Canadian Perspectives on Academic Integrity, *9*(2), 1-9.
https://doi.org/10.55016/7xvke049
Peer-reviewed article

Indigenous Practices of Integrity: Considerations for Applications in Post-Secondary Spaces

Jaime Fiddler* and Miriam Perry

Abstract
Indigenous understandings of "integrity" are rooted in Indigenous worldviews. Therefore, they cannot be easily stitched onto the colonial frameworks from which academic integrity policies usually arise. When asked to explore academic integrity from Indigenous perspectives by our own post-secondary institution, the authors began a critical journey into understanding practices of integrity from both Indigenous and western worldviews. This paper shares our journey of inquiry, as well as the key tensions we see when these two perspectives of integrity are brought together. We share the processes in which we engaged and recommendations for others seeking to take pragmatic action to "decolonize" academic integrity policies and practices. Though we share the integrity-related insights we are taking forward in our own context, we also emphasize the need for post-secondary institutions to cultivate ethical spaces in which local Indigenous wisdom can be meaningfully centred.

Keywords
academic integrity, Canada, decolonization, Indigenous approaches, integrity

Bow Valley College
*__Corresponding author__: jfiddler@bowvalleycollege.ca

Introduction

The ways we think about and support academic integrity in post-secondary spaces is changing. These changes have been prompted not just by generative AI, but also by the acknowledgment there are multiple lenses from which academic integrity might be considered. Our own post-secondary institution, a medium-sized college in an urban setting in Treaty 7 territory, initiated a project to evaluate our academic integrity policy and procedures against best practices found in current literature. The project also sought to identify gaps in our policy, procedure, and related supports from the lenses of equity, diversity, and inclusion; principles of Universal Design for Learning; stress and mental health; and decolonization and Indigenization (Ferguson et al., 2024). One of the goals of this work was to consider ways we might revise our own academic integrity policies and procedures to best serve our community of diverse instructors and learners.

As Indigenous educators at our institution, we were invited to join the research team to contribute to the decolonization/Indigenization lens. The larger study was approved by the Research Ethics Board, and we were both co-investigators. We do not share data from the study here but focus on decolonization/Indigenization considerations, including how we define these key concepts. In addition to critically examining our existing academic integrity policies and processes through the lens of decolonization/Indigenization, we were also invited to create a guide/tool that would allow other institutions to engage in similar work. We recognized this would be a complex task, but we were motivated by a strong desire for Indigenous perspectives to be included in this critical research and to increase academic integrity supports for Indigenous students at our institution.

We begin this paper by sharing our own positionality and starting places. We then share the critical journey we took to understand practices of integrity from both Indigenous and western worldviews, as well as the key tensions we see when these two perspectives of integrity are brought together. We share the processes in which we engaged and processes we recommend to others seeking to take pragmatic action to "decolonize" and/or "Indigenize" academic integrity policies and practices. Though we share the integrity-related insights we are taking forward, we also emphasize the need for post-secondary institutions to consider ways to cultivate ethical spaces (Ermine, 2007) in which local Indigenous wisdom can be meaningfully centred.

Authors' Positionality

My name is Jaime Fiddler, and I am very proud to be a citizen of the Métis Nation within Alberta with strong family ties to the historic Métis community of Batoche in Northern Saskatchewan. My Dad was born in that region, and when he was young, my grandparents brought him and his siblings to Calgary, which is where I grew up. My mom's family holds my Welsh and Irish ancestry. My great grandparents on that side of my family settled in Southern Saskatchewan, then they too made the move to Calgary with a young family. I began

my career as a K-12 teacher, later returning to university to pursue an MA, followed by a PhD. My areas of focus have been on teacher experience and professional learning, arts-based and narrative forms of research, and research ethics and research representation: *How do we share knowledge? Who gets to decide the "best" way to represent knowledge?* I began instructing university courses during my PhD program, which has given me the opportunity to consider academic integrity from several different perspectives. While teaching research methodology courses, for example, I confronted how most referencing systems privilege very particular types of written knowledge, while relegating other kinds to the margins. While teaching Indigenous Education courses, I navigated the literal walls western institutions place around what knowledge is learned and most importantly, how it is learned. While teaching courses focused on Reconciliation, I have considered how artificial intelligence has automated the process of extracting knowledge from Indigenous communities without following protocols of learning in relational ways, honouring teachers, or maintaining the connections that knowledge has to communities or land bases. Currently, I support faculty professional learning around Indigenous Education, as well as the decolonization and Indigenization of courses and programs at our college. I am honoured to bring my critical lens as a Métis scholar and educator to this work and to collaborate with Miriam Perry.

My name is Miriam Perry. My Blackfoot name is Nato yik ki makki, Holy Feather Women. I was honoured to be gifted my Blackfoot name from Grandfather Elder Miiksika'am, Clarence Wolfleg Sr. I am Cree-Anishnaabe-Métis and mixed European ancestry from Treaty 5 territory in northern Manitoba. I grew up in the predominantly Indigenous community of Sherridon, Manitoba with my maternal grandmother's culture (Swampy Cree), with roots in Opaskwayak Cree Nation (grandmother) and Young's Point. My great-grandfather from my mom's side comes from Belgium, and my mother's biological dad is from the Ukraine. My father's side is Anishnaabe and Métis from Duck Bay, Camperville, and Pine Creek First Nation in Treaty 4 territory. My father passed away when I was very young, and we lost connection with the family for a variety of reasons, so I never grew up with that side of my family. I am only now making connections, after many years of learning and understanding our family and greater colonial history. My maternal grandmother's first language is Cree (Swampy Cree); my grandparents on my father's side speak Saulteaux (the Ojibway/Anishnaabe language) and Michif as their first language. I honour all sides of my ancestors and recognize that identity is a lifelong journey of learning, unlearning, reflecting, and doing. I have been navigating the field of academic integrity first through my Master's thesis, *Indigenous Voices for Well-being in Northern Manitoba: An Exploratory Study* (Perry, 2018), where I began my journey in Indigenization and decolonizing research methodologies. I continued with a community-based project through our college, where I was part of a team working in collaboration with Elders and educators from the Kainai Nation. Through this experience, I gained first-hand knowledge of relationship-building, Blackfoot protocols, and the importance of honouring Indigenous ways of knowing. I currently work as an instructor at the same college, where I focus on teaching an Indigenous Studies course and delivering presentations that centre Indigenous perspectives across a variety of social and historical contexts.

Conceptual Starting Places

Though the terms "decolonization" and "Indigenization" are often used interchangeably, we began our process by considering their unique meanings and what direction each might indicate.

Decolonization

To define "decolonization" in an education setting, we draw upon the work of Dr. Marie Battiste, an education scholar from the Potlotek First Nation. Battiste (2013) asserts that in order to decolonize education, we must recognize "the Eurocentric assumptions of superiority within the context of history and to recognize the continued dominance of these assumptions in all forms of contemporary knowledge" (p. 186). This leads us to examine the assumptions upon which academic integrity policies and practices are based. By identifying the worldview from which academic integrity policies arise, we can also identify whose worldviews are missing. Only then can we create space for Indigenous knowledge to enter. This work of decolonization, of critically examining which voices dominate a discussion then actively choosing to bring Indigenous perspectives to the foreground, is work all of us (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) can share. Throughout this paper, we offer some critical examinations of the worldviews that most often inform academic integrity policies and procedures in post-secondary spaces.

Indigenization

Where "decolonization" in education is about identifying where western knowledge dominates a particular education practice and making choices that decenter these perspectives, "Indigenization" is about "the engagement of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing as parallel and valid means of constructing systems and practices" (Poitras Pratt & Gladue, 2022, p. 107). Indigenous communities have well-established and effective approaches to teaching and learning that arise from Indigenous worldviews and values. For example, Gladue (2020) articulates how "story and song systems … serve the purpose of caretaking and protecting this knowledge through the passage of time" (p. 7). Yet, in most academic settings, stories and songs are not even recognized as examples of knowledge-sharing practices. In addition to examining the assumptions and biases in academic integrity practices then, we sought to articulate what practices of integrity look like when they arise from Indigenous worldviews. For this, it was essential that we engage with other Indigenous scholars

and practitioners. Indigenization is work that must be led by Indigenous Peoples. However, creating the institutional space and ensuring institutional capacity exists for this work is a shared responsibility. We identify some of these shared responsibilities throughout the paper.

Approach to Knowledge Building

Honouring sources of knowledge and a journey undertaken in learning is a practice of integrity from Indigenous perspectives (Gladue, 2020). Therefore, it is important for us to share the process in which we engaged as we considered how to apply Indigenous perspectives of academic integrity to a critical analysis of our existing policy and procedures.

We began by consulting the emerging body of research from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars related to Indigenous perspectives of academic integrity (Eaton, 2024; Gladue, 2020; Lindstrom, 2022a; Poitras Pratt & Gladue, 2022; Sopcak & Hood, 2022). We met regularly to share how we might apply what we were learning to a review of existing policies/procedures in our own context.

We are also grateful to have engaged in conversation with Dr. Gabrielle Weasel Head (2024) very early in our process. Dr. Weasel Head (formerly Lindstrom) is a Kainai scholar who has published in this area, and this consultation guided our key questions. We were also fortunate to learn from Amskapi Pikaani Elder Dustin Walter (personal communication, 2024), who shared traditional knowledge around the Seven Blackfoot Virtues (of which integrity is one), as well as knowledge he has gained through his own experiences as a scholar and instructor.

Combined, these sources of knowledge informed our understanding of academic integrity from both Indigenous and western worldviews. We are keenly aware that we still have much to learn, especially from those Treaty 7 perspectives from which we have not yet heard. One of our key recommendations is that a more fulsome consultation be conducted with all Indigenous perspectives in the Treaty 7 area, which includes Blackfoot, Tsuut'ina, Îyâxe Nakoda, and additional Métis perspectives.

Considerations for Ethical Space

Working between worldviews is tension-filled. During this journey, we navigated conflicting spaces as we endeavoured to be as intentional as possible in our direction. When presenting a draft of this paper at an academic integrity conference, we witnessed a presentation from Poitras Pratt et al. (2025) that highlighted the connection between our experiences and the ethical space of engagement (Ermine, 2007). We are grateful that this group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars shared their own reflections so openly.

Relationships are at the heart of Indigenous research. Within Indigenous paradigms, everything begins with and is sustained through relationships—with people, the land, the community, and the knowledge itself. Relationship-building is a central aspect of what Wilson (2008) describes as ethical Indigenous research. Relationships go hand-in-hand with ethical space. The ethical space of engagement (Ermine, 2007) is a space where two or more perspectives can come together in dialogue as assumed equals with the intention to build relationships. Creating an ethical space requires first an "agreement to interact" that both acknowledges and affirms the "human diversity created by philosophical and cultural differences" (Ermine, 2007, p. 10). We are each continuously influenced by our own biases and unique worldview; this is part of being human. In order to see the world from another perspective, this must be acknowledged, and we must be willing to cultivate deep humility – to learn and to listen deeply, with both respect and responsiveness. Plans made and actions taken within an ethical space are collective ones, taken when all input has been considered, and when the course of action has reciprocal benefits for all parties.

The ethical space of engagement is a space of integrity, and our moments of feeling the lack of this space of engagement have been those where we felt unable to act with complete integrity, when there was distance between what this work should ideally involve and what seemed practically possible. At times, to move toward greater integrity in this learning journey, we took space that was not given or made choices knowing they may be misunderstood or viewed as inconvenient. Navigating worldviews in tension felt like choosing between being good collaborators on the one hand and doing our best to uplift the Indigenous knowledge systems we are asked to represent on the other. For others on similar journeys, it is worth emphasizing that for Indigenous educators aiming to uphold an Indigenous worldview that emphasizes relationships, maintaining relationships may discourage conversations that initiate conflict (Paul, 2022). We are grateful that in our own institution, we continue to discuss ways to share responsibility for the creation of an ethical space and that this has been prioritized as we move forward in our academic integrity work.

While developing this paper, we also acknowledged the discomfort we felt when sharing the oral teachings we received beyond the land-based place where this knowledge was shared. We reflected that the knowledge around the Seven Blackfoot Virtues was shared with us to support our own college community of instructors, staff, and students, and we are committed to doing that work. When we shared what we learned in a conference space though, we felt uneasy when photos were taken of our slides, possibly to be carried forward into other places that may be out of context for Blackfoot teachings. We let that unease indicate there was a practice of integrity we were missing and decided not to share this knowledge beyond our own context again. We reflected that the Seven Blackfoot Virtues are not ours to share, and the idea that we would be "cited" in reference to our slides that included this knowledge would be incorrect. We therefore limit the review below to

published work that our readers can also find and reference – knowledge that the authors themselves chose to share in this way. We also stress the significance of including consultations with local Indigenous knowledge holders as an essential step in your journey. We make specific recommendations for creating an ethical space of engagement as we conclude this paper.

Indigenous Approaches to Academic Integrity

Common themes arise when examining scholarship focused on decolonizing/Indigenizing academic integrity. We explore four themes here, beginning broadly with worldviews, then narrowing to specific examples of Indigenous approaches to academic integrity. We acknowledge that we explore a mere fraction of Indigenous perspectives amongst the hundreds of diverse Indigenous cultures and worldviews.

Centring Discussions of Worldview and Values

That fundamental differences exist between Indigenous and western worldviews and values has been well-established (see for example, Little Bear, 2000). A key difference is that Indigenous knowledge systems understand and describe worldviews that are wholistic in nature. Western perspectives tend to be hierarchical, reductionist, and separated (Poitras Pratt & Gladue, 2022). This divergence draws our attention to the first assumption that must be deconstructed when decolonizing academic integrity: how is "academic integrity" distinct from "integrity" in other areas of life and practice?

Dr. Gabrielle Weasel Head shares, "an Indigenous paradigm is relationally oriented. As such, the notion of integrity is wholistic which means it is infused in all areas of life" (Lindstrom, 2022a, p. 126). From this Blackfoot perspective, "integrity" is a value lived out in the whole of community life, not separated into categories of academic or non-academic. Wholistic considerations lead us to understand "academic integrity" not as a technical skill employed only in classrooms or lecture halls but a way of being in the world and in relation with knowledge, knowledge holders, and knowledge systems. This raises questions regarding the extent to which teaching "academic" integrity, without considering the whole of a person or their contexts, is possible.

In addition to questioning the perspective that informs "integrity," other values often associated with academic integrity also need to be closely examined. Post-secondary institutions often refer to the six "fundamental values of academic integrity" created by the International Center for Academic Integrity (2021). Decolonizing approaches guide us to ask questions about where these values come from and to whom they belong. We considered that the document is authored by non-Indigenous North American scholars; there is no description of consultation with Indigenous knowledge holders or consideration of Indigenous perspectives; the definition of each of the six values is sourced from the Merriam-Webster dictionary, an American publication; and the document and the values themselves are written only in English. This document then represents a distinctly western worldview, though it is often taken up in post-secondary spaces as universal in nature. This assumption of "universality" normalizes the exclusion of Indigenous values and knowledge systems from the outset. Following Eaton (2024), we do not raise this because it is "one knowledge system competing against another" (p. 13). Rather, we critique the assumption that values institutions put fourth are neutral, universal, or "fundamental," and we critique accompanying notions that academic integrity practices arising from western values can be meaningfully Indigenized in practice. Indigenous practices related to integrity must arise from a shared understanding of Indigenous worldviews and knowledge systems. Because Indigenous worldviews and knowledge systems are local, this may mean that definitions and practices related to integrity are local as well and not informed by a single, centralized source.

How Assumptions about Human Nature Inform Practice

Ontological differences between Indigenous and western worldviews extend to fundamental assumptions about human nature and the purposes of, or intentions behind, educative practices. When understood from western perspectives that emphasize individualism and competitiveness, human nature is often viewed as intrinsically dishonest (Lindstrom, 2022a; Poitras Pratt & Gladue, 2022; Sopcak & Hood, 2022). Academic integrity policies and practices are in place to deter academic dishonesty using the mechanism of fear. Put another way, this refers to a core assumption that humans will cheat unless there are punishments that act as a sufficient deterrent.

This can be contrasted with Blackfoot understandings of human nature and practices that educate towards integrity. Humans are seen as inherently honest, and when they do not act with honesty, relational or contextual factors are examined first. Educative practices are about nurturing inherent honesty, and bringing each individual into good relational standing in the community:

> From an Indigenous perspective, the qualities that encompass integrity are instilled in nation members from birth and reinforced throughout their lives via pedagogical strategies that nurture capacities for walking a life of integrity. Fear is not one of the motivating elements in Indigenous approaches to learning. (Lindstrom, 2022a, p.130)

Western practices of academic integrity often mirror criminal justice practices (Sopcak & Hood, 2022), and teaching about academic integrity is often limited to teaching individuals the definitive boundaries between "cheating" and "not cheating." While placing responsibility for academic integrity violations at the individual level is warranted, it also "tends to dimin-

ish the role of academia in students' academic dishonesty ... ultimately, the problem becomes the student and not the institutional values that work to foster competitive individualism within a punitive academic culture" (Lindstrom, 2022a, p. 129).

Indigenous practices begin at the level of intrinsic integrity and relational responsibility and are more closely related to restorative practices, which include the well-known "restorative justice" practices employed in criminal justice systems. It is important to consider restorative practices as intrinsically linked to Indigenous worldviews, including the underlying assumptions discussed in this paper. Neglecting this connection has resulted in what Maori scholar Juan Tauri (2018) argues is a form of "co-option of aspects of Indigenous life-worlds" (p. 4). Restorative practices arise from an acknowledgement that "not only do we in *fact* live in relation (and relationships) with one another, we could not be otherwise" (Llewellyn, 2019, p. 128, original emphasis). These relationships include relationships with all of creation, as emphasized in the Indigenous concept of "all our relations" (e.g., Bastien, 2004; Little Bear, 2000; Wilson, 2008). Individuals are not seen as solitary or disconnected but rather as bundles of relationships embedded within a greater web. All missteps on a learning journey are considered and addressed relationally, and acting with integrity is about honouring relational responsibilities to a community. Restorative practices are intended to "restore, repair, and heal those relationships" (Chartrand & Horn, 2018, p. 4) by examining root causes of breaks in integrity, offering opportunities for all parties to acknowledge responsibility, and supporting educative outcomes that foster student success and ensure instructor-student relationships remain strong.

Imagining Shifts in Institutional Culture

Practices that shift from an individual to collective orientation require the support of an institutional culture oriented towards these goals. Along with policy changes, it is important to make space for institutional culture to be Indigenized – or to imagine what shifts in institutional culture might arise if practices of integrity arose from Indigenous worldviews. To explore this more fully, we examined examples/evidence from other post-secondary institutions.

Restorative Practices at MacEwan University

Sopcak and Hood (2022) report on the incorporation of restorative practices at MacEwan University. This incorporation was not explicitly motivated by decolonization/Indigenization goals but by the acknowledgement of the "disconnect between academic integrity prevention work focused on values-based education ... and procedures for responding to academic misconduct that are grounded in punitive, fear-based, rule-compliance" (Sopcak & Hood, 2022, p. 556). To address this dissonance, they advocate that restorative practices be integrated into institutional policies. They observed that in their space, restorative practices brought greater harmony to the prevention and response aspects in academic integrity policies and procedures, and that restorative practices provide "an experiential learning opportunity to all involved that highlights the rootedness of ethical decision-making in relationships and community" (Sopcak & Hood, 2022, p. 567). These outcomes closely reflect Indigenous practices of integrity and core outcomes of education from Indigenous perspectives.

Seven Grandfathers in Academic Integrity

A more explicitly Indigenous approach to academic integrity was found in the University of Toronto's "Seven Grandfathers in Academic Integrity" resource (Maracle, 2020). This resource incorporates local Anishinaabe knowledge to emphasize "a foundation for personal responsibility" and "demonstrate the interconnectedness of one's actions with the lived environment and also offer a way of understanding and being in our academic environment" (Maracle, 2020, para. 2). We cannot reflect on how this knowledge is brought to life in the institution, but we appreciated the similar themes brought forth here, and also the example of how local and specific teachings can be centred.

Indigenous Approaches at the University of Calgary

Keeta Gladue (2020), a Cree and Métis scholar at the University of Calgary, provides an additional example in the "Indigenous Academic Integrity" guide. This document incorporates academic integrity and Indigenous paradigms, focusing on relationships, interconnectedness, and land-based knowledges. She highlights respect, relationality, and reciprocity – Indigenous values that have been identified as essential by multiple Indigenous scholars (e.g., Absolon, 2010; Kovach, 2000; Wilson, 2008). Gladue's (2020) work adds valuable and practical guidance for how we might honour Indigenous value systems within western academic institutions.

Academic Integrity Practices Arising from Indigenous Perspectives

Informed by the above perspectives, we considered the pragmatic tasks before us: to critically examine our existing academic integrity policies and processes through the lens of decolonization/Indigenization and to create a guide/tool that would allow other institutions to do similar work. To do the former, we asked decolonizing questions about what worldviews and assumptions informed our existing policy and practices. To do the latter, we moved beyond these questions to ask, *What would we see in our institution if practices of integrity arose from Indigenous perspectives?* The following summary may offer some utility as a "guide" or "tool" for other post-secondary institutions, but since Indigenous knowledge is relational and place-based, our exploration is not likely to be wholly transportable to other contexts.

Worldview and Values

In a context where academic integrity practices are informed by Indigenous worldviews and values, what would we see within policy and procedural documents/processes? We envision the following:

- Indigenous Knowledge Holders would be clearly identified as contributors to policy, procedures, and to all related practices of integrity within the institution.
- There would be clarity and acknowledgement of whose value systems are represented, and underlying worldview(s) would be made explicit.
- The definition of "integrity" would be inclusive of Indigenous definitions/perspectives, including definitions of associated/interconnected values (e.g., honesty, responsibility, respect, reciprocity . . .).
- Conceptions of "knowledge" would be inclusive of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge sharing practices, and would be clearly defined in ways linked to specific paradigms.
- Examples of knowledge-building activities and assessment practices would reflect Indigenous ways of knowing, being, doing, and relating.
- The language of integrity and related practices at the institution would be move beyond a criminal justice focus (i.e., code of conduct, investigation, offence, sanction) to include language that reflects assumptions of inherent honesty and truthfulness (i.e., responsibilities, commitments, learning principles).

In the absence of any of the above, the starting place is the beginning: ethical partnerships with local Indigenous Knowledge Holders. Given that values and practices related to integrity are so fundamental in Indigenous value systems, it is likely that letting Indigenous knowledge lead will result in a more integrated culture of integrity within post-secondary institutions.

Relational Responsibilities

In a post-secondary space infused with Indigenous perspectives, how would we define our relational responsibilities? We envision the following:

- Everyone would understand that they are an equal and contributing member of a collaborative post-secondary community rather than part of a system of hierarchical relationships in which only some members carry relational responsibilities.
- Opportunities would be given for everyone to reflect on their own positionality and bias, and to learn about and from perspectives other than their own, including Indigenous perspectives. This would allow for the creation of an ethical space of engagement when mistakes or misconduct occur.
- Instructors and support staff would be able to articulate their role in supporting students on a lifelong learning journey, including identifying their own responsibility for students who engage in academic misconduct, rather than seeing their role as one of simply policing or enforcement.
- The teaching and learning environment would support Indigenous values and practices of integrity from Indigenous perspectives.

At our own institution, identifying one's relational responsibility can be a barrier to the thoughtful implementation of an academic integrity policy. For example, our academic integrity policy encourages the consideration of each learner's unique context, experience, and history, but it could be expanded to include who is responsible for this, how to make these considerations, or what skills might be required. One strength of the restorative approach Sopcak & Hood (2022) outlined is that identifying and accepting responsibility is a clear step in the process of responding to misconduct.

Support and Access for Learners

Academic integrity policies often indicate students are responsible for learning about and adhering to institutional guidelines. However, if we shift integrity practices into the realm of relational responsibilities, and we consider that developing integrity is a wholistic and lifelong journey, then we need to more deeply consider how integrity is reflected in the institutional culture and how we inspire integrity across our whole community. We envision the following:

- Indigenous knowledge systems would be represented throughout all discussions.
- Policies and procedures would include knowledge and instruction from multiple perspectives that contribute to a nurturing learning environment.
- "Academic" integrity would be reinforced by an institutional culture of integrity. Practices of integrity would be widely taught and would include exemplars.
- Policies and procedures could be accessed in multiple ways (e.g., orally, in plain language, and through multiple means of representation), including ways that reflect Indigenous ways of knowing.
- Instructions would be explicit for students *and* instructors, and would include procedures for considering student context and ways to ensure equitable courses of action are taken.
- Policies and procedures would offer pathways to actively support students who make mistakes, with the assumption that the student can be guided toward greater integrity.
- Processes that address incidences of misconduct would include supports for ensuring the instructor-student relationship is restored after an incident is addressed. This would ensure that the student continues to feel connected to the learning community to which they belong

and that instructors can maintain/restore trust with their students.

- Restoring relationships may require that additional supports, including mental health supports, which would be available for students and instructors.

Integrity as a value and practice should be alive and a vital part of post-secondary life. As Vogt et al. (2025) identify, more post-secondary institutions are moving towards "proactive and educative approaches to addressing violations of academic integrity... [recognizing] that postsecondary students often require learning, emotional, and other supports that were not offered in the past" (p. 114). We advocate for these supports to include Indigenous ways of knowing, being, doing, and relating. In addition to further emphasis on proactive approaches, attention should be given to the space after an incident of academic misconduct is identified. Fear of harming relationships with students can prevent instructors from successfully navigating incidents of academic misconduct (Scurr et al., 2025). Current punitive measures do not leave room for the instructor-student relationship to be mended or to restore students to places of belonging. Restoring relationships, though is necessary for a learning journey to continue.

Honouring Knowledge

Knowledge and knowledge transmission practices must also be considered when thinking about academic integrity practices that arise from Indigenous perspectives. Shawn Wilson (2001), a Cree scholar who has written extensively on Indigenous methodologies, articulates that in dominant knowledge paradigms, "knowledge is an individual entity: the researcher is an individual in search of knowledge, knowledge is something gained, and therefore knowledge may be owned by an individual" (p. 176). Citation systems, often seen as the de facto practice of academic integrity, might be seen as the simple identification of ownership of a piece of knowledge to which one wishes to refer. By contrast, an Indigenous paradigm understands knowledge to be relational. If I am in relationship with knowledge, and "knowledge is shared with all of creation" (Wilson, 2001, p. 176), then I also have a responsibility to that knowledge. Fulfilling this responsibility requires wholistic action that moves beyond citation toward knowledge caretaking: "ensuring that the integrity of knowledge, which connects our community's past to its future, is built on a foundation of respect and relationship" (Gladue, 2020, p. 7). What would we see if post-secondary spaces honoured knowledge from this lens? We envision the following:

- Indigenous Knowledge Holders would be valued and cherished sources of learning throughout the institution—not only by Indigenous members of the post-secondary community.
- Relationships—and relationship-building processes—would be understood as sites for knowledge building. For example, engaging relationally with the land, in ceremony, or with an Elder and learning through exchange is different than the unidirectional processes of learning from texts or video.
- Indigenous protocols for seeking knowledge through reciprocal relationship would be included in instruction.
- Indigenous practices of honouring, caring for, and transmitting knowledge would be widely taught and shared in respectful and appropriate ways throughout the institution .
- Considerations for sharing knowledge forward would move beyond acknowledgement of source to deeper considerations of relationality and reciprocity (Poitras Pratt & Gladue, 2022).

Indigenous ways of learning and of knowledge transmission are absent if the only ways to "honour" sources of knowledge is a citation system or avoidance of "copyright infringement." These are western protocols for honouring knowledge. From Indigenous perspectives, honouring the sources of our own learning is an important practice of integrity and is heavily emphasized within discussions of academic integrity from Indigenous perspectives. Indigenous learners should be able to learn appropriate ways to honour knowledge systems within post-secondary spaces as part of their programs.

Recommendations

We have shared our starting place, our journey of inquiry, and how what we have learned has begun to shape the work we hope will unfold at our own institution. Some of our reflections may guide others in similar work, but it is also important to enter into a knowledge-building process that centres knowledge from your own community (Indigenous and non). To start this journey, we outline the following recommendations.

Continuing Research Conversations that Centre Indigenous Wisdom

For those seeking to include Indigenous perspectives in academic integrity research, it is key to begin at the beginning—or with the knowledge paradigm itself (Wilson, 2001). Only from an Indigenous paradigm can a research question be asked that will meaningfully centre Indigenous wisdom. In our journey, we took a step back from the original task of "decolonizing" academic integrity to first consider what integrity means from Indigenous perspectives. Similarly, hoped-for research outcomes might differ when research is anchored in western versus Indigenous paradigms. Decolonization begins when we consider who gets to ask the questions and whose goals we are working towards. Centring Indigenous wisdom is about allowing Indigenous wisdom to lead. From that starting place, ways of engaging in knowledge building/research methodology can follow. When these are all aligned, the research can have integrity.

Building Ethical Space

Whether in research or practice, working between worldviews requires an ethical space of engagement (Ermine, 2007). Research must be grounded in "relational accountability—that is, [it] must be connected to or a part of a community (set of relationships)" (pp. 41–42). This living network of relationships extends to all of creation. It involves observing appropriate protocols, demonstrating respect for those relationships, and recognizing that a researcher's responsibility extends far beyond data collection to include the ongoing maintenance of trust, reciprocity, and relational integrity. Dr. Gabrielle Weasel Head outlines a framework for entering ethical space within curriculum development processes, and building a culture and program of academic integrity at a post-secondary institution could follow a similar path (Lindstrom, 2022b). We draw upon that work here and also upon the explorations we have shared in this paper.

Ethical space requires that we know who we are as individuals and that we identify the worldview from which we operate and where our individual knowledge comes from. Once this reflective works begins, we can be more intentional about understanding what social and cultural contexts we "bring to the table," and from here contribute to space where all are "open" to another lens. Western approaches to research tend to narrow to a specific focus. Incorporating Indigenous approaches to knowledge building and considering a proposed research question from a wholistic worldview may, for example, widen the scope of a research question to include relational considerations. Both approaches have strengths and the potential to yield rich insights. If we consider our own journey, we began with the intention of look at specific policy documents related to "academic" integrity, but our view shifted when we took a step back and considered "integrity" from a wholistic perspective. From this starting place, methodological choices made will be those that can honour these multiple worldviews.

Once starting places have been co-identified, responsibilities can be determined, and reciprocal relationship building can begin (Lindstrom, 2022b). Who is contributing to the shared work and who is benefiting? Are the Indigenous contributors receiving something that is meaningful to them and that contributes to a thriving community? Are the Indigenous educators sharing the work being supported with the time and resources they need to contribute meaningfully? In relation to academic integrity work, it is worth considering if practices that honour Indigenous knowledge at the institution also make a meaningful contribution to knowledge caretaking (Ermine in Different Knowings, 2011). Or, is Indigenous knowledge being appropriated into a non-Indigenous space without reciprocal benefit?

As the work continues, touchpoints may be required to ensure that Indigenous and western perspectives are both seen as valid and valued. If the work slips back into western ways of working after a brief engagement with Indigenous knowledge systems, a paradigm shift has not occurred. We also emphasize the significance of humility and returning to the ethical space where reminders of humility, openness, and continued learning would be a valued part of the shared journey.

References

Absolon, K. (2010). Indigenous wholistic theory: A knowledge set for practice. *First Peoples Child & Family Review*, *5*(2), 74–87. https://doi.org/10.7202/1068933ar

Bastien, B. (2004). *Blackfoot ways of knowing: The worldview of the Siksikaitsitapi* (J. W. Kremer, Ed.). University of Calgary Press. http://hdl.handle.net/1880/49840 (D. Mitaken Chief, language consultant)

Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit*. UBC Press. https://www.ubcpress.ca/decolonizing-education

Chartrand, L. N., & Horn, K. (2018). *A report on the relationship between restorative justice and Indigenous legal traditions in Canada*. Department of Justice Canada. https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/rjilt-jrtja/rjilt-jrtja.pdf

Different Knowings. (2011, September 2). *Willie Ermine: Knowledge as a being [Video recording].* YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lchPn8-NhZ4

Eaton, S. E. (2024). Decolonizing academic integrity: Knowledge caretaking as ethical practice. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *49*(7), 962-977. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2024.2312918

Ermine, W. (2007). The ethical space of engagement. *Indigenous Law Journal*, *6*(1), 193-203. https://utoronto.scholaris.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/f8a0441d-2b9f-49dc-b30d-a6439a5cb142/content

Ferguson, C. D., Toye, M. A., Fiddler, J., Fiebig, L., Morris, J., Perry, M., & Rousseau, J. (2024). *Academic integrity inclusivity and accessibility study: Research project brief*. University of Calgary. https://hdl.handle.net/1880/118791

Gladue, K. (2020, November 13). *Indigenous academic integrity.* Taylor Institute of Teaching and Learning, University of Calgary. https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/resources/Indigenous-academic-integrity

International Center for Academic Integrity. (2021). *The fundamental values of academic integrity* (3rd ed.). International Center for Academic Integrity. https://web.archive.org/web/20220331224207/https://academicintegrity.org/images/pdfs/20019_ICAI-Fundamental-Values_R12.pdf

Kovach, M. E. (2000). *Indigenous methodologies: Characteristics, conversations, and contexts*. University of Toronto Press.

Lindstrom, G. E. (2022a). Accountability, relationality and Indigenous epistemology: Advancing an Indigenous perspective on academic integrity. In S. E. Eaton & J. C. Hughes

(Eds.), *Academic integrity in Canada: An enduring and essential challenge* (p. 125–139). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83255-1_6

Lindstrom, G. E. (2022b, January). *Ethical space of engagement in curriculum development processes: Indigenous guiding principles for curriculum development projects.* Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning, University of Calgary. https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/resources/Indigenous-guiding-principles-for-curriculum-development-projects

Little Bear, L. (2000). Jagged worldviews colliding. In M. Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision* (p. 77–85). UBC Press. https://www.ubcpress.ca/reclaiming-Indigenous-voice-and-vision

Llewellyn, J. J. (2019). Responding restoratively to student misconduct and professional regulation: The case of Dalhousie Dentistry. In J. B. G. Burford & V. Braithwaite (Eds.), *Restorative and responsive human services* (p. 127–142). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429398704-9

Maracle, I. B. J. (2020). *Seven Grandfathers in academic integrity.* Centre for Learning Strategy Support and First Nations House Indigenous Student Services, University of Toronto. https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/CLSS_7-Grandfathers_AODA.pdf

Paul, D. N. (2022). *We were not the savages: Collision between European and Native American civilizations* (4th ed.). Fernwood Publishing.

Perry, M. (2018). Indigenous voices for well-being in northern Manitoba: An exploratory study. In J. Markides & L. Forsythe (Eds.), *Looking back and living forward: Indigenous research rising up* (Vol. 125, p. 245–254). Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004367418_025

Poitras Pratt, Y., & Gladue, K. (2022). Re-defining academic integrity: Embracing Indigenous truths. In S. E. Eaton & J. C. Hughes (Eds.), *Academic integrity in Canada: An enduring and essential challenge* (p. 103–123). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83255-1_5

Poitras Pratt, Y., Tekakarewes Collins, B., Isbister, D., Sutherland-Allan, M., Bourque, L., Beans, S., … Cunningham Hall, D. (2025, May). *Demonstrating academic integrity with Indigenous peoples through ethical actions [Conference presentation].* Canadian Symposium on Academic Integrity. Regina, SK, Canada.

Scurr, C. D., Mangahis, C., & Mandal, J. (2025). Toward a nuanced understanding: Faculty barriers to navigating academic integrity violations. *Canadian Perspectives on Academic Integrity*, *8*(3), 13–23. https://doi.org/10.55016/ojs/cpai.v8i3.79408

Sopcak, P., & Hood, K. (2022). Building a culture of restorative practice and restorative responses to academic misconduct. In S. E. Eaton & J. C. Hughes (Eds.), *Academic integrity in Canada: An enduring and essential challenge* (p. 553–571). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83255-1_29

Tauri, J. M. (2018). Restorative justice as a colonial project in the disempowerment of Indigenous peoples. In T. Gavrielides (Ed.), *Routledge international handbook of restorative justice* (p. 342–358). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315613512-24

Vogt, L., Eaton, S. E., Stoesz, B. M., & Seeland, J. (2025). Academic integrity in selected western Canadian colleges and polytechnics: A policy analysis. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy / Revue Canadienne En Administration et Politique de l'éducation*, *206*, 112–129. https://doi.org/10.7202/1118737ar

Weasel Head, G. (2024). *Kainai first nation.* Oral teaching. personal communication (in Calgary, Alberta).

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

Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Fernwood Publishing.

Open Access

Received
November 13, 2025

Accepted
March 16, 2026

Published online
April 25, 2026

Citation
Authors. (2026). Indigenous practices of integrity: Considerations for applications in post-secondary spaces. *Canadian Perspectives on Academic Integrity, 9*(2), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.55016/7xvke049

Copyright
©2025 Fiddler & Perry. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY). The use, distribution, or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution, or reproduction is permitted that does not comply with these terms.