

# Knowledge Liaisons: Negotiating Multiple Pedagogies in Global Indigenous Studies Courses

Camie Augustus  
*University of Ottawa*

## Abstract

Over the past few years, Canadian universities have been at the forefront of institutional changes that identify Aboriginal people, internationalization, and pedagogical change as key areas for revision. Most universities' strategic planning documents cite, at least to varying degrees, these three goals. Institutions have facilitated these changes by supporting new programs, teaching centres, and course redevelopment. While much attention has been given to those goals individually, it is rarely considered how these commitments converge in particular course offerings. This article considers the connections among Indigenous, global, and pedagogical goals by examining undergraduate comparative Indigenous studies courses, some pedagogical challenges that arise in those courses, and some strategies I have developed in meeting those challenges. Based in auto-pedagogy and a critical analysis of existing and emerging pedagogical frameworks, this article uses key concepts from Indigenous epistemologies, knowledge translation, and Sue Crowley's (1997) levels of analysis to propose "knowledge liaisons" as a teaching model that addresses these challenges.

## Résumé

Au cours des dernières années, les universités canadiennes se sont trouvées à l'avant-plan de changements institutionnels touchant les Autochtones, l'internationalisation et les changements pédagogiques, tous retenus comme étant des secteurs clés à revoir. La plupart des documents de planification stratégique de ces universités citent ces trois objectifs, du moins à divers degrés. Les universités ont orchestré ces changements en soutenant de nouveaux

programmes, des centres d'enseignement et la création de nouveaux cours. Alors qu'une grande attention était dirigée vers ces buts de façon individuelle, la façon dont convergent ces engagements, en particulier l'offre de cours, est rarement prise en compte. Cet article examine les liens existant entre les objectifs autochtones, internationaux et pédagogiques en examinant les cours de premier cycle qui portent sur les études autochtones comparées, certains défis pédagogiques qui surviennent dans ces cours, et quelques stratégies que nous avons élaborées afin de relever lesdits défis. Fondé sur l'autopédagogie et sur une analyse critique de cadres pédagogiques existants ou émergents, cet article fait appel aux concepts clés de l'épistémologie autochtone, de l'application des connaissances, et des niveaux d'analyse de Sue Crowley (1997) afin de proposer des « liaisons de la connaissance » comme un modèle d'enseignement qui répond à ces défis.

### **Introduction**

In the current educational climate of increasing fiscal concerns, Canadian universities are seeking to redefine themselves in an effort to increase student enrolment and retention. Changes are reflected in recently revised strategic plans, from which three common objectives emerge: Indigenous education, global awareness, and pedagogical shifts to “student-centred” teaching, often expressed as “student engagement.” While much attention has been given to those goals individually, it is rarely considered how these commitments converge in particular course offerings. This article considers the connections among Indigenous, global, and pedagogical goals by examining undergraduate comparative Indigenous studies courses, some pedagogical challenges that arise in those courses, and some strategies I have developed in meeting those challenges.<sup>1</sup> To be clear, this is not an attempt to construct an Indigenous pedagogy, but to reconcile multiple pedagogies in the classroom, of which Indigenous pedagogy is one. Based in auto-pedagogy and a critical analysis of existing and emerging pedagogical frameworks, this article uses key concepts from Indigenous epistemologies, knowledge translation, and Sue Crowley's (1997) levels of analysis to propose “knowledge liaisons” as a teaching model that addresses these challenges.

### **Literature Review**

Despite the implied importance of comparative Indigenous studies, little has been written about global Indigenous courses. There are two sets of literature wherein one might expect to find such a conversation. The first, literature on teaching globally, generally does not consider or include Indigenous issues (Rothwell, 2005; Stanley & Plaza, 2002). Discussions of teaching globally tend to focus on “global awareness” as a socio-economic problem, centring on students' abilities to situate their knowledge in global contexts (Gibson, Rimmington, & Landwehr-Brown, 2008). What might be described as the “development” model considers topics like housing, the effects of transnational corporations, poverty, food security, and internal political crisis and conflict (Peterson, 2012). A corollary of this model takes an anti-capitalism stance, whereby globalization is invariably posited as a tool of exploitation (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2001). In both models, Indigenous peoples are viewed in the context of other disadvantaged or “develop-

ing” populations in classrooms that seek to teach racial tolerance and cultural diversity (Fanghanel & Cousin, 2012). Multiculturalism is thus taken to an international level to promote tolerance and dispel negative stereotypes. The emphasis is on teaching students to be responsible “global citizens” who are engaged in and aware of global issues and problems, especially those in African, Latin American, and South Asian countries. Violations against community well-being are thus posited in the context of modern human rights and environmental issues, not of continuing historical colonialism. Indigenous peoples become conflated with “the poor” or “victimized” (although indeed they are often both), in contrast to students as citizens of privileged, “developed” nations who are taught about their social responsibilities to “save” victimized peoples.

The second body of literature, on Indigenous studies pedagogy, tends to focus largely on the question “What is Indigenous studies?” (Battiste, Bell, & Findlay, 2002; Neegan, 2005). Two overarching concerns frame the recent store of literature about Indigenous Studies specifically: defining the discipline and its goals (Andersen, 2009; Champagne, 2007; Kidwell, 2011; Thornton, 1978; Warrior, 2011; Wheeler, 2001); and protecting and defending the discipline within the broader academy (Champagne, 2008; Cook-Lynn, 1997; Fitzmaurice, 2011; Innes 2010; Stevenson, 1998). Discussions on teaching practices are far less numerous and tend to address local contexts or discipline-specific challenges, particularly the ways in which Indigenous studies programs or departments can collaborate with local communities (Andersen, 2012; Chartrand, 2012; Lambe, 2003; Mcgloin, Marshall, & Adams, 2010; Ray & Cormier, 2012). Those that do discuss the teaching of Indigenous issues outside of Indigenous studies are often discipline-specific (Atalay, 2006; Godlewska, Moore, & Bednasek, 2010; Hufnagel, 2000; Nielsen, 2010). While these studies have been valuable in terms of addressing challenges in teaching Indigenous issues in various disciplines, as such they are not obligated to address Indigenous pedagogies as defining teaching concepts, nor do they offer interdisciplinary frameworks for teaching Indigenous issues.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, we have a poor understanding of the unique challenges that plague teaching global Indigenous issues, particularly from the perspective of Indigenous pedagogies.

### **The Problem of Pedagogies**

The problem of pedagogy arises not only in a specific disciplinary context—namely, the “What is Indigenous studies?” question—but more generally as we collectively contemplate major pedagogical shifts in postsecondary education. While more research in a specifically Canadian context needs to be conducted, recent research suggests problems in terms of both pedagogy and content. For instance, a recent by study Magda Fusaro and Vivek Venkatesh (2012) of twelve universities in Québec suggested that students do not support some of the proposed pedagogical changes. The research examined modes of learning from both student and faculty perspectives. The results suggested that students preferred lectures over technology-enhanced modes of learning, collaborative work, or discussions, while professors believed discussion and group interaction produced learning success. As one of the few major *Canadian* surveys on university teaching and learning, it was revealing. Even if it did not directly address teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes, as its critics contended, it challenged the current trends in education theory, which claim that activities-based classrooms are more successful, at least if we are to acknowledge a relationship between student satisfaction and learning success (Clark, 2011).

While we are contemplating so-called “new” pedagogies, there are still matters to resolve regarding the importance of content. An ongoing research project out of Queen’s University points to gaps in student knowledge about Indigenous peoples, suggesting the need to teach content to an extent perhaps not required in other disciplines (Godlewska et al., 2010). While there are even more pressing concerns about teaching students to think critically about that content (Andersen, 2012), the two go hand in hand. This need for content comes on top of calls to teach from Indigenous perspectives, wherein cultural protocols and respect for intellectual property are not simply observed but respected, integrated, and practiced (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Lambe, 2003). There is, then, another consideration for instructors as they negotiate the sometimes competing demands of students, universities, and Indigenous communities.

While Indigenous pedagogies are as varied and numerous as the cultures themselves, there are a few aspects that might be considered “common” to many or even most Indigenous pedagogies, centring around five themes: (i) place/land (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Beard, 2011; Cajete, 2000; Johnson, 2012; Styres, Haig-Brown, & Blimkie, 2013); (ii) community and kinship (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Macdougall, 2014); (iii) language (which includes a range, from teaching courses in Indigenous languages—little of which currently happens in Canadian universities—to introducing single Indigenous-language words, such as place names and concepts) (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Mcgloin & Carlson, 2013); (iv) holistic teaching pedagogies (which include concepts such as interconnectedness, spiritual and emotional growth, social engagement, and learning as a life-long process) (Anuik & Gillies, 2012; Beard, 2011; Canadian Council on Learning, 2007; Iseke, 2010; Kovach, 2010); and (v) decolonization, both as a process of individual and social change and as introducing specific content (Cajete, 2000; Thaman, 2003). While this is not an exhaustive list, it identifies some of the more prominent themes that emerge from the literature on Indigenous pedagogy and include aspects that play some role in Indigenous pedagogies or epistemologies around the world; these themes thus can serve as points of comparison and unifying themes in the global classroom. They are also all aspects that I attempt to address in my courses.

Much more has been written about “mainstream” pedagogies. The student-centred pedagogies deal with various practices as opposed to content themes as guided and inspired by two of the key documents on the new pedagogies: LEAP (Association of American Colleges and Universities, n.d.) and Guidelines on Learning that Inform Teaching (Teaching and Learning Laboratory, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2006). They consider the importance of experiential, inquiry-based, interdisciplinary, and collaborative learning as classroom practices that place an emphasis on “student-doing” as opposed to “teacher-doing” (namely, lecturing), or active versus passive learning (Dentith & Maurer, 2011; Gibson et al., 2008; Stanley & Plaza, 2002). The correlation between these evidence-based best practices and universities’ learning outcome goals is reflected in many universities’ planning statements (University of British Columbia, 2012; University of Ottawa, 2010; University of Saskatchewan, 2010).

Finally, I turn to the third pedagogical framework, which is focused on empirical content. This is the approach gradually being replaced by the skills-based or student-centred model. In this model, content is taught for its own sake. The empirical information itself is considered important. This view is premised on the belief that knowing “facts” (or

an agreed-upon interpretation) is valuable, and that knowledge is transferable. It can be used in various and even unexpected ways to explain and contextualize events, actions, and ways of thinking. In this model, students are repositories for pre-existing information—for things that are known or accepted as “true” in that discipline. This information comes mostly from academic experts in the form of lectures, usually supplemented by assigned readings. This factor, according to educational experts, is what makes this model teacher-centred, not student-centred.

While mainstream and Indigenous-based pedagogies might overlap in terms of program restructuring and delivery, they are driven by very different epistemologies and outcomes. Fundamentally, the current push for new pedagogies is driven by employer demands and the perceived “skills gap”—that is, the gap between student skills and employer needs (Boyer, 1998; Burleton, Gulati, McDonald, & Scarfone, 2014). Students learn information primarily as a means of developing specific marketable skills to meet labour demands. In short, we are to choose the content that fits the skills we want to teach to make students employable. Indigenous-based pedagogies, on the other hand, seek to achieve understanding among students, and sometimes simply to impart knowledge. They are often driven by self-determination and decolonization, seen as overarching goals in the context of university learning and the broader field of education. While both the transmission of information and the teaching of skills are essential components to Indigenous traditional teaching and learning, they often occur simultaneously in a setting appropriate to the subject being taught (Little Bear, 2009). Learning can also take an individual approach, thus operating as responsive teaching directed by relationship-building (Bastien, 2004; Lambe, 2003; Wilson, 2008). In the university classroom, however, the context of learning changes dramatically, and this model does not translate well. In fact, there is a recognized gap between classroom “theory” and experiential “practice”: university teachers often note that students have challenges in synthesizing these two sets of knowledge. While Indigenous Studies programs also want their students to be employable upon graduation, that does not necessarily constitute the primary or only goal of education. At the very least, knowledge and skills are seen as equal partners, where perspective, understanding, and citizenship (used here to mean social responsibility and commitment to community) offer the promise of decolonization.

Furthermore, content holds a special role in Indigenous studies, as it is, in the words of one department, an “emergent discipline” (Department of Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan, 2015). The broader public, including some Aboriginal people themselves, remain unaware of the basic empirical facts that constitute historic and continuing colonialism, what one recent study calls “wilful ignorance” (Godlewska et al., 2010). This lack of basic knowledge about Aboriginal people and their place in Canadian history means that there are more “threshold concepts” in Indigenous studies—that is, difficult concepts that are key to understanding the disciplinary perspective (Meyer & Land, 2006). Its core content, methodologies, and epistemologies do not count among the “common knowledge” of most of its students. Consequently, Indigenous issues require teaching basic content to a degree perhaps not seen in many other disciplines. We can expect students to have a basic understanding of the chronology of Canadian history, for instance; but experience has demonstrated that we cannot expect them to understand the fundamental concepts of colonialism.

These fundamental concepts are integral to the study of Indigenous peoples in any context or discipline. While teaching trends have turned away from content-based approaches, I argue that it is a necessary component of effective teaching in global Indigenous courses wherein empirical information about people and places forms the basis of opportunities to learn skills and to meet the goals of decolonization. That information is, for its own sake, especially important when we are dealing with rights violations and historical injustices, where awareness alone can lead to the kinds of changes we are seeking, or at the very least offer a first step. Information for the sake of learning critical skills, then, becomes almost secondary in certain contexts. Instead, learning information for its own sake becomes essential to awareness and decolonization. It is this content knowledge that can actually make a valuable contribution to teaching students how to be good citizens—a central aspect of the new pedagogies, of internationalization, and of university mandates.

However, from the perspective of Indigenous pedagogies, there are some significant problems in terms of voice appropriation in delivering content from Indigenous perspectives. Given the range and number of Indigenous communities and cultures represented over the semester, there are logistical challenges regarding pedagogy and perspective. Although providing a general historical, social, or cultural context was within my purview as the course instructor, it could not be the *only* voice through which information was channelled. While the instructor's role is that of an expert, this is less so in a comparative Indigenous studies course, where "expertise" does not operate within the context of first-hand experience. In keeping with Indigenous protocols regarding the dissemination of knowledge and claims to expertise, this was not a role I could be as comfortable with as in other teaching areas.

Understanding classrooms as potential sites of conflicting pedagogies, then, contextualizes the following discussion on the practice of teaching. While I agree that there are clear correlations between Indigenous-based pedagogies and skills-based pedagogies, there are also clear correlations between Indigenous-based pedagogies and *content*-based pedagogies. However, it should not be taken that Indigenous pedagogies are simply a unique combination of the other two: Indigenous pedagogies constitute methods and epistemologies on their own. While there is often overlap between goals, the intent is not always the same. The fundamental conflict between skills-based and content-based pedagogies then puts Indigenous studies, at least global and comparative Indigenous studies, in a precarious position. It is concurrently both aligned and at odds with broader institutional goals about learning.

### **An Experiment in Auto-pedagogy**

Identifying this problem, as well as attempting to solve it, was a practice in reflective teaching: a contemplation/practice cycle that encourages pedagogical research alongside its practice (Brookfield, 1995; Kolb, 1976). As a new university teacher, when I first contemplated how I would teach—especially balancing appointments to two departments (History and Native Studies)—I discovered what I felt to be a disjuncture between my goals in the classroom and the expectations that seemed to emerge from theoretical discussions in the literature, and, indeed, from the university's vision for teaching. I also felt I had difficulties meeting some of the expectations of Indigenous-based pedagogies, especially when working outside of Indigenous Studies departments or programs. I eventually

came to believe that these challenges were the result of the concurrence of three separate but not always compatible sets of pedagogical frameworks: Indigenous-based pedagogies, skills-based or student-centred pedagogies, and content-based pedagogies.

In undertaking this assessment, I drew from two sets of experiences, both of which contributed to my reflective teaching practice. First was my teaching experience, which includes, among others, four comparative or international Indigenous courses. I have taught these four courses in different ways each time, at different levels (as first-, second-, and third-year undergraduate courses), and also in different departments and universities: one American and one Canadian university; in a history department, in a general humanities education course, and in a Native Studies department. This experience has provided me with a broad range of results and varying degrees of success, but it has also given me unique insight. Certain patterns that have emerged among these otherwise very different teaching environments can contribute to both best practices and approaches to teaching global Indigenous courses.

The second experience I drew on was my research on teaching pedagogy, conducted in 2012 for the Humanities Division of the College of Arts and Science at the University of Saskatchewan. The primary objective of this research project was to produce a literature review for departments in the humanities as they worked towards restructuring their programs in accordance with the university's new teaching goals. That research exposed me to a wide range of theories, practices, and models in the student-centred pedagogies that most universities are encouraging. It also made me aware of a vast store of literature on pedagogy that few non-education university teachers have the opportunity (or time) to survey. Undertaking this (paid) research provided me with the time and opportunity for self-learning that many early-career teachers do not receive.

Teaching while undertaking this research also provided the opportunity to engage in a reflective approach to teaching and learning pedagogy. I was able to experience the results of different approaches, vary the amount of time spent lecturing, and test out new classroom activities. The research allowed me to theorize about teaching, especially comparative or global issues, from different disciplinary perspectives. It also alerted me to the lack of literature on teaching these specific kinds of courses and prompted me to collect my thoughts about this deficit, in the hopes of starting a dialogue. In that context, my comments here should be considered the start of a conversation: ongoing and tentative, not conclusive or definitive.

### **Course Description and Organization**

A brief description of how I taught and organized a comparative Indigenous issues course helps contextualize the discussion on the problem of pedagogy and the “knowledge liaisons” proposal. The first and last weeks of the course were thematic, dealing broadly with worldviews and colonialism at the beginning, and with decolonization and sovereignty at the conclusion (see Appendix A). The weeks in between were organized geographically, generally by country (although I have used larger regional organizations in the past, such as “The Andes”). Each week also featured an Indigenous community or cultural group from that geographic region and highlighted one major theme. Each week was further organized into historical and contemporary, colonization and decolonization, and lecture and in-class activities an intersection of place, event, experience, and community.

In addition, each week combined three pedagogical approaches through different activities by dividing contact time into roughly three sections (see Appendix B). First was the utilization of a content-based approach in the way of a lecture, which provided the broader thematic and empirical context. The second and third were a combination of Indigenous and student-based pedagogies, wherein students undertook a classroom activity that revolved around Indigenous-authored media—either print, video, or technology based. I also addressed two other goals in comparative and international courses. The first was to present both a historical *and* a contemporary context for each community and country we learned about. The second was to juxtapose the experience of colonialism with efforts of decolonization. What resulted, then, was a grid-style approach to teaching, in which the three pedagogies were employed to examine a selection of regions, cultural groups, and themes or issues. Additionally, the approach provided three levels of exploration: local, global, and thematic. The intended result was a complex representation of comparison and contrast, demonstrating diversity on the one hand and broader patterns on the other.

### **Solutions to the Comparative Classroom: Knowledge Liaisons**

Some of the success I have had is, I think, attributable to the organization of the course and the incorporation of two conceptual frameworks: “knowledge liaisons” and “three levels of analysis.” The starting place for negotiating these pedagogies is, in my view, to recast the role of the instructor from “expert” to “mediator,” which can be realized through the concept of “knowledge liaisons.” This approach to teaching posits the instructor as one who negotiates and translates vast stores of information and provides a broader context for specific and local examples. Students take on the task of learning the intricacies of local specificities of Indigenous perspectives and experiences, while instructors take on the responsibility for linking those examples to broader global patterns and academic contexts. My development of this concept comes from three sources. The first is Hung, Lee, and Lim (2012), who use of “knowledge brokers” in terms of negotiating between formal and informal learning.<sup>3</sup> In an attempt to bring informal learning success to the classroom, they argue that teachers can act as brokers between two sets of knowledge and/or skills to be learned. I have adapted that concept in comparative Indigenous courses, wherein teachers can act as liaisons between Indigenous and university pedagogies, between local and global perspectives, and more broadly between information and understanding.

The second source for “knowledge liaisons” derives from the area of knowledge translation, broadly defined as “the methods for closing the gaps from knowledge to practice” (Straus, Tetroe, & Graham, 2009). Knowledge translation is usually thought of as methods of reframing health-related research to appeal directly to policy-makers, with the goal of effecting change in healthcare services (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2014). However, the same principles of knowledge translation can be applied to university teaching. In this scenario, the university teacher acts as an information broker who synthesizes, translates, interprets, and manages knowledge on behalf of the student. The component of information management—organizing it for effective dissemination and retrieval—is especially important, as students are easily overwhelmed with new and large amounts of knowledge. In comparative Indigenous courses, students not only are learning about people, places, issues, and historical events that are new to them but also are

being exposed to new and different ways of thinking about, perceiving, and experiencing the world, ways are often at odds with their own socialization. In my experience, the feeling of being overwhelmed by information is the issue students most frequently comment on in comparative or global courses. Thus, the responsibility of the instructor reaches far beyond assigning readings for students to do on their own: it requires interpreting that mass of information in manageable pieces and comprehensible ways.

The third model comes from the roles of knowledge and the teaching process in Indigenous communities. Elders in many Aboriginal communities are often referred to as “knowledge keepers”—that is, those who are the experts in the knowledge considered essential and valuable to that community. Their role is to maintain that knowledge and to pass it along intergenerationally. Thus, the role of the university teacher, traditionally seen as the expert in the classroom, can misappropriate the role of the Elder in relation to knowledge and teaching (Tomsons & Mayer, 2013). Acting as the “liaison” instead of the “expert” allows university teachers to always be cognizant that they are not necessarily experts in culturally specific Indigenous knowledge. It can be difficult not to want to assume the role of “expert” as a university teacher; but maintaining distance between myself and Indigenous knowledge, and not appropriating or taking ownership of it, is, for me, an important aspect of respecting that knowledge and working towards decolonizing education. As a historian, I consider myself a holder of knowledge in many ways. However, as a university instructor trained in a western tradition, this is something I need to maintain constant awareness of. Thus, I regard my role in this context as that of a broker more than a keeper or an expert.

Inarguably, university teachers already practice some form of knowledge brokerage. Lectures and textbooks are exercises in the synthesis and dissemination of empirical and theoretical research that is translated into language that can be appreciated by undergraduate students. The distinction in what I offer here lies in the position of authority over and ownership of the knowledge. For Indigenous issues courses, that position must remain with Indigenous peoples themselves.

### **Three Levels of Analysis**

The second conceptual framework that has helped me navigate the difficult and competing pedagogical demands in global Indigenous courses is the sociological concept of “three levels of analysis”—adopted from Sue Crowley’s (1997) interpretation of Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological framework for human development. These levels of analysis include a micro level, a macro level, and a context. In comparative Indigenous courses, that translates to the experience of individuals or communities (the micro level), the broader national or international arena (the macro level), and the themes (the context). These courses discuss a specific, named community in a broader national context, focusing on select themes of colonization and decolonization. This approach has allowed me to connect (or “liaise between” to maintain the analogy) local, Indigenous-based knowledge and pedagogy within broader national and global content, and with comparative and international approaches to understanding colonialism and decolonization. We can thus examine broader patterns of colonialism and decolonization, and do so by using specific local examples in which people and communities can be named and identified, not generalized or homogenized. The result (or at least the intended result) is that students develop an understanding of global patterns while still acknowledging and respecting local difference and cultural sovereignty.

## **Assessing Pedagogy**

In employing these various concepts and pedagogies and in taking an auto-pedagogical approach to teaching while conducting this research, four notable results emerged.

First, students perceived me as a better teacher, as noted in their end-of-term student evaluations, because of the increased inclusion of group activities and class discussions. Indeed, this aspect received the most positive comment from students, both in class and anonymously on evaluations.

Second, students had a better classroom experience. It was clear from observation that students enjoyed the in-class group work and discussions. There was a high level of participation, especially when students knew in advance what the group activity and structure would be. This was particularly noteworthy because students were not awarded grades for participation. Distributing handouts containing a brief synopsis and a list of questions for consideration prior to the class activity proved the most successful way of preparing students.

Third, students performed better during weekly in-class group work or discussions when I had provided them with at least one lengthy content lecture (in this case, one 50-minute class). In weeks when I provided short lectures to supplement assigned reading, instead of providing the content to them in the form of an orthodox lecture, students did not perform as well in group work. They were unable to answer questions, apply concepts, or make recommendations for solutions. They indicated that they did not fully understand the topic and especially did not understand the Indigenous experience of that event.

Finally, student performance was lower on the final exam than in classes where I taught more traditionally—that is, where I used more content-based lectures and group discussion limited to formal seminars. Indeed, on a final exam, students were unable to perform on their own the same skills practiced in group-based activities. They were also unable to recount the conclusions or findings from their in-class activities, even though they were given a choice of questions on the exam. In fact, the best exam answers came from questions that required students to draw on lecture content.

In short, students demonstrated high levels of interest and ability during in-class discussions and activities but lower ability to apply and recall those skills and knowledge in an exam setting. In contrast, they displayed better application and recall of information learned in lectures. That, then, left a very clear pattern for success: while student-centred pedagogies kept students engaged, they needed heavy content-based teaching in the form of lectures.

## **Conclusion**

Comparative Indigenous courses serve as a microcosm in two ways. First, they reflect broader pedagogical challenges, such as those between student engagement and student learning. But more importantly for the purposes here, they reflect ways in which broader institutional goals intersect and play out in course offerings. If the goals of internationalization, Aboriginal engagement, and pedagogical reform are indeed to remain primary considerations of Canadian universities, then determining how such goals might unfold in the undergraduate classroom should equally be the concern of university teachers. Comparative/global Indigenous Studies courses—no matter what discipline they are actually

being taught in—are an obvious place for these goals to come together, but they pose a unique set of challenges with sometimes competing pedagogical demands. As Indigenous Studies broadens and grows, there is a responsibility of defining and implementing specifically Indigenous pedagogies – that is, by engaging Aboriginal students via a set of *Indigenous* rules of engagement by regularly representing Indigenous voices in the classroom. This means integrating Indigenous and anti-colonial pedagogies in meaningful ways, undoubtedly a challenge in an authority-driven environment. But by shifting our positions as university teachers as well as our attitudes about authority and expertise, we can better begin to address Indigenous methodologies without abandoning the needs of students or the demands of higher education’s goals. While the proposal of “knowledge liaisons” here points to one possible starting point, there is a clear need for further research and discussion.🍁

### Notes

1. I refer here to “Indigenous studies courses” to include all courses that fit this description, regardless of discipline.
2. I exclude here literature that examines effective teaching practices for Aboriginal students, which I distinguish from teaching Indigenous issues.
3. I have chosen “liaisons” over Hung, Lee, and Lim’s “brokers” so as to avoid the commercial connotation of the latter, which may suggest commodification when used to discuss Indigenous knowledge.

### Acknowledgements

This paper was supported by a postdoctoral fellowship from the Metis Research Chair, Dr. Brenda Macdougall, University of Ottawa. It was first presented at the Native American Indigenous Studies Association annual meeting, 2013 (in Saskatoon, SK). I would like to thank audience members and co-panelists for their input. I would also like to thank Deborah Lee, University of Saskatchewan, for feedback on an earlier draft of this paper. Parts of this research were also supported by the Humanities Division of the College of Arts and Science, University of Saskatchewan, through a curriculum research fellowship (2012–13).

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### **Contact Information**

Camie Augustus  
Department of History  
University of Ottawa  
[camie.augustus@uottawa.ca](mailto:camie.augustus@uottawa.ca)

Camie Augustus is a SSHRC postdoctoral fellow at the University of Ottawa, where she teaches in the Institute of Canadian and Aboriginal Studies.

## **Appendix A: Course Schedule**

Week 1 Course Introduction (Sept. 7)

Week 2 Indigenous Geographies, Indigenous Epistemologies

Week 3 Colonial Geographies, Colonial Epistemologies

Week 4 Indigenous Worlds in Brazil

*Tupinambi, Brazilwood, and Labour: Historical Continuities*

Week 5 Indigenous Worlds in Mexico/Central America

*The So-called Mayan Collapse: Yucatec Mayan Resistance and Persistence*

Week 6 **Indigenous Worlds in Latin America**—The Andes

*Liberalism, Quechua Persistence, and the Politics of Racialized Inequities*

Week 7 Indigenous Worlds in Latin America—The Southern Cone

*Deterritorialization in Paraguay: The Ayeoro and the Guarani*

Week 8 Indigenous Worlds in Latin America—The Amazon

*The Problem of Anthropology and Consent: The Yanomami in the Amazon*

Week 9 **Indigenous Worlds in Hawai'i**

*Sovereignty and Colonialism in Hawai'i: Kanaka Maoli and the Akaka Bill*

Week 10 Indigenous Worlds in New Zealand

*An Indigenous Perspective: The Maori and the Treaty of Waitangi*

Week 11 **Indigenous Worlds in Asia**

*Food Plant and Cultural Transitions in Indigenous Malaysia*

Week 12 Indigenous Worlds in Australia

*Assimilation, Education*

Week 13 Colonialism and the World—Putting it all Together I

*DRIP, Indigenous Action, and Political Mobilization*

Week 14 Colonialism and the World—Putting it all Together II

*“Indigenous” Comparatives: Creating a Definition*

## Appendix B: Sample Week's Schedule

### Week's Organization:

Region: Southern Cone

Countries: Paraguay; Brazil

Cultural Group(s): Guarani; Ayoreo

Major Themes: Deterritorialization; Forced Removal; Indigenous Resistance

Minor Themes: Religious Adaptation; Monocultural Agriculture

### Indigenous Worlds in Latin America—The Southern Cone

Monday – Religion and Culture in Paraguay: Guarani, Jesuits, and Deterritorialization

*ACTIVITY:* Lecture (historical colonialism, religious conversion, and forced relocation)

Wednesday – *Continuing Colonialism: Deterritorialization Today*

*ACTIVITY:* Multi-media (film), *The Dark Side of Green* (recent expulsion of Guarani Kaiowá in Mato Grosso do Sul, on the border of Brazil and Paraguay)

Friday – *Bulldozers and Jobs: Economic Transformations*

*ACTIVITY:* Group Activity and Discussion

### Pre-assigned work:

1. Handout “Uncontacted Tribes: Critical Questions”
2. Read IWGIA Report *The Case of the Ayoreo* (statements by the Ayoreo Indigenous peoples of Paraguay regarding deterritorialization)

In-class work (groups): examine “Guarani” video clips from Survival International

Followed by discussion (entire class)