

Decolonizing and Revitalizing Academic Advising in the Canadian Post-Secondary School System to Improve Indigenous Student Success

by

Anna Brown

Building Indigenous Theory Micro-Credential, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, 2022
Associate of Arts (Business/Commerce), Thompson Rivers University, 1994

Rachel Marchand

Building Indigenous Theory Micro-Credential, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, 2022
Diploma (Early Childhood Education), Okanagan College, 2010

Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Education

in the
Educational Leadership Program
Faculty of Education

© Anna Brown and Rachel Marchand 2024
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Summer 2024

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International
(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Declaration of Committee

Name: Anna Brown and Rachel Marchand

Degree: Master of Education (Indigenous Resurgence)

Title: Decolonizing and Revitalizing Academic Advising
in the Canadian Post-Secondary School System
to Improve Indigenous Student Success

Committee: **Chair: Michelle Pidgeon**
Professor, Education

Rebecca Cox
Supervisor
Associate Professor, Education

John Chenoweth
Committee Member
Adjunct Professor, Education

Verna Billy-Minnabarriet
Examiner
Adjunct Professor, Education

Ethics Statement

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained, for the research described in this work, either:

- a. human research ethics approval from the Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics

or

- b. advance approval of the animal care protocol from the University Animal Care Committee of Simon Fraser University

or has conducted the research

- c. as a co-investigator, collaborator, or research assistant in a research project approved in advance.

A copy of the approval letter has been filed with the Theses Office of the University Library at the time of submission of this thesis or project.

The original application for approval and letter of approval are filed with the relevant offices. Inquiries may be directed to those authorities.

Simon Fraser University Library
Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada

Update Spring 2016

Abstract

If Indigenous students are considered “at-risk” at BC public post-secondary educational institutions due to hardship, socioeconomic discrepancies, and/or learning disabilities, what can academic advisors do to further reduce asymmetric power relations, institutional insensitivity, and social discrimination to improve Indigenous student success? Academic advisors execute prescriptive and developmental advising procedures to frame foundational advising; however, these methods fail to develop a student’s sense of identity. Our study involved conducting a sharing circle with staff, faculty, and managers at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT), an Indigenous post-secondary institution, to better understand how academic advisors and instructors can support Indigenous students. Our analysis found participants discussed an innovative approach to advising that is culturally appropriate. Our participants felt that for this new model to work staff, faculty, Elders, and managers must collaborate in the advising duties. Our research recommends a new holistic approach to academic advising, which incorporates their intellectual, emotional, cultural, and physical needs (building on Pidgeon’s (2008, 2016) Indigenous Wholistic Framework). However, for this new advising model to be implemented, work must be done to educate staff and management, preparing the space, and support rebuilding student identities.

Keywords: prescribed advising; developmental advising; holistic advising practices; post-secondary institutions; Indigenous students; barriers to education; Indigenous worldview; culturally supportive environment; colonial mechanisms; Indigenous cultural practices; student identities

Dedication

Anna Brown

I dedicate this proposal to my grandmother, Pearl Lorna Clayton, who always believed I could go on to bigger and better things. She taught me to love without condition and took care of me when I wanted to run away from the world. She believed, “[you] can lose an arm or a leg, but they can never take away your education” P. Clayton (personal communication, April 15, 2002).

Rachel Marchand

I would like to dedicate this proposal to my father, Harvey Joseph Parker. I am proud of him, for his legacy has been to work hard for what you want, to be strong no matter what, and to face barriers with resiliency. Despite starting his educational journey at the Kamloops Indian Residential School (KIRS). He went on to be the first in his family to graduate and attend college. One day, from the top floor window of KIRS, he saw a spark, that spark led to a question, that question led him to finish high school, and high school led him to college to become a welder. Once he left school, he made his own sparks for others to see, and in his own words he said, “[l]ook at me, I did it” H.J. Parker (personal communication, May 15, 2020).

Acknowledgements

Anna Brown

I would like to thank my fellow graduate students, Rachel Marchand, and Shannon Peltier, who dedicated so much time working together to complete all our projects as a team. As we moved through the program, we felt our Indigenous knowledge and success grow. I am privileged to have been touched by their strength and resiliency. I would also like to thank the Lower Similkameen Indian Band (LSIB), NVIT, my instructors, especially John Chenoweth, and the rest of my cohort classmates. The experience was challenging and enlightening.

Rachel Marchand

I would like to thank LSIB for the invitation to learn, build, and grow together during the last two years in the LSIB, Master of Education cohort. I would also like to give special acknowledgement to my instructors, fellow graduate students, and my teammates; Anna Brown and Shannon Peltier, for the inspiring discussions, learning and bonding that happened during our time together. I am forever changed by the experience, and I am better for it.

List of Acronyms

4Rs	Responsibility, Reciprocity, Relationship, Respect
DPAC	District Parent Advisory Committee
KIRS	Kamloops Indian Residential School
LD	Learning Disability
LSIB	Lower Similkameen Indian Band
MAEST	Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training
M.Ed.	Master of Education
NVIT	Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
OKIB	Okanagan Indian Band
OMAESD	Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development
OSD	Office for Students with Disabilities
PAC	Parent Advisory Committee
PSIs	Post-Secondary Institutions
RCAP	Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
REB	Research Ethics Board
SD22	School District #22
SFU	Simon Fraser University
TEAMS	Microsoft Online Meetings
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Committee

Table of Contents

Declaration of Committee	ii
Ethics Statement	iii
Abstract	iv
Dedication	v
Acknowledgements	vi
List of Acronyms	vii
Table of Contents	viii
Introduction	1
Researcher Role/Positionality	2
Anna Brown	2
Rachel Marchand	4
Literature Review	5
Post-Secondary Institutional Responsibilities	6
Indigenous Student Experiences	7
Academic Advising	8
Prescriptive Advising	9
Developmental Advising	10
Decolonization of Academic Advising	11
Summary of Literature	13
Methodology	14
The Research Design	14
Research Purpose and Questions	14
Site of Study	14
Protocol and Ethics	15
Participants	15
Sharing Circle Process	17
Data Analysis	19
Rs as Analysis Framework	19
Trustworthiness	20
Limitations of Study	22
Metaphor	22
Findings	23
Educating Staff in the Indigenous Worldview	24
Preparing the Space	24
Rebuild Student Identities through Communication	26
Recognize the Topic is Larger than any Method	27
Discussion	29

Recommendations: Educational Practice, Theory, and/or Policy	30
Conclusion	31
References.....	33
Appendix A. Sharing Circle Participant Consent Form	36
Appendix B. Email Script (for the third party send to participants)	39
Appendix C. Verbal Script (for the third party send to participants)	41
Appendix D. Script for Sharing Circle Protocol	43
Appendix E. Interview Questions.....	45

Introduction

According to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (MAEST) (2021), “Aboriginal learners who complete high school transition to post-secondary institutions at a lower rate than non-Aboriginal learners” (p. 12). We maintained all universities and colleges sign into the belief that academic advising was created to help students get situated and strive for educational and career goals. The University of Arizona’s Policy and Procedures (2024) state, “[a]cademic advising is a collaborative relationship between a student and an academic advisor, the intent of this collaboration is to assist the student in developing meaningful educational goals that are consistent with personal interests, values, and abilities” (Advising Resource Centre, para 1). If so, then why does the advising system not work for Indigenous students?

We started by exploring the incumbent need to decolonize and revitalize academic advising systems, so post-secondary institutions can promote culturally responsive and inclusive educational environments that empower Indigenous learners with the support, resources, and guidance needed to overcome challenges and attain academic achievement.

In our literature review, we learned the definition of at-risk students and examined the barriers they faced, how BC post-secondary institutions have chosen to manage this situation, and what the government and other Indigenous professionals were doing to reconstruct the situation. We then explored how academic advising was utilized to guide and support at-risk students through the roles of academic advisors and instructors. The research literature highlighted both successes and failures of the two most prominent advising methods, prescriptive and developmental academic advising. Yet, there is little literature that specifically speaks to academic advising and Indigenous students. Therefore, drawing on Harris’ (2018) quantitative study with students at an historically Black college, there are parallels between Indigenous and Black students wishing for more connection and relationship. Harris’s study addressed the effect of annexation and how creating a more holistically decolonized and revitalized culturally responsive application to create clear expectations of duties and responsibilities of advising associates created identity and connectivity within at-risk students. Our study explored what is needed for decolonizing academic advising for Indigenous students.

We were convinced we needed to investigate if we could improve the success rates for Indigenous students directly labelled “at-risk,” by decolonizing and revitalizing academic advising to promote a culturally responsive and inclusive educational environment that empowers Indigenous learners with the support, resources, and guidance from academic advisors and instructors.

Researcher Role/Positionality

Anna Brown

My home community of Lower Nicola is called “scw’emx” meaning, “people of the creeks” and is located just eight km outside the city of Merritt. I am a member of the nle?kepmxc Indian Band, an interior salish nation; “nle?kepmxc meaning “people of the canyon”. My territory is located along the sécwepemc, Lillooet, Washington, and Okanagan borders. I reside along the banks of the Thompson and Nicola Rivers that make up the Nicola Valley. My people neighbour both the spaxomin Okanagan and the Athapaskan stuwix.

I am a female, born with multiple nationalities: Irish, English, Italian, and Indigenous. I correlate with both my familial settlers and my ancestral native peoples. I mostly identify with my Indigenous heritage and am more responsive to my maternal-side’s family history. I now find myself with three sons and a daughter-in-law. I am married to a wonderful man from Loon Lake BC; he brings with him three sons and a daughter, all married, with four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

As someone who is split-minded, I am still trying to discover where I fit. I am always seeking knowledge from our Elders, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. I need to accept that not one person is identical, but rather, we can all learn from each other if we persist in building our connective tapestries of life. I recognize I must also advance what is important to me.

Arduous work is critical, I am gathering information to become the next matriarch of my family. I find inspiration in laughter, and education is the key component to living a healthy and balanced lifestyle. I have worked at NVIT for the last thirty years, of which, fifteen of them have been as an Academic and Financial Planner.

At NVIT, Canada's leading Indigenous public post-secondary institution, it considers itself to be a one-stop shop for academic advising. My role connects assessment preparation, program selection, scheduling, financial aid, scholarships/bursaries, and personal and accessibility support. At most post-secondary institutions, staff members have separate roles and responsibilities for each area of expertise. NVIT is small enough, one staff member bears many hats and executes all duties in one position.

Year after year, students meet with me to discuss their educational needs, experiences, successes, and failures. My profession is to eliminate their fear by providing calming techniques, study material, and equipping students with tools to remove distraction and fear. It then becomes the students' responsibility to use those tools and build their assets.

As I work with students, it is sometimes difficult to attract their attention as you can see the fear permeating inside. Trying to break down that fear, it seems jumping into advising to begin program planning is a delivery made too premature. Wearing a suit brings back feelings of institutionalism. Using a strong diction makes them feel inadequate and unable to communicate any further, so providing study questions to help them prepare for an exam is not the answer to finding their potential success. In my research, I understand the knowledge I explore comes from the very people I need to safeguard. I honour their sharing and respect their boundaries. I understand it is a privilege to research their very lives.

Many post-secondary institutions in the colonized educational system are not providing Indigenous students with the holistic techniques advisors can use to comprehend and bring emotional energy back into student's lives and to refocus on their ability to thrive. With the re-establishment of holistic education, advisors, working collaboratively with faculty members and administrative staff, I am hoping to find new techniques to allow students to assess and recognize their worth, bringing empowerment.

Rachel Marchand

Way', my name is Rachel Marchand, I am a proud Indigenous woman, scholar, daughter, mother, sister, and partner from the Okanagan Nation. I reside in the Okanagan Indian Band located at n'kmaplqs, Head of the Okanagan Lake, in Vernon, BC. My lineage comes from both my mother, Walline Parker (Morpaw) who is of Chilcotin descent from the Anahim Lake Band and my father, Harvey Parker from the Okanagan Indian Band. I was fortunate to grow up in the interior of BC in Williams Lake, for the first decade of my life, until my family relocated back to the Okanagan Indian Band when I was ten, in 1985. To this day, I live on the land my family has stewarded since our Parker family was displaced from Arrow Lakes Reserve.

Being a first-generation, post-Kamloops Residential School survivor, I have had the privilege to be a part of public-school capacities, roles, and leadership as student, parent, advocate, PAC Representative, DPAC Representative, Indigenous Parent Representative, Master Student, Faculty and OKIB Band Councillor. I sit on a variety of education committees that range from community, local band, municipal, national, regional, provincial, and federal. All this experience has led me to my passion for decolonizing and revitalizing education to be holistic and autonomous to Indigeneity.

My firsthand experiences as a parent with teachers, academics and systems have varied with educational systems. My children have attended public, private, homeschool, band school, community delivery, SD22 vLearn (is a public District Online Learning) academies, distance education, late-French immersion, and dual-credit models taught in English, Okanagan Immersion, and French. We have experienced all the above academic methodologies because as a parent, I knew that I was my children's first teacher, so I advocated, advised, and supported them all in their educational journeys. When the systems did not fit my children, we sought out different systems. In the end, we learned there were multiple styles we could choose, so my family's success in education was due to choosing the option that worked for us and our children's needs.

Having observed education for the past few decades has shaped me as an educator and scholar. I want to know and be part of the change Indigenous students need and deserve. I want to decolonize, remove barriers, and reduce racism in the

educational system. Like my father's journey motivated me, I want to create a spark for others; to see and be the change our Indigenous students need to succeed.

I have the advantage of working for NVIT, a post-secondary Indigenous Institution working hard at supporting students. My roles include being a faculty member, a teacher, and supporting students in their educational journey on their way to succeed. This research project is a tool to do that; to decolonize academic advising and improve access points to support a holistic approach along with our NVIT Elders and staff.

As we are both Indigenous employees at NVIT, we are immersed in the subject of academic advising Indigenous students. Our axiological assumptions influenced our everyday work as an academic advisor and instructor in an Indigenous post-secondary institution. We are influenced by, values, individual experiences, and worldviews of being Indigenous working within an Indigenous public post-secondary institution. We can relate and understand what it feels like to be a minority, and the challenges that "at-risk" students face when they enter post-secondary. As the researchers, we want to support our fellow Indigenous students. We have a personal stake in supporting our own people, because that is what we do, and it feels right.

Literature Review

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada (2015a), alongside the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) (1996), has shed light on the enduring impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples, emphasizing the profound need for systemic change within Canadian institutions, including education. Colonization has not only dispossessed Indigenous peoples of their lands and cultures but has also ingrained systemic barriers within educational systems that continue to marginalize Indigenous students. The TRC's Calls to Action (2015b) urge post-secondary institutions to take responsibility for fostering environments that acknowledge and address these colonial legacies. This responsibility extends beyond mere inclusion; it requires the active Indigenization of educational practices to honor Indigenous ways of knowing and support the academic success of Indigenous students. As post-secondary Institutions increasingly recognize this as their obligation, there remains a critical gap in academic advising practices that are crucial for the success of Indigenous students. This gap underscores the need for holistic and culturally relevant advising frameworks, such as

Dr. Michelle Pidgeon's (2008, 2016) Indigenous Wholistic Framework, which challenges conventional advising structures and offers a path forward for truly supporting Indigenous learners.

Post-Secondary Institutional Responsibilities

Education has been a tool of colonization (e.g., residential schools) that have systemic barriers that hinder Indigenous students (Battiste, 2013; Black & Hachkowski, 2018; TRC, 2015a). Post-secondary institutions are increasingly acknowledging the need to Indigenize their practices, ensuring that Indigenous students and communities' ways of knowing are being central to educational processes. While institutions have been focusing on program and curriculum development (Pidgeon, 2016), a significant gap remains in the realm of academic advising. Academic advising still relies on two advising methods, which do not adequately serve Indigenous students, prescribed and developmental (Barbuto, Story, Fritz, & Schinstock, 2011; Crookston, 1972, 2009; Harris, 2018; King, 2005; Williams, 2007). The literature suggests post-secondary institutions use the success rates of "at-risk" students as a crucial system of measurement reflecting the effectiveness of educational interventions adapted to address the unique challenges these students face (Tinto, 1993). Finn (1993) expressed, "engagement behaviors are not just important in the early grades or during the high school years but continue to be important in post-school accomplishments as well" (p.45). According to Heisserer and Parette (2002), "at-risk" reflects students who "are ethnic minorities [including Indigenous students], are academically disadvantaged, have disabilities, are of low socioeconomic status, and are probationary students" (p. 69). While there is literature challenging this categorization, we recognize that it remains a prevalent term within post-secondary education and government. According to the Ontario Ministry of Indigenous Relations (2012), Indigenous peoples are three times less likely to complete a university degree compared to that of their non-Indigenous counterparts" (as cited in Black & Hachkowski, 2018, p. 1092). Levin and Alcorn (2000) believe:

Educational levels for Aboriginal people in Canada, though they have been improving significantly, remain low in comparison with the general population. The concentration of Aboriginal people is highest in Canada's prairie provinces, where it reaches about 12 percent and is growing considerably more rapidly than the general population. Undereducation of

Aboriginal people is linked not only to economic and social hardship for their community, but to significant problems for the larger society. (p. 20)

Dr. Michelle Pidgeon's (2008, 2016) Indigenous Wholistic Framework offers a critical approach to address the gap in supports and services for Indigenous students. She argues providing a holistic, interconnected, and place-based understanding of education is essential for the success of Indigenous students that includes their physical, emotional, cultural, and intellectual well-being. Sallaffie, Penny, Cherba, Healey-Kearok, and Patel (2022) highlighted the long-standing issues in Nunavut's education system, describing it as having history of cultural genocide and the erasure of Indigenous languages and histories. They argue that this history continues to impact current educational practices, failing to equip Nunavut's youth with the skills needed to confront the ecological challenges in their region. The reports they cite identify a variety of barriers, including a deep distrust of the education system rooted in the legacy of residential schools, inadequate academic preparation for post-secondary education, and feelings of isolation among Indigenous students. Additionally, they note that family obligations and financial challenges often hinder students' ability to complete their programs, and a lack of respect for Aboriginal culture within post-secondary institutions exacerbates these issues (Pidgeon, 2008, 2016; Black & Hachkowski, 2018; Walton et al., 2020). As Black and Hachkowski's (2018) did an extensive literature review that identifies several educational barriers facing Indigenous students, the next section explores some of the recent literature on Indigenous student experiences.

Indigenous Student Experiences

It is important to understand that Indigenous students choose to go onto post-secondary, not only for individual goals but also for their families, communities, and broader Indigenous nations (Pidgeon, 2008; Walton et al., 2020). As Hunt, Lalonde, and Rondeau (2010) reiterate education is "...inextricably linked to broader community change" (p. 27). Four Arrows, aka, Jacobs (2008) states "Indigenous education is described as holistic thinking, as it involves a deep connection to place and the environment, and speaking from one's heart ... for example, ... Indigenous people look at the concept of place as it relates to the harmony and balance of life that we understand from living and observing in that space" (as cited in Black & Hachkowski, 2018, p. 1095).

By understanding these challenges through the lens of Indigenous students' experiences, we can better grasp the barriers within existing advising structures and work towards implementing more inclusive practices. Crane et al., (2019) suggest that post-secondary institutions might contribute to "cultural violence" through curricula that neglect to respect and integrate Indigenous Peoples' colonial histories, rights, and cultural perspectives (as cited in Nielsen, Livernoche, & Ramji, 2022, p. 142). This neglect can perpetuate "asymmetric power dynamics," which marginalize these communities, reducing their voices and treating them as issues to be managed within limited time (Nielsen, Livernoche, & Ramji, 2022, p. 142).

The literature review from Harris (2018), revealed that only first year students may prefer developmental advising however, advisors believe prescribed advising should be administered within their first year of studies. After their first year, it becomes more about social necessities than academic progress, so our research required us to identify the additional support and services Indigenous students require over and above other students' needs to continue successfully in post-secondary institutions. Understanding the barriers faced by "at-risk" Indigenous students through this holistic lens can help academic advisors and instructors better comprehend the interconnected effects of positive advising interactions in post-secondary realm.

Academic Advising

To better understand the dynamics between academic advising and the student experience and given the lack of literature specific to Indigenous students and academic advising, we broadened our inclusion of selected articles based on the experiences of minority groups, like those of Indigenous students, to draw parallels and explore the systemic challenges they face within the current advising structures. Given the deep-rooted challenges Indigenous students face within the education system-such as those highlighted in Nunavut and the broader context of colonial erasure-it becomes essential to explore how different advising models can impact student retention and success.

Throughout our literature review, we noted the literature did not divide the students' academic levels into first year vs. second year or theory vs. skills-based programs or home-study vs. on-campus vs. in-community delivery formats. Finally, the articles did not describe whether students who left high school early, or without

graduating, caused further retention and/or success. Thus, our focus was to inquire about the impacts of social factors on school completion and provide a more personalized approach that fosters deeper connections between students and their educational environment, which is especially important for “at-risk” or marginalized students. This developmental approach can significantly contribute to improved retention and success rates among Indigenous students, who face unique challenges within the academic setting. Finally, the articles did not describe whether students who left high school early, or without graduating, caused further retention and/or success, so our focus was to inquire into the impacts of social factors on school completion and if the different language groupings created complex variables and factors.

Prescriptive Advising

Prescriptive academic advising serves as the starting point in the educational journey, providing students with guidance that extends beyond mere course selection. In a prescriptive advising system, students benefit from having a strategic roadmap constructed by academic advisors and the students themselves. “A prescriptive advisor believes that their duty is mostly complete once they provide advice; from there, it is the student’s responsibility to follow through on the guidance given” (Appleby, 2008, p. 85).

Fielstein (1994) reminds us that prescriptive advising can provide a successful foundation for advising because students have the right to expect their advisors to provide them with

[p]recise information regarding curriculum choices, major requirements, and graduation requirements ... [h]owever, the prescriptive style fails to engage students actively in their education and does not help them develop a sense of responsibility for their academic choices (as cited in Appleby, 2008, pp. 85-86)

Within the prescriptive model, decision-making authority rests with the advisor, meaning that outcome does not benefit the student, responsibility falls on the advisor. “This approach emphasizes the advisor’s expertise rather than fostering a collaborative relationship where both advisor and the student work together in decision-making, which contrasts with Indigenous ways of shared responsibility to wisdom” (Crookston, 1972, as cited in Weir, Dickman, & Fuqua, 2005, p. 75). Crookston (1972) highlights the

importance of an Indigenous worldview within the Prescribed Advising approach to deepen student identity, autonomy, and support collaborative decision making.

A student's indecision can lead to, "how the student perceives the counselor or teacher as the authority with the right answer" (Gordon, 1981, p. 434). Therefore, it is important to make sure that,

As counselors and teachers, we need to recognize student courage and provide encouragement as they assume the risks of each forward movement. It is important for instructor-led information to not be prescribed advising, because "students will ultimately realize career and life decisions are theirs alone. (Gordon, 1981, p. 438)

The hierarchical power structure often found within the advisor-student relationship, particularly in prescribed advising, could be dismantled by the advisor adopting a holistic perspective and meeting the student where they are at through a strength-based lens.

Developmental Advising

Developmental academic advising is a dynamic and personalized approach to guiding students through their educational journey, focusing not only on course selection, but also on growth and goal attainment; "the development of the whole student-intellectually, personally, and socially" (Gordon, 1994, p. 71). In this student-centered model, advisors collaborate with learners to identify strengths, interests, and potential challenges sensing the responsibility for one's educational path. Advisors provide ongoing support, helping students navigate challenges, set realistic goals, and make informed decisions about their academic and career paths as the student develops throughout the career journey. Researchers have found that students want a developmental relationship with their advisors that help them with academic and career goals (Winston & Sandor, 1984, p.12). Developmental academic advising thus becomes a transformative experience, empowering students to take ownership of their education and equipping them with the skills needed for a successful and fulfilling future.

Habley and Rockett (1988) believe "some evidence shows, however, that little progress has been made in implementing developmental advising consistently across campuses" (as cited in Gordon, 1994, p. 72). Schulenberg and Lindhorst (2008) highlight the various models of academic advising, including the current advising-as-teaching

approach, with significant efforts to define the profession. However, they argue that these models are reflections of the dynamic and interconnected nature of the field. From their perspective, none of these models fully capture the true purpose, cultural significance, or impact of academic advising, which plays a deeper role in guiding individuals through their educational journey. Harris' (2018) study,

...contributed to the argument that minority students are satisfied with a prevailing developmental approach. Underrepresented students feeling isolated or uncertain about their role in the campus community may find the needed connection to the institution and the campus community through the relationships established with advisors using the developmental approach. Affirmation of belonging to the institution will more likely emerge from developmental advising interactions than through the one-way directive approach of prescriptive advising. (pp. 42-43).

Harris (2018) conducted a survey of 77 “at-risk” students on academic advising approaches at a historically Black university, which provides valuable insights into how prescriptive versus developmental advising might influence “at-risk” student outcomes. For example, they found that many students preferred developmental advising over prescribed, because students need to make connections “to the institution and the campus community through the relationships established with advisors using the developmental approach” (Harris, 2018, p. 42). This comparison is particularly relevant when considering Indigenous student experiences in post-secondary education, where similar issues of cultural disconnection and systemic barriers are prevalent.

While students prefer developmental advising, we note that there is a need to consider alternative models of academic advising, such as an Indigenous holistic model. This model would not only address students' immediate needs but also support their long term growth and development. It would integrate cultural, social, and academic support to ensure a more comprehensive and effective advising experience. By exploring this approach, our study aims to address a critical gap in the literature on culturally informed academic advising for Indigenous students.

Decolonization of Academic Advising

While the prescriptive advising approach acknowledges the importance of addressing students' needs with clear structured guidance and developmental advising fosters deeper connections in long-term planning, an effective academic approach must

go beyond these models. It should acknowledge and address the immediate needs of students while simultaneously supporting their long-term growth and development. Connecting to Pidgeon's (2016) Indigenous Wholistic Framework, such as holistic approach to advising would emphasize the integration of cultural, social, and academic support, ensuring a comprehensive advising experience empowering students to navigate the complexities of their educational journey successfully.

Archibald (2006) argues that decolonization is fundamental to address the trauma experienced by Indigenous peoples. She emphasizes the importance of engaging in processes that unravel the lingering impacts of colonization, advocating for education that heals and restores Indigenous communities. Similarly, Marie Battiste (2013) emphasizes that decolonizing education involves confronting the ongoing impacts of colonialism on Indigenous communities. She advocates for educational environments that honour and incorporate Indigenous knowledge and perspectives, supporting Indigenous self-determination. As Battiste asserts, this process "requires recognizing and addressing the legacy of colonialism and its ongoing effects on Indigenous peoples, cultures and knowledge systems" (Battiste, 2013, p.24).

Building on these ideas, decolonizing academic advising involves critically examining and transforming existing practices to better serve Indigenous students. This approach requires moving away from traditional, prescriptive methods and towards more holistic, culturally responsive frameworks that acknowledge and respect Indigenous ways of knowing.

Carroll (2020) notes decolonizing involves the entire advising community and tasks us with the following:

- NACADA must assume decolonizing leadership to redefine academic advising on American college campuses
- Ask colleges and universities to form global alliances to share decolonizing re-imagined academic advising resources and services
- Ask to rebuild university partnerships that value non-Western knowledge
- Ask faculty and instructors to redefine their curricula to place value on non-western knowledge in the classroom and in research (para 5-6).

Carroll's (2020) decolonizing responses offer crucial insights into how academic institutions can better support Indigenous students and work towards decolonizing academic advising. By emphasizing proportional representation and increasing the presence of Indigenous, racialized, and low-income students and faculty, institutions can create a more inclusive and representative academic environment. This is particularly important for Indigenous students whose worldview and ways of knowing and being are more holistic.

While previous research has shown that minoritized students prefer developmental advising (Harris, 2018), current models often fail to be culturally responsive to Indigenous students' unique needs. These traditional approaches do not adequately support the holistic development required for Indigenous learners, leading to gaps in their academic success and well-being.

OMAESD (2011) spoke of a "broader understanding of success and its contributing factors are what is required to ensure a more holistic measurement of success at the postsecondary level" (as cited in Black & Hachkowski, 2018, p. 1095). "The literature points to acknowledging the knowledge and life experiences using a participatory model that is culturally appropriate to provide equity for Indigenous learners" (Aseron et al., 2013; Ilcek, 2011 as cited in Black & Hachkowski, 2018, p. 1094). Understanding we need to re-position academic advising for Indigenous students, the literature is clear; it is time to revitalize academic advising with an Indigenous holistic approach.

Decolonizing academic advising in this way is essential to creating a more inclusive and effective advising experience. Our study aims to explore these possibilities and address a critical gap in the literature on culturally informed academic advising for Indigenous students, highlighting the importance of moving beyond prescriptive models to approaches that truly support Indigenous learners.

Summary of Literature

We learned decolonizing academic advising requires shifting from a one-size-fits-all approach to one that honors and integrates the diverse cultural backgrounds and holistic needs of Indigenous students. Our research needed to include the importance of

community, land, spirituality, and relationality in educational journeys. The literature showed advisors should work collaboratively with students, creating personalized pathways that reflect their cultural identities and aspirations rather than imposing standardized academic metrics and that decolonized advising also includes fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment within the academic environment. In our research we looked to prioritize cultural relevance, holistic well-being, and student-led goals, so academic advising can become a transformative tool for supporting Indigenous students' success on their own terms.

Methodology

Based on our reading of the literature, and our own professional experiences, we understood we needed to investigate if decolonizing and revitalizing academic advising would promote a culturally responsive and inclusive educational environment that empowers Indigenous learners with the support, resources, and guidance from academic advisors and instructors.

The Research Design

Our study was a qualitative study following Indigenous research protocols from Currie & Kaminski (2009). Our qualitative data was collected through expert opinions from each member of our sharing circle, an Indigenous culturally appropriate focus group.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of our research was to explore decolonize academic advising to support Indigenous student success. The broader research question we set out to answer was, “What can academic advisors and instructors do to Decolonize and Revitalize Academic Advising in the Canadian Post-Secondary School System to Improve Indigenous Student Success?”

Site of Study

NVIT is an Indigenous post-secondary institution with campuses in both, Merritt and Burnaby, BC. It offers 68 programs and has approximately 1316 students (as of

2022/2023). There are four Academic Advisors at NVIT: two at each campus. The site of research materialized at NVIT in both boardrooms. Staff from the Burnaby campus joined via TEAMS meeting. The spaces were the most comfortable rooms at NVIT with enough seats for participants to find comfort and correctly respond to any Covid-19 parameters.

Protocol and Ethics

We obtained permission from Lower Similkameen Indian Band (LSIB) to conduct research that may affect their members we were part of the MEd program that was being offered on their territory and they were sponsoring LSIB members. We then approached NVIT asking for a letter of support for its employees to participate in our research. Permission was granted by both parties and their letters of support were part of our ethics application to SFU Office of Research Ethics.

Using the core principles of ethics, the authors ensured respect and confidentiality for each of the participants and recognized each of their intrinsic values and autonomies. The authors practiced concern for their welfare and did not expose them to unnecessary risks. They were treated fairly and equitably, all the while considering the imbalance of power in the room. Stakeholders were protected against culpable deception. Finally, the participants signed the invitations as consent to their participation (APPENDIX A. Sharing Circle Participant Consent Forms).

Participants

Our sharing circle held a diversity of Indigenous voices in our knowledge holder sharing circle. Of the seven participants, all self-identified as Indigenous, three were faculty members of in Early Childhood Education and Associate of ARTS, and Social Work, three were staff from registration and student services, and one was a manager of students.

The reason we recruited our participant pool went as follows:

- The management team at NVIT is currently seeking delivery methods in advising that follow Kirkness and Barnhart's (1991) 4Rs of Respect, Relevance, Responsibility, and Reciprocity and Archibald's (2008) extension

of those Rs to include reverence. Management needs to focus on the policies that may require changes and/or update job descriptions.

- Faculty need to adapt their teachings into holistic delivery-modeled tools with NVIT students.
- Elders and Knowledge keepers hold the traditional knowledge to describe the techniques and processes we will implement and the nuances the knowledge carries.
- Academic and Financial Planners can revitalize the academic advising methods in a holistic format. Our selection of participants came with a variety of perspectives, equally valued.

To prevent stereotyping or discrimination, we were committed to eliminating our selection bias by ensuring the participants in the study were from various program/department areas at NVIT and at all diverse levels of the institution. They were not gender specific but had to be of Indigenous ancestry and occupied Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Our staff, faculty, Elders, knowledge keepers, and exempt staff required a letter of invitation. On June 12th, we sent invitation emails to eleven Indigenous staff, faculty, managers and/or Elders at NVIT. In the emails, we included the Sharing Circle Participant Consent forms (Appendix A), and the Sharing Circle Protocol document (Appendix B).

Due to the work required in the ethics review process, upon receiving ethics approval from SFU, we had a limited window of time to conduct research as most NVIT staff members would be leaving for summer holidays.

From that point, we developed a project timeline to ensure we stay on track and complete the research in a timely manner as follows:

June 12	Sent invitations to stakeholders
June 25	Hosted sharing circle with participants (1-4pm)
June 30	Completed transcription housekeeping
July 01-03	Transcripts provided to participants for revision
July 05	Edited transcription completed

There was no consent forms completed before the sharing circle, only verbal commitments to attend. They were asked to come to the NVIT Merritt campus or via TEAMS meeting if online support was required. Participants were informed of any

potential benefits and foreseeable risks. Each of the participants work at NVIT, so they have a vested interest in recruitment and retention of our students. Each participant received indirect benefits by gaining knowledge on how to work and plan with Indigenous students. It created a more harmonized workplace for each participant. The potential benefits that could possibly affect the participants' welfare is that they could become a future Indigenization committee member at NVIT. As with the participants, the researchers could possibly benefit from a more cohesive Indigenous advising plan to work with.

The interview was held in a circle sharing method. We asked three questions during the session. Their voices were recorded; however, they were not to be identified and remain anonymous. This was not a condition of our employment or the participants. The data collected is held by Anna Brown and Rachel Marchand.

After the sharing circle sitting, a set of transcripts was generated by TEAMS software and copies were sent to each stakeholder for review/revision to ensure the nuances of Indigenous theory, knowledge, and tradition were captured correctly. The final version was then collated into the final document to continue the next stage of the research – our analysis.

Sharing Circle Process

Our data was collected using a sharing circle method by Currie & Kaminski (2009). We began with an unspoken protocol in Indigenous exchange of information. We served Indian tea, coffee, and water, with a variety of healthy snacks to prepare them for sharing in the circle. Everyone was asked to be seated, so we could perform an opening prayer. One of the participants offered the prayer and we moved onto introductions. We then transitioned to the customary protocol for gatherings.

We mentioned the availability of counselling services if any member felt burdened or overwhelmed with the information they shared. It was explained at the start of the circle, if a participant was not willing to share information due to having a supervisor in the circle, their position was safe no matter what the information provided when participating in the circle. The research outweighed the foreseeable risks from the participants' perspectives, expertise, or roles.

On the research date, seven participants attended the sharing circle so, we re-mentioned the need for the Sharing Circle Consent forms (Appendix A.) to be submitted and all members handed them in at the start of the sharing circle. We asked three questions during the session. Their voices were recorded; however, they were not to be identified and remain anonymous as per our ethics approval and consent process.

Rachel Marchand conducted the talking/sharing circle while Anna Brown transcribed each participants' responses. During the sharing circle session, stakeholders were able to share their knowledge, feel comfortable in the space we set up for them, and provide insight into Indigenous knowledge. Knowing fragments of knowledge held by an individual can build the historical narrative by sharing their stories as a collective; thereby, it reinforced the overall knowledge of the group and built spirituality and protocol knowledge.

We upheld our commitment to honour everyone's time by adhering to the three-hour time limit for our sharing circle. This time allowed for everyone to participate if they wished to share their ideas. Our circle ended with closing reflections of participants' current perspectives of the holistic advising process and their gratitude for having participated. A closing share of participants' current perspectives ended the sharing circle in a good way. The researchers presented thank you gifts for the panel's time and knowledge. We again, mentioned the availability of counselling services if any member felt burdened or overwhelmed with the information they shared.

After the sharing circle sitting, a set of transcripts was generated by TEAMS software and copies were sent to each stakeholder for review/revision to ensure the nuances of Indigenous theory, knowledge, and tradition were captured correctly. The nuances of the group were noticed when they spoke their own language to introduce themselves. In the transcription, they had different backgrounds and different languages. We needed individuals to translate their own languages. Knowing there was a power dynamic, different values and experiences reflected their cultural norms and life experiences in unique ways. As they shared their responses, their comfort levels and relationships with the researchers influenced how they articulated their thoughts and feelings. It was crucial to accurately interpret their responses to ensure that their diverse voices were all acknowledged and respected during our analysis. The final version was

then collated into the final document to continue the next stage of the research – our analysis.

Data Analysis

Our qualitative data was collected through the expert opinions from each member of our sharing circle focus group. By gathering and transcribing data from NVIT staff, faculty, and managers, our method of hosting a sharing circle to collect qualitative data using open question interviews with NVIT staff members allowed us to extrapolate their expert opinions to identify multiple subjective realities of colonized histories, cultures, and knowledge. Since decolonizing methodological space is complex, our qualitative data from each member of our sharing circle focus group was transcribed onto TEAMS software. We gave our participants two additional days to view their transcriptions and make changes or additions they did not mention in the original circle to prevent impressionism from other participants carrying into their own knowledge. We analyzed our data through inter-rater reliability. Our method of hosting a sharing circle to collect qualitative data using open-question interviews with NVIT staff members allowed us to extrapolate the colonized histories, cultures, and knowledge to identify multiple subjective realities through substantial findings and the use of metaphor to capture nuanced meanings.

Rs as Analysis Framework

Our three sharing circle questions were systematically reviewed using 4Rs (Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, and Responsible Relationships (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Pidgeon, 2008, 2016) and Archibald's (2008) principle of Reverence, as we were trying to interpret the data, capturing common threads that eventually evolved into themes, representing significant aspects of the data that address the research question. It helped us identify themes in our data that answered our research lenses:

1. Responsibility-What policies do you think currently exist that limit/enhance student success? Do you think having holistic advising will create control over our students?
2. Reciprocity-What rights do students/staff/institutions have if we implement a holistic approach to academic advising?

3. Respect-What abilities, achievements or qualities will students/staff/institutions gain from having a holistic approach?
4. Relevance-What significance is the holistic approach to students/staff/institutions? What are the techniques that can be implemented in the holistic approach?
5. Reverence-Who gets esteem/loyalty/piety/awe/adoration/admiration by implementing the holistic approach?
6. Relationship-How will having a holistic approach improve the relationship between students/staff/institutions? How does the holistic approach connect advising to the success of students?

Trustworthiness

Our assumption and inquiry came from a place of understanding how to better sustain Indigenous students' success in post-secondary. The philosophical assumption was that not only do we understand better, we do better because we know better, and Indigenous students feel safer and more open to work with us, yet the dominant society culture of post-secondary is set up for the dominant, not the "at-risk students", and that is why the prescribed and developmental academic advising approaches are two methods that have been used and work; however, we saw it is not enough for our Indigenous college to increase enrollment and retain them. We used inter-rater reliability to measure the degree of agreement between the co-researchers and our mentor, Dr. John Chenoweth, ensuring consistent assessments. We demonstrated the findings were applicable in other contexts or with other groups, achieved by providing rich, thick descriptions of the research context and participants. We ensured the research process was logical, traceable, and documented where we detailed our decision-making processes and methodology. We established the findings were shaped by the participants and not our bias or motivation. Our ontological assumptions arose when information provided by our participants could not be seen, but could be mentally understood, the nuances of the Indigenous knowledge.

As we are both Indigenous employees at NVIT, we are immersed in the subject of academic advising. Our axiological assumptions are influenced by our everyday work as an academic advisor and instructor in an Indigenous post-secondary institution. The themes we are influenced by, values, personal experiences, and worldviews of being Indigenous working within an Indigenous public post-secondary. We can relate and

understand what it feels like to be a minority, and the challenges that at-risk students face when they enter post-secondary.

As the researchers who are both Indigenous, we can relate and have an understanding and want to support our fellow Indigenous students. We have a vested interest in supporting our own people, because that is what we do, and it feels right. By adhering to the SFU's ethics principles and guided by Indigenous research methodology Currie & Kaminski (2009), our work was both scientifically rigorous and culturally respectful, fostering trust and collaboration with Indigenous communities. We ensured our Indigenous research was rigorous involving several key steps:

Engagement and Collaboration:

We involved two Indigenous communities in the research process, respecting their knowledge, values, and perspectives. We collaborated with Indigenous researchers and leaders to co-create research questions, methodologies, and interpretations.

Cultural Sensitivity and Ethical Considerations:

We adhered to ethical guidelines that prioritized the rights, dignity, and cultural heritage of Indigenous peoples. We obtained informed consent, ensured transparency, and respected traditional knowledge systems and intellectual property rights.

Methodological Rigor:

We used robust and culturally appropriate research methodologies that aligned with both academic standards and Indigenous ways of knowing. It included a sharing circle qualitative method which honours oral traditions and community involvement.

Reflexivity and Accountability:

We maintained reflexivity by continually examining and addressing our own biases and assumptions. We ensured accountability by reporting back to the community and incorporating their feedback in the data transcription process. We adhered to ethical guidelines that protected the rights, dignity, and cultural heritage of Indigenous peoples, ensuring the research will benefit the community.

Validation and Dissemination:

We validated findings through triangulation and cross-verification with our supervisor to ensure the research measured what it intended to measure, accurately reflecting the concepts relevant to the Indigenous community. We ensured the research appeared to measure what it claims to on the surface, making sense to both researchers and Indigenous participants. We disseminated results in ways that are accessible and beneficial to the Indigenous communities involved, ensuring that the research contributes positively to their well-being and self-determination.

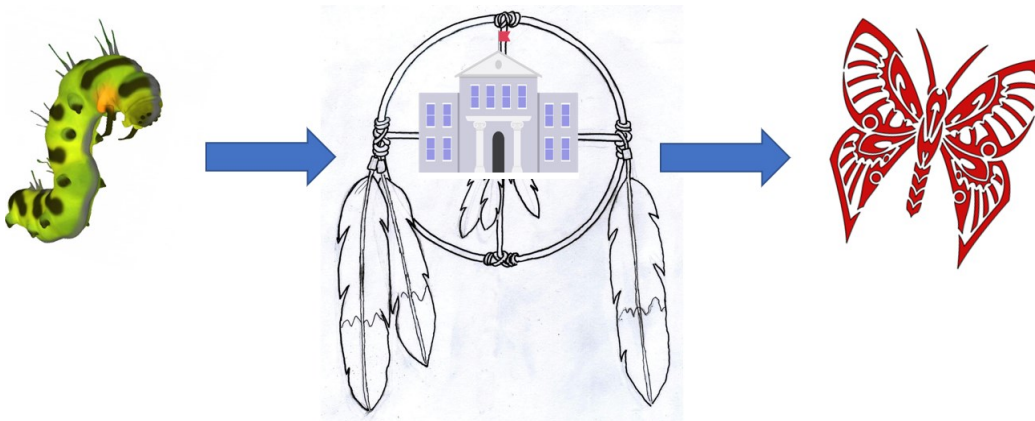
Limitations of Study

Here are key limitations of our research:

1. An ethical limitation shown as power dynamics. The power imbalances between participants as co-workers/colleagues may have affected the research process, outcomes, and community trust as it may have caused impressionism.
2. A practical limitation happened during the direct translation of data when the participants spoke their Indigenous language. Interpretation by the participants was provided.
3. The only type of employee that did not participate was an academic advisor; thereby, the advising tools and techniques that would have been helpful in identifying a new advising method were not discussed.

By acknowledging and addressing these limitations, the researchers improved the quality, relevance, and impact of Indigenous research while respecting the rights and perspectives of Indigenous communities.

Metaphor



At NVIT, the Elders' office has a depiction of a caterpillar metamorphosis. It demonstrates schools can help students transform into butterflies. Using our method will design our use of metaphor as a tool for comprehending and communicating our research framework or conceptualization of connecting Indigenous barriers and advising needs of Indigenous students to decolonize and revitalize a holistic method of academic advising.

To begin, students possess their own colonial historical perspectives and experiences. The dots on the caterpillar's body represent students' own worldviews, Indigenous knowledge and histories. Caterpillars start their life cycle consuming all they can, so they can begin expanding and changing into the butterfly just as students begin to obtain all the education they need to succeed and move forward in the world.

Just as a caterpillar undergoes metamorphosis to become a butterfly, transforming into a completely new being, schools must create nurturing environments that promote the growth and development of their students. This transformation isn't just academic; it's about shaping student identities and worldviews. By integrating an Indigenous perspective, schools can offer a holistic education that emphasizes community, connection to the land, and respect for diverse cultures. This approach helps students develop a sense of identity grounded in a broader understanding of the world and their place within it, like a butterfly emerging with a new form and a wider view of the world.

Findings

In our pursuit to decolonize and revitalize academic advising within post-secondary institutions, with contributions from seven participants, which included, managers, faculty, and support staff from NVIT, four critical themes emerged: Educate the staff in the Indigenous worldview, preparing the space, rebuild student identities through communication, and recognize the topic is larger than any method.

Implementing the Indigenous worldview provides staff with the necessary understanding and sensitivity to create a truly inclusive and supportive educational experience. The quote asserted, "making sure that all of the people that work for us here or have interactions have mandatory exposure to what we are talking about ... so many non-Indigenous people that really want to help, but they don't want to do the homework" (Participant A). This necessitates the training of staff in the Indigenous socio-historical cultural knowledge as a forefront to starting the advising process. By training staff and incorporating this understanding into their teaching and administration practices and policies, equips institutions to create an environment acknowledging and respecting the unique challenges and strengths of Indigenous students.

Educating Staff in the Indigenous Worldview

While preparing the physical and emotional space for Indigenous students is crucial, the training of staff and Indigenous socio-historical cultural knowledge is equally important. Effective support for Indigenous students extends beyond the environment to educators and administrators who interact with them daily. Training staff in these areas equips them with the necessary understanding and sensitivity to create a truly inclusive and supportive educational experience.

“I think we need to focus a lot about teaching our educators...that’s exactly what we end up doing for our students.” (Participant E). This quote emphasized the importance of educating staff from an Indigenous perspective. She noted that focusing on teaching educators about Indigenous worldview is essential, especially in post-secondary institutions.

“To enhance the student experience, I think that the institution needs to have an understanding of Indigenous people’s history with colonization” (Participant B). He stressed that to enhance the student experience, institutions need to understand Indigenous people’s history with colonization. By incorporating this understanding into their teaching and administration practices, institutions can create an environment that acknowledges and respects the unique challenges and strengths of Indigenous students.

Making sure that all of the people that work for us here or have interactions have mandatory exposure to what we are talking about...so many non-indigenous people that really wanna help, but don’t want to do the homework. (Participant A)

Ensuring mandatory exposure to Indigenous perspectives for all staff is critical. By incorporating this understanding into their teaching and administrative practices, institutions can create an environment acknowledging and respecting the unique challenges and strengths of Indigenous students.

Preparing the Space

Preparing the space was the second theme that emerged from our sharing circle as a way to enhance the Indigenous student experience. Management, staff, and faculty

believe advising begins with post-secondary schools needing to prepare the environment, in all four directions; spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically, before Indigenous students will find comfort in attending. Participant B stated, “This further emphasizes the challenges Indigenous students face when they do not have access to culturally supportive environments.” Based on our participants’ feedback from our sharing circle, it was evident the space is crucial for Indigenous students.

“One thing I appreciated was the community at NVIT...and I definitely felt the hit when I wasn’t at NVIT...the sense of community just wasn’t there for me or wasn’t easily accessible for me.” (Participant C). She noted a significant difference in the sense of community between NVIT and SFU. This feedback underscores the importance of preparing and maintaining a supportive and inclusive space for Indigenous students to foster a sense of belonging and community.

The whole system is a colonization mechanism; classrooms are all set up like hierarchies in our Indigenous worldview. We are born with absolutely everything we need to know. My job, interacting with students, is to help them remember this and to let them know that they carry their all-personal power...they don't have to give anything to me; they have it all, and all they have to do is exercise it...instructors support students in the space by helping them know who they are and the power that they have; they just need to start using it. (Participant A)

Participant A emphasized the importance of creating a safe Indigenous space and highlighted the traditional classroom setup reflects a colonization mechanism. She shared the need for a different approach in Indigenous education; instructors support students by helping them recognize their word power and identity. This approach speaks to supporting students in a holistic, Indigenous worldview, providing the necessary space for students to successfully navigate secondary institutions.

Another participant shared “a big part of just helping students when they come here, is making them feel at home, and in a safe space and allowing them to be able to be themselves, just letting them feel and learn while they're here (Participant G). She shared that students often returned years later to express their gratitude for the supportive environment she helped create. Her experience reinforces the significance of a welcoming and secure space, where students can be their authentic selves and engage in their learning journey effectively. Speaking about the importance of relationship building, another participant reflected

I was in the middle of nowhere, legitimately. I walked into the room, and I was like, I'm here. I made it...so we started off with a little bit of humor and connection. Immediately by humbling myself coming into their space, we worked through some process, a lot of self-reflection and that identity. The relationship building is so important. (Participant E)

After having lost all her luggage on route, she emphasized the importance of understanding and respecting the student space from an educator's perspective. She shared a personal experience of delivering a lesson in a rural community. Her experience highlights the critical role of educators in creating a connection with students by respecting and integrating into their space fostering a sense of trust and mutual respect.

Rebuild Student Identities through Communication

Another critical aspect of supporting Indigenous student success is rebuilding student identities. This process involves communication, comprehensive student support, strong advocacy, and effective strategies.

I didn't identify as Indigenous...I was ashamed...until I started to connect with my culture. I was so afraid; I was completely petrified to step foot into here because I didn't feel like I belonged...I had imposter syndrome. (Participant C)

These efforts are crucial in addressing the overarching challenge of identity overshadowed by historical and on-going colonization. By focusing on rebuilding student identities, institutions can empower Indigenous students to reclaim and strengthen their sense of self, which will enhance their academic and personal growth.

In addition to creating a supportive space and training staff in Indigenous socio-historical cultural knowledge, another critical aspect of supporting Indigenous student success is rebuilding student identities. This process involves communication, comprehensive student support, strong advocacy, and effective strategies. These efforts are crucial in addressing the overarching challenge of identity overshadowed by historical and on-going colonization. By focusing on rebuilding student identities, institutions can empower Indigenous students to reclaim and strengthen their sense of self, which will enhance their academic and personal growth.

I didn't feel like I belonged, especially coming from a predominately white town, I was not exposed to my own culture growing up in lil'wat, and so I had major problems with my own identity and so I came here. (Participant C)

She shared her personal experience as an NVIT student, which highlights the importance of rebuilding identity in a post-secondary context. Her story illustrates the profound impact that a supportive and culturally relevant post-secondary institution can have on an Indigenous student through exposure to culture, although not her own culture, and yet, it gave her a sense of community at NVIT where she began to address her identity struggles and rebuild her sense of self. This underscores the importance of creating environments that facilitate identity reclamation, and the power meant for Indigenous students. As Participant C shared earlier, she felt like an imposter when she initially began her studies, this experience highlights one of the challenges Indigenous students face when they do not have access to culturally supportive environments. Her experience at SFU underscores the need for institutions to actively facilitate connections between students and their cultural roots including providing access to Elders and community support, by doing so, institutions can help mitigate feelings of impostor syndrome and promote a stronger sense of identity and belonging.

Drumming on Fridays is really important, and it all stems from creating that place that [Participant A] talks about, where students feel really good about being who they are in a very safe environment. (Participant B)

He spoke about the importance of supporting students in knowing who they are. It emphasized the role of NVIT staffing administration as vessels of support for student identities. His insights highlight the need for institutions to create spaces and practices that affirm and celebrate Indigenous identities, providing students with a safe and supportive environment where they can fully express themselves.

Recognize the Topic is Larger than any Method

The importance of understanding the complexity and depth of a topic can often exceed the scope of any single approach or method used to study or address it. During our sharing circle we discovered our inquiry into implementing a holistic approach to advising was far more complex than our questions initially suggested. Consequently, our participants found it challenging to provide straightforward answers. The responses varied widely, as suggestions included: trauma informed practice workshops,

implementing talking circles, having elders available for support, expanding online resources to connect students with elders, assisting students with application processes, and improving communication, it became clear that addressing holistic advising involves both short-term and long-term strategies reflecting the complexity and breath of the issue.

The phrase “recognize the topic is larger than any method” emphasizes the importance of understanding that the complexity and depth of a topic often exceeds the scope of any single approach or method used to study or address it. Therefore, during our sharing circle with experts from NVIT staff and faculty, we discovered that our inquiry into implementing a holistic approach i.e., holistic advising for post-secondary students was far more complex than our questions initially suggested. Consequently, the experts found it challenging to provide straightforward answers, as the topic exceeded the scope of our questions. For instance, when the question was posed, “what ideas do you have to implement holistic advising as faculty, support staff, or managers, the responses varied widely, suggesting trauma informed practice workshops, implementing talking circles, having Elders available for support, expanding online resources to connect students with Elders, assisting students with application processes and scholarships, and improving communication. It became clear that addressing holistic advising involves both short-term and long-term strategies reflecting the complexity and breadth of the issue.

Its really hard to talk about indigenization and decolonization without understanding the whole system as a colonial mechanism...this highlights the complexity and the need for comprehensive understanding when discussing such intricate topics...I think we all should, we should be able to fund and run these kinds of sessions that are safe. (Participant A)

She addressed the need for more discussions like our sharing circle. She said there is an underscoring of importance to creating supportive environments for these critical conversations.

One of the things I'm hearing is the importance of listening, especially with students. A lot of times we don't see the students, especially on our campus. They don't ever come upstairs. Our community here is not very good right now. (Participant C)

An Associate Registrar shared a highlight of a broader realization during the sharing circle that staff do not always have the best connection or relationship with

students; therefore, it emphasizes the need for more efforts to improve support, advising and faculty positions for Indigenous students.

Discussion

As noted earlier in our discussion of the role of post-secondary in supporting Indigenous students, in their work to take up the TRC Calls to Action (2015b), they must also ensure their support services, like academic advising, are also doing the work of decolonizing and reconciliation. Our findings contributed to existing literature and research by providing fresh insights, empirical data, and theoretical perspectives that expanded current understanding in the field.

By highlighting previously unexplored areas, such as unique cultural contexts (Indigenous institution) or specific demographic groups (Indigenous staff/faculty/administrator/Elders), our research contributed voices of Indigenous peoples related to academic advising and what is needed at an institutional level to support Indigenous students. Additionally, our findings offered practical implications, suggesting new approaches, interventions, or policies that addressed identified gaps or issues. This contribution not only added new data but also enriched the discourse with diverse perspectives, potentially leading to more comprehensive and inclusive models and frameworks. Through rigorous analysis and thoughtful integration with existing knowledge, our research helped to advance the field, providing a foundation for future studies and applications.

We unearthed evidence that suggested, educating staff in the Indigenous worldview provides them with the necessary understanding and sensitivity to create a truly inclusive and supportive educational experience by necessitating the training of staff in the Indigenous socio-historical cultural knowledge as a forefront to starting the advising process. Preparing the space in all four directions; spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically, was the second prominent finding before Indigenous students find comfort in attending. Another critical finding of supporting Indigenous student success was rebuilding student identities by involving communication, comprehensive student support, strong advocacy, and effective strategies. Such efforts are crucial in addressing the overarching challenge of identity overshadowed by historical and on-going colonization. What is unique in our study is our site - doing this

research at an Indigenous-centred institution highlighted that even as an Indigenous institution, with Indigenous staff there is important ongoing work to do in decolonizing and Indigenizing or practices.

Finally, we discovered our examination was far more complex than our questions initially suggested, making it clear that addressing holistic advising involves both short-term and long-term strategies reflecting the complexity and breath of the issue. Our sharing circle inquiry revealed crucial insights into enhancing the academic advising framework to better support Indigenous students; therefore, we proposed recommendations for practice and policy to decolonize and revitalize academic advising in the BC post-secondary system to improve Indigenous student success.

Recommendations: Educational Practice, Theory, and/or Policy

Our sharing circle inquiry has revealed crucial insights into enhancing the academic advising framework to better support Indigenous students; therefore, we propose the following recommendations for practice and policy to decolonize and revitalize academic advising in the BC post-secondary system to improve Indigenous student success:

Practice:

- To integrate Indigenous cultural practices and traditions into the daily life of the institution by scheduling regular cultural activities, ceremonies, and storytelling.
- Create dedicated spaces on campus where Indigenous students can gather, connect, and engage with their culture and community.
- Adopt a holistic approach to academic advising that considers the emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of Indigenous students in addition to their academic needs.
- Establish mentorship programs where Indigenous students can receive guidance from Indigenous Elders and community leaders.
- Foster lines of communication between students, advisors, and the broader campus community.
- Create platforms where students can voice their concerns and suggestions.

- Advocate for the needs and interests of Indigenous students at all levels of the institution, ensuring their voices are heard in the decision-making processes.

Policy:

- Develop policies that mandate the inclusion of Indigenous cultural elements in the curriculum and create campus activities in consultation with Indigenous students that are regularly reviewed for effectiveness.
- Implement policies that require academic advisors to undergo training in holistic advising practices.
- Include community representatives in institutional planning and policymaking.
- Develop advocacy programs that support Indigenous students in navigating the institutional landscape and accessing available resources.

To further develop and refine these recommendations, we propose the next step should be to design a national research project to be conducted at other Indigenous post-secondary institutions, focusing on holistic advising. This research will provide a broader understanding of best practices and innovative strategy that can be implemented across institutions to support Indigenous student success by collaborating on a national scale, a comprehensive framework that addresses the unique needs and challenges of Indigenous students in post-secondary education.

Conclusion

Both researchers, having direct work experience in the BC post-secondary system conducted a literature review that addressed the low success rates of Indigenous students even when receiving the same academic advising as non-Indigenous students. We recognized the need to explore further, the additional barriers Indigenous students face preventing them from success. After researching the Indigenous student experience, it listed multiple barriers compared to those of non-Indigenous students. This prompted us to determine if there was a need for a decolonized and revitalized holistic academic advising method that would improve Indigenous student success.

In our research, we hosted a sharing circle with NVIT staff, faculty, and managers, using community engagement and collaboration to validate our findings. Each member re-iterated their Indigenous knowledge, cultural heritage, and ways of being, knowing, and doing. We recognized, there may have been some impressionism

due to the imbalances of power as the sharing circle process is meant to develop consensus decision-making, not evoke separatism of participants. Interpretation of their native languages also delayed the data collection process. Members were asked after the sharing circle to submit translations and to include the nuances of the meaning.

Participants were not ready to commit to a new holistic advising method until institutions and institutional staff begin speaking to the Indigenous worldview, preparing the space (environments) and getting mandatory exposure (training) in the Indigenous socio-historical and cultural knowledge. Recognizing any holistic advising method will need to be exceeded by short-term and long-term strategies that reflect the complexity of and breadth of the issue. Only then, could post-secondary institutions begin to rebuild student identities through communication enhancing their academic and personal growth.

References

- Advising Resource Centre. (2024, Feb 16) Policies and procedures: Advising roles and responsibilities. University of Arizona. <https://advising.arizona.edu/policies-procedures/advising-roles-responsibilities#:~:text=Academic%20advising%20is%20a%20collaborative,personal%20interests%2C%20values%20and%20abilities>
- Appleby, D.C. (2008). Advising as teaching and learning. In V.N. Gordon, W.R. Habley, and T.J. Grites (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (2nd. ed., pp. 85-102). Jossey-Bass/Wiley.
- Archibald (2006). Narrowing in on educational resources that do not affect student achievement. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 81(4). 23-42. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327930pje8104_2
- Barbuto, J. E., Jr., Story, J. S., Fritz, S. M., & Schinstock, J. L. (2011). Full range advising: Transforming the advisor-advisee experience. *Journal of College Student Development*, 52(6). 656-670. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2011.0079>
- Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit*. UBC Press.
- Black, G.L. & Hachkowski, C. (2018). Indigenous learners: What university educators need to know. *Journal of Higher Education*, 43(8), 1092-1108. DOI: 10.1080/03098
- Caroll, D.W. (2020). Recognizing colonialism in academic advising: Starting strategies to decolonize advising services [Conference presentation]. Virtual. *NACADA Journal*. 2020 Annual Conference. para 5-6. <https://advisortraining.wayne.edu/news/decolonizing-academic-advising-and-moving-toward-an-asset-based-advising-approach-40911>
- Crookston, B.B. (1972). A developmental view of academic advising as teaching. *Journal of College Student Personnel*. 13(1). 12-17. <https://doi.org/10.12930/0271-9517-14.2.5>
- Crookston, B.B. (2009). A Developmental View of Academic Advising as Teaching. *NACADA Journal* (2009) 29 (1): 78–82. <https://doi.org/10.12930/0271-9517-29.1.78>
- Currie, S., & Kaminski, J. (2009). Talking circles. Retrieved from <http://firstnationspedagogy.ca/circletalks.html>
- Gordon, V.N. (1994). Developmental advising: The elusive deal. *NACADA Journal*, 39(2), 72-76. <https://doi.org/10.12930/NACADA-19-201>

- Harris, T. (2018). Prescriptive vs. developmental: Academic advising at a historically Black university in South Carolina. *NACADA Journal*, 38(1), 36-45.
<https://doi.org/10.12930/NACADA-15-010>
- Heisserer, D. L., & Parette, P. (2002). Advising at-risk students in college and university settings. *College Student Journal*, 36(1), 69–83.
- Hunt, S., Lalonde, C., & Rondeau, Y. (2010). Supporting aboriginal student success, Report of the Le, Nonet research project. University of Victoria.
https://www.uvic.ca/iace/_assets/docs/uvic_lenonetreport_2010.pdf
- Kirkness, V.J. & Barnhardt, R. (1991). First Nations and higher education: The four R's - respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 30(3), 1-15. Nielsen, J., Livernoche, R., & Ramji, K. (2022). The Indigenous work-integrated learning resource hub: A needs-based approach to addressing barriers and opportunities for Indigenous students. *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning*, 23(2), 139.
- Pidgeon, M. (2008). Pushing against the margins: Indigenous theorizing of “success” and retention in higher education. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 10(3), 339-360.
- Pidgeon, M. (2016). More than a Checklist: Meaningful Indigenous Inclusion in Higher Education. *Social Inclusion*, 4(1), 77-91.
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996). Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples/Pages/final-report.aspx>
- Sallaffie, M., Penny, J., Cherba, M., Healey-Kearok, G.K., & Ratel, J.-L. (2022). Key informants perspectives on education success, supports, and barriers in Nunavut education. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 45(1), 54-79.
<https://doi.org/10.53967/cje-rce.v45i1.4805>
- Schulenberg, J. K., & Lindhorst, M. J. (2008). Advising is advising: Toward defining the practice and scholarship of academic advising. *NACADA Journal*, 28(1), 43–53.
<https://doi-org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/10.12930/0271-9517-28.1.43>
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition*. University of Chicago Press.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). *Canada’s Residential Schools: The Legacy (Vol 5)*. McGill-Queens University Press.
- Walton, P., Pidgeon, M., Hamilton, K. E., Clark, N., & Arnouse, M. (2020). Indigenous university student persistence: Supports, obstacles, and recommendations. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 43(2), 430-464.
<https://journals.sfu.ca/cje/index.php/cje-rce/article/view/3975>

- Weir, S.B., Dickman, M.M., & Fuqua, D.R. (2005). Preferences for academic advising styles. *NACADA Journal*, 25(1), 74-80. <https://doi.org/10.12930/0271-9517-25.1.74>
- Williams, A. (2007). Exploring educational methodologies. *Journal of Educational Research*, 45(3), 245-260.
- Winston, R.B. & Sandor, J.A. (1984). Developmental academic advising: What do students want? *NACADA Journal*, 6-13. <https://doi.org/10.12930/0271-9517-415>

Appendix A.

Sharing Circle Participant Consent Form



FACULTY OF EDUCATION
Masters of Indigenous Educational Leadership

8888 University Drive
Burnaby B.C. Canada V5A 1S6

TEL + 1 778 782 1111
FAX + 1 778 782 1111
SFU.CA

Sharing Circle Participant Consent Form
Ethics Application #30002425
Version #1
April 23, 2024

Decolonizing and Revitalizing Academic Advising in the Canadian Post-Secondary School System to Improve Indigenous Student Success

Study Team:

Research Supervisor:
Dr. Michelle Pidgeon, SFU Faculty of Education

Student Leads:

Anna Brown and Rachel Marchand, Masters of Indigenous Educational Leadership:
Indigenous Resurgence

Invitation and Study Purpose:

As part of this project, you are being invited to participate in a sharing circle interview. Your participation will contribute to recognizing and describing the traditional and historical barriers of Indigenous students. This information will help the researchers determine if an Indigenous holistic approach to academic advising for both Academic Advisors and Faculty Members would provide a greater benefit to at-risk Indigenous students than prescribed or developmental advising methods, the two most common forms of academic advising used today.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate in the sharing circle. If you decide to participate, you may still choose to withdraw from the sharing circle at any time without any negative consequences to the services to which you are entitled or are presently receiving.

Study Procedures:

the sharing circle will take approximately three hours of your time. The sharing circle will take place in-person at the Merritt NVIT campus or via Microsoft TEAMS. With your permission, the circle will be recorded onto Microsoft TEAMS. The interviewers and the interviewees will need to abide by the latest provincial health guidelines in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and the SFU affiliated research team while interacting with participants. We are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. We will hold the circle on Tuesday, May 14th from 1:00pm-4:00pm. Rachel Marchand will facilitate the circles and Anna Brown will maintain the recording. After one week, Anna Brown will provide an individual transcript to each participant to ensure the transcribing has captured the meaning and nuances of each participant's

Sharing Circle Participant Consent Form
Ethics Application #30002425
Version #1
April 23, 2024

Decolonizing and Revitalizing Academic Advising in the Canadian Post-Secondary School System to Improve Indigenous Student Success

Study Team:

Research Supervisor:
Dr. Michelle Pidgeon, SFU Faculty of Education

Student Leads:

Anna Brown and Rachel Marchand, Masters of Indigenous Educational Leadership:
Indigenous Resurgence

Invitation and Study Purpose:

As part of this project, you are being invited to participate in a sharing circle interview. Your participation will contribute to recognizing and describing the traditional and historical barriers of Indigenous students. This information will help the researchers determine if an Indigenous holistic approach to academic advising for both Academic Advisors and Faculty Members would provide a greater benefit to at-risk Indigenous students than prescribed or developmental advising methods, the two most common forms of academic advising used today.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate in the sharing circle. If you decide to participate, you may still choose to withdraw from the sharing circle at any time without any negative consequences to the services to which you are entitled or are presently receiving.

Study Procedures:

the sharing circle will take approximately three hours of your time. The sharing circle will take place in-person at the Merritt NVIT campus or via Microsoft TEAMS. With your permission, the circle will be recorded onto Microsoft TEAMS. The interviewers and the interviewees will need to abide by the latest provincial health guidelines in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and the SFU affiliated research team while interacting with participants. We are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. We will hold the circle on Tuesday, May 14th from 1:00pm-4:00pm. Rachel Marchand will facilitate the circles and Anna Brown will maintain the recording. After one week, Anna Brown will provide an individual transcript to each participant to ensure the transcribing has captured the meaning and nuances of each participant's

responses. You will have one week to submit any revising that is required.

Potential Risks:

This is a minimal risk study; however, the researcher understands you may experience emotional or psychological stress from sharing your experience. The researcher has a responsibility to ensure care and will have a list of available resources should you share you are experiencing emotional or psychological stress. You may end the interview at any time.

Potential Benefits of the Study:

We believe taking part in this study will benefit you in your future role at NVIT. Students and community members will benefit from what we learn in this study and have stronger faith when sending their family members to become students in the post-secondary system.

Payment:

We cannot pay you for participating in this study; however, for participating in this study, you will be provided with a pouch of tobacco as appreciation for your time. You will receive this at after the circle. It is not contingent on completing the interview.

Organizational Permission:

Permission to conduct this research has been obtained from NVIT and the Lower Similkameen Indian Band.

Confidentiality and Data Security:

Your identity and confidentiality will be respected in final reports, presentations and publications emerging from this research project. Information that discloses your identity will not be released without your consent. Participants will be identified by the use of a code. Participants will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study. With your permission, the audio of the interview will be recorded to assist with data analysis. Any data you provide may be transmitted and stored in countries outside of Canada, as well as, in Canada. It is important to remember that privacy laws vary in different countries and may not be the same as in Canada. Once you have approved the transcription, the audio recording will be deleted. The data will be kept on a password protected USB drive or printed hard copy and all data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office. A master file linking the identity of participants with a pseudonym will be kept and stored securely and separately from the data. Any electronic files will be stored in a password protected folder and destroyed after 5 years. To mitigate conflict of interest, the data will be reviewed by both the student lead and the research supervisor.

Future Use of Research Data:

This project is being done as part of the requirements for a Masters of Indigenous Educational Leadership: Indigenous Resurgence. The results of this project will be presented at the 2024 summer institute at 1420 Hwy 3 Cawston, BC and may also be shared in other presentations and publications.

Appendix B.

Email Script (for the third party send to participants)



FACULTY OF EDUCATION
Masters of Indigenous Educational Leadership

8888 University Drive
Burnaby B.C. Canada V5A 1S6

TEL + 1 778 782 1111
FAX + 1 778 782 1111
SFU.CA

Email Script (for the third party send to participants)
Ethics Application #3002425
Version #1
April 23, 2024

Greetings:

Thank you for taking a moment to read this email.

As an Indigenous employee at NVIT, you are being invited to participate in a sharing circle. You will be asked to provide guidance and feedback into what you feel would be valuable components and beneficial experiences in both online and in-person learning environments to help make our academic advising including faculty advising processes better in the future for Indigenous students.

Facilitated by Anna Brown and Rachel Marchand, you will be asked questions regarding Indigenous student barriers and the best holistic practices and approaches that will guide the academic advising processes at NVIT.

This project is a requirement for the master's in Education, Indigenous Educational Leadership: Indigenous Resurgence program at SFU. This research is being supervised by Dr. Michelle Pidgeon. We will present the results of this research in the form of a written report to our faculty supervisor.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to sit in a sharing circle 2-hours in length. You may choose not to participate, and you may also end your participation in the survey at any point in the process. This is a minimal risk study. The stress involved in completing the circle will be no more than the stress that you encounter in your daily work.

This sharing circle collects data anonymized. Anonymized means we will know who participates in the survey, but will not be able to match the participant's responses to you as an individual name, only a unique identifier. We will be keeping any information we have about you or your participation confidential. We will not release your name or describe your participation in the survey in such a way that you could be identified.

The data related to this research study will be kept with Anna Brown and Rachel Marchand. Any list of participant information will be stored separately from the raw data. The anonymized participant data collected will be included in a final report. Results will be presented during the 2024 summer SFU institute (where MEd candidates present their research to peers and evaluators). After completing all our MEd degree requirements, other conferences and

After completing all our MEd degree requirements, other conferences and publication opportunities from this research may be presented at academic conferences and published in higher education peer-review journals. We will destroy the raw data after five years.

Participation in this research is voluntary. By consenting, participants have not waived any rights to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm. You can decide to stop participating at any point in the process for any reason. Your decision to participate (or not) will not be shared with anyone. There are no negative consequences for withdrawing your participation. We will not be able to identify the data as yours. If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, please contact the Director, SFU Office of Research Ethics.

Sincerely,

Anna Brown/Rachel Marchand
Master of Indigenous Educational Leadership: Indigenous Resurgence
Simon Fraser University

Appendix C.

Verbal Script (for the third party send to participants)



FACULTY OF EDUCATION
Masters of Indigenous Educational Leadership

8888 University Drive
Burnaby B.C. Canada V5A 1S6

TEL + 1 778 782 1111
FAX + 1 778 782 1111
SFU.CA

Verbal Script (for the third party send to participants)

Ethics Application #30002425

Version #1

April 23, 2024

Hello:

I would like to speak with you for a moment to ask if you would be willing to volunteer to partake in our research project as a participant.

As an Indigenous employee at NVIT, we would like to invite you to participate in a sharing circle. You will be asked to provide guidance and feedback into what you feel would be valuable components and beneficial experiences in both online and in-person learning environments to help make our academic advising including faculty advising processes better in the future for Indigenous students.

The sharing circle will be facilitated by Anna Brown and Rachel Marchand. You will be asked questions regarding Indigenous student barriers and the best holistic practices and approaches that will guide the academic advising processes in the post-secondary system.

Our research project is a requirement for the master's in Education, Indigenous Educational Leadership: Indigenous Resurgence program at SFU. This research is being supervised by Dr. Michelle Pidgeon. We will present the results of this research in the form of a written report to our faculty supervisor.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to sit in a sharing circle 2-hours in length. You may choose not to participate, and you may also end your participation in the survey at any point in the process. This is a minimal risk study. The stress involved in completing the circle will be no more than the stress that you encounter in your daily work.

The sharing circles collect data anonymized, meaning we will know who participates in the survey but will not be able to match your responses to you as an individual name, only a unique identifier. We will be keeping any information we have about you or your participation confidential. We will not release your name or describe your participation in the survey in such a way that you could be identified.

The data related to this research study will be kept with Anna Brown and Rachel Marchand. Any list of participant information will be stored separately from the raw data. The anonymized participant data collected will be included in a final report. Results will be presented during the 2024 summer SFU institute (where MEd candidates present their research to peers and evaluators). After completing all our MEd degree requirements, other conferences and publication opportunities from this research may be presented at academic

research to peers and evaluators). After completing all our MEd degree requirements, other conferences and publication opportunities from this research may be presented at academic conferences and published in higher education peer-review journals. We will destroy the raw data after five years.

Participation in this research is voluntary. You can decide to stop participating at any point in the process for any reason. Your decision to participate (or not) will not be shared with anyone. There are no negative consequences for withdrawing your participation. We will not be able to identify the data as yours. If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, please contact the Director, SFU Office of Research Ethics.

Sincerely,

Anna Brown/Rachel Marchand
Master of Indigenous Educational Leadership: Indigenous Resurgence
Simon Fraser University

Appendix D.

Script for Sharing Circle Protocol



FACULTY OF EDUCATION
Masters of Indigenous Educational Leadership

8888 University Drive
Burnaby B.C. Canada V5A 1S6

TEL + 1 778 782 1111
FAX + 1 778 782 1111
SFU.CA

Script for Sharing Circle Protocol
Ethics Application # 30002425
Version # 1
April 23, 2024

Way' Hello:

I would like to thank you all for coming and volunteering to be part of our research project and this sharing circle. I would like to acknowledge the syilx and nle?kepmx traditional territory we are gathered on today, and we want to extend our gratitude to all of you and especially, our Elders, for being here today. As it is traditional and customary practice to open gatherings in a good way, I would like to ask if there is someone here who would be willing to open us with a prayer, song, or smudging.

Limlemt (Volunteer) for starting us in a good way.

My name is Rachel Marchand, and I work for NVIT's, Indigenous Early Years Education Faculty, and this is my colleague, Anna Brown, who works for NVIT as an Academic and Financial Planner. As we are both current staff of NVIT, for clarity and transparency during the entire research study and this sharing circle, we will be here as Simon Fraser University, Masters of Indigenous Education: Indigenous Resurgence candidate students.

Therefore, the purpose of today's sharing circle is to incorporate your intellectual knowledge to support our research topic, in a respectful way. We will begin with an opening round of introductions where each participant briefly shares their name and their role at NVIT for the circle.

For our main questions we will ask and allow each participant the opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings, experiences, or reflections on a chosen topic or theme. I encourage active listening and respect for each participant and if you want to speak, raise your hand, and let Rachel know that you want to speak. After each question and people share, I will invite others to offer respectful responses, reflections, or words of support if they feel called to do so.

At the end of the sharing circle, we will close by asking each participant a final question as an opportunity to share any final thoughts, insights, or feelings. We thank everyone for their participation and contributions.

Closing Prayer/Song:

Invite a respected Elder or knowledge keeper to lead a closing prayer or song, offering gratitude for the shared experience and asking for blessings as the circle comes to an end.

Closing Smudge:

Conclude with a final smudging ceremony to cleanse and purify the space once again, releasing any remaining tension or negative energy and offering prayers for healing and well-being. Anna will light the smudge.

Closing Remarks:

Express gratitude to all participants, Elders, and ancestors for their presence and contributions to the sharing circle.

Next Steps:

Offer any relevant information about future circles, events, or resources for further personal support and connection within the community.

Dismissal:

Thank everyone once again and officially dismiss the circle, allowing participants to depart with a sense of closure and gratitude for the shared experience.

Appendix E.

Interview Questions



FACULTY OF EDUCATION
Masters of Indigenous Educational Leadership

8888 University Drive
Burnaby B.C. Canada V5A 1S6

TEL + 1 778 782 1111
FAX + 1 778 782 1111
SFU.CA

Interview Questions
Ethics Application #30002425
Version #1
April 23, 2024

Decolonizing and Revitalizing Academic Advising in the Canadian Post-Secondary School System to Improve Indigenous Student Success

- Question #1: What will enhance the Indigenous student experience at post-secondary? Please provide the barriers Indigenous students face.
- Question #2: Who is impacted by implementing a holistic approach? Please include, if applicable, the community, the individuals, the families, the institution, the employee, etc.
- Question #3: What is the new holistic advising method moving forward? Set it up for future by providing techniques, tools, procedures, etc.