Branching out: Insights about researcher development from participatory action and Indigenous approaches to research

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Abstract

Background: This paper shares reflections from participatory action research (PAR) and Indigenous approaches to research (IAR) team members on how they developed both personally and professionally through involvement on two Indigenous-focussed studies. Objectives: Sharing these reflections with the community-engaged scholarship (CES), which includes PAR, and Indigenous research communities is intended to further understanding about the relational role of individuals to themselves and with others in community-university research. Methods: Reflections were gathered from 20 university and community research members on the two studies in the forms of focus groups, interviews and written submissions. Results: Three compatible themes emerged from the participants' reflections on their development: establishment of respectful relationships, increased cultural understanding, and personal empowerment. To help detail the meaning of these advancements, an Indigenous artist and study team member identified the oak tree as a metaphor representing the strength it took for team members to self-reflect on their beliefs, values, practices and assumptions. The

metaphor is applied to present the results. Conclusion: Branching outside the boarders of discipline-specific scholarship, and intersecting two traditions in a unique and culturally rooted way, has contributed meaningful insight on researcher development in community-engaged scholarship.

Keywords: Indigenous Research Approaches; Community Engaged Scholarship, Participatory Action Research, researcher wellbeing, researcher development.

Introduction

Community-university engagement has a long, interdisciplinary tradition in the social sciences. There is a history of action oriented (Lewin, 1948/1973), participatory (Freire, 1970) and community-based (Israel, Schurman, & House, 1989) research, for example, within education, geography, sociology, anthropology, feminist, and more recent public health disciplines (Israel et al., 1989; Stringer, 2014; Tandon, 2002). Although much of this work initiated from North America, in large part it "grew out of experiences in the developing world" (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 2001, p. 183). Today, understandings of the broad area of community engaged scholarship (CES) vary across the globe and "as a field of practice…[there is] very little conceptual or theoretical material on which to draw" (Kajner, 2015, p. 16).

In Canada, a frequently referenced definition of CES is that of the Community-Campus Partnerships for Health: it "involves the faculty member in a mutually beneficial partnership with the community and results in scholarship deriving from teaching, discovery, integration, application or engagement" (Jordan, 2007, p.3). Canada's history of CES has unique features, such as the prioritisation of Indigenous foci, its relationship to the call for increased accountability within academia, and specific social influences on its development (e.g., establishment of the Social Science and Humanities Research Council's Community-University Research Alliances Grants Program; Barreno, Elliott, Madueke, & Sarny, 2013; Hall, 2013).

There is a general consensus in the CES field that it is a form of collaborative inquiry between the community and academia (Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, 2015; Metzger & Szekeres, 2010). Minor attention, however, has been paid to the specific role of team members. Given the current dearth of scholarship on CES in Canada and elsewhere, including Australia (Lloyd et al., 2016), there is potential for insight to be gained from allied fields, including community-centred research approaches such as participatory action research (PAR) and Indigenous approaches to research (IAR). This paper shares how PAR and IAR team members developed both personally and professionally through involvement on two Indigenous-focussed studies. Reflections were gathered from 20 university and community research members on the two studies in the forms of focus groups, interviews and written submissions.

This paper begins by briefly reviewing the literature on PAR and IAR, as they guided the two original studies. PAR recognises the significant role of team members in university-community engaged partnerships and IAR acknowledges the multiple ways of knowing team members contribute beyond dominant Western science. This establishes the context for reviewing three compatible themes that emerged from the researchers' reflections on their related personal and professional development from participating in the two studies: the establishment of respectful relationships, increased cultural understanding and personal empowerment. To help detail their meaning, an Indigenous artist (Pauline Young) identified the oak tree as a metaphor representing the strength it took for the team members from the two studies to self-reflect on their beliefs, values, practices and assumptions. The metaphor is applied to present the results. The paper concludes by sharing that branching outside the boarders of discipline-specific scholarship, and

intersecting two traditions in a unique and culturally rooted way, can contribute meaningful insight on researcher development in community-engaged scholarship.

Literature Review

Participatory Action Research

Participatory action research developed in the 1950s from studies in low income countries that were designed to create "social and individual change through engaging diverse people in the research process" (Reid, Brief, & LeDrew, 2009, p. 12). Taking on varied forms (e.g., agro-ecosystem analysis, participatory rural appraisal), action research traditions continued to expand in response to criticisms of conventional Western research being an exclusive, top-down and academic driven process (Chambers, 1994; Chevalier & Buckles, 2013; Reid, Tom, & Frisby, 2006; Zolner, 2003). It has been consistently recognised over PAR's history that meaningful change is highly dependent on strong partnerships between researchers and the community (Baum, MacDougall, & Smith, 2006).

PAR attempts to broaden traditional forms of positivist research by "encompass[ing] approaches to research that are collaborative, inclusive, and action-oriented" (Reid et al., 2009, p. 12). It is premised on a combination of researchers' participation in society, engagement through action (with acknowledgement of history), and creating and challenging knowledge through research (Chevalier & Buckles, 2013). PAR is frequently described as more of a guiding philosophy for conducting research, than it is a specific method (Israel, Eng, Schulz, & Parker, 2005; Olshansky, 2008). Ultimately, PAR aims to "dismantle an academic monopoly on the definition and employment of knowledge" and "empower people through the process of constructing and using their own knowledge" (Miller & Brewer, 2003, p. 225).

Community-centred research approaches like PAR require academic researchers to broaden beyond what has conventionally been identified in Western science as the role of a researcher – the objective, dispassionate and unattached scientist (Myrdal, 1969). This includes self-reflection about the researcher's personal and professional development, and not just that of the community and its members they are working with and for (Chevalier & Buckles, 2013; Kindon, Pain, & Kesby, 2007; Swantz, 2008). Although this is recognised interpersonally amongst researchers, not a lot is documented in the literature. It was only in 2010 that Jack Whitehead's keynote speech at the Seventh Annual Action Research Conference reflected on his development both personally and professionally as a researcher in PAR-guided studies (Whitehead, 2010).

Indigenous Approaches to Research

The history of research undertaken in Indigenous communities across the globe, including among First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada, has not for the most part committed to respectful engagement. This is particularly evident in the design of research studies where Western worldviews have dominated to the exclusion of Indigenous beliefs, values and practices (Dell et al., 2011; Hall, Dell, Fornssler, Hopkins, & Mushquash, 2015; Mann, 2005). For example, reciprocity is a foundational value within many Indigenous beliefs systems, however, Western research practices have tended to *take* information without *giving back*. This has had multiple negative and sustained colonising effects within Indigenous communities (Dua, 1999; Holmes, Stewart, Garrow, Anderson, & Thorpe, 2002; Rowan et al., 2015; Smylie et al., 2003; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999).

PAR's commitment to partnership, as reviewed above, highlights the importance of developing open and trusting relationships among team members in a study (Macaulay et al, 1999). This compliments the increasing scholarship on Indigenous approaches to social science research, in Canada and globally, involving both Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners and the prioritisation of Indigenous ways of knowing (David & Reid, 1999; Rowan et al., 2015). IAR generally focus on "center[ing] Indigenous knowledge and processes in research that is community-driven in both design and implementation, that has direct application within the communities, and that facilitates rather than obstructs the sharing of knowledge" (Popvici, 2013, p. 10).

Kovach (2010) cautions that while Indigenous research methodologies are allied with some Western qualitative approaches, such as PAR, they do remain distinct. For example, IAR account in detail for non-Western ways of knowing. To illustrate, Indigenous researcher Michell (2009) reflects that "[t]here are times in the research process where we need to take a break, build a fire, drink tea, and share berries and bannock. We allow our thinking to digest what we have learned. We experience the ethical space of spirit becoming physical. The berries that nourish our thinking become a part of our living/talking/experiencing/being" (p. 71). There is no similar understanding documented within PAR research.

IAR have claimed for some time the impracticality of considering the researcher only in the context of their research (Weber-Pillwax, 2001). Wilson (2008) states: "It is clear that the nature of the research that we do as Indigenous people must carry over into the rest of our lives. It is not possible for us to compartmentalize the relationships that we are building apart from the other relationships that make us who we are" (p. 107). Indigenous researchers frequently face a paradox in undertaking research—they are largely trained using Western methods to design, observe, report and disseminate data, but little attention has been allotted to their role as a researcher, and oftentimes with the complexities of being a researcher in their home community (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). Some Western derived research does push back against positivist scientific approaches, such as anti-oppressive practices and feminist methodologies', and focus on researcher self-reflection, but it is limited and even more so within a cross-cultural context.

Research Projects

The reflections of team members from two PAR and IAR informed studies were gathered for this paper: a Canadian Institutes of Health Research funded project titled *From Stilettos to Moccasins* (FSM), and a study funded by the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation titled *Saskatchewan Team for Research and Evaluation of Addictions Treatment and Mental Health Services* (STREAM). Both projects have been guided by a First Nations Elder, traditional knowledge

keepers and cultural practitioners, and involved Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals with lived experience, academics, students, community members, treatment providers, and government and organisational representatives. Several individuals overlapped between the two studies.

The FSM research project was funded from 2006 to 2014 with operating and knowledge translation grants. This community-directed project was spearheaded by the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse in partnership with Carleton University and the University of Saskatchewan. The research focused on the healing journeys of criminalised First Nations, Inuit and Métis women from drug abuse. The project initiated with an in-person team meeting, guided by the wisdom and cultural knowledge of Elder Paul Skanks and the late Elder Joyce Paul. The team's starting point was assuring respect for the research participants who would be asked to share their stories of healing in the study. This required the apriority development of respectful and knowledgeable relations and engagement among the team members. With findings from the study established over the next six years, the project concluded with members of the original team and several research participants meeting in-person to translate the findings into community products, including a song, music video and community workshop titled *From Stilettos to Moccasins* (Dell, Gardipy, Kirlin, Naytowhow, & Nicol, 2014), available at: http://www.addictionresearchchair.ca/creating-knowledge/national/aboriginal-women-drug-users-in-conflict-with-the-law/.

The STREAM study was funded in 2009 and concluded in 2013. Guided by an advisory committee comprised of a First Nations Elder, community leaders, researchers, individuals with lived experience, and cultural practitioners, the goal was to develop a research strategy to improve understanding of culturally appropriate addiction treatment and mental health services for First Nations and Métis in the province of Saskatchewan in Canada. Given the cross-cultural composition and diverse experiences of the team members, STREAM's Elder, the late Campbell Papequash, and helper (*O ska pi yoos*)

Larry Laliberte, identified the need to begin the study by hosting an Indigenous cultural awareness gathering to increase members' understanding of Indigenous knowledge to better facilitate communication and collaboration among themselves and the communities they were to work alongside. A three-day gathering was held in October 2010 and consisted of historical and contemporary teachings and a traditional pipe ceremony. This was followed by attendance at Elder Papequash's culture camp in the spring of 2011, 2012 and 2013 at Key First Nation in Saskatchewan. The culture camp focused on traditional teachings and ceremonies, including participation in a traditional ceremonial sweat-lodge. Resulting publications and other knowledge translation products (e.g., DVD) reflecting STREAM's work blended Western and Indigenous knowledge in the research process and amongst team members (Dell et al., 2011; Fornssler, McKenzie, Dell, Laliberte, & Hopkins, 2013; Tempier, Dell, Papaquash, Duncan, & Tempier, 2011). See http://www.addictionresearchchair.ca/creating-knowledge/provincial/s-t-r-e-a-m/.

Gathering Reflections

Reflections were gathered from 20 unique team members on the two research projects, noting members' roles could not always be easily categorised as either *university* or *community*; for example, one team member is an academic researcher who is a First Nations community member with lived experience of healing from drug abuse. At the same time, data shared by Indigenous and non-Indigenous team members were not compared because an Indigenous identity did not equate with Indigenous cultural understanding among the participants. A total of 18 FSM team members shared their reflections on personal and professional development through focus group participation (n=11), interviews (n=6) and a written submission (n=1). The in-person focus group was 90 minutes in length and the interviews were by telephone and 25 minutes on average. They were led by various authors on this paper. Respondents represented the diversity of members of the study team—by roles, gender and Indigenous and non-Indigenous

background. The goal of collecting the reflections was to provide insight into: (1) their role in the research project and how they got involved, (2) how they developed personally and professionally from their participation in the study (about research, themselves, and others), if at all (3) what, if anything, contributed to this development, and (4) a definition of respect within the project and its role, if any, in their development.

Fourteen team members participated in STREAM's Aboriginal cultural awareness 3-day gathering, with participant evaluations completed at the end of each day. Participants commented on logistics of the event, content presented by the late Elder Papequash, the take home message of each day, the impact of the session personally and professionally, and how the knowledge gained, if any, would benefit the work of STREAM. A total of 9, 8 and 7 evaluations were completed each day (i.e., not everyone completed one each day, some people did not attend each day or full days). A group of six of the most active participants of STREAM also met with Elder Papequash one month following the original gathering to reflect on their experiences in the areas above in the form of a focus group. It was 120 minutes in length and led by one of the authors.

The collection of reflections for this paper, and their analysis, was designed as a phenomenological, qualitative examination of multiple participants' perspectives, enabling subjective experiences and meanings to guide the process (Berg, 1998; Boyatzis, 1998). Congruent with phenomenology, the chosen methods of collecting the reflections (interviews, focus groups, written submissions) were deemed the most appropriate as they allowed for a prioritisation of individuals' creation of meaning based on their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Patton, 2002). At the same time, this approach recognises others' perspectives as the mechanism through which individuals' stories collaboratively unfolded (Creswell, 2013). Authors on this paper, representing Indigenous and non-Indigenous and community and university backgrounds, participated in all states of the data collection and analysis (e.g., ranging from an Elder's prayer before a focus group to theme identification in the collected data).

The analytic approach was specifically informed by the phenomenological work of Moustakas (1994) and by a data-driven method of coding. Applying a phenomenological approach prioritised the team members' experiences in the community engaged scholarship field where limited reflection and research specific to the focus of this paper is documented. An inductive approach to data analysis allowed for "silenced voices or perspectives inherent in the information [to] be brought forward and recognized" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 3). Further, developing codes inductively through a thematic analysis offered a specific and culturally competent lens through which to view the data (Thorne, 2000). This supported the prioritisation of Indigenous ways of knowing in understanding the data.

Results and their Contribution

Three compatible themes emerged from the reflections of the team members from the two studies about how they developed personally and professionally as a result of their participation in an Indigenous-focussed, PAR project. First, the FSM team members highlighted their establishment of respectful relationships. One participant shared: "These respectful relationships contributed to my growth. For example, I gained good knowledge about how to treat people. How they want to be treated. How to move with people and how to be kind at the hardest moments. How to be flexible with people and roll with the punches" (FSM Interview; See Figure 1 for more illustrations).

"We learned from one another, with non-judgmental attitudes and being open to hear each other no matter where they are from…There was a desire to learn from others' experience; being kind and generous" (FSM Interview).

"I think that being a part of this project has definitely helped me to be more open with people." (FSM Interview).

"I saw respect being demonstrated throughout the entire process of the project, from the beginning in the choice of words that were used in the interview guide….And as the project progressed, I felt that all members of the team were respected. Everyone was kept up to date with the progression of the project and given praise for hard work done" (FSM Focus Group).

"It has changed me professionally by improving my communication skills as well as interpersonal skills, which has proved to be very important in my current and future jobs and careers" (FSM Focus Group).

"If respect is present you are more in unity with everyone around you" (FSM Focus Group).

"At first I was wary of working with researchers, but I knew the Principle Investigator and it was because of this relationship that I believed we could all work together. Together we [research team members] worked hard to achieve this – honour and respect. This demonstrated that what was set out to do was possible. The work that was most gratifying was to see how the women themselves believed in the project and did their best" (FSM
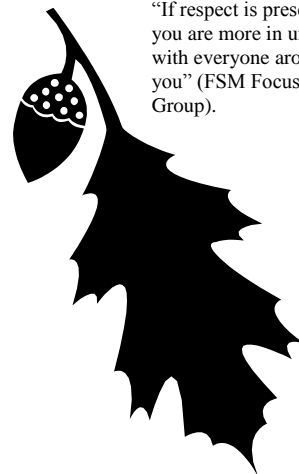
"This project demonstrated that [a] project could be done with respect and honour as many projects are not done this way. It was about long-term relationship building" (FSM Interview).

"These respectful relationships contributed to my growth. For example, I gained good knowledge about how to treat people. How they want to be treated. How to move with people and how to be kind at the hardest moments. How to be flexible with people and roll with the punches" (FSM Interview).

"This project has taught me to be open and more sensitive to people on a day to day basis because everyone has their own story, whether good or bad, that everyone can relate to on some level if the communication is there" (FSM Focus Group).

"How she [the Principal Investigator] talks to people, how she shows kindness. In turn, watching this allowed me to learn how to be inclusive of all voices. The PI never pulled rank. She never went ahead without getting everyone's say" (FSM Interview).

Figure 1: Establishment of respectful relationships - FSM

The community-engaged literature references partnership development between community and university as key to achieving necessary project foundations such as authentic participation, sharing power within the research project, building trust and relationships among research participants, resolving ethical dilemmas, and ensuring sustainability of research outcomes (Israel et al., 2005). The FSM members' reflections supported this and contributed a relational understanding of respect. As identified by Elder Joyce Paul on the FSM team, "respectful relationships are the guiding force of the project; between university and community members as well as within each participating member, that is, their respectful and honest relationship with themselves" (personal communication, January, 2013). The work of Indigenous scholar Hart (2010) likewise acknowledges the importance of a comprehensive understanding of respect in his work, sharing "While I have noted several definitions of respect (Hart, 2002), Ida Moore (nee Brass, 2000) has explained that respect is described in the Muskéko-ininiw term kisténitámowin, or "to take care to never mistreat any form of life" (p. 79).

Second, the STREAM team members identified the importance of gaining a cultural understanding. One shared: "No one was afraid to give their opinion and teach others who don't know. For example, during the smudge ceremony I was nervous but later was comfortable and no one ever made me feel like an outsider. I felt when I didn't know, others were willing to teach me. They shared through telling stories in their personal journey. Never did I feel they were offended by me being non-Native" (STREAM Written Reflection; See Figure 2 for more illustrations).

"This project has shared so much with me about Aboriginality. I have learned so much from our project Elder, and will carry that with me to other research projects I become involved in" (STREAM Written Submission).

"No one was afraid to give their opinion and teach others who don't know. For example, during the smudge ceremony I was nervous but later was comfortable and no one ever made me feel like an outsider. I felt when I didn't know, others were willing to teach me. They shared through telling stories in their personal journey. Never did I feel they were offended by me being non-Native". (STREAM Written Reflection).

"I really learned a lot from this session. About my culture and way of life" (STREAM Written Submission).

"I felt what I didn't know others would teach me. I felt accepted by the research team even though I am non-Indigenous" (STREAM Written Submission).

"STREAM is being given knowledge and understanding, and can incorporate that into their ways of doing things in order to make effective and culturally appropriate decisions concerning addictions" (STREAM Verbal Reflection)

"I would like to thank you for this opportunity to continue my healing, with the goal to assist other Indians in need" (STREAM Written Submission).

"This personally reinforced my identity, culture, language and values and how important these are to me" (STREAM Verbal Reflection).

"What a great bunch of people. Willing to venture out of their comfort zone. It is wonderful to see and feel" (STREAM Verbal Reflection).

"Campbell's talk about Aboriginal history and colonialism, and his stories about his experiences in residential schools appeared to be very powerful for some of the participants. They were difficult to hear, and brought back memories for some, but their validity and truth were acknowledged. The need for identity as a tool for healing as well as the importance of cross-cultural understanding were also acknowledged and identified as necessary to working together in a meaningful way" (STREAM Written Submission).

"This experience complimented my spirit. It made me think about my life.... While the Elder was praying I asked him to help me and my spirit" (STREAM Written Submission).

Figure 2: Cultural understanding - STREAM

In the continually emerging area of community-engaged scholarship limited attention has been paid to culture and diversity to date. The STREAM members highlighted the necessity of such an understating in their Indigenous-focussed PAR study. The history of PAR, and specifically the pioneering work of Kurt Lewin (1948/1973), is grounded in race relations. His work focussed on blending theory and practice and challenged researchers to turn research outcomes into civic and political action. Taking this further, the Indigenous research literature imparts that it is about facilitating rather than obstructing the sharing of knowledge, including challenging culturally embedded knowledge domains (Popovici, 2013). Elder Campbell Papequash of the STREAM project wisely shared: "There are few people in each of the
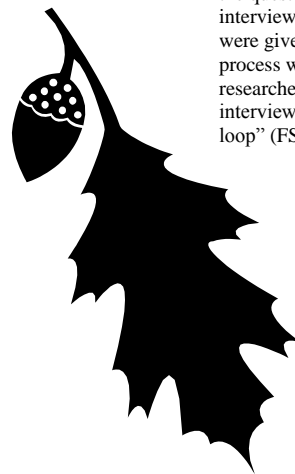
many tribes across this great sacred land that have survived to this day, that have kept their teachings, language and ceremonies alive. Although the traditions may differ over a period of time from tribe to tribe, there is a common thread that runs throughout them all and no way is better than the other" (Papequash, 2011, p. 239). Third, members on both projects emphasised their sense of empowerment gained through participation in the studies. One participant shared: "I learned about who I am as an Aboriginal woman, it reinforced my identity. I realised how much I don't know about who I am" (STREAM Interview). A FSM participant simply stated: "We were committed and empowered" (FSM Focus Group; See Figure 3 for more illustrations).

"There was such a gentle and caring approach to the project that it didn't feel like research. It felt more like reaching out to these women to hear their stories that no one else in society would take the time to hear. It was about listening and giving them a voice. I never thought research could accomplish something like this" (FSM Interview).

"Camaraderie developed because the women experienced the research process together. In the first meeting, giving the pearl was like a seed planted and nurtured along so they looked forward to seeing each other again. No doubt the women bonded. Educated women and those working towards education are at the same place. Together they were empowered" (FSM Focus Group).

"This research process [is] slower but outcomes stronger and [a]s a new researcher opened my eyes on how to do research – step back from [being] an 'expert'. Despite having a degree, it doesn't mean I know everything. A lot of academics need to experience that." (FSM Interview).

"Elder Campbell showed me how to talk to my spirit, and I am going to do that. I am going to talk in a healthy and loving way, to help me stop smoking". (STREAM Written Submission).

"You could see empowerment in how the questions were vetted before the interviewing began; how the interviews were given and delivered, how the process was inclusive between the researchers, the women and the interviews…everyone was kept in the loop" (FSM Focus Group).

"I learned about who I am as an Aboriginal woman, it reinforced my identity. I realized how much I don't know about who I am" (STREAM Verbal Reflection).

"I enjoyed Campbell's stories of his own experiences, and was able to identify and relate with them. I was empowered and inspired by the session and by Campbell's experiences" (STREAM Written Submission).

"This project has not been easy because we are all so different but those differences have brought us together and that is what counts the most. I tap my moccasins to y'all old and new within this project. Y'all have done an amazing job" (FSM Interview).

"We were committed and empowered" (FSM Interview).

Figure 3: Empowerment – FSM & STREAM

Empowerment is a key feature of PAR and community-engaged research generally, but has mainly been confined to community member empowerment (Kerrigan et al., 2015; Macaulay et al., 1999; Wilmsen, 2008). There is some discussion of researcher empowerment in the literature, such as the co-learning scholarship, but not with specific attention to the individual researcher (Olshansk, 2008). The original work of Fiere (1970) spoke about the need for academics to be critically minded, but with a focus on community change. More recent, an academic article clarifying concepts about PAR spoke to engagement, and specifically Foucault's notion of power resulting from interactions, but potential for change in the researcher was again not acknowledged (Minkler, 2005).

Researcher empowerment is more so an inherent focus of Indigenous approaches to research (Whitehead, 2010), characterised by Wilson (2008) as a "ceremony that brings relationships together" (p. 8). He explains: "By reducing the space between things, we are strengthening the relationship that they share. And this bringing things together so that they share the same space is what ceremony is about. This is why research itself is a sacred ceremony within an Indigenous research paradigm, as it is about building relationships and bridging this sacred space" (p. 8). Ermine (2004, 2007) explains that an "ethical space of engagement" is a space in which Western and Indigenous worldviews and researchers can come together (2007, p. 194). Tait (2008) operationalises this "ethical space of engagement" by arguing that outsiders have moral and ethical obligations to non-Western knowledge and understanding that must be paramount in research with Aboriginal communities; this "ethical space facilitates [the] development of cross-cultural linkages that are ethically sustainable and strive for equality of thought amongst diverse human communities" (p.3).

Key to this ethical space of engagement for the researcher is self-reflection. The work of Bull (2010) highlights the importance of authentic relationships forming within this ethical space, noting it "enables researchers to understand and care about aspects of the specific Aboriginal interpersonal style and concepts about self and others, rather than operating on Western

assumptions about people" (p.17). This takes the original work on reflexivity in Western research, which focused on sharing the researcher's voice, to a completely new level (Hertz, 1997). Referred to as *insider research* for Indigenous researchers, Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) explains that there is a constant need for reflexivity, noting that "insider researchers have to have ways of thinking critically about their processes, their relationships and the quality and richness of their data and analysis" (p. 1). For example, Roberts (2005) reflects on how she was impacted doing research within her own community. She states "[t]he stories they shared were heart wrenching, illuminating, and profound and have forever changed me, both as a person and as a researcher" (p. 108). This understanding is in line with what Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) refers to as decolonising methodologies and Brant Castellano's (2004) focus on Aboriginal self-determination through the application of Aboriginal research ethics; these are methods of research that are rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing (Macaulay et al., 2007).

Reflection through Metaphor

Metaphors have been both studied and theorised about within the social sciences (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2004). Carpenter (2008) shares that specific to qualitative research designs, "[m]etaphors can be used to provide structure to the data; to understand a familiar process in a new light; to identify situation-specific interventions; and to evoke emotion" (Carpenter, 2008, p. 274). To illustrate, a 2013 community-based study examined access to health care for Aboriginal persons living with HIV and AIDS, and peer researchers began their interviews "…with the respondent selecting an image they brought with them or they identified from an on-site magazine that symbolized their experiences with care." (Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network, 2013, p. 40). Based on evaluations of this approach, it was deemed effective for initiating two-way, open dialogue (Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network, 2013).

Metaphors have been applied specifically by Indigenous scholars to introduce novel concepts

that may not *fit* within the dominant paradigm (Jensen, 2006; Roberts, 2005). For example, Michell (2009) shares that he applied berry gathering as a metaphor in his writing about community-based research, with the understanding that "[t]he use of metaphors is a particular lens that helps people gain clarity about notions and concepts that are too complex to understand within the confines of academic discourse" (p. 66). This understanding shares certain similarity with other fields, such as arts-based research and knowledge translation strategies (Greenhalgh & Wieringa, 2011; McIntosh, 2010; Morey, 2011).

It is also well-established that Indigenous cultures support oral storytelling traditions to teach and share Indigenous ways of knowing and knowledge (Iseke & Brennus, 2011; MacLean & Wason-Ellam, 2006; McKeough et al., 2008). Metaphors oftentimes form an important part of the stories (Lewin, 1948/1973). For Canada's First Nations, Métis, and Inuit populations, "[s]torytelling is a traditional method used to teach about cultural beliefs, values, customs, rituals, history, practices, relationships, and ways of life" (First Nations Pedagogy Online, 2009). Given that there is limited attention to documenting the personal and professional development of team members in PAR projects, and likewise CES generally, a culturally meaningful metaphor and its corresponding story were chosen by an Indigenous artist and participant on the FSM project to help express the reflections of the members of the two studies in this paper.

The tree is culturally symbolic and meaningful to Indigenous peoples, as evidenced in sacred teachings and universal relationships of people with the land (Small, 2000). The oak tree was chosen by the artist for its historic symbolism of strength in Western culture. The oak tree also crosses cultures and is likely the most well-known tree on the globe with 300-400 varieties in existence, and serving as an emblem of multiple countries and states. Although the oak tree does not have a specific known ceremonial significance for Indigenous peoples in Canada, all trees are vital to the health of humans (Elder B. Ermine, Elder C. Papequash & cultural knowledge keeper L. Laliberte, personal communication, January, 2013). Trees supply oxygen, food, shelter and medicine for human, animal and land survival. For example, the cedar tree bares traditional cleansing medicine for some First Nations (Blouin, 1993; Erichsen-Brown, 1988). It was also symbolically chosen as a gesture to Western knowledge and approaches by an Indigenous artist.

With the oak tree as the metaphor, the artist created two artistic renditions to help share the team members' reflections. Drawing 1 identifies key components of the oak tree. The story of the oak tree is that it can subsist for hundreds of years, with its roots growing straight into the earth (Datnow, 2010). Its branches intersect with breadth en masse. The oak leaves are a key source of nourishment for the tree, converting sunlight into energy. Annually, the oak's leaves are shed and flowers appear. Depending on the environment, the flowers may become acorns, in which a single seed can take between 6-18 months to mature, depending on the tree species. The odds that an acorn will become a tree are very low; "...for every 10,000 acorns, only one will become a tree" (Datnow, 2010, p. 51).
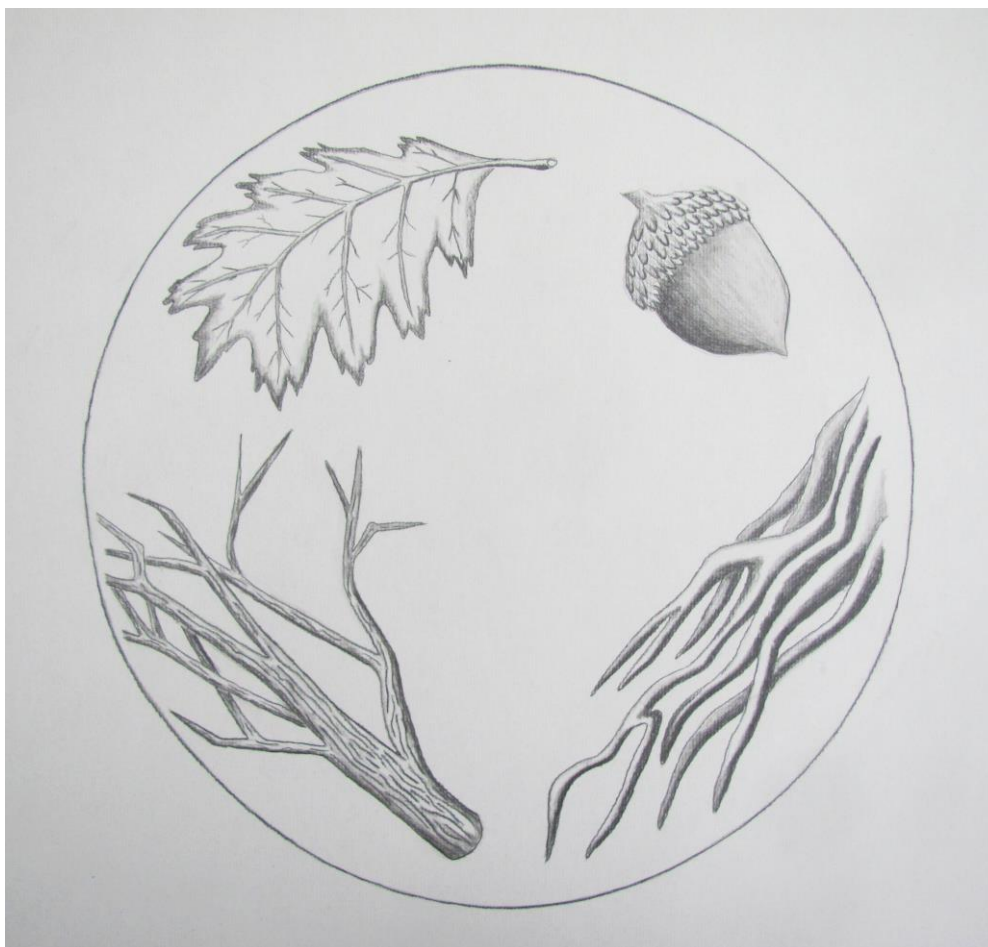
Drawing 1: Parts of the oak tree

Artist: From Stilettos to Moccasins community researcher – Pauline Young

Drawing 2 applies the tree metaphor to illustrate the results of the paper. The many leaves of the tree represent the individual experiences of the PAR and IAR team members establishing respectful relationships and gaining awareness of the importance of a cultural understanding. Like the leaves on a tree, this fundamentally fuelled the two studies. The team members' development is represented by the acorns, which took time to mature. Just as each acorn is unique, so too are the qualities and talents each member had to offer their respective projects and develop within them. Likewise, the flower that turned into an acorn only did so within a nourishing environment. Self-reflection was critical to the team members' growth, alongside the strength it took to engage in it, as represented by the oak tree's strong root base. For example, a non-Indigenous STREAM member shared that learning about a new culture and cultural practices was a challenge, however, she came to appreciate that "...when [she] didn't know, others would teach [her]." It was also difficult for individuals to open up, but it was nonetheless identified as necessary for a successful research project. One Indigenous STREAM member shared how it was "not easy to be open or vulnerable". Through feelings of vulnerability grew empowerment. The broad and distinct intersecting branches of the tree represent the varied and long-term connections among the team members in the studies. The longevity of the tree represents their sustained willingness and commitment to personal and professional development throughout the studies. Ultimately, it was the creation of a space for the team members' experiences to be shared that led to self-reflection: A FSM researcher shared that "[w]e created a circle that each woman would have their turn to use their voice [in]". At present, the existence of such a space appears to be as rare in research processes as the few oak acorns that eventually develop into a tree.

Drawing 2: Artistic representation of the project findings

Artist: From Stilettos to Moccasins community researcher – Pauline Young

Implications for CES

University researchers' experiences are minimally recognised in the Community Engaged Scholarship-oriented research literature, which generally includes PAR and IAR (Pappas, n.d.; Dalal, Skeete, Yeo, Lucas, & Rosenthal, 2009). As shared, only recently has PAR begun to acknowledge the personal and professional development of all team members, not just community members and non-university based researchers. That said, Tsey et al. (2007) share that returns for community members in inclusive and empowering research approaches typically focus on "...an enhancement of their sense of self-worth, resilience, belief in their capacity to improve their social environment and ability to reflect on root causes of problems, find solutions and address immediate family difficulties" (p. 36). When university researchers' experiences are recognised, the focus is mainly on academic

incentives and not personal ones (Nyden, 2003). We know, however, that personal and professional development, although not termed as such, are accounted for in IAR. The results of this reflective paper share that the relational role of individuals with themselves and others, in terms of both professional and personal development, occurred for both university and community-based team members, and in compatible areas within and across Indigenous-focussed projects.

The implications of this understanding are varied and significant for CES generally, and two stand out. First, as CES gains recognition in the university infrastructure, it is critical that the experiences (personal and professional) of all team members, including university researchers, be accounted for. The benefits and drawbacks for community involved academic researchers cannot be overlooked, and in particular when the conversation about CES can directly impact

their welfare (e.g., tenure, promotion, merit pay, self-fulfillment, meeting competencies, etc; Barreno et al., 2013). The Indigenous scholarship in this area underscores the need to approach the area from multiple ways of knowing and understanding, not just that of traditional Western science.

And second, if team members are developing both personally and professionally, this should naturally open the door to cross-cultural understanding. We know from varied experiences of PAR-related approaches that this has traditionally been an area of tension (Castleden, Sloan, & Lamb, 2012). The most recent Canadian report on CES shares that "[c]ommunity-engaged scholarship (CES) and community-academic partnerships are gaining momentum in higher education institutions….Yet there is a well-articulated disjuncture between calls for social relevance, knowledge translation and mobilization, community-based research, service-learning and engagement more broadly, and the resources, structures and policies in Canadian universities" (Wenger, Hawkins, & Seifer, 2011, p. 1). The Indigenous scholarship in this area recognises multiple ways of knowing in Indigenous research approaches (Fletcher, Hibbert, Robertson, & Asselin, 2013).

Conclusion

The results of this reflective paper support the increasing call within Indigenous scholarship to create spaces for researchers' experiences to be recognised, in PAR scholarship to recognise university and community involved partnerships, and for CES to fully consider these. There is wisdom to be gained from these allied fields. An Indigenous Elder explicitly shares: "Emotionless, passionless, abstract, intellectual, academic research is a goddamn lie, it does not exist. It is a lie to ourselves and to other people. Humans – feeling, living, breathing, thinking humans – do research. When we try to cut ourselves off at the neck and pretend an objectivity that does not exist in the human world, we become dangerous, to ourselves first, and then to the people around us" (Hampton, 1995, p. 562, as cited in Wilson, 2008, p. 52). This paper shared that with this

recognition, and just like the longevity of an oak tree, the relationships, cultural understanding and empowerment that developed for the team members from the two PAR and IAR informed studies has the potential to impact their personal and professional development for many years to come.

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