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ARTICLE

The Give Away Spirit: Reaching a Shared Vision of Ethical Indigenous Research Relationships

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"Every society needs educated people, but the primary responsibility of educated people is to bring wisdom back into the community and make it available to others so that the lives they are leading make sense." Vine Deloria, Jr., Red Earth White Lies, 1997, p.4

Abstract

This paper discusses the dilemma that emerges when codified protocols taken from dominant research paradigms are applied to research in Indigenous communities. We examine the underlying beliefs and assumptions of research paradigms, both Western and Indigenous, and explore how this incompatibility can be reconciled. We seek to reframe paradigmatic structures to reflect the values and beliefs of Indigenous peoples so that the Indian/non-Indian divide is bridged with a culturally responsive research paradigm. This process raises a number of ethical issues related to voice and privilege that we believe have to be resolved in order to be inclusive of multiple perspectives. Grande (2008) points out the problem of "nations [that] get trans- or (dis)figured when articulated through Western frames of knowing" (p. 234). It is this presence of intellectual colonialism that troubles us as educators and researchers as we struggle to maintain our commitment to promoting social justice and ethical interactions within the tribal and academic communities in which we work.

Introduction

Due to the historical views held by many scholars about Indigenous people and their communities, early researchers felt entitled to lump all Indian tribes together and exploit their "subjects" for their own benefit. This Pan-Indianism had a negative effect. The researchers often wrongly assumed that tribal traditions, beliefs, customs, and concerns were universal. In fact, there is great diversity among these individuals, communities and tribal nations. According to Census 2000, there are approximately 4.1 million American Indians and Alaska Natives living in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). There are over 560 tribal governments recognized and more than 250 tribal languages spoken (Caldwell et al., 2005). Today, severe poverty, health challenges, generational trauma, and lack of opportunity have a dramatic impact on Indigenous individuals, communities, and nations. American Indians are different from other minority groups in this country because of tribal sovereignty and the political and legal implications of this government-to-government relationship. As individuals, they are citizens of the United States, the state they reside in, and the tribe in which they are enrolled; yet, often they still are perceived as the *other*. We are at the crossroads. There is an opportunity for members of two distinct worlds, the dominant Western culture and Indian country, to teach and learn from each other by building bridges across different ways of knowing, from both discipline and cultural perspectives.

Our field of multicultural education has long embodied the idea of creating space for multiple voices, for encouraging culturally responsive pedagogy, and critically acknowledging the issues of the power differential within the school system and other institutions. However, within the academy and research fields, we have found that the panoply of voices has been restricted. This is particularly true for Indigenous peoples. Our experiences and discussions with Indigenous colleagues show an increasing concern for the "ethics of our relationships with each other and our surroundings...[that] challenge the boundaries of the disciplines as well as the dualistic perspectives imposed by categorizations like physical or social, oppressor or oppressed" (Lincoln & Cannella, 2009, p. 279). This concern is manifested in the contested ethical standards for research and misunderstandings that emerge from different epistemologies and modes of discourse. Although Indigenous peoples continue to be the most researched peoples worldwide, research in Indigenous communities is becoming more politicized as tribal communities voice desire to maintain control over their knowledge and resources. Research ethics, appropriate methodologies, and theoretical frameworks are being evaluated critically.

Colleges and universities have established ethical standards through Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines to protect participants in research projects. Through this review process, it is assumed that the risk to participants is minimized, informed consent of participants is documented, and rights, welfare, and privacy of participants is safeguarded. In the United States, most IRB guidelines are based on government regulations known as *The Common Rule* which governs numerous federal agencies that grant funding to higher education institutions (U. S. Department of Health & Human

Services, 2009).

However, established IRB guidelines fail to acknowledge the unique cultures of Indigenous peoples, the sovereignty of Indian nations, and the historical position of Indigenous peoples as objects of research. These codes are designed to protect the individual not the collective community, and they offer the guise of objectivity, allowing the researcher to represent or interpret the lives of the other. Unfortunately, there have been several documented cases where Indigenous communities not only did not benefit from, but have also been harmed by unethical research practitioners. For example, the decision of a recent lawsuit the Havasupai Tribe filed against researchers at Arizona State University has been widely publicized (Harmon, 2010). A biomedical researcher was charged with misusing blood samples taken from members of the Havasupai Tribe to explore schizophrenia, inbreeding and immigration patterns instead of the proposed research on the genetic clues to diabetes. The courts found that the geneticist responsible for the research had taken advantage of the tribal members and the university's Board of Regents was ordered to compensate tribal members and return the blood samples, as well as provide other assistance.

Institutional Review Board guidelines are generated by the same institutions that have, in the past, been associated with colonialism and racism. Consequently, the power for defining the ethical rules is firmly with the researcher (Fine, Tuck, & Zeller-Berkman, 2008; Hansen & Van Fleet, 2003; Lincoln & Cannella, 2009; Smith, 1999). The Havasuapi case raises the question as to what responsibilities researchers have to protect vulnerable populations.

In response to this reality, an increasing number of Indian tribes are developing their own IRBs. But, because most of these IRB guidelines "insert an Indigenous perspective into one of the major [Western] paradigms" (Wilson, 2008, p. 39), the effectiveness of Tribal IRBs in redirecting research is questionable. This, then, is the dilemma. A more innovative research paradigm based on Indigenous ideas, values, and beliefs appears to be necessary for development of Indigenous theory and methodology.

We propose that it is not enough to understand the historical context of American Indians. It is not enough to want to work in collaboration or adopt a Participatory Action Research or Community-Based Participatory Research model. It is not enough to adhere to a code of ethics, overseen by either a university IRB, or a Tribal IRB, as these are often designed around a Western model that is largely influenced by federal grant guidelines. Rather, one has to have a clear comprehensive understanding of what an Indigenous research paradigm entails and be willing to make the necessary changes to implement the associated methodologies. We need to acknowledge past injustices, question Eurocentric views on what constitutes cultural and intellectual property, replicate how knowledge is transmitted in Indigenous communities, and reframe a collaborative participatory research approach where there is shared control over the research process. It is important to create space for Indigenous scholars, tribal leaders, and community members to decide what research projects would best serve and benefit their communities.

In this article, the term *American Indians* is used to identify the collective original inhabitants of the United States unless specific tribal nations are identified. The terms *Indigenous* and *Indians* refer to the original inhabitants of the United States, Canada, Australia, and other colonized nations worldwide and are used interchangeably throughout this article. As defined in Wilson (2008), "The term dominant, like the culture that it describes and the society created by the culture, is not meant to include those who fall 'outside' the powerful majority" (p. 35). Western, therefore refers to the Eurocentric culture within North America and Australia.

Historical Unrealities

The visionary Crow Chief Plenty Coups, knew the importance of being educated. He stated, "Education is your most powerful weapon. With education, you are the white man's equal; without education, you are his victim, and so shall remain all your lives" (Little Big Horn College, 2009). Although Indians have always valued education, what they have encountered in the Western educational system is the colonization of their minds and identity. The system is designed to promote socialization and adherence to Western values, beliefs, and traditions. The brutality of this indoctrination process is well documented. Unfortunately, Indigenous pedagogies which are community-based, which are holistic, and which highlight the reciprocal relationship between teaching and learning, differ greatly from the Western philosophy on education. The incongruence between these two pedagogical approaches has had a negative impact on Indian students since the Boarding School era. The hegemony of Western educational policies and practices explains the compliance of Indigenous peoples to the educational system that in effect has enforced their own oppression (Smith, 2005).

Vine Deloria, Jr., a leading American Indian scholar, often addressed the conflict between mainstream scientific theory and

the Indigenous ancestral worldviews in his writing. His alternative views on U. S. history ignited controversy when he described the decadence of American culture and insisted that Indian children receive traditional teachings before they were exposed to the philosophies of the dominant Euro-American culture (Deloria, 1997). He emphasized that the initial contact between Indians and Europeans and the attempts at assimilation have resulted in a wide gap between the beliefs and practices of Indians and non-Indians notably in three domains: science, religion, and government. According to Deloria, "Science and religion are inherited ways of believing certain things about the world" (1997, p. 3). As an activist, Deloria pushed Indigenous people to achieve self-governance, but he advocated change through education rather than through violence.

There are a myriad of historical issues that affect current educational and research efforts in Indian communities today. We cannot ignore the consequences of colonialism. The historical relationships between tribes and researchers have not always been positive. There are numerous examples of negative, harmful, insensitive educational and research endeavors involving American Indians. As a result, many tribal communities do not trust educators and researchers:

The fundamental thesis of the anthropologist is that people are objects for observation, people are considered objects for experimentation, for manipulation and for eventual extinction. The anthropologist thus furnishes the justification for treating Indian people like chessmen for anyone to play with (Deloria, 1988, p. 81).

Western Epistemology versus Traditional Knowledge

Research is a discovery process in which researchers search for knowledge. Knowledge is *not* acultural and none of the parties participating in educational research involving Indigenous communities is apolitical. Approaches to research, whether qualitative or quantitative, are embedded in institutional structures that tend to promote and maintain the *status quo*.

All too often, the Western world has ignored Indian methodologies for gathering data.

In *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, Shawn Wilson (2008) describes how situating himself as a storyteller instead of researcher/academic scholar allows him to present information in a more culturally appropriate way by modeling "Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and doing." He emphasizes that, "The use of an Indigenous research paradigm when studying Indigenous peoples requires the holistic use and transmission of information" (p. 32).

Wilson (2008) defines key terms that describe how Indigenous worldviews qualify Indigenous research methodologies. Research paradigms are broad frameworks which are characterized by the researcher's beliefs and/or assumptions about reality. These beliefs are made up of the concepts of ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology. Ontology is the theory which addresses the nature of reality while attempting to explain what it is. Epistemology addresses what one perceives to be reality; it is tied to one's ontology and frames how one knows and describes the world. Methodology defines how a researcher goes about gaining more information about the world as one sees it, i.e. about one's own reality. Axiology determines what one considers research-worthy and how one should go about obtaining that information in an ethical manner.

Reality as viewed through the concepts of ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology vary among cultures. Consequently, Western epistemology and traditional knowledge are often at odds with each other. Smith (1999) highlights two major areas of conflicting views that relate to research: the conceptions of space and time. This is evident in differing language, philosophy and values. Disparate ideas of time and space as they relate to research paradigms can be observed in the institutional expectations of researchers to distance themselves from the participants and community of study as evidenced in the accepted use of the third person in research writing. This is in stark contrast to the first-person accounts preferred by many Indigenous scholars, and also relates to the issue of voice. For example, Wilson (2008) noted that a major obstacle that he had to overcome in writing his thesis was obtaining permission to write in the first person. He states,

Indigenous people in Canada recognize that it is important for storytellers to impart their own life and experience into the telling. They also recognize that listeners will filter the story being told through their own experience and thus adapt the information to make it relevant and specific to their life. When listeners know where the storyteller is coming from and how the story fits into the storyteller's life, it makes the absorption of the knowledge that much easier (p. 32).

In contrast, in Western paradigms, the idea that knowledge should be approached through the intellect leads to the belief

that research must be objective rather than subjective, that personal emotions and motives must be removed if the research results are to be valid. Consequently, as illustrated by Wilson's personal research saga, Indigenous researchers who deviate from the dominant paradigm have needed to justify their approach in order to conduct their research.

The rational categorization of knowledge is also at odds with a more holistic Indigenous perspective. Tafoya (1995) explains this by saying that Western research "has a history of people being told to amputate a part of themselves to be able to fit something that's rigid, and not built for them in the first place" (p. 27). Practices within the Western paradigm, as evidenced from this example, can isolate aspects of one's cultural identity by focusing on individual components rather than by looking at the person as a whole. Comparing Western and traditional knowledge, we see that educational practices and research procedures are not universal but culturally bound.

Decolonizing of Research Methodology

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), Sandy Grande (2004) and Shawn Wilson (2008), among other Indigenous scholars, have laid the groundwork for critiquing dominant paradigms and establishing an Indigenous research paradigm. Guba and Lincoln (1994) describe four dominant research paradigms. The first two, positivism and post-positivism are based on similar definitions of reality. Positivism promotes one true reality, and it is said that this ultimate truth can be uncovered. The second paradigm supports one true reality which can never be seen fully. In critical theory, the third paradigm, reality is perceived to be shaped by many cultural and social values and is therefore more fluid. Constructivism, the fourth paradigm, promotes a variety of fluid realities. In both critical theory and constructivist methodological approaches, socio-cultural factors influence the methodology. In all four of these dominant research paradigms, knowledge is seen as individually constructed. This is in stark contrast to Wilson's paradigm which places researchers as the interpreters of a shared knowledge which belongs to "the cosmos" (Wilson, 2008, p.38).

Grande (2004) established a decolonizing pedagogical model which embraces Indigenous ways of knowing. She termed this alternative approach *Red pedagogy*:

Specifically, a Red pedagogy necessitates (a) the subjection of the processes of Whiteman schooling to critical pedagogical analyses; (b) the decoupling and dethinking of education from its Western, colonialist context, including revolutionary critical pedagogy; and (c) the conceptualization of Indigenous effort to reground students and educators in traditional knowledge and teachings. (Grande, 2008, p. 244)

Red pedagogy seeks to transform institutional practices and structures. Adopting Grande's model would not only change pedagogy, but would impact scholarship and research protocols as well.

Smith (1999) emphasizes that the term *research* is defined in a context of European imperialism and colonialism. She examines the historical context and philosophical basis for Western research and how it differs dramatically from Indigenous worldviews, and she critically examines the historical underpinnings and philosophical framework which establishes Western knowledge as superior. In order to create institutional change, the curricula, textbooks, instructional strategies, practices and policies, and research protocol need to be decolonized. Wilson expands on Smith's decolonizing methodologies that are associated with Western paradigms by establishing a uniquely Indigenous paradigm based on Indigenous ways of knowing and relating.

Many research methods support a particular paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As mentioned earlier, some Indigenous scholars may try to impose an Indigenous methodology within a dominant paradigm. The result is not always effective, since it is nearly impossible to remove the underlying epistemology and ontology upon which the paradigms are built. Wilson explains, "On the other hand, if one starts from an Indigenous paradigm, then one can choose to use any tool from within that paradigm that may be effective" (p. 39).

Promoting Ethical Research

There is evidence that Western researchers have acted unethically in their collection of data and categorization of the social, cultural and linguistic systems of Indigenous communities (Hillbrant, 2002; Smith, 1999). Under the guise of research, they exploited their subjects by stealing their artifacts, misinterpreting their traditions, and disrespecting their knowledge of the natural world. Malsbary (2008) reminds us that, "... centuries and decades later, Indigenous peoples remember research as a process of subjugation, dehumanization, and pain" (p. 1). To date, few academics have taken steps to acknowledge and repair the disruption their research efforts caused. In fact, "the massive amount of useless knowledge

produced by anthropologists attempting to capture real Indians in a network of theories has contributed substantially to the invisibility of Indian people today" (Deloria, 1988, p. 81).

According to Wax (1991), conducting ethical research in Indigenous communities is challenging because the investigators and American Indians do not share a common worldview nor a common moral vocabulary. As a result of our life experiences and cultural heritage, we each view the world through a distinct cultural lens. This limits our objectivity as described by Caldwell et al. (2005): "Our cultural lens operates as both window and blinders, giving us different perspectives, while simultaneously obscuring our ability to perceive in terms other than our own" (p. 2). Members of the dominant culture and Indigenous peoples are often divided by a fundamental schism. In order to mesh both worlds, it is necessary for researchers who would normally adhere to a dominant paradigm to reject the ethnocentric vision that a Western approach to education and research is the only valid model, and respect holistic, experiential Indigenous strategies that have been in place for millennia.

Many scholars call for systemic reform in how research is conducted in Indian Country (American Indian Law Center, 1999; Caldwell et al., 2005; Hermes, 1997; Hillbrandt, 2002; Pidgeon & Hardy-Cox, 2001). Some scholars emphasize the importance of cultural sensitivity and cultural competence in the research process; others promote tribally established codes of ethics and tribally operated and administered IRBs. To assist researchers and institutions in carrying out culturally sensitive, ethical, mutually beneficial research involving Indigenous peoples, Internal Review Boards, ethics offices, and tribal governments have suggested templates and prepared research guidelines, questioning protocols, and exhaustive checklists (American Indian Law Center, 1999; Sahota, 2007; Sahota, 2008). Although helpful, these efforts are limited and problematic because IRBs, guidelines, and checklists alone do not eradicate all of the challenges and barriers that arise when conducting research in Indigenous communities.

Therefore, mutually beneficial research calls for a shift in power between researchers and tribal members (American Indian Law Center, 1999; Sahota, 2007; Sahota, 2008). In the past, Indigenous peoples were rarely involved in raising research questions; now they want a say in prioritizing research endeavors.

A much more promising line of research draws upon funds of knowledge in Native communities to derive and apply research insights in education. 'Funds of knowledge' refers to the repertoires of knowledge residing in the communities that are frequently overlooked or dismissed in conventional Western science and school curricula... (Moll et al., 1992 as cited in Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002, p.5).

According to Reyes (2006), since we are limited by the cultural lens through which we see the world, when the researchers and the researched do not speak the same language or share the same cultural background, the resulting research findings are suspect. From what Reyes and others suggest, one might conclude that there is no room for non-Indian researchers to be involved in Indigenous research. We would argue, however, that negotiating Smith's *tricky ground*, "the spaces between research methodologies, ethical principles, institutional regulations, and human subjects as individuals and as socially organized actors and communities" (Smith, 2005, p. 85) is possible through establishing a reciprocal relationship where academic freedom is respected and tribal sovereignty honored. Negotiating that tricky ground means establishing, fostering, and maintaining relationships between the institution or researcher and the researched community. It also means recognizing and addressing the imbalance of power between the two parties.

Kirkness and Barnhardt's (1991) research provides a template which can be used for negotiating inequities within research protocols. Their study sought to transform the relationship between First Nations/American Indian students and the faculty, staff, and administrators in higher education across Canada and the United States. It focused on the mismatch of perspectives and the effect on pedagogical practices. Their findings are applicable to efforts to improve research practices between the academy and tribal communities. They identified four requirements for promoting more equitable relationships and interactions between Indigenous peoples and the academy which include *respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility*. We would add one more, *relationality*. We will discuss these five Rs as they relate to the dilemma of determining appropriate and effective ethical standards for research within Indigenous communities.

Respect

Smith (2005) poses the question, "What is respect, and how do we know when researchers are behaving respectfully? What does respect entail at a day-to-day level of interaction" (p. 97)? With this query, she is teasing out the complexities embedded in cross-cultural interactions and understandings. Respect for the individual (or human subject) may have been considered a social norm and standard principle in IRB guidelines, but these ethical codes tend to inscribe as truth a single reified perspective of morality (Lincoln & Cannella, 2009). The essentialist nature of codified ethics moves researchers to

become “overly concerned with the technical specificity of empirical generalizability and profoundly underconcerned with generalizability of theory, of domination, and movements of resistance” (Fine, Tuck, & Zeller-Berkman, 2008, p. 174). The focus on generalizability and respectful attention to institutional codes opens the possibility of the researcher disrespectfully treading on sacred ground in terms of cultural norms and Indigenous ethics. Concern for the rights and well-being of individual participants ignores the communal nature of Indigenous cultures and the values and responsibilities of individuals within these social structures.

Respect is also a contested issue when reviewing the purpose of research studies of Indigenous communities. Respectful adherence to IRB guidelines is equated with a moral high ground. “Research is often assumed to be beneficial simply because it is framed as research; its benefits are regarded as ‘self evident’ because the intentions of the researcher are ‘good’” (Smith, 2005, p. 99). However, rather than addressing institutional systemic problems, research questions are more frequently focused on the individual, family, or immediate Indigenous community with a recurring theme of blame the victim (Swisher, 1998). Research protocols advance the interests of the researcher and tend to establish the researcher as interpreter of community mores, behaviors, and attitudes. There is an impulse to represent the voices of the other in a, presumably, well-meaning attempt to further understandings or a more sinister attempt to rescue or liberate the less fortunate (Bishop, 2008; Lincoln & Cannella, 2009). Practicing respectful research within Indigenous communities demands a research methodology that addresses cultural standards of the community and a repositioning of the researcher from interpreter to listener with an openness to learning from Indigenous perspectives rather than appropriating or judging their cultures and knowledge (Bishop, 2008; Smith, 1999).

Relevance

Learning from Indigenous perspectives implies an acknowledgement of the value of Indigenous knowledge and listening to what is important in their perspectives. Historically, this was never recognized. Indigenous knowledge has “been viewed by Euroculture as inferior and primitive” (Kinchloe & Steinberg, 2008, p.136). Sequestering Indians on reservations, legislation such as the *Dawes Allotment Act* (1887) and the *Termination Act* (1953), and placement of Indigenous children in boarding schools are evidence of a concerted effort toward destruction of Indigenous cultures and assimilation to American values (Cajete, 2008; Grande, 2008). Any consideration of Indigenous knowledge has been to regard it as “peculiarly local” (Battiste & Henderson, 2000, p. 134). The identification of Indigenous knowledge as local knowledge or ethno-knowledge situates that knowledge as culturally grounded and, at the same time, establishes a contrast with Western knowledge that has no identified cultural grounding, but, lacking a cultural tag, is seen as the norm or as universal. This relegates Indigenous knowledge to a lower, more provincial status—an alternative knowledge that is marginalized within general society, and certainly within the academy. Additionally, study of Indigenous knowledge has often resulted in romanticization of traditions and customs. Research protocols that focus on generalizability tend to promote essentialization of knowledge about Indians. This translates into an assumption of an Indigenous identity for all Indians and romanticization of the culture, freezing it in precolonial time with no expectation of evolution to cope with modern issues (Kinchloe & Steinberg, 2008). The conceit in such research presents knowledge of Indians from the standpoint or understanding of non-Indians, essentially explaining Indians to themselves. Traditional knowledge becomes commodified with little consideration of the private, spiritual, or confidential nature of that knowledge.

Assigning a universality to Western knowledge maintains the frameworks for research and representation of knowledge (Findlay, 2000; Smith, 1999). “Indigenous [and non-Indigenous] scholars and intellectuals are pressed to produce technical knowledge that conforms to Western standards of truth and validity” (Denzin, 2005, p. 936). Any recognition of the value of Indigenous knowledge calls into question Western standards and makes them the object of inquiry. Questioning academic research practices is tantamount to acknowledging the lack of neutrality in academic rationality and to “bring thinking itself into question” (Findlay, 2000, p. xi).

If, as Cajete (2008) notes, “meaning is key to relevance” (p. 496), then relevance of research within Indigenous communities is dependent on the researcher defining the intersection of research practices and the cultural landscape. However, working toward relevance in research protocols creates difficulties for those in the academy who may discount the important role Indigenous knowledge plays in the beliefs, traditions, and values that permeate tribal communities.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity within research implies a give-and-take within the research process that has largely been absent in Western research methodologies:

For those imbibed in privilege, to know someone is to expect them to reveal themselves, to tell themselves, to

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give up their sovereignty, while at the same time shielded by their privilege, never having to show their own
bloodstains, track marks, piling bills, or mismatched socks (Fine, Tuck, & Zeller-Berkman, 2008, p. 169).

It is an issue of power. The power differential is determined by whose knowledge is valued, who determines the importance of ideas, and who determines the rules for procedures for examining knowledge. Dismantling or interrogating this power differential requires an examination of the purposes of research—who initiates and who benefits—and clarification of institutional policies and procedures that inform research protocols. Reciprocity within a research paradigm demands collaboration, interchange of ideas, sharing power, learning *from* the other. Hermes (1997) defines the concept of reciprocity as “going back and forth between the problem, the practice, and the community” (p. 23).

However, this process is more complex than it first appears. Jones and Jenkins (2008) trouble our notions of collaborative inquiry. They point out that enthusiasm for a dialogic approach to research “might be an unwitting imperialist demand—and thereby in danger of strengthening the very impulses it seeks to combat” (p. 471). Overcoming the power differential through a dialogic process may move participants to disregard or downplay differences in a movement toward shared understandings, which leads to a spirit of unity. While this may be useful when working toward a shared goal, the melding of ideas may also establish a sort of hybridity or democratic ideal of equality or sameness that, in reality, does not exist. Jones and Jenkins use the titular concept of the “indigene-colonizer hyphen” to illustrate the unalterable difference that exists within a collaborative research relationship: “Colonizer peoples assert the us in a shared modern life, Indigenous peoples—as a matter of political, practical, and identity survival as Indigenous peoples—insist on a profound difference at the Self-Other border. The hyphen is nonnegotiable” (p. 475). Grande (2008) argues this point in terms of sovereignty and self-determination through protection of tradition and language as necessary considerations to maintaining identity as Indigenous peoples. Recognition of ever present issues of power and privilege are necessary for the researcher to successfully engage in truly collaborative and reciprocal research.

Responsibility

The concept of responsibility rests with both the Indigenous community and with the researcher. Indigenous communities have realized that they can’t depend on university and college IRBs to protect their cultural traditions, values, and knowledge. Institutional IRB frameworks further Western perceptions of the world and conceptions of knowledge as frames for conducting and interpreting research (Smith, 1999). “Indigenous peoples must control their own knowledge and retain a custodial ownership that prescribes from the customs, rules, and practices of each group” (Battiste, 2000, p. 136). Many Indigenous communities are taking responsibility for defining their own ethical guidelines for research of and within the community. Assuming control of research protocols enables guidance of the purposes of research to the benefit of the community, as well as protecting the community from inappropriate practices and commodification of Indigenous knowledge.

The most important responsibility for researchers is a willingness to learning *from* rather than *about* Indigenous peoples. This creates opportunities for a reconceptualization of research protocols that recognize issues of sovereignty, identity, culture, and place (Lincoln & Cannella, 2009; Miheuah, 1998). Researchers are also responsible for ethical use of knowledge that has been entrusted to them. This translates into providing a venue for Indigenous voice as well as a critical examination of the systems and discourses that continue to promote colonization. Ethical use of knowledge prohibits representation or interpretation of Indigenous knowledge, hybridization of that knowledge within Western constructs, and exploitation of traditional knowledge and culture through appropriation of stories or elements of that knowledge (Denzin, 2005; Fine, Tuck & Zeller-Berkman, 2008; Lincoln & Cannella, 2009). “Indigenous peoples’ knowledge and heritage are not commodities, nor are they the property of the nation-states and their researchers. Indigenous knowledge and heritage are sacred gifts and responsibilities that must be honored and held for the benefit of future generations” (Battiste, 2000, p. 144).

At the very least, responsible research within Indigenous communities necessarily involves codified ethical guidelines that are promulgated by both the community and college; however, these guidelines often are influenced by “new colonialist practices imposed by contemporary hyper-capitalism (Lincoln & Cannella, 2009, p. 277). Consequently, sensitivity to the issues of privilege and historical colonialist practices as well as cultural traditions, knowledge and values are also part of responsible research.

Relationality

Many Indigenous scholars emphasize the importance of relationships, not just current human relationships, but the connection Indigenous peoples have to their ancestors, the future generations, nature, and to the land. When Wilson

(2008) polled his colleagues, “Several stated that the relational way of being was at the heart of what it means to be Indigenous” (p. 80). He emphasized that the sharing and participation that relationship building entails is an important aspect of ethical Indigenous research. Deloria stated, “The Indian principle of interpretation/observation is simplicity itself: ‘We are all relatives’ (Deloria et al., 1999, p. 36). He further explains that relying on our interconnectedness as a methodological tool for obtaining knowledge “means that we observe the natural world by looking for relationships between various things in it” (Deloria et al., 1999, p. 34). This concern with relationality is evident from initial contacts. When Linda Tuhiwai Smith was interviewed, she described introductions in this way, “In our culture we begin by introducing ourselves by naming our geography, where we come from, then our ancestral lines, and then finally we name the people” (Smith et al., 2002, p. 169).

The four Rs, as discussed earlier, are practices that provide entry to the relationship building process between researcher and the Indigenous community; however, it is relationality that will allow both parties to create intimate, on-going relationships and is the key to understanding and embracing Indigenous ways of knowing. According to Wilson (2008), if Indigenous ways of knowing have to be narrowed through one particular lens (which it certainly does not), then surely that lens would be relationality. In fact, the key to being included has just as much to do with how well you have connected with members of that community than the work you have done in the past.

In Conclusion

In the beginning of this article we cited the dilemma as moving beyond institutional and tribal IRB guidelines toward development of a research paradigm that incorporates Indigenous ideas, values and beliefs. Institutional guidelines have not addressed the concerns of Indigenous communities, and researchers working under these guidelines have often misrepresented tribal people and communities. Tribal Nations have sought control over the research within their communities by establishing their own research guidelines, but their protocols have tended to follow Western institutional frameworks and fall short of establishing an actual Indigenous methodology. We found that these institutional or Western frameworks promoted a narrow view of research that dismissed “non-traditional” methodologies, particularly those that lessened the space between researcher and participants. A focus on objectivity promoted a rational, impersonal approach that valorized distancing between researcher and researched and disregarded the complexities inherent in the relational experience that is research (Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008). The shared vision of an Indigenous research paradigm must be based on the belief systems and interactional styles of the Indigenous community, and we contend that ethical research within Indigenous communities needs to address the relationality inherent in a collaborative effort of understanding that is part of a shared purpose or goal. The five Rs, respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility and relationality, are key to the negotiation and transformation of institutional practices and research frameworks (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Wilson, 2008). Critical pedagogical analysis and “decoupling and dethinking education” (Grande, 2008, p. 244) and research from Western institutional frameworks serve to reground research protocols. Engaging in this process gives voice to Indigenous communities “Questions are formed differently, priorities are ranked differently, problems are defined differently, people participate on different terms” (Smith, 1999, p. 193). In developing a shared vision, the possibility for transformation of researcher and community relationships becomes possible because interests intersect.

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