

# PLAR Journey of an Indigenous Student and Mentor

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# Outline

- Co-Presenters
- Indigenous People of Canada
- History of Colonization
- PLAR at TRU
- Two different worldviews
- PLAR Journey
- Indigenous PLAR project
- Q&A



People, validation and power: democracy in action?

# Geraldine Bob (student)    Nic Suapa (Mentor)

- Born, raised and educated in Canada
- Indigenous, member of T'exelc
- Experienced in ECE and Elementary School
- Went through PLAR for BGS, then completed M.Ed.
- Currently works as Indigenous Student Services Coordinator/PLAR Assessor

- Born, raised and educated in Thailand
- Thai-Canadian live and work in Secwepemcúl'ecw
- Experienced in adult education
- Graduated, University of Regina, Canada
- Previous TRU Aboriginal and Open Learning Centre Facilitator
- Currently Indigenous PLAR Developer

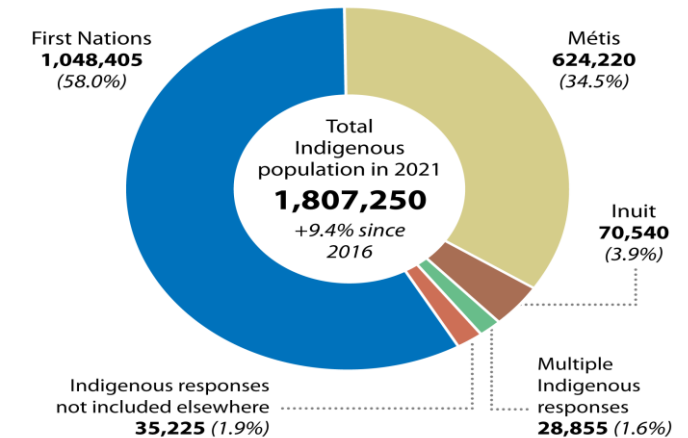
# Indigenous People of Canada as of 2021

- More than 1.8 million people self-identified as Indigenous
- Three groups of Indigenous people:
  - First Nations,
  - Inuit,
  - and Metis.
- They are unique in histories, languages, culture practices, and spiritual beliefs.

Source: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100013785/1529102490303>

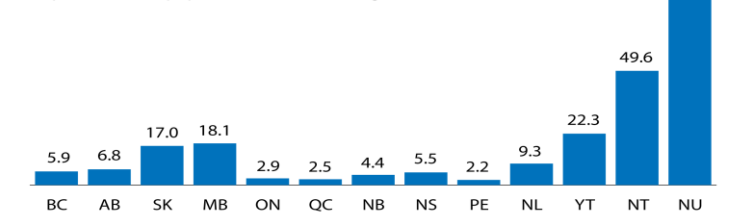
## CENSUS 2021: Indigenous population

A breakdown of the Indigenous identity population in Canada in 2021:



## INDIGENOUS POPULATION IN 2021 BY PROVINCE/TERRITORY

Proportion of the population who were Indigenous (%)



SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA

THE CANADIAN PRESS



# Aboriginal First Nations

## Our Own Names & Locations



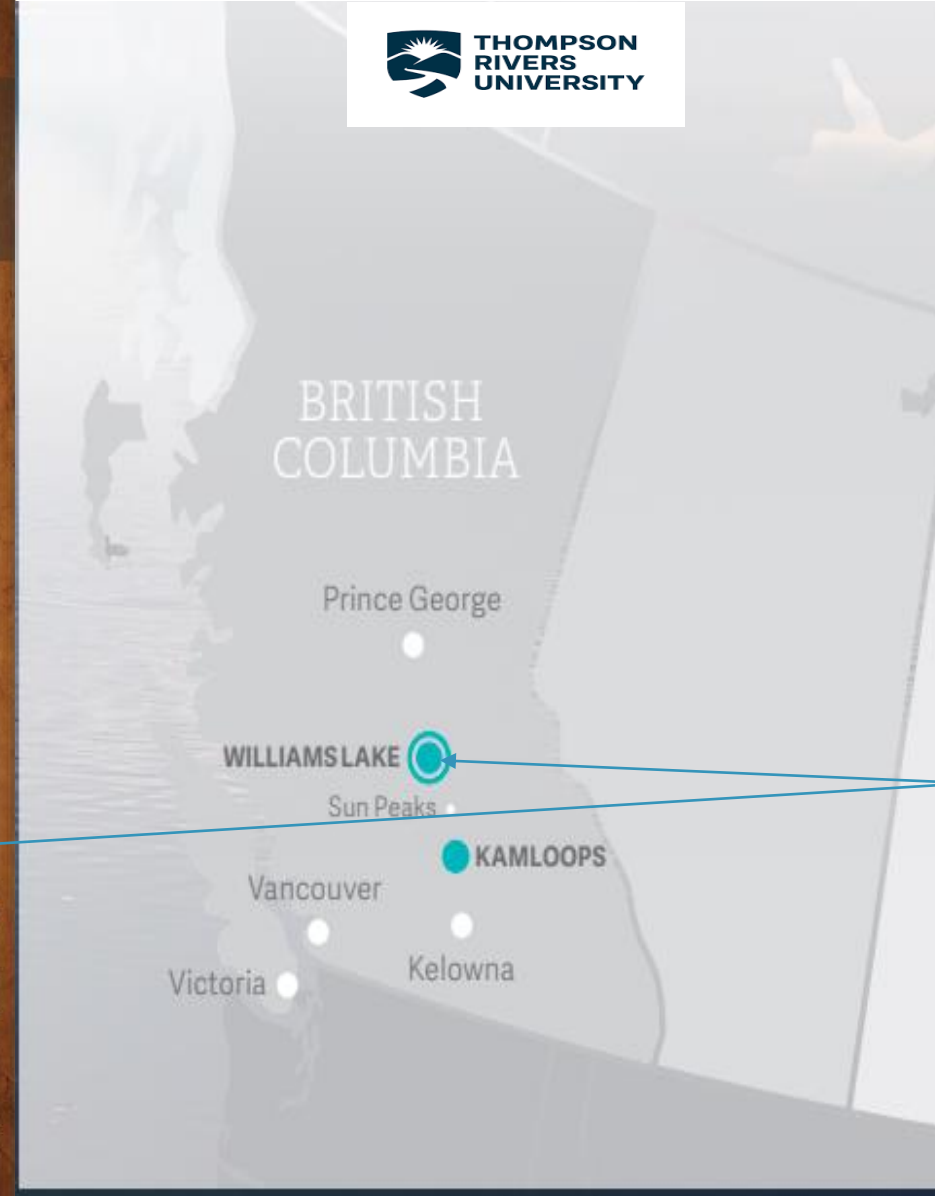
- Over 630 **First Nation communities**, represent more 50 nations and 50 languages
- **Inuit** are Indigenous people in the Arctic
- **Metis** are people of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry
- The **Secwépemc**, known in English as the Shuswap people

Sources: [https://www.ammsa.com/sites/default/files/articles/article-photos/11-sn\\_ws\\_can-givennames.jpg](https://www.ammsa.com/sites/default/files/articles/article-photos/11-sn_ws_can-givennames.jpg) and <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100013785/1529102490303>



# FIRST NATIONS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

- 80 First Nations in TRU Services Area
- 15 bands of three nations in TRU-Williams Lake campus services area
- Both campuses also serve students across the globe
- We are here



Source: [https://www.tribalnationsmaps.com/store/p3407/British\\_Columbia\\_-\\_PDF\\_-\\_DIGITAL\\_MAP\\_%28STATIC%29.html](https://www.tribalnationsmaps.com/store/p3407/British_Columbia_-_PDF_-_DIGITAL_MAP_%28STATIC%29.html)

# A Very Brief History of Colonization

- For 100s of years, Canada has been walking a destructive, depowering path
- Feelings and actions of superiority in the colonizers' ways of knowing (epistemology) and learning (pedagogies)
- Many believed these ways were superior and must be adopted by all
- Labeled as “Cultural genocide” in Truth & Reconciliation

Source: Forseille & Borhaven (2024)



Image Source: <https://www.kentmonkman.com/editions/the-scream-giclee-print>



# PLAR Pathways at Thompson Rivers University



**PLAR at TRU has 4 pathways for students to potentially follow:**

1. Competency-based Portfolio
2. Course-based Portfolio
3. Challenge Exams
4. Credit Bank



Thompson Rivers  
University, Williams...



Sunrise Apartments

Western Ave



Thompson Rivers  
University - Williams...

Cataline  
Elementary School



Blair St

Western Ave

Flo Charging Station



Blair St

West

St

St





# The Gathering Place TRU-Williams Lake



# Two Different Worldviews

	Western Worldviews	Indigenous Worldview
<b>Knowledge Methodology</b>	Scientific, skeptical. Requiring proof as a basis of belief.	Spiritually orientated society. System based on belief and spiritual world, tradition and cultural practices
<b>Truth</b>	There is only one truth, based on science or Western-style law.	There can be many truths; truths are dependent upon individual experiences and beliefs.
<b>Relatedness</b>	Compartmentalized society, becoming more so.	Society operates in a state of relatedness.
<b>Land use</b>	The land and its resources should be available for development and extraction for the benefit of humans.	The land is sacred and usually given by a creator or supreme being.

Source: Adapted from Working with Aboriginal Worldviews, Anne Mead cited in <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-worldviews-vs-western-worldviews>



# Two Different Worldviews (continued)

	Western Worldviews	Indigenous Worldview
<b>Time</b>	Time is usually linearly structured and future orientated (months, years, days etc.)	Time is non-linear and cyclical in nature. The seasons are central to this cyclical concept.
<b>Comfortability</b>	Comfortability is related to how successful you feel you have been in achieving your goals.	Comfortability is measured by the quality of your relationships with people.
<b>Human being</b>	Human beings are the most important in the world.	Human beings are not the most important in the world.
<b>Wealth</b>	Amassing wealth is for personal gain.	Amassing wealth is important for the good of the community

Source: Adapted from Working with Aboriginal Worldviews, Anne Mead cited in <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-worldviews-vs-western-worldviews>

# PLAR Journey: Indigenous Student & Mentor

Challenges	Indigenous Student	Mentor
Colonized Mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Devalued own knowledge</li><li>• Cultural clash-not speak about own selves</li><li>• Lower self-esteem and confidence</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Empowerment and encouragement</li><li>• Gradual emancipation – result to free one selves from structure and take control</li></ul>
Relationship & Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Impact of Residential School, day school and 60 scoop</li><li>• Been colonized by educational practices and still happening today</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gaining trust and relationship</li><li>• Demonstrating and proving genuine respect</li><li>• Being available and capable throughout the course</li></ul>

# PLAR Journey: Indigenous Student & Mentor

Challenges	Indigenous Student	Mentor
Ways of Demonstrating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Academic writing was the only way to demonstrate learning and knowledge</li><li>• Indigenous people rely heavily on oral or story telling</li><li>• Cultural safety, not comfortable to tell personal story</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Co-created mutual learning</li><li>• Translating and converting oral or storytelling to academic writing/presentation</li><li>• Be mindful on accuracy and authentic</li><li>• Learning is ongoing – lifelong learning</li></ul>
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It takes times to establish what PLAR is</li><li>• Season cycles: Hunting, harvesting, and gathering</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Being patient and courteous</li><li>• Going on student's speed</li><li>• Respect student's times</li></ul>



# PLAR Journey: Indigenous Student & Mentor

Challenges	Indigenous Student	Mentor
Life situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Past and present impact of residential school</li><li>• Relatedness – when a critical event occurs, it impacts every part of one's being</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Respect tradition and culture</li><li>• Accept students have “a life”</li></ul>
Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Psychological safety (Mental health: PTSD etc.)</li><li>• Cultural safety</li><li>• Sense of belonging</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure supports in place (Elders and cultural activities)</li><li>• Ensure psychological and cultural safety practices made available</li><li>• Mutual learning – take ownership of learning</li></ul>

# Indigenous PLAR project



Currently working with the communities: Esketemc and T'exelc

Weave what we learned fully into Indigenous PLAR project

Research, reflect and adjust on how PLAR should proceed

Be open to change as each community is different



**Williams Lake**  
FIRST NATION



