

Indigenous Research Paradigm: A Conceptual Model



American Indigenous Research Association Credit Dr. Lori Lambert

In an **Indigenous knowledge research paradigm**, of which I am situated, it is valued that knowledge is personal, situated, and subjective. In this way it is valued that objectivity is just one method of knowing that has limitations just as all methods do.

In an **Indigenous knowledge research paradigm** it is valued that knowledge is embodied, heartfelt, and found in the practices we do. In this way it is valued that reason, consciousness, and intent are just three methods of knowing that have limitations just as all methods do.

In an **Indigenous knowledge research paradigm** it is valued that knowledge is found in beliefs, stories, and rituals. In this way it is valued that atoms and molecules are just one way of knowing that have limitations just as all methods do.

In an **Indigenous knowledge research paradigm** it is valued that knowledge is relational meaning knowledge is found in one's relationship to the knowledge. In this way it is valued that a commodified understanding of knowledge that places it in the outcome or the product has huge limitations.

In an **Indigenous knowledge research paradigm** it is valued that knowledge is multiple, diverse, and layered where all community people have knowledge. Knowledge holders include weavers, wood choppers, fire keepers, hunters, gatherers, cooks, ceremonialists, writers, theorists, philosophers, and intellectuals. In this way it is valued that all people have knowledge.

In an **Indigenous knowledge research paradigm** it is valued that knowledge predated human arrival, meaning that water, trees, bears, birds, fish, and turtles all have knowledge. In this way it is valued that all beings have knowledge and that human knowledge has huge limitations.

In an **Indigenous knowledge research paradigm** it is valued that knowledge is more than about happy stories with happy endings. It is valued that the criterion of "happy" is a barrier to shifting people out of a knowledge paradigm that is not working for them, their children, or grandchildren or any of the Earth's beings.

In an **Indigenous knowledge research paradigm** it is valued that knowledge is foremost a responsibility. It is valued that knowledge takes contradictory negatively emotional non-linear paths especially when a destabilizing and major conceptual shift is required.

In an **Indigenous knowledge research paradigm** it is valued that we need to be weary of the person who prefers to keep us "warm and fuzzy" in our thinking as they most probably are offering knowledge that is rooted in the manipulation of who we are.

In an **Indigenous knowledge research paradigm** it is valued that there is the need

to use alternative and broader forms of disseminating knowledge productions such as writing for Indigenous newspapers, Indigenous magazines, Indigenous newsletters, leftist magazines, leftist newspapers, and blogging.

In an **Indigenous knowledge research paradigm** it is valued that there is the need to broaden one's methods of communication such as relying on university campus radio shows, radio podcast producers, videos, webinars, vlogs, theatrical performance, dance, and the spoken word. The line of thinking is that if Indigenous intellectuals and activists are only writing, publishing, and speaking to ivory tower academics they are doing a disservice to community members. After all, foremost it is the community that we need to serve.

Further to this, in operating within an **Indigenous knowledge research paradigm**, as a measure to reach community members, many people are using social media such as facebook, twitter, and YouTube. In addition some people have built their own websites to house the materials they are creating and producing for their communities.

In addressing colonization and all it has done and continues to do, there is the need for community members to value the people who are doing the work and to stand behind and beside them. This means reading and listening to their work and sharing it with other community members. Otherwise we defeat ourselves and remain in a colonial understanding of the world that pollutes the water we drink and the air we breathe.

The unfortunate thing is that as we struggle to overcome the filthy waters and contaminated air of colonization there are many difficult dynamics that are barriers to our ability to stand behind and beside one another and as such working with one another. These dynamics include internalized oppression such racism, sexism, and ableism. There are also the dynamics of jealousy, lateral violence, anti-intellectualism, identity issues, cultural appropriation, and pan-Indian new ageism.

Additional barriers to cleaning the polluted waters and air of colonization include the appropriation of eldership such as thinking that they know everything and offer an essential truth to all things Indigenous, the appropriation of allyship in unprincipled and manipulative ways that are disingenuous, and the pitiful appropriation and manipulation of the agency of needful people who have identity and/or spiritual issues.

An additional barrier of de-colonization is overcoming the hurdle of asking for help. In helping it must be understood that offering help is not a charitable act; rather, help is hard work. Interestingly, it is only through help that you will gain clean water and air and in this way help is also selfish.

For over 25 years I have been writing, talking, publishing, and disseminating knowledge in several alternative forms of communication. In doing so, assuming that all people are interested in clean water and air, I have repeatedly, repeatedly, repeatedly, and repeatedly reached out to community people asking for help in reading and sharing my work. In this process I have been unyielding in my effort.

I want to take this time and say “Chi-Miigwetch” to everyone who has been standing behind and beside me and coming through with the practices of reading my work, listening to my radio podcasts, and watching my videos and webinars; and “Chi-Miigwetch” for sharing them as well.

Additional links on Indigenous knowledge:

- <http://www.lynngehl.com/black-face-blogging/sharign-creators-love-for-algonquin-territory>
- <http://www.lynngehl.com/black-face-blogging/on-indigenous-knowledge>
- <http://www.lynngehl.com/black-face-blogging/indigenous-knowledge-protection-act-on-protecting-the-recovery-re-vitalization-and-resurgence-of-ik>
- <http://www.lynngehl.com/black-face-blogging/protecting-indigenous-knowledge>
- <http://www.lynngehl.com/black-face-blogging/caw-caw-caw-what-is-your-indigenous-knowledge>
- <http://www.lynngehl.com/black-face-blogging/2>
- <http://www.lynngehl.com/black-face-blogging/ocanada-or-clean-water-lets-all-think-about-it>



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