

I Am Not Represented Here: Cultural Frameworks and Indigenous Methodology Primer for Postsecondary Settings

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to share approaches for Indigenous students who are novice researchers at post-secondary settings in finding space and culturally relevant ways of representing their worldview in research through Indigenous methodologies and cultural frameworks. While there may be some similarities between Indigenous methodologies and Western qualitative research approaches, there are obvious cultural differences. This article presents an example of an Indigenous Māori centered approach and examples of Aboriginal approaches using Indigenous research methodology through cultural frameworks that may have relevance to both Indigenous students and non-Indigenous allies who support them on their research journey.

Keywords

Indigenous methodology, Kaupapa Māori research, Māori, Aboriginal cultural frameworks

Introduction

An Aboriginal graduate student recently sat down in the second author's office and stared at the books in the shelves, stating, "I am not represented here, there are thousands and thousands of words, but I cannot find myself here." Tucked in between Western texts on education, psychology, and research, works by Chrisjohn, Duran and Duran, Battiste, Kovach, Tuhiwai-Smith, and Wilson, among other prominent Indigenous scholars and writers, are often not given the lectured, written and lived space required to best support Indigenous students in their research quests.

The authors have been challenged in supporting graduate level Indigenous students to find an approach for their voices or see them reflected in the Western realm of research at the post-secondary setting. Battiste and Henderson (2000) eloquently sums up what we are experiencing with Aboriginal students in research; "For most Aboriginal students, the realization of their invisibility is similar to looking into a still lake and not seeing their image" (p. 76). In proposal meeting after proposal meeting, Indigenous students are looking through layers of qualitative approaches for their image, a clear image not overlapped with more known and accepted approaches from the current dominant Western paradigm. Indigenous approaches are often viewed as secondary, or worse, overlooked and not considered (Hart, 2010), reflecting the marginalization of Indigenous knowledge.

The authors have frequently observed Indigenous graduate students influenced to combine Indigenous approaches with various qualitative approaches without the cultural, philosophical integration required for some sort of theoretical, identity congruence. Students often grapple to apply some form of methodology and theoretical foundation to their theses, attempting to combine Western qualitative approaches that often are not congruent with who they are and what they want to know; the epistemology required for them not found in traditional qualitative approaches. Babbie (2001) noted "if epistemology is the science of knowing then methodology is regarded as a sub-field of epistemology, it may be regarded as the science of finding out" (p. 18). Yet Wilson (2001) clearly states that Indigenous research involves more than "finding out," with one's relationship to the world emphasized. The questions that the authors struggle with involve what culturally relevant methodologies are currently available for Indigenous

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students to use in this relational knowledge-sharing process. Indigenous students are sometimes intrigued by various qualitative approaches, sharing with the authors how the components of theoretical construction found in grounded theory are similar to Elder's teaching, or how the perceived universal life world themes of lived relation (relationality), lived body (corporeality), lived space (spatiality), lived time (temporality), and lived things (materiality) described by van Manen (2014) in interpretive phenomenology reflect a more inclusive Indigenous view. Some aspects of these qualitative approaches fit students' research intent and their current personal location, but other students are passionate about using Indigenous approaches as the primary methodology. This article is intended for Indigenous students and supervisors in graduate programs who cannot find such a fit with many qualitative approaches and want to use a culturally relevant approach. Faculty supporting Indigenous undergraduate students who have an opportunity to develop a research project may find this material adaptable for their purposes. An exploration of Indigenous knowledge, theories and methodology including Kaupapa Māori research from New Zealand provides context for examples of Māori and Aboriginal cultural research frameworks.

Indigenous ways of knowing and being play a key role to identity, self-determination and self-governance, all protective factors in the well-being of Indigenous and Aboriginal communities. The first author is reminded daily as a Māori scholar who has lived and worked for 40 years with the Dakelh Nation within a western-dominant cultural context, that since colonization, Indigenous peoples have been educated in ways that are often totally foreign to them. Indigenous students may become seduced or colonized by hegemonies that reify western forms of culture and thinking if not offered Indigenous alternatives. Students may struggle to preserve their own Indigenous knowledge(s) and cultural identities because they are immersed in Western knowledge predominant in most post-secondary institutions. It is within this context that the authors had the vision for working with student nation-specific cultural frameworks or for those students who have been removed or disconnected from their nations and tribes, knowledge and identity focused frameworks and promoting ways of knowing and relational engagement with the world through Indigenous methodology. A Māori-centred Kaupapa Māori research approach highlighted by Durie (1996), a Māori psychiatrist, scholar and researcher, and the Māori research framework created by the first author served as a model for other Indigenous cultural frameworks that Aboriginal students supported by the authors have successfully used.

Indigenous Knowledge and Theories

Indigenous methodologies come from many years of intergenerational tribal and cultural ways of knowing and being (Kovach, 2010), shifting and changing as cultures change and shift. Acknowledgment of students' genealogical and geographical ties through Indigenous methodologies during their

research journey, may help them to re-affiliate with their identity and ultimately connect to a sense of belonging. The authors advocate for Indigenous approaches knowing that they have the potential to connect students to their identity and generate feelings bridging the past and present. This process is particularly important to Indigenous students from urban contexts who do not currently have a connection to their culture, nation or tribe. Being a tribal or community member is determined by genealogy, acknowledgment, and input with each student being at a different place in the reclamation process of finding identity. Kovach (2010) reminds these students that they all come from a specific tribal background, that they have a right to know who they are and how Indigenous methodology can assist them to reclaim their identity by starting where they are, their epistemic center. Indigenous methodologies facilitate identity journeys no matter where the Indigenous student comes from or how connected to culture they are.

Indigenous methodology is critical to transforming, rereading, and critically analyzing existing research practices, including life story/history, ethnographic, auto-ethnographic, narrative, visual, and other postcolonial methodologies. There are many teachings of old and new Indigenous knowledge used as metaphorical, conceptual, identity and methodological frameworks. Indigenous methodologies include Indigenous pedagogies supported by the needs and traditions of specific communities. This process may include creating new methodologies, such as those used by Indigenous students in identity research quests, as well as modifying existing practices, with the intent of positively benefiting Indigenous communities with the knowledge generated in identity (Denzin et al., 2008).

Researchers such as Linda Tuhiwai-Smith (1999), Marie Battiste (2000) and Marie Battiste and James Youngblood Henderson (2000) have all argued that culture needs to be viewed as a domain of struggle where production and transmission of knowledge is always a contested process. Battiste (2000) affirms that "most Indigenous scholars choose to view every way of life from two different but complementary perspectives: first as a manifestation of human knowledge, heritage, and consciousness, and second as a mode of ecological order" (p. 35). An example of this integration of perspectives is the Indigenous emphasis on the connection between land and language. From a Māori worldview, "Kei roto i te whenua te reo Māori": the language is embedded in the land. It is through these connections that cultural knowledge and cultural identity are maintained. Māori identity emanates from the land, similar to the philosophies of many Aboriginal nations. It is the place where self-awareness, mana and importance originate (Bennett, 1979). Durie (2004) suggests that the fundamental starting point and significant characteristic for most Indigenous peoples is a strong sense of unity with the environment. Indigenous people share a common belief that the land and/or environment play a major role regarding knowledge. Rangihau (1992) addresses the spiritual and emotional connection of the people to the land stating that is central to their ways of being in the world. Cohen (2001) speaking from an Okanagan place of knowing, aligns with this sense of unity, describing how

Indigenous knowledge flows from the connection between the ecology, the land, the animals, and the world, reflecting a tetrahedral relationship described by Kawagley (1995) where the force flows all ways between the human, spiritual and natural worlds that support and are supported by the worldviews of Indigenous people, culture, knowing and living.

Cajete (1994) describes the accumulated, environmental knowledge within Indigenous groups around the world as a body of ancient thought, experience, and action. Exploring the fundamentals of Aboriginal knowledge, Ermine (1995), a Cree philosopher, imparts, "those who seek to understand the reality of existence and harmony with the environment by turning inward have a different, incorporeal knowledge paradigm that might be termed Aboriginal epistemology" (p. 28). Ermine also discusses the interrelationships within the spiritual and physical (or natural) spaces but extends this further in support of inward learning or self-actualization. Battiste and Henderson (2000) refer to the word "unity" when describing relationships that create, and are simultaneously infused, by energy. Elaborating further on the power of this energy, Kawagley (1995) states,

the creative force, as manifested in nature, is more profound and powerful than anything the human being can do, because in it is the very essence of all things. Yet within this profound and powerful force are efficiency, economy, and purpose, the expression of which is dependent on the human being. (p. 11)

Parallel Paradigm Shifts: Qualitative and Indigenous

Qualitative research has evolved from multiple paradigms, a variety of connected assumptions of the social world woven into conceptual frameworks for researching the world (Filstead, 1979). In working with the parallel paradigms found in Indigenous research, four main philosophical assumptions are considered: ontology as a way of being through immersion in a reality; epistemology as a way of thinking and knowledge creation; methodology as using a way of thinking to gain knowledge of a reality; and axiology as the set of values and ethics that guide the process (Wilson, 2001). Krauss (2005) succinctly explains ontology as the philosophy of reality, epistemology articulating how people know reality and methodology as the process used to attain knowledge of reality. These philosophical anchors hold down the systemic quest for knowledge (Ponterotto, 2005). Like many Indigenous students, the first author is a member of an Indigenous community and the Western world, therefore understanding of these terms has been affected by reality, knowledge, and ethical protocols from two worlds: once again translating Western terms to Indigenous conceptualizations. Christopher (1996) presents these assumptions in describing culture as a conceptual scheme, residing in cognition rather than behaviors, customs, and actions, "more or less connected, more or less normative descriptions of how humans work, what our minds are like, what are possible modes of life, and how one commits to them" (p. 19).

Battiste and Henderson (2000) state that the work should be on understanding rather than defining Indigenous knowledge as there is no methodology to use in attempts at defining such knowledge. A body of Indigenous theory and knowledge is growing using Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, methods and axiologies (Porsanger, 2004). In order to organize and describe the possibilities for nation-specific Indigenous approaches and cultural frameworks, the four philosophical assumptions of ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology are used as guides in presenting examples of Indigenous ways of knowing in research.

Possible Modes of Life: Ontology Translated

Ontology explores the nature and reality regarding human knowledge; the study of what exists and the nature of what exists, our existence. Ontology is also defined as a description of the concepts and relationships that can exist for an agent or a community of agents (Gruber, 1995) or simply as an inventory of all the things that exist in the world (Davidson & Tolich, 1999). Allison and Heath (2002) include Kant's definition of ontology as "that science (as part of metaphysics) which consists in a system of all concepts of the understanding, and principles, but only so far as they refer to objects that can be given to the senses, and thus confirmed by experience" (p. 354).

An example of Indigenous understanding would be of the laws of nature and language considered integral components of Tūhoe identity which is centered on their language and culture. In trying at determining which "laws of nature" exist and what they consist of, ontology is put into practice; we seek to know what exists and why. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) note that ontology raises basic questions about the nature of reality and the nature of human beings in the world, questions that cultural immersion defines.

Defining tikanga Māori (Māori ontology). Māori ontology seeks to make people aware of culturally sensitive information for Māori (Deng et al., 2007). Ontology refers to the underlying principles of sustaining tribal identity which are listed as "tikanga" (principles), "kawa" (protocols), "Whanaungatanga" (family practice), "whakapapa" (genealogy), "te taiāo" (environment), "ngā kōrero pūrākau" (mythology), and "te reo ā iwi" (tribal language). Deng et al. (2007) state that "Māori ontology can be claimed to be a present and living reality of particular ancestors and gods, an unfolding revelation of future order generated within that reality" (p. 328). Māori ontology is created by acknowledging the interconnectedness of both the physical world and the spiritual world: all knowledge(s) created through a myriad of myths, beliefs, genealogy, and experiences which in turn have been fundamental to the establishment of Māori principles.

Knowing: Defining Epistemology

Theory gives us the tools of exploring knowledge; epistemology investigates the origin, nature, and limits of human

knowledge; assumptions on the study of knowledge, how it is acquired, and the relationship between knowledge holders (participants) and knowledge interpreters (researchers) (Ponterotto, 2005). Royal (2004) defines epistemological as a term to denote a type or view of knowledge and its place in our experience of the world. Expounding further on the epistemological approach, Royal states:

an epistemological approach to Mātauranga Māori requires a desire to explore the heart of human experience out of which knowledge and its applications flow. It is not beholden to any one field of Mātauranga Māori, although it requires the testimony of the tohunga-experts of the various fields for evidence, guidance, and mana. (Royal, 2004, p. 15)

The first author believes that some confusion arises from attempts at trying to understand Mātauranga Māori from a Western perspective. If this article were written in Māori, the preceding or following sentences would determine the context in which the words Mātauranga Māori are being used, an example of the pivotal importance of language in Indigenous approaches.

In terms of Aboriginal epistemology, Battiste and Henderon (2000) states that Aboriginal knowledge consists of understanding of ecological change processes, always in flux, ever changing:

Concepts about “what is” define human awareness of the changes but add little to the actual processes of change. To see things as permanent is to be confused about everything: an alternative to that understanding is the need to create temporary harmonies through alliances and relationships among all forms and forces. This web of interdependence is a never-ending source of wonder to the Aboriginal mind and to the forces that contribute to the harmony. (p. 265)

Aboriginal writers note how knowledge gained in transmission from Elders and from the land is often described as knowledge acquired through revelation, sometimes referred to as spiritual knowledge (Lavellee, 2009). The relational nature of Indigenous epistemology of the interconnectedness of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspect of life does not fit into the narrow confines of Western compartmentalization of health (Lavellee, 2009). Ermine (1995) explains that Aboriginal epistemology is grounded in the self, the spirit and the unknown and is explored through introspection and self-actualization. He suggests that Aboriginal holy people and philosophers rely on processes of self-actualization to find the wholeness that extends both inward and outward.

Finding Out Through Relationship: Methodology

Methodology in the qualitative paradigm is the blending of the philosophical assumptions from ontology, epistemology and axiology that suggest the process and procedures for each research endeavor in the search for understanding, the results of owning one’s perspective (Elliot et al., 1999; Ponterotto,

2005). Ermine (1995) examines Indigenous identity by ways of acquiring knowledge, suggesting that Aboriginal people tend to go inward in their search for meaning and knowledge, further stating that “their (Indigenous people) fundamental insight is that all existence [is] connected and that the whole enmeshed the being in its inclusiveness” (p. 113). Kovach’s (2010) implications for research from a tribal methodology include: culturally centered—which is in and of itself is community based; acceptance of a wider knowledge base that includes many dimensions; an emphasis on the relational component; decolonizing purpose; use of Indigenous methods (i.e., circles, storytelling etc.); ethical space for this methodology created in the university culture; and the need for more communication among Aboriginal researchers.

Kaupapa Māori research: Māori-centered approach. Durie (1997) contends that worldwide efforts by Indigenous peoples toward self-determination have resulted in debates about intellectual ownership, community control, participation, and partnership in research. As Māori have struggled to assert their rights to determine their own future in their own ways, other Indigenous nations have also struggled with the same issues. Durie (1997) noted that Māori health research differed from medical research and other health research as it was primarily concerned with the health of Māori people and in that respect took “full cognizance of Māori culture, Māori knowledge and contemporary Māori realities” (p. 79), placing Māori people and the Māori experience at the center of the research activity.

Cunningham (2000) identifies the term “Māori-centered” as one which further develops into taxonomy of Māori research based primarily on the degree of Māori involvement and control in a specific research project. Cunningham points out that Māori research has several defining characteristics: namely, that Māori are more likely to be involved at all levels of the research (for example, as participants, researchers, and analysts); that Māori data will be collected; that Māori analysis is applied; and, as a result that Māori knowledge is produced. The goal of such an approach is to further the Māori position in the world. Māori-centered approach to research can be viewed as the “practice” of research—the physical manifestations of the research. While a Kaupapa Māori research approach shares commonalities with a Māori-centered research approach, distinctions do exist. Kaupapa Māori expands on Māori-centered ideas and goes beyond the focus of a purely Māori-centered approach to research; essentially, a Kaupapa Māori approach to research is the theory behind the research.

Good and worthy values: Axiology. For Indigenous approaches, the center of research is personal and community ethics and values. Each culture has its own moral visions, the cultural values and assumptions that shape one’s experience of life, defining what is good and worthy (Christopher, 1996). These cultural values are then reflected in protocols required for knowledge engagement in Indigenous communities. Wilson (2001) describes Indigenous research as relational accountability, with the researcher answering to all relations; axiology being integral

to the methodology as knowledge is gained for the researcher to fulfill her or his part of the research relationship.

In approaching research using a Kaupapa Māori model, researchers favor an initial Hui (traditional meeting) forum to discuss and negotiate the terms of a place for research and much as possible, to seek full involvement of a group or community. The goal of this is to ensure that all participants' aspirations are reflected in the research. The Kaupapa approach also encourages face-to-face or one-on-one interviews, as described by Smith (1999). Researchers also need to ask themselves if they are really the most suitable person for the study. Until research capability is available within each tribe, it is incumbent on the Kaupapa Māori researcher to employ the least intrusive approaches, and to apply methods that are empowering and affirming for those who participate in sharing stories of a similar nature. Only then can a Kaupapa approach be successful.

Indigenous Frameworks

Smith (2005) suggests that Indigenous theorizing is contextual, connected to a specific cultural location and site, tested in practice, organically connected, and made with the people not just in the academy. This suggests that the person proposing the claim to "theory" possess some cultural skills, able to connect with the epistemological foundations of the knowledge, language and culture related to the people to whom the theory is applicable. Indigenous theorizing is transformative and portable rather than universal, has the flexibility to critique and renew itself, and is engaging of other theory, able to justify its existence. Indigenous theorizing as able to critically engage new and traditional formations of colonization—colonization from external forces and internal colonization already working within and through ourselves, often found in educational settings.

To benefit Indigenous communities, Smith (2000) notes five theoretical components that enhance transformative theories. One is a capacity to make "space" for itself to be sustained in a context of unequal power relationships with the colonizer and the critique that will inevitably be developed as such Indigenous theorizing often contradicts and challenges the existing and accepted ways of knowing, doing, and understanding in the academy. Other components include a capacity to sustain the validity and legitimacy of the theory in the face of challenge both from the colonizing imperatives and from internal (Indigenous) hegemonic forces and a capacity to be "owned" and to "make sense" to the Indigenous communities themselves. Other enhancing components include the capacity to have the potential to positively make a difference—to move Indigenous people to a better existence; and a capacity to be continuously reviewed and revised by those for whom the theory is intended to serve. These five components are critical to creating Indigenous space particularly within the academy.

The power of allowing a cultural perspective in transformative theories to be expressed has many nuances. First, it helps researchers to move beyond "over generalization" and notions

of "essentialism" with respect to speaking beyond specific contexts. There are parallels from this approach and in the methods used that might be useful for informing other specific cultural studies. The embedded arguments of this evaluation are universal and seek to identify the following (1) How is colonization promulgated? (2) How do communities utilize their cultural practices, values, and knowledge to resist? (3) How might communities who have been the victims of language, knowledge and cultural loss develop strategies that counteract these situations and achieve mental and physical well-being? (Smith, 1997). It is within this context that the scholarly works of Indigenous students are encouraged.

Kovach (2010) describes how Indigenous researchers have the task of applying conceptual frameworks that demonstrate the theoretical and practical underpinnings of their research, and, if successful, these frameworks illustrate "the thinking" behind "the doing." She suggests that an epistemic center is the key—creating an ethical imperative where methodology is emergent in a process that is intertwined and web-like, not linear. The cultural frameworks are conceptual work, representing student's ontology within their Indigenous methodology, presenting the underlying principles of tribal identity, guiding the research journey. Discussed earlier, methodology integrates ontology, epistemology and axiology leading to the process and protocols for each researcher in the search for understanding. In Indigenous methodology, this conceptual map or framework pulls everything together.

Cultural frameworks may serve as self-contained Indigenous methodology approaches with the Indigenous knowledge from the nation guiding Indigenous methods of gathering the data and in determining meaning and relevance in the analysis. The frameworks may also serve as metaphors guiding the integration of qualitative approaches such as grounded theory or narrative inquiry data collection and analysis. The important point for academia is that Indigenous methodology of cultural frameworks stands alone and does not need to be integrated with Western approaches in order to be considered rigorous, respected and relevant research approaches.

The first author has developed many examples of what an Indigenous cultural framework might look like, working closely with her students in framing and re-framing cultural frameworks. She envisions cultural knowledge, experience and skills in metaphorical frameworks including people, animals, birds, fish, places and other cultural objects and knowledge as components. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students seek to share their stories when they are working on their projects or theses and will often face dilemmas in finding a methodology or framework that fits for them. One of the many methods used with students at this point in their research journey is dialogue or storytelling. Students are encouraged to share stories about themselves, genealogy or geographical location, customs, traditions, stories, songs, dances, prayers, incantations, regalia, or something of significance. A cultural framework based on key components from each story can then be developed allowing the student an opportunity to reflect upon the cultural practices, revise and create where needed, and reclaim knowledge and

existence as an individual member of a collective. For example, the description of the fishnet framework speaks to the protocols of the Witsuwit'en community, guided by their Feast house principles such as (respect, relationships, responsibility, and reciprocity), their genealogical and geographical kinship ties (identity), environment (interconnectedness to mother earth, storytelling (the existence of the salmon), and the Witsuwit'en language (the depth of knowledge is imbedded in the language). The methodology allows students to position their approach of how they see their cultural ways of knowing and being in frameworks.

The following frameworks, one Māori, one Métis and three from northwest and northern Aboriginal Nations help illustrate the process of working with Indigenous methodologies.

Māori Framework: The Piupiu (Grass-Skirt)

A grass skirt, also known as a (piupiu) is commonly used among the Māori people of New Zealand. The grass skirt is made from phormium tenax (harakeke) also known as the flax plant. The flax plant is a resource used in traditional practices such as medicinal, floor mats, baskets, war, performing arts and other multiple purposes. It comes in various patterns and designs. Within the grass skirt, Fraser (2009, 2012) frames her tribal identity by weaving knowledge and the patterns which these knowledges create, representing the foundations of Māori identity. The first stage, the foundation of the grass skirt began with the individual decision-making: to observe, participate, inquire, experiment, implement, and develop. The second stage used the collective decision-making which is built upon family (whānau), place of gathering (marae), sub-tribal group (hapu), tribe (iwi), canoe (waka), and higher learning (wananga). Such a framework is essential for identifying processes that are principally based and internally consistent. The grass skirt as a framework shows how decision making is done on an individual as well as a collective level. On an individual level, it is determined by the individual's level of observation, participation, inquiry, experimentation, implementation, and development. On the collective level, decisions are not validated or legitimized until they are discussed or presented through family, gathering place, and sub-tribal, tribal, and educational forums.

Aboriginal Framework: Canoe and Paddles

While writing her thesis focused on culturally relevant mental health support for Aboriginal youth, Carlick (2009) of Southern Tutchone, Tlingit, Kaska and Tahltan descent wondered how she would incorporate data in a way that would honor her First Nations traditions, making space for her nations' knowledges. She was not sure what methodological approach was a fit for her, but she had extensive experience working with the youth. Every time she returned to her community, the youth and mentors would either be hunting, fishing, or carving in cultural camps. As she started to share her summer stories while visiting her communities, she talked about her thesis which included

the youth and Elders. Her conceptual framework was based on a canoe built by the youth and guided by the Elders. The stories just unraveled in such a natural setting; it was exciting and thought-provoking, stimulating the student and first author to start thinking about what her framework would look like. The student brought photographs and pictures; from there began a conversation exploring her identity, history, and community through youth engagement and Elder involvement.

With all this information, the student and first author began to develop her framework that took the form of a dugout canoe, representing ancestral knowledge that was carved on each side of the canoe. Carlick (2009) described that she, "knew it was helpful to integrate the canoe as a conceptual framework because it reflects the First Nations Youth in the Yukon pulling together, using their traditions with respect for my ancestors and cultural ways of life, and it reflects the strength of my interviewees responses which all together pull our way of life through the ripples colonization and residential schools have caused" (p. 28).

Once the canoe was conceived in its entirety, Carlick (2009) describes how six painted and carved paddles were included, carefully constructed with traditional stories, each paddle representing three youth and three Elders who were participants in the study. In this framework, the youth would learn from the Elders teaching them how to work together, how to protect their identity and how to maintain traditional knowledge and use that knowledge in creating culturally relevant mental health support. This vision created space for the youth to succeed in education, carrying Elders' knowledge and wisdom, and to also preserve cultural identity, traditions, and language. It is through this transformation that the community may achieve self-determination for the people, by the people, and with the people. The youth collaborated with the Elders, but ultimately, the Elders are the storytellers of how things used to be in a time prior to colonization. The visual metaphor used was to row in unison, pulling together to reach the same destination, current and past knowledge building the canoe and representing a continuation of Carlick's enhancement of her life journey

Aboriginal Framework: Button Blanket

King (2011) from the Tsimshian nation, focused her research on speaking with First Nations women about identity legislation, rights and women's ways of knowing identity, integrating Indigenous methodologies with phenomenology. She shares similar tribal philosophies as the first author in terms of location and naming with her tribal community located by the Skeena River in British Columbia, Canada. Her people are also known as "The people of the mist" much like the first author's tribal link and location, as a member of "The children of the mist." King describes the object that holds the most meaning in her life as her button blanket. King took her cultural methodology to another level by using her button blanket as a framework, each button made from abalone shell. From conversations about her nation, she described the abalone, a major food source, which grows alongside of the rocks in the

ocean. The abalone shell is rough and sharp, but when opened, the most beautiful colors are seen within. Used as a metaphor, the outside could be seen to represent the challenges that many Indigenous people have endured through colonial discourses, and the beauty within the shell may speak to language revitalization, cultural identity, resilience, resistance, and self-determination. Each abalone button was carefully placed to represent Tsimshian cultural ways of knowing and being.

To enhance her use of the button blanket as a framework for cultural representation, King (2011) used the raven to represent the stories told to her by Elders and community members. She comes from the Raven clan and the story with most meaning to her framework is the story of raven who stole the sun (a trickster). King (2011) describes the components of the cultural framework developed for her research:

1. The Heart of the Raven-Co-researchers: Without the co-researchers this work would not exist and would not have taken the life that it did. Their stories and experience of the Indian Act are essential to the meaning and purpose of this research.
2. The Sun in Raven's mouth-Knowledge from story: The sun represents the experiential component of the co-researcher's stories of status transmission. It is reflective of the learning and sharing that took place in the research and represents the eventual releasing of this knowledge as the sun was released by Raven.
3. The Left wing of Raven-Indigenous Methods of Research: This wing represents the Indigenous components I took into consideration when designing the research. Each feather of the wing symbolizes important things to consider when doing research with Indigenous peoples: a) Respect, b) Reciprocity, c) Relevance, and d) Responsibility (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991).
4. The Right wing of Raven-Phenomenology: This wing represents the four pieces I view as integral to the success of phenomenology in this research: a) Researcher experience, b) Co-researcher experience, c) Essence, and d) Meaning. These components reflect the 11 values and goals in this research while making space for the indigenizing of a methodology.
5. Raven's Eye-Researcher Perspective: The eye exhibits the researcher perspective in my work. The importance of this component lays in the fact that not only am I the researcher in this work, but I am also an active participant (p. 11).

There are many trickster or deity stories shared among Indigenous peoples with similar philosophies and metaphors. These stories are often lessons about historical events, who was involved, and why the event occurred and/or how Indigenous people and nations came into being. The stories are often represented genealogically and geographically to kinship ties, oral traditions, legend typology, cultural practices and traditions, historical symbols, and tribal landmarks. King's (2011)

integration of both deity story and specific cultural representation of the button blanket emphasized her location and the research findings in a culturally relevant methodology fit.

Aboriginal Framework: The Fishnet

This cultural framework stems from the stories of a Witsuwit'en student who is also a well-respected Elder and was exploring identity in her research. Fishing plays a significant role for this Elder from the many stories learned through peripheral learning with her family and community members. Each year, community members fish, can and dry salmon for Elders who are unable to obtain their traditional food. The individually crafted rectangular fish net was used in the rivers and lakes with large enough holes in which to catch the salmon and allow for the smaller species to swim through to the upstream spawning areas (personal communication with Gloria George, 2011). The reinforced coil at the top and on one side, which was attached to a large pole hoisted from the banks over the water, strengthened not only the fish net to avoid overnight collapse, but metaphorically, shows how ancestors and current generations overcome adversities and, in the process, adjust and improve upon the circumstances (personal communication with Gloria George, 2011). In this conceptual framework, the fish net represents the students' learning about the ancestral threads—a combination of colonial and neo-colonial, and the impact on her Aboriginal ancestors. She also uses the fish net to conceptualize the strengths and responsibilities on both her matrilineal and patrilineal sides in her identity search.

Aboriginal Framework: The Métis Sash

In working with her three foster Métis children, the first author became familiar with the Métis Sash. A Métis Sash comes in various styles and is worn by men around the waist or worn over the shoulder by the women. The Sash is made of wool interwoven with the colors red, green, yellow, blue, and white. One day while attending a conference, two Métis Elders had approached the author and greeted her with three Métis Sashes which they had presented from the same community as the children's biological grandfather. Although they did not have a story to tell the author, the Elder said, "I am sure you will know how to find the children's history embedded in their Sashes." Years later, the first author was able to locate the biological family and was able to capture the children's lost stories and identity.

The colors in these Sashes represented for the children their lives of cultural identity, despite having grown-up in the system as foster children. The red represented their blood connection to their genealogical kinship ties, the green is their geographical connection to mother earth and all things that have spirit, yellow represents the sun rising from the east, and to give thanks from all corners of the world, the blue represents sky father and the ocean, lakes, and rivers below the sky that hold the spiritual tears that help all people, animals, birds, insects, and mammals to survive. The strands are also related to the

concepts of the medicine wheel including mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual realms.

Métis people will determine why the Sash is significant to them and how this symbol of identity relates to their research. The Métis Sash was used as a framework in the work of Robinson (2007) a Métis scholar from British Columbia, in her research on implementing an Aboriginal Choice School, a topic of great importance to Indigenous communities. Using her Métis Sash as a framework, Robinson assigned red to symbolize the history of the Metis and Aboriginal people and black to symbolize the “dark” period of Metis and Aboriginal history. She presented red and black in her literature review of the history of Aboriginal Education in Canada due to the black period of Residential Schools. She used red, with the addition of blue and white (the symbol of the Metis people) to describe the strength of Aboriginal ways of knowing. Green within the Metis Sash signifies growth and prosperity and was relevant for the question she asked participants regarding the visioning of how choice schools are changing the lives of Aboriginal people and their communities.

Robinson (2007) explains: “The Metis Sash remains a significant component of Metis culture and it is part of not only my history, but also my children’s history and my family’s history. I feel the colors of the Sash are a powerful way to weave an Aboriginal philosophy into something of significance in this writing and that the voices of my interviewees can be blended into colors that represent the knowledge that flows through their words” (p. 22) This framework allowed her to integrate the key findings and concepts from her research, firmly anchored in her culture.

Summary

All aspects of Indigenous methodology are relational. Reconciliation is a process of relationship healing, and acknowledgment of the need for action on addressing the on-going legacies of colonialism. Kovach (2017) reminds that all of us in academic culture are shaping academic culture; choice of methodology is often a political act. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) emphasizes that Indigenous research is very real, not an abstraction, developing and evolving with Indigenous people. In academia, understanding what knowledge is privileged is an on-going process. A cultural positioning allows a holistic premise to emerge that is open to a broader range of knowledges—sacred knowledge, the dream world, the knowledge of the ancestors (Kovach, 2010) that may bring meaning for Indigenous students.

As academics, we feel the responsibility to champion culturally relevant and culturally safe environments for our Indigenous students. The use of nation/community-specific frameworks honors the multiple Indigenous knowledge systems, a view of many epistemologies. The relational core of Indigenous research holds promise and positivity for Indigenous researchers, including students working in post-secondary settings. Research included as examples of Indigenous

frameworks all meet Smith’s (2000) theoretical component for enhancement of transformative theories: the potential capacity to positively make a difference and move Indigenous people to a better existence. Frameworks from Māori, Southern Tutchone, Tsimshian, Wet’suwit’en, and Métis researchers are an inspiring beginning to illustrate the process of applied Indigenous methodology.

Glossary

Aboriginal: The term Aboriginal used in Canada refers to the following people, First Nations, Inuit, and Metis. Each group is unique in their language, culture, traditions, and protocols. The terms Aboriginal and Indigenous are often used interchangeably depending on the context.

Dakelh Nation: The Dakelh or Carrier are the Indigenous people of a large portion of the Central Interior of British Columbia. There are several communities represented based on their location, language (dialect), protocols, traditional practice, and history

Hapū: Sub-tribal group in Aotearoa (New Zealand)

Hui: Māori traditional meeting

Indigenous: In this context, Indigenous relates to people, place, and land as the occupants of their continent. As noted, the term is used interchangeably. For example, Aotearoa, New Zealand will often refer to “Tangata Whenua” or People of the Land.

Iwi: The main tribe of the sub-tribes

Kaska: Indigenous people who live in southern Yukon and northern British Columbia.

Kawa: Tribal protocols

Kaupapa Maori: Theme/Topic (Māori Philosophy)

Mana: Prestige

Māori: The Indigenous people of Aotearoa, New Zealand

Māori Centered: Where the Māori thinking, doing, and practices occur, by the people, for the people and with the people.

Marae: Sacred Gathering Place

Mātauranga: Knowledge

Métis: The Métis people are the descendants of mixed ancestry (Indigenous and European). Métis are unique within their nations in language (Michif, a combination of Cree and French), cultural traditional practices, and location.

Pūrākau: Narratives/Storytelling/Myths.

Piupiu: Māori traditional grass skirt made from flax plants and known as phormium tenax. The plant grows abundantly in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Tahltan: Indigenous people located in northern British Columbia.

Te Taiao: The environment.

Tikanga: Māori custom.

Tlingit: Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest, Coast of North America. (Tlingit, people of the tides).

Tsimshian: Indigenous people of the Pacific Northwest Coast, British Columbia.

Tutchone: Indigenous people located in southern Yukon, Canada.

Waka: Canoe.

Wananga: Educational Institute.

Witsuwit’en: A First Nations territory located in northwest British Columbia.

Whenua: Land.

Whakapapa: Genealogy.

Whānau: Family.

Whanaungatanga: Kinship, relationship.

Authors' Note

The terms Aboriginal and Indigenous will be used interchangeably according to content used.

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