

TIIEC 2025 Abstract Presentations – Thursday April 3, 2025

The Role of Indigenous Art Forms and Practices as Data Sovereignty, Ensuring Healthy Families and Communities

Indigenous peoples have intricate holistic knowledge systems for education, governance, kinships, communities, health and wellness. Historical impacts dismantled Indigenous ways of knowing that resulted in fragmentation of Families. Revitalization of Indigenous Data Sovereignty can be found in Indigenous Art forms and its practices. Reconnecting and gaining knowledge of these methodologies creates an ethical space for healing and wellness for Indigenous families and communities. Westernized systems of data collection sees itself as the primal centering of knowledge, which it is not. Indigenous Art forms such as beadwork and quillwork are methods in which we decode our kinships, our teachings and our life stories. Within the quillwork and beads are the philosophies of our life practices. This is why we sing, dance, and continue ceremonial practices. This framework is referred to as: “Wokbenime - Mahpiya Ekta & Maka Ekta - What is sacred above with our Ancestors is what is sacred below”. We dream our designs into existence and by cosmology and our societies. Decolonizing and decoding our practices lends to the resurgence of Indigenous pedagogy.

Keywords: Data Sovereignty, Decolonization, Indigenous Art,

Teresa Snow, Maskwacis Cultural College

Honouring Indigenous Youth as Knowledge Holders and Light Seekers: Storying Educational Futures

Indigenous youth hold deep knowledge about education, yet their voices are often overlooked in conversations about school reform and Indigenous education policy. This presentation shares how my research, which centers the lived experiences of Indigenous youth in small urban Saskatchewan high schools, is framed through ethical relationality (Donald, 2016) and Indigenous Storywork (Archibald, 2008). Engaging in a conversational research approach, this work resists extractive methodologies and instead honours Indigenous youth as co-researchers, allowing them to guide how their experiences are shared and interpreted. I will reflect on the process of being in-the-midst of this research—how I navigate ethical tensions, hold space for Indigenous youth’s stories, and ensure that this work remains accountable to the communities it serves. Key tensions at play include the complexities of conducting research within colonial institutions, the balance between honoring youth voices while respecting cultural knowledge protocols, and the importance of building relationships that extend beyond the research context. This session will explore how Indigenous youth’s perspectives can shape alternative visions for education and challenge deficit-based narratives often imposed by the system. Participants will be invited to reflect on how we can collectively create spaces where Indigenous youth voices are not just heard, but valued in meaningful ways. This session will focus on framing the work, exploring existing tensions, and inviting reflection on how research can be in service to Indigenous youth and communities.

Keywords: youth, Indigenous education, decolonization, research

Katherine Koskie, Grad Research Asst Fellowship, Faculty of Education - International Initiatives
University of Alberta

Buffalo Beyond Education

Education has often been referred to as "the new Buffalo" in recent times. While this analogy may resonate with some, I believe the Buffalo should remain the Buffalo. Historically, the Buffalo played an integral role in the lives of many Plains Indigenous Nations, serving as a source of sustenance, knowledge, spiritual guidance, leadership, and so much more. Its significance cannot be overstated. At Buffalo Culture Collective, we strive to honor and elevate Buffalo perspectives by ensuring the Buffalo continues to be a vital part of our communities. Our mission is to help schools, artists, individuals, and communities reconnect with this "great Big Brother"—Mushum, the Buffalo. One way we achieve this is by partnering with local Buffalo producers to repurpose unused products, such as hides, and making them accessible to communities. This allows people to engage with the Buffalo in meaningful ways, much like their ancestors once did. These acts of reconnection and decolonization have profoundly impacted children, educators, and entire communities, fostering a renewed sense of identity and purpose. Historically, the Buffalo united Indigenous Nations, and through the Buffalo Culture Collective, they are doing so once again. I am grateful for the opportunity to share my journey of reconnecting with the Buffalo and how this relationship has profoundly transformed my life as a Michif. This process has not only restored lost connections but also healed parts of my soul I didn't realize needed healing.

Keywords: Buffalo Connection Rematriation

Colin Arlt, Buffalo Culture Collective

Education; Calling on the Healing of the Horse

Exploring the role of land requires a deep understanding of ancestral roots, self-awareness, and historical knowledge, offering individuals a unique Indigenous perspective on Canadian identity. Notably, while Minister Trudeau's father sought to suppress Indigenous self-identification, the community's steadfast connection to the land, history, culture, and spirituality ensured that their identity endured. Without this knowledge, assimilation may have been a real possibility. My personal connection to my lands and my people's experiences and resilience deeply inform my perspective.

When I ride my horse on the land, I reflect on my people's past, their profound connection to the land, and the significant changes we have faced. Land-based learning revitalizes our cultural heritage, ceremonies, stories, and treaties, offering a powerful alternative to traditional classroom instruction. Through programs such as horse riding and land-based initiatives, we can engage young people, pulling them away from technology, substance abuse, and other negative influences, and guiding them toward personal growth and empowerment.

In a world grappling with pressing social issues like drug overdoses and other severe challenges, increasing resources for land-based programs could be transformative. These programs hold the potential to reshape communities and create long-lasting change. The future is uncertain, and skills rooted in the land could be essential for survival, especially in times of economic hardship or food scarcity.

Inspired by the documentary *Dakota 38*, which tells the story of a healing ride following a traumatic historical event, I felt called to develop and lead horse programs. These programs support healing from trauma, grief, and personal challenges, especially for Indigenous students who are carrying their own burdens. My experiences with horses have shown me their power to heal, helping me through trauma and loss. Horses have been my steady companions, always picking up the pieces and helping me rebuild.

Keywords: Land based Education, Misatim, Horses, Healing\

Tyler Tootoosis, CEO Misatim Healing / Classroom Teacher, Sweetgrass School

Intergeneration Wholistic Knowledge in Education

In Nêhiyaw (Cree), Kiskêyimisowin (self-knowledge) is sought through self-reflection while in relationship with the natural world. Introspection is a part of Indigenous pedagogy, nurtured and supported by relationships with the Elders and community. The wisdom and stories of Elders can help nurture and grow the wholistic aspects of self (Spirit, body, heart, and mind) of proceeding generations. Indigenous traditional systems of knowledge transference within communities have been disrupted by colonialism, racism, and attempts at cultural genocide. An extensive literature review reveals that cultural ways of learning and healing are more effective for Indigenous people than colonial modalities. Intergenerational learning is essential for Indigenous people's spiritual, emotional, cognitive, sociocultural well-being, and overall health. Nêhiyaw scholar Amanda Fraser will present autoethnographic research on intergenerational knowledge and stories told by nimosôm (my grandfather) from the Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation. This research uplifts Indigenous self-determination and traditional practices that have occurred since time immemorial.

Keywords: Nêhiyaw (Cree), Elders, Knowledge Transference, Wholism

Amanda Fraser, Instructor, Bachelor of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University

Indigenous Women in Educational Leadership

Indigenous women in educational leadership: leading systems transformation and policy development. “The woman is the foundation on which nations are built. She is the heart of her nation. If that heart is weak, the people are weak. If her heart is strong and her mind is clear, then the nation is strong and knows its purpose. The woman is the center of everything.” -Dr. Art Solomon, Ojibwe (1914- 1997) Indigenous women are the heart of our nations. Since 2015, with the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, we have witnessed the development of senior administrative positions being created to lead Indigenous education in systems of public schooling. Indigenous women are increasingly occupying these roles. Policies that centre truth and reconciliation are emerging across the country in efforts to advance Indigenous education and to create the conditions that lead to possible system transformation that benefits Indigenous student achievement and well-being. This paper speaks to the complex challenges that Indigenous women must navigate within these colonial structures and seeks amplify the voices of Indigenous women in educational leadership, drawing on Indigenous women’s knowledge systems in efforts to effect change today, and for future generations. How do Indigenous women bring Indigenous perspectives - ways of knowing, being, and doing to these spaces? What does Indigenous women’s leadership practice look like in systems of public education?

Keywords: Indigenous; Leadership, Women's Knowledge Systems, Feminism, Storytelling, Decolonization

Tanya Senk, Superintendent, Indigenous Education, Toronto District School Board

Hearing Perspectives: A Journey Toward Staff Wellness at Kainai Board of Education

In this session, we will emphasize the critical importance of listening to staff voices to enhance wellness within the Kainai Board of Education. Recognizing that staff well-being is foundational for effective teaching and learning, this presentation will focus on understanding and addressing the wellness needs of our staff so we can plan forward using their voice to guide our planning. We will discuss the importance of collaborating with our Leadership which includes: System and school leadership, Elders, Knowledge

Keepers, and staff extremely well versed in Blackfoot Language and Culture, as we customized and integrated their voices into the creation of a Staff and Student Wellness Data Collection process. By involving these key figures in the development and implementation of our data collection they will be foundational in advancing the Wellness Focus at KBE. Communication, collaboration, relationships and focus on holistic wellness are key components of Kainaiyssini which is a parallel concept to (Cree People's Wahkotamowin). Additionally, we will connect the session to themes of community well-being and cultural responsiveness, exploring how the act of listening to staff aligns with broader discussions of creating and ensuring safe, caring, respectful, welcoming and inclusive and supportive educational environments. As a result of participating in this session, participants will have the opportunity to:

Understand Staff Wellness: Explore the definition of wellness and current initiatives. Emphasize Listening: Recognize the importance of actively listening to staff feedback. Collect and Analyze Data: Learn effective strategies for data collection to inform future wellness plans. Implement Culturally Appropriate Change: Identify actionable steps that honor cultural connections and responsiveness. Foster Leadership and Collaboration: Discover how to cultivate a supportive culture through collaborative practices. Review Impact and Sustainability: Examine the results of our initiatives and strategies for sustainable wellness practices. Engage in Dialogue: Participate in an interactive Q&A to share experiences and insights on wellness. This session aims to engage participants in understanding the significance of listening to staff voices, integrating community wisdom, and evaluating the impact of our efforts on staff wellness in culturally responsive ways. By prioritizing leadership, collaboration, and informed practices, we can create a healthier environment for all members of the Kainai Board of Education community.

Keywords: Voice, Listening, Wellness, Collaboration, Data

Amber Hester, Kainai Board of Education - Blood Tribe Southern Alberta

Cameron Shade, Kainai Board of Education - Blood Tribe Southern Alberta

Igniting Identity Through Land-Based Education

We would like to present on the powerful impact our school's On-the-Land programming has had on our students, staff and communities' Indigenous identity. Our students have On-the-Land camps from grades 7-12, so we do a lot of On-the-Land programming. In grades 7 and 8 students do a 14 km hike into a Historical Buffalo Ranch in Wood Buffalo National Park (one of the biggest national parks in the world) and back out, In grade 9 students have the opportunity to go on a canoe trip down our historic Slave River and also have the opportunity to get their canoe certification. In grades 10-12 students have the opportunity to go on a 5 day winter camp by snowmobile to one of our beautiful inland lakes, Piers Lake, where they learn about trapping and the traditional way of life. We also do a whole school Ice Safety Camp for all students and staff where they learn about ice safety, cultural practices and our way of life. It is also focused on climate change and what those effects have on people going out on the land today. These camps have restored and revitalized relationships between Elders and students and have ignited their pride in their identity. We have also established a wonderful cultural space outside of our school to enrich the culture and language of our students. This gives us the opportunity to bring the experience of being on the land right to our school. Our cultural area is front and center at our school. It has grown from a small fire pit and a few benches to a beautiful inviting space. This area outside our school has revitalized the culture, language and identity of our students in so many ways. We have cleaned 100 fish in 2 days, we have made dry fish, made dry meat, cleaned and cooked geese/ducks/grouse, and made cultural crafts from drum making, beading, rattle making, tufting... Our students helped build our school's cultural area. They are very proud of this cultural space at our school, it gives us the opportunity to bring the Land to the School. We also have Elders that know when we are out cooking traditional food they can just drive through and we will bring them something. They feel welcomed and support the work that we are doing with our students.

Randy Constant, Education Director, East Central First Nation Education Authority

Pauline McKay, Superintendent of Education, East Central First Nation Education Authority

Decolonizing and Anti-Racism Education with San'yas Online Training

Indigenous Peoples continue to face systemic racism and discrimination in organizations within Canada, highlighting the need for urgent, comprehensive educational interventions. The San'yas Anti-Racism Indigenous Cultural Safety Training program has delivered educational trainings to over 200,000 people since its launch in 2009. San'yas means 'way of knowing' in Kwak'wala, the language of the Kwakwaka'wakw Peoples living on traditional unceded lands on what is now known as Vancouver Island. With curriculum rooted in Indigenous-led knowledge, San'yas supports all learners to deepen their understanding of settler colonialism, providing the tools and skills to address Indigenous-specific racism. San'yas uses a strengths-based approach that interrogates how Indigenous-specific racism informs the beliefs, worldviews, policies and everyday practices of settlers working within organizations. The San'yas training is focused on supporting participants to become change agents and take action against Indigenous-specific racism. This interactive presentation draws from our experiences as facilitators and developers of the training. We will share research findings of what has worked and been most effective so that others can learn from the process. We will also provide an analysis of participants responses to the training and explore examples of shifts in participants' learning. Our findings are drawn from pre and post-training questionnaires, facilitated discussions and participant stories. The results of our research have important implications for organizations working towards eradicating Indigenous-specific racism and highlight the exciting possibilities for online learning in anti-racism education. Join us in exploring the San'yas learning journey and the role it plays in advancing change. Learn about the significant legislative shifts that hold organizations responsible and how we see San'yas as a critical first step towards eradicating Indigenous-specific racism in Canada. Our goal is to demonstrate how collective efforts, accountability and a shared understanding of colonial impacts are essential in driving meaningful reconciliation and systemic transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples across Canada.

Keywords: Indigenous-specific racism, Anti-racism research and practice, Decolonizing education, Transformational online learning, transforming organizations

Sheelah McLean, San'yas Anti-Racism Indigenous Cultural Safety Training

Katie Skelton, San'yas Anti-Racism Indigenous Cultural Safety Training

Native Tongue - The Story of Language Revitalization

Native Tongue is a groundbreaking Indigenous-led documentary series that explores the global movement of language revitalization and cultural resurgence among Indigenous nations. Produced by Wabanaki Media, the series follows the powerful stories of language keepers, educators, and youth reclaiming their ancestral languages despite centuries of colonial suppression. Spanning multiple Indigenous nations across Turtle Island (North America) and Aotearoa (New Zealand), Native Tongue highlights the resilience, creativity, and determination of communities working to breathe life back into their languages. Through intimate interviews, immersive storytelling, and stunning cinematography, the series showcases how language is not just a tool for communication but a living expression of identity, sovereignty, and intergenerational knowledge transfer. At the Think Indigenous Education Conference, we are honoured to share the vision behind Native Tongue with fellow educators, language warriors, and knowledge keepers. Our presentation will explore: The role of film and media in amplifying Indigenous language movements. The importance of Indigenous-led storytelling and narrative

sovereignty. ✓ Opportunities for collaboration with language educators, curriculum developers, and community leaders. As an education-focused docuseries, Native Tongue is not just a film—it is a call to action. We invite educators and community members to join us in shaping this project, ensuring that Indigenous languages remain strong, spoken, and thriving for generations to come. Join us as we reclaim our voices, one word at a time.

Keywords: Language Revitalization, Filmmaking, Storytelling

Curtis Pilon-Vinish, Indigenous Futures Film Academy

Desmond Simon, Indigenous Futures Film Academy

Nate Gaffney, Indigenous Futures Film Academy

Finding Family: Minimizing Barriers to Indigenous Student Success Through Online Education

This research report examines the impact of online teacher education on Indigenous student success, focusing on the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP) at the University of Alberta. ATEP was designed to increase the number of Indigenous teachers in Canada through improved access to culturally-grounded postsecondary education for Indigenous preservice teachers. Beginning Fall 2021, ATEP launched a flexible, online model that enables students to continue living in their home communities while earning their teaching degrees. This pilot offering has turned into an annual intake with expansive success, serving students from coast to coast. A regular critique of online education is the inability to foster meaningful relationships or community, which is antithetical to many Indigenous pedagogical approaches and values. We have seen the opposite – students online are well connected to one another and have crafted deep, long-lasting relationships that are now carrying them into the early years of their teaching careers. Through a qualitative study involving focus groups with Indigenous undergraduate students in ATEP’s Bachelor of Education program, we explore how an Indigenous Bachelor of Education program can minimize institutional barriers and support students’ academic, professional, and personal aspirations, highlighting the importance of culturally grounded learning experiences, familial and local support systems, and institutional practices inside and outside of the classroom that foster a learning environment in which Indigenous students can thrive. The findings identify several core elements essential to Indigenous student success in online teacher education alongside opportunities for deepening Indigenous student success through online education. Ultimately, our findings underscore the importance of culturally responsive and relationally driven education models that not only remove institutional barriers but also reinforce Indigenous identity, self-determination, and long-term professional success.

Keywords: online education; teacher education; cohorts; community

Evelyn Steinhauer, Associate Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta

Danielle Steele, Field Experience Lead, ATEP, University of Alberta

Kelly Ryan, kiskinwahamakew, ALF, ATEP University of Alberta

Danielle Gardiner Milln, Research Coordinator, ATEP, University of Alberta

Indigenous Medicine Wheel to Promote Good Health and Holistic Wellbeing

The focus of my presentation will be on how to integrate the Holistic Medicine Wheel into classroom teachings to promote good health and well-being. I will utilize an interactive presentation created with Genially.com, which educates about the Medicine Wheel while emphasizing the importance of individuals’ mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Participants will have the opportunity to examine their own Wellness Wheel and assess whether it is balanced. This program is designed for my grade 10-12 students, but I believe it can also be adapted for younger grades and adult learners. The

Medicine Wheel can serve as a tool in the classroom to enhance overall well-being. I will also discuss how the Medicine Wheel can be incorporated into various aspects of our lives, including in educational settings. It's essential for educators to consider students' well-being—spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional—when developing lesson plans. This approach not only benefits the students but also supports teachers in creating a holistic learning environment. This presentation is relevant as it emphasizes the integration of Medicine Wheel teachings and holistic wellness within classroom teaching. It focuses on addressing the mental, physical, emotional, and social needs of both students and educators. Furthermore, it honors Indigenous traditional teaching methods and values, highlighting the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy. The interactive presentation can be found at <https://view.genially.com/653ab6a31da62f001134eeae/dossier-holistic-medicine-wheel-teachings> This is a free interactive resource that any one can use, also the platform is easy to use and create [lessons](#). I do use YouTube videos, and www.fourdirections.com in this presentation but as an extra link to learn about Medicine Wheel teachings. This interactive activity is ongoing, to make it work well for all. I would like a chance to share and receive feedback on how to improve it as well a chance to share my work.

Keywords: Medicine Wheel Teachings, Holistic Pedagogy

Sarah Ann Frampton, Principal, Keeseekoose Chiefs Education Center

Indigenous Youth in Business Opening Doors to the Future

The Almightyvoice Education Centre Business Club was created with the intention of using the world of business to help open doors to the students futures. The youth created a company which is called 3R Innovative Imaging, which they own and manage entirely. The 3R's stand for Re-cycle, Re-use, Re-invent. They take cabinet doors and wood that would otherwise be destined for the landfill and turn them into beautiful, unique, innovative one-of-a kind works of Indigenous themed artwork. The youth have had tremendous success over the past couple of years and have truly proven that Indigenous youth CAN SUCCEED in business. Their artwork is showcased and sold in retail locations across Western Canada, and while attending numerous conferences, they become the centre of attention, for all of the right reasons, wherever they go. Their story of success can prove to be motivating and inspiring to youth far from the borders of their community. A few successes include: being one of 18 Indigenous businesses chosen to be filmed for Season One of Bears Lair. The youth competed in Pow Wow Pitch 2023, and finished third overall from an original 2400 applications. Two of the youth Travelled to Papa New Guinea to attend the World Indigenous Business Forum where they were main stage presenters. A story that needs to be told and shared.

Keywords: Dream, Believe, Achieve, Inspire, Motivate

Ruby Daniels, Almightyvoice Education Centre

Leahora Paul, Almightyvoice Education Centre

Katie McLeod Stewart, Almightyvoice Education Centre

Sacred Strokes

Sacred Strokes; Connecting to Spirit and Economic Independence Art is more than an expression; it is a bridge between the past, present, and future. Sacred Strokes is my journey of connecting artistry, traditional and cultural upbringing, and Indigenous identity to inspire and empower youth. Through painting, tattooing, and creative exploration, I have carved a path toward economic independence and self-expression while staying rooted in my heritage. My work is a reflection of resilience, storytelling, and cultural preservation—honoring the teachings of my ancestors while embracing the evolving landscape of

Indigenous creativity. By sharing my story, I hope to guide young artists in reclaiming their identities, finding strength in their craft, and creating sustainable futures through their passions. This journey is about more than art—it is about connection, empowerment, and the revitalization of culture through creative expression.

Keywords: Indigenous, Art, Tattoo, Student Success

Jonas Thomson, CEO, Good Heart Tattoo, Carry the Kettle

Nikaniwin: Merging Culture into the Everyday

The Nikaniwin program that focuses on leadership development and youth engagement. Leaders are trained to work with young people to develop their own leadership qualities, their self confidence and self-esteem, as well as their identity. The program uses sport and fun to develop key competencies all through the provision of culture. Through this lens this session will discuss how to merge culture into everyday settings be it school, sports, or other extracurriculars.

Keywords: sport, culture, mentorship, leadership, identity

Amy Shipley, Sport Participation Lead, SASK SPORT

Land Based Education in the Urban school system

A land based presentation sharing experiences in a Regina school system. Some experiences included post-covid anxiety with students and how their experiences in our 5 credit land based program helped to change their lives. As one of our tools, we've used traditional hide tanning practices to teach oral cultural history, spiritual significance to our Indigenous worldview, and also examining the connection to western science from a chemical perspective. Another aspect that we touch on is the connection of language and culture, Song & Dance to the land, water and sky. Land based education is teaching how we must use and respect, and also how we connect with our senses: smelling, seeing, feeling, touching, and even eating and drinking. We can't speak of land based education without knowing who was here first, how they perceived their universe historically and in modern times. We use smudging in daily practice and touch on the topic of ceremony that is practiced by the various cultural groups around Regina, Saskatchewan and across North America. In our course Plains Cree is the focus although we touch on Saulteaux, Dakota, Lakota and Nakoda similarities and differences in our curriculum. We use the water and the land to "rewild" the spirit in our students. Our courses focus is the urban Indigenous high school student, although we've had Non-Indigenous students from various nationalities taking part. We are now in semester 6. I am also part of an elementary school program that follows the same principles. Land based education can always change and improve. Land based education can change lives in the best way.

Keywords: Land based, cultural language education

Gary Gott, Knowledge Keeper, Regina Public Schools

Walking Together: Relational Pedagogy and Two-Eyed Seeing in Education

Educators are called to be responsible beings, turning “towards each other” and making relationships the curriculum (Sinclair, Indspire 2020). In the spring of 2019, we embarked on a cross-cultural exchange that profoundly transformed our perspectives. Through a collaborative self-study, we document this deeply personal and relational learning journey, exploring how meaningful relationship-building shapes

our evolving practice. Grounded in Indigenous Knowledge systems and guided by storytelling as methodology (Kovach, 2019), we reflect on two central questions: How did our exchange experience deepen our understanding of Indigenous methodologies? How might we continue to apply these teachings in our professional and personal growth? Framed by relational research paradigms (Wilson, 2008) and the “Two-Eyed Seeing” approach (Martin, 2012), our inquiry centers on the interweaving of Indigenous and Western ways of knowing. Drawing on the Cree Medicine Wheel, we take a holistic approach to meaning-making, honoring balance, interconnectedness, and reciprocity in our reflections. This self-study has been transformative, deepening our awareness of ourselves as educators and reinforcing the power of relational pedagogy. By bridging Indigenous and Western paradigms, our work offers insights into how educators might engage in respectful, reciprocal learning relationships in both research and practice. Presentation Format: 20-minute Workshop, projector & screen to share presentation

Keywords: Indigenous Education, Relational Pedagogy, Two-Eyed Seeing, Storytelling, Self-Study

Lydia Sunchild, Mosquito Grizzly Bear Head Lean Man First Nation

Laryssa Gorecki, Mosquito Grizzly Bear Head Lean Man First Nation

Indigenizing Archaeology: nōsisim of Survivors

“Isn’t ALL archaeology ‘Indigenous Archaeology?’” and “Aren’t you already doing enough?” are all things that have been said to me as an Indigenous student who used archaeology as a tool for decolonization. My 2023 master’s thesis titled, “Archaeological Interpretive Design for Wanuskewin Heritage Park from The Indigenous Perspective: ‘astam api: Stories of Indigenous Archaeology’” is a personal storytelling of my experience reconciling the field of Archaeology and Education in Saskatchewan. When completed, my research included an interpretive product exploring the archaeological record of Wanuskewin but also highlights the deeply rooted colonialism within archaeology and education. As a nōsisim of Indian Residential School survivors, I grew up between Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and our home community of Sturgeon Lake in the summer. Since I was young, I have always felt like something was missing: it was my connection to language, spirituality, and my closeted-Two Spirit identity. It was this understanding of the intergenerational impacts of colonialism that led me to my academic advocacy. My thesis research was unlike any of my fellow Masters students. My focus and methodology was rooted in my Indigenous ways of knowing and allowed my thesis to be written as a story rather than a report. It was an active challenge to decolonize the academic system through the heavy emphasis on miyo-ohpikihâwasowin (Good Child Rearing). Ultimately, I had taken the criticisms and dismissals to prove how archaeology can serve as an honorary witness to Indigenous peoples’ sacred relationship to land since time immemorial. In addition, modeling archaeology done by, for, and with Indigenous community challenges the status quo held within the system of archaeology and education as demonstrated by me: a Queer Two Spirit Archaeologist, a nōsisim of survivors.

Keywords: Indigenizing Archaeology, Storytelling, Masters Research

Honey Constant-Inglis, Founder, Honey Willow nehiyaw Studio

History of decolonization.

To understand what decolonization looks like we must look at the areas of the past that is not shared to gain a deeper understanding of a true Cree way of thinking as well as how to navigate through through life as a modern indigenous person. Traditional customs, language, spirituality.

Keywords: Traditional language ceremony & customs revitalization.

Daniel Sangrey, Executive Director, Sangrey Solutions

Empowering Two-Spirit Youth: Decolonizing Education with Indigenous Teachers For Two-Spirit Youth

Indigenous Teachers For Two-Spirit Youth (ITTSY) is a collective of Indigenous educators in Saskatchewan dedicated to supporting the academic success and well-being of Trans and Two-Spirit youth. With a focus on decolonizing education and incorporating Two-Spirit perspectives into curriculum development, ITTSY aims to create inclusive and empowering learning environments for Indigenous youth. Through advocacy, networking, and innovative strategies, ITTSY strives to challenge colonial narratives and promote cultural resilience among Two-Spirit youth. This presentation will showcase ITTSY's unique approaches to supporting Two-Spirit youth in education, led by Indigenous educators from Saskatchewan. The discussion will focus on the effectiveness of their advocacy work and the positive results they have seen. By sharing their innovative methods and dedication to Indigenous education, ITTSY will offer valuable perspectives and insights to the conference attendees.

Keywords: Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, Two-Spirit, queer advocacy, education

Tanzy Janvier, Indigenous Teachers for Two-Spirit Youth

Jade Hupé, Indigenous Teachers for Two-Spirit Youth

Supporting Students with Limited Access to Post-Secondary Education

Abstract: Supporting Students with Limited Access to Post-Secondary Education This presentation will explore the resilience demonstrated by Métis students as they navigate the challenges of their educational journey, including limited access to resources, geographical isolation, cultural differences, and financial barriers. Focusing on strategies to foster student success, the session will highlight approaches to supporting Métis students as they transition from rural to urban environments and manage the complexities of post-secondary education. Key topics will include the support and services offered by the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) post-secondary department for citizens, emphasizing the importance of relationship building, mentorship programs, academic resources (such as funding), mental health support, and practical guidance throughout their academic careers.

Keywords: Metis Students, Post Secondary Supports

Jen Pritchard, Metis Nation of Saskatchewan

Danielle Ethier, Metis Nation of Saskatchewan

Teaching JUMP Math in an Immersion classroom

The workshop titled "Immersion Teachings & Early Numeracy, the Secret to Success" focuses on developing math fluency and confidence in young students through mindful instruction and immersion teaching. A key aspect of this workshop is addressing the common fear many elementary teachers have about teaching math. JUMP Math, a registered Canadian charity, is dedicated to nurturing the mathematician in every teacher and student. By providing well-structured lessons and activities, JUMP Math helps teachers overcome anxiety and build confidence, ensuring that math is taught effectively in the early years, which is crucial for academic success. The workshop emphasizes the importance of practice and confidence in the language of numbers, using Elders to support new language learning linked to math, and nurturing a joy in numbers. It also highlights the significance of supporting communities in

translating educational resources into Indigenous languages. Protecting and revitalizing Indigenous languages is vital for preserving the cultural heritage, knowledge, traditions, and history of Indigenous communities in Canada. Language plays a key role in cultural continuity and community resilience. Participants will learn how to support Immersion Math teaching and will be provided with examples and information on translating resources into Indigenous languages. The workshop aims to create a safe, happy environment for learning math, where children can develop a love and excitement for numbers. By integrating Indigenous languages into math instruction and involving Elders, the workshop seeks to foster a deeper connection to cultural heritage while enhancing math education. Overall, this workshop is designed to empower teachers, support communities, and promote the importance of Indigenous languages in education, ultimately contributing to the academic success and cultural preservation of Indigenous students.

Keywords: Immersion teaching Numeracy Confidence Elders Knowledge Excitement

Liz Barrett, Jump Math

wâhkôhtowin: Decolonizing Teacher Education for All Our Relations

This presentation discusses findings of a research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada that studied an Indigenous teacher education model (wâhkôhtowin) in Saskatchewan, Canada. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) found that Canada's education system attempted to "kill the Indian in the child" in order to assimilate Indigenous peoples into society. Today, teacher preparation continues to be critiqued for reifying whiteness and colonial assumptions that perpetuate inequitable experiences for Indigenous peoples. To counteract this critique, the Indian Teacher Education Program at the University of Saskatchewan co-created with educational partners and Indigenous knowledge keepers the wâhkôhtowin model premised upon relationality, ceremony, language, and child-centeredness. Teacher education experiences are designed to create safe spaces for Indigenous teacher candidates in school settings, support cultural learning and identity, and foster pedagogical growth. Our research employs qualitative mixed methods framed as "practice research" and we hold to a spirit of research as ceremony. This presentation focuses on lessons learned, including: privileging field experiences premised in Indigenous epistemologies; responding to changing needs across school systems; the impacts of diverse personal experiences and comfort with Indigeneity; the value of language, culture, land-based experiences and Elder engagement; the need to incorporate anti-racist education within cultural learning models; and, sensitivity around the placement of Indigenous students within religiously-based schools in Canada. Findings have the potential to mitigate intergenerational effects of colonial policies; increase educational and employment outcomes for Indigenous peoples; provide direction for successful partnerships and offer strategies for decolonizing teacher education.

Keywords: relationality, ceremony, language, and child-centeredness

Yvette Arcand, Director, Indian Teacher Education Program, USASK

Dawn Wallin, Office of Vice Provost Research, USASK

Lori-Ann Daniels, Indian Teacher Education Program, USASK

Embracing Indigenous Values to Address Modern Challenges with ImmersiveLink 7 Ethics

The ImmersiveLink7 Ethics course explores the integration of traditional Indigenous values with modern educational applications, addressing the typical presentations of Indigenous culture which often come from a historical lens, preventing real-life applications. This workshop highlights ImmersiveLink 7 Ethics, which was created with contributions from Wanda Baxter, Kolette Cristante, and Rob Spade

through their teachings and translations. Focus groups were completed to ensure the course was creating its intended impact while honouring traditional wisdom. This course unpacks the history of the Seven Sacred Teachings, aligning with their related animal and Ojibwe translation, to show a deeper story of each of the teachings. Learners will leave the course with a renewed sense of core values and cultural connection. With versions tailored to a diverse audience, the course connects to learners from Grade 8 to adults in the workforce. Through the application of this course, educators and organizations can advance reconciliation efforts by fostering understanding and respect for Indigenous cultures, histories, and contributions. Our programs are aligned with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, aiming to create meaningful and lasting impact through education and awareness.

Keyword: Ojibwe language, education, values, teachings, cultural integration

Charmaine McCraw, Manager, Indigenous Engagement & Training, ORIGIN

David Abbott, Vice President of Operations & Strategic Initiatives, ORIGIN

Ryan Maracle, Business Development Officer, ORIGIN

Collective Empowerment in the Classroom: Bringing a Multi-Sensory perspective through Storytelling.

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” (Maya Angelou) There is no greater Success in Modern Post-Secondary Education than acknowledgement of one’s true self. Standardized education promotes and adheres to regulated performance outcomes that can be harmful (Bjerede, M. 2013) that contribute to loss of creative, intuitive and conceptual gifts of oneself. In this presentation, Pheasant-Neganigwane will highlight key components of her research of classroom teaching. Included in this talk is how bringing a multi-sensory perspective to one’s pedagogical approach using a Storytelling paradigm can bring students to a Meaningful Learning experience. Building upon Pheasant’s dance and her Anishinaabe principled positionality, she will share the background, journey and her own realization and engagement with mobilizing traditional knowledge standards with conventional western education standards to a modern classroom. Included in this presentation will be an introduction to assessment strategies that enable key concepts introduced in her presentation.

Keywords: Anishinaabe principled positionality, mobilizing traditional knowledge standards

Karen Pheasant-Neganigwane, Assistant Professor, Mount Royal University

The Journey Toward Cultural Change: University of PEI’s Path to Decolonizing the Academy

Since the release of the TRC Commission of Canada Report in 2015, efforts have been made throughout Canada’s post-secondary institutions to implement the Calls to Action and create tools for participating in reconciliation. In 2022, UPEI hired its first Indigenous Advisor. One week later, UPEI announced the newly stand-alone Indigenous faculty- Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research, and Applied Studies (IKERAS). Since then, UPEI has made steady progress toward reconciliation due to innovative and ground-breaking initiatives that have helped the university move positively toward decolonization. This presentation will highlight several initiatives, including the construction of our teepee on campus grounds, the expansion of smudging rooms across campus, the acknowledgment of Indigenous land on UPEI’s website, graduation stoles for Indigenous graduates, and full scholarships for Indigenous community members to enroll in Mi’kmaw Language courses at UPEI. Furthermore, IKE 1040- Indigenous Teachings of Turtle Island is now a requirement for all incoming students. There are fifteen Indigenous faculty and staff members working for IKERAS, and the first Minor in Indigenous

Studies was awarded at the 2023 convocation. The presentation will also discuss other initiatives and the obstacles and barriers encountered on the path to cultural change.

Keywords: Indigenous Education, Reconciliation, Decolonization, Indigenization, Canadian Post-Secondary Institutions

Corinne Chappell, Indigenous Advisor to VPAR, University of Prince Edward Island

"Empowering Change: Educational Leadership in Decolonizing Indigenous Education"

Education leadership plays a crucial role in decolonizing Indigenous education by ensuring that policies, practices, and curricula align with the values, histories, and knowledge systems of Indigenous communities. Decolonization in education involves recognizing and challenging colonial structures that have historically marginalized Indigenous ways of knowing, teaching, and learning. Effective leadership is required to initiate this transformative process, making education more inclusive, respectful, and responsive to the diverse needs of Indigenous students. First, education leaders must foster cultural competency and understanding of Indigenous worldviews within schools. This requires promoting curricula that integrate Indigenous languages, traditions, and perspectives, rather than relying on Western-centric models. Leaders should also advocate for the inclusion of Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers, and community members in the education system to ensure that Indigenous knowledge is respected and passed down. Moreover, education leaders must challenge discriminatory practices and create safe, supportive environments where Indigenous students feel valued and empowered. This includes providing professional development for educators to address intergenerational trauma, and ensuring that Indigenous students have access to resources that reflect their cultural identity and focus on healing. Education leadership is also key in establishing partnerships between schools, families, and Indigenous communities. Leaders must work collaboratively to identify local priorities, understand the historical context of Indigenous education, and develop policies that address the needs of Indigenous learners. This partnership can help create educational environments where Indigenous knowledge, languages, and traditions are not only preserved but celebrated. In conclusion, education leadership is essential in decolonizing Indigenous education, as it promotes cultural awareness, challenges colonial legacies, and fosters equitable learning environments. By doing so, leaders contribute to the broader goal of social justice and the restoration of Indigenous cultural sovereignty within educational systems.

Keywords: decolonizing Indigenous Education leadership

Faith Waston, Director of Education, Treaty Education Alliance

Learning From and With Communities Not About: Parent Engagement in support of School Success

Session: Learning From and With Communities Not About: Parent Engagement in support of School Success with Adrienne Durocher
Session Description: Learning From and With Communities Not About: Parent Engagement in support of School Success Do you know the difference between parent involvement vs parent engagement? In this session, we will explore those differences, and plan ways to foster families and communities within our schools and curriculum. Families and communities are the children's first teachers and continue to teach them daily; therefore, we should value parent voice and presence in the education system.

Keywords: Parent and Community Engagement

Adrienne Durocher, Superintendent of Learning Support, Lac La Ronge Indian Band

Traditional Values through the Teepee

Using the Teepee as a teaching tool or guide we are able to recall the traditional values our communities upheld. Using the teepee I will share how we can apply these values to the education system. These value systems carried stories and connection to the land and the old ways Plains Cree once lived by. I will set up a 6ft teepee with the audience and discuss how I was taught the story and the plains cree understanding of the teepee. Focusing on kinship, humility, respect and love in the session.

Keywords: Teepee, Plains Cree, Humility, World View, Community

Mary Lee, Elder, Treaty 6 Territory

Jasmyn Albert, Session Host & Facilitator, Connected North

First Nations Trauma Informed Education

Trauma-informed Indigenous education training is essential for educators working within First Nations communities because it equips them with the necessary tools and understanding to effectively support students who may be experiencing the lingering effects of historical and intergenerational trauma. Indigenous communities have faced a myriad of challenges, including the impacts of colonization, residential schools, and systemic oppression, which have significantly affected their cultural, social, and emotional well-being. By undergoing trauma-informed training, educators gain insights into how trauma manifests in behaviour, learning, and interpersonal relationships, allowing them to create a safe and supportive learning environment. This understanding fosters empathy and patience, enabling teachers to approach students with sensitivity, recognizing that certain behaviours may stem from trauma rather than intentional defiance or disengagement. Furthermore, trauma-informed training emphasizes the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy, encouraging educators to integrate Indigenous perspectives, histories, and practices into the curriculum. This not only validates the experiences of Indigenous students but also promotes a sense of belonging and identity, which is crucial for their academic success and mental health. Additionally, such training empowers educators to collaborate with families and community members, recognizing that healing and support extend beyond the classroom. By building strong relationships rooted in trust and respect, educators can better advocate for the needs of their students and contribute to a holistic approach to education. Ultimately, trauma-informed Indigenous training is not just beneficial but vital, as it fosters resilience, promotes healing, and encourages academic achievement among Indigenous learners, ensuring that they receive an equitable education that honors their unique experiences and heritage. To date over 100 First Nations and non First Nation Educators from Saskatchewan have completed the training, the feedback and training reviews have been 100% positive.

Keywords: FN Trauma Informed Education Practices

Deanna Ledoux, Therapist/Social Worker, Grief & Loss, Chief Poundmaker School

Pili-mawe-ponaso awtōsis, ciw wəlamewakən - Creating a Path for Truth

In 2021, our District had a vision for embedding First Nations history, language, culture, and worldviews into the English Language Arts curriculum, learning experiences, and activities. As a district team, we partnered with Wolastoqiyik stakeholders to begin the journey of creating a four-year First Nations Education High School curriculum and a toolkit of resources to support teachers in putting this vision into action. We knew this work needed to centre the voices of Wolastoqi knowledge carriers and Elders.

Keywords: Indigenous. Engagement. Community. Consultation. Education.

Sarah Francis, Nihkanatpat ciw Skicinowi Kehkiketuwakon - Director - Leader for Indigenous Teachings, Anglophone School District West

Molly Brown, First Nations Education Coordinator, Anglophone School District West

Ocean Sense: Indigenous Knowledge and Ocean Science Connections

Ocean Sense is Ocean Networks Canada's (ONC) novel education program that invites communities, educators, and students to explore the ocean through multiple ways of knowing - ocean science, Indigenous knowledge, and data exploration. The core modules, co-created by ONC and Indigenous community partners, provide curriculum-aligned, experiential learning for middle and high school students. Accessible online for free, Ocean Sense modules are complete resource packages that include slide decks, videos, worksheets, and games. In addition to a brief look at the resources themselves, learn about ONC's journey towards authentic collaboration and respectful sharing of Indigenous science.

Keywords: Indigenous, Science, Resource, Ocean, Collaboration

Lauren Hudson – Ocean Networks Canada, K-12 Education Coordinator

Monika Pelz – Ocean Networks Canada, K-12 Education Coordinator

Maia Hoeberechts – Ocean Networks Canada, Associate Director of Learning and Community Engagement

Jax LaFlamme – Ocean Networks Canada, Indigenous Learning Coordinator

Community-Led Design: The Role of Elders, Families, and Partners in Creating awâsisak kâ-nîmîhtocik - St. Francis Cree Bilingual School

This presentation will explore the community-driven design process behind *awâsisak kâ-nîmîhtocik - St. Francis Cree Bilingual School*, a project over a decade in the making. Rooted in ethical engagement and traditional nêhiyaw (Cree) protocols, the creation of this school has been guided by the voices of Elders, families, students, and community partners.

Every Indigenous design element incorporated into the school is a direct result of extensive consultation with parents, students, and organizations such as the Saskatoon Tribal Council. The Elder's Advocacy Committee has played a central role in ensuring that Cree language, culture, and ways of knowing are authentically reflected in the school's physical and educational environment. This session will highlight how meaningful collaboration, guided by Indigenous knowledge systems, has shaped the design of this unique learning space and created a model for reconciliation-driven education in Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

Attendees will gain insight into the successes and challenges of ensuring Indigenous voices remain at the center of school development, as well as strategies for fostering deep, reciprocal relationships between school divisions and Indigenous communities.

Keywords: Community, Action, Elders Language, Culture Reconciliation

Kelly Cardinal, Superintendent of Education, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools

Sacred Tools: Healing Trauma Through Storytelling

When we consider storytelling as a sacred practice amongst Indigenous people, we can acknowledge the power behind sharing, and receiving, story. The ability to transfer our experiences in any form, be it orally or written, becomes a transfer of knowledge and learning. When we are actively listening and engaged in a story that is being shared, or that we are sharing, we can participate in the framing and re-framing of our personal narratives, which then encourages our reclamation of our personal power. Storytelling, then, can be considered a valuable tool for healing from trauma. For Indigenous people, this method can be regarded as a sacred framework for processing traumatic experiences that are often rooted in family violence, poverty, addiction, and other social issues. Through sharing, there is a connection and re-connection to one's spirit, family, land, culture and community. This fosters a healthy method of processing trauma and recovery. Introducing storytelling as a healthy method of healing to Indigenous youth, will support the varying approaches of primary prevention, early intervention and supportive intervention of the social issues at hand. Storytelling in the classrooms, at staff meetings or retreats, in University/College settings, and even at home, will produce a sacred commitment to continued healing.

Keywords: Storytelling, Healing, Trauma Recovery, Resilience

Desarae Eashappie, Family Violence Prevention Coordinator

Indigenous Educational Leadership – Student Success

Organizational change within an educational system is a complex endeavor that requires commitment, perseverance and a driven passion. The focus of the problem is to examine underlying issues and contributing factors for the low literacy and numeracy rates for First Nation (FN) students. The achievement gaps in First Nation literacy and numeracy have been consistently widening these past five years according to data collected. The data displays that gaps began widening seven years ago and are continuing to the present day. The assessment tools utilized to compile data are from the Fountas and Pinnell (F & P) benchmark system and Basic Concepts of Math (BCM's were developed by a school division in this prairie province).

Keywords: Educational Leadership, Passion, Literacy, Numeracy

Dr. Laverna Stong Eagle, White Bear First Nation Education
