



Racially Marginalized Experiences on the Indigenization of Education

Jin McRae

Grande Prairie, AB

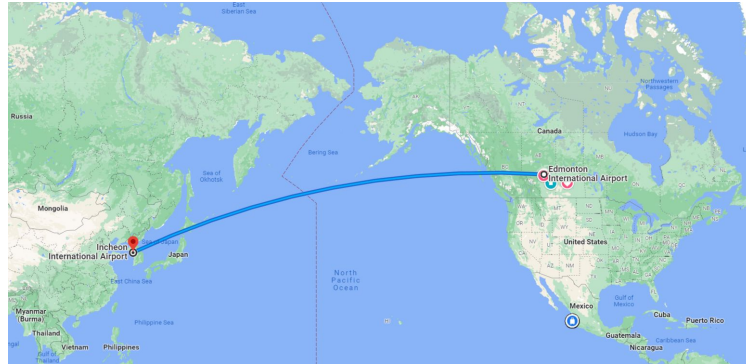
March 8, 2024

Personal Land Acknowledgement



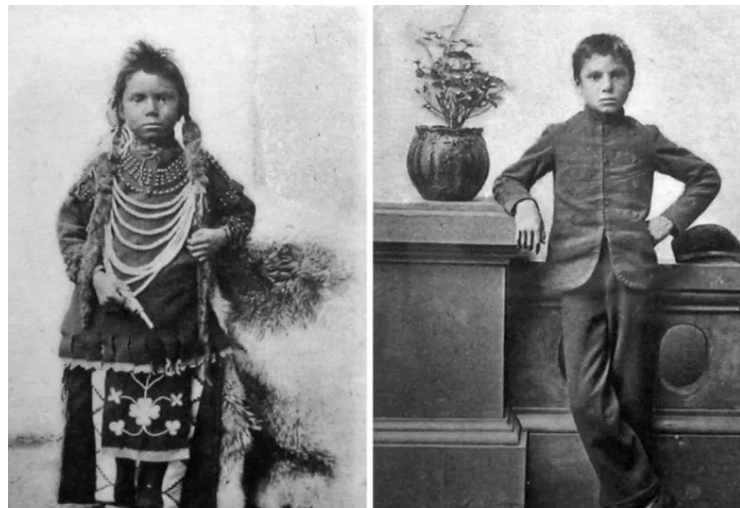
Korean Peninsula as a Tiger

안녕하세요! *Hello!*



North America as a Turtle

Parallel Colonialism: Before & After



조선말
한국어



日本語
にほんご

CHEROKEE

WFOA.9

HEITSUK

mámní?a

IN KITTIT

$$\wedge^q L_j \otimes \wedge^{n-q} L_j$$

LAKOTA

šaglóğan

LUSHOOTSEET

ɬix^wači? ʔi ti ču?

94-1 ISMAF

neku7pll7úpekst



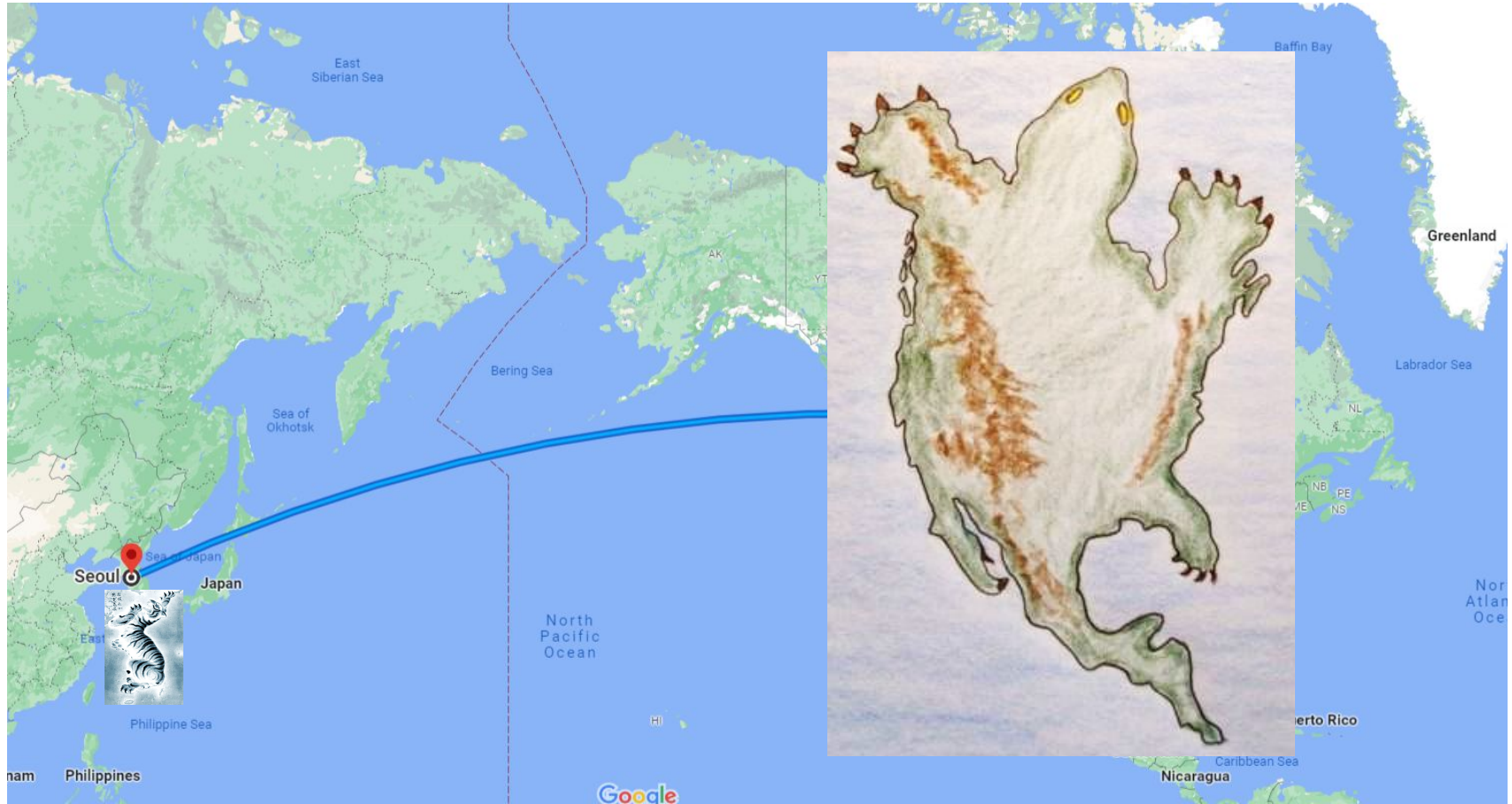
Hello

Bonjour

Hola



Comparison of Land Size



Personal Land Acknowledgement



Treaty 6 Territory

Traditional territory of the Nehiyaw, Denesuline, Nakota Sioux, Anishinaabe, and Niitsitapi peoples.



Treaty 8 Territory

Traditional territory of the Beaver Cree, Dene, and Metis peoples.

This is a Safe Space





Racially Marginalized Experiences on the Indigenization of Education

Capstone Research Paper Available Online:

www.JinMcRae.com/research

(References & Citations can be found in the paper)

Research Rationale: Origins

Potential research topics stem from personal lived experience (questions in life):

- Born in South Korea, immigrant to Canada
- Adapting to English, Euro-Canadian cultural norms
- Became a teacher, helping students like me (visible minorities)
- Faced with growing awareness and duty for Indigenous knowledge (PD, TQS, Classes)
- Disconnect observed and feeling “uneasy,” but different from colleagues/others

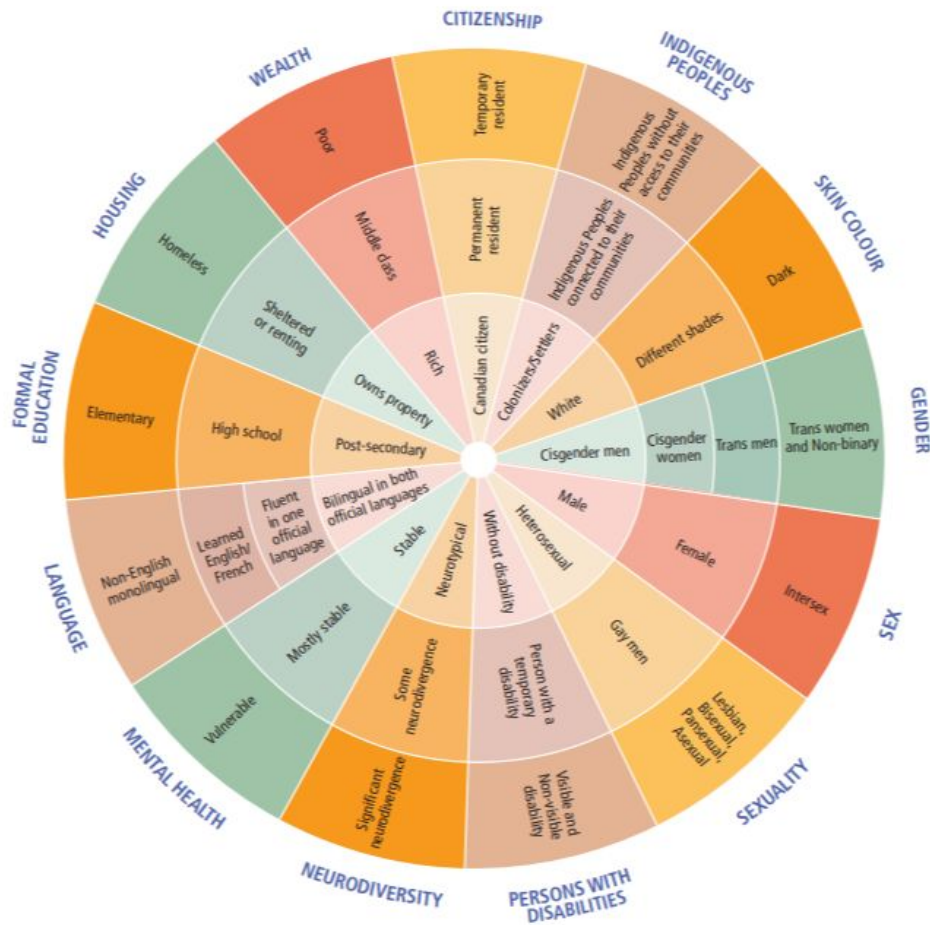


A Person's Positionality

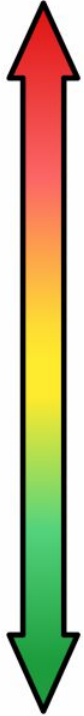
Considering an individual's privilege and “power” in society:

- Several dimensions of diversity (ex. Skin colour, gender, sexuality, wealth, education, health, etc.)
- “Centered” vs “Marginalized”
- Each person is uniquely positioned in each diversity dimension
- “Polite” Canadian society tends to shy away from these labels, but such sentiments continue the status quo of discrimination & marginalization

WHEEL OF PRIVILEGE AND POWER
(the closer you are to the centre, the more privilege you have)



Correct Terminology



- ❑ “Visible Minority”
- ❑ “Person of Colour”
- ❑ “Racially Marginalized”
- ❑ “Ethnocultural”
- ❑ “Equity Seeking”
- ❑ “Equity Denied”
- ❑ “Equity Deserving”



Questions For Today

- How are newcomers to Canada responding to the Indigenization of schools?
- Where do racially marginalized Canadians fit in reconciliation?
- How can immigrant students understand the importance of reconciliation with the Indigenous peoples?



First: Understanding Newcomer Expectations

How Canada portrays itself to the world:

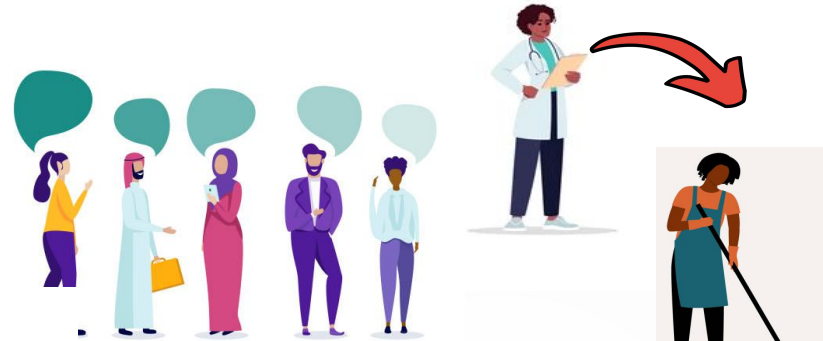
- Poutine
- Natural Geographic Beauty
- Maple Syrup
- White/European Majority of “Nice” People



But: Newcomer Realities in Canada

How Canada treats its marginalized populations:

- Not recognizing foreign credentials
- Dealing with the cold climate without experience
- Lack of support to receive social services
- Requiring fluency in English or French
- Lack of affordable housing
- Subtle, hidden forms of discrimination



Newcomer Reality Example (2021)

‘Road’ scholars: Why every taxi driver possesses their own brand of genius

Where are you least likely to die of a heart attack? In a taxi, because chances are your cabbie is a cardiologist.

This joke, often told in Montreal, plays on the urban archetype of the taxi-driving doctor. The idea is hardly new. Back in 1970, taxi-driving Globe and Mail journalist Peter Churchill described such cabbies as “immigrants who have struggled to Canada bearing their glittering recommendations and qualifications from places with unpronounceable names: doctors of law, medicine or philosophy who suddenly find they must keep body and soul together while the New World figures out what to do with them – or to let them do for themselves.”



Newcomer Reality Example (2014)

Three Filipino workers killed in crash were returning from language class

Three people died in a collision Saturday between a car and a truck on Highway 11 in central Alberta, RCMP say.

“There was freezing rain earlier in the day and it could have contributed to the collision, and they’re saying possibly driver inexperience with those types of road conditions,” he said Sunday afternoon.

Newcomer Curveball: Indigenizing Education

- National “Calls to Action” involving schools and public education by the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- Indigenous topics required in the Teaching Quality Standards (TQS), the Leadership Quality Standards (LQS), and the Superintendent Leadership Quality Standards (SLQS) by Alberta Education.



Truth and
Reconciliation
Commission of Canada



Troubling Reactions

- Why do we need to learn this?
- Are you confusing history with current events?
- Why bring up the past again?
- Are you trying to make me feel bad/guilty?
- What about my (non-White) culture?
- What about other minorities?
- Are you trying to indoctrinate?



More Troubles (Cultural Appropriation)

The 5 F's:

- Food, Flags/Colours, Fashion/Costumes, Festivals/Parties, and Folklore/Stories.

Go deeper by:

- Learning the Historical Background and Geographical Context of the culture.
- Understanding the Reasons for Attitudes, Beliefs, Dispositions, and Values.
- Connecting with Real People from the culture and develop relationships (Interculturalism over Multiculturalism).



Problems, Problems, Problems

“Add-and-stir” Model of Indigenization:

- Cultural appropriations of Indigenous topics.
- Oppositions from students, parents.
- Confusion for Newcomers to Canada.

Result: educators & institutions hesitant, overly cautious - lack of commitment and action.



Research Project Rationale

- Personal experiences in Canada as an immigrant (mentioned before)
- Observing similar patterns with other Newcomers (my parents & students)
- Wishing to learn more about Reconciliation as a responsible educator
- Realizing a gap/disconnect of what Canada is for Newcomers vs. White/Europeans vs. Indigenous



Literature Themes on Visible Minorities

- Widespread view of reconciliation as a Indigenous and European/White only issue (binary dichotomy).
- But visible minorities are neither, which often excludes them from the concept of reconciliation.
- Even worse, newcomers can adopt and perpetuate Eurocentric colonialisms in Canada.



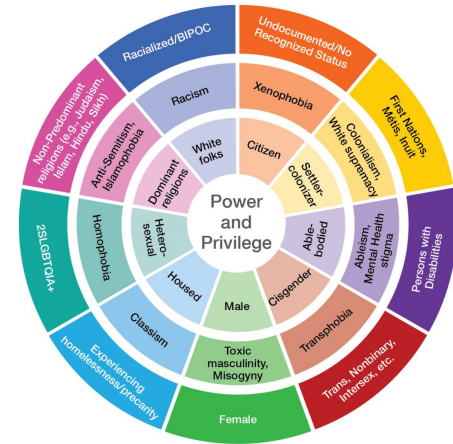
Literature: Colonial Victims

- Historical discrimination by the government (ex. Komagata Maru Incident, Chinese Head Tax, Japanese Internment Camps, etc.)
- Continuing incidents of racism individually and systematically (ex. Eurocentric Citizenship Test & Requirements, Black Lives Matter, Islamophobia, Stop Asian Hate, etc.)
- Thus, part of Indigenous side of reconciliation?



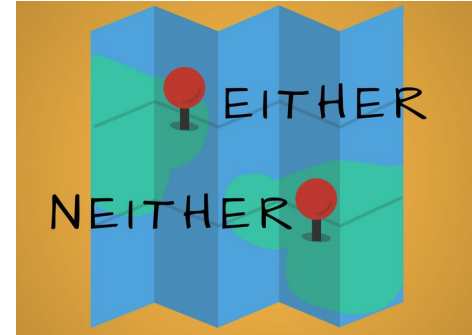
Literature: Privileged Settlers

- Even though visible minorities are victims of racism, they still benefit from colonialism and settlerhood in Canada, which exploits Indigenous lands and peoples for settler gain.
- Significant differences in quality of life reported between Indigenous communities and visible minority communities (ex. Educational attainment, geographic proximity to urban opportunities)
- Thus, part of White/European side of reconciliation?



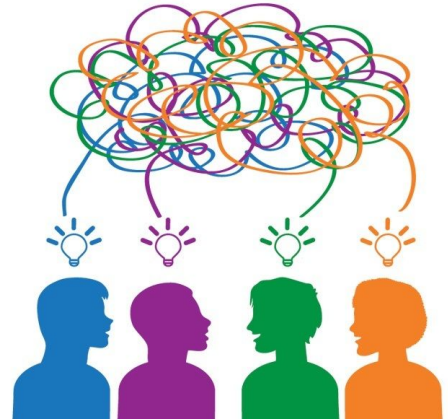
Literature: Uniquely Positioned “Third Space”

- Dual-role of being both the colonizer and the colonized, since neither White/European and Indigenous.
 - Marginalized by Eurocentrism & racism
 - Benefitting from settlerhood
- Visible minorities could show the way forward in reconciliation based on hybridity and pluralism in Canada.
- “More research needed for differently positioned settlers” (Hiller, 2017).
- Reconciliation in Canada needs to recognize Ethnocultural diversity that is not always represented.



Research Project Details

- Central Question - “How are visible minority teachers responding to decolonization, Indigenization, and reconciliation?”
- Qualitative Research Design - open ended to allow for multiple perspectives, interpretations, and realities to be collected.
- Data Analysis - open coded interview transcripts, deductively grouped using a matrix chart.
- Research Participants - visible minority teachers in an urban school in Alberta, with at least 5 years of experience, with a variety of teaching assignments.



Findings: Allyship (Initially & Superficially)

- Participants demonstrated Indigenous awareness
 - Lack of meaningful and effective funding and support
 - Lower educational attainment, houselessness, addictions
 - Residential Schools, generational trauma, lower quality of life on Reserves
- Empathy & Solidarity demonstrated
 - Residential Schools, Orange Shirt Day - defining narrative for empathy and solidarity
 - More quality Indigenous-related Professional Development needed for educators
 - Cultural appropriations and misrepresentations empathized
 - More incentives, time, and resources needed for educators
 - Victimhood from Eurocentric meritocracy empathized
 - More Indigenous topics needed in schools
 - Being denied belonging in Canada due to non-White features
 - Shared experiences against racism and bullying



Findings: Paradoxes (Conflicting Analyses)

- Participants' personal reports:
 - Canada does not seem to want reconciliation, truly and sincerely.
 - Prefer not to give back land to the Indigenous and not have to relocate.
 - Immigrants are actually grateful for opportunities provided by “White” Canada.
 - Indigenization should take place at the cost of “White” Canadians, not visible minorities.
 - Visible minorities help their own first, rather than contributing to Canadian society broadly.
- Participants' reported actions, professionally:
 - Wish to segregate Indigenous content as a separate subject to keep remaining subjects.
 - No Indigenous content due to lack of age-appropriate materials and resources.
 - Quality Indigenous content and resources are not readily available.
 - Indigenous content is irrelevant to certain subject matter.
 - More guidance, funding, materials, and support needed.



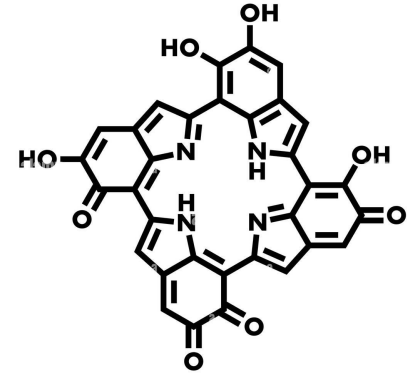
Findings: Barriers (Hidden Truths Revealed)

- Analysis of participants' declarations of allyship and paradoxical realities: additional barriers exist for visible minorities to truly partake in reconciliation.
- Barrier 1: Having to assimilate to Eurocentric Canada
 - Crucial for survival in Canada - all newcomers have to assimilate, but it is a greater task for racialized newcomers than those who have a European/White background.
 - White privilege affecting reconciliation - White/European settlers have more opportunities and availabilities to learn about and engage in reconciliation, while Racialized settlers are preoccupied with assimilating to the White/European systems and are left resorting to approaching reconciliation through a White/European lens. .
- Barrier 2: Lack of awareness for Settler Privilege
 - Disconnect between "settler" and "immigrant" - past vs. today, White vs. Racialized.
 - Racialized settlers unable to see their own privilege as colonial settlers.
- Instinctual preference for one's own culture
 - Double-edged relationship to Eurocentric Canadian culture (to assimilate and to reject).
 - Preserve one's own language & culture, cannot advocate/ally with Indigenous as effectively



Implications for Racialized Settlers

- Need to recognize our settler privilege (immigrants are settlers too) and reflect how we are both colonizers and colonized on this land
- Assimilate to Canada for reconciliation, not Eurocentric colonialisms (preserve home culture and language, but respect the Indigenous ways as the true ways of this land)
- Strengthen commitments toward reconciliation (by decolonizing & opening space up for Indigenizing)



melanin



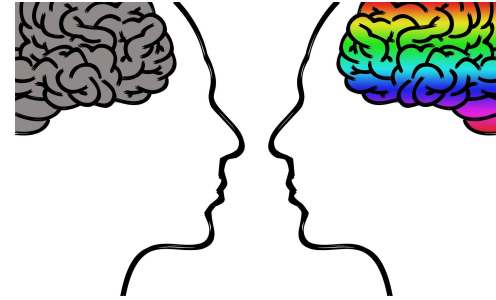
Implications for Indigenous Peoples

- Just like there's multiple groups under the umbrella term of "Indigenous," there's multiple groups under "Settler" as well (aka racialized settlers, visible minorities)
- Reconciliation involves relationships - building relations by recognizing the shared experiences of discrimination and racism in visible minorities to create powerful allyship
- Guide newcomers with patience and understanding - it is disorienting to understand the multiple layers of "Canada"



Implications for White Canadians

- Understand and recognize that Canadian society “centers” White/European peoples automatically (aka White Privilege) even in reconciliation
- Decolonize first, then invite the Indigenous (create a genuinely open and accepting space first, rather than simply following an “add-and-stir” model)
- Reshape/Rebrand Canada as Indigenous, especially when recruiting and inviting newcomers and immigrants to come become settlers too (stop adding to the expansion of the colonial exploitation)



Literature: How To Decolonize

- Confront the settler within:
 - Compare any thought/attitude with Indigenous worldviews to reveal harmful colonial ideas.
 - Marginalized individuals can channel the feeling of being “othered” into decolonizing from Eurocentric oppression and internalized racism/discrimination.
 - Requires ongoing, repeated, commitments, and is a lifelong process.
- Center the Indigenous:
 - Multiculturalism is a Eurocentric colonial framework - instead, try Interculturalism.
 - Build reciprocal relationships with Indigenous peoples and focus on shared humanity.
 - Connect your Indigeneity with Canada’s Indigenous peoples - we are all Indigenous somewhere.



Answer Key: Questions From Today

- How are newcomers to Canada responding to the Indigenization of schools?
 - Barriers to learn and understand, let alone to commit.
- Where do racially marginalized Canadians fit in reconciliation?
 - Uniquely positioned third space of duality.
- How can immigrant students understand the importance of reconciliation with the Indigenous peoples?
 - Connect with shared humanity and Indigeneity.



More Questions To Research

- How can educators portray Canada as an Indigenous-centered place and community, to visible minority and newcomer students and families, rather than portraying Canada as a White/Eurocentric society?
- How do we open visible minority students' eyes to the settler privilege they enjoy in Canada, compared to the colonial oppression experienced by the Indigenous peoples and the Indigenous lands?



*It is everyone's responsibility to decolonize,
but it is the Indigenous peoples that can lead us towards Indigenization.*

Thank you

All citations & references are in the full research paper:

www.JinMcRae.com/research

