

# 2022 Alaska Indigenous Research Program

Getiy ngiġnath ts'i xidixodinigi'anh:  
An introduction to Indigenous  
research methodologies

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**Dgheyay Kaq' dhisdo q'u'isdineyhdi yił.**



**Dena'inaq elnenaq' gheshtnu ch'q'u yeshdu  
'I live and work on the land of the Dena'ina'.**

**Translation: Helen Dick, Sondra Shaginoff-Stuart, Joel Isaak**

Beth *Ginondidoy* Leonard



Member of the Shageluk Tribe  
Second language learner of Deg Xinag  
Doyon Language Revitalization Committee/  
Doyon Languages Online

Academic Background

BA – Linguistics

MEd – Language & Literacy

PhD – Alaska Native & Cross-Cultural Studies

Research – Indigenous Higher Education/IK/Indigenous Sciences

2019 Arctic Indigenous Scholar (ICC/ARCUS)

2014 Fulbright New Zealand U.S. Core Scholar



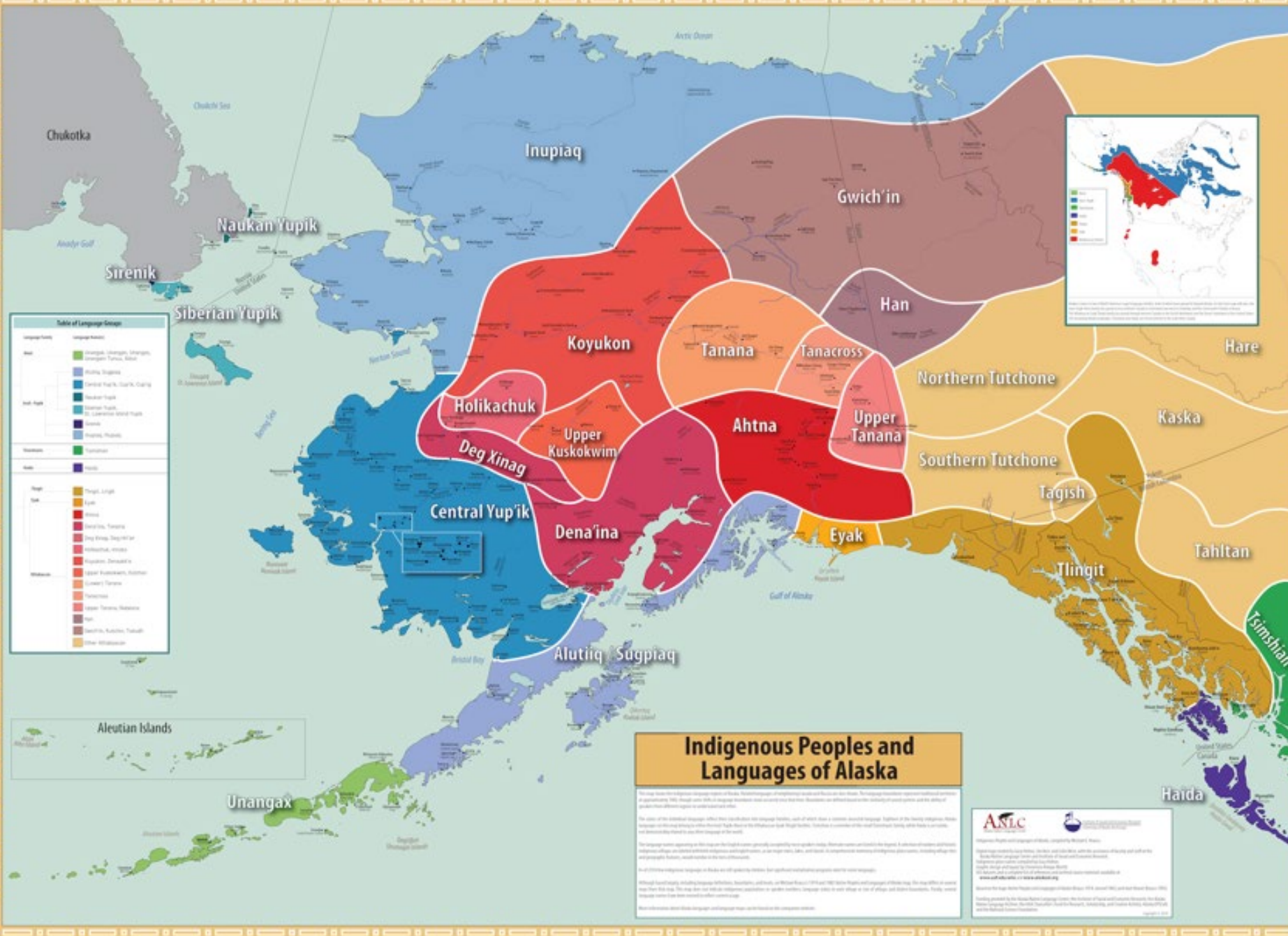
APU Courses

ANS 31000: Indigenous Well-Being & Education

ANS 30500: Indigenous Knowledges & the Sciences

CE 29211: Indigenous Land Management, Stewardship  
& Conservation

CS 22700: History & Culture of Alaska Natives



**Table of Language Groups**

Language Family	Language Name
Aleut	Chukchi, Chugach, Unalut, Agultha, Upiut, Upiutik, Upiutik
	Yupik
	Central Yupik, Coastal, Gwich'in
	Siberian Yupik
	Central Yupik, Central, Coastal, Gwich'in
	Yupik
	Yupik
	Yupik
	Yupik
	Yupik
Athabaskan	Alutiiq, Sugpiaq
	Yupik
	Yupik
	Yupik
	Yupik
	Yupik
	Yupik
	Yupik
	Yupik
	Yupik
Eskimo-Aleut	Yupik
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	Yupik
	Yupik



## Indigenous Peoples and Languages of Alaska

The map shows the indigenous language groups of Alaska. The languages are grouped into Eskimo-Aleut, Athabaskan, and Na-Dene. The map also shows the distribution of the languages. The map is based on the work of the Alaska Native Language Center (ANLC) and the Alaska Native Language Center (ANLC).

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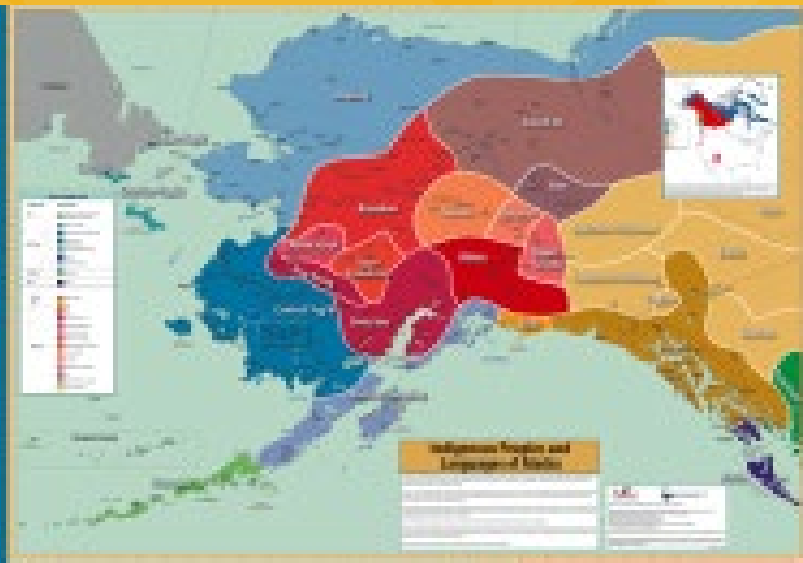
**ANLC** Alaska Native Language Center

University of Alaska Fairbanks

1000 University Drive, Fairbanks, AK 99775-1100

Phone: 907/475-1500

Website: [www.alnclanguagecenter.org](http://www.alnclanguagecenter.org)



a

Massercullen

# Łeggjitno' / Edixi (Shageluk)











Alford, Dan Moonhawk. (1993). A report on the Fetzer Institute: Sponsored dialogues between Western and Indigenous scientists. Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness, 11 April 1993. <http://hilgart.org/enformy/dma-b.htm>

(Sa'ke'j:) When we wear leathers and beads and eagle thongs and things like that, it's not seen as totally ludicrous, as decoration - it's seen as containing something you want to have a relationship with.

How do our ways of knowing and value systems influence our relationships with people and 'more-than-human' beings? (aka other-than-human/non-human)

How might an understanding of Alaska Native or Indigenous methodologies influence your professional interests and research?

Methods (the tools we use to collect data), and methodologies (the theoretical and philosophical considerations of how to engage in the process of doing research)...research methodology drives the assumptions we make and our choice of topic and methods and situates us in a particular geopolitics of time and space. (p. 427)

Brayboy, B., Gough, H., Leonard, B., Solyom, J., and Roehl, R. (2011). "Reclaiming scholarship: Critical Indigenous research methodologies." In S. Lapan et al. (Eds.) *Qualitative Research* (pp. 423-450). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Who sets the research agenda and for what purpose[s]?

Whose questions drive the research and why are these questions relevant?

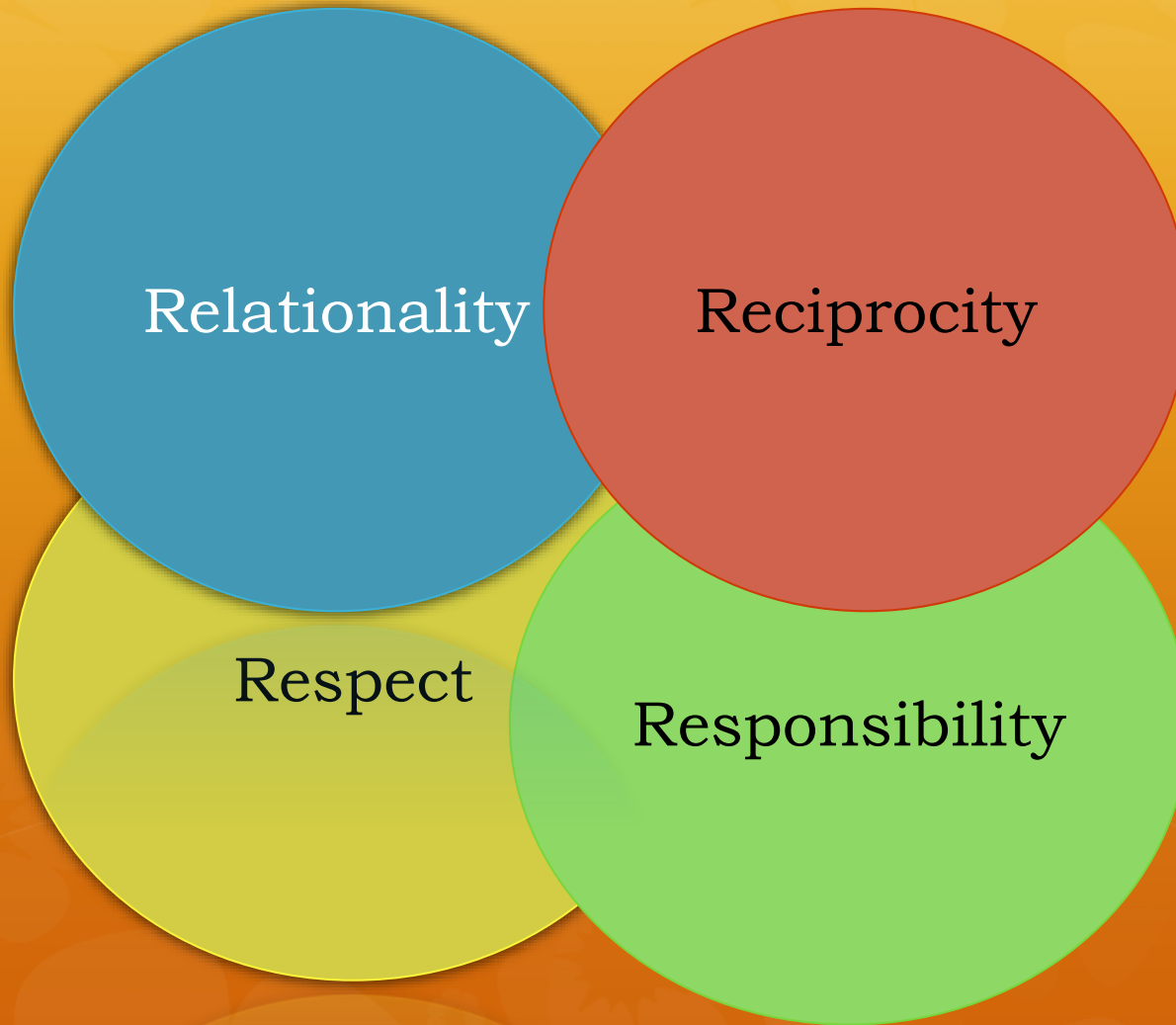
Who controls and is accountable for the research outcomes or 'knowledge gained' during the process?

Does the research benefit Indigenous community/ies? If so, how?

Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S., and Smith, L. T. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of critical and Indigenous methodologies* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press).

Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples* (London: Zed Books Ltd.).

# Indigenous Value Systems



...in the gift economy, the gifts are not free. The essence of the gift is that it creates a set of relationships. The currency of the gift economy is, at its root, **reciprocity**...in a gift economy property has a “bundle of responsibilities” attached. (p. 28)

Kimmerer, R. W. (2013). Braiding sweetgrass, Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge, and the teachings of plants. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions.

Brayboy et al. (2011), in distinguishing a *critical* Indigenous methodology, examine how underlying values and philosophy determines whether research seeks “the Truth, a point of view, a structural cause or an individual failing, an answer, or a question...it determines whether we believe we own what we find or whether we believe we enter into a relationship with those ideas to learn from them, to care for them, and to pass them on to the next generation” (p. 427).

Brayboy, B., Gough, H., Leonard, B., Solyom, J., and Roehl, R. (2011). “Reclaiming scholarship: Critical Indigenous research methodologies.” In S. Lapan et al. (Eds.) *Qualitative Research* (pp. 423-450). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.



...the dominant paradigms build on the fundamental belief that knowledge is an individual entity; the researcher is an individual in search of knowledge, knowledge is something that is gained, and therefore knowledge may be owned by an individual. An Indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational. Knowledge is shared with all of creation. (p. 176)

Wilson, S. (2001). What is an Indigenous research methodology? *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 25(2), 175-179.

Because relationship is a key element of Indigenous epistemic systems, the appropriate use of Indigenous Knowledge is to serve the whole community, not just one individual who uses the knowledge to gain power over others...Knowledge is seen as being given to individuals *so that* they can share it with the community...no one is seen as discovering or creating knowledge.

<https://tapestryinstitute.org/indigenous-knowledge/ik-as-a-process-of-coming-to-know/>

Rigney's (1999) conceptualization of Indigenist research is informed by principles of “resistance,” “political integrity,” and “privileging Indigenous voices” (p. 116).

Rigney, L. (1999). Internationalization of an Indigenous anticolonial cultural critique of research methodologies: A guide to Indigenist research methodology and its principles. *Wicazo Sa Review* 14(2), 109-121.

Rix, Wilson, Sheehan and Tujague (2018) further engage the term *Indigenist* to describe research by advocates and allies “that respects and honors Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing through using methods that are informed by, resonate with, and are driven and supported by Indigenous peoples” (p. 2).

Rix, E. F., Wilson, S., Sheehan, and Tujague, N. (2018). “Indigenist and decolonizing research methodology.” *In Handbook of research methods in health social sciences* (Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.).

# Discourse in the Sciences

Examples from my K12 & higher education experiences:

- Nature exists in a state of competition.
- Animals are non-sentient.
- Humans are the only species to use tools.
- Animals don't 'have' language[s].
- The world can be explained in dualistic or binary terms, e.g. organic/inorganic, animate/inanimate, human/non-human, etc.
- Intelligence is always measured against humans/human achievement.

# Orientations/Values

Why not admit that opportunity and cooperation [in nature] are more likely to abet novelty, innovation, and creation than are struggle and competition?” (Averill quote, p. 61).

Current models are “insufficient for understanding the principles of cooperation and nonviolence” (p. 75).

Medin, D. L. & M. Bang. (2014). Who's asking?: Native science, Western science and science education. Boston, MA: MIT Press.

# Orientations / Values

The “distinction [between basic and applied research] also neatly allows science to shunt any issues involving values to the application side of things, so as to keep basic science pure...Scientists are also adroit in focusing on the uncontentious, positive applications of knowledge rather than the more controversial uses of knowledge” (p. 26).

Why did you go ahead with nuclear energy without first having solved the nuclear waste problem?...it is interesting, it is fascinating, it is fun” (Nader quote, p. 60).

Medin, D. L. & M. Bang. (2014). Who's asking?: Native science, Western science and science education. Boston, MA: MIT Press.

In some Native languages the term for plants translates to “those who take care of us.”

Kimmerer, R. W. (2013). Braiding sweetgrass, Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge, and the teachings of plants. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions.

...from a Western perspective, plants have little agency. This logic has arguably held back emerging research on plant abilities and intelligence, as Western scientists now understand that some plants can recognize and selectively favor kin and that many plants can signal the presence of threats.

Bang, M., Marin, A. & D. Medin (2018). If Indigenous peoples stand with the sciences, will scientists stand with us? *Daedalus*, 147(2), 148-159.

[https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED\\_A\\_0048](https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED_A_0048).

Note an example of [perhaps unquestioned] theory, principle, premise, assumption or value in your study area or discipline. How do these influence research?

### **Examples from education**

- *Race to the Top*
- *At-risk*
- *Disadvantaged*
- *Formal/Informal education*
- *Underprepared*

### **Examples from linguistics, language documentation**

- *Language death*
- *Moribund languages*
- *Proto-Athabaskan*
- *Fluent/non-fluent*



**Chelsea Bond, Senior Research Fellow and Associate Professor,  
School of Social Science, University of Queensland**

*Indigenous Human Flourishing*

*Critical Indigenous Health Humanities*

- We have been disciplined by our discipline
- Health and Indigeneity are seen as mutually exclusive.
- [Science] has excluded us from the category of what it is to be human.
- Health has been a racist technology that has interrogated our bodies in order to prove how inferior and incapable we are.

Bond, C. (2018). To be healthy and human: Making the case for an Indigenist health humanities. Keynote address, Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga 8th Biennial International Indigenous Research Conference. New Zealand, University of Auckland.

Our futures are *not* hopelessly bound in the absence of a material cure for DNA methylation. Healing rituals work, and they work because of the actions of our living relations who are animals, plants, waters, stones, spirits, and stories. As Indigenous people, we have knowledge and ways that give us the power to bypass material mechanisms and free ourselves and our children from the impact of trauma.

Adams, D. H. (2016). In service to the land: Indigenous research methods in the natural sciences. Tapestry Institute Occasional Papers 2(1b).  
<http://tapestryinstitute.org/occasional-papers/in-service-to-the-landindigenous-research-methods-in-the-natural-sciences-vol-2-no-1b-october-2016/>

...these results demonstrate that Indigenous language use, as a marker of cultural persistence, is a strong predictor of health and wellbeing in Canada's Aboriginal communities.

Hallett, D. & C. E. Lalonde. (2007). Aboriginal language knowledge and youth suicide. *Cognitive Development* 22, pp. 393-399.

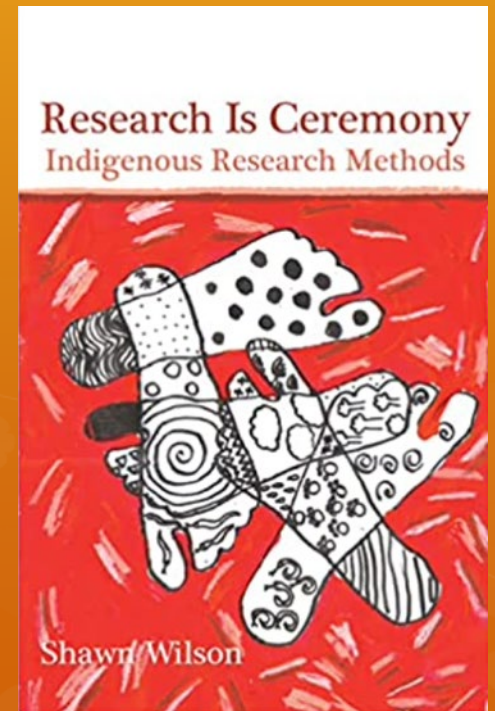
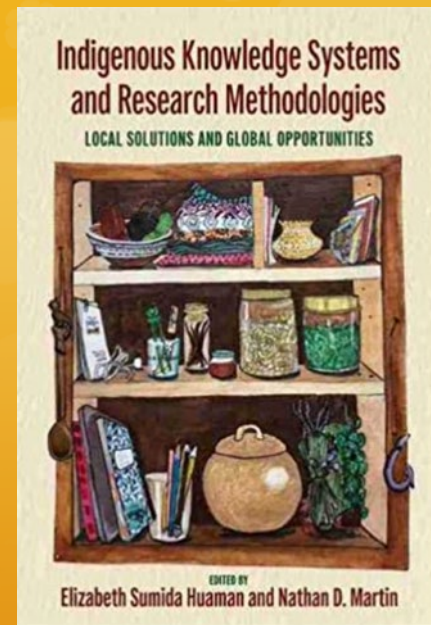
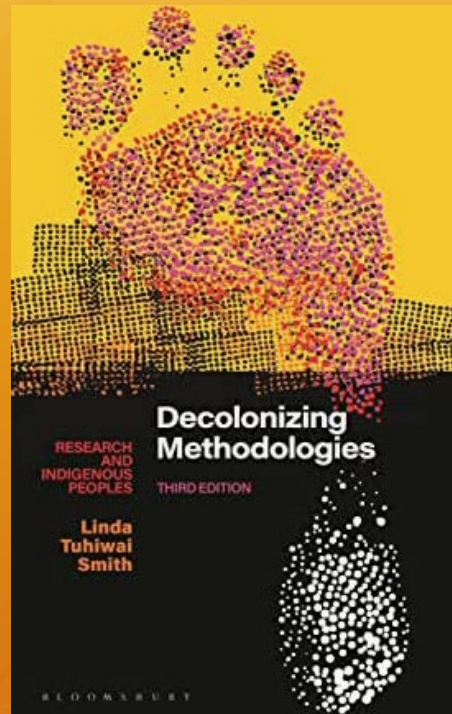
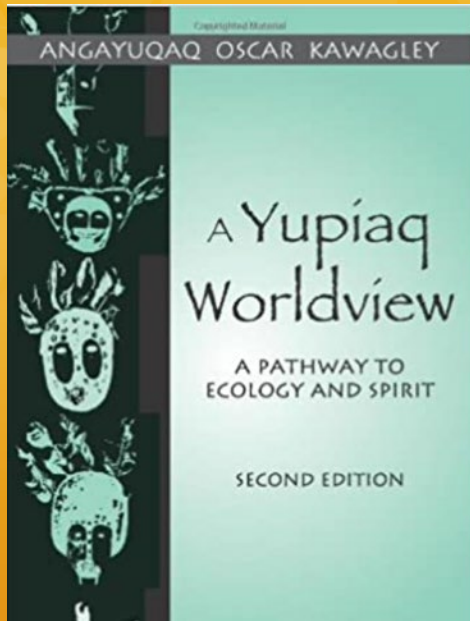
The hypothesis that this third and final part of our report is meant to test is that some First Nations communities, but not others, succeed in providing their members with an otherwise missing measure of cultural continuity, essential to understanding themselves as connected to their own past and building futures (p. 13).

Chandler M.J. & C. Lalonde. (1998). Cultural continuity as a hedge against suicide in Canada's First Nations. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 35(2), 191-219.

I think that once we start to see the world as gifts from more-than-human relatives, then it brings us to gratitude for the gifts of the land. And my hope and challenge to all of us is that as we give gratitude to the land, could we also shape our lives so that we live in such a way that the land might be grateful for us.



Kimmerer, R. W. (2021). Gifts of the land: A guided nature tour with Robin Wall Kimmerer. The Commons KU.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxJUFGIPYn4>



# Recommended Resources

- Baxter, A. (2021). Talk of Alaska: Confronting the legacy of boarding schools in Alaska. June 18, 2021. Anchorage: Alaska Public Media. [https://www.alaskapublic.org/2021/06/18/confronting-the-legacy-of-boarding-schools-in-alaska/?fbclid=IwAR3oddQASoPsaxHzCGYNxmWsl9CLjm5lcd3zC\\_8Cn1PIgO4NegT2V7RubRE](https://www.alaskapublic.org/2021/06/18/confronting-the-legacy-of-boarding-schools-in-alaska/?fbclid=IwAR3oddQASoPsaxHzCGYNxmWsl9CLjm5lcd3zC_8Cn1PIgO4NegT2V7RubRE)
- Bond, C. (2018). To be healthy and human: Making the case for an Indigenist health humanities. Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga 8th Biennial International Indigenous Research Conference – Keynote. Auckland, NZ: Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga. Accessed via <http://mediacentre.maramatanga.ac.nz/content/dr-chelsea-bond-be-healthy-and-human-making-case-indigenist-health-humanities>
- Emery, T., C. Cookson-Cox & N. Raerino. (2015). *Te waiata a hinetitama – Hearing the heartsong: Whakamate I roto I a te arawa – A Māori suicide research project*. Auckland, New Zealand: Ngā Pae o Te Māramatanga.
- Hallett, D. & C. E. Lalonde. (2007). Aboriginal language knowledge and youth suicide. *Cognitive Development* 22, pp. 393-399.
- Jackson, M. (2017). Why did Māori never have prisons? [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=moana+jackson](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=moana+jackson)

## Recommended Resources

- [K.I.N. Knowledge in Indigenous Networks. \(2020\). Webinar 2020: Accessing deep Indigenous knowing amidst COVID-19.](#)
- Morse, G. S., J. McIntyre & J. King. (2016). Positive psychology and Native Americans. *In* E. C. Chang, C. A. Downey, J. K. Hirsch & N. J. Lin (Eds.) *Positive psychology in racial and ethnic groups: Theory, research and practice* (pp. 109-128).
- Ullrich, J. (2019). For the love of our children: An Indigenous connectedness framework. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 15(2), 121-130.
- Walters, K. (2009). Why do the research on unspoken issues? Critical and sensitive research issues symposium. Ngā Kaupapa Muna - The unspoken issues: Violence and abuse in our communities. Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Media Centre (39:00). Accessed 12/3/20: <http://mediacentre.maramatanga.ac.nz/content/why-do-research-unspoken-issues>