

Transcript for Research Speaker Series – Storytelling as Methodology: Anti-Oppression in Teaching and Research

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GWEN NGUYEN:

It's right at 11:00, so I think I can start while people are still joining in. But my name is Gwen and I'm a learning and teaching advisor at BCcampus. It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the first session of BCcampus Research Speaker Series Winter 2024 on a very important topic, Storytelling as Methodology. Before we start, I'd like to go over a few housekeeping items. The first thing is this whole session will be recorded. You're welcome to keep your camera off and feel free to rename yourself to "Participant." We've also enabled live captioning for accessibility. I would like to say special thank you to my two exceptional teammates, One is Britt Dzioba and Kelsey Kilbey. Britt has been a very wonderful partner for this Research Speaker Series project, providing her inspiration and unwavering commitment to this project. Kelsey has been our wonderful support behind the scenes for all events of teaching and learning team at BCcampus. Before we dive into the session, I'd like to begin with the territorial acknowledgment.

On this slide, you will see this slide display two beautiful photos. One represents the place that most BCcampus staff live and work, including myself, specifically on the unceded territories of various Indigenous nations in British Columbia. One shows a very vibrant, lively city in Vietnam, where I am right now. As we respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, we continue our journey of learning and relationship building. Although I live and work on the traditional territories of Lekwungen-speaking People, including the Songhees, Esquimalt, and WSÁNEĆ People typically, I am right now presently in Saigon, Vietnam, visiting my family and working remotely. It's almost 2:00 a.m. Actually, 2:00 a.m. Despite the time zone challenges, I'm very grateful that I have the opportunity to be close to my family and still collaborate with everyone on the other side of the world. Please feel free to share your introduction and territorial acknowledgement in the chat if you wish. Typically, we share the survey link at the very end of the session. But recognizing that some of you might have a tight schedule, I'd like to mention this right now. We invite you to participate in a short anonymous survey. The link is available in the chat and your feedback will help us shape our future professional development event for the new fiscal year. Please help us with the survey.

Turning back to our session focus, we are here to dive deep into Understanding Storytelling as Methodology: Anti-Oppression in Teaching and Research. In the session description link, it says "What can anti-oppression in research look like, sound like, and feel like? To navigate this exploration, we are very happy and privileged to have Dr. Lyndze Harvey. I had the pleasure of connecting with Lyndze during our doctorate program in curriculum and instruction at the University of Victoria. Her bonus passion, as well as the innovative approach in teaching as well as research, especially incorporating the storytelling as well as auto-ethnography and some

other methodology truly stands out. Dr. Harvey's significant contribution to the anti-oppression teaching and research are really noteworthy and deserves our research community's attention. Please join me in warmly welcoming Dr. Lyndze Harvey as she leads through understanding and empowering storytelling as a method for anti-oppression in research and teaching. Here you go, Lyndze, please take it away.

LYNDZE HARVEY:

Thank you so much, Gwen. Hi and welcome everyone. My name is Lyndze Harvey and I use she/her pronouns. Today I'm going to be talking to you about some of the research I've been doing and just the way that I'm exploring my own process of reconciling and learning as a settler.

All right. I want to start by saying "Tá'cé'el sw siam." Welcome, honoured ones. I feel really welcomed by BCcampus and by your attendance and willingness to learn. Thank you for being here. I also want to acknowledge with respect to the Lekwungen- speaking Peoples, the Songhees, Esquimalt, and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples on whose unceded traditional territory I work and learn. But also the unceded traditional territories of the T'Sou-ke and Scia' new on whose land I live and play. I'm very lucky to be here.

I'm going to begin today with a territorial acknowledgment. Check. We've done that. I'm going to situate myself. I'm going to tell you a story. Then I'm going to discuss this idea of modernity and coloniality in maybe a new way to some of you. Then we will approach a common opinion and an alternative opinion. That's where we're going to get some discomfort and some vulnerability. Hopefully, I can help you through that. Then I'm going to explore with you this idea that I've been encountering, where I'm trying to choose emancipation. This is a difficult choice to make. It sounds easy, but there's some other things that get in my way and distract me. I think they probably distract you too. I want to talk to you about that. Then I'm going to offer you some of my trust and see how that feels for you. And maybe that's something you want to bring into your own practice in teaching and research. Then hopefully at the end, we'll have some time for your stories or questions.

To begin, I'm a settler on this land. I was born on the territories of the Anishinaabe, which is what we call Ontario, southwestern Ontario. Some of my ancestors were born on a farm in the Isle of Wight, in England. Others were born in a poorhouse in Scotland. I also have ancestors from an unknown village in Lebanon and many other ancestors from unknown places. Most were settlers, but not all.

I am a queer parent of two, a partner of 25 years. I'm also neurodivergent. I teach teachers to be in-service teachers and leaders and those researching educational studies. My research has centred around how we prepare active citizens for pluralistic democracy. Whether we even know what that means. Whether we can do this while confronting coloniality and considering diversity, equity, and inclusion, dismantling competing understandings of freedom, and letting go of the need to do so with a scaffolded explanation. That is where I'll be taking you today.

This question motivates me. Can we walk our talk? I think most of us want to walk our talk, but when we pull back and really reflect around the idea of a scaffold explanation and other opportunities for storytelling, what is happening there? Are we walking our talk?

I'm going to begin with a story. Before I tell the story, I want to invite you to make space for the story. Many times in our capitalistic modernity, we tend to be in a hurry, to rush, to be busy. We're going to talk about the efficiency of time. Storytelling confronts all of that. Can we make space? Can we say, I am just here right now? I am present in this moment, and I'm ready to just listen? Can I put down any devices that I'm holding? Can I put down a pencil, if I'm taking notes? And just make space for the story.

It is a dry and sunny day, one of the last before the winter rains settle in for the remaining months of the year, and the children are rolling the log rounds with impressive strength from one end of the garden to the other. They have a plan and I stand by. I am on standby. I watch as seven people between the ages of two and six pause and talk, give directions to one another. Point here and there, smile and laugh. The little apple tree is at the centre of it all. It is crooked, nearly without leaves, covered in a lichen we call old man's beard because it resembles a faint green and coarse facial hair. The children are trying to fix the tree. They have moved the log rounds, about eight of them, so that they're placed on their flat sides and they cannot roll anymore. They put wooden planks laid on top of these log rounds to create a scaffolding. They have a toy tool box with plastic replica tools. They have sticks and rocks and they are tapping the tree or sawing at its branches and the trunk while humming and talking as they work. A four-year-old approaches me and asks, "What's this?" And he's holding up a red rectangle that looks like a level, but without the small glass tubes of liquid and bubbles. Instead, there are shapes cut out where the useful parts of the instrument would be. I open my mouth to speak, to give its name, and to explain its function, but I stop myself. "Would you like to see what that tool really looks like?" In the shed I dig around for a minute to produce a small aluminum level about 10 inches long and complete with those tubes with the yellow green liquid and bubbles. He runs back to the tree with both levels, imitation and actual. He proceeds to compare them, study them, and try them out. He places them both on one of those planks of scaffolding. Another child, about five years old and with a muddy face, crouches down to see the levels and asks, "What's that for?" They both take turns handling it and talking about it. Another child joins in. And now there are three of them crowded around the levels, and they are interested in the bubbles. "Do they come out?" They know that these pockets of air are important, and the levels have been set on the plank. And I hear one of them say, "Don't touch it." Another one picks up the short end of the 1-by-four plank and lifts it slightly off the log. And suddenly there's some excitement. The two children closer to the level are pointing and talking. And they instruct the child with the plank in her hands to slowly lower it to the ground. The original curious kid comes my way, shouting, "Come here, you've got to see this." The level, the real one, has been set on the plank. The little red rectangle, the mock level, is nowhere to be seen. The hammering and the sawing has ceased, and the children gather around us. The curious child begins, "At first, I thought it was a measure, but it was not having numbers." This was true as what numbers used to be on the level have faded away. He continued in his little kid way,

"So this thing has a bubble inside of it and the bubble moves around When you move it. See?" He holds the level to my face and he tilts it really slowly from side to side with a steady hand, and I tell him, I do see it moving. The other children are very close and clamoring to see it and talking and telling me what they have done. And the child places the level on the plank and proceeds, "See how the bubble is in the middle? This wood is flat. Then we move the wood." And he instructs another child to move the wood, and everyone clears away and is suddenly quiet. "Look, the bubble moved all the way this way. Do you see?" He sounds triumphant and his eyes are bright. And I acknowledge that I see what he means. And the child holding the plank returns it to its place and takes over. "That's because it's not flat. Now it's flat and the bubbles are in the middle." The little ones are excited and they all talk. And they pass the level around and they go from plank to plank and test it again and again.

What transpired with the level was not a typical example of my approach to teaching. At the time, it felt challenging and unnatural to refrain from explaining the level to the children. I wanted to intervene. I wanted to tell them what it was called, and what it did, and how it worked. I wanted to show them how to use it. For the record, they called it the "flatter" because it showed that things were flat rather than the "level." To allow the experience to unfold was to learn alongside the kids. To quash this compulsion to explain this deep need to show what I know felt as though I was neglecting my role. I'm a teacher. A teacher is scaffolding a carefully approached lesson. What was I doing if not teaching? What were the children doing with the level if not learning? These lines were blurring and there was this uncertainty and vulnerability that came with seemingly doing nothing. I felt I could choose to bring it in and bring the situation back to something with which I was familiar and perhaps regain that assurance of my position. Or I could let down my guard and explore the unknown, the unscripted, and what other possibilities there may be. The children were clearly engaged in the latter, and I wanted to be with them.

When I think about the story, I think of teaching and learning within modernity and what happens when one engages their praxis. I also think about coloniality and my commitment to confronting it in my thinking and my practice.

In this presentation, I will use the term "modernity" instead of what is usually called "the West," which is referring to the global West and North. Modernity is not a place or a time, but rather it is like the air you breathe. It is a single story of progress, development, human evolution, and civilization that is omnipresent. I want to explore the impacts of this story of modernity and its paradoxes on education and educational research specifically. But I think this extends to all research. In her book, *Hospicing Modernity*, Vanessa Machado de Oliveira, she's a Latinex professor, a current dean of Education at UVic, and co-founding member of Gesturing Decolonial Futures Collective, which a link will go up in the chat if you want to explore that. She takes up the role of modernity in teaching and educational research. Like Machado de Oliveira, I understand modernity to be unsustainable. My hope is that we can relinquish enjoyments and securities afforded by modernity and embrace other ways of being and doing. Traditionally, education within modernity has relied on the passivity of the learner. While educational

research has embraced similar tractability among those who read it, this is something I think needs to be questioned. As teachers and researchers, we are used to leading the learner to a predetermined endpoint. Revealing relevant information as we see fit in our roles, perfecting our guided decoding or our sensibly ordered illustration of the complicated in these simplistic and digestible terms is a sign of competence. Of being the good teacher or the good researcher. As students or interlocutors, those who read the research, that's the word I'm using, "interlocutors," we are accustomed to being led from point A to point B to point C. We rely on the intelligence of the other, the teacher, or the researcher, person writing research, to guide our understanding towards that gradual released independence.

This story of modernity and the story of teaching and research is echoed in coloniality. Machado de Oliveira points out that modernity cannot exist without colonialism and coloniality. Both are constituted of and inseparable from modernity. While colonialism refers to the occupation and subjugation of lands and peoples, coloniality applies to the way in which relationships, reason, wisdom, and other structures like education and research are co-opted by and for the colonizer. Modernity and coloniality impose a mode of representation that claims both benevolence and universality for itself, while denying its violence and unsustainability. Within modernity and coloniality, there is a narrative that tells us that science is superior to philosophy. Instruction prevails over dialogue. Persuasive argument trumps storytelling. Reason is more valid than emotion. And what is unknowable, it must be put aside for what is certain. We want that certainty. The separation and hierarchy of methods in educational research is evident in the dominant narrative surrounding the role of the teacher and student, the parent and child, psychology and philosophy, and Western and Indigenous ways of knowing. are also facing this hierarchal story. The presentation of knowledge as something that is sought and given to us divides us. The use of scaffolding to explain how one arrives at a certain judgment or interpretation preserves those roles of superior and inferior. Are you uncomfortable yet? I'm hoping we're all uncomfortable at this point.

How we do educational research, theorizing, its expression is influenced by those very ideologies on which we attempt to shed light. If I'm trying to shed light on systemic racism and policy, on invisible colonial legacy. If I'm trying to raise voices because I see a lack of representation in voice, and then I continue by using the same ideologies that I notice are problematic to shed that light, there's a problem there. Our technique can be applied to silence, or we can use a technique to unsettle. We can use methodology to make connections or make a call to action. Or there could be some other outcomes that undermine those goals. Does the more common approach to teaching and expressing research or theory, one that relies on a carefully ordered reasoning and explanation, aid us in fulfilling our humanizing goal? Or does it simply express our knowledge in a way that stultifies and silences the other, undermining our efforts. When the aim is to question modernity or resist colonialism, or coloniality, or to seek equity, or to make space for diversity, or to teach or research inclusion, inclusivity, can we maintain methods rooted in modernity and coloniality and still be committed to our goals? It's an uncomfortable question.

Can we use a scaffold and explanation? Without examining its origins, impacts, or the status quo it maintains? If we are to let go of the standard way of teaching and expressing research findings, is there a viable alternative? How can we critically engage in educational theory and practice and produce "academically acceptable responses to our queries"? Be that rigorous academic we are called to be and further the cause of equity. And have a humanizing relationship with students and our interlocutors, our readers.

So these questions are especially pertinent when the topics we explore surround systemic inequities or call for decolonization, anti-racism, and other systems of oppression. And I'm assuming that if you're here, you are interested in researching those things or in bringing a confrontation to anti-oppression. Or confrontation to oppression into your classrooms, into your research. Both teaching and educational research are opportunities to either reproduce or reduce inequality, right? For years we've been reproducing inequality and there's this call to reduce it. But are we really reducing it? It's a deep and important question. We need to walk our talk. Praxis, which may be a new word for some of you, I'm using the Ferrian and bell hooksian approach to praxis. In praxis, our practices should align with our beliefs and our goals. What we think and what we do cannot be separated because one informs the other. Our reflections on the connection or disconnection between the two is essential for us to transform, for us to continually move and change. Praxis supports teachers and researchers in their efforts to make changes in themselves, in the structures within which we operate, like classrooms or the academy or our field. "By making space for critical conversations surrounding what we think and what we do, the reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed," that's a quote from Freire, need not be reserved for what we just critically engage, but also how we express the critique. We're not just going to be using this to dig into what it is we're criticizing or we're having a critical eye on. We also need to use it for our approach, our methodology. In our research or our resolution in classroom teaching is... Sorry, if our research or our resolution in classroom teaching is in the realm of critical consciousness and transformation and we seek a more equitable and just world, we need to reflect on that theory of praxis connection and the role of a scaffold explanation as it may be subverting our aims.

This is where I'm going to ask you to lean in to even more discomfort. Allow yourself some self-compassion if you're feeling a little vulnerable, if you're thinking I'm feeling criticized. This is something that I do regularly. Those feelings that we feel. Notice them because they're telling you that you want to do well by your students and by those you research. That's a good thing. Just invite that in and have some self-compassion. As I discussed, this common opinion, an opinion I have held myself and an alternative opinion, one that I'm struggling with, but I'm open to at this point.

In his book, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Jacques Rancière argues that the common approaches to teaching and expressing knowledge are problematic and ineffective in supporting the goal of reducing inequality. The effective or practiced teacher knows the secret to transform knowledge from one who is learned to one who is ignorant. At the centre of it all is the ability

to recognize the distance between the top material and the person being instructed. The distance between learning and understanding. That's what we've been told. That's the story.

After determining what someone else needs to know, a good teacher or researcher, it takes pains to make the student or interlocutor understand by breaking down the concepts or skills into smaller parts, easier to digest while interpreting the rationale or reasoning or giving the significance. This is why we do this and possible use for these components and how they make a whole. We carefully curate scaffold points to effectively reveal our knowledge to the person supposedly without it. The logic of this methodology, the science of explanation, is deemed necessary because the one who explains considers the ignorant less intelligent. The belief is that the ignorant person needs to have information explained in order for them to learn efficiently.

This is uncomfortable to hear, but according to Rancière, the explanation is the procedure in place. So the goal of understanding. We have this goal. We want people to understand. That's undermined by the objective of stultification, meaning the loss of initiative for those who have something done for them, resulting in what they call a numbing or deadening, rather than understanding. Instead of reducing inequality or leaving space for emancipation through learning, there's this enforced stultification. Because within the explanation is this unspoken message which maintains the rationale of inequality. The message being that "to explain something to someone is first of all to show him that he cannot understand it by himself." I'm not saying that we as teachers or researchers walk around all day thinking I have superior intelligence, everybody else has inferior intelligence. We're not consciously thinking I'm going to enforce stultification and keep these people one step behind me so I can maintain my role as a superior intelligence. I don't think we consciously do that, hopefully. I don't think it is going to be something that's easy to undo because we don't consciously think it. Because it's something that we need to shed light on. Rancière is shining a light on that disconnection between theory and practice. In teaching and the writing of educational research we cling to the scaffold and explanation because a narrative tells us that it is necessary. This narrative is the same one that tells us that the preschooler cannot understand the tool, like the level, without the guidance of the teacher. They don't possess the intelligence that is equally capable to ours. We think that our efforts to explain will raise up students, interlocutors. I'm going to reduce inequality by explaining things and raising them up with intelligence, with education. That our practice will help them. But an explanation may, in fact, reproduce inequality through maintaining the belief that explaining is teaching, and being explained to is learning. The scaffolded argument in written research is also seen as the only option when the interlocutor cannot reach an understanding without that breakdown of the details into more approachable parts.

Full disclosure. When I first encountered the notion that explanation preserves a distance between people, an interval that is vertical and preferential, I balked. I did not see that as something that I was doing. Maybe it was true for some but not for me. My reaction indicated discomfort. Discomfort tells me that I am feeling vulnerable. And vulnerability announces to me that I have a choice. I can choose praxis or I can choose paralysis. Praxis is something that's

going to keep me moving, keep me transforming, and paralysis is not. I can reflect on my theory, practice connections and disconnections in the way in which what I do may be undermining what I believe. Or I can hold really tightly to the old ideas or the current ideas that support the ease of my world view and maintain things as immobile and unchanging and impossible to improve. Why did I hold onto this belief? Upon reflection, there were several roadblocks to reconciling my beliefs and practice. I was concerned about my role as a teacher in academics, without superior and inferior intelligences. And the practice of a scaffold explanation, much like the situation of the level in the preschoolers. If I wasn't explaining, what was I doing? It felt like I was doing nothing. My teaching in writing indicated that I was unconvinced that the argument in the way that I wanted them to understand it. I didn't think that they'd be able to understand it without me. They couldn't grasp the complexities or what I assumed would be challenging for them without me. They couldn't attain the knowledge that I deemed was necessary without me doing the reasonings for them.

In the world of anti-oppression work, we speak of intent versus impact, right? If I do not intend to oppress or undermine the intelligence of my students and interlocutors, then what? But the impact is really important here. The impact is enforced stultification. Can I continue with such a practice? But then I thought, okay, I have certainly had teachers in my life that empowered me. Those who probably explained concepts or ideas and did not have the effect of numbing or deadening my sense of my own intelligence or my capacity for learning. I have read research and academic writing that scaffolds a theory, and I have not felt that pang of inferiority or the sense that I was being rendered stupid. My need for this claim to be always true was wrapped up in modernity. I was attempting to move beyond that, but modernity kept calling me back. The voices of modernity, coloniality, and Western supremacy culminate in one loud and obvious question, for me anyway. Can inequality of intelligences be proven? You can't prove that we all have equal intelligence, as Rancière claims.

But proof of inequality of intelligences is not the point. Proof of inequality of intelligences is not the point. If the belief is that one intelligence is superior to another, then the aim is to reduce this gap, right? This perceived gap informs a method. Rancière suggests an alternative, another possibility that could emancipate all parties from this paradoxical narrative. What if we change our point of departure? When our jumping off point is based on reducing inequality. I want to create an anti-oppressive approach to teaching social studies, for example. When I have that as my jumping off point, the inequality between ourselves and our interlocutor is already present. We've already started with that they're unequal or they're lower, right? This is similar if the aim is to reproduce inequality. We're starting over here. But if both sides of the coin begin with an accepted disparity, there's a problem. Rancière reframes our approach with the opinion of equal intelligence. He says, you just have to have this opinion. The new point of departure where we start with this idea, what if all intelligence is equal?

I know what you're thinking. The opinion that we have equal intelligence is not to say that the student interlocutor knows everything the teacher researcher knows, But only that they are equally intelligent and therefore adept at understanding what any other human has created

with their intelligence. Indeed, we have different life experiences, different strengths and interests. For example, my sister, who designs furniture and builds furniture, can build a chair. And I cannot. But under the opinion of equal intelligence, if I had the will and the interest to learn how to build a chair, I could do so. Likewise, if she had the will and the interest to learn about French Enlightenment philosophy, which is where I spend most of my time, she would be capable of doing so. The opinion of equal intelligence does not mean that we learn in isolation from others either. We can't just always teach ourselves completely isolated from everyone else. Although we can teach ourselves things. We all have before. I taught myself how to knit, for example, I would not learn to build a chair without those tools and the chair to study, which are both created by people with equal intelligence to me. I might read a book that describes how a chair can be built. I might Google it, I might watch an online video that features someone like my sister building a chair. I could ask an expert, I could call my sister with some questions or to problem-solve and dialogue with someone of equal intelligence, albeit different experiences than me in terms of furniture and its construction. If I had the will and interest in building a chair and I believed, or my teacher believed, in my capacity to do so, I could use the methods above to learn to build a chair.

The need for efficiency be damned. That's modernity talking, right? The need for efficiency be damned. Emancipation would be the revised goal. If our jumping off point of our point of departure is that we all have equal intelligences, it's going to change where we go from there.

Okay. Aren't these methods still rooted in this scaffolded explanation? A book or a video on how to build a chair may still offer steps that break down what to do in an order that is more approachable to one that is new to this knowledge. Filling the gap between the learned and the ignorant as criticized before or reframed, these are experts from whom we are learning. One can be in a relationship with a text or video and skip what is already known, right? And focus on what is of interest or unknown. The interlocutor can control the lesson. Is it simply in the outlook of the student interlocutor? Rancière tells the story of Joseph Jacotot. Joseph Jacotot lived in the 18th century and his calling to spread the word that all people can teach what they do not know and can teach themselves what they desire to learn. But as a teacher and educational researcher, does this position make my work obsolete? Or is there a way that I can teach and express research at that revised point of departure? If I begin with an equality of intelligences, how does my teaching and research change? Rancière's goal is not to prove that everyone has equal intelligence, but rather he constructs equality as an opinion for the purpose of seeing what can be done under that supposition. If the teacher researcher approached the student interlocutor with a supposition that they are equally intelligent and therefore capable of understanding and learning, how would their practice differ from that which extended from the common opinion of superior and inferior intelligences?

What other methods might one use in writing, research, or teaching without explaining, without being the knowledge keeper, without the language of reason, without leading another on a journey to a destination already decided. The revised goal is not a transmission of knowledge. We cannot possibly know what another person already knows or how they know it.

We cannot know another person's truth. To make either supposition is to assume inequality. The aim amended is emancipation. This aligns with my research in a way that supports my praxis. This allows me to walk my talk.

Rancière's opinion is that learning is about relationships and making connections. We relate everything we encounter to what we have already learned. We make associations from our experiences to our existing interpretations. Learning is a translation. When the method employed is explanation, the connections and translations are made for rather than by the student or interlocutor. So the revised course of action is connecting to the shared humanity of others through speaking our truths. And the method is guided by the value of that journey rather than this predetermined destination. The problem is that within the dominant narrative of modernity, we seek truth. Right? A teacher researcher instructs so that student interlocutor, and this is a quote from Rancière, "lifts up the mask, rejoices, but his joy doesn't last long; he soon perceives that the mask he has taken off, covers another one, and so on until the end of all truth-seekers." This makes me think of moments in classes when we say, "Oh, well we'll learn more about that next week." Or "first you need to know this before you can learn that." That knowledge is controlled, even though we don't really know what another person's truth might be. Machado de Oliveira remarks that in modernity we are conditioned to want to cover everything with a heavy blanket of fixed meanings to index reality in language to word the world. Rancière says that the pursuit of truth is different from speakings of truth. The former presents opinion or one's interpretation of facts as truth, while the latter acknowledges truth to be only a person's opinion and opinions are in need of verification. It is this lifting of mask, the search for truth. The method of relying on explanation or someone more intelligent reasoning for another that leaves one wanting for something. The focus on a conclusion, one that is reached through reasonings and judgment, and a gradual release to independence by the teacher or writer of research undermines our shared humanness.

A method that aims to verify our shared humanity with others who we believe to be like us, makes poetry and translates and invites others to the same Rancière models and describes a more satisfying approach to teaching writing, teaching or writing research. He says, "it's a storyteller who never runs out of stories. It gives itself over to the pleasure of imagination without having to settle accounts of the truth. It sees that veiled figure only beneath the travesties that hide it. It is content to see those masks to analyze them without being tormented by the countenance underneath."

As helpful as Rancière is in my effort to deconstruct modernity and coloniality of the scaffold explanation and to open up to alternative approaches to thinking and doing in educational research. Contemporary Indigenous understandings of researching and writing within a narrative approach are essential because they've been doing it since time immemorial. Machado de Oliveira speaks to modernity's implications on stories. She says, "we are socialized to treat stories as tools of communication that enable us to describe reality, prescribe the future, and accumulate knowledge." We must be careful not to fall into another colonial trap. Modernity and coloniality have a way of staying hidden even in the open. In her book,

Indigenous Storywork, Stó:lō scholar Joanne Archibald discusses the need for stories to be "taken seriously." Archibald demonstrates the ways in which narrative writing is based in equality as the meaning is not given by and from another, but rather it is found by the listener, the reader, the interlocutor. Modernity has taught us to live and think out of our bodies. We push aside our heart so that we may focus on that rationale, our reasoning. This is what the Tewa scholar, Gregory Cajete calls a good life. It is a good life. Is it a good life? If a good life is to always think the highest thought can we do so when the thinking is done for us?

Within modernity, storytelling, and emotion are the domain of the irrational other. Something to be avoided in quality research if the outcomes are to be accepted by the academy as rigorous. And rigor is the primary qualifier rather than equality. And these elements are exclusive, right? You're rigorous or you're something else. Archibald tells us that "when the medium is storytelling, not only is meaning found rather than given, but one does not have to give meaning right after hearing a story, as with the question and answer pedagogical approach." But rather, we cannot control the lesson.

Reading or hearing a narrative implicates the listener or the interlocutor into becoming an active participant in the experience of the story. The threads that tie Rancière's ignorant schoolmaster and Archibald's Indigenous story work together for me are their efforts to reflect on this connection between the opinion of equality and its practice. The reciprocal and interrelated relationship between storyteller and interlocutor reconciles that hierarchy that is usually employed. Equality is implied because all humans tell stories and listen to them too. The story is not an equalizer, but it begins with equality in mind. Also, the perspective that a text is supposedly complete can be upset by storytelling. With equality as a point of departure, this text or this thing to dissect can instead be approached as something with which we connect and interact.

Archibald quotes Gerald Vizenor of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and the White Earth Reservation, who believes that "the story doesn't work without a participant... There has to be a participant and someone to listen. I don't mean listening in the passive sense. You could even listen by contradiction... That's really critical in storytelling."

In the instance of the level and the preschoolers, I was concerned that I was doing nothing if I was not explaining the level to the children. But I was engaged. I could feel it in my whole being. I was listening and watching as the children explored the tool, problem-solved, made mistakes, and then told me the story of their discoveries. I did not give meaning, but the children still found what they needed. It may not have been the meaning that I would prescribe. I could not control the lesson, but is the goal one of efficiency or something else entirely? I was engaged in resistance. I fought my habits and preconceived notions about intelligence, and held space for the children to tell stories to themselves, each other, and me. And this was emancipating for me and them.

When I tell the story to my students in teacher education, they often notice a connection between this Rancièrian revised point of departure or the opinion of equal intelligences and the First Peoples Principles of Learning. Jo Chrona, who is an educator and author. She's from the Ts'msyen Nation and she also has European heritage. She writes about the First Peoples Principles and Indigenous pedagogy. In her book *Wayi Wah!* I highly recommend it. She speaks about the effort to move from "learning about" to "learning from" Indigenous and foreign pedagogies. And the importance of honouring knowledges and the ways of being that confront and resist colonialism. She really centres First People's voices, Indigenous voices. The First Peoples Principles are a set of learning principles. Maybe you are not familiar with them, I've got a link to them for you. They're a set of principles that we can learn from. They are part of this Indigenous-informed pedagogical framework that reflects Indigenous knowledges and understandings about effective teaching and learning processes and environments that Indigenous people in Canada have had since time immemorial. The First Peoples Principles are listed here. And I will hold space for you to consider the story of the level and Rancièrian opinion and these principles and the connections that my students may have made. But please remember that you can even listen by contradiction. The principles are:

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of self, the family, the community, the land, the spirit ancestors.
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.
- Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.
- Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.
- Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.
- Learning involves patience and time.
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity.
- Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared permission and or in certain situations.

When presenting on this topic at an academic conference, an audience member who was an educator and scholar questioned whether removing explanation from teaching practice or expressing research would be possible with more difficult concepts and skills. He acknowledged that preschoolers could figure out simple things, but could a secondary student learn a mathematical concept without a teacher's explanation? Or could a graduate student understand a theory with a paper breaking it down into more digestible parts? Ranciè's point is not to remove explanation entirely, but rather to acknowledge the role of the belief in an inequality of intelligences in our practice of scaffolding explanations in teaching and in writing research. What might be done if we practice teaching and wrote research with an equality of intelligence as the point of departure? Can we acknowledge the colonialism and lack of praxis inherent within the scaffold explanation? Or are we just going to throw up our hands and sigh, giving into the belief that this questioning of the scaffolded explanation can only go so far. That is undoubtedly rooted in modernity and coloniality, that reaction. It screams of an inequality of intelligences as it confirms the narrative that the knowledges of Indigenous Peoples is inferior

or simple, or just easier to comprehend. It commits us to that either/or mentality. A scaffold explanation is the option or let them figure it out on their own, that reason or emotion, that control or chaos. But what about "Yes, and?" Rancière's alternative opinion invites us to step away from cause-and-effect thinking, away from explications. Rather than scaffolding, it unfolds in poetry and prose, and narrative and storytelling. He calls this improvisation. It is an offering of genuine thinking, the saying of truth rather than seeking it. It's the thinking that is done in all human art. "In the making of," he says, "shoes, machines, or poems." He says that "an emancipated novice need only to believe that the philosopher's thoughts are like their own. In his words, "they can see the power of intelligence that is in any human manifestation." That "what" is expressed on the page is only achieved by our counter translation. The author needs the reader to exist.

And this is praxis. It is that humanizing relationship with the learner interlocutor. And it is something fundamentally different from delivering ready-made schemas. It's about speaking in ways that change the distribution of the sensible in such a way as something that can be seen and heard, that was not seen and heard before, but connecting different worlds.

One who's employing that improvisation in teaching and/or expressing research does not illustrate what they're doing. They do not treat the learner interlocutor as though the teacher researcher has a better understanding of truth. Jacotot insists that there are "no men of great thoughts, no people of great thoughts, only people of great expressions." Improvisational expressions do not try to say everything. They do not try to assume the interlocutor needs to understand the thing expressed exactly as the teacher researcher understands it. But rather than writing to command, to join minds, submit wills, force action, which is writing that is done to the interlocutor. Improvisational writing is done with the interlocutor making space for their story and their truth.

In closing, perhaps there's no conclusion to be found in writing or teaching for that matter. Maybe we just need to trust. And I trust you. You've come to some conclusions today and I didn't tell you what to do and I didn't spell out exactly how to do this. But hopefully we can reframe our mindsets and start to see our readers, our co-researchers, and the people with whom we work as equally intelligent. That might change our methodology.

"It is not the procedure, the course, the manner that emancipates or stultifies; it's the principle. The principle of inequality, the old principle, stultifies no matter what one does. The principle of equality, the Jacotot principle, emancipates no matter what the procedure, book, or fact is applied to."

And I trust you to do that. Thank you.

GWEN:

Thank you very much, Lyndze, for a very informative and inspiring talk. We have a few minutes but there's a question. I will open the space. If you have any questions, just please unmute

yourself. But right now, there's one question in the chat from Kimberly. Kimberly asked "the learning objective as engagement and process rather than the endpoint or credential. But does our educational system really allow for this? Do our institutions really make space for this? Could you say a bit about this?"

LYNDZE:

Yeah, absolutely. Thank you for the question. Yeah, Do our institutions make space for this is a question that comes up often when I'm talking with teachers to be, teachers in-service, but also graduate students who are working on their theses or dissertations, and they want them to be accepted by the community. Right? And I think that for a very long time, different opinions, different beliefs did not have space in the academy or in the school system. Those things only changed by people doing them, by people questioning things, people pushing boundaries. I've noticed this more and more as I attend academic conferences that more and more people who are interested in anti-oppression or interested in changing political and social constructs or questioning those things, they are the people who are using storytelling. Most of the time, they're also people who are not straight white men. There are people who occupy other marginalized positions and situate themselves in other marginalized places. And yeah, my answer is that no, there isn't necessarily space for this yet, but that's what our job is. I think our job is to push and make that space.

GWEN:

Thank you, Lyndze. Yes. Kimberly also said that "I agree and we go for it."

LYNDZE: Yeah, go for it.

GWEN:

Yes. Lyndze's contact information will be shared on our site as well as the slides today will be shared with everyone. As well as the registrants as well.

LYNDZE:

Yeah, there's a document coming out with my list of references as well. If you're interested in any of those texts that I mentioned, especially the Jo Chrona text, I think it's written for teachers in the K to12 system, but I got a lot out of it and it's an excellent read that's local to B.C. Yeah. Feel free to email me sometimes. We just don't have those questions right now and if something's keeping you up at night, just email me.

GWEN:

Thank you, everyone.

KIM:

Lyndze. Lyndze, I just needed to tell you, did I ever need your talk today. Thank you. Really well done. Really, really strongly appreciated.

LYNDZE:

Thank you. I'm glad that someone felt that way and needed it, that you got what you needed out of it.

KIM: Yeah, it was great. Thank you. Lots to chew on.

GWEN:

Thank you very much, everyone, for staying with us till now. Again, please help us with the survey for your feedback for this session as well as helping us shape professional development events in the future. Please stay tuned with us for our Research Speaker Series. We have one in February on digital arts-based research and the other one on artificial intelligence that we can use in research insights as well. So, you can find the registration information on our site and yes. Yeah, we look forward to seeing everybody again.