DISRUPTING THE ACADEMY: HOW WE MOVE FROM MERE INDIGENOUS INCLUSION TO DECOLONIZATION INDIGENIZATION

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to Hannah, Zakery and Rosie who give me purpose and strength and inspire me to achieve greatness. Without you I would not be me.

ABSTRACT

This research takes place in a period of reconciliation which is a conversation in Canada that has increased with the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) *Final Report* and its 94 Calls to Action. This has encouraged educational institutions to endeavor in Indigenization efforts. This study uses an Indigenous paradigm as articulated in the work of Shawn Wilson (2008) and Margaret Kovach (2009) to expand on current theory and frameworks targeting Indigenization within the academy along with exploring student perspectives on Indigenization with the intent to expand and provide greater context for the process of Indigenization in post-secondary institutions. Indigenous Knowledge should be welcomed, supported, celebrated and valued within the academy and this research is an example of moving the academy in that direction.

Keywords: Indigenization, Indigenizing the Academy, Indigenous paradigm, reconciliation, inclusion, decolonization

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Having some knowledge about the communities you work with is an important step toward building and strengthening relationships. It also allows for people listening or reading to understand the history of the land they occupy and how they play a part in that history.

Land acknowledgements, also known as territory acknowledgments, are statements of recognition and appreciation of the Indigenous Nations and the history of that Nation. Given the COVID 19 restrictions there were two areas that this thesis was completed on and therefore I have chosen to acknowledge two Nations.

I am grateful and honored to be studying and living on the homeland of the Blackfoot, in the community of Lethbridge on the shores of the Old Man River. I am thankful for the knowledge that I have received through the University of Lethbridge and from the Knowledge Holders of this land.

I would also like to honor that I am from Inuvik Northwest Territories and am grateful to have been born and raised on the traditional lands of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in. I am humbled and honored to have defended my thesis on my homeland and appreciate the support that was provided by the Gwich'in Tribal Council.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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GLOSSARY

Colonization: A process of seizing land through control, marginalization, domination, assimilation and at times elimination of the Indigenous people (Government of the Northwest Territories, 2013; hereafter GNWT).

Cognitive Imperialism: Through the assimilative history of Indigenous people, Eurocentric values have dominated and controlled the thoughts, processes and minds of those at universities which have ultimately assumed superiority of knowledge in the education systems (Battiste, 2013).

Decolonization: The process of decolonization refers to deconstructing colonial ideologies of superiority of Western thought and approaches. This requires dismantling structures and addressing power inequities that privilege dominant paradigms (Battiste, 2013).

Elder: Individuals that have accumulated knowledge and respect from the community and are often given the name Elder and looked to as Indigenous Knowledge Experts (Kovach, 2009).

Eurocentric: is focusing on European culture or history to the exclusion of a wider view of the world, implicitly regarding European culture as preeminent (GNWT, 2013).

Inclusion: Indigenous inclusion is seen as increasing Indigenous faculty and student admission. This approach focuses on addressing the need to accommodate Indigenous faculty, staff, students, and communities in overcoming obstacles, so they are successful within the academy (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018).

Indian Residential Schools System (IRSS) - Indian Residential Schools System have documented that more than 150,000 Indigenous children were removed and separated from their families and homes to attend school (TRC, 2015a).

Indigenization: Work that involves changing spaces, places, processes and systems to include Indigenous ways of knowing (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018).

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW): The National Inquiry's Final Report reveals that persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses are the root cause behind Canada's staggering rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people (CITE)

Reconciliation: is about collaboration with communities and Nations. The center of this approach should be around repairing relationships between Indigenous people and Settler Canadians (TRC, 2015a).

Relationality: The fundamental belief that knowledge is relational. Relational knowledge requires you to be responsible to all your relations when doing research (Wilson, 2008).

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP): was created in order to restore justice to the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada and to propose solutions to the existing problems (RCAP, 1996).

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission: The mandate is to inform Canadians about the history of colonization and legacy of residential schools through the truth telling of Survivors and communities. The commission was created through a legal settlement (TRC, 2015a).

Western: living in or originating from the West, in particular Europe or the United States (Oxford, nd)

Worldview: Understanding of the world from a particular place connected to culture (Little Bear, 2000).

Calls to Action: One of the outcomes of the TRC Report were the Calls to Action. The Calls to Action document and detail 94 recommendations in the areas of child welfare, education, health, justice, language and culture. Quoted below are Calls to Action 62, 63 and 57. Calls to Action

62-65 are specifically targeting education. Call to Action 57 calls upon institutions to learn about

the history of colonization and legacy of residential schools in order to build cultural

competency, respect and accountability (TRC, 2015b).

> 62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to: Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous Knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous Knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education (TRC, 2015b, p.7)

> 63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including: Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above (TRC, 2015b, p.7).

> 57. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills- based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism (TRC, 2015b, p. 7)

CHAPTER 1: STARTING MY (RE) SEARCH

1.1 SITUATING MYSELF

Danch'uh Ashley vilzhii. My name is Ashley Ens. It's customary as an Indigenous researcher and Northerner to introduce and situate myself in this research. I come from the Gwich'in nation, born and raised along *Nagwichoonjik*, known in English as the Mackenzie River, in Inuvik, Northwest Territories (NWT) which is the sacred land of the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit nations. I spent several years living and learning on the shores of *Tucho* or Great Slave Lake in Yellowknife, NWT which is the traditional land of the Yellowknives Dene, Tłı̨chǫ, and Métis people. I currently reside with my family and study along *Napiitahta* translated as Old Man River in Lethbridge, Alberta which is the sacred land of the Blackfoot people and I am honored to be immersed in the culture and beauty of this territory and have been gifted the name of *Isspiiapotsohtsi* translated as Northern Dancer. I start by explaining where I come from because Indigenous research is place specific and has a responsibility and relationship to land. As researchers, our stories are based on relationships to the communities we serve (Fast & Kovach 2019; Wilson, 2008). Therefore, where I come from, where I have been, and where I am, are integral to the development and process of my research.

My father, Patrick Bourque, is of Gwich'in, nēhiyawēwin (Cree) and Irish descent. He is the kindest, gentlest soul I know, and I have been blessed to have him as my support through this journey. My mother, Shelley Ens, is of German descent and has gifted me with a strong work ethic and persevering strength for which I am forever grateful. I write from the perspective and identity of a Métis, Dene woman and acknowledge that although Indigenous people have similar worldviews that hold common and enduring beliefs, Indigenous groups are also unique and

distinct and speak from a place-based perspective. Indigenous Knowledge values, respects and honours many truths which cannot be separated from collective knowledge but is a way of knowing that is place based (Fast & Kovach, 2019). Sharing my stories is an attempt for a greater understanding of myself and existence within this research; it is a process of inner subjectivity where I will share my perceptions and beliefs. This will create the space to not only identify myself through gender, heritage and experiences, but express my individual theoretical stance (Fast & Kovach, 2019; Windchief & Ryan, 2019) of what my truth is and how I fit within it. Through my use of story, I attempt to shift the perception of Indigenous voices in research as powerful, creative and transformative.

Growing up in the Arctic had its challenges with a history of colonial violence felt through all governing systems that had personal repercussions felt within my extended family. I did not learn of this colonial past or understand the reasons for contemporary impacts until adulthood. I had known dysfunction around me in my community but did not understand why. I first understood what the impacts of having a father that went to residential school at the age of five entailed when my own son turned five. I was watching my son, Zakery, play effortlessly with joy in the swimming pool and it dawned on me that he was the same age as my dad when he first left home for residential school. I could not hold in the pain that this caused me and was flooded with tears of grief. This grief turned into a need to know more, which eventually led me to return to school, as a single parent with two children, to pursue my undergraduate degree. This is where I began to shift the reality of our lives by pursuing the drive within myself to create systemic change.

Academically I did well and was able to comply and fit nicely into the school culture. I learned quickly how to get good grades but not to think critically about what I was learning. Once completing my degree in Management, I spent several years working with the Territorial

Public Service where my initiatives focused on reconciliation, creating programs and training targeting Indigenous success. This is where I started to feel the struggles of being an Indigenous woman within the public service. There was a need to work twice as hard to be recognized and although we were putting money and effort into the programs to support Indigenous people, I did not feel supported from my own managers. It felt like we were grazing the surface and perhaps saying the right things but not actually changing the reality for Indigenous people entering our workplace or for those of us who were within the system. I was unsatisfied and had a desire to create real change. I decided to leave my job and return to school to complete my master's in management because creating real change meant earning the credentials to do so.

I have worked hard and was awarded with good results, but I really felt out of my league in the first few months of this program. I was the only Indigenous person in my cohort, and I could not find my voice in the classroom; I sat amongst my peers and it sounded like people were reciting lines out of a textbook. It didn't seem real; it wasn't practical, and it wasn't relatable to me. I questioned my worth, value and contribution of being in the program. I made several attempts to voice my concern as an Indigenous student which resulted in little understanding of my concerns. I was encouraged to take my "space as a woman". What I was experiencing was not gender inequality; rather it was the colliding of different worldviews (Little Bear, 2000). At the same time my sweet 13-year-old *bun* (daughter) was facing the challenge of being the new kid in grade seven. She was eagerly trying to find her place and feel comfortable. She gets her work ethic from her mother and grandmother which makes parenting easy. She came home from school and was in tears because she did not like her new life and I whole-heartedly felt her pain. I made some peppermint tea and we sat on our couch underneath paintings of Dene Elders from across the North and we cried and shared our stories. She asked me why the Indigenous kids in her class always had their names on the board for late

assignments and were always getting sent out of class for causing trouble. I felt this heavy wave

enter my body knowing that this question was deep and filled with historical trauma. For a

moment I imagined the experiences Indigenous people of Canada have suffered and the pain and

abuse they live with daily and how their truths are ignored and silenced, and then realized what a

privilege those parents have that do not have to answer this question.

This research acknowledges the colonial violence that Indigenous people have

experienced in what is now known as Canada for centuries and further explores the socially

approved and cultivated colonial ignorance that has dominated Canadian culture, specifically

within the academy. I will explore worldviews from Indigenous and Western perspectives and

the role that formal education has perpetuated including what Marie Battiste (2013) has termed

cognitive imperialism. Through the assimilative history of Indigenous people, Eurocentric values

have dominated and controlled the thoughts, processes and minds of those at universities which

have ultimately assumed superiority of knowledge in the education systems. Cognitive

imperialism is a result of colonization which denies people their cultural integrity by upholding

the legitimacy of one dominant way of knowing (Battiste, 2013).

This thesis takes place in the "era of reconciliation" which is conversation in Canada that

has intensified with the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC)

Final Report and its 94 *Calls to Action*. This discourse has encouraged educational institutions

across Canada to enhance their efforts to identify and confront the systemic prejudices embedded

in course content, funding and priorities, administrative decision-making and the priorities of

teachers, teacher education, faculty and staff (TRC, 2015a). The era of reconciliation and Calls to

Action have resulted in various and uneven "Indigenization" efforts at universities throughout

the country.

I have embraced the use of an Indigenous paradigm which is heavily influenced by my Dene values and guided by Blackfoot protocols. I have also grounded myself in the work of Mi'kmaq Elder Dr. Albert Marshall who uses the phrase Two-Eyed Seeing and described the process as seeing both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives in life. He further describes it as using your eyes independently shifting back and forth between perspectives, and how by doing this, individuals arrive at a meeting place of integration (Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall, 2012). This is the approach that I have used when coming to know this search for information.

I will use Indigenous storytelling to explore and discover "self", as a Dene woman, Indigenous researcher and intergenerational residential school survivor. This will allow me to explore meaning of this research in relation to my world and how the dominant Western world I live in is socially, culturally and politically different from Indigenous perspectives. This is my effort and intent to (re)claim, (re)store and (re)write my own lived experience and reality as an Indigenous person and how it has contributed to my growth as a researcher.

Throughout this paper you will find my stories presented in circles, moving from past to present; Indigenous values are based on relationship-building and in order for my research to be authentic my stories are an essential component. The relationship between the research, ideas presented, myself as the storyteller, researcher and the listener are part of the Indigenous paradigm I wish to honour. (Archibald, 2020; Wilson, 2008). I use different styles of communication: an academic approach and personal narrative of storytelling, which is presented in a different font. These two "voices" complement each other and provide rich context of my research, allowing the reader to build a relationship with my story.

I use sharing circles (Archibald, 2008) and conversation-based interviews (Kovach, 2010b) to examine Indigenous student perspectives at the University of Lethbridge to explore

how we can move past inclusion towards reconciliation that would lead to decolonization in academic spaces and institutions. These approaches acknowledge more than one worldview to be recognized, celebrated and valued within the academy, allowing stories to unfold in a way that is respectful and honourable to an Indigenous paradigm. I also draw upon existing research on Indigenization efforts to build on theories and practices of Indigenizing the academy. This is demonstrated through the braiding together of Indigenization frameworks to expand on the understanding of processes related to Indigenizing the academy. I expand upon and provide greater context to processes of Indigenization by analyzing student experiences; this demonstrates how experiences and stories have the ability to deepen and extend Indigenization within the academy. I use Gaudry and Lorenz's (2018a) three-portion spectrum to categorize existing research and explore post-secondary experiences which range from Indigenous inclusion to reconciliation and eventually to decolonization of institutions.

Academic research in Canada, and in other colonized countries, has been indistinguishably interconnected to imperialism and colonialism which have framed Indigenous experiences, and created self-serving truths which favor the colonizer (Smith, 1999; Battiste, 2013). In response to these pervasive structures, Indigenous scholars are responding by restoring and reclaiming their own research prerogatives, cultural intelligence, knowledge systems and research methods. Guba and Lincoln (1994) discuss competing paradigms and claim that with growing commitment to critical and cultural consciousness within academia, new spaces have emerged that allow for previously marginalized perspectives. Indigeneity is centred around the ability to rediscover and reposition culture from within, as opposed to looking to external resources for knowledge to validate our ways of knowing. Smith and Webber (2019) proclaim that Indigenous Knowledge, research and theory should not be validated through a westernized lens. They note that "the prospect of actively applying Indigenous Knowledges in ways that

disrupt the Euro-centric knowledge systems is in itself a transformative endeavor" (p. 4). For these reasons, my use of storytelling, sharing circles and conversational interviews are my key methods.

1.2 EXPLORING WORLDVIEWS

The following section will describe, compare and contrast worldviews of Indigenous and Western perspectives. Although Smith and Webber (2019) stated we should not have to validate Indigenous ways of knowing through a Western lens, it is still necessary as most of the individuals reading this will not be familiar with Indigenous worldviews and it is essential to understand the differences when using an Indigenous paradigm. Piantanida and Garman (2009) explain worldviews as "the totality of one's beliefs, for research purposes the most relevant beliefs are those of ontology, epistemology, and axiology" (p. 47).

The concept of cultural interface was introduced and can be described as the complexity of the relationship of Indigenous and Western knowledge systems. Kerr (2018) used this term in her case study evaluating the First People's principles of learning in teacher education. These principles emphasize the interconnectedness of life and learning and the importance of understanding and learning through an Indigenous lens (Kerr, 2018). This directs us to acknowledge the differences and respond to those differences when contemplating worldviews, all while acknowledging the politics and power which drive these differing systems.

Worldviews from Indigenous and Eurocentric perspectives differ considerably; Leroy Little Bear (2000) describes how these worldviews collide, which inevitably create conflict. If we want to understand why these worldviews are at odds, we need to understand their respective underlying philosophy, values and customs. Indigenous worldviews can be described as being circular, holistic and rely on connection and fluidity of energy (Little Bear, 2000). Indigenous Knowledge (IK), which at times is called Traditional Knowledge (TK), is part of the collective

whole of Indigenous people that exists in the context of their learning and knowing from the places where they have lived, hunted, explored, migrated, farmed, raised families, built communities, and survived for centuries (Huaman, & Mataira, 2019; Battiste, 2013; Little Bear, 2000) IK will be used in this research as it frames knowledge in the present whereas TK alludes to something that is of the past and although teachings are passed on IK is fluid, evolves and should be framed in the present. Settler perspectives frequently try to frame IK as historical, obsolete, pre-modern, and therefore implicitly irrelevant. The refusal to acknowledge that IK can and has evolved in pace with European Knowledge (EK) is an implicit but significant factor in resistance to Indigenization. Battiste (2009) provides an example of this when explaining that EK practices and learning strategies in western education have supressed IK since the point of contact.

An example that is drawn from Leroy Little Bear (2000) is in relation to the use of language: generally speaking, Indigenous languages are rich and are process or action oriented. Most Indigenous languages do not include dichotomies black/white, right/wrong, good/bad, saint/sinner, including the concepts of animate/inanimate which leads to the worldview that everything is living. There is life in the trees, mountains, rock, air, water and a relationship that connects them all (Little Bear, 2000). An important connection is made between language and education that can be used when explaining different worldviews.

The primary source of IK is in Indigenous languages and teachings that make every child unique in their learning capacities, learning styles, and knowledge bases. This relates back to the notion of place-based learning and the unique teachings that are drawn from the experiences of place. Battiste (2009) describes the process of learning as sacred and holistic, as well as experiential, purposeful, relational, and a lifelong responsibility. Traditions, ceremonies, and daily observations are all integral parts of the learning process, allowing for spirit-connecting

processes to enable the gifts, visions, and spirits to emerge in each person. In IK, reason and passion are intertwined. It should be noted that learning IK requires an individual to be mindful and understand themselves with the ability to self-reflect. It is different than learning about IK values, perspectives and attitudes, there is also a metaphysical component to learning. This worldview is subjective and personal. The best approach to learning and understanding IK is in the dynamic linguistic foundations of Indigenous frameworks and paradigms (Newhouse, 2013).

On the other hand, Eurocentric views can be compared as being linear, singular, and objective with emphasis put into processes and developing knowledge systems which are based on specialists in a particular area. Language is factual, dominant, rule based and full of dichotomies. In academia, this is demonstrated by the example of an experiment in Western-based science which looks objectively at a concept in a controlled environment to measure, count and conclude a truth about the subject of interest. This view collides with Indigenous ways of knowing (Little Bear, 2000; Battiste, 2009).

Through colonization, in the forms of terror and aggression along with oppressive and genocidal polices, Indigenous people have become disconnected in their worldviews (Little Bear, 2000) and some no longer identify with either Indigenous worldviews or Eurocentric worldviews. They are caught somewhere in-between and struggle to identify with either worldview. To explain how these oppressive assimilative polices have broken the connection between worldviews and IK, we need to consider the connection with IK and the land. Drawing back on Indigenous worldviews we know that there is a strong connection to the land and practice of relationality, in the sense that everything is living and connected is a common teaching. Destruction of the land as a colonial manifestation has had a direct negative impact on IK and nations and has contributed to the disconnection that is experienced today. We can also look at the importance of language and IK and see how Indian Residential School Systems

(IRSS) destroyed this aspect of learning and life which has negatively impacted IK and nations today. IK is collective and communal and although diverse among different groups there are many similarities including the experiences of being lost (Battiste, 2009). There is strong discourse around *how* Indigenous people learn which is far more important than *what* they learn and that when developing Indigenous education systems these culturally inherent ways of teaching and learning must be incorporated (Simpson, 2004).

1.3 THESIS STRUCTURE

This study aims to answer the question: *How can Indigenous student perspectives on the implementation of Indigenization improve, deepen and extend the process at Post-Secondary Institutions?* This thesis is presented in six chapters, the introduction includes a description of an Indigenous paradigm, a section which situates me as the researcher along with comparing, contrasting and explaining worldviews from Indigenous and Western perspective. Chapter Two is a literature review which sets the context of colonization and the history of residential schools and includes my personal stories and experiences as an intergenerational residential school survivor. This chapter also explores Indigenization as a movement looking at perspectives from an array of Indigenous scholars and also includes a range of initiatives that move on a spectrum from inclusion to reconciliation and then decolonization. Chapter Three describes the research methodology which stems from an Indigenous paradigm and further explores the use of conversation-based interviews and sharing circles as the method of gathering stories. Chapter Four reviews the data analysis used when coming to know the data. Chapter Five includes the process of "coming to know the stories" and categorizes the findings through the use of inclusion, reconciliation and then decolonization indigenization. Chapter Six concludes the results and discusses the limitations and implications of the research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 SETTING THE CONTEXT

In 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper recognized past injustices that Indigenous people have endured through the Indian Residential School System (IRSS) through a statement of apology.

> The government now recognizes that the consequences of the Indian Residential Schools policy were profoundly negative, and that this policy has had a lasting and damaging impact on Aboriginal culture, heritage and language. While some former students have spoken positively about their experiences at residential schools, these stories are far overshadowed by tragic accounts of the emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect of helpless children, and their separation from powerless families and communities. The legacy of Indian Residential Schools has contributed to social problems that continue to exist in many communities today. It has taken extraordinary courage for the thousands of survivors that have come forward to speak publicly about the abuse they suffered… The burden of this experience has been on your shoulders for far too long. The burden is properly ours as a Government, and as a country. There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian Residential Schools system to ever prevail again. You have been working on recovering from this experience for a long time and in a very real sense, we are now joining you on this journey (Stephen Harper, 2008, p.1).

Months later, Prime Minister Stephen Harper denied any history of Colonialism in Canada which is quoted in Maclean's magazine "We also have no history of colonialism. So, we have all of the things that many people admire about the great powers but none of the things that threaten or bother them" (Wherry, 2009). These two quotes clearly indicate that Canada has not fully accepted or reckoned with our colonial history and injustices that were designed to eliminate Indigenous people. It serves as an example demonstrating the disconnect, misunderstanding and resistance Canadians hold towards our colonial history which heavily impacts our current reality. This speaks to the work that needs to be done to inform and Indigenize spaces to ensure we are creating culturally safe learning environments for all students.

Battiste (2013) described Prime Minister Harper's apology as "Canada's apology to Aboriginal peoples for the destruction of their lives, their loss of parenting skills, and

jeopardizing their continued livelihood based on their rich cultures and heritages comes as a welcome first step in creating a responsive education system for Aboriginal peoples" (p.64). However, two views of reality are portrayed in these quotes. One, is the understanding of Indigenous people living in what is now called Canada, which understands a colonial past with a prevailing legacy of assimilative polices endured, and the other is a lingering settler view, hostile to Indigenous issues which sees Canada being a country untouched by colonialism. Harper apologized for the harm inflicted on Indigenous people for over 100 years of the IRSS just months before his statement saying Canadians have no history of colonialism. This is a clear example of willful ignorance which represents only those most advantaged by colonialism.

To understand the disconnect between Indigenous and Eurocentric perspectives, it is first necessary to describe Indigenous societies precontact and review the history and legacy of colonization, including that of the residential schools. Throughout this section you will find my dad's stories told through my perspective. I will reflect and relate these large events to my experience as an intergenerational residential school survivor, as I have been affected by my dad's residential school experience.

Indigenous people throughout North America had healthy, prosperous, dynamic societies, with their own languages, histories, cultures, spiritual practices, ceremonies, technologies and education systems. There were also hardships, trials, and war experienced. They passed these practices and values down from generation to generation through oral storytelling traditions and a mixture of ceremonies, teachings and daily activities (Government of the Northwest Territories, 2013; TRC, 2015a).

These traditions were passed down through to my father. He was born in 1955 and grew up in Aklavik, Northwest Territories. He is one of thirteen children who were raised in a two-bedroom home along the Hudson Bay Company side of the Mackenzie River. He was raised traditionally and grew up harvesting animals and plants from the land. Some of his favorite snacks were from the smoke house where he remembers finding smoked muskrat, fish and beaver tails hanging from the racks. He describes

playing with his brothers in the bush and stopping to snack on roots from the ground. He describes always being cold in the winter, but never hungry which was a gift during this time as many families were starving. They were a muskrat trapping family and during this time he called Aklavik the capital of the muskrat community. He speaks of the relationship with the land as if it was a relationship with a person where the land always provides. It's a reciprocal relationship. You don't take what you don't need, and you are grateful for what it has given you. It sounds beautiful and something that I have only learned as an adult. I didn't grow up the same way and these traditions were not passed down to me; our traditions were disrupted when he was taken away to school and Westernized.

The core of these teachings consisted of describing an interconnected world. Indigenous education systems were holistic, and complex intertwined with daily life lessons and spiritual teachings. These teachings respected the autonomy of the child and independent exploration was encouraged. Parenting came from all sources of the family, and it was often expected that older siblings, aunties, uncles, grandparents and other community members participated in this process. However, non-interference is a common practice in Indigenous cultures which encourages natural consequences to occur as a form of development (Kirkness, 1999). Through stories and teachings Indigenous children were raised to be capable people (James, 2016) and to live properly and contribute to the community's physical survival. This changed with first contact and continued to evolve as the colonial forces set forth to dominate the new world (TRC, 2015a; GNWT, 2013).

My dad grew up doing chores. He was responsible for cutting ice from the river and bringing it back to camp for cooking and cleaning. He was also responsible for collecting wood for the stove and also feeding the sled dogs. As he got older, he attended the trap line with his older brothers and father. He tells a story about a spring hunt and the abundance of muskrats they harvested. He describes the process of filling up the gunny sack, *which is a canvas bag full of the skins to bring to the Hudson Bay fur traders. After a season of good harvesting, they were prepared for the coming year and those years which were of abundance allowed them to help their neighbors on the shore. They lived among several Inuit families and my grandmother became close to these families and spoke fluent Inuvialuktun. I hear different versions of this story, but it is one that allows me to never forget about the strength of community when raising a child. My dad was four years old, and it was normal for the younger children to be tied to a tree while chores were being done to prevent them from getting lost or hurt. My dad escaped from his tree and ventured down to the bottom of the river. He somehow untied a canoe and held on to the side and began to float down the river. He was spotted by a group of women picking berries down the river and rescued by three older ladies. From this point on my dad became a favorite and was watched over by these families.*

Public funding for residential schools dates back to the 1870s (GNWT, 2013). These schools were commonly run by the Anglican and Catholic churches, however residential schools have been traced back to the 1620's. Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, was instrumental in expanding the Indian Residential School system (Manroe, 1998). In 1883, he authorized his cabinet to create three residential schools for Indigenous children. Since then, there were over one hundred and thirty residential schools throughout Canada and the last documented institutions closed in 1996: Gordon Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan and Grollier Hall in my home community, Inuvik Northwest Territories. These schools were federally funded but operated by churches with the goal of assimilating Indigenous children. The intent was to eliminate any intellectual, cultural, spiritual teachings from the family and community by removing any parental involvement in child-rearing. During this time period there were more than 150,000 Indigenous children institutionalized in these schools and it is estimated that at the time of the *TRC Final Report* (2015) there were approximately 80,000 survivors of residential schools still living (TRC, 2015a). However, ongoing intergenerational effects are present for every Indigenous person today and continue to contribute to the social problems that exist today (GNWT, 2013; TRC, 2015a).

My dad's first year institutionalized at Stringer Hall, the Anglican residential school, and attending Samuel Hearne School was 1960 with his two brothers Tommy and Robert. He describes the day as feeling excited. It was the first time they had left their camp and his first time going on an airplane. They were flying into Inuvik and at that time the population was approximately 2,000 people; to them this was the biggest "city" they had ever experienced. There were about 250 students in each residential school, one was Oblate-run, Grollier Hall, and the other where my dad was institutionalized. They had never been around that many people before. Part of the excitement was seeing his two brothers and two sisters who had been at the school for a couple of years already. He doesn't speak of the earlier years of his experience but often talks about the "battles" that would happen at the school as he got older. There is a long history of rivalry between the Inuit and the Gwich'in at the schools and was something he never experienced before attending the schools. He also attests this rivalry to being one of the Roman Catholics vs. Anglicans. These battles were bloody fights which broke out often between the residential schools. His first few weeks consisted of learning the ropes of the school but also the ways of the playing fields which were about fighting. If there is one thing my Dad learned during this time it was how to "fight".

The intent of the residential school was not just directed at the individual families. It was part of a larger Federal and Territorial government goal including the elimination of the social and economic responsibilities which were taken on by the government during the signing of the Treaties. *The Indian Act* of 1876 combined all of Canada's legislation (at that time, the Dominion of Canada) which governed "Indians." The *Act* defines who an Indian is and sets out the process and conditions of how to stop being an Indian. Under this legislation the Government had the authority to legislate Indian people's religion, land, education, government and economy and could even govern individual lives. Indian agents were assigned to enforce rules and had authority to govern and overturn decisions pertaining to Indian people (GNWT, 2013; TRC, 2015a).

Our family does not have treaty status. My great, great grandfather Enoch Moses was one of the first to sign treaty 11 in 1921 but somewhere from then and now we lost our status. Several years ago, our family came together with the existing documents we have, and I was tasked with pulling together the information and pursuing the application process to get our status back. This process is long, tedious and 100% self-driven. What I found was an old marriage certificate belonging to my great grandfather Billy Phillips and great grandmother Jane Moses. Billy Phillips was an Irishmen who had made his way to the Arctic as a Hudson Bay tradesmen and married Jane Moses who was 31 years younger than him. This was so disturbing to me, but I felt shame bringing it up to my dad, so I just casually ignored it, it didn't seem to bother anyone else. From conversation that I have heard, it seemed that marrying a white man was considered marrying up regardless of the age gap.

From the research it appeared that my great great grandfather Enoch Moses had signed scrip and given up his treaty status; this could have been for many reasons; to work, to go to school, but what my family had brought forward it sounded like it was to drink alcohol because at this time it was illegal for Indians to consume alcohol. This process was hard on me, and I eventually stopped pursuing the process. It was hard to get information and Indigenous Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) was not forthcoming and it was up to me to find what I needed.

The damage of residential school has had an everlasting effect on the lives of Indigenous people; they reach far beyond the number of children who attended the schools. Communities were ripped apart, families destroyed, and cultures suppressed. There are well documented accounts of emotional, mental, spiritual, cultural and physical abuse, including sexual abuse of Indigenous students while in the 'care' of residential schools (RCAP, 1996; TRC, 2015a). These effects have been felt through generations resulting in lost parenting skills and abusive patterns

which continue to be seen and experienced today. The history of these schools has shaped the

lives and experiences of people, which have affected every interaction with each institution with

which they come in contact, whether it be health, legal or social system. The legacy continues to

impact every community in the country and the intergenerational impacts are felt everywhere

and through every Canadian institution (GNWT, 2013; TRC, 2015a).

This story made me laugh but also left a lump in my throat. My dad was twelve years old and still living in residence at Stringer Hall. By this time, he was considered a Senior Boy and knew the ropes of the school. Inuvik had Midnight Madness movie nights on Sundays and my dad and three other boys planned on attending. The movie being played was Elvis Presley: Girls, Girls, Girls*. They prepared for bed fully dressed and waited until the Administrator did the last nightly check at 11:00 pm. Once the coast was clear, they snuck out the fire escape after preparing their beds with extra linen, so it appeared as if there were sleeping bodies underneath the covers. They attended the movie and snuck back in, thinking their plan had run smoothly. In the morning they were teased and laughed at because there had been a fire drill while they were gone, and it was noticed that they weren't there, and their beds had been stuffed with linen. They waited all morning in suspense with what was going to happen when they noticed after chores that the Administrator was walking down the hall with a willow stick. Each boy received whips on their bare butts for sneaking out. At first, I laughed a little until I noticed that it was more serious than it sounded; this whipping left bloody cuts and they were unable to sit comfortably for weeks. My dad could hear the other boys yelling and crying before he received his discipline and said it was worse than being whipped.*

2.2 RESISTANCE

It is important to include a section with a note on resistance; Indigenous people

throughout history and this legacy have demonstrated incredible resistance. Parents fought hard

to keep their children safe and lobbied for schooling in their own communities, for better quality

of food, safer environments, for quality education rather than doing only chores and for less

harsh discipline. Students continued to find ways to run away and return to their families, get

more to eat, hide for safety and ease their workloads. Resistance may have led to small

improvements for students, but it never touched on the unequal power distribution. The

resistance through this time period continues today and was able to act as a standing force in

recognition that residential schooling has done undeniable damage but was a complete failure at

assimilating children (GNWT, 2013; Schools, 2012; TRC, 2015a).

My dad completed grade 8 and then decided to leave school and start working; there was nothing easy about my dad's life and he worked hard trying to make the lives of his children better. I consider myself living proof of his achievements. Reflection has been a big part of this process and it has forced me to see the destructive nature of my childhood and also consider how the intergenerational impacts of residential school have affected my life. Remembering has initiated the healing process and having the opportunity to share my story and discuss my dad's story has created more space in my life. The intent of this research is working towards resolving the spiritual, emotional, physical and mental wounds of this legacy and through the process I wish to reconnect to move past this isolation and find my voice. I will add my voice to change the academic system within which I'm working to hold my ways of knowing and being on equal footing with other epistemologies.

The result of these colonial policies and the lack of discourse around them has resulted in inequities in all systems of governance including and not limited to housing, health, justice, employment and education. RCAP pointed out that "Aboriginal people are more likely to face inadequate nutrition, substandard housing and sanitation, unemployment and poverty, discrimination and racism, violence, inappropriate or absent services, and subsequent high rates of physical, social and emotional illness, injury, disability and premature death" (1996, p. 107). For these reasons, colonialism cannot be relegated to the past as it continues today and is entrenched in the relationship between Indigenous people and Canada (GNWT, 2013). This relationship has fueled discrimination and domestic violence throughout our country.

There have been various movements initiated by Indigenous groups to gain greater autonomy of Indigenous education. Recommendations have been seen in the forms; the RCAP, TRC's *Calls to Action*, and *the* MMIW *Calls for Justice*. There has also been an impact from individual Indigenous resistance and movements such as the Berger Inquiry, Idle No More and most recently through Black Lives Matter with Indigenous voices being elevated and heard during this movement. Cultural oppression has been an impact of ongoing colonial imperialism. As a form and act of resistance, Indigenous scholars are reclaiming history, expressing culture and ways of knowing through work and articulating their perspective in ways that are impacting

academic decisions. This cannot negate the impact of colonial imperialism, but it is a form of asserting place in the discourse of history (Battiste, 2013; Graveline, 2000; Smith, 1999).

RCAP's final report was released in 1996 and contained 440 recommendations that would improve the lives of Indigenous people and relationships with Canada. The mandate of this process was to uncover the effects of generations of exploitation, violence, racism and enforced cultural imperialism on Indigenous people. The report was direct in reminding Canadians that for the past 30 years Indigenous leaders have continually made policy recommendations to Governments and there is a plethora of studies on record consistent with the findings of RCAP (1996) "…what we find most disturbing is that the issues raised at our hearing and in interveners' briefs are the same concerns that Aboriginal people have been bringing forward since the first studies were done" (p. 440). And even though RCAP was released in 1996, much of what was recommended has still not been implemented. Ten years after the release of RCAP the Assembly of First Nations completed a report card which indicated that the Federal government failed to implement these recommendations and demonstrated a short fall of approximately 8 billion in funding (AFN, 2010).

Nineteen years later, in May 2015, the TRC released their *Final Report* and its 94 *Calls to Action*. The *Calls to Action* lays out steps for all levels of governments, organizations, and churches in Canada to address the legacies of the residential schools in relation to child welfare, health care, justice and education. This paper addresses the *Call to Action* 62 by acknowledging the necessity and importance of having Indigenous people included in the process of developing Indigenous content. *Call to Action* 62ii. is where my paper makes its strongest case of recognizing the efficacy of Indigenous ways of knowing and of coming to know when incorporating Indigenous content into curriculum. This paper also addresses TRC *Call to Action* 63 by recognizing the importance of creating adequate learning resources which will assist with

building cultural competence among students, staff and faculty. Lastly this paper addresses TRC *Call to Action* 57 by addressing the need to train students, staff and faculty on the history of colonization and legacy of residential schools.

Paramount to the TRC was the sharing and believing of stories from survivors of residential schools and the colonialism that took place in Canada. This process allowed Indigenous people to record their experiences through testimonies. It was a time when their truth was allowed and encouraged to be told. Recognizing the critical importance of remembering and recording this history from an Indigenous experience was a healing process but also fundamentally critical to ensure history does not repeat itself. Through this process it was confirmed and shared with Canada that the intent of residential schools was to destroy Indigenous Knowledge, languages and family relationships. The aim was to then replace these with Eurocentric values, systems, and beliefs (Battiste, 2013; Czyzewski, 2011).

The TRC recognized that education has an integral role in the development and reconciliatory relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. To quote the chair of the commission, Senator Murray Sinclair, "Education is what got us into this mess…but education is the key to reconciliation" (2017). The recommendation included learning about the truths of residential schools and included larger spectrums of transforming education into a space and place where Indigenous experiences are integrated, respect for inclusion of Indigenous epistemologies would be created, and racism and coloniality would be rejected (Battiste, 2013).

It would be a mistake to try to explain the low levels of post-secondary achievement Indigenous people face without acknowledging the history and continued discrimination and deficiencies of various institutions (Battiste, 2013; Little Bear, 2000). Statistics of current post-secondary rates from the 2011 National Household Survey indicates that 9.8% of Indigenous people aged 25-64 have a university degree compared to 26.5% of the non-Indigenous Canadian

population of the same age (Statistics Canada, 2020a). The low achievements rates are primarily a result from the well documented systemic and cultural barriers that set the ground for educational marginalization (Battiste, 2013).

RCAP estimated that excess government expenditure related to the low economic and poor social conditions of Indigenous Canadians was approximately $2.2 billion in fiscal year 1992–1993. This works out to be 0.20 percent of nominal GDP (RCAP, 1996). Gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians continue to exist. Statistics show that Indigenous populations are the fastest growing demographic, increasing at a rate that is estimated to be four times the annual rate of the rest of Canada. Census data has also documented that the Indigenous population is young. In 2016, the average age of the Indigenous population was 30.2 which is a decade younger than the average age of the non-Indigenous population (Statistics Canada 2020b). This young population needs to be ready for the labour market and equipped through an education that will allow them to fully participate.

Having an education has been proven to be the most important determinate of labour market outcomes (Boudarbat & Chernoff, 2010), both education and employment are considered social determinates of health and contribute to the health and wellbeing of society (World Health Organization, 2008). Given the growing and young population of Indigenous people it is evident that Indigenous people play a vital role in the future of Canada's economic structure. It is estimated that if Canada can close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous levels of education and social well-being, Canada's GDP could rise by $401 billion dollars by 2026 (Sharpe & Arsenault, 2009). The long-term fiscal impact of equitable education and improved social outcomes is immense and in the best interest of all Canadians. Eliminating the intergenerational effects should also be considered as a benefit of closing this gap. A higher

educational attainment of parents has a lasting effect on healthy child development (WHO,

2008).

I was the first person in my family to graduate from high school which was considered a huge accomplishment. When I graduated with my undergraduate degree it was a life altering experience for not only myself but my whole family. I went to school as a single parent with two children who will forever remember the sacrifices their mother made to make their lives better. I was never encouraged to continue with my studies after high school; rather, I was encouraged to find a good job and financial security. I sometimes sit in awe when I look at my daughter and how focused and determined she is with her studies. I know that I have personally broken the cycle for my children, and they will persevere in life with the sky being the limit.
I am also continually humbled when I see my peers because I know I was one of the "lucky" ones. I see my old classmates walking and living the streets, suffering from addiction, enduring daily abuse, living off of a broken system and continuing the cycle. This could have easily been my future and is the reality for so many Indigenous families.

The TRC report encourages Canadians to critically discuss, engage and move beyond the

injustices of colonialism through education to create a space and a shift towards reconciliation.

Reconciliation is not an end result, but a process of developing relationships based on trust,

reciprocity, respect and recognition (TRC, 2015a). All of our systems have been steeped in

Eurocentrism which is the dominate way of thinking. The system is based on the notion that

some people have 'knowledge' which others need. Our colonial history has dismantled

Indigenous Knowledge systems and replaced them. *Cognitive imperialism* refers to how the

education system perpetuates Eurocentric ideologies through training students thought processes

to normalize and perpetuate colonialism (Battiste, 2013). To move beyond this, we have to look

at ways to decolonize our current education system. The relationship between decolonization and

education can be looked at as dismantling the colonial structures and can be examined in three

categories: teaching as the process (way of doing); the content of teaching such as curriculum

(way of knowing); and the governance and administration of the institutions (way of being),

which tend to derive from Eurocentric epistemologies, ontologies and methodologies (Cooper,

Major & Grafton, 2018).

Unlike previous reports, the TRC *Calls to Action* have pushed Canadian post-secondary education towards Indigenization. The *Calls to Action* had a disruptive effect on public discourse in ways that was not seen before (TRC, 2015b). It is important to note that Indigenization efforts are not new and there is a history of efforts (explored below) which has led us to where we are today.

2.3 INDIGENIZATION

The concept of Indigenization in scholarly work first appeared in the late 1990s and evolved in depth and perspective to become a transformative uprising internationally (Smith, 1999, Battiste & Barman, 1995; Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004, Louie & Poitras-Pratt, 2017; Pete & Schneider 2013; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018a) The most widely used working definition for Indigenous people was first seen through the work of Martinez Cabos (1986) report to the Unities Nations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

> Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions, and legal systems (p. 291).

The overall goal of 'Indigenizing the Academy' refers to systemic inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in polices, programs and practices throughout all levels of governance and practice. It is about making room for other ways of knowing, braided through the day-to-day composition of institutions. Movements towards Indigenization are detectable in a variety of areas, including recruitment and retention of Indigenous students, Indigenous student services, Indigenous-specific transition programs and Indigenous-specific governance structures, such as changes to leadership and the inclusion of First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) student governance groups

(Battiste & Barman, 1995; Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004; Pidgeon & Hardy Cox, 2005). Although these initiatives welcome more Indigenous students and leaders, additional reform is sorely needed. Moving beyond this inclusive approach, Battiste argues that challenging policies, programs and curriculum is required to ensure that Indigenous Knowledge is respected and included this is considered a more transformative approach to Indigenization (2013).

Indigenization is also demonstrated through collaboration among Indigenous professors to bring practical, tangible and relatable ways of Indigenizing the classroom (Louie & Poitras-Pratt, 2017; Pete & Schneider 2013). This grassroots approach, which is usually in the form of single Indigenous professors within a faculty establishing best practices on how to Indigenize classrooms, can be summarized by the actions of resistance and persistence. Resistance against dominant Eurocentric ways of teaching includes changing the method and content of curriculum. This requires the ability to be aware and critical of colonizing tendencies to erase Indigenous Knowledge, creating room for other ways of knowing, and demonstrating persistence by supporting Indigenous Knowledge systems and ways of knowing through relationships, curriculum choice and anticipating and correcting racism (Battiste, 2013; Louis et al., 2017; Pete & Schneider 2013).

Indigenous scholars have distinct and diverse views on Indigenizing the academy. This thesis will outline the different viewpoints and, by doing so, weave them together as an identifiable movement. Daniel Heath Justice (2004), a professor of First Nations and Indigenous Studies at the University of British Columbia and author of *Why Indigenous Literature Matters*, describes Indigenizing the academy as a responsibility and a right for Indigenous scholars. He argues that Indigenous people have an entitled inheritance to be part of the meaning-making processes and that it is essential that the values of respect, humility and generosity of spirit be at the centre of this process. Marie Battiste and James Youngblood Henderson (2000) make a

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similar argument in relation to Indigenous Knowledge systems within academic institutions and the need for intellectual self-determination.

Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred (2012) takes a slightly different approach and advocates that it is important that scholars push back when confronted with colonizing ways. He encourages meaningful relationships and discourse around Indigenous Knowledge systems, Indigenous data analysis and interpretation. He further explains that fully Indigenizing the academy is not possible and argues that the goal is not to transform colonial institutions to Indigenous ones, but to make universities environments that choose inclusivity of principles, values, and differing worldviews based on respect, with the goal of creating systematic, structural changes. Indigenization is a process of including Indigenous Knowledge systems as a valid and accepted method of knowledge creation. In relation to the academy, this involves bringing Indigenous Knowledge and approaches into the academy alongside Western Knowledge systems. Indigenization does not mean changing what currently is or combining two systems of knowing but requires the current system to create room for learners to understand and appreciate both (Smith, 1999).

2.3.1 INDIGENIZATION FRAMEWORKS

Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) developed the 4R's as a framework for Indigenizing the academy including respect, reciprocity, relevance and responsibility. This framework has been expanded on and used in furthering research and discussions to improve Indigenous experiences in the academy. The 4R's are foundational values and represent perspectives of respect for Indigenous ways of knowing, reciprocity in relationships, relevant programs and services and the responsibility to take control of education. The objective of this framework is to build relationships and understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing to

support Indigenous success in higher education (Marker, 2004; Pidgeon, 2016; Tessaro et al., 2018).

Since this framework was created, it has been adapted to fit different programs and services for Indigenous students and is considered a foundational framework for Indigenous education initiatives (Tessaro et al., 2018; Wimmer, 2016). Respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility and relationships were used as guiding principles in the development of the First Nations Schools Principals Course (FNSPC) which is used throughout Canada with focus on bringing Indigenous values into online learning environments (Tessaro et al., 2018). The 4R's is considered an alternative approach when compared to most universities, which Harris and Wasilewski (2004) describe as the two P's of "power and profit". They proclaim that Indigenous students are expected to adapt to the two P's which results in worldviews colliding.

Gaudry and Lorenz (2018a) use a three-portion spectrum to describe post-secondary approaches to Indigenization which starts at inclusion, moves to reconciliation, and then to decolonization. These concepts are prevalent throughout research and at times have been used interchangeably. I will explore how these three concepts are separate but contribute to interrelated processes. The organization of my paper will use this as a guiding framework to explore the different approaches, methods, policies and experiences which fall into these categories of Indigenization. I have used this framework to organize the work of this research because it speaks to the varying levels of Indigenization which can be described as modest steps to transformative processes; this will allow me to explore initiatives and tie them into the movement of Indigenization.

2.3.2 INDIGENIZATION INCLUSION

The concept of "Indigenous inclusion" is limited in its approach. It is geared towards increasing the representation of Indigenous faculty, staff and students without any structural

change within broader models of reform (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018a). This method of Indigenization requires financial commitment and is usually a lengthy process, it essentially adds Indigenous people to existing colonial systems with the expectation that these new hires and new students conform to the dominant Eurocentric academic culture. By solely adopting this approach, institutions overwhelmingly risk continuing paternalistic, colonial practices of Indigenous tokenism and the oversimplification of Indigeneity (Cooper et al., 2018).

There are two common recruitment approaches which target Indigenous students; I have categorized these as inclusive practices. Indigenous University Promotion Initiatives are strategies that attempt to recruit Indigenous Youth to universities; they are usually in the form of Indigenous-specific career fairs, high school to university-bridging programs and Indigenous staff who attend schools and communities to promote the facility (Parent, 2017). Universities Canada state that there have been 15 high school bridging programs (2020).

Next, Indigenous University Transition Programs are the most common approach used to recruit Indigenous students (Holmes, 2006). These programs are designed to assist mature students and students who may not have the formal prerequisites for university acceptance. The admission process accommodates applicants by considering life experiences, personal references and interviews (Parent, 2017). The goal is that transition process will offer individual students the support, knowledge and skills required to understand and be comfortable with university norms, procedures, and expectations (Parent, 2017). Universities Canada identifies 45 transition programs in Canada (2020). Pidgeon (2008) has criticized this approach for essentially requiring Indigenous students to abandon their ways of knowing and quickly transition to Eurocentric academic culture. Similarly, Episkenew (2013) suggests that since universities encourage Indigenous people to exclude their ways of knowing, they assume Indigenous people have inadequate depth for higher learning.

Inclusion also requires space for more relevant and respectful understandings of the Indigenous Lands, on which universities occupy. There is a growing need and desire for Indigenous-specific spaces to be made available on university campuses. It's important to note that many Indigenous languages do not differentiate between time and space. Smith (1999) argues that Indigenous spaces have been colonized to be a well-defined fixed term which essentially holds power. Indigenous languages often have words which describe relationships between time and space and therefore they cannot be separated. However, institutions are moving towards creating the physical inclusion of space in the form of buildings which are architecturally designed to honour local Indigenous peoples' culture (Pidgeon & Hardy Cox, 2005). An example of this is the First Peoples House (FPH) which is described as a social, cultural and academic place designed with modern and traditional Coast and Straits Salish people's values and customs; the building is decorated with Indigenous art and surrounded by Indigenous plants. The intent of this building is to provide a safe space for Indigenous students attending the University of Victoria (University of Victoria, 2020). Some spaces include Elders' rooms, ceremonial rooms, kitchens, computer labs, art and statues which respect Indigenous cultures and way of knowing (Pidgeon et al., 2013).

Universities consist of a diverse student body with increasing representation of Indigenous students and other visible minorities, as the earlier discussion about Indigenous recruitment initiatives suggested (Parent, 2017). However, racial diversity is not as reflected among faculty bodies as student ones. This is perhaps unsurprising because for over a century, Indigenous people in Canada were discouraged from pursuing a higher education due to oppressive policy of enfranchisement and the loss of Indian status under the *Indian Act* for attending post-secondary education. This enfranchisement clause remained in effect until amended in 1985 (GNWT, 2013; TRC, 2015a).

While researching Indigenous faculty representation, I found an overwhelming presence of commitment towards diversity and inclusion often labelled with "best diversity employer" tags. This illudes to the idea that institutions want the reputation of being diverse and inclusive. There is also the trend of hiring Indigenous faculty in response to the recommendations made by the TRC. *Call to Action* 7 recommends closing the gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians, specifically education and employment gaps (TRC, 2015b); this involves recognition of the significance of Indigenous educational leadership representation at the faculty, professional, administrative and governance levels.

The Academic Women's Association of the University of Alberta has produced a comprehensive, multi-layered analysis of leadership levels across 15 universities in Canada which are considered the top research institutions. They concluded that at senior institutional levels, there is little to no diversity in relation to race and gender. The results are summarized as board chairs being 85.7% white, and 57% male. Only 7.1% are visible minority female, and none are Indigenous, chancellors are 100% white, and 26.7% are female, presidents are 80% white, and 86.7% male, Provosts and VPs are 100% white, and 66.7% male, VPs Research nears gender parity with 46.7% female, 20% visible minorities (male and female) combined and Deans of faculties and schools: 92.2% are white, 32% are female, and a mere 7.7% are a visible minority or Indigenous person (Smith & Bray, 2019). It should be noted that the University of Lethbridge has since appointed Chancellor Charles Weaselhead, Taatsiikiipoyii (2021) which demonstrates a small success in improving visible change at senior levels of universities where systematic change has the potential to occur.

Henry et al. (2017) argues that if academic leadership was truly representative of the people being served, it would influence key decision makers to undertake radical action and genuinely tackle structural inequality. Unequal representation contributes to the failure in

training, curriculum development, recruitment, hiring of Indigenous faculty, retention of current Indigenous staff, tenure and promotion, and innovative anti-racist scholarship. There appears to be an appetite for Indigenous inclusion in relation to increasing the number of Indigenous students; at the faculty and senior management levels, however, meaningful efforts remain inadequate. To achieve systemic and meaningful change and increase presence and use of Indigenous Knowledge systems, a radical rethinking is required.

A common approach at universities is to hire a small team of specialists to tackle the Indigenization issue. This is visible in various FNMI divisions, which are burdened with the responsibility of Indigenizing the academy. Instead of building capacity throughout the university, there is a small, siloed team tasked with dealing with all the issues and meeting all the needs of Indigenous students. This is often criticized as a form of tokenism, expressed as a buffer between Indigenous issues and the rest of the institution (Davis et al., 2018). To create meaningful change, Indigenous issues must not be marginalized to one specific area. We need discussions and resolutions throughout all faculties across the institution to provide resources and institutional support to normalize and build relationships between the two groups.

Gaudry and Lorenz (2018a) conducted a study among Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators in response to trending Indigenization inclusion efforts and noted that Indigenous faculty felt an incredible responsibility towards Indigenization efforts. They were often looked at as "experts" and expected to be knowledgeable in all areas of Indigenous issues. They were often secluded in particular faculty areas and called upon to answer Indigenous issues and given special projects with limited support or resources to accomplish Indigenization tasks. Louie et al. (2017) described the same concerns and further explored individual professors' experiences of how they Indigenized their classrooms with little or no extra resources provided. The roles and

responsibilities which come into play from the professional lens sometimes do not align with the positionality of Indigenous educators (Windchief & Ryan, 2019).

Indigenous inclusion efforts are essential to the process of Indigenizing the academy; however, without adequate representation, support and resources, these inclusion efforts tend to burn out Indigenous faculty and create superficial, temporary change. Indigenous faculty, staff and students are expected to adjust to the culture, teaching methods, research methodologies and intellectual worldviews of the university. The Indigenous inclusion approach attempts to establish the academic "norms" and find approaches to support Indigenous people to fit within those "norms" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018a). Increasing the presence of Indigenous students, employees and content in academia does not in itself translate into meaningful space for Indigenous Knowledge but can be considered a first step to Indigenizing the institution.

2.3.3 RECONCILIATION INDIGENIZATION

Reconciliation is not an end result; it is a process of addressing the injustices that Indigenous people have faced and continue to experience. It is about building relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada based on mutual respect (TRC, 2015a). Specifically related to education, the TRC *Calls to Action 7 and 62* have requested the elimination of employment and education gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people along with incorporating Indigenous education into existing programming. There is also the call to ensure university administrators and students have the resources to build capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect (TRC, 2015b). Cooper et al. (2018) describes the TRC as a response to educational institutions implemented by Government which were assimilative and abusive to Indigenous children, families and communities. The report examined how the Indian Residential School System (IRSS) dislocated Indigenous Knowledge systems and imposed assimilative Eurocentric Knowledge systems (TRC, 2015a).

Applying Indigenization to a reconciliation approach involves improving relationships and supporting success for Indigenous students. Success from Indigenous perspectives is measured differently and includes all aspects of the individual including emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual; therefore, inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge production, transmission and histories within the academy is essential (Battiste, 2009). Canadians, including those working at universities, know little about Indigenous histories, current realities for Indigenous communities, and Indigenous cultural expressions. Paulette Regan (2010), a former Indian Residential Schools claims manager, wrote a book based on her dissertation called *Unsettling the Settler Within* and contends that to truthfully partake in reconciliation, non-Indigenous Canadians must deconstruct and unlearn their understanding of history and acknowledge the legacy of a country that has ignored and devalued Indigenous people. Reconciliation Indigenization starts with truth telling and moves towards building relationships. The next section will explore how Indigenous Course Requirements (ICR), Land Acknowledgments and community-driven research partnerships are acts of reconciliation demonstrated at universities.

The TRC *Calls to Action* inspired the University of Winnipeg, Trent University and Lakeland University to mandate that every undergraduate student, at these respective universities, complete a course on Indigenous history. These universities did this in response to the TRC *Calls to Action* 62 in an effort to prepare students to engage with the larger society where reconciliation is important (University of Winnipeg, n.d; Trent University, 2020; Lakehead University, 2020). ICRs mandate students to complete a set amount of content on Indigenous people in order to graduate. What this entails varies institutionally, with policies at different stages among universities. ICRs have been mandated in some programs, specifically social work, education and health-related fields (Hare, 2015). This is the beginning of greater discourse around social change in academia. There is a growing concern over how these ICRs

are being taught, what content is mandatory, who is teaching them and whether there are effective resources available.

Gaudry and Lorenz (2018b) suggest that ICRs need to be directed towards unlearning previously taught material or assumptions to provide opportunities to deconstruct what students believe they know to be true about Indigenous histories and create space to learn more truthful knowledge regarding Settler colonialism and Indigenous people. This approach supports Battiste's (2013) work around decolonizing education and acknowledges that our systems of education have been created and maintained to enforce the identity, language and culture of the colonial mindset. Gaudry and Lorenz (2018b) conducted a study on ICRs which included Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty perspectives; results outlined a number of concerns relating to these courses. Administrative challenges including resources, time and capacity were common among all. The worry that ICRs should be overseen and implemented by Indigenous faculty was prevalent. Limited resources and a lack of support raised apprehensions that the burden would be placed on already overworked and under-resourced staff resulting in Indigenous faculty efforts being unsustainable. Anxieties regarding Indigenous Knowledge and self-determination were also noted. A similar study reported concerns over authenticity and learning from place. Instructors felt insecure over the content they were teaching resulting in feelings of inauthenticity. There were similar fears around place of learning and whether the content was going to be respectful of the importance placed on space specific learning (Hare, 2015). Indigenous Knowledge is tied to place of learning (Kovach, 2010a; Wilson, 2008) and so is undermined by a pan-Indigenous approach that must inevitably dissociate learning from authentic ties to place, thereby reflecting mere tokenism. ICRs have a vital and valuable role to ensure the stability, justice and legitimacy of liberal political values in multinational countries (Tanchuk et al., 2018). Universities especially have a responsibility to ensure the dissemination

of Indigenous content due to their influence and power in creating systems of knowledge. It is evident that Canadians lack appropriate knowledge of the historical relationship between Settler Canadians and Indigenous people. IRCs are one reconciliatory approach to embrace and support the need to address this gap.

Land Acknowledgments are another step towards reconciliation, and they are presented verbally, visually and in writing and are intended to be a gesture towards honouring the original occupants of the land. These acknowledgments have evolved to be a political statement or gesture towards reconciliation which encourage Canadians to understand they are situated on and benefit from Indigenous Lands. Governments, organizations and universities have followed this trend and it is common to experience land acknowledgments at meetings, conferences and informal or formal gatherings. It is important for Canadians to understand the history that has brought them to live on the land they are on and it is an opportunity to understand place within that history.

There are different forms of acknowledgment which vary from appreciation to recognizing Indigenous peoples' lasting relationship to land in recognition of rights, sovereignty and existence (Keefe, 2019; Wilkes et al., 2017). The Canadian Association of University Teachers has developed an information tool kit along with a guide and script that can be used during land acknowledgments (CAUT, 2020). Land acknowledgments pose the risk of being disrespectful if they are not done properly. Often times you will see presenters reading verbatim, which can become a token gesture of reconciliation and therefore disrespectful. Hayden King is an educator that works at Ryerson University, he helped develop the template territorial Land acknowledgment for the university and describes it as a political statement encouraging non-Indigenous Canadians to acknowledge the territory they are working on. He has since come forward to state that he *"regrets"* doing this because it had become a surface level

acknowledgement and became a trend rather than understanding the historical, territorial and legal understandings of treaty agreements (King, 2019).

Another form of Indigenizing the academy through the reconciliatory process are research initiatives based on partnerships with Indigenous communities. This is commonly seen through participatory action research (PAR) and community-based participatory research (CBPR) which are closely linked with Indigenous research approaches. The emphasis is on Indigenous communities having a voice and universities sharing the power of knowledge production (Huaman & Mataira, 2019). At its core PAR and CBPR work towards social transformation while respecting personal experiences and the knowledge of all participants involved. Both approaches demonstrate a commitment to collaborating with communities and breaking down power structure in the research process (Evans et al., 2009; Tobias et al., 2013).

These research approaches stress the importance of bottom up versus top-down knowledge production and display institutional commitment and supported scholarship that is action and community oriented. This type of research is beneficial to both the university and community (Huaman & Mataira, 2019). This is the beginning of reconciling a relationship between Indigenous communities and researchers which, in the past, has been a top-down approach where Indigenous people have been studied as the "Other". This was first documented in Edward Said's (1978) Orientalism where he argued that Western and European scholars have been misleading, stereotypical and inaccurate in their representation of different cultural representations. He further went on to proclaim these representations situated Western and European cultures as superior and became justification for colonization. As a result of its long colonial history, research has had a poor reputation in Indigenous communities (Smith, 1999), so much work remains to be done to rehabilitate that relationship.

PAR and CBPR as research approaches have similarities with Indigenous research methods by seeking to build relationships, attempting to prioritize community commitments and facilitating a power shift from institutions to communities however, they do not fall into the same paradigm (Kovach, 2010a). These approaches are moving in a direction that supports reconciliation which is seen through statistics demonstrating that 70% of universities in Canada have partnerships with Indigenous communities, organizations and reserves. From these relationships there has been a 55% increase since 2013 in Indigenous programming to support students (Universities Canada, 2020). This has resulted in reconciling relationships which have advanced Indigenous communities by improving and clarifying polices which have then benefited communities with credible research, programs and policies along with discourse in reports, books and in the media (Castleden et al., 2015; Chartier, 2015). However, there is still systematic change needed to allow for Indigenous Knowledge system to be valued and credible within academia.

These initiatives have demonstrated commitment towards reconciliation, but as previously stated reconciliation is not an end result but a process of addressing the injustices that Indigenous people have faced and continue to experience. Reconciliation is about building relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada, one that is based on mutual respect.

2.3.4 DECOLONIZING INDIGENIZATION

Decolonization represents a radical change in the institution and is not a widely accepted approach within the academy. The term decolonization is used to show the movement, gestures and acts that move towards decolonization; this is essentially the process of shifting the power that was taken during the colonial past (Cote-Meek, 2020). Colonialism is based on the premise of invasion, domination and assimilation which involves taking the land. Tuck and Yang (2012)

attest that "decolonization is not a metaphor" (p.3) which means that returning the land should be at the root of this process and is required to decolonize.

From an institutional approach it requires transformative change and support from senior management to create room for other meaningful ways of knowing (Battiste, 2013; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018a). Decolonization refers to breaking down colonial systems and addressing the superiority of Western thought and approaches. This includes dismantling structures and addressing power inequities that privilege dominant paradigms (Battiste, 2013). Decolonization requires institutions to recognize and acknowledge the ongoing colonial dynamics that shape the discourse within Canada. It ultimately requires the return of power to Indigenous people to support self-determination (Cote-Meek, 2020). Decolonization supports the value of Indigenous Knowledge systems and approaches and shifts the frame of reference to this knowledge.

When considering decolonizing approaches to Indigenization, it is imperative that the academy recognize that it has built itself on and profited from Indigenous lands as the dominate, privileged and only way of knowledge creation (Galla & Holmes, 2020). Canada's post-secondary institutions have failed to mandate standards, so Indigenous-related curricula often have limited learning objectives and outcomes. Too often what is designated as Indigenous content is a one-page document or 20 minutes set aside in a lecture which is random and tokens Indigenous information (Scott, 2020). This is not a form of Indigenization and does a disservice to those involved. It creates a belief that Indigenous content is something of the past not worthy of incorporating content throughout a number of topics. To create meaningful change, we need to create room for other systems of learning to occur.

Canadians have a self-serving, willful ignorance of a dishonest history of Settler relations with Indigenous nations which privileges the Settler majority of Canada (Regan, 2010). As a result, Indigenous people have been subjected to cognitive imperialism which springs from

colonization and denies people their cultural integrity by upholding the legitimacy of one

dominate way of knowing over all others. These misinterpreted and misreported key historical

events have been used to hold down Indigenous people for years (Battiste, 2013; Scott, 2020).

We have the opportunity to correct these wrongs and the TRC *Calls to Action* have encouraged

and created a nation-wide discourse on how to do this (TRC, 2015b). Having a shared

Indigenous-Canadian narrative will benefit all Canadians and, in the process, contribute to

justice.

2.4 CONCLUSION

Decolonization does not occur without inclusion of Indigenous voices and without

reconciling the relationships, histories and collective memories experienced in Canada. This is a

result of hundreds of years of a broken relationship divided by conflict on rights, health, politics

and education (GNWT, 2013; TRC, 2015a). Regan (2010) states that

> Decolonization is not "integration" or the token inclusion of Indigenous ceremony.
> Rather, it involves a paradigm shift from a culture of denial to the making of space for
> Indigenous political philosophies and knowledge systems as they resurge, thereby
> shifting cultural perceptions and power relations in real ways (p. 189).

Decolonization Indigenization is about recreating and re-righting Indigenous history to better

reflect Indigenous perspectives and experiences (Smith, 1999). Revising pedagogy used to create

and transfer knowledge is intended to create inclusive teaching and learning practices reflective

of Indigenous ways of knowing.

Throughout this section we have looked at Indigenous scholarship and trends in the

academy that have shaped our current system. Examples of policies, Indigenous scholars and

research have provided evidence to support an identifiable movement towards Indigenizing the

academy. To recognize the divide between Indigenous and Western perspectives and

worldviews, it is first essential to understand the history and legacy of colonization, including

that of the residential schools; this was done through the inclusion of my dad's story and the impacts on me as an intergenerational residential school survivor. Frameworks for Indigenizing the academy have been explored and supplemented with examples of how universities are approaching Indigenization. This research has braided together the work of Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) 4R's framework for Indigenizing the academy which includes respect, reciprocity, relevance and responsibility along with Gaudry and Lorenz (2018a) three-portion spectrum describing post-secondary approaches to Indigenization which starts at inclusion, moving to reconciliation, and then decolonization to deepen and expand on the process of Indigenizing the academy. This paper is an example of decolonizing the academy through the use of an Indigenous paradigm and the combination of using existing literature focused on Indigenizing the academy to braid together frameworks to further the understanding and the movement of Indigenization within the academy.

CHAPTER 3: KNOWLEDGE IS RELATIONAL

3.1 INDIGENOUS WAYS OF KNOWING

This research is situated in an Indigenous paradigm which is distinctively different from the dominant paradigms described by Guba and Lincoln (1994). The commonality of positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism as paradigms is that knowledge is believed to be from an individual perspective. Shawn Wilson proclaims that many Indigenous researchers see themselves as the interpreters of knowledge which belong to the cosmos (2008). Knowledge cannot be owned by an individual. Indigenous perspectives believe that knowledge is relational and belongs to all creation which is shared. Researchers are a part of a larger process of uncovering knowledge which belongs to a greater collective; the central difference between Indigenous and Western paradigms is the ownership of knowledge (Kovach, 2010a; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008).

In this section I will discuss how my research methodology stems from the ontology (what is real) and epistemology (what is knowledge) of an Indigenous paradigm. Kovach (2010b) uses the term paradigmatic in relation to Indigenous methodologies to emphasize that research flows from Indigenous worldviews and values and is accountable to the relations of that research. An approach often used in Indigenous research is to decolonize dominant methodologies as a means of Indigenizing them; an example of this is demonstrated through the use of incorporating Indigenous protocols such as ceremony, Elder involvement or reciprocity into a dominant framework. This approach has been effective but is an attempt to Indigenize dominant paradigms and does not fall within an Indigenous paradigm. Shawn Wilson (2014) has described the Indigenous paradigm as a philosophy to ensure it is not exclusive and more inclusive of those that believe in love in action. He uses the example of considering himself a

feminist and not being a woman; therefore, following an Indigenous paradigm is not exclusive to Indigenous researchers.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) developed the 4R's as a framework for Indigenizing efforts. These include respect, reciprocity, relevance and responsibility. The 4R's are foundational values and represent perspectives of respect for Indigenous ways of knowing, reciprocity in relationships, relevant programs, services and research and the responsibility to take control. An Indigenous research framework that embraces relevance, responsibility, respect and reciprocity with relationality as the fastening component will guide my approach. Wilson (2008) shared his thoughts on relationality:

> An Indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational. Knowledge is shared with all creation. It is not just interpersonal relationships, or just with the research subjects I may be working with, but it is a relationship with all of creation. It is with the cosmos; it is with the animals, with the plants, with the earth that we share this knowledge. It goes beyond the idea of individual knowledge to the concept of relational knowledge. [hence] you are answerable to all your relations when you are doing research (p.177).

It is imperative to understand that relationality is an Indigenous worldview which holds the researcher accountable to developing a relationship or interconnectedness with not only the research and research participants but an interconnectedness with more than just the self and others. It extends to include the environment, animals, ideas, spirit world, culture, language as well as the past and future (Little Bear, 2000).

In this section my intent is to connect the Indigenous paradigm with an explanation of what is real and how we come to know what is real through relational accountability. This research ensured that methods were relevant to Indigenous perspectives and experiences, that respect at all levels was maintained throughout the research process, reciprocal relationships were fostered and responsibility was demonstrated through forms of participation. Reciprocity

within an Indigenous research paradigm requires relationship through listening and learning from each other and exchanging ideas. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) summarizes this by stating "when indigenous peoples become the researchers and not merely the researched, the activity of the research is transformed. Questions are framed differently, priorities are ranked differently, problems are defined differently, people participate on different terms" (p. 193).

Wilson (2008) states that "we Indigenous scholars have begun to assert our power; we are no longer allowing others to speak in our stead. We articulate our own research paradigms and demand that research conducted in our communities follows our codes of conduct and honours our systems of knowledge and worldviews" (p. 14). He continues to explain that "part of developing an Indigenous research paradigm is that we can use methods and forms of expression that we judge to be valid for ourselves" (p. 14). This supports the notion that Indigenous researchers are paving the road to an Indigenous paradigm that is credible, valid and accepted within the academy and this is my goal too.

3.2 INDIGENOUS PARADIGM

Introduced earlier in this paper, Elder Dr. Albert Marshall's Two-Eyed Seeing *Etuaptmumk,* has become a pan-Indigenous mantra but is derived from his Mi'kmaq roots where he recognizes community as responsibility. To actively see both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing is a process which leads to success. He describes it as using your eyes independently shifting back and forth between perspectives, which results in a meeting place (Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall, 2012). There is also the notion that when gifted knowledge you have the responsibility to act upon that knowledge in a good way. This is how I have been able to be successful in my search; grounded in every step I have had to see both ways of knowing and actively balance each worldview to the best of my ability with relationships being the fastening component. Marshall presented this as a guest and a gift into other territories and it

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has been used and adapted in research (Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall, 2012). Through attendance of Liberal Education (LBED) 1850 I was gifted the knowledge from Don McIntyre of the notion of being a good host and a good guest and how this is derived from Indigenous values. As a Dene woman I was also taught this from my home community.

This paradigm brings to the table an understanding of storytelling and how it is connected to relationships, learning this is why I shared the story of my father and how his experience as a Residential School Survivor impacted me on this research journey. This thesis is being done on Blackfoot Territory and therefore as a guest I reached out to Elder Francis First Charger who is a respected and knowledgeable Blackfoot Elder and he agreed to act as the host of this journey. Francis and I spent weeks together discussing my research interests, my intent and what I hoped the journey would look like. We discussed how our relationships could benefit the process and what kind of guidance I would need from him. I knew from the onset that I would need his help to ensure I was properly conducting my sharing circles, but I also realized that his knowledge, expertise and wisdom would benefit my search extensively and I requested that he sit on the committee as a reviewing committee member. Having Francis as the Elder guiding my research was part of a larger systemic process because of his skills, history, wisdom and cultural knowledge.

Francis and I exchanged practices of how things were done, he shared knowledge about how Blackfoot circles are performed and how we would follow these practices to the best of our ability given we were working in online environments. More details about these protocols are included in appendix (J). I gifted him tobacco and he gifted me the teachings needed for this search.

3.3 GATHERING STORIES

In the beginning of this paper, you read my dad's story as well as my story and I have situated myself within this research to recognize and nourish the personal growth component of this process and product. Bastien (2005) notes in her research that the aspect of personally benefitting from research is an inevitable by-product of Indigenous research, throughout the research I kept an open heart and considered the process a learning journey. People live their lives immersed in their stories, and I want to honour that. We all have a story to tell and throughout history this has been a means of communicating our needs, wants and desires. How the story is told is the responsibility of the storyteller and with this comes significant accountability. It is important to understand the complexity of stories. They pass on history, traditions, teachings, belief and values (Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2009). Stories can be the blueprint of a map and provide direction for others. They can be funny, entertaining, sad, serious, frustrating and complex. Some stories are shared, filtered, edited and told from the perspectives of others. There are chances stories will be misrepresented, mistreated, misused and at times manipulated. Stories hold power.

Indigenous Storywork is a method of privileging Indigenous voices through research (Archibald, 2008). Kovach (2009) describes two types of stories that are often used in research methodology; mythical stories that are intended to teach and stories that are described as personal. Story is a vital component of validating and presenting knowledge which is respectful of relationships. (Archibald, 2008; Archibald, 2020; Fast & Kovach 2019; Kovach 2010a; Kovach 2010b, Wilson, 2008; Leddy, 2010). Archibald (2008) outlined her "storywork pedagogy as a process-oriented approach where the learner engages in story to find answers and meaning" (p. 5). She has used: respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness and synergy as the guiding principles to storywork and asserts that they take on a

life of their own and become the teacher if the principles are used properly (Archibald, 2008). These principles are very similar to the 4R approach that will guide this process and the interrelatedness, synergy and holism are aspects of the molding of relational accountability.

3.4 SHARING CIRCLES

Sharing circles were used in this research to gather Indigenous student perspectives on Indigenization within the academy. Sharing circles have a sacred aspect to them in Blackfoot culture. They are used for healing and growth. Sharing circles are based on the notion that there are equitable power relations, including participants and the facilitator, who is often an Elder. Throughout the process, stories are shared by participants. Sharing circles can be explained as acts of sharing all aspects of the individual. This is often a combination of heart, mind, body and spirit sharing. Permission is given to the researcher to report on the discussions (Davis et al. 2018; Nabigon, Hagey, Webster, & MacKay, 1999; Lavallee, 2009; Tachine et al., 2016; Wright, Wahoush, Ballentyne, Gabel & Jack, 2016). There is an acknowledgment of a spiritual component of a sharing circle, and it is often recognized that spirits of our ancestors and the Creator help guide the process and the participants contribute to the energy of the circle. The process is structured as non-judgemental, supportive, respectful and attentive listening is required. Not all sharing circles follow the same protocols as we all come from different traditions.

Each of the sharing circles followed Blackfoot protocol and started with an opening ceremony led by Elder Francis First Charger. As the researcher, I reviewed protocols and instructions for the circle (see Appendix C) and used the sharing circle blueprint as a guide to start the sharing (see Appendix D).

3.5 CONVERSATION BASED INTERVIEWS

The interviews consisted of open-ended questions that "open up topics and allow respondents to construct answers, in collaboration with listeners, in the way that they find meaningful" (Riessman, 1994 p. 54). The themes of the questions gently followed Gaudry and Lorenz's (2018a) spectrum of Indigenization within the academy but overall were attuned with a conversational method (Kovach, 2010b; Leddy, 2010) to ensure that I followed the principles which embraces relevance, responsibility, respect, and reciprocity (Kirkness & Bernhardt, 1991). This allowed the participants flexibility to share what they felt was important regarding this topic. This approach respects oral traditions as a mean of sharing knowledge and is grounded in relational accountability. The conversation-based interviews followed a blueprint which included a rationale for the questions being asked (see Appendix B), however, the conversations tended to flow organically and often the blueprint was not needed and served as more of a guide to ensure the topics were covered. At the end of the conversation, I reviewed the guide and followed up with additional questions if needed. Conversational method of inquiry is a common method used throughout qualitative research (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009; Kovach, 2010b; Leddy, 2010). When used within an Indigenous paradigm, it significantly includes several unique factors:

- the link to an Indigenous worldview within an Indigenous paradigm
- the responsibility to ensure relational accountability and respect for cultural protocols.
- the approach of being flexible and informal within a collaborative dialogic setting.
- the approach is also reflexive (Kovach, 2010b).

To retain Indigenous Knowledge and to pass on culture and history the use of storytelling as a method of inquiry is used. Storytelling is the way Indigenous people have shared information since time immemorial (Archibald, 2008; Geia, Hayes & Usher, 2013; Kovach, 2010a, Kovach, 2010b; Leddy, 2010; Wilson, 2008). It is also one method which allows

Indigenous scholars to add to academic research and be recognized as experts in their fields of study (Leddy, 2010).

3.6 STORY GATHERING PROCESS

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions, which change daily, sharing circles and conversation-based interviews were scheduled using Zoom. Prior to these being scheduled, I met by phone with all participants to ensure they were comfortable with the protocols, process and consent form and during this time relationships were built through the sharing of stories and intent of the research. After the scheduled meetings participants provided their email addresses and physical address, and electronic money transfers were sent to participants and small gifts were dropped off on their doorstep. This often resulted in additional phone calls of appreciation and gratitude for being involved in the process.

The sharing circles and conversation-based interviews were digitally audio and video recorded, and the recordings were professionally transcribed, using a third-party transcription service, Rev.com. Prior to recording the material, participants signed consent forms, agreeing to be recorded, and understood that the recordings would be heard by the transcriptionist, Rev.com. To add depth and understanding to the audio recordings, I took notes after the sharing circle and conversation-based interviews which consisted of my reflection on the process. The intent of this is to record any interesting observations including demeanor, gestures or body language among participants, memorable stories and how I felt when hearing them and any commonalities that resonated during the meetings. Immediately after the sharing circles and conversation-based interviews, I listened to each recording to ensure accuracy and sound of the recording, this allowed me to add depth and understanding to my notes and further explore my reflections on the process and stories, experiences and suggestions which were shared.

Transcripts were provided electronically through email to participants which were password protected for final approval of their comments. Participants had ten business days from the time the transcripts were sent to provide comments and edits along with feedback, if no response was received, they were determined approved. There were some minor edits made by participants. Participants were only granted the opportunity to provide edits on their own personal comments and stories. It is essential to ensure that the stories shared are accurate reflections of the intent of the participants.

Several steps were taken to protect the anonymity and identity of participants. To protect the participants' stories, all transcripts were stored on a password-protected, secured digital files on the researcher's personal computer. The files containing the audio-recording and the transcripts were secured in separate password protected file on the same password protected computer. As a backup, files were stored on a password protected USB and locked in a secure cabinet. Access to those files were limited to those directly involved with the study, including the researcher and research committee members with the exception of the external transcriber, Rev.com.

To maintain confidentially among members of the sharing circle, the consent form contained a section regarding confidentiality of information which was also disclosed during the sharing circles. Participants agreed to the following: a) to hold in confidence any and all stories or experiences shared during the sharing circle b) respect all members of the circle through respectful behavior and comments c) when talking about the circle to others, leave all identifying material about the other members out of the conversation.

3.7 "IN A GOOD WAY"

I worked closely with the University Ethical Research Board (ERB) to ensure that the research design aligned with the universities ethical principles while still honoring Indigenous

ethics and protocols. The Indigenous ethics protocol was guided by Kirkness and Bernhardt (1991) 4R framework and all approaches in this section align with the 4R's. The approval of the Human Subject Research Committee (HSRC) provided guidance and confidence in the roles, responsibilities, and rights of the participants and researcher. Blending an Indigenous research design with the ERB was challenging at times and required additional explanations and supporting evidence however, the goal remained to ensure that the research was done ethically, respecting the culture, knowledge and values of Indigenous participants while upholding academic integrity.

There are policies in place regarding the principles of ownership of research and data, control of the research, access to the data, and possession more commonly known as OCAP which is essentially a set of rules specifying that First Nations own the data and have control over how it is used (Schnarch, 2004). These principles were founded to provide direction on how community members should be treated throughout the research process and how communities should be involved (Schnarch, 2004). There is also the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) which published 15 guidelines for research involving Indigenous people. These guidelines provide an overview and understanding of Indigenous worldview and how to approach knowledge transfer is respectful, emphasizing researcher's responsibilities (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2007).

According to Kovach (2010a), there are four ethical considerations to support the reciprocity of relationships. First, the research methodology must be aligned with Indigenous values and demonstrate accountability to the community; the research must embrace anti-harm methods and benefit the community. Gathering stories through research is not objective, nor will it appear unbiased. The very nature of an Indigenous research paradigm is the awareness that I as the researcher am part of this knowledge revelation and will develop relationships with those

participants involved. It is the understanding that my feelings are connected to my mental thought process and when I use reason, ask questions, and think, my research will be connected to my emotions and therefore never entirely free of bias or subjectivity.

Indigenous worldviews consider Elders as subject matter experts of life (Wilson, 2008). They hold teachings, knowledge, stories and ceremonies of all of our relations and are an essential component of research processes. The role of the Elder continued to inform the process on protocol and procedure which were culturally specific to Blackfoot territory. I worked closely with Blackfoot Elder Francis First Charger, who is the Elder-in-Residence as the University of Lethbridge and also a member of the review committee to guide my research protocols. If Elder First Charger had recommendations or suggested changes, I adapted my approach as necessary, given that it did not impact the validity, reliability, and ethical components of the study (Kovach, 2010a; Lavallee, 2009; Tachine, Bird & Cabrera, 2016; Windchief & Ryan, 2019; Wilson, 2008).

3.8 RECRUITMENT

I used purposive sampling methods to recruit participants. Patron (1995) describes this process as a method of targeting information rich cases to enhance the study. Purposeful sampling complimented the data gathering method of sharing circles and conversation-based interviews. This approach allowed me to examine the complexity of different experiences and how those complex experiences relate to this topic.

Indigenization as a movement is constantly evolving within academia and ensuring up-to-date reflective experiences is important. The participants of this study were self-identified Indigenous students at the University of Lethbridge. Canada has a history of redundant and oppressive guidelines that are used to recognize and determine Indigeneity (AFN, 2019) making self-identification even more important. Participants self-identified as Indigenous and were only

required to state their Nation or community; no proof was required. There was a small risk that some may claim Indigeneity who have not grown up with the experience of being an Indigenous person. This has occurred in the past and is seen through a select few who are seizing opportunities designated for Indigenous people. For the purposes of this study self-identification was sufficient and proof was not required. I worked directly with Lindi Shade, Iikaisskini Manager at the Indigenous Student Centre, to distribute a recruitment email to University of Lethbridge Indigenous students (see Appendix E).

Students from different Nations, age groups, genders, faculties, and academic majors took part in the study. I assessed whether or not these factors had influenced their experiences of Indigenization at the University of Lethbridge. Further, demographics indicated that Indigenous women obtain higher rates of education then Indigenous men. Indigenous women hold university degrees at a rate of 16.6%, which is nearly double of Indigenous men 7.6% (Statistics Canada, 2020). A total of 10 Indigenous women participated in the sharing circles and interviews and 6 Indigenous men.

Indigenous paradigms centralize reciprocity through gift giving to acknowledge the importance and value of shared stories (Archibald, 2020; Archibald, 2008; Fast & Kovach 2019; Lavallee, 2009). Kovach (2009) proclaims that providing a gift to participants signifies the good intentions of the researcher and that the research will be used in a good way. Each participant received a culturally appropriate gift according to their customs. I offered students, for instance, tobacco in exchange for their story, since it is given in exchange for something. Participants also received an honorarium of $100 for taking part in the study which was sent electronically. This thesis was funded through Alberta Indigenous Mentoring in Health Innovation (AIM-HI) and Hotıì ts'eeda Strategy For Patient Oriented Research (SPOR) Governing Council.

3.9 SAMPLE SIZE

Research indicates that when using sharing circles as a method of data collection 1-3 sharing circles are used with participants ranging from 2-8 members per circle (Brandenburger, Wells, Stluka, 2017; Akearok, Cueva, Stoor, Larsen, Rink, Kanayurak, Emelyanova, & Hiratsuka, 2019; Lavallee, 2009; Tachine et al., 2017). Following this, I conducted two sharing circles: the first circle had 5 participants and the second circle had 7 participants. There were 4 conversation-based interviews completed to build on the findings from the sharing circles.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 COMING TO KNOW THE KNOWLEDGE

Data analysis is not off-the-shelf; rather, it is custom-built, revised, and "choreographed" (Huberman & Miles, 1994). Staying true to the Indigenous paradigm takes creativity and time. There is limited research on Indigenous data analysis and for this reason I did not refine the chosen method; rather I had hoped to custom build the analysis to honor an Indigenous paradigm as the search progressed. Data collection, data analysis and report writing are not separated procedures; they are interrelated and continue simultaneously as the research progresses (Myers, 2020). Ensuring that my data analysis aligned with my worldview was the most challenging aspect of this thesis journey. I felt a responsibility to the participants and experiences that were shared and it was crucial to ensure Indigenous congruency. Part of the data analysis struggle included the lack of process and previous research which felt like more of a search of its own. I had to consider areas of history, protocols, community culture, oppression, relationships and spirit to ensure I was upholding the integrity of an Indigenous paradigm. I explore this later in the sections describing how I stayed true to the 4R's in this search. In the next section I will discuss how the use of storywork is used in the data analysis process.

4.1.1 STORY

Lavallee's (2009) study indicates that using standard qualitative data analysis methods for sharing circles is problematic and not aligned with Indigenous values of storytelling. She determined that these methods were unsupportive of Indigenous frameworks because the approach deconstructed the stories and failed to honor the story or authentically capture the participants' voices. Similarly, Tachine, et al. (2016) used the method of sharing circles and were concerned with the process of sharing the findings in a way that respected and honoured the participants. As such, they collectively created resources and strategies to share what they

learned from the research with the appropriate administrators with the intent of creating change that would benefit participants. This served as reciprocity in data analysis.

Being respectful and authentically representing the voices of participants through the analysis is crucial (Lavallee, 2009). Indigenous scholar Gregory Cajete describes data analysis as "coming to know", which he portrays as a process of making meaning and understanding (2000). Each conversation-based interview and sharing circle gently followed the three-portion spectrum of Indigenization which ranged from inclusion moving to reconciliation then to decolonization (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018a) this was also used when "coming to know" the data as a thematic structure to organize my findings. This approach allowed me to make the connection between stories and their potential to deepen and provide context to the process of Indigenization in academia. I have presented the findings from the conversation-based interviews and sharing circle stories through a collective storywork approach, with the continued support and approval from the participants. This approach is often described as narrative inquiry, but to stay true to an Indigenous paradigm, I chose to use the concept of storywork, which emphasizes the importance of storytelling customs which are seen in most Indigenous cultures (Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2009; Smith 1999). Tachine, Cabrera, Yellow Bird (2017) used a similar approach of telling condensed stories when presenting the data from their sharing circles and found it to be culturally respectful to Indigenous ways of knowing. Hallett, Held, McCormick, Simonds, Real Bird, Martin and Trottier (2017) worked collaboratively with community participants, Elders and an academic review board to develop thematic coding for analyzing interview data that was culturally appropriate for storytelling. They quickly realized this method was disrespectful of Indigenous storytelling and participants did not approve the findings. Instead, they worked to ensure participant voices were honoured and stories remained intact while respecting the community's ways of knowing and making meaning. The methodology of collective storywork

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(Marsden, 2005; Archibald, 2008) along with deductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) has allowed me to engage with multiple perspectives and stories to reflect and record using the themes that have guided this research, inclusion, reconciliation and decolonization as they relate to Indigenization.

The collective storywork (Marsden 2005; Archibald, 2008) will ensure that I honor the individual voices of storytelling and provide an opportunity to weave the stories together to provide insight and movement towards deepening the experiences of Indigenization efforts. Margaret Kovach (2009) argues that story and meaning are incapable of being separated. She states, "stories are vessels for passing along teachings, medicines and practices that can assist members of the collective" (p.95). Kovach (2020) provides an example in her research *Searching for Arrowheads* which used condensed stories from her interviews to honor the voice of participants and then followed this with a personal narrative storytelling reflection which allowed her to reflect on the conversations, stories and teachings.

I used Kovach's method to reflect on the stories' key teachings to determine how the process aligned within Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) 4R framework (respect, reciprocity, relevance and responsibility) for Indigenizing the academy. Reading and re-reading the transcribed interview data and listening and watching the conversation-based interview and sharing circle Zoom recordings allowed me to familiarize myself with the data and build stronger relationships with the participants and stories. During this time, I wrote in my reflection journal and paid close attention to stories and experiences that resonated with me and my story. I focused on the personal movements I felt with the sharing, which is often described as subjective, although personal is a more accurate description. Indigenous methods are personal, this thesis is deeply personal and throughout this journey I have learned about my position and

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place within this search for information and how my history, experiences, worldview and culture have impacted the process.

I coded the transcripts with the identified themes of inclusion, reconciliation and decolonization by using a color-coded system of highlighting sections in the transcripts that fit these descriptions. I used purple to represent stories that were inclusive, green to identify stories which fit into reconciliation and red for stories which described decolonization. I then read and reread the stories to ensure they were accurate reflections of each category I worked individually with those participants that identified the willingness to continue the review and approval process of the stories to confirm my understanding of what was shared and how these fit into the themes. By ensuring that this process aligned with an Indigenous paradigm I created an opportunity to privilege Indigenous student voices in the context of post-secondary education which is often dominated by a Eurocentric patriarchal narrative.

4.2 RELEVANCE, RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY & RECIPROCITY

This section will demonstrate the rigor applied to the data collection, analysis, and reporting of this study using approaches that honour and respect an Indigenous paradigm. Guba and Lincoln (1989) describe the trustworthiness of qualitative research and assesses it into four categories: credibility, transferability, dependably and confirmability of qualitative research. Their approach does not support the Indigenous research framework in this research. Instead, I embraced Kirkness and Bernhardt's (1991) framework of relevance, responsibility, respect and reciprocity with relationality as the foundation of this approach. This research framework ensured that data collection and analysis were relevant to Indigenous perspectives and experiences, respect was demonstrated throughout process, reciprocity shown, relationships maintained with the research participants and research, and responsibility was shown through all

forms of work. In the next section, I explain how the 4R's contribute to the quality of data collection and analysis; each are connected and dependent on one another.

4.2.1 RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility is undeniably ingrained in knowledge. Windchief and Ryan (2019) explain the role of Indigenous researchers and their commitment to honoring community values while upholding academic procedural integrity. If Indigenous researchers act unethically in their community and ignore cultural protocols while conducting research, there is not the option of replacing their community or Nation. For Indigenous academics, these consequences are not only job loss, but it has the potential to create lasting damage to the researchers' relationships in their community. As described earlier Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall describes Two-Eyed seeing, which is seeing both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives. (Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall, 2012).

As a researcher, I have a responsibility to uphold academic integrity as well as the integrity of using an Indigenous paradigm, which includes the relationships that I develop with my participants and the communities that I work with. I have ensured that the stories of participants' experiences are true reflections of their intent by incorporating the review and approval process at the level of data collection and analysis. Ethical practices of an Indigenous researcher when analyzing data lie in the responsibility to hold themselves accountable to the relations that are grounded in the Indigenous paradigm; this includes my relationships with the research participants and within the academy. Throughout this research I was "strong like two people", a phrase coined by Tłı̨chǫ Elder Elizabeth Mackenzie, who encouraged youth to never lose site of the teaching and traditions of the Dene, but to be strong in the white man's world (GNWT, 2013).

4.2.2 RECIPROCITY

At all stages, I have shown reciprocity by establishing relationships with participants, following Indigenous protocols and upholding the integrity of the stories. This required time and commitment which was demonstrated in the preparatory work. I discussed the research intent with participants before the data gathering and worked closely with them to finalize the analysis and presentation of the stories. The narrative storywork reflections demonstrate reciprocity by providing my observations through a written expression of the conversations and stories which focused on key teachings and how they related to this study. Working with Elder Francis demonstrated reciprocity by ensuring that my intentions were respectful and honourable to Indigenous protocols and knowledge creation processes.

The nature of an Indigenous research paradigm is based on the notion that the researcher is part of the knowledge creation process and for this reason I have chosen to share my stories and continue to share my voice throughout the project (Kovach, 2010a, Kovach, 2010b; Wilson, 2008) as a form of reciprocity. Our shared story allowed me to make connections through family history, existing relations, interests and community ties.

4.2.3 RELEVANCE

Throughout the data collection and analysis, Blackfoot specific methods and protocols were used to ensure that the process was relevant to Indigenous perspectives and experiences. It is the responsibility of the researcher to be aware of the relationship of the researching self as well as how the research process, and findings will impact the community. For this research, Indigenous place was considered Indigenous space as I did not work directly with Kainai, Piikani or Siksika. Protocols were space specific and were tailored specific to the participant, this was discussed in detail in the ethics and protocol section. Given that I am a guest on the Blackfoot Confederacy territory I am honored and humbled by the Blackfoot ways of knowing and caring

for this land including my research therefore, the use of a Blackfoot Elder as my expert to guide me in this area ensured relevant protocols and procedures were utilized.

The data collection methods of using both conversation-based interviews and sharing circles validated culturally relevant approaches to gathering stories. It also represented triangulation, adding to the discovery, interpretation, and meaning of the stories by comparing group recollections against individual perspectives (Myers, 2019). Windchief and Ryan (2019) discuss the importance of analyzing the data and writing the findings in a way which keeps the question of "who is the work for?" as the central component when completing this task. They explore the balancing act of following the formal training received within the academy while also upholding the relevance and respect to their communities.

4.2.4 RESPECT

Respect was demonstrated by ensuring the integrity of the experiences shared were true reflections of the participants. The analysis entailed a review and approval process to allow for participation and collaboration which respected the voice and decisions of participants. The choice to use condensed stories showed respect by capturing the authentic voice of the storyteller and keeping the story intact by not tearing it down for further analysis (Kovach, 2009).

Relevance, responsibility, respect, and reciprocity set the groundwork for building relationships. Sharing personal stories and situating self in the research allowed me to speak about personal identifiers and beliefs, and also served as an opportunity to express my theoretical stance, how I see the world, and what I believe to be true. This speaks to accountability and integrity as a researcher and is a way to express truthfully biases, assumptions and theoretical tendencies throughout the process as well as the final product of the research (Fast & Kovach, 2019). Building these relationships through respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and relevance guided me through the data collection and analysis and built trust throughout the process as I

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mobilized action in this journey. Archibald (2008) says, "we must let our emotions surface. As the Elders say, it is important to listen with, "three ears: two on the sides of our head and the one that is in our heart" (p. 8).

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

5.1 COMING TO KNOW THE STORIES

Throughout this paper the goal of 'Indigenizing the Academy' is described as a systematic shift to include Indigenous Knowledge into the polices, programs and practices into the university which is seen and felt throughout all levels of governance, administration and practice. Essentially it is making room for other ways of knowing which is braided through the day-to-day work of the institutions. Indigenization has been described as a process of including Indigenous Knowledge systems as an accepted method of knowledge creation. In relation to the university, this includes bringing Indigenous Knowledge and approaches into the institution alongside Western knowledge systems. Throughout the discussions and shared student experiences it is clear that Indigenization does not mean discarding what currently exists however, it is combining two systems of knowing which requires the current system to create room for learners to understand and appreciate both (Smith, 1999). This process needs to be about empowering Indigenous voices that are led by Indigenous people and communities with the goal of a resurgence of Indigenous Knowledge.

This study aims to create a space for Indigenous students to share their stories, experiences and thoughts on how we can deepen and improve the process of Indigenizing the academy. The conversation-based interviews and sharing circles were gently guided by an interview blueprint which used the themes of inclusion, reconciliation and decolonization (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018a). Participants did not always follow this as a guide and often shared what felt right for them at the time, which was the intent of the chosen methods of gathering stories. It was clear from the onset of the meetings that participants were eager to have their voices heard and share their experiences. Meetings, on average, lasted between 30-45 minutes and started with a discussion around process and protocols which intended to answer questions

and develop relationships with participants. Through these conversations it was clear that there were experiences that needed to be shared.

At the beginning of the sharing circles Elder Francis opened the circle in prayer and shared a story to set the tone of the meeting, during this time the circle was not recorded as per Blackfoot protocol. Once the story was complete recording started. Elder Francis also closed each round of the circle with comments, reflections and encouragement to participants.

Gregory Cajete is an Indigenous scholar, and he describes the data analysis process as "coming to know" the data which is essentially the meaning making process (2000). Throughout the analysis I kept "coming to know" the participants' stories as a focal point when exploring Indigenization in relation to the themes of inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonization.

I have presented the findings from the conversation-based interviews and sharing circle stories in accordance with the themes of inclusion, reconciliation and decolonization using a collective storywork approach, this process allowed continued support and approval from the participants to ensure the stories being highlighted were accurate. I also used Kovach's method of narrative reflection to determine the key teachings and how they aligned with my understandings and thoughts (Kovach, 2009). This created another opportunity to demonstrate vulnerability and reciprocity and served as a reminder to respect the stories shared.

5.1.1 STORIES OF INDIGENOUS INCLUSION

Indigenization as an inclusion effort is narrow in its approach. Its target is increasing the representation of Indigenous faculty, staff, and students without fundamentally changing structures within the institution. It is often seen through Indigenous specific programs and recruitment efforts created to teach, support, and assist Indigenous students, staff, and faculty to be successful within the institution (Parent, 2017). Three of the participants benefited from the Indigenous Student Success Cohort which is the university's transition program and described

the experience as being supportive and informative. It allowed them a semester or two to gain confidence within an unfamiliar system and learn about the extra support systems that were available. The professors who are Indigenous and non-Indigenous are familiar with the unique struggles of being an Indigenous student and provide supports and flexibility to encourage success. The goal of the transition process is to provide individual Indigenous students the support, knowledge and skills required to understand and be comfortable with university norms, procedures, and expectations (Parent, 2017).

There was a common experience with struggling to access Indigenous faculty and administration. The University of Lethbridge does not record Indigenous employment rates and does not have an employment equity program (University of Lethbridge, 2021). The University of Lethbridge is set up with a division of Indigenous Student Services which is referred to as Iikaisskini Student Services and includes a handful of Indigenous employees that serve the Indigenous students and answer Indigenous specific questions and concerns. Throughout the sharing of stories, it was clear that the handful of employees worked hard at creating a supportive environment for Indigenous students. It was often expressed that staff members made tremendous impacts on the success and experience of students. One of the participants shared the following:

> Rhonda Crow is the Indigenous liaison within the Dhillon School of Business, and she is *"perfection"*. She's warm and welcoming, and she's willing to go above and beyond for anything that you need when she understands that there's a concern. She always offers tutoring and other supports, she's more than willing to help. She has been a complete asset to my education this time around and just her letting me know what resources are available.

The stories, comments and experiences shared with accessing the current Indigenous services demonstrated the immense support and work they are doing to create a culturally safe environment for Indigenous students to succeed. Staff are often stretched thin with the services

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they provide and the weight of creating change within a system relies on a select few. Instead of building capacity throughout the university, there is a small, siloed team tasked with dealing with all issues and meeting all the needs of Indigenous students. This creates a sense of ownership for those tasked with assisting students and often leads to "burn out" of employees. This siloed approach has been criticized as a form of tokenism, intended to be a filter between Indigenous issues and the rest of the institution (Davis et al., 2018).

Having access to Indigenous faculty and staff was a major concern for participants. One of the participants shared her experiences seeking assistance from an academic advisor:

> … her suggestion was that I should just do an Indigenous studies degree instead of pursuing pre-med because she thought I had better marks there and that I would just do better there. And I remember for me, that was really impactful because I thought... since the beginning of my journey at the university I've been trying to take up space and to honor my ancestors who fought really hard for me to be able to achieve an education, and that it always feels that there is something to prove as an Indigenous person or as a person of color and you can't be in the same space and you can't succeed in the same ways. So having that pressure on me since the beginning, and then going through that experience with that advisor brought me back to the whole battle of it all or the whole fight of it all.

This experience shows the disconnection and the lack of awareness demonstrated from the Advisor and how this impacted the students' confidence. Another participant shared a similar story of being encouraged to switch programs and take Indigenous studies:

> I feel the faculty often sees us like we have an inability to succeed in the same way as other students. So, I left that meeting thinking, "does the institution, do the advisors, do my professors just think I'm a dumb Indian that can only study Indian stuff". So even though I had these big dreams and goals of achieving other things, it wasn't what they saw for me. From that experience, I realized that if I wanted to do what I wanted to do and I had these goals and I still wanted to succeed that I was just going to have to find support and keep going, despite what other people might think and to try harder to push those barriers and those stereotypical ideas that they have about us.

There were other participants that shared comparable experiences of being encouraged to take the Indigenous studies program, as opposed to continuing with their desired program. This left the students feeling insulted and unsupported in an environment that they already struggle to

maneuver through. Students expressed feelings of being inferior, believing that something was wrong with them, or they were not intelligent enough to do things their white counterparts could. There was also the discussion that Indigenous studies was not a 'real' academic program and was viewed as downgrading their experience of being a student. The idea of having Indigenous administration throughout different departments was a discussion that was brought forward to improve and prevent these types of situations from happening. Inclusion of Indigenous faculty and administration throughout the institution is a method of providing resources and support to normalize and strengthen relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups.

There are well documented accounts of emotional, mental, spiritual, cultural, physical and sexual abuse, of Indigenous students who attended residential schools (RCAP, 1996; TRC, 2015a). This has resulted in generations of pain and suffering resulting in abusive patterns which continue to be seen and experienced today. From this there are low achievements rates which are primarily a result from systemic and cultural barriers that set the groundwork for educational marginalization (Battiste, 2013; RCAP, 1996; TRC, 2015a). The history and legacy of the IRSS has and continues to shape the lives and experiences of Indigenous students. These intergenerational impacts are felt everywhere and through every Canadian institution (GNWT, 2013; TRC, 2015a). Indigenous students continue to face struggles and hardships that are different than most students within the academy. This was apparent throughout the sharing of stories which included aspects of single parenting, financial hardships, overcoming addiction, death among family members, mental health concerns, chronic illness, and feelings of isolation. The concern that the university did not have an Indigenous counsellor on staff came up from multiple participants and it was apparent that the struggles that these participants faced were unique and overwhelming. One participant shared the following experience:

> I advocated that we need an Indigenous counselor because I'm tired of going through and having conversations about how both my parents are deceased and that I'm worried about my grandma and having awkward sympathy from people that don't understand that Indigenous people live shorter lifespans and that the diseases of civilization impact us a lot harder than other people.

Having Indigenous staff is an essential component of creating inclusive and culturally safe places for students to learn. There are currently over 500 Indigenous students enrolled at the University of Lethbridge (University of Lethbridge, 2021), this could not be reviewed against employment equity rates because employment equity information is not recorded. There should be minimum requirement for employees to have a basic understanding of the history of colonization and the legacy of residential schools and how this has impacted the current reality Indigenous students face.

There are Indigenous specific classes that you can register for at the University of Lethbridge however, a common concern was that these classes, often derived from a pan-Indigenous perspective, are largely taught by non-Indigenous instructors. Stories were shared describing professors asking Indigenous students what their thoughts were on specific topics which were often not relevant to where they were from. This was explained as being embarrassing and uncomfortable by being put on the spot and expected to comment on topics that were not of relevance to them. Participants also described the need to correct material that was being taught by non-Indigenous professors which was described as either being irrelevant to the place or inaccurate all together. One participant shared the following:

> The first time I went to university, I was 18, and I took a Native American Studies course, that was taught by a white instructor. I took five years off of school and when I went back to school, I took Indigenous Studies it was taught by a white instructor. I took an Indigenous health class. It was called Traditional Health Concepts that was taught by a white instructor. I just feel like, why not have an Indigenous Instructor or facilitator for these classes. It sends the wrong message and it's exhausting when you have to correct the professor on content that is being taught. I don't have the emotional capacity to do this three times a week. It becomes pointless and I don't even want to attend the class.

> These types of classes are important and it's what we have been fighting for but having white instructors defeats the purpose and continues to perpetuate the inaccurate legacy of Indigenous experiences within post-secondary intuitions.

Another participant shared frustration with the lack of Indigenous support within the classroom and the constant feeling of not hearing Indigenous perspectives reflected in the curriculum or the institution. The reality is that any interest in something out of the norm had to be a self-directed process. She shared this experience about her desire to find Indigenous perspectives and content:

> There's no Indigenous faculty to help mentor or guide you through those things. You really have to rely on the books that you read. I feel that's one huge difference between myself and a lot of people in my cohort, both in my master's and my PhD. I feel a deep sense of connection to people like Shawn Wilson, Margaret Kovach, and Linda Smith. I just feel like I know them based on what they've written, because that's what helped guide me. I really can emphasize with the frustration of feeling no support specifically within my program.

The desire to have Indigenous faculty and administration was common throughout the sharing. There is a disturbing absence of basic historical knowledge and misinformation about Indigenous people in Canada. Indigenous students are left without mentors or guides to assist with learning and are called on during class discussions involving Indigenous content.

The absence of a university structure to support Indigenous students was a concern among many participants. Overall, there is a lack of culturally appropriate spaces available to students. Currently there is a student lounge which is named after the late Narcisse Blood, Tatsikiistamik but it is located down in the basement which is hard to locate and not a welcoming location. There is also a Iikaisskini Indigenous Student Centre which has a gathering place that was described as modern and nice but it's almost a 15-minute walk from the student union building which makes it inconvenient for students to access. Together these designated spaces give the impression that Indigenous students are not a central part of the university. One participant shared the following:

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When I first moved here, I went down to the FNMI room. It was down in the basement and I didn't feel comfortable there. It was a small space. I felt like we were being... I don't know, segregated. I couldn't even find it at the beginning. I don't know, I just felt like it was just so far away as is the new building you have to walk 15 minutes and it's hard to find that and to have walk all the way back to the university.

Indigenization, as an inclusion effort, requires Indigenous spaces not only for Indigenous students to meet but for inclusion of relevant and respectful understandings of the Indigenous Lands which universities occupy. The stories shared highlight the need for Indigenous-specific spaces to be made available, accessible and seen on university campus, not only for Indigenous students but for all students at the University of Lethbridge who want to take part in the larger discussions of Indigenous related content.

Through this process of gathering stories, it was steadily expressed that the University is doing a good job at improving access to programming and increasing recruitment and retention rates of post-secondary students. However, it is also clear that the intent of these supports is directed towards creating environments for students to learn the norms and adjust to the Western system of the academy. There is a deeply entrenched norm of Western knowledge systems being the neutral and essential system for the academy which sets a level platform and playing field for all students (Battiste, 2013). This system is not working for everyone, and the stories shared in the sharing circles display the resistance, resilience and courage of Indigenous students to uphold and value Indigenous ways of knowing. The movement to Indigenize is falling on the shoulders of a handful of Indigenous scholars, staff and students to advance the work of non-Indigenous scholars to include Indigenous materials in the classroom. These gestures, while considered an improvement, have the tendency to be degrading and tokenistic in nature (Lavallee, 2020). We need to do more than invite Indigenous scholars, Elders and students to sit on committees, provide guest lectures and provide opening comments at meetings to meet our inclusion needs. Participants shared stories of challenging the status quo and questioned polices, intent of

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programs and curriculum content. This can be an exhausting and a risky process for marginalized students and faculty, and an unreasonable burden. There was a strong message that Indigenous Knowledge needs to be respected and included to support a more transformative approach to Indigenization.

5.1.2 STORIES OF RECONCILIATION INDIGENIZATION

Indigenization reconciliation is an approach that includes relationship building and creating inclusive environments for Indigenous students to succeed. Success from Indigenous student perspectives is measured differently and includes aspects of emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual safety; given this, the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge creation, sharing and histories within the academy is essential (Battiste, 2009). There are two components of reconciliation in Canada; the first is "truth telling" and the next is finding ways to repair the broken relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians (TRC, 2015a). Part of reconciling these relationships is learning about and understanding residential schools, as well as other culturally genocidal practices. The impacts of these practices continue to have debilitating effects. A significant and challenging aspect of Indigenizing the academy will be correcting the legacy of a country that has so misused its educational systems.

There was a reoccurring theme heard from students who felt that they were being silenced, not being heard, and not being able to take up "*space*". There was also the feeling that when they did take up space their voice was not valued in the classroom. One participant shared the following:

> In terms of racism or discrimination and how I have experienced this. I find the minimizing of your voice is the biggest thing. It took me years to feel comfortable enough to speak up, and even then, the conversation just gets redirected to something else. And it's not valued, your perspective or your experience or who you are. I mean, once you start talking, it's the eye rolls in the classroom and amongst people who don't want to listen to another story.

This story is important and provides an example of oppression within the classroom and the impacts that silencing has on students.

Discussions around needing to be the advocate on Indigenous content was expressed. There was frustration experienced by participants who enrolled in classes with the expectation that there would be an acknowledgment of an Indigenous perspective in the classroom. The need and desire to '*tell the truth*' and educate others was expressed in the following story one of the participants:

> I'll tell you what Indigenization is, its Indigenous people taking control of the story and the narrative and telling it honestly and truthfully and authentically, so that people have to listen…It's my time to tell you what my lived experiences and what our family's history is. And that's for all Indigenous people. They carry the weight of being their own ambassadors, which is really hard…we need people to start listening to those that carry the stories and carry the knowledge and carry the authenticity of their families into these institutions…Indigenization to me, if I'm saying it from a change-based model or like a perspective of shifting the needle a little bit more towards our end goal of reconciliation and decolonization, it's that analyzing systems and incorporating Indigenous histories and knowledge in with Euro-Canadian histories and knowledge. So, if I go to a History 1000 class, we don't start from New France. This history, the teacher should be able to talk about pre-contact societies. They should be able to understand that Canada is not just New France forward and that before that there was history…we've erased Indigenous histories. We've erased Black history in Canada. We've erased any notions of LGBTQ2S+ history in Canada. We are a country of erasure. And because of that, we now have to use our emotional labor to educate some scientists, some white professors about Indigenous people because they refuse to want to do it, because they haven't been told that way. Our unconscious bias in this country has been built on a very Eurocentric model of historiography.

This story has an undertone of anger and frustration because of the realization that they study within a system that does not allow for their truth to be heard. There were many comments from participants on the need for Indigenous specific training for faculty and staff. There is currently no Indigenous training available for employees at the University of Lethbridge. There is no mandate which requires faculty and staff to acknowledge or learn the colonial history of educational practices in Canada and how these practices have impacted Indigenous Nations. The TRC *Calls to Action* 57 has called on universities to ensure that administrators and students have

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the resources to build capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect which requires knowledge of the history of colonization and legacy of residential schools and how this continues to impact Indigenous students today (TRC, 2015b). Many universities are treating these histories as optional, available perhaps for those who actively pursue it, but otherwise its neglect effectively means it is deemed irrelevant for the majority. Full reconciliation cannot happen without acknowledgment of the truth. The truth in this case includes a more complete knowledge of the history of the widespread and long-lasting harm done to Indigenous people by European settlers and their descendants.

Participants expressed feeling acts of racism but finding it hard to pinpoint exactly what was happening and how to describe the incidences. Experiences were described as microaggressions which over time resulted in feelings of being insecure, out of place and at times questioning themselves. This history of colonization and the practices which are alive and well within the university continue to reinforce the role of the colonizer and impact the thoughts, ideas, and decisions Indigenous students make within the institution. Participants often took the role of clarifying content and questioning approaches, but it came at a price. One student expressed the following story:

> I struggled in my Public Health course, most of the students wanted to write their paper to discuss suicide in Northern remote communities. It was pretty big in the news. A couple of communities declared state of emergency. The discussion was really ignorant, and I don't think they understood the world that we live in. I expected the professor to direct the conversation to something more productive, but she didn't. It was clear that the professor and students did not understand what it was like to live in rural, remote communities. They had all these prescriptions and solutions, and it was just really far off. There was victim-blaming and derogatory comments. And, for me, I could only engage in so much until emotions got too high and I felt like I was arguing. It's not really constructive after a while. This supports the importance of having Indigenous instructors. If you're going to be teaching Indigenous content, and provide Indigenous example, you should be Indigenous or you should have a basic understanding or context of living situations and culture.

Another story shared involved a student who was trying to convince the instructor and students that having stereotypical examples of Indigenous people as "drunks, homeless, suffering with addiction" was not helpful in learning health approaches and teaching concepts and served to reinforce stereotypical images of how Indigenous people are portrayed. The following was shared:

> It even got to a point where they were creating stereotypical case studies about Indigenous people that just drove me nuts. There was nothing I could do or say to convince them that was wrong. Those instances were really defeating. I felt like I couldn't even get an open conversation going. It just was guard up and, "No. I'm not racist. I'm not being racist," and then it makes you question yourself.

These stories shed light on the reoccurring theme of Indigenous students needing to advocate for respect and understanding of Indigenous content and Indigenous systems of creating knowledge.

There were many discussions throughout the sharing of participants describing their experiences or lack of experiences with the land acknowledgment process. Land acknowledgments are intended to be statements given to show honour and respect to the original occupants of the land and to provide space and time for those listening to understand how they fill this space and have benefited from this land. Stories were shared about the significance of having these done at the beginning of class, for some it was a sign of respect and they felt it set a positive tone for the class. Others felt that it was not done in a good way; they described land acknowledgments as being another item checked off on their to do list and at times those conducting them would not lift their eyes from the paper and read it verbatim. Context was not provided and making it a personal gesture was not considered. One of the participants shared the following story of how they addressed land acknowledgments:

> I addressed the entire student union and talked about the land acknowledgement. Because I told them that there's nothing more insulting than someone reading a land acknowledgement with a dead voice and a dead heart. The purpose of a land acknowledgement is to actually acknowledge your gratitude for being where you are

today. If you don't hold that gratitude, leave the empty words. As Indigenous people, we've had enough empty words to fill a lifetime. We don't need them as a placate for nothing meeting. If you are not capable to be genuine and actually grateful and to feel those words that are on that paper and to address and to have that moment of connection and mindfulness that it's meant to bring this meeting, either give it to somebody else, or don't say it at all.

From this experience they were able to tastefully and tactfully explain why sincere land acknowledgments were significant and how they should be done properly.

There are varied approaches to reconciliation within the academy and some faculties are further along and more receptive than others; experiences were shared with joy and excitement and on the other hand there were also stories shared that were heartbreaking and exhausting to hear. There are Indigenous initiatives throughout the university but without consultation, commitment and partnership with Indigenous communities and more importantly the inclusion of Indigenous faculty and staff, these approaches reinforce the paternalistic promotion of a classed, gendered and racialized approach to knowledge production (Battiste, 2013).

5.1.3 STORIES OF DECOLONIZATION INDIGENIZATION

Decolonization, as a process, focuses on deconstructing colonial practices and replacing them with inclusive practices. This process often requires the dismantling of Western structures, recognizing and addressing power inequities that privilege dominant paradigms (Battiste, 2013). This process requires universities to acknowledge and address the ongoing colonial forces that shape the discourse within Canada and the impacts of colonization. It comes down to power and how the power is being held requires the return of power to Indigenous people to support intellectual self-determination (Cote-Meek, 2020).

From the students' perspectives stories were shared about the misunderstandings that have occurred in relation to the teachings, assignments and relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and faculty. Some were stories of success where Indigenous students

were able to include Elders in their research or present their work in story form which is more

aligned with Indigenous values. However, there were a lot of stories which led to the

disconnection between Indigenous and Western worldviews. One participant shared a story that

led her to withdraw from her program entirely because she felt ashamed, embarrassed and

unsupported. She was asked to prepare a lesson plan for a social studies lesson with primary

school students as part of her coursework for her degree. She received approval to do so from a

Blackfoot perspective. She reflected on this process and felt it was a success, the students were

engaged and receptive and she felt proud of the work that she did. After the work was complete,

she was asked to meet and shared the following:

> …then when it came time to do my feedback, the first thing that was told to me by the teacher was, "Okay, first of all, we're in the public school system, we don't pray. We're not a Catholic school system". And I told her, "Well, this is the Blackfoot culture that I was sharing. And it is a part of our spirituality, but it's a part of the way we do things when we start things we pray." she replied "Well, if I have a student coming back to me telling me that you're teaching them how to pray, then I'm going to get in trouble because we're not allowed to teach her children how to pray". I was very discouraged, and I felt unsupported even though she had approved my plan and said it was excellent before the class started. I asked her "Well, do I even have a chance? Do I have a chance to pass this PS1 and move on to PS2 and three and get my ed degree?" And she replied, "Well, you're missing some competencies." And I told her, "Okay, and I had nothing to say after that, I'm missing competencies because I was respectful of Blackfoot ways of knowing and opened the class in a Blackfoot prayer. I went home. I cried; I cried a whole lot. And I really thought about my options and what I want to do which was leave the program because of the lack of support and respect for my culture.

This story clearly highlights the disconnection between worldviews and the lack of respect or

knowledge around what is appropriate and what is not. This could have been handled differently

and it could have been a teaching moment for everyone, however it ended in the student feeling

so unsupported that she left the program.

There was a lot of sharing about the need to defend ideas and perspectives and how

daunting and challenging that became when introducing an idea that did not align with what was

being taught in class. The classroom was not considered a safe environment open to discussing

different ideas. One participant was constantly challenged in her Master's program about the desired methodology for her research. This resistance eventually led her to drop out of the program once her coursework was complete. She shared the following experience when challenging the dominant paradigms:

> For example, in one of my master's courses, I got into that discussion about decolonization, but I presented Indigenous methodologies and the value of them. I can't remember what book I used. I think it was Indigenous methodologies. But the response that I got from the professor himself, I mean, he had already, obviously, thought about decolonizing, but it was very confrontational. It was a lot for me already to present something like that that was challenging the norm for research methodologies. And then to come up against a fairly confrontational response was really difficult and I felt unsupported and humiliated.

This challenge was also described as an opportunity from some Indigenous students; situations where tension arouse due to differences in opinions was a chance for Indigenous students to share their voice and create space for discussion. One participant shared the following: "The opportunities I think Indigenous people have today and including myself is that we are standing up for ourselves more in these public spaces, in these public forums and we're starting to say our knowledge matters." It was noted that this is not the case for everyone and being in these situations is extremely challenging.

Another student discussed the self-directed research which was required when completing her thesis work. She described the process as isolating and lonely, there were no faculty available to discuss the use of an Indigenous paradigm or other decolonizing lens used in research. She continued to feel belittled and unsupported until the date she defended her thesis work. This is her experience:

> The room was packed with people from the department, and then all of a sudden, I was celebrated. I was like, "What happened? What happened to all the tension? What happened to all the challenging? Now that I'm graduating and now that I'm getting attention from a higher level in the organization now, everybody is telling me how amazing I am?" I felt tokenized, and it just kind of drove me a little bit crazy, because I was just like, "You weren't there to support me when I was struggling. You weren't there

to support me when these micro aggressive things were happening, but now you want to celebrate and say that you were one of my instructors. Okay.

The reoccurring theme is the challenge students faced when introducing an idea or methodology that did not align with the dominant forms of inquiry. The need to work harder and provide proof of why Indigenous Knowledge was valid and credible was hammered into every story.

The notion of Two-Eyed Seeing was a reoccurring comment which took on a number of different interpretations. It was introduced in chapter one of this paper, Two-Eyed Seeing approach originates from Mi'kmaq Elder Dr. Albert Marshall who described the process as seeing both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives in life. (Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall, 2012).

One participant shared a perspective on this approach and described it as a knowledge creation process which values both ways of knowing, the story was described as a reconciliation process of creating a new narrative that respects and values both ways of knowing:

> I think it's really intricately tied into a Two-Eyed Seeing approach to how knowledge is co-constructed, it's that we take this understanding that Western knowledge is privileged. We privilege both together and we collaborate the knowledge-based practices, so that they can work symbiotically and that we can co-construct the new narrative. Now, in order to do that we have to create a new narrative. And this is where institutions will be challenged, because I don't think they have the ability or the capacity to co-create new narratives because of the entrenched Eurocentric history that they're so proud of.

I thought this was a brilliant approach and perspective on creating a discussion that will move us to a place where we bring diverse knowledge systems together and use the differences to fill in the gaps while respecting the integrity of both. The story shared reminded me of the two row wampum belt which was beaded by the Iroquois and signified a treaty between the Iroquois people and Europeans. There are two rows beaded on the belt which represent two paths and two ways of knowing. The paths represent two ways of knowing with the understanding that they are equal and they do not cross over or interfere with one another (GNWT, 2013). This is similar to

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the strategy described above and can also be applied to the concept of Indigenization which at the core is about creating room for other ways of knowing within the institution.

The other perspective shared was about ensuring you were strong in both systems. Having strong connections to your Indigenous culture and community is essential for your well-being but it's also important to learn the western systems and be confident and strong within those systems.

> Indigenous people live in two worlds. That's a reality, but that's a good thing, because as long as we continue to live as the indigenous people that we are raised to be, to have that good heart, to know what truly matters, to know to be good to our family or people, to always try and help our own people, that's how we are who we are. That's how we survived all that we've survived. That other system is important for us to know. So financially, we can continue going and staying within their system and having the nice things that we have. But it's not who we are as people.

Although these ideas of Two-Eyed Seeing are different, I found them both to be compelling and strong interpretations of what is needed. The phrase of being strong like two came up multiple times as participants were describing stories and experiences.

Decolonization Indigenization is not a universal movement and throughout literature, identity and position it has varying degrees and meanings. It's important to note that Indigenous people cannot decolonize settler colonial structures which are based on power and benefit the majority of Canada (Lavallee, 2020). Indigenization cannot be thought of as a strategic goal mandated to be complete within an unrealistic timeline. Pardy and Pardy (2020) describe their Indigenization workshop to include participants perceptions of Indigenization to include having Indigenous artwork in the office, completing a land acknowledgment, being flexible with timelines and referring to the medicine wheel. While these are all nice gestures, they are symbolic in nature and do little to change the systems of oppression that derive from colonization. Within the university colonial hardships often go unnoticed and unaddressed because we have legitimized them within our systems which have upheld unequal power distributions. For non-Indigenous faculty and student's decolonization should be thought of as a

learning journey which begins with self-reflection and understanding of how they have benefited from colonialism and an openness to unlearn and learn new ways of knowing. It then continues with the willingness to give up power and include Indigenous faculty and students in discussions, assessments and decisions. There is no easy, comfortable or quick solution this decolonization Indigenization requires full accountability for our actions and decisions and how they impact those that come after us.

5.2 JOURNEY OF COMING TO KNOW

Throughout this research journey I have experienced grown personally which impacts the decisions and action I make personally and professionally. I first began this learning journey without realizing the impacts this search would have on me; I made a commitment several months ago to strengthen my knowledge, understanding and appreciation for my Gwich'in roots. This was demonstrated through my conversations with my dad about his childhood which motivated me to do more searching. This has brought me on a learning journey where I have found myself getting lost in research and experiencing deep conversations about what life was like in the "*old days*". This has resulted in new relationships, networks and strengthening relationships with family which has ultimately made me feel fuller as a person. Kathleen E. Absolon (2011) defines a *"conscious Indigenous scholar"* as an Indigenous searcher who is on the road to unpacking, uncovering and unlearning the impacts of a colonial history all while staying true on the path of reclaiming their Indigenous culture. I feel that this learning journey has helped me along that path of becoming a conscious Indigenous scholar.

Throughout the sharing I continued to write in my reflection journal and paid close attention to what was being shared and how it resonated with me and the stories that I have shared. I reflected on the personal movement within when listening to participants and reflected on how I was feeling. When participants shared personal struggles, I felt a deep knot in my chest

because I felt their pain and could relate to the challenge of being a single parent, losing family to addiction and constantly feeling like you don't belong in the system. I also found myself feeling the anger expressed through the challenges of not having Indigenous content, Indigenous curriculum and Indigenous supports. In a way it was comforting because I realized I was not alone in the struggle. There were other master's students that were fighting the same fight of using Indigenous research methods in their thesis work and understood the importance of relations through the work they were doing.

At one point one of the participants was sharing his success story of overcoming addiction and being sober for two years and I could not fight the tears from falling. I was so proud of the success they shared but also realized how challenging the day-to-day work is for Indigenous students. Hearing first-hand about the struggles Indigenous students have to overcome and the barriers they are faced with was challenging to process.

Through coming to know the stories I realized that I am on the right path. I chose the right area to study and the work that I have done makes me feel proud. I have a deep respect for those Indigenous scholars that have paved the path I am on and often felt mentored through the reading of the work and the personal stories they shared. I have developed and respected the relationships within this search and created a space where stories, experiences and voices were heard.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 UNDERSTANDING

In this thesis I have created a space for Indigenous students to share their experiences of Indigenization efforts to garner a deeper understanding of how we can expand on, deepen and improve this process. Despite the success in recent years, the stories from this search indicate that there continues to be painful experiences and hardships which impact the overall educational experience of post-secondary Indigenous students. In this section I have categorized my understanding using the 4R framework of relevance, responsibility, respect and reciprocity (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991).

6.1.1 UNDERSTANDING RELEVANCE

Understanding the reality and context of Indigenous students' lived experiences is important. Each student interviewed was impacted by the Indian Residential School System either as an intergenerational survivor or through learning the history and how the history created a sense of shame for them or their family. Experiences reinforced the notion that classroom content which incorporated Indigenous material was heavily in the context of describing Indigenous people as 'struggling' whether it was through poor health statistics or describing a history which has led to many social problems Indigenous people face today. This served to reinforce stereotypes which ultimately reinforces the disconnection between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, faculty and staff. Having information, material and examples that are relevant to Indigenous students is important to build capacity for cultural competence, foster mutual respect and develop relationships. There needs to be more emphasis on the collective history and how that is portrayed within curricula. University is intimidating for Indigenous students with the reality that most programs do not recognize, relate to or respect how the history of colonialism has impacted Indigenous lives. There is limited understanding of sovereignty or

self-determination, the relationships to lands and Indigenous ways of knowing and being. It is essential to have relevant information available for all students within the academy.

6.1.2 UNDERSTANDING RESPONSIBILITY

As demonstrated in this thesis universities across the country have a responsibility to respond to the TRC *Calls to Action* through programs and services, increasing recruitment and including Indigenous content within the classroom. Through the stories it was clear that there are a handful of faculty and staff that are faced with the task of dealing with Indigenous content. There is a strong movement to create more equitable services for Indigenous students. An example of this was seen through the Elder-in-Residence program which provides necessary support and comfort to Indigenous students from the area and also those that were away from home. It was also evident that the university has a responsibility to do more. There is a responsibility to provide adequate resources and build capacity through professional development opportunities, support for Indigenous research and publications, additional staff and content for faculty to incorporate Indigenous content that is relevant and respectful.

6.1.3 UNDERSTANDING RESPECT

Indigenous students shared stories of being impacted by addiction, death, illness, single parenting, mental health and financial burdens. The reality described by many participants highlights that they are already defying the odds by being post-secondary students and overcoming and dealing with challenges daily. This success is partly due to relying heavily on reclaiming identity and space, and very much a part of the journey of empowering themselves to become self-determined and strong like two people (GNWT, 2013). Lavallee (2020) describes that if education is not respectful of Indigenous Knowledge it can be detrimental to the success and wellbeing of students. Ensuring respect is maintained throughout the academy is essential to the continued success of Indigenous scholarship.

6.1.4 UNDERSTANDING RECIPROCITY

The widespread notion of Indigenizing the academy can be controversial and risky at times. Universities have a long oppressive history with Indigenous people and content which often includes misrepresentations, exploitation, inaccurate information and dismissive and disrespectful understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing (Battiste, 2013). This structure is often reinforced by colonial systems and practices that reinforce this and provide symbolic gestures which often leads to forms of tokenism. For these reasons it is essential to ensure that Indigenous students, faculty, staff, Elders and communities are included in the conversations and decisions around Indigenizing the academy. Reciprocity should be demonstrated through the value and respect that is being placed with Knowledge Holders.

Having the themes of inclusion, reconciliation and decolonization allowed me to categorize initiatives, experiences and stories and also create a means to move along a process which was often described as moving towards success. It also provided a direction and organized discussion to move Indigenous Knowledge throughout the institution. Through the sharing of stories and experiences along with supporting research it became clear that there are grey areas in how we define Indigenization and decolonization. More work needs to be done to provide actions and resources to keep things moving along the spectrum. It is also clear that one cannot exist without the other. We cannot reconcile relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous without the inclusion of Indigenous people.

6.3 CONTRIBUTIONS

The efforts to Indigenize academia have increased in research since the "era of reconciliation" formed with the release of the TRC *Calls to Action* (2015). Levels of Indigenization have been discussed throughout this paper which range from Indigenous inclusion, Indigenization reconciliation and decolonization Indigenization (Gaudry & Lorenz,

2018a). Through this research and the sharing of stories it was determined that there are "grey" areas in how we define and categorize these movements. This paper contributes to this discussion by describing the current conversations and using the stories that were shared to build upon this discourse.

There is limited research on Indigenization efforts from those that are most impacted by these initiatives, the students. Studies have documented that Indigenous students continue to face racism and systemic discrimination within the academy (Bailey, 2016). These findings support Indigenous student involvement in furthering the discussion on Indigenization efforts and also provided a safe space to talk openly about their experience as students.

This research builds on the work of Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) use of the three-portion spectrum to categorize Indigenization initiatives. These categories were used as a framework to guide the research through the literature review, methodology, data collection, analysis and findings. Kirkness and Barnhardt's (1991) framework of relevance, responsibility, respect and reciprocity was used to explain the quality of data collection and analysis and how they were connected and respectful of the Indigenous paradigm. This framework was also used when coming to know the data and describing my understanding of the findings. The use of these frameworks as methodological tools builds on the current understanding and use of them.

Battiste (2013) discusses the process of decolonizing educational institutions as a method of undermining the perceived superiority of Western approaches and dismantling structures to address power inequities that regularly privilege dominant paradigms. Indigenizing the academy as a research topic and the use of an Indigenous paradigm, which used Blackfoot protocols and also drew from my understandings as a Dene woman, is in itself an act of decolonizing the academy. By incorporating storywork and Indigenous student perspectives as the focus of validating and sharing knowledge, I have ensured relational accountability in this research and

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am moving to create and validate Indigenous ways of knowing within the academy. Most importantly I have completed this work in a good way, one that has included respect, reciprocity, relevance and responsibility.

There are defined roles involved in Indigenizing the academy which need to be accurately expressed. Non-Indigenous faculty and staff cannot Indigenize curriculum, classrooms and systems without the inclusion and participation of Indigenous people. In order to create change, there needs to be shared power in the decision-making process, along with assessments and creation of materials that accurately reflect Indigenous ways of knowing. Indigenous scholars cannot decolonize systems without the inclusion of non-Indigenous people of power. Indigenous people can contribute by exerting power to create spaces within the colonial structures to activate change, but it requires non-Indigenous positions of power to be on board. The work does not reside with Indigenous people to decolonize these systems.

6.2 LIMITATIONS

The study ran concurrently with the COVID 19 pandemic which changed daily and had implications on the study design. The in-person meeting restrictions impacted how the conversation-based interviews and sharing circles were planned. Ideally it would have been in person and there would have included ceremony and food, but we were restricted to creating online environments that would be respectful of the meetings taking place. This was a limitation and impacted how stories were shared as well as how relationships were built.

The findings of this study represent individual stories and experiences and may not be reflective of the experiences of all Indigenous students at the University of Lethbridge or at other Canadian universities. However, these experiences are not unique to this study and have been recorded through the work of Bailey (2016) which explored Indigenous student experiences within the university and reported similar findings.

There has also been other research which criticized the use of token and symbolic gestures as a means of reconciliation and Indigenization and made recommendations for a more transformational change within the institutions (Cooper, Major & Grafton 2018). Another limitation of this study was the sole focus on the experiences of Indigenous students. For a more fulsome understanding of the Indigenization process, it is imperative to also hear the experiences of Indigenous faculty and staff. To fully articulate and understand the process of Indigenization, the experience of the different levels and roles in education must be better understood.

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APPENDIX A: CONVERSATION-BASED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL SCRIPT

Good morning / afternoon / evening,

Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed today. Before we get started, I need to ask for your permission to audio record this interview. This recording will be heard by myself, research committee members and the professional transcriber who will transcribe the audio into text. Do I have your permission to audio record this interview?

(Y)

Thank you. Once I have begun recording, I will need to ask you again if I have your permission to record. This is formal procedure, and I can understand how it feels impersonal but it's part of the academic process.

[start recording]

Do I have your permission to record this interview?

(Y)

Thank you.

Before we begin the interview, I would like to introduce myself and explain my role in this research and give you some information on the study that is being conducted. My name is Ashley Ens, I am a mother of two children Hannah and Zakery and my partner is JR Manyfingers. I am originally from Inuvik, NT. I called Yellowknife, NT home for several years and now live in Lethbridge with my family. I come from the Gwich'in Nation and have strong connections with the Tłı̨chǫ Nation and my partner is from Kainai Nation. I am a Master's student at the University of Lethbridge. My educational and professional background is in Management, Human Resources and Diversity and Inclusion. My Master's thesis uses an Indigenous paradigm to explore Indigenization efforts throughout the academy.

The purpose of this research is to explore student perspectives and experiences of Indigenization within and throughout the academy to better understand how we can further develop the process of Indigenization to work towards culturally safe places of learning.

Indigenization Inclusion	Indigenous inclusion is seen as increasing Indigenous faculty and student admission. This approach focuses on addressing the need to accommodate Indigenous faculty, staff, students, and communities in overcoming obstacles, so they are successful within the academy (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018) This is seen through the creation of Indigenous specific programs and services as well as Indigenous specific roles within the Academy.
Reconciliation Indigenization	Reconciliation Indigenization is about collaboration with communities and Nations. The center of this approach should be around building strong relationships (TRC, 2015).

Decolonial Indigenization	The process of decolonization refers to deconstructing colonial ideologies of the superiority of Western thought and approaches. This requires dismantling structures and addressing power inequities that privilege dominate paradigms (Battiste, 2013). Decolonization supports the value of Indigenous Knowledge systems and approaches and shifts the frame of reference to this knowledge

The research will require approximately 60-90 minutes of your time today. During this time, a conversation-based interview will be conducted, in which I will pose to you questions about your thoughts and experiences of being an Indigenous student and how the process of Indigenization has impacted this. The questions will focus on a spectrum of Indigenization that I have found helpful to categorize Indigenization efforts. This spectrum start at Indigenous inclusion then moves to Indigenous reconciliation and then decolonization.

This research is being conducted in accordance with the University of Lethbridge policies for ethical research. There is the possibility of triggering unpleasant past experiences from participants. Participants will be able to stop and or pass on questions at any time should they feel distressed. There will also be supports provided to participants if needed. I hope that through this process we can develop a relationship and I will at times offer my story in a reciprocal gesture. If there are any times that you feel uncomfortable, please let me know and we can stop or break as needed. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. During the interview, you have the right to refuse to respond to any questions that you are asked. As well, you have the right to withdraw yourself from the study at any time during the research, until the point that the final thesis document is completed. There is no consequence for withdrawing from the research if you choose to do so. You will still receive your honorarium and you will have the option to have the material you shared kept in or removed from the study.

The recording will be professionally transcribed, with the assistance of an external transcriptionist service Rev.com. As such, this means that there will be an external party who will hear the content of the interview, strictly for the purposes of transcription and they will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement. Do you understand and agree to this?

(Y)

The interview information that you provide for this research will be held in confidence, and several steps will be taken to protect your anonymity and identity. During the data analysis phase, and in the final thesis document, you will be identified by a pseudonym in place of your real name, unless you would like to be named.

Transcripts will be provided electronically through email for your final approval. This is your opportunity to review what you have shared to ensure the intent was recorded properly. You will be identified with a pseudonym and provided the information prior to reviewing to avoid confusion, unless you have made the decision to be named. You will have ten business days from the time the transcripts are sent to provide comments, edits and or feedback, if no response is received it will be determined approved. If edits are required communication will be sent electronically via email to confirm the final product. Once the condensed stories have been identified the review process will continue with the ten-day tracking period until the final

product is approved. It is essential to ensure that the stories shared are accurate reflections of the intent of the participants.

You are encouraged to respond to the interview questions in an open and honest manner. The questions are open ended, and the use of conversation is going to be used. Please feel free to tell stories, share examples and ask questions as we move along.

The findings of my research will be reported in my final thesis document and may also be published in an academic and/or professional peer-reviewed journal or presented at an academic and/or professional conference, so that others may gain a better understanding of Indigenization within the academy. There will also be a presentation of the findings that you will be invited to at the end of the study.

After our conversation, should you have any questions regarding the study or should you wish to obtain a copy of the study results, please feel free to contact me by email at Ashley.ens@uleth.ca or telephone at (587)-394-7865. You may direct questions regarding this study to my thesis supervisor, Dr. Robbin Derry who may be reached by email Robbin Derry at Robbin_Derry@uleth.ca. Questions regarding your rights as a research participant may be addressed to the Office of Research Ethics, University of Lethbridge by email at research.services@uleth.ca or by telephone at (403) 329-2747.

Do I have your permission to begin the interview?

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW BLUEPRINT

This will be used as a guide during the conversation-based interview. It will not be shared with participants.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	PROBING QUESTIONS	RATIONALE
Demographics			
Age	How old are you?		
Education Level	What is the highest level of Education that you have obtained? What is the highest level of education that your parents obtained?	High school? Some college? College Diploma? Some University? Bachelor's Degree? Master's Degree? PhD Degree?	This will provide insight into the various levels of education of the participants. Most students who attend post-secondary come from families who have. This will show that connection or not and also speak to support systems. Highschool is included in the list of questions because at the University of Lethbridge there is a transition program targeting Indigenous students and Grade 12 is not a requirement. There are also mature students who have not completed high school. This will set context into the various levels of experiences
Dependents	Do you have any other dependents?	Children? Adult dependents? What are their ages? Do they reside with you?	This question will speak to the context of the student. Mature Indigenous women tend to attend post-secondary at higher rates than men. Indigenization at the University of Lethbridge targets families through events that are inclusive of everyone
Institution			
Identity	How do you identify yourself?	Mother, daughter, Indigenous Nation? How would you describe yourself ?	

To understand their context within the Academy - University, Major and overall experience	Can you start by telling me about what University(s) you attend or have attended? What programs you were in? Length of programs? Can you briefly tell me a little bit about what your University was like for you?	What events led up to you attending the University? How has this impacted your life? Major/Minor? How long did you attend? What was an average day like for you? What was your favorite and least favorite thing about post-secondary?	This will provide context to the stories that are shared. Different faculties have different support measures for Indigenous students. An example of this is the Indigenous student nursing group and Indigenous transition programs which are separate and unique to that particular faculty.
Barriers	Have you experienced any barriers or limitations as an Indigenous student?	Were there any challenges you experienced simply because you were Indigenous? Did you ever experience any acts of racism or discrimination?	This speaks to the individual experiences of being an Indigenous student.
Opportunities	Have you experienced any opportunities because you were an Indigenous student?	Sometimes universities try to invest in Indigenous students. Did you ever experience acts of kindness or given opportunities simply because you were Indigenous?	This speaks to the individual experiences of being an Indigenous student.
Irrelevance	Have you experienced situations where being Indigenous was irrelevant? Or Were there situations where your Indigeneity at the University was a neutral factor?	Do you have experiences where being Indigenous was not a factor?	This speaks to the individual experiences of being an Indigenous student.
INDIGENIZATION: Indigenous Inclusion /Reconciliation			
Beliefs, thoughts, feelings around Indigenization and what it means	How would you define Indigenization within the academy?	How is it applied? Are there examples or experiences you can draw on?	This speaks to participants understanding of Indigenization
Indigenization – Course Content	What, in practical terms, does Indigenization mean in relation to curriculum and learning for students? As well as faculty and staff?	Did you have any mandatory course requirements? What kind of Indigenous related content did you learn about? Did you have any Indigenous professors? Can you think of areas or opportunities the academy can take to further Indigenize?	Indigenization within course content and Indigenous specific training can be an act of Inclusion and reconciliation. These types of experiences are essential to understanding how we can bring depth to the process.

Indigenous Inclusion	What does Indigenous inclusion mean to you in the context of being a student within the academy?	Were there student support services on campus? What support was provided to you as an Indigenous student? Did you feel that there was a presence of Indigenous students and staff? Do you have any stories or experiences that might highlight this?	This will provide context surrounding the experience of feeling connected to the University. There are current supports and determining how they are used and perceived by Indigenous students is important.
Indigenous Reconciliation	What does reconciliation mean to you in the context of being a student within the academy?	What kind of acts of reconciliation have you experienced as a student? Do you have any stories or experiences that might highlight this?	This will provide insight into how Individuals are experiencing acts of reconciliation. We often thing of reconciliation as grand gestures however at the core is relationship building which is personal.
INDIGENIZATION: Decolonization			
Decolonization	What does decolonizing the academy mean to you?	What does it not mean? How do we decolonize the academy? What happens when we decolonize?	At the core of Indigenization is decolonization and creating room for change within. This will provide insight into how individuals experience and foresee this happening?
FUTURE CONTACT			
Interest in participating in future research	Would you be interested in participating in future research?	May I contact you by phone? Email?	
Member checks	I will be ensuring accuracy in the transcripts and as I analyze data to ensure that I am correctly capturing individual stories. What is the best way to reach you?	May I contact you by phone? Email?	
Knowledge of potential interview participants	Do you know of anyone else in a similar situation that may be interested in participating in this research? If yes, would you mind passing on my information to this individual?		

APPENDIX C: SHARING CIRCLE PROTOCOL SCRIPT

Good morning / afternoon / evening,

Thank you for taking the time to take part in our sharing circle. Before we get started, I need to ask for permission to audio record this circle. This recording will be heard by myself, the research committee members and the professional transcriber who will transcribe the audio into text. Do I have your permission to record this interview?

(Y)

I will request permission from everyone individually.

Mahsi cho

Before we begin the sharing circle, I would like to introduce myself and explain my role in this research, as well as give you some information on the study that is being conducted. My name is Ashley Ens, and I am a mother of two children Hannah and Zakery and my partner is JR Manyfingers. I am originally from Inuvik, NT. I called Yellowknife, NT home for several years and now live in Lethbridge with my family. I come from the Gwich'in Nation and have strong connections with the Tłı̨chǫ Nation and my partner is from Kainai Nation. I am a Master's student at the University of Lethbridge. My educational and professional background is in Management, Human Resources and Diversity and Inclusion. My Master's thesis uses an Indigenous paradigm to explore Indigenization efforts throughout the academy.

The purpose of this research is to explore student perspectives and experiences of Indigenization within and throughout the academy to better understand how we can further develop the process of Indigenization to work towards culturally safe places of learning. The research will require approximately 2-3 hours of your time today. During this time, the sharing circle will be conducted, in which I will pose to you questions about your thoughts and experiences of being an Indigenous student and how the process of Indigenization has impacted this. The sharing will focus on a spectrum of Indigenization that I have found helpful to categorize Indigenization efforts. This spectrum starts at Indigenous inclusion then moves to Indigenous reconciliation and then decolonization.

Indigenization Inclusion	Indigenous inclusion is seen as increasing Indigenous faculty and student admission. This approach focuses on addressing the need to accommodate Indigenous faculty, staff, students, and communities in overcoming obstacles, so they are successful within the academy (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018) This is seen through the creation of Indigenous specific programs and services as well as Indigenous specific roles within the Academy.
Reconciliation Indigenization	Reconciliation Indigenization is about collaboration with communities and Nations. The center of this approach should be around building strong relationships. The difference

	between reconciliation Indigenization from Indigenous inclusion is the move to target the internal structures of the University by working towards improving relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, staff and faculty.
Decolonial Indigenization	The process of decolonization refers to deconstructing colonial ideologies of the superiority of Western thought and approaches. This requires dismantling structures and addressing power inequities that privilege dominate paradigms (Battiste, 2013). Decolonization supports the value of Indigenous Knowledge systems and approaches and shifts the frame of reference to this knowledge

This research is being conducted in accordance with the University of Lethbridge policies for ethical research. There are no anticipated risks or discomforts related to this research. I hope that through this process we can develop relationships. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. During the sharing circle, you have the right to refuse or pass on your turn if needed. As well, you have the right to withdraw yourself from the study at any time during the research, until the point that the final thesis document is completed. There is no consequence for withdrawing from the research if you choose to do so. You will still receive your honorarium and you will have the option to have the material you shared kept in or removed from the study.

The recording will be professionally transcribed, using an external transcriptionist Rev.com who will sign a non-disclosure agreement. As such, this means that there will be one external party who will hear the content of the sharing circle, strictly for the purposes of transcription. Do you understand and agree to this?

(Y)

I will request permission from everyone individually.

The information that you provide for this research will be held in confidence, and several steps will be taken to protect your anonymity and identity. During the data analysis phase, and in the final thesis document, you will be identified by a pseudonym in place of your real name, unless you would like to be named.

Transcripts will be provided electronically through email for your final approval. This is your opportunity to review what you have shared to ensure the intent was recorded properly. You will be identified with a pseudonym and provided the information prior to reviewing to avoid confusion, unless you have decided to be named. You will have ten business days form the time the transcripts are sent to provide comments, edits and or feedback, if no response is received it will be determined approved. If edits are required communication will be sent electronically via email to confirm the final product. Once the condensed stories have been identified the review process will continue with the ten-day tracking period until the final product is approved. It is essential to ensure that the stories shared are accurate reflections of the intent of the participants.

The findings of my research will be reported in my final thesis document, and may also be published in an academic and/or professional peer-reviewed journal or presented at an academic and/or professional conference, so that others may gain a better understanding of Indigenization within the academy. There will also be a presentation of the findings that you will be invited to at the end of the study.

After our sharing circle, should you have any questions regarding the study or should you wish to obtain a copy of the study results, please feel free to contact me by email at Ashley.ens@uleth.ca or telephone at (587)-394_7865. You may direct questions regarding this study to my thesis supervisor, Dr. Robbin Derry, who may be reached by email at Robbin_Derry@uleth.ca. Questions regarding your rights as a research participant may be addressed to the Office of Research Ethics, University of Lethbridge by email at research.services@uleth.ca or by telephone at (403) 329-2747.

Sharing circle
The facilitator will open the circle by holding the object and welcoming the participants and explaining the intent of the circle along with situating self in the research.

The circle is foundational in explaining Indigenous worldviews. This is how things are connected and provides balance within and throughout the world.
Instructions for the sharing circle:
- Facilitator will prompt participants when it's their turn to speak. It is encouraged to speak openly about personal feelings, experiences, stories, memories anything that feels right.
- Speakers are asked to be respectful of others people's time. – Depending on the amount of people in the group, time allotments will be determined and encouraged to follow.
- When the speaker is finished, the object is passed sunwise to the next participant given that the circles will be online the facilitator will prompt participants when it is there turn to speak.
- Listeners are not to speak during this time and asked to show the utmost respect and kindness to those that are sharing.
- Listeners are encouraged to keep an open heart through the process.
- If participants are passed the object and do not want to speak at that time, they simply pass the object to the next person.
- The sharing circle is confidential and participants are asked to keep the sharing circle private and not repeat what was discussed.

APPENDIX D: SHARING CIRCLE BLUEPRINT

This will be used as a guide during the sharing circle to assist with directing the sharing in within the circle. It will not be shared with participants.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE	RESEARCH QUESTIONS		RATIONALE
Demographics			
Age, Education Level, Dependents, Identity, Major	Please start by introducing yourself and telling us a bit about yourself? Somethings to consider: How do you identify yourself? Where are you from? What is your of Education background that you have obtained? What is the highest level of education that your parents obtained? Do you have any dependents?		This will provide insight into the various levels of education of the participants. Most students who attend post-secondary come from families who have. This will show that connection or not and also speak to support systems. Highschool is included in the list of questions because at the University of Lethbridge there is a transition program targeting Indigenous students and Grade 12 is not a requirement. There are also mature students who have not completed high school. This will set context into the various levels of experiences This question will speak to the context of the student. Mature Indigenous women tend to attend post-secondary at higher rates than men. Indigenization at the University of Lethbridge targets families through events that are inclusive of everyone
To understand their context within the Academy - University, Major and overall experience	Can you start by telling me about what University(s) you attend or have attended? What programs you were in? Length of programs? Can you briefly tell me a little bit about what your University was like for you?	What events led up to you attending the University? How has this impacted your life? Major/Minor? How long did you attend? What was an average day like for you? What was your favorite and least favorite thing about post-secondary?	This will provide context to the stories that are shared. Different faculties have different support measures for Indigenous students. An example of this is the Indigenous student nursing group and Indigenous transition programs which are separate and unique to that particular faculty.

Barriers	Have you experienced any barriers or limitations as an Indigenous student?	Were there any challenges you experienced simply because you were Indigenous? Did you ever experience any acts of racism or discrimination?	This speaks to the individual experiences of being an Indigenous student.
Opportunities	Have you experienced any opportunities because you were an Indigenous student?	Sometimes universities try to invest in Indigenous students. Did you ever experience acts of kindness or given opportunities simply because you were Indigenous?	This speaks to the individual experiences of being an Indigenous student.
Irrelevance	Have you experienced situations where being Indigenous was irrelevant? Or Were there situations where your Indigeneity at the University was a neutral factor?	Do you have experiences where being Indigenous was not a factor?	This speaks to the individual experiences of being an Indigenous student.
INDIGENIZATION: Indigenous Inclusion /Reconciliation			
Beliefs, thoughts, feelings around Indigenization and what it means	How would you define Indigenization within the academy?	How is it applied? Are there examples or experiences you can draw on?	This speaks to participants understanding of Indigenization
Indigenization – Course Content	What, in practical terms, does Indigenization mean in relation to curriculum and learning for students? As well as faculty and staff?	Did you have any mandatory course requirements? What kind of Indigenous related content did you learn about? Did you have any Indigenous professors? Can you think of areas or opportunities the academy can take to further Indigenize?	Indigenization within course content and Indigenous specific training can be an act of Inclusion and reconciliation. These types of experiences are essential to understanding how we can bring depth to the process.
Indigenous Inclusion	What does Indigenous inclusion mean to you in the context of being a student within the academy?	Were there student support services on campus? What support was provided to you as an Indigenous student? Did you feel that there was a presence of Indigenous students and staff? Do you have any stories or experiences that might highlight this?	This will provide context surrounding the experience of feeling connected to the University. There are current supports and determining how they are used and perceived by Indigenous students is important.

Indigenous Reconciliation	What does reconciliation mean to you in the context of being a student within the academy?	What kind of acts of reconciliation have you experienced as a student? Do you have any stories or experiences that might highlight this?	This will provide insight into how Individuals are experiencing acts of reconciliation. We often thing of reconciliation as grand gestures however at the core is relationship building which is personal.
INDIGENIZATION: Decolonization			
Decolonization	What does decolonizing the academy mean to you?	What does it not mean? How do we decolonize the academy? What happens when we decolonize?	At the core of Indigenization is decolonization and creating room for change within. This will provide insight into how individuals experience and foresee this happening?

APPENDIX E: EMAIL LETTER OF INVITATION

Re: Invitation to take part in Sharing Circle on Indigenizing the Academy

My name is Ashley Ens, I am a mother of two children Hannah and Zakery and my partner is JR Manyfingers. I am originally from Inuvik, NT. I called Yellowknife, NT home for several years and now live in Lethbridge with my family. I come from the Gwich'in Nation and have strong connections with the Tłįchǫ Nation and my partner is from Kainai Nation. I am a Master's student at the University of Lethbridge. My educational and professional background is in Management, Human Resources and Diversity and Inclusion. As part of my degree, I am completing a thesis with a focus on exploring students' perspectives on Indigenizing the academy. I am looking to host *sharing circles* to further explore student experiences of Indigenization within the academy

The sharing circle will occur in an online platform and it is expected to require 2-3 hours of your time. These will be scheduled using online platforms such as Zoom, Skype or Zoho and will be audio recroded. An honorarium will be provided for taking part in the sharing circle.

If you self-identify as Indigenous (First Nations, Metis or Inuit), are a current or past (part-time/full-time within the past five years) student in an undergraduate or graduate program at the University of Lethbridge I would greatly appreciate learning from your experience(s).

We will discuss how you wish your anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained during and after the research study. If you have any concerns or questions, please let me know. Although you will be asked to provide minimal demographic information such as, Indigenous identity (First Nations, Metis or Inuit) and age, personal individual information will not be used in my thesis or publications. Pseudonyms will be used in place of actual names unless otherwise agreed upon.

If you have any questions about my study or are interested in participating, you may contact me at Ashley.Ens@uleth.ca or (587) 394-7865. My thesis supervisor Dr. Robbin Derry can be reached at Robbin_Derry@uleth.ca.

Thank you, Mahsi Cho, in advance for your participation. Respectfully,

Ashley Ens

Re: Invitation to take part in Conversation Based Interview on Indigenizing the Academy
My name is Ashley Ens, I am a mother of two children Hannah and Zakery and my partner is JR Manyfingers. I am originally from Inuvik, NT. I called Yellowknife, NT home for several years and now live in Lethbridge with my family. I come from the Gwich'in Nation and have strong connections with the Tłįchǫ Nation and my partner is from Kainai Nation. I am a Master's student at the University of Lethbridge. My educational and professional background is in Management, Human Resources and Diversity and Inclusion. As part of my degree, I am completing a thesis with a focus on exploring students' perspectives on Indigenizing the

academy. I am looking to host *conversation-based interviews* to further explore student experiences of Indigenization within the academy

The conversation-based interviews will take approximately 60-90 minutes and can be scheduled at your convivence. Given the current Covid 19 restrictions the interviews will be scheduled using online platforms such as Zoom, Skype or Zoho or can be scheduled on the phone at your convenience and will be audio recorded. An honorarium will be provided for taking part in the interview.

If you self-identify as Indigenous (First Nations, Metis or Inuit), are a current or past (part-time/full-time within the past five years) student in an undergraduate or graduate program at the University of Lethbridge I would greatly appreciate learning from your experience(s).

We will discuss how you wish your anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained during and after the research study. If you have any concerns or questions, please let me know. Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Although you will be asked to provide minimal demographic information such as, Indigenous identity (First Nations, Metis or Inuit) and age, personal individual information will not be used in my thesis or publications. Pseudonyms will be used in place of actual names unless otherwise agreed upon.

If you have any questions about my study or are interested in participating, you may contact me at Ashley.Ens@uleth.ca or (587) 394-7865. My thesis supervisor Dr. Robbin Derry can be reached at Robbin_Derry@uleth.ca.

Thank you, Mahsi Cho, in advance for your participation. Respectfully,

Ashley Ens

LETTER OF CONSENT

Dear NAME:

My name is Ashley Ens, I am a mother of two children Hannah and Zakery and my partner is JR Manyfingers. I am originally from Inuvik, NT. I called Yellowknife, NT home for several years and now live in Lethbridge with my family. I come from the Gwich'in Nation and have strong connections with the Tłı̨chǫ Nation and my partner is from Kainai Nation. I am a Master's student at the University of Lethbridge. My educational and professional background is in Management, Human Resources and Diversity and Inclusion. My Master's thesis uses an Indigenous paradigm to explore Indigenization efforts throughout the academy. Thank you for agreeing to participate in a research study to better understand student perspectives and how they bring depth to the understanding of Indigenization in the academy. The findings of my research will be reported in my final thesis document and may also be published in an academic and/or professional peer-reviewed journal or presented at an academic and/or professional conference, so that others may gain a better understanding of Indigenization within the academy. You can reach out to request a copy of the final thesis report by contacting me directly. There will also be a presentation of the findings that you will be invited to at the end of the study.

Indigenization Inclusion	Indigenous inclusion is seen as increasing Indigenous faculty and student admission. This approach focuses on addressing the need to accommodate Indigenous faculty, staff, students, and communities in overcoming obstacles, so they are successful within the academy (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018) This is seen through the creation of Indigenous specific programs and services as well as Indigenous specific roles within the Academy.
Reconciliation Indigenization	Reconciliation Indigenization is about collaboration with communities and Nations. At the center is should be around building strong relationships. The difference between reconciliation Indigenization from Indigenous inclusion is the move to target the internal structures of the University by working towards improving relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, staff and faculty.
Decolonial Indigenization	The process of decolonization refers to deconstructing colonial ideologies of superiority of Western thought and approaches. This requires dismantling structures and addressing power inequities that privilege dominate paradigms (Battiste, 2013). Decolonization supports the value of Indigenous Knowledge systems and approaches and shifts the frame of reference to this knowledge.

Time Commitment, Benefits, and Risks

This research will require approximately 60-90 minutes of your time. The conversation-based interview will be scheduled using an online platform. The conversation-based interview will be audio-recorded. You will be asked to tell your story through a series of open-ended questions that follow a three-part spectrum on Indigenization starting at inclusion, moving to reconciliation and then decolonization.

You will be provided an honorarium of $100 for sharing your stories which will be provided to you at the end of the conversation-based interview. If you choose to withdraw your information from the study, you do not need to return your honorarium.

The benefit of taking part in this study is the opportunity to share your story and experiences which will contribute to understanding how Indigenous student perspectives on the implementation of Indigenization improve, deepen and extend the process at Post-Secondary Institutions

The final report that will result from this work will be carefully reviewed to ensure that the stories shared give no indication of an individual participant's identity. Any identifying information will only be referred to in broad terms, avoiding specifics that might lead to the identification of individual participants. No personal or identifying information will be disclosed. Pseudonyms will be used unless previously agreed to use name in research.

It is recognized that discussing your experience on Indigenization within the academy could trigger past experiences that cause discomfort. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. You may choose to not answer any question or have the recording stopped at any point. You may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason up to June 30, 2021 by notifying the researcher in person or using the contact information included in this letter. If you do withdraw, you will be asked to determine how the data is handled. To ensure the researcher has your informed consent, feel free to ask for clarification or additional information at any time during your participation.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Several steps will be taken to protect your anonymity and confidentiality as appropriate. The conversation-based interview will be audio-recorded will be transcribed using an external transcriptionist Rev.com. Only the researcher, Ashley Ens, the research committee members and the external transcriptionist who will sign a non-disclosure form will have access to the transcripts. All of the stories collected in this study will be kept on a password-protected computer, to which only the researcher, Ashley Ens, will have access. The files containing the audio-recording and the transcripts will be secured in separate encrypted and password protected files on this password protected computer. The transcript will be edited to remove any personal identifying information. Pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants as the conversation-based interview is transcribed, to maintain participants' confidentiality. Any identifying information that is shared, such as university or location of residence, will be anonymized in the transcript, and only referred to in broad terms, to avoid any specifics that might lead to the

identification of individual participants. Pseudonyms will also be assigned to anyone mentioned in the discussion unless otherwise agreed upon to use name in research. You will have the opportunity to review your transcript; you will have ten days after receipt of the transcript to request changes. If I do not hear from you, it will be assumed that there are no requested changes.

The audio-recording will not be used for any purpose other than data collection. The transcript and audio-recording will be returned to participants or destroyed after two years. The transcript and audio recording of the data will be stored on a password protected USB as well as on the researcher's password protected laptop in a password protected folder. Any and all archived data will be completely anonymized. This consent form and any other files containing your name or contact information will be stored on the researcher's password protected computer and will be accessible only to the researcher. The resulting thesis paper will not contain any mention of your name and pseudonyms will be used for any quotations used unless decided that you would like to be named.

If you require any additional information about this study, please contact Ashley Ens at 587-394-7865 or Ashley.Ens@uleth.ca. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Office of Research Ethics, University of Lethbridge at 403-329-2747 or Email: research.services@uleth.ca).

This research project has been reviewed for ethical acceptability and approved by the University of Lethbridge Human Participant Research Committee. Thank you for your consideration.

Do you confirm that you have read the Letter of Consent [or the Letter of Consent has been read to you] and have had all questions answered to your satisfaction?
☐ **YES**

☐ **NO**

Do you agree to participate in this research?
☐ **YES**

☐ **NO**

Do you agree to be audio-recorded?
☐ **YES**

☐ **NO**

Do you want to see your transcript for review? You will have 2 weeks after receipt of the transcript to request changes.
☐ **YES**

☐ **NO**

What fate do you wish for your audio-recording and transcript at the end of the 2 year retention period?

☐ **RETURNED TO YOU**

☐ **DESTROYED**

I have read (or have been read) the above information regarding this research study on Indigenizing the academy, and consent to participate in this study.

_____   _____

Name of Participant   Date

_____

Signature

_____   _____

Name of Researcher   Date

_____

Signature

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

LETTER OF CONSENT

Dear NAME:

My name is Ashley Ens, I am a mother of two children Hannah and Zakery and my partner is JR Manyfingers. I am originally from Inuvik, NT. I called Yellowknife, NT home for several years and now live in Lethbridge with my family. I come from the Gwich'in Nation and have strong connections with the Tłįchǫ Nation and my partner is from Kainai Nation. I am a Master's student at the University of Lethbridge. My educational and professional background is in Management, Human Resources and Diversity and Inclusion. My Master's thesis uses an Indigenous paradigm to explore Indigenization efforts throughout the academy. Thank you for agreeing to participate in a research study to better understand student perspectives and how they bring depth to the understanding of Indigenization in the academy. All stories and information shared will be kept confidential. The findings of my research will be reported in my final thesis document and may also be published in an academic and/or professional peer-reviewed journal or presented at an academic and/or professional conference, so that others may gain a better understanding of Indigenization within the academy. You can reach out to request a copy of the final thesis report by contacting me directly. There will also be a presentation of the findings that you will be invited to at the end of the study.

Indigenization Inclusion	Indigenous inclusion is seen as increasing Indigenous faculty and student admission. This approach focuses on addressing the need to accommodate Indigenous faculty, staff, students, and communities in overcoming obstacles, so they are successful within the academy (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018) This is seen through the creation of Indigenous specific programs and services as well as Indigenous specific roles within the Academy.
Reconciliation Indigenization	Reconciliation Indigenization is about collaboration with communities and Nations. At the center is should be around building strong relationships. The difference between reconciliation Indigenization from Indigenous inclusion is the move to target the internal structures of the University by working towards improving relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, staff and faculty.
Decolonial Indigenization	The process of decolonization refers to deconstructing colonial ideologies of superiority of Western thought and approaches. This requires dismantling structures and addressing power inequities that privilege dominate paradigms (Battiste, 2013). Decolonization supports the value of Indigenous Knowledge systems and approaches and shifts the frame of reference to this knowledge.

Time Commitment, Benefits, and Risks

This research will require approximately 2-3 hours of your time. The sharing circle will be audio-recorded. You will be asked to tell your story through a series of open-ended questions that follow a three part spectrum on Indigenization starting at inclusion, moving to reconciliation and then decolonization.

You will be provided an honorarium of $100 for sharing your stories which will be provided to you at the end of the meeting. If you choose to withdraw your information from the study, you do not need to return your honorarium.

The benefit of taking part in this study is the opportunity to share your story and experiences which will contribute to understanding how Indigenous student perspectives on the implementation of Indigenization improve, deepen and extend the process at Post-Secondary Institutions

The final report that will result from this work will be carefully reviewed to ensure that the stories shared give no indication of an individual participant's identity. Any identifying information will only be referred to in broad terms, avoiding specifics that might lead to the identification of individual participants. No personal or identifying information will be disclosed. Pseudonyms will be used unless otherwise agreed up on to use real name in reserach.

It is recognized that discussing your experience on Indigenization within the academy could trigger past experiences that cause discomfort. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. You may choose to not answer any question or have the recording stopped at any point. You may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason up to June 30, 2021 by notifying the researcher in person or using the contact information included in this letter. If you do withdraw, all efforts will be made to withdraw your data from the study. To ensure the researcher has your informed consent, feel free to ask for clarification or additional information at any time during your participation.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Several steps will be taken to protect your anonymity and confidentiality. As a participant of the circle you are to hold in confidence any and all stories or experiences shared during the sharing circle. Respect all members of the circle through respectful behavior and comments. When talking about the circle to others, leave all identifying material about the other members out of the conversation. Your reaction to the sharing circle is yours, however the details of it will be kept confidential. The sharing circles will be audio-recorded will be transcribed, using an external transcriptionist Rev.com. Only the researcher, Ashley Ens, the research committee members and the external transcriptionist who will sign a non-disclosure form will have access to the transcripts. All of the stories collected in this study will be kept on a password-protected computer, to which only the researcher, Ashley Ens, will have access. The files containing the audio-recording and the transcripts will be secured in separate encrypted and password protected files on this password protected computer. The transcript will be edited to remove any personal identifying information. Pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants as the sharing circle is

transcribed, to maintain participants' confidentiality unless participants agree otherwise. Any identifying information that is shared, such as university or location of residence, will be anonymized in the transcript, and only referred to in broad terms, to avoid any specifics that might lead to the identification of individual participants. Pseudonyms will also be assigned to anyone mentioned in the discussion. You will have the opportunity to review your portion of the transcript; you will have ten days after receipt of the transcript to request changes. If I do not hear from you, it will be assumed that there are no requested changes.

The audio-recording will not be used for any purpose other than data collection. Individual's recorded excerpts and transcripts will be returned to participants if requested or destroyed after two years. The transcript and audio recording of the data will be stored on a password protected USB as well as on the researcher's password protected laptop in a password protected folder. This consent form and any other files containing your name or contact information will be stored on the researcher's password protected computer and will be accessible only to the researcher. The resulting thesis paper will not contain any mention of your name and pseudonyms will be used for any quotations used.

If you require any additional information about this study, please contact Ashley Ens at 587-394-7865 or Ashley.Ens@uleth.ca. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Office of Research Ethics, University of Lethbridge at 403-329-2747 or Email: research.services@uleth.ca).

This research project has been reviewed for ethical acceptability and approved by the University of Lethbridge Human Participant Research Committee. Thank you for your consideration.

Do you confirm that you have read the Letter of Consent [or the Letter of Consent has been read to you] and have had all questions answered to your satisfaction?
☐ YES

☐ NO

Do you agree to participate in this research?
☐ YES

☐ NO

Do you agree to be audio-recorded?
☐ YES

☐ NO

Do you want to see your transcript for review? You will have 2 weeks after receipt of the transcript to request changes.
☐ **YES**

☐ **NO**

What fate do you wish for your audio-recording excerpt and transcript at the end of the 2 year retention period?

☐ **RETURNED TO YOU**

☐ **DESTROYED**

I, _____ hereby agree to maintain the confidentiality of information disclosed during the sharing circles or observed live as follows:

      a) To hold in confidence any and all stories or experiences shared during the sharing circle

      b) Respect all members of the circle through respectful behavior and comments.

      c) When talking about the circle to others, leave all identifying material about the other members out of the conversation. Your reaction to the sharing circle is yours, however the details of it will be kept confidential.

I have read (or have been read) the above information regarding this research study on Indigenizing the academy, and consent to participate in this study.

_____   _____
Name of Participant   Date

_____
Signature

_____   _____
Name of Researcher   Date

_____
Signature

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

APPENDIX I: SUPPORT SERVICES

University of Lethbridge

- Contact Counselling Services via e-mail: counselling.services@uleth.ca or phone 403-317-2845
- Bookings can be made week days, 9am - 3:30pm
- You will need to provide your student ID number

Alberta Mental Health Support

- Mental Health Helpline
  1-877-303-2642

Indian Residential Schools Support

- Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program
  1-800-464-8106
- Residential School Crisis Line is available 24 h
  1-866-925-4419.

APPENDIX J: BLACKFOOT PROTOCOLS

Sharing Circles

Elder Francis First Charger provided Blackfoot protocols for the sharing circles. These consisted of the following:

- The motion of the circle started from sunwise. Given that we were working with an online environment we tried to the best of our ability to follow that
- In Blackfoot protocol eagle feathers are not used as sacred objects. I was going to use an eagle feather during our circle but was advised not to. During the opening comments I mentioned circles normally have a sacred object which differs from Nation to Nation
- The circle always opens in ceremony. Given that we were working in an online environment and recording our sessions I provided a list of names to Francis and did a smudge and prayer in the morning before the circle began.
- In Blackfoot protocol the number four is a spiritual number for this reason we had four rounds of sharing in the circle
- The use of tobacco was used as a gift of offering for the stories that were being shared
- Francis started the circle open in prayer and then provided a story of significance