

Pulling Together

Week 3 - Engaging with Indigenous Communities

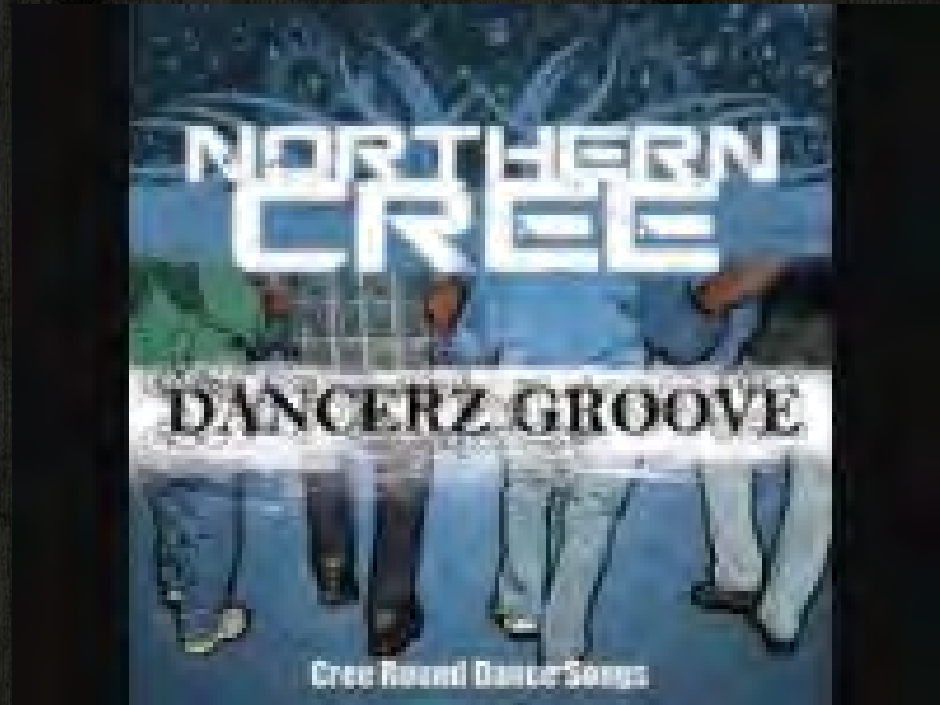


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https://youtu.be/0fJX_QczU5w

Agenda for Today

1. Check in...
2. Special Guest: Josh Morin
3. Working *with* Indigenous communities
4. Working *with* Elders
5. Some tips for Communication
6. Cultural Appropriation vs Appreciation

Check in...

- **Week 3: Thursday, January 26 (pg. 27-35)**
 - Engaging with Indigenous Communities
- **Week 4: Thursday, February 2 (pg. 37-45)**
 - Incorporating Diverse Sources of Knowledge
- **Week 5: Thursday, February 9 (pg. 47-56)**
 - Developing Awareness of One's Own Role in Indigenization and Reconciliation
- **Week 6: Thursday, February 16 (pg. 58-65)**
 - Promoting Systemic Change

Special Guest... Josh Morin!



Working *with* Indigenous Communities

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“The word itself ‘research’ is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts , it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful. It is so powerful that Indigenous peoples even write poetry about research. The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world’s colonized peoples.”

- Tuhiwai Smith, 2012

Emotional Triggers – Working with Trauma

- Be prepared!
 - Be aware of emotional support available in the community and in the University
 - Know professional codes surrounding disclosure
 - Think about how you will respond if someone is triggered
- Self-Care
 - Be aware of emotional labour
 - Take time in-between sessions
- Know who you are
 - Situating yourself is crucial when working with communities

Métis Aunty Advice...

“It’s not your place to put your emotional shit on communities, they have their own traumas and are not your babysitters this is taken from years of experience working with Indigenous Communities in various contexts.”

Who is an Elder? Who is a Knowledge Keeper?

First Nations, Métis and Inuit elders are acknowledged by their respective communities as an 'Elder' through a lifetime of learned teachings and earned respect. Many communities have defined protocol and process for becoming an Elder. Gender and age are not factors in determining who is an elder.

Knowledge keepers are those people who may not be considered an elder but carry traditional knowledge and expertise in different spiritual and cultural areas.

Working with Elders: General Tips

- Do not leave invitations to the last minute. Discuss expectations in advance
- Ask about smudging and inquire about building protocol
- Do not rush or limit time during conversations
- Do not interrupt
- Elders should be served first
- Do not touch regalia without permission
- Get extra space for them if needed
- Walk them to events
- Gifts: it is customary to provide a gift of appreciation afterwards
- Elder Helper (Oskapew) and Attendants
 - Oskapew - assists with preparation of ceremony
 - Please ensure that they are compensated as well
 - If they do not have a helper, you will need to provide one

Elder Honorariums

Events that require honorariums

- Prayer: To start an event/activity with a prayer and to end with a prayer
- Cultural Workshops: Storytelling, drum making, etc.
- Traditional Ceremony
- Convocation

Tobacco Offering

- Tobacco may be offered as an acknowledgement of their wisdom and teachings
 - Represents a sacred gift exchange
- Present the tobacco in an open hand. If the Elder takes the tobacco, they've accepted the request
- This is not viewed as an obligation
- Tobacco ties - make your own



NOTE: Not all Indigenous Elders expect a tobacco offering.

Smudging and Pipe Ceremonies

Smudging is an Indigenous tradition that involves the burning of sweetgrass, sage and/or cedar. Sage and cedar smudges produce a very strong and distinct aroma but the smoke associated with them is minimal and lasts a very short time. Sweetgrass has a very mild aroma and produces less smoke. A smudge is burned primarily for purification and to help to create a positive mind set.

Tobacco is used in pipe ceremonies by a pipe carrier.





<https://youtu.be/00Bb1xGqO20>

Some Tips for Strong Communication

Avoid Colloquialisms

- This is used in popular communication and carry connotations that may offend
- Try to avoid at all costs
 - ~~Indian giver~~
 - ~~Circle the wagons~~
 - ~~Low man on the totem pole~~
 - ~~Rain dance~~
 - ~~Too many Chiefs, not enough Indians~~
 - ~~Pow wow~~
 - ~~Indian Summer~~
 - ~~Indian Time~~

Don't Force Timelines

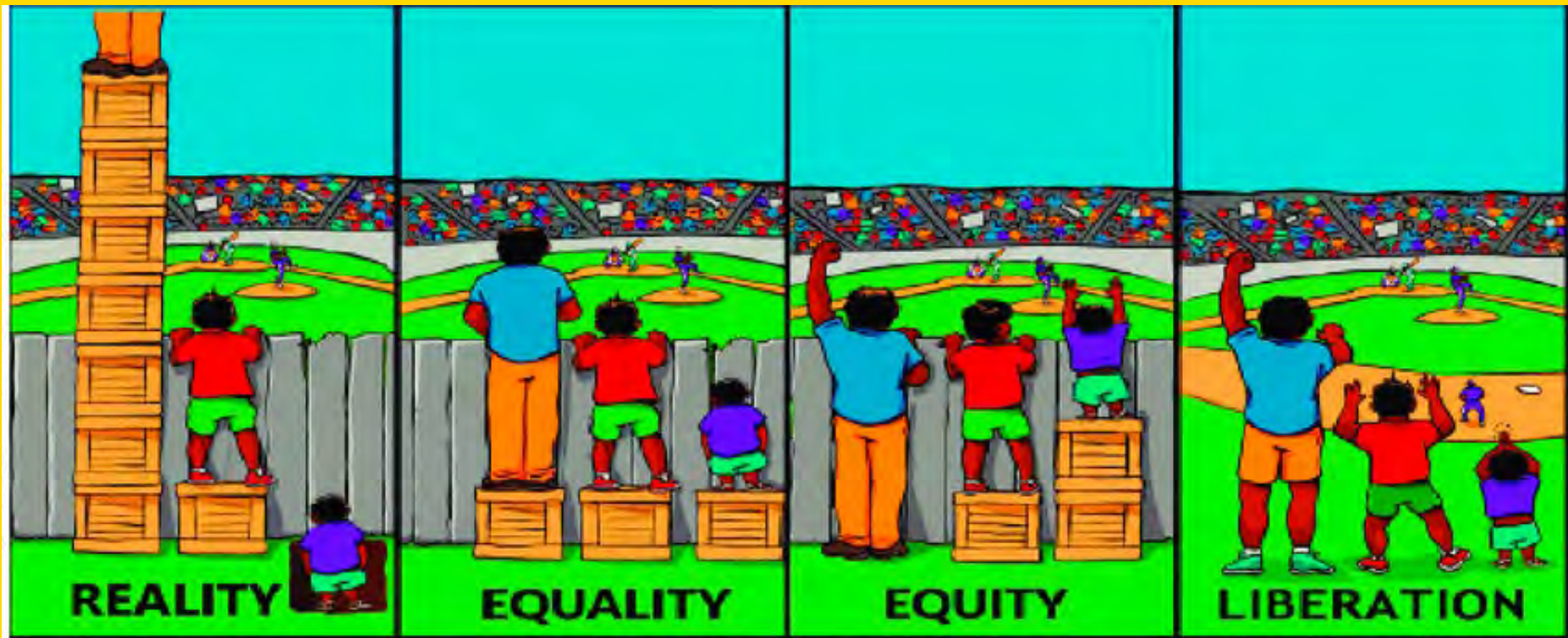
- This is a thorny issue
- Do not go into community with a timeline. Pushing too hard will create resistance, which will make things go slower
- Pushing will compromise and future possibilities
- Leave your timeline back at the office, follow the community's lead
- Leave dates and meetings times up to them. We do not know if there are any cultural, traditional pursuits that may take precedence over your meeting.

“Stakeholders”

- This is common business jargon
- Avoid at all costs! If an Indigenous community is not happy with what you are doing, they can launch legal action against a business
- Indigenous Peoples are not stakeholders - they have constitutionally protected rights and are used to dealing with Canada, provinces and territories on a Nation-to-Nation basis.
- Instead, consider: “Rights holder”

Equality or Equity

- Use with caution!
- Indigenous peoples have constitutionally protected rights



Lastly...

- Do not assume that because you have an Indigenous friend that you are an expert
- Do not assume that men rule.
- Potluck vs Potlatch
 - Potlatch is an ancient, traditional gathering held by many NorthWest Coast First Nations that survived the best attempts of the government to banish it.
- Do not import direct eye contact. Eye contact came with severe punishment in Residential School. For hunter societies, they need to keep an eye on their lunch.
- Don't overdress. You can send the wrong message: that you have lots of money or that you are a "defender of the Empire"
- Do not interrupt. Wait your turn to speak.

*Who is allowed to
tell Indigenous
Stories?*

EVERYONE!

As long as they follow Cultural Protocol and Ethical Care is considered ...



<https://youtu.be/kWDBfsuKfol>

Cultural Appropriation

- When someone adopts an aspect of a culture that is not their own.
- Represents a power dynamic where someone from a dominant culture takes elements from another culture that is systematically oppressed by that dominant group

What About Cultural Exchange?

- When people share mutually with each other
- Does not represent a power dynamic

Assimilation

- When marginalized people adopt elements of the dominant culture in order to survive
- There are no options here. These groups do not have the power to decide which customs to follow.

Cultural Protocol

“a means to ensure that activities play out in a manner that reflects the community teachings and are done in a good way”
(Kovach, 2010)

Elder Protocol and Guidelines

Remember: Protocol differs among Elders and communities

Cultural Protocol – Exmamples

ALWAYS consult with the community that you are working with. There is no single rule to fit all communities.

Protocol Examples:

- Some stories only told in the Winter seasons
 - Winter = Storytelling!
- Some stories you are not allowed to say specific names.



<https://youtu.be/9BHvpWP2V9Y>

*See you
next week!*

**Week 4: Thursday, February 2
(pg. 37-45)**

*Incorporating Diverse Sources of
Knowledge*