

**Report on a Special Topics Course &
Allied Professional Development
Initiative:
Building Capacity in the Area of
Indigenous Education**

*Report submitted by Hartej Gill & Deirdre
Kelly for the Nov. 17, 2022 EDST Dept.
Meeting*

This report provides a brief description of a course created and taught by Dr. Amy Parent as well as an allied professional development opportunity designed for faculty members, offered in collaboration and in tandem with the course in July 2022. In all, 10 graduate students from EDST and other departments in the Faculty of Education took the course for credit; 5 faculty members and sessional lecturers fully participated (beside the instructor); and 6 youth joined us for at least one class and daylong outing.

**EDST 565: *Engaging Indigenous
Intergenerational Wholistic & Land-Based
Approaches to Teaching and Learning* –
Instructor: Dr. Amy Parent**

This course was offered by Dr. Amy Parent in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report and Calls to Action (2015). The course provided an opportunity to deeply explore and integrate wholistic practices (which are foundational to Indigenous epistemology and ontology) by engaging with Coast Salish knowledge holders and urban Vancouver Indigenous community leaders through embodied, experiential land-based learning opportunities. The course space provided a unique intergenerational learning opportunity for graduate students in the faculty to create a collaborative learning community to support a critical inquiry process to deepen their understandings of

Indigenous knowledges, perspectives, and wholistic pedagogies through the lens of Indigenous sovereignty, resurgence, and resistance.

The course also provided a supportive space to look at Canadian society and participants' own assumptions and commitments. As such, the course encouraged gaining greater awareness of the historic and contemporary relationships between Canadian society and Indigenous Nations and peoples that frame the topic of Indigenous Education in a Canadian nation-state founded in settler-colonialism.

The course was offered with extended classes over an 8-day period. The mornings were often spent in guided intergenerational learning circles led by co-learners and the afternoons or full days were spent in critically informed land-based opportunities with Coast Salish Nations and Urban Aboriginal organizations.

The critical community outings as part of this course included:

- x^wməθkwəyəm House Post Walking Tour (x^wməθkwəyəm Nation)
- Musqueam Cultural Education Resource Centre
- Urban Nation Youth Association (x^wməθkwəyəm, Skwxwú7mesh, Səlilwətał overlapping territories)
- Halq'emeylem Place Names & Stories Bus Tour (Stó:lō Nation)
- Vancouver Indigenous Mural Walk (x^wməθkwəyəm, Skwxwú7mesh, Səlilwətał overlapping territories)
- x^wçičəsəm Garden (Indigenous Health Research and Education Garden) (x^wməθkwəyəm Nation)
- Aya7ayulh Chet (Cultural Journeys) School (Skwxwú7mesh Nation)



"The Matriarch", created by Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) artist Siobhan Joseph, 7th Ave. at Main Street, Vancouver

Intergenerational Decolonizing & Indigenizing Professional Development Initiative

The course described above was offered in collaboration with the *Intergenerational Decolonizing and Indigenizing Professional Development Initiative* for EDST, led by Drs. Hartej Gill and Deirdre Kelly. Initially, we thought this would involve some connected and some parallel components for EDST faculty and sessional instructors to attend, but in the end, because the teachings and learning of the course offered such a deeply engaging and valuable experience, everyone decided to participate in and attend the entire course together! Faculty did all readings, worked with graduate students and youth to co-host a Learning Circle, and submitted a written reflection on the experience of facilitating a Learning Circle conversation. In addition to the many Elders, Knowledge Holders, and community members involved in the shared learning of this course, we also had several local elementary and high school students join us and co-lead or participate in learning circles throughout the course. This was a very inspiring and decolonizing intergenerational learning opportunity for all involved!

Comments from sessional lecturers & faculty participants:

"... my heart sings of thanks for the love you have put forth in opening our eyes, ears and hearts to who the Pacific Northwest indigenous Peoples are and what their culture, values, struggles and triumphs are!" (Sharon Jarvis)

"This wonderful interrelational, interdependent and intergenerational process of sharing, learning and being is deeply felt and appreciated. ... I woke up yesterday morning feeling immense gratitude that even though the class is now over, the embodied experience will live through us and continue in our work and our lives." (Gloria Lin)

"The course was transformative and a highlight of my career at UBC. Having young people with us was great... I really realized that I want to change how I am in the world and to be in a better relationship with relatives living on land, the air and water." (Michelle Stack)



"Entangled Flow", created by Abbey Pierson, an artist of Cowlitz, European, and Mexican heritage, 3rd Ave., Vancouver

Comment from a youth participant:

“As a pre-high school student, I had the exciting opportunity to attend Dr. Parent’s EDST-565 Course on Indigeneity for an entire week in July, 2022. Although we learn about Indigeneity in schools, in this university course we were actually Indigenizing through teachings and ceremonies directly shared on the land by Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers. I also had a chance to read university articles and co-lead a learning circle with faculty and older students who discussed very insightful ideas that were beneficial to my decolonizing journey.” (Chandran, Grade 8, Vancouver School District)



The class with Dr. Alannah Young, xʷčícəsəm Garden (Indigenous Health Research and Education Garden) (xʷməθkwəy̓əm Nation), UBC Farm



Class members, Skwxwú7mesh Nation

Acknowledgements:

We are very honoured and grateful for the privilege of the co-teachings/co-learnings in this course on the traditional, unceded, and ancestral overlapping territories of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Səlílwətał (Tseil-Waututh), and Stó:lō (Stolo) Nations.

We thank Dr. Amy Parent for gifting us with the unforgettable course; the Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Holders, and community leaders who generously shared their teachings; EDST and Dr. André Mazawi for supporting the initiative, both intellectually and materially, through the Innovation Budget’s line item for Indigenous education initiatives, which covered honoraria to Indigenous Knowledge Holders, donations to Indigenous-led organizations, and Indigenous land-based tour fees.



Class members, day 1, gathered in front of the House Post of ‘qiyəplənəxʷ’ (‘Capilano’) by Musqueam artist Brent Sparrow Jr, north side of Allard Hall, UBC.