

Settler-scholars' engagement with decolonizing teaching practices and centring Indigenous Knowledges in Canadian higher education

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Introduction

As a settler, I do not have the knowledge or authority to teach about Indigenous Ways. I do have a responsibility to engage in decolonizing practices within my spheres of influence, in order to push aside colonial ways, so that Indigenous Ways may come into the centre. I understand there is a middle ground between the Western colonial academy and Indigenous Ways. When settlers enter this middle space, we may feel unsettled, uncertain, and even afraid. This can be fertile ground for our growth and for building new relationships with Indigenous people, relationships that reject settler-colonial violence and embrace pathways forward together, based on respect, reciprocity, truth-telling, and justice.

Research Wonders (Questions)

- What are some concrete actions that settler scholars and educators can take towards decolonizing teaching practices and centring Indigenous Ways?
- What does settler unsettlement look like in practice?

Conceptual Underpinnings

Since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report was released (TRC, 2015), postsecondary institutions and educators have been grappling with how to implement aspirational Indigenous strategic plans (such as the University of Calgary's *ii'taa'poh'to'p* Indigenous Strategy). What are concrete steps that settler academics and educators can take to decolonize a centuries-old, colonial institution like the university? Regan (2010) urges settlers to engage in our own unsettlement, while Zembylas and McGlynn (2012) offer a framework for transformative learning through their theory of pedagogies of discomfort. Ermine (2007) invites settler and Indigenous colleagues into an ethical space with new rules for engagement. I wonder about a faculty learning community (FLC) (Cox, 2017) as a site for creating such an ethical space of engagement.

Methodology

This poster is based on a narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) published in 2022 (Mooney). The study explored experiences of three settler-Canadian academics who participated in a FLC on Indigenization. In this poster, I use artist-rendered portrayals of select research participant stories and audio recordings to illuminate significant experiences shared by John, Anthony, and Molly (pseudonyms). I co-composed these stories with their respective participants, following several research conversations.

About the author:

Julie Mooney is a Canadian settler of Irish and Scottish ancestry, living and working in Treaty 7 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis Nation. A member of the 3M National Teaching Fellowship, with over 17 years' experience in higher education teaching, research, and educational development, Dr. Mooney's current research interests in higher education contexts include decolonizing and centring Indigenous Ways, mentoring relationships, and learning communities. Dr. Mooney is the owner and senior consultant at *In the Midst Educational Consulting*. She is also serving as an Educational Development Consultant and member of the Academic Team with the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning, at the University of Calgary.

Stories (Findings)

John's Story



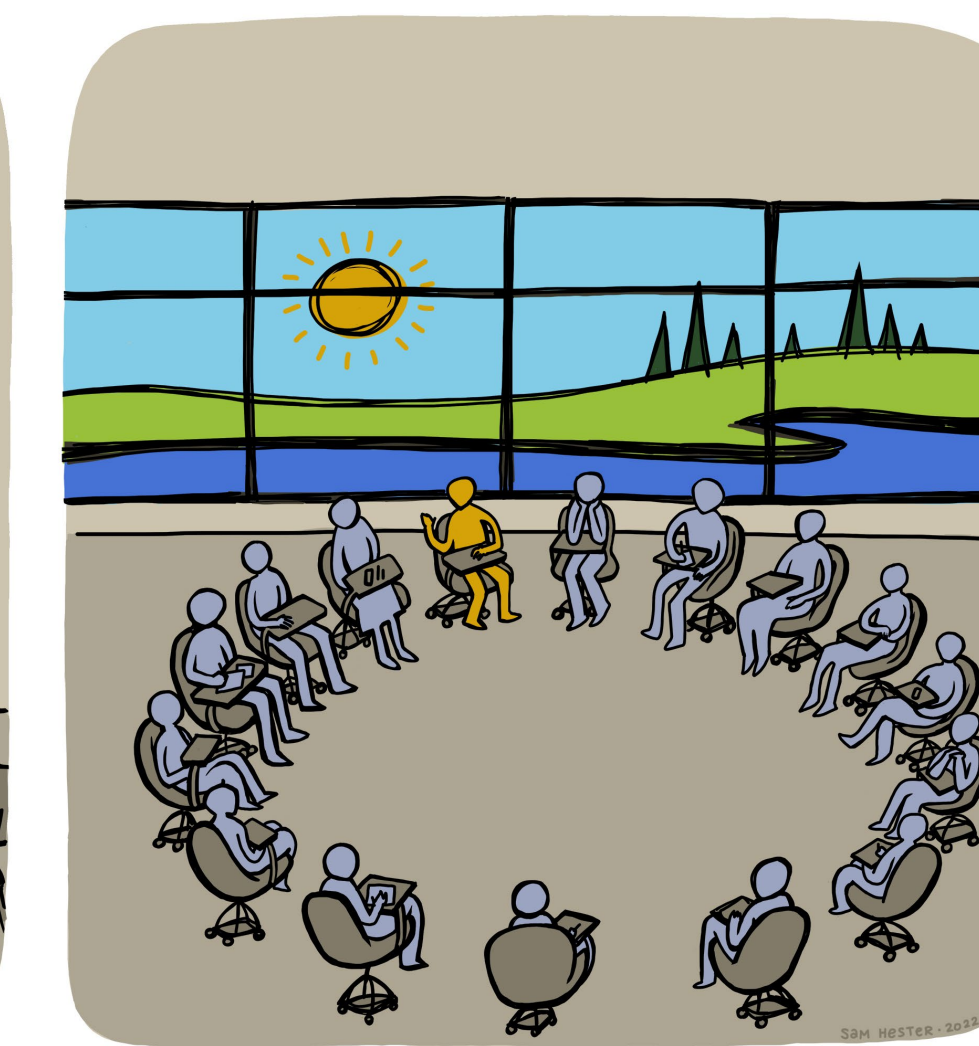
Use a QR code reader to access audio visual recordings of stories.

Anthony's Story



Or visit YouTube Channel @inthemidst-jmooney

Molly's Story



Possibilities for (recommendations) Settler Academic Action

1. Engage in community with settler and Indigenous colleagues, Elders, Knowledge Holders, and community members where you live and work, whether as part of a formal FLC or an informal group.
2. Build renewed relationships in the ethical space of engagement.
3. Engage in critical, self-reflection and questioning. Question your motivations, your assumptions, your disciplinary rules, epistemologies, and ontologies.
4. Participate in land-based learning. If/when you are invited to participate in community events, ceremonies, and gatherings, say yes, even if/especially when you feel pushed beyond your comfort zone.
5. Start where you are. Take small steps, often. This is an ongoing, lifelong process of learning and unlearning.

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