

2013-05-15

“The Giant Puzzle”: Indigenous Research Ethics and Protocol

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1st Annual Collaborating for Learning Conference, May, 15-16, 2013, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta.

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Collaborating for Learning Conference, University of Calgary, May 15 & 16, 2013

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<http://tlc.ucalgary.ca/cflearn/>

Note: This conference hand-out accompanies the PowerPoint presentation, “The Giant Puzzle”: Indigenous Research Ethics and Protocol

Abstract

Collaboration can be used in classrooms to demonstrate a variety of concepts using visual representations. This workshop presents “The Giant Puzzle” as an innovative and flexible teaching and learning tool. This workshop will focus on Indigenous Ethics and Protocols and three major aspects of research: Academia, Indigenous Communities, and the Self to illustrate numerous research and cultural intricacies. As the puzzle pieces are brought together, a larger picture is revealed to identify cultural underpinning that complement Indigenous and Western ways of knowing. Activities that engage students in creative thinking, experiential learning, and summative group discussions enhance critical reflection, inquiry, and learning while having fun.

Collaboration in the Classroom

- How and where can collaboration be used to enhance critical reflection and learning? Inquiry? Leadership?

Fun collaborative activities may be tailored to any classroom environment. Benefits to incorporating creativity in learning activities are the development of new and original ideas, visualization of multilayered concepts, and the enhancement of critical reflection and inquiry proficiency. This workshop presents *The Giant Puzzle* as an innovative teaching and learning tool. To demonstrate the effectiveness of collaboration, participants will complete the construction of, and analysis of, a giant puzzle in a group setting. The workshop theme will focus on conducting ethical research with human subjects. Indigenous ethics and protocol along with three intersecting research roles of Academia, Indigenous Communities, and the Self will be explored. As the puzzle pieces are brought together, a larger picture will emerge to reveal academic and cultural underpinnings of Western and Indigenous ways of knowing. The process of collaborative work will invoke critical reflection, contemplative inquiry, and organizational and leadership skills.

Collaboration in inquiry

- How can you use collaborative activities in learning to prepare students for their academic or professional futures?

Collaborative activities such as “The Giant Puzzle” provide students with the gift of intellectual exploration, knowledge exchange, and team building skill. Other skills that arise from a collaboration inquiry process are deep listening, critical analysis, relational respect, visualization, and self-confidence in generating and sharing innovative ideas with group members. Students prepare for their academic or professional futures by cultivating critical reflective capacities, having open-minds, and developing intellect.

- How does collaboration affect the way you teach in your discipline?

As I teach in the International Indigenous Studies program at the University of Calgary, core to Indigenous ways of knowing is a worldview where humans interconnect with the natural world. Indigenous cosmologies of sacred ecologies include tangible and intangible realities; collaborative hands-on activities develop an ability to conceptualize worldviews that go beyond numerical outcomes. Students are able to visualize and exchange ideas about things seen, experienced or believed outside their own realms of thinking. Students remark that my strong sense of creativity encourages them to explore their own ideas, possibilities, and limitations without worry of judgment.

Session Formats

- Workshops – The workshop format is designed to provide a forum for the collaborative development and discussion. Workshop proposals should clearly indicate how participants will actively contribute to the session.

The workshop format centers on the construction of the giant puzzle. Twelve coloured pieces of Bristol board are used to make the puzzle. The puzzle is divided into six pieces, which are pre-drawn and partially cut out; group members will complete the cutting process. Six groups are formed and given a different puzzle piece. Annotated bibliographies of selected academic readings are attached to each puzzle piece.

The ultimate objective of this activity is to engage in the discussion on how various perspectives of Indigenous research ethics and protocol between Academia, Indigenous Communities, and the Self play an integral role in ensuring ethical research practices with human subjects are followed. Participants use different colored felt markers and crayons to do two things on the puzzle piece: 1) write the title of the assigned reading or film, and 2) write at least two critical points that identifies uniqueness about Indigenous research and protocols from one or more of the three perspectives mentioned above.

Leroy Little Bear (2000) states that, Western and Indigenous ways of knowing exists as “jagged worldviews.” The challenge of this activity is to examine how these worldviews can complement, fit, and work together in respectful ways. At the end of the workshop group members share their findings in a round table discussion. Group members sew and or tape the final giant puzzle together. The puzzle is then posted on a wall for the workshop participants to see and reflect on the entire journey of collaborative development in its completed state observing how different perspectives come together as a greater whole.

Little Bear, L. (2000). Jagged worldviews colliding. In M. Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming indigenous voice and vision* (pp. 77-85). Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Learning objective: By the end of this workshop, participants will have identified numerous intricacies of conducting ethical research with human subjects; three perspectives of Academia, Indigenous Communities, and the Self are explored using “The Giant Puzzle” as a collaborative teaching and learning tool to:

1. Show how different knowledge systems function within a larger framework,
2. Learn about Academic ethics applications and ethics review boards,
3. Learn about the complexities of Indigenous ethics and protocol,
4. Learn about the importance of “having a strong ethical research backbone” within the Self,
5. How to tailor “the giant puzzle” activity to various classroom needs, and
6. The benefits of using collaboration to enhance critical reflection, inquiry, and learning.

Total workshop time: (50 minutes)

Time points

- *3 minutes* Brief introduction and explanation of “The Giant Puzzle” collaborative activity
 - Incorporated in the University of Calgary “Indigenous Ethics and Protocol” (INDG 315) Fall 2012 & 2013 courses
 - Each perspective of Academia, Indigenous Communities, and the Self carries unique principles and practices that intertwine, weave, and culminate to enrich ethical research practices with human subjects
- *17 minutes* Group participatory action
 - Line: To show and distribute the 6 puzzle pieces to individual groups (notice how natural leaders take the lead)
 - Group task: Group members read segments of literature associated with their puzzle piece and critically reflect on the deeper meaning, issues, and application of research ethics and protocols within their assigned research role.
 - Identify main points of the literature and write this on the puzzle piece with markers or crayons.
 - Identify nuances and possible areas of overlap between principles and practices of Academic policy, Indigenous Communities (there are over 600 different First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities within Canada), and the Self (researchers bear great responsibility in the process and outcome of conducting ethical research)
 - One group will be given yarn and a darning needle to sew sections of the puzzle with perforated holes (identify issues of cultural diversities, ethics policies, and how jagged worldviews can work or fit together)
- *24 minutes* Group sharing
 - Each group has **3 minutes** to present their finding in working with this collaborative activity

- Each group is to introduce their puzzle piece with respect to the associated research role of Academia, Indigenous Communities, or the Self
 - State **one** critical reflection(s) of ethics and protocol with respect to the associated research roles (Academia, Indigenous Communities, Self) found in your reading(s)
 - Each group is to **state how** this collaborative activity promotes inquiry, learning, and leadership skills
 - Each group is to place, tape, and or sew their individual puzzle piece on a main tabletop to complete the giant puzzle (**1 minute per group**)
- *5 minutes* Summary
 - Post the giant puzzle on the wall for the class to view
 - Conclude the workshop with an overview of critical issues concerning Indigenous Peoples and Research
 - *1 minute* Closing Statement

Whether in a classroom or workplace setting, collaborative activities that incorporate the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains of learning naturally generate creativity and enhance critical reflection, inquiry and leadership skills. Today, participants continue to learn about the complexities and nuances of research *between* and *with* Western and Indigenous ways of knowing and being.



Giant Puzzle Project, “Indigenous Ethics and Protocol” (Laplante: INDG 315 – Fall 2012)