

# Editorial: Indigenous Knowledges and the University

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In Coast Salish tradition the editorial groups that worked on this *Canadian Journal of Native Education (CJNE)* theme issue *Indigenous Knowledges and the University* raise our hands in thanks and respect to all who submitted articles for review, to the reviewers, to those whose articles were accepted for publication, and to the first wave Indigenous scholars who created space in academe for Indigenous scholarship and for Indigenous Knowledges. The idea for this theme issue began when Celia Haig-Brown of York University approached Jo-ann Archibald at the University of British Columbia about having a theme dedicated to the challenges and opportunities of bringing Indigenous Knowledges and academe together. Celia and a group of graduate students from York University had recently experienced presenting papers related to a similar theme, and they wished to find publishing opportunities for their scholarly work. Jo-ann had also had conversations with Lynne Davis of Trent University about co-editing a *CJNE* issue. We three agreed to co-edit a *CJNE* issue on the theme of *Indigenous Knowledges and the University* and to include a small group of graduate students to work with each of us to give them the experience of publishing a blind-peer-reviewed journal.

Our opening editorial first acknowledges the work of first-wave Indigenous academics—Carl Urion (1990-1997) and Verna J. Kirkness (1986-1992)<sup>1</sup>—who were the first Indigenous editors of the *Canadian Journal of Native Education*. We describe the process of determining the theoretical structure, the theme issues, and the various sections that follow. The editorial ends with an introduction to members of each editorial team.

To begin, we honor the Indigenous protocol of acknowledging the Indigenous people and their land on which we stand and complete our work. The annual theme issue of the *CJNE* is the responsibility of the University of British Columbia, which is on the traditional and unceded territory of the Musqueam First Nation. The waves of the Pacific Ocean greet this land every day and over time leave an imprint. At York University we met and worked on the traditional land of the Mississauga people

of the Anishinaabe Nation. At Trent University the editorial team wrote across various territories connecting sacred places where Indigenous stories of Creation are held in the Earth, from the petroglyphs in Peterborough, Ontario to the petroforms in Manito Abi (Manitoba), and through the territories of the Haudenosaunee where the Kayanere'kowa, the Great Law of Peace, prevails.

Over time the editorial work of two Indigenous scholars, Carl Urion of the Deerborn Métis and Verna J. Kirkness of Cree ancestry, has left a significant imprint by ensuring that an educational journal such as *CJNE* gives priority to Indigenous discourse and scholarship based on Indigenous Knowledge. Carl Urion signaled an important change in *CJNE's* discourse in 1991 by encouraging scholars to move away from acculturation models of education and discourse. He believed that a new wave of scholars was beginning to develop quality scholarship from Indigenous perspectives and encouraged us with this thought: "Academic discourse changes to be cognizant of [Indigenous] discourse; it does so because good scholarship demands no less" (1991, p. 9). Verna J. Kirkness challenged us to think critically with themes such as putting education into culture instead of putting culture into education (1987); revitalizing Aboriginal languages (1989); and recognizing the effects of residential schooling (1991). Urion and Kirkness' scholarly leadership created an important opening in the academic literature for Indigenous-based perspectives and ways of thinking. Despite this important shift, many still experience difficulties as they try to navigate academe on Indigenous terms.

In the 2008 call for *CJNE* articles, we acknowledged that for scholars immersed in Indigenous Knowledges and cultures, working in academe means negotiating an intellectual terrain that too often continues to be dominated by epistemic colonialism. Yet scholarship, teaching, research, writing, community service, and methodologies shaped by Indigenous epistemic realities have much to say to the academy. The waves of the oceans remind us of the movement started by first-wave Indigenous scholars who began to change the academy by ensuring that Indigenous voice and participation could move into and produce academic literature. We wished to recognize and circulate scholarship in the form of research articles, stories, and thought pieces that had significant ideas and issues that needed to be expressed. The authors of the articles in this theme issue represent the second and third wave of scholars involved in Indigenous scholarship. The following questions in the call for articles provided stimulus for the contributions.

- How do Indigenous Knowledges shape teaching, scholarship, and methodologies?
- How can the relational nature of these knowledges, with their commitment to spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical dimensions, be accepted and nurtured?

- What is the nature of the forces that resist the inclusion of such world views?
- Most important, how can Indigenous Knowledges contribute to the significant improvement of Indigenous education?

During the blind review process, three reviews for each submission were completed by two faculty members and one graduate student. Each of the three editorial collectives took responsibility for completing the reviews, making decisions about which articles would be published based on the blind reviews and their perspectives, working with authors and their revisions, and preparing and writing the editorial sections. After reading all 20 articles accepted for publication, the three editorial groups met to discuss the structure for organizing the articles and the editorial. We approached this last publication component much as we approach a research study where we complete a content analysis of major ideas and themes that emerge from the articles: Indigenous Methodologies, Indigenizing Practices, Disciplinary Perspectives and Experiences, and Graduate Education. Our editorials can be viewed as the continuation of a long story, where we first set the story context and begin to tell a part of the story, followed by many stories that add richness to the overall teachings and themes. A shorter editorial before each section helps us continue our listening and reading by giving additional context to the section themes.

We also wished to place the articles in an Indigenous theoretical framework. In our planning meetings we returned to the 4 R's as first articulated by Ray Barnhardt and Verna J. Kirkness (1991) in their milestone article "First Nations and Higher Education: The Four R's—Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility." The theory of the 4 R's helps us to understand and live in our academic world; there is a coherent and continuous relationship among these principles/values. We adapt Barnhardt and Kirkness' framework by using an Indigenous Knowledge theoretical standpoint. In order to understand and use Indigenous Knowledge beneficially, we start from a position of respect toward specific and collective forms of Indigenous Knowledges. Respect is demonstrated by creating space to read, to think about, to feel, and to engage with various forms and sources of Indigenous Knowledges. The critical questions noted above help us search for and develop relevant IK epistemologies and research methodologies. The Indigenous teaching of the inclusive and wholistic circle guides a reciprocal learning process between and among people and between Indigenous scholarship and academe. Reciprocity in this theoretical framework is not a give-and-take relationship: it is a political and ethical action where people work in alliance and in cooperation to bring IK into the center. Responsibility toward Indigenous Knowledges challenges us to create scholarship that will transform Indigenous education to ultimately improve the lives and well-being of Indigenous peoples and their

communities. We enact our responsibility by producing this theme issue to share struggles and triumphs related to bringing Indigenous Knowledges and the University together.

This particular *CJNE* issue also signals a change in university sponsorship at the University of British Columbia from the First Nations House of Learning to the Faculty of Education's Associate Dean for Indigenous Education and the Indigenous Education Institute of Canada. We raise our hands in thanks and respect to the First Nations House of Learning for its support over a 21-year period. The Thunderbird logo that is on the front cover will be used in future theme issues of *CJNE*. Direction 7 Musqueam artists created the Thunderbird image with a human in its center. In Musqueam and Coast Salish cultures, the Thunderbird is the most powerful of mythical creatures. It symbolizes excellence and is a protector that helps those in need to have a better life. The human in its center represents a scholar. Together the Thunderbird and the scholar search for educational excellence and social justice. This image encourages us to keep working toward a relationship between Indigenous Knowledges and the university that is respectful, relevant, reciprocal, and responsible.

The contributions of authors in this volume represent well the spirit of the Thunderbird. Works by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors help convey many aspects of what it means to engage with the creative possibilities and limiting resistances of the university at this moment in history. Their contributions, the participation of emerging scholars in the editorial process, and the artistic works of scholar/artists in illustrating this volume carry forward the legacy and momentum that define the epistemic terrain set in motion by the first wave of Indigenous scholars in academe.

Moving west from one ocean to the great lakes and rivers of the east, our editorial collective includes:

#### *The UBC Group*

Jo-ann Archibald, Q'um Q'um Xi'em, is Sto:lo, and she is the Associate Dean for Indigenous Education in the Faculty of Education at UBC. Her latest book is *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit*. Jo-ann's current research examines Indigenous student transitions from undergraduate to graduate studies and culturally responsive math education.

Jeff Baker is a doctoral student in Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of British Columbia. A person of Métis, Chinese, and Norwegian ancestry, his community-based research in Indigenous science education is rooted in the ethical spaces that emerge at the intersections of Indigenous Knowledge systems and biocentric complexity thinking.

Donna Hill has an English Honors BA from Okanagan University College (2005) and an Interdisciplinary MA from UBC Okanagan (2008). She is a currently a first-year doctoral student in UBC's Faculty of Educa-

tion, with an interest in Indigenous Knowledge and methodologies. Her heritage is French Métis, English, Irish, and Scottish.

Michelle Pidgeon is from Newfoundland and Labrador. She is currently an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. She completed her doctorate at the University of British Columbia in 2008. Michelle's research agenda spans the disciplines of higher education, student services, and Aboriginal education.

Jocelyne Robinson is an international artist and a doctoral student in the Faculty of Education at UBC. In 2007 her art called *Dancing to the Songs of the Universe* became the first Canadian permanent public art sculpture to be mounted in Shanghai, China. The sculpture was created for the commemoration of Tongji High School's 100th anniversary.

#### *The York University Group*

(Ahnungoonhs) Brent Debassige is Ojibway-Anishinaabe and a member of the Caribou clan from M'Chigeeng First Nation, Ontario. Currently he is a doctoral candidate at York University. His research is focused on his transformational journey of coming to know Anishinaabe *mino-bimaadiziwin* (loosely translated as living the good life) and how this way of knowing informs good and respectful research.

Celia Haig-Brown, Faculty of Education, York University, teaches courses in research methodologies and community education. Her latest book *With Good Intentions: EuroCanadian and Aboriginal Relations in Colonial Canada* (2006) was co-edited with David Nock. Her current research on education as regeneration: processes of decolonization focuses on the place of Indigenous Knowledges in educational institutions. She has Anglo-American ancestry.

John Hodson is the Research Officer in the Tecumseh Centre for Aboriginal Research and Education at Brock University. John is of Mohawk descent, Turtle clan, and has worked in Aboriginal education at the college, university, and community levels in Ontario for over 15 years. John is currently pursuing a doctorate at York University and is a recipient of a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council doctoral award.

Deb O'Rourke is a non-Indigenous visual artist and writer in the York University Master's in Education program. As an educator focused on democracy in education, she feels it is vital to acknowledge thoroughly the primacy of Indigenous societies in all aspects of Canadian life. This involves the need to face our history unflinchingly in order to prepare the ground to work together for the best that can happen in the name of democracy.

Adam Pulpan is a non-Aboriginal doctoral student at York University, who works with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. His research looks at the possibilities for intergenerational relationships and the sharing of knowledge and values in schools. His goal is to influence

positively the people, communities, and world around him through his research and other efforts.

#### *The Trent University Group*

Lynne Davis is Program Director of the PhD Program in Indigenous Studies at Trent University. She worked as a researcher, policy analyst, and writer in education for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and co-edited *Aboriginal Education: Fulfilling the Promise*. Her current research focuses on Aboriginal alliances with social and environmental movements.

Rainey Gaywish is 3rd Degree Midewiwin of the Three Fires Midewiwin Lodge. Her doctoral dissertation focuses on the work of Edward Benton Banai to revitalize Anishinabe Midewiwin spiritual traditions. Rainey is a Program Director with Aboriginal Focus Programs in Extended Education at the University of Manitoba.

Caroline VanEvery-Albert is a member of the Mohawk Nation, Turtle clan from Six Nations. She is currently a doctoral student at Trent University in the Indigenous Studies program. As an educator and language speaker/learner, her goal is to help develop a quality immersion program rooted in Kanyen'kehaka (Mohawk) teaching, learning, and language.

#### *Note*

<sup>1</sup>Other first-wave Canadian Indigenous scholars have also made significant contributions to changing academe: Marlene Brant Castellano, Joseph Couture, Leroy LittleBear, Olive Dickason, Freda Ahenekeew, and Eber Hampton. For the purposes of the *CJNE* editorial, the impact of its two editor-scholars Carl Urion and Verna J. Kirkness are highlighted.

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#### *Erratum*

The editors for the *CJNE* 2007 Volume 30, Issue 1 were: Carmen Rodríguez de France, Alan Pence, and Margo Greenwood.

**Section One**  
**Indigenous Methodologies**



*Alabaster Stone, Artist: Jocelyne Robinson.*

*Veins run through the red alabaster stone that evoke birth and identities of self and all other entities. I viewed the stone as a relationship with my ancestors. The stories that are told and those that are sacred are alluded to by the porcupine needles that guard the hole at the center of the sculpture.*



## Section One Editorial: Indigenous Methodologies

*Lynne Davis*

*Rainey Gaywish*

*Caroline VanEvery-Albert*

*Trent University*

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The academy is a privileged space with well-entrenched patterns of creating and transmitting knowledge. Its technologies of power are finely woven into the practices of the classroom and its academic beliefs about carrying out research. In the academy the discontinuities between Indigenous and Western values and traditions come into sharp focus as Indigenous scholars engaging in Indigenous Knowledge research and teaching come face to face with a conditioned environment that they must navigate in order to carry out their work.

By drawing on Indigenous Knowledge traditions that are centuries older than the academic institutions they are engaging, the spaces of discomfort and pain can become places of creativity and transformation. The authors in this section talk about their personal journeys to reach deeply into the cultural knowledge of their peoples to find teaching and research methodologies that respect and affirm the ways of being of their Nations.

Green talks about storytelling as the point of departure for her academic research and teaching. Re/telling stories from her childhood about the Haisla tradition of preparing oolichan fish for consumption, she draws on traditional knowledge in all its richness and complex layering. She demonstrates how these stories have become a source of identity and strength for her presence in the academy and how they have provided her with pedagogical strategies and methods for approaching her academic work.

Thompson picks up similar themes. Raised away from her community, she describes her journey back to Tahltan traditions. This traditional knowledge then became the basis of articulating a Tahltan research methodology, one that she can consider honorable in representing Tahltan knowledge and values. In her words, "This paradigm shift has helped me to understand who I am as a Tahltan and how the teachings of my Elders and Ancestors can be used to carry out respectful and useful research in my roles as student, educator, and researcher."

VanEvery-Albert's journey to learn the Kanyen'kehaka or Mohawk language has provided her with a deep rooting in Rotinonhsyón:ni (Mohawk) ontological and epistemological worlds. Excavating the philos-

ophical underpinnings of Rotinonhsyón:ni understandings by dissecting the meanings of Rotinonhsyón:ni words, she illustrates differences between Western and traditional approaches to education. She articulates the need to re-vision *education* and academic scholarship grounded in Rotinonhsyón:ni epistemologies.

Dénommé-Welch is an artist who uses his art to explore issues of identity and historical traumatic aspects of Indigenous life. Using arts-based methodologies, he discusses art as a site of pedagogy, storytelling, and research and moves beneath the surface into the tensions and ethics of Indigenous Knowledge production. He shares with the reader various works from his visual art series "The Birch Bark Eaters" and the many questions raised about the academy's practices of representing Indigenous peoples and "truth telling."

Longboat's story is one of a seeker. She narrates her journey in the academy of striving to find the supports and safety to engage both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal knowledge traditions in the production of new knowledge. It is a rough terrain. She travels it with realism and curiosity, brightened by a sturdy sense of optimism that she will find a measured path.

Taken together these articles affirm that contemporary Indigenous methodologies can rely on roots that run deeply into the ground of ancestral knowledges. The authors, all Indigenous, find their source of strength in the stories, languages, traditions, and practices of remembrance that connect them to community. Traditional knowledges and methodologies both inspire and give strength to Indigenous scholars who are part of the great movement to transform the practices of the academy from within. Some of their efforts may flow easily because they are able to stand on the shoulders of Indigenous scholars of earlier generations. But often this generation of Indigenous scholars is breaking new ground as they challenge the boundaries of what the academy considers its truths.

The articles in this section offer original analyses and specific examples of creativity, transformation, and struggle in motion. They capture the dynamic momentum that has developed as individual scholars, each from their own lived experiences, respond to the question of what it means to be an Indigenous scholar in the academy at this time. Their experiences illustrate well the collective effort to change the academy through deep reflection and strategic action.