

TBESTAWAW8GAN

Listening to the Realities of Indigenous Students to Prevent and Counter Discrimination

Awareness Resource



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The awareness resource **TBESTAWAW8GAN - Listening to Indigenous Student Realities to Prevent and Counter Discrimination** was created by all the following people whom we warmly thank.

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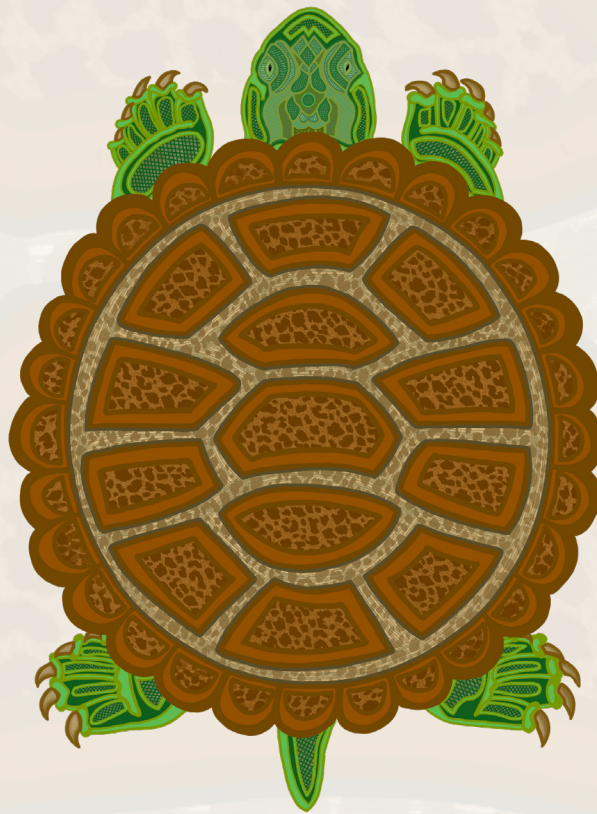
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AN INDIGENOUS STUDENT'S SMUDGE



Vicky Boldo
Cree Métis
Assistant Director of the
Indigenous Initiatives
Bishop's University



Vicky - Every day is a gift. As a student your days are packed with demands. One thing I have come to know is that my best days... are when I wake up and set intention...when I make time to align the heart and the head and when I give thanks to Creator for all that sustains us, for all those that have come before us and for the generations to come.

As a student, you are the prayers of your ancestors, past, present and future. Your words, actions, intentions and relationships are the prayers for those to come. We are living in times of injustice, division and violence and our Mother Earth is working so hard to keep us safe and cared for. Colonialism, systemic oppression and negative human attitudes and behaviors flow contrary to Indigenous worldviews and natural law.

I am blessed each day and it is an honor and a privilege to work in a post-secondary environment with such beautiful young individuals. I strive daily to accompany, support and advocate to the best of my being. I believe in you, trust you and stand with you in all that you are!

In your morning practice – whatever that looks like for you, be it smudging, meditation, prayers, journaling ... clear the mind so that you can be mindful and remain in gratitude in all your interactions throughout the day with the lands, the waters and all your relations; don't forget that this also applies to self ...

Clear the eyes to see the beauty in all things; and to see your inner and outer beauty...

Clear the ears to actively listen and hear what is being shared and also to honor your inner promptings and intuit...

Clear the throat, mouth, tongue and lips, for conscious and healthy breathing...to savor all that is nourishing and to speak truth honestly with kindness and conviction; and to speak kindly of and to self

Clear the heart to feel the gift of life and to be able to have love, empathy, compassion and patience in all interactions with all your relatives and with self

Clear the legs and feet to walk in a good way...with integrity, respect and humility.

In times of self-doubt, fear, fatigue, bullying and adversity, do your best to remember that you are not alone... You are deeply rooted and originate from ancient knowings. Generational wisdom, care and resiliency carries us, we are NOT our trauma! Being our best selves, and being accountable to self and all that supports and surrounds us is the medicine to counter discrimination, violence of all kinds and exclusion.

Sawêyimik Kahkiyaw Nitôtêminânak Mîna Niwâhkômâkaninânak Kinanâskomitinân

Bless all our friends and relatives, thank you!





INTRODUCTION



Patricia-Anne Blanchet, Ally

Advisor in Indigenous Pedagogy
Faculty of Education, University of Sherbrooke

Valérie Laforce, W8banaki from W8linak

Co-Founder, Niaka Creative Graphic Design Agency
Educational Services Coordinator, W8banaki



INTRODUCTION



Valérie - Kwaï mziwi, nd'aliwizi, greetings to all. I'm Valérie Laforce, a member of the W8banaki Nation and originally from the W8linak community. I am co-founder and co-owner of the Creative Agency Niaka.

Patricia-Anne - Kwaï, hello, my name is Patricia-Anne Blanchet and I'm an Advisor in Indigenous education at the Faculty of Education at the University of Sherbrooke's Faculty of Education. In a posture of cultural humility, I walk as an ally to First Peoples to include Indigenous perspectives in education.

We are pleased to present the ***Tbestawaw8gan Awareness Tool: Listening to the Realities of Indigenous Students to Prevent and Counter Discrimination.***



The mission of the ***Tbestawaw8gan*** collective, which I coordinate, is to design culturally relevant and meaningful educational resources in digital form. It is made up by Indigenous and non-Indigenous professionals and students from several institutions in higher education in the vast ancestral territory of the W8banaki Nation, the Ndakina. Its members are: UdeS, Bishop's University, Champlain College-Lennoxville, Cégep de Sherbrooke, W8banaki, Kiuna College and the Niaka graphic design agency.

This bilingual resource is aimed at all students, educators and professionals in Quebec CEGEPs and universities, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. It aims to raise awareness in higher education circles of the various types of discrimination that Indigenous students can suffer. This resource also aims to equip Indigenous students with ways of reacting and intervening in the event of bullying or discrimination. The platform is freely accessible and transferable to all post-secondary educational environments in Quebec, and beyond.

Systemic injustices stemming from colonialism and the Indian Act still in force continue to affect Indigenous families, and the pursuit of a post-secondary education entails many obstacles and challenges linked in particular to the intergenerational trauma of the residential school system.

For many Indigenous students, educational trajectories are discontinuous and fraught with systemic obstacles. For example, the lack of access to educational institutions in remote Indigenous communities leads to hypermobility and multiple school transitions, in addition to numerous significant cultural shocks. In addition, the high cost of education can hold back Indigenous people, who often must concile work, family and education. There is also a lack of support and resources in cegeps and universities, such as culturally and linguistically appropriate programs. These barriers can affect the motivation and confidence of Indigenous students and have a significant impact on their ability to pursue higher education and ultimately access quality jobs that match their needs. It is essential to recognize them and work to eliminate them to ensure equitable education for all.

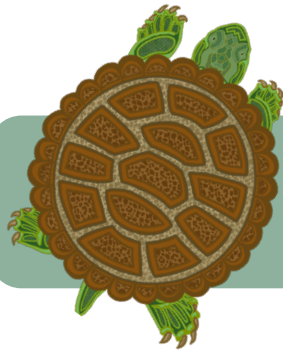
So it is important to work to provide educational environments that are relevant, safe, and culturally consistent with the experiences and values of Indigenous students.

Valérie - Often, the microaggressions suffered by Indigenous students are quite involuntary on the part of the person with whom they are dealing. Rather, it stems from a lack of knowledge of the historical and contemporary realities of the First Peoples, leading to discomfort or awkwardness that can be very hurtful.

Patricia-Anne - The aim of this resource is to help all those concerned gain a better understanding of the discrimination that Indigenous students may experience during their academic career, so that they can better detect and deconstruct it.

Traveling on the back of the Tolba turtle, you will learn through video clips of the several types and levels of discrimination and intimidation that Indigenous students in higher education are likely to encounter. Examples and advice will be offered by representatives of the various post-secondary institutions who have worked together on this project. In the form of comic strips, you will explore scenarios based on real-life discriminatory experiences of Indigenous students.

Valérie - The symbolism of the turtle represents Mother Earth, wisdom. On its back, we find the lunar calendar, the number of scales corresponding to the number of moons in a year: 13 large scales for the 13 moons of the year, 28 small scales going around for 28 days of each moon. We advise you to travel in this resource with a posture of cultural humility, as a continual learner with an open heart and mind, putting aside the cultural tickets, stereotypes and prejudices that might color your view.



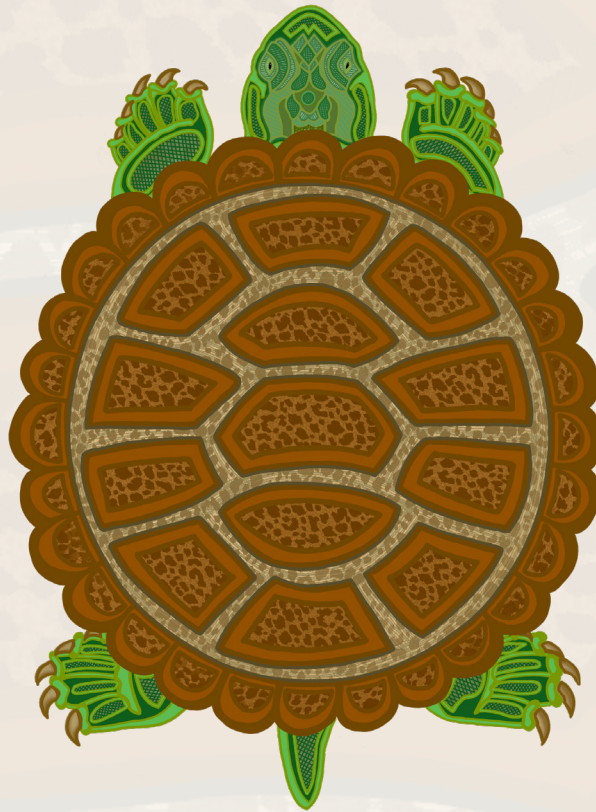
When we integrate and graphically adapt cultural elements into our creative process, when some may be sensitive or even beyond our knowledge, it's important to refer to the right resources such as the knowledge carrier.

We hope that your exploration of this resource will be most enlightening and enriching, and that it will contribute to the well-being and success of Indigenous students by alleviating obstacles to their academic progress and equipping them to reach their full potential.

Kchi Wliwni



CULTURAL BIAS, STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES




Lois Marie Dana-Schaefer

Penobscot Nation
Student life advisor
Indigenous and Intercultural services
Champlain's College-Lennoxville

Julie-Ann Vollant

Innu from Mani Utenam
Undergraduate student in psychology
& Indigenous studies
Bishop's University



CULTURAL BIAS, STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES

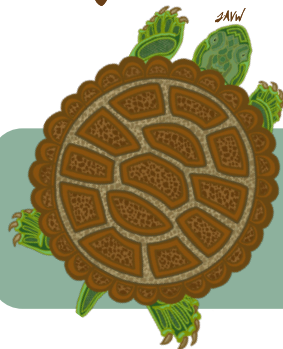


Lois - Kwe, nd'aliwizi Lois, Dana, n'wigi Wabanaki, Alnabe Mə̀nəhan Panawahpskewi nəya. Hi, my name is Lois Dana. My family is from Indian Island before located in the state of Maine. I live on the Wabanaki here in Quebec. I work at Champlain College. I'm a student life counselor working with Indigenous students here.

Julie-Ann – Kuei, Julie-Ann Vollant-Whittemore. Hi, my name is Julie-Ann Vollant-Whittemore. I have a native name. It's Kamenekuanet which means the one that sleeps well. I'm Innu. I'm originally from the Mani Utenam reserve, which is located in the North Shore region of Quebec, which is 15 minutes away from the city of Sept-Iles. Not a lot of people know. And I'm a Bishop's student, a psychology major, and a minor of Indigenous studies.



Lois - Implicit cultural bias relates to our assumptions and unconscious beliefs about a group based on the values that we learn from society. Bias can impact our understanding and interpretations of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples. Our cultural background is affected by what we were taught in school, our parents' or family's attitudes, our religious background, or representations of Indigenous people that we see in the mass media or society. Our cultural bias can also come from what we did not learn about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples. We may lack knowledge about the eleven Nations and territories within the province of Quebec.



Our cultural bias can stop us from wanting to learn more or to keep us from experiencing something new and valuable in another culture. While implicit bias is not obvious, it can lead to harmful and discriminatory outcomes.

Julie-Ann - Explicit bias reveals itself in the oversimplification of assumptions that we make about other cultural groups. These assumptions are called stereotypes and appear in our conversations with others. Stereotypes are often unfair and focus on the negatives. Statements and questions that reveal an assumption can be harmful **THOUGH OUR INTENTION MAY NOT BE.** ["You do not look Indigenous!"](#) is a biased statement revealing an assumption about how Indigenous people look. Amnistie International, 2021, reminds us that Hollywood cinema has helped shape society's representations of a "typical " Indigenous person. I might add that the few Indigenous characters portrayed in Hollywood were played by non-Indigenous actors.

Lois - In the book [Aboriginal Peoples : Myths and Realities](#), Pierre Lepage (2019) mentions common questions revealing the misunderstandings between Quebecers and Indigenous Peoples: "Shouldn't everyone in Quebec have the same rights?" "In an era of globalization, wouldn't it be simpler if Indigenous Peoples integrated into Quebec society?" "Weren't land claims settled a long time ago?" "Don't they pose a new threat to Québec's territorial integrity?" Lepage explains that without education and historical truths, the realities of Indigenous Peoples cannot be appreciated and the biases and beliefs that are prevalent in Quebec culture cannot be addressed.

Julie-Ann - "Why do Indigenous students attend our school when they can go elsewhere?" "Why do Indigenous students have their own lounge?" "How did you end up here?" "If you are missing home, why don't you go home." This is a sad but common discourse overheard in college hallways or asked as innocent questions.

Examples:

Lois – An example of unconscious cultural bias and anti-Indigenous bias is students not wanting to learn more about Indigenous Peoples and histories after one or two classes on the subject. Non-Indigenous students complain about having already learned about residential schools, forced relocations, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, genocide, or Indigenous histories. One common statement is, "Why are Indigenous people are not getting over it?" The truth is colonization is ongoing and we are not only learning history from 400 + years ago, but we are learning our grandparent's and parent's history, and even our own history.

Julie-Ann : A second example of explicit cultural bias is a negative statement regarding Indigenous medicines or food: "That smells!" That does not taste good! If you comment negatively on the smell of burning sage, the taste of cedar tea, the flavor of moose meat, or the appearance of beaver meat, you are attacking something that is valuable and precious to another human being. Our implicit

biases influence what we feel is superior. Yes, discrimination can show up in relation to smells and food.

Advice:

Julie-Ann - Ask thoughtful questions! Reserve assumptions. Choose cultural humility. It is okay to not know everything, but realize that your statements can lead to harm, discomfort, and discrimination.

Listen to Indigenous voices and experts. Learn history and stories. Ask thoughtful questions. Read the Indigenous *Ally Toolkit* to learn more about how to be an ally and learn about which harmful statements to avoid. Aministie International's Booklet: *Tu n'as pas l'air autochtone* gives other stereotypes to avoid saying aloud. *Mikana's Decolonial Toolbox: Educational Pathway* document provides helpful terminology for decolonizing and resources for learning.

Lois - We can move from cultural bias to cultural competence through humility. Mik'maw Elder Albert Marshall, from Eskasoni First Nation, coined the phrase *Etuaptmumk/Two-eyed seeing*. This phrase guides us to include multiple perspectives in our learning journey. We want to keep Indigenous ways of learning and knowledge and learn to see knowledge from Western and mainstream ways- learning with both eyes. With this two-eyed seeing, we can create inclusive discourse that does not reflect only one belief, assumption, culture, or worldview. Wliwni

**Isaak Lachapelle-Gill, Guardian of the land,
W8banaki from Odanak**

What was your experience as an Indigenous student in the Cégep system?

Isaak - The more I went to school, the more I felt alone and separated from my community. I was not outgoing enough to go to the Indigenous lounge.





I felt torn away from my community, and I felt like if I had graduated from my program, I wouldn't have returned to my community because all the jobs in cinema were in Montreal, so I left.

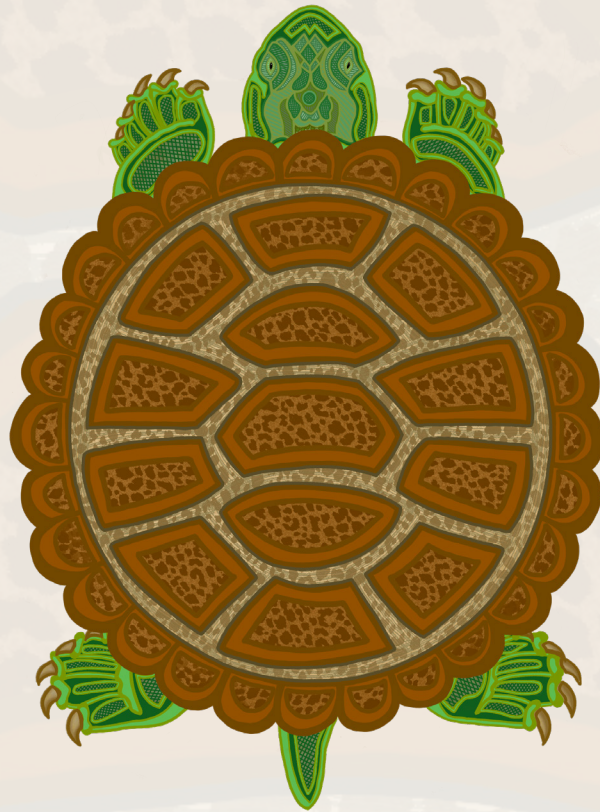
I told people I was Abenaki, but not all the time. Some people thought it was cool, but others did not believe me or would argue with me about it, or they would ask me about taxes and hunting and fishing rights. After people knew I was Indigenous, some of them started using me as the token Indian, at least that's how it felt at the time.

I was one of the only students in my program that was Indigenous. I felt singled out... and more alone because I felt singled out. I didn't finish my program.

I feel like the more they learn about us, the more they have to do, so they are uncomfortable. "



TOKENISM AND INSTRUMENTALIZATION



Chloé Corbeil-Smith

Kanien'kehá:ka from Six Nations
of the Grand River
Indigenous Affairs Coordinator
Faculty of Law, University of Sherbrooke

Tammy Papatie

Anishnaabe from
Lac Simon
Student in law
Faculty of Law, University
of Sherbrooke

Guy Drouin

Ally of First Peoples
First Peoples Partnership
Coordinator
Faculty of and Health Sciences
University of Sherbrooke

TOKENISM AND INSTRUMENTALIZATION



Chloé - My name is Chloé Corbeil-Smith. My family comes from the Six Nations of the Grand River and I am the Indigenous affairs coordinator at the University of Sherbrooke.

Tammy : Kwe, I am Tammy Papatie and I study at the Faculty of Law. I come from the Anishinaabek community of Lac Simon.

Guy : Hi, Guy Drouin, First People's partnership coordinator, at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. I consider myself as a non-Indigenous ally in the cause of First People's rights.

Definitions :



Chloé - Tokenism or facade inclusion, in the Indigenous context, is the practice of symbolically including and using Indigenous people, their image or culture in a project, without giving them the opportunity to actively participate or make decisions. It's often an attempt on the part of an organization to be benevolent, and to create an appearance of reconciliation or inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, when in application the benefits are rather superficial.

Tammy - To this can be added instrumentalization, which is the act of including Indigenous perspectives on a project, program or event, but very often for marketing or promotional purposes, in order to receive grants, or to improve one's own image.



Guy - Tokenism and instrumentalization are often recognized by a lack of reciprocity and sincere collaboration. It's as if we're only interested in the person's status for the benefits we can gain from it. These situations can spoil the collaboration and it necessarily spoils the relationship and leaves one feeling used.

Examples :

Chloé - A researcher might try to include Indigenous student in his or her research project, just to have a better chance of getting a research grant. This creates situations where Indigenous students sometimes feel like they're walking around with a «dollar» sign on their head.

Tammy - A professor might also refer to an Indigenous student in the class and ask them to give their perspective or talk about Indigenous realities to the rest of the class, when they don't necessarily feel ready to talk about this, don't feel they have the expertise to talk about these issues, or just don't feel like it.

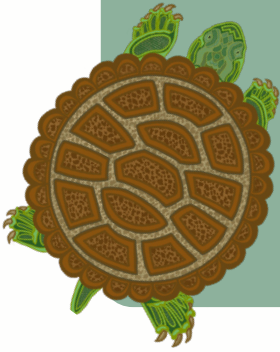
Advice :

Chloé - As an organization, it would be important to ask ourselves why we want to include First People's voices or perspectives, and how we want to go about it in order to collaborate in a meaningful way and not just pay lip service to inclusion. That's why it's important to communicate clearly and transparently with the people involved in the role they might have in the project and their expectations.

Tammy - And you know what? As a student, you also have ways of protecting yourself from this kind of situation.

If you are approached to participate in a project, event or program, take the time to talk with the people who have contacted you.

Guy - To assess genuine willingness to collaborate, you can ask yourself the following Who/Where/When/How/Why questions.



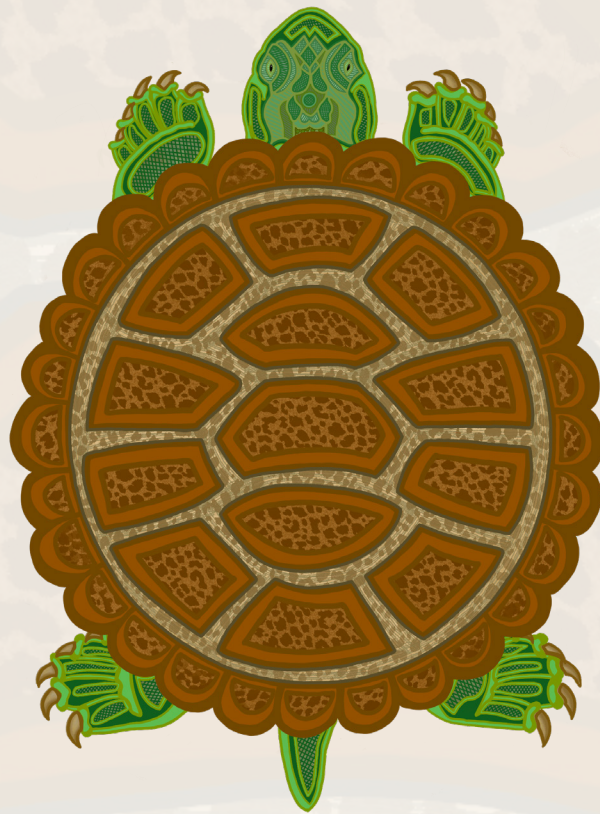
- **Who** will be involved in the project, and for whom?
- **Where** will the meetings take place: virtual, face-to-face, will I have to travel?
- **When** is this project going to take place, do I have to make myself available for a particular day? How many hours of work are expected of me for this project? Is it a recurring project? Only once? Do I have to be available on a particular day?
- **How** will I be compensated for my participation? Will my travel expenses be covered?
- **And the most important question of all is why!** Why do you want to include me or Indigenous perspectives in your project? And what are the advantages and disadvantages for you, for me and for First Peoples?

Chloé - These questions will give you a clear picture of what's expected of you, and make it easy to identify whether a project is tending towards the instrumentalization or front-of-house inclusion of Indigenous perspectives. It's also an opportunity for you to identify whether you really want to invest your time in this project, and whether it corresponds to your interests, values and aptitudes.

Guy - These questions will enable you to assess the seriousness of the person, then the quality of the preparation of the person who's going to contact you. They'll also tell you what's expected of you, and whether you're willing to invest your time in this project. To know if it meets your values, corresponds to your values, then corresponds to your identity, respects your identity.



CULTURAL APPROPRIATION VS. CULTURAL APPRECIATION



Shawna Jerome

Mi'qmaq from Gesgapegiag
Coordinator of Indigenous
Student Support Services,
Bishop's University

Brayden Hottot

Ojibwe from White Sand First Nation
Indigenous student's life coordinator
Bishop's University



CULTURAL APPROPRIATION VS. CULTURAL APPRECIATION

Shawna - Kwe, I am Shawna Jerome and I come from the Mi'qmaq community of Gesgapegiag. I am Coordinatoor of Indigenous Support Services at Bishop's University.



Brayden - Hello my name is Brayden. I'm Ojibwe from Thunderbay. My community is WhiteSand First Nation adn I work at Bishop's as the Coordinator of Indigenous Support Services.

Brayden - Cultural appropriation is a phenomenon where elements of a marginalized group's culture are adopted by a dominant group, often without respecting cultural contexts and meanings. In the Indigenous context, cultural appropriation occurs when elements of Indigenous culture are taken, used, or commercialized without permission or participation of Indigenous peoples.

Instead of cultural appropriation, you may develop your cultural appreciation, on the other hand, is the recognition and understanding of the cultural practices of a marginalized group, with respect to context and cultural meanings. Cultural appreciation involves engaging with Indigenous Peoples, listening and learning from their perspectives and respecting their rights and self-determination.

Examples:

Brayden - A clear illustration of appropriation in post-secondary settings involves costumes and themed parties. When individuals dress in costumes like Pocahontas and go a step further by embodying stereotypes of the culture in their behavior, it can create a highly uncomfortable atmosphere for others.



Shawna - This scenario reflects a lack of comprehension and often stems from limited exposure to Indigenous cultures. Such situations can place an Indigenous individual in an uncomfortable position. Confronting the person may risk exposing them to potential conflict, while not addressing the behavior could perpetuate harm.

Brayden - Another instance of cultural appropriation may manifest in crafts and traditions. Like if someone invites a non-Indigenous guest to a sweat lodge, sharing the cultural experience, and the guest proceeds to independently initiate their own sweats without consulting elders, it represents a form of appropriation. There are numerous examples, ranging from less extreme instances like engaging in traditional crafts to more severe cases like the sweat lodge. Things like dream catchers can often be seen inside of "spiritual" gift shops.

Shawna - Utilizing Indigenous symbolism and art inside of corporate or institutional design without consulting Indigenous people. Cultural appropriation involves appropriating elements from a culture that is not one's own, including distinct items, aesthetics, or spiritual practices. This act mimics these cultural aspects without seeking consent, permission, or establishing any cultural context or relationship with the items or practices.

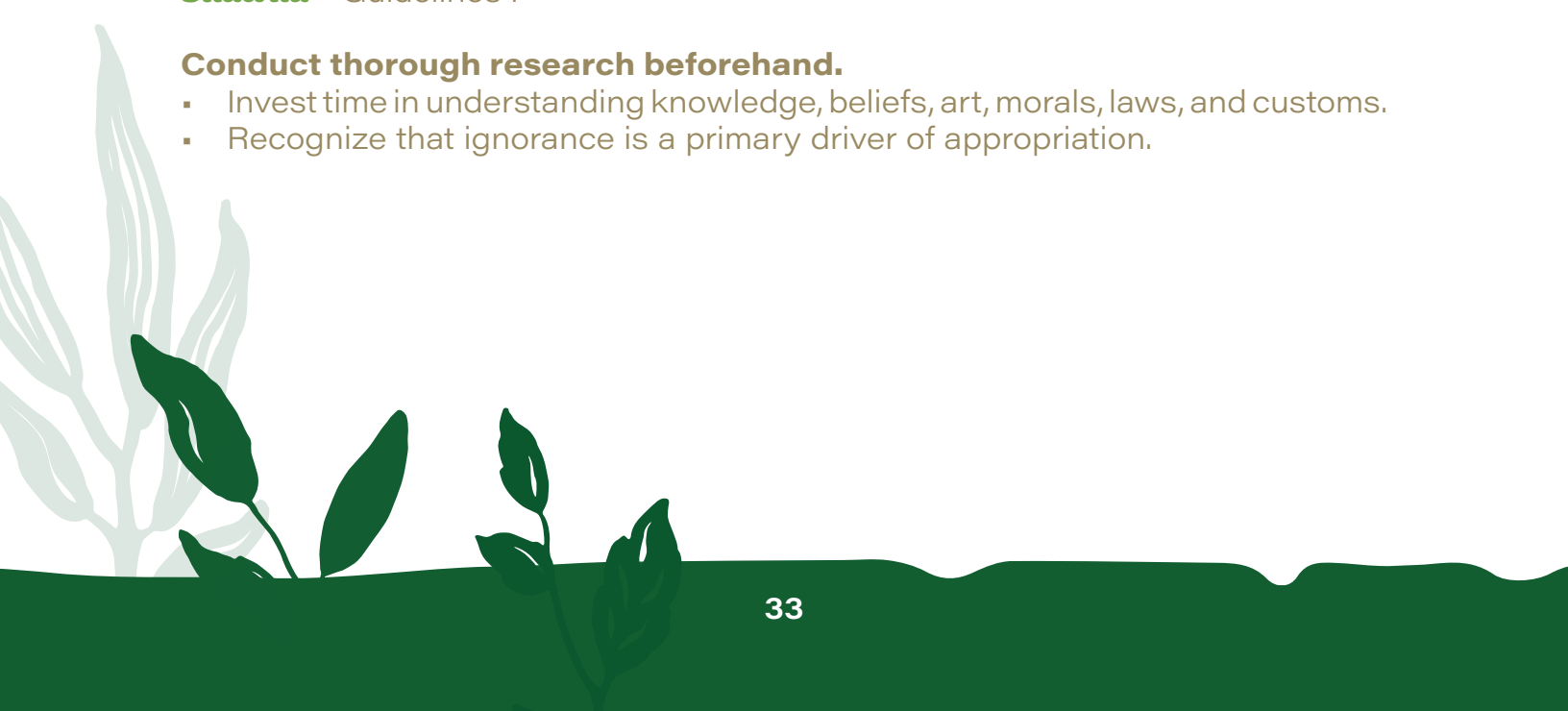
Brayden - The motivation behind such appropriation is typically driven by personal interest, financial gain, a desire for popularity, or simply an aesthetic preference. This can be avoided by simply involving Indigenous consultants from the nation you are hoping to represent in the projects being done.

Advice :

Shawna - Guidelines :

Conduct thorough research beforehand.

- Invest time in understanding knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, and customs.
- Recognize that ignorance is a primary driver of appropriation.





Brayden - Here I share with you some suggestions of self-reflection through questions:

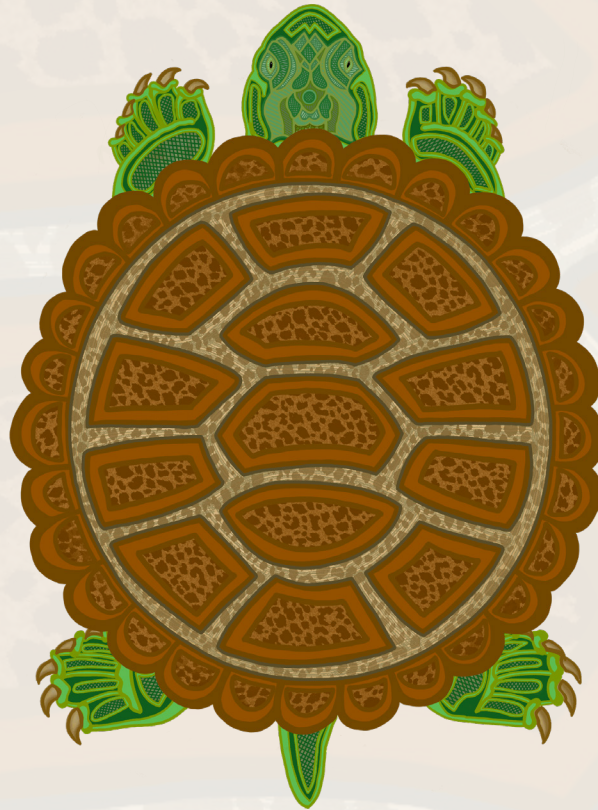
- Comprehend the cultural significance of what you are borrowing.
- Evaluate whether your words or attire perpetuate stereotypes of a particular culture.
- Align your actions with cultural traditions.
- Assess whether you actively engage, promote, and share the benefits of what you are using.
- Consider who ultimately benefits from the cultural exchange.

Shawna - And then an example of appreciation over appropriation is beaded earrings. We are seeing this as a very common form of artwork that is being present right now. And a form of appropriation would be that you go online and buy beaded earrings from an unknown source instead of going to a local Indigenous artist to buy these beaded earrings. And if somebody asks you about these beaded earrings, making sure you tell them that they come from an actual Indigenous person who either gifted to you, or that you encourage their business by buying something from them instead of saying that you've made them yourself.





ESSENTIALIZATION AND GENERALIZATIONS



Léonie Thibodeau

Anishinaabek from Pikogan
Bachelor and Teacher of Social and
Educational Adaptation graduate
Faculty of Education,
University of Sherbrooke

Kim Arsenault

W8banaki from W8linak
Film making student
Kiuna Institution



ESSENTIALIZATION AND GENERALIZATIONS

Léonie - Kwe, my name is Léonie Thibodeau, I'm a member of the Anishinaabe Nation, from the community of Pikogan. I have a bachelor's degree in social and academic adaptation.



Kim - Kwai mziwi, my name is Kim Arsenault and I'm from the Abenaki community in W8linak. I study Indigenous Film Production at Kiuna Institution.

Léonie - The purpose of this video is to make you aware of two closely related concepts that can be prejudicial to Indigenous students: essentialization and generalization.

Kim - To do this, it's important to remember the words stereotype and prejudice, since these concepts stem directly from the preconceived ideas that some people have about First Peoples, and which we have a collective responsibility to deconstruct.



Léonie - «The concept of Indigenous essentialization refers to the process by which First Peoples are reduced to general, simplified and stereotyped characteristics or traits, neglecting the diversity of their cultures, histories and realities».

Kim - It's important to consider the complexity of distinct knowledge, know-how and know-how-to-be of nations, communities, clans, families and individuals.»

Kim - Generalization, for its part, is a phenomenon that consists of applying stereotypes or prejudices to all First Peoples students in a simplified, even unfair way, without taking into account their cultural and individual diversity».

Léonie - Unfortunately, First Peoples are sometimes perceived through a uniform and reductive identity, based on generalities and preconceived ideas, rather than recognizing the uniqueness of their history, culture and language forged right on their territory and manifesting itself in various ways throughout time.

Examples :

Léonie - It can sometimes be difficult to recognize the concept of essentialization. We've outlined some of the situations in which essentialization takes place:

Kim - Reducing First Peoples cultures to a few emblematic elements, such as traditional costumes or musical instruments.

Léonie - Considering the First Peoples as homogeneous, ignoring their cultural and linguistic differences.

Kim - Considering First Peoples as beings «frozen» in time, without taking into account their evolution and ability to adapt to change.

Léonie - Using generalities to describe First Peoples such as presenting them as hunter-gatherers or warriors.

Kim - Presenting the First Peoples as «authentic» beings, in opposition to the «artificial» culture of Western societies, without taking into account the evolution and diversity of their culture.

Léonie - Asserting that First Peoples have a «natural» relationship with the environment, presenting them as guardians of nature or beings in harmony with their environment.

Advice :

Léonie - Here are some specific and less specific tips that will help, in the near future, not to provoke or reproduce such discrimination:

Kim - Firstly, when generalizing, always be aware and vigilant of what you're saying, to avoid the risk of potentially discriminatory slips.

Léonie - What's more, if you witness a comment that may offend an Indigenous student, even unintentionally, play your role as an ally by educating your fellow man in order to defuse the escalation and put historical and contemporary truths into perspective! We need it!

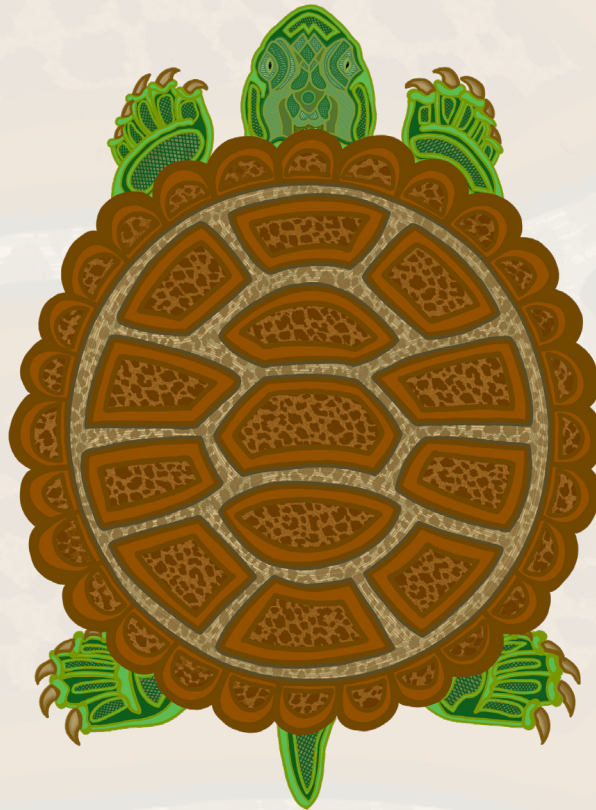
Kim - It's also important to keep in mind that the student doesn't necessarily have a traditional background. It's important to remind yourself and others not to assume that all people from Indigenous backgrounds have the same traditions and experiences. Each nation has its own practices. It's also important to remember that around half of Indigenous students grew up in an urban environment, which complicates their relationship with their community and culture.

Léonie - Offer authentic, relevant and validated educational and cultural resources. Choose the most local ones possible, which means maintaining relationships based on reciprocity with neighboring communities.

Kim - Finally, in terms of behaviors to avoid, encourage students to discuss their interests and skills openly. We encourage open discussion, which is essential to understanding the different types of discrimination.



NEOCOLONIALISM



Sabrina Dixon

Crie from Waswanipi
Humanities student
Cegep of Sherbrooke

LJ Houde

Ally of First Peoples
Humanities student
Cegep of Sherbrooke

Caroline Desruisseaux

Ally of First Peoples
History teacher
Cegep of Sherbrooke



NEOCOLONIALISM



LJ - Hello, my name is LJ Houde, I'm an ally to First Peoples and I'm currently studying social work techniques at the Cégep de Sherbrooke.

Sabrina – Wachiya, hello, my name is Sabrina. I'm from Waswanipi, in southern James Bay. I'm studying human sciences at Cégep de Sherbrooke.

Caroline – Hello, I'm Caroline Desruisseaux, a non-native from Sherbrooke. I teach history at the Cégep de Sherbrooke.



Caroline - What is neocolonialism? So, what are its origins and legacies for Indigenous students in Quebec schools today? The first thing we need to understand is that the cumbersomeness that exists in Quebec schools today for Indigenous students can be traced back to a colonial history that originated mainly in the 19th and early 20th centuries. On the one hand, in Quebec schools, we had Euro-Canadian, Euro-Quebec students who were learning racial theories, that is, who were really learning that there was a hierarchy between human beings, they were learning that on the school benches. On the other hand, for Indigenous students, a system of residential schools existed at the federal level across the country, which uprooted Indigenous children from their culture, their parents and their families, and in which they suffered physical and psychological trauma. All this had intergenerational consequences and traumas across the country. So this colonial history still exists. It has a legacy; it still has an impact. We call it neocolonialism. And it's still expressed in our schools in Quebec, we can see some examples of it now.



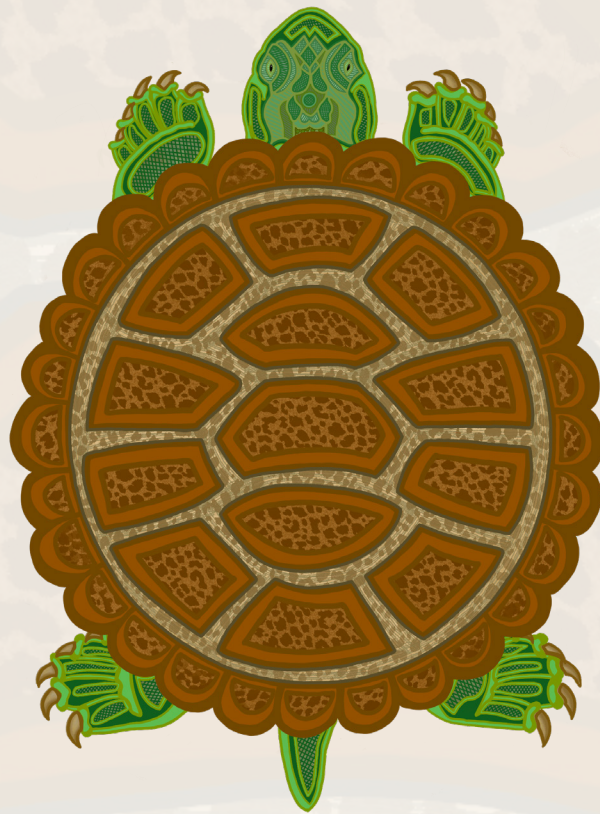
Sabrina - So, you must realize that neocolonial mentalities continue even at university and cegep, in other words, in higher education establishments. What's more, other students take courses in Quebec's history in which Indigenous Peoples are never mentioned. So, we're rendered invisible. A more subtle way of bringing out neocolonial mentalities.

Finally, some teachers will use the wrong terms to talk about Indigenous Peoples. For example, Inuit people will still be called Eskimos, which means raw meat eaters instead of Inuit. We'll also call the Kanien'kehà:ka people Mohawk, which means man-eaters, instead of People of the Flint, which is the name the nation calls itself.

LJ - So, the next time an Indigenous student or someone talks to you and corrects you on what you've just said instead of going with a comment like, but I've always said like that, my parents also say, it's written in the book things like that, just for once, shut up and listen.



INDIGENOUS IDENTITY



Jessie Lepage

Ilnu from Mashteuiatsh
Master's student in Educational Sciences,
Lecturer and Conference speaker
Faculty of Education, University of
Sherbrooke

Suzie O'Bomsawin

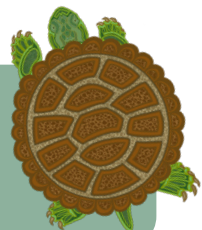
W8banaki from Odanak
Assistant Director
Abenaki Council of Odanak



Jessie - Welcoming my new culture is uncomfortable, because I still feel like an impostor. Am I entitled to certain services reserved for First Nations? Can I apply for scholarships reserved for First Nations and Inuit? Does the university understand the complexities of funding between an Indigenous community and the educational institution?

Speaking in «we» and not «he» including myself in that «we» remains a challenge for me. But one day, Michelle Audette, the Innu senator, said to me: «Jessie, you didn't become Indigenous, you've always been Indigenous. Now it's up to you to live it, this culture that belongs to you.»

In accepting this status, I gave myself a mission. A personal mission to actively participate in decolonization and walk the path of healing by educating and sensitizing non-Indigenous people to our realities as First Peoples, so that we can all work together for greater social justice.



Not so long ago, I was like you. Having lived 32 years as a non-Indigenous, I too had to go through the whole process of learning about First Peoples. If I can do it, you can too.

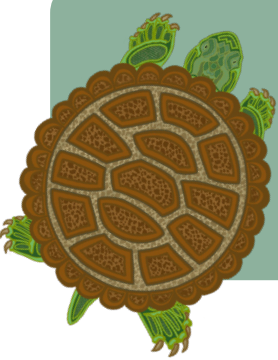
So, this is an invitation to you.

An invitation to commit to a personal encounter with the First Peoples.



The Aberrations of Indigenous Self-identification

Suzie - A worrying issue is that of people who call themselves Indigenous, and who sometimes even give themselves titles such as hereditary chief, spiritual guide or clan leader. These people justify calling themselves Indigenous because they have ancestors dating back to the beginning of colonization. They speak for us, in our place, and claim to have the same territorial reach and existence as we do. It's important to keep this in mind, because academic institutions are interesting breeding grounds for these individuals who want to make their case and claim ancestral rights, in the same way as recognized Indigenous communities.

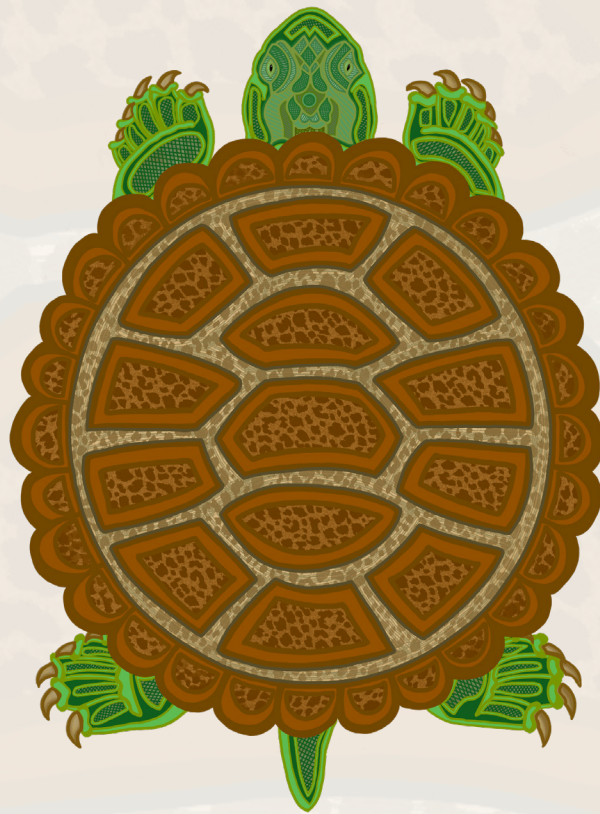


We are the sole guardians of our territory, our heritage and our identity. These people have nothing to do with us, and they are not the bearers of knowledge from a thousand years of heritage. This must be said and taken into consideration. We need to take the time to check with our collaborators. I have been questioned several times by sensitive organizations on the subject: «Which nation are you from? Which community? These are good practices.

This is not just a folkloric concern. For someone to pretend to be me is identity fraud, and fraud in many ways. That's why we need to be sensitive to these issues. That said, you can be an ally without being self-proclaimed.



UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY SPACES AND SELF-IDENTIFICATION



Sylvia Watso

W8banakiak from Odanak

Helen Watso

W8banakiak from Odanak

University Community Spaces and Self-identification

Sylvia and Helen Watso, W8banakiak from Odanak.

What was your experience as students in post-secondary?

It's good that there is an Indigenous center at Bishop's University.

We were the founding members of the Concordia Indigenous Student Centre. We raised money for the women's shelter in Montreal. We were very active members. We merged all the Indigenous students from all the universities. We knew everyone. We did potlucks, babysitting exchanges and fundraising which enabled 15 members of the center to travel to the Wellness conference in Arizona.

What are your ideas on self-identification?

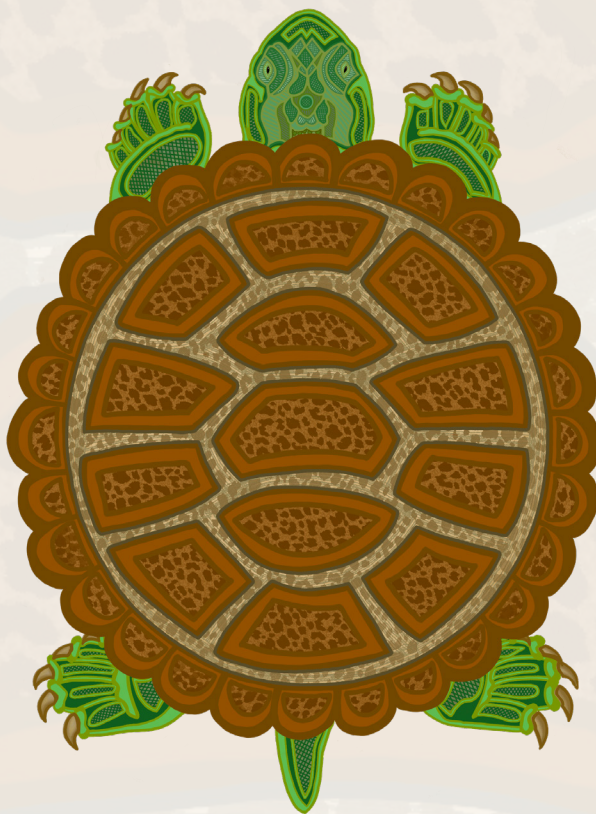
«We had an Indigenous student from the Caribbean identifying as Indigenous at the university for a summer employment. They are Indigenous to their own home, but they are not Indigenous to these lands.

To have integrity in the universities is important and to respect First Peoples representation is one of the reasons why all universities are working on changing their intake forms. Self-identification is not sufficient in these times, and we all need to continue conversations about Indigenous identity fraud. »





AUTHENTIC SITUATIONS



WHAT TYPE OF
DISCRIMINATION IS THIS?



**« When you braid your hair, you
look more Indigenous! »**

« Could you please take your ceremonies somewhere else, it makes me uncomfortable! »



WHAT TYPE OF
DISCRIMINATION IS THIS?

WHAT TYPE OF
DISCRIMINATION IS THIS?



**« It's funny how comfortable you
are with technology, I didn't think
you had any in your stash. »**

« Hey look, I'm thinking of you, I've dressed up as an Indian! »



WHAT TYPE OF
DISCRIMINATION IS THIS?

WHAT TYPE OF
DISCRIMINATION IS THIS?



**Teacher to Indigenous student in class:
« Can you explain to us why you
Aboriginal people don't pay taxes? »**