



Decolonization and
Indigenization:
Finding our Way
Along the Path

Lindsay (Kawennenhá:wi) Brant, M.Ed.
Educational Developer,
Indigenous Pedagogies and Ways of Knowing

What is Decolonization?

Defining decolonization is an arduous task because there are many contexts, understandings, and viewpoints about what it can/should mean, and/or what it doesn't mean. Understanding what decolonization means really comes down to how we understand colonization and our place within that process. If we try to understand or at least have a sense of what colonization is, we can then begin to view decolonization as an undoing or unlearning of the "colonial" mindset. We can then create space for Indigenous Ways of Knowing (including social, political, spiritual, cultural contexts and worldviews) to emerge. Let's embark on a journey of reimagining life, teaching and learning, and our place within all of it; not with a goal of reaching a destination, but through thoughtfully and continually looking inward and outward to find our way along the path.

What does decolonization look like at Queen's?

At Queen's, decolonization can mean many different things such as building capacity in strategic areas to support Indigenous programming, recognizing and supporting Indigenous scholarship and traditional knowledge, integrating Indigenous knowledge into curricula across academic programs, developing training and guidelines for Indigenous research and work with Indigenous communities, continuing to build the capacity of the Office of Indigenous Initiatives and other meaningful inclusion of Indigenous voices in policy and decision making at senior administration levels, and more. This means continuous engagement and integration of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' Calls to Action, and Queen's own report entitled [Yakwanastahentéha Aankenjigemi Extending the Rafters: Truth and Reconciliation Commission Task Force Final Report](#).

Source: <https://www.queensu.ca/indigenous/decolonizing-and-indigenizing>

What is Indigenization?

If we think about decolonization as the unsettling or undoing of colonial power and structures and ways of learning and teaching, then Indigenization can be understood as the re-doing or reaffirming of education to include Indigenous ways of knowing, thinking, feeling, believing and being.

This work involves elevating the voices of Indigenous peoples, meaningful inclusion of traditional and cultural knowledge, and intentional inclusion of Indigenous ways of teaching and learning to form and create pedagogical approaches.

This work can be done by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. For non-Indigenous people to take on this work, it requires respectful relationship building, ongoing consultation and partnership with Indigenous peoples. It requires a willingness to continually engage in unlearning/unpacking of biases, examining power and privilege, and constantly learning from and with Indigenous peoples about their ways of knowing, their lived experiences.

Types of Indigenization

Gaudry, A., & Lorenz, D. (2018) assert that there are three distinct uses of the term “indigenization” across post-secondary institutes in Canada.

1. **Indigenous Inclusion:** “[...] Indigenous inclusion is a policy that aims to increase the number of Indigenous students, faculty, and staff in the Canadian academy. Consequently, it does so largely by supporting the adaption of Indigenous people to the current (often alienating) culture of the Canadian academy.
2. **Reconciliation Indigenization:** “[...] is a vision that locates indigenization on common ground between Indigenous and Canadian ideals, creating a new, broader consensus on debates such as what counts as knowledge, how should Indigenous knowledge and European-derived knowledge be reconciled, and what types of relationships academic institutions should have with Indigenous communities.
3. **Decolonial Indigenization:** “[...] envisions the wholesale overhaul of the academy to fundamentally reorient knowledge production based on balancing power relations between Indigenous peoples and Canadians, transforming the academy into something dynamic and new.”

The journey
along the path

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

- Ask yourself why you want to decolonize. Who are you doing it for? Why are you doing it?
- Remember that decolonization/Indigenization/reconciliation are all processes and journeys. There is no end point, and no destination; but rather, a constant experience of searching, finding and rediscovering your way along the path.

FIND AND BUILD A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

- Find people who are also doing the work of decolonization/Indigenization and join them along the path. Help guide and support each other, and be constantly willing to listen, to step up and step back as needed, to unlearn, relearn, and experience things from a place of humility, respect, care and love.

Decolonization Drop-In Series

- **Decolonization Drop-In Series**
- **Facilitated by Lindsay Brant, Educational Developer, Indigenous Pedagogies and Ways of Knowing, Centre for Teaching and Learning**
- This informal discussion series is intended for anyone (faculty, grad students, staff etc.) currently doing decolonizing/Indigenizing work in their courses, and would value the opportunity for discussion with colleagues to form a virtual community of practice or circle of support.
- **September 15 – December 15, 2020**
- **Tuesdays 11:30am – 12:30pm - [Join Now](#)**
- **September 17 – December 17, 2020**
- **Thursdays | 1:30 – 2:30pm - [Join now](#)**

References

Gaudry, A., & Lorenz, D. (2018). Indigenization as inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonization: navigating the different visions for indigenizing the Canadian Academy. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 14(3), 218–227. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180118785382>.

Queen's Centre for Teaching and Learning:

<https://www.queensu.ca/ctl/teaching-support/decolonizing-and-indigenizing/what-decolonizationindigenization>

Queen's Office of Indigenous Initiatives:

<https://www.queensu.ca/indigenous/decolonizing-and-indigenizing>