



INDIGENOUS METHODOLOGIES



ART & HUMANITY
LITERARY SERVICES AND CONSULTING



SELF-REFLECTION - A CORE INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

What is an Indigenous methodology? To me an Indigenous methodology means talking about relational accountability. As a researcher you are answering to all your relations when you are doing research. You are not answering questions of validity or reliability or making judgments of better or worse. Instead you should be fulfilling your relationships with the world around you. So your methodology has to ask different questions: rather than asking about validity or reliability, you are asking how am I fulfilling my role in this relationship? What are my obligations in this relationship? (Wilson, 2001, p. 177)

In Indigenous research approaches:

- **Researchers must constantly reflect on their relationships** (with Indigenous partners and co-producers of knowledge, with community, Land...).
- Researchers must **examine their intentions, responsibilities, and impacts** throughout the research process.
- This idea makes **self-reflection** a core methodological practice: researchers must continually ask themselves questions such as:
 - *Who am I in relation to this research?*
 - *Who am I accountable to?*
 - *How does my presence affect the knowledge being shared?*

Shawn Wilson is a community psychologist and researcher. He is Opaskwayak (oh-PASS-kwee-ack) Cree from northern Manitoba.



RESPONSIBILITY, RESPECT, RELATIONALITY, RECIPROCITY

In the spirit of these '4 Rs', take 5 minutes to consider:

- What Territory am I in?
- What gifts can I offer in the spirit of respect and reciprocity to my colleagues and the First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis peoples on whose land I live, work, and play? (e.g., advocacy and relationship-building in my circles, such as at my book club)
- What am I open to humbly receiving from all living things with whom I cross paths today and in the work ahead? (e.g., teachings and wisdom from others by taking the nearby Mi'kmaq community's heritage path tour)


Try to think of concrete answers such as in the examples above, rather than abstract ones. → actionable items

Feel free to share anything you're comfortable sharing in the chat.

I have learned that:

“The values of ‘Responsibility, Respect, Relationality and Reciprocity ‘(the 4Rs)’ in Indigenous research methodologies inform the core principles of Indigenous kinship systems. This is most often understood as the interconnectedness to land, relatives, animals, and spirits.” (Roy, 2022, Abstract)

Roy, N. (2022). The Use of Indigenous Research Methodologies in Counselling: Responsibility, Respect, Relationality, and Reciprocity. *First Peoples Child & Family Review*, 17(1), 3-19. Retrieved from <https://fpcfr.com/index.php/FPCFR/article/view/551>



HOW TO DECOLONIZE
OUR WRITING &
THINK
“ANTICOLONIAL”



ART & HUMANITY
LITERARY SERVICES AND CONSULTING



ELEMENTS OF INDIGENOUS STYLE: A GUIDE FOR WRITING BY AND ABOUT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

1. Indigenous style overrides general publishing rules

2. Collaborate

3. Compensate

4. Use appropriate terminology

5. Do not use inappropriate possessives

Greg Younging, 2018, 2nd ed. 2025, Brush Education

Page numbers below from 1st edition; new information from 2nd edition in subsequent slides.

1. Follow house style, except when it differs from Indigenous style:

“Works by Indigenous authors or with Indigenous content should follow standard style references and house styles, except where these disagree with Indigenous style. Indigenous style overrules other styles in cases of disagreement.” (p. 7)

2. Collaborate:

“The key to working in a culturally appropriate way is to collaborate with ... Indigenous Peoples” (p. 31).

“Work in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and authors to ensure that Indigenous material is expressed with the highest possible level of cultural authenticity, and in a manner that follows Indigenous Protocols and maintains Indigenous cultural integrity” (p. 31).

3. Compensate:

“In the history of publishing Indigenous content by non-Indigenous authors in Canada, it

has been unusual for the Indigenous Peoples or individuals providing the content to receive compensation. This is partly because conventional copyright does not recognize Indigenous cultural property, so revenues for using Traditional Knowledge or Oral Traditions have not, generally, flowed back to their owners in the form of royalties. Part of it may also come from a notion in conventional publishing that inclusion in a book is its own reward” (pp. 44-45).

“Indigenous style recognizes the importance of royalties to Indigenous Peoples and authors—and compensation to individual Indigenous contributors, and to Indigenous communities and organizations—as part of fair and respectful publishing relationships”
(45)

4. Use Appropriate Terminology

“The process of decolonizing language surrounding Indigenous Peoples is not finished: terms, names, and styles continue to evolve. So, plan on not getting it right. Make your best effort to make informed, mindful choices about terminology” (p. 50)

“Works should avoid inappropriate terminology used in reference to Indigenous Peoples, except when:

Specifically describing or discussing this terminology

Referring to a proper name, or the name of an institution or document

Quoting from a source that contains the terminology

If a work quotes from a historical source that uses inappropriate terminology, it is important to flag this content” (p. 61)

5. Do not use inappropriate possessives:

“Indigenous Peoples are independent sovereign nations that predate Euro-colonial states and are not ‘owned’ by Euro-colonial states. Indigenous style therefore avoids the use of possessives that imply this, such as ‘Canada’s Indigenous Peoples,’ ‘our Indigenous Peoples,’ and ‘the Indigenous Peoples of Canada’” (p. 91).



1. INDIGENOUS STYLE OVERRIDES GENERAL PUBLISHING RULES

Writing by Indigenous authors, or writing that focuses on Indigenous topics, should generally follow the usual style guides and publishing rules. However, if those rules conflict with Indigenous languages, cultural practices, or stylistic preferences, Indigenous style conventions should take priority.

The person or community appearing in a publication “are the authorities on how they are described. No hard-and-fast rule or ‘house style’ should stand in the way” (2nd ed., p. 122)

E.g., elder versus Elder; he/she versus they; alternative expressions of identity grounded in Indigenous languages and worldviews (Two Spirit, Indigiqueer)

Greg Younging, 2018, 2nd ed. 2025, Brush Education

Bear in mind, for example:

- In Cree, the third person singular is a genderless pronoun (i.e., there's no "he" or "she")
- Two Spirit can be a gender identity, a sexual identity, a spiritual identity, and so on



2. COLLABORATE

Collaborate closely with Indigenous Peoples and authors to ensure that Indigenous content is represented as authentically as possible, in ways that respect Indigenous protocols and protect the integrity of Indigenous cultures. → Always work *with* the experts to make sure their words and work are accurately and respectfully represented.

Spotlight on collaborating with Inuit: “Inuit cultures, colonial experiences, and material conditions...differ significantly from those of non-Inuit, including First Nations and Métis. Circumpolar peoples are vastly diverse, including in their opinions on writing and editing. Expect diversity in storytelling styles, in cultural references, and in dialects, spellings, capitalization, and usage” (2nd ed., p. 197)

Greg Younging, 2018, 2nd ed. 2025, Brush Education



3. COMPENSATE

Indigenous style affirms that paying royalties to Indigenous Peoples and authors—and providing compensation to individual contributors, communities, and organizations—is essential to building fair and respectful publishing relationships.



Spotlight on Compensation and AI: “Be aware that when you upload works into AI models such as ChatGPT, you may be providing the model access to those works, which it may then incorporate. Proceed with extreme caution when working with Indigenous Traditional Stories or other aspects of Traditional Knowledge and Indigenous cultural property” 2nd ed., p. 143)

Greg Younging, 2018, 2nd ed. 2025, Brush Education



4. USE APPROPRIATE TERMINOLOGY

The effort to decolonize language about Indigenous Peoples is ongoing. Preferred terms, names, and stylistic practices continue to change over time. As a result, you should expect that you may not always choose perfectly. What matters is making thoughtful, well-informed decisions about the language you use and remaining open to learning and correction.

A community may change how it spells its Nation's name to reflect its own language more accurately.

A respectful writer adopts the updated spelling, even if older publications use a different version.

When quoting a historical source that contains outdated or offensive terms, it is important to clearly indicate or acknowledge that the language may be inappropriate.

Flag the content and discuss it in a footnote or – even better – in a paragraph in the body of the work.

Greg Younging, 2018, 2nd ed. 2025, Brush Education



5. DO NOT USE INAPPROPRIATE POSSESSIVES

Indigenous Peoples are sovereign nations with histories that existed long before Euro-colonial states and are not the property of those states.

Possessive phrases imply ownership or control.

Indigenous style
DOES NOT use phrases
such as:

Our Indigenous partners
Our Indigenous Peoples
Canada's Indigenous Peoples
The Indigenous Peoples of Canada

Greg Younging, 2018, 2nd ed. 2025, Brush Education

FINAL TIPS

- Use Indigenous sources and works by Indigenous authors.
- Be specific wherever possible: Mary Benson is of Anishinaabe-Ojibwe ancestry and a member of Pimachiowin Aki community.
- Ensure research participants are Indigenous and co-creators of knowledge.
- Approach issues from a strengths-based perspective. Pathologization is an ongoing act of colonial violence.
- Respect Indigenous colloquial English (e.g., “living on the rez”) instead of editing it into “proper” English.



epSos.de, CC BY 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons



RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS & RESILIENCE

‘The policies and actions that were enacted to colonize Indigenous Peoples in Canada have been described as constituting cultural genocide. When one considers the long-term consequences from the perspective of the social and environmental determinants of health framework, the impacts of such policies on the physical and mental health of Indigenous Peoples go well beyond cultural loss.’
(Matheson et al. 2022)



BiblioArchives / LibraryArchives from Canada, CC BY 2.0
<<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons

What do you know about the Indian Residential School System?

- Government funded, church run schools aiming to assimilate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian-Christian culture by removing them from their families and communities.
- First school 1831; the last one to close was in 1996
- Approximately 150,000 Indigenous children were housed in the approx. 130 schools throughout the 165 years of operation
- Children were removed from their families and forced into the schools.
- Children often learned practical skills instead of the standard school curriculum.
- Physical and sexual abuse was rampant


Ongoing Legacy:

- **Intergenerational Trauma:**
 - The residential school system has had lasting and intergenerational impacts, with trauma being transmitted across generations.
- **Mental Health Impacts:**
 - Many survivors experience mental health challenges, including PTSD, substance abuse disorders, and depression, stemming from their experiences in residential

schools.

- **Demand for Support Services:**

- There is an ongoing need for accessible and culturally safe healing programs and support services for residential school survivors and their families.



“They might have hurt us physically, but we healed, they might have hurt us emotionally, but we still felt the love from our parents. They might have still hurt us mentally, tried to take away our language the way that we lived, but we had that powerful mind and the most important thing was our spirit that they never took away.”

▪ **Elder Margaret Reynolds**, a residential school Survivor and a member of the First Nations University Board of Governors and kêhtê-ayak (Elders) Council.

<https://www.fnuniv.ca/news/national-day-for-truth-and-reconciliation/>

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS ARE RESILIENT

- **Reclaiming cultures and languages**
- **Intergenerational healing**
- **Community-based healing initiatives**

→ Demonstrating being strengths-based and understanding our history so we can work towards relationship and respect

Reclaiming Culture and Language:

Despite the prohibition of Indigenous languages and cultures in residential schools, many survivors and their descendants are actively working to revitalize these aspects of their heritage. For example, a 2022 study found that two-thirds of parents of young Indigenous children considered it important for their children to speak an Indigenous language, a significant increase from 2006.

Efforts to preserve language do more than that: they empower identity, pride, and cultural strength. And when kids hear their grandparents speak and can answer in the language, that’s something beautiful.

Intergenerational Healing:

Many survivors have found strength and motivation to heal from the love for their children and grandchildren, recognizing the intergenerational impacts of residential schools and the

importance of breaking the cycle of trauma.

Community-Based Healing Initiatives:

There's a growing emphasis on community-led and culturally appropriate healing programs that address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools.

DENNIS SADDLEMAN, "MONSTER"



- When I listen to Dennis's poem, I feel... (enter one difficult emotion, e.g., sadness, defensiveness, anger)
- Why am I feeling this?
- What is one thing I learned from Dennis's poem?
- Now that I have learned this, how can I work to change my thoughts, behaviours, and/or actions?

Dennis Saddleman, a respected poet and Residential School Survivor from what is now known as Nicola Valley, British Columbia.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uD2ysbp8708>

**These are personal reflections. You won't be asked to share them with the group.

Close with Joy Harjo, Praise the Rain

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_duFsFbxlg



RIGHTING WHITE WRITING

Group Work



ART & HUMANITY
LITERARY SERVICES AND CONSULTING



IDENTIFYING COLONIAL CONSTRUCTS IN RESEARCH AND WRITING

- Drawing on what you have learned during this workshop, and sharing your own knowledges, identify the ways in which this abstract and the study it represents are colonial, and by extension racist and harmful?
- Think big and small—macro and micro—what needs to change specifically in this abstract, and what needs to change conceptually in the research project that resulted in this abstract?
- If you were starting this research project from scratch, how would you do it differently?

Prevalence and Behavioural Correlates of Obesity Among Indigenous Youth in Northern Manitoba

Thompson, M., Carter, E., & Lee, K.

Abstract:

Rising rates of youth obesity present a significant public health concern in northern regions of Canada. This study examines the prevalence and correlates of obesity among Indigenous youth living in a remote community in Northern Manitoba. Using a cross-sectional design...

Seek participants' thoughts first, but use the below as guiding questions if needed:

Are Indigenous research methods prioritized?

Is there any emphasis on qualitative data?

Where is community voice located (if at all)?

Whose knowledge systems define "health" here?

How are colonial structures (food systems, land dispossession, housing, systemic inequities) treated — as background variables or structural determinants?

Is data disaggregated?

Is the study strengths-based?



POSSIBLE CONSIDERATIONS

-  Are Indigenous research methods prioritized?
-  Is there any emphasis on qualitative data?
-  Where is community voice located (if at all)?
-  Whose knowledge systems define “health” here?
-  How are colonial structures (food systems, land dispossession, housing, systemic inequities) treated — as background variables or structural determinants?
-  Is data disaggregated?
-  Is the study strengths-based?



REFERENCES

Wilson, S. (2001). What is Indigenous research methodology? *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 25(2), 175-179.
<http://search.proquest.com.libproxy.mta.ca/scholarly-journals/what-is-indigenous-research-methodology/docview/230307399/se-2>

Matheson, K., Seymour, A., Landry, J., Ventura, K., Arsenault, E., & Anisman, H. (2022). Canada's Colonial Genocide of Indigenous Peoples: A Review of the Psychosocial and Neurobiological Processes Linking Trauma and Intergenerational Outcomes. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 19(11), 6455. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19116455>

Roy, N. (2022). The Use of Indigenous Research Methodologies in Counselling: Responsibility, Respect, Relationality, and Reciprocity. *First Peoples Child & Family Review*, 17(1), 3-19. Retrieved from <https://fp CFR.com/index.php/FPCFR/article/view/551>

Younging, G. (2025). *Elements of Indigenous style: a guide for writing by and about Indigenous Peoples* (2nd ed.). Brush Education.



THANK YOU!

Please see handout for some further reading.
Follow-up considerations on next slide.





FOLLOW UP REFLECTIONS & CONSIDERATIONS



What is the most valuable idea, technique, or perspective you gained from this workshop—something you will actively apply to your future work?



What additional topics, questions, or skills would you like to see addressed in future sessions?



How interested would you be in a follow-up peer-review workshop led by Dr. Julie Sutherland that includes time to share your writing and receive feedback?

- Very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Not interested