in teacher education programs, and that there be more land-based, immersion, community-based, correspondence, and online teacher education courses at Trent and other PSIs so that fluent speakers have access to practices and formats that cater to their needs. She also indicates that language teacher requirements must be adapted for fluent speakers of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabemowin to facilitate the language being taught at Trent. How to better nurture Michi Saagiig Nishnaabemowin and other Indigenous language teachers is a crucial area for more discussion and research. Strengthening and

transforming mainstream teacher education must occur at all PSIs to maintain and revitalize local Indigenous languages.⁸⁸

Migizi ow-kwe teaches in the Odawa dialect (spoken in her home at Wikwemikong Unceded Territory). However, she acknowledges all Anishinaabeg dialects and includes some words from other dialect in her class materials. She imparts: "There is no one correct way of saying a word" and that "understanding more than one dialect leads to increased communication" (Williams, S., 2013, p. iv). As mentioned, Migizi ow-kwe has nurtured three generations of Anishinaabemowin learners at Trent. In addition to the barriers for fluent speakers to teach in PSE that she identifies above, Migizi ow-kwe highlights two other significant challenges regarding teaching Michi Saagig Nishnaabemowin at Trent: "Our department always talks about language and culture, but nothing has been done because there is no money. There is a road blockage." Additionally, she says, "First Nations people need to have a stronger voice to say what we want." Indeed, Gidigaa Migizi expresses concern that other Indigenous languages, including Anishinaabeg dialects, are potentially "colonizing" if they are dominant at Trent. Based on these insights, the Wenjack School should act on finding ways to accommodate local community speakers who may not have a teaching degree or undergraduate degree. Furthermore, the school could consider creating policy in this area and potentially becoming a leader in this area based on their success in establishing criteria for dual scholar tenure track Indigenous Elders.

Indigenous Spaces and Naming

Visibly, consciously, and purposely being Indigenous (embodying Indigeneity), maintaining and creating Indigenous spaces, and renaming were also put forward by research

⁸⁸ At Dalhousie University in Mi'kma'ki, the criteria for hiring a Mi'kmaw language teacher is language proficiency and some evidence of teaching proficiency with adult learners (Margaret Robinson, Mi'kmaq, lives in Kijipuktuk/Halifax, NS, personal communication, October 2023).

collaborators as part of Indigenizing, as well as reforming and transforming structures and systems at PSIs and supporting Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty. They want more Indigenous spaces honoured at Trent. As mentioned, this includes land and water-based areas for teaching. There is also a request from Migizi ow-kwe for an Indigenous kitchen. Creating more Indigenous spaces and renaming resonates with Indigenous projects of reclaiming, retelling, revitalizing, restorying, and repairing, as put forward by Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999).

Collaborators also suggest using Michi Saagiig language and local place names as part of bilingual signage around Trent to educate everyone about local land, language and history and nurture a sense of Indigenous community and belonging. Since the time of this research, two Michi Saagiig names were conferred through ceremony in 2019. The Traditional area was renamed Mnidoowag A'Kiing (Spirit Lands), and the Indigenous Learning Space in the Bata Library was named Giizhigaatig (Cedar Room). Additionally, the Treaty 20 & Williams Treaty Display: *Aki Ezhnikaadeg Yaamgak—The Land on Which Trent Sits* was created in 2019, and rocks installed in 2021 recognize the Treaties lands and bear the symbols of the dodemaag (clan system) of the Treaty 20 Michi Saagiig signatories, as part of the process of reconciliation. Furthermore, Wshkiigimongaki's flag is now flying at Trent.

Research collaborators and other students also stress that Champlain and Catherine Parr Traill Colleges need renaming—especially Champlain College, due to the harm this well-known colonizer caused (Robins, 2021; Wood, 2021; Wall, 2018). Trent's crest, or logo, features Champlain as symbolized by the conquering colonizer's sword. Cheyenne Wood, a Mi'kmaq student in the Wenjack School, finds Champlain College's motto, "continuer mes decouvertes," (continue my discoveries), "is like a spit in the face" (Wood, 2021). As Gidigaa Migizi says, in the history books, we hear that Champlain "was 'discovering,' but actually, he was spreading viruses" (Williams, D., 2018, p. 41). A Trent presidential committee reflected upon Champlain's

legacy and released recommendations in 2022, noting they had reached an "imperfect conclusion" (Trent, 2022, p. 18). They decided to keep the name of Champlain College but add historical and cultural context by giving Indigenous names to the buildings and spaces of the college in consultation with local Indigenous Elders to bring "Indigenous history to the forefront—and inform non-Indigenous students of colonial history" (Trent, 2022, p. 18–19). They also recommend giving an Indigenous name to Trent's next college. Indeed, the sixth Trent college will be named Gidigaa Migizi College to honour his legacy.

Beyond Trent's broader challenges related to colonial naming and the celebration of colonial history, Indigenous Studies has experienced its own challenges related to centring and honouring local Indigenous Peoples. A staff member of the FPHL recalls that in 2017, there were concerns over changing the name of the Department of Indigenous Studies to the Chanie Wenjack School of Indigenous Studies. They reflect that in Indigenous Studies,

[w]e say that we want everything to be Indigenous-led and the importance of consulting with local Indigenous Peoples, and yet, in our own activities, we are not. No one in the community had any idea where this name came from. What was our process? We are developing a new process now because there hasn't been a clear process other than the Aboriginal Education Council. (2017)

Gidigaa Migizi concurs, adding that while he appreciates the school honouring Chanie Wenjack (an Anishinaabeg boy from Marten Falls First Nation who died from overexposure after escaping from the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School), the renaming was done without consultation with the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg or with faculty and students. Gidigaa Migizi felt local people were not adequately included in the university and must improve. He felt there should have been a university-wide discussion about it. He remarked, "The Mississauga Nishnaabeg are not represented here. . . . it would have been an honour to me and to the Mississaugas to have a Mississauga name used." Gidigaa Migizi also mentioned that Trent is generally weak in the area of consultation. In the Indigenous sharing circle, the need for centring Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe

was reiterated by other circle participants and members of the Traditional Advisory Council (TAC) for the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. Program, including Andy Dufrane, President for the Peterborough & District Wapiti Métis Council. He brought everyone's words together, acknowledging that:

[The Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg] have stories, they have history, they have their culture, and this university should respect the fact that this river runs through their territories, that they sit on this land. The university should first respect the Mississauga People in the way they name buildings and courses and in our structure here.

Colliding Values and Beliefs Concerning Land Development

An example of the challenges of and the critical importance for those at Trent who are learning how to centre Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, their land, language, knowledges, history, and spirituality, to work alongside and consult with Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg using "free, prior and informed consent" as per the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) was highlighted during my time as a student in a multi-year conflict over development on the land that Trent occupies. Diverse perspectives came into focus, and conflict arose regarding a proposed arena complex and the Trent Research and Innovation Park (TRIP).⁸⁹ In 2016, tensions arose when Trent sold a portion of their land at Pioneer and Nassau Mills Roads to the City of Peterborough (hereafter referred to as Peterborough), where both parties proposed the building of a \$54 million arena complex, with no prior Indigenous consultation. According to Julie Davis, Trent's Vice-President External Relations and Development, the site of

⁸⁹ In 2016, TU President Leo Groarke, Vice-President of research and innovation Neil Emery, Vice-President of External Relations and Development Julie Davis, and officials with the City of Peterborough unveiled a plan for a multi-use development on 130 acres of endowment lands. This was to include a Trent Research and Innovation Park (TRIP) (85-acres on the East Bank of the Odenaabe zibii), a twin-pad hockey arena, a pool, a major league-sized baseball field, and a natural turf sports field. This \$54-million development was proposed for southeast corner of Pioneer Road and Nassau Mills Road. Construction was expected to begin in 2019. They said, "work is well underway on the latter two components, with a projected opening of this summer." Emery added "We've had enough of keeping [it] a secret" (Rellenger, 2016).

the jointly proposed Trent and Peterborough arena complex and the TRIP were identified in the Trent Land Plan (TLP) in both 2006 and 2013 (Davis, G., 2018). Following the sale of land, in 2017, Peterborough widened the road to prepare for the arena, clearcutting an area of giijik (cedar trees) close to Mnidoowag A'Kiing (the Spirit Lands), a teaching and ceremonial area where students gather daily. For many Indigenous and settler students, this was their first notice of the proposed development. Many were devastated by the wasteful harming of the land and giijik—their relatives and an important medicinal plant. In response, Elders and staff from the FPHL held a ceremony for the trees. From 2017 until 2019, public pushback ensued with Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Elders, the Sacred Water Circle, Trent students, and local naturalists and ecologists collaborating to lead awareness-raising events and speaking out against TU and Peterborough's actions. This included Dorothy and Migizi ow-kwe, who spoke on several occasions, including during a Trent open house in 2018 on Faryon Bridge, which they took considerable effort to access in their wheelchairs. The community groups mentioned above asked that the proposed development be relocated as they felt it would impact multiple wetlands connected across the campus that are designated nature areas. A study surveying biota in response to the proposed development estimated a minimum of 1,500 relatives or species with 27 species risk at Trent (Gaffney-Knox & Taylor, 2021).

Lack of Consultation with the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg

UNDRIP and the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2014 in the Province of Ontario advise municipalities to engage with First Nations early in planning processes. Yet consultation and engagement with local Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg communities did not occur until after most approvals for the proposed arena had been granted. Indigenous communities were sent a site plan from Peterborough as part of a circulated list to stakeholders in 2017 (City of Peterborough, 2017). Dorothy reveals: "We weren't consulted in an appropriate manner. We

have ceremonies there . . . and we believe in the spirit of the land, and the protection of water. This was disregarded completely" (Davis, G., 2018). In 2018, Wshkiigimongaki met with Trent and Peterborough, asking for meaningful engagement that recognized Indigenous Rights and Treaty Rights, both of which are part of the process of reconciliation. Wshkiigimongaki indicated that the proposed development would negatively impact the wetlands and wildlife sanctuary, both of which are culturally significant and hold heritage value to the Michi Saagiig Peoples who live and work in Nogojiwanong and the surrounding communities. Wetlands have great cultural significance to the Michi Saagiig and are known as the medicine chests of the Anishinaabeg. Michi Saagiig Elders and a Council member from Wshkiigimongaki requested that Peterborough slow down the development as an archaeological assessment for the lands along Pioneer Road was not undertaken prior to the area being disturbed. They said that the area has a high potential for archaeological resources, primarily due to the proximity to the river and an already established rich archaeological history along the Odenaabe ziibi. They also said that a drumlin was cut into and a large portion removed during construction activities for the TRIP and that any archaeological resources present would have been destroyed (Wshkiigimongaki, 2018). Dorothy says she "begged" Peterborough to reconsider the arena's location, with an eagle feather held high in her hand (Taylor, 2018). A consultation process led by Dawn Lavell-Harvard, was initiated after these events occurred.

Conflicting Narratives over Aki/Land

The differently situated understandings of land and water, of community well-being, and of how to work through conflict and come to a resolution, as held by Trent and the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg and other Indigenous Knowledge Holders, are further illustrated by a close read of the following narratives. President Leo Groarke expressed Trent's position on the land development:

Our hope is this brings the university and the community together. Maybe it's even broader than that. If we're very successful, we're going to develop an economic backbone for Peterborough and maybe even beyond Peterborough, as sort of a gateway to eastern Ontario. (Rellinger, 2016)

Following community resistance to the arena project, Julie Davis stated: "We have done species-at-risk surveys, tree retention and replacement surveys, hydrological surveys, more than 18 environmental studies with the City of Peterborough in the last two years to ensure these developments are done the right way" (Deeth, 2018). Note that the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority said they had approved all plans, and that "external reviews" did not find species at risk at either site (Davis, G., 2018). In 2020, a group of Indigenous and settler people associated with Trent who were concerned about the draft Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan held *Honouring the Land of the Sacred Elements*, a seminar to raise awareness and encourage respectful dialogue for the benefit of the land (Gaffney-Knox & Taylor, 2021). At this session, Migizi ow-kwe shared teachings from the Anishinaabe Creation story, beginning with the four sacred elements. She explained how Mother Earth provides a place to live and walk, fire transforms us, nibi (water) shapes us, and air moves us. Migizi ow-kwe said that Anishinaabeg move lightly on the earth so as not to hurt her. She also shared some teachings about nibi (water), how it purifies our minds and bodies, and that it is important to approach nibi with reverence and respect. She added that Anishinaabeg culture has no corporal punishment; when someone feels troubled or someone does wrong, they are told to sit by the water and meditate as nibi brings "peace, calmness, and hope" (Gaffney-Knox & Taylor, 2021). Migizi ow-kwe commented on the central conflict related to the Trent Land Plan:

I know we need economics to bring income to live, and comforts for our life. We do not have to destroy for the sake of money. We must meet our needs without harming and destroying land, water, fire, and air. . . . The Great Spirit gave us these sacred things. We must respect them. We must look at the land as sacred. If we destroy it, where is there to go to? Right now, the world is telling us something. . . . We are not paying attention to it. (Gaffney-Knox & Taylor, 2021)

Dorothy elaborated on this message:

There is a smidgen of a crack of the spirit world that shines through in this land. And [the spirits] speak and converse with our people and those who are sensitive to it and you among us can hear that communication through the beautiful songs of the meadowlark, the chorus frog, the crickets. (Gaffney-Knox & Taylor, 2021)

She then addressed Trent's administration: "I challenge Trent to really go beyond saying that 'we are sustainable and green . . .' while at the same time you chop down all our cedar trees and beechwood and basswood." She asked them to "please reconsider the present and future of the lands of Trent," adding, "You have a very good chance to listen to the spirits of the land. . . . you have a chance to protect—beyond protection, to maintain the treasure that's in your own backyard" (Gaffney-Knox & Taylor, 2021). This echoes her advice to the upper administration who participated in the 2018 co-learning sharing circle. Dorothy was highly involved in the consultation process on the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan with Wshkiigimongaki. The community told Nbisiing, a consulting firm hired to interact with Indigenous Peoples, that they wanted the lands left the way they are, with a moratorium on all development. Dorothy found that Trent "make[s] their own decisions. . . . even though they have consulted" (Gaffney-Knox & Taylor, 2021).

Listening and Learning

In the end, the proposed arena development fell through. This was not a result of Peterborough and Trent listening to Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg concerns but because provincial funding for the project was cut in 2018, and the area was designated a provincially significant wetland by the Province of Ontario in 2019. The area was renamed the Kiiiktaanaa Mash'ing (Spring Peeper Marsh) Wetland Complex by the Elders & Traditional Knowledge Keepers Council in 2023. This seems like a positive ending to this the story. However, during the height of the tensions, Trent continually upheld settler-colonial values of land as commodity, success as

growth and economic progress, and that science alone could determine the "the right way" forward (as per Groarke and Davis's statements above). Both Elders and Wshkiigimongaki were compelled to direct their energies into resisting Trent and Peterborough. The Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg indicate that we must listen to our relatives and to Minadoog, the spirits of the land, that we consider their knowledge and guidance. Since 2016, Trent has been quick to pivot in their narratives, public statements, plans, and marketing strategies related to what occurred. After resisting recommendations from Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Elders, Wshkiigimongaki, Trent students, and Nogojiwanong community members to find another site for the arena, and consulting retroactively with Indigenous communities, the statement on Trent's website in 2023 claims that the Trent Land and Nature Areas Plan "promotes land-based learning and discovery, enhances the understanding and health of our natural spaces, and models a new approach to community and Indigenous engagement." Trent also says it is collaborating/will collaborate with the Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers Council and the Michi Saagiig Consultation Liaisons table to develop ways to monitor and enhance the health of the natural environment at Trent (Trent, 2023). Trent administration walked the land near the new proposed residence and Senior Centre with a group of local Elders and community people, indicating a positive step forward.

Since the start of the planning and development progress, there has been a lack of transparency, communications, adherence to Indigenous consultation as per UNDRIP, and sustained, face-to-face conflict resolution. These remain concerns in relation to the ongoing review and monitoring of the health of Aki Ezhnikaadeg Yaamgak and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action that Trent and other PSIs have committed to upholding. Complicated and interrelated aspects of settler colonialism are at play and need to be monitored ongoing. First, as indicated earlier by Shanahan (2019), Canadian law shields

university boards' decisions and conduct from review and oversight, with boards acting as quasi-judicial tribunals over their own operations and practices. This is something that needs to change. Secondly, as observed by Gidigaa Migizi, Trent is still working with industry, "which is all about growth of resources, and resources which are ours. On the left-hand, Trent is promoting Indigenization and on the other hand they are promoting de-Indigenization."

The hierarchical and siloed nature of Trent's governance model (and that of all Canadian PSIs) was thrown into stark relief by examining how current Trent leadership approached relationships with local Indigenous People during the conflicts over land development. Why did they not consult with those in the Wenjack School and with local Indigenous communities at the outset of their plan to sell and develop the land? From 2016–2019, they were caught in cycles of defensiveness, denial, and resistance to local Indigenous Peoples and knowledges, indicating entrenchment of settler-colonial beliefs, practices, and processes. Trent's new direction perhaps indicates openness to listening, learning, and adaptation, and there are many ways to widen this path.

Prospects for Becoming Good Relatives

The majority of research collaborators feel some of the land and water occupied by Trent's campus needs to be returned to the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg and that areas need to be set aside from sale or development and be dedicated for educational purposes. Additionally, resources must be devoted to taking care of and supporting teaching opportunities in these spaces. A major block to this is that most Trent administration and many of us as settlers are not experienced at respectfully engaging with Indigenous Peoples, and further, we have lost a direct relationship to the land and do not yet embrace land and water as pedagogy. Trent has opportunities to enhance and accelerate their actions to foster respectful and trust-based relations between peoples, as per the TRC's Calls to Action. This includes taking actions that

demonstrate understanding of the urgent need for land- and water-centred education and its implications for future generations. Trent would also benefit from becoming fluent in how to embody and facilitate Treaty relationships in the context of Treaty 20 (1818) and the Williams Treaties (1923) that govern the area where Trent is situated and from being responsive to settler responsibilities in the context of the Land Back movement. These Treaties include ensuring that Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg have access to the mouths and banks of the rivers (to be discussed further in chapters 10 and 11). The guidance of Elders associated with Trent offers settler peoples ways to become open to the potential of a different relationship with Indigenous Peoples, the land, and the water, and for land restoration and Indigenous stewardship. Furthermore, Snelgrove et al.'s (2014) suggestion that solidarity between Indigenous and settler/Treaty peoples be grounded in "actual practices and place-based relationships" offers direction for relational ways forward (p. 3).

Trent has opportunities to stop the cyclic ways in which settler colonialism reproduces itself in governance, on the land, and in the academy. Trent administration is well situated to listen to the guidance of Elders and open up to learning from Indigenous Knowledge systems and teachings, or, in Dorothy's words, "to be more sensitive" (Gaffney-Knox & Taylor, 2021). As they move forward from challenging relational and fiscal years, Trent administration has opportunities to learn how to centre the Michi Saagiig, to learn and reflect on their experiences, and to activate and embody the knowledges, skills, and abilities to do co-learning, consultation, facilitation, and conflict resolution within the Trent and Nogojiwanong community. If those living in Kina Gchi Nishnaabeg- ogaming (the place where we all live and work together)⁹⁰ are concerned about the health of Mother Earth and global climate change and are willing to learn about and reflect on the knowledges of the land, embedded in Michi Saagiig Nishnaabemowin

⁹⁰ Simpson, L., 2017, p. 2.

and the stories from the ancestors and the voices of Minadoog (spirits), the prospects for changing destructive human beliefs and behaviors are formidable. Listening and learning in these ways is essential to nurturing and respecting Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty and to ensuring the health of aki and nibi and all beings within the ecosystem of Odenaabe zibii. Without inclusion of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Knowledges in working through the challenges that collectively confront us in an ecosystem where salmon, eel, and manoomin once thrived, and the countless more-than-human beings that are part of a web of interconnected and interdependent intelligence, settler society has only a narrow view of how to proceed. If settlers associated with Trent can't learn to be good humans and respect the knowledge of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, those who have lived here for over 10, 000 years, then we are not good relatives. We exhibit hubris and ignorance that will further contribute to degrading and destroying Creation.

Upholding Indigenous Knowledge Sovereignty

Based on the insights of Gidigaa Migizi, Dorothy, Migizi ow-kwe and other Elders who are trying to love and guide those at Trent, it is evident that their land and water, the more-than-human beings they share these with, their language, spirituality, and history are inseparable from who they are as people and their ways of being and knowing. Alfred and Corntassel's (2005, as built on the work of Holm et al., 2003) proposed model of Indigenous Peoplehood that suggests four interlocking concepts: "sacred history, ceremonial cycles, language, and ancestral homelands" aligns with these understandings (p. 609). Grounded in Anishinaabeg Knowledge systems, Jerry Fontaine (Sagkeeng First Nation), Trent Indigenous Studies Ph.D., and Assistant Professor in Indigenous Studies at the University of Winnipeg, reinforces this proposed model:

Ceremonial i-zhi-chi-gay-win zhigo kayn-dah-so-win (Ways of doing and knowing) and Anishinabe critical consciousness are found in our spiritual history and oral traditions that are grounded in language and geography. Everything we know originates from Manitou Aki. (Fontaine & McCaskill, 2022, p. 186)

The primacy of aki (land) to knowing is further reiterated by Anishinaabeg and Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholars. Recall how Anishinaabe scholar Nicole Bell (Kitigan Zibi First Nation), Coordinator of the Indigenous B.Ed. Program, describes Indigenous Knowledge as culture specific, contained within the local knowledge, worldview, and lands of a nation, and as "epistemological, in that each nation culturally determines for itself how it knows what it knows," encapsulating land as knowledge as the basis for local Indigenous ways of being and knowing (Bell, 2014, p. 4). Moreover, Leanne Simpson reminds us that land (and water) are pedagogy, both as process and context for Nishnaabeg/Indigenous intelligence (2014). Fontaine further emphasizes that Anishinaabe pedagogy has spirituality at its core (Fontaine & McCaskill, 2022). As Anishinaabe scholars Deborah McGregor and Sylvia Plain (2013) say:

Recognizing our relatives as a source of knowledge forms an integral aspect of our Anishinaabe theoretical foundation. This means that our knowledge systems are rooted in the Earth and the place we come from: where our ancestors are. There are many stories of Anishinaabeg who seek knowledge or that knowledge is revealed to them by our relatives or the spirit world. (p. 111)

Furthermore, land and water are critical to Nishnaabewin (the practices, knowledge, and ethics that make Nishnaabeg People who they are and construct the Nishnaabeg world) and to generating Indigenous understandings of nationhood, governance, and sovereignty (Simpson, L., 2017). These understandings must be centred in all aspects of Indigenous education at Trent, including research ethics processes.

In linking the wisdom shared by Gidigaa Migizi, Dorothy, Migizi ow-kwe, and others in Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Aki with that from Murdena and Albert Marshall (chapters four and five) and other Indigenous Elders across Wabanakik, they all indicate that local Indigenous

Peoples hold spiritual knowledges within their lands and languages. As Murdena shares in her circular *Conception of L'nu'k/Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, Figure 4 in the centre or nucleus of the circle is spiritual knowledge (in this case, plant medicines), or "the sacred nature of the medicine, the spirit of it" (Marshall, M., 2008, p. 2). Furthermore, Murdena imparts that "the innermost circle, wherein sacred knowledge resides, can only truly be understood within the language of the particular Aboriginal or Indigenous Peoples of the area; it is not possible to translate this knowledge into another language" (Bartlett et al., 2012a, p. 337). In other words, it can't be translated, or its essence will be lost; it cannot be removed from the land, the language, or the peoples (Marshall & Marshall, 2013). Indigenous Knowledges cannot be removed from their land-based contexts. Based on this guidance and the direction suggested by these Elders and other research collaborators, it is recommended that Trent enter into a process to discuss creating protocols, an agreement, or a memorandum of understanding with the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg concerning how they would like to centre their knowledge systems, land, language, history, and spirituality at Trent. This is an opportunity for Trent to engage in understandings of Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty and to be a leader in this area. Trent could do so by extending their work with the Elders & Traditional Knowledge Keepers Council and in Treaty education. Ultimately, such discussions with local Indigenous Peoples concerning how they would like to be centred are essential at all PSIs across Chi'Mikinak (the Great Turtle) and are part of the process of supporting Treaty-based and resurgence-based decolonial Indigenizing processes by taking actions that uphold Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty.

Working with Diverse Indigenous Nations

Related to the critical need to centre Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, their land and water, knowledges, language, history, and spirituality, thereby upholding Indigenous Knowledge

sovereignty, research collaborators shared insights on finding ways to work with the common undercurrents of Indigenous Nations at Trent, and at the same time, accommodate their diversities. A staff member of the FPHL speaks to the diversity among Anishinaabeg and the primacy of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg on Aki Ezhnikaadeg Yaamgak (the land on which Trent sits):

Each community does things a little differently within their group. Down on Walpole, they do things a little bit differently, and up around Nipigon, they do things a little differently. It becomes dangerous when we learn about our identity from a book in a very dogmatic way, and it says things have to be done very strictly according to the way one Elder says they have to be done—that implies that all the other Elders in their community and according to their traditions are wrong. We are going to have to struggle with how to make space for all of those traditions to be valued, to be legitimate, to recognize and honour these, in a way that is not saying one is better than the other, while at the same time acknowledging that we are here in Mississauga territory. We have to recognize the Mississauga way of doing things as having primacy here.

Dorothy and Jerry Fontaine indicate that working with the diversity of Indigenous Nations at Trent is about Indigenous Nations getting their own house in order first. Dorothy says we need to "prepare our house for ceremony." This means Indigenous People working collaboratively to support Indigenous resurgence and make it strong for those yet to come. Jerry suggests the ceremonies of the "N'swi-ish-ko-day-kawn Anishinabeg O'dish-ko-day-kawn" (Three Fires Confederacy)⁹¹ offer guidance for relations between Indigenous Nations (Fontaine & McCaskill, 2022, p. 181). He says this Anishinaabe governance system gives "Ojibway, Ota'wa, and Ishkodawatomi-Anishinabeg and allied nations a stable political, economic, social, military, and spiritual belief structure, one that promised personal, Clan, community, and nation security" (Fontaine & McCaskill, 2022, p. 181).

⁹¹ For an in-depth discussion of N'swi-ish-ko-day-kawn Anishinabeg O'dish-ko-day-kawn (Three Fires Confederacy), see Fontaine, J., & McCaskill, D. (2022). *Di-bayn-di-zi-win (To Own Ourselves): Embodying Ojibway-Anishinabe ways*. Toronto, ON: Dundurn Press.

In terms of the understandings between Indigenous Nations relevant to the Trent context, Gidigaa Migizi shares the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg history and stories of the Treaty and the Dish with One Spoon wampum, also known as Gdoo-naaganinaa (Our Dish)⁹² between the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg and the Kahnawà:ke Nadawe (Mohawks) in 1701 (Williams, D., 2018). These Treaties hold the instructions for sharing land and respecting each other's sovereignty. Gidigaa Migizi also indicates the reason for conflict between Indigenous Nations in central and southern Ontario is because of ongoing colonialism: "All Indigenous nations in the area have suffered because we have been dispossessed of our territories, because there has been so much settlement and development on top of us, and because of diseases. This is the root cause of our conflicts. We were all trying to survive" (Williams, D., 2018, p. 44). In responding to understandings that ongoing colonialism and Christian doctrines that espouse the inferiority of Indigenous Peoples are the root of many conflicts between Indigenous Nations, those at Trent would do well to support the process of "preparing our house for ceremony" as directed by Indigenous Peoples. Trent and other PSIs have knowingly and unknowingly perpetuated colonial legacies, interfering in relations and agreements between Indigenous Nations by not centring local Indigenous People and Treaties in their governance and hiring practices, and in multiple sites within Indigenous PSE programs. Entering into dialogue with Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg about how they would like to be centred at Trent is a critical relational way for those at Trent to activate Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty, as well as Treaty-based and resurgence-based decolonial Indigenizing processes.

⁹² Simpson, L. (2008b). Looking after Gdoo-naaganinaa: Precolonial Nishnaabeg diplomatic and treaty relationships. *Wicazo Sa Review*, 23(2), 29–42.

CHAPTER NINE: TRANSITIONING TOWARDS INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE

Introduction

Indigenous and allied research collaborators stress the necessity of restructuring, reforming or transforming current university governance and transitioning towards Indigenous governance within the Chanie Wenjack School of Indigenous Studies (Wenjack School) and other Indigenous programs at Trent University (Trent). They indicate that this is paramount to the processes of decolonizing and Indigenizing. Differently situated, Indigenous and settler-colonial governance frameworks and modes of power co-exist within Trent and the Canadian academy. Processing some understanding of these systems can increase receptivity to insights shared by Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, other Anishinaabeg, and Rotinoshón:ni Knowledge Holders concerning Traditional Indigenous governance, which they contrast with Trent's settler-colonial governance. They indicate short-term steps for reforming and restructuring post-secondary education (PSE) governance that involve connecting, enhancing, and elevating Indigenous leadership within current governance structures and frameworks and, ultimately, creating ethical spaces for Indigenous governance of Indigenous post-secondary education (PSE). Indigenous Knowledge Holders' insights point to promising practices that support Indigenous relational autonomy for Trent's Board of Governors (BOG), Academic Senate, upper administration, and relations with Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg/local Indigenous communities. Ultimately, Indigenous governance of Indigenous programming is required to uphold Indigenous relational autonomy and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty. Transitioning to Indigenous governance also leads to long-term systemic and decolonial transformation of Indigenous PSE and post-secondary institutions (PSIs). It is also part of healing relations between Indigenous-settler peoples and with Creation.

Mainstream/Settler-Colonial University Governance

Mushkego Cree and French scholar Candace Brunette-Debassige (2021) emphasizes the need to decolonize structures and modes of power within the settler-colonial academy and the Canadian state are critically interlinked. Analysis of these linkages, and the structures, systems and practices of university governance in Canada has received little attention in the mainstream scholarship, and there are many gaps related to Indigenous Peoples and settler-colonial governance in PSIs. Therefore, I highlight these gaps to establish the context for analysis of post-secondary institutional governance and insights concerning the need for Indigenous governance of Indigenous PSE programming. As noted throughout this work, many Indigenous Knowledge Holders and scholars and some allied scholars identify PSIs as sites that replicate settler colonialism. Their insights are grounded in Indigenous Knowledge systems and/or derived from critical theory approaches, including Indigenous critical theory, anti-colonial, decolonizing, and settler-colonial theory approaches. The voices and approaches used by those in the mainstream literature about university governance do not tend to intersect with the voices and approaches of those who are working to analyze settler-colonial/Indigenous power relations in PSIs.

Scholars who are engaged in mainstream inquiry produce analysis rooted in settler-Colonial historical, legal, political, and economic frameworks, which neutralize power relations with Indigenous Peoples, normalizing whiteness and/or rendering it invisible. Broadly, mainstream scholars are concerned with upholding "democratic," collegial governance with greater transparency and accountability in Canadian PSIs. Their narratives do not recognize the ways in which the structures and systems of the academy are produced within settler-colonial frameworks and operate similarly to the Canadian state. The considerable gaps between the different frameworks and discourses about power and governance that co-exist within the academy signify a need for accelerated institutional and transdisciplinary dialogue and action on

governmentality and a renegotiation of power to facilitate reconciliation and decolonization.

This also applies to the Canadian state.

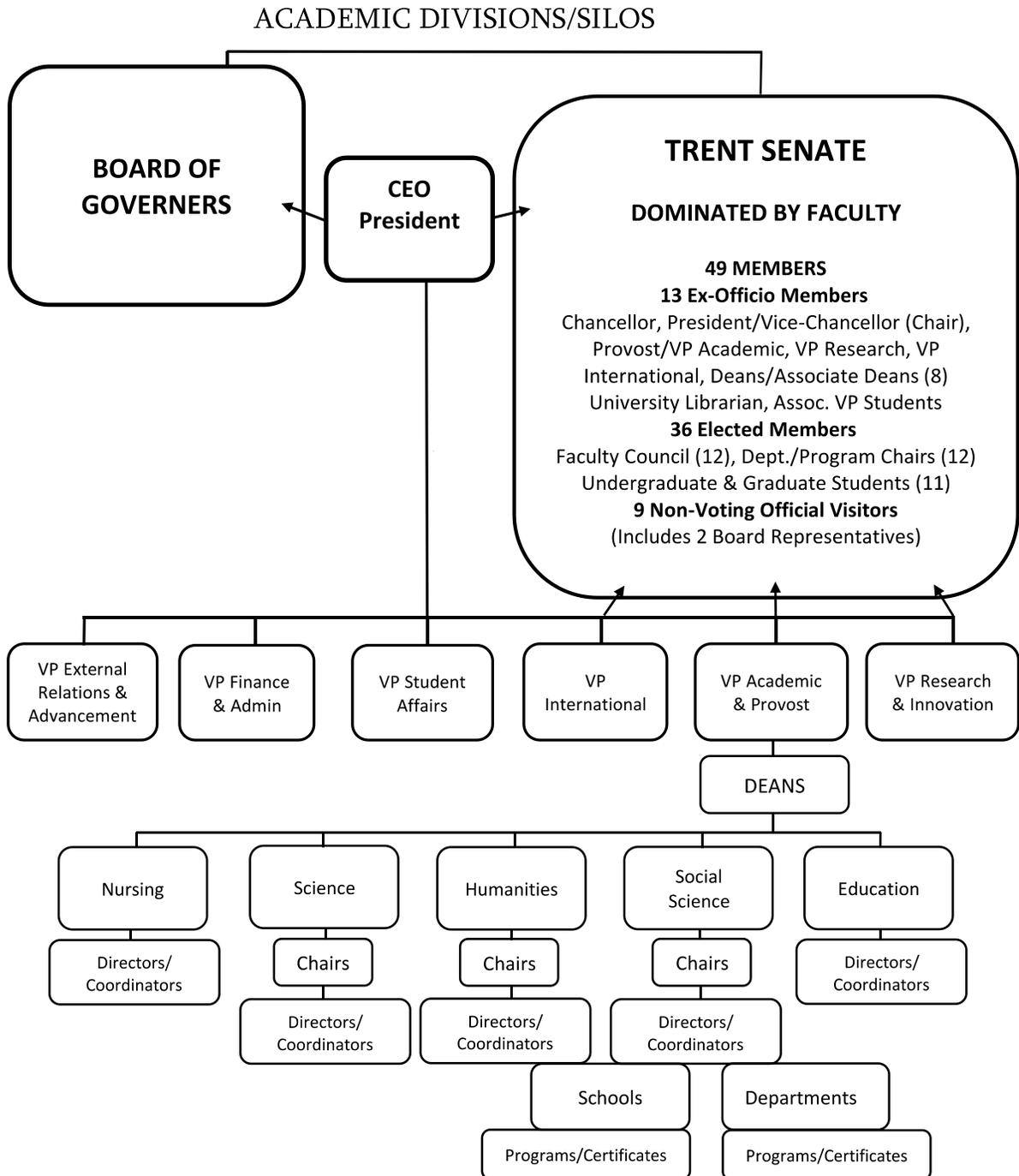


Figure 11: Academic Senate - Trent University

Using Trent as an example, Figure 11 depicts the mix of academic senate members fairly representative of Canadian universities (Trent, 2016; Lougheed & Pidgeon, 2016). (Boards of Governors (BOGs) were featured in the literature review.) The diagram highlights the hierarchical and siloed structures and practices that govern academic subjects and, therefore, knowledges. Note that academic divisions are supported by staff, professors, course instructors, and students/learners, who have their own hierarchies of knowing.

A broad characterization of the structures, systems, practices and relations of power within university governance shows that a mix of competing vertical and horizontal powers create complex, fragmented, diverse, and unique environments that challenge governance and leadership within PSIs (Boyko & Jones, 2010; Keeling et al., 2007). Horizontal forces are identified as central senior administrators and student affairs/support services. Recall that the influence or replacement of relatively flat collegial governance structures by hierarchical, managerial, and bureaucratic corporate models embodied through the president, senior administration, and deans is an ongoing concern in the senate (as well as the BOG) (CUFA BC, 2020; CAUT, 2018; ISGUG, 1993; Shanahan, 2019). Academic divisions (vertical and fragmented structures) that organize or operate in silos results in PSIs being more focused on internal rather than broader institutional goals, including Indigenizing. For example, professors and students often have a stronger sense of community, and share approaches and discourses with those in related disciplines, rather than across disciplines within the institution (Keeling et al., 2007).

Devolving Settler-Colonial Modes of Power

Settler-colonial modes of power are upheld in Canadian PSIs by what Brownlee (2015, as cited in CAUT 2016) characterizes as a governance system lacking transparent and inclusive practices that allow a small number of individuals to make decisions in a vacuum. The

hierarchies within PSI governance, whereby people in specific roles and imbued with specific powers—presidents, vice-presidents, deans, chairs, coordinators and professors, course instructors, and teaching assistants, for example—affords a system in which individuals can make decisions in relation to larger groups or communities. Furthermore, the system allows individuals to use power over others to make unilateral decisions without consultation with Indigenous Peoples, which may have wide-ranging implications that are not in keeping with community goals or with the principles of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC, as per the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples). Normalization of power afforded to individual decision-makers within mainstream university governance contributes to marginalizing, fragmenting, and dishonouring Indigenous expressions of relational autonomy—of knowledges as collectively held, as well as consensus-based Indigenous leadership and governance styles that include the voices of women and members of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community (Brunette-Debassige, 2021; NIMMIWG, 2019a).

Theorizations of power that can potentially devolve settler-colonial modes of power and decolonize relations with Indigenous Peoples in university governance that arise out of Indigenous and critical theory understandings both make contributions. Settler scholar John Gaventa (2004, as cited in Wallace, 2013, p. 26) asserts that settler peoples can enact different paradigms of power by embodying relations with Indigenous Peoples that share "power with," rather than wield "power over." He offers the idea that power can be shared at multiple levels, from the national to the local, the structural to the interpersonal, and the collective to the individual (Wallace, 2013, p. 25). While helpful in looking at multi-sited aspects of governance, these conceptions of power do not include the land and more-than-human beings. Indigenous understandings point to how power is shared with all of Creation and are discussed later in this chapter.

Mainstream Understandings of "Good Governance"

As put forward in the mainstream literature, at the board level, ideal governance and decision-making practices include equitability, transparency, internal and external accountability structures and mechanisms, due process, and fairness that establishes "good faith" in decision-making. It also involves "consulting broadly and diligently scrutinizing" the issues and concerns of the diverse university community (CAUT, 2018; CUFA BC, 2020; Shanahan, 2019). Within this narrative, the academy engages in recurrent struggles to uphold ideal governance and decision-making practices. Furthermore, lack of trust and political maneuvering can interfere with "good" governance" in areas without oversight, scrutiny, or policy. Bradshaw & Fredette (2009, as cited by Loughheed & Pigeon, 2012, p. 102) recommend that academic senates practice long-term, strategic, proactive, integrated, and cohesive (as opposed to internally focused, short-term, operational, reactive, and simplistic) institutional governance and that these be integrated into policy to guide future administrators. The diverse roles of faculty within universities, in faculty associations, and on the senate, within bicameral governance structures, are also recognized as critical to the proper functioning of the university governance model and ensuring that board fiduciary duties are met (Shanahan, 2019). Yet, Indigenous understandings of governance within unique Indigenous homelands, communities, and sovereignties are absent from these discussions.

As discussed, many university teachers equate collegial governance (in which colleagues are treated as equals) with democratic—"good governance," and understand acting in "good faith" as acting in the best interests of the university (CAUT, 2018; CUFA BC). However, understandings of "best interests" depend on positioning within the institution (Shanahan, 2019). The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) advocates for a reclamation of collegial governance, which includes "dismantling the structures" that are part of more

corporate practices in board governance (CAUT, 2018, p. 1). Yet, while CAUT advocates for a resurgence of collegial governance, because of its settler-colonial roots, this system is also bound up in the problem. Recall that the structures of university governance in Canada are upheld by the same scaffolding of interlocking systems of domination and oppression that uphold settler colonialism; universities tend to reproduce settler-colonial goals through their policies, processes, and practices. In the mainstream critiques, the academy engages in recurrent struggles to uphold representation, consultation, equity, transparency, and accountability in its dealings. Yet, the source of horizontal and vertical powers within institutional matrixes are imposed through ongoing neoliberal and settler-colonial frameworks. This cannot be denied or covered up with rhetoric. As noted, Trent and all mainstream universities intrude upon Indigenous homelands; are structurally embedded within Canadian law; are enmeshed within capitalist systems; are engaged in the sale and development of land; are in research partnerships with private corporations; and find their governance structures increasingly corporatized and controlled by a small group of predominately white, male senior administrators and board members (Brunette-Debassige, 2021; CAUT, 2016; Shalahan, 2019; Swartz, 2014). Informal norms and practices or internal structures, sometimes referred to as "academic culture," are also ideologically and discursively constructed and must also be problematized as they are interwoven with the political, cultural, social, and economic systems of Canadian society and are generated through structures of settler colonialism (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015; Davis et al., 2017; Simpson, L., 2014, 2017; Regan, 2010). I posit that mainstream analysis of academic governance and culture is insufficient in examining the governance of PSIs, as it disregards Indigenous governance and the interconnected factors that trouble Indigenizing processes. Analysis that considers diverse, including Indigenous understandings of governance, is needed.

Colonial Systems: Tracking the Anti-Trickster

From 2013 to 2023, when I attended Trent, the president and administration operated in a different context than the people who supported the creation of Indian and Eskimo Studies back in 1969. During the mid-1990s, government funding provided 70% of PSIs' operating revenue, but by 2009 this was down to 55%. As a result, the burden was transferred from the federal government to students, with tuition rising to over \$3000—a 69% increase (Mackenzie & Rosenfeld, 2002; Wellen et al., 2012). When I began my research process in 2017, some of Trent's upper administration members were using their powers to nurture the Chanie Wenjack School of Indigenous Studies (Wenjack School) and support land-based and Treaty education. In my opinion, notably Jacqueline (Jackie) Muldoon, Past Provost & Vice-President Academic (2015-2020). While Trent's administration (from 2013-2013) supported Indigenous priorities in many areas, following approximately 30-plus years of funding cuts to PSE, current approaches are also driven by economic factors and are reactive and crisis-driven. This is evident in the conflicts resulting from a lack of Indigenous consultation prior to Trent selling a portion of the land it occupies to the City of Peterborough, the proposed filling of an unevaluated wetland for a twin-pad arena complex, and destroying potential archeological findings. Operating within neoliberal frameworks and ideologies, the governance structure, systems, and processes of PSIs can be unknowable, can shape-shift, and, like all colonial systems, can behave as the "anti-Trickster" when it is convenient (Henderson, 2000, p. 58). I experienced the anti-Trickster during my attempts to track Indigenizing processes at Trent. Doing so required more meetings than I could attend, including meetings in spaces I did not know existed. Minutes were also not readily available or not taken by some committees. As a student, I lacked considerable resources to counter the anti-Trickster in the systems at Trent.

Anishinaabeg and Rotinoshón:ni Governance

Trying to Indigenize disciplines and departments within colonial structures and systems, as mentioned by many Indigenous educators over the last 60-plus years, is like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. While they may tout themselves as institutions seeking to reconcile, Indigenize, and decolonize, universities' structural and systemic marginalization and fragmentation of Indigenous Peoples and their knowledges in decision-making precludes meaningful Indigenous involvement and the creation of ethical spaces. During my initial consultation with the Traditional Advisory Council (TAC) for the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. Program, I was inspired by a discussion with Migizi ow-kwe about university and Traditional Anishinaabe governance. I saw a need to try to represent the governance of Indigenous programming at Trent so that participants, including myself, could better reflect upon it. Figure 12 was co-created with research participants. All inaccuracies are mine. Giving power to Indigenous Peoples in the academy means reforming, restructuring, and transforming governance. In the Indigenous sharing circle, research collaborators discuss the challenges posed to Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty by the governance structure and relations of power at Trent, and share their own models of governance.



Figure 12: Governance of Indigenous Programming - Trent University

According to Gidigaa Migizi, Indigenous programming at Trent "waxes and wanes" depending on the administration. With great diplomacy, Gidigaa Migizi told administration who participated in the co-learning circle that they were the best administration at Trent he had witnessed. In responding to Figure 12, Gidigaa Migizi imparts: "If we were to envision this structure for Anishinaabeg, it would be an inverted Christmas tree rather than a standing up Christmas tree." He explains how leadership works traditionally:

I think the people should be in a row at the top and the executive, senior level should be at the bottom. That's the way we traditionally run our leadership. Chiefs were workers, not people who made decisions. But they would make a decision after consulting with people. And I think this is where we have much to learn yet, at Trent in terms of organization. . . . somehow as leaders, as thinkers, as Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee people, we have to insist that our type of leadership is represented there.

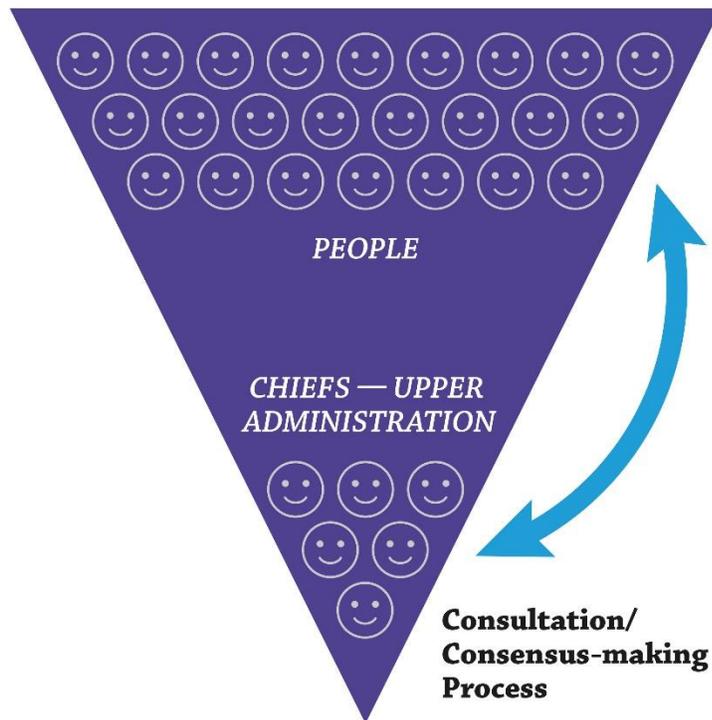


Figure 13: Gidigaa Migizi's Vision of Anishinaabeg Governance for Trent University

Gidigaa Migizi's comment highlights how Traditional Anishinaabeg governance systems are grounded in relational autonomy and involve consultation and consensus-making, in which everyone's perspective contributes and is valued.

Mohawk faith keeper Skahendowaneh Swamp explains how mainstream governance becomes more and more compartmentalized as new committees and bodies are formed: "It happens, not necessarily on purpose. . . . [I]n this setting . . . the boxes get bigger, or the boxes get more plentiful. . . . [T]here are more and more boxes and little, little, little boxes and it keeps going and going and going." Skahendowaneh offers that within a Rotinoshón:ni worldview, in terms of organizational structure and governance, everyone is in rows, as on a cob of corn—they are not part of a hierarchy. He continues:

One of the first things that came to my mind about "What does Indigenizing the academy look like to you?" is to have all of these things on an equal level in one row. How can it become that? That is the thing that is going to take many years. I think people are beginning to wake up to the fact that what's been done in the past isn't necessarily working, and some adjustments need to be made. That's where the work from our department, from the school, from the students, from everybody comes into play.

For Skahendowaneh, Indigenizing means having all the different entities—the board, the senate, upper administration, the schools, etc., all the people—on an equal level in one row. He indicates that this transformative process is a collective, long-term effort.

As the circle continues around, Gidigaa Migizi comments that he would like to see the TAC moved to the area of the vice presidents or the deans. Nicole Bell builds on the insights offered by Gidigaa Migizi, Skahendowaneh, and the others who spoke before her:

I like the idea of moving up the Traditional Council. It's hard for me to say up because that's not how I think. I'm still wrestling in my mind for a visual representation of how it would look. We talked about a line, we've talked about a circle, and the inverted triangle that Doug introduced . . . Dorothy mentioned the vice president level. I heard Doug say the dean level, perhaps at both levels, because it takes more than one person to mobilize this work. I like the idea that Indigenous representation is down at the ground level, where we know all the action happens, but it's at the level that can visualize and mobilize what needs to be done on the ground.

Nicole also indicates the need to determine common aspects of Indigenous governance:

I think one of our challenges is similar to one of the challenges we had in the 1980s, when we were asked to define self-government, and we couldn't because we have all different Nations who define things for themselves. . . .

I hear Skahendowaneh talk about how it is rows and it's the corn. And from my Anishinaabeg teachings, it's a circle. And one is not right, and one is not wrong. One is not better. It's different because we are different Nations and peoples. There is diversity in us. I think the challenge then becomes, what are those common elements or undercurrents that we can pull from all of those different ways in which we speak about, or ways in which we celebrate, or ways in which we are—from our individual Nations?

Nicole highlights a critical challenge. As the circle continues, participants build on each other's ideas to propose strategic approaches that broadly address how to work in relation to Trent's governance, and specifically in terms of the many advisory councils, committees, and student groups related to Indigenous programming. In chapter eight, guidance for working with diverse Indigenous Nations was discussed in terms of respecting existing Treaties, protocols, and ceremonies between Nations. Collaborators also stress the need for all peoples to honour Treaty-based relational ways of being and knowing on the land and in the academy (to be expanded upon in chapters ten and eleven).

As part of Indigenizing, Indigenous research collaborators suggest connecting, enhancing, and elevating existing Indigenous leadership and governance within current structures, systems, and practices as a starting point. This includes engaging with local Indigenous People in daily relations and decision-making. They feel Indigenous Knowledge systems are currently restricted by neocolonial hegemony at Trent. They propose creating a strategic plan that involves using existing councils and reconsidering, clarifying and redefining relationships between the Wenjack School Leadership Group, the First Peoples House of Learning (FPHL), the Indigenous Education Council (IEC), departmental and faculty committees, the Ph.D. Council, the Ph.D. Traditional Advisory Council (TAC), Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE), the Trent Undergraduate Native Association, and the Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers Council (ETKKC) created in 2018. They recommend that the authority of Traditional Indigenous People be recognized and that they be involved in all

decisions regarding all things Indigenous from the outset, not through retroactive consultation. Collaborators' insights related to some entities working together to create Indigenous programming at Trent are detailed below.

The Traditional Advisory Council for the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. Program

As noted, a significant strength of the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program is the leadership and guidance of the Traditional Advisory Council (TAC). The collective nature of Indigenous Knowledges is activated and embodied through Elder/Knowledge Holder Councils, and this group is a testament to that. There is consensus among Indigenous and some allied collaborators that the TAC should be honoured, enriched, and expanded from guiding the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. students to guiding all of Trent to address issues and tensions related to Indigenous Knowledge Systems, knowledge engagement, and ethics, including development of Indigenous programs and curriculum, hiring, etc. This would involve moving the TAC to the area of the vice presidents or the deans. Note that other PSIs across Chi'Mikinak have created spaces for Indigenous Peoples, not necessarily Traditional People, at this level of power.⁹³

Dorothy also suggests including youth and faculty voices on the TAC:

I think this could make some real progress in the institutional bureaucracy in elevating the Traditional Advisory Council up to the vice president level. In this way, our voices will be heard at the leadership level and changes will start to be made. And a Traditional Council doesn't only include the Elders. Still, it should also represent the student body and the faculty. . . . If our group is up at the vice president level, we have the ear of the president, the ear of the senate and the board, and in this way, we can influence economic decisions, and we can hear firsthand before decisions are made; we will hear first, not second. That would be a recommendation, in my opinion. We need to get this process started from words to action. (Taylor, 2017)

⁹³ For example, Laurentian University has an Associate Vice-President of Academic and Indigenous Programs; the University of Winnipeg has an Associate Vice-President of Indigenous Affairs; the University of Victoria has a Vice-President Indigenous, the University of Northern British Columbia has an Associate Vice-President, Indigenous; and Lakehead University has a Vice-Provost of Aboriginal Initiatives. The Council of Ontario Universities (2023) lists the many Indigenous VP level positions in Ontario.

Research collaborators also recommend that the TAC be fully and sustainably resourced with staff and funding. As noted by members of the TAC and Jacqueline Muldoon, former Provost & Vice-President Academic (2015-2020), prior to 2018, upper administration has leaned on the TAC for guidance many times in the absence of a Trent-wide Elders advisory. There has also been some confusion regarding the TAC's role and authority. Jason Fenno, an Indigenous Studies Ph.D. candidate and first-year representative on the Indigenous Ph.D. Council advises that this cannot be taken if Trent were to give the TAC more of a leadership role within Trent's governance structure. Since these suggestions were made in 2017, the Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers Council (ETKKC) was created in 2018.⁹⁴ Discussions concerning the relationship between the TAC and ETKKC need to occur. Related to this, the mandate of the ETKKC to guide Trent on "tradition, culture and protocol" could be revisited, and the roles of the Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders on this body clarified. The TAC has historical, collective, and specific experience and knowledge in dealing with diverse and complex issues related to understandings of Indigenous Knowledge systems, knowledge engagement in relation to the academy, and mentorship of learners in the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program. The TAC is ideally situated to guide Trent in relation to upholding Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty and should be consulted further.

Indigenous Traditional Authority

Migizi ow-kwe speaks to an ongoing issue related to how Indigenous Traditional authority and power are not fully understood or embraced at Trent. In terms of the TAC, she says,

Administration questions the authorities we have. We are not seen as Knowledge Holders in the same way as the academics. We can't make them

⁹⁴ The Trent Board of Governors approved the ETKKC in their Institutional Indigenous Initiatives (March 23, 2018).

understand our systems are different from theirs. . . . Maybe they need to be more open-minded, as right now it's blocked.

To make changes in this regard, Migizi ow-kwe indicates that the top administrators need more education and experience related to Indigenous ways of being and knowing, as well as Traditional authority and governance. Additionally, she says more Anishinaabeg People are needed on the Trent Board of Governors (BOG). She feels that past involvement of Anishinaabeg chancellors Tom Jackson and Mary Simon demonstrates progress; however, she feels these are "small changes." She identifies a pressing, ongoing issue in relation to Indigenous Knowledge and authority: "The instructors, the academic people, are very reluctant, especially the professors that are in other disciplines [beyond Indigenous Studies]." Gidigaa Migizi concurs, adding that he thinks progress is being made in the faculty of education and social work but not in some of the older, more established departments like archaeology.

Power and Governance—The Board of Governors and Academic Senate

Gidigaa Migizi's insights about the Trent BOG and Academic Senate serve to highlight and analyze where and how power lies in the institution:

For an academic institution like Trent that wants to Indigenize, on one hand, the senate has accepted this and said, "We'll recognize you," but on the other hand, they are the ones making the decisions. "We are going to make that decision with you" should be the mandate, not "about you" or "we are going to make it for you." You cannot have this "for you," because the moment you make it "for you," you are a colonizer.

He says local Indigenous People don't have any say in the academic senate and that this results in tokenism that arrives at the school or department level. Gidigaa Migizi recognizes that Indigenous People have been part of the BOG but not the Senate (except for Indigenous faculty, etc.). He indicates that if Trent wants to Indigenize its administration and their perspective on local Indigenous Peoples, it should have a seat for a local Indigenous person on the university senate. They would then have to listen to and take seriously this person's ideas on academic

policy. In this context, Gidigaa Migizi says Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg would participate in the governance of Trent from the "top-level down." He reflects further that Indigenizing means having a voice and some authority in the daily relations or operations of Trent:

Trent has done good things to recognize Indigenous Studies as a department rather than part of a department, but that was a big move earlier on. If Trent is serious, a small step would be to add a vice president of Indigenous Affairs. Administratively, on a daily basis, there has to be someone on a provost level or vice president level responsible for Indigenous issues. . . . There is a Chair of Indigenous Knowledge, who is not tenure track, and they have no power at that level, which is not their purview.

Gidigaa Migizi suggests looking at a framework like Lakehead University's and the impacts of having Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux as Vice-Provost for Indigenous Initiatives for three years.⁹⁵ He continues, "Lakehead doesn't have a department of Indigenous Studies. That's the advantage of Trent. They scored a big coup when they did that, and Don McCaskill is the one who led that charge." Furthermore, he notes that "there must be responsibilities and programming for a vice-president of Indigenous Affairs to be responsible for, so that person doesn't end up being a token." Gidigaa Migizi also recommends there be a permanent senate subcommittee on Indigenous issues with a mandate that includes Indigenous community priorities. Dorothy also indicates the importance of daily activation of Indigenous governance:

It has to be more than superficial, materialistic recommendations that are implemented—they have to be meaningful. They have to be used on a daily basis and incorporated into every aspect of Trent's governance structure and program delivery. I think we can do that. I think there is a lot of knowledge and experience around this table, and we can bring in others if we feel we need more.

⁹⁵ Since 2016, Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux has been the Indigenous Chair for Truth and Reconciliation, the first one in Chi'Mikinak. She develops and implements modules to engage the staff, faculty and administration of the Lakehead community on the mandate of truth and reconciliation. She is also the Chair of the Governing Circle for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba.

The three Elders/Knowledge Holders' comments resonate with what is put forward in the literature concerning Indigenous relationality as autonomy and the significance of daily acts of resurgence (Corntassel & Scow, 2017; Hunt & Holmes, 2015). As noted, Corntassel and Scow (2017) indicate that everyday actions express and renew Indigenous relationships to lands, waters, language, sacred living histories, and the natural world, and renew Indigenous communities, peoplehood, and nationhood: "Everydayness allows us to see Indigenous relationality in action" (p. 58). Furthermore, Gidigaa Migizi, Migizi ow-kwe and Dorothy's suggestions are supported by the Indigenous Education Protocol by Colleges and Institutes Canada, whose seventh principle emphasizes ensuring governance structures recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples. This stipulates that: "Exemplary practices for implementing this are to: "Ensure Indigenous representation on college and institute Boards of Governors, Program Advisory Committees, Student Associations through delegated seats for First Nation, Métis and Inuit leaders, and allow for parallel Indigenous Advisory Councils and Elder/Métis Senator Councils" (Canada, Colleges and Institutes, 2014). At a minimum, Trent needs to ensure parallel governance on the BOG.

Furthermore, Dorothy offers guidance on process to the members of the upper administration who were present in the co-learning circle. She recommends "doing things in a good way,"⁹⁶ or *mino bimaadiziwin*, as grounded in Michi Saagiig governance. Dorothy suggests Trent follow Indigenous ways of being and doing when they conduct their board and senate meetings. She emphasizes sitting face to face, sharing food, sharing ceremony, being honest, showing emotions, and talking to consensus, as occurred in the three sharing circles as part of this research. Dorothy also suggests that approaching conflict resolution in Indigenous ways

⁹⁶ Williams, D., 2013.

would be beneficial for situations that arise at Trent (as recommended in the TRC Calls to Action). She emphasizes that change is possible, healing is possible, and resolution is possible.

The Indigenous Education Council

Composed of local Indigenous community and university representatives, the Indigenous Education Council (IEC) advises on Indigenous education for the Trent Academic Senate and BOG. One of its roles is to support the "cultural integrity" of academic programs (Trent, 2022). Aboriginal Education Councils (now Indigenous Education Councils) were put in place at all PSIs in Ontario by the Province in 1992. The model for these came from the Indigenous leadership of the Council of Directors (COD), an Aboriginal Advisory Council for the Native Management and Economic Development Program at Trent, created in 1985. The COD included six Anishinaabe community representatives, six faculty members, and two students. Its mandate involved all decision-making related to Indigenous education, including curriculum development and faculty hiring. Jack Beaver, a businessperson from Alderville First Nation, was heavily involved during the early days (Fontaine & McCaskill, 2022). To ensure the IEC is included in Trent's overall governance, *The Report of the Special Committee on Indigenous Education* recommends that a member of IEC sit on the Academic Senate and that a local Indigenous community member sit on the BOG (Trent, 2017).

Nishnaabeg Commentary

In seeking to rebalance and transform asymmetrical Indigenous-settler sites and power relations in the academy, and to decolonize, many PSIs across Chi'Mikinak are slowly addressing the under-representation and marginalization of Indigenous Peoples and reforming the governance structure so that Indigenous Peoples are in senior decision-making roles. While increasing Indigenous leadership can potentially lead towards a critical mass of Indigenous Peoples in the academy, and ensuring Indigenous Peoples have senior administration positions

is critical, these are merely a basic start towards balancing asymmetrical power relations, and the efficacy of these actions remains to be seen. Indigenous voices and perspectives may remain marginalized and fragmented within colonial structures and systems without shifting towards Indigenous governance and leadership that uphold Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty. As put forward by Nicole Bell, Indigenous governance is not up or down or hierarchical but draws on diverse, grounded actions of Indigenous Peoples, or grounded normativity. Ultimately, no matter how Indigenous leadership is connected, enhanced, and elevated within mainstream PSI governance, Gidigaa Migizi says that Nishnaabeg also need to politicize: "There is room at the university to expand all Indigenous issues, but some of this has to be done on our own too. We have to politicize our minds and our wishes and do something about it." Moreover, despite the workings of colonial systems, when Dorothy says the Indigenous People at Trent have to "prepare our house for ceremony," she says that in relation to:

Indian school and the governance structure that we are trying to change. . . . and trying to influence . . . first we have to start in our own department. The changes have to come from the First Peoples House of Learning and the Indigenous Studies department first. And if we are going by culture and tradition, it means we have to prepare our house for ceremony. Prepare our house for those visitors and those young people that are coming here. They are begging us on a spiritual level to help them because we live in a world of uncertainty. So, we have to be strong ourselves, first in our own department.

Dorothy adds: "If we could have a solid program that only focuses on the language and make it mandatory . . . then we have the right to tell the upper management structure to change—change in a good way so we can influence those newcomers to do the work." This is a Catch-22, as having a solid language program needs support from Trent administration. Research collaborators indicate that, ultimately, shifting to Indigenous governance is necessary and should be considered through a long-term strategic plan. Co-governance could be an interim phase.

A Resurgence of Traditional Indigenous Governance

This last section provides some background on local Traditional Indigenous Governance, including the Anishinaabeg clan system of governance and insights on how these relate to and what they offer mainstream PSE from Migizi ow-kwe, Gidigaa Migizi/Doug Williams, and other Anishinaabeg Knowledge Holders. Skahendowaneh's understandings of Rotinoshón:ni governance as they relate to Trent are also discussed.

Based on a 1995 mandate from the Anishinabek Grand Council, the Anishinabek Nation (also known as the Chiefs of Ontario) have been working to restore jurisdiction of their inherent rights (to self-determination and self-governance), rights they have never relinquished to any other nation, including Canada. Their efforts resulted in the Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement (2017) and the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement Act (2022). Former Grand Chief Anishinabek Nation Patrick Madahbee explains:

We have always had these rights. We are the First People that Creator placed here on this land, and it's our land. It's our territory. We've always done this for centuries. We've allowed outside jurisdictions to come in and interfere with how we do things. It's time that we also now take back and occupy the field. (Anishinabek Nation, 2015).

Anishinaabeg recognized the need to put the frameworks, governance structure, and principles of law-making they already had "on paper" for colonial governments and settler/Treaty people to understand. These frameworks are outside the legislative framework of Canada and are based on oral histories and teachings (Anishinabek Nation, 2015). The principles of Chi-Naaknigewin (the written constitution of the Anishinabek Nation) concern how Anishinaabeg conducts themselves or their way of life. As shown in Figure 13, the Anishinaabe Chi-Naaknigewin is founded on Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe (One Anishinaabe family). The Anishinaabe dodemaag is the Traditional Anishinaabe clan system. It is part of a complex and comprehensive governance structure (simplified here) that encompasses decision-making and

justice, and addresses community needs. Decision-making requires the participation and unanimous agreement of every dodem within the community. The Anishinaabe dodemaag or family determines a person's place, roles, and responsibilities in the community. An individual's dodem is inherited from their father's side. Non-Anishinaabe people may be adopted into a



Figure 14: Anishinaabe Chi-Naaknigewin (Chiefs of Ontario, 2018).

dodem. The Waabzheshii (Marten) clan is often willing to adopt newcomers. Some dodems, such as the Ajijaak/Zhaake (Crane) and Maang (Loon) clans, hold leadership positions and are linked with the hereditary Chief system. The Crane clan oversees external governance, international relations, and Treaty-making, and the Loon clan handles internal administrative matters. The Makwa (Bear) clan is responsible for community health and security. Fish clans excel in mediation, planning, and strategic thinking, and Bird clans hold educational roles. Anishinaabe-Métis scholar Rebecca Chartrand (2016), based on her work with Anishinaabe Elder Garry Robson, says the Anishinaabe dodemaag shows that the people always had "doctors, teachers, spiritual leaders, hunters, warriors/protectors of justice, and philosophers," and that coming to understand one's place in the clan system is part of the lifelong learning journey. The dodemaag system of governance is based on the Seven Sacred Gifts (Anishinaabe Grand Council, 2012). These include zaagidwin (love), debwewin (truth), mnaadendamowin⁹⁷ (to give respect to all of Creation), nbwaakaawin (wisdom), dbaadendiziwin (humility), gwekwaadziwin (honesty), and aakedhewin (bravery) (Anishinaabe Governance, 2022).

Anishinaabe Chi-Naaknigewin is proclaimed by Peoples identifying as the Anishinabek Nation to exercise their sovereign, inherent, and Treaty Rights, and to establish and empower the Anishinabek Nation Government in the unceded lands of their territories as their Traditional government (Anishinaabe Governance, 2022). Note that not all Anishinaabeg Nations have adopted this.⁹⁸ Anishinaabe Chi-Naaknigewin includes collective decision-making and looking seven generations ahead and is based on the perspectives of the dodemaag. As understood by the Anishinabek Nation, Anishinabek People have "the inherent right, bestowed by the Creator, to enact any laws necessary to protect and preserve Anishinaabe culture, languages, customs,

⁹⁷ Gitigaa Migizi speaks of minaadedamowin meaning the "good, heart, life," which he interpreted as looking at things twice, or standing back when you have a problem to consider.

⁹⁸ J. Hoggarth, Anishinaabe, lives in Curve Lake First Nation, personal communication, 2024).

traditions, and practices for the betterment of the Anishinabek" (Anishinabek Nation, 2015). The process ensures consulting with E'Dbendaagzijig (the citizens of the Anishinabek Nation, which are those people who are recognized as E'Dbendaagzijig by Anishinabek First Nations or the Grand Council or in English, Those Who Belong) and their participatory law-making and policy procedures (Anishinabek Nation, 2015). Anishinaabe scholar Sylvia Plain (Aamjiwnaang First Nation) helps to put this into context. She says that in her journey to understand and live in Anishinaabe mino bimaadiziwin and Anishinaabe Chi-Naaknigewin, she respects that as "Anishinabek we are governed by the natural laws of Mother Earth. The principles of natural laws must be followed to ensure that we continue to create life that supports mino bimaadiziwin for ourselves and for future generations" (Danard & Plain, 2013).

I asked Migizi ow-kwe, Gidigaa Migizi, and Skahendowaneh if they thought a resurgence of Indigenous clan systems could guide or be applied in Indigenous PSE. Migizi ow-kwe (2017) is not sure the Wenjack School could follow the clan system of governance right now as she feels there are not enough Anishinaabeg People and Chiefs who know their culture and clan systems to make this governance work. The resurgence of these ways inspires her: "It's coming. At least [Anishinaabeg] are learning, and they want to adopt it because they know it was run traditionally. They want to go back to it as part of relationship." Migizi ow-kwe says a larger group of people are needed and that we might not see this in our lifetimes. However, she believes it will happen in the future. In comparing Anishinaabe governance with colonial governance systems, Gidigaa Migizi asks:

Where does the compromise come? You can't take [our ways of governing] and replace it with that [their ways of governing]. So, what is possible? I know the dilemma of putting this on to that, or a form of this compromised to fit that, or that to fit this. It's never been done at the university level. People have tried to do this at the band level, where they tried to replace the *Indian Act* governance. I don't know how successfully. But the head of this is the Creator.

Gidigaa Migizi reminds us that the *dodemaag* is for communities and nations, and that a university is only a segment of a nation, and a segment of the community. Yet universities are embedded within the Canadian State.) Gidigaa Migizi feels that:

Sometimes, universities have trouble identifying with the local community. They try and set themselves apart, as in "we are the elite." The university looks at Indigenous Knowledge as coming through the back door; they don't look at it as becoming accredited the same way they are. So that's a problem. So, I don't know. All kinds of things come into play when you try to compare the two. You could try introducing [Chi-Naaknigewin] into the system and see what they think.

Most importantly, Gidigaa Migizi indicates that the head of the Anishinaabeg *dodemaag* is the Creator. This reinforces the directions indicated by Indigenous Knowledge Holders throughout this work as to respecting their original teachings and, thus, Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty. Skahendowaneh also indicates the necessity of youth and those yet to come relearning their original instructions. He says that the *Indian Act* has removed the nine rafters of the Rotinoshón:ni Longhouse and that the clans have been reduced to material symbols. He tells young people to "take up a rafter and rebuild the longhouse. Don't go and live in the big comfortable house." Skahendowaneh is interested in how the understandings of the Turtle, Wolf, and Bear of the Rotinoshón:ni clan system might be used to guide Indigenous councils, committees, student groups, and staff involved in Indigenous programming at Trent. Traditional Indigenous governance and resurgence of clan systems offer the potential to widen the path of Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty at Trent and other PSIs. This is a critical area for future research.

Conclusion

A resurgence of Indigenous governance can remedy the competing vertical and horizontal powers identified within PSIs that create the complex, fragmented, diverse, and unique environments that trouble broad institutional processes such as Indigenizing, and the hierarchical, siloed, and fragmented structures and practices that govern knowledge. Indigenous governance speaks to the qualities of ideal governance as recommended in the mainstream literature. This includes long-term, strategic, proactive, integrated, and harmonized governance and decision-making practices characterized by equitability, transparency, and inclusivity. Also emphasized are internal and external accountability structures and systems, as well as due process and fairness to establish trust in decision-making through broad community consultation and consensus making (Boyko & Jones, 2010; Bradshaw & Fredette, 2009; CAUT, 2018; CUFA BC, 2020; Keeling et al., 2007; Shanahan, 2019). Furthermore, Indigenous leadership and governance, the original governance of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe Aki, offers opportunities for different relations of power with the land and all beings of Creation.

As discussed, Indigenous understandings are critical to addressing degradation of land and waters, global climate change, loss of biodiversity, unsustainable development, ecosystem and human health issues as Indigenous Knowledge systems contain ecological and ethical frameworks, offering the potential to transform and heal relationships with the land and with all beings (Donald, 2013; Kimmerer, 2013; Marshall, M., 2013; McGregor, 2004; Miller, 2013; Simpson, L., 2014; TRC, 2015; Williams, D., 2013). IKS relate to all aspects of PSE and are inherent in Indigenous governance. Indigenous ways of being, knowing and teaching (pedagogy) encourage balance,

(w)holistic development and healing. This offers prospects for connecting diverse peoples and knowledges, connecting knowledge silos, fostering transdisciplinarity, and systemic transformation. IKS Ideally, Indigenous Knowledge Holders are found throughout every site at Trent, and IKS are elevated and respected as equally significant paradigms to Eurocentric/settler-colonial knowledges in all disciplines and departments. Processes towards Indigenizing, decolonizing, reconciliation and upholding Treaty relations and responsibilities are not just the work of the Wenjack School and the faculty of education, sustainability studies, environmental science, nursing, social work and business, where efforts to engage with Indigenous Knowledges are being made. In upholding shared institutional processes and responsibilities, prospects for peaceful, ethical alliances that value difference and diversity, and sustainable futures with all of Creation may be more fully realized.

Indigenous governance of Indigenous programming at PSIs inherently centres local Indigenous Peoples, their lands, knowledges, languages, history, and spirituality. This is more effective than continually trying to make myriad changes and add-ons to the governance, programming and staffing of Indigenous programming that is ultimately diminished by colonial hegemony. In building on what Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders associated with Trent have recommended, perhaps we can call on Nenabozho,⁹⁹ Anishinaabe cultural creator, hero and trickster, to help us in shape-shifting, and a resurgence of Indigenous governance. Could an interim co-governance phase combine Indigenous and mainstream PSE governance? The instructions for creating ethical

⁹⁹ Nenabozho (spelling from Stark, 2013) is depicted in diverse Indigenous stories as a Manidoo, the embodiment of life, with the power to create, protect and transform life. Also considered a trickster and a shape-shifter, Nenabozho appears as a rabbit, a coyote and a raven in different stories. Nanabozo is a rule breaker and known for stirring up mischief. Stories of Nanabozo's adventures and mishaps are to teach humans how to live a good life (Benton-Banai, 1998; Johnston, 1976; Stark, 2013; Williams, D., 2013).

spaces for Indigenous governance lie in our shared Treaties. In the next chapter, I examine settler/Treaty peoples' understandings of the Treaties that guide Trent and the prospects for learning through Treaty epistemology to fulfill our responsibilities to aki, nibi, and all of Creation.

CHAPTER 10: RESETTING AND REPAIRING INDIGENOUS/SETTLER RELATIONSHIPS: "THAT'S YOUR JOB"

Introduction: The Context of Reconciliation

I introduce this chapter by reviewing the context of reconciliation in Canada and sharing insights nurtured through my relationship with Migizi ow-kwe/Shirley Williams. As part of ongoing discussions with her, the message is very clear—Indigenous and settler peoples need to reset their relationship. Migizi ow-kwe says that for settlers, reconciliation is "your job." I offer insights from settler research collaborators and some suggestions on how we can activate and embody our Treaty responsibilities as settlers.

As discussed, basic understandings of the process of reconciliation in Canada involve "establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples," facilitated by "awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour" (TRC, 2015, pp. 6–7). Ultimately, settler peoples need to come to understand that that we are all Treaty peoples and that the ongoing process of reconciliation is a shared responsibility (TRC, 2015). It is crucial for settler/Treaty peoples to acknowledge that concepts of "reconciliation" and "truth" are understood and framed differently by Indigenous communities across Chi'Mikinak (Great Turtle), by settler Canadians, through the mandate of the TRC, and by governmental and non-governmental institutions and organizations. Indigenous communities have their own concepts of "truth-telling"—their own understandings and priorities regarding what constitutes meaningful relations, healing, and reconciliation, based on their unique and diverse cultures (Johnson, 2013; Noori, 2013; TRC, 2015). Within these different worldviews, reconciliation between Indigenous and settler peoples means reconciling with the lands, waters, and all beings—taking care of Creation together (Williams, D., 2014; Marshall, M., 2014; RCAP, 2015).

Transformational learning must occur before settler society embraces these aspects of their Treaty responsibilities and takes reconciliatory action.



Figure 15: Migizi ow-kwe/Shirley Williams in *Where are the Children, Healing the Legacy of the Residential Schools* (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2003).

Insights from Migizi ow-kwe

The heart of reconciliation is the loving, trust-based relationships I have with Indigenous People who have become my friends. A long-standing relationship is with Migizi ow-kwe/Shirley Williams, whom I had the honour of meeting at York University when we were both part of the 1992 Master of Environmental Studies cohort. After attending York, we fell out of touch. Then, in 2008, a package arrived from my mother with the catalogue for *Where are the Children? Healing the Legacy of The Residential Schools*¹⁰⁰—and there was Migizi ow-kwe. She was featured in an article detailing her life path as a keeper of Anishinaabemowin and as a Trent University (Trent) professor, as well as her incredible resilience as an Indian Residential School (IRS) Survivor, as shown in Figure 15. Reflecting on our friendship, the tears start to flow—for what she has endured and in joy for her triumphs. I have many stories about the deep mentorship and healing that have emerged from my friendship with Migizi ow-kwe, and I am so grateful that we are part of each other's paths. I felt my life come full circle while attending Trent and having her as one of my professors. Her directives about reconciliation and the need for Indigenous and settler peoples to reset their relationship are part of my lifelong learning journey.

In 2015, shortly after the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) final report came out, I was about to do my oral comprehensive exam concerning Indigenous Knowledge for the Traditional Advisory Council (TAC) of the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program. Migizi ow-kwe came into the room and told us she had just come from the TRC closing ceremony in Ottawa. She hauled the massive 1234-page report out of her luggage and pushed it into the centre of the table. We all

¹⁰⁰ *Where are the Children? Healing the Legacy of The Residential Schools* is an exhibit developed by the Legacy of Hope Foundation in 2001 and has an overarching goal to promote understanding and reconciliation in Canada about IRS (Legacy of Hope, 2023).

commented on how thick it was. Migizi ow-kwe paused and looked into my eyes over the top of her reading glasses. She gestured towards the report: "This is your job," she said.

Migizi ow-kwe and I spoke many times about the process of reconciliation during my research. These exchanges helped me to better understand my role in relation to post-secondary institutions (PSIs), as part of Nibi Emosaawdamajig (Those That Walk for the Water), and in protecting the land and water, in particular during the community resistance to Trent and Peterborough's plan to fill an unassessed wetland for a sports arena development. Dialogue with Migizi ow-kwe helped to illuminate critical insights about the need to look more deeply at Traditional Indigenous governance and the differently situated ways of Indigenous and Canadian/mainstream post-secondary education (PSE) governance, systems, and practices. I told Migizi ow-kwe that I planned to talk to members of Trent's upper administration about where they were at in their learning and about our collective Treaty responsibilities, not because of their professional roles, but on a personal level. Migizi ow-kwe responded that most academics are afraid to interact from a personal level because of their training. She says that's what's missing in the settler-colonial education system. She gave the example that in student essays and academic publications, people are taught not to speak in the first person or to use the pronoun "I."

Migizi ow-kwe feels that Trent senior administrators need to be "more open-minded" about Traditional Indigenous governance—that their understandings are "blocked." She adds that settler peoples need to become more educated about Indigenous Peoples and different knowledges systems. Still, most importantly, as settlers, we need to come to Indigenous Peoples to reconcile. I asked Migizi ow-kwe her thoughts about the potential of educating upper administration at Trent on reconciliation. The following is an excerpt from this conversation that

I believe can be applied to all settler/Treaty peoples and helps to situate us in this time of the Seventh Fire:

Migizi ow-kwe: "It must come from them. We cannot force them to learn."

Gillian: "So, they need to come and say, 'I realize I need to learn this.'"

Migizi ow-kwe: "That's part of it—when they come, they have to reconcile."

Gillian: "What do you think I can do to move that along?"

Migizi ow-ke: "That's your job!"

Gillian: "So none of you, as Elders and Knowledge Holders, you are never going to go to them; they must come to you. . . . I never thought about that before, but of course."

Migizi ow-kwe: "We are not missionaries."

Gillian: "It's going to take many people to help facilitate that. And I don't see that happening at Trent right now."

Migizi ow-kwe: "No."

Gillian: "This really helps my understanding. This is so important to reflect on. The whole point of doing this research is that there are benefits for Indigenous Peoples. And other settlers also want this to happen."

Migizi ow-kwe: "The benefit is for non-Native people to come to an understanding of how to work towards that relationship when it should have started in the 1600s. We must go back and begin again to make peace and unity."

Gillian: "Do you think we are beginning again now?"

Migizi ow-kwe: "To some extent."

Settlers' Insights: Overview

Based on findings from one-on-one guided discussions, I uncovered the need for settlers and allies to learn and act within Treaty-based contexts. In response, I facilitated a sharing circle

for settler/Treaty peoples in 2017 that included a group of students, professors, and administration. It centred on the question: "How can we uphold our Treaty responsibilities and values regarding Treaty 20 (1818) and the Williams Treaties (1923)?" We also discuss how we might evaluate ourselves on the journey toward decolonizing and Indigenizing PSE.

Collaborators reflect on the implications of living in a Treaty area and facilitating local Treaty relationships, generating many suggestions for learning, reflecting, and evaluating Treaty relations as individuals and institutionally. Everyone agrees that we should do our best to honour the spirit of local Treaties and contribute to maintaining the well-being, health, and rights of Indigenous Peoples. What emerges from the circle represents a spectrum of differently situated and generational understandings about local Treaties, Treaty values and responsibilities, and the relationship between Treaty and land, and demonstrates how settler collaborators engage using different discourses when discussing Treaties. Collaborators shared how they are in various states or phases of knowing about Treaty relationships and responsibilities.

One collaborator emphasizes that settlers have avoided learning about these, putting a burden on Indigenous Peoples. Most collaborators speak to the need to strengthen and nurture relations between Indigenous and settler peoples and for settlers to educate themselves. Some indicate that settlers need to activate non-dominating relations with the land and make reparations for what has been/is being done to the land and water, and to address systemic anti-Indigenous racism. It is mainly the youth collaborators who recognize that Treaties with Indigenous Nations have been and are being violated by Trent. Collaborators share suggestions for Treaty education and pedagogies for relearning. Some collaborators have difficulty making connections between Treaties and issues related to land. Others offer suggestions for reconciling differently situated understandings of land. Some collaborators speak to institutional

responsibilities for upholding Treaties and reconciliation, and the need to evaluate these. Based on these, I summarize collective insights and propose recommendations for institutional action.

Settler Collaborators' Treaty Understandings

There is consensus from research collaborators that settler society is at the beginning of its journey in relation to Treaty education, that it will take some time to learn about our responsibilities and subsequently, act on and embody these. The majority of settler collaborators are in synch with Migizi ow-kwe's directive that reconciliation "is your job." Some are/have been reflecting on their positionalities for many years and possess some awareness of their power and privilege, as well as understandings of how the dominant hegemony of settler colonialism impacts Indigenous Peoples. Some are educators and learners in the field, one with a specific research focus on local Treaties. Others are administrators who navigate Treaty relations in public and often contentious contexts and spaces through their roles at Trent. They are "learning on the job," so to speak.

Research collaborators speak to what they might contribute as Treaty people. Most feel they are using their gifts, power, and positions within Trent to move reconciliation forward. The majority make themselves vulnerable, both personally and professionally, by showing emotions and acknowledging various phases or states of "not knowing." They highlight what might be necessary for settler/Treaty people to learn and epistemologies and pedagogies for learning. Collaborators see a need for settler/Treaty peoples to self-educate so as not to overburden Indigenous Knowledge Holders. Collaborators also consider how to evaluate Trent's institutional or systemic journey to decolonize, reconcile, and uphold Treaty responsibilities. Based on their insights and findings from the literature, I propose changes related to multi-sited areas of the institution and actions Trent could take to become a more reciprocal Treaty partner.

Settlers' Lack of Knowledge about Local Treaties

I introduced the settler circle (2017) by setting a broad context for Treaty 20 and the Williams Treaties in relation to Trent. I mentioned that as part of local Treaties, the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg were promised the banks and mouths of the river and the islands—key fishing areas and waterways they depend on. I reminded the group that land is the source of Indigenous Knowledge, and that Trent has just under 1500 acres of land on both sides of the Odenaabe zibii (Otonabee River). As we move around the circle, all the collaborators raise the issue of a general lack of knowledge of local Treaties. Some are unaware of the protracted legal disputes (since 1992) between the Williams Treaty Nations with Ontario and Canada (resolved in 2018) and recent (2016) disputes over planting and harvesting manoomin (the good seed or wild rice) on Pigeon Lake, as well as the ongoing impacts of the Trent-Severn Waterway, which flooded and destroyed many traditional manoomin harvesting areas and ecosystems (Williams, D., 2013).

Kelly King, former TRent Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge and Science (TRACKS) Education Director with a B.A. in Indigenous Studies from Trent and an M.E.S. from York University says that in terms of coming to understand the implications of living in a Treaty area and our responsibilities as settlers:

We need to get back to what the Treaty is in the first place. Having that at the forefront of all levels of education is necessary to continue with any kind of relationship or building relationships. As well, aside from having relationships with people, I think we need to have relationships with the land in ways that are not dominating, what we've seen throughout settler colonialism. I am trying to work through this, to relate to land differently than how I was raised.

For Jacqueline (Jackie) Muldoon, Past Provost & Vice-President Academic (2015-2020), Treaty education means continual learning. She suggests: "We have to understand what happened then, and what those in the past thought was happening." She emphasizes that settlers have a "responsibility to think about what it means today in terms of the Treaties. Treaty 20 meant

getting a commitment for the Indigenous population to continue to use the waterways, the islands, etc., and clearly that hasn't happened."

Phil Abbott, an Indigenous Studies Ph.D. candidate and course instructor in the Wenjack School, speaks to multiple considerations concerning settlers' Treaty responsibilities and education. His historical research uncovers much about local Treaties. Phil finds many settlers talk about the need to educate ourselves, but this can be difficult as "we have avoided educating ourselves on Treaties. Treaty 20 was signed almost 200 years ago." He suggests that when Treaties were signed, settlers viewed this as the end of the relationship. They also believed/believe Treaties meant/mean "settlers taking control of the land, which was definitely not the understanding with Treaty 20 in relation to the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, and almost any other Treaty." Phil speaks to the challenges of reconciling Indigenous and settler perspectives on Treaties: "There was a written document and then an oral understanding, and very often, those two were separate." He continues:

I think the Mississauga understood that they were keeping access to the waterways and the islands, but beyond that, I don't think they were agreeing to have the forests cut down and every parcel of land divided into rectangles, and given over to private property when they were signing the Treaty in 1818.

Phil says if settlers interpret the Treaties based solely on the rights they receive but not their responsibilities, "200 years later, there is a lot to figure out if we haven't been living up to our responsibilities." These differently situated understandings concerning Treaty need to be worked through. As indicated in the literature (Battiste, M., 2016a; Borrows & Coyle, 2017; Palmater, 2016; Williams, 2018), by Phil and others in the circle, we shouldn't rely on Indigenous people to educate us. Phil says:

We need to listen to Indigenous voices more, but it is incumbent for settlers to start figuring this out for ourselves; we can't keep going to people to ask them to explain it to us. The irony is that we weren't taught about Treaties, and that's the legal basis for us to be here. . . . In settler-colonial societies, that kind of

history is ignored because it's an uncomfortable history. It's easier just to ignore it and not talk about it.

Phil refers to the work of settler scholar Cole Thrush, who suggests that Indigenous Peoples have been/are bearing the responsibility of colonial history, and that by not teaching ourselves about Treaties and not understanding that history, settlers have often avoided that burden. As Phil says, "It's time that settlers start to acknowledge that history, take on some of this burden and start to figure out what we need to do to have meaningful reconciliation moving forward."

Lynne Davis, Associate Professor in the Wenjack School, acknowledges Gidigaa Migizi/Doug Williams' essential role in sharing Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg history and culture, and teaching about local Treaties, for her personally, for Trent, and for the wider Nogojiwanong community. She concurs with Jackie Muldoon that learning about Treaty is "a process of continual learning" and feels there is a hunger for this knowledge. "As a university, we need to make spaces for those tellings," says Lynne. She was a key organizer of the *Understanding our Local Treaties* panel in 2016, which included Gidigaa Migizi, Anne Taylor, Curve Lake Cultural Archivist; Dave Mowat, Alderville First Nation; and Phil Abbott. Lynne believes the creation of Trent's land acknowledgement captured the community's consciousness in terms of "understanding that the Mississaugas agreed to share the land with us and that we are the direct beneficiaries of that sharing. And it is now. It is not past."

Jason Fenno, an Indigenous Studies Ph.D. candidate and first-year representative on the Indigenous Ph.D. Council, emphasizes how Treaty education is approached in *Introduction to Indigenous Knowledge* (INDG-2100Y) (required as part of the Indigenous Studies degree programs), led for many years by Wenjack School Chair David Newhouse. In this course, learners explore Treaties in the places where they were raised. Jason says that in doing this exercise, many students experience a kind of awakening. They come to understand that Treaties are not something from the past; they are part of the places where we live. They also come to recognize

how privileged they are to live and learn in Indigenous territories. Jason feels that a resurgence of local Indigenous place names is a key step towards a resurgence of Treaty understandings and Indigenous Knowledges.

Asaf Zohar, Chair of the Master in Sustainability Studies Program and Associate Professor in the School of Business, acknowledges that Treaty is the basis of everything—it is our understanding of our roles and responsibilities, and how these need to be anchored in a fundamental commitment to respectful relationship building. He reminds us that our circle is in the Jake Thomas Room, where several wampum belts hang on the wall. Asaf recognizes that wampum belts are the essence of Treaty—that wampum belts are the first original representation of authentic relationship building that is manifested through Treaty, calling for mutual acknowledgement, respect, and understanding as a basis for the relationship and co-creation. Building on the question posed to the circle, Asaf posits:

How do we Indigenize a curriculum? We need to revisit shared norms of understanding of what Treaty means and get back to the original understanding of what the wampum belt meant when it was enacted as a basis for going forth with co-creation.

Asaf explains that in sustainability studies and business, there is a focus on practical outcomes.

He asks, "How are we going to make a sustainable enterprise that acknowledges both [knowledges]?" Asaf says:

I struggle with how to get there, especially when the classroom is full of students who have not been educated, do not understand Treaties, and do not understand responsibilities. What is the process through which we get people first to listen because that is the most important thing, and then to speak words that reflect a genuine commitment to the original co-creation when so much harm, so much damage, and so much misunderstanding has occurred?

Treaty Education for Settlers

Research collaborators share suggestions for curriculum related to Treaty education, pedagogies, and desired learning outcomes, including the transformation of settler

consciousness and embodied reconciliatory actions that include all of Creation. Most research collaborators speak to a need for settler/Treaty peoples to self-educate as much as possible so that they do not overburden Indigenous Knowledge Holders in effort to prevent the potential retraumatizing that can occur when Indigenous People are asked to retell their personal stories and/or ancestral histories. Based on insights from research collaborators in all of the circles, the literature, and my experience as a student in the Wenjack School, I find that settler peoples need to do multiple learnings in coming to respect Indigenous Peoples and their knowledge systems. This includes becoming more knowledgeable in multiple areas, including Indigenous language, culture, history, and governance; learning about and reflecting on settler colonialism and Canada; and exploring and reflecting on our ancestors' knowledges, cultures, histories, etc. Highlighting or adopting a broad or local Indigenous Peoplehood model as a learning tool within the Wenjack School and across Trent could be a foundational support. Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Simpson recommends the one put forward by Alfred and Corntassel (2005). It has potential as a foundational concept or matrix in guiding Indigenous research and teaching—to support learners in coming to understand the interrelated and equally significant aspects of Indigenous Peoplehood and Indigeneity as well as Indigenous relational autonomy and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty.

Collaborators indicate a need for Canadian Studies, History, Political Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, Education, Environmental Studies, Science, Philosophy, etc., to support this collective work and align with Indigenous Studies by creating courses centred on local Indigenous histories, Treaties, Treaty relations and responsibilities, Indigenous governance, and settler colonialism. A Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe Knowledge Holder could revitalize Gidigaa Migizi/Doug Williams' course on Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe history. Kelly finds people seem open and willing to learn about settler responsibilities but that considering how to go "beyond

theorizing" is an important question. This resonates with my research focus on activating and embodying our responsibilities as settlers. Grounded in her vision of Treaty education and her experiences in the Wenjack School, Kelly indicates that creating courses focused on constructs of settler colonialism and the settler state as opposed to the general history of Canada would be an "important shift or at least a refining of focus" at Trent. Kelly finds:

There has been such a critical eye focused on Indigenous culture in the past, almost like a taking of Indigenous culture. But to have a critical eye on the settler state, first and foremost, would be interesting to push and balance the things we are talking about. Also, I would suggest more applied learning, more connection to communities, and more focus on the land.

The majority of people in the circle are white settler peoples who are not accustomed to reflecting on how our locations are based on entitlement and privileges that include the resources and powers derived from living within the Canadian state and as attached to whiteness.

Transformative Pedagogies

As the Wenjack School has evolved, Indigenous Studies programs have attracted many settler learners. Research collaborators speak to ongoing tensions between the needs of Indigenous and settler students. This is an issue faced by all PSIs. As noted, we have all been systemically and structurally denied Indigenous truths and knowledges of Indigenous/settler and Treaty relations through the Canadian education system—truths that are a vital first part of reconciliatory processes (Pete et al., 2013). Trent's Vice-President External Relations and Development Julie Davis says that along her learning journey she grapples with how to grow understanding without causing Indigenous Peoples to have to give up so much of their energy and emotion and every time they share their stories and perspectives. There is a need for decolonial education for settler learners and for facilitating Treaty relationships in classrooms

through workshops and other events led by the Wenjack School and in the broader Trent community.

When Lynne Davis says she is in a continual/ongoing "stance of not knowing" that motivates her to learn more about Treaties, she uncovers a critical aspect of settler's Treaty education. Acknowledging that a state of "not knowing" is part of addressing the complex layers of settler consciousness, a process needed to disrupt the settler-colonial status quo (Davis et al., 2016; Regan, 2010). Colonial/Eurocentric knowledge systems founded on positivist and post-positivist frameworks (as normalized in most mainstream disciplines) have exacerbated a need in learners to have "answers," often in the form of empirical evidence. The literature suggests that settlers must relearn and re-educate by becoming more reflective and reflexive. This involves uncovering mythologies and dominant Canadian historical and contemporary narratives, and critically analyzing Indigenous-settler power relations and Canada as a settler-colonial state, among other areas. Such learning is enabled through Indigenous, transformative, anti-oppressive, anti-racist, anti-colonial, and decolonizing pedagogies.

Drawing on her work as an IRS resolution manager, settler scholar Paulette Regan (2010) says we need to "unsettle the settler within"—to name and transform our inner colonizer. Pedagogies of discomfort, humility, and vulnerability contribute to this journey (Boler, 1999; Regan, 2010). Based on the work of Paulo Freire, Regan suggests that we should "strive to maintain critical hope that is rooted in struggles for freedom" (Regan, 2010, p. 22). Schugurensky (2002, as cited in Regan, 2010) asserts that transformative learning occurs only when "critical reflection and social action are part of the same process" (Schugurensky, 2002, p. 62). Roger Simon (2004, as cited in Regan,

2010) finds that emotions alone don't do much to transform Indigenous-settler relations and emphasize our mutual responsibilities.

As noted, for settlers to contribute to decolonizing, this must not be a metaphor but rather should centre Indigenous land, sovereignty, and ways of thinking, and must include conversations about sharing the land for Indigenous lifeways and cultures for future generations (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Barker and Pickerell (2012, as cited in Barker & Battell Lowman, 2015) define decolonizing acts "by the mutual sharing of place, maintenance of social-spatial organizations commensurate with their respective cultures, mediated through respectful protocols designed to maintain alliances across, rather than in spite of, difference" (p. 111). Barker & Battell Lowman (2015) remind us that decolonization is a process and a practice, not a goal; being an ally is an active, relationship-based process, not something you claim to be. Ideally, relearning translates into settlers putting their power at the disposal of those whose power has been co-opted, taking action that aligns with Indigenous priorities, addressing white and other forms of privilege, and disrupting settler colonialism and settler-colonial ways of being.

Some exemplary strategies for transformative learning include the homelands assignment in Introduction to Indigenous Studies (as mentioned), reflections on reconciliation in the honours program, and courses such as *Indigenous/Settler Alliances for Justice* (4050H) and *Transforming Settler Consciousness* (4051H) (both of the latter created by Lynne Davis). Scott Somerville, with a B.A. in Indigenous Studies, minor in IESS, comments that the research he did in *Transforming Settler Consciousness* helped him to understand a critical underpinning of settler colonialism:

In Europe, around the time of the Enlightenment period, having property was viewed as having absolute rule over the land. That is one of the foundational changes in consciousness that led to colonization. Whoever owned the land had

every right to do what they wanted with it. I know it's not absolute here, but a lot of the time, we treat it as such and with Trent owning so much land, I think changing our perspective on that and knowing that we don't have the right to do whatever we want on the land, that we must be held accountable and consult with Indigenous People, I think that's important.

Don McCaskill, Professor, Wenjack School, indicates that the fundamental understandings grounded in Indigenous Knowledges, which include relationships with the land and other experiential ways of knowing, are necessary to shifting ways of being. He reminds the group that the original vision of Indigenous Studies was founded on the three components of a wholistic education—a solid academic program, an Indigenous cultural component and applied aspects. Heart-based; land-, language-, and ceremony-centred; art-, music-, and dance-based; experiential and community-based ways of knowing and learning, oral teachings, and reflective learning: there are central to the Wenjack School and the Indigenous B. Ed. program, and nurture transformation in ways that encourage learners to create good relations and take up their responsibilities to all of Creation. In his learning, Don found that mentorships with several Indigenous Elders and the power of ceremonial practices changed who he was. When he was sitting in the fasting lodges or doing the sweats, he came to understand,

You had to unlearn as much as you learned. Because our approaches to knowledge are so ingrained in a western way that we don't recognize it, and that's natural; that's the way it is. When we ask someone about their culture, it's like asking a fish to talk about water. They are in it. So, when you get involved in another culture, you start to see your own culture.

Based on research collaborators' directions, I recommend creating more courses that facilitate settler re-education and shift ways of being and knowing. The Centre for Teaching and Learning could enhance how they support the work of the Wenjack School and other Indigenous programming by continuing to develop Indigenous-centred curricula and exploring the infusion of Indigenous pedagogies mentioned above and

other transformative and anti-oppressive pedagogies across disciplines and institutionally. Moreover, these could be offered through Continuing Education and as part of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Treaty education could be added as an Indigenous Course Requirement or be a separate required course or module. Note that any new programming needs to be led by Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders in ways that do not further add to their teaching and committee loads, etc., and must be fully resourced.

Land—Reconciling Differently Situated Perspectives

I find that research collaborators' differently situated and generational perspectives concerning local Treaties are accentuated when discussing land. Learning from and taking care of or protecting the land is vital to Treaty relations, and, in the context of Indigenous Knowledges, critical to survival. Furthermore, the Land Back movement asks settler society and Trent to consider returning some land to the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg. Land is at the forefront of the tensions between Indigenous Peoples and the Canadian state. "Having a cottage on the lake" emerges as a metaphor for settler-colonial privilege and land ownership in the Kawartha region, especially in the context of the 2016 manoomin disputes on Pigeon Lake. However, it must be acknowledged that all settler peoples benefit from Indigenous dispossession, whether they live on a lake where manoomin grows or in an urban centre such as Nogojiwanong. Yet, despite these factors, not all collaborators mention the importance of land or the violation of local Treaties due to Indigenous dispossession. In fact, some settler collaborators avoid and defensively discuss these topics. It is mainly youth and Ph.D. students who speak to land and acknowledge settler privilege based on the way local Treaties have unfolded. Kelly mentions creating non-dominating relations with the land, Phil acknowledges settler privilege, Jane Gray,

a course instructor in IESS with a Ph.D. in Indigenous Studies from Trent, speaks to the importance of land restoration, and Scott recognizes land as kin.

Scott, one of the youths in the group—and, as noted, Anishinaabeg Elders, Trent students, and local Nogojiwanong community members—found Trent's sustained involvement in proposing to fill an unassessed wetland for a sports arena that went forward without consultation with local Indigenous Peoples, is a violation of local Treaties. Scott tells the story of what he witnessed as a fire keeper for the tipi at the Mnidoowag A'Kiing (the Spirit Lands), one of the land-based teaching areas situated in by the woods beside Enwayaang (the way we speak together), where the Wenjack School is housed:

The firekeepers came in one morning and saw all the cedars along the road cut down. That really hurt the team. They consider the cedar their relatives. One of them had a pickup truck, so we brought a lot of the cedar to use as a medicine in the tipi.

Scott says that many people he knows will be standing up to protect the wetlands. He asserts that Trent needed "to have a process in place before filling a wetland, and Indigenous People, including local governments, should be involved." One of the outcomes of the City of Peterborough and Trent's conflict with the Michi Saagiig Nishinaabeg was for Trent to develop a consultation process, retroactively. Scott suggests that Trent could benefit from more regular communications and transparency with students, faculty, and staff about the processes they are engaged in regarding land development. Note that these are both emphasized in the TRC's Calls to Action. Scott proposes that the Trent community come together for a Treaty renewal process, review the Treaties and their contemporary implications, and agree to continue forward with those renewed understandings. If Trent were to follow up on this, they would be a leader in this area.

In her role as Provost and Vice-President Academic, Jackie Muldoon says she finds it challenging to relate Treaty responsibilities to land "because I see so many roadblocks in terms

of getting others to understand, even the little that I know, and I obviously don't know very much. I'm not sure how to do it other than just keep trying." Neil Emery, former Vice President Research and Innovation (2011–2020) and Professor of Biology, finds he has had to accelerate his learning about Treaty relations because of his involvement with the Trent research park and the proposed twin pad arena build, etc. Neil feels people hold different paradigms related to land development issues and Indigenous Peoples. He encounters the " 'that's all in the past' crowd" who can't acknowledge the ongoing harms endured by Indigenous Peoples, and what he calls "alarmists or activists" who are protecting the land. Neil finds neither group wants to listen. Still, he believes that common ground can be found and says, "It's never too late to learn and get people together who want to move things ahead in a thoughtful way." In the context of moving things ahead, I clarified with Neil that he was speaking to coming to a resolution about the research park. We did not have time to discuss "moving things ahead" in the context of settler colonial logics due to the short length of the circle.

Asaf also speaks to how people come from different frameworks, in this case, mainstream sustainability frameworks and Indigenous understandings. He says:

From a western perspective, we frame sustainability as having an economic dimension, a social dimension, and an environmental dimension. If you begin to integrate IK into that, you begin to understand that all this rests on a bedrock of cultural understandings. If you will, the fourth pillar of sustainability.

Asaf identifies the potential to make upholding Treaty responsibilities and co-creation central to learnings in Sustainability Studies. There is much potential for co-creation as a model, rather than "integrating" IK into mainstream sustainability. Indigenous understandings incorporate the roles of all beings with broad, inclusive frameworks that offer non-hierarchical approaches to ecological models and social, environmental, political and economic relationships, and there is much work to be done for mainstream learners to come to appreciate this. Again, the short duration of the circle limited discussion in this direction. Asaf's example illustrates how co-

creation, and the inclusion of IK is an important project and an opportunity for Sustainability Studies. Based on our collective Treaty responsibilities, I believe this applies to all disciplines and subject matter. Indeed, this is the ongoing work of *etuaptmumk*—the gift of multiple perspectives or two-eyed seeing—and points to the necessity of reconciling differently situated perspectives and the knowledge silos of academic disciplines in upholding Treaties.

Jane paraphrases the wisdom of Leanne Simpson, who talks about "a process of imagining the land as it was so you can imagine how it could be" to promote shared understanding around the circle. She suggests we could look at relationships in the same way. Jane asks: "In going back before the Treaties, what might relationships have looked like?" Most responses to this suggestion were positive; however, some administration say they find it difficult trying to reimagine Indigenous/settler relations and relations with the land and water. They focus primarily on barriers to rebalancing, notably the impossibility of restoring land to its precolonial state. They also refer to the challenges of making changes to existing PSE structures. Jackie Muldoon agrees that changes are needed but wonders what historical perspectives we would use to guide us. She adds, "We have such structure around us already that you would have to essentially undo or fight, and how much you can do that is another question." In the previous chapter, Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders have offered guidance on transitioning towards greater Indigenous governance in PSE.

Scott recommends that part of the way forward could be for Trent to contribute its strengths in research to better explore and address some of the complex issues related to Treaty relations and Indigenous well-being that are critical to our ethical and shared futures: "As an academic institution, we have a lot of resources to do that—research and academic evaluation is our mission. We could look at specific problems that need to be solved." He suggests that the Trent Community Research Centre would be a good vehicle for this work and that "hav[ing]

students involved . . . could help bridge the gap between people coming from different paradigms, and from different levels at Trent." While disparities in understanding are evident around the table, Neil Emery is quick to endorse Scott's proposal. He remarks that this would be an excellent way to strengthen and move the work forward.

Institutional Responsibilities for Treaty and Reconciliation

As touched on, Trent has an institutional duty to be accountable to the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg and other Indigenous Nations, to move forward in the process of reconciliation, to uphold local Treaties, and to do Treaty education. Don says there have been several paradigm shifts as the Wenjack School has evolved, and that Trent is starting to come to grips with the implications of living in a Treaty area and the relationship with Indigenous People this involves. He feels there has been impetus from the TRC, and, to some extent, the larger Canadian population—the younger generation in particular, who are, for the first time starting to engage, trying to understand Traditional Indigenous cultures, and to understand and redress the issues of the past. It is a testament to the generational knowledge of the youth who collaborated in this research and to the Indigenous programming at Trent that has nurtured their learning, that youth embody their Treaty responsibilities. They do so by putting settler's Treaty responsibilities into context, challenging the generations that proceed them to be more reflexive about their positionalities as settlers, acknowledging the privilege they have gained from Treaty violations, holding Trent to be accountable to Indigenous communities, and proposing concrete ways that Trent can take reconciliatory action.

Don echoes Gidigaa Migizi/Doug Williams' observation that Indigenous programming "waxes and wanes," according to Trent's administration. As discussed previously, the earlier iteration of the department/School with Joe Couture was founded on fundamental understandings of Traditional values and teachings, and this guided everything informally. In the

absence of these across the Wenjack School, there is an increased need to be more prescriptive and formal in centring Indigenous Knowledges. One area in which collaborators stress it is paramount for Trent to maintain as an exemplary practice is upholding the criteria for tenure-track Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and dual tradition scholars. There was concern around the circle that this had waned in recent years and could impact Trent's reputation as a leader in Indigenous Studies. As discussed earlier, I raised this issue with David Newhouse and Don McCaskill (2022), who affirm that this practice has recently been revitalized through new hires and is embedded within the system through policy. Don emphasizes that institutionally, it is critical that:

We listen to [Traditional people], and we give them some authority, and we allow them to make some decisions, and we are flexible enough as an institution to make those changes. Additionally, in our programs, we commit to really get[ting] involved in an experiential way with Indigenous culture, at least to shift our thinking in a more culturally appropriate way, and then start having a conversation. But it's not easy. It's not easy for us as individuals, and it's not easy for the institution to make those kinds of changes. But I do see that there is a willingness in the sense that there hasn't been in quite some time to do that.

There is some discussion of Trent's ability to maintain ongoing leadership in Indigenous Studies. Jackie recalls that when the TRC's Calls to Action were released, after 40-plus years in Indigenous Studies, Trent had a history of relationships, policy and programming that many other PSIs didn't have. Trent was already working on some of the directions in the Calls. Rather than respond directly to the Calls, Jackie says the Senate Committee on Indigenous Education approached this by considering what 21st-century learners or teachers would need to know. She says it has been challenging for Trent to maintain its position as a leader, as many other institutions, in responding to the Calls—some larger and with more funding—are creating new policies and programming and doing cluster Indigenous hires, for example. Jackie says, following the TRC:

Trent wasn't in the news. We had to look at our history and how everything we have done has played out, the influence it's had, and the influence it will continue to have going forward. We're not starting from the same point, but we always want to be leaders here, not followers.

Lynne agrees that Trent needs to maintain its role as a leader. She mentions some Indigenous community members on the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. Council have concerns about Trent losing its leadership role because of the important work so many other universities are doing. She suggests that Trent reassert their leadership by publicly affirming Elders and Traditional People as tenured faculty. I believe Trent would continue to set an example for Indigenous programming across Chi'Mikinak by upholding the practice of centring Elders' leadership as Don outlines and encouraging and supporting other PSIs to do the same.

Evaluating Reconciliation

Trent is just embarking on Treaty education, and as mentioned, hosted a public *Understanding Our Local Treaties* panel in 2016. Jackie Muldoon suggests that Trent has a duty to educate its learners on local Treaties. Beyond curriculum development, she would like Trent to establish institutional guidelines, parameters, or protocols for upholding its Treaty responsibilities. This could be the focus of future institutional-wide collaboration. Chris Furgal, Associate Professor, Wenjack School and the School of the Environment, suggests that we find ways to evaluate Trent's progress towards decolonizing and reconciliation through a type of report card or index that combines quantitative and qualitative aspects like the United Nations Human Development Index which looks at countries' average achievements in health, knowledge and standard of living. In this regard, Trent could look to the work of Anishinaabe scholar Eva Jewell (Chippewas of the Thames First Nation) and settler scholar Ian Mosby, as well as other Indigenous evaluation processes. Jewell and Mosby (2023) find that in the eight years since the 94 Calls to Action were released, 81 Calls remain unfulfilled, with zero fulfilled in 2023.

Additionally, Jane notes that Fleming College has adopted the Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes (Canada Colleges & Institutes, 2014) and that it has helped to direct the sustainability programs. She says it is easy to implement, practical, and has benchmarking. It has helped elevate Indigenous perspectives and bring them into decision-making regarding curriculum development at Fleming. Furthermore, the infusion of IK brings faculty members together with Indigenous Knowledge Holders and enhances transdisciplinarity. As discussed, the infusion of IKS connects knowledge silos, aids in bringing together diverse knowledges, fosters transdisciplinarity, and creates more (w)holistic PSE.

Proposed Institutional Actions

In addition to what has been put forward, there are several broad actions settler/Treaty People at Trent and other PSIs need to take toward being more reciprocal Treaty partners. These relate to local Indigenous Nations, all levels of Canadian governments, corporations, and to land. First, as highlighted by Indigenous collaborators, Trent must focus more on supporting the well-being and health of local, adjacent and global Indigenous Peoples. This includes revitalizing Trent's initial relationship with Wshkiigimongaki and other Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg communities and nearby Indigenous communities, including the urban community in the Nogojiwanong area by actively going out into the communities to strengthen reciprocal relations—finding out how communities would like Trent to support their capacities, goals, and priorities—and to resource these. This might involve creating new educational programming or collaborative research, etc. Second, Trent and other PSIs need to keep pressure on the Canadian state, provincial governments and municipalities, and the corporate sector to implement the TRC's Calls to Action. When entering into corporate partnerships, Trent must be aware of these partners' history and relations with Indigenous Peoples. PSIs must also disengage their governance from Canadian legal systems in areas where these conflict with TRC Calls to Action.

Third, Trent and other PSIs must move beyond performative land acknowledgements, Indigenous renaming, plaques, artwork, and the dedication of relatively small indoor spaces for purposes related to Indigenous education, etc., and to return some land to local Indigenous Nations. In Trent's case, in consultation with the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, more of the 1460 acres of land should be devoted to land- and water-based education and ceremony houses, as suggested by Indigenous research collaborators. Additionally, areas of land could be co-managed with local communities. Land restoration could also take place in areas along the Odenaabe ziibi and interconnected wetlands, utilizing partnerships with Indigenous Studies and Trent's many environmental programs. Trent needs to get more creative—to reimagine relationships with Indigenous Peoples, the land and Creation, and their students, who are highly capable of co-generating solutions when given spaces and opportunities to do so.

Taking Action

One of the most significant challenges towards reconciliation/reconciliaACTION, decolonizing, and resetting/re-creating relations with Indigenous Peoples and the land means going beyond dialogue, beyond relentless, critical hope, to activate and embody the spirit and intent of Treaty—to take up responsibilities to be good relatives, and to nurture community relations and values of peace, friendship, and non-interference. As mentioned, settler collaborators have differently situated understandings and engage with different discourses about Treaty relations and responsibilities. They were not able to collectively discuss some of the complex and nuanced areas related to Treaties in a short introductory circle. This complicates the work. With the exception of the students and a few professor collaborators, settler-colonial thinking tends to be reproduced, treating settler colonialism and PSE governance structures as unchangeable meta-structures. As Migizi ow-kwe has noted, this type of thinking blocks abilities to generate creative ideas or imagine actions that could be taken to uphold

Treaty responsibilities. This affirms that reconciliation requires a paradigm shift, the transformation of PSE and settler society, and resetting and repairing settler-Indigenous relations.

To further activate and embody their roles and responsibilities as Treaty people, it was suggested by Scott Somerville that Trent and the Wenjack School have regular discussions, similar to our sharing circle, but not organized and facilitated through the labour of a student (me). Alongside self-education, this would involve facilitated dialogue, and engaging in Indigenous ways of resolving conflict with an Elder-guided group of students, faculty, staff, and administration. This would contribute to closing the divide, lack of transparency and communication between different groups at Trent, especially concerning issues where there is contention, particularly regarding land, Indigenous/settler power relations, Treaty understandings, racism, development, sustainability, etc. In the concluding chapter, findings from Mi'kma'ki and Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Aki will look more deeply at how coming to know through Treaty epistemology and ontology offers great potential to shift settler-colonial relations individually and institutionally.

CHAPTER 11: LET US TREATY OUR WAY FORWARD

Research Overview

Since the 1960s, post-secondary institutions (PSIs) across Chi'Mikinaak (the Great Turtle) have been/are learning how to engage with Indigenous Knowledge Holders and their knowledges in academic programs and research and considering what it means to decolonize and support Indigenous lead, systemic, transformative, and reconciliatory change. My work set out to explore the following overarching questions:

- According to Indigenous Knowledge Holders involved with four Canadian mainstream post-secondary education (PSE) programs, what practices support and nurture Indigenous autonomy in relation to Indigenous Knowledge systems?
- From the perspectives of Indigenous Knowledge Holders and settler/Treaty people associated with these PSE programs, how can we embody and activate these practices as individuals and institutionally, and what are the issues, tensions, opportunities, and prospects for doing so? In other words, what is the potential for transformation of mainstream PSIs?

These questions were explored through transdisciplinary, emergent, and qualitative approaches, including co-learning, *etuaptmumk* (the gift of multiple perspectives), Indigenist, decolonizing, and critical theory lenses, particularly settler-colonial, within an ethics of relational and Treaty-based accountability. The experiences, stories, and understandings of the Traditional Advisory Council (TAC) of the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program and other Indigenous Knowledge Holders and settler people associated with three programs at the Chanie Wenjack School of Indigenous Studies (Wenjack School) at Trent University (Trent), as well as insights from Mi'kmaw Dr./Elders Murdena and Albert Marshall regarding the former Toqwa'tu'kl Kijijitaqnn/Integrative Science (TK/IS) program at Cape Breton University (CBU), have grounded and guided my findings.

I find that Indigenous inclusion in PSE does not necessarily result in structural, transformational, reconciliatory, or Indigenizing change, but rather, institutions try to constrain Indigenous Peoples within colonial governance structures and frameworks. We are at a stage where co-learning and co-creating are possible. However, Indigenous autonomy demands further rebalancing and restructuring of asymmetrical Indigenous/settler relations on the land, in governance, in the academy, and settler society. Prospects for Indigenous relational autonomy and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty in PSIs arise from Indigenous governance of Indigenous programming, which inherently centres local Indigenous Peoples, their lands, knowledges, languages, histories, and spiritualities. It also requires settler peoples "*to Treaty*" our way forward. This involves using Treaty epistemologies and ontologies to uphold Treaty values, relationships, and responsibilities and to create ethical spaces for Indigenous governance.

Contributions

My work contributes to Indigenous, settler-colonial, reconciliation, and political studies; understandings of co-learning and etuaptmumk; knowledge translation; transdisciplinary and transcultural education and research; and the work of Indigenous/settler alliances. I uphold relational accountability by reflecting on Murdena Marshall's insights, which provide a foundation for my learning about Indigenous Knowledge systems. I centre Murdena's legacy and praxis using Indigenous storytelling as epistemology by bringing together multiple tellings of her story about Mrs. Matheson and Mi'kmaw medicines and highlight her conception of L'nu'k/Indigenous Knowledge systems. I propose a conception of Indigenous Knowledge systems that brings together diverse Indigenous scholars' insights, including those of Murdena (2008), Alfred & Corntassel (2005), Bell (2014), Holm et al. (2003), and Wilson (2008). I offer insights on why the ground-breaking TK/IS program at CBU struggled because of deep settler-colonial

hegemony. I suggest that collective Indigenous community–university stewardship that creates and respects spaces for Mi'kmaw governance and knowledge sovereignty in policy and praxis based on Treaty ethics would have helped sustain the program. This is based on Albert Marshall's insights that *etuaptmumk* and co-learning are essential to *ankukamkove'l* (a Mi'kmaw expression for Treaty) and *ankukamkua'tu* (doing Treaty),¹⁰¹ which involves bringing together our diverse gifts to take care of Creation. I indicate how co-learning and *etuaptmumk* are strengthened by recentring and re-grounding these within the Treaty-based contexts and epistemology from which they are derived, as linked to the knowledge that Albert brings forward and to Murdena's teachings on Indigenous Knowledge systems (IKS).

My work brings together perspectives from Indigenous and mainstream education and governance, enriching how differently situated understandings might speak to each other. I put forward the terms/discourse Indigenous relational autonomy and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty to recentre Indigenous ways of being and knowing and to heal colonial knowledge domination and hegemony. As discussed, Indigenous Peoples must have autonomy regarding Indigenous and decolonizing processes to realize Indigenous goals (AFN, 2010; Alfred, 2004; Corntassel, 2012; Coultard, 2014; Simpson, L., 2011 & 2014). I suggest the term Indigenous relational autonomy to describe how diverse Indigenous Peoples activate relationality or relational autonomy by restoring understandings of relationality as everyday acts of resurgence within multiple zones or sites (Blackwell, 2012; Blaser et al., 2010; Corntassel & Scow, 2017; Hunt & Holmes, 2015). Indigenous relational autonomy goes beyond mainstream notions of autonomy as Indigenous understandings of relationality, epistemology, and ontology include all beings within Creation as sources of knowledge, not just humans. Within Mi'kma'ki, it is akin to the Mi'kmaw understanding of *m'sit no'kmaq* or All My Relations. *M'sit no'kmaq* imparts

¹⁰¹ Mi'kmaw language spellings are from Elder Barb Sylliboy of Eskasoni First Nation.

respect for relationships and responsibilities that include Wabanaki and settler peoples, the ancestors, and all beings (Augustine, 2016). In Mi'kma'ki, settler people must transform settler consciousness into relational or m'sit no'kmaq consciousness.

Based on the insights of research collaborators and as informed by the literature, I put forward Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty as a grounding or anchoring concept to guide Indigenous programming in the academy to recentre Indigenous Nationhood and resurgence in relation to Indigenizing and decolonizing. Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty(ies) emphasize(s) rebalancing relations away from colonial, hegemonic dominance in PSIs and the Canadian state. Using the discourse of sovereignty emphasizes Indigenous Knowledge systems as emergent living processes activated within cultural, social, economic, political, and governance systems through land-based relations—sovereignties that have not been relinquished and with power at stake. Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty(ies) are asserted in relation to the academy through daily, multi-sited practices of relational and land-based Indigenous resurgence within Indigenous homelands, disrupting and renegotiating power relations within PSIs. Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty is critical to Indigenizing and decolonizing and indicates specific actions for settler/Treaty peoples. Upholding Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty(ies) supports efforts to move Indigenizing processes along the spectrum that Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) identify—from inclusion to reconciliation-based Indigenizing towards Treaty-based and resurgence-based decolonial, Indigenizing processes.

As part of this concluding chapter, I first offer insights and recommendations specific to Trent and then bring what emerged from experiences at Trent alongside understandings from Murdena and Albert Marshall and the CBU context. I theorize about what living in Treaty indicates within Wabanakik and Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Aki and how Treaty epistemologies can guide PSIs in creating ethical spaces for Indigenous governance of Indigenous education. The

diverse knowledges of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, Anishinaabeg, Rotinoshón:ni, and Wabanaki Peoples regarding Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty resonate with and inform each other and indicate that the ongoing work of co-learning and co-creating is for settlers/Treaty peoples and PSIs to Treaty our way forward. I plant some seeds for PSIs across Chi'Mikinak to consider nourishing in the Indigenous homelands they occupy. I argue there is a need to reflect and find ways to evaluate the evolving journeys of Trent, CBU, and other PSIs to decolonize, Indigenize, and reconcile. I believe this work would be strengthened by linking it with the experiences of those in other parts of Chi'Mikinak.

Offerings for Trent University

Overview

The insights and recommendations for Trent that follow came together through the knowledges and care of Indigenous and settler students and graduates of the Indigenous Studies bachelor and doctoral programs; Indigenous and settler faculty; Indigenous staff and settler administrators; and the Indigenous Elder/Knowledge Holders of the Traditional Advisory Council (TAC) of the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program. What I have uncovered is informed by 40 one-on-one discussions, three knowledge sharing circles of ten-plus people, and a feedback session with the TAC. What happens next is critical. By listening to and acting on guidance from this sizeable group, the Wenjack School and Trent have opportunities to strengthen Indigenous programming through the ongoing maintenance and daily renewal of Indigenous relational autonomy and Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty. Insights from research collaborators indicate that, ultimately, transitioning to Indigenous governance of Indigenous programming is needed to uphold Treaty-based decolonial Indigenization and resurgence-based decolonial Indigenization in mainstream PSE. Within current colonial governance systems, there are negligible prospects for this. As Mushkego Cree and French scholar Candace Brunette-Debassige

(2021) finds in her in-depth study of Indigenous women administrators' experiences of policy in Canadian universities: "Indigenous women administrators who dare to work in the academy inherit and struggle within a structural incommensurability that makes achieving 'decolonial-Indigenization' (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018) arguably—one hesitates to say it—impossible" (p. 229). Other PSIs have the opportunity to learn from Trent's longstanding experience.

Among other milestones, Indigenous Studies at Trent is known for the ground-breaking creation of the Indian and Eskimo Studies program (1969), the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program (1999), and the creation of criteria for tenure-track Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and dual tradition scholars (2001). The great strength and the influence of three generations of Anishnaabeg and Rotinonhsión:ni Peoples at Trent bolsters prospects for Trent to continue to lead and innovate in the field. However, Indigenous Peoples cannot do this alone. The onus is on settler peoples to uphold their responsibilities to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the Treaties to counteract systemic neoliberal, colonial influences that challenge endogenous Indigenous programming. Trent needs to listen to Traditional Indigenous Peoples, give them authority, and centre their leadership and decision-making processes by entering into the process of transitioning to Indigenous governance of Indigenous programming. Creating spaces for Indigenous governance needs to be considered through a long-term strategic plan, of which co-governance could be an interim phase. The first steps towards this are put forward in this work. Alongside transitioning to Indigenous governance, collaborators recommend co-developing protocols with the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg on how they would like their knowledges centred, embarking on a process of local Treaty renewal, and creating a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of progress towards decolonizing, upholding the TRC's Calls to Action, and Indigenizing. Additionally, to further activate and embody the roles and responsibilities of Treaty peoples, as suggested by research collaborator Scott Somerville, Trent

and the Wenjack School should have regular discussions about decolonizing and Indigenizing similar to the sharing circles I facilitated, but not organized and facilitated through the labour of a student. This would involve facilitated dialogue and engaging Indigenous ways of conflict resolution with an Elder-guided group of students, faculty, staff, and administration. Such circles would contribute to closing the divide and addressing the lack of transparency and communication between different groups at Trent, especially concerning issues with contention, particularly regarding land, Indigenous/settler power relations, Treaty understandings, racism, development, sustainability, etc. By acting on the guidance of research collaborators, Trent can continue to provide leadership in Indigenous education in these areas and encourage and support other PSIs to do the same. Based on the Traditional importance of Indigenous women in matrilineal societies, one Special Committee on Indigenous Education in a decade that does not include the voices of Michi Saagig Nishnaabekwe is insufficient to encourage this evolution.

Upholding Exemplary Practices in Indigenous Education

Based on insights from over 20 Indigenous research collaborators associated with Trent, Indigenizing is revealed as a process and a journey and means creating a sense of belonging and community. Indigenous autonomy and sovereignty are critical to Indigenizing processes, which must be Indigenous-led with Indigenous Knowledge systems (IKS) as a foundation. Indigenizing means putting land first—returning to Traditional ways of teaching based on the understanding that land, language, and ceremony are sources of knowledge. Indigenizing must centre and involve consultation with local Indigenous Peoples and practical applications of *Indian Control of Indian Education*. Indigenizing is a conscious, daily effort that involves continually rebalancing and reconstructing in relation to Creation and Indigenous communities and in response to colonial structures, systems, and ways of being. Collaborators express urgency to decolonize and

Indigenize immediately—to stop discussing and to take action and implement proposed recommendations from Indigenous Peoples.

Research collaborators emphasize that exemplary practices of the Wenjack School and Trent must be maintained and strengthened. This means adequate funding and resourcing with spaces, staff, etc. Indigenous learners emphasize that engaging with their own knowledge systems, with Elders/Knowledge Holders, on the land and water, with more-than-human beings and in community—enacting cultural and spiritual practices—and cohort learning provide strength and healing and support them in navigating PSE at Trent. Paramount is the essential leadership of Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders in the Wenjack School and the university at large and upholding Trent's criteria for tenure-track Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and dual tradition scholars, which sets a precedent across Chi'Mikinak. Indigenous youth learners ask, "Who are we Indigenizing for?" and ask that their needs be recentred in the Wenjack School. The role of the Trent Undergraduate Native Association (TUNA) could be enhanced for this purpose. Nicole Bell's student-centred Anishinaabeg understanding of the university teaching/research/service model that governs professors could also support this. The ethics review process of the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program, led by Indigenous faculty members, is an exemplary process that could be emulated across Chi'Mikinak to improve upon how Research Ethics Boards (REBs) function in relation to Indigenous communities and knowledges. Improving REBs is a critical area for future exploration, and Trent could help stimulate work in this area.

Research collaborators recommend that the Wenjack School continue its commitment to Indigenous ways of being and experiential learning by prioritizing heart-based, land-, language-, and ceremony-centred; art-, music-, and dance-based; and experiential and community-based ways of knowing and learning, oral teachings, and reflective learning. They would like to see increased use of land-, ceremony-, and community-centred pedagogies,

especially in the undergraduate programs. The First Peoples House of Learning (FPHL) could be engaged in increasing the use of these pedagogies to support specific individual course offerings and learning objectives. Since research collaborators made these suggestions, the FPHL has separated its governance from the Wenjack School in order to better serve Indigenous students throughout Trent (David Newhouse, Onondaga Nation, lives in Nogojiwanong/Peterborough, ON, personal communication, June 2024). Collaborators also indicate that it is critical to strengthen strategies for supporting Indigenous and other racialized learners with professors and other teaching faculty through the FPHL and the Centre for Teaching and Learning. This includes supports for coping with the impacts of settler-colonialism and healing from multi- and intergenerational trauma, racism, and other forms of discrimination. The use of Indigenous, transformative, anti-colonial, decolonizing, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist pedagogies, drawing on supportive theory to name practices of colonialism and discrimination, and awareness and use of strategies to disrupt systemic racism and microaggressions are all recommended. Increasing professional development and training for all faculty and staff concerning the multiple challenges faced by Indigenous and other racialized students in PSIs is also mentioned.

Furthermore, maintaining culturally safe spaces aimed at supporting Indigenous learners needs to be improved, based on reports from Indigenous youth that they do not feel safe in the Bata Library. Research collaborators note that they want to see the continued honouring of Indigenous spaces and naming through bilingual signage for Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg place names and the creation of an Indigenous kitchen. They disagree with Trent keeping the name Champlain College. They note the need to restructure the Indigenous Required Course for relevancy and the safety of Indigenous students.

Centring Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Knowledges

Direction related to Indigenous Knowledge systems in PSIs must come from local Indigenous Nations within their homelands. This means centring the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg—their land and water, knowledges, language, history, and spirituality—at Trent. Research collaborators recommended that Trent deepen relations by entering into dialogue with the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg to create protocols, an agreement, or a memorandum of understanding on how this would unfold. Ultimately, ongoing dialogue with local Indigenous Peoples is essential at all PSIs across Chi'Mikinak. Other recommendations for centring Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg include adopting Michi Saagiig Elder Dorothy Taylor's suggestion for Odenaabe zibii (Otonaabe River) and surrounding lands to guide Indigenous education. This exemplifies land and water as pedagogy. Moreover, adapting requirements for course instructors so that fluent speakers of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabemowin can teach at Trent is needed. Mainstream teacher education at all PSIs must be reformed and restructured to maintain and revitalize local Indigenous languages. As noted, Dalhousie University uses language proficiency and some evidence of proficiency in teaching adult learners to recruit Mi'kmaw language teachers (Margaret Robinson, Mi'kmaq, lives in Kjiptuk/Halifax, NS, personal communication, October 2023).

Upholding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action

Trent needs to enhance and accelerate actions to foster respectful and trust-based relations between Indigenous and settler peoples, as per the TRC's Calls to Action. This means upholding the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and honouring the principle of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC). It also includes becoming fluent in activating, embodying, and facilitating Treaty relationships and responsibilities in the context of Treaty 20 (1818) and the Williams Treaties (1923) that govern the area where Trent is

situated. Treaty 20 affirms Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg's hunting and fishing rights (Curve Lake First Nation, 2017).

Trent and all PSIs need to take actions that demonstrate understandings of the urgent need for land- and water-centred education and its implications for future generations and be more responsive to settler responsibilities in the context of the Land Back movement. In consultation with the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, more of the 1,460 acres of land Trent occupies should be devoted to land- and water-based education and for ceremony houses, and set aside from sale or development; furthermore, some area land and water should be returned to the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg. Land restoration could occur in areas along the Odenaabe ziibi and interconnected wetlands; utilizing partnerships with Indigenous Studies and Trent's many environmental programs, areas of land could be co-managed with local communities.

To recognize and work with the knowledges of diverse Indigenous Nations at Trent, Indigenous research collaborators recommended a resurgence of established protocols, ceremonies, and Treaty understandings between Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg and other Anishinaabeg, Rotinoshón:ni, and other Indigenous Nations. Dorothy Taylor and Anishinaabeg scholar Jerry Fontaine indicated that Indigenous Nations must first get their own house in order through ceremony and by working collaboratively to support Indigenous resurgence and make it strong for those yet to come. Jerry suggested that the ceremonies of the "N'swi-ish-ko-day-kawn Anishinabeg O'dish-ko-day-kawn" (Three Fires Confederacy) offer guidance for relations between Indigenous Nations (Fontaine & McCaskill, 2022, p. 181). Gidigaa Migizi/Doug Williams indicated that between the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg and the Kahnawà:ke Nadawe (Mohawks), the Treaty and the Dish with One Spoon wampum, also known as Gdoo-naaganinaa (Our Dish)¹⁰²

¹⁰² Simpson, L. (2008b). Looking after Gdoo-naaganinaa: Precolonial Nishnaabeg diplomatic and treaty relationships. *Wicazo Sa Review*, 23(2), 29–42.

of 1701, holds the instructions for sharing land and respecting each other's sovereignty (Williams, D., 2018). Trent should support "preparing our house for ceremony" as directed by Indigenous Peoples (Dorothy Taylor, 2018).

Indigenous Governance of Indigenous Programming

Indigenous and allied research collaborators stress the need to restructure or reform current university governance and ultimately transition towards Indigenous governance for Wenjack School and other Indigenous PSE at Trent. They recommend that a long-term strategic plan for this be developed. Indigenous governance of Indigenous programming at PSIs inherently centres local Indigenous Peoples, their lands, knowledges, languages, history, and spirituality. This is more effective than continually making myriad changes and add-ons to the governance, programming, and staffing of Indigenous programming. The original governance in Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe Aki offers opportunities for re-creating non-hierarchical and inclusive relations of power with the land and all beings of Creation. Transitioning to Indigenous governance leads to long-term systemic and decolonial transformation of Indigenous PSE and PSIs and remedies current issues in mainstream PSE governance. It is part of healing relations between Indigenous-settler peoples and with Creation.

Indigenous governance and the resurgence of clan systems offer great potential to widen the path of Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty at Trent and other PSIs. These are significant areas for future research. An interim phase could see the co-governance of Indigenous PSE, combining aspects of Indigenous and mainstream PSE governance. The considerable gaps among the different frameworks and discourses about power and governance that co-exist within the academy signify a need for accelerated institutional and transdisciplinary dialogue and action on governance and a renegotiation of power to facilitate a transition to

Indigenous governance. Mainstream educators cannot continue to treat settler colonialism and PSE governance structures as unchangeable meta-structures.

Indigenous research collaborators indicated short-term steps for reforming and transforming mainstream governance that first involves connecting, enhancing, and elevating Indigenous leadership within current governance structures and frameworks. Their insights point to practices that support Indigenous relational autonomy for Trent's Board of Governors (BOG), Academic Senate, and upper administration, as well as relations with Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg/local Indigenous communities who should be engaged in daily relations and decision-making. Collaborators propose looking to existing councils and reconsidering, clarifying, and redefining relationships between the Wenjack School Leadership Group, the FPHL, the Indigenous Education Council (IEC), departmental and faculty committees, the Ph.D. Council, the Ph.D. TAC, Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE), TUNA, and the Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers Council (ETKKC). Adding youth to the TAC or creating an Indigenous Youth Council is also suggested. Since the time that research collaborators put forward these suggestions, the ETKKC was created in 2018.¹⁰³ Discussions concerning the roles of the TAC and ETKKC would need to be revisited so Indigenous Elders/Knowledge Holders' mandate is extended beyond guiding Trent on "tradition, culture and protocol," as per the current ETKKC's mandate. The TAC has historical, collective, and specific experience and knowledge in dealing with diverse and complex issues related to understandings of Indigenous Knowledge systems and knowledge engagement in relation to the academy, as well as the mentorship of learners in the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program and should be consulted further.

¹⁰³ The Trent Board of Governors approved the ETKKC in their Institutional Indigenous Initiatives (March 23, 2018).

Upholding Treaty Responsibilities

Trent has a duty as an institution to be accountable to the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg and other Indigenous Nations, to move forward in the process of reconciliation, to uphold local Treaties, and to do Treaty education. As Anishinaabe Elder Migizi ow-kwe/Shirley Williams indicates, Indigenous and settler peoples need to reset their relationship for peace and unity, as this did not happen in the 1600s. She says that for settlers, reconciliation is "your job." Insights from research collaborators point to how settlers can activate and embody our Treaty relationships and responsibilities. As individuals, settler/Treaty peoples need to use our gifts, power, and positions within Trent to move reconciliation forward; we need to self-educate so as not to overburden Indigenous Knowledge Holders. We must take on the burden of the Treaty history we have been avoiding. Settler education requires learning in multiple areas, including Indigenous culture, language, history, and governance; learning about and reflecting on settler colonialism and Canada; and gaining awareness of the knowledges, cultures, histories, etc., of one's ancestors. As grounded in the literature, settlers need to relearn and re-educate by becoming more reflective and reflexive. This necessitates "unsettling the settler within"—naming and transforming our inner colonizer and transforming our settler consciousness (Regan, 2010). This involves uncovering dominant Canadian historical and contemporary narratives and mythologies, and critically analyzing Indigenous-settler power relations and Canada as a settler-colonial state, among other areas. Settlers also need to shift our ways of being to re-create non-dominating relations with Indigenous Peoples, the land, and All Our Relations. As mentioned, such learning is enabled through Indigenous, transformative, anti-oppressive, anti-racist, anti-colonial, and decolonizing pedagogies. Pedagogies of discomfort, humility, and vulnerability also contribute to this journey (Boler, 1999; Regan, 2010). Collaborators indicate the need to create more courses that facilitate settler re-education, shift ways of being and knowing, and offer

analysis of settler colonialism. Departments such as Canadian Studies, History, Political Science, and Sociology must support this collective work alongside Indigenous Studies by creating courses centred on local Indigenous histories, Treaties, Treaty relations and responsibilities, Indigenous governance, and settler colonialism.

In honouring the TRC's Calls to Action, Trent needs to have more regular communications and transparency with students, faculty, and staff about the processes they are engaged in related to Indigenous communities and land development. Settler youth collaborator Scott Somerville proposes that the Trent community come together for a Treaty renewal process, review the Treaties and their contemporary implications, and agree to move forward with those renewed understandings. Collaborators suggest that Trent contribute its strengths in research to explore and address some of the complex issues related to the TRC, Treaty relations, Indigenous well-being, and climate change that are critical to our ethical and shared futures. The Trent Community Research Centre is one entity suggested for doing this work.

In summary, research collaborators outline several broad actions settler/Treaty People at Trent and other PSIs need to take toward being more reciprocal Treaty partners. These relate to local Indigenous Nations, all levels of Canadian government, corporations, and to land. First, as highlighted by Indigenous collaborators, Trent must focus more on supporting the well-being and health of local, adjacent, and global Indigenous Peoples. This includes revitalizing Trent's initial relationship with Wshkiigimongaki (Curve Lake First Nation), other Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg communities and nearby Indigenous communities, including the urban community in the Nogojiwanong area. This would involve actively going into these communities to strengthen reciprocal relations, finding out how communities would like Trent to support their capacities, goals, and priorities, and providing resources to support these. This might involve creating new educational programming and collaborative research, etc. Second, Trent and other

PSIs must keep pressure on the Canadian state, provincial governments and municipalities, and the corporate sector to implement the TRC's Calls to Action. When entering into partnerships with corporations, Trent must make itself aware of the history and relations these corporations have with Indigenous Peoples. PSIs must also disengage their governance from Canadian legal systems in areas where these conflict with TRC Calls to Action. Third, Trent and other PSIs need to move beyond performative land acknowledgements, Indigenous renaming, plaques, artwork, and the dedication of relatively small indoor spaces for purposes related to Indigenous education, etc., and to return some land to local Indigenous Nations. In Trent's case, in consultation with the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, more of the 1,460 acres of land should be returned for land- and water-based education and ceremony houses, as suggested by Indigenous research collaborators. Additionally, areas of land could be co-managed with local communities. Land restoration could also take place in areas along the Odenaabe ziibi and interconnected wetlands, utilizing partnerships with Indigenous Studies and Trent's many environmental programs. Trent needs to get more creative—to reimagine relationships with Indigenous Peoples, with the land and Creation, and with learners/students who are highly capable of co-generating solutions.

Let Us Treaty our Way Forward

Early Treaty Values and Instructions

Anishinaabeg, Rotinonhsión:ni and Wabanaki Peoples remind settler society that the shared values and the spirit and intent of early treaty relationships create a framework for respectful and ethical relations that both sides agreed would exist forever. These relational instructions can guide Treaty epistemology in PSE and lead to the creation of ethical spaces for

Indigenous governance. These are encapsulated in the 1613 Kaswentah¹⁰⁴ (Two-Row Wampum), which governed the relationship between the Mohawks and the Dutch; the 1764 Treaty of Niagara and Wampum (Peace Belt)¹⁰⁵ involving 24 Indigenous Nations who gathered to discuss an alliance with the British, including Anishinaabeg; and the Peace and Friendship Treaties between the Wabanaki Confederacy and the British Crown (1725–1779). The Kaswentah is based on peace, friendship, and respect and emphasizes familial relations and kinship (Lyons, 1986; Powless, 2000). The Peace and Friendship Treaties are founded on principles of mutual respect, benefit, and protection (Palmater, 2016). Anishinaabeg scholar Deborah McGregor underscores the Kaswentah as a model for co-existence that addresses issues of power and ideology, suggesting it as a foundational guide for Indigenous-settler initiatives. She argues for its adoption to replace unbalanced knowledge engagement that attempts to incorporate or integrate Indigenous Knowledges into settler initiatives (McGregor, 2002). As noted, Michi Saagiig scholar Leanne Simpson indicates there is no need to keep re-creating policy in PSE and Canadian governance as Treaties can effectively guide policy. These insights emphasize the enduring relevance and applicability of Treaty principles and provide instructions for settlers to activate and embody their responsibilities.

Diverse Indigenous Knowledge Holders emphasize that the spirit and intent of Treaties transcend written documents and accounts. These extend into the encompassing relationships, the language and stories of Indigenous Nations, oral tradition, and wampum designed to symbolize agreements, as well as in ceremonies, speeches, and exchanges of gifts (Battiste, M., 2016a; Borrows, 1997; Cardinal & Hildebrand, 2010; Marshall, A., 2013; Williams, D., 2018;

¹⁰⁴ This word is Mohawk language.

¹⁰⁵ A wampum is an agreement between nations or individuals made of beads to tell a story. It should be retold or revisited annually through community memory and performance (Hass, 2007; Williams, D., 2018).

Young, 2020). These elements must be considered as they are part of Indigenous narratives and interpretations of Treaty principles. During the 1764 Treaty of Niagara, the Covenant Chain of Friendship was extended, solidifying the diplomatic ties between the Indigenous Nations and the British Crown. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 was also recognized and accepted as part of



Figure 16: Kaswentah Wampum replica by Ken Maracle (Six Nations of the Grand River Territory).¹⁰⁶

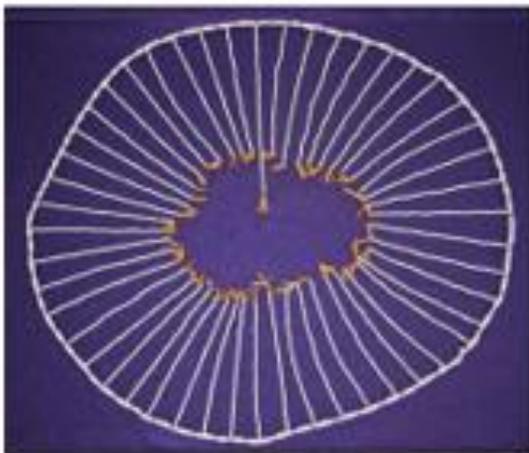
these proceedings.¹⁰⁷ The Kaswentah is one of many wampum belts presented at the Treaty of Niagara and later adopted by 200 Indigenous Nations, including the L'nu'k (Young, 2020). It is considered a metaphor for the mutual agreement between European settlers and the Rotinoshón:ni to live in peace, following parallel but separate paths of culture, language, government, ways of life and knowing, and spirituality (Best Endeavours, 2023; Venables, 2013). The two nations also committed to meeting to discuss solutions to any issues that might arise (Onondaga First Nation, 2014). Oren Lyons Jr., Faithkeeper of the Seneca First Nation, says that the Kaswentah is significant because it established the process by which the Rotinoshón:ni

¹⁰⁶ Aboriginal Education Centre, Toronto District School Board (Best Endeavours, 2023).

¹⁰⁷ Many Indigenous Nations consider the Treaty of Niagara a crucial element in the nation-to-nation relationship with the British Crown and a key aspect in understanding the implications of the Royal Proclamation, yet Canada does not officially recognize it (Borrows, 1997).

would interact with their "White brethren" and sets the process for all ensuing Treaties (Lyons, 1986, p. 119). (See Figure 16). He says the Kaswentah was held by the Dutch, the English, the French, and George Washington (Lyons, 1986). Onondaga Nation Chief Irving Powless Jr. indicates that the three rows of white beads comprising the middle represent truth and symbolize relationships based on peace, friendship, and respect as a way to strengthen responsibilities as sovereign nations. One of the purple rows of beads represents the European sailboat, and the other represents the Indigenous Peoples in their canoe.

Chief Powless Jr. says the river or road of life includes "the whole circle of life—the animals, the birds, the fish, the water, the plants, the grass, the trees, the stars, the moon, and the thunder—we shall live together in peace and harmony, respecting all those elements" (Powless, 2000, p. 23). He adds that "because we have different ways and different concepts, we



shall not pass laws governing the other.

We shall not pass laws telling you what to do. You shall not pass a law telling me and my people what to do" (Powless, 2000, p. 23). Chief Powless Jr. says the description in many readings, "as long as the grass is green, the water flows, and the sun rises

Figure 17: Teiokiohkwaonháhston Circle Wampum of the Fifty Chiefs. R. Hamell, 2013. (Wampum Bear, 2023.)

in the east," is his ancestors' way of saying "forever" (Powless, 2000). The enduring and contemporary influence of the Kaswentah is exemplified by the Mohawk of Kahnawà:ke, who leverage it to challenge the *Indian Act*, asserting the sovereignty of the Rotinoshón:ni Confederacy internationally (Muller, 2008). The Kaswentah originated from the

Teiokiohkwaonháhston Circle Wampum of the Fifty Chiefs that documents kinship relations among 50 matrilineal clan families bound together by intertwined strands representing the Great Law of Peace, Kaianerenkó:wa. It includes a string for brother/cousin, which serves as a basis for interactions with European settlers. The Kaswentah was adapted from the Circle Wampum with a more linear design for comprehension by the Dutch. Today, settler peoples still face challenges in grasping the circular, complex, balanced, inclusive, consensus-based, and non-hierarchical aspects of Indigenous governance (Hill, 2008; Henry, 2013, Swamp, 2017). Mutual Treaty values about sharing the land, respecting each other's sovereignty and ways of being and knowing and responsibilities to Creation resonate from Wabanakik to Michi Saugiig Nishnaabeg Aki and Rotinoshón:ni homelands, and there is much to guide future work. Mi'kmaw scholar Tuma Young indicates that the most common metaphor for Treaties is as a chain; a braid is also valuable for symbolizing the relationships between perspectives from Indigenous, Canadian, and international law to look at the whole picture (Young, 2020). As discussed in the sections concerning Michi Saagiig governance, values and principles are encoded in the Anishinaabe *dodemaag* and the Seven Sacred Gifts or Grandmother/Grandfather Teachings (Anishinaabe Grand Council, 2012) and formalized with neighbouring nations through Treaty. Anishinaabeg legal scholar John Borrows offers a comprehensive look at how Anishinaabeg values and teaching can contribute to healthier Indigenous-settler relationships in *Law's Indigenous Ethics* (2019).

As discussed, the Creation Stories are the most important of all stories and set the theoretical framework from which other stories, experiences, and teachings can be interpreted. These are at the root of the values and teachings that guide relations between all nations (Augustine, 2016; Borrows, 2013; Metallic & Cavanagh, 2002; Simpson, L., 2011). These stories are told and retold in Indigenous communities so that children will learn Indigenous thought and

theory. Based on her learnings from Anishinaabe Elder Asinykwe/Edna Manitowabi, Leanne Simpson has shared that "Our Elders tell us that everything we need to know is encoded in the structure, content and context of these stories and the relationship, ethics and responsibilities to be our own Creation story" (2011, p. 33). She noted she realized this after Asinykwe told her that we need to think of ourselves as zhaashkoonh (muskrat). This relates to the creative force and the idea that we each have to dive down and retrieve our own handful of dirt to contribute to Indigenous resurgence. We each have to struggle and sacrifice against settler colonialism to achieve re-creation for the communities (Simpson, L., 2011). Indeed, Rotinoshón:ni values of interconnectedness and interdependence with all of creation are taught first through the Creation story and subsequent Rotinoshón:ni epics, *Kayaneren'kowa/The Great Law of Peace* and *Gaiwiyo/The Good Message or Code of Handsome Lake* (Hill 2006; Porter, 2008). Ankukamkau'tu (Doing Treaty) is the original instruction for relationality in Wabanakik (Augustine, 2016; Battiste, M., 2016a; Marshall, A., 2020; Metallic & Cavanagh, 2002; Simpson, L., 2011).

Rotinoshón:ni scholars David Newhouse (Onondaga), Roronhiake:wen/Dan Longboat, and Susan Hill (both Mohawk Nation from Oshwe:ken, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory) have suggested looking to the Kaswentah for its implications in knowledge engagement, education, and ethics. They see the potential for Two-Row engagement and research as a decolonizing process. Newhouse has reminded us that the two rows of the Kaswentah signify that respectful dialogue should take place between the two nations: "Not engaging with the knowledge of others is inconsistent with a Kaswentah philosophy of engagement. . . [it] is required in order to live well with those with whom one shares the world" (2008, p. 6). Roronhiake:wen feels that the river of life is in danger right now—that settlers need to steer their ship and Indigenous peoples their canoes to restore the health of the river. He asked,

"What can provide balance and facilitate discussions between the two?" (Longboat, 2014). Hill concurred, asserting that today, Treaty relations need to be "polished" as the colonizers have not stayed true to the central tenets of the Treaties (Hill, 2008).

Like Hill, Mi'kmaw Dr./Elder Albert Marshall reminds us that relationships are not static and need ongoing maintenance and renewal (Marshall, A., 2018). Like the Kaswentah or Two-Row Wampum, Albert and Murdena Marshall's vision of etuaptmumk, the gift of multiple perspectives or two-eyed seeing, promotes an ethical framework that seeks to avoid "a clash between knowledges, domination by one worldview, or assimilation by one worldview of the knowledge of another" (Bartlett et al., 2012, p. 13). Albert imparts that etuaptmumk is consistent with a Kaswentah approach. In other words, two-eyed seeing draws on the Two-Row Wampum (Marshall, M., 2013). Young's (2020) acknowledgement that L'nu'k adopted the Kaswentah brings this connection full circle. In Mi'kma'ki, examples of contemporary Treaty values relations are exemplified by the community of Listuguj First Nation, which has stepped outside the Department of Fisheries and Oceans management regime and maintains its Treaty with the salmon nation using Traditional governance and harvesting practices. Mi'kmaw scholar Alfred Metallic says that talking with the salmon and learning their stories is critical to guiding the relationship. Furthermore, as part of her Mi'kmaq governance model for Mi'kmaq Aboriginal and Treaty rights to fish, Mi'kmaw scholar Shelley Denny (Eskasoni First Nation) has proposed interactive etuaptmumk forums as essential to creating spaces for collaboration and dialogue across knowledge systems (Denny, 2022).

Treatying in Mi'kma'ki

As part of my last thoughts, I return to what Murdena Marshall shares about the way forward in Mi'kmaki, where I reside as a guest. As discussed, Murdena says settler/Treaty peoples who can come to know through emotional relationships and understandings can

develop and cultivate respect for a subject (Bartlett et al., 2012a; Joudry, 2016). Murdena indicates the potential for heart-based knowing with all beings, not as part of an objectifying process of Othering that positions Indigenous Peoples as inferior and alienates people from more-than-human relatives, but within a multi-dimensional mirror that reflects diverse ways of knowing, a world that mkamlamun (heart-mind) can see.

Echoing Lighting's understanding, Leanne Simpson adds that "it can take many years after hearing a story to know the meaning of that story in one's heart—for it to become a truth—yet the process of it becoming debwewin or heart-knowledge is the process of integrating that echo into one's experience" (2011, p. 104). The essential teachings about relationality, respect, reciprocity, and responsibility that Murdena shares in her metaphor about diverse knowledge systems are grounded in the Mi'kmaw Creation Stories that speak to co-existence with other nations and that later guide the Treaties of Peace and Friendship), as well as co-learning and etuaptmumk. Albert Marshall indicates that etuaptmumk and co-learning are essential to that ankukamkowe'l and ankukamkua'tu by bringing together our diverse gifts and knowledges to take care of Creation. The insights of both Murdena and Albert Marshall provide a foundation for embodying heart-based relationality, to regain (w)holistic balance and heal within ourselves and with the world around us thereby transforming settler consciousness to relational or m'sit no'kmaq (All My Relations) consciousness. From here, we may come to engage with L'nu'k and all beings, activating and embodying the spirit of co-learning and etuaptmumk—taking ethical actions based on Treaty epistemology to honour our relations and responsibilities on the land, in the academy, in governance, and settler society. As part of this, ethical action means non-interference; therefore, we must move out of the way as Indigenous Peoples assert their sovereignty. At the same time, as relatives, we can align with L'nu'k and other Indigenous Peoples, love them and lend our power to resist colonial violence, protect land, water, and all

beings, and make reparations. Murdena and Albert's teachings are essential to the co-learning journey that Wabanakik, Innu, and Inuit Elders have invited Atlantic post-secondary institutions (PSIs) to engage in.

Theorizing on Treaty Epistemology

The mainstream academy and settler/Treaty peoples who participate with it need to learn how to situate ourselves within diverse and unique Indigenous homelands and knowledge systems. While there are many areas we need to attend to, the basis of the work for settlers/newcomers and PSI is to Treaty our way forward. As noted, each Treaty relationship is unique and tied to specific peoples in their lands and waters. To Treaty goes beyond land, territorial, or Treaty acknowledgements. I argue that it is critical to come to know through local Treaty epistemologies as these can guide learners in activating and embodying practices that nurture Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty on the land, in the academy, and settler society. Coming to know through Treaty epistemologies is relational and heart-based practice that ideally leads settler society to activate Treaty ways of being, i.e., to Treaty. To Treaty means coming to embody ethics of ancestral and relational accountability to pick up our Treaty responsibilities and take action to rebalance Indigenous/settler power relations and relations with all beings. To Treaty means engaging in ethics of non-interference derived from Two-Row Wampum and two-eyed seeing with respect to IKS, centring IKS and Indigenous governance, and nurturing Indigenous Knowledge sovereignty in Indigenous education (and beyond). Entering into the spirit of Indigenous Treaty understandings, as well as one's own ancestral understandings, holds immense potential for transformational personal and systemic change and growth. Living Treaties ARE the ethical spaces and the policy directives needed in PSE—not as couched within the colonial recognition of Canadian law but as sacred pacts—evolving and adaptive processes between nations shared through daily relational practices and stories with

future leaders. Indigenous governance of Indigenous education IS transformative, structural, and systemic change.

Learning and living within Treaty epistemologies, I argue that settlers/newcomers must come to respect IKS and governance and not interfere with these. PSI must make spaces for relational ways and teachings of Treaty (as based on natural law) to unfold, to trust in the integrity and rigour of IKS and Traditional Indigenous governance. As noted, this governance includes lands, waters, and all beings as sources of knowledge and goes beyond elected *Indian Act* leadership to include spiritual leaders and grassroots voices. Creating spaces for Indigenous governance goes beyond mandates of Indigenizing that reach only as far as Indigenous inclusion and reconciliation-based Indigenizing to embrace decolonial policy and praxis based on "treaty-based decolonial indigenization" and "resurgence-based decolonial indigenization" as put forward by Gaudry & Lorenz (2018). Indigenous governance offers a revolutionary paradigm shift from colonial ways. This shift is more powerful than making myriad adjustments and additions that do not interconnect within all the relevant sites of the academy. Furthermore, along settler/Treaty peoples' reflexive journey of unlearning and relearning, Treaty education forms part of the foundation of truth that is needed before reconciliation can take place. Ultimately, to Treaty means to heal relations, to restore and take care of Creation in balanced, non-dominating, co-learning collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, and to manifest life-affirming, shared, peaceful and ethical I futures with all beings.

Reflections on the Research Process

I have undergone a long and transformative journey in creating this work. I am very grateful for the generous one-on-one discussions, visits, and meals with so many loving, brilliant, and dedicated people who contributed to what I uncovered. The strength of my learning spirit

and the voices of ancestors and mentors who have crossed over to the spirit world also inspired and carried me.

The way that I approached my research was very involved and process driven. Maintaining relationships with research collaborators was paramount. This is how relational accountability works in research; however, the research design was more time-consuming than an average Ph.D. dissertation. To speak to my research questions, I needed to do what felt/feels like lifetimes of learning. The scope of my research resulted in a much broader literature review than I anticipated. I spent a whole winter catching up on settler-colonial theory and its traditions. A few faculty at Trent warned me to narrow my topic and include a smaller group of research collaborators (or participants), but I did not listen. However, because I engaged with the Indigenous Elders on the TAC on several occasions and was able to include so many Indigenous and settler faculty and students, as well most of Trent's upper administration, I feel that my research is strong and credible. I believe in this work.

As a student in the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program, I was embedded in my research in ways that supported my ability to nurture relationships and organize the three knowledge sharing circles. Including Trent administration in these circles was a major feat. A main challenge I encountered was research collaborators sharing perceptions about other individuals or unknowingly trying to steer my findings in specific directions. I had to reflect on how to handle this. I came to realize that all the issues and challenges collaborators and I were/are frustrated about and where we wanted to see change were ultimately created by colonial structures and systems. I learned how important it is to redirect any personal critiques into analysis of structures, systems, and practices of PSIs and settler colonialism.

I felt my research excelled through the circles I facilitated. The direct in-person transmission between Elders, students, and settler administration in the circles was very

powerful. There is no substitute for the energies and interrelations that occurred and the stories that were shared. I believe that Indigenous Elders and youth speaking and being heard in those circles had impacts that continue to ripple outwards. For some members of the administration, it was the first time they heard certain Indigenous stories, teachings, and knowledges. I hope this helped them on their journeys to be authentic and heart-centred in their ongoing relations with Indigenous Peoples. If I were to do the research again, I would spend more time with Indigenous youth who participated and find ways to restructure aspects of the co-learning circles. Any questions about Indigenous education for those in the system can be triggering. The youth all shared personal stories, and I felt they were highly vulnerable. A counsellor from the FPHL was to be at this circle and available to connect afterwards, but they were unavailable at the last minute. I don't know how this could have been prevented. I checked in with the youth later, and they said they were fine, but I had wanted them to have the opportunity for immediate support.

Some of the questions I asked during one-on-one sessions with administration, I believe, had impacts on the directions Trent was taking around 2017–2018. This is what participatory action research endeavours to do. At one point, Gidigaa Migizi told me my research was very much embedded in process and remarked that this was positive and yet might be difficult to track. I cannot know for certain, but I felt that my questions related to the TAC stimulated Trent to look again at the essential leadership of Indigenous Elders and community people. Likely, there was some influence in both directions.

I observed that it was challenging for some members of the upper administration to participate in sharing circles with students, faculty, and staff. Some administrators exhibited signs of discomfort, defensiveness, and white fragility, and attempted to recentre whiteness and, in one instance, victimhood. Perhaps it was an act of courage for them to participate.

During the co-learning circle, I felt some Indigenous collaborators were exceedingly diplomatic and kind to their settler colleagues. More than one offered emotional and political support to settler administrators. I left this circle wondering if I had been too critical of Trent's actions and policies due to the relations modelled by Indigenous Knowledge Holders. However, what I presented to the circle collaborators was a summary of the findings from the one-on-one discussions, not my personal opinions. At the of the day, I think most people prioritize maintaining comfortable or good relations in their work environments. I feel that the closeness between colleagues at Trent or at any organization, and the tendency in myself and others to want to soothe settlers' feelings of discomfort can be a barrier to transforming colonial systems and upholding Treaty responsibilities. The onus is on us as settlers to lovingly challenge colonial systems and each other in ways that keep lines of communication open and minimize harm. This will be ongoing work for many generations to come. In closing, I would like to say Wela'liq, Chi Miigwetch, Niawen to all the people who were part of this journey and those who have taken the time to read my dissertation.

Epilogue

Trent will welcome incoming president Cathy Bruce in the summer of 2024. According to Julie Davis, Vice President External Relations & Development, future discussions will take place about the process and timing for setting new goals and approaches to build on the institutional commitment to Indigenous education, reconciliation, and Indigenous community engagement (J. Davis, lives in Peterborough, ON, personal communication, 2024). I hope this work contributes to this process.

In 2022, *Inwendaamin Oki* (How We are Related to the Land) was created by Trent students, staff, alums, and community members who love the Trent Land, Air, and Waters, including Elder Dorothy Taylor. *Inwendaamin Oki* celebrates and endeavours to protect the living landscape to which the Trent community belongs and is related through ceremonies and events committed to upholding community relations. *Inwendaamin Oki* will release a booklet dedicated to the Trent Land, Air and Waters in 2024.

Cape Breton University's strategic plan for 2019-2024 demonstrates its continued focus on Indigenous education. The plan emphasizes Indigenizing the L'nu way. To achieve this, the university is engaging Elders and Knowledge Keepers, embedding L'nu perspectives in the curriculum and campus traditions, creating spaces and opportunities for recognizing truth and seeking reconciliation, making university education and resources increasingly accessible to L'nu learners, and enhancing efforts to preserve and promote the language that sustains L'nu culture (CBU, 2019).

In May 2024, the creation of an independent oversight body to be led by a new Commissioner for Modern Treaty Implementation was announced. This body is to hold Canada accountable for living up to the commitments of Modern Treaties and nation-to-nation, Inuit-Crown, and government relationships (Canada, 2024). As Trent, CBU and other PSIs consider

how to honour Treaty values and relations, they can look to and respond to how the new entity contributes to rebalancing Crown-Indigenous Modern Treaty relationships.

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Appendix A: Research Discussion Guide and Research Sharing Circle Agendas

Research Instrument

Title of Research Project: Centering Indigenous Autonomy of Indigenous Knowledge Systems at Canadian Universities

A. Guided Discussion Outline

1. In what capacity, and for how many years have you been involved with the _____ (Trent Indigenous Studies, IESS, Indigenous B.Ed program etc.)
2. What practices center, support, nurture and promote Indigenous Knowledge holders' autonomy in relation to their knowledge systems in postsecondary education and research?
3. How do you think these practices can be operationalized and enacted?

Building on areas identified in the literature and through oral sources, including participants in this research, operationalization might be considered in relation to, but not limited to, the following:

**TREATY RELATIONS &
VALUES**

**RECONCILIATION
(TRC)**

UNDRIP

- Relationships
- Use of land
- Governance
- Law
- Language
- Economics
- Knowledge engagement frameworks, paradigms or guiding principles
- Policy
- Research Practice
- Research Ethics
- Program Design
- Curriculum
- Pedagogies
- Criteria for Instructors
- Academic Culture

4. What are the issues and tensions for Indigenous Knowledge holders to have autonomy in relation to their knowledge systems in the Indigenous Studies department (other Trent programs, research projects)?

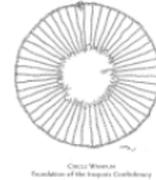
5. What are the opportunities and prospects for Indigenous Knowledge holders to have autonomy in relation to their knowledge systems?

6. Is there anything else you would like to add or discuss?



**Indigenous Autonomy of Indigenous Knowledge Systems
SHARING CIRCLE**

**Tuesday, November 28 from 9:30 am – 11:30 am
THE GATHERING SPACE**



DRAFT AGENDA

9:00 am Refreshments Available

9:30 am Opening Prayer - Kitiga Migizi - Doug Williams

Visioning Session:

What does "Indigenizing" look like at Trent?

What does the governance of Indigenous Knowledges look like?

- Department Level
- Senate and Board Level
- Community Level – Michi Saugig Nishinaabeg, Haudenosaunne, Métis, Cree etc.

Systemic Transformation: What are the short term steps? What does long term transformation look like?

Action Items/Recommendations

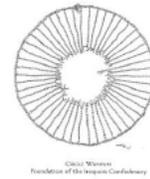
Closing Prayer

11:45 am Lunch prepared by Grandfather's Kitchen



Indigenous Autonomy of Indigenous Knowledge Systems SHARING CIRCLE

Tuesday, December 5 from Noon – 3 pm
The Jake Thomas Room – Gzowski 345



Circle of Wisdom
Foundation of the Wapiti Confederacy

DRAFT AGENDA

Noon Lunch prepared by Grandfather's Kitchen - Sponsored by the Office of the Provost and VP Academic as well as the Office of the Vice-President Research.

1 pm Opening

Visioning Session:

What can we do as non-Indigenous/settler/allies to uphold our Treaty relationships, responsibilities and values, particularly in Michi Saagiig Nishinaabeg aki (Mississauga homelands)?

What do our Treaty relationships look like in the context of engaging with Indigenous Knowledge systems that include the land and Anishinaabemowin language (Anishinaabe language) as a source of knowledge?

How might we evaluate our efforts to decolonize and “Indigenize” and at Trent?

Action Items/Recommendations/Affirmations

3 pm Closing



Indigenous Autonomy of Indigenous Knowledge Systems CO-LEARNING CIRCLE

Friday, December 7, Noon - 3 pm
The Jake Thomas Room - Gzowski 345



DRAFT AGENDA

11:30 Room will be open

Noon Opening Prayer
Lunch prepared by Grandfather's Kitchen - Sponsored by the Office of the Provost and VP Academic as well as the Office of the Vice-President Research.

1 pm **Introductions**
Short Presentation

We will consider the recommendations put forward by members of the Ph.D Traditional Council and Indigenous Knowledge holders from the first sharing circle as well as recommendations from the Indigenous/settler/allies in the second circle. (See information package).

Visioning Session:

For Consideration

How can Trent move beyond a model of "Indigenous inclusion" and "reconciliation indigenization" towards policy and praxis based on "treaty-based decolonial indigenization" and "resurgence-based decolonial indigenization?" (See Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018).

How can we embark on a co-learning journey focused on understandings of Indigenous governance and the activation of Treaty responsibilities in relation to Indigenous Knowledge systems?

How can the structure and systemic practices at Trent transform to accommodate Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee governance models as well as the Treaties we are governed by?

What are the immediate and meaningful steps we can take to balance asymmetrical power relations?

Action Items/Recommendations/Affirmations

3 pm Closing

Appendix B: Research Collaborators

Indigenous Knowledge Holders

Indigenous Faculty

- Dr. Mark Dockstator (Oneida Nation of the Thames) - Associate Professor/Indigenous Studies, President of the First Nations University of Canada 2014-2019)
- Dr. Nicole Bell (Wiikwemkoong First Nation) - Coordinator of the Indigenous B.Ed. program, Associate Professor, School of Education, Indigenous Studies Ph.D. from Trent University

Indigenous Staff

- Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard (Wiikwemkoong First Nation), Director of the First Peoples House of Learning

Indigenous Studies Ph.D., Candidates/Students

- Dr. Jerry Fontaine (Sagkeeng First Nation), Assistant Professor, Indigenous Studies, University of Winnipeg, Indigenous Studies Ph.D. from Trent University
- Moktthewenkwe/Barbara Wall (Citizen Potawatomi Nation of Shawnee), Lecturer/Professor Indigenous Language and Culture/Indigenous Studies, Indigenous Studies Ph.D. from Trent University, former course instructor and teaching assistant for IESS program
- Brandy Kane (Xaxl'ip First Nation), Indigenous Studies Ph.D. candidate, Ph.D. Council upper-year representative
- Amy Swawanda (Wiikwemkoong First Nation), Indigenous Studies Ph.D. from Trent University, Ph.D. Council upper-year representative 2018
- Bobby Henry (Six Nations of the Grand River Territory), B.A., Indigenous Studies and History & Indigenous B.Ed. from Trent University, Indigenous Studies Ph.D. candidate

Indigenous Studies and IESS Undergraduate Students

- Jessica Parks (Tyendinaga/Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte), B.A. Indigenous Studies and Indigenous B.Ed. from Trent University
- Nikki Auten (Tyendinaga/Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte), B.A. Indigenous Studies, M.A. in Sustainability Studies (MASS) from Trent University, former teaching assistant in IESS
- Dawn Martin (Six Nations of the Grand River), B.A. Indigenous Studies from Trent University, B. Ed., Queen's University
- Jaimee Lazore (Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne), B.A. Indigenous Studies from Trent University, Co-President of TUNA 2017
- Juliana Lesage-Corbiere (Batchewana First Nation), B.A. Indigenous Studies from Trent University. Co-President of TUNA 2017

Settlers

Trent University Senior Administration

- Leo Groarke, President and Vice-Chancellor, since 2014
- Jacqueline Muldoon, Provost & Vice-President Academic, 2015–2020
- Neil Emery, Vice President Research and Innovation, 2011–2020, Professor of Biology
- Julie Davis, Vice President External Relations & Development, since 2006
- Bruce Cater, Dean, Arts and Social Sciences 2012–2017, Professor, Economics

Faculty

- Chris Furgal, IESS program Coordinator, Associate Professor, Indigenous Studies/School for the Environment

- Don McCaskill, Professor, Indigenous Studies, Indigenous Studies Ph.D. Traditional Advisory Council
- Lynne Davis, Associate Professor, Indigenous Studies
- Asaf Zohar, Chair, Master's in Sustainability Studies program, Associate Professor, School of Business

Indigenous Studies Ph.D. Graduates/Candidates/Students

- Ross Hoffman, Professor Emeritus, First Nations Studies, University of North British Columbia, Indigenous Studies Ph.D. from TU
- Phil Abbott, Indigenous Ph.D. candidate and course instructor in Indigenous Studies
- Jane Gray, Ph.D. in Indigenous Studies, TU, course instructor in IESS
- Jason Fenno, Ph.D. candidate and TA, in Indigenous Studies, Ph.D. Council first-year representative, 2017

Indigenous Studies & IESS graduates/students

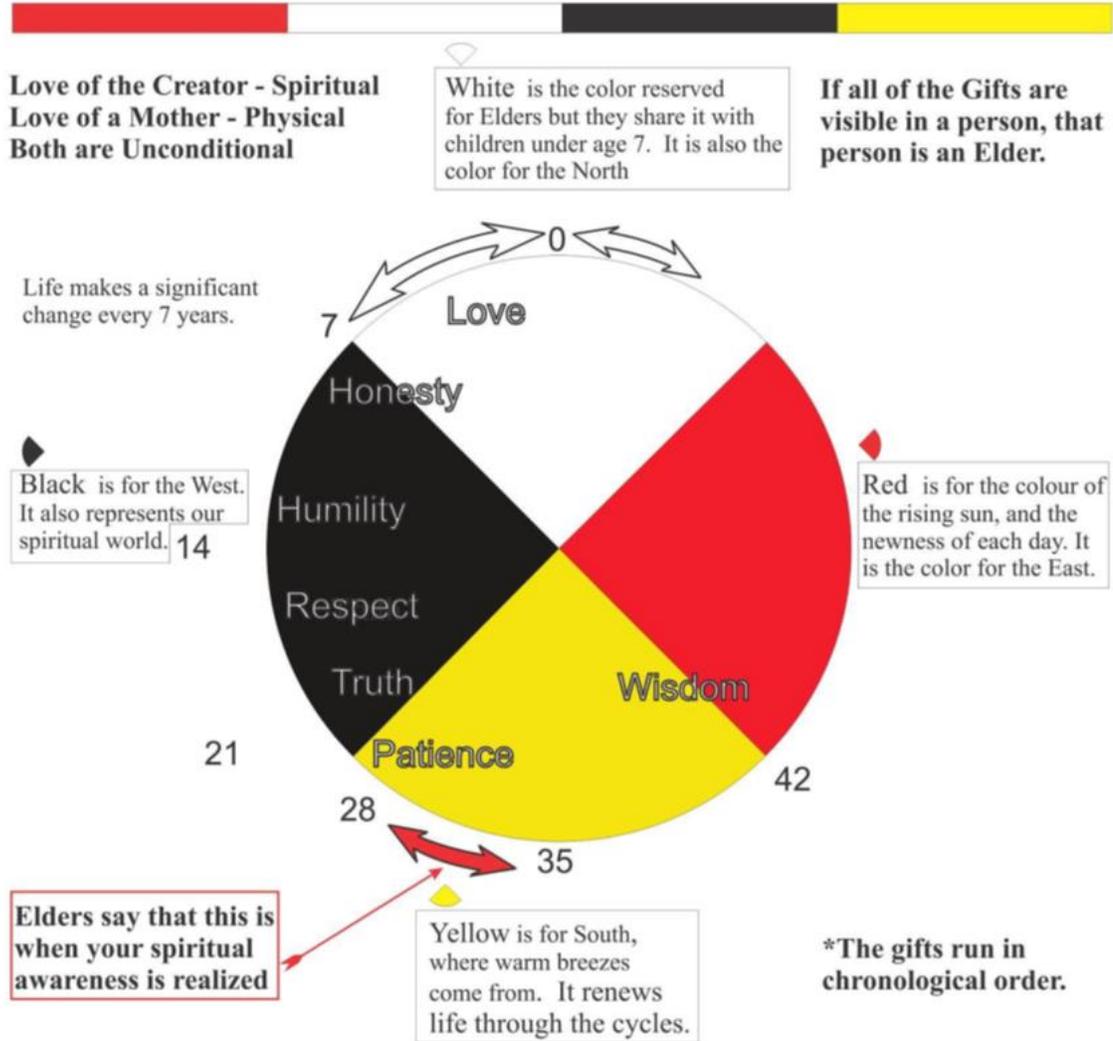
- Robyn Smith (Former TRent Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge and Science (TRACKS) Coordinator, B.A. IESS from Trent University
- Kelly King (Former TRACKS Director, B.A. Indigenous Studies, Theatre Focus, from Trent University, M.E.S. York University
- Scott Somerville (B.A. in Indigenous Studies with a minor in IESS from Trent University

Appendix C: Murdena Marshall on the Seven Sacred Teachings and Who is an Elder?

Reflecting on ancestral teachings and her experiences, Murdena shared her understandings of the Seven Sacred Mi'kmaw Teachings with the group of 23 Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqey, Innu, and Inuit Elders *Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Elders Project: Honouring Traditional Knowledge*, (2009–2011) at the mawio'mi (gathering) in 2010. She used a circle she had created to show how she integrates these familiar teachings within the cycle of life. This led to her discussion of “Who is an Elder?” Murdena says women have the role of passing on these teachings. In her conception, the Seven Sacred Teachings or gifts correspond to the seven stages of life—from youth to Elder Figure 18. These gifts emerge about every seven years in a person’s life, initiating a significant change (Marshall, M., 2008). These Seven Sacred Teachings are also shared in Wolastoqey and Anishinaabeg traditions as gifts we may receive and qualities by which we need to guide ourselves. According to Gidigaa Migizi/Doug Williams, Kokum Dibaajimowinan or Grandmother Teachings originate from the Grandmothers but are also known as Grandfather Teachings because of their importance. In Anishinaabeg conceptions, bravery rather than patience is one of the gifts (Williams, D. 2013). Murdena says love is the critical foundation of all of these. From zero to seven, Murdena says, “The first gift that we will receive from the creator is love” (APCFNC, 2011, p. 57). She says all of us have these gifts; however, to be considered an Elder, these gifts must be visible or recognized by others. Murdena feels people are very free with the word “Elder.” She says not everyone is an Elder and that “maybe none of us are” (APCFNC, 2011, p. 57). Of the seven gifts, she says: “Wisdom is the most sought out. Everyone wants to be wise, but that’s the last gift you’ll receive—the last gift that will show itself” (APCFNC, 2011, p. 57).

Mi'kmaq Sacred Teachings

7 Stages of Life with the 7 Gifts



Elders believe that we can go back to age 7. This is the only time that the circle reverses in life. Apaji-mijua'ji'juen

Apaji (preverb) - repeat, go back, again.

Mijua'ji'j (root word) - child under 7

uen (inflection) - in the process of, to be, state of being.

By Murdena Marshall
 Graphics Thomas Johnson

Figure 18: Mi'kmaq Sacred Teachings

When a person has love, honesty, humility, respect, truth, and patience, Murdena says, and if

you have managed to hang on to them and displayed them within yourself, then wisdom will show up. And once wisdom shows up, you not only become a counselor. You become a healer – you become everything that you want to be when you have wisdom because you have all of these life experiences behind you to motivate you to make decisions based on experience. No, you cannot be an Elder with ten easy lessons. Those gifts have to show up in you – you must be able to display them. (APCFNC, 2011, p. 60)

She adds, "When all of these gifts are seen in you, you don't have to go to the podium and tell us 'I am an Elder.' People will tell you that you're an Elder" (APCFNC, 2011, p. 60). It is also possible for a young person to display all these gifts. In broad Indigenous contexts, Indigenous communities recognize who their Elders are (Austin & Sylliboy, 2017; Kulchyski, McCaskill & Newhouse, 1999; University of Alberta, 2012; Williams, D., 2013).