

Transcript for Decolonizing Process: Lessons Learned
BCcampus webinar held on February 2, 2022
Facilitators: Teri Derksen, Stephen Javorski, Manjeet Uppal
Moderator: Leva Lee

LEVA:

My name is Leva Lee with BCcampus. I'm joining you today from where I live, work, and play on Coast Salish lands, specifically the traditional territory of the əṅqəmiṅəṅ and Skwxwú7mesh speaking peoples. This workshop today is part of the ongoing work at BCcampus to support learning and action towards decolonization, reconciliation, and indigenization with the goal of advocating for systemic changes in the post-secondary environment of BC. I'd like to introduce you to our three panelists and faculty from Vancouver Island University's Child and Youth Care program. They will share with you the lessons learned from their journey last fall to explore how to decolonize process and practices in their program. We have with us today, Teri Derksen; Professor, Stephen Javorski; professor, and Manjeet Uppal; Professor and CYC program chair. So welcome to you all and thank you very much for joining us. I'm going to hand it over to you.

PROF. MANJEET:

Great. And if we could begin by respectfully acknowledging the traditional and unceded territories of Snuneymuxw First Nation, the Tla'amin First Nation, and Cowichan Tribes on whose traditional territories Vancouver Island University is located. I'd also encourage any guests that wish to post the traditional territory that they are zooming in from into our chat this morning. Could we move to next slide? Great. And then from there, the next one please. OK, and thank you Leva for the introductions. I'm Manjeet Uppal, program chair. Teri, Stephen, did you wish to introduce yourselves as well?

PROF. TERI:

Yes, thanks, Manjeet. Good morning, everybody. Thank you so much, everybody, for joining us today. My name is Teri Derksen. And I'm of mixed European and Coast Salish ancestry; on my father's side Acadian from Cape Breton; on my mother's side Dutch Scottish and with W̱SÁNEĆ ancestry. I grew up on the unceded land of the W̱SÁNEĆ people, and I'm very grateful to be joining you today from the unceded land of the Snuneymuxw people. So welcome, everybody.

PROF. STEPHEN:

Good morning. My name's Stephen Javorski. I'm currently joining you from the traditional unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nations. And I'm of European and British descent, sort of British and Irish on my mom's side and polish on my father's side. I grew up in the traditional ends of the Anishinaabe, and Mississauga First Nations, and I'm happy to be here with all of you today.

PROF. MANJEET:

Manjeet Uppal, I was born in Punjab in India, I was a little pudgy baby about six months old when my parents came to Victoria, and some of my relatives say, and I still look the same; old and pudgy, right; but we won't get into that. If we can move to the next slide. I just want to start off with recognition and intentions. We recognize that we don't identify as indigenous. We do not have people on our team who identify as indigenous, so we're not experts by any means. Our intent is to

share the lessons that we've learned as we embarked on a process to strengthen our commitment to reconciliation. And through that process, we worked with Kathi Camilleri, an indigenous facilitator, who we've been working with for almost a decade. She draws on her indigenous knowledge and ways of being in the work she does, OK. I believe next slide, please.

PROF. TERI:

There we go. OK. So before we begin, I wanted to just provide some context for everybody. The Child and Youth Care program offers at Vancouver Island University offers both a degree and a diploma and... Leva I just see your mic is, Manjeet, maybe your mic is on. I'm getting some feedback. Thank you. Yes, thank you. So we have both a diploma and a degree credential within our program. And we prepare students to work with children, youth, families, and communities facing complex challenges. We have both indigenous and non-Indigenous students in our program. And many of our grads, some of our grads, both indigenous and non-Indigenous, do go on and end up working with indigenous communities. So alongside our colleagues across the province; and I see some of them are here today in the audience, which is so wonderful to see. You know, we are a part of a larger effort across the province with regards to Child Youth Care Programs, really looking at and interrogating, you know, our curriculum, certainly what we're teaching, how we're teaching, and certainly, Child and Youth Care Practice as well, because we're also very much concerned with the reality that our students are; we're preparing our students really to move into practice.

And often our graduates end up working within systems that are implicated in ongoing colonialism. So we are very, very committed to working to ensure that our indigenous students are represented in the program, that they feel that their realities are reflected, and that for our non-Indigenous students, that they're leaving the program able to work with indigenous communities in culturally responsive ways. So we do have some history in this area, in our program and what we're really trying to do is build on that history, kind of bolster our efforts; and I would say, overall, really working to enhance social justice within our programs. So that's some of the contexts. So we can go to the next slide. Thank you. So we thought it would be helpful to share with you some of our current efforts. And certainly, this is an ongoing process. This is a process that doesn't end. Like I said, we're building on some of our current efforts is sort of where we're at now as a program. And so some of the things that we're currently doing is we're aiming to increase the voices of indigenous scholars and artists into classrooms, we're looking at ways that we can develop more assignments with an indigenous focus.

As I mentioned earlier, really strengthening our curriculum in relation to social justice and anti-racism. And we're doing this across all of our classes. And one of the things that we've done fairly recently is created a number of modules that students in practicum are completing with a real focus on social justice and anti-racism that is directly linked to practice. We are working more purposefully and intentionally around integrating trauma-informed principles into our teaching. In addition, for a number of years now, we've been offering the village experiential workshop to our third-year students in one of Manjeet's classes. And this is another opportunity offered through Kathi Camilleri. So we've been, as Manjeet mentioned, we've been working with Kathy for a long time. And so this experiential exercise for third-year students in the village, it's been a really important part of the work that we've been doing. More recently, but probably for the last couple of years, we've been offering the Kairos blanket exercise to our first-year students.

And this, again, is a very experiential exercise. And I actually just did it yesterday afternoon with my first years and it's the first time that I've done the online version. And I have to say they've really done an incredible job. It's quite a creative way that they've shifted that Kairos experience into an online format. So we do offer those to, like I say, to first and third-year students in our program. We

also offer a contact and colonization course and we have elders in our classes. And we do have an elders teachings course. So Manjeet, I don't know if you wanted to talk a little bit more about the elder's teachings in particular.

PROF. MANJEET:

Sure. The elders teaching course is a very unique course it's been offered since 1993. And we invite elders into the classroom to share their their wisdom and knowledge. And it's often connected to classes that we have going. So for instance, if students are working through Child Development class, we'll have elders sort of come in and share their knowledge about child development. Like i said, it has been running since 1993. And we've probably had three to four hundred community elders come into the classroom and share information, or we visited them out in the community. And it's really key in developing relationships with community and elders. So like I said, a very neat course. And I think next slide, we can probably move to her.

PROF. STEPHEN:

All right, thanks. So I just wanted to talk a little bit about; I guess what we as a team thought we needed to continue to move forward. Again, I think we have... all the things that Teri had just discussed, we've been putting a lot of effort into over the years, and I think we're feeling a little bit stuck, or unsure as to what to do next. And we thought what we really needed was an opportunity for the whole team to come together and dedicate time to have meaningful dialogue, to sort of co-create and articulate a decolonial approach to practice for a program moving forward in addition to our efforts over the last decade or so. We can go to the next slide. Apologies if I'm a little bit spacey, today, I'm getting over COVID. So I might be a little bit scattered. But so our purpose, this fall was that we wanted to stay consistent with indigenous principles of relationality, experiential learning, and values and set aside time to come together as a team to really think deeply and have a dialogue around what a decolonial approach or practice is, and what shared values we would like to hold as we move forward in our work.

And as part of this, we decided to work with Kathi Camilleri again, to set up a facilitated workshop to dig deeper into this. And I will turn it back over to Manjeet.

PROF. MANJEET:

Great. So next slide, please. By the way, you do great, Stephen. So the how. You know, like Steve was mentioned, we felt, you know, the institution indigenizing and we felt a little stuck as to as your next steps and how we sort of move forward, particularly with everything happening out there, COVID, and so on. So, we received support from BCcampus for this project and very much appreciated. We contracted with Kathi Camilleri to come in, do a Paddling Together Visioning Day. And we've included the link here. And Kathi sent us a number of questions that we sort of reviewed, and everyone returned to her that really helped clarify some of our values, visions, and goals. And then she brought us together in a very focused discussion, which really helped us sort of identify where we wanted to go and potential blocks and how we will pass those. So I found it to be a really, really useful session. And it's led to a sort of reinvigoration in our faculty as far as moving ahead on some of the things we're talking about today.

So yeah. So can we move to next slide, please. Thank you. So some of the details, like I mentioned, it was a one-day facilitated workshop. We sort of had to put everything else on hold, which I think was good because in this pandemic time, we're just racing with all sorts of things, but it forced us to sit and sort of work together and sort of turn off our cells and our emails and everything else that goes on. And I found that was very useful. Kathi sort of reflected upon what we were sharing and did a final report. Also, she had a graphic recording of what we'd shared in visual form, and here's just a

portion of it that you can see on the screen. What we did as a faculty after we reviewed all the information Kathi sent to us around the visual recording and the report is we met and discussed and debriefed that experience. And we're now meeting monthly to sort of move things along as far as where we want to go as a faculty for decolonization. And that's a difficult word in that we're in an educational system that is colonial in nature, but what we can do within that system to sort of move things along and meet the commitments we've made under the TRTC report.

So yeah. And I think from there, next slide, and Teri is gonna pick it up from there.

PROF. TERI:

Thank you, Manjeet. Yeah. So when we were working on this workshop, and I was meeting with Lava about, you know, what might be of interest? And, you know, Leva asked this question, and I thought it was such a valuable question. And I took this question back to the faculty team. And the question was, you know, what were the elements of this process that really facilitated our work? What were those nuanced sort of pieces of what we did, that really seemed to, help move us along? And one of the things that, you know, Manjeet has already referred to; but this idea of the time, and dedicating time, I mean, everybody is, you know, also busy and so I think we all really took this collective and personal commitment, really, to heart. And we did dedicate time to prepare for our work with Kathi, to prepare for the day that we spent with Kathi. And as Manjeet mentioned, a real commitment, I think, as a result of this process, too, to really continue to connect and work together, collectively, around our efforts.

So that notion of dedicated time, I think, really became something that was important for us. And we also really work to create space for genuine dialogue. And I would say, sort of what we did here was, we really brought ourselves to the table in a very humble, genuine, truth-telling way. And so that we could be honest about where we were at within this process; What were our struggles? What were our questions? What didn't we know? What did we need to learn more about? And so that that space for genuine dialogue, I think without it, this process wouldn't have worked. I think our efforts would have kind of crumbled, and we may have gone back to our individual desks and selves and continue to do things, you know, but lost some of this momentum, we would have lost some of this momentum and being able to come together in this really genuine way. And Kathi uses this term, 'open hearts and open minds. We heard that a lot from Kathi. And I think that really kind of speaks to this idea of creating a space for this real genuine dialogue and this honesty and being truthful with ourselves about our questions and our struggles.

Very much this was an emergent process, you know, I think if this had come sort of from a directive, from the top down, we would not have engaged in it in such a meaningful way. So it really truly came from a genuine desire from all of us to want to examine what we were doing and look at how we could move our efforts forward, and deepen and broaden our work in this area. So, definitely, this emergent co-created nature, with Kathi's assistance really was definitely facilitated in our work. Also very, very much grounded in values. Kathi worked with us really, really closely around our collective and our individual values. And so that's really provided a really important foundation for us. As a human service program, we're fairly aware of trauma-informed principles, Kathi certainly works from this perspective as well, too. And I think those trauma-informed principles also really facilitated our work. And, again, our process wasn't informed by Indigenous ways of knowing, with Kathi by our side.

And I think also Manjeet often reminding us and bringing in those lessons from elders that Manjeet has learned over the years that we could ground our efforts in. So those are some of those elements of the process that facilitated our work. And if we could go to the next slide, please. So what was the

outcome? So at the end of our time together, we of course, did a debrief as well, too. And these points really do come from the faculty team. And these are sort of some of the themes that we talked about as the outcome of our time together. I think Manjeet already sort of referred to this a little bit. But we definitely felt more hopeful and optimistic about what isn't possible. It's such a huge task, you know, that we all have individual and collective responsibility around. And I think sometimes it can feel quite overwhelming. And we can be and I know I can be uncertain, definitely about; Where do I go? How do I start? How can I possibly, you know, make a difference. And so I think we really all felt much more hopeful and optimistic about what is possible and what we could do.

We definitely felt more connected, more cohesive. So rather than us kind of working in silos, within our own courses, if you will, I think we really came to a place where we're starting to see a vision that's more embedded into our program, as a whole. And that's very uplifting. I think part of that is what helps us to feel more optimistic. We also really began to see our strengths and our potential. And that was, I think, really helpful and motivating. We began to recognize some of the things that we were doing. And some of the things certainly that we could do, I think and throughout the whole process, we became more committed. And we did gain some more clarity on how we could move forward and what would be sort of some of the priorities in moving forward and Manjeet, I think, is going to speak to that next. We can move to the next slide. I may have that wrong, but... Yeah, is that Steve?

PROF. STEPHEN:

That's me.

PROF. TERI:

Sorry, Steve.

PROF. STEPHEN:

No worries. OK, so I just like to talk and touch on a few of the sort of highlights around the action items and what we intend to do moving forward following the workshop. And the first thing is that we have all committed to working to enhance the relationships we have with indigenous communities and elders. And that includes our resident elders, who held full-time positions at the university, as well as the communities that we teach in and work with. I think there was this real identification that as non-Indigenous faculty, this isn't something that we can do alone, we really do need to actively engage with our indigenous communities, to sort of work through how we can better work with them and how we can better prepare our students to work with them in the future. We had a strong commitment to modeling our shared values, which we identified as humility, collaboration, responsibility, love, respect, kindness, and generosity, and a collective commitment using spirit opening words, and action through kindness and truth is part of our pedagogy.

Next slide, please. We also have committed to working to increase cultural safety in all aspects of our program. And some of these can be small changes as an example; I teach research methods and stats courses and the traditional or long-standing course learning outcomes and course descriptions really focused on Western ways of knowing. And I think one small thing I'm going to do as an example is to encourage people to include elders as, a valid academic source in their lit review projects. And there's tons of other ideas, I just thought I would share one there. And this next thing I think, is really important that we're committed to advocate for resources, and larger systemic support and change to help support with the decolonization process and to help support relationship building with indigenous communities. If we are to meaningfully engage with the

community, we need the time and the resources to support that; food for honoraria, to support large gatherings, and all that sort of thing.

And we discussed various ways that we as individual faculty members and as a collective team can commit to moving forward. And that I will pass it over to, I believe Manjeet is next.

PROF. MANJEET:

Thank you, Steve

LEVA:

Manjeet, I noticed there were a couple of questions in the chat. I don't know if you wanted to take them now or we can hold on to those two to lead when you are taking questions. So just flagging it for you.

PROF. MANJEET:

Sure. Maybe we'll take questions. Since afterwards,

LEVA:

OK, we'll do.

PROF. MANJEET:

Perfect. And always a pleasure to have the voice of children appear in our presentation, right. So just a bit about the lessons learned. The journey is a process that requires ongoing commitment in time versus in objective that we're achieving. It involves taking responsibility; individual and collective. Working with indigenous facilitators, leaders, and communities. And I think that's really, really key there. Creating space for an emergent and co-created ongoing process. I remember, a number of years ago, I met with the committee of elders at VIU. And we were discussing relationships, and so on. And they made it really clear that in the past, they hadn't been invited into an institution, so the way they are at VIU. And that for them was real progress. And they're hoping that people would continue to develop that relationship. So I think that, you know, co-created ongoing process, that's really important. Identify your collective values, and that goes values day to day, right. Be trauma-informed.

I think always being humble, listening, and learning is really key. And one of the things we hope to teach our students and have them do is say, go out and work with clients. Let go of what is not working and cultivate what is. And I think for me, that was a real lesson because sometimes I focus on all the barriers to getting things done. But once you start to focus on cultivating what is, amazing how those barriers sometimes diminish. Recognize the actions that you take and take them; wreck the actions you can take and take them. So those are just some of the key lessons that we as a faculty pulled out of this process. Right. And I think next slide, please. Ah, which brings us to questions. So yeah, I think is a group we're interested in answering any questions that people might have.

LEVA:

So Manjeet, maybe I'll just pipe up with the two that I noticed in the chat. So Dale from Nanaimo has the question about supporting Indigenous students, which can be a double edged sword through the fact that they have many vicarious and intergenerational trauma. So he, I guess, he was just asking, you know, how you might approach that?

PROF. MANJEET:

Yeah, I mean, I think by, you know, taking that trauma informed lens, doing a lot of work up front on, you know, trigger warnings, on on safety plans, we have large groups of elders that we can tap into,

and I'm often connecting students with, those elders, a lot of support services, you know, and Dale and his group, being one of those supports at VIU. And doing what we can to sort of, you know, assist students in working through some of the difficult issues that pop up in Child and Youth Care, you know, I think. Is there any anything Stephen or Teri you'd want to add to that? Or?

PROF. TERI:

No, I think maybe the one thing I would add is, again, going back to that, being truthful, as who we are, you know, as faculty and recognizing that this needs to be a learning journey. And as we learn, as I learn, you know more about some of the realities of, you know, indigenous students and indigenous history. You know, I think it allows me to be more responsive to Indigenous students. If I listened in a better way, I listened, I think differently. And it goes back to that relational work. I think what we try and do is we work really relationally with our students and support them as much as we can. Again, as Manjeet mentioned, you know, we exist within a colonial system; within a colonial world. And so sometimes those struggles are, not easy. But it's that real emphasis on working really relationally with students. Yeah. I think it's really important. And drawing on those trauma-informed resources and learning, learning, learning learning. We have put some resources in the chat and I see other folks are putting resources in too; Cindy, thank you.

There's a book that we put in the chat that I think our team actually read quite a while ago, couple of years ago now. But this one here colonized classrooms, and the reference for this is in the chat, and I do highly recommend this resource or I would have had, yeah.

LEVA:

That's great. Yeah, I see the reference in the chat. I'm just seeing one of the questions there might be, but there was also one earlier on about spirit opening words. And I think Emma wanted to maybe if you could speak to that just a little bit more.

PROF. TERI:

I think that phrase may have come through Kathi's work. I can't remember actually, honestly, but for me, it speaks to some of the reading that I've been doing around the learning spirit, and that it's that work comes from the taste. And what that means to me is that always a recognition that our students and people that we work with viewing folks that we work with, from a holistic perspective. And so we're attending not just to that cognitive knowledge, right? That colonial, we're just going to inform, you know, and making sure that we're really viewing the folks that we work with, from a more holistic perspective, and being so mindful of and humble, that our words can do great harm and our words can help build that, support that learning spirit. So yeah, goes back to that relational piece, I think. That's what that means to me.

LEVA:

Thank you.

PROF. TERI:

Oh, I think Steve might have wanted to add something to that.

LEVA:

Yeah, Go ahead, Steve.

PROF. STEPHEN:

And I think, and we've talked quite a bit about this over this past year, in how important it is to attend not only to this sort of learning process and our hope to outcomes but how we can support the mental health and well-being of all of our students. And I know Terry you've done a bunch of

work looking through the Thrive program, which is sort of Mindfulness-Based Stress Management, emotional management in mental health care, and rather than waiting for an emergency to refer to counseling services, what are some things we can do to help support and maintain the mental health and well being of our students? And I think that's part of the... To me, I think that's part of the Spirit opening language process; is being willing to be in a relationship with our students and to help support them.

LEVA:

Nice. Manjeet, did you want to add anything to that as well?

PROF. MANJEET:

I know, I think Teri and Stephen; they've covered that well, so...

LEVA:

OK, great. And I noticed in the chat someone asked; when working with Kathi, if it was a cross-section group of faculty from different departments, or was it just Child and Youth Care?

PROF. MANJEET:

Yeah, I mean, in this instance, it was just Child and Youth Care. Kathi has for the health and human services programs, the entire faculty, she's done similar processes, you know, around the journey, and also around the village, as well. So one of the things we found is Kathi is really good if we discuss some sort of what we're looking for is developing a customized sort of a process for us. So yeah, she ends up working with her third-year students, we have it built into our curriculum, and then I think the institution has been using her as well and has found it to be quite fruitful, so...

LEVA:

OK. And...

PROF. TERI:

If I could just add to that too. Leva, if I could add to that. Also, just to point out that we did as a whole faculty; Health and Human Services; go through a similar process with Kathi. And I have to say, from my experience, it was much richer when we did it just as our department, just as our program, the child care program. Yeah, for me, it was much, much more powerful when we could just kind of really focus on our team. And also to note that it was wasn't just our faculty who participated in this process with Kathi, it was also our practicum coordinator and our program assistant. So it was our entire team. We also invited sessionals to come as well to; I can't remember if they were able to join us, but really the intent was our child and youth care team, it's a real focus on our team. And I think that was really valuable.

LEVA:

OK, great. Thank you. Another question any big ass to get more indigenous professors to teach within the faculty? I'm not sure who would like to take that.

PROF. MANJEET:

I could address that if you like. Yes, absolutely. So VIU has just going through a large process around employment equity. There's anti-bias training for panels that are hiring, there's now going to be special procedures in place for reaching out to groups that we need, that we feel we need to bring on board. So yes, I'd say there's a lot happening in that area right now. We're also, you know, looking at tight budgets, we haven't hired into our faculty in a number of years. But when we next hire all of those resources will be available for us. And I particularly like the anti-bias training for any panel. So if you're going to be on a panel, then you access that training and in other procedures that

should make it easier, I think. We've tried in the past to recruit, particularly, you know, indigenous faculty, unfortunately, we weren't successful, but with all of the different approaches are being put in place and the expertise that's been gained on the hiring process, I think, I'm hoping that that will shift and change going forward.

LEVA:

Great. Another question here. I have... So Brooke is asking, 'I'm curious if you have been thinking about assessment processes and assignments, as you have been considering decolonizing the process.' Been thinking about assessment processes and assignments.

PROF. MANJEET:

Again, I could fill this one. I mean, I think it's an important part of the process around decolonization. And I teach a line in the Child Youth Care Practice class. And I know in that one, you know, I remember a student talk to me and saying, you know, it's not really relevant to me. And I asked what's relevant to you? And they're saying there's new life; the teachings it's our laws, you know, from a conservative perspective. So I said, Well, why don't you focus your assignment on that, and so I've always kind of been flexible in that way. I think students learn a lot more if it's something that they're interested in and able to sort of feel that's relevant to them. So I think that's a really important part of the process is looking at our evaluation or assessment, those sorts of things, and being a little more creative in that area as well. So that's just from my perspective, I don't know if Teri or Stephen have anything they want to add or..?

PROF. STEPHEN:

No, I think I just reiterated... I think the real importance of being flexible with assignments, and being able to help students think outside the box where and when it gets a good fit for them. I think I'm by no means an expert at being able to do this all the time. But I think, being able to work with students interests, and as long as in the process, they're able to get to the course learning outcomes. I'm less concerned about how they show what they have learned then getting to the end product. So I think something we've done in the past and Manjeet you were helpful with this 'cause you directed studies for some courses. So you don't have to shift with the existing published course description and learning outcomes; you can shift things a little bit to fit into the needs and interests of the students and I've done that with with a stats course a few times and shifted to using indigenous research methods texts. And for them having that account is their fourth year qualitative and quantitative analysis.

LEVA:

Sounds great. Teri, did you have anything else to add on that one? Assessment is a really big topic.

PROF. TERI:

Now, it is a big topic now. And I think Steve and Manjeet really, you know, really are highlighting I think, for me, what's key is that flexibility is very key, lots of variety. And I think too, you know, those authentic assessment exercises. So, assignments that are really relevant to people's local context and community, whatever that might be, I think is really important, often very applied assignments. So there's a really clear connection to the relevance of the work. I think, is really important, recognizing elders as equal to absolutely academic sources. And so some of those are some of the other pieces that I think are important. But again, this is such a huge area, I think I have so much I could learn in this area, and always wonder what else could I be doing? Right? So, those are some current sort of thoughts, but it's a journey.

PROF. MANJEET:

Oh, if I could also add, it just popped mine. I know, in one particular class, it was a final assignment that I kind of, you know, it was a traditional paper and reflection. And I talked to one of the elders who I was working with, on couching campus I worked quite closely with and she really encouraged me to change that exercise entirely. And, students seem to really appreciate it. And I've noticed that I think it's more effective. So we have our sort of as academics and so on our traditional approach, but if we reach out to others, and talk to them and get challenged on it, boy, it's interesting, right? So I often talk to some of the elders I'm connected with, I have that advantage from the class and I'm teaching and sort of get your input on that stuff. And it guides me when it comes to things like even assessment. Right.

LEVA:

Thank you, I think there's a couple of more questions in the chat. And then we could probably open it up to people who actually want to ask you on camera or live or whatever. This one here from Emma. Could you elaborate on how you navigated, and continue to navigate the challenge of prioritizing the time for this process? Have you been explicit about what your department has chosen not to do in order to protect the time? Do you encounter hesitancy and resistance from any faculty members to investing the time?

PROF. MANJEET:

I can answer that. I think we just decided, I mean, there's so much happening, you know, with the pandemic, the shifts online and back off, and everything else that was happening, that we just decided, as a faculty that if we don't decide that we're going to make the time and the commitment now. It probably would never get done, because things just always pop up. So like I mentioned, we're committed to meeting, you know, as a faculty. We generally meet once a month in a faculty meeting, we're now meeting twice a month in the second meeting is focused on our program review and decolonization, indigenisation whichever term, you know, you want to use. And so that does take away from faculty time, you know. Instead of marking, we're in this meeting and so on. But we're all quite committed. And the feeling I also noticed another question in the chat. You know, do you have buy in from your whole faculty? And, yeah, actually, we do. And I think it's because of this process we went through where we, you know, looked at our values, discussed it and then collectively came to a vision.

So yeah, it does take away from some other things. And there's sometimes some professional development courses that are sort of aligned with when we have our meetings, and I'd love to attend that but know what we've made a strong commitments here, and we're going to continue through with it. So I think it's just all of us deciding that and then making it a priority, right?

LEVA:

Yeah, I love that what that question is agreeing on, but what will you not do is always a good one. To make space, right? Make space. So let's make some space for some questions. Maybe we can open the floor. That's a good segue here. Would someone like to, I think Keri said by raising your hand. Maybe we can call on people, if they'd like to ask a question of our panelists. You can raise your hand like physically, it doesn't have to be electronically.

PROF. TERI:

I would also be interested, you know, invite comments, you know. I'm sure there's many people in the room that have; the metaphorical room; that have experience, or thoughts that others might like to hear, too. So I would like to also say, just, we could open up that sort of discussion as well, too. So, yeah.

LEVA:

Somebody asked a question. There were two I noticed in our... Another one in the chat about, 'Do you have a program outcome specific to decolonization? Or indigenous knowledge, culture and language? Is that an appropriate outcome? And how big is your department?'

PROF. MANJEET:

Our department is fairly small, we're at six and a half faculty, a program coordinator and admin support. So, fairly small faculty. As far as outcomes and we have in the past when the institution went through the indigenisation process. And going back, even prior to that, you know, we've gone and identified areas in our curriculum where we want to incorporate Aboriginal, Indigenous ways of knowing and being, and that's where we invite guests in for that. I think part of this process for us that we're just embarking on and thanks to the BC campus support is probably going to involve more specific outcomes around decolonization, and knowledge and culture we're in. That's where, you know, for us, it's very important that we're working with the communities that we're serving and doing that, because that's where some of that information will come from. We're sort of working with or walking next to and going to take advice on that. So we've just embarked upon that journey right now. And the journey will probably continue for quite a while to come.

Right. So...

PROF. STEPHEN:

Well, I just I'd like to share one of the four general CYC program learning outcomes. That upon successful completion of the job in youth care program, students will be able to apply and integrate critical, creative and ethical thinking in Child and Youth Care Practice contexts grounded in a critical understanding and awareness of marginalization, structural inequity, colonialism, decolonization, intersectionality, power and privilege.

LEVA:

Thanks, Steve. I'm just looking to see if there's any hands raised.

PROF. TERI:

Looks like Richard has a hand up, Leva.

LEVA:

Richard, go ahead. What's your question? Thank you.

RICHARD:

Thank you. I'm up in Fort Nelson, I work at the Northern Lights College. Before the pandemic, we're really making effort to try to be witness, be present during summer events, community gatherings, cultural activities, and we were really trying to encourage our faculty and staff to engage and also be witness. It was a new initiative, new effort. A lot of traveling in the north, it's communities are so far apart. But the idea of just trying to support opportunities for faculty and staff to engage and be witness. At a personal level, but also, I guess my question is, 'Has your institution looked at supporting faculty and staff within the institution to be witness to community cultural activities and events during summer months?'

PROF. MANJEET:

You know, I, I believe so. For instance, we've had a number of indigenous, Chancellor's and presidents have been you know, brought into VIU and each time there was witnessing ceremony. Graduations incorporate different you know, cosalish traditions. In, in the elders teaching class, I had one particular elder that was really interested in making sure that people understood ceremony. So

we actually had simulated naming ceremony and had students involved in every process there, every part of it to really understand the complexity, what's going on. So I think as much as institution is able to, they tried, particularly given current fiscal climates, right, that's what we're all up against. But I don't know if that answers your question, or if Teri and Stephen want to add anything there?

PROF. TERI:

Well, I would say, you know, just thank you for the question, Richard, because I think what the other, as Manjeet is talking, the other thing that comes to my mind is, I think those very real challenges of the resources and the time and the energy and the heart and all those things that are required, in order to develop those really genuine relationships that we've been talking about. And whether that's through witnessing or you know, working collaboratively, or it can look so different depending on their situation. Right. And that's one of my, you know, I'm sure it's a shared challenge is having a system that is flexible enough and resourced enough that allows for us to do this very, very important part of the work. And I don't... your question just really speaks to me to the reality of that challenge. Because it is a challenge. And, yet, it's so fundamental to what I think we have to be doing here. So it's such a real tension that there's... I don't think we have an answer for that for sure.

But it's part of when we talked earlier about recognizing that we need to be advocating for some of our program needs, right? And how can we take up more of an advocacy role within this system? Right? And yes, some of it is happening, and it certainly is appreciated and acknowledged as valuable. But is it really carved into our work day? Can we do it other than off the side of our desk? Which is (CROSSTALK)

RICHARD:

It is a similar challenge I think we have; and a lot of institutions have, but I think it was more wanting to plant that seed and get that idea and that conversation of how can our institutions support our people, our staff, or humans, to meet and be human and engage and learn and be witnessed and experience different opportunities they may not otherwise do on their own. So, Thank you.

LEVA:

Thank you, Richard, what a wonderful question. We probably have time for just one more. Susan? Is Susan from TRU ready for your question? Would you like to ask that question?

SUSAN:

Hi? I don't have a question. I have a comment. Is that OK? Yeah. I was very excited about this session and happy to see it coming up. Because at TRU we were working on, I put it in the chat. We're working on decolonizing, our prior learning and assessment process. And it felt so lonely walking this path and so much uncertainty and say for me personally anxiety about you know, is this the right way to be going? Not the right way to be going but more like how do you go about doing this? So it's been a very, I think the word blind process, and really just going with the heart and what feels right, and looking at the Truth and Reconciliation and the calls to action and UNDRIP. And I'll say we've been on this journey for about two years now. And it's a slow journey. But I've been so heartened by the people around us that when you stammer, not sure what you're asking, you know, they just been so open to helping. And this session, and particularly, to see what you've done to see how you've done it, to see the impact and to know that there's much more to learn.

It just it was an excellent reminder that we're not in this space alone. And there's a lot of people out there that are on this path, or in this journey. And there's some really good lessons that have been learned. So thank you for taking the time to put this together and for sharing your insights.

LEVA:

Thank you, Susan. We have a couple of more minutes. so I'll turn it back to the team, is there any other final thoughts? Teri, Stephen, Manjeet.

PROF. MANJEET:

You know, like I said, you know, from my perspective and our perspective, hopefully, we're just setting the initial phases of this. And sort of, you know, within the past built within our curriculum space for Indigenous ways of knowing and being Entapped into resources to bring that to students. And, this decolonization piece, it's a much bigger piece, particularly when we're in an institution that really defines colonization in a way. So it's, going to be interesting. And I know I very much look forward to that work And continuing that work and the relationships that we've developed with community, with elders, with our students or alumni, everyone involved. Great. So thank you, everyone for opting to hear us speak today. So..

LEVA:

Teri?

PROF. TERI:

I just, yeah, just thank you so much, Manjeet for... Yeah, I think just what you said just still captures what I'm thinking, and I just want to thank everybody so much for joining us today in the conversation. I look forward to continuing to learn and to develop relationship. And I do know it will be ongoing, which is a good thing. So thank you all for coming.

LEVA:

And Steve?

PROF. STEPHEN:

Yeah, I'd echo the sentiment of Manjeet and Teri. Very appreciative to all of you for coming today and to BCcampus for providing the grants to make the workshop with Kathi happen. And I look forward to continuing to learn and grow as a person and an instructor and to really put some more intention into working in and with our indigenous communities.

LEVA:

Well, on that, I'd like to thank you three, very much for sharing your lessons learned. I think people found it very helpful. We will have the recording available for others who wish to also learn from you. And thank you for all the participants and for the wonderful BC campus support team for helping us today. So I hope you all have a wonderful day.