

Framework for Indigenization of Teaching and Learning

OVERVIEW

The Framework for Indigenization of Teaching and Learning was developed as a partnership between the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement and The Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning, Indigenous Education Initiatives Team. The initiative grew out of thoughtful, strategic collaboration between key members of each office. The primary goal of the framework is to extend an invitation to colleges, schools, and departments to reflect on the values embedded in the framework itself and examine the impact it can have on teaching and learning. The realities experienced in creating this framework are historical, contemporary, systemic, and complex.

Indigenization and decolonization of teaching and learning invites opportunity for “...the respectful, meaningful, ethical weaving of Indigenous knowledges, lived experiences, worldviews, and stories into teaching, learning and research.”ⁱ

WHY INDIGENIZATION & DECOLONIZATION MATTERS

- Enhancing teaching and learning with Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation practices encourages valuing the integrity of Indigenous cultures, languages, and knowledge systems.ⁱⁱ This in turn will foster a **respectful** environment in classrooms for Indigenous students, faculty, staff, and community.
- Authentic inclusion of Indigenous ways of seeing, being, and becoming into instruction, assessment, and curriculum will provide opportunity for Indigenous learners to see themselves in teaching and learning. Making education **relevant** to the lived experience of Indigenous learners will prove beneficial. A university that authentically accepts Indigenous students’ experiences and perspectives will find itself increasing relevance to the needs of those learners.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Recognizing the benefits of gifting and receiving of knowledge in mutually respectful relations with Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples is at the heart of **reciprocity**. Learning is a ceremony and when the relationship between educator, learner, elders, and community results in authentic collaboration, change will happen.
- All members of the learning circle share in the **responsibility** to create and maintain learning environments that support success for Indigenous learners. It begins with a courageous examination of systemic barriers hindering success and a promotion of equitable outcomes for Indigenous learners.

The [ohpahotân / oohpaahotaan Let's Fly Up Together Indigenous Strategy for the University of Saskatchewan](#) defines Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation. The Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning strives to enhance teaching and learning by following the gifts shared in the strategy.

Indigenization	challenges us to amplify the forces of decolonization. Indigenization strengthens the fabric of the University. It involves the respectful, meaningful, ethical weaving of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit knowledges, lived experiences, worldviews, and stories into teaching, learning, and research. Indigenization is a gift that benefits every member of our community.
Decolonization	practices contest divisive and demeaning actions, policies, programming, and frameworks. Indigenization is the healing, balancing force; it calls us to action, inspires opportunities for mutual cultural understanding, and helps us to find comfort in the discomfort decolonization can entail.
Reconciliation	is a goal that may take generations to realize. It “is about forging and maintaining respectful relationships. There are no shortcuts” (Senator Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission). As a community, we have a shared responsibility to honour and join in the journey of reconciliation; to repair, redress and heal relationships; and nurture an ethical space in which we can explore how we relate to each other through the lenses of history, culture, and lived experience.

In consideration of the compelling why, the OVPIE and GMCTL offer the Framework for Indigenization of Teaching and Learning to colleges, schools and departments not as a checklist, but as an invitation. An invitation to reflect, to listen, and to act with care and responsibility. Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation are ongoing, relational processes that ask each of us to engage thoughtfully in realizing change. This work may at times be uncomfortable and complex, yet it is through that discomfort that deeper understanding and transformation can emerge.

Resources

ⁱ Arcand, E., Arcand, L., Badger, B., Battiste, M., Blair-Dreaver Johnston, A., Buffalo, M., Campbell, M., Creely-Johns, M., Cummings, N., Duquette, R., Fleury, N., Halfe, L., Hamilton, M., Henderson, M., Kayseas, F., Kayseas, E., Keewatin, M., Lewis, K., Linklater, L. J., ... Tsannie-Bursest, R. (2021). *ohpahotân / oohpaahotaan*. University of Saskatchewan. <https://indigenous.usask.ca/documents/lets-fly-up-together.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Kirkness, V. J. and R. Barnhardt (2001). First Nations and Higher Education: The Four R's - Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility. *Knowledge Across Cultures: A Contribution to Dialogue Among Civilizations*. R. Hayoe and J. Pan. Hong Kong, Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong.

ⁱⁱⁱ As above.