

Intentional Indigenization of Organizational Learning: A Critical Annotated Bibliography

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The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) has released its findings and recommendations on the decolonization and reconciliation of Indigenous peoples within Canada. Its publication *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Call to Action* (2015), is a guide which, in part, acts to define the future of inclusive, Indigenized organizational learning:

92. We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.
- ii. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.
- iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism (TRC, 2015, p.10).

The intention of this critical annotated bibliography is to locate and evaluate the current educational research and literature, in order to build a theoretical framework in which to base future research and professional inquiry into the intentional Indigenization of organizational learning.

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This TRC mandate, utilized as a driving force in restructuring the Eurocentric organization for the purpose of intentionally Indigenizing organizational learning, forms the basis for professional inquiry into the following research questions: How can Indigenous pedagogies transform existing Eurocentric organizational learning initiatives to fulfill the mandates of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada? How will the intentional Indigenization of organizational learning benefit Indigenous peoples and communities, or will it face backlash, acting to further marginalize the Indigenous populace in the workplace?

Process

The literature compilation and annotation was undertaken using an interdisciplinary approach, including, but not limited to the fields of adult education, Aboriginal education, Indigenous governance, organizational learning, educational leadership, and Indigenous resurgence. Initially a secondary source review was conducted using Google as a search engine, incorporating keyword searches for ‘Indigenous epistemology’; ‘Indigenizing the workplace’; ‘Aboriginal pedagogy in the workplace’; ‘Aboriginal pedagogy in corporate training’; ‘Pedagogy of the regulated professional’; ‘Aboriginal + workplace learning’. The results of the secondary search provided relatively limited resources, prompting further searches of primary resources, utilizing the Queen’s University Library databases: Academic Search Complete, Educational Source, and ERIC. Additional keywords ‘Indigenous enterprise development training’; ‘Aboriginal ways of knowing in the workplace’; ‘Indigenous research methodology’; ‘Indigenous career tracking’; and ‘Corporate social responsibility’, were searched, again resulting in limited Canadian and international content focused on the intentional Indigenization of organization learning. The au-

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thor's personal library and earlier writings were also consulted to locate additional literature re-sources.

Annotated Bibliography

Alfred, T., and Corntassel, J. (2005). Being Indigenous: Resurgences against contemporary colonialism. *Government & Opposition*, 40(4), 597-614. DOI: 10.1111/1477-7053.2005.00166.x

This article was selected, as an interdisciplinary exemplar to augment the lacking literature from adult and Aboriginal education fields, based upon the authors' current research interests in Indigenous governance and Indigenous resurgence. Taiaiake Alfred, Ph.D. (Cornell University), is currently a full professor at the University of Victoria, where he was the founding director of the Indigenous Governance (iGov) program (UVic, 2008). Jeff Corntassel, Ph.D. (University of Arizona), is the current director of the iGov program at the University of Victoria (UVic, 2008). These authors offer compelling arguments for reclaiming Indigenous identity, which furthers the argument for the support of Indigenous autonomy in educational endeavours, more specifically in organizational learning, as reconciliation efforts require the inclusion of Indigenous peoples as productive members of their own communities, as well as in all aspects of society. This reclamation of Indigenous identity also calls for the inclusion of community, culture, language, and spirituality, along with the acknowledgement of traditional Indigenous ways of being and knowing as a valid constructs of any intentional Indigenization of organizational learning.

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The purpose of the article is to discuss Indigenous identity in relation to socio-political contexts of colonialism and decolonization discourse from a Canadian perspective.

Specifically selected for its theoretical overview of Indigenous resurgence; Indigenous identity in relation to Indigenous self-determination; and its historical overview of the negative affects of colonialism on the Indigenous populace. By extrapolating the findings in this article, a theoretical foundation for understanding the socio-political complexities of Indigenizing organizational learning emerges.

Dragonfly Consulting Services Canada. (2012). A guide to including Aboriginal perspectives [Web log post]. Retrieved from: <http://dragonflycanada.ca/resources/diversity-aboriginal-perspectives/> (DCSC).

This web log post was selected for its direct connection to Indigenous involvement in organizational learning, written from a Canadian perspective, by an Indigenous educator with over twenty years experience in adult education. The intended audience is adult educators, corporate trainers, and human resources personnel engaged in the hiring and subsequent training of Indigenous peoples in the workplace. Basic Indigenous pedagogy and its incorporation into organizational learning is discussed on a superficial level; however the author does offer caution against cultural appropriation of traditional Indigenous knowledge, and symbols, and sacred or cultural objects, the argument being the inappropriate usage of such by the dominant culture only leads to the further marginalization of Indigenous peoples.

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With a lack of scholarly writing or research related to the intentional Indigenization of organizational learning in Canadian and global contexts, the use of secondary sources is required to determine the extent of the need for further original educational research.

Most of the information within this article has been extrapolated from K-12 Aboriginal education resources, which serves to provide the theoretical foundation of Indigenous pedagogies and research methodologies that can be adapted for use in Indigenizing organizational learning. There is one area of concern within this article, whereby the author suggests as a means of workplace inclusion, that Indigenous symbols be incorporated into the workplace (i.e.: images of an Inuit inukshuk, dream catchers, medicine wheels, or images of other sacred objects be placed in common areas); this ideology, while well meaning, may lead to the cultural appropriation of such items and images, rather than being a gesture of inclusivity, acts to further marginalize Indigenous peoples in the workplace.

Environmental Careers Organization. (n.d.). *ECO Canada's Aboriginal recruitment guide*.

Retrieved from: <http://www.eco.ca/pdf/Aboriginal-Recruitment-Guide.pdf>

While the authority of the authors in the field of human resources, Aboriginal or adult education cannot be readily determined, this corporate hiring guide is indicative of the nature of the literature available to corporate hiring managers, in respect to actively promoting the inclusion of Indigenous workers within the Eurocentric organizational construct. It is written from a settler-ally perspective, for a Eurocentric settler audience,

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with the intention for hiring managers to specifically target the Indigenous worker demographic. Themes contained within the content include the involvement of local Indigenous communities in the corporate hiring process, along with involvement in creating an inclusive workplace; however, the literature is problematic in that it speaks about Indigenous inclusion from an assimilationist perspective, whereby the intent is to introduce sufficient Indigenous content into the workplace to appear inclusive while sustaining the original Eurocentric construct of the organization. Intentional Indigenization acts to deconstruct the Eurocentric nature of the workplace, creating an inclusive organization that is built upon constructivist ideology, incorporating Indigenous ways of being and knowing into all aspects of the organization, rather than promoting the colonial assimilationist ideology which always acts to marginalize and oppress a diverse workforce.

Fenwick, T.J. (2006). Work, learning, and adult education in Canada. In T. Fenwick, T. Nesbit, & B. Spencer (eds.). *Contexts of adult education: Canadian perspectives* (pp. 187-197). Toronto, ON: Thompson Educational Publishing, Inc.

The author is an Associate Professor of Adult Education in the Department of Educational Studies, at the University of Alberta. Her research interests include knowledge politics in workplace education and learning. This chapter is relevant to validating the ideology of intentional Indigenization of organizational learning, and promotes the inclusion of Aboriginal pedagogies (i.e.: holistic, storytelling, narrative, collectivism), in organizational learning initiatives. Much of the discourse focuses on

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current trends in adult education theory and research, namely the four themes of lifelong learning; creating subjective learning experiences that challenge organizational assumptions of worker identity based on gender, culture, and community relationships; practice-based (informal) learning; and justice, equity, and human rights in relation to organizational learning outcomes.

The audience for this chapter is adult education practitioners, educational leadership, and is theoretical in nature. Interpretation of this chapter allows for the solidification of teaching and learning philosophies that underpin professional practice. By engaging in literature that is theoretical in nature, a conceptual framework for the intentional Indigenization of organizational learning emerges. Personal beliefs and biases in relation to the topic are challenged, and ultimately strengthened, fuelling the fire that drives future professional practice, inquiry and educational research.

Fitzgerald, T. (2006). Walking between two worlds: Indigenous women and educational leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 34(2), 201-213.
DOI: 10.1177/1741143206062494

The author, an Indigenous adult educator, at the time of publication, held the PhD (Education) Programme Director position at Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand. While not directly related to Indigenizing organizational learning, this article does illustrate and discuss issues facing Indigenous peoples in the workplace; power, gender, and ethnicity. It specifically cautions against the creation of a

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homogenous, assimilated approach to organizational learning, and acts as a reminder of the trend, borne from globalization, of commodification of education, where organizational learning is driven by the Eurocentric nature of the needs and demands of the organization, tending to focus less on the individual worker needs. Indigenous workers remain oppressed and marginalized under this system, which actively resists the intentional Indigenization of organizational learning.

The author, speaking to an audience of women in educational leadership roles, suggests critical analysis of educational leadership theories and organizational values which favour tokenism in inclusivity and employment equity practices, with the intention of challenging the assumptions of current Eurocentric organizations. It is through this challenging of assumptions that the intentional Indigenization of organizational learning becomes a reality.

Haar, J.M., and Brougham, D.M. (2013). An Indigenous model of career satisfaction: Exploring the role of workplace cultural wellbeing. *Social Indicators Research*, 110(3), 873-890.

This article provides quantitative research, based on the survey results from Indigenous workers canvassed in 14 New Zealand based workplaces, on the career satisfaction of Indigenous (Maori) workers, and offers a construct for the measurement of worker satisfaction based on the following five factors of worker performance observed in a collectivist environment: human capital, socio-demographics, organizational sponsorship, individual differences, and cultural wellbeing. Of interest is the discussion

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on power paradigms and the detrimental effects of dominant culture on the Indigenization of organizational learning, noting the realities of lower performance evaluations, lower access to promotions or career advancement, and an overall job dissatisfaction felt by Indigenous workers.

While this article is written for an audience of human resources professionals, corporate trainers, adult educators and educational leadership in New Zealand, the affects of colonization on Indigenous peoples is similar to Canadian (and global) colonial Indigenous experience, suggesting that the data collected may be relevant to Canadian organizations. The authors focused on the promotion of cultural understanding, traditional Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, and the creation of a respectful work environment as factors that benefit the mental health and overall wellbeing of Indigenous workers. There were no specific references to Indigenous pedagogies being utilized in organizational learning; the literature focused more on diversity and multiculturalism discourses, rather than on the development of an Indigenized curriculum specifically related to organizational learning outcomes. There is need for caution when the discussion becomes focused on workplace diversity, as within this discourse there is the tendency to further oppress and marginalize Indigenous workers.

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Spencer, B. (2006). *The purposes of adult education: A short introduction*. Toronto, ON: Thompson Educational Publishing Inc.

This publication was referenced as a source of accepted theoretical adult education literature, as the author has been actively engaged in the field of adult education, as a professor at the Centre for Work and Community Studies at Athabasca University, as well as being the author of several articles and texts related to the field of adult education.

This literature provides historical overviews of the field of adult education, along with the major schools of thought on the purposes of adult education, with a focus on the social transformational (social justice) aspect of adult educational programming.

Extrapolating from adult education theory, and building upon Aboriginal (K-12) educational theory, new frameworks for the intentional Indigenization of adult education are able to be constructed. This publication adds to the discourse promoting organizational learning as a means of achieving greater worker autonomy; more control over work constructs; greater contributions to the organization as a whole. From this, it can be inferred that Indigenous workers would benefit similarly from organizational learning; furthermore, it would stand to reason that intentional Indigenization of organization learning would offer the organization similar benefits, as well as acting to promote a healthy, balanced, holistic and inclusive workplace for all employees.

Conclusion

There is limited research and literature directly relating to the intentional Indigenization of organizational learning; the majority of the resources found initiated from interdisciplinary sources outside the fields of adult and Aboriginal education. It is worth noting that there are several articles that were purposely omitted from this critical annotated bibliography, as their content was strife with Eurocentric assimilationist discourse and misinformation relating to current educational leadership theories which acts to devalue the concept of intentional Indigenization of organizational learning, while promoting workplace diversity initiatives that further marginalize and oppress Indigenous peoples. The purpose of this critical annotated bibliography is to work toward the construction of a working foundation upon which future educational research, inquiry, and professional practice may be structured from.

Taking inspiration from discourse that intentionally challenges the Eurocentric construct of post-secondary educational institutions, and calls for the Indigenization of post-secondary education (Davidson, 2016, February 10), the concept of intentional Indigenization of organizational learning emerged. Future educational research and scholarship is needed to develop, implement and monitor Indigenization strategies in Canadian workplaces, with emphasis on worker recruitment, retention, and overall cultural wellbeing. Continued professional inquiry into various aspects of Aboriginal and adult education, with a focus on the development of theoretical frameworks specifically designed to Indigenize organizational learning, is paramount to successfully creating a viable strategy that is easily implemented in all Canadian workplaces.

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The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's suggestions (2015) regarding improving the educational and employment outcomes of Indigenous peoples is a powerful reminder of the legacy of colonialism in Canadian organizations. It directly challenges the Eurocentric nature of the corporate workplace and justifies the immediate need for the intentional Indigenization of organizational learning as a means of reconciliation and decolonization.

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