

Guidelines for Selecting Resources on Indigenous Topics

Table of Contents

1. [Overview](#)
2. Background
3. [Guiding Practices](#)
4. [Examples](#)
5. [References](#)
6. [About the Authors](#)

Overview

This guideline was developed (in Spring, 2024) with the intention of supporting faculty who wish to respectfully incorporate Indigenous perspectives into their classrooms while utilizing critical and decolonial approaches. When seeking Indigenous resources, there are numerous aspects to consider, as many authors who engage in topics relating to Indigenous knowledge, Peoples and economic development have a history of perpetuating harmful practices.

We created this guideline drawing from our experiences in the field of business and management practices with the intention to aid efforts to responsibly identify Indigenous resources. These guidelines have been informed by several authors who are cited below, as well as our interactions and collaboration with colleagues who work within and beyond academic settings. We extend our utmost gratitude to those voices and collaborators, particularly to Áurea M. Vericat Rocha, Shandin Pete and Brad Jackson for their comments on this document. We are also grateful to the people that came before us, especially to the support and teachings of the “Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures” collective, Jacqueline Jennings and Nikki Sanchez of “Decolonize Together,” the UBC CTLT Indigenous Initiatives Team, Lauren Casey, student collaborators Elsa Doxtdator-Jansson and Eric Surette, and for many informal but essential conversations, to Jordyn Hrenyk of SFU Beedie. This guideline was inspired by and adds to the work of these scholars and organizations. We encourage you to also consider their perspectives in your journey/process towards decolonizing and indigenising your curriculum and teaching.

This document was conceived as a **guiding tool** rather than a checklist. While we tried to be as comprehensive as possible, our positionality influences what we deemed to be essential considerations when evaluating materials and we may have missed other critical elements. The

document includes examples of resources that are suitable for use as teaching resources, as well as examples that may be deemed questionable or should be avoided. We encourage you to embark on a journey of decolonial approaches and critical awareness of Indigenous Peoples by considering the location and Nation-state where you are situated. This guideline should not be used in isolation or as your only approach toward decolonial teaching practices or engagement with Indigenous topics. For more information on the various approaches to working on Indigenous topics, please see the teaching resources within the Online Resource Centre and contact [CTLT Indigenous Initiatives](#).

Background

Historically, Western research in Indigenous communities has followed extractive and unethical methods (Battiste, 2013, 2000). Indigenous knowledge has been misappropriated and has been part of the extractive approach of colonization, perpetuating negative and ongoing consequences for Indigenous communities (Smith, 1999). Decolonization necessitates acknowledging the historical misuse, misrepresentation, and appropriation of Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and practices. It involves working actively to avoid reinforcing stereotypes, misusing information, and perpetuating the marginalization of Indigenous voices.

Among the many possible ways to contribute to the dismantling of colonization, Xwi7xwa library proposes using a critical literacy perspective when selecting and utilizing Indigenous content. This approach foregrounds the importance of following cultural protocols that have been outlined by the authors and consider the cultural, ideological and sociolinguistic contexts in which the source originated and was interpreted (McNicol, 2016). A critical literacy approach involves asking yourself questions such as “Whose story is this?”, “Who is benefiting from it?”, and “Whose voices are absent?” Considering these and other related questions supports the critical reflection that is necessary when engaging with narratives featuring Indigenous topics (Nicol et al., 2020).

Indigenous critical literacy asks us to scrutinize aspects of authorship and identity in relation to storytelling and teachings, thereby promoting a more inclusive and respectful approach to Indigenous knowledge. This work also requires a critical stance in our teaching. While incorporating Indigenous topics might initially be done through what Battiste (2011) calls an ‘add and stir’ approach (meaning superficial), we encourage you to take a step further and work toward integrating Indigenous perspectives in the classroom by acknowledging how they challenge Western ways of thinking and knowing.

Guiding Practices

When considering a teaching resource such as a research article, business case, book chapter, and so on, pay attention to the following considerations. The first two items on the list are the most crucial, while those thereafter may be considered as secondary.

1. Check if the author(s) is/are Indigenous.
 - a. Usually, there is a positionality statement that explains where the author is from (such as Indigenous Nation, cultural group, and/or community).
 - i. Consider the Indigenous author's life experience in their community to centre their work. For example, are they raised in their community? Are they reconnecting? Are they from a displaced Indigenous population?
 - b. If the resource does not include a positionality statement, search for professional profiles (e.g., university/faculty websites, personal websites, etc.) or biographies in which the author describes their background. For resources with multiple authors, search for profiles of each author.
2. Defer to local sources/information.
 - a. Where possible, it is preferable to amplify the perspectives of local Indigenous Peoples(s).
3. If the author is not Indigenous.
 - a. Search for their work experience to find out if they work alongside Indigenous Peoples or communities in a respectful manner.
 - b. Do your due diligence in searching for news articles or other publications that will provide more information about the author's credibility, reputation, and ethics in working with Indigenous communities.
4. Identify the purpose of the publication.
 - a. Identify the funding agency – does the funding trajectory of the organization demonstrate a history of supporting the goals of Indigenous Peoples?
 - b. What is the purpose of the publication?
5. Consider how is the resource portraying and including Indigenous Peoples
 - a. Through stereotypes: As victims, as problems, as deficient, as savage/wild.
 - b. By generalizing (e.g. speaking about one example and generalizing it to all Indigenous groups). (Parent & Kerr, 2020; Davidson, 2020)
 - c. In the past, as if Indigenous cultures are not vibrant and thriving. (Younging, 2018)
 - d. As capable, as stakeholders, as rights-holders, as holding a worldview of equal relevance.
 - e. Does it include and prioritize Indigenous voices and perspectives? (Davidson, 2020)
 - f. Does the material ascribe pan-Indigenous ideology? If you are not aware, look up resources about pan-Indigenous identity and understand its rootedness in Federal Policy.
6. What kind of information is shared?
 - a. Public information.

- b. Personal information.
 - c. Information that belongs to a cultural group or family. Note that some culturally relevant information is private and not meant to be shared or might be associated with particular protocols for sharing. Was the author mindful of these protocols and verified that publishing or sharing the information in any other form is permitted? (Parent & Kerr, 2020). Highly ethical resources will explicitly reference how their methods and research respected the protocols of the communities they worked with.
7. What knowledge or worldview is shared?
- a. Are Indigenous perspectives and worldviews (of one group or multiple ones) given the same importance and presence than Western perspectives?
 - b. Are Indigenous perspectives and worldviews (of one or multiple groups) emphasized, independent of, or in contrast with Western approaches?
 - c. Are Indigenous approaches presented in a way that acknowledges the diversity among Indigenous perspectives or in reference to a specific group/locality/community? (Parent & Kerr, 2020; Davidson, 2020)
 - d. Are Western values, perspectives, and worldviews portrayed as more valid/reliable/important than Indigenous perspectives?
8. If it is an academic research paper
- a. Complement your evaluation of the resource with the [Xwi7xwa Critical Indigenous toolkit](#).
 - b. Does the paper describe how the research methodology includes decolonizing methodologies and/or is guided by principles established by Indigenous Peoples. (e.g. Archibald, 2008)
 - c. Describes the consent, involvement, and participation of Indigenous Peoples.
 - d. Presents Indigenous perspectives.
 - e. Describes a reciprocal methodology process (e.g. Did the research methodology and results benefit the community it collaborated with to create knowledge?). (Wilson, 2008)
9. When the resource includes an Indigenous story
- a. Complement your evaluation of the resource with [Parent, A. & Kerr, J. \(2020\) Indigenous Storywork Giveaway for Educators](#).
 - b. Mention the author and source.
 - c. Include the process by which the author received approval to share it.
 - d. Ensure you have permission to share it and explain how you received permission to share the story.

After you have vetted a resource as a beneficial teaching tool, include the following details in your teaching methods with the resource:

- 1. Make sure to highlight:
 - a. Indigenous authorship (Name).
 - b. Indigenous ancestry.
 - c. Indigenous cultural group.

2. Share how you accessed the resource, and what was your rationale for using it.

When you use a resource of non-Indigenous authorship, discussing Indigenous topics:

1. Make sure to mention:
 - a. Name and a small biography of the author.
 - b. Experience working with Indigenous groups (Years, place, communities).
 - c. Relationship with Indigenous community or person (Explain the type of relationships).
 - d. Kind of research (Methodology).
2. Share with your students your rationale as to why you are not using a source of Indigenous authorship. This should go beyond saying that you “could not find Indigenous authorship in this field.” You should demonstrate your researched and critically considered the suitability of a resource, to discuss or examine a topic from an Indigenous perspective or about Indigenous Peoples.
3. How you accessed the resource, and what your rationale is for using it.

Bringing This into Practice (or, Some Examples)

Here we provide examples of resources that can better explain how this guideline can be used to select resources, especially as related to our work in the business school. In what follows, we have provided several examples to show how you can identify the issues outlined above.

The following two papers are examples of articles that could be incorporated into your course. When evaluated using our Guiding Practices, it is clear that they are thoughtfully developed and appropriate for class use.

Example 1

Atlas, W. I., Ban, N. C., Moore, J. W., Tuohy, A. M., Greening, S., Reid, A. J., Morven, N., White, E., Housty, W. G., Housty, J. A., Service, C. N., Greba, L., Harrison, S., Sharpe, C., Butts, K. I. R., Shepert, W. M., Sweeney-Bergen, E., Macintyre, D., Sloat, M. R., & Connors, K. (2020). Indigenous Systems of Management for Culturally and Ecologically Resilient Pacific Salmon (*Oncorhynchus* spp.) Fisheries. *Bioscience*, 71(2), 186–204.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biaa144>

This article was written by Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors. It provides specific Indigenous perspectives, knowledge, practices, and approaches throughout the article. Those approaches relate to the authors' localities, talking specifically about their communities. The article offers an in-depth description of Indigenous fishing management based on an understanding of the landscape and ecosystems. They offer solutions to fishing management systems based on Indigenous perspectives and bring those into dialogue with Western approaches. The authors acknowledge where the knowledge originated. The references also include Indigenous authors.

Example 2

Caron, J., Asselin, H., Beaudoin, J.M. (2020). Indigenous employees' perceptions of the strategies used by mining employers to promote their recruitment, integration and retention. *Resources Policy*, 68, 101793 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resourpol.2020.101793>
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0301420720301586>

This article was written by non-Indigenous authors, but much of the information it shares is based on Indigenous perspectives. It presents findings of interviews conducted with Inuit, Anishinaabe, and Cree participants. It also describes the research method and methodology, and how participants were engaged. The article shares the findings and conclusions from Indigenous perspectives and uses Indigenous and non-Indigenous references.

The following articles may at first appear to be appropriate resources, but are problematic when examined in more depth:

Example 3

Lal, V. & Lim, D. (2021) *The Yukon Soaps Company: Indigenous Business Growth*. Ivey ID: 9B21M055 <https://www.iveycases.com/>

The perspective and information in this case is well-developed. It makes deliberate efforts to communicate the Indigenous protagonist's goals and considerations for the development of her business activities. However, the authors' questions and emphasis on business growth is approached only from a Western perspective. As Hrenyk and Salmon (2024) point out in this case "we see the unquestioned assumption that growing a business (understood as selling more products) is the right solution for any challenge a firm faces. As such, Indigenous or alternative conceptions of business growth are not examined" (p.15). While nuanced analysis like this may not immediately emerge to the untrained eye, critically considering whose perspectives or belief systems constitute the core of a business case or article will ensure thoughtful decisions about which content to use in course materials. This case may still be a useful teaching tool, however, it is advisable to critically frame its use and engage in discussion with students about the authors' limited conceptualization of the protagonist's business.

- Which guideline points would be helpful to identify this? **5d and 7d**.

Example 4

Elliot, C. & Popma, J. (2021). *Agnico Eagle Mines: Retaining an Inuit Workforce in Canada's North*. Ivey ID: 9B20C054 <https://www.iveycases.com/>

This case is presented through Western values, perspectives, and theory. It assumes that Western perspectives are more important than Inuit ones and imposes Western approaches over Inuit ones. There is no consideration/inclusion of an Inuit perspective, nor has there been any discussion of why the turnover and absenteeism are so high from an Inuit approach. It omits what problems Inuit employees identify when working there and/or the solutions they offer. Creating a culturally diverse workforce plan without consulting the Inuit employees perpetuates culturally inadequate approaches.

- Which guideline point be helpful to identify this? **1a, 5e, 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d, 8b**.

Example 5

Natcher, D. C., Davis, S., & Hickey, C. G. (2005). Co-management: Managing relationships, not resources. *Human Organization*, 64(3), 240–250.
<https://doi.org/10.17730/humo.64.3.23yfnkrl2ylapjxw>

This paper was written by non-Indigenous authors, and the information shared concerns cultural diversity's role in resource co-management, highlighting its potential to enrich decision-making processes. It presents the research methods, methodology, and findings, combining Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives. The main issue with this article is that the research methodology fails to mention how the research was reciprocal to the community and if they shared their findings with the communities involved. While searching information about the authors, we learned that one of them [sued her First Nations employers](#), revealing a fractured relationship with local communities.

- Which guideline point would be helpful to identify this? **1a, 3a and 3b, 8b.**
-

The following two cases are examples of what should **not** be shared in the classroom:

Example 6

Sparling, D. & Koeckhoven, S. (2012) *Indian and Northern Affairs Canada -The New Horizon Farms Dilemma*. Ivey ID 9B12M043. <https://www.iveycases.com/>

This case assumes Western approaches to development are intrinsically good/beneficial for everyone without questioning them. It describes the process of involving Indigenous Peoples as decision-makers as overly time-consuming. The case also contests the idea addressing, using, leasing, and extracting from Indigenous land as process of colonialism. Finally, the case presents Indigenous communities from a deficit perspective.

- Which guideline point be helpful to identify this? **5a, 5d, 5e, all of 7**

Example 7

Valente, M. & Desjardine, M. (2013). *The Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement: A Revolutionary Partnership for Sustainable Development*. Ivey ID: 9B13M121 <https://www.iveycases.com/>

This case addresses the challenges of having an agreement fully supported by an Indigenous community while considering implementation issues. The agreement was made excluding First Nations communities who were not consulted about their partnership and were affected by it. The nature of the agreement was not communicated to Indigenous leaders or community members. It has a paternalistic approach, assuming Indigenous groups as incapable and thus developing agreements on their behalf without their free, prior, and informed consent.

- Which guideline point be helpful to identify this? **5 and 7**
-

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Ben Wells is of mixed European settler and Indigenous background. He is a member of the Shxw'ōwhámél Nation near Hope, BC through his paternal family, and is also Métis of Duck Lake, Saskatchewan on his maternal side. He was raised in the territories of the Tk'emlúps te Secwèpemc (Kamloops) and Haida, and has lived on the territories of x^wməθk^wəyəm, selíłwitulh and s_kwxwú7mesh since 2010. He holds a BA in Psychology from UBC.

We created this document based on our experience and work at UBC Sauder School of Business in a project called 'Llgaay gwii gina sk'aadGa 'láas ad Xaaydas gina Gan unsid- Enhancing Business Education with Indigenous Knowledge'.