

“Indians of North America”

AN INTRODUCTION TO INDIGENOUS SUBJECT HEADINGS

Currently, both Library of Congress Subject Headings and Canadian Subject Headings continue to use the term “Indian”, despite calls to alter terminology.

Common headings used include “Indians of North America”, “Indigenous peoples”, “Native peoples”. “Métis”, and “Inuit” are also used. Relationships between terms can be unclear.

Other organizations have already undertaken efforts at alterations or alternatives to LCSH or CSH, including:

- Manitoba Archival Information Network
- Victoria Public Library
- Xwi7xwa Library
- Decolonizing Description Working Group

Alterations can vary from terminology changes to the structure of knowledge organization systems.

Library catalogue page for *Missing and Murdered Indigenous people in "Canada": An Inclusionary Approach to Understanding Violence Against the Original People of Turtle Island*
<https://search.library.ualberta.ca/catalog/8705165>

Indigenous Methodology

RELATIONALITY AND RESEARCH

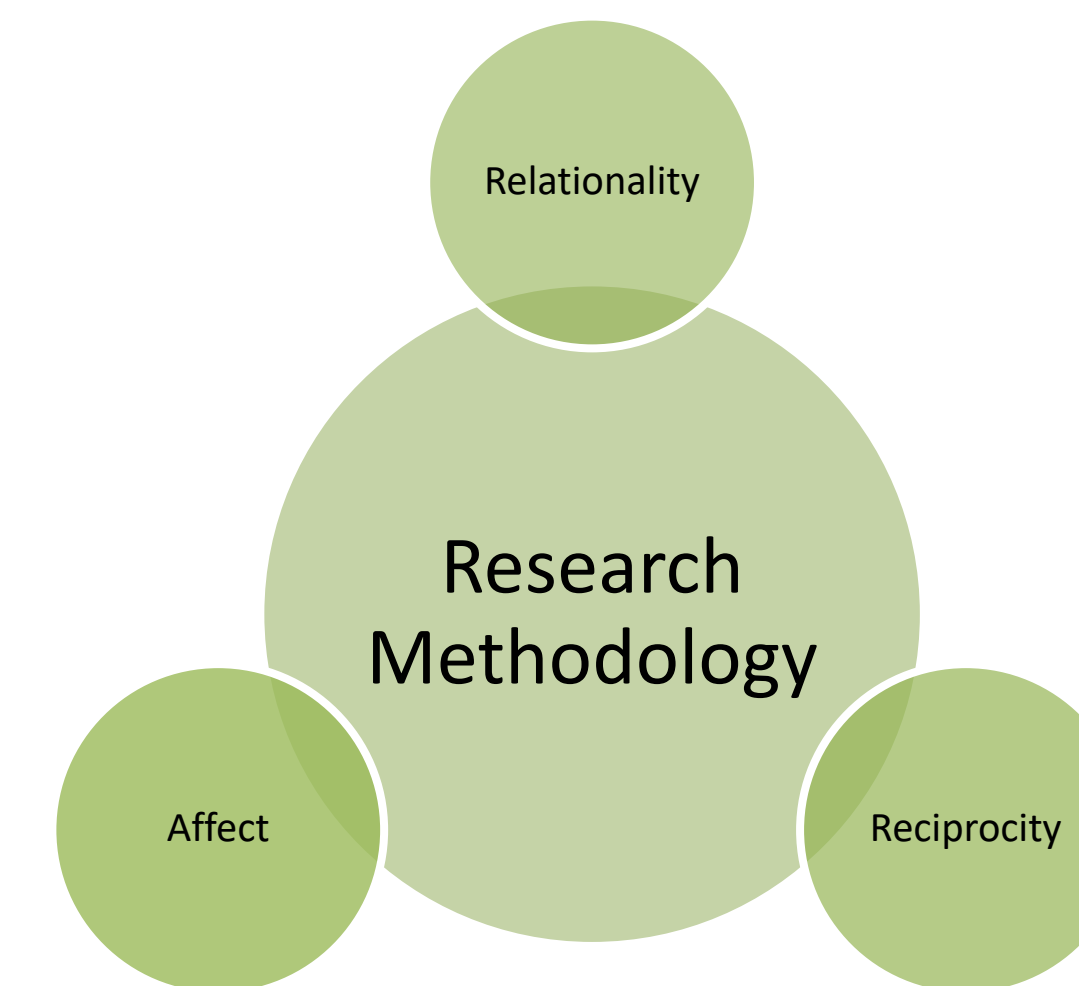
This project is heavily influenced by the works of Shawn Wilson (2008; 2019) and Margaret Kovach (2009).

Wilson (2008) writes: “relationships do not merely shape reality, they are reality” (p.7).

Indigenous research is relationality. Understanding that individuals have relationships to people but also to places, things, and ideas is bedrock principle of this research.

My own relationships are important. As a Métis man I am not neutral, and pretending to be so would do a disservice to the research and the student participants.

Finding ways to engage in reciprocal relationships with students is equally important. Participants have the opportunity either to remain confidential, or to be recognized as co-creators of this research.



ETHICAL APPROACHES TO RESEARCH

Working in good relationships with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students was crucial for me. This includes ensuring that students maintain ownership of their data.

Students have had the opportunity to review any public representation created from this research, including this poster.

Students had the option of having their names associated with their responses, or to remain confidential.

Student Voices

RELATIONSHIPS WITH “INDIAN”

No students reported feeling comfortable using the term “Indian”.

“...the settler angle is that they’re using what they know as well from the past but I also expect that they’re gonna eventually change the wording to suit this day.” – Wil Fraser

“I feel like it’s definitely a negative relationship. I’ve... definitely heard it being used, kind of... in a very negative context” – Unnamed Student

EFFECTS OF TERMINOLOGY

We can never forget the language we use affects students. In some cases, we have forced students away from the library entirely.

“Yeah I don’t, I don’t like it. And I really like it even less when I actually have to use it to find what I need” – Carry Perrier

“I know personally myself and a lot of other of my friends who have just stopped using the library catalogues ... if a person that is paying the fees to attend school can’t access the library catalogues because they don’t feel safe to use them then how is that fair?” – Calista Strijack

STUDENT SOLUTIONS

Students are already critically engaging in these issues. Involving them in potential solutions will be important for rebuilding trust.

“It’d be cool if you could work it where if you typed in something where you could check a box or could automatically search other similar topics without you having to physically type it in, so if we changed our topic heading it might automatically search in other databases for something else” – Unnamed Student

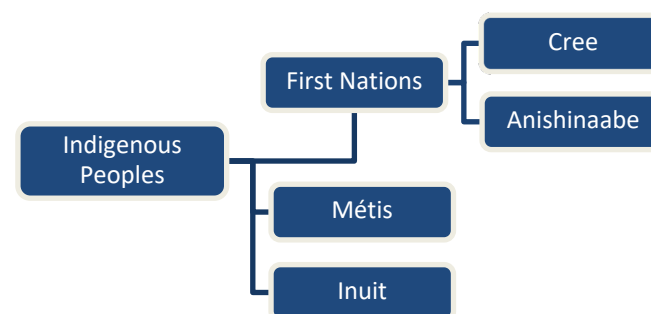
Terminology

WHAT’S THE DEAL?

The continued presence of colonial terminology is a significant barrier to decolonizing or Indigenizing efforts.

Indigenous peoples have their own names for themselves. “Indian” is reductionist and acts as a reminder of the legacy of the colonial attitudes that defined western institutions.

There is no one-size-fits all approach; there is no simple fix. Despite the difficulty, libraries must be prepared to engage with Indigenous users to better represent them in catalogues.



A simplified examination of levels of specificity for Indigenous peoples. Inspiration taken from the Xwi7xwa library Indigenous Knowledge Organization

Methods

INTERVIEWS

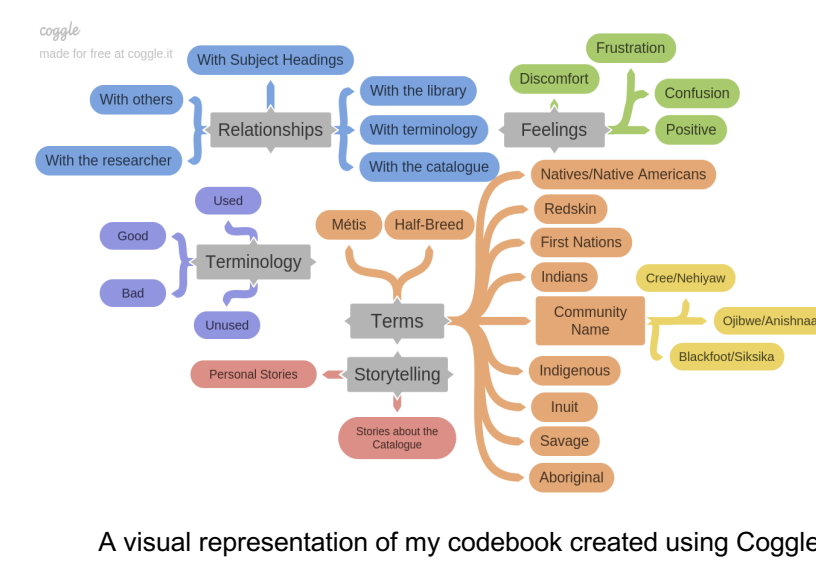
In total, five Students from the NS290 class agreed to participate. Two identified as non-Indigenous, two as Indigenous, and one as Nehiyaw.

Thirty-minute semi-structured interview were conducted with each students with a focus on relationships with terminology found in subject headings.

CODING

Interviews were then transcribed and coded using MAXQDA.

I used a mix of inductive and deductive coding.



References

- Kovach, M. (2009). *Indigenous methodologies: Characteristics, conversations, and contexts*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press
- Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing
- Wilson, S., Breen, A. V., & DuPré, L. (2019). *Research and reconciliation: Unsettling ways of knowing through Indigenous relationships*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars