


The sharing of indigenous knowledge through academic means by implementing self-reflection and story

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Abstract

Indigenous research scholars navigate a complex landscape that is impacted by their relationships, as well as the roles and responsibilities that come with both their Indigenous and professional positionality. This article contemplates the passing of Indigenous knowledge through academic means by implementing self-reflection and story. Concluding that Indigenous research is for Indigenous community, this article explores questions such as What are the “Rules” to using Indigenous methodologies in research? How can we use Indigenous methodologies in research that reflect the nuance of our community identity? How can we reciprocate in the sharing of Indigenous knowledge? and finally, How can we share Indigenous knowledge in a way that maintains cultural protocol? The practical implications of this work include support for Indigenous methodologies and consider the tri-cultural context of the He Manawa Whenua Indigenous research community. Future work connected with the findings includes complicating the perceptions of research from both academic and Indigenous community perspectives.

Keywords

Indigenous knowledge, indigenous epistemologies, indigenous methodologies, relationality

Indigenous knowledge is held collectively by the people. For Moana peoples ... It is the vast body of water that connects us, not separates us. (Victor Narsimulu, Personal Communication, 23 October 2010)

There are multiple and varied ways to implement Indigenous methodologies in research, and these ways are complicated by several elements. If we are doing Indigenous research, one consideration that needs to be made is an articulation of the reasoning behind the research; this is an effort to accurately reflect intention. Often, the research processes and the subsequent “product” is dependent upon researcher identity and positionality, specific community and/or shared values, conceptualizations of relationship and struggles between academic and Indigenous community formalities. For the purpose of maintaining an indigenous theory, this article utilizes the idea that there are multiple utilities of stories including, but not limited to (1) a contribution constructed for Indigenous communities and Indigenous researchers alike, (2) our experiences resisting a non-Indigenous academic paradigm, and (3) honoring both specific community complexity and the overlap of shared values. We offer this Indigenous reflective study to support the responsible sharing of Indigenous knowledge in academic spaces.

read this article. To do so, I wish to locate myself so that you know who I am and why I might see the world the way that I do. As this was intended for a predominately Indigenous audience, I join the collective in privileging Indigenous voices as we honor the people, their connection to the land and water, and the protocols that serve to remind us of who we are. As a result, I offer the following self-location.

I grew up with the Nakóna¹ name Tatąnga Togáhé that was given by my grandfather Hokšína Oyágabisa.² I am a member of the Napéšǫ³ (Personal Communication, Minerva Allen, 4 August 2001), Húdešana⁴ (Personal communication, Sweeney Windchief Sr., 1980) and Wadópana⁵ clans (Personal communication, Larry Wetsit, June 2007). As opposed to saying the often clichéd “these are my people,” I am intentional in communicating that these clans serve as the very communities that give me my sense of identity and as a result, I belong to them. These communities are located in northern Montana, about as far from Mniwáǰi⁶ (Moana⁷) as one can get in North America.⁸ I was primarily raised and

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By invitation

In alignment with Indigenous methodologies in research, my intention is to create a relationship with those who

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educated off reservation in Wyoming and though we lived away from home, my Dad was intentional about keeping me and my siblings connected to our Indigenous identity, and he had the support of our mother who was of non-Native origin. In the summers, we would make the journey back to see our relatives to participate in ceremonies, celebrations, and making relatives. Nevertheless, these journeys were a substantial sacrifice for my parents given the time commitment, distance, and strain on financial resources. These journeys had more to do with who I am today than my parents may ever realize. It was during these journeys, that I was made aware of who my ancestors and relatives are, how to behave, and cultural protocols of the Nakóna community.

Responsibility

Given this positionality, I am obliged to be humble and share that the only reason I feel I can engage in conversations about Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, axiologies, and methodologies (Wilson, 2008) within the ocean canoe paddlers' context is not because of some sense of academic entitlement, rather it is because I was asked, and it would only be appropriate because I was asked by relatives. I was asked to share my experience in knowledge transmission, and it is most appropriate to address the vessel in which all knowledge is contained, and that is relationship.

Cultural protocol dictates that Nakóna individuals follow ontologies that center to kindness, humbleness, thankfulness, and courage (Personal Communication, James Shanley, 2 June 2007). Thus, the only reason I can engage in conversations around, "He pukenga wai he nohonga tangata, He nohonga tangata he pukenga kōrero"⁹ within the ocean canoe paddlers (Māori) context is because I was asked, and it would only be appropriate because I was asked by relatives. My intention is to share my experience in connecting knowledge transmission to personal relationship as opposed to only the notions of scholarship that are accepted as pure by "Western" academic standards.

We are related

Spending time in Utah, playing some rugby and finding much in common with American born Mni Wañji (Polynesian) peoples, I found myself drawn to a particular sense of community, a willingness to share, excellence in storytelling, the gracious sharing of food, and a peculiar sense of humor. Years later and only after traveling to Aotearoa,¹⁰ working, and spending time with, Samoan, Rotuman, Hawaiian, Māori, and Tongan colleagues, was when I merely began to understand the complexities, nuances, and depths of our relationships. It became clearer to me after sharing stories about how our experiences seemed to be similar with one particular uncle by the name of Tašúga Sába;¹¹ I will never forget what he told me that day. As usual, our uncles open pathways for us to travel, learn and return,

Nephew ... those island people you are talking about are your relatives, treat them accordingly. (Personal Communication, Tašúga Sába, 2008)

Interestingly, after taking the time to share these experiences with my relatives back home on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, was I able to see that this was an experience, which resembled the very essence of what I embrace about my own community.

As I revisit what my uncle said, what resonated with me was the idea that knowledge is inextricably connected to responsibility. Now, as a result of familial instruction, I know these are my relatives, and with this knowledge comes the specific obligation of reframing my interaction in a way that honors them as such. He has since shared stories that canoe paddlers share which are thousands of years old, telling of a time when the world was covered with water. These stories were told and re-told, sometimes in secret, particularly, during times when Indigenous peoples were subject to colonized law such as the assimilation era in the United States between 1880 and 1920 (Hoxie, 1984; Lacey, 1986). During this time, the government told our relatives "It is illegal to teach your kids the Assiniboine language. If you persist we will throw you in jail" (Personal Communication, Kenneth Ryan, 2017). Thankfully, our relatives persisted in the face of assimilation era laws, while some others did not.

The experience of sharing these stories prompted this Indigenous reflective study that considers four questions. These questions are not necessarily stated and answered as they might be in majoritarian academic verse. These are the questions that we consider in writing for Indigenous peoples and are contemplated through personal narrative with the intention of planting seeds of thought. We hope the result will be many continued conversations with other Indigenous scholars that collectively continue to move the dialogue into Indigenous ontological space. So, I ask you the reader, to consider the following: (1) What are the "Rules" to using Indigenous methodologies in research? (2) How can we use Indigenous methodologies in research that reflect the nuances of our community's identity? (3) How can we reciprocate in the sharing of Indigenous knowledge? Finally, (4) How can we share Indigenous knowledge in a way that maintains cultural protocol? I encourage an organic form of contemplation related to the conversational method (Kovach, 2010) that many experience as rewarding and that is commonly known as visiting.

Learning

Some of the best learning happens outside of the classroom. Academic rigor in formal learning spaces is a source of pride of many scholars, researchers, graduate students, and academics. I admit that on more than one occasion I have boasted about how many pages I've written that day, how many books I managed to read that semester, or even how late I stayed up the night before grading students' papers. These boasts come in quipped comments at dinner or posted on social media. Regardless of my attempts at pretentious

self-aggrandizement, I am convinced that some of the best learning happens separate from the contemporary formalized western learning context.

During the coursework portion of my own doctoral experience, there would often be a small gathering of students after class huddled around a streetlight. We would be in the parking lot chatting and making sense of that evening's class for ourselves. One evening, in the middle of one such conversation, a Rotuman friend comes up and says,

Hey bro ... What does the transmission of knowledge look like in traditional Assiniboine communities? (V Narsimulu)

In reflecting on this question, I have to thank him because in trying to answer this question I was immersed in what has become my comprehension of Indigenous methodologies in research. My understanding of Indigenous methodologies includes components such as (1) establishing a relationship (or perhaps more importantly having asked questions because of the relationship), (2) inquiring in a way that continues a larger conversation, (3) leaving space and time for contemplation, and (4) not asking for knowledge sake, rather asking for the sake of community benefit.

Broadly, Indigenous methodologies in research and in particular, the example of Victor's inquiry, center and privilege Indigenous concepts of intellectual contribution. If we are indeed sharing Indigenous space, we must consider Indigenous conceptualizations of relationship roles and responsibility as they align within an Indigenous epistemology. As colleagues and friends, we had already established a relationship and understood, without being explicit that we would engage in dialogue and discourse, reciprocate in response, and grow as a result of the conversations.

My response to Victor's question, quite frankly, took a while to think about. It was an important question, asked by an important person, and to answer it I needed some time to reflect and respond carefully. It has been my experience that in the Western educational construct one is not often given the time to reflect on own experience. We were trained from primary school to answer with the one right answer and to provide that answer as quickly as possible. But contrary to this Western paradigm, Victor gave me all the time I needed being considerate of relationship, positionality, and the roles that both of these play on this interaction. By asking me such an important question, he was essentially handing me a responsibility. Therefore, to respond to Victor, I had to consider the way in which knowledge is often passed, through storytelling (Archibald, 2008).

Stories

Stories are often repetitive, flexible, and contextualized to the listener and hearer. As a result, the story that I had constructed for Victor, though not yet given to him, would have to be made in a way that communicated precisely what I wanted to convey, and I would have to be able to tell it repetitively. Often, these stories construct and carry multiple answers.

This oral passing of knowledge may lack credibility in quantitative, positivist and dualistic, circles. In the spirit of academic inquiry scholars are primed to ask, "How can something that is grounded in multiple interpretations 'hold water' or be seen as externally and internally valid and reliable?" As is often misunderstood in the academic realm, Indigenous conceptualizations of knowledge are held by the community as opposed to held by one aristocratic/academic person or small elite group of people. For the sake of our conversation here, I emailed the story that I constructed for Victor to a respected community member at home, and asked him to tell me if it was okay to share this. My biggest fear was that I was sharing something I was not supposed to and I wanted to make sure that sharing would be supported by more than just me, particularly an individual the community held in high regard. In the field of Indigenous methodologies in research, one might refer to this as member-checking with an Indigenous knower.

Days later I waited for a response, I began to doubt myself, I waited some more and started to panic. A week had gone by and I wondered if I had alienated myself from my own community by wanting to share something that perhaps was not for people outside of the community. Had I lost the respect of a knowledge keeper in my community? I questioned myself over and over again, "What is the protocol for sharing with people a story about how I came to understand how knowledge is transmitted from one person to another in a Nakóna context?" I asked silently, "Is it even possible to contrast it with the concept of 'teaching' in a western educational paradigm?" During this time, I had so many moments of doubt, fear, and anxiety I cannot begin to count them. I received an email 10 days later ... it read,

Sorry to take so long to get back. I closed this and sent it to a wrong folder. This looks fine to me ... thanks for asking. (Larry Wetsit, Email Communication, 16 December 2010)

After experiencing a feeling of relief, I had a chance to reflect. This interaction served to teach me some incredibly important lessons about Indigenous inquiry. Namely, (1) to be patient ... people need time, as do I, (2) relationship comes first, ask people you trust, in a sense you are in this together, and finally (3) this will be a journey filled with doubt, anxiety, and fear. All of these will need to be negotiated in your own way as you search for one's own understanding. I promptly shared my response with Victor, which prompted more conversation and continued inquiry that was reciprocal.

Tri-cultural context

The concept of contribution seems to be one that is understood differently by the academy when compared to an Indigenous context. Indigenous knowledge is thousands of years old, is passed through relationship and Indigenous frameworks, and considers community continuity. This contrast is confounded by the idea that to contribute one must adhere to the social norms, mores, and traditions of the community(s) one is contributing to. Because of the

tri-cultural context of this particular article, the idea of contribution grows ever more complex. If we are to engage in any space in a culturally appropriate ways, we must consider the community context (in this case, Indigenous peoples of the contemporary English speaking world), the meeting environment (Indigenous research in the context of academia), and the circumstances of the self ... in this case, myself (a Nakóna scholar working at a non-Indigenous institution).

Māori

As a visitor to the He Manawa Whenua Indigenous Research Conference, I must eternally endeavor to recognize the Tangata Whenua¹² and my role as a visitor. This means treating relatives accordingly and to the best of my ability serving to maintain traditional protocol. By doing this, I may have every intention of respecting the people of the place and following their lead. However, just because it is my intention, does not mean that I will do it well. Nonetheless, I follow ... not out of blind faith, rather I follow out of trust for traditional epistemologies, ontologies and cosmologies, which may be different (or uncannily similar) to my own communities'. When in another Indigenous community space, paying close attention to the knowledge carriers and contributing as you would at home comes with its own sacrifices. By using the term sacrifice I mean an act of giving up something valued (my own comfort level) for the sake of something else regarded as more important or worthy (our relationship as Indigenous peoples). In other words, this struggle can be seen as confusing, but this is often the case when knowledge is sacred.

Indigenous research in the context of academia

Within strictly academic space the ethical principles of research are documented and monitored albeit rather superficially. One's academic discipline may have a required ethics course that is drawn from an academically recognized body of knowledge. At the institutional level, there are Internal Review Board (IRB) processes constructed to maintain professional ethical standards that communicate the idea that respect for the person, beneficence and justice will be considered and violations will not pass muster (Hemmings, 2006). For instance, if one is caught acting in an unethical manner it may cause them professional ruin to the degree that they are forced to change jobs or even careers. This of course, is not to be taken lightly. I say superficial because people change careers, find new jobs, go back to school and so on as a part of regular professional development. When considering the ethic of a collective Indigenous community, scholars are held to both an academic standard and the ethic of their own community(s) that brings attention to the individual's identity location.

Nakóna

As Nakóna, we cannot change our family tree. We cannot merely join another tribe as if it were a matter of taking a

test and paying tuition and fees. Nor can we step out of our identity, remove our shared experience and our traditional roles, and dis-locate from the very structure that brings meaning to life. We are taught to not give entrusted cultural knowledge to the next person while we go be someone else. If an outsider were to carry for us our collective ways of being, knowing, and doing, we must consider the depth of what we are asking them to do and most likely reconsider. The wellbeing of Indigenous communities is dependent upon various traditions and ceremonies that are currently practiced. Therefore, even without IRB approval, an ethics class requirement, or an advisory board, we are held to a standard that might seem unfathomable in a Western context. To step out, or be removed from those who give us our identity would be unthinkable. The fact is that banishment is reserved for those who commit heinous crimes or act in a way that plagues the community (Kunesh, 2007).

Entering into communal spaces of indigeneity

Nakóna people in Aotearoa, or any other Indigenous spaces that are not uniquely Nakóna, may find that what is required of us as relatives, in another Indigenous communal context, may not fit our calendar, comfort zone, or concept of appropriateness. However, as is often the case at home, relationships are more important than the tasks at hand, we are reminded to maintain cultural integrity. This is done by remembering that good feelings among people, health, knowledge development, and shared prosperity are paramount as we commit to "Bodies of water" that connect us, "Bodies of people" who are our relatives, and "Bodies of knowledge" that we share.

Who is your work for?

Indigenous researchers who have been formally trained in the academy, and who have a connection to Indigenous community will grapple with the internal question, "Who am I doing this work for?" Given the unique identity location of Indigenous researchers, this hopefully prompts some complicated questions. When doing research on our own communities, we have to be conscious that we were likely trained in an environment that was not designed with Indigenous ontologies in mind. We have to look with "two eyes seeing" (Archibald, 2008). We have to consider what we see from a researcher's perspective that is dependent on one's own theoretical perspective and methodological expertise. This must be balanced with what we see as a member of our own community, which describes how we are accountable to our community. Hopefully, this prompts us to evaluate what our responsibilities to the community are. These two considerations in combination can provide a clear picture of the community development we would like to see in the future.

Because the academy is structured in a way that academics, as opposed to community members, are likely to be the ones that review manuscripts for presentation and publication, it may feel like we have to center their experience in

writing as opposed to our own. This is problematic primarily on two fronts: the internal and the external. First, this internal action privileges and serves a non-Indigenous perspective. As a consequence, de-centering one's own Indigenous perspective suppresses the internalization of Indigenous identity. Second, the external action of writing in a way that centers majoritarian voice dis-serves our communities by further alienating them from our work (Grande, 2004). If a scholar from a specific community publishes their work, it is likely that there will be community members who want to read their work because they know the person or they know that they are from the same community. If they open the book or begin to read the article and do not relate to what the person is saying (because it is written for a majoritarian academic audience), the community member may be alienated from all subsequent work and perhaps post-secondary education altogether. Word travels fast within and through Indigenous communities, and this misstep may reach more than just the reader.

Intentional communication

One solution to this problematic situation is to write to and for other Indigenous academics; they will hold us accountable to the academic standard. Another solution is to write for our communities. Our communities are best positioned to hold us to a standard that is in alignment with community expectations. We cannot hide behind academic vernacular, as they will see right through it. We are to write for them. Indigenous peoples are the people we have the most in common with; we struggle with many of the same questions and as a result of this struggle through time, we are the beneficiaries of many Indigenous elders who have paved the way.

The Indigenous people who came before us have made, and are continuing to make it possible to do the work we want, need, and know how to do. They moved headstrong into the storm, stood their ground, and persevered. Even when there were people looking to eliminate them in academic spaces, they drew upon their own ingenuity, community strength, and endurance to provide the space for others to live and do their work to provide for their families. It is our obligation to do the same for the oncoming generations, some of which may be Indigenous scholars.

If there is one thing that I can offer to this tri-cultural space it is to do what I can to develop our collective critical consciousness and to understand that the academic work is rarely accepted by indigenous communities in meaningful and useful ways. The reasons include, but are not limited to, the incongruence of educational systems with Indigenous life-ways, a broad mistrust of the education system that is rooted in settler and/or colonizer discourse, and a multitude of others including socioeconomic disparities (Calderon, 2014; Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, 2014). Though these phenomena were multifaceted and frequent, there are those that work to re-center an Indigenous experience in their scholarship. Often these scholars developed their work by starting with the Indigenous community while being mindful to include them in every aspect of the

research and dissemination process. This includes using methodologies as presented by Indigenous scholars such as Graham and Linda Smith, Leonie Pihama, Shawn Wilson, Deborah Wetsit, Jo-ann Archibald, and many others. Grounding our works in theoretical and conceptual models that consider Indigenous ontological positioning, and centering pragmatic results in specifically Indigenous space, quite simply *serves the people*. To do this last part, we are obliged to think about why we cannot just come in from the outside, do research, (Boyer, 1993; Bull, 1997; LaVeaux & Christopher, 2009; Weaver, 1997) develop a career in research, and call it good. In fact, if we are to contribute we must start with the community and begin the process because the community knows us well enough to co-develop our work.

Indigenous triangulation

In order for Indigenous scholarship to come full circle, we need to be transparent with those who prompted us (even if unintentionally) to do this work. Consequently, I sent this manuscript to Dr. Kenneth Ryan (Tašúga Sába¹³) who opened my eyes to appropriately engaging in Indigenous inquiry. I humbly asked for his consent, feedback, critique, criticism, permission, and to see if he was willing to be a co-author. As a result, the manuscript was sent to him by mail, a form that he requested, and he responded promptly.

Feedback: multiple methods

A short time after sending this manuscript, I received in a similar brown envelope that I sent in several documents: (1) a letter apologizing for the delay, and an invitation to sit together and outline what we wish to submit, (2) a list of the Assiniboine rules of life (Appendix 1), (3) a document entitled "Tribes of the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes, Fort Peck Indian Reservation, MT," dated 18 October 2012, (4) the transcription of a presentation that Dr. Ryan made earlier in the year,¹⁴ and (5) an abstract: "The passing of Indigenous knowledge through academic means by implementing self-reflection and story" which includes the following points:

- What are the rules to using Indigenous methodologies in research?
- How can we use Indigenous methodologies in research that reflect the nuance of our community identity?
- How can we reciprocate in sharing Indigenous knowledge?
- How can we share Indigenous knowledge in a way that maintains cultural protocol?

(6) A 6-page, single-spaced response to the manuscript I sent, answering these four questions. The questions are answered in several different ways that reflect a complexity of communication that involves relationship, Indigenous methodologies, and information that is *not* public. I of course cannot reveal community information outside of relationship but can share the process as well as information

that is relevant and public. There was a multiplicity of methods for answering my questions. Dr. Ryan made use of Indigenous story work (Archibald, 2008), both in a tribal historical sense, but also in a contemporary way by sharing his personal experiences as he traveled through Oceania. He also spoke directly to me in his writings, at times showing me in my writing where I was wrong, gently reminding me of the correct spelling, and pronunciation (which I have gone back through and corrected), while simultaneously encouraging me to continue this work.

There was some linguistic overlap between some of the Oceanic terminology that I use in this article and Dr. Ryan would write the meaning in the Nakóna language, showing particular linguistic connection. My questions were answered in the following way.

What are the "Rules" to using Indigenous methodologies in research? Dr. Ryan responded,

In addressing this question, the foundation to your answer is firmly established and eloquently stated by the comments by Victor Narsimulu, October 23rd 2010: 'Indigenous knowledge is held collectively by the people For the Moana peoples... *It is the vast body of water that connects us, not separates us.*' 'It is true that the vast body of water connects us.' The vast body of water (The Ocean) does connect us and has connected our canoe paddler people for the past 10,800 years (the time of Noah's flood). As Assiniboine (Wadopabi) the farthest back we can go in history begins as follows: 'In the beginning Inktomi is floating on a raft with 4 of his brothers: 1) beaver, loon, duck, muskrat (Long & Standing, 2004) ... I won't go into the story because you know it already.'

Dr. Ryan continues to respond using stories to make the point that we have a shared history with the Indigenous peoples of Oceania:

The second most important story in the genesis of the Assiniboine is told as follows:

One Time Inktomi, a Wadopana (Canoe Paddler Assiniboine) was paddling in his canoe. At this time, all the world was water. He met another man, and each raised their hands in peace and greeted one another, they spoke Wiyutabi¹⁵ because they were unable to speak each other's language.

The stranger, via hand sign language asked the Wadopana who he was. The Wadopana, who replied in hand sign language, shared that he was a Wadopana man. The Wadopana then asked the stranger who he was. The stranger replied in hand sign language that he too, was Wadopana. (Canoe Paddler)

After sharing stories about how Wadopana must be all over, and relationships were constructed, the two had to part ways, and travel in different directions:

The Wadopana told the stranger Wadopana that he had to be going and the stranger replied that he had to be going also. As they departed, they waved at each other and paddled away (Told, told, and re-told by a tribal uncle Leslie A. FourStar). Uncle FourStar and Dr. Ryan's Grand Father (Father's Father)

used to tell him, 'Somewhere in this world there are canoe paddlers ... go look for them.'

Helping people understand, from generations of stories, that we are to reach out and connect with our Wadopana relatives all over the world.

In answering the question, *How can we use Indigenous methodologies in research that reflect the nuances of our community's identity?* Dr. Ryan reminded me that though some of what I stated above may be true according to the academic western paradigm, it may not be true in an Indigenous paradigm. For instance, I made the statement,

Assiniboine people in Aotearoa, or any other Indigenous spaces that are not uniquely Assiniboine, may find that what is required of us as relatives, in another Indigenous communal context, may not fit our calendar, comfort zone, or concept of appropriateness.

In his response, he shared,

If you go to traditional Indigenous communities with Wadopana openness, with your hand raised, in the sign of greeting and peace, you will fit into any Indigenous communal context, comfort zone, or concept of appropriateness. I would gently refer you to how the Māori, and all of the Indigenous pacific communities and their members have treated you. They opened the doors to you for you to study and learn from them. The same is true for your visits to South America, their doors are open to you. They have accepted you.

This incredibly powerful statement humbles me (the first author) and reminds me to reflect on how I have been so honored and privileged to share in these other Indigenous spaces. Indeed, I am reminded of the communal nature, where traditional protocol is adhered to, songs and stories are common, food is shared, and there is a community connection that is best expressed outside the auspices of the western academic publication. Indeed, it is these practices that Indigenous methodologies challenge a western paradigm and reflect the nuances of the community identity, which leads well in the third question: How can we reciprocate in the sharing of Indigenous knowledge?

Reciprocity is revealed in the literature as it relates to Indigenous values (Coulthard, 2010; Ellis & Earley, 2006; Harris & Wasilewski, 2004; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). In addressing this question, Dr. Ryan talked of a time in 1995 when he spoke with Oceanic peoples. During this exchange, they shared their story of genesis, and it mirrored the Inktomi story referenced above. This is a brilliant example of reciprocity between Indigenous peoples. Sharing stories often results in both unique people becoming enlightened to a shared reality. When stories that are thousands of years old are shared, they are not lost in the mists of time, rather they serve to connect Indigenous peoples.

Resisting majoritarian perspectives

This kind of reciprocity pushes back on a narrative of division that is so pronounced in modern "approved" textbook

curriculum. Too often our youth are told a version of history that places tribes in constant conflict with one another, as well as the colonial governments. The narrative of division is problematic because it serves to skew reality and further dehumanize Indigenous peoples. The solution to this problem is to collectively reinvigorate what Indigenous communities have in common, as opposed to only presenting narratives of conflict, understanding that there are differences but appreciating those differences, as supported by Brayboy's (2005) seventh tenet "Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups" (p. 429). There have been thousands of years of history preserved by sharing stories. These stories reflect some shared experiences of Indigenous peoples and also reflect what makes them unique as people, and what gives them their identity while simultaneously serving to solidify relationships with others. This then connects to the fourth question to be addressed in this article, how can we continue to learn from one another and uphold traditional social manners; in other words, *How can we share Indigenous knowledge in a way that maintains cultural protocol?*

The warning

In addressing this question, Dr. Ryan shared a story of an Indigenous academic that he knew very well, whose early academic efforts were welcomed and encouraged by elders and community. This research was supported and called for by community and was in concert with elders. From what I understand, this was research that reflected what many contemporary Indigenous scholars were hoping oncoming generations would undertake.

Overtime, the scholarship that this individual produced changed. The latter academic work began to build on non-Indigenous religious institutional philosophies. Once the community saw that he accepted this philosophy, a perspective that was not grounded in home and community, his own community stopped talking to him. In an effort to continue his academic career, he then ventured into the realm of condensing the data and stories of a previous historical project to arrive at a published book which opened professional doors for him but isolated him from the people who gave him his Indigenous identity. Was this good Indigenous scholarship? In the story that Dr. Ryan shares, it revealed that his scholarship served to further alienate him from his home community. Eventually community members from his own community would tell others not to share their knowledge with him.

Dr. Ryan's sharing a hard story and reflecting what can happen when research is not grounded in the community, served to teach me an important lesson. It reminded me that Indigenous researchers need to center their own community in research and not be lured into thinking that the institutional needs are more important than the needs of Indigenous communities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I share that I have received an invitation to continue. As Tašunga Saba, (Dr. Kenneth Ryan) stated in his response, "I know we are far from finished ... I'll be the first to acknowledge that what I have written in this document is limited. Tell me what more you need or what needs to be expanded." The information that was shared with me was interwoven with information that is not to be shared publicly, and as I consider the Assiniboine Rules of Life (Appendix 1), there are a few that are directly related to Indigenous research methodologies; know, respect, and help your relatives, respect your elders, always try to help people, don't lie, don't steal, be careful what you say, share what you have, and always do what you say you are going to do.

Multiple lessons

It is worth mentioning that the information that I received from my uncle was far beyond what I needed given the scope of this article. The material he sent, I needed both in my personal and professional life. I am reminded that there is knowledge that is not shared outside of specific community contexts. I am reminded to center community in research, and I am reminded that we have relatives, Wadopana relatives throughout Moana, and we are to know, respect, and help one another.

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Notes

1. Assiniboine.
2. Assiniboine name for Joe Day, Translation; "The boy everybody talks about."
3. Stakes themselves people through my paternal grandfather and father.
4. Red Bottom People, band of Assiniboine on my grandmother's side.
5. Assiniboine band that settled on the Fort Peck Reservation, called canoe paddlers, Canoe band; Paddlers, band of Assiniboine living around Wolf Point, MT.

6. An ocean, sea.
7. Sea, ocean, large lake.
8. Otherwise known by multiple contemporary indigenous communities as “Turtle Island,” referencing multiple creations stories.
9. “Bodies of water, bodies of people, bodies of knowledge” in the Māori language.
10. New Zealand.
11. Tašúga Sába Translation: His Black Horse, also known as Dr. Kenneth Ryan.
12. Local people, hosts, Indigenous people—people born of the Whenua, that is of the placenta and of the land where the people’s ancestors have lived and where their placenta are buried.
13. In the Nakóna language, this means “His Black Horse.”
14. The transcription included verbiage akin to: this information is not being presented for publication or university class, this belongs to the tribal people in the audience. Therefore, the information of the transcript will not be considered in this manuscript.
15. Hand sign language.

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Appendix I

The Assiniboine Rules of Life

1. Know your relatives
2. Respect your relatives
3. Always help your relatives
4. Don’t marry your relatives
5. Don’t bother your relatives
6. Tomorrow is promised to no one
7. Nothing lasts forever, with the exception of this Earth
8. Respect all women
9. Respect all those who are weaker and smaller than you
10. Always acknowledge and worship the creator
11. Respect your elders
12. Always try to help people
13. Don’t lie
14. Don’t steal
15. Be careful what you say, someone is always listening
16. If you hear something and you don’t know if it is true, don’t repeat it
17. Share what you have
18. Everything you give comes back 8 times
19. Don’t be stingy with food
20. Don’t live with animals inside your lodge
21. No matter how far you travel, you end up at the same place
22. Always do what you say you are going to do
23. You cannot say no to your aunts or uncles
24. Those who sleep at another lodge (house) will have an uncomfortable night