

Transcript for Pulling Together: A Guide for Curriculum Developers, Session 5 (February 9, 2023)

Session Title: Developing Awareness of One's Own Role in Indigenization

BCcampus webinar hosted February 9, 2023

Host: Gabrielle Lamontagne

Facilitator: Tanya Ball

Guest Speaker: Rachel Mason

TANYA BALL:

Good morning, everybody. We're all trickling in and getting connected online here. There we go. I can see some familiar faces. Hi. Alright, so this week: Week 5. One more week left. I'm getting sad because I love doing this. It's so fun. This week we're going to be talking about developing awareness of one's own role in Indigenization and reconciliation. And we actually have a special song request this week. Can I get the next slide, please?

So, we wanted to dedicate this song to Clint Dutiaume. I don't want to... oh, I think I'm messing that right up.

ANNE MARIE BRENNAN:

Tanya. It's pronounced "Duty-um"

TANYA:

Dutiaume? Awesome. Anne-Marie, actually, did you want to introduce the song?

ANNE-MARIE:

Oh, sure.

TANYA:

So sorry, I don't want to put you on the spot.

ANNE-MARIE:

No, it's okay. So Clint Dutiaume... My best friend is Clint Dutiaume's niece. And my best friend comes from... her family is quite a prominent musical family, Métis musical family in Manitoba. She's always been very close to them and Clint passed away very young from cancer a couple of weeks ago, and I just thought Michelle was so proud of him and she's so proud of her family and she's always talking about them and sharing their music and what they've done. And I just thought after our conversation a couple of weeks ago about bringing spirits closer and continuing legacy, I thought this would be a really nice place to share some of Clint's music and invite his spirit to be with us and to just remember him.

TANYA:

Absolutely. Thank you so much. I actually took a deep dive into Clint's music after you sent us the email and holy cow does that guy... he can fiddle, he can fiddle like, he's amazing. Huge,

huge fiddle player, really huge influence on Métis music, so I'm really excited to share this with everyone, so thank you. Thank you for sharing.

ANNE-MARIE:

Sorry, just one more quick thing to add.

TANYA:

Yes?

ANNE-MARIE:

Clint was well enough to attend an induction ceremony he and his brothers were inducted into, I believe it was the Manitoba Music Hall of Fame. So, Michelle was so pleased and so excited that he was well enough to attend that. It was quite an honour for them. TANYA: That's beautiful. That's beautiful. I'm really excited to share this with everyone today. Let's give it a listen.

[♪ "BOSS MAN" BY YOUNGER BROTHERS PLAYS ♪ ♪]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WbSrDWwe8ZQ>

TANYA:

Amazing. Marsee, Chi Miigwetch. Hiy hiy. Thank you, Clint, for joining us for your song today. So thank you, we honour and remember you. Thank you, again, Anne-Marie for sharing the song with us. I really enjoyed that. So let's jump in. We're ready. So today this is what we're doing. We have our check-in as usual, we have a special guest, which is Rachel Mason. We're going to talk a little bit about collection development, anti-oppression theory, unconscious conscious bias, and being an ally. Whatever we don't get through today, we're going to have our wrap-up session next week. I am really excited for it. Can I get the next slide?

This is where we're at. So this week we are reading pages 47 to 56. If you're following along in the book next week, we'll be wrapping it up with pages 58 to 65. That's going to be promoting systemic change. Next.

There we go. So I am happy to introduce Rachel Mason. She's joining us today. She's actually had a really big help in developing this program. So we're very, very grateful to her for joining us today. She has the time. She's with Arrive Consulting and I have her contact information here, but I'm going to pass it over to you, Rachel, to introduce yourself and your community. Go ahead. Thank you.

RACHEL MASON:

Thanks so much, Tanya. And really great to meet you all and see you today. I was really pleased when I was asked by BCcampus to be part of this program because I think that these are really excellent learning resources and I'm just really happy that people are using them and talking about them and meeting to discuss them and learn together. So I'm really grateful that you

guys have launched this online learning program. So today's topic is developing awareness of one's role in reconciliation and Indigenization. So most of what I'm going to talk about today is my journey to develop my awareness of my role in reconciliation and Indigenization. And that's an ongoing lifelong journey. But I'm going to talk about where I've come to today through my past experiences and some reflections on what I've learned in that process. And then we're going to have some dialogue on some questions to talk about what your role is. As Tanya mentioned, I was one of the writers for the Curriculum Developers book. And it was a really great process to collaborate with the other members of the project. And this is one of the chapters that was... We split up some of the work and this is one of the chapters that I really focused on. So yeah, it's going to the next slide. Thanks.

Okay, so I'm just going to introduce myself and share my cultural background. So my background is Eastern European Jewish from Lithuania on my mother's side. And that's represented by the challah bread there, which is a special bread eaten on Shabbat, which is on Friday night. And that was my daughter who helped me put together this presentation and I guess she didn't want to be in the photo, but she made that bread. So that's a little bit about the heritage on my mother's side. I wasn't raised in a culturally Jewish family because my family was very assimilated in the past generation. So it's been something I've been learning about to reclaim and learn a little bit more about that culture. Then the other side of my family, on my father's side is English. And I have a really large family in England. And this is from a family reunion I went to last summer. These are all the children of my cousins. But we also had second cousins there and there were over 100 people, so that's my English heritage. So if you can go to the next slide please.

So a little bit about where I've lived. I was born in London, England. My parents were living there at the time and this is a photo of my kids in London last summer going back there to visit family. When I was two years old, I moved to the United States and I grew up in Westport, Connecticut. And Westport is a town that is, sorry, I pressed mute. I didn't think about this at the time that I was growing up there, but I'm putting together this presentation. I did some research and learned that Westport is 90% white. And there's very little Indigenous presence there. So in my own learning since then, I've learned that I grew up on the territory of the Pequonnock, Paugussett, and Wappinger people. But at the time that wasn't something that I was aware of. And the only kind of presence was through place names in the area. I grew up there until I went away to university. And then I met my husband, who is Canadian, during those years and I came to live where I am calling in from today, which is the territory of the Lekwungen speaking people, the Songhees, and Esquimalt nations in what's known today as Victoria, B.C. So next slide.

This is my family. A big part of my life today is raising these four kids. This was their back-to-school picture in September and my husband, who grew up in Edmonton. And this is us in front of our house in Victoria. Next slide.

I'm going to share with you a little bit about my personal and professional story. So as I mentioned, where I grew up, it was not a very diverse place. And I wasn't very aware of cultural identity and race and Indigeneity. Those weren't really things that were on my mindset when I was growing up. Then I went to University in Rhode Island. And again, it wasn't an extremely diverse environment in my university contexts. But I did start doing some work with one of the high schools and working on now a youth empowerment program with some of the girls in the school and then started getting exposed to some of the class and race disparities that I hadn't considered as much in my upbringing. And then I went to work for a year in Tanzania. I'm going to show the next picture, please.

Thank you. This is me with some of the youth that I worked with in Tanzania. I worked in two places at a centre for children who had been living on the street and also in a youth program and I helped them. This is the first curriculum I ever developed. It was on life skills and HIV AIDS prevention. And I developed it in both English and Kiswahili. And I had someone help me translate it so it can be taught in either language. That was really my first awakening to my own identity as a white person and to understanding really the impacts of colonialism in the world because I really stood out there as a white person. And the word for "white person" in Kiswahili is "mzungu." Which we were told by our teacher means going around and around. Because sometimes white people would, in the beginning, would all look the same to the local people. And so they would think, well, there's a white person there, there's another one there. They're just going around in circles. So that was the story that was shared with us. And people really treated us differently based on our race. So we were invited to the parties of people we didn't even know. We were asked to come in and sit in meetings with funders or community officials. We were asked to fund programs and things like that. And so it really made me recognize the privilege that I carry. Also, it was my first exposure to really seeing that kind of poverty in the world because Tanzania is one of the poorer countries in the world. So it really left me grappling with now that I understand this and how much I benefited from the impacts of colonization and how it's impacted people and in other countries. And I wasn't yet at that time really thinking about North America. But that became apparent to me later. Thinking about how do I respond and how do I deal with this in my life? And I really started thinking about how I could use the skills and the privileges that I had gained in my upbringing and through my intergenerational journey to contribute to work that's against oppression, against colonization, and what role I could play in that kind of work. So if you can go to the next slide, please.

I moved back to Victoria in 2004, and I was looking for work in international development because that's kind of what I'd come from. And on a whim, I applied for a job with the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres. And this will tell you something about my age. It was actually a printed ad in the newspaper that I found and circled and responded to. And I didn't think that I would get the job, but I did, and I ended up working for two years for the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres. And my work was youth council coordinator. So I helped to coordinate a provincial youth council, but I also had the opportunity to visit and work with all of the 24 youth councils in the Friendship Centres in B.C. So I went around to all these communities and helped support them with youth engagements and youth empowerment. And

it was a huge learning experience for me because at that time I didn't really know anything about Indigenous people in Canada and I didn't really know much about Canada in general. So I was really learning a lot and it was really intense and building relationships and really navigating what is my role in this work, you know, and how can I best contribute? After a couple of years of working there, I decided to switch gears and try working for the Province of British Columbia. And part of my reason for that was I was looking at the higher level positions in the Friendship Centre movement and feeling like it wouldn't really be appropriate for me to move into those positions as a non-Indigenous person. And so I didn't really see what was the path forward for me. But also I'd had my first child. I thought, okay, I should get a job that's really stable, and a long-term commitment and things like that. So I worked for five years for the province and I worked in the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and the Ministry of Health in Aboriginal Health. And that was an interesting experience. I didn't, it was challenging and I never, I didn't feel like I fully fit within working within the government environment, especially coming from community to working within the provincial government. And I remember when I left the Friendship Centre movement some people joked, Oh you're going over to the dark side. There was a lot of good work and I met a lot of great people in my role working for the province. And I also have the opportunity to do a lot of professional development and learning, which I really appreciated. But after five years there, I had the opportunity to work with a new school that was opening up in our town called the Pacific School of Innovation and Inquiry. And this is a really unique school. It's all inquiry-based learning so the students really create their own paths of learning with, in collaboration with teachers. And everybody is working on different things and it's very personalized and very based on the students' interests and curiosities. And I really felt that this was a kind of education system that I wanted to work in. And so I went over there and it was brand new and so it was getting the new school started and up and running. I had the opportunity there to do some Indigenous education with the kids. But it was interesting because not all of them, with the free choice that they had there, not all of them were interested in that learning. And that was a little hard for me and made me think about how there's positives but also the downside and kind of, you know, letting people decide what they want to do when they may be missing some of this learning that I felt was really important for them to have. But it was a good experience. And while I was working there, I was working there three days a week. So I also started taking our contract work and working on some curriculum development with the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres and some other contracts. And after three years, I had my fourth child and I decided to go into consulting full-time. So if you can use the next slide, please.

That's when I started Arrive Consulting and where I'm still working today. And we do three different areas of service, but they're all interrelated. So we support learning and the development of curriculum and learning resources. And we do that both for Indigenous organizations that want learning that's grounded in Indigenous contexts. And we also do it for non-Indigenous organizations. And it's usually focused on cultural competency learning. And then we also support some Indigenous organizations with their growth as an organization. So we do strategic planning and reporting and monitoring and evaluation and facilitation and engagement with those organizations. Lastly, we also do work that falls under the reconciliation

area. And so we support organizations with creating reconciliation plans and reconciliation learning frameworks and implementing training within their organizations. So it's really diverse. I get to work with a lot of different organizations. I work with, probably the majority of my clients are Indigenous organizations and nations. But I also work with government and non-profit clients. And it's different every day, so I'm really enjoying it. If you can show the next slide.

This is a group of collaborators that I work with and we formed a group called the Call to Action Collaborative, where we work together to do that reconciliation work. And so we have Alex and Nella Nelson, who are really well-respected Elders in this community that work with us. And then Tanya Clarmont and Sebastian Silva who were two other consultants that are part of this work. And so one of the things I really enjoy about my work is working with these amazing people every day. Next slide.

Okay, so that's my introduction. Thank you for listening to a bit of my story. I wanted to provide you with the context to understand some of my reflections. And so what I've done in the next section is just put together some of my reflections about what I've learned about working in partnership with Indigenous people. And I just want to stress that these are just my learnings and reflections. They may not apply to everyone. And other people may have had different experiences. So I don't want people to see them as rules or advice, but just sharing some of my learnings that have worked for me. And as I mentioned, I'm always growing in this work. So if I give this presentation in five years, I may reject some of these or have some new ideas, but these are just my reflections of where I'm at now in my learning journey. So next slide.

Yeah, so I'm going to talk about each of these in turn and tell you a little bit about them. So the first one that was important to me and inspired me to get into this work and to stay with it is the recognition of systems of privilege and oppression. And understanding the ways that I've benefited from systems of privilege, as well as the ways I've been impacted by oppression. And I have a workshop that I do with Tanya where we both share stories of ways that we have experienced privilege and oppression. And it really brings up a lot for people because most people have experienced both of those in some regards of their life. And I talked a little bit about Tanzania being really one of my first experiences of recognition of that. There's another story that I like to share that kind of really raised my awareness. And it was pretty early in my career when I was working for the Friendship Centre movement and we were having a big youth conference. You guys may have heard of Gathering Our Voices. And it was in a fancy hotel in downtown Vancouver. One of my Indigenous colleagues said to me, You know, the staff here are so disrespectful. They're really hard to work with and they really don't treat us well. And I said, Well, I've only had good experiences with them. I think they're really nice and they're really helpful. Then this person said back to me, Well, it's because we're brown. And it just really struck me and I was like, I never really thought about the fact that I would be treated differently in that kind of circumstance based on my race and appearance. So it just made me understand that I was having a different experience than other people and that I was so privileged that I wasn't even aware of it, basically. So that's something that I keep in mind in all

of the work that I do. The second one is getting to know your own identity. When I first started working in this field, I was invited into a lot of circles where people shared who they are and their cultural background. And I got the impression that that was an Indigenous practice for Indigenous people. And so when people asked me to share my cultural background, I would just say I'm not Indigenous. That worked for a little while until I got invited to participate in a sweat lodge on one of my Friendship Centre trips. And I said that in the lodge where we were introducing ourselves. And the Elder who was leading that ceremony said, Yeah, but where are you really from? I said, Well, I'm American. Yeah, but where are you really from? I realized that I didn't really know how to answer that question. And I don't remember what I said at the time, but it made me think, Okay, I need to have an answer to that. And it's not okay for me to just say what I'm not. I need to share who I am and I need to understand who I am and what that means for me and what my cultural background is. And take the opportunity to learn about that. Especially when I'm working with Indigenous people, I really need to be open about who I am because there's always an uncomfortable feeling when you're in a project or a space where we're talking about Indigenous cultures or people and you don't know if the person is Indigenous or not. So it's really something that I've learned to be very upfront about. And also to take, to take pride in and be grateful for my own heritage and cultural background.

The next thing I'm going to talk about is making mistakes. So in one of the, I think there's a section on this in the Curriculum Developers book and there's a video that I've recorded. Maybe some of you guys have seen that. It's a little embarrassing for me to watch because they made us read from one of those machines so it came off a little robotic. But it is something that I like to talk about with people because I think it's one of the things that can really challenge non-Indigenous people in this work is that fear of making mistakes. And I've made many mistakes. And some of them I'm sure I'm not even aware of. But sometimes I have been corrected. And when I have been corrected, I'm grateful for that because someone's taken the time to share with me and thought it was worth investing their time in helping me learn about that better. And recorded that video with Asma to really show that Indigenous people also make mistakes. When it comes to cultural and protocol and relations, there's always learning to do there. And so I think just recognizing that there's always more learning to do there and there's always going to be mistakes. But how can you take those mistakes and make them into a learning experience? And when you can make up for those mistakes and address them in a good way. So I really want to encourage people to feel that they can make mistakes and that they can move on from them.

The next one is really being humble and vulnerable. And I think for me it's been okay with being uncomfortable. I remember the first time I walked into the first Friendship Centre that I worked with and it was up in Cowichan. And I walked into the youth centre and it's full of Indigenous youth there. And I felt so uncomfortable. I felt like I really stood out and that people would be thinking, What is she doing here? But nobody treated me like that. They knew I was coming for a purpose and they welcomed me and I met with the youth, and we had a great discussion. I just got through it. And I think there's been many times in my work when I have felt uncomfortable and just move forward and get through it and you grow from that. So I think

there's a danger, there's more of a danger to avoiding being uncomfortable than to moving into and addressing uncomfortable situations.

The next one I want to talk about is the importance of doing your own learning. So when I first started working for the Friendship Centre movement, I knew that I didn't know very much. And so I asked my supervisor at the time, Is there a book that I can read to learn about Indigenous people? And he just kind of laughed at me. And they're actually... Now there are a lot more books but at the time, almost 20 years ago, there weren't as many books. And I think what I got from his response is the importance of taking that learning into my own hands and learning through experience and researching and understanding. I did end up finding some books and I ended up taking First Nation Studies classes and doing that learning in that kind of formal way. But yeah, just being responsible for your learning and not asking, you know, Indigenous people to explain or teach you unless that's their role, of course. And that goes into the next one.

Don't expect Indigenous people to do the work for you. And in one of my curriculum projects recently, we were training non-Indigenous, well non-Indigenous and Indigenous volunteers to work within the Friendship Centre. And so we did a lot of interviews with Indigenous people asking what they would want volunteers to know. One of the things that came up was how uncomfortable many of them felt when non-Indigenous people would ask them questions about their experiences, their culture, or their identity as non-Indigenous people.... as Indigenous people, sorry. And they either didn't know or they didn't feel comfortable explaining it to that person. And so one of the suggestions that they shared with us was the importance of asking consent for those kinds of questions. And not just going up to someone and saying, tell me about your language and culture or tell me about your family's experience with residential school. But instead, saying, I'm on a learning path and I'd love to learn more about this. Would you be okay with talking to me about it? If not, that's okay. This is really only after you've made efforts to do your own learning first, right? So they gave us some advice on how people could ask consent for those questions. And it made me think back to when I was first working in government. And we had one Indigenous person working on our team. And she was the go-to person for all questions of protocol. I'm going to visit this community. What should I bring them? How should I get in contact with someone to do a welcome? What do I say? And she very graciously answered those questions. But that wasn't her job. She had a whole other job and a program to run. It wasn't until later when I learned more than I thought about how inappropriate it was that we were asking that person to answer all of our questions on all things Indigenous, right? So yeah, I think that's it for this slide. Next slide, please.

Okay. This is the last one on this topic. I talked about this a little bit earlier about making mistakes, I have had situations where people gave me feedback and sometimes I felt very uncomfortable. Just to give one example, I was at a conference and I was giving a talk about some work that I had done. And we were running really short on time. So I said at the end, we're 5 or 10 minutes from the end. And I said something like, Very quickly, does anyone have anything that they want to share? And nobody shared too much. And then afterwards, one of the Elders came up to me and said, If you want people to share, don't introduce it by saying,

can you share something very quickly? Because what you're saying there is, it's not that important. We don't have that much time to listen to what you want to share. And I felt so bad and I never thought about it like that before. But that's been a huge teaching for me in my own facilitation and the way I engage with people in meetings. And so I'm really, really grateful that that Elder, who I didn't even know, took the time to come up and share that feedback with me.

But I also want to share that sometimes I've received feedback that didn't resonate with me or didn't sit right with me. And I think there's also a danger of going too far to thinking, well, just because I receive this feedback, it must be right. And I think there's also a need to think, what really, what are my values? And what do I really hold true? And how do I want to show up in the world? And sometimes some of that feedback is not going to be helpful. So it's important for you to decide whether that feedback is something that you can take and integrate or not. So it's complex.

Then the next one I want to talk about is, I'm always thinking about how I can best contribute in my work with Indigenous people. And that's really something that's always evolving for me and it's changed over time. When I first started working with the Indigenous youth through the Friendship Centre movement, I really felt that my role was purely just to coordinate their activities and just be the one who could facilitate making things happen for them or organizing things. If they said they wanted to hold a conference, I could help arrange it, that kind of thing. But I was really careful like there should be nothing of what I think needs to happen coming into this, this work, right? But after 10, 15 years of doing work with Indigenous communities, I started to realize, you know, maybe I do have some things to share and I can provide some advice that may be helpful or not, but I can share advice based on my experience. So I got a little bit more open to that and playing a bit of a more active role. But always it's important to me that the work I'm doing, especially with Indigenous organizations, it's led by Indigenous people. And my role is often very background and supporting type of role.

I also just want to put in a note about recognizing the diversity of Indigenous people. And I know we all know that there's many Indigenous nations in Canada and there's First Nations and there's Métis and there's Inuit people. But a lot of times I hear people say, Oh, we need to find out what Indigenous people think about this. Or we need to get an Indigenous perspective or an Indigenous lens on this issue. And I found that that's not, it's not easy to do because there's going to be a diversity of perspectives amongst Indigenous people. Just to give you an example, a project I'm working on now, we're working on what kind of terminology we're going to use in the book that we're writing. And the Indigenous people on the committee have different opinions about it, right? So it's important to really engage with that complexity and that diversity of opinions and recognize that just like all people, Indigenous people are going to have different perspectives on things and it doesn't make sense to lump together and say, Oh, we need an Indigenous perspective or one Indigenous person provides some advice and then that kind of covers it off. It's not quite that simple. That gets the last one.

There's a lot of times I remember, as I was saying, that when I worked in government that those questions of protocol, I was always looking for a black and white answer. This is what you do. Here are the steps. And often there wasn't one. It was, you could do this or you could do that. And so recognizing that there's not always one way or one right answer of how to work in a good way in partnership with Indigenous people. Great. Thanks so much. I have one more section, if you could bring....

So I want to talk a little bit about the role of non-Indigenous people in supporting reconciliation and why I think that that is important. So if you can bring up the next slide.

I would just say firstly that reconciliation is about a relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. And it's about healing that relationship. And Chief Justice Murray Sinclair said that reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem, it's a Canadian problem. If non-Indigenous people aren't involved, how can there be reconciliation? It needs to be about the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The second one I'm noticing more than ever, there's more and more organizations and agencies who are approaching me and my colleagues for learning about Indigenous people and more and more realization of what they missed in the general education system, the information that wasn't included. They didn't learn about residential schools. They didn't learn about the Indian Act. They didn't learn about Métis scrip, and so people are recognizing that they have this huge lack of knowledge. And if we want everybody to fill that gap, we need non-Indigenous people to step into sharing that knowledge. Especially non-Indigenous people who've had the opportunity to do some learning themselves or to have some connection and engagement with Indigenous communities. Because otherwise there won't be enough people to address that gap. And I also recognize, and I've heard from many of my clients that it's not always a priority for Indigenous people to focus on educating non-Indigenous people. And in fact, sometimes it's really not a priority at all. Some of the Indigenous organizations I work with, there's been times when I've said, Oh, you know, you could really advise people on how they could work in a more Indigenous way, or they could bring reconciliation into their work. And what I've heard back is, but we're not interested in that because our role is working with our people and supporting them. And so even people who, Indigenous people who could take that role of educating non-Indigenous people, that may or may not be their interests.

Then for me, the last point I want to make is really returning to what I shared earlier with my first awakenings in Tanzania was the awareness of the privilege that I held and how I could turn that into responsibility, and how I could take responsibility for my privilege and work to undo ignorance and equity and oppression in the best that I can with the time that I have. I think that's always something that's important to me. And it kind of centres and inspires me in the work that I do. With that, I think I've shared some of my musings here and I think we're going to go into some dialogue soon. But I think Tanya, did you want to have some time for people to share their thoughts Or ask me questions or anything?

TANYA:

I think there might be a good idea if we can take a pause before we go out into the breakout rooms, if anyone has any questions for Rachel. Also thank you so much. I really enjoyed your presentation. You've definitely... I've experienced a lot of the same things that you've experienced. That's really cool.

RACHEL:

Thanks.

TANYA:

So if you have a question, you can either put your hand up in the, I guess it's the emoji thing or if you want to it in the chat. Oh, there's one in the chat. Here's Kāshā. She's wondering what your company does for... Oh, it cut off, I think... reciprocity. There, there we go. Great question.

RACHEL:

Is Kāshā, can you tell me more about what?

TANYA:

Oh, Kāshā. Thank you so much for correcting me on that.

RACHEL:

Can you tell me more about what you're thinking with your question?

KĀSHĀ:

Oh, hi there. I'm Kāshā. And I was just wondering about reciprocity. So the faculty that I work with, I always encouraged them to, if they are going into a community to do something for the community. So, for example, recently, a woman that I helped with a beading pattern, she is giving \$0.50 from each sale of her fireweed earrings to the MMIW because that will help a lot of people. So I'm just wondering about those sorts of things. If you have reciprocity in your company to give back to the Indigenous peoples that you work with?

RACHEL:

Yeah. That's a great question. A couple of things. Yeah. So as I mentioned, a lot of my work is very behind the scenes, so it's not directly with communities most of the time. It's mostly working with Indigenous organizations who then themselves are engaging with communities. So for example, let's say we're doing an interview and we're interviewing someone to make a video, for example. We would always recommend to the organization that we're working with that there be an honoraria and a gift provided to that person in recognition of their time. And we wouldn't go ahead with the process if that wasn't something that they wanted to do, but usually it's them who are really in the lead in terms of how they want to show reciprocity to the community members that we work with. So they really, we want them to start to think about how they recognize people's time and contributions in that way. And the other thing that I'm

thinking about in relationship to our clients is just trying to meet people where they're at in terms of their budgets and their scope of work and trying to be really flexible to work out like a cost that works for them, and will support them to do the work. So it's not the same for everyone. It's what I'm saying in that regard. And we also do what we can to support people with, you know, completing the work even if there are shortages and things like that. So in that way, it's often kind of an in-kind contribution.

KĀSHĀ:

Yeah. Sorry for that. Just I didn't, I would have brought up honorariums, but no, just I'm thinking too, also where your business is located and if you don't have to answer this, I'm just thinking about volunteering in the community and you probably do that, but people you work with maybe that's something that you do more on the humble side of it and just giving back to the community here. So I know I tried to volunteer here with Tsimshian even though I'm not Tsimshian.

RACHEL:

Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely

KĀSHĀ:

So sorry about that. I mean, it was hard to. It was hard to ask that question. I wasn't quite sure how to word it. Brought up the honorarium because it is important. My honorarium is more than usually what people have thought of in the past. So yeah.

RACHEL:

I hope I answered your question. I've also done volunteer work in community as well. And, you know, my closest connection in this community is working with the Friendship Centre movement, but also with local communities so that I wasn't totally sure what you're asking, so I hope I've answered your question the best that I can. Thank you.

TANYA:

Awesome. Thank you. There's another question here in the chat, Rachel. This is from Uni. She says, I hear this frequently from faculty that they don't feel entitled to use Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies. I wonder how I can best work with them in that regard. As I'm also a non-Indigenous myself and share the same concerns.

RACHEL:

Okay. I guess I question a little bit more like, what do you mean by use Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies? I think to me it's a, if it's a question of incorporating Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies into your course, I think there's. Okay, so I guess I'll start with the Indigenous pedagogies questions. There's a lot of things in what we refer to as Indigenous pedagogies that I think are just really good teaching pedagogies and really helpful for all students and all learners, right? I think there's a lot that can be learned from Indigenous pedagogy. So I see our education system starting to recognize more and more that those things are needed. That

learning doesn't always have to be in the classroom and that relationships are important in learning and then that, you know, learning is a personal journey. And some of these core concepts that might be referred to as Indigenous pedagogies. And so I would encourage all educators to learn from the Indigenous pedagogies and increase, enrich their own teaching through that learning. But I think where people really get concerned is around cultural things like can I, can I do a cultural activity with my students? I think if people don't feel comfortable doing that, that's understandable, but is there an opportunity for them to work with partners? Are there supports in the school? Are there Indigenous support workers or advisors in the school who can support with that? Or could they ask. Is there they could ask permission? Is there a way that I can do that? So for example, one thing I have used in teaching before is the talking circle. And before I did that, I was working in high school. I talked to some of the Indigenous educators in high school and said, I would like to use this. What do you think about it? And they made some suggestions to me about how I could do it in a good way. So I think there's an opportunity to look at getting some support for either learning how could I do that in a good way or how can I bring in somebody local who could help with those practices? But what I really want to discourage people from is sharing content about Indigenous people. Sometimes, you know, when it goes into sharing, like who are the Indigenous people of this place? And thinking about what your relationship is to them and being able to learn about their history and their culture and their community. If people are afraid to bring that into the classroom, who's going to do it? I think in terms of that content, it's really important for educators to step into that space, even when they're feeling uncomfortable about it and they may, there could be situations where they do make a mistake and someone might say that was inappropriate that you shared that. Oh, okay. Well, thank you for helping me understand that. I won't do that again. And I recognize that maybe that's a rosy picture of the environment that we live in. But if there's an opportunity for stepping into discomfort a little bit and learning from mistakes and doing the research, the background work that you need to do to understand and feel comfortable with what you're sharing. I had one other thought about it, but it's slipped my mind, so I'll leave it there and see if anyone has follow-up questions. I'll give you an example. Actually, I'm facilitating a meeting next week. And it's with an Indigenous organization. And sometimes in meetings that I've had before, we create a circle in the centre of the circle, we put a blanket that has a Coast Salish spindle whorl pattern on it. The first time I did this, I asked one of the Elders that I was co-facilitating with, Is it okay for me to use this blanket and what should I put on it? And he recommended I put on some cedar and I put on some traditional medicines. So I've used that blanket in a number of settings and people have really liked it and responded well to it. But this is a different group of people that I'm working with, a different organization and an Indigenous agency. And when I shared this idea with them, their feedback was, We like this, but it doesn't feel right that you, as a non-Indigenous person, should be setting this up. So I asked them, what would feel comfortable to you? We could take it out completely. We could just maybe instead of medicines, we just put nature elements or maybe someone from your organization sets it up or the co-facilitator that I'm working with. They had some discussion about it and they got back to me with their preference and then we went from there. So it's a matter of me being flexible about... In the first situation, I asked for permission and guidance on how to use this. But in another situation, maybe there's

a different context and people aren't as comfortable with it. So even if you figure out something that you know, some of... you might get some support that some Indigenous people are comfortable with. There might be others who aren't, and it depends on the context. So I know that's not a straightforward answer, but that's been my experience. It's just being really open to the feedback and dialogue about those kinds of things. And yeah, it looks like there's a really great suggestion in the chat for a really good book, and I never heard of that. So thank you for recommending that.

TANYA:

Amazing. Thank you, Rachel. There we go. Okay. I just wanted to check to see if there's a question. We'll talk to you soon, J. Stuart or G. Stewart. Don't worry if you need to leave early. But at this point, I just want to thank you again, Rachel, for spending some time with us. I don't know if you are able to stay for discussions, but you are welcome to stay. At this point. I do want everybody, if you can add your thanks in the chat or show your emojis, if you want to show your video and give her an applause, that would be really appreciated. Thank you, Rachel. I still think it's valuable to do the breakout rooms today though. I think we should. We do have a couple of breakout rooms if we can get those all sorted out here. Paula, we have our discussion questions. So each breakout room is going to get their own discussion question. And if I can get one person, everyone to elect at least one person to share their discussion with the larger group. That would be really appreciated. And Paula has kindly added all of the breakout questions into the chat. So depending on which breakout room that you are in, 1 in 5, you have a question, How does your privilege, or how do you think you're impacted by privilege and oppression and so on and so forth. So let's all separate and we'll regroup back.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How do you think you are impacted by privilege or oppression? What does this mean for your work and the way you live your life?
2. Have you experienced working in a relationship of allyship (as an ally and/or with an ally)? What was positive about this experience? What was challenging?
3. What questions do you have about your role in Indigenous education? Is there anything that makes you feel nervous/uncomfortable or supported/accepted?
4. What are some things you do to make people you work with (colleagues, learners, etc.) feel safe? What questions do you have about how to create more cultural safety in your learning environment?

TANYA:

All right. Welcome back, everyone. Was that enough time for everybody? I'm hoping so. I'm really hoping so. Okay, so at this point what we're going to do is close the slides so we can see everyone. If you want to put your camera on, you can. If not, we can black screen it. It's okay. I'm used to talking to myself anyway. Okay. Let's go through these questions. I was actually talking to everyone while you were in the breakout rooms that some of the teachings that I was taught are... sometimes when you're teaching important things come up. Those important things need time as well. So it's important for all of us within Indigenous pedagogies to remain

flexible. So I'm really excited to hear everyone's conversation about these breakout rooms. I think what we'll do is we'll save the lecture portion for next Thursday so we can hear everyone and share. So let's go with the first question. That's breakout room 1 and 5. That's question: How do you think you are impacted by privilege or oppression? What does this mean for your work and the way you live in your life? Is anyone able and willing to share?

PARTICIPANT:

I'll start because I said that I wasn't going to talk because I just want to get it over with. The vote was we should all say a little something. So I'm going to go first. I think we actually had a good moment for me in the breakout room because I was saying that one of the things, ways, it affects my work is that I'm scared of making a mistake even though we have the conversations around, it's okay to make mistakes in becoming an ally. It doesn't, that doesn't sit with me. It still scares me, no matter what, it scares me. And so, yeah, one of the people in our room, Lisa, just had some good thoughts and advice on that. I appreciated that.

PARTICIPANT:

Hi. I'm from room 5. We actually spent more time talking about allyship. So we did talk briefly about number one, but we weren't sure which question we were supposed to answer. So we're actually on the allyship question if that's okay.

TANYA:

Oh yeah, that's totally fine. Like conversation sometimes just flows. That's all about visiting. So we're talking about pedagogy. So an Indigenous pedagogy is actually visiting and sometimes through conversation, things get fleshed out. So your group just needed to talk about allyship and that's okay.

PARTICIPANT:

I think Lisa should share her gem that we got with our conversation.

TAYNA:

Are you willing to share, Lisa?

LISA:

Sure. I had said that I'm white passing, but I'm status, so I know both sides of the fence. And then we got on the conversation of being fearful. So trying to make those steps in that reconciliation and doing all that. But being afraid you're going to make a mistake. And then how do I fix it? Especially when you've already got people looking at you and they're thinking, you don't belong in our group type thing. So I said, if you're honest and upfront about things like, I'm learning how to do this. I really want to make things better, but I may make a mistake. And if I do, please stop me and help me correct it so I can learn it properly. That was the gem. Right. So those who are afraid to make that first step, if you're honest about it, then usually the people hearing you are going to be more likely to help you than to get angry with you.

DANIEL:

I was also in Lisa's group and I just really appreciate that very practical piece, right? It's not very theoretical in that sense. He's just very practical. And I know like for us here at where I worked at the Justice Institute in British Columbia. A lot of times we say to anyone in our courses that let's say, for example, there are 10 students in the classroom. We try and always say, there are, there are 11 students here, there are 12 students here. We're all learning together. And so it matches with what Lisa was saying. Just setting that tone early on of, hey, this is something I'm learning, please I'm open to any feedback. We've received some great feedback from the students who teach us, don't they? We're learning from them just as much as they are learning from us. So it really matches with that tone. And again, appreciated hearing that Lisa,

TANYA:

Daniel, I think you said it right. You know, like we are learning from the students as well. If we're talking about reciprocity, which we were talking about earlier. So reciprocity is actually a really ingrained way of knowing. It's how we produce our knowledge and it's actually a part of our being as well. So relationality and reciprocity is really important. So if I can give you all a tip that works really well for me is when I start a classroom, I talk about the misconception that Indigenous are experts in everything because we're not. Yes, I'm Métis, but, and this is where positionality and where Rachel was saying getting to know yourself is really important because if you introduce yourself and say, Hey, I'm Métis. I'm from this community. This is where my knowledge comes from. This is where my experience comes from. And then open up and say to the classroom like because I know in this classroom setting we all have a bunch of different experiences and a lot of people have more experience in certain things and I do. So opening up the conversation to be more collaborative so we can all talk about our community experiences and making it a collaborative way. And that's within Indigenous pedagogies is a really good way of addressing that right away. So you can say, I'm going to make mistakes. That's okay. If I make a mistake, just like Lisa was saying, give me a correction. And yeah, it's a community of learners. Thank you, Kāshā. Community of learners, and it's really ingrained in us. If you make a mistake, chances are if someone corrects you, it means they care enough about you to spend some time with you and give you some advice, right? Go ahead, Rachel, do you want to add anything?

RACHEL:

Yeah. I think what you shared I just wanted to add a little bit to what I was talking to about asking Indigenous people to share their knowledge. And when we did those interviews with people for the program, I was developing. One of the things that came up was how uncomfortable Indigenous people felt when they were asked a question about cultural knowledge and they didn't know. A lot of times that was because of the disconnection that they had experienced as a result of colonialism. And when they were asked those questions, they started to think like, Oh, I'm, maybe I'm not really, I'm not a good Indigenous person or I'm not, you know, I feel bad that I don't know more about my culture, right? It made them feel really bad. So I think that important thing, we can't assume that... a lot of times I think non-Indigenous people think that well, if I were an Indigenous person teaching this, I would know everything. I would feel fully comfortable. But a lot of times non-Indigenous, Indigenous people

will also feel uncomfortable with that. And I think that really goes back to what you were saying about just being honest with who you are, whether you're Indigenous or non-Indigenous, and that you're still learning. And that can happen whether you're Indigenous or not. So yeah, Great points.

TANYA:

Exactly. I'm just going to put in an article in the chat Rob Innes. He has an article and it's called "Who Are You anyway?" It's all about working with communities. And Rachel brings up a really good point that there's insiders and outsiders to communities, right? But then there's everything that's in-between. There's a huge spectrum, right? So because of dispossession from land and urbanization, my family is from a small Métis village, but I am not connected to the Land there because I grew up in the city, right? So it's about insider and outsider and recognizing where you fit in that picture, right? I think it's really cool. Can we jump? I know we're running out on time as we always do. But I wanted to jump actually to breakout room 4 and 8 because I think this is a really cool question. What are some things you do to make people you work with safe, feel safe? And what questions do you have about how to create a more cultural safety, cultural safety in your learning environment?

JESSICA:

I was the note keeper. I'm Jessica and I was a note keeper for room number 4. And I'll just read through the notes and I hope I do justice to the great concepts that we talked about. If you have relationship-based work, the relationship creates the opportunities to share. It creates a safe workspace where instructors feel safe asking questions. When, this person said, when faculty come into their room, they make time, they put aside their other work. They are there for those people. So it's flexible that way. Another person said stay very connected with the Indigenous bands. We have, we each have a region where building those regions as a group. We check in with them. We go to their regions and then in each institution, in each region, there's an Indigenous students opportunity to connect with Indigenous students and build relationships there. Another person said there's two paths to how to approach this. On the instructional side, this person said they were white, German, European, and provided a lot of space to allow for other cultures. Allowing learning to occur as opposed to pushing that learning. And asking for questions means you don't necessarily have to answer my question. It's not like an immediate thing. It's like when I ask for questions. I'm opening up time for you to reflect on the process. And then on the work side, this person said, you know, there is an organization that's colonized, profit-motivated. There's pressure to perform and have deliverables. There's quotas. And the college just doesn't understand that when you reach out to the community, you can't expect an immediate jump on board, but rather, you need to provide the space for the community to consider your request and think about it. And this person also said, when dealing with communities, here's a great quote. No answer is an answer. I wrote that down and I will remember that. Also they brought out reciprocity. How important reciprocity was for creating a safe space. Because you feel like you're going back to that relationship. And just one more page after this, I'm giving students enough time. Lots of, there's lots of complexity. And when there's lots of complexity, you should approach your work with

care and love. Being genuine and listening. Not oh, it's not our space to say, We think you need this. Instead say, Here's what we're thinking about doing. Is any of what we're doing interesting to you? And allow people to opt in rather than just say, Here's our mandate, this is how we're going to fix it. Then a really lovely conversation about being vulnerable, not the sage on the stage. This person has said he started as class by saying, well first, will you teach me something, a word or phrase? And then just show your unknowing and your discomfort and your, and you're grappling with the knowledge. You show yourself as a learner as well as the teacher. Reading your work and culturally responsible pedagogies and Indigenous pedagogies. Promoting learner agency and learner voice so they can take control of their own learning journeys. It's not just about the test at the end, but the process of learning. Rather than being the sage on the stage or sitting beside, walking with the learner through their journey. And that you're sort of co-learning in that. And then the last thing is, who decided that we would teach classes for exactly this many minutes or this many hours and that learning would only happen there? And that's such an artificial colonial time-based structure and we need to maybe, when we're decolonizing our learning, we could start with that concept and I hope my colleagues in breakout room 4 feel represented in all those notes.

TANYA:

You all killed it. I love that. Great job, Jessica, and great job to everyone in your group. If you don't mind, can I draw some attention to your name title? Because I think this is a really important thing to talk about as well. So in Jessica's, she has her pronouns, but not guys in there. And I think that's really important because we're talking about things like language. So I'm going to include in the chat, there's Greg Younging. He has a really good book. And Chelsea Vowel, they both have really good books about how to appropriately talk, because what this is all about is using appropriate language, right? And knowing which language to use. So this is a really good place to start on how to appropriately talk with Indigenous peoples in using resisting and resurgence language, right? So it's really cool. I really loved that. I loved all of your ideas. The only thing I would caution you on is using the word bands with respect to all Indigenous peoples. Because not all Indigenous use those words like Métis, they don't use the word "bands." That's mostly a First Nations tradition. So I mean, words. Words are powerful. So the more that we learn about them, the more that we can destructure them. Any other suggestions for this question and making our students feel safe and welcome?

VALERIE:

Tania, this is Valerie and I had a lovely group and thank you very much, Jessica, for all of the wonderful things that you contributed. It was very, very thoughtful and one thing that stuck with me with the discussion. We had a beautiful discussion and I just want to thank my group for nominating me to speak on their behalf and also for their wonderful discussion and their sharing. One to make people feel safe. And I thought it was a beautiful, beautiful thought was just taking space to have introductions to get to know people and where they're coming from. And I think that there were a lot of things that we talked about, but that was the one thing that resonated and I really appreciated that. And doing heart-centred work, you know, if you're doing a heart-centred work and you stumble or a hiccup or something like that, then, you

know, then you should be able to be okay with that because you're coming from a good place and you're learning and you're being open and people are very generous when you have a hiccup or a stumble. And that giving space for large groups, but small groups as well so that the quieter people can have a chance to have a voice in a different way. There were many more things that we... we really appreciate that little bit of extra time because we started talking about some other things. And I invite any member from our group to add anything that I may have missed or something that resonated very strongly with them that I did not share. And if they don't wish to do so, then I just thank them for the opportunity for representing them. Hay čx^w qə

TANYA:

Oh, I'm muted. Of course. Just saying thank you, Valerie. I love all of your ideas as well. Everything is really important and both groups, they've picked up on a really important aspect is that heart learning aspect of it, right? I've had lots of Elders tell me it's about learning, going from the brain to the heart and back again. And in traditional academia we're so heavily focused on the brain and the mental peace that we often forget that we're a whole person, right? There's other things that you need to enact in that type of stuff. Like there's your emotions, your Spirit, and also your physical body that we need to take care of as well. So introducing yourself and being vulnerable, I can't emphasize that enough. Be your true authentic self because the more honest and true you are with yourself to your students and the people you're working with, that's where reciprocity kicks in, right? So then you'll get that in return, right? Thank you for sharing. Any other last-minute items that anyone wants to share that were really cool in those discussions? Here in some blank, blank space. Which means I think it's time to wrap up so we can all go home and let things percolate. So we'll come back together and wrap everything up and we'll have a larger conversation next week. I'm really looking forward to it. Thank you again, Rachel, for everything. I'm looking forward to seeing you all next week. Marsee. We'll see you all then. Thank you.

RACHEL:

Thank you, everyone. Take care.