DEVS 220 Online – Introduction to Indigenous Studies

Showcase of Teaching and Learning
May 1, 2019

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Questions Considered by the Development Team

Is online teaching and learning in the academy inherently colonial?

What can be done to decolonize the university?

• How can students contribute?

• How do we build online relationships prior to introducing the Essential Question process?

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Course Development

• Positive relationships from the start among the development team

• Our considerations as a team:

  How do we disentangle ourselves from colonial academic structures and conventions to ask what knowledge gets prioritized and evaluated?

  How can we foster our online community and encourage students to explore and express their learning? What resources are needed to support students intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically?
Course Delivery

The Question:
“How can we (as students) help to decolonize the university?”

This “Essential Question” was scaffolded and explored over 8 weeks, using active learning strategies and engagement with the teaching team and peers, to deepen the inquiry over time, culminating in a narrated poster.
## Essential Question Process

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<td>Initial Thoughts - Brainstorm and Discuss</td>
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HOW TO DECOLONIZE THE ACADEMY

Queen's University is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Territory

Decolonizing the academy is a path to reconciliation

COLONIZATION IN CANADA

Sustained attack on the connection between Indigenous peoples and their land, culture and communities [1]

Began at first contact with European settlers centuries ago [1]

Examples of how colonization is active today:
- Some indigenous communities lack basic infrastructure [1]
- Land claims are still challenged and/or ignored [1]
- Violence and murdered indigenous women and girls [2]

Examples of resistance to colonization:
- Fighting for stolen land to be returned
- Passing indigenous knowledge, language, and culture on to future generations

STRATEGIES

Inclusion of Indigenous Ways of Knowing
- Content, process, evaluation, knowledge sources
- Recognize the value of indigenous knowledge and what it can contribute to the knowledge of all humanity
- Establish the privilege of settler approaches to learning

Exploring Indigenous History and Culture
- Embrace and provide resources to student-led activism, cultural events, and other programming
- Support community engagement by students and teachers

Exploring the Colonial Impact
- Offer activities (based on indigenous pedagogy) that help to understand colonization, power dynamics and systems of oppression
- Recognize the colonial impact of the institution

Changing the Learning Environment
- Foster inclusivity and equity
- Create spaces on campus for indigenous knowledge to be shared and for indigenous student groups to gather

A COMPLEX QUESTION...

"Solutions" can be problematic

Unsettling the Settler [7]

A worthwhile effort?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Critical thinking about positive steps forward
- Learned many strategies to decolonize the academy
- Connection to the indigenous community at Queen's
- Eager to support decolonization efforts
- Confronted feelings of settler-guilt
- Sympathized with the pain inflicted by colonization
- Reflected on my privilege and how to devalue it
- Questioned if the academy’s beliefs align with my own

WHO AM I?

Canadian

Non-Indigenous

Educated in a Eurocentric system