

“VIEWPOINTS” ON RECONCILIATION:
INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES FOR
POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE
SOUTHERN INTERIOR OF BC

2020



Project Synopsis

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Executive Summary

This research project synopsis presents diverse Indigenous community perspectives regarding the efforts needed to enable systemic change toward reconciliation within a public post-secondary educational institution in the Southern Interior of British Columbia. The main research question for this project was “How does a community college respectfully engage in reconciliation through education with the First Nations and Métis communities in the traditional territories in which it operates?”

This research was realized by a team of six Indigenous researchers, representing distinct Indigenous groups within the region. It offers Indigenous perspectives, insights, and recommendations that can help guide post-secondary education toward systemic change. This research project was Indigenous led within an Indigenous research paradigm and done in collaboration with multiple communities throughout the Southern Interior region of British Columbia.

Keywords: Indigenous-led research, Indigenous research methodologies, truth and reconciliation, Indigenous education, decolonization, systemic change, public post-secondary education in BC, Southern Interior of BC

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Chapter 1: Bringing “Viewpoints” into Focus

This chapter provides an overview of the events and learnings that inspired the need for this research project and topic. It offers an overview of pertinent documents, an introduction to the Nations and colleges in the region, and discusses the project goals.

Project Background

In September 2012, Senator Murray Sinclair, former chair of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, presented a lecture as part of Selkirk College’s Speaker Series. At the time, the commission’s work was focussed on bringing awareness to the public about Canada’s Indian Residential Schools and documenting stories from survivors and their families about their Residential School experiences (Selkirk College, 2012).

That same year, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training in British Columbia (BC) released *The Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan: 2012–2020 Vision for the Future*. This document set out a number of objectives, including the first goal:

Systemic change means that the public post-secondary education system is relevant, responsive, respectful and receptive to Aboriginal learners and communities and relationships between public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities are based on mutual respect. (Government of BC, Ministry of Advanced Education [AEST], 2012, p. 13)

Subsequently, during the following years, Selkirk College, co-developed and signed memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with the local First Nation and Métis governments, including the Colville Confederated Tribes (Sinixt/Lakes), the Okanagan Nation Alliance (Syilx), the Ktunaxa Nation Council, and the Métis Nation BC (Colleges and Institutes Canada, n.d.; Colville Confederated Tribes Business Council & Selkirk College, 2016; Ktunaxa Nation Council & Selkirk College, 2016; Métis Nation BC & Selkirk College, 2014; Sylix Okanagan Nation Alliance & Selkirk College, 2015). These MOUs helped guide the institution’s future steps and define aspirational goals toward meaningful, authentic and respectful partnerships within its educational facilities and services.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) 94 calls to action, released in 2015, offered clear direction on priority areas and spurred a national sense of urgency and responsibility for public services to act on enabling change toward the systemic reparations needed to address the findings and gaps in the public service. In the TRC's (2015) final report, Call to Action #62 called "upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators to: ... [address] education [related to reconciliation]" (p. 289). The TRC final report reiterated some of the important aspects from the 2008 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), which also influenced the urgency for change in the public awareness, reparations needed, and respect for Indigenous peoples and Indigenous Nations' self-determination.

Through this research, Selkirk College sought to identify their role, as a public post-secondary community college, in reconciliation. Early insights in this project determined that within the work of reconciliation each First Nation and Indigenous group represented throughout the region in which the college operated would require independent consultations to determine the behaviours and values that the communities wished to see reflected in the college's efforts in reconciliation. The values and behaviours identified by the Indigenous communities in this research will better equip the college in developing strategies and tools to implement "systemic change" (AEST, 2012, p. 13) within the institution and help address the knowledge gaps for staff, instructors, and students who wish to understand their role in the reconciliation efforts ahead.

In the fall of 2015, Selkirk College submitted a research proposal to the Social Sciences and Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). The proposal was accompanied by letters of support from the Okanagan Nation Alliance and the Ktunaxa Nation Council, representing two of the First Nations within the Southern Interior of BC. Okanagan College and College of the Rockies also provided letters of support. This research was envisioned as a way to continue to strengthen the relationships between Selkirk College and the Indigenous communities within the region, as well as the other publicly funded post-secondary institutions throughout the BC Southern Interior who also stood to benefit from this research.

This project proposal was originally designed to engage two primary investigators who would represent all Indigenous peoples and groups throughout the Southern Interior region. Early insights led to amendments made to the project design, in order to appropriately broaden the number of primary investigators so that the distinct First Nation communities throughout the Southern Interior region of BC could be individually represented. The Métis Nation was also invited to include a primary investigator to ensure that the large population of Métis residents and their voices throughout the region would be included. Many Métis people in the region prefer to identify as Aboriginal instead of Indigenous, as per section 35 of the Constitution Act (1982).

The primary investigators went on to conduct their research for this project in accordance with their individual community and cultural protocols. The primary investigators used select methods and specific methodologies based on their community's needs, and this research has been framed within an Indigenous research paradigm.

First Nations in the Southern Interior of British Columbia

The region in which this research was conducted includes the following First Nations:

- Ktunaxa Nation Council (Ktunaxa). Please see <http://www.ktunaxa.org>
- Okanagan Nation Alliance (Syilx). Please see <http://www.syilx.org/>
- Secwepemc Nation (Shushwap). Please see <http://shuswapnation.org/>
- Sinixt/Arrow Lakes Peoples (Sinixt). Please see <http://www.colvilletribes.com/>

Additional Indigenous or Aboriginal Peoples

The following list encompasses additional Indigenous or Aboriginal peoples or communities represented within the Southern Interior region:

- Métis Nation British Columbia (see <http://www.mnbc.ca/>),
- urban Indigenous population, and
- Inuit.

Primary Investigators

The following list presents the primary investigators for this project:

Syilx Okanagan Nation

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Ktunaxa Nation

Christopher Horsethief, PhD

Sinixt/Arrow Lakes

Grahm Wiley-Comacho, MA

Métis Nation BC

Michele Morin, BSW

Roy Progorzelski, MSc, PhD (Candidate)

Due to project limitations, this synopsis was collaboratively written by the majority of the research team, and draws upon the individual research reports attached as Appendix A through to D.

Project Coordination

The overall project coordination was supported by Selkirk College, specifically by the Indigenous Services Liaison, Jessica Morin, MA, the Director of Applied Research and Innovation, Terri MacDonald, PhD, and Rhys Andrews, MA, Vice-President, Education. This team worked collaboratively to support the primary investigators in ensuring that an Indigenous paradigm and perspectives were respected from within the organizational and institutional processes for the duration of the project.

Goals of this Research Project

This project included three main goals:

1. Understand the role of a public post-secondary community college in reconciliation.
2. Continue to foster and build relationships based on respect and reciprocity with the Indigenous Nations and communities throughout the Southern Interior region.
3. Develop tools and resources to help guide and support “systemic change” in public post-secondary education.

This project aimed to strengthen relationships and collaboration opportunities between the college communities and the Indigenous communities within the region. The need for this research was to be responsive to “Systemic Change” (AEST, 2012, p. 13).

“Approximately 23,240 Indigenous students are in the public post-secondary system in B.C. and they make up 8.3% of the domestic student population” (Government of BC, 2020, Quick Facts section, para. 3). Fostering an environment for intergenerational healing is critical in tackling the impacts of intergenerational trauma caused by the Indian Residential Schools, and many other impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples. The TRC (2015) *Summary Report* stated,

Education is a fundamental human and Aboriginal right, guaranteed in Treaties, in international law, and in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In particular, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples contains a powerful statement on the right to education under community control. The Declaration states, “Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.” The Commission believes that fulfilling the promise of the Declaration will be key to overcoming the legacy of the residential schools. (p. 146)

With the TRC’s (2015) calls to action, the MOUs with the First Nations and Métis Nation represented in the region, UNDRIP (United Nations, 2008), and the Colleges and Institutes Canada (n.d.) *Indigenous Education Protocol*, the urgent call for systemic change has ever increased. Since this research began in 2017, the Government of BC (2018) released the *Draft Principles that guide the Province of British Columbia’s Relationship with Indigenous Peoples* document, and additional inquiries and calls for justice, including the National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019) report, and class action law suits for Indian Day School survivors (Gowling, n.d.), and in 2017 Sixties Scoop survivors were acknowledged (Government of Canada, 2020). Bill 41: Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act was also introduced in BC in 2019.

Public Post-Secondary Colleges in the Southern Interior

There are three public community colleges located within the Southern Interior region of BC. It comprises the Okanagan Region, the Boundary Region, and the East and West

Kootenay Regions. In addition to benefiting Selkirk College, this synopsis and its appendices could be helpful to other regional colleges in defining their role and work toward reconciliation.

Selkirk College is located in the West Kootenay and Boundary Regions of BC and has campuses in Castlegar, Trail, Nelson, and Grand Forks as well as learning centres in Kaslo and Nakusp (Selkirk College, n.d.). Selkirk College has MOUs with First Nations within the Traditional Territories in the region, including the Syilx (Okanagan Nation), Ktunaxa Nation, and the Sinixt/Arrow Lakes (Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation). The college does not yet have an MOU with the Secwepemc Nation (Shuswap). Selkirk College also has a signed MOU with Métis Nation BC (College and Institutes Canada, n.d.; Colville Confederated Tribes Business Council & Selkirk College, 2016; Ktunaxa Nation Council & Selkirk College, 2016; Métis Nation BC & Selkirk College, 2014; Syilx Okanagan Nation Alliance & Selkirk College, 2015).

Indigenous students attend Selkirk College to complete credentials in health sciences, social work, trades, arts, business, and environmental sciences. They travel here from various communities and represent diverse nations across Turtle Island, including the Métis, Cree, Ktunaxa, Secwépemc, Sinixt, Syilx, Haida, Heiltsuk, Anishishinaabe, St'át'imc, Dene, Nisga'a, Kwakwaka'wakw, Cowichan, Mi'kmaq, Inuit, Gwich'in, Tsimshian, Gitksan, Stó:lō, and Nlaka'pamux Peoples.

The College of the Rockies is located in the East Kootenay Region of BC and has a main campus in Cranbrook with five regional campuses in Creston, Fernie, Invermere, Golden, and Kimberley, within the traditional territory of the Ktunaxa Nation and home to the Kinbasket people (College of the Rockies, n.d.).

Okanagan College is located in the Okanagan Region of BC and has campuses in Kelowna, Penticton, and Vernon, within the traditional territory of the Syilx Okanagan People. Their Salmon Arm campus is located within the traditional territory of Secwepemc people. (Okanagan College, n.d.).

College of the Rockies provided facilities for some Ktunaxa research activities related to this project, and Okanagan College supported the hiring of a student research assistant to partake in the Syilx-2 research. Both Okanagan College and College of the Rockies invited researchers involved in this project to present at conferences, where researchers shared early insights and information about their project methodologies and the scope of their research.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an introduction to the community participants and stakeholders, stated the goals, and offered the rationale for the motivation and importance of this research topic. This chapter also presented an overview of the ways in which the project was initially conceptualized and how it evolved and remained emergent during its course.

Chapter 2: Separate but Together

This chapter offers insights into the ways that this project evolved during its course. It begins with early insights and explains some of the ways that the project formed a cohesive overarching project methodology, with several individual research methodologies employed within.

Early Insights

With the overarching long-term goal of overall “Systemic Change” (AEST, 2012, p. 13) within education, this research project was envisioned to be conducted as “relevant, responsive, respectful and receptive” (p. 13), in a relationship based on “mutual respect” (p. 15), where the Nations would be equal partners to help define a respectful process for this Indigenous-led research project. The research project and process were emergent from the beginning, defined only through the learning process of actually conducting the research.

Through listening, learning, and engaging in authentic co-creative visioning processes, Selkirk College staff were challenged to adapt and be flexible and sincere in their efforts to administer and accommodate the changes that were needed to fulfill the optimal experience for this project to unfold. The need for an institutional liaison was essential in order to ensure that an advocate would be available to weave Indigenous worldviews into processes that had predominantly operated through western worldviews and lenses. This project was responsive to insights on the project design, which was informed by the primary investigators representing their Nations, and the college made adjustments to its processes and policies as needed.

From the original design, it was determined that it was inadequate to employ only two researchers to speak for all Indigenous peoples in the region. Subsequently, six primary investigators were selected based on the recommendations of their Nation representatives as well as individual researchers’ commitments to developing a collaborative research approach to undertake this project. This project supported the creation of diverse approaches to hiring the individual researchers, depending on the Nation’s circumstances or preference in research agreement or arrangement. Through a mix of job postings, some

of the primary investigators became Selkirk College employees, one was employed by their Nation and another was arranged through a fee-for-service contract. Primary investigators employed on this project functioned as individuals representing their Nation's distinctive interests, while simultaneously functioning as a team in the interest of exploring the overarching research question, *"How does a community college respectfully engage in reconciliation through education with the First Nations and Métis communities in the traditional territories in which it operates?"* The primary investigators had complete autonomy over the methodological approach, the sub-questions, and the ways in which they engaged with their communities. Primary investigators were allocated funds to undertake their projects in the ways that they had deemed appropriate.

This research paradigm challenged dominant research methodologies, reinforcing the notion that Indigenous peoples are not subjects, but rather experts in their ways of knowing, and contributing to the notions of Indigenous research practice (Wilson 2008, pp. 58–59) and decolonizing research practice (Smith, 1999, pp. 137–140). "Research partnerships between universities and communities or organizations are fruitful collaborations and can provide the necessary structure to document, analyze, and report research findings on reconciliation to a broader audience" (TRC, 2015, p. 242), but recognizing that western concepts of research may not fit within the communities is an important aspect of reconciliation. Smith (1999) stated,

While researchers are trained to conform to the models provided for them, indigenous researchers have to meet these criteria as well as indigenous criteria which can judge research 'not useful,' 'not indigenous,' 'not friendly,' 'not just.' Reconciling such views can be difficult. The indigenous agenda challenges indigenous researchers to work across these boundaries. It is a challenge which provides a focus and direction which helps in thinking through the complexities of indigenous research. At the same time, the process is evolving as researchers working in this field dialogue and collaborate on shared concerns. (p. 140)

"Viewpoints" Overarching Project Methodology

The development of the **"Viewpoints"** methodology was formulated by the research team during this project (see Appendix E). An underlying principle to this methodology is that it is **Indigenous led**. Indigenous led, in this context, means that Nation members from within the region that the research was conducted are best suited to engage in research within

their own communities. This is true because not only are these specialized researchers familiar with their community protocols, but they are also better able to determine or seek advice from knowledge holders on the research design and other research components. Indigenous-led community research in the context of this methodology attended to specific communities' protocols, including aspects of data collection and data housing, participants' engagement, and determining the cultural methodologies that best fit their community's needs (Good Water et al., 2019).

Viewpoints maintained an invitation and placeholder for diverse Nations within the shared territories to participate in the project. The fact that all the Nations were not represented did not inhibit the other researchers from completing their research; this synopsis acknowledges the missing perspectives within the limitations section of this report (see Chapter 6).

This methodology allowed for multiple stakeholders to be represented within a research project through the participation of several primary investigators. The overarching research question and project goals remained the same, but the primary investigators represented their own communities' interests, cultures, protocols, and individual priority areas of focus related to the research topic, and, as noted earlier, the researchers had autonomy over their project designs.

Each primary investigator involved had permission from a representative from their Nation's government to participate as community representative in the project, and to engage in their own independent inquiry processes to ensure that their research was authentic in seeking knowledge creation through preserving and representing their Nation's interest and worldviews. The primary investigators were responsive to their community protocols and needs within their research design, and their study conduct was in alignment with their Nation's protocols. Within their individually prepared ethics proposals, primary investigators identified all pertinent details around intellectual property and data housing within their specific ethics applications or collaborative research agreements.

A key feature of *Viewpoints* is that this project methodology routinely rotates the listed names of the cultural groups involved, which precludes the commonplace misunderstanding that any single cultural group in a shared overlap territory is more formal, has preference, or is better established by always being mentioned first, which is a common practice in the semantics of composing western English subject lists.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the ways in which the project evolved to ensure that proper representation and methodological cultural autonomy were priorities and respected. It provided an introduction to the *Viewpoints* methodology, which allows for each researcher to engage in her or his own research practices, working within shared project goals.

Chapter 3: Distinctive Methodologies

This chapter provides an overview of the distinctive methodologies that were utilized for each of the primary investigator's community-based research projects. A brief explanation of each of the methodology is provided.

Ktunaxa Methodology: ʔuk iniłwiytiyała (Thinking with One Heart)

The Ktunaxa Nation Traditional Knowledge and Language Advisory Committee (TKLAC) met in November 2017 to discuss ongoing and future Ktunaxa research projects and proposed a formal methodology born from Ktunaxa cultural decision-making practices used in traditional and historical leadership settings.

The methodology was named ʔuk iniłwiytiyała, which translates to “a group thinking with one heart.” Members of the TKLAC implemented this traditional practice to demonstrate it as a research methodology at the Aboriginal Gathering Place at the College of the Rockies in February 2018. Members of the group sat in a circle and one member asked the group the question, “How would we describe the mechanics of thinking with one heart?” The group rendered the answer as their ancestors would have centuries ago, by moving around the circle with members describing eight distinct and relevant Ktunaxa specific protocols.

As Selkirk College sought clarification on several technical, protocol and process aspects of project data gathering, the Ktunaxa speakers and cultural resource people maintained any methodology would need to be compatible *both* with commonplace social sciences research practices *and* the Ktunaxa culture. The ʔuk iniłwiytiyała method ensured a safe and relevant environment that would support Ktunaxa resilience by demonstrating traditional crowdsourcing activities, promote scientific rigour, and respect cultural protocols.

Syilx-1: Methodology

Approaching the main research question developed by Selkirk College from a Syilx Okanagan perspective required the use of Syilx concepts within the research. Syilx concepts based upon enowkinwixw were included in the survey and research findings (Enowkin Centre, n.d.).

In addition, this research reformed Selkirk College’s research question into seven separate questions. As such, Selkirk College’s main research question—“How does a community college respectfully engage in reconciliation through education with the First Nations and Métis communities in the traditional territories in which it operates?”—became seven separate research questions aimed to identify Okanagan Syilx views of reconciliation with a community college.

Addressing a research question developed outside of a Syilx Okanagan framework required a reformulation into several questions within a Syilx Okanagan framework aimed toward addressing and understanding the purpose of the research and representing the voiced and stated views in the written surveys as accurately as possible. The Syilx framework used to aid in the understanding and representing the voiced views is based on Armstrong’s (2006) explanation of Syilx Okanagan individuality within family and community (pp. 36–37).

Given that this research focused on reconciliation from a Syilx perspective, it was inherently decolonizing, and thus, the following quote by Nicoll (as cited in Kovach, 2010) applies: “A decolonizing perspective is significant to Indigenous research because it focuses on Indigenous-settler relationships and seeks to interrogate the powerful social relationships that marginalize Indigenous peoples” (p. 42). Further clarity comes from Smith (1999), who stated,

Decolonization, however, does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge. Rather, it is about centring our concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes. (p. 39)

Guided by Smith’s (1999) words, ideally the Syilx Okanagan would have been involved in the project sooner to develop the research from the beginning, as building a working relationship begins with discussions. The research questions were placed in a mixed-method survey questionnaire format. Members of the Syilx community were invited to participate in the research by (a) answering the survey questionnaire online, (b) taking part in an in-person questionnaire interview with the researcher reading the questionnaire and writing the participant’s answers directly upon the form, or (c) the participant reading the questionnaire and writing their answers on the questionnaire form themselves.

Syilx participants were identified through snowball method, word of mouth, and social media, in which an invitation to participants was extended to the Syilx Okanagan Nation and communities. SurveyMonkey (n.d.), an online survey tool, was used to collect responses. Participation was open to Syilx people from the age of 14 and older. For minors under the age of 18, parental consent was required in the online and paper consent forms. Syilx people were approached via email, messenger, and in person by the researcher.

Syilx-2: Methodology

The data-gathering process involved a series of community engagement sessions and followed Syilx customary practices, one of which was to provide a meal for each session. Indigenous researchers identify this as a universal protocol for implementing the Indigenous methodological approach (Cabrera et al., 2016, p. 287). A broad overview of the research, including the research background, objectives, and consent form, was provided. Once the consent form was signed, the en'owkinwixw process commenced. There were four rounds of questions guiding the discussions, which were flexible and open-ended, allowing room for stories to be shared.

The en'owkinwixw process is described by Dr. Jeannette Armstrong (2000) in the following statement:

The Okanagan people used this word when there was a choice confronting the community. An elder would ask the people to engage in En'owkin, which requested each person contribute information about the subject at hand. What took place was not so much a debate as a process of clarification, incorporating bits of information from as many people as possible, no matter how irrelevant, trivial, or controversial these bits might seem, for, in En'owkin, nothing is discarded or prejudged. (p. 9)

The en'owkinwixw is like a sharing circle “for many tribal cultures, the act of sitting in a circle, as a collective means of decision making is similar” (Kovach, 2009 p. 124). Kovach (2009) suggested, while there are differences in protocols with different tribal sharing circles, there are also similarities. Following the Syilx protocol, the en'owkinwixw began with introductions from the researcher and participants. These introductions often extended to include family ties, tribal affiliations, individual roles, or responsibilities within the community. This process is practised in the broader Indigenous community (Cabrera et

al., 2016; Wilson, 2001). Shawn Wilson (2001) explained this as an Indigenous methodology and, when practised, creates relational accountability to both the research and research subjects (p. 176). Wilson (2001) further stated, “Knowledge and peoples will cease to be objectified when researchers fulfill their role in the research relationship through their methodology” (p. 176).

Indigenous scholars have acknowledged that other forms of data collection allow for participants not to be anonymous; however, they also recognized the importance of allowing room for participants to identify themselves in ways they deemed as appropriate (Cabrera et al., 2016, p. 288). Furthermore, Cabrera et al. (2016) confirmed confidentiality within sharing circles is still a significant concern; it was also a consideration when conducting the en’owkinwixw process. For that reason, participants will remain anonymous in this report, and their responses will be presented collectively.

Métis Methodology

The research project used a two-eyed seeing approach with a mixed methodology. A two-eyed seeing approach is a collaborative cross-cultural framework that intentionally avoids domination between western and Indigenous knowledge bases by moving beyond domination by one worldview or an assimilation of one worldview into another (Hatcher et al., 2009). The research encompasses a western approach by accumulating data through surveys, questionnaires, and formal interviews. However, traditionally Métis people practised active listening, and through this were able to pass down the history, traditions, and philosophies of the Métis culture to younger generations. Barkwell et al. (2006) discussed Métis oral storytelling as intricately tied to their culture. Some stories are sacred and only told to certain people. These stories can only be told if the teller has permission from the story’s original owner, and if the precession of people to whom the story was told is recounted. These special stories are seen as intellectual property of the family (Barkwell, 2006, p. 9).

Roy Pogorzelski, one of the researchers, is Métis from Northern Saskatchewan, currently living in Southern Alberta, and is from a very cultural and active Métis family. The other researcher, Michele Morin, is situated locally in the Kootenays and was able to make

important connections, had many relationships to the Métis communities, and held a lot of trust. Michele was instrumental in gathering community members from Trail, Castlegar, and Nelson to be interviewed for this important study. It was imperative that the unique, separate and distinct culture of the Métis was honoured within this project. In 2002, the Métis National Council (n.d.) officially defined Métis as, “Métis means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation”. Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) is the only legal authority in the province that is able to grant Métis Citizenship as per Section 35 of the Constitution Act (1982), through their central registry (MNBC, n.d.). All Métis participants within this research are Métis as defined by the Métis National Council.

The researchers followed the ethical principles laid out by Pratt (2019) that the basis for conducting research with Métis communities is based on (a) reciprocal relationships developed where equal responsibility and equal benefits would result from the research; (b) respect for both the individual and the collective as Métis; (c) safe and inclusive research environments that span the diversity of Métis and include both traditional wisdom keepers and those trained as researchers; (d) diversity of knowledge traditions and ways of knowing, across and with geographical locations; (e) research should have relevant and worthwhile outcomes for the community and be endorsed by the community; and (f) knowledge of complexities of Métis history and context is essential, as well as understanding that “there is also a need to balance traditional with contemporary” (Pratt, 2019, p. 48) within the Métis context.

The research design and intended target participants were all carefully delineated, and a clear rationale for the research project was carefully articulated for subsequent peer review and approval (Pratt, 2019, p. 50). Finally, as arbiters of knowledge production, post-secondary institutions set the protocol and process necessary for the legitimizing of knowledge production. Formalized in this process is ethics approval, so it is important that the institution worked closely with the researchers and communities as co-conspirators on producing this research (Pratt, 2019).

In mid-November 2019, the researchers met with Elders and community members to discuss being Métis and the importance of reconciliation through education. The Métis researchers were sure to abide by Métis protocol with respect to gift giving, and even though prearranged questions were available, the researchers carried on the in-person interviews through informal dialogue. Métis Knowledge Keepers predominantly pass information through storytelling, humor, and by discussing familial lines, which is important in establishing cultural and familial connection. The data were transcribed with the help of a transcriber through Selkirk College and then combed through to find common themes, patterns, and categories emerging in the information gathered. Individuals were given aliases to protect their identities throughout the research process as well as in this paper. The participants in the survey are anonymous with the data being compiled to find common themes, patterns, and categories in the responses.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the different and distinct methodological approaches that each of the primary investigators utilized within their individual community research projects.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

This chapter provides an overview of some of the key Syilx-1, Syilx-2, Ktunaxa, and Métis research findings pertaining to this project. The sections in this chapter are divided into the different perspectives from each of the nations.

Syilx-1 Findings

For this research, Selkirk College's one research question was separated into seven separate research questions, which allowed the Okanagan Syilx people to express their views regarding post-secondary education and reconciliation.

The Okanagan Syilx survey responses to the research questions were separated into different sections for each question. A summary of survey responses was used in this report in a manner that prioritizes people's voices. As will be shown, reconciliation has many facets and people approach and view it in different ways.

Another important repetitive facet to acknowledge are the several mentions of the relationship between the Syilx Okanagan and the Sinixt. Reconciliation, the larger Okanagan speaking territory and its history including Castlegar and Nelson where Selkirk College has campuses, is addressing the relationship between the Syilx Okanagan and Sinixt. In regard to the relationship between the Sinixt and the Okanagan Syilx, it is important to know that many Sinixt people's descendants are band members within the Okanagan Nation Alliance (Okanagan Nation Alliance, n.d.). For further information about the relationship, please visit the Okanagan Nation Alliance website (www.syilx.org).

A summary of research findings or identified next steps outlined by Syilx Okanagan survey responses focussed on building an ongoing relationship between the Okanagan Syilx and Selkirk College aimed toward reconciliation. In the survey responses, this spanned from ensuring all staff and students understand reconciliation and why it is important to ensuring the college campus is a welcoming safe environment where the Okanagan Syilx are able to take part in continued dialogue prioritizing reconciliation.

The understanding of reconciliation by Selkirk College staff and students can begin by internal education with supplementary, further, and more specific information about how to reconcile, which can be obtained by having reconciliation-focused conversations with Okanagan Syilx Nation, bands, and communities, as well as with youth, families, Knowledge Keepers, leadership, family heads, old people, and Elders.

Specific ways of building a relationship with the Okanagan Syilx included the inclusion of Okanagan Syilx on college boards or committees, college-hosted events or meetings in the community, and collaboration on research projects that are mutually beneficial to the Okanagan Syilx and Selkirk College. As for supporting the college campus to be a welcoming safe environment where Okanagan Syilx are visible, this can be done by developing and teaching Okanagan Syilx history or curriculum, acknowledging the territory, having Okanagan Syilx as instructors and staff, recruitment of Okanagan Syilx students, displaying Syilx Okanagan art, showcase Syilx crafters and artists for demonstrations, and Syilx positions on college boards and committees.

Syilx-2 Findings

The questions that helped to generate great discussions in the en'owkinwixw process identified important values, perspectives, and experiences held by Syilx participants. Their responses were organized into the following codes based on values and behaviours implied in participants' responses: Elders/tradition, youth/vision, mothers/relationship, fathers/action.

Elders/Tradition

In the en'owkinwixw process, "Elders" symbolize values based on tradition, along with a connection to the land. (Armstrong, 2000, p. 11)

The following information represents Syilx Elders' perspectives.

Tried and true solutions brought forward by participants started with a recommendation to continue implementing traditional territory acknowledgments. Furthermore, in territory acknowledgments, participants represented by "Elders" specifically wanted community colleges to acknowledge they are on borrowed and unceded territory, and to recognize that

there are no formal agreements regarding the land title. Participants also request that individuals providing territorial acknowledgments also acknowledge how they are privileged and are benefiting from Indigenous lands.

Participants also wanted to ensure there is also a visible acknowledgement of Syilx territory by including an Okanagan Nation flag on every campus and include Elders and an invitation to the broader Syilx community for a celebration. Additional ways to ensure that Syilx cultural presence is visible is to place welcoming signs in the language, or art in the form of pictures or sculptures. Furthermore, participants wanted to see everyone practising and incorporating Syilx greetings in everyday social interaction (i.e., say “*way*” instead of “hello”). Concerning land, participants wanted to see educational institutions decolonize and indigenize the outdoor space, surrounding campus locations by planting Indigenous plants and protecting the habitat. Furthermore, they want to see educational institutions teach the importance of land and water to all students and why Indigenous people want to protect those lifeforms.

Participants wanted to see community colleges honour the Indigenous educators, professors, and Elders who work in the institutions. Moreover, they wanted the education system to recognize Traditional Knowledge Keepers and their roles by providing them with credentials such as honorary doctoral degrees. Participants also encourage community colleges to foster a sense of pride in students and their Indigenous cultural identity by connecting Elders with students and by holding celebrations or social gatherings with an Indigenous focus. One suggestion is to bring Syilx Elders to Selkirk as Elders in residence.

Participants expressed that they want community colleges to decolonize and Indigenize curriculum. To accomplish this, community colleges can, first, share the truth in truth and reconciliation. Participants wanted the Syilx history of residential schools in the curriculum. Truth-telling to the participants meant learning the local history and expanding that out to all Indigenous people. Participants also want Indigenous history in non-Indigenous studies courses to be accurate and treated as equally valid to western teachings. Participants expressed the need for community colleges to provide financial support for community- and nation-driven curriculum (language, stories, place name

makers, etc.). Participants also wanted to see more support and partnerships garnered with En'owkin Centre and En'owkin Centre instructors.

Youth/Vision

In the en'owkinwixw process, "youth" symbolizes visionary and innovative thinking, challenging societal norms. (Armstrong, 2000, p. 10)

The following information represents Syilx youth perspectives.

The first finding is to ask students what they need, empower them, and support what they envision. Educational institutions should allow for creative cultural expression in all courses and course assignments. Participants wanted to see educational institutions hire Syilx people beyond professor, faculty, and administrative positions. For example, one participant shared how they played an acting and teaching role as a pregnant Indigenous woman travelling from a rural community once a year. They also wanted classes that privilege Indigenous knowledge equally as mainstream western scientific knowledge, not just as an add on.

Participants presented innovative community-led research ideas. One community research idea brought forward is to conduct a survey in the Nation geared toward former, current, and future students. Their suggested research questions included the following:

What courses, programs, or degree pathways did Syilx students take or want to take? What worked for them during their time in post-secondary education systems? What were the barriers Syilx students experienced? Lastly, what are their needs and how post-secondary institutions help meet those needs?

Participants would like the college to re-evaluate Indigenous graduate students' pathways for Indigenous students so that more Syilx students could go on to become masters and doctoral candidates, and potentially faculty. Participants also did not want to use their valuable time reconciling with settlers; they ask that their voices are heard and respected.

Moreover, in direct opposition to the values Elders symbolize, the youth did not value educating the educators. From this perspective, participants conveyed that it is not their responsibility. Participants wanted to reflect and think about whether institutions are the

right space to share Syilx culture, beliefs, *cap tik wł*, and language. In this regard, participants recognized that Knowledge Keepers experience a high demand already. They criticized the monopolization of Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Participants felt their time would be better spent teaching Syilx people in the community. They wanted educational institutions to provide space and resources for Elders to transmit language and cultural knowledge to youth.

Participants wanted to see more people of colour employed throughout the institutions, and a societal norm that youth want is for everyone to respect all gender identities. Participants wanted to see gender-neutral bathrooms for people of all genders to feel safe and welcome. Furthermore, participants want to see spaces for Indigenous students with disabilities. One participant shared that sometimes Aboriginal rooms are not safe for Indigenous students with disabilities, and occasionally other areas are not secure for them as an Indigenous person either. Overall, to better support Indigenous students and communities, participants call for stereotypes addressed and racism confronted within the institution.

Mothers/Relationship

In the en'owkinwixw process, "mothers" symbolizes relationships, policy, and workable systems. (Armstrong, 2000. p. 10)

The following information represents Syilx mothers' perspective.

Participants request the college include Syilx knowledge in community college governance, board, and policies; implement principles of collaborative decision-making models; and highlight the voices of future generations. Participants expressed the need for educational institutions to build trusting relationships with Indigenous communities and students. To support Indigenous students and communities, participants would like to see pre-existing policies meant to help Indigenous students reinforced, and changed so that students can attend to their cultural and family responsibilities (i.e., funerals) without fighting bureaucracy. They would like to see institutions include Indigenous housing and childcare, with alternate pathways for students to reach their goals.

Fathers/Action

In the en'owkinwixw process, "fathers" symbolizes the act of ensuring there are security, substance, and shelter measures in place. (Armstrong, 2000, p. 10)

The following information represents Syilx fathers' perspective.

The fathers' perspective is based on action and outlines how participants within this dataset wished to see educational institutions move beyond policies and agreements. This perspective would like to see more than a verbal land acknowledgment and a strategic set of measures implemented to support the success of Indigenous students. Instead of creating a mandate that all staff, faculty, and students take Indigenous studies 101 courses, Participants want to see institutions offer a challenge course, as this may help reduce resistance and encourage buy-in. Participants advised cultural safety initiatives be constant and throughout the term, along with follow-up discussions in the classroom with a focus and understanding of reconciliation. Furthermore, they want faculty to come to reserves so they can learn cultural safety and history directly from the communities to gain the first-hand experience.

The fathers' perspective also wanted to see an increased investment in capital planning with Indigenous designs and architects throughout the campus, not just in isolated locations. They also recommended hiring Syilx artists be hired to create art that establishes a visual presence at each of the campus locations. In terms of shelter, participants wanted to see investment in housing for Indigenous students and their Indigenous families. Furthermore, they wanted to ensure that Indigenous students have access to food security, emergency funds, and peer mentors, as well as computers and other necessary equipment available to support student success. Participants also want to see more grants and bursaries available to Syilx students.

Participants want to see more support for Indigenous faculty and educators in the institution, along with an increased number of Indigenous educators, so they are not overworked. Participants wanted to see Knowledge Keepers financially compensated for their time at higher rates, which reflect their value and worth. They want to see more Syilx

employees in administrative roles to better support students. At the same time, participants conveyed that the Syilx population is small, with a limited amount of Knowledge Keepers. They suggested that institutions give space and allow the opportunity for the Nation to have an internal dialogue to collectively outline what the relationship should and could be with Selkirk and other community colleges in the region. In the meantime, they suggested that educational institutions share resources (i.e., Syilx Elders, Indigenous professors).

Story

Participants shared stories and personal experiences, which they sometimes had never shared before. Often these stories reflected experiences of marginalization from the educational system for participants and their family members. The approach to understanding the stories of marginalization is also rooted in Syilx cultural practices (Armstrong, 2000). Their multilayered responses in Appendix C (see Section 3.0) provide a lens of being impacted in a first-hand way from the educational system, and hopefully it will garner ways in which positive change can be created.

Ktunaxa Findings

Project data collection and analysis discussion moved from the three-person team to the KNC TKLAC. A total of eight meetings were held between February 7, 2018, and August 22, 2018. The first session proposed the working model of the ʔuk̓ iníłwiytiyała methodology as described in the Distinctive Methodologies section (see Chapter 3).

The following primary themes emerged from the first session:

1. ʔuk̓ iníłwiytiyała is the most appropriate way to gather data from the Ktunaxa Nation. Additionally, the Ktunaxa people are the only true experts in the ʔuk̓ iníłwiytiyała framework and non-Ktunaxa should not interpret or analyze without strict consultation.
2. The data gathered in the research process would be irreducible to the individual, would belong to the group, and the group would be anonymized—unless members made statements they wanted directly attributed to themselves.

3. Both Ktunaxa and western ethics processes are valid. Stated another way, the research would only be valid if both sets of concerns were part of a larger conversation agreed to before research started.

Methodology discussions resulted in the suggestions Ktunaxa ethics be viewed as valid and institutional, formal, and equal to the Selkirk College ethics processes, that the ʔuk' iniłwiytiyała methodology be adopted for formal research gathering and default anonymity be offered to research participants.

The TKLAC formally agreed to use the ʔuk' iniłwiytiyała at the second session. The group also discussed several aspects of the concept of reconciliation. The settings ranged from simple apologies, the role of sincerity in apologies (what does being forced to apologize do to the sincerity or efficacy of the apology), to finding or resetting a balance (as might be exemplified by balancing or reconciling a check book).

The following points were clarified in the second session:

1. Reconciliation as a concept created by Canada serves Canadians—not Canada's Indigenous populations.
2. Canadians overwhelmingly omit the "Truth" from Truth and Reconciliation discussions, referring to T&R generally as *Reconciliation*.
3. For Indigenous people, including the Ktunaxa, Reconciliation is fundamentally about Truth, with one participant noting, "The formal Canadian apology is less important to us. It is less useful to us than opportunity."
4. No non-Ktunaxa can be the expert, the spokesperson, or knowledge holder of Truth and Reconciliation, Residential School, or resilience resources—any research, policy, or planning activities must belong to the group striving for resilience.
5. It is most important to use reconciliation activities to open conversational space where Indigenous voice has been forcibly removed. For example, discussions of Indigenous culture, language, spirituality, identity, family, and education must be open to meaningful Ktunaxa participation.

The project team offered a statement on Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation movement as a tool to open conversational spaces—including those aligned with components of the Ktunaxa Nation Vision Statement—to Indigenous-led discourse, contextually nuanced units of analysis (including spoken stories), and reciprocally calibrated spaces. The following statement, composed in the latter research sessions and approved at the final research team meeting, references the “truth” and “completeness” required by the *Strengthening Indigenous Research Capacity Strategic Plan* (Government of Canada, 2019), the forward-thinking hope required for Ktunaxa families to pursue resilience in the wake of cultural entropy, and the stark ownership of painful histories as a foundation for building a brighter future. It also comes from a place of cultural intimacy, which prevents non-Ktunaxa from speaking authoritatively about the topic of Ktunaxa Reconciliation.

nas n̄ ini ku qat̄wiyনা [this is what is in our hearts]. qaqaʔni ma yaqaʔitknawaski [what they did to us is true]. q̄ apit̄paʔnin [say it all/tell the whole story]. mika yaqaʔitknawaski hu qayaqaʔqazaʔani [despite what happened to us we made it through]. hu qat̄winaʔani kuʔ suk̄it̄ ʔaqst̄maknik̄ naʔa [we want a good life for ourselves]. hawiʔkinin k̄mak̄ kyam ʔ ʔina·kinin [hold the truth and go forward]. ʔin̄t̄ qaqa [so be it]. maʔʔ kukt̄kinin! [do not change this statement!]

Métis Findings

Identity

One common theme that surfaced was the need to reclaim identity, be resilient, and pass the culture and history on to younger generations. This reiterated the importance of educating Métis youth about their own culture as well as institutions educating about the accurate history of the Métis people of Canada and about re-imagining a history from a Métis perspective.

One major theme that came out of the data was focused on the importance of Métis identity. The Elders interviewed discussed knowing they were Métis, but also being told not to admit they were Métis in public settings or in community for fear of retribution for the Métis role in the Northwest Resistance. Younger interviewees discussed the notion of

knowing they had ancestry that was Aboriginal, but did not know much about Métis culture and history, as it was often oppressed in the household.

Post 1885, as Métis families migrated to different areas of the country or across the border to the United States fleeing persecution, many families altered or hid their identities as Métis people, which in the present time has created challenges for post-secondary institutions to locate Knowledge Keepers and to truly understand the breadth of the Métis story in Canada. The notion of being Métis, as was common in all the interviews, was this feeling that one did not belong with Euro-Canadian society, nor with First Nations society. It was a social diaspora, but the family unit was a supportive entity in settling and caring for one another.

The family unit was an important support to Métis families as they entered the Kootenays, but the discrimination, xenophobia, and anger the Métis encountered created a challenge for future generations in identifying as Métis and created an open catchall definition, in which Métis culture was being lost. Métis cultural identity and attachment to the homeland and genealogy was a present theme in all the interviews. Another large theme that came from all the interviewees was an emphasis on a loss of Métis culture, but also an emphasis on how everyone still knew in their heart they were Métis.

It is important for parents to learn their Métis identity so that they can pass it on to their children and answer important questions regarding their Métis identity. The goal for the majority of the interviewees was teaching Métis children in their early years so that they can have pride in who they are as Métis people. The interviewees all agreed that it is important to speak up for the rights of Métis families by volunteering, getting involved, and being more visible as groups in the community, so more Métis citizens feel comfortable getting involved and re-learning about their culture. It is important for Métis people to have pride in their culture, but the interviewees all agreed that much more education about Métis culture is required for reconciliation to be a possibility.

Education

The interviewees all agreed that the emphasis on Aboriginal education at Selkirk College has been promising, but that the Métis voice is still not quite as emphasized in the education or fabric of the institution as it should be. In order to address reconciliation at the post-secondary level, serious conversations are required about the truth behind reconciliation, and one of those truly important pieces is racism.

The interviewees all agreed that the misconceptions arise from a lack of accurate education on the Métis people throughout the school system. This has contributed to stereotypical and xenophobic attitudes toward individuals identifying as Métis. Everyone interviewed agreed that the Métis story has been poorly taught in the educational system, but that this poses an opportunity for all levels of education to gather the knowledge to deliver important and necessary education about the Métis people.

As institutions grapple with questions of terminology, it is easy to exclude voices from homogenous terms like Indigenous or Aboriginal and the interviewees unanimously agreed that the Métis voice was overshadowed or forgotten in discussions on Indigenization and reconciliation. However, all the interviewees agreed that Selkirk College is taking steps in a positive direction and that the changes they are seeing are important steps in incorporating and including the Métis story. Interviewees offered a lot of advice for community colleges as they transition their institutions to implement the recommendations from the TRC's (2015) calls to action.

Reconciliation within post-secondary institutions should be supported by the community and knowledge holders. The interviewees all responded that traditional Métis Elders should be invited to speak on matters that they have expertise on when it comes to introducing policies, programs, and events that are Aboriginal focused. Relationships have been built in a positive and promising direction and should be nurtured and sustainable within the work of reconciliation. The interviewees all agreed that the culture remains within the family units and that it is where knowledge is transferred; as such, educating and engaging with Métis community and family units is vitally important in bringing Métis knowledge into the work in colleges around reconciliation.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of various findings from each of the research projects. Within this chapter, diverse perspectives and priority areas of focus were identified.

Chapter 5: Recommendations

This chapter provides Ktunaxa, Syilx-1, Syilx-2, and Metis recommendations. Each one of the sections provides an overview of the various ways that post-secondary environments could be more responsive to the needs of the communities and help support the systemic change necessary for the work of reconciliation.

Ktunaxa Recommendations

Suggestions based on participant feedback have been broken down into engagement profiles:

1. Indigenous learners within the campus community.
2. Non-Indigenous members of the campus community.
3. Faculty and staff in the campus communities.
4. Ktunaxa community members, including non-students.

1. Indigenous Learners within the Campus Community

Ktunaxa participants offered the following suggestions to Indigenous learners to aid in the work of reconciliation:

- *Elders/community members in residence* — Continue to make resource persons available, especially Elders and community members in residence from the Indigenous groups in the region.
- *Scholarships, bursaries, tuition waivers* — Continue to support Indigenous learners with scholarships, bursaries, and tuition waivers specific to the Indigenous groups in the region. Additionally, create nation rebuilding scholarships for graduate students from the Indigenous groups in the region.
- *Maintenance of safe, supportive affinity spaces* — Continue to operate the Gathering Place to support students (including those from Indigenous groups in the region) and to support coursework specific to Indigenous-related programming.
- *Indigenous programming to educate Indigenous learners about their communities* — Support Indigenous-led course and program development specific to the Indigenous

groups in the region (including language courses). Additionally, occasional courses specific to the Indigenous groups should be made available exclusively to Indigenous learners.

2. Non-Indigenous Members of the Campus Community

Ktunaxa participants offered the following suggestions to non-Indigenous members to aid in the work of reconciliation:

- *Interaction with Elders/community members in residence* — Extend the role of Elders and community members of Indigenous groups in the region to improve social interactions, workshops, and coursework. This promotes open conversational space to expose non-Indigenous members of the campus community to Indigenous Voice.
- *Focus programming like non-course language workshops, research presentations, arts shows, etc.* — Support Indigenous groups in the region to continue to co-develop language learning activities to expose non-Indigenous members of the campus community to Indigenous languages.
- *Indigenous programming/coursework to educate non-Indigenous learners about Indigenous history, research, art, etc.* — Support Indigenous groups in the region to continue to co-develop social, cultural, historical, research, art, as well as other learning activities to expose non-Indigenous members of the campus community to other aspects of Indigenous life.

3. Faculty and Staff in the Campus Communities

Ktunaxa participants offered the following suggestions to college faculty and staff members to aid in the work of reconciliation:

- *Professional development for faculty, staff, and administration* — Work with Indigenous groups in the region to co-develop and co-facilitate professional development activities for college faculty, staff, and administration.
- *Resources for bringing Ktunaxa/LKB community members to campus for collaboration projects* — Implement activities that bring Ktunaxa Nation Citizens and specifically Lower Kootenay Band members to the Selkirk College environment.

These projects increase interaction with Indigenous voice and facilitate cross-cultural understanding.

- *Co-instruction opportunities and community resource persons, auxiliary instructors for language, culture, and Residential Schools discussions* — Continue to co-develop co-design and co-teach coursework with Indigenous groups in region. This ensures the campus community “hears Ktunaxa voice” rather than “the voice of others talking about us.” This is a necessary part of opening conversational space, because “when others speak for us, no one needs to talk with us.”
- *Retreats or training at Ainsworth or St Eugene’s* — Work with Indigenous groups in the region to plan and implement educational and training activities at Ainsworth Hot Springs and St. Eugene’s Mission.

4. Ktunaxa Community Members, Including Non-Students

Ktunaxa participants offered the following suggestions to Ktunaxa members to aid in the work of reconciliation:

- *Community support* — Work with the Ktunaxa Nation Council and the Lower Kootenay Indian band to develop community support resources for Ktunaxa Citizens and Lower Kootenay band members. These may be offered as community courses, workshops, or activities that support (a) community initiatives and (b) Indigenous-led programming or programming “About Ktunaxa, for Ktunaxa”.
- *Ktunaxa courses in communities to develop our capacities* — Work with the Ktunaxa Nation Council and the Lower Kootenay Indian Band to develop courses that enhance the capacity of Ktunaxa people to explore resilience resources and improve linguistic and cultural competencies. These may include (a) Ktunaxa designed and facilitated language or cultural workshops and (b) Ktunaxa designed and facilitated healing, resilience, or reconnection workshops.
- *Ktunaxa workshops that allow us to confidently reintegrate our voices into conversational space* — Support activities designed to develop the communicative capacities of Ktunaxa Nation Citizens—because “it isn’t helpful when other speak for is, we need to advocate for ourselves.”

- *General course development* — Assist the Ktunaxa Nation in developing courses that build context for increased capacity in a range of topics, such as critical theory and “political correctness,” better understanding minority status, and coping with historical triggers related to power differentials and everyday experiences.
- *Equine therapy* — Support Indigenous-led equine therapy workshops in Ktunaxa communities, exclusive to Ktunaxa community members.
- *Two-day language workshops in community* — Support Indigenous-led Ktunaxa language workshops in Ktunaxa communities, exclusive to Ktunaxa community members.
- *Longer Ktunaxa language workshops/weeklong grammar workshops* — Support Indigenous-led Ktunaxa extended language workshops in Ktunaxa communities, exclusive to Ktunaxa community members.
- *Language mentorship–apprenticeship program* — Support Indigenous-led Ktunaxa language mentorship–apprentice programs, exclusive to Ktunaxa community members.
- *Miscellaneous workshops and retreats* — Support the development of miscellaneous programs, workshops, and informational sessions. These include (a) Elder/youth technology and language mentorship to encourage cross-generational technology use for better exchange of language resources, (b) cross-cultural workshops, (c) training Ktunaxa community members to teach staff and students about reserves, activities, bands, councils, taxation, and different levels of government community members have to work with, and (d) lateral violence.

Syilx-1 Recommendations

Suggestions based on participant feedback are presented in the following sections:

1. Responsibility and reconciliation.
2. Syilx Okanagan voice.
3. Additional views on reconciliation.
4. Next steps with Okanagan Syilx.

1. Responsibility and Reconciliation

Syilx-1 participants offered the following suggestions relating to responsibility and reconciliation:

- Communicate the importance of territory acknowledgement, and ensure that staff have knowledge about reconciliation
- Offer nsyilxen language classes and staff training and knowledge of racism with tools to stop it.
- Acknowledgement of territory and peoples, create trust, and build respectful relationships through hosting a gathering, having signs in nsyilxcen, and pictures of Syilx people's history.
- Introduce mandatory Indigenous Relations courses to ensure that everyone understands the history of First people and the impact of colonialism,
- Ensure that local First Nations have a voice in college programming and Indigenous supports provided.
- Use a strength-based approach to reconciliation by understanding First Nation historical context, developing ongoing relationships, and connect education programs and services with cultural healing to make a culturally safe place for all.

2. Syilx Okanagan Voice

Syilx-1 participants offered the following suggestions relating to Syilx Okanagan voice:

- Oral culture is still practised today and needs to be the foundation of all research and reconciliation.
- Encompass reconciliation as transformative change and fostering inclusion; research must make room for nsyilxcen because the Okanagan are an oral people.
- Display Okanagan art and use Indigenous books that Syilx Okanagan people wrote as well as books written by Indigenous people as a whole.
- Ensure reconciliation is directed by a First Nations Elder and a youth.
- Have a resident Elder from the Okanagan Nation.

- Hire Okanagan academics and implement Syilx-Okanagan-based classes.
- The Syilx voice needs to be accepted at the college without any confrontation from other Nations.

3. Additional Views on Reconciliation

Syilx-1 participants offered the following suggestions relating to their additional views on reconciliation:

- Ensure Okanagan Syilx traditions and beliefs inform or are within territory community colleges.
- Respect individual and family relationships with the Columbia River.
- Support the Syilx voice to speak for social justice and mainstream culture, as it is failing at reconciliation.

4. Next steps with the Okanagan Syilx

Syilx-1 participants offered the following next steps toward reconciliation:

- Host continual discussions about reconciliation, as reconciliation is dynamic.
- Prioritize building a respectful relationship with the Okanagan Syilx people including youth, Elders, medicine people, families, and leadership.

Syilx-2 Recommendations

Suggestions based on participant feedback are presented in the following sections:

1. Elders/traditional perspectives.
2. Youth/vision.
3. Mothers/relationships.
4. Fathers/action.

1. Elders/Traditional Perspectives

Syilx-2 participants offered the following suggestions relating to their views on Elders and traditional perspectives:

- To Indigenize curriculum, community colleges can learn Syilx cultural protocols from the people and respect them.
- Recognize Elders and their roles as Traditional Knowledge Keepers by providing them with credentials such as honorary doctoral degrees. Include territorial acknowledgements when speaking to groups to recognize they are on borrowed and unceded territory.
- Share the truth in truth and reconciliation and have a visible presence.
- Decolonize and Indigenize curriculum. Incorporate oral stories, water declaration, and preexisting Syilx publications into curriculum materials.
- Have Syilx educators teach the broader settler community about Syilx culture and history.
- Offer more support to and partnerships with the En'owkin Centre and En'owkin Centre instructors.

2. Youth/Vision

Syilx-2 participants offered the following suggestions relating to their perspectives on youth and vision:

- Create mentorship opportunities and re-evaluate Indigenous graduate students' pathways so that more Syilx students could go on to become masters and doctoral candidates and potentially faculty.
- Youth participants wanted to engage the Syilx Nation to come up with a broader vision, and they wanted educational institutions to support internal community and Nation discussions so the Syilx people can create a collective strategic plan.
- The participants represented here did not want to use their valuable time to reconcile with settlers; they asked that their voices be heard and respected.

- Avoid stereotypical performances and ensure an accurate representation of Indigenous peoples.
- Ensure there is a societal norm within the institution in which everyone, including all abilities and all gender identities, is respected and safe.
- Participants want to see stereotypes addressed and racism confronted within the institution.

3. Mothers/Relationships

Syilx-2 participants offered the following suggestions relating to their views on mothers and relationships:

- Readjust funeral policies for Indigenous students, as they experience a disproportionate amount of death within their extended families and communities.
- Implement policy changes so students don't feel like they're fighting a bureaucracy while they are receiving higher education; include Indigenous housing and childcare.
- Create alternate pathways for students to reach their goals.
- Recognize that Indigenous students have the extra burden of emotional labour and work. They should not need to become the educators.
- Implement mandatory introductory level Indigenous studies and Okanagan history courses for all disciplines.
- Create a community environment that supports Indigenous students to help alleviate feelings of isolation.
- Provide communication workshops so Indigenous students can learn to communicate constructively (i.e., toastmasters).
- Ensure Indigenous students are given opportunities to engage with their cultural identities meaningfully in ways that respect the cultural diversity of various Indigenous nations.

- Ensure all professionals in every field are aware of how their decisions can influence the lives of Indigenous people (i.e., social care workers).
- Ensure that professionals are aware of systemic barriers and are held accountable so that they do better in their professional fields as they move forward.
- Have educators encourage self-reflection with Indigenous and non-Indigenous students; self-reflection needs to include who they are, where they come from, and how they relate to each other.

4. Fathers/Action

Syilx-2 participants offered the following suggestions relating to their views on fathers and action:

- Offer a challenge course instead mandating that all staff, faculty, and students take Indigenous studies 101 courses. Increase investment in capital planning with Indigenous designs and architects throughout the campus, not just in isolated locations.
- Invest in housing for Indigenous students and their families.
- Ensure that Indigenous students have access to food security, emergency funds, and peer mentors. This can include potluck dinners and access to safe transportation to and from grocery stores.
- Develop processes for institutional accountability to ensure that education dollars attached to Indigenous students are appropriately allocated.
- Waive tuition and parking fees for Syilx students.
- Make more grants and bursaries available for Syilx students.
- Provide more support for Indigenous faculty and educators in the institution, along with an increased number of Indigenous educators.
- Ensure that Knowledge Keepers are financially compensated for their time at significantly high rates that reflect their value and worth.

Métis Recommendations

The following recommendations are divided into three topics areas:

1. Understand accurate Métis history.
2. Identity and respect for diversity.
3. Research Ethics Committee and professional development.

1. Understand Accurate Métis History

Métis participants offered the following suggestions relating to Métis history:

- Understand the accurate Métis story in Canada so that Métis youth can take pride in their culture and be accepted into the education system as a Métis person.

2. Identity and Respect for Diversity

Métis participants offered the following suggestions relating to identity and diversity:

- Métis people's identity and diversity within our culture needs to be respected within terminology that is inclusive. There is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to outreach to solve challenges, so within the confines of reconciliation and community colleges a plan must be customized accordingly.
- Many Métis students, community members, faculty, and staff are in the process of re-learning about their Métis identity, and this is a process of understanding the culture, learning family histories, and figuring out how to engage intimately with reclaiming their cultural identity.
- Incorporate Métis knowledge-based practices through the hiring of Métis academics and administrative staff and by encouraging students to explore research through a Métis knowledge-based approach to assist in building this understanding.
- Provide training for all staff that is not just Indigenous awareness, but also has a focus on the Métis people.

3. Research Ethics Board Professional Development

Métis participants offered the following suggestions relating to the Research Ethics Board and professional development:

- Develop reflexive approaches to research, which is vitally important when it comes to transparency, understanding the limitations, and providing a deeper understanding of how their epistemology engages with the data on a personal level.
- Ensure that Research Ethics Boards (REB) have Aboriginal representation that can speak directly to Aboriginal methodologies, and establish tribal and community human research ethics guidelines.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the recommendations that were based on each of the individual community research projects.

Chapter 6: Project Limitations

Ktunaxa Project Limitations

Limitations included a sample size of fewer than 20 participants and research meetings that were largely closed to the public and, therefore, not considered “public Ktunaxa information.” Issues related to the sample size were annealed by a significant consideration of the diversity of the sample (see Page, 2007, 2011): (a) a diversity of cultural, social, educational and gender backgrounds; (b) a diversity in places lived and variation in life experiences outside ʔamakís Ktunaxa; and (c) a diversity in problem-solving skills and abilities. These key diversities ensured an uncoordinated crowdsourcing, also known as groupthink. While the research began as a “closed setting” to ensure participants’ comfort with open discussion, it eventually changed to a more open setting. These later sessions were not advertised as “open”; however, Ktunaxa Nation Council employees, family members of the sample, and at-large Ktunaxa community members and elected councillors did attend sessions, either by being asked by the TKLAC to sit in on the session or by inquiring to join the session. The research team made note of the need to open future research to Ktunaxa people and agreed to prepare a community-friendly, jargon-free project report.

Sylx Project Limitations

Limitations of this research included merging two separate research processes (the overarching project methodology and the individual project) and no planned future research. More specifically, the project merged two separate research processes that took more time than anticipated, and this needs to be kept in mind for future projects. In regard to future research, this project was somewhat limited in breadth, and there are no set plans for future research or actions; however, this research is a standalone project with the potential to be a springboard for future research.

Métis Project Limitations

In the course of the study, the researchers felt a sample size of 21 was a positive size to get started on this research project. The in-person interviews provided diverse and rich data, but also recurring themes were constantly emerging. In the future, a potentially larger

sample size from each region specifically would create a positive representation of the specific communities within the Kootenays. This project amalgamates information from Nelson, Trail, and Castlegar, with the majority of survey respondents being from Nelson. As well, the sample size in age was quite elderly; in the future, a study with Métis youth could add a lot of positive information regarding personal stories within academia. However, the Elders offered knowledge about Métis history in the Kootenays, information about Métis identity and culture, and an understanding of how Métis people have been treated in the past.

Overall Project Limitations

The overall project limitations included the ever-changing landscape and insights to appropriately navigating the system change process, while informing and identifying the specific needs for change to ensure Indigenous ways of doing are recognized and accepted. Many aspects of this research project uncovered incompatibilities with community protocols and institutional processes. While many of these challenges were addressed during the project, the timelines did not permit full authentic process to be honoured within the community partners own timelines and processes. This was marked with five of the primary investigators representing the Nations, and having 1 year to complete the research and report. They began their contracts with the college during the summer of 2019 when many employees are taking summer holidays, departments are working with less capacity, and entire processes are on hold until the fall semesters begins.

These challenges were precipitated in 2017 and 2018, primarily through the engagement process of seeking community researchers who were either brought on as employees, as Nation employees, or subcontractors. As a principle of this research and in alignment with the self-determination of each one of the Nation partners, each scenario had various institutional internal accommodations that were outside of the “normal way of doing things.’. The efforts that the college put forth through creative solutions allowed for the researchers to participate eventually; however, the timelines became evidently condensed. The project eventually proceeded with job postings in 2018 for Nation researchers after concluding that it was the best approach for some of the Nations involved. One of the First

Nations from the Southern Interior was invited, the Secwepemc Nation, but were not part of this project.

The time limitation for this project was further exemplified within the research ethics process. When the consultative processes with the Nation partners and internal Human Resource complexities were sorted out, the researchers finally committed to the project in Spring 2019, with the summer right on the horizon. The REB had a summer break for two months before many of the ethics proposals were developed. When the REB resumed in September 2019 and the projects started their individual research ethics reviews, this process was carried through October and November. Researchers gained approval to proceed at various times through the fall of 2019.

In the winter of 2019–2020, during the most active portion of the research data collection process, winter road conditions in the mountains and Elder considerations delayed the ability for some of the data collection to be completed within the allotted time frame before March 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic also further complicated the ability to have the community engagement and presence that was intended. Despite the Covid-19 restrictions, this report was assembled efficiently and as carefully as possible within these limitations. Due to some of the above-listed project limitations, this report is missing a focused Sinixt perspective. The report will become an addendum once it is submitted to Selkirk College.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of some of the limitations that impacted this research project. It covers limitations for each of the primary investigators as well as for the overall project.

Chapter 7: Sharing Viewpoints – Knowledge Mobilization

This chapter provides an overview of the various occurrences in which primary investigators and the project coordinator were able to share insights and project learnings throughout the duration of this project. It provides an overview of different methods of knowledge mobilization and professional development, including conference presentations, professional development, and the creation of a cohesive project methodology that enabled the project to be undertaken.

Conference Presentations

Horsethief, C., Morin, J., & Southam, T. (2017). *Exploring reconciliation through community college education*. S'tenistolw, Camosun College, Indigenous Adult and Post-Secondary Education Conference, Victoria, BC, Panel Presentation.

Morin, J. (2018). *Exploring reconciliation through community college education*. Panel Presentation. Na'tsa'maht CICAN Conference, Victoria, BC.

Good Water, D., & Morin, J. (2019). *Exploring reconciliation through community college education*. BCARIN Annual Meeting, Okanagan College, Kelowna, BC.

Horsethief, C., & Morin, J. (2019). *Exploring reconciliation through community college education*. College of the Rockies, Learning region symposium: The learning of place: Land, people, communities, St Eugene's Mission, Cranbrook, BC.

Good Water, D., & Morin, J. (2020). *Why Indigenous-led research is important in this time of truth and reconciliation*. Applied Research and Innovation, Selkirk College.

Papers/Presentations

Good Water, D., Hall, H., Horsethief, C., Morin, J., & Pogorzelski, R. (2019). *"Viewpoints" Indigenous-led research methodology*. Selkirk College Applied Research and Innovation, Selkirk College.

Reports

Good Water, D. (2020). *Exploring reconciliation through community college education with the Syilx Okanagan*. Selkirk College.

Hall, H. (2020). *Exploring reconciliation in community college education*. Southern Interior, British Columbia. Selkirk College.

Horsethief, C. P. (2020). *Thinking with one heart: A Ktunaxa report on Selkirk College's SSHRC grant* (A final report for SSHRC Grant Number 890-2015-2054). Ktunaxa Nation Council.

Morin, M., & Pogorzelski, R. (2020). *Exploring reconciliation through community college education for the Métis community*. Selkirk College.

Professional Development

Hairsine, P. (2019). *Workshop: Publication writing workshop*. Selkirk College Applied Research and Innovation Centre Workshop.

Algonquin College & The First Nations Information Governance Centre. (2020). *Fundamentals of OCAP®* [Online training course]. First Nations Information Governance Centre.

Chapter Summary

This chapter highlights some of the opportunities researchers used to connect with each other and to formulate stronger connections to the project throughout its duration. These opportunities also provided greater awareness of this project for the wider community through sharing presentations at various conferences and events.

Chapter 8: Visions for Future Research

This section provides some suggestions for future research that can build upon this project. Some areas of focus include youth and student initiatives, protocols for research with Indigenous communities in the Southern Interior region, and research related to professional development resource creation in order to be responsive to the knowledge gaps and resource needs for institutions.

Youth and Student Initiatives

- There are many potential research initiatives that could provide insights to better understand the needs of current secondary and post-secondary Indigenous student's in the region.

Developing Institutional Protocols for Indigenous Research

- An Indigenous-led inquiry on the topic of Indigenous research could potentially support the development of institutional protocols and policies to ensure Indigenous community-led research is appropriately respected, prioritized, and valued within public educational institutions.

Resources and Curriculum Development for Indigenous Research Ethics

- Research initiatives to determine the professional development needs of research ethics boards and non-Indigenous researchers would help identify the knowledge gaps and curriculum needs for professional development of research ethics boards and their members.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided ideas for research topics that could build upon this research project. It presents specific topics including youth and student initiatives, research for the development of institutional Indigenous research protocols, and resource and curriculum development possibilities for research ethics.

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Appendix A: Ktunaxa SSHRC Final Report

Thinking With One Heart: A Ktunaxa Report on Selkirk College's SSHRC Grant

Prepared by Christopher Horsethief, PhD

May 1, 2020

Introduction

This report presents Ktunaxa insights regarding the project's primary research question: *How does a community college respectfully engage in reconciliation through education with the... communities in the traditional territories in which it operates?* It was prepared by Principal Investigator Dr. Christopher Horsethief of the ʔakisq̓nuk First Nation, as a contractor for the Ktunaxa Nation Council Traditional Knowledge and Language Sector on May 1, 2020.

While the findings may be useful to the general Canadian public this report focuses on strategies that will benefit the Applied Research and Innovation institute at Selkirk College, but may inform other 2-year community colleges, post-secondary institutions or educational partners working to improve relationships with Indigenous communities. Accordingly the report focuses on qualitative themes and suggestions for community colleges operating in ʔamak̓is ktunaxa (the Ktunaxa traditional territory).

The report begins with acknowledgements, then presents sections on methodology (including participant selection), community background and relation to Selkirk College, general research findings (including Ktunaxa community recommendations), project conclusions, limitations of the study and directions of future research. It concludes with a reference section and addendums detailing the project timeline (see Addendum 1), the Ktunaxa Statement on Reconciliation (see Addendum 2), project team images (see Addendum 3), project suggestions (see Addendum 4), and the Ktunaxa Nation Vision Statement (see Addendum 5).

The research project was funded by the "Exploring Reconciliation Through Community College Education" SSHRC Grant Number 890-2015-2054. This is the final Ktunaxa report for this grant.

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This research was made possible by the contributions of several Ktunaxa Elders, language speakers and cultural people associated with the Ktunaxa Nation Council (KNC) Traditional Knowledge and Language (TKL) Sector Advisory Committee (TKLAC), as well as KNC employees. Many of these individuals are Residential School survivors that continue to make sense of their experiences and children of Residential School students that strive for resilience in the wake of their parents' and grandparents' experiences. Together these families use their voices

to add stories to research conversations concerning colonization/post-colonization capacity, nation building and resilience.

The project team was composed of the following members: Chief Alfred Joseph, Chief Mary Mahseelah, Hereditary Chief Sophie Pierre, Dominic Alexander, Dorothy Alpine, Herman Alpine, Mary Basil, Laura Birdstone, Gina Clarricoates, Marguerite Cooper, Amelia Dannyluck, Roberta Gravelle, Elizabeth Ignatius, Anne Jimmie, Marie Nicholas, Hazel Pascal, Pete Sanchez, Kay Shottanana, Bea Stevens, KNC Sector Directors Codie Morigeau and Don Sam, Cecilia Teneese, Leanna Gravelle and Samantha Sam.

Background

The Ktunaxa people have traditionally occupied plateau and prairie lands in British Columbia, Alberta, Montana, and Idaho (Morgan, 1980; Schaeffer, 1940; Smith, 1986; Turney-High, 1941). KNC defined the heartland of the Ktunaxa people in geographical terms rather than federal, provincial, state, or international demarcation: 70,000 km² adjacent to the Kootenay and Columbia rivers and the Arrow Lakes and Flathead Lake (Ktunaxa Nation, 2011). The Ktunaxa refer to their traditional territory as *ʔamakʷis ktunaxa*. Following European incursion into *ʔamakʷis ktunaxa* the Ktunaxa population were confined to Reserve lands in Canada (the Lower Kootenay Indian Reserve, the St. Mary's Indian Reserve, the Tobacco Plains Indian Reserve, and the Columbia Lake Indian Reserve) and Reservation lands in the United States (the Standing Arrow band of the Flathead Indian Reservation and the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho; Harvey, 2009). Interviews with Ktunaxa speakers also indicate significant numbers of Ktunaxa people in Cranbrook BC, Invermere BC, Vancouver BC, Victoria BC, Missoula MT, Spokane WA, and Calgary AB (H. Alpine & D. Alpine, personal communication, June 6, 2009).

Ktunaxa differs from neighbouring languages in that it is a linguistic isolate ("Kutenai Indians," 1913). Ktunaxa is not a part of a larger language family, unlike the Salish tribes to their south and west, and the Blackfeet to their east (Curtis, 1911). This isolation, along with small Indian reserve populations, puts the Ktunaxa at a disadvantage in maintaining the number of beginner speakers necessary to sustain a fluent corpus capable of carrying a coherent cultural identity. The challenge to maintain cultural identity is made worse by Canadian and provincial measures imposed on Indigenous education, family structures and the intergenerational bond used to exchange critical identity resources between Ktunaxa generations.

Paramount among these measures was the creation of the Canadian Indian Residential School System (CIRSS). The Ktunaxa, like many Canadian First Nations people, were subject to educational assimilation at the hands of missionary educators (Mugocsi, 1999). For the Ktunaxa the CIRSS took the form of St. Eugene's Mission School (SEM). The Federal Government constructed SEM in 1910 (KNC, 2007), and funded its administration first by Oblates of the Mary Immaculate and then by the Anglican Church of Canada. St. Eugene's was typical of the CIRSS experience in one important respect: the faculty, staff, and clergy actively and aggressively dispossessed the First Nations students of their language (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2008). In addition to Ktunaxa students, the faculty and staff attempted to reprogram Okanagan, Shuswap, and Blackfoot children as farmers and animal husbandry specialists (KNC, 2007; Quinn, 2010) effectively removing the specialized occupational skills and Indigenous epistemologies.

The faculty and staff at SEM employed a brutal form of direct English language instruction to replace Ktunaxa as a primary means of social family discourse (M. Teneese, personal communication, July 29, 2010). Crawford (2007) expanded the influence of boarding school education to include a “delayed” component, where invasive educational experiences induced parents to abandon their Native language in family communication. He asserted the delayed outcome surfaced when parents raised their children “only or mostly in English, believing this would help them in school” (Crawford, 2007, p. 49). In the case of the Ktunaxa, entire generations of language speakers either abandoned their language completely or spoke it behind closed doors (H. Alpine, personal communication, March 12, 2009). Concurrently, accompanying traditional spiritual values were either abandoned or practiced underground (Mugocsi, 1999). The schools implemented a systemic de-differentiation of specialized cultural knowledge (Horsethief, 2012).

The cumulative effect of Indigenous cultural and spiritual attrition has been described as fundamentally genocidal occurrences (Tinker, 1993); soul damaging (Zelmer, 2010); soul wounding (Duran, 2006); crushing individual energies (Tousignant & Sioui, 2009); depleting the collective immune systems of Indigenous communities (Abadian, 1999); attempted conversions of the heart (Petersen & Peers, 1993); intractable grief (Sam, 2019) and forced undoing of Indigenous culture (Horsethief, 2020). Yet through this brutal history, the oldest Ktunaxa strive to make sense of the missionary experience and the youngest of the beginner speakers continue to pick up new words and use them—both signs indicating resilience.

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation’s (2006) investigation of Indigenous healing and decolonization offered a comprehensive summary description. Addressing statistical maladies in Indigenous communities, they noted,

Generations of Aboriginal children in Canada were sent to government sponsored residential schools run by the Roman Catholic, Anglican, United, Presbyterian and other churches. The physical and sexual abuse suffered by many of these children—along with the imposed alienation from families, communities and cultures—left scars that have been passed on from generation to generation. This legacy of abuse and intergenerational trauma is now well recognized. (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2006, p. iii)

It is important to underscore this point: Ktunaxa children returned to their families without a firm cultural identity. They were “demoralized, victimized and often unable to bond” (Fournier & Crey, 1996, p. 62). They found themselves embedded in displaced and disoriented communities engrossed in “accelerated social and economic dissolution” (Fournier & Crey, 1996, p. 62). Indigenous Elders, previously competent repositories of elaborate histories and specialized information systems, now had “no one to receive their wisdom and lost their reason for existence” (Fournier & Crey, 1996, p. 62). These low points of human cultural interaction describe the lived—and remembered—experiences of the Ktunaxa people.

Inspired by this history the Ktunaxa engaged with several educational partners operating in ʔamakís Ktunaxa. These include school districts, regional universities and local community colleges including Selkirk College. Selkirk College has demonstrated a history of educational partnerships with the Ktunaxa Nation, faculty and staff training in Ktunaxa language instruction and Ktunaxa co-teaching activities. Additionally, Selkirk College has developed institutional

policies for promoting Indigenous land acknowledgements based on “values of respect, inclusivity, curiosity and collaboration; the spirit and intent of the UNDRIP...; the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; the Colleges and Institutes Canada Indigenous Education Protocol; and the Memoranda of Understanding with regional First Nations” (Selkirk College, 2017, p. 1).

In 2016, Selkirk College approached KNC about a project to explore ways 2-year community colleges foster Reconciliation. The project would be funded by Canada’s Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and would also involve simultaneous research activities with the Sinixt, Okanagan and Métis nations. Jessica Morin submitted a research synopsis to the Ktunaxa Research Ethics Board (KREB) in 2017, which resulted in a lengthy philosophical discourse between Selkirk College and KNC. Both Selkirk College’s and KNC’s ethical considerations were satisfied at a meeting at the Ktunaxa Nation Governance Building in December 2017, clearing the way for research to begin in 2018. Research sessions with KNC technical and administrative staff began February 7, 2018, expanded to include the TKLAC in March 14th, 2018, and concluded November 13th, 2018. A detailed timeline of research session activities and emergent themes appear in Addendum 1.

A final consideration regarding project background: Recent Ktunaxa research has sought to consolidate research resources for a nonlinear synergy built on education, training, empowerment and capacity building. This strategy not only combines critical activities of the KNC Education and Employment and Traditional Knowledge and Language sectors, but also with ongoing Canadian research efforts. These are summarized in the Strengthening Indigenous Research Capacity (SIRC) Strategic Plan published by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, which pledges to “co-develop with Indigenous Peoples an interdisciplinary research and research training model that contributes to reconciliation” (Government of Canada, 2019, p. iii).

The plan cited the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) position that twenty-first century Canadian policy must reach reconciliation with Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians, noting “reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples’ education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity” (Government of Canada, 2019, p. 20). Ultimately, the TKLAC, KNC project research team and Selkirk College representatives agreed to marry these Canadian research goals to the Ktunaxa Nation by aligning the project with the Ktunaxa Nation Vision Statement (KNVS). This community based and Nation driven document (as seen in Addendum 3) includes references to these seminal themes: strong and healthy Ktunaxa citizens, sense of community, the Ktunaxa language, celebration of Ktunaxa history in our homelands, togetherness, self-sufficiency and self-governance. While the KREB process required Selkirk College to explicitly identify one theme to support—the project touched on several components.

Efforts to combine Indigenous education and research related to historical processes of colonization, including the Indian Child welfare and the Residential School systems, have well established roots in the Ktunaxa Nation. Ongoing threads of research analysis, policy and dissemination include the KNC Social Investment Sector’s Practice Framework (Knutsgard et al., 2019), colonization as imposed entropy in Ktunaxa social and cultural networks (Horsethief,

2016, 2018, legislative genocide and health conceptualizations (Shahram, 2017, 2020), designing “Elders in the making” programs (Morigeau, 2020), and resilience in the face of intractable grief and transformative Indigenous research (Sam, 2019, 2020). The emphasis of these Ktunaxa led graduate studies is to refine the units of analysis and structures that support—rather than replace—traditional Ktunaxa tools.

The cumulative work of Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy offered terminology that refines two salient concepts. First, Brayboy et al. (2014) asserted nation building work must be incorporated into contemporary educational programming, even if it must be cultivated in the safe space of de-colonial (commonly referred to in the Ktunaxa Nation as post-colonial) education in predominantly White institutions. They suggested programs can and should be sites of nontraditional post-secondary education, including Indigenous programming and tribal nation building (commonly referred to in the Ktunaxa Nation as nation re-building). Brayboy et al. noted,

legal, political, cultural, economic, health, spiritual, and educational capacity among Indigenous communities... (are) best captured by the philosophy of self-determination through self-education, which emphasizes the importance of Native peoples taking care of Native peoples and continuing that process. It is a project for Indigenous communities driven by Indigenous communities. (pp. 593–594)

Additionally, Brayboy’s (2006) description of Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) centered on the role of oral tradition and narrative in the posing and testing of theory. Brayboy modelled stories as theories, and their discussion an active process of how Indigenous research:

theory is not simply an abstract thought or idea that explains overarching structures of societies and communities; theories, through stories and other media, are roadmaps for our communities and reminders of our individual responsibilities to the survival of our communities. These notions of theory, however, conflict with what many in the “academy” consider “good theory.” (p. 427)

Brayboy (2006) extended the argument, noting stories are not separate from theory, as “they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being” (p. 430), and their exchange in Indigenous led situations provides the basis for development of identity through sharing—and specifically hearing—schematics, orientations and understandings. Brayboy’s brand of TribalCrit allows educational institutions:

to change the ways that Indigenous students think about schools and, perhaps more importantly, the ways that both schools and educational researchers think about (Indigenous) students... research will lead both to a better understanding of the needs of Indigenous communities and to changes in the educational system and society at large that benefit Indigenous communities. (pp. 441–442)

Stated succinctly the Ktunaxa Nation and Selkirk College have conceptualized this research as more than a means apology or healing. Rather is it a means of furthering a reciprocally calibrated relationship, a method of preserving nation vision based on Indigenous led nation re-building efforts, and a tool for refining uniquely rooted theories from the Ktunaxa lived experience—

especially when that experience is painful and may be distorted when shared or analyzed across cultural boundaries.

Methodology

Ktunaxa technicians and TKLAC members discussed potential methodologies for this project between October 2017 and February 2018. These discussions took place at the KNGB while the KREB ethics review process was facilitated. As Selkirk College sought clarification on several technical, protocol and process aspects of project data gathering, the Ktunaxa speakers and cultural resource people maintained any methodology would need to be compatible *both* with commonplace social sciences research practices *and* the Ktunaxa culture. This balance would promote scientific rigour in the project environment and support Ktunaxa resilience by demonstrating traditional crowdsourcing activities.

The TKLAC met during November 2017 to discuss ongoing and future Ktunaxa research projects and proposed a formal methodology born from Ktunaxa cultural decision-making practices used in traditional and historical leadership settings. The methodology was named ʔukiniłwiytiyała, which translates to “a group thinking with one heart.” Members of the TKLAC implemented this traditional practice to demonstrate it as a research methodology at the Aboriginal Gathering Place at the College of the Rockies in February 2018. Members of the group sat in a circle and one member asked the group the question, “how would we describe the mechanics of thinking with one heart?” The group rendered the answer as their ancestors would have centuries ago, moving around the circle with members describing the following protocols:

1. A Ktunaxa decision maker would summon a collection of independently operating and knowledgeable community members to explore potential outcomes, often this was a chief.
2. The chief would provide background to the issue being discussed, allowing their right hand and whip to add relevant information.
3. If the chief was acting on behalf of a community member, that person would also be able to provide relevant information.
4. A question would be posed to the group, soliciting community input.
5. Every person in attendance would be able to offer input or remain silent:
6. Once a speaker began speaking the following protocols would be strictly observed:
 - It was not acceptable to tell any speaker their input was “wrong” or “incorrect.”
 - It was not acceptable to tell any speaker they did not belong in the assembly.
 - It was not acceptable to speak over or interrupt any speaker.
 - A “long” pause was necessary after each speaker, to ensure they had the opportunity to finish their thoughts without being rushed (member of the TKLAC asserted this pause was generally long enough for Western researchers to “become uncomfortable” and “fill the awkward silence” to “facilitate conversation”).
7. Once all speakers either spoke or passed the decision-maker would describe their decision.

8. The decision was accepted as drawn from Ktunaxa social and cultural custom, well informed by the community, irreducible to any individual and belonging to the group.

The TKLAC posed the ʔukiniłwiytiyała method was based on sovereignty and representative of Ktunaxa consensus: It prevented one person from “getting into others’ business” and “provided all the information a group could offer.” The TKLAC offered two relevant clarifications. First the process was central to the notion of sovereignty, because “all Ktunaxa had their jobs, and it was poor form to get into other’s business—essentially I’m okay to do my work because I know you aren’t going to interfere with my work, and you’re okay to do your work because you know I won’t interfere with your work.” This was described as relevant behavior to train sovereign community members from “the youngest community members, to families and heads of households, to village-to-village discussions, to relationships with other tribal and language groups.”

Second, the process illustrated Ktunaxa consensus decision making, which is often inaccurately thought of as “the chief makes decisions that everyone finds acceptable.” A more accurate depiction of Ktunaxa consensus decision-making looks like “the chief asking all relevant parties to weigh in on an issue, then making a decision based on the most complete set of suggestions—and it was not necessary for the entire group to find the decision acceptable. This practice is an effective means of drawing from the “wisdom of the crowd,” an idea presented by James Surowiecki (2004) who argued diverse groups of independently acting individuals often make decisions more accurate than individuals experts or groups of experts with similar backgrounds. This is because experts tend to make the same kinds of mistakes; people with the same education make the same kinds of guesses and offer similar solutions; analysts/specialists/technicians trained the same way are subject to similar biases. By crowdsourcing community information from a diverse group of participants the chief could make decisions that are optimal for a larger group.

Sample Selection

With the benefits of crowdsourcing in mind the TKLAC posed a second question for consideration, “who should be a participant in the sample?” The group reviewed key aspects of group diversity, including (a) Residential School survivors with direct CIRSS experience, (b) students of educational/training schools out of the area with experience learning while away from the ʔamakis ktunaxa, (c) patients that attended tuberculosis hospitals in the Lower Mainland, and (d) first-generation survivors of items a, b, and c. The group considered the composition of the TKLAC and deduced it met the criteria, noting members were able to travel for meetings and was capable of lodging in close proximity of the KNGB, was composed of both women and men, and represented each of the four Canadian Ktunaxa communities.

The sample is depicted in Table 1, with categorical variables for the members’ community, their survivor status, secondary or post-secondary teaching/co-teaching experience, KNC policy/technical working group experience, elected leadership experience, research experience (as member of TKLAC) and previous relationships with Selkirk College:

Table 1*Sample Description*

Name	Community	Survivor	Teaching Experience	Policy Experience	Governance/ Leadership Experience	Research Experience	Experience with Selkirk College
Alfred Joseph	ʔakisq̓nuknik	X	X	X	X	X	
Mary Mahseelah	ʔa·kanuxunik	X		X	X	X	
Sophie Pierre	ʔaq̓amnik	X	X	X	X	X	
Dominic Alexander	ʔaq̓amnik	X		X		X	
Dorothy Alpine	ʔaq̓amnik	X	X			X	
Herman Alpine	ʔaq̓amnik	X	X			X	X
Mary Basil	ya·q̓annu·ki	X			X	X	
Laura Birdstone	ʔaq̓amnik	X		X		X	
Roberta Gravelle	ʔa·kanuxunik	X		X		X	
Elizabeth Ignatius	ʔa·kanuxunik	X				X	
Gina Clarricoates	ʔaq̓amnik	X	X	X		X	
Marguerite Cooper	ʔakisq̓nuknik		X	X	X	X	
Amelia Danyluck	ʔakisq̓nuknik	X			X	X	
Anne Jimmie	ya·q̓annu·ki	X	X	X	X	X	X
Marie Nicholas	ʔakisq̓nuknik	X				X	
Hazel Pascal	ʔakisq̓nuknik	X				X	
Pete Sanchez	ʔakisq̓nuknik		X			X	X
Kay Shottanana	ʔaq̓amnik	X	X	X		X	
Bea Stevens	ʔakisq̓nuknik	X			X	X	

The TKLAC also agreed to extend membership to new members as they joined the group, as well as community members that moved back to ʔamakʷis Ktunaxa and at large community members that may have been able to add data that supported or added to the project. As a final note, the TKLAC agreed with the primary investigator and KNC technicians' opinion that the Ktunaxa should only conduct research with Ktunaxa participants—not members of other Indigenous cultural groups. This was partly to reduce costs and partly to support the notion of sovereignty mentioned above: Arrow Lakes researchers should interview Arrow Lakes people, Okanagan researchers should interview Okanagan people and Métis researchers should interview Métis people. This precludes one cultural group from interpreting and analyzing another's, or as the TKLAC described it, "it keeps us from getting into another group's business, and keeps others from getting into our business—this is in line with traditional notions of sovereignty."

Research Findings

Once the project team formally adopted the ʔukiniłwiytiyała methodology it met for several informal sessions to discuss potential interviewing and recording formats, to address budgeting and accounting procedures and outstanding ethics review questions. These questions were forwarded by Jessica Morin on behalf of the Institutional Review board at Selkirk College, and were described as final obstacles to a Collaborative Research Agreement between Selkirk College and the Ktunaxa Nation Council. Many of the questions centered on the sample frame, intertribal relations and Tri Council Party Statement compliant treatment of Indigenous participants. Specifically, Selkirk College suggested the Ktunaxa research team conduct interviews with non-Ktunaxa Indigenous participants. Selkirk College also suggested these cross-cultural Indigenous interactions focusing on the CIRSS experience would draw members of various Indigenous cultural groups together. Finally, there was an expectation that the Ktunaxa research team would follow previously accepted practices and protocols set by Selkirk College.

These led the Ktunaxa research team to formulate the first set of findings, which were referred to pre-engagement findings. The term was chosen to denote institutional complications not related to gathering, analysis or reporting of project themes. However these lingering discussions were obstacles to funding transfers and engagement with research participants. The following specific responses were rendered by Codie Morigeau, Don Sam and Christopher Horsethief:

- Ktunaxa research will center on Ktunaxa research participants and their experiences as members of Ktunaxa communities and experiences as Ktunaxa survivors or descendants or survivors of the Residential School experience. Ktunaxa researchers are not well suited to interview, interpret or analyze data from other Indigenous cultural groups—and vice versa.
- Expecting Ktunaxa researchers to engage in cross-cultural research (with Sinixt, Okanagan, or Métis participants) would violate traditional notions of sovereignty and would reduce the accuracy of research findings by translating key research concepts across Ktunaxa and non-Ktunaxa domains.
- This would not facilitate members of various Indigenous cultural groups working together, nor would it heal any historical or traditional rifts between Indigenous groups

that preceded Selkirk College's research activities. *In short, it is not Selkirk College's job to heal Indigenous people.*

- Assuming Selkirk College's institutional practices are precedent, valid or legitimate because they are perceived as "established," "official," "institutional," or "accepted" can create a scenario whereby all other ethical considerations are "not established," "unofficial," "non-institutional," or "unacceptable." This concept was described by Fairclough (1992), who noted, "Institutional practices which people draw upon without thinking often embody assumptions which directly or indirectly legitimize existing power relations. Practices which appear to be universal and commonsensical can often be shown to originate in the dominant class or the dominant bloc, and to have been naturalized" (p. 27). In this scenario Selkirk College's assumption that its practices were legitimate were only based on its privileged history, however the Ktunaxa practices were just as legitimate.
- The Ktunaxa research ethics process was created to protect Ktunaxa Elders, their intellectual property and the social and cultural structures necessary in maintaining the Ktunaxa identity.

These responses resulted in the technical team's suggestion that project research commence, even if all Selkirk College's questions were not completely answered.

In light of the pre-engagement findings Selkirk College agreed to proceed. Project data collection and analysis discussion moved from the 3-person team to the KNC TKLAC at eight meetings between February 7, 2018, and August 22, 2018. The first session proposed the working model of the ʔukiniłwiytiyała methodology as described in the methodology section. The primary themes to emerge from the first session were:

- ʔukiniłwiytiyała is the most appropriate way to gather data from the Ktunaxa Nation. Additionally, the Ktunaxa people are the only true experts in the ʔukiniłwiytiyała framework and non-Ktunaxa should not interpret or analyze without strict consultation.
- The data gathered in the research process would be irreducible to the individual, would belong to the group, and the group would be anonymized—unless members made statements they wanted directly attributed to themselves.
- Both Ktunaxa and Western ethics processes were valid. Stated another way, the research would only be valid if both sets of concerns were part of a larger conversation agreed to before research started.

Methodology discussions resulted in the suggestions Ktunaxa ethics be viewed as valid and institutional, as formal as and equal to the Selkirk College ethics processes, that the ʔukiniłwiytiyała methodology be adopted for formal research gathering and default anonymity be offered to research participants.

The TKLAC formally agreed to use the ʔukiniłwiytiyała at the second session. The group also discussed several aspects of the concept of reconciliation. The settings ranged from simple apologies, the role of sincerity in apologies (what does being forced to apologize do to the

sincerity or efficacy of the apology), to finding or resetting a balance (as might be exemplified by balancing or reconciling a check book). The following points were clarified:

- Reconciliation as a concept created by Canada serves Canadians—not Canada’s Indigenous populations.
- Canadians overwhelmingly omit the “Truth” from truth and reconciliation discussions, referring to the term generally as “Reconciliation.”
- For Indigenous people, including the Ktunaxa, Reconciliation is fundamentally about Truth, with one participant noting, “the formal Canadian apology is less important to us. It is less useful to us than opportunity.”
- No non-Ktunaxa can be the expert, the spokesperson or knowledge holder of truth and reconciliation, Residential School or resilience resources—any research, policy or planning activities must belong to the group striving for resilience.
- It is most important to use reconciliation activities to open conversational space where Indigenous voice has been forcibly removed. For example, discussions of Indigenous culture, language, spirituality, identity, family and education must be open to meaningful Ktunaxa participation.

These resulted in the following suggestions: Truth be inextricably linked to Reconciliation, and Ktunaxa resource people be included in teaching and co-teaching settings, because “if non-Indigenous and non-Ktunaxa experts speak for us—then there is no reason to speak directly with us and we are kept outside of conversational space.”

The next research session focused discussion on beneficiaries of reconciliation in a contemporary educational setting. This included non-Indigenous faculty, staff and students—as well as Ktunaxa students on campus and Ktunaxa community members that would not benefit from campus programming or reconciliation efforts. Specific concerns were raised with respect to Western experts “saving us” by teaching our histories, backgrounds, cultures and languages on campus or in community. The following themes emerged:

- Until now our resources have been forced through Western filters to be viewed as valid.
- This always involves someone from the institution “validating” or “vouching for us”, so to be viewed as legitimate we need the institution to tell us we’re legitimate—until we make them uncomfortable. One example was offered regarding the Aboriginal Gathering Place at College of the Rockies, “This place was supposed to be ours. We put up some of the money for it. And when we wanted a Ktunaxa name and a set of keys CotR [College of the Rockies] changed their understanding. We had to ask for permission to be here. And all their AGP [Aboriginal Gathering Place] signs have the college logo over our words and no KNC logo.”

These themes resulted in the suggestion Selkirk College review Duran’s (2006) epistemic hybrids and Mignolo’s (2003) locus/loci of enunciation, then incorporate key ideas into faculty training, course work for non-Indigenous learners and supportive positioning materials in Indigenous affinity spaces.

The remainder of research discussions refined the notion of reconciliation stakeholders at 2-year institutions, and began connecting research participant experiences to potential resilience resources. The following questions were viewed as “research setting starting points”:

- How do you think a 2-year community college can help with reconciliation?
- What can a 2-year college institution do to affect reconciliation?
- How can we be involved in evaluation to make sure reconciliation is happening?
- How does the institution understand reconciliation? What is the starting point?
- When you moved on to public education what helped you?
- When you re-entered education at a later age what helped you?
- If you attended post-secondary education at a later age what helped you?
- What safe space/affinity space resources were useful to you?
- What classes, workshops or activities would have been helpful to you?
- What classes, workshops or activities would be helpful to your students?
- What classes, workshops or activities would be helpful to other non-Indigenous students?
- What kinds of experienced/stories should be included in anti-bias efforts?

The next key development was discussion of a differentiated set of beneficiaries. The groups included (a) Indigenous learners (including Ktunaxa students) that could be supported within the larger 2-year college campus community, (b) non-Indigenous (and non-Ktunaxa) members of the 2-year college campus community, (c) faculty and staff at 2-year college campus communities, and (d). and Ktunaxa community members—including non-students. ***Suggestions for these groups follow:***

1. Indigenous learners within the campus community
 - A. *Elders/Community Members in Residence*—Selkirk College should continue to make resource persons available, especially Elders and community members in residence form the Indigenous groups in the Selkirk operating territory.
 - B. *Scholarships, bursaries, tuition waivers*—Selkirk College should continue to support Indigenous learners with scholarships, bursaries and tuition waivers specific to the Indigenous groups in the Selkirk operating territory. Additionally Selkirk College should create nation re-building scholarships for graduate students from the Indigenous groups in the Selkirk operating territory.
 - C. *Maintenance of safe, supportive affinity spaces*—Selkirk College should continue to operate the Gathering Place to support students (including those from Indigenous groups in the Selkirk operating territory) and to support coursework specific to Indigenous related programming.

- D. *Indigenous programming to educate Indigenous learners about their communities*—Selkirk College should support Indigenous led course and program development specific to the Indigenous groups in the Selkirk operating territory (including language courses). Additionally occasional courses specific to the Indigenous groups should be made available exclusively to Indigenous learners.
2. Non-Indigenous members of the campus community
- A. *Interaction with Elders/Community Members in Residence*—Selkirk College should extend the role of Elders and community members of Indigenous groups in the Selkirk operating territory, for social interaction, workshops and coursework. This promotes open conversational space to expose non-Indigenous members of the campus community to Indigenous voice.
- B. *Focus programming like non-course language workshops, research presentations, arts shows, etc.*—Selkirk College should support Indigenous groups in the Selkirk operating territory to continue to co-develop language learning activities to expose non-Indigenous members of the campus community to Indigenous languages.
- C. *Indigenous programming/coursework to educate non Indigenous learners about Indigenous history, research, art, etc.*—Selkirk College should support Indigenous groups in the Selkirk operating territory to continue to co-develop social, cultural, historical, research, art, etc. learning activities to expose non-Indigenous members of the campus community to other aspects of Indigenous life.
3. Faculty and staff In the campus communities
- A. *Professional development for Faculty, Staff, Administration*—Selkirk College should work with Indigenous groups in the Selkirk operating territory to co-develop and co-facilitate PD activities for Selkirk College faculty, staff and administration.
- B. *Resources for bringing Ktunaxa/LKB community members to campus for collaboration projects*—Selkirk College should implement activities that bring Ktunaxa Nation Citizens, and specifically Lower Kootenay Band members, to the Selkirk College environment. These projects increase interaction with Indigenous Voice and facilitate cross-cultural understanding.
- C. *Co-instruction opportunities and community resource persons, auxiliary instructors for language, culture, Residential Schools discussions*—Selkirk College should continue to co-develop co-design and co-teach coursework with Indigenous groups in the Selkirk operating territory. This ensures the campus community “hears Ktunaxa voice” rather than “the voice of others talking about us”. This is a necessary part of opening conversational space, because “when others speak for us, no one needs to talk with us.”
- D. *Retreats or training at Ainsworth or St Eugene’s*—Selkirk College should work with Indigenous groups in the Selkirk operating territory to plan and implement education and training activities at Ainsworth Hot Springs and St. Eugene’s Mission.

4. Ktunaxa community members—including non-students
 - A. *Community support*—Selkirk College should work with the Ktunaxa Nation Council and the Lower Kootenay Indian band to develop community support resources for Ktunaxa Citizens and Lower Kootenay band Members. These may be in-community courses, workshops or activities that support:
 1. Community initiatives.
 2. Indigenous led programming, or programming “About Ktunaxa, for Ktunaxa.”
 - B. *Ktunaxa courses in our communities to develop our capacities*—Selkirk College should work with the Ktunaxa Nation Council and the Lower Kootenay Indian band to develop courses that develop the capacity of Ktunaxa people to explore resilience resources and develop linguistic and cultural competencies. These may include:
 1. Ktunaxa designed and facilitated language or cultural workshops.
 2. Ktunaxa designed and facilitated healing, resilience or reconnection workshops.
 - C. *Ktunaxa workshops that allow is to confidently reintegrate our voices into conversational space*—Selkirk College should support activities designed to develop the communicative capacities of Ktunaxa Nation Citizens—because “it isn’t helpful when other speak for is, we need to advocate for ourselves.”
 - D. *General course development*—Selkirk College should assist the Ktunaxa Nation in developing courses that build context for increased capacity in a range of topics, such as critical theory and “political correctness”, better understanding minority status, and coping with historical triggers related to power differentials and every day experiences.
 - E. *Equine therapy*—Selkirk College should support Indigenous-led equine therapy workshops in Ktunaxa communities. These should be exclusive to Ktunaxa community members.
 - F. *2-day language workshops in community*—Selkirk College should support Indigenous-led Ktunaxa language workshops in Ktunaxa communities. These should be exclusive to Ktunaxa community members.
 - G. *Longer Ktunaxa language workshops/week long grammar workshops*—Selkirk College should support Indigenous-led Ktunaxa extended language workshops in Ktunaxa communities. These should be exclusive to Ktunaxa community members.
 - H. *Language mentorship-apprenticeship program*—Selkirk College should support Indigenous-led Ktunaxa language mentorship-apprentice programs, exclusive to Ktunaxa community members.
 - I. *Miscellaneous workshops and retreats*—Selkirk College should support the development of miscellaneous programs, workshops and informational sessions. These include:
 1. Elder/youth technology and language mentorship to encourage cross-generational technology use for better exchange of language resources.
 2. Cross-cultural workshops.

3. Training Ktunaxa community members to teach staff and students about our reserves, activities, bands, councils, taxation, and different levels of government we have to work with, etc.
4. Lateral violence.

Conclusions

Human relationships are at the core of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation movement. For most Canadians it is about an official apology. For Indigenous people it is about brutally personal experiences, internalized by generations of families that were deprived of the ability to raise their young, teach their cultures and speak their languages. Younging et al. (2009) described the CIRSS and reconciliation efforts as a new relationship “between the Canadian government and Aboriginal peoples, between the abused and their abusers, and between individuals within families and communities” (p. ix). The research team decided a part of this new relationship was a shift from “saviour” research and practice to “support” research and practice.

The Ktunaxa Nation, through the voices of the Traditional Knowledge and Language Advisory Committee and the project research team, set out to make this research not about the intensely personal stories of abuse, betrayal and recovery—they wanted recommendations about the future, to advance suggestions to enable and not supplant Indigenous resilience inertia, and to support capacity development through education and conversational space. The voices involved in this research urged community colleges to continue the shift from the policies of colonization to broader conversational spaces open to Indigenous voices having been forcibly removed.

The project team offered a statement on Canada’s “Truth and Reconciliation” movement as an tool to open conversational spaces—including those aligned with components of the Ktunaxa Nation Vision Statement—to Indigenous led discourse, contextually nuanced units of analysis (including spoken stories), and reciprocally calibrated spaces. The statement (found in Addendum 2) reads as follows:

nas nini ku qalwiynala (this is what is in our hearts). qaqa?ni ma yaqalitknawaski (what they did to us is true). qapilpalnin (say it all/tell the whole story). mika yaqalitknawaski hu qayaqalqaçalani (despite what happened to us we made it through). hu qalwinalani kuç sukil ?aqstmakniknala (we want a good life for ourselves). hawiçkinin kçmakkyam ç çina-kinin (hold the truth and go forward). çinl qaqa (so be it). ma?ç kuktkinin! (do not change this statement!)

This statement, composed in the latter research sessions and approved at the final research team meeting, references the “truth” and “completeness” required by the SIRC Strategic Plan, the forward-thinking hope required for Ktunaxa families to pursue resilience in the wake of cultural entropy, and the stark ownership of painful histories as a foundation for building a brighter future. It also comes from a place of cultural intimacy, which prevents non-Ktunaxa from speaking authoritatively about the topic of Ktunaxa reconciliation.

At the beginning of the report I proposed these findings would directly benefit the Applied Research and Innovation Institute specifically, and the Canadian public indirectly. It is worth noting the Ktunaxa community also benefited in several important aspects related to CIRSS induced vulnerability traps, compromised communication avenues and potential resilience

outcomes. These resulted from individuals embracing emotional vulnerability—as a group—in an effort to crowdsource healing resources in a culturally appropriate setting. This phenomenon belongs to the Ktunaxa; The pain belongs to Residential School survivors and the hope belongs to their families. Like the Ktunaxa Statement on Reconciliation internal Ktunaxa benefits are not to be deconstructed, recombined or tinkered with. The healing aspects of this research are valid, simply because they are.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

As a final note on methodology, the project research team conducted a post-research conversation to discuss improvements to methodology and sample. These limitations included a sample size of fewer than 20 participants and research meetings that were largely closed to the public and therefore not considered “public Ktunaxa information.” Issues related to the sample size were annealed by a significant consideration of the diversity of the sample (see Page, 2007, 2011): (a) a diversity of cultural, social, educational and gender backgrounds; (b) a diversity in places lived and variation in life experiences outside ʔamakʔis ktunaxa; and (c) a diversity in problem-solving skills and abilities. These key diversities ensured an uncoordinated crowdsourcing, also known as groupthink. While the research began as a “closed setting” to ensure participants’ comfort with open discussion, it eventually changed to a more open setting. These later sessions were not advertised as “open”; however, Ktunaxa Nation Council employees, family members of the sample, and at-large Ktunaxa community members and elected councillors did attend sessions—either by being asked by the TKLAC to sit in on the session or by inquiring to join the session. The research team made note of the need to open future research to Ktunaxa people, and agreed to prepare a community friendly non-jargon project report.

With respect to future research, this project would mesh seamlessly with other ongoing Ktunaxa research. This includes extension of the ʔukiniłwiytiyała (Thinking with One Heart) methodology to allow for more specific reciprocity in cross-cultural research. Specifically, the ʔukiniłwiytiyała framework has been combined with the xaçqanaʔ ʔitkiniʔ (Many Ways of Working Together) CIHR research project. Where ʔukiniłwiytiyała crowdsources information from a single collective, the xaçqanaʔ ʔitkiniʔ methodology crowdsources information across boundaries and promotes iterative calibration that preserves the context and indexical systems for both cultures. Essentially, this strand of research can be thought of as interfacing “domains of knowledge” while preserving distinctions important to each domain. Such research would be suited for discourse analysis (see Fairclough, 1992; Gee, 1999; Wodak, 1989), anti-epistemology (Maranhão, 1990; Stewart, 1994; Warnke, 1987), contact zones (Harris, 1995; Pratt, 1991), or boundary objects (Bechky, 2003; Star & Griesemer, 1989; Wenger, 1998).

Citation

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Addendum 1: Research Approximate Timeline of Meetings/Dates

- October 1, 2017—Begin negotiation of both Ktunaxa Nation Council and Selkirk College research ethics processes, including online and in-person iterative clarifications.
- December 31, 2017—Conclusion of Ktunaxa Nation Council and Selkirk College research ethics discussions, with final communications sent by email.
- February 7, 2018—Technical discussion of ethics, internal Ktunaxa communication protocols, discussion of preferred methodology and preservation of anonymity with the Ktunaxa Research Ethics Board, the KNC TKL and the TKLAC.
- March 14/15, 2018—Initial research discussion of research methodology, Ktunaxa epistemology and, ʔukiniłwiytiyała (Thinking with One Heart methodology) with the TKLAC. Primary themes: ʔukiniłwiytiyała is a contemporary tool adapted from a traditional decision-making practice, preserving contextual cultural and social association and Ktunaxa nuance.
- April 6, 2018—Research discussion of project sample, selection of advisory committee, affirmation of the interview process as a tool for pushing the locus of enunciation from Western dominated to Ktunaxa structures. Primary theme: ʔukiniłwiytiyała is an extension of Indigenous sovereignty (“you stay out of our business, we stay out of yours”) consistent with Ktunaxa consensus (the Chief consults with the sectoral authorities before making a decision).
- May 29, 2018—Research discussion about project goals, clarification of project findings end-users, and identification of research beneficiaries. Primary theme: Reconciliation is for Canadians, support for resilience if for Indigenous people.
- June 11, 2018—Research discussion generated a differentiated list of beneficiaries, including college faculty/staff, non-Indigenous learners, Indigenous learners and non-learner Ktunaxa community members. Key themes: Reconciliation has to be honest, direct and non-revisionist, and the painful history must be a part of greater Canadian reconciliation to regain balance.
- August 15, 2018—Research discussion of reconciliation as a tool for Canada, and discussion of which research results are important to Ktunaxa people. Key theme: There is a need for a statement of Reconciliation based on Ktunaxa cultural input—not solely from academic, Western scientific or non-Indigenous KNC employee perspectives.
- August 16, 2018—Research discussions included the need for honesty and truthfulness regarding missionary education. Key theme: Many Ktunaxa did not survive the Residential School, and they need to be remembered.
- August 22, 2018—Review of the initial research results, and generation of the first version of the statement on Reconciliation. Key theme: Recommendations should be specific requests/asks for support that promotes resilience/higher education is a critical part of resilience.
- October 19, 2018—Final review of project qualitative themes, and statement on Reconciliation finalization.
- November 13, 2018—Update on minor linguistic changes to the statement on Reconciliation, and finalization of report.

Addendum 2: Working Group Statement on Canada's "Truth and Reconciliation"

nas n̄ini ku qalwiynala

this is what is in our hearts

qaqa?ni ma yaqalitknawaski

what they did to us is true

q̄apilpat̄nin

to say it all/to tell someone to tell the whole story

mika yaqalitknawaski hu qayaqalqaçalani

despite what happened to us we made it through

hu qalwinalani kuç sukił ?aqslmakniknala

we want a good life for ourselves

hawiçkinin kçmakkyam ç çina·kinin

hold the truth and go forward

çinl qaqa

so be it

ma?ç kuktkinin!

do not change it (for an idea change)

Discussed and finalized at the KNGB Museum Space, August 16, 2018. Research Working Group members present: Anne Jimmie, Mary Basil, Roberta Gravelle, Hili Ignatius, Alfred Joseph, Marie Nicholas, Sophie Pierre, Dorothy Alpine, Laura Birdstone, Marguerite Cooper, Herman Alpine, Leanna Gravelle, Don Sam, Christopher Horsethief.

Addendum 3: Images of the TKLAC and Project Team engaged in research activities

Image 1—Members of the TKLAC discussing differentiated beneficiaries



Image 2—Members of the TKLAC discussing the Statement on Reconciliation with observers



Image 3—Members of the project team discussing the Statement on Reconciliation in front of the Ktunaxa Nation Vision Statement written in Ktunaxa



Image 4—The Ktunaxa Nation Vision Statement

Addendum 4: Research Suggestions

General Project Recommendations:

- To recognize Ktunaxa Indigenous research ethics processes as internally valid, even if external research ethics questions are not completely answered.
- To recognize Ktunaxa research be viewed as valid and institutional, as formal as and equal to the Selkirk College ethics processes.
- To recognize the One Heart methodology be recognized as a formal research gathering methodology, and cultural anonymity be offered to any research participants.
- To inextricably link “Truth” with Reconciliation.
- To include Ktunaxa resource people in teaching and co-teaching settings, because “if non-Indigenous and non-Ktunaxa experts speak for us—then there is no reason to speak directly with us and we are kept outside of conversational space”.
- For institutions working with KNC to review Duran’s (2006) epistemic hybrids and Mignolo’s (2003) locus/loci of enunciation, then incorporate key ideas into faculty training, course work for non-Indigenous learners and supportive positioning materials in Indigenous affinity spaces.

Recommendations with respect to Indigenous learners within the campus community:

- Elders/Community Members in Residence, Scholarships, bursaries, tuition waivers, Safe, supportive affinity spaces, and Indigenous programming to educate Indigenous learners about their communities.

Recommendations with respect to Non-Indigenous members of the campus community:

- Interaction with Elders/Community Members in Residence, Focus programming like non-course language workshops, research presentations, arts shows, etc., and Indigenous programming/coursework to educate non Indigenous learners about Indigenous history, research, art, etc.

Recommendations with respect to Faculty and staff In the campus communities

- Professional development for Faculty, Staff, Administration, Resources for bringing Ktunaxa/LKB community members to campus for collaboration projects, Co-instruction opportunities and community resource persons, auxiliary instructors for language, culture, Residential Schools discussions, and Retreats or training at Ainsworth or St Eugene’s.

Recommendations with respect to Ktunaxa community members:

- Community support for Community initiatives and Indigenous led programming, or programming “About Ktunaxa, for Ktunaxa”, in-community Ktunaxa courses to develop our capacities, Ktunaxa workshops that allow is to confidently reintegrate Ktunaxa voices into conversational space, and a range of community workshops identified by Ktunaxa for Ktunaxa.

Addendum 5: Ktunaxa Nation Vision Statement

Vision Statement

Strong, healthy citizens and communities, speaking our languages and celebrating who we are and our history in our ancestral homelands, working together, managing our lands and resources as a self-sufficient, self-governing Nation.

visit us at:
www.ktunaxa.org



Appendix B: Syilx-1 SSHRC Final Report

**Exploring Reconciliation Through Community
College Education with the Syilx Okanagan**

Dallas Good Water, MA
April 30, 2020

Acknowledgements

Special thank you to the Okanagan Nation Alliance and the Okanagan Indian Band for their assistance during the research process.

A thank you to Jessica Morin and Terri MacDonald for their supportive working environment during the project. Also, thank you to all Selkirk College faculty, staff and students that I met during the project.

1.0 Methodology

The aim of this project was to help Selkirk College better understand their role in Reconciliation from a Syilx perspective. Approaching the main research question developed by Selkirk College, from a Syilx Okanagan perspective required the use of Syilx concepts within the research. Syilx concepts based upon enowkinwixw were included in the survey and research findings (Enowkin Centre, n.d.).

In addition, this research reformed Selkirk College's research question into seven separate questions. Selkirk College's main research question, "How does a community college respectfully engage in reconciliation through education with the First Nations and Métis communities in the traditional territories in which it operates?," became seven separate research questions aimed to identify Okanagan Syilx views of reconciliation with a community college.

Addressing a research question developed outside of a Syilx Okanagan framework required a reformulation into several questions within a Syilx Okanagan framework aimed towards addressing and understanding the purpose of the research and representing the voiced and stated views in the written surveys as accurately as possible. The Syilx framework used to aid in the understanding and representing the voiced views is based on Armstrong's explanation of Syilx Okanagan individuality within family and community (Armstrong, 2006, pp. 36–37).

Also, as this research is focused upon reconciliation from a Syilx perspective, it is inherently decolonizing and thus, Nicoll (as cited in Kovach, 2010) stated, "A decolonizing perspective is significant to Indigenous research because it focuses on Indigenous-settler relationships and seeks to interrogate the powerful social relationships that marginalize Indigenous peoples" (p. 42). Further clarity comes from Smith (1999):

Decolonization, however, does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge. Rather, it is about centring our concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes. (p. 39)

Guided by Smith's words, ideally the Syilx Okanagan would have been involved in the project sooner to develop the research from beginning. As building a working relationship begins with discussions. The research questions were placed in a mixed-method survey questionnaire format. Members of the Syilx community were invited to participate in the research by (a) answering the survey questionnaire online, (b) taking part in an in-person questionnaire interview with the researcher reading the questionnaire and writing the participant's answers directly upon the questionnaire form, or (c) the participant writing their answers on the questionnaire form themselves.

Syilx participants were identified through snow-ball method, word of mouth, and social media in which an invitation to participants was extended to the Syilx Okanagan Nation and communities.

SurveyMonkey was the online tool used to collect survey responses. Participation was open to Syilx people from the age of 14 and older. For minors under the age of 18, parental consent was required in the online and paper consent forms. Syilx people were approached via email, messenger and in person by the researcher.

Research results were presented to Selkirk College for its inclusion in the larger Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) report. The findings will be used to inform some teaching materials as the Syilx perspective on reconciliation in college education. Research reports were also provided to research participants if they chose in the survey process.

2.0 Background

Selkirk College's project is quite complex since it spans research, post-secondary education and reconciliation. Addressing research, post-secondary education and reconciliation from an Okanagan Syilx perspective is innovative and important in the present. Selkirk College's project is complex as its campuses are located at Castlegar and Nelson British Columbia, which, at present, involve many Aboriginal groups and as such, they are all individually involved in the larger research project.

For instance, for the larger project Selkirk College also engaged with a Ktunaxa researcher, Métis researchers, a Sinixt researcher, and another Syilx Okanagan researcher in separate reconciliation research projects, in addition to this research. All of these separate yet related projects will inform the final project report for SSHRC.

The following are Selkirk College's reasons for their research project. The two excerpts are from their Research Ethics Review application and are a fulsome explanation of Selkirk College's project background.

Much of the current state of troubled relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians is attributable to educational institutions and what they have taught, or failed to teach, over many generations. Despite that history, or, perhaps more correctly, because of its potential, the Commission believes that education is also the key to reconciliation. Educating Canadians for reconciliation involves not only schools and post-secondary institutions, but also dialogue forums and public history institutions such as museums and archives. Education must remedy the gaps in historical knowledge that perpetuate ignorance and racism. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 234)

Additionally, Selkirk College mentioned the Government of British Columbia, Ministry of Advanced Education, in 2012 launched an *Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan: 2020 Vision for the Future*. The province's plan identifies a number of goals as its "2020 Vision for the future" (p. 1). The first goal is as follows: "Systemic change means that the public post-secondary education system is relevant, responsive, respectful

and receptive to Aboriginal learners and communities and relationships between public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities are based on mutual respect” (Government of British Columbia, Ministry of Advanced Education, 2012, p. 13).

Selkirk College identified this first goal as guiding their reconciliation efforts in this project with the various nations involved. Selkirk College also aims to contribute to the nation’s capacity building through this project. Selkirk College identified “systemic change” (Selkirk College, 2019, p. 1) as a long-term goal and, therefore, wanted this research project to be conducted in a “relevant, responsive, respectful and receptive” (p. 4), in a relationship based on “mutual respect” (p. 4).

Moreover, Selkirk College developed the following reconciliation guiding goals:

- Understand the role of a public post-secondary community college in the work of reconciliation,
- As a public post-secondary institution, continue to foster and build relationships based on respect and reciprocity with the Indigenous Nations and communities throughout the Southern Interior region,
- Provide insights to the perspectives of the Syilx Community on the meaning of reconciliation in a college setting.

3.0 Research Findings

For this research, Selkirk College’s one research question was separated into seven separate research questions. The separating into seven questions was to allow Okanagan Syilx people to express their views regarding post-secondary education and reconciliation.

The Okanagan Syilx survey responses to the research questions are separated into different sections for each question. Utilizing different sections for each research question enabled the researcher to present the survey responses in a way that prioritizes accuracy and relationship between people’s views. Also, it is important to acknowledge the repetition of question responses to accurately show people’s opinions. A summary of survey responses are used in this report, in a manner that prioritizes people’s voices. As will be shown, reconciliation has many facets, and people approach or view it in different ways. The goal of this report is to represent survey responses as accurately as possible. Wilson (2008) explained,

The research must accurately reflect and build upon the relationships between the ideas and participants. This analysis must be true to the voices of all participants and reflect an understanding of the topic that is shared by researcher and participants alike. In other words, it has to hold relational accountability. (pp. 101–102)

Another important repetitive facet to acknowledge are the several mentions of the relationship between the Syilx Okanagan and the Sinixt. Reconciliation, the larger Okanagan speaking

territory and its history including Castlegar and Nelson where Selkirk College has campuses, is addressing the relationship between the Syilx Okanagan and Sinixt. In regard to the relationship between the Sinixt and the Okanagan Syilx it is important to know that many Sinixt people's descendants are band members within the Okanagan Nation Alliance (2017). For further information about the relationship, please visit the Okanagan Nation Alliance website (www.syilx.org).

3.1 Who is Responsible for Reconciliation?

Survey Question 1 asked, "Who at the college, either department or position should be responsible for reconciliation works?" Responses included, everyone, to all college staff, and also an Indigenous staff person who has been through post-secondary and, therefore, understands the challenges of an Indigenous person in an institution.

The majority response was that "everyone" has a responsibility for reconciliation. More specific feedback included, "every individual person at every level should actively participate in reconciliation." Another person stated, "There shouldn't be one department or position responsible for reconciliation work. It should be the entire college that actively works towards reconciliation to create a meaningful approach." Further clarification comes from another survey, "all colleges, all college departments and everyone needs to understand that it is the work of all citizens of Canada and that we all need to be willing to understand what reconciliation works and what it involves."

Specific college positions identified as responsible for reconciliation included the president, the deans, the senate, First Nations Centre representatives and the Student Body Council members. Precisely, "deans are responsible for encouraging and expecting reconciliation is happening in their schools and that it is being taught to students so everyone has a better understanding of Indigenous issues and the history behind the injustices that have happened to Indigenous people."

A survey respondent further noted, all front-line staff and administration should be aware of reconciliation and counselling staff should be aware of reconciliation and also have formal reconciliation training and awareness. Another respondent shared a related point of view that all staff should fully understand the concept of reconciliation.

Additionally, another survey respondent went a step further by outlining the ideal relationships and dedication underlying reconciliation work:

College faculty and students involved in reconciliation should be dedicated advocates with a relationship to Indigenous communities that would be there to assist students and staff to make sure their reconciliation work was culturally appropriate and done in ways that were sensitive to the needs of the communities they were seeking reconciliation with.

However, a counterpoint to the dedication required for college staff and student undertaking reconciliation works was expressed as a worry, wherein high level reconciliation directives would not be implemented by front line staff. Continuing the counterpoint perspective, two remedies were put forth towards ensuring reconciliation works are implemented. One of the remedies suggested to ensure that reconciliation is worked towards is the use of an “independent mechanism to ensure parties are meeting their responsibility.” The second remedy offered is policy developed for each department to implement.

Okanagan Syilx responses regarding who at the college is responsible for reconciliation mainly named everyone as being responsible for reconciliation. Some specific college positions named included the President, the Dean, the senate, faculty, staff and administration.

3.2 What Should Reconciliation by a Community College Look Like?

The discussion about community colleges’ reconciliation tasks and responsibilities begins with survey responses to Question 2, which asked people to outline their thoughts about colleges’ responsibilities towards reconciliation. Survey responses in this section outline direct actions for Selkirk College.

The following survey responses to Question 2 are grouped together because they all outline the overt and underlying responsibilities a college has towards reconciliation as a place of education. Importantly, a survey respondent began by recognizing Selkirk College for their approach of seeking input from First Nations first and for being directed by First Nations for First Nations. Another survey respondent acknowledged that Thompson Rivers University is doing a good job and gives concrete examples, like Thompson Rivers University has indigenized their university and has protocols with Elders. The response continued to note there should be mandatory course requirements in programs about Canada’s relationship with First Nation people.

In a related direction, that is discussing college institutions responsibilities toward education, the following several survey responses provide more in-depth feedback. One survey respondent acknowledged that colleges have more resources to develop programs and a responsibility to develop programs that are most beneficial to First Nations. A different survey respondent added more detailed direction by saying that, colleges have a responsibility to increase cultural understanding of people, communities or bands and colonialism. Cultural understanding includes, educate about cultural sensitivity, awareness, competence and cultural safety.

Several survey respondents continued to outline college responsibility to reconciliation and more fully explained the importance of an ideal college staff outlook and their responsibility. Some of the feedback was previously mentioned in Question 2 responses, however, repetition allows for people’s individual opinions to be represented. One respondent imparted that all college staff have a responsibility for reconciliation and should be knowledgeable about First Nation or Syilx history and this history should be taught in all fields. The response also stated that care should be used, so individuals are not made to be the expert on all Indians. Another respondent explained

that community colleges should know and be formally trained about reconciliation, its history and its effects. Lastly, a response reminded that community colleges can aide in growth and the exchange in knowledge.

The preceding responses to survey Question 2 are grouped together because they are action oriented. In other words, the Okanagan Syilx survey responses contain direct action towards reconciliation. Also, an inherent or underlying sentiment within the responses points to the need for checking and ensuring that a respectful relationship is the goal of reconciliation embraced by Selkirk College.

Additionally, continuing the survey responses discussion, one respondent specifically identified not only Aboriginal students but also Aboriginal college staff, college visitors, and the importance of the college campus setting supporting their pride and confidence. The respondent also identified the education system overall has a high level of responsibility since they are the main source of institutional injustices towards Aboriginal peoples.

Further, the following summary of three survey responses are a combination of directed action towards reconciliation and directed action involving Okanagan Syilx territory, protocols, worldview, history, and colonization for Selkirk College. One survey respondent provided detailed feedback about how colleges can approach reconciliation including a course in nsyilxcen or Syilx Okanagan language and culture, college signage in nsyilxcen and English acknowledging the territory upon which the college sits. Another survey response stated that the college can acknowledge the local area as the Syilx territory, the college can include Syilx and Indigenous perspectives in all curriculum and departments. Further, the person added that it is important for people to learn about local Okanagan Syilx history and the intergenerational impacts of colonization, assimilation, and cultural genocide. The response continued with the respondent stating, it is important to educate students about Indigenous beliefs, protocols, culture, traditions, and worldviews. This same respondent also wrote, everyone needs to work towards building positive relationships with an open attitude to move forward. Another survey respondent discussed the importance of territory acknowledgement, staff knowledge about reconciliation, nsyilxcen language classes and staff training and knowledge of racism with tools to stop it. In regard to staff knowledge about reconciliation, staff should know why reconciliation is being implemented and why their participation is mandated.

These three responses are a combination of reconciliation as a college responsibility and also actioned steps to take for reconciliation with the Syilx. These responses are provided in summary so the thoughts of the people come through. The thoughts emit the importance of reconciliation and provide a path for action.

The following six responses are also reconciliation directed action with the Syilx. The directed actions for Selkirk College again, include territory acknowledgement and provide further insight, such as building a respectful working relationship with the Syilx that is reciprocal. The first

survey respondent discussed reconciliation by a community college includes both research and survey with the Okanagan Syilx, involvement with the Okanagan Syilx at a community level, and the college should be a resource for the Okanagan Syilx. Another respondent imparted that reconciliation starts with equal grounds, acknowledging unceded territory, and offering extra support for trauma. In another survey response, a respondent built upon the equal grounds statement by saying, the college should ensure the local culture and territory owners should be known, recognized, and welcomed by all staff. Another survey respondent opined, the college should do territory acknowledgements, involve Okanagan Syilx communities in different initiatives, and host different forums for discussions and collaborations. Yet another survey respondent said that Selkirk College, should do territory acknowledgements and partner with the nation, needs to educate their students about reconciliation through classes or information booths, posters, signs around the campus. The final of the six surveys in this grouping discussed the need for the college to recognize the relationship between the Okanagan Syilx and the Sinixt, which is shown through shared nsyilxcen language, shared place names occurring in the Okanagan Valley and along the Columbia, many Syilx have ancestors originating along the Columbia and recognition of historic issues like the Oatscott and Castlegar Reserves.

The second survey questions asked what reconciliation by a community college should look like and what is the college's level of responsibility in the work of reconciliation. The responses varied to include indigenizing the university, involving Syilx communities in different initiatives, educate on history, colonialism and their impacts, know that education is the main source that created the injustice towards aboriginal peoples, acknowledging the territory and building a respectful relationship with the Okanagan Syilx. All survey responses require Selkirk College to build a working and dynamic relationship with the Okanagan Syilx.

3.3 Syilx Okanagan Voice at Selkirk College

The fourth question about Syilx voice at Selkirk College elicited responses that are able to inform the relationship development between the Syilx Okanagan and Selkirk College and its path. Guidance about Syilx voice at Selkirk College involved engaging Okanagan Syilx with specific population segments of the nation and how to incorporate Syilx voice at Selkirk College.

Importantly, the majority of survey responses to Question 4 identified, either the people, families, a band or the Okanagan Nation to be involved and also, how Okanagan Syilx voice should be represented at the college. In addition to the Syilx people themselves being involved in the reconciliation works, genuine and appropriate relationship building founded upon respecting the rights and position of the Syilx people. The relationship building would include Syilx people representation or their input within the community college community to maintain a strong understanding of the traditions and protocols of the Syilx.

Further, guidance regarding Okanagan Syilx voice in the college needs to include an Elder since they were the ones initially affected by educational experiences or colonization. The respondent

clarified that the Elder does not necessarily need to come from the Chief and Council. Further guidance about Okanagan Syilx representation in reconciliation works means, inclusion of all Okanagan families, not just the political or chief and council families and also any supporting research is done by Okanagan academics and family heads/old people. Another survey respondent provided direction to Selkirk College to respectfully form relationships based upon inclusion and participation of the Syilx peoples. The Syilx peoples are identified as youth, families, knowledge keepers and leadership. The respondent further noted, for reconciliation, the college must understand that sharing and learning are reciprocal.

Survey responses to Question 4 discussing the relationship building between the Syilx and Selkirk College provided important guidance about Okanagan Syilx people, families, youth, Elders and leadership from bands and the Okanagan Nation all being included; however, without solely prioritizing Syilx leadership.

Again, there is repetition between survey question responses; however, their organization within this report is purposed towards furthering the understanding of people's responses.

Survey responses to Question 4 about "how" or the actions or tasks for the Okanagan Syilx voice to be heard by Selkirk College will follow. The organization of the following responses, specify the development of programs including consistent Okanagan members and Okanagan instructors for information presentations and programs. A survey respondent noted it is important to have more Indigenous representatives on college boards and committees. Another respondent added that the Syilx community should be engaged at the start of planning and committees include Syilx people to guide the process for a minimum of 2 years.

Along that same line, a few more survey responses provided guidance about the Okanagan voice, that Okanagan people should represent Okanagan life experience. Their survey responses to the question also included, courses in Okanagan language and culture, courses conducted in the Okanagan language (or nsyilxcen), prominent signage on campus in both nsyilxcen and English; and signage acknowledging the band or territory the campus sits. Further guidance related to on-campus Syilx voice representation was to ensure an inviting space for Okanagan Syilx students, including curriculum and classes that are focused or have space for the Syilx point of view or worldview.

Moreover, several survey responses to Question 4 were organized due to their relativity to and mention of the nation, in their guidance regarding Okanagan voice and Selkirk College and their discussion follows. A survey respondent suggested a partnership on a regular basis between the college and the nation directly. Another survey respondent advised political leadership be present at major events at Selkirk College and for Syilx artists to have the ability to contribute visibly to the college's community arts.

An additional survey respondent suggested Syilx language, artwork, and cultural activities occur at the college. This individual continued to state that the Syilx voice needs to be accepted at the

college without any confrontation from other nations. Another survey respondent suggested the inclusion of the Syilx in the planning of new programs and in the implementation of Indigenous worldviews when developing all college programs. The survey respondent continued to state, the BC Public Schools are promoting and implementing Ways of Learning and this practice should be utilized by all education levels across the province including colleges and universities; additionally, it is important to include voices from the local bands and the Okanagan Nation, etc. Yet another survey respondent proposed the involvement and engagement of the Okanagan by being talked to in a way they understand. This individual stressed the need to ensure our language speakers, educated and youth have a voice.

As such, survey responses to Question 4 identified Syilx Elders, youth, families, family heads, language speakers, Chiefs and Councils, leadership, Knowledge Keepers and academics as being integral to a Syilx voice. The survey respondents also identified ways for the Syilx voice to be heard including building an on-going relationship with the Syilx and Syilx representation on college boards and committees. Respondents also noted ways, tasks or the “how” of Syilx voice representation like, the development of Syilx-based curriculum, Okanagan instructor for information or programs and building a genuine appropriate relationship.

Additionally, a few more survey responses to Question 4 are left to discuss. These following survey responses are grouped together because they each have a point of view to guide or remind about research ethics. The initial survey response to discuss pertains to making sure research findings are not imposed on members, as all research has research bias. Two survey respondents both felt their voices were heard since they were vocal about their opinions. One survey respondent continued by clarifying that not all Syilx people have the same values or ideas, so it is difficult to know what a Syilx voice sounds like. The final survey response to Question 4 clarified that people with a relationship to the land upon where the college resides have been involved all along in both informal and formal relationships. That is, in relationships like memoranda of understanding collaborations, really relationship building without “formal” approval, by people who wish to make a difference in Upholding truth in land and resources.

These final survey responses to Question 4 were all focused on organizing or reminding about research ethics and keeping the research’s use in check. The points made for Question 4 are very important to keep in mind and to acknowledge within the research process.

Overall, survey responses to Question 4 provided excellent guidance for situations or opportunities to dialogue with the Syilx Okanagan to ensure their voice is represented. As stated earlier, Syilx voice is Elders, youth, knowledge keepers, language speakers, family heads, old people, grassroots, leadership, chiefs and councils, families and the Nation. Tasks or ways to engage for the Syilx voice, include building a relationship between the college and the Okanagan Syilx people that respects the rights and position of the Syilx people.

3.4 Selkirk College approach to reconciliation with Okanagan Syilx

Okanagan Syilx responses to Question 5, in which Okanagan Syilx were asked how a community college should approach reconciliation works, contain suggestions or tasks that are both new and ones that were mentioned in other survey question responses.

Previously mentioned suggestions or tasks include beginning by initiating a partnership with the nation upon which the college resides, acknowledgement of territory and peoples, create trust and build respectful relationships like hosting a gathering, signs in nsyilxcen, pictures of Syilx people's history, Okanagan art displayed, Indigenous books used that our nation people wrote and books written by Indigenous people as a whole.

Also, suggestions or tasks identified by Okanagan Syilx in response to survey Question 5, reconciliation should be directed by a First Nations, an Elder and youth, take information from the territory holder, having a resident Elder from the Nation, hiring Okanagan academics, implement Syilx Okanagan based class, introduce mandatory Indigenous Relations courses to ensure that everyone understands the history of First people and the impact of colonialism, ensure that local First Nations have a voice in college programming and Indigenous supports provided.

Further suggestions or tasks were identified in survey responses to Question 5; however, these suggestions and tasks aimed toward reminding the research of ethical research perimeters. Namely, have conversations with communities or bands or nations to ask or verify if reconciliation works are needed, ensure how or if competing levels of government or corporations can not exploit or leverage the people in reSearch. Many Syilx members from the South Okanagan and some North Okanagan people attended residential school in St. Eugene's and may be willing to give their perspective.

Moreover, new suggestions or tasks relevant to reconciliation works by colleges, identified by responses to survey Question 5 include, having a student and community advisory committee from local communities with membership either selected or appointed. The selected or appointed people should be people with cultural knowledge, a good attitude and openness.

As well, survey respondents identified the community college's approach to reconciliation as entailing open to ideas or different approaches. They identified reconciliation work as involving initiatives; for example, creating and offering different programs, hosting forums supporting Indigenous voices, like Ted Talks, panels, or hosting different events highlighting Indigenous academia or fine arts.

Survey respondents suggested, after developing a partnership, then, involve the entire student population via social media. This was followed by a suggestion to plan a social event for students around reconciliation that is an open and safe space. During the event, talk to students about what would be most beneficial in educating and approaching them about reconciliation.

Another survey respondent outlined tasks or suggestions for a community college approaching reconciliation, noting that it should be directed by First Nations, an Elder, and youth implementing directives from this research. Also, cultural safety training for college staff and the development of anti-racism policy for students and staff outlining and ensuring that intolerance is not acceptable.

More, a survey respondent suggested hiring Okanagan academics who have the knowledge to engage with the grassroots Okanagan people to ensure their participation in conducting the research. Developing the research includes creating research questions and doing interviews. Reconciliation must be inclusive of all Okanagan peoples, values, practices and ways of being, so the research is done by our people for our people with the community college's support, and it's not done by the non-Native college academics and given to the Okanagan leadership. In a related comment, a survey respondent noted the need for any research to have its purpose stated very clearly.

Another survey respondent suggested the development and implementation of an Okanagan course and recruiting of Okanagan staff. This respondent also suggested in-person and online recruitment drive for students that includes high schools.

Further, a survey respondent said, the college should first foster and support Syilx community members within the college community (students, faculty, staff) to find safe spaces to express the historical circumstances that have led to the need for reconciliation. When college researchers want to engage in reconciliation work, it should be done in partnership with Syilx people who are active in the process both as participants and as stewards of the process.

As well, another survey respondent suggested a meeting between the college and the local First Nation for advice about what reconciliation works should consist of and how together they can implement change to support reconciliation. The survey continues, the college should introduce and implement mandatory Indigenous Relations courses so everyone understands the history of First people and the impact of colonialism. Thereby the college is ensuring the local First Nations have a voice in college programming and Indigenous supports provided.

Moreover, a survey respondent suggested the college engage the Syilx and ask them what reconciliation should look like and not presume an answer. Reconciliation is about higher quality education delivery and changing history between Indigenous peoples and settlers, and it can not be denied. Survey respondents continued to share that specific approaches, as stated earlier, can be informal and formal, invitations, inclusion, genuine participation, openness, transparency, financial support, and partnerships. There is a need to hear a "No" and need to hear a "Yes" and not minimize either. Yes, respect is mutual but understanding trauma, colonization, pathologies, realities of Indigenous perspectives is real, not token invites.

Yet another survey respondent identified that Selkirk college should look to the community for guidance, as each community is different, even within its own territory. The college should ask

the community what their expectation of reconciliation looks like and what is required to support Indigenous people to achieve higher graduation rates. Perhaps, a reconciliation committee populated by Elders, students, leaders or alumni with the college recognizing that limited financial resources should not prevent key people from participating and bridging that gap.

Additionally, the following are further new tasks and suggestions identified by respondents to survey Question 5. The survey responses are summarized into synthesized responses for reading flow without compromising their important message. A survey respondent stated the college needs to engage the Okanagan people including Elders, medicine people, youth, grassroots people from the territory they are utilizing, about education. Another survey respondent identified the college should meet with the community to determine what they would like to see. This community meeting should involve the Chief and Council, Elders, and youth.

Another survey respondent suggested inviting Syilx that practice traditional Plateau arts to do a talk or teach a class. Indian hemp rope is a good example.

One survey respondent imparted that reconciliation is about breaking the chains of trauma. This trauma passes through “the generations and so we must give tradition, purpose, and power back with strength to stand against oppression because our ‘government’ is still not respecting Indigenous peoples and their territories.”

Some of the survey respondents were unable to answer Question 5. One survey respondent did not provide any information about their reason for not answering the question. The other respondent cited a need for more thought about the question.

Survey responses to Question 5, which asked how a community college should approach reconciliation, included both new and previously mentioned suggestions and tasks. The suggestions and tasks offered were ways for the college to approach reconciling with the Syilx Okanagan. These included meeting with bands/communities and the Nation and working with Elders, youth, medicine people, grassroots, and leadership to discuss reconciliation. The majority of responses included meeting with the Okanagan Syilx to begin the reconciliation process.

3.5 Okanagan Syilx Survey Participation and Reconciliation Views not Addressed within the Survey

This section focuses on survey Questions 6 and 7. Question 6 asked people to choose an option of characteristics or traits that most closely fit for their survey participation, while Question 7 allowed people to offer their input about any reconciliation subject or matter not addressed within the survey.

Survey Question 6 proposed five traits or characteristics to choose from that best explained their participation in the survey. Respondents chose every possible choice of the five; however, the majority chose that Okanagan Syilx traditions and beliefs should inform or be within territory community colleges. The next popular trait or characteristic that respondents identified with was

“it’s important to participate in the research because it will help Okanagan students and all students.” The remaining two respondents noted answering the research questions was a way of aiding Okanagan Syilx attending community college and that this research was a way to inform change in the community college. In actuality, the four characteristics or traits to identify with were based upon Okanagan Syilx tenets and in this research reflected people’s motives to inform change in community colleges.

Also, survey Question 7 was designed to allow people to further address any question or provide any task, direction, and feedback about reconciliation. The responses to Question 7 varied. Generally, each of the responses contained threads of thought that connected many of the responses; a thread for Question 7 is directed toward the underlying foundation of education, which thus far is not inclusive of Okanagan Syilx ways of being. The following summary of responses encompasses reconciliation as a transformative change that fosters inclusion, research must make room for nsyilxcen because the Okanagan are an oral people, relationship of the Columbia River to a person and their family, Syilx voice to speak for social justice and mainstream culture is failing at reconciliation.

In response to Question 7, one respondent acknowledged, for reconciliation to be a priority presently, a lot of work was undertaken by BC First Nations to counteract government’s debilitating social policies. Another respondent outlined the importance of oral culture, and as such any related research needs to reflect language, orality, stories, and cultural practices. Oral culture is still practised today and needs to be the foundation of all research and reconciliation. The survey respondent continued, Syilx ways of being must be shared in story, on the land, and where appropriate cross referenced with historical documentation. Another survey respondent would like reconciliation to expand beyond colleges to the various governments in Canada that profit from resource extraction. Another survey respondent stated plainly that the dominant culture or mainstream Canada is failing at reconciliation, the education system does not adequately address the issues, and Indigenous peoples are almost invisible in pop culture, like television and movies. Another survey respondent explicated institutions need to listen to community voices and build a relationship of respect with the Syilx people for a system that is friendly for Indigenous students; as Indigenous students should not be surviving institutions but thriving in them. Yet another respondent highlighted the importance of classroom sensitivity in pointing out First Nation student to speak on behalf of all First Nation people or as an expert on First Nation issues, and knowledge from an Elder is valid and equal to information from a book. A respondent raised an important issue for reconciliation by asking, how will it be determined when reconciliation goals are achieved and who will make that determination?

One survey respondent acknowledged the importance of the Columbia River and its tributaries for their healing, sustenance, and spiritual strength to their family and the need for the river to be that for the coming generations. Another respondent imparted, traditional and old ways of the Okanagan Syilx are built through Okanagan teachings and stories. One respondent advised the use of a strength-based approach to reconciliation by understanding First Nation historical

context, developing ongoing relationships, and connecting education programs and services with cultural healing to make a culturally safe place for all. The final survey encapsulates many of the directives imparted in survey responses, and as such serves as the final words for this research project.

The opportunity to invite the experts themselves to speak to subject matters is important. Cannot avoid conflicts if dedicated to social justice and social reform including college/academic delivery, quality education, Indigenous education, Indigenous languages support, Indigenous student services, housing, advocacy-Reconciliation is for everyone-DEFINE what it means for Selkirk College and commit to it in all planning, at all levels. It's beyond a Pow Wow, its Transformative change and fostering inclusion, not fear based rhetoric and old narrative that continues to oppress-Promote New Learning, New Educational experience.

Responses to Question 7 offered a myriad of information and actions and identified problems within the post-secondary for the Syilx Okanagan. Social justice, social reform, transformative change to foster inclusion and the connecting thread or relationship are pointing to western dominant epistemology operating within post-secondary education and thus, the need for reconciliation. The expressions in response to the research questions provide a beginning for developing reconciliation with the Okanagan Syilx.

It has been my aim throughout the research findings section to represent the people's words as accurately as possible, to let their words inform, guide, and further the conversation about Okanagan Syilx reconciliation with Selkirk College.

4.0 Recommendations

Recommendations for Selkirk College next steps with the Okanagan Syilx include continual discussions about reconciliation, as reconciliation is dynamic. As mentioned several times in the survey responses, a priority is building a respectful relationship with the Okanagan Syilx. Survey respondents also mentioned that Okanagan Syilx people include youth, Elders, medicine people, families, and leadership.

5.0 Conclusion

In closing, the survey questions provided an opportunity for people to voice their opinions, thoughts, and reflections upon their experiences and knowledge to inform reconciliation. The feelings, sentiments, and knowledge provide steps forward for reconciliation.

Survey responses to the first six research questions were straight forward in that they addressed the preceding question; however, Question 7 was very open in reconciliation scope and correspondingly, people's responses were expansive and provided further reconciliation directives.

6.0 Limitations

Limitations of this research included merging two separate research processes and no planned future research. More specifically, the project merged two separate research processes, which took more time than anticipated and needs to be kept in mind for future projects. In regard to future research, unfortunately, this project is somewhat limited in breadth and there are no set plans for future research or actions. However, this research is a standalone project and is also able to be a springboard for future research.

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Appendix C: Syilx-2 SSHRC Final Report

**Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)
Community and College Social Innovation Fund**

**Exploring Reconciliation in Community College Education,
Southern Interior ~ British Columbia**

Harron Hall

Selkirk College

July 24th, 2020

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Introduction

The Southern Interior Region of British Columbia (B.C.) is comprised of the traditional territories of several First Nations and is home to a large Métis and urban Indigenous population, each having a distinct history, language, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs. The purpose of this investigation is to identify Selkirk College's role in reconciliation, as a public post-secondary institution, and to address cultural diversities between Indigenous communities. It was collectively decided that independent community engagement was appropriate. The independent engagement process was intended to help unravel the unique challenges, values, and behaviours that each Indigenous Nation in the region experiences with hopes to inform and guide systematic change.

The focus of this research project was to examine the Okanagan Nation's response to the question: How does a community college respectfully engage in reconciliation through education with the First Nations and Métis communities in the traditional territories in which it operates? Three additional questions were used to guide community dialogue sessions:

1. How can the Community College respectfully engage in reconciliation with the Syilx (Okanagan Nation)?
2. How can a community college support Syilx students and faculty, and what is the role of non-Indigenous faculty in reconciliation?
3. What changes need to be made to reflect the needs of the Syilx Nation?

There are three larger post-secondary institutions located in the Okanagan territory, including the University of British Columbia – Okanagan Campus, Okanagan College, and Selkirk College. There are at least a dozen other educational institutions and satellite campuses (i.e., Kelowna College of Professional Counseling) located in the Okanagan Valley. Lastly, there is one private post-secondary institution called the En'owkin Centre. Even though the research focused on publicly funded community colleges, there is a potential that the data can help influence all the educational institutions operating within the Syilx territory.

An Okanagan research paradigm was used in the investigation process with the inclusion of Syilx methodology. The research paradigm applied the en'owkinwixw process, or four societies

¹ *lim'ləmt*: thank you

process, to guide the methodology in structuring and analyzing community dialogue sessions. “This process is a traditional method the Okanagan use for building collaboration, collective-decision-making and consensus-making” (Sam, 2008: 39). The research principles were based on Syilx commitments to reciprocity, inclusivity, collective contributions, and responsibilities. The intent of applying this methodology was to bring into balance all the perspectives and responses from Syilx participants.

Syilx History

The original inhabitants of the Okanagan territory are known as the Syilx (Okanagan) speaking people (Armstrong et al. 1993/94: 4). The Syilx people are described as a trans-boundary tribe separated at the 49th parallel by the border between Canada and the United States (Armstrong et al. 1993/94: 4). The Syilx territory follows the Okanagan River, East to the Selkirk range, and West to Cascade summits, and south along the Columbia River (Armstrong et al. 1993/94: 4). The Syilx territory is vast and diverse, with landscapes ranging from deserts and endangered grasslands to lakes and alpine forests.

The Syilx people historically were organized into eight (8) districts - all speak n’syilxcən² and contain the same stories and customs. The eight regions are interconnected linguistically, culturally, and share the same kinship connection (Armstrong et al. 1993/94: 4). The eight districts include the Southern Okanagan, Northern Okanagan, San Poil, Colville/ Kettle, Arrow Lakes, Slokan, and Similkameen/Methow (Armstrong et al. 1994/94: 4).

Following European settlement, Governor Douglas worked to establish reserves from 1858 to 1862 this formed the initial reserve boundaries, however, without the transaction of payment, a joint-use agreement is the only outcome from the preliminary negotiations with Governor Douglas (Armstrong et al. 1993/94: 46-48). A joint commission was formed by the federal and provincial governments, operating in the region from 1876 to 1878 to outline the reserve boundaries (Armstrong et al., 1993/94: 53). Followed with the creation of the Arrow Lakes reserve, surveyed in 1902, and allotted by Commissioner Vowell (Armstrong et al. 1993/43: 55). However, with the death of the last member, Annie Joseph, the reserve reverted to the province (Armstrong et al. 1993/43: 55-56). Syilx scholars and knowledge keepers firmly articulated, “The Arrow Lakes reserve still belongs to the Arrow Lakes Okanagan descendants who are now dispersed on every reserve of the Okanagan in Canada and the U.S.” (Armstrong et al. 1993/95: 56). Overall, most of the current reserves were formed in the Syilx territory during this timeline, and then later downsized to what it is today.

The seven communities currently representing Syilx people in B.C. include the Penticton Indian Band, Okanagan Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, Lower Similkameen Indian Band, Upper Similkameen Indian Band, Upper Nicola Indian Band, and Westbank First Nation. In the United States, the Syilx people are a part of the Colville Confederated Tribes, located in North Central Washington State.

² n’syilxcən; the Okanagan language

Background

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) developed 94 “Calls to Action” for Canadians to implement moving forward “to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation” (2015: 1). Since their release, Guadry and Lorenze argue the “(TRC) Calls to Action (2015) have had a powerfully disruptive effect on Canadian post-secondary education since their release in December 2015” (2019: 159).

Selkirk responded to the TRC report with an SSHRC research project proposal titled, *Exploring Reconciliation in Community College Education* (2015). The proposal referenced the following call to action:

We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation. (TRC, 2015: 8)

By referencing the 65th Call to Action (TRC, 2015), Selkirk College’s proposal to SSHRC highlighted the importance of this work. The funding allocated to this project has provided an opportunity to form a deeper understanding and insight into a post-secondary educational institution’s role in the work of reconciliation based on truth and mutual respect and in partnership with the Indigenous communities.

Furthermore, this project also responds to the B.C. Government signing of the United Nations (2008) *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP). Article 15.1 of the UNDRIP states, “Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories, and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information” (2008: 14). Overall, by responding to UNDRIP (United Nations, 2008) and TRC (2015), Selkirk is in a leading role to strengthen the relationships between Indigenous communities and the publicly funded post-secondary institutions throughout the B.C. Southern Interior.

Methodology: The en’owkinwixw process

The data-gathering process involved a series of community engagement sessions and followed Syilx customary practices, one of which was to provide a meal for each session. Indigenous researchers identify this as a universal protocol for implementing the Indigenous methodological approach (Cabrera et al. 2016: 287). A broad overview of the research, including the research background, objectives, and consent form, was provided. Once the consent form was signed, the en’owkinwixw process commenced. There were four rounds of questions guiding the discussion, which were flexible and open-ended, allowing room for stories to be shared.

The en’owkinwixw process is described by Dr. Jeannette Armstrong in the following statement:

The Okanagan people used this word when there was a choice confronting the community. An elder would ask the people to engage in En’owkin, which requested each person contribute information about the subject at hand. What took place was not so much a debate

as a process of clarification, incorporating bits of information from as many people as possible, no matter how irrelevant, trivial, or controversial these bits might seem, for, in En'owkin, nothing is discarded or prejudged. (2000: 9)

The en'owkinwixw is like a sharing circle “for many tribal cultures, the act of sitting in a circle, as a collective means of decision making is similar” (Kovach 2012: 124). Kovach (2012) suggests, while there are differences in protocols with different tribal sharing circles, there are also similarities. Following the Syilx protocol, the en'owkinwixw began with introductions from the researcher and participants. These introductions often extended to include family ties, tribal affiliations, individual roles, or responsibilities within the community. This process is practised in the broader Indigenous community (Cabrera et al. 2016; Wilson 2001). Shawn Wilson (2001) explains this as an Indigenous methodology and, when practised, creates relational accountability to both the research and research subjects. This methodology carefully considers the “appropriation of Indigenous culture and knowledge” (Wilson 2001: 176). Wilson further states that “knowledge and peoples will cease to be objectified when researchers fulfill their role in the research relationship through their methodology” (2001:176).

Indigenous scholars have acknowledged that other forms of data collection allow for participants not to be anonymous; however, they also recognize the importance of allowing room for participants to identify themselves in ways they deemed as appropriate (Cabrera et al. 2016: 288). Furthermore, Cabrera et al. (2016) confirm that confidentiality within sharing circles is still a significant concern; it was also a consideration when conducting the en'owkinwixw process; for that reason, participants will remain anonymous in this report, and their responses are presented collectively.

Participants

A total of 29 Syilx people participated in the en'owkinwixw sessions. An invitation was sent to the Syilx Indian Residential School Committee (Syilx IRS Committee) and the elected leadership of the seven-member communities. The Syilx IRS Committee and four communities accepted the invitation, including the Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB), Osoyoos Indian Band (OIB), the Penticton Indian Band (PIB), and Westbank First Nation (WFN). OIB and WFN Chief and Council participated in the en'owkinwixw, while PIB Chief and Council wrote a Band Council Resolution and intended to join in the community engagement sessions. The Syilx IRS Committee accepted the invitation to participate.

Emphasis on engaging elected leadership in the en'owkinwixw process was to ensure each community was informed of the research project and had the opportunity to participate. Invitations extended to each respected community education coordinators and interested community members working in post-secondary institutions, whereas the community engagement sessions were open to all Syilx people to participate, with the two central locations (North-Okanagan and South-Okanagan) to ensure broader participation.

Project Limitations

Not all communities responded to the invitation to participate. Unfortunately, community engagement with the OKIB was cancelled due to precautionary measures taken by Syilx leadership

to prevent the spread of COVID-19. One specific limitation was the time constraints. Indigenous communities have limited capacity, and it is hard to fully engage communities when there are deadlines to meet. Overall, community engagement takes time, especially when addressing the Elders, sometimes they do not provide the answers right away and this project was not the exception. In that regard, the follow-up meetings with the Syilx IRS Committee were initially cancelled due to COVID-19; with much scrambling they were rescheduled online and not all the Elders present at the initial meeting participated online. Online community engagement with Syilx Elders brought its own set of limitations, including the lack of access to Wi-Fi or a landline, along with technical difficulties, and time constraints. The research project was also limited in breadth, and there are no set plans for future research or actions; however, this research is a standalone project with the potential to be a springboard for future research. Therefore, the follow-up to this research project is important.

Data analysis

Data analysis involved two types of analysis methods. The first approach employed a thematic analysis using the en'owkinwixw framework. According to Indigenous researcher Margaret Kovach, "analysis works to decontextualize knowledge through the organizational act of sorting data" (2012: 130). With the use of the en'owkinwixw process, participants' responses are organized based on the en'owkinwixw four societal themes, which includes Elders, youth, fathers, and mothers (Armstrong 2000: 11). The responses are not organized according to age, sex, or gender of the participant, but rather the participant responses were coded based on the beliefs, perspectives, and dynamic oppositional views interpreted by the researcher.

Marlowe Sam describes the en'owkinwixw as the following:

This process is a traditional method the Okanagan use for building collaboration, collective decision-making, and consensus-making. It is based on the understanding that every society group, or organization has four main roles ... These 'societies' represent areas of concern: tradition, relationship, action, and vision, respectively. By looking at the concerns of each group, better decisions are made. (2008: 39)

The second method involved a narrative analysis. "The presentation of a story in research is an increasingly common method of presenting finding(s)" (Kovach 2012: 131). Working with stories is a way of making meaning that requires research to be presented in its contextualized form (Kovach 2012: 131). Using narrative as a form of analysis allows the researcher to reflect and condense the story and to allow for knowledge that may not have been considered to enter the conversation (Kovach 2012: 125). Wilson suggests, "Storytelling and methods like personal narrative also fit the epistemology because when you are relating a personal narrative, you are getting into a relationship with someone. You are telling your (and their) side of the story, and you are analyzing it" (2001: 177). Direct quotes from participants are used to support data findings; however, since confidentiality was a concern in the ethics process, speakers will remain anonymous, and direct quotes are collectively represented by the en'owkinwixw process (EP) they participated in (i.e., EP1–EP5).

Discussion/Key Findings

Four questions helped guide the discussions during the en'owkinwixw process. One key finding is that in every en'owkinwixw process, all participants thought the wording of the first question was problematic. The primary research question provided by Selkirk College was as follows: How does a community college respectfully engage in reconciliation through education with the First Nations and Métis communities in the traditional territories in which it operates? There was a concern that the wording of this question indicated that Selkirk believed the region to be a part of Métis traditional territory; the overall sentiment is that Métis are guests and that also extends out to Inuit. The participants expressed wanting the college to be more grounded with local Indigenous protocols and practices. One participant expressed their concern that “colleges also try to include Inuit and Métis, almost to the exclusion of Syilx people” (EP2). Participants articulated that there are many layers in acknowledging the traditional territory, especially when considering the historical and current politics in the region. However, participants specifically wanted to remind community colleges that the Métis are visitors in this region. As Syilx people, the participants would not go to Inuit or Métis territory and expect the same level of consultation and engagement from community colleges in their territory.

The remaining three questions also helped to generate great discussions in the en'owkinwixw process. These discussions identified important values, perspectives, and experiences held by Syilx participants. Their responses were organized into the following codes based on values behaviours implied in participants' responses.

Elders/Tradition

In the en'owkinwixw process, Elders symbolize values based on tradition along with a connection to the land (Armstrong 2000: 11). Tried and true solutions brought forward by participants started with a recommendation to continue traditional territory acknowledgments. Furthermore, in territorial acknowledgments, participants represented by “Elders” specifically wanted community colleges to acknowledge they are on borrowed and unceded territory, and to recognize that there are no formal agreements regarding the land title. Participants also request that individuals providing territorial acknowledgments also acknowledge how they are privileged and are benefiting from Indigenous lands. One participant shared the best territory acknowledgment they heard:

My boss introduced herself she said that her family was from France and they settled on Haudenosaunee land where they cultivated and [were] benefactors from colonization, and she still benefited from colonization and that she continues to benefit from colonization, and to me, that shows so much respect. (EP2)

Research findings suggest that participants want to ensure there is also a visible acknowledgment of Syilx territory by including an Okanagan Nation flag on every campus with an invitation to the broader Syilx community and Elders for a celebration. Additional ways to ensure that Syilx cultural presence is visible is to place welcoming signs in the language or art in the form of pictures or sculptures. Furthermore, participants wanted to see everyone practising and incorporating Syilx greetings in everyday social interaction (i.e., say ‘way’ instead of hello). Concerning land, participants wanted to see educational institutions indigenize the outdoor space

surrounding campus locations, by planting Indigenous plants and protecting habitat. They want to see educational institutions teach the importance of land and water to all students and why Indigenous people want to protect those lifeforms.

Participants wanted to see community colleges honour the Indigenous educators, professors, and Elders who work in the institutions. Moreover, they wanted the education system to recognize Traditional Knowledge Keepers and their roles by providing them with credentials such as honorary doctoral degrees. Participants also encourage community colleges to foster a sense of pride in students and their Indigenous cultural identity by connecting Elders with students, and by holding celebrations or social gatherings with an Indigenous focus. One suggestion is to bring Syilx Elders to Selkirk as Elders in residence.

Participants expressed that there is a need for community colleges to decolonize and Indigenize curriculum. To accomplish this, community colleges can, first, share the truth in truth and reconciliation. One participant stated, “I feel like we hear a lot about Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenization right now, and I think reconciliation is taken out of context sometimes, and whenever we talk about truth and reconciliation, we’re still at the truth-telling part of history” (EP2). Participants wanted the Syilx history of residential schools in the curriculum. Truth-telling to the participants meant learning the local history and expanding that out to all Indigenous people. Participants also want Indigenous history in non-Indigenous studies courses to be accurate and treated as equally valid to western teachings.

The participants want to see broader awareness shared on historical issues and how that relates to current issues (i.e., the Oka crisis, or the creation of section 35 in the Canadian constitution). Furthermore, allies within the system can support reconciliation efforts by educating non-Indigenous peoples, and one participant shared that sometimes non-Indigenous allies are the only ones that non-Indigenous people listen to (EP4).

To indigenize curriculum, community colleges can do the following: learn Syilx cultural protocols from the people and respect them. Incorporate our captik^{wł}³ oral stories, water declaration, and pre-existing Syilx publications into curriculum materials. Moreover, participants expressed that the broader settler community needs to learn about Syilx culture and history but thought the act of teaching culture was a role best for Syilx educators to fill. Institutions need to listen to Indigenous people and understand that Indigenous people are more than just singing and dancing and drumming. In this regard, community colleges can provide financial support for community- and nation-driven curriculum (language, stories, place name makers, etc.). Also, participants wanted to see more support and partnerships garnered with En’owkin Centre and En’owkin Centre instructors.

Youth/Vision

In the en’owkinwixw process, “youth” symbolizes visionary and innovative thinking, challenging societal norms (Armstrong 2000: 10). The following dataset represents youth participants’ responses: ask students what they need, empower them, and support what they envision. First, they recommend educational institutions allow for creative cultural expression in

³ Oral Stories

all courses and course assignments. Participants wanted to see educational institutions hire Syilx people beyond professor, faculty, and administrative positions. For example, one participant shared an example of how they played an acting and teaching role as a pregnant Indigenous woman travelling from a rural community once a year. Participants want to see classes that privilege Indigenous knowledge equally as mainstream western scientific knowledge, not just as an add on.

Participants brought forward innovative community-led research ideas. One community research idea brought forward by a participant is to survey the Nation geared towards former, current, and future students. Their suggested research questions are as follows:

What courses, programs, or degree pathways did Syilx students take or want to take? What worked for them during their time in post-secondary education systems? What were the barriers Syilx students experienced? Lastly, what are their needs and how post-secondary institutions help meet those needs? (EP2)

Furthermore, one participant suggested re-evaluating graduate students' pathways for Indigenous students (EP2).

By re-evaluating student pathways, the participant envisioned that more Syilx students could go on to become masters, Ph.D. candidates, and potentially a faculty member. Another participant asked, "How many Syilx students do we want to see graduate with graduate studies, masters, PhDs, etc.?" (EP2). They also thought mentorship could play a more significant role so students can pursue those pathways. Overall, participants wanted to engage the Syilx Nation and to come up with a broader vision.

Research findings suggest that educational institutions to support internal community and Nation discussions so the Syilx people can create a collective strategic plan. This visioning process includes areas the Nation and member communities need to see students pursue, and how students can help fill those needs with their educational endeavors. It is the youth's way to challenge societal norms, and in this regard, participants in this dataset expressed that "reconciliation is dead" (EP4). Participant's voices represented their valuable time to be spent reconciling with a system that still cause's unjust harm on Indigenous people; they ask that their voices are heard and respected. One participant was frustrated with stereotypical performances in the Southern Interior Region of B.C., more specifically in the Kootenays, and they wanted to see an accurate representation of Indigenous peoples (EP4).

In direct opposition to the values Elders symbolize, the youth society did not value educating educators. From this perspective, participants conveyed that it is not their responsibility. Participants wanted to reflect and think about whether institutions are the right space to share Syilx culture, beliefs, captikwł, and language. In this regard, participants recognized that knowledge keepers experience a high demand already. They criticized the monopolization of Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Participants felt their time would be better spent teaching Syilx people in the community. They wanted educational institutions to provide space and resources for Elders to transmit language and cultural knowledge to youth.

Participants in this data set also expressed frustration with the reconciliation process in institutions. They recognized that there are some educational institutes do the minimal; they will put up Indigenous signage on their street, or the ONA flag and will call it reconciliation. However, that is not meaningful reconciliation. True reconciliation in an educational institute is to have Syilx and other Indigenous people in decision-making administrative positions. “If we went there and seen brown people in the administrator’s office, brown people in teachers and professor positions, if we had seen those kinds of things, now that’s getting more closer to true reconciliation” (EP5).

Lastly, a societal norm that youth want is for everyone to respect all gender identities. Participants in this dataset wanted to see gender-neutral bathrooms for people of all genders to feel safe and welcome. Furthermore, participants want to see spaces for Indigenous students with disabilities. One participant shared that sometimes Aboriginal rooms are not safe for Indigenous students with disabilities, and occasionally other areas are not safe for them as an Indigenous person either. Overall, to better support Indigenous students and communities, participants call for stereotypes addressed, and racism confronted within the institution. There is a lot of work the college can do to address systemic inequalities that Syilx people face. One issue that can be addressed is creating easier access to post-secondary education. Teachers need to honestly teach about different unjustified treatment of Indigenous peoples.

Mothers/Relationship

In the en’owkinwixw process, “mothers” symbolizes relationships, policy, and workable systems (Armstrong 2000: 10). The following dataset represents mother participant responses: include Syilx knowledge in community college governance, board, and policies. These participants wanted to see the principles of collaborative decision-making models implemented, and they specifically wanted to highlight the voices of future generations. Participants expressed the need for educational institutions to build trusting relationships with Indigenous communities and students.

To support Indigenous students and communities, participants shared the following suggestions: reinforce pre-existing policies meant to help Indigenous students. Readjust funeral policies for Indigenous students, as they experience a disproportionate amount of death within their extended families and communities. Implement policy changes, so students do not feel like they are fighting a bureaucracy while they are receiving higher education. Include Indigenous housing and childcare and create alternate pathways for students to reach their goals. Furthermore, one participant is an Aboriginal support worker; in their experience, they see that Indigenous students have the extra burden of emotional labour and work. They stated,

It takes our students longer to graduate because they are asked to do extra work in their classrooms or go on to be the educators, or are learning about their own trauma and histories in a classroom full of people who don’t have the understanding or education. (EP2)

A participant shared an uncomfortable experience in class. The participant said,

I was in a class one time at the university it was public policy and we were going off about the MMIW [Missing and murdered Indigenous Women and Girls] and someone went off

how they were all drunks and drug addicts, and the professor did absolutely nothing to disseminate or address it. I tried to put my hand up so I can at least speak on it, so I think having professors familiar with it would have enough knowledge that they can share accurate information is critically important. (EP2)

This story captures just one moment of how students become the educators within the institution. Racism and ignorance are barriers that Indigenous learners face. Meanwhile, another participant visited the Okanagan college campus, and it happened to be on the moose-hide campaign day. At the gathering, there were a lot of students, settlers, and international students present. They felt the event was great and wanted to see more awareness on issues such as MMIW (EP4).

One way to address ignorance is to implement mandatory introductory level Indigenous studies and Okanagan history courses for all disciplines. Participants want to see a community environment that supports Indigenous students and can help alleviate feelings of isolation. Also, bi-weekly check-ins could help ease any anxiety and stress students experience. One participant expressed that Indigenous students may lack communication skills to help address this; they suggested educational institutions provide communication workshops so Indigenous students can learn to communicate constructively (i.e., toastmasters). Indigenous students maybe unfamiliar with structured activities, they will need help adjusting to meet due dates. It helps when instructors meet with students to ensure they feel accepted and comfortable during the length of time they are in their class or are enrolled in post-secondary education. Participants wanted to ensure Indigenous students are given opportunities to engage with their cultural identities meaningfully and respectfully.

In terms of relationality, participants want to ensure all professionals in every field are aware of how their decisions can influence the lives of Indigenous people (i.e., social care workers). Ensure that professionals are aware of systemic barriers and are held accountable so that they do better in their professional fields as they move forward. Moreover, they want to see educators encourage self-reflection with Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, self-reflection needs to include who they are, where they come from, and how they relate to each other.

There is a concern that Indigenous students who have not completed high school or GED are not given a chance; they want to see institutions trust that they can do better if given the opportunity and support. A workable system means creating a separate admissions process for Indigenous youth that did not receive their GED due to systematic barriers. Questions posed by these participants include, “How can community colleges accept applications from Indigenous students that have lacked opportunity, support and were categorized as learning disabled and therefore given up on in high school?” (EP3). In that same regard, the current admission process is sometimes a barrier for potential students (i.e., a daunting task to even find all credits, especially in cases where students have taken a break from the education system). Therefore, participants recommended creating a more open admissions/application process. Post-secondary institutions can ensure that all Indigenous people have access to education from elementary to graduation level. A participant wanted community colleges to include work experience as a prerequisite. Also, to provide opportunities for potential students to have that first-hand experience in the career of choice; this can help students navigate their career choices and prevent students from taking an unfulfilling career pathway.

Participants wanted to see engagement in each of the seven-membered communities, along with tailored programs for each community. Participants believed that community colleges could meet this need by offering courses in the communities, furthermore by doing so, they thought that this might empower students to move forward in their educational goals outside of the community (EP1). Overall, participants in this dataset want more community engagement, so they are knowledgeable about what services community colleges can provide.

Fathers/Action

In the en'owkinwixw process, "fathers" symbolizes the act of ensuring there is security, substance, and shelter measures in place (Armstrong 2000: 10). One participant commented by saying, "I think acknowledging we are on Syilx territory isn't enough. The amount of time I get asked for that script to do a land acknowledgment, it has become a checkbox, I personally don't like the script of 'we're on your territory' you're welcome" (EP2). They asked the following questions: "What actions come with that? What does that mean to you personally? What are you doing to reconcile?" (EP2). This response reflects how the "men's" perspective is based on action and outlines how participants' within this dataset want to see educational institutions move beyond policies and agreements. They want to see a strategic set of measures implemented to support the success of Indigenous students. Instead of creating a mandate that all staff, faculty, and students take Indigenous Studies 101 courses, they want to see institutions offer a challenge course, as this may help reduce resistance and encourage buy-in. Regarding cultural safety, a participant suggested that cultural safety initiatives are constant and throughout the term, along with following up discussions in the classroom with a focus and understanding of reconciliation. Furthermore, they want faculty to come to reserves so they can learn cultural safety and history directly from the communities to gain the first-hand experience.

Participant included in this dataset wanted to see an increased investment in capital planning, with Indigenous designs and architects throughout the campus, not just in isolated locations. Or participants also recommend hiring of Syilx artists to create art that establishes a visual presence at each of the campus locations. In terms of shelter, participants wanted to see investment in housing for Indigenous students and their Indigenous families. Furthermore, they wanted to ensure that Indigenous students have access to food security, emergency funds, and peer mentors. Food security and student support can include potluck dinners and access to safe transportation to and from grocery stores. A participant suggested educational institutions ensure education dollars attached to Indigenous students are appropriately allocated by providing services, such as access to tutors. Ensure there are Aboriginal rooms or centres are fully equipped to be comfortable and welcoming. Ensure there are computers and other necessary equipment available to the students to succeed. Generally, all Syilx participants also wanted to see educational institutions in the region waive tuition and parking fees. They wanted to see more grants and bursaries made available for Syilx students. One participant wanted to know more about the employment needs of each community and how community colleges could gear their programs to meet this need.

Participants want to see more support for Indigenous faculty and educators in the institution, along with an increased number of Indigenous educators, so they are not overworked. Participants wanted to see knowledge keepers financially compensated for their time at higher rates, which reflect their value and worth. They want to see more Syilx employees in administrative

roles to better support students. At the same time, participants conveyed that the Syilx population is small, with a limited amount of knowledge keepers. They suggested that institutions give space and allow the opportunity for the Nation to have an internal dialogue to collectively outline what the relationship should and could be with Selkirk and other community colleges in the region. In the meantime, they suggested that educational institutions share resources (i.e., Syilx Elders, Indigenous professors) in the meantime. One participant stated, “As a Nation, we need to have a strategy in place. Providing policy changes and creating agreements with education institutions without a plan and capacity to meet those demands is unrealistic without a strategy in place” (EP2).

Story

Participants shared stories and personal experiences, which they sometimes had never shared before. Often these stories reflected experiences of marginalization from the education system for participants and their family members. The approach to understanding the stories of marginalization is also rooted in Syilx cultural practices (Armstrong 2000). Their multi-layered responses will provide a lens of being impacted in a first-hand way from the education system and hopefully garner ways in which to create positive change.

One participant shared a story of their child’s unfair treatment in middle school. They experienced unfair treatment and extreme disciplinary actions. The participants’ child was labelled as disruptive with authority issues and was expelled and sent to a storefront school. Once they arrived at the storefront school, the principal called the parent and said their child did not belong there and proved to be a capable student. However, due to this negative experience, their child quit school. The participant stated, “The school system actually inhibits our students, [rather] than supporting them in their education goals” (EP3). The participant thought the education system fails Indigenous people; they shared that they came across teachers with a preconceived notion that all Indigenous students have a learning disability. These experiences limit opportunities for Indigenous people to continue with higher education. Indigenous youth experience marginalization in high school and middle school. According to *Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan*, there have been improvements, at the same time, there is barriers Aboriginal learners face, and progression builds on success from K–12 (British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education 2012: 9-10). Stories like the one mentioned above showcase the obstacles learners face in K–12.

Similarly, another participant had a horrible high school experience. However, they continued with their education endeavors by attending post-secondary education. While in post-secondary education, their thoughts and attitude started to change, and education became a more positive experience because they felt empowered in the ability to choose (EP2).

One participant received a D grade in history class at a local community college because they challenged the professor when he said that Indigenous people are cannibals. Years later, they came across the same professor who had become associated with the local Indigenous community; a shared contact in the community explained that they have learned a lot since then and have changed. The participant was satisfied the professor had learned, but it still did not change their mark (EP3). Indigenous scholar Marie Battiste stated, “Educators still know very little about how Indigenous are raised and socialized in their homes and communities, and even less about how Indigenous heritage is traditionally transmitted” (2009: 89). Another participant tried to Indigenize

their course projects. During one class, their professor said, “I’m not giving up my land deed” (EP3), even though the participant was not even talking about land. In another class, they tried integrating their culture into their art pieces, but it was rejected because the professor did not know how to mark their work (EP3).

The second story of racism was based on the experience of a participant’s friend. They said,

There was a student, he was a member who was attending the Okanagan College in the trades sector, personally identified himself as not coming across as an Indigenous person. He was in the washroom with a bunch of students, and they were making a bunch of racist remarks and because they felt that he wasn’t native. (EP2)

The participant encouraged their friend to educate their peers. Addressing racism can be a positive learning experience for non-Indigenous students; it is often a burden for Indigenous students. Based on this experience, the participant recommended mandatory Indigenous studies or cultural training courses.

One participant shared a story of their peer who was given the tools to challenge barriers in post-secondary education. The student went to school in New Zealand and met a peer who went to a high-calibre college in the United States. They had high marks and attributed their high scores to their educational process. The student would write an essay, on their first submission, they might receive a B grade. Still, the instructor would provide feedback on how to make the paper an A+. By the third or fourth submission, the student knew what the instructor wanted to receive an A+ on an essay (EP1). The moral of the story is to provide tutoring for students so they can reach their fullest potential, even if they have passing grades, to support students to achieve more.

One participant shared a personal story regarding their uphill battle with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). Their great-grandchild was placed for adoption before notifying the immediate family, and they had to work hard to adopt that grandchild. The participant believed that the government continues to marginalize Indigenous families and tear them apart as they did in the residential school era. Moreover, programs like social work have a direct impact on First Nation family lives. As one participant stated, “Their education is going to apply directly to the issues we have today” (EP3).

Lastly, one participant witnessed a post-secondary institution interfering with Syilx culture and language. The participant saw a job posting for a language position to qualify; they needed to be certified by the institution. They did not name the institution, but it was outside of the territory with no Syilx instructors or faculty. They asked, “How can an institution on the West Coast with no community connection certify a Syilx person as a language instructor” (EP4)? They called the institution with the pretense that they were interested in the position and wanted to know who the institution had in place to certify them. The institution shuffled them around to various people and finally told the participant a representative not representative from the Okanagan would endorse them. Still, they would not inform the participant who that representative was. There is a process and a protocol when teaching the language. The issue the participant expressed is that the institution did not follow Syilx protocols. No one gave the institution the right or responsibility to certify language speakers in the Okanagan Nation, and there were no partnerships set in place. Yet,

the institution went ahead anyway; the participant felt this was inappropriate (EP4). The participant made the following recommendation: Do not work with or incorporate ingenuine people to teach Okanagan culture and history within the institution, instead work with respected knowledge keepers, Elders, or respected instructors and faculty members from the community (EP4).

Conclusion

The purpose of this investigation was to identify Selkirk College's role in reconciliation, as a public post-secondary institution and to address cultural diversities between Indigenous communities. Specifically, this part of the investigation looked at the Okanagan Nation's response to the role of a community college in reconciliation. A total of 29 Syilx people participated in the en'owkinwixw sessions. The en'owkinwixw process is an inquiry-based methodology that is inclusive of multiple and oppositional perspectives, including Elders, youth, mothers, and fathers (Armstrong 2000; Sam 2008). A narrative and thematic method to analyze data were both used. Responses were coded based on values and beliefs interpreted by the researcher, rather than sex, gender, or age.

Traditional responses presented by Elders were to see territorial acknowledgments enforced. Participants in this dataset want educational institutions to recognize traditional Knowledge Keepers and their roles by providing them with credentials such as honorary doctoral degrees. They also wish educators would share the truth in truth and reconciliation and support the decolonization and Indigenization of the curriculum. They also want to have a visible presence on campus and to recognize the importance of why Indigenous peoples protect the land and water.

Participants who were youth brought forward innovative community-driven research ideas. Community colleges and other educational institutes in the region can provide the necessary resources to support community-based research initiatives. True to the nature of youth, these participants did not value educating educators and believed reconciliation was dead.

Participants who were mothers provided a multitude of policy changes to be implemented. They also wanted more community engagement to build trusting relationships. Participants also suggested creating accessible pathways one workable solution, which addresses the barriers Indigenous learners experience.

Participants who were fathers want to see actions beyond territory acknowledgments. They want to see funds geared towards Indigenous peoples are appropriately allocated, investment in capital infrastructure that reflects Syilx culture, more employment of Syilx people, and programs to support communities employment goals.

Lastly, narrative analysis of stories indicates that participants experience a wide range of marginalization in education systems starting from K-12 and into post-secondary education. They were presented in their contextualize form. Stories shared by participants and their experiences help to identify barriers. By doing so, awareness can be formed, followed by changes in educational systems to reflect respectful and reciprocal relationships.

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Appendix D: Métis SSHRC Final Report

Exploring Reconciliation Through Community College

Education for the Métis Community

By Roy Pogorzelski & Michele Morin

March 23, 2020

Selkirk College

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All My Relations,
Roy & Michele

Abstract

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) released the *calls to action*, which provided an opportunity for Canadians to begin the process of educating, building relationships with Aboriginal communities and formulating responses of institutional, systemic and community change. This has prompted post-secondary institutions to begin the process of “indigenizing” the academy and become a leader in fostering a strong commitment to reconciliation. Based on input from a survey and in person interviews of 21 Métis community members from Trail, Castlegar, and Nelson in the Kootenay region, information is gathered on how a community college (Selkirk College) can engage in reconciliation with Métis communities in the Kootenays.

Introduction

At the G20 Pittsburgh summit in 2009, Prime Minister Stephen Harper boldly proclaimed, “Canada does not have a history of colonialism” (Wherry, 2009). This infuriating statement came the year following his apology on behalf of the Government of Canada for their role in operating, supporting and creating policies related to Residential Schools. His naivety in regards to First Nation, Métis, and Inuit histories in Canada as a leader of the country should be shocking, but on the contrary it further iterates just how misinformed and misguided Canadian society is when it comes to understanding the impacts of colonialism on the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.⁴ This lack of understanding stems from the tensions that exist over the history, culture and identity of the people who live together in the place now known as Canada and the particular conceptions of nation, nationality and citizenship considered most appropriate (Donald, 2012, p. 535).

In Métis communities across Canada, “Research” is a dirty word. As a way to thrive and survive in a colonial context, Métis peoples have been engaged in research and knowledge generation through observation and experimentation. Research by “outsiders” has had a negative reputation in Métis communities due to being conducted unethically, about irrelevant topics and based on incorrect assumptions. On numerous occasions, researchers have arrived in Métis communities, extracted data and left without sharing the results with the community (McGregor, 2018, pp. 129–130). As articulated by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999),

⁴ Aboriginal will be the term utilized throughout the course of this research paper. The reasoning for this is because the writer will be applying their own Métis lens throughout the paper and Métis Elders the researcher has spoken to have stated that they do not see themselves in the term Indigenous, but rather they prefer Aboriginal. As Aboriginal is the legal and political term used in Canada under the constitution for Métis, Inuit, and First Nations people, it will be the term utilized within this paper.

The word itself, “research” is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world’s vocabulary. When mentioned in many Indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful...The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the worlds colonized peoples....It galls us that Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that it is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us. It appals us that the West can desire, extract and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas and seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own cultures and nations. (p. 1)

For many years, Métis people were subjects of studies that did not strengthen their culture, identity, or well-being. Fortunately, Métis people in Canada have been asserting their roles in research processes and taking charge of the research agenda (McGregor, 2018, p. 130).

Academic institutions and research ethics committees are grappling with the notion of “decolonizing” or “indigenizing” how research in Métis communities has previously been conducted. Kovach (2009) claimed that at the present, there is a large desire to give voice to Aboriginal epistemologies within qualitative research, but those who attempt to fit tribal⁵ epistemology into western cultural conceptual rubrics are destined to feel the discomfort (p. 31). It is important that Métis people continue to exhibit self-determination when it comes to having their paradigms, epistemologies and ontological practices represented within academic institutions.

Traditionally, most Métis communities used story telling as a primary instrument for historical record keeping (McGregor et al., 2018, p. 14). The researchers, who are both Métis met with Elders and community members from three communities in the Kootenays (Trail, Castlegar, and Nelson) to discuss reconciliation and how community colleges can respectfully engage the Métis community. Teillet (2019) noted that the Métis story has often been ignored in Canada or told by non-Métis people from an outsider’s perspective. This has created a lot of misconceptions, stereotypes and prejudice towards the Métis story in Canada. Thus, the importance of re-imagining, re-imagining and re-telling Métis experiences in Canada from a Métis perspective is vital. Métis historiography has been often dismissed in academic settings and the lived history of the Métis experience has been one of oppression, which has led to many Métis people losing valuable connections to their identity and culture. Therefore, the purpose of this research paper is to address how a community college can respectfully engage in reconciliation through education with the Métis community in the Kootenay region.

Methodology

The research project used a two-eyed seeing approach with a mixed methodology. A two-eyed seeing approach is a collaborative cross-cultural framework that intentionally avoids domination between western and Indigenous knowledge bases by moving beyond domination by one worldview or an assimilation of one worldview into another (Hatcher et al., 2009). The research encompasses a western approach by accumulating data through surveys, questionnaires,

⁵ Tribal is the word utilized to address a pan-Aboriginal approach to research.

and formal interviews. However, traditionally Métis people practised “active listening” and through this were able to pass down the history, traditions, and philosophies of the Métis culture to younger generations. Barkwell et al. (2006) discussed Métis oral storytelling as intricately tied to their culture. Some stories are sacred and only told to certain people. These stories can only be told if the teller has permission from the story’s original owner, and if the precession of people to whom the story was told is recounted. These special stories are seen as intellectual property of the family (Barkwell et al., 2006, p. 9).

Roy Pogorzelski, one of the researchers is Métis from Northern Saskatchewan, currently living in Southern Alberta and is from a very cultural and active Métis family. The other researcher, Michele Morin, is situated locally in the Kootenays and was able to make important connections, had many relationships to the Métis communities and held a lot of trust. Michele was instrumental in gathering community members from Trail, Castlegar, and Nelson to be interviewed for this important study. The researchers followed the ethical principles laid out by Pratt (2019) that the basis for conducting research with Métis communities is based on (a) reciprocal relationships developed where equal responsibility and equal benefits would result from the research; (b) respect for both the individual and the collective as Métis; (c) safe and inclusive research environments that span the diversity of Métis and includes both traditional wisdom keepers and those trained as researchers; (d) diversity of knowledge traditions and ways of knowing, across and with geographical locations; (e) research should have relevant and worthwhile outcomes for the community and be endorsed by the community; and (f) knowledge of complexities of Métis history and context is essential, as well as understanding that “there is also a need to balance traditional with contemporary” within the Métis context (p. 48).

The research design and intended target participants were all carefully delineated, and a clear rationale for the research project was carefully articulated for subsequent peer review and approval (Pratt, 2019, p. 50). Finally, as arbiters of knowledge production, post-secondary institutions set the protocol and process necessary for the legitimizing of knowledge production. Formalized in this process is ethics approval, so it is important that the institution worked closely with the researchers/communities as co-conspirators on producing this research (Pratt, 2019).

In mid-November 2019, the researchers met with Elders and community members to discuss being Métis and the importance of reconciliation through education. The overall sample size is 21, with 11 being in-person interviews from the communities of Trail, Castlegar, and Nelson. The other 10 individuals filled out an online survey. Overall, 11 of the people interviewed were females and 10 were male. The age range of the interviewees: 20–29 (one person), 30–39 (one person), 40–49 (four people), 50–59 (four people), 60+ (11 people). The respondents came from the communities of Trail (four in person), Castlegar (three in person; one survey), Nelson (four in person; nine survey). The Métis researchers were sure to abide by Métis protocol with respect to gift giving and even though pre-arranged questions were available, the researchers carried on the in-person interviews through informal dialogue. Métis knowledge keepers predominantly pass information through storytelling, humor and by discussing familial lines, which is important in establishing cultural and familial connection. The data was transcribed with the help of a transcriber through Selkirk College and the data was combed through to find common themes, patterns and categories emerging in the data. Individuals are given alias names to protect their identity throughout the research paper. The participants in the survey are anonymous with the data being compiled to find common themes, patterns and categories in the responses.

Limitations

In the course of the study, the researchers felt a sample size of 21 was a positive size to get started on this research project. The in-person interviews provided a lot of rich data, but also recurring themes were constantly emerging. In the future, a potentially larger sample size from each region specifically would create a positive representation of the specific communities within the Kootenays. This project amalgamates information from Nelson, Trail, and Castlegar, with an overwhelming amount of the survey respondents being from Nelson. As well, the sample size in age is quite elderly, so in the future a study with Métis youth could add a lot of positive information regarding personal stories within academia. However, the Elders offered knowledge about Métis history in the Kootenays, information about Métis identity and culture and understandings of how Métis people have been treated in the past.

Background

The Métis presence and contributions in British Columbia (BC) has often been untold and ignored. Goulet and Goulet (2008) have contributed important scholarship to the story of the Métis in BC. Goulet and Goulet (2008) discussed the Métis as employees of the fur trading companies, brave voyageurs, engages, guides, and interpreters and quoted:

Over majestic snow-capped mountains and along crystal clear waterways the first. Overland fur trade explorers, with their Métis and French Canadian voyageurs, came to the lands now known as British Columbia. It was over 200 years ago that they journeyed to the Pacific Northwest on behalf of the Northwest Company (NWC). Their objective was to expand the fur trade as far as it could reach and always to search for the elusive overland route to the Pacific. (p. 6)

It would eventually be David Thompson and his crew in 1811 that would find a navigable route that would take them to the mouth of the Columbia River, guided by his Métis country wife (Goulet & Goulet, 2008). In 1799 at Ile-a-la-Crosse, cartographer David Thompson married “*a la facon du pays*,” a young Métis girl named Charlotte Small; they had many Métis children with their first three accompanying them west of the Rock Mountains in 1807 (Goulet & Goulet, 2008, p. 63). Historical writings have dismissed the importance of Charlotte Small in the writings on David Thompson, but Charlotte Small as told by many Métis Elders and historians was a main reason David Thompson claimed so much success. Many Métis country wives that accompanied their partners west of the Rocky Mountains and to the Pacific Northwest brought with them customs, culture and languages that they had grown up with on the western plains (Goulet & Goulet, 2008).

Women like Charlotte Small taught these values and skills to their children, but also to their spouses, in doing so, they greatly facilitated their husbands in their activities and played an integral part in the development of the fur trade (Goulet & Goulet, 2008). The Métis played a vital role in the construction and development of the Forts in BC. Along with the explorers and company officers were the Métis from the Great Plains and the voyageurs. The Métis and French Canadian servants of the fur trade physically built the buildings and were active in the day-to-day operations of these forts, such as Rocky Mountain Fort, Fort of the Forks, Fort Simpson, Rocky Mountain Portage Fort, New Hudsons Hope, Trout Lake Fort, Fort d’Epinette, Kootenae House, and many others (Goulet & Goulet, 2008). The Métis woman were fluent in michif, the Métis language of

the fur trade, became role models and significantly contributed to the economic and social development of the settlements that grew up in and around the forts. Many of these communities evolved into permanent cities, towns and villages that still exist in the Province of BC, which is a lasting tribute to these indispensable female partners (Goulet & Goulet, 2008, p. 67).

According to Goldthorpe (1996), colonization is not an equal process. Large differences occurred between the culture of the colonials and the pre-existing cultures of the peoples subjected to colonial rule (p. 46). Prior to colonization, the Indigenous people held absolute empire over the forests, plains, mountains, rivers, and lakes. They lived by hunting and fishing, travelling from one region to another according to need or season, living in easily transported tents, clothing themselves in animal skins, especially that of the bison their most precious game (Tremaudan, 1982, p. 1). Colonial encounters disrupted the identity of these two cultures (European & First Nation) and, through the process of miscegenation (mixing), transformed and created a new mixed identity (Ahmed, 2000, p. 12). The Métis people of Canada have been referred to as the “New Peoples” because they emerged through interrelations between two distinct groups, First Nations and Europeans (Barkwell et al., 2001, p. 13). The word Métis is derived from the French language and simply means “people of mixed blood” (Friesen & Friesen, 2004, p. 43). In the past, a number of other words have been used to refer to the Métis, they include Bois Brule (burnt wood because of their dark complexion), michif (also the name of the Métis language), half-breed and country born. The term Métis was noticed by the early Métis to represent the people in the most satisfactory way possible, thus it has become the term that is used (Goulet & Goulet, 2006, p. 14). Eventually, the Métis were employed as guides, interpreters, and message carriers for the fur trade companies. As well, they quickly became frontier traders themselves and acted as middleman between their First Nations relatives and trading companies (Purich, 1988, p. 157).

Although Métis identity as a mixed identity developed in Eastern Canada, it was not until the early 19th century that the concept of Métis nationalism gained momentum (Sealey, 1976, p. 5). Casey (1996) claimed culture is carried through our bodies. Through this, the individual’s self-perception of their body encompasses their identity, which carries their culture into a certain environment (p. 34). He went on to claim that to be cultural, or to have culture, one must inhabit a place sufficiently and intensively in order to cultivate it (Casey, 1996, p. 34). In this case, culture becomes embodied into an individual through its basic actions and understanding of their background. The Métis people’s eagerness to expand west to follow the fur trade, allowed for the Métis through their physical bodies and perceptions of their shared identity to carry the culture into the region of Red River (Manitoba). This allowed for a homeland where Métis culture and identity could be cultivated to take on a distinct cultural form, which was separate from both their First Nations and European backgrounds. Casey also stated that through the body, knowledge of place is acquired, which allows a location to become cultural in character full of experiences, histories, languages and thoughts (p. 34).

Walkem and Bruce (2003) claimed it is primarily culture that sets the Métis apart from other Aboriginal peoples. Many Canadians have mixed Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal ancestry, but this does not make them Métis or even Aboriginal (p. 64). Green (2003) stated culture remains an essential context for individual and collective identity, and that it is through culture that our individuality is made meaningful (p. 8). However, maintaining connection to cultural identity was a challenge for the Métis post 1885 at the conclusion of the *Northwest Resistance* in Batoche. The Métis that bravely defended their land and cultural rights in Northern Saskatchewan ran out of

ammunition and were overtaken by the Northwest Mounted Police (NWMP). Following 1885, many families fled the area of Batoche (Purich, 1986, p. 173). They found themselves branded as “rebels” and “traitors” and through further oppression found themselves in a desperately impoverished state with their rights virtually disappearing (Barkwell et al., 2001, p. 77). Barkwell et al. (2001) labelled this period from 1885–1960 as the “Forgotten Years” for the Métis people (p. 77). Recently, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (2006) has labelled the “Forgotten Years” as 1885–1900, but regardless, the Métis people found themselves in a time of diaspora in Canada. The Métis people maintained their traits of identity at the family and individual level, but the days of national activity post 1885 came to an end. The Métis people became marginalized, impoverished and encountered heavy discrimination. They were forced away from living on First Nations reserves with family and denied education because they did not pay taxes on their “road allowance”⁶ homes (Barkwell et al., 2001, p. 77). A large rift in Métis identity was the consequence.

This is also a period where some Métis, if it was possible, would identify as “white” to alleviate the discrimination imposed on them from Canadian society. Others, based on physical appearance, would identify as “Indians” because there was more access to social programming and treaty rights. As well, the Canadian Government’s First Nations policy was one of forceful assimilation and cultural genocide; a large number of “Treaty Indians” lost their status through the Indian Act and had difficulties finding acceptance into a discriminatory Canadian society. These individuals would often identify under the term Métis and reside in Métis communities. The desire of the Canadian Government was that the “Métis Question” would eventually disappear and the majority would assimilate based on their lack of rights and recognition by the government. This treatment by the government and Canadian society inflicted a feeling of shame amongst the Métis people, which also caused many families to discontinue identifying as Métis or passing their history orally to their children (Barkwell et al., 2001, p. 77). Understanding this history is tremendously important in comprehending the re-emergence of pride in Métis families and communities.

Donaud (2007) placed the Métis into four categories after 1885: First, the Métis that integrated, adapted to the Euro-Canadian culture and became historical Métis by being proud of their past accomplishments as a group, but resentful of the situation of the modern Métis. Second, Métis that lived on the fringe of “white settlements,” which were classified the road allowance people, who worked any jobs they could come across and were quite impoverished. Third, those that lived on the fringe of First Nations reserves and lastly, those that resided in isolated communities with an economy based on fishing, trapping and hunting. This last group best preserved the traditional Métis identity and provided most of the Métis leaders that arose throughout the 1930s and post-World War 2 (Donaud, 2007, p. 11). As Elders from Castlegar and Trail mentioned during the interviews, most of the families migrated to Trail from Duck Lake post 1885 to settle in the Kootenays, which many families can trace familial lineage to Northern Saskatchewan. They were all young children when their family migrated from Duck Lake but upon arriving in BC the Métis families came together naturally as per Métis traditions and supported each other.

⁶ Also mentioned later, these were families that lived on the fringe of Euro-Canadian settlements, were impoverished and wandered from job to job (Donaud, 2007, p. 11).

Reconciliation

The Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA, 2004) published a collection of stories from Métis survivors of the Residential School system in Canada in “Métis Memories of Residential School: A Testament to the Strength of the Métis.” Post 1885, as part of the assimilation policies, many Métis children attended church run government funded Residential Schools, industrial, church and day schools. The MNA discusses the importance of informing Canadian society of abuse encountered by these survivors as often the Métis story has been dismissed or ignored by Canadian society. According to M. Smith (2017), reconciliation is “the restoration and healing of relationship in Canada, this refers to the process taken on the by TRC to revitalize the relationship between citizens of Canada (Indigenous & non-Indigenous), as well as nation to nation relationships with Canada” (p. 10). As well, the Government of Canada has never offered an apology or attempted to remedy the loss of land and life that the Métis people have encountered in the Red River and Northwest Resistances, which for the Métis accompanies the pain communities have felt at the hand of the federal government. Education on the Métis people of Canada has been very minimal and often taught with prejudice, misconceptions, stereotypes and without the Métis voice involved.

Justice Murray Sinclair addressed this in the Ottawa Citizen:

This is not an Aboriginal problem. This is a Canadian problem. Because at the same time that Aboriginal people were being demeaned in the schools and their culture and language were being taken away from them and they were being told that they were inferior, they were pagans, that they were heathens and savages and that they were unworthy of being respected – that very same message was being given to the non-Aboriginal children in public schools as well. They need to know the history includes them. (M. Smith, 2017, p. 27)

A key part of honesty is recognizing and accepting the truth, some parts of history can be hard to believe and at times can hurt to learn how legislation and policies have impacted the Aboriginal peoples in Canada. However, in the case of the Métis people, existing records make it impossible to say how many Métis children attended Residential School. Remember, it was not until 1982 and the rewriting of the constitution that the federal government officially acknowledged Métis as Aboriginal peoples in Canada. This meant that policies for Residential School, both at the federal and provincial levels, were unclear when it came to enrolment of Métis children. There were a few public schools in Métis communities, and if the parents wanted their children to have formal education, often their only choice was to try to have their children to attend Residential School (M. Smith, 2017, p. 68).

In 2006, the *Aboriginal Healing Foundation* conducted the most in-depth report on Métis experiences in the Residential School system. The report mentioned that the story of the Métis has been underemphasized for a long time in the realms of both Residential School and Métis history. Throughout the twentieth century, the collective lives of the Métis have often been disconnected from other dominant community structures in Canada. The policies that were created for the Métis and Residential Schools reflected how administrators felt about where they thought the Métis station in society should be. The Métis, as viewed by the administration, were either to be considered “Indians” or assimilated as non-Aboriginal Canadians. Any future the Métis had as a

nation was not given consideration by the dominant Euro Canadian society (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2006, p. 1). Government manipulation of Residential School records often hid the numbers of Métis attendees. The fact that the Métis attended and survived the Residential School experience has been left as a side note in the past. However, in the past decade or so, Residential School survivors and intergenerationally impacted people are finding an open and safe venue for their stories that they never had before (Chartrand et al., 2006).

Often times a Métis child was judged by the colour of his or her skin, the community he or she originated from, his or her kinship ties and health condition when he or she arrived at the school. Métis that were identified as having much in common with their First Nations relatives would arguably be more negatively affected by Residential Schools than Métis who identified more with their European relatives. Like their First Nations relatives, they likely spoke Michif or a First Nations language and came from cultural and religious backgrounds similar to their First Nations relatives. Thus, for such Métis, they would have also experienced the policy of banning their languages, culture, and religious beliefs. They would have suffered equally with their First Nations relatives in terms of the impact of such colonial policies on their self-esteem and identity (Chartrand et al., 2006, p. 18). There were also schools specifically for Métis that included St. Paul des Métis Residential School operated by Father Lacombe, the Ile a La Crosse school in Saskatchewan and the St. Paul Residential School in Yukon. However, one can conclude that Métis attended Residential Schools in Canada and in many cases, they attended as minorities in largely Indian Residential Schools. Their experiences were equivalent to their First Nations peers and, in some cases, because of their minority status and lack of “official” sponsorship were discriminated against. In the present Métis communities look to their Elders and their fellow community members for healing needs and have a considerable amount of strength to draw upon within their own communities. Healing programs for Métis communities would, therefore, be better designed according to regional needs and community profiles. These communities vary in size, history, and location; all major factors in determining the best route for the healing journey. Métis communities with long traditional histories that have Elders available for consultation may receive healing guidance from them. Métis Elders are key to these healing initiatives and hold the answers to many of the questions left unanswered on the Residential School issues (Chartrand et al., 2006, p. 84).

The release of the TRC calls to action in 2015 has prompted community colleges to educate and address reconciliation on their campuses. Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) stated that communities, scholars, and administrators want better relationships, but are faced with the challenging task of reconciling these aspirations with a university culture that is still, for the most part, invested in Indigenous erasure and marginalization. Conceptually, reconciliation represents a move to expand the academy’s still-narrow conceptions of knowledge to include Aboriginal perspectives in transformative ways (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 86). The transformation of the existing academy by including Aboriginal knowledges, voices, critiques, scholars, students, and materials as well as the establishment of physical and epistemic spaces that facilitate an ethical stewardship of a plurality of Aboriginal knowledges and practices so thoroughly as to constitute an essential element of the college. It is not limited to Métis people, but encompasses all students and faculty, for the benefit of our academic integrity and our social viability (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 222). Our findings from our interviews will offer important perspectives on Métis identity, Reconciliation and Education and bringing in Métis knowledge into post-secondary institutions.

Findings

Identity

Prior to the findings being discussed, I want to start with an important quote from Christi Belcourt (as cited in Chartrand et al., 2006):

Despite direct assimilation attempts. Despite the residential school systems. Despite the strong influences of the church in Métis communities to ignore and deny our Aboriginal heritage. Despite not having a land base. And despite our own diversity in heritage. We are still able to say we are proud to be Métis. We are resilient as a weed, and beautiful as a wildflower. We have much to celebrate and be proud of. (p. 13)

This quotation is extremely important because in all of the interviews, the shared idea of being proud and making a point to discuss our resilience as a people was continuously mentioned. Throughout the 11 in-person interviews and corresponding with the 10 survey interviews common themes emerged in the data. All the interviewees discussed the importance of Métis identity. One common pattern that occurred was the notion of reclaiming identity, being resilient and to pass on the culture and history to the younger generations. This reiterated the importance of educating Métis youth about their own culture, about institutions educating about the accurate history of the Métis people of Canada and about re-imagining a history from a Métis perspective.

One major theme that came out of the data was focused on the importance of Métis identity. The Elders interviewed discussed knowing they were Métis, but also being told not to admit they were Métis in public settings or in community for fear of retributions for the Métis role in the Northwest Resistance. Younger interviewees discussed the notion of knowing they had ancestry that was Aboriginal but did not know much about Métis culture and history as it was often oppressed in the household. This conflict of identity was shared from Doug, one of the Elders interviewed:

I think what happened was they didn't want to get their name involved with the Métis association because of what went on back in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and different places.... A lot of them tried to hide it. Because I remember asking my mom when I was a kid, because I was a dark complexion and kids use to tease me at school. I asked my Mom, if I was 'Indian' and she said, 'no, no, you're French so that background was really not taught to us at all. What I found, a lot of people in Trail here tried to hide their Métis ancestry (Personal Interview, 2019). Fred, another Elder added that "It was not a good thing to be Métis. You were looked down on. So, when they came over here that didn't come up. My dad never told me anything. My grandma did, but not my dad because he was 13 years old when he left Duck Lake and it was not a good thing to be Métis back then in Saskatchewan.

Post 1885, as Métis families migrated to different areas of the country or over the border to the United States fleeing persecution, many families altered or hid their identities as Métis people, which in the present time has created challenges for post-secondary institutions to locate knowledge keepers, or to truly understand the breadth of the Métis story in Canada. As Maggie stated,

I must have been 19 or 21. There was talk that we were Métis, but in my family my grandfather hid that just because it was not good to be Métis because the white man did not want you and you were not considered to be really Native.

The notion of being Métis as was common in all the interviews was this feeling that one did not belong with Euro-Canadian society, nor with First Nations society. It was a social diaspora, but the family unit was a supportive entity in settling and caring for one another, as Jake an Elder stated,

When I first came here there was a lot of Métis here, you know, but there were no groups. We're all friends, we're all related, so we were not grouping together because we were Métis, we were grouping together because we were related.

The family unit was an important support to Métis families as they entered the Kootenays, but the discrimination, xenophobia, and anger the Métis encountered created a challenge for future generations in identifying as Métis and created an open catch all definition, where Métis culture was being lost. As Samantha and Elder stated, "A lot of people believe that because you have mixed blood of white and First Nations that your Métis, but they are not." Métis cultural identity and attachment to the homeland and genealogy was a present theme in all the interviews, with one participant saying,

When we sat down here to talk today, we said where we were from, how we related to each other, what land we worked from, what we are doing now, all of it was about relationship. All of it was about connection. Because once you know how you're connected then you know your language is correct.

Another significant theme that came from all the interviewees was an emphasis on a loss of Métis culture, but also an emphasis on how everyone still knew in their heart they were Métis.

It is important for parents to learn their Métis identity, so that they can pass it on to their children and answer important questions regarding their Métis identity. The goal for the majority of the interviewees was teaching Métis children in their early years, so that they can have pride in who they are as Métis people. As Elder Audrey stated, "In the past 10 years, we've tried to make ourselves visible. Prior to that we were invisible." The interviewees all agreed that it is important to speak up for the rights of Métis families by volunteering, getting involved and by being more visible as groups in the community, so that more Métis citizens feel comfortable getting involved and re-learning about their culture. As Nicole stated,

I try to wear the sash for anything ceremonial, whether it is for Indigenous events or other. And I wear it around my waist for certain things like Canada Day. My dad sets up a big booth of Métis history, culture and different symbols. We got the flags up and so I always wear the sash and for Remembrance Day I laid the wreath in honor of our Métis veterans and had the sash on then.

It is important for Métis people to have pride in their culture, but the interviewees all agreed that there is so much education about Métis culture that is required if reconciliation is going to be a possibility.

Education

The interviewees all agreed that the emphasis on Aboriginal education at Selkirk College has been promising, but that the Métis voice is still not quite as emphasized in the education or fabric of the institution as it should be. As Nicole stated,

I feel like for any organization that is concerned with reconciliation and is putting that in as “one of their mandates” and they just don’t want it to be a buzzword, it actually matters to them to have meaning behind it. It is going to the community and saying, “What is this for you, what do you need from us, and what does it mean to you?” as opposed to “This is what we are going to do for you.”

In order to address reconciliation at the post-secondary level, serious conversations are required about the truth behind reconciliation. One of those truly important pieces is racism, as Elder Fred stated,

A lot of kids are still finding too that there’s a lot of racism out there against the Métis. My daughter was a school, I won’t say which one, but she was sitting there, and the Aboriginal liaison comes up to her and said, “Are you Aboriginal?” and she does look Aboriginal. She said, “Yeah, I am.” She replied, “Oh, what are you?” and my daughter said, “I’m Métis” and you could see the worker’s face drop. As soon as you say you’re Métis people don’t consider you Aboriginal, as we face discrimination from both white people and First Nations.

The interviewees all agreed that the misconceptions arise from a lack of accurate education on the Métis people throughout the school system. This has contributed to stereotypical and xenophobic attitudes towards individuals identifying as Métis. As John stated,

I would say our school education was almost negligible. I really cannot remember any Aboriginal teachings in the Canadian story. With exception in about grade 10 when the Louis Riel story was told. Basically, Louis Riel started an uprising and it was a one hour talk about the negative things the Métis did.

This was reiterated by Celia, who stated,

What we were taught in school about the Métis was really bad, it was bad, just nothing, I was going, “Oh my god this is completely wrong.” Even in the museum, they state David Thompson’s wife as Aboriginal and I went down there and told them, “You need to change that.” She was Métis.

Everyone interviewed agreed that the Métis story has been poorly taught in the educational system, but that this poses an opportunity for all levels of education to gather the knowledge to deliver important and necessary education about the Métis people.

As institutions grapple with questions of terminology, it is easy to exclude voices from homogenous terms like Indigenous or Aboriginal and the interviewees unanimously agreed that the Métis voice was overshadowed or forgotten in discussions on Indigenization and reconciliation. However, all the interviewees agreed that Selkirk College is taking steps in a

positive direction and that the changes they are seeing are important steps in incorporating and including the Métis story. One participant was particularly pleased with how the Métis were included in the acknowledgement statement:

They name all the nations and then they say “and we also acknowledge the Métis people who live here, call this area home and so willingly share their knowledge with us,” this was a really interesting way to bring this forward.

Another participant stated,

I do go to a lot of events at Selkirk College and they’ve been very supportive of me as an alumnus. They have sent me as an alumnus to different conferences and events and have kept in touch with me about if things come up that are relative to me or applicable to me to keep that engagement and support.

As community colleges transition their institutions to implement the recommendations from the TRC Calls to Action, there was a lot of advice that the interviewees recommended at the post- secondary level.

Regarding implementing reconciliation for the Métis community on campus, Gwen stated,

It is important to be conscious of not excluding people from the process. My experience has been exclusion and that’s where the fear comes in. Because in this time of Reconciliation people want to do the right thing, but what is the right thing? We are all still sitting in a place of truth and because of this, it can be challenging to ensure everyone’s voice is heard and they are included.

Jake added to this by mentioning “the need and importance for specific Métis education, to incorporate Métis language into the programming and to educate about important Métis symbols and history by bringing traditional Elders into the classroom.” Maggie added, “Selkirk college needs to continue to hold community events but incorporate more Métis culture into the celebrations.” John stated, “The regional Métis history in BC needs to be taught more and that there should be a separate Aboriginal library that houses a lot of Métis scholarly material.” Nicole mentioned, “The college could put together free webinars for the Aboriginal peoples of the Kootenays as an educational tool and that more emphasis for including Métis people could occur in the gathering place.” This was also reiterated by Jenn, who stated,

Métis education needed to happen through humility and not humiliation. The gathering place is a good example, if somebody comes in and says stuff that people don’t agree with, should they be shut down? No, because that’s a gathering place, a place to voice things. If you can’t voice things then you are stifled and through open dialogue people will walk away with whatever they want to walk away with.

Finally, a person who responded to the survey noted,

Reconciliation means something different for everyone, acknowledgement, awareness, acceptance and engagement. Providing a space for these actions to exist and be represented in the physical building. This space provides opportunity for art, displays,

acknowledgement of existence, participation and exhibition in appropriate times for the Métis culture, for both Métis and non-Métis staff, faculty and students.

Reconciliation within post-secondary institutions should be supported by the community and knowledge holders. As the interviewees all responded that traditional Métis Elders should be invited to speak on matters that they have expertise on when it comes to introducing policies, programs and events that are Aboriginal focused. Relationships have been built in a positive and promising direction and should be nurtured and sustainable within the work of reconciliation. Jake mentioned, “We do have a lot of Métis people in the Kootenays. Especially in Trail. All my relatives are there. They all come from the same region, in Batoche. That’s what makes it unique. We gather together.” As Fred noted,

Métis knowledge and contributions to BC need more recognition, the Métis story should be bigger than it ever was, in Canada they have done a good job of hiding the Métis Resistances. When I was a kid going through school there was half a page in the textbook about the Métis.

Nicole added to this by stating, “The Métis have an interesting history, especially in BC and we should see the story of our flag, the sash and our language within post-secondary institutions.” The interviewees all agreed that the culture remains in our family units and that it is where knowledge is transferred and so educating and engaging with Métis community and family units is vitally important in bringing Métis knowledge into the work in colleges around reconciliation.

Recommendations

Joseph and Joseph (2019) mentioned the most common mistake that non-Aboriginal people make when engaging with Aboriginal communities is not recognizing the cultural diversity of Aboriginal peoples. There is a misconception that Aboriginal people are one homogenous group who share the same culture, traditions, language, worldviews, needs, and desires and this simply is not true (Joseph & Joseph, 2019, p. 11). The participants throughout the interviews reiterated the point that Métis people’s identity and diversity within our culture needs to be respected within terminology that is inclusive. There is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to outreach to solve challenges, so within the confines of reconciliation and community colleges a plan must be customized accordingly. Joseph and Joseph (2019) stated that this can be done by recognizing the unique history, culture, and traditions of each community, which is a fundamental first step that Canadians can take to respect Aboriginal peoples. Take the time to build relationships with local Métis communities and those individuals you are working with (Joseph & Joseph, 2019, p. 16).

Joseph and Joseph (2019) continued that, in doing reconciliation work, don’t assume that because Aboriginal worldviews share similarities that they are all the same. In consultation meetings, don’t talk about western ways of knowing as though they are the de facto authority and research the culture of the Métis community you want to draw research from, to understand the local community, you need to look before the surface (p. 43). This was mentioned repeatedly throughout the interviews was the need for understanding of the accurate Métis story in Canada, so that Métis youth can take pride in their culture and be accepted into the education system as a Métis person.

Another recommendation comes around the concept of identity; it is important not to exclude individuals because of perceived notions of objective criteria. Métis identity is very subjective and many Métis students, community members, faculty and staff are in the process of re-learning about their Métis identity and this is a process of understanding the culture, learning family histories and figuring out how to engage intimately with reclaiming identity. Incorporating Métis knowledge-based practices through the hiring of Métis academics, administrative staff and by encouraging students to explore research through a Métis knowledge-based approach can assist in building this understanding. Finally, training for all staff that is not just Indigenous Awareness, but has a focus on the Métis people is extremely important to combat misconceptions, misunderstanding and to inform history from a Métis perspective.

Finally, within the role of research ethics. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) discussed the importance of procedural ethics in institutions, which offers strict guideline that could be considered a hindrance to research, or on the other hand be viewed as guidelines to protecting communities. It can be argued that institutional procedural ethics have often embraced a Eurocentric approach to engaging Aboriginal communities. This is where procedural ethics and ethics in practice become conflicted. As Peers (2018) stated, reality is often construed through methodological practices that are often western based. Being reflexive in approaches to research is vitally important when it comes to transparency, understanding the limitations, and providing a deeper understanding of how their epistemology engages with the data on a personal level. Aboriginal research often finds conflict with procedural ethics as the research goes through ethics committee approval. As well, often times ethics review committees lack Aboriginal representation that can speak directly to Aboriginal methodologies. Another challenge mentioned by Guillemin and Gillam (2004) is combatting ethics committee speak that is understandable language, free of jargon, but will reassure the committee that the researcher is competent and capable and can be trusted to conduct research. This can create challenges for Aboriginal researchers that operate from a more oral based perspective than a written perspective.

Tuck (2009) suggested that communities establish tribal and community human research ethics guidelines. This will allow people to build on the momentum of work being done in their communities and offer a level of control over research in Métis communities. Communities would also consider guidelines that protect cultural, intellectual, and sacred knowledges from being stolen, appropriated, or handled in ways that is disrespectful (Tuck, 2009, p. 423). In this case, academic researchers wanting to gain access to Métis knowledge would not only have to pass the procedural ethics of the institution, but would have to pass the communities ethics review committee in community, which will allow stronger Métis consultation and feedback at the beginning of the research. This was furthered by Peers (2018), who discussed three things to combat utilitarian ethics: (a) cultures and communities develop their own ethical code of conduct, leading to virtue ethics, relational ethics of care, communitarian ethics and ethical reflexivity; (b) utilitarian principles do not fit with some paradigms or research methods, Aboriginal communities should be contacted at idea conception to avoid top-down research; and (c) participants are in a better position to determine if something is a benefit or harmful, rather than the researcher making these assumptions (p. 273).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research project through Selkirk College was informative, exciting and overall impressive that the college is breaking down the intersectionality of reconciliation to allow for many voices to be heard. Michele and I were both honored to be selected to engage Métis members in the Kootenays, all those interviewed were happy with the direction that Selkirk College was taking, many have had a long standing history in this region, but the overall goal for everyone was how can we build relationships based on respect, trust and awareness about each other. The important emphasis on Métis identity, whether that be passing on the culture, reclaiming one's identity or educating about the Métis people is vitally important, but even more important is educating about the local experience within BC and the Kootenays area. Overall, when it comes to working on reconciliation with Métis communities, it is important to understand who the Métis people are, understand Métis history and learn the true story of the Métis people from Métis scholars, Elders, and community members themselves.

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Appendix E: “Viewpoints” Overarching Project Methodology

“Viewpoints” Indigenous-led Project Methodology

Exploring Reconciliation Through Community College Education

Prepared for: Selkirk College Applied Research and Innovation Centre (ARIC)
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Abstract

Researchers present emerging possibilities towards Indigenous community self-determination through the use of the “Viewpoints” research project methodology and design. The Viewpoints methodology is useful for research taking place within geographical areas that encompass the Traditional Territories of different First Nations, and its application encourages Indigenous community self-determination. This research project methodology remains flexible for individual researchers representing their communities to have autonomy over their distinct inquiry processes and engagement protocols. Although there may be differences between the researcher’s community engagement processes, Viewpoints researchers maintain the same overarching research question and goals for the research. Viewpoints ensure that the research collaboration functions within a container, but enables flexibility and respect for the diverse needs, intellectual freedom, and autonomy of each of the Nations involved. This inquiry project methodology seeks to provide space for multiple “Viewpoints” throughout a geographical landscape. Through the application of Viewpoints within the SSHRC project titled, “Exploring Reconciliation Through Community College Education”, this methodological overview includes a case-study reflection, with important learning and considerations for future applications. This overview also provides insights on the ethics application and review process, and introduces ways that Research Ethics Boards (REB’s) can better understand the Indigenous researcher’s presentations of non-western research methodologies and ideas.

Note on Terminology – Researcher and Primary Investigator are used interchangeably in this document.

Key aspects of the Viewpoints Methodology:

Viewpoints Methodology:

- Allows for multiple stakeholders to be represented within a research project through the participation of multiple Primary Investigators or Researchers.
- The overarching research question and project goals remain the same, but the Primary Investigators represent their own communities’ interests, cultures, protocols, and individual priority areas of focus related to the research topic and engage in their own research project design.

- Primary Investigators have their Nation Government’s permission to participate as community representatives in the project on behalf of their Nations and cultures.
- Primary Investigators engage in their own independent inquiry processes and ensures that their research is authentic in seeking knowledge creation through preserving and representing their Nations worldviews.
- Primary Investigators are responsive to their community protocols and needs in their research design, and their study conduct is in alignment with their Nations protocols.
- Researchers identify all pertinent details around intellectual property and data housing within their individual ethics applications or collaborative research agreements with their Nations and the grant holder/funder.
- The institutional or organizational liaison functions as a neutral facilitator to coordinate the project, advocate for the self-determination and autonomy of each researcher for the duration of the project.
- Without interference from the liaison/facilitator or project coordinator, the Primary Investigators maintain autonomy over individual research processes.
- The project liaison/facilitator or coordinator provides support as needed and ties the project together with support and feedback from all research team members in co-authorship and final reporting.
- While research findings and outcomes may be distinctly different from each researcher, there may also be emergent themes.
- This project methodology respects the cultural diversity and self-determination of Indigenous peoples, governments structures and diverse world-views.
- The Viewpoints project methodology does not standardize the data collection process, analysis, findings, intellectual property or data housing, nor does it assume an umbrella heading or single “Indigenous perspective” or a “component” within a research project.
- The Viewpoints project methodology can routinely rotate the listed names of the cultural groups involved, which precludes the commonplace misunderstanding that any single cultural group in a shared overlap territory is more formal, preferred or established by always being mentioned first—which is a common practice in the semantics of composing Western English subject lists.
- Nation invitations remain open within a reasonably identified timeframe after the project start date, providing that it does not inhibit the other researchers from completing their milestones and the final reports.

Case-Study Application / Learnings

This methodology was developed and applied through the research process of “Exploring Reconciliation Through Community College Education, a SSHRC funded project at Selkirk College through the Applied Research and Innovation Centre. As this project methodology was emergent, many of its concepts specific to Indigenous viewpoints only became known through the process of this research process. Some key learnings from this SSHRC project include:

Ethics

Applying for Institutional Research Ethics Review Board (REB) approval is a challenge with this model. Here are a few key insights for consideration on future project methodology application:

1. It would have been helpful to clearly articulate the Viewpoints overarching Indigenous research project methodology early on to the Institutions Research Ethics Review Committee.
2. It would have been helpful to pre-establish a mechanism for waiving institutional REB approval when the Indigenous Nations have their own Research Ethics Board, and when assessing applications that are submitted by Indigenous researchers who are working in the interest of their communities. The REBs prioritize their standard REB policies when, in contrast, the researchers prioritize their community protocols above those of the institutions.

Examples of how REBs could be enabled to better support Indigenous research methodologies:

- Ethics approval could be sought and granted by the Indigenous Nations if a letter of approval is submitted to the grant holding institution's REB.
 - A letter from the Nation could state that the research proposal has met their Nation's ethics approval process, and is consistent with their community protocols.
 - The letter could indicate that the Nation assumes the liabilities and responsibilities related to the research project conducted within its communities.
3. For researchers involved whose Nations do not have their own ethics review boards, the researchers prepare and submit their own research ethics applications under the common project title referencing that it is part of the overarching project employing the Viewpoints methodology and specific project title to the grant holding entity.
 4. When ethics proposals are submitted to an institution's ethics review board, the review committee is responsive to the TCPS Chapter 9 considerations.
 5. It would be recommended and expected that there would be REB members who are Indigenous and have experience with Indigenous Research.
 6. While the TCPS has considered many articles pertaining to Indigenous research in chapter 9, it lacks a course for REB's to confidently apply the consideration in chapter 9 when assessing applications.

Key Considerations

The Viewpoints Methodology maintains an invitation and placeholder for diverse Nations within Shared Territories to participate in the project within a reasonably identified timeframe after the project start date, providing that it does not inhibit the other researchers from completing their milestones and the final reports.

This methodology is Indigenous-Led, meaning that Nation Members from within the region that the research is conducted are best suited to engage in research within their own communities.

This is important because not only do they understand their community worldviews and are familiar with their community protocols, but they are also better able to determine or seek advice from knowledge holders on the research design and other research components. Insider community research attends to their communities' protocols, including aspects of data collection and data housing, participants' engagement, and determining the cultural methodologies that best fit their community's needs.

Viewpoints provides a mechanism for Indigenous voices and self-determination to be presented through distinct research processes, and helps ensure that the sole authority for determining what is ethical with respect to Indigenous knowledge doesn't rest completely with the western institutions and worldviews.

It also introduces ways that ethics processes can be more inclusive of Indigenous cultural viewpoints, and encourages researchers to present their diverse perspectives in conceptualizing, gathering, analyzing, reporting and disseminating Indigenous knowledge in the form of scientific research data, with assurance that it is not assessed solely through non-Indigenous filters.

Potential Application of Viewpoints for Diverse Projects

This project methodology could be a potential approach to research projects across multiple sectors undertaken within Traditional Territories that are shared by multiple Nations. i.e., business, tourism, land development, environmental restoration, health, social sciences, technology, innovation, Traditional Knowledge, and other areas of study where Indigenous Nation consultations and perspectives would be valued or required.

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