Bridging Cultures: Explorations, Collisions + Considerations of Indigeneity & Design

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ABSTRACT: This research project addresses a long-standing issue in contemporary Environmental design education and practice: the exclusion of Indigenous perspectives in all educational processes, principles, and policies. This one-year research initiative collaborated with three Indigenous Knowledge Keepers as guides and mentors and aimed at integrating indigenous ways of seeing and knowing into curricula and pedagogy within the fields of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape. The initiative was funded by an Indigenous Engagement Grant from the University of Calgary and spanned two consecutive semesters, involving multiple studios and courses, where instructors had the flexibility and support to align their course content with the overarching Indigenous research theme. Roundtable discussions and workshops, led by Indigenous leaders, played a pivotal role in the project. These workshops served various purposes throughout the academic year, including introducing Indigenous Culture, providing design critiques, offering reflections, and allowing for open question sessions. Key to this endeavor's success was the creation of a welcoming and respectful environment. The research recognized the need to treat Western Design and Indigenous cultures as distinct, running in parallel, with the establishment of an ethical space as a secure and safe bridge between them. In bringing Design and Indigenous realms into juxtaposition, and at times collision, the research leaders needed to be supportive and diligent around risks & vulnerabilities, while cultivating opportunities and opening doors to discovery. Despite the participants' initial lack of awareness about Indigenous ways, the guidance of Indigenous mentors, coupled with facilitation by research leaders and participant motivation, led to significant progress in design work that incorporated, respected, and celebrated Indigenous knowledge. This paper narrates the educational journey of this initiative and outlines valuable lessons that promise to positively impact the design education and practice of tomorrow..

KEYWORDS: indigenous, pedagogy, architecture, innovation, ethics

INTRODUCTION

> What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset. – (Crowfoot N.D.)

Design, in our contemporary world, faces a plethora of unforeseen challenges, forces and factors that demand attention and innovation. Paramount in this mix of emergent parameters are equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA). While the origins of the profession of Architecture, and allied design fields, are rooted in power, politics, and privilege, today we are increasingly called to answer to a broader base of users, to respect a wider range of communities, and to design with sensibility + sensitivity, responding to a different today while anticipating an unknown tomorrow. Essential to understand is that;

> Design has to be extricated from the rationalistic, dualist, capitalistic, and modernist traditions in which it has been enmeshed, and reoriented toward the creation of conditions for other ways of being~knowing~doing (Escobar 2015).

Given the highly pluralistic character of many countries, cities, and communities, it is proving inadequate and unethical to design to a tightly defined demographic, to accommodate only a narrow constituency, or to be driven by short-term agendas. Contemporary design demands an embrace of uncertainty, a subscription to flexibility, and a commitment to continuous reflection, reform, and improvement.

This paper recounts research funded through an Indigenous Engagement Grant in Canada and stands unique in both its ambitions and approaches. The research addresses a deeply rooted problem in Environmental Design education + practice – namely, pronounced, and irresponsible omission of Indigenous ways of seeing, thinking, knowing and being in processes, principles, procedures, policies, and so forth. In a positive and proactive gesture, the research included three prominent Indigenous Knowledge Keepers as guides and mentors in the project: Casey Eagle Speaker, Sandra Sutter, and Tito Gomez. The initiative, a year in duration, involved six+ studios/courses (i.e., Architecture, Landscape Architecture + Planning) in two consecutive semesters – with a goal to have Indigenous culture find places of influence and inspiration within curricula and pedagogy. The Instructors, Mary Ellen Taylor, Mauricio Soto-Rubio, Fabian Neuhaus, Nooshin Esmaeili, Volodymyr Amiot, and Enrica Dall'Ara, were free to determine briefs, content, and directions within the greater Indigenous-centric research/teaching venture. A common thread for all courses, studios, instructors, and students, was participation in community workshops offered multiple times over the research period. These workshops, led by Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, had manifold goals – dependent on location within the academic year – such as the introduction of Indigenous Culture, provision of design critique at pivotal points, proffering of reflections at the end of a semester, open question periods, etc. Through these practices, the climate for the research endeavor, supported by Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, was welcoming, respectful, and assuring. Fundamental to the research were two qualities: an acceptance that Design and Indigeneity were distinct cultures needing to run in parallel (i.e., seeing with 'two eyes'), and awareness that

ethical space needed to be created as a bridge (shared domain) between the two cultures. In bringing Design and Indigenous realms into juxtaposition, and at times collision, the research leaders (both Architecture professors) needed to be diligent around risks & vulnerabilities, while cultivating opportunities and opening doors to discovery. Many participants on the university side came to the project with little awareness of Indigenous ways. Through the kindness and wisdom of the Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, coupled with facilitation by seasoned researchers and the motivation of participants, remarkable strides were made in design work that incorporated, respected, and celebrated Indigenous knowledge. This paper tells the story of this courageous educational journey, and outlines lessons that hold promise to positively impact Environmental Design education and practice moving forward.

1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE TEACHING ENGAGEMENT RESEARCH INITIATIVE

> While there are undeniably wounds, insensitivities, and injustices there are also good intentions, a willingness to know, and some exciting visions for a far better future. (Sinclair, Calliou, Sutter 2014).

History, protocols, and intentions matter when collaborating with indigenous communities. From design studios honoring Indigenous culture, courses including First Nations, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) dimensions, academics serving on key university committees supporting Indigenous communities, and faculty winning awards for commitment to Indigenouscentred teaching + research, the School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape at the University of Calgary has proven dedicated and committed. While the history of engagement with Indigenous culture within the school is relatively short, the initiatives have nonetheless been many and meaningful. For example, faculty members have been running indigenous-themed studios for several years, such as designs for Aboriginal Cultural Centres at the Centres at the Fort Calgary and University of Calgary sites. They have also engaged in collaborative interdisciplinary studios working with local indigenous bands to address design of commercial, housing, and community projects. Such studios have included FNMI members to guide steps and provide feedback and subscribed to the dictum “Nothing about us, without us.” The school has also been involved in research projects considering a range of Indigenous topics, including shelter approaches and sustainability solutions. At the community level the institution has organized and hosted numerous symposia and lectures, covering a range of topics from Indigenous design thinking and authority in design to sharing the city and social justice. Faculty from the School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape are recipients of honors recognizing leadership in the realm of Indigenous Culture in environmental design, including a prestigious Rev. Dr. Chief John Snow Award and the University of Calgary Teaching Award for Excellence in Indigenous Ways of Knowing.

The workshops described in this paper serves as a pivotal step in the school's ongoing commitment to embrace Indigenous aspects of design and planning. The initiative represents a cohesive and focused approach to provide a structured framework for the integration of Indigenous ways of being and knowing into the curriculum, and to foster a deeper understanding of Indigenous culture, knowledge, and practices among both students and faculty. By respectfully engaging with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and emphasizing community involvement, the initiative seeks to create a more inclusive, continuous, and meaningful educational experience. Through the sharing of stories, from both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous perspectives, a shared understanding developed — around our past, our present, and our future.

2.0 METHODS

> We argue that this path will be more successful if we, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, can walk together, understand each other, share together, and see through the eyes of the other. (Sinclair, Calliou, Sutter 2014).

Critical to the success of this initiative was the conscious creation of an ‘Ethical Space’, where students, instructors, Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, and the rest of the participants in this initiative felt safe, protected, and supported. An Ethical Space can be defined as condition or state where a culture of empathy, equity and inclusion is openly discussed, agreed upon, and maintained throughout the project. This tactic provides participants with an opportunity to ask any questions without fear of retribution of judgement, to recognize different points of view based on individual backgrounds and histories, and to acknowledge we can all learn from one another. Operating within an Ethical Space allowed the design projects to resonate with Indigenous sensitivities and priorities participants, and more importantly, allowed participants to grow as individuals.

2.1 Two phases – five workshops – six design courses

This project was conducted primarily at the graduate level, with one instructor at the undergraduate level joining halfway through. At the graduate level, the students per class totalled between 9-21 and at the undergraduate level between 90-100. Per semester, there were between 3-4 classes participating, ranging across all three disciplines (Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Planning). Studios and courses explored not only design, but also emerging areas such as land trusts, affordable housing, master planning, advanced technologies, and so forth. Modes of engagement included workshops, storytelling, indigenous expert critique + input, elder knowledge sharing, open question periods, design integration, experiential learning, and student/staff reflections. The workshops comprised two phases, each encompassing three components: imagination, exploration, and reflection. Each phase, and all components, benefited from the guidance of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, and brought together into communion and conversation both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous communities.

2.1.1 Phase one – getting to know what we don’t know (fall Semester, 2023)

In this phase, the initial focus was on developing an understanding about the two distinct spheres of Indigenous culture and Western design traditions. This part of our journey included historical challenges as well as distinct priorities and goals. It presented an opportunity for the participants to learn from each other within a previously

defined 'Ethical Space'. An opening roundtable event that included faculty, student representatives, and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers provided a chance to consider parallel histories, to gain appreciation of different world views, and to establish common ground. This forum permitted a fulsome critique of the school's historical efforts to incorporate Indigenous Ways of Knowing, while also recognizing necessary steps to succeed moving forward. Building from initial conversations, there were pilot projects that took place within the Architecture, Planning, and Landscape programs. These projects took the form of design studios or other courses, with a goal to meaningfully engage Indigenous communities and explore collective issues. Design studios comprised a signature pedagogy at SAPL - permitting students to tackle complex design problems and develop their own skills and knowledge. Mid-way through the semester, the Indigenous Knowledge Keepers met with faculty and students involved in the three Fall Term Pilot Projects, with a goal to learn, exchange, and improve. The students and faculty involved in the projects came together as an interdisciplinary group to work with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers in an open forum format, where the entire school had the opportunity to listen and participate.

2.1.2 Phase two - reflecting, revising, refining (winter Semester, 2024)

This phase started with a Roundtable intended to reflect on the activities of the previous phase, consider lessons learned, and to provide feedback essential to moving ahead. Participants presented stories from Phase One (Fall semester) - reflections of successes as well as difficulties and challenges. The session involved identifying steps that should be folded into the curricula of the three Winter Term Pilot Projects - one pilot each in Architecture, Planning, and Landscape. Mid-way through the second semester, the Indigenous Leaders met with faculty and students engaged in the respective pilot projects. Through open sharing of obstacles and opportunities, adjustments were made to teaching and learning to improve experiences and strengthen outcomes. At the end of the term, a final Roundtable was held with Indigenous and Non-Indigenous members to reflect on the rich path of discovery, to highlight progress made, and to consider next steps. The conversations of this concluding Roundtable directly contributed valuable knowledge to reforming the School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape's Strategic Plan. As noted previously, the numerous reflective and community conversations within the initiative had impacted curricular dimensions of the graduate programs dramatically and positively, while also, and more profoundly, shaping curricular content and pedagogy in a new Bachelor of Design in City Innovation (BDCI undergraduate design program.

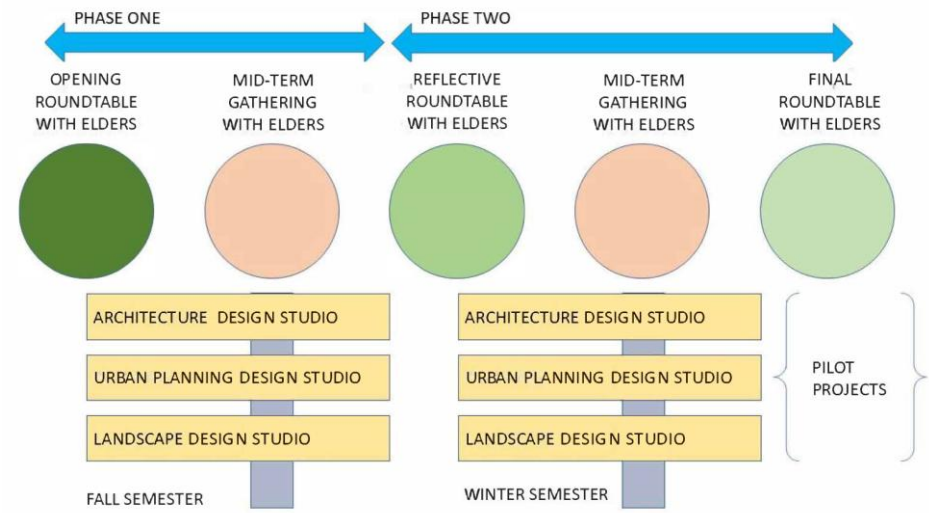

Figure 1: Chart of the Research initiative showing two phases, five roundtables, and six courses.

3.0 TEACHING ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

> Our Western design practice is to imitate and to sample what we learn, see and experience in our design education. This practice is counterproductive for decolonizing progress. Source: (Fabian Neuhaus, Interview by authors, 2023)

3.1 Workshop structure

The structure of the proposed activities was an important strategic consideration. There were five workshops conducted over one academic year (September to April) followed by reflection interviews with each participating instructor. Each workshop, save for the final professors' project review session, was four hours long and was structured so that there was an introduction by research leaders outlining the goals, followed by guest speaker sharing, and then an open question period. A key goal was to share, learn, and develop together as we pursued more meaningful curricular composition, content, and outcomes. Researchers Mauricio Soto Rubio and Dr. Brian Sinclair moderated the workshops, while Cathryn John and Kriti Acharya recorded written notes. Out of respect for the wishes of the Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, audio and visual recordings were not permitted. It was also expected that the same three Indigenous Knowledge Keepers (a Treaty 7 Elder, a Metis leader, and a Chippewa-Cree & Tohono O'odham Knowledge Keeper) worked in the project over the course of the grant to ensure continuity, to develop trust, and to nurture the school's ongoing relationship with the Elders. The project was envisioned as incorporating both full community conversations (at the roundtables) as well as more specific explorations within

the curriculum. A key goal was to have faculty and students who worked on pilot projects join with the larger SAPL community to share stories, present learnings, and build knowledge practices together.

These sessions were designed to be less formal, so that students and staff would feel comfortable participating and asking questions. The safety to ask questions without judgement was paramount in assisting students in their understanding of indigenous ways of knowing and being. One of the Knowledge Keepers, Tito Gomez, encouraged students and instructors to treat the question period like an Ask Me Anything (AMA) session where participants put aside fear of insult, and asked the questions that they would otherwise be too afraid to ask. By prefacing the question period in this way, a space of understanding, sharing and empathy was created, while learning was augmented. The guest speakers would begin by introducing themselves and how they grew up, the shared stories they learned and wisdom they had come to know. Through this sharing, storytelling became a method of generating “a space of mutuality that can open up new ways of being in the world” (Barcham 2019). Through this openness, students and instructors were able to glean a deeper, often unfettered, understanding of local indigenous cultures and respectful ways of engaging indigenous communities. The workshops were a response to the calls to action by the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) – delineating efforts non-Indigenous peoples need to take to better understand indigenous cultures and move demonstrably towards reconciliation. Through open, honest and empathetic communication, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, students and instructors together cultivated a welcoming environment that empowered participants with the courage to share their stories and accept each other despite their differences. These workshops enhanced the deeply immersive experiential learning in each studio, leaving a lasting and positive impact on the participants.

Figure 2: Workshop with Elders at the School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape at the University of Calgary.

3.2 The course descriptions

The research project encompassed a range of courses, specifically design studios and design theory courses hailing from the domains of Architecture, Urban Planning, and Landscape Architecture. These courses, while already equipped with their long-established educational objectives, embarked on a unique journey to introduce students & teachers to Indigenous perspectives and ways of seeing and understanding the world. The overarching teaching approach aimed to foster a harmonious blend between Indigenous knowledge and contemporary Western studio culture, ultimately forging a novel teaching methodology. Consequently, studios became dynamic spaces where the realms of design culture and Indigenous culture converged, influencing the creative projects undertaken by students. The courses included the following:

3.2.1 MArch Foundation Design Studio: An indigenous artist live/work studio

This is the first studio in the 3-year MArch program, and therefore, it shoulders the responsibility to define foundational aspects of architecture, its culture, its design process, and its discipline. Part of the learning curve explicit in the pedagogy of a first studio is the development of a consciousness around moving from lived experience to its abstract interpretation within architectural conventions. These architectural conventions collectively form a language that can be consciously manipulated towards the ‘construction’ of design intentions in architectural form. Architectural form, in turn, anticipates lived experience. However, what type of experiences should define an architectural project? This studio invited students to design a live/work studio for a prominent Indigenous artist. The project anticipated diving deep into Indigenous culture and the proposition of an architectural response that prioritizes harmony and balance between nature and the built environment, between Indigenous traditions and a contemporary lifestyle.

3.2.2 MArch Design Studio II: Architecture and future of cities

This course is an introduction to architecture as an artistic and scientific endeavour, as well as an examination of its purpose and intentions, its processes, and its products. Students developed an understanding of the social, cultural, historical, technological, economic, and natural context influencing the design of buildings and other human-made objects and environments. A range of guest lecturers and different types of assignments exposed the students to a wide variety of perspectives and practices, while offering an opportunity to explore basic design ideas and activities.

3.2.3 MLA Landscape Architecture Studio II

This studio sought to improve the students' design skills and abilities through an investigation into a topical, issue-based problem, and the development of a solution in a landscape context. The course was divided into four broad topic areas including landscape identity (i.e. what makes a landscape unique); master planning and concept design (i.e. definition of objectives, strategies, and design concepts through which the landscape's identity can be preserved, revealed, or enhanced); design development; and design synthesis and communication. A key objective of the project was to develop a profound understanding about traditional Indigenous knowledge and practices. This process was guided by Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, the traditional stewards of the land.

3.2.4 MArch Senior Research Studio in Architecture. Nookóówayi (my home). An architectural design studio: exploring the future of housing in the Siksika Nation of Alberta.

This senior research architectural design studio explored the design of culturally appropriate housing options for the Siksika Nation of Southern Alberta. In this studio, students identified the priorities and sensitivities of the community and evaluate culturally appropriate design strategies that could help improve the status-quo of aboriginal housing by promoting pride, self-determination, and a sense of ownership. In this regard, the project considered the role of community participation in the design and construction of houses, as well as Traditional Ecological Knowledge or TEK, understood as the broad and interrelated knowledge, wisdom, and practices of Aboriginal cultures. The goal was not to produce generic affordable housing options, but specific solutions firmly anchored on local values, traditions, needs, and sensitivities. The studio also evaluated the potential of emerging construction technologies and materials such as digital design and prefabrication, 3d printing, modular architecture, as well as environmentally friendly systems such as solar energy capturing processes. Emphasis was placed on the ability of these systems to contribute to improved health and safety, durability, and the reduction of operational and maintenance costs. This course stands as the final design studio in the Master of Architecture program and therefore is crafted to allow students to demonstrate their competency and ability to balance complex design priorities such as culture, site, program, and materiality, in a comprehensive and meaningful way.

Figure 3: Student Design of a Clan Compound in Siksika Nation. Source: (Wilson, 2023)

3.2.5 MPlan history of urban planning

This course introduced the planning discipline and located it in a broader cultural context. The course approached planning history and theory from various angles including historically, by topic, academically, profession and location-based. Planning as a discipline is in the making -- its transformation since its formal institutionalization in the late 19th century is ongoing today. A portion of the course is dedicated to the discussion about decolonizing the disciplines history in the Canadian context. Why are we planning? The course provided a theoretical framework for discussion and practice. Students explored and evaluated the different theories, models, perspectives, technologies, forces and cultures that have and continue to shape the discipline. What does it mean to be a planner? The program was designed to address a range of aspects from modernist planning to economic, environmental, political and social planning aspects of occupying the land. Where does planning need to go? This course provided a foundation for students to understand the theoretical and ethical frameworks and to recognize the drivers behind the wider-ranging and multitude of roles for planners today. The starting point was the understanding that planning is a culturally defined role that operates at the dialectic intersection of society and space. As such, the course aimed to elaborate on precisely those responsibilities that come with such a position. Is there space beyond planning?

4.0. FINDINGS

> Elders describe holistic life as necessarily encompassing physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects. This can be portrayed in the form of a Medicine Wheel. More often than not, we find ourselves out of balance in one of these areas. Being deficient or out of balance spiritually will influence the other aspects of life. – (Stonechild 2016)

The teaching engagement workshops, and associated reflections, allowed for unique insights into where design education is falling short with regards to Indigenous ways of knowing and being in the world. Design education remains held to a Westernized standard, a process of knowledge transfer that commonly excludes other ways of knowing and seeing, thereby leaving valuable insights unrecognized. This is evidenced in the interviews with participating instructors: Vlad, Fabian, Mary-Ellen and Nooshin who each noted that Indigenous knowledge is more

embodied and experiential, conducted from a position of equity, and thus inclusive and conversational rather than overly intellectual and assertively hierarchical.

Indigenous ways of knowing can inform design education as it begins a shift towards a more equitable, diverse, inclusive and accessible future. The learnings discovered from this unconventional project range from complex relational observations encoded in what we know today as ‘academia’, to more easily implemented shifts in the pedagogical approach at a class-by-class level. In Non-Indigenous education, decision-making is typically centralized and influenced by administrative priorities and curricular standards. Indigenous projects, conversely, require the active participation and input of the community, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers, so that their collective priorities, needs, and sensitivities are identified and addressed from the beginning.

The strict and compressed timelines of Non-Indigenous education do not typically allow for genuine human connections to form or for deeply inclusive learning to take place. This is because Western approaches are anchored in a culture of immediacy and the relentless fragmentation of time. In non-Indigenous institutions, objectives are expected to be reached as quickly as possible, making it extremely challenging to engage in a meaningful way. If we can’t engage from a position of vulnerability, understanding and empathy, where listening leads to action, we run the risk of performative reconciliation in the form of public relations rather than doing the work (interview with Volodymyr Amiot). As expressed by several participating instructors: reconciliation and building trust takes time, we need to meet each other where we are at and not impose our ways of being onto those most often left out of the academic process.

An unexpected discovery that came up in interviews with instructors was that for international students, the history of colonization in Canada was a particularly challenging topic. While domestic students may have some exposure to these pressing matters, international students often lack such context. Most of them were previously unaware of the history of colonization in Canada. Professor Enrica Dall’Ara also emphasized the absence of a dedicated course on Indigeneity and culture within the school, creating a knowledge gap among both domestic and international students. Providing context about colonization becomes imperative to address questions regarding reconciliation. Bridging this gap involves addressing issues of insensitivity, intolerance, injustice, and discrimination in all environmental design practices. Understanding the unique challenges faced by Indigenous communities requires a comprehensive educational approach. Despite this deficiency, the research project was deemed to be effective in meaningfully embracing and incorporating Indigenous Ways of Knowing into studios, course, classrooms and school culture.

In his interview, Planning Professor Fabian Neuhaus noted that in design education, teaching and learning practices direct students to sample and imitate what they learn and see in the world, then implement that in their design work. Almost exclusively, what is seen and experienced in the built environment has been produced through a non-Indigenous lens. To teach only what is deemed of merit from a Westernized perspective, is to enforce the erasure of alternate ways of being in the world, including but not limited to Indigenous ways of knowing. This is an essential discovery to begin to digest. It is also one of the findings that can be acted on most quickly, by introducing students to more inclusive precedents by Indigenous designers. At the onset, this may be challenging for instructors who may not have knowledge of projects completed by Indigenous designers that are related to student projects. A recommendation here would be to broaden the scope of "projects” to be deemed as precedents by negating the necessity for projects to have a certain level of ‘professionalism’. This may be necessary due to the decades of institutionalized racism towards biracial, interracial, and people of colour within academic institutions, which almost exclusively, through barriers to inclusion, prevented them from becoming professionals in their respective fields. By this it is meant that perhaps the body of work generated solely from professionals exiting the academy is not in fact a broad enough, nor inclusive means of understanding the comprehensive body of work realized by Indigenous peoples in the landscape, planning or architecture realms.

In Walking Backwards Into The Future: Indigenous Wisdom Within Design Education, Nan O’Sullivan speaks to the need for integrating alternative modes of practice to stem the tide of human and environmental destruction, consumption, poor health and extinction (2018). Particularly potent in addressing the wicked environmental problems society faces today are indigenous ways of being with the land which require a reframing of neocolonial mindsets around land management and ownership:

> We need to step out of existing institutional and epistemic boundaries if we truly want to envision the worlds and practices capable of bringing about the significant transformations seen as needed (Escobar 2016, introduction).

It is a necessity to consider Indigenous perspectives in environmental design education. The ethos of environmental design has close ties to politics, westernized land management and capital interests, all of which can interfere with a genuine connection to the land (Mary-Ellen Tyler April 2023) make it particularly influential in shaping the world, and society at large. The teacher involved in this particular project, within our research initiative, insisted on the benefits of collaborative approaches, co-creation of knowledge, and responsible land management that looks seven generations into the future, as methods we can adopt from indigenous practices. Working towards the decolonization of the design process and thus design culture, the folding in of Indigenous design methodologies embraces a future of co-design where the boundaries of Westernized institutional methodologies are negligible. The importance of understanding reconciliation, embracing creativity, and acknowledging the interconnectedness of all things is paramount for environmental design to continue contributing meaningfully and positively to the future.

The hiring of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers to help guide the reconciliation process was something that each instructor highlighted as a need for moving forward. Access to more Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Indigenous community members who live and work in this realm can be challenging -- local FNMI groups can lack trust that formal institutions can be equitable and not extractive. This fear could be mitigated by ensuring that the community

“be the main beneficiary of the project" (Reitsma et al. 2019). To ensure this, one recommendation was to help develop relationships and build trust by finding people who "walk in both worlds” (Mary-Ellen Tyler April 2023), meaning that they are both indigenous and working within, or adjacent to the profession or have established relationships with professors. These people who are a part of both design culture and Indigenous culture can make bridging the gaps a much more streamlined process by acting as an intermediary during consultations. They have connections to the community and can identify key contacts to seek out, as well as advise, researchers and teachers concerning relationship building. These people, facilitating vital relationships, could be staff, students or outside contacts. Here it becomes clear that hiring more Indigenous staff, attracting more Indigenous students and inviting more Indigenous reviewers and experts into the classrooms to provide feedback on student work, would play an integral role in building trust, respect and relations. Through this process, students would be exposed to Indigenous ways of interpreting the world on a more frequent basis, which was a suggestion made by both Professor Enrica Dall’Ara and Fabian Neuhaus to increase acceptance, empathy and understanding.

A part of Indigenous ways of knowing includes a ‘pedagogy of experience’ – that is, if students and professors had access to immersive experiences throughout their education at the Architecture, Planning and Landscape school, not only would the degree programs integrate methods of Indigenous knowledge transference in practice, but in addition to this, participants would be able to develop relationships with the communities hosting the events. Though Western institutions approach environmental design education in more rationalistic and theoretical ways, incorporating experiential knowledge can inform and enrich designs through a more tactile, immersive and intersectional way.

By bridging the gap between indigenous ways of knowing and design education, the academy places value upon multiple modes of knowledge transfer and ways of being in our world. It acknowledges that Westernized ways of teaching and learning are not holistic and that there is much more to learn from other, previously disregarded perspectives. The authors contend that Western institutions could benefit from the integration of Indigenous ways of knowing, especially as there are distinct needs for, and growing interest in, attracting more Indigenous and biracial, interracial, and people of colour to the institution. This inclusion of other ways of knowing signifies an encouraging shift in academia's approach to education, as well as an acknowledgement of its historical merits and faults. Together, by bridging the gap, design education and Indigenous perspectives can begin to collaboratively and collectively build a future in which post-secondary education is rendered as more inclusive, accessible, equitable and diverse.

5.0 NEXT STEPS

> If knowledge stays hidden, it will do no good. It will only do good once it is shared. (Casey Eagle Speaker. Bridging Cultures Workshop 2022)

Professors at the School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape indicated through exit interviews that the path forward is not singular. Rather, it necessitates ample time and a pronged approach. Understanding that reconciliation is a process that requires patience, persistence and well-intended efforts, we can begin to imagine a future in which Indigenous world views are incorporated into design education at both graduate and undergraduate levels.

Naturally, to design from a position of empathy and understanding of alternate ways of knowing creates the opportunity to manifest work that is both unique and speaks to other modes of being in the world. This road starts with relationship building. It is necessary to develop authentic relationships and build trust over time with community members in the local nations. Innate in the development of relationships is the building of trust, which then furthers the integration and bridging between Indigenous ways of knowing and design education.

As these modes of practice and relationships are developed, immediate action can be taken to create an Indigenous- collection of stories, that are open and accessible to all. This collection of lessons and teachings was noted as a necessary next step in numerous interviews within out research, and was identified as a beneficial resource for course building and student development moving ahead.

Building off a resource collection, a library of Indigenous teachings, projects, contacts, and precedents in each field of study, would undoubtedly assist professors as they prepare to integrate more Indigenous ways of knowing and seeing into their course content and delivery.

We believe that bridging cultures, Indigenous Culture + Design Culture, is essential to innovation, growth and development in SAPL as today becomes tomorrow. Further, the proposed pedagogical recommendations and reform will inform and inspire our steps as SAPL builds knowledge, heightens performance, shapes profile and raises reputation as a leader in integrating Indigeneity and design in higher education.

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