

Meixi & Emma Elliott-Groves

meixi@uw.edu | emma.elliott@wsu.edu

## The Big Idea

Relational reciprocity is an indigenous worldview and guides indigenous concepts of self, including relations with humans, greater-than-humans, entities, and landscapes. We find that elements of LOPI (Rogoff, 2014; Rogoff, Paradise, Mejía-Arauz, Correa-Chávez & Angelillo, 2003) build indigenous young people's sense of relational reciprocity which has implications for strengthening the collective capacities of indigenous communities.

## Research Questions

- How does LOPI support building relational reciprocity?
- How do indigenous young people's concepts of selves shift when learning environments are designed with facets of LOPI that build relational reciprocity?

## Design Context: Cowichan Young People Nature Walk

- The participants in this study engaged in a workshop that included:
- a nature walk with a First Nations' medicine elder,
  - creating an art project representation of their self-identified relationships,
  - and a narrative interview to share stories associated with each relationship.

Participants are five Cowichan Tribes young people (ages 12 to 17) and one Cowichan Tribes elder/medicine woman age 67 years

## Data

- Audio recordings and final art project artifacts from indigenous young people
- Findings of this poster are taken from 5 Cowichan young people's narratives about why they chose the things they did and the relationships they portrayed in their art projects during a nature walk

## How does the study enhance our understanding of Learning by Observing and Pitching In to family and community endeavors?

- **Relational reciprocity and LOPI are mutually co-constituted:** Relational reciprocity is a guiding principle of being within LOPI and facets of LOPI directly builds relational reciprocity
- Family and community are **inherently interdependent** and therefore relational reciprocity is an underlying guiding way of being where LOPI is a way of participation in it.
- Naming and thinking about the contribution of their multiple relationships has implications for **collective capacities – the systems of relationships between humans, greater than humans, landscapes** - that facilitate indigenous people's ability to self-determine how they adapt to changing circumstances and plan and prepare for their collective futures.

## Findings

- Indigenous young people use metaphors to identify their relations, illustrating their sense of relational reciprocity
- LOPI lends itself to building relational reciprocity, in particular Facet 1, 4 & 5.

### Facet 1:

Learner is incorporated and contributing to family/community endeavors

As indigenous young people contribute to family/community endeavors, they develop a sense of belonging, strength, and security and in turn enhance their sense of relational reciprocity

Kate: *Me and Ellen chose bark for our friends because the bark is always with the tree and it's strong with the tree and it goes through everything with the tree and friends are the same.*

**Analysis: The bark and the tree are mutually co-constituted; one does not exist without the other and in fact are stronger together. Family/community and learner are in an interdependent relationship necessarily bound by a sense of reciprocity.**

### Facet 4:

Goal of learning: To transform participation, learn consideration & responsibility, along with information and skills, to contribute and belong to the community

By self-identifying their system of relations using metaphors, indigenous young people transform participation through perspective taking and the acknowledgement of multiple relations

Maria: *A maple leaf for the ancestors, right? Because the leaves fall but then they come back around when it's season to. They may fall but they're always going to be around, right?...While the leaves are green, they're good to look at. When they fall, they're good to look at. I chose this for ancestors because it once was alive and it was with us but now it's not. But it still serves a purpose in the ecosystem like ancestors have a purpose in our everyday lives.*

**Analysis: By using the maple leaf to represent her ancestors, Maria describes how both continue to sustain life across time. Maria considers landscapes and entities and identifies their purpose in her system of relations. Indigenous young people develop a consideration for their multiplicity of relations by naming them and how they contribute to and are connected with the vast web of life.**



### Facet 5:

Learning by means of wide, keen attention, and contribution with guidance from communitywide expectations and sometimes people

Designing a nature walk with a First Nations medicine elder allowed indigenous young people to learn about relational reciprocity by means of wide, keen attention to the land and the contribution of their relationships through metaphor

Cowichan Teachings- *"nutsa maat"/We are all one:* The family is the heart of life. Honor the elders. Each person is important. Everything in nature is a part of our family. We are all relatives. Live in harmony with nature, take care of the earth and take only what you need. Take care of your health. Be positive and enjoy today. Share what you have. Be honest and truthful in all you do and say. Do the best you can do to be the best. Learn from another. Respect the rights of one another. Respect your leaders and their decisions. Respect your neighbors. Take responsibility for your actions. Help one another and work together for the good of all. All things are connected. Give thanks for what you have been given.

**Analysis: Through keen attention to their landscapes, indigenous youth were able to portray Cowichan teachings throughout the walk. In particular, attention was paid to using indigenous teaching and learning practices using metaphor, self-identifying their system of relations, and intergenerational learning. In so doing, indigenous young people were able to understand themselves and their relations in a deeper way.**

## References:

- Rogoff, B. (2014). Learning by Observing and Pitching In to family and community endeavors: An orientation. *Human Development*, 57, 69-81.  
 Rogoff, B., Paradise, R., Mejía-Arauz, R., Correa-Chávez, M., & Angelillo, C. (2003). Firsthand learning through intent participation. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 54, 175-203.