

Self-Location





Reclaiming Dakelh Perspectives, Knowledge Systems, Cultural Values and Methodologies through Community Collaboration and Education

By Tina R. Alexis (Dakelh)

For Saskatchewan Indigenous Mentorship Network Annual General Meeting & Student Symposia

February 24th, 2021

Supervisor: Dr. Winona Wheeler (Cree/Assiniboine/Saulteaux/ English/Irish descent)

Co-Supervisor: Dr. Michelle Johnson-Jennings (Choctow)

Overview of Presentation



Aim:

- Promote and enable Dakelh members to reflect on our community's strength and current concerns
- To promote critical dialogue regarding Dakelh traditional knowledge and ways of being

Context:

Decolonization / Reclamation (of Dakelh Knowledge systems & ways of being)

Methodology:

Postcolonial Indigenous Paradigm & CBPR

Methods:

Storytelling & Talking Circles

Other Considerations:

Ontology, Epistemology & Axiology

Background



Photo Courtesy: https://www.ulkatcho.ca/ancestral_origins.htm

Dakelh people are Indigenous people of Central BC.

Intermarried heavily with both the Nuxalk and T̓silhqot'in people and share territory in the Coast range with the Nuxalk Peoples

Prior to first contact Dakelh people had fully functional systems, were independent and lived adaptable and healthy lifestyles.

It is the hope that reclaiming our traditional ways of being will assist Dakelh people in the health and wellbeing of community.

Objectives



- Through storytelling and talking circles, enable members to reflect on the current community concerns as well as reflect and build upon our community's strengths.
- To promote critical dialogue and reclamation of Dakelh knowledge systems & epistemologies.

Research Questions



1. What are Dakelh people's relationship to traditional ways of being?
2. How will sharing these old ways assist us in healing our community?
3. What are other communities doing to counteract disparities as a result of colonial impacts?

Proposed Methodology



My research will employ a Postcolonial Indigenous Paradigm through community engagement and education (CBPR).

By using two qualitative research methods, storytelling and talking / sharing circles - an Indigenous research framework is applied.

Throughout the entirety of the research, the following principles will be applied: respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991) and holism, interrelatedness and synergy (Archibald 2008).



Postcolonial Indigenous Research Paradigm

"A framework of belief systems that emanate from the lived experiences, values, and history of those belittled and marginalized by Euro-Western research paradigms"
(Chilisa 2012, 19).

"Relationships are key to an Indigenous research paradigm" (Wilson 2008, 62).

Storytelling / Stories



”[T]he researcher takes the role of storyteller rather than researcher/author” (Wilson 2008, 32).

In storytelling, the storyteller has a relationship with the listener (Wilson, quoted in Chilisa 2012, 120).

Talking / Sharing Circles



"Talking circles are based on the ideal of participants' respect for each other and are an example of a focus group method derived from postcolonial Indigenous worldviews" (Chilisa 2012, 214).

"The circle is non-judgmental, helpful and supportive. Respect is important, and this includes listening to others" (Lavallée 2009, 29).

Other considerations...



Relational Ontology: We are beings with many connections – Relationships are multiple and interconnected (Chilisa 2015).

Relational Epistemology: Knowledge is relational. A web of connections inform what is known and how it can be known (Chilisa 2015).

Axiology: Ethical protocols that draw from cultural practices informed by connectedness and a web of relationships that include connections with the living and non-living (Chilisa 2015).

Awetz'eh / Conclusion



"Indigenous methodologies includes evidence of tribal epistemology, integration of a decolonizing aim, acknowledgement of preparations necessary for research, space for self-location, a clear understanding of purposefulness and motivation of the research, guardianship of sacred knowledges, adherence to tribal ethics and protocol, use of Indigenous methods [storytelling] and giving back" (Kovach 2010, 44).

"Indigenous methodologies are often a mix of existing methodological approaches and Indigenous practices" (Smith 2012, 144)

References

Archibald, Jo-ann. 2008. *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body and Spirit*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Chilisa, Bagele. 2012. *Indigenous Research Methodologies*. California: Sage Publications.

Kirkness, Verna and Barnhardt., Ray. 1991. "First Nations and Higher Education: The four R's – Respect Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility." *Journal of American Indian Education*, 30, no. 8: 1-15.

Kovach, Margaret. 2010. "Conversational Method in Indigenous Research." *First Peoples Child and Family Review*, 5, no. 1, 40-48.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1069060ar>.

Lavallée, Lynn. 2009." Practical application of an Indigenous Framework and Two Qualitative Indigenous Research Methods: Sharing Circles and Anishnaabe Symbol-Based Reflection." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8, no.1, (March):21-36.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 2012. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. 2nd ed. New York: Zed Books.

Wilson, Shawn. 2008. *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing.