

## “What Can I Do?”: Teaching Indigenous Content in an Era of “Reconciliation”

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### Abstract

This article is reactionary to the current discourse about the inclusion of Indigenous content in social work education. I centre this discussion on the history of social work education and the contemporary responses to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action (2015). Through engaging Guswhenta (the Two Row) wampum and the concept of “difficult knowledge” (Pitt & Britzman, 2013), I outline the potential roles and responsibilities of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators in social work.

*Keywords:* Indigenous, social work education, Guests

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This article is reactionary. It is a reaction to the many requests and questions that I have heard asked many different ways but usually with the same intent. The questions come from non-Indigenous people (or individuals that I address as “Guests” in this article) who have started to unlearn dominant Canadian or North American history. It is a reaction to all the commentaries of “wanting to help” that flow from non-Indigenous people since the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) report on Indian Residential Schools (TRC, 2015). It is also reactionary to the hype brought on by Canada’s celebration of the 150th anniversary of the British North American Act of 1867.<sup>1</sup>

The intent of this article is not to shame non-Indigenous people for not knowing the history of Canada as a geo-political nation-state founded through violence and the colonization of Indigenous Peoples and Land. I am of the strong belief that the lack of Indigenous history taught in public schools is part of a politic to situate Canada as a “good” nation and not a colonial oppressor. Through this article, I hope that non-Indigenous people will take upon themselves the responsibility to do their own learning and reading without expecting Indigenous people to provide this labour. This article has been written to guide and support non-Indigenous people when they want to engage Indigenous histories and knowledges.

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<sup>1</sup> I am acknowledging that just as this paper was going to print, the final report for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2S People (2019): *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. Privy Council: Ottawa, ON, was released. I wanted to include an analysis of these calls; however, due to the personal impacts of this report, I have decided to acknowledge it and make a commitment to engage with this report in future work.

As the move toward Indigenous inclusion and critical consciousness-raising occurs in education, many non-Indigenous people have questions about their roles as allies, educators, and co-conspirators. I am hoping to gently and generously offer my answer—one person’s answer. One set of thoughts and insights.<sup>2</sup>

However, before I discuss any more, I feel that I need to introduce myself as I have been taught (Absolon, 2011; Baskin, 2016). I am an Indigenous person. I am a citizen of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and belong to the Kanien’kehá:ka Nation. My relations are the Turtle Clan. I also have Celtic heritage on my father’s side. I have been trained as both a social worker and a “strong helper” (Baskin, 2016). I am an educator in a school of social work, in a profession that has and continues to have problematic relationships with Indigenous Peoples, Nations, and communities. More importantly, I am an auntie, a sister, and an Ista (the Mohawk word for *mother*). These identities inform and inspire my teaching, theory, and practice.

It is from this positioning that I will situate this discussion within my discipline of social work, by articulating the reasons that social work has been challenged as colonial and by exploring some base knowledges on Indigenous worldviews that will lead into a discussion on the different responsibilities of Guest and Indigenous educators. I want to articulate what I mean by the term *Guest*. This term comes from teachings I first received from Stó:lō writer and knowledge keeper, Lee Maracle. The term *Guest* could be understood from many different positionalities and, as I have discussed elsewhere with numerous other teachers and knowledge keepers (Koleszar-Green, 2016, 2018), there are complications and intersectionalities of this term as people move across territories and political positionings. I am using *Guest* as a term to distinguish between individuals who identify as Indigenous to the territory known under the geo-political nation-states of Canada and the United States and those who do not (these are the Guests). There can be many different identities under this term of *Guest* and I am not equating them as politically the same. The distinction is simply that Guests are not Indigenous to the stated territory.

### **Stepping Up to the Calls to Action**

In speaking to what I personally know and teach, I am focusing on the relationship to teaching and learning within my specific discipline of social work. The profession of social work is seen as a purveyor of “lovely knowledge” (Pitt & Britzman, 2003) that is operationalized by good people who position themselves as individuals who want to empower and help other people experiencing personal struggles. Even though I am focusing on social work, I know that there are many links and connections to be found in the resistance, struggle, and re-learning for other professions like education, medicine, and law. In fact, all of these disciplines also were addressed in the TRC’s (2015) report.

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<sup>2</sup> I am not saying that all Indigenous people will agree with me; in fact, I know that will never be the case. Indigenous people are diverse and have individual, community and Nation alliances that inform and facilitate their engagement with Indigenous inclusion and the Canadian state.

These discussions need to take place within a broader context, as Indigenous education in the field of social work has experienced many developments and changes over the past few decades (Baskin, 2016; Weaver, 2000). Social work, like many professional programs and designations, has been traditionally used as a method of social control over Indigenous peoples and has been “intrusive, judgemental, controlling and harmful” (Baskin, 2005b, p. 1). However, Indigenous Peoples have been entering the social work field as practitioners, managers of social services organizations, and professors in universities (Burke, 2018; Sinclair, 2004). As this influx has occurred, there has been a move to be more inclusive of Indigenous worldviews in social work curriculum; but there has also been open hostility to these changes from students and professors alike (Baskin, 2005a).

The Calls to Action issued by the TRC (2015) are directives, designed to start a reconciliation process between Indigenous people, communities, and Nations with the Canadian, provincial, and territorial governments and the citizenry of Canada. There is much public discourse on “Truth and Reconciliation”; however, it is my personal experience we are not yet in an era in which reconciliation is possible. Before we can even think about reconciliation, I believe that we need to have Truth and Information. There have been conversations about the “Truth” of the colonial damage. It is my belief that before reconciliation can occur, we need to start unlearning/learning/relearning. As outlined in the TRC’s Call 62, there is a need for educators to create and deliver age-appropriate curricula for kindergarten to Grade 12 (TRC, 2015) because generations of Canadians have little to no knowledge about the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the geo-political nation-state of Canada. One of the Calls to Action (Call 1) addresses the legacy of residential schools, challenging the profession of social work and the educators of future social workers to ensure that there are understandings about the historical implications of residential schools on current family structures. However, the writers of the Calls to Action realized that in order to actually address the legacy of residential schools, there needs to be a professional consciousness shift that includes social workers knowing that Indigenous communities hold answers and responses to the structural and systemic disparities they face. Social workers need information and the ability to be reflexive of the implications of this information for them both personally and professionally.

The Calls to Action were released in June 2015, and child welfare and the profession of social work were addressed in the first Call to Action under the title “Legacy.” The Calls are not ranked, however the intergenerational and collective legacy (Baskin, 2016) of the Indian Residential School System is clearly articulated in the following Call:

#### Child welfare

1. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by:
  - i. Monitoring and assessing neglect investigations.

- ii. Providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside.
- iii. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools.
- iv. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing.
- v. Requiring that all child-welfare decision makers consider the impact of the residential school experience on children and their caregivers. (TRC, 2015, p. 1)

In order to address and attempt to rectify the problematic position of social work within the lives of Indigenous Peoples, I believe that social work programs need to adhere to the Calls to Action and ensure that all future social workers have an understanding of the current implications of Indian Residential Schools and other colonial structures and mechanisms. It is also imperative that social workers know that Indigenous communities are able to articulate a different path through Indigenous approaches to social work theory, practice, and research. But will this be enough?

The inclusion of Indigenous knowledges within social work has been a topic of discussion that has recently returned to the forefront within social work education. In June of 2015, the Student Caucus of the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE, 2017) presented a motion urging the revision of the Association's accreditation standards (CASWE, 2014). This motion was in response to the release of the TRC's (2015) Executive Summary and the Calls to Action. It was the intent of the motion that all schools of social work across Canada would include a mandatory course on Indigenous social work. This motion along with the recently endorsed *Statement of Complicity and a Commitment to Change* (CASWE, 2017) should be advancing social work in a direction for Indigenization. The statement was read at the May 31, 2017, annual general meeting for CASWE and is an attempt to implicate the social work profession in the problematics of colonial violence. There is more work to do to ensure that the organization and schools and faculties have the ability and buy-in to roll out all 12 commitments to change.

The idea that social work education is not responsive to Indigenous students and Indigenous populations is, however, not new. As Sinclair (2004) pointed out, this was one of the reasons that the School of Indian Social Work at First Nations University of Canada (formerly the Saskatchewan Indian Federation College) was formed in 1974. Since this time there have been Indigenous social workers working in communities, developing practice approaches and theory, and teaching Indigenous ways of engaging as social workers.

### **Working Together and Sometimes Working Apart**

As I moved into my first academic position, the job call that I responded to required that the candidate have relationships, research interests, and practice knowledges within Indigenous communities, pedagogies, and approaches. Being Indigenous was not part of the requirements. I was first hired as a non-tenure track appointment then later applied and was hired into a tenure track position. In the first position, I was charged with a list of “deliverables” that included organizing an Indigenous speakers series, facilitating relationships between Indigenous organizations and the field placement office, scanning the current curriculum for Indigenous content, developing and delivering Indigenous curriculum that was to be core at both the undergraduate level and the graduate level, as well as organizing with traditional knowledge keepers for ten in-class teachings for my colleagues. I was also to complete and defend my doctoral thesis. I was to complete all of this and a few other small items over the course of two years. I give this background to highlight what is and was expected of me. These were the deliverables that were outlined as my responsibility. These deliverables were on top of teaching two full-year courses. I accepted these responsibilities with happiness, as it demonstrated to me that the school, although lacking in Indigenous knowledge, had the knowledges that there are/were things that needed to change.

Over my time at the school I have had many wonderful conversations with colleagues on how Guest people can include and teach Indigenous content. I have been questioned about their struggles around essentialization and appropriation. I have been asked to provide resources and knowledges. I have been asked what Guest educators’ roles are in bringing Indigenous knowledges in to a Western education system. I could understand that these colleagues had really good intentions and wanted to include Indigenous knowledges as part of dismantling dominance. I also watched very caring and critical people struggle to know what and how to teach. As I watched and listened to the struggle they shared, I realized that conversation on responsibilities was missing from the discourse on “bringing in Indigenous knowledges.” My intent with this article is not to give final direction (as that is very personal and tied to the relationships that an individual has) but to open up a space to discuss how positionality and identity informs not only responsibility but also ability to teach Indigenous content.

### **Indigenous Worldviews and Education**

As Baskin (2016) discussed, Indigenous worldviews can inform and support practice for all social workers. In the introduction to her book, *Strong Helpers Teachings: The Value of Indigenous Knowledges in the Helping Professions*, she distinguished between worldview and cultural practices and protocols (Baskin, 2016). I am going to expand these in order to support and encourage a deeper understanding for all readers; I feel that I need to provide a short set of definitions of terms as I understand them.

Indigenous worldviews share a base framework that is remarkably consistent with Indigenous Peoples across the globe (Baskin, 2016; Smith, 1999). Indigenous

worldviews are a way of living and seeing one's life. As implied by the word *worldviews*, Indigenous worldviews are about looking at all interactions, all relationships, and all facets of life through this lens (Baskin, 2016). These worldviews have been marginalized and attacked by the dominant white settler society as a way to assimilate and annihilate the cultures of Indigenous peoples (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; TRC, 2015). The resistance that has transpired within Indigenous communities has created a movement that insists and struggles against the oppressive structures to ensure that Indigenous ways of knowing and being in the world not only survive but thrive (Hill, 2010; Simpson, 2011) or as Jeffery McNeil-Seymour, a Secwépemc Two-Spirit academic and activist, discusses "sur-thriving" (personal communication, May 29, 2017).

These understandings of worldviews include holistic, reciprocal, and interconnected relationships between individuals, families, clans, Nations, animal and plant life, and the whole cosmos (Cajete, 2000). Indigenous knowledges are the teachings and ways of knowing that come from the cultural practices of different Indigenous cultures. These ways of knowing might include (but are not limited to) dreams, traditional teachings, Earth knowledges, and blood or genetic memory (Baskin, 2016; Lavallee, 2009).

Indigenous pedagogy is based on Indigenous worldviews and knowledges. The way that Indigenous content is taught is just as important as what is taught. As scholar, educator, and Mi'kmaq knowledge keeper Marie Battiste (2002) explained, Indigenous education

is a process derived from creation, and as such, it has a sacred purpose. It is inherent in and connected to all of nature, to its creatures, and to human existence. Learning is viewed as a life-long responsibility that people assume to understand their world around them and to animate their personal abilities. Knowledge teaches people how to be responsible for their own lives, develops their sense of relationship to others, and helps them model competent and respectful behaviour. Traditions, ceremonies and daily observations are all integral parts of the learning process. They are spirit-connecting processes that enable the gifts, visions and spirits to emerge in each person. (pp. 14–15)

These ways of teaching include concepts such as experiential learning (Baskin, 2016), the use of metaphors (Harris, 2002), stories (Baskin, 2005a) and non-interference principles (Sakoieta, personal communication, September 22, 2013; see also Brant, 1990; Prowse, 2011) to support growth and learning. Indigenous pedagogy can also include learning that occurs on the Land (Baskin, 2016; Cajete, 2000; LaDuke, 1999), in ceremony (H. King, personal communication, October 9, 2013; Simpson, 2011; Wilson, 2009), and through self-reflection and exploration (Baskin, 2016).

One other important construct in Indigenous education is that all people within the teaching–learning relationship will gain and give knowledges. This reciprocal relationship is contrary to many schools of Western education that are based on the

teacher or professor knowing all and espousing this knowledge to the empty vessel student (Freire, 1970; Harris, 2002).

The last set of terms I want to define are *Indigenization* and *decolonization*. It sometimes seems that these words are used interchangeably; however, there are significant distinctions. The term *Indigenization* is about bringing Indigenous knowledges, people, and theories into spaces where Western forms of thought have been centralized. *Decolonization* is about disrupting and transforming the political and systematic structures; it is about Land and the repatriation of Land (Tuck & Yang, 2012). At this point in academia, most spaces are only Indigenizing schools and institutions.

This distinction between decolonization and Indigenization could also be seen along the lines of anti-racist and culturally responsive education. As Cree scholar Verna St. Denis (2017) discussed, there have been many attempts in both culturally responsive and anti-racist education to engage Indigenous knowledges and histories. As she described, a culturally responsive approach explores Indigenous ways of being, cultural knowledge, and ideas like the Medicine Wheel/Spirituality. These are enlivened by elements such as respect for Elders, powwows and feasts, treaties, and impacts of residential schools. I see this in line with the Indigenization approach. In discussing her deep understanding of anti-racist education, St. Denis examined systems of oppression, privilege, and white supremacy. This moves teachers and learners away from individualization of racism and expresses whiteness as dependant on the marginalization of “others.” Anti-racist education intends to destabilize power by promoting equity and justice. It is inherently political in its analysis. Although distinct, anti-racist education is the role of both Indigenous and Guest educators. The means and mechanisms of such education will be different due to the responsibilities to privilege, lived realities, and experiences of the educators. This will be expanded on below.

### **Re-Centring Indigenous and Guest Relationships**

As a Haudenosaunee woman, I have been taught by my Elders about my responsibilities and the ways that I need to engage. I have been taught that adversarial relationships are harmful to truth telling and reconciliation. One of my favourite teachings on relationships and responsibilities is a wampum belt teaching called Guswhenta. Guswhenta, in Mohawk, or the Two Row Wampum, in English, is more than 400 years old. It was originally accepted as a treaty by the Dutch in 1613. In many spaces Guswhenta is now held up as a symbol of how our Indigenous and Guest relationships should continue to be.

Guswhenta is made up of three rows of white beads separated by two rows of purple beads. The purple beads run parallel to each other. It is said that the purple beads are to represent two vessels (one a canoe and the other a ship) that travel down the same river without interfering with each other or attempting to steer the other vessel. The white beads are to represent Peace, Friendship, and Mutual Respect (Sakoieta & Tewentahawitha, personal communication, September 22, 2013). Many times, when I hear traditional teachers explain Guswhenta, there is use of a metaphor

for the engagement between Guests and Haudenosaunee. Guswhenta is about the historical and current relationships and how they need to be based on integrity. In my understanding, Wampum is a living document and Guswhenta does not only talk to those who originally accepted Guswhenta as a treaty, but all those that have entered Indigenous territories since.

As I turn this discussion to the roles and responsibilities that Indigenous and Guests have in educating new and emerging social workers, I want to offer my Peace, Friendship, and Mutual Respect. It is not my intent to shame or blame individual educators or even individual schools. My intent is to uphold my responsibilities to Guswhenta.

### **What Are Our Responsibilities?**

It is my belief that we all have responsibilities to continue to learn and grow. This learning can be challenging, especially when it is disruptive to one's own understanding of self. Deborah Britzman (2013), a Guest scholar, discusses the construct of "difficult knowledge," describing it as knowledge that challenges one and one's idea of themselves or society. I feel that the teaching about the colonization of Indigenous peoples is difficult knowledge to teach and learn, as it is a struggle that implicates white settlers and Guests (the implications might be different, but still challenging) in the colonial or genocidal project and the impacts of bearing the emotional baggage. Difficult knowledges affect and alter people as they study, learn, and teach; and this notion of difficult knowledge seems to impact both Guest educators and learners. In discussing the struggle of one student's learning of difficult knowledge, Pitt & Britzman (2003) explained that even in wanting to learn the new and challenging knowledge, there is a push-pull response to the education.

Even though several of her stories take up knowledge as something to be warded off or something that might be pulled out from under her, she also expresses anger at those who withhold knowledge that she has come to deem important (such as knowledge about the cruel treatment of animals that we use for food). (Pitt & Britzman, 2003, p. 763)

As the move to bring in Indigenous worldviews and approaches to social work becomes more integrated into curricula across the country, I have been asked by non-Indigenous colleagues (both at my institution and from other schools), "What is my role?" and "How do I teach Indigenous content without getting emotionally stuck?" I do not think that I have all of the answers; however, I have a few thoughts that I would like to share. My thoughts are not directives, as I do not believe in directly interfering; however, as a mechanism of self-survival, I am using this platform as a way to respond to the constant requests that I receive. In my understandings of Indigenous worldviews, there are teachings on not interfering with the ways that other people live their lives. It is not my intent to interfere and tell people what to teach; I am articulating some potential roles that Guests might want to take up.

In speaking directly to social work educators, I believe that we all have a role in teaching and learning other stories in histories. The Canadian education system has problematically erased assimilative policies and practices from dominant

knowledge (Burke, 2018; Koleszar-Green, 2016). We have a responsibility to challenge these taken-for-granted histories and to unpack what we think we know about Indigenous peoples. In line with this, it is imperative that we search out the biases in our education, not saying that these will be erased, but to acknowledge and discuss how the education system has intentionally not taught some stories. There might be mistakes made, such as assuming that Indigenization is the same as other social justice projects such as anti-racism or feminist initiatives (Silver, 2017). There might be large learnings to be had (Hiller & Carlson, 2018). There might be times when humility is central. There might be times when listening is imperative. We learn by doing and we might not always get it right the first time. Please try again!

In a research project I asked non-Indigenous people who had completed a course on Indigenous topics taught by Indigenous scholars for their reflections on their pre-course knowledge. As one participant said: “I think that I knew enough, to know that I did not know very much” (Koleszar-Green, 2016, p. 74). She further contextualized this lack of knowledge, as she had uncovered the political agenda of colonization both prior to enrolment and at the very beginning of her course. She spoke to a definite mix of feelings “between guilt, embarrassment, and in some sense, anger” (Koleszar-Green, 2016, p. 74). Another participant reflected that in uncovering her lack of knowledge, as she simply said, “I was taken aback by how little I knew” (Koleszar-Green, 2016, p. 126).

Learning and teaching history is an important role that all educators can and should take up after they have committed to unlearning and relearning colonial stories. The teaching of history, such as legislation, terminology, and practices that perpetuated colonization and current impacts of these mechanisms of colonial control, can all be taught by Guest instructors. This is knowledge that Guest instructors can and should be comfortable teaching, since these knowledges are the creation of the colonizer.

Baskin (2016), Burke (2018), Hart (2002), Sinclair (2004, 2016), and many others discuss how the profession of social work has operated and continues to operate as an arm of colonization. The removal of children to residential schools (Baskin, 2016) or the Indigenous Child Removal System (Sinclair, 2016) are all tasks that have been carried out by social workers. The structures of Canadian society, including education, justice, and health care, are spaces in which social workers and other professionals have historically been employed and in contact with Indigenous people (Kennedy-Kish, Sinclair, Carniol, & Baines, 2017). These are not topics that only Indigenous people should teach, we *all* need to take responsibility to learn and teach such material. In addressing this material it is imperative that Guest educators engage reflexively with their privileges and complicity in the systems of domination. As an Indigenous woman and scholar, I also have the responsibility to teach students the historical implications of colonial ideologies, legislation, and practices.

There are many other ways that Guest educators can engage in decolonial education in ways that support the further learning and development of all students. Guest scholars need to support and engage with Indigenous scholars in tangible and

material ways. Many times, Indigenous scholars are “alone” in a faculty, meaning that there is only one (maybe two) Indigenous educators. This causes a huge workload burden and a sense of isolation that has, in my experience, inspired me to seek out Guest people who are willing to stand beside me and support me as I struggle to engage in teaching difficult knowledges and having hard conversations. I have been fortunate to have a few colleagues who are willing to bring forward issues in public spaces (such as faculty meetings) and pick up administrative or writing work so that I could have more time to centre my energies in areas in which I alone have knowledges. I would describe these practices as “standing beside” and “picking up work” as roles of Guests.

There seems to be a realization by some non-Indigenous faculty members (at least in my school) that Indigenous scholars have specific knowledges around theory, practice, and research; these knowledges are based on Indigenous worldviews. Teaching Indigenous knowledges is not a role that Guest people need to engage with. These are the distinct roles for Indigenous educators to take on. It is also important for us to re-teach history and implications of social work, but most Indigenous scholars I know have been hired for a very specific reason: to bring Indigenous worldviews into programs. Teaching Indigenous approaches and worldviews will not only support Indigenous communities but, as Baskin (2016) explained, will advance the profession of social work. These engagements and teachings should be our primary role in educating. I am not advocating for teachings of cultural practice (as the practice of culture is for those individuals of a culture) but for teaching that uses Indigenous pedagogies and centres Indigenous worldviews.

As Guest and Indigenous scholars work together, we are able to bring different knowledges and theories to the table. As we have had different life and practice experiences, we are able to provide students with a more holistic understanding of social work. In sharing stories and experiences, we are able to link the struggles of colonization and post-colonial theory to diasporic issues within global contexts. Working together to teach holistically does not mean that we will immediately be able to align our understandings. There is actually work that both Indigenous and Guest people need to do apart from each other. The reason that some of this learning needs to be done apart is to address the anger and guilt that stem from learning difficult knowledges that Guest people might unconsciously carry that can be very harmful to Indigenous scholars. As Guest people work to understand the roles that they want to take up in decolonial or Indigenous education, Indigenous scholars do not need to witness these processes.

I have been involved in conversations where Guests were really working hard to unpack and unlearn dominant ideologies around Indigeneity; however, these conversations left me feeling raw and traumatized. It is my suggestion that Indigenous scholars need not be present for these conversations, but instead that such conversations can be facilitated by Guest allies who have been unlearning colonial implications over time. If no such scholar is employed at an institution, faculties may need to bring in a facilitator. Many Indigenous scholars will know of a few skilled Guest people to bring about these conversations. This could also be a role for an Indigenous person who is outside of the school or faculty. If you are bringing in an

Indigenous consultant or trainer to do this work, pay them well, as their knowledge is very specific and their time is valuable.

The conversations that Guest faculty members have in their classrooms with Guest students (and maybe one or two Indigenous students) can be very different from those I might have with Guest students, due to differences in our respective positionalities. Conversations that take place in a non-Indigenous social work theory class are different than the conversations that take place in an Indigenous knowledge and worldview class. I want to strongly encourage all Guest educators to continue including and engaging Indigenous topics and histories in all their courses even when, or especially when, there is a mandatory Indigenous approaches class. The reason being that if all Indigenous education (history, topics, and approaches) is only taught by Indigenous people, ideological siloing and isolation will continue to marginalize Indigenous instructors and communities. We do not all need to, nor should we have, the same knowledges and worldviews; however, there needs to be a commitment by all educators to teach about the colonial impacts of the Canadian nation-state and the mechanisms and professions that have been utilized as agents of control both historically and presently.

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to comment on two issues that occur quite frequently. There are two interrelated comments I would like to make about the overburdening that can occur for Indigenous people. First, asking your students to go out and interview an Indigenous person or social worker or to attend a ceremony is problematic. Many Indigenous social workers and community agencies are overburdened and are focusing on the important work of serving Indigenous peoples. Educating Guest social work students is not their job. Secondly, asking your overworked Indigenous colleagues to come to your class or provide you with a guest speaker is not our work. If you want to bring in a guest speaker, it is important that you build your own relationships, prepare your class with readings and discussion, and provide a respectful honorarium.

There are also other struggles that need to be mentioned that can result in disconnection for Indigenous scholars. One example is the idea that Indigenous scholars are positioned differently. We are differently positioned with our own understanding of roles, responsibilities, and realities, which is why there are specific hiring calls for Indigenous knowledges. In my experience, even as a junior Indigenous faculty member, I am asked and expected to take up work that has been labelled as “senior scholar” roles. I have been situated in a position, due to the lack of Indigenous scholars across my institution, to provide advice to and engage with upper administration. However, as a junior scholar in these relationships, I am still cognizant of the fact that I am precarious until I achieve tenure. Métis scholar Adam Gaudry (2016) has described how Indigenous scholars without tenure are asked to teach difficult knowledge that will challenge students with little to no protection within the tenure and promotion process.

### Conclusion

I am hopeful. I know that there is much work to be done in shifting the practices and theories of the profession of social work, but I am hopeful that the TRC's Calls to Action might inspire change. I am hopeful that Guests and Indigenous social work educators will be able to build and deliver content that is supportive of Indigenous communities while also encouraging Guest social workers to be reflexive of their positionality. I am hopeful and excited to work in partnership with Guest people to alter social work as a profession. As I think of Guswhenta, I think of something that Sakoieta said to me. He said something like "living in peace with each other is not enough. There needs to be a relationship but a relationship that includes Peace, Friendship, and Mutual Respect. Not just one, but all three" (Sakoieta, personal communication, September 22, 2013). I hope that my sharing here can be seen as a visit and a conversation, not as directives but as a motion to build a different relationship. A relationship with Peace, Friendship, and Mutual Respect. I am hopeful.

Nya:weh Ko:wa (Thank you very much)

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