Toward a More Inclusive Discipline: Applying Indigenous Approaches to Economics Instruction

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Abstract

We contribute to the effort to build a more inclusive discipline by offering lessons and teaching strategies derived from the Native peoples of North America.. Our proposed relational approach to teaching provides a framework that accommodates many practices already gaining traction in economics. We share specific, research-informed practices for inclusive teaching as well as personal narratives. We discuss the importance of setting the tone in the early days of the semester, we summarize some of the principles of Indigenous-influenced economics courses, and we talk about how to translate those principles into applied teaching strategies. We believe

borrowing from Indigenous pedagogies can build belonging and community in our classrooms, thereby contributing to a discipline that is more welcoming of a broader range of students.

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Introduction

We are two economists weaving together our stories and approaches to teaching to help other economists better educate and embrace a wider array of students. In this paper, we propose drawing on Indigenous approaches to teaching that focus on building community in the classroom. We discuss ways in which Indigenous approaches can be incorporated into teaching economics, and we argue that doing so will contribute to a learning environment that not only enhances learning but also fosters community and belonging for all students of economics. This approach is focused on building relationships, so we start by introducing ourselves.

Larry:

> I am a member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina and have taught economics at the University of North Carolina Kenan Flagler Business School in Chapel Hill since 2006. From 2017 to 2021, I was director of the UNC American Indian Center, where we supported American Indian students and communities. I was honored with eagle feathers

from two North Carolina tribes for my work at the Center and earned five teaching awards as a professor. To chronicle the challenges of being Native American at UNC and in the economics profession, I have started a memoir and enrolled in an MFA in creative writing program at the Institute for American Indian Arts in Santa Fe. While my experiences in the academy have been "uneven," I find great joy in teaching and supporting students. I hope writing for a non-academic audience will allow me to scale up my impact.

Laurel:

I come from North Florida, a place where swampland is punctuated by giant oak trees draped in Spanish moss. There, I grew up in the absence of seasons, surrounded by green and living things, spending most of my time outdoors. I am of mixed European descent, claiming connections to Northern Europe as recent as two generations prior. But, I feel connected to many different parts of the world where I have lived, ranging from the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains to the savannahs of sub-Saharan Africa. I have experience teaching in Peru, China, South Africa, the United States, and Canada. Most recently, I developed new courses on Indigenous economics and Indigenous economic development for the University of Alberta. My contributions to this paper are shaped by my own experiences, and I acknowledge that my understanding of Indigenous approaches is limited to the perspectives of a non-Indigenous scholar and instructor.

As instructors, we aim to integrate ourselves into the community we create in our classrooms. Our introductions in this article follow a similar model. In this article, we separate out our voices

at times to convey our own individual stories and experiences. We both stand behind and support each other's stories and take collective responsibility and pride in this article.[1]

We both know from our experiences that economists are unlikely to be from marginalized groups. We've seen this as we have moved through graduate programs, classrooms, conferences, and faculty meetings. Some of us see and experience the lack of diversity and regret even considering economics as a profession (Chavis 2023, Allgood et al. 2019). The lack of diversity applies to race, gender, and socioeconomic condition. Recent research has shown that the socioeconomic diversity of US-born Ph.D. economists is lower than other large Ph.D. fields, and economics has been losing ground over the last two decades to these other fields (Schultz and Stansbury 2022, 2-3). Thus, in the overall context of the academy, where the lack of diversity is already stunning (see, for e.g., National Center for Education Statistics, 2023; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2022), economics is at the back of the pack and moving in the wrong direction.

The Survey of Earned Doctorates, a census of recent graduates, indicates that in 2021, 33% of doctorates in economics were awarded to women (NCSES 2021, Table 1-5).[2] In that same year, only 3.9% of economics doctorates were awarded to Black candidates and 0 were awarded to American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian (AIANNH) candidates (NCSES 2021, Table 3-4).[3] Historical data from the U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) reveals that 2021 was not an anomalous year, as only 20 doctorates in economics were awarded to American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN)

[1] Both of our experiences are largely, though not exclusively, with the peoples Native to what is now Canada and the United States. Thus, we use Indigenous as a type of shorthand. That said, this is the language often used in the literature on this topic. Our paper is not meant to represent all Indigenous approaches, merely those that have been most impactful for us.
[2] This percentage has decreased from 34.5% in 2011.
[3] This statistic is calculated using only U.S. citizens and permanent residents.

candidates between 1995 and 2022 (CSMGEP 2022).[4] Using 2012 data, Nelson and Madsen (2018) found no Native American tenure-track professors in the top 50 economics departments. To our knowledge, more recent data on the representation of AIAN faculty at top economics departments have not been collected, but we have no indication that the situation has changed. Given the lack of AIAN presence in the academy, Walters et al. infer that "there is no question that their absence means their perspectives and potential academic contributions are missing" (2019, 613). This paper is our attempt to provide some Indigenous perspectives on teaching economics to lessen, at least a little, the impact of that absence.

In wrestling with the lack of Native American presence in economics and higher education more generally, a natural starting point is to recognize that "colonization is endemic to U.S. society" (Brayboy 2021, 194). For the Indigenous people of North America, there has never been an endpoint to colonization that would have resulted in the restored sovereignty of their tribal nations. While such recognition can be a call for activism and resistance, in this context, we highlight the existence in our society of multiple approaches to learning and sharing knowledge. Large research universities often take an individualistic approach to the relationship between professor and student in the classroom. We suggest an approach that moves toward the "collectivistic, holistic and interrelated worldviews of AIAN populations" (Walters et al. 2019, 621). Our suggested approach is in line with a model of "two-eyed seeing," which positions Western approaches and Indigenous approaches alongside one another, fostering a safe and inclusive co-learning community that emphasizes personal connections (Hatcher et al. 2009). We

[4] We acknowledge that these statistics may be slightly misleading due to data collection methods, in particular noting that IPEDS relies on single-race categories (Burnette, Younker, and Wick 2020). Nevertheless, estimated increases associated with using multiple race categories instead of single race categories are not substantial enough to come close to closing the racial gap in educational attainment (254).

share specific and easily actionable examples from our teaching experiences and research with the aim of creating a more inclusive and welcoming economics classroom.

Our focus on the classroom is motivated both by our passion for engaging students and by the research in our discipline that views approaches to teaching as critical to diversifying the economics profession. Bayer and Rouse (2016) focus on undergraduate teaching as one of the areas where changes could increase the diversity of our profession. They review a few best practices and expect that innovations will be found through economic research and experimentation. "Through projects with rigorous experimental designs, we learn what works and what does not work in increasing the representation of women and minorities in economics, while also gaining greater insight into causal mechanisms and generating additional hypotheses to support future research and initiatives (235)." We agree with Bayer and Rouse about our need to "revise how we present economics to undergraduates" (233) and how economists need to engage in more active learning and help more students imagine themselves as economists. What we propose is to look outside of the economics profession for solutions. Moreover, we ask economists to take a leap of faith to look outside our discipline and even outside of the dominant Western culture to learn from Indigenous peoples about how to build a strong and more diverse community of economists.

Selected literature

There are many possible explanations for the lack of diversity in economics. For example, when it comes to the underrepresentation of AIAN scholars, the affordability of higher education has been cited as a principal concern (National Native Scholarship Providers 2022). While acknowledging that myriad challenges exist, we focus on explanations that relate to curriculum and the learning environment. Doing so allows us to hone in on and promote

solutions that center on Indigenous pedagogical approaches. At the heart of these approaches is a foundation of community and relationships.

Much of the empirical research in this area points to the need for community building in economics as a discipline. Bayer, Hoover, and Washington (2020) note that not only is the number of Black, LatinX, and Native American economists small, but so too is their relative level of professional satisfaction. They propose a set of solutions "grouped under the action areas of inform, mentor, and welcome" (217). Their recommendations are centered on both building stronger connections among economists and creating a more hospitable environment for members of marginalized groups.

> Being able to connect what's happened in the classroom with what a given student's lived experience or question is, is extremely useful. . . . I personally know a lot of . . . people of color, who, I think personally, if economics was much more accessible, they would probably be economists because they're interested in questions of, how do we fix the gender gap? How do we fix the racial disparities in education and wages? These are economics questions (Bayer, Hoover, and Washington 2020, 210).

A few months before Mary Daly became President of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Daly summarized the problem as follows:

> We've set up mentoring programs, we've published newsletters, and we've condemned bad behavior, and yet, women and minorities are not choosing to pursue careers in economics. I believe it's because we're asking people to fit a mold that they're not comfortable with, rather than creating a culture where they feel welcome (2018).

While Daly's focus is on the whole of our profession, we believe that significant gains can be made by creating a more welcoming and inclusive classroom environment. This is indeed part of

a broad cultural change that Daly advocates as she concludes, “We need to imagine what cultural change looks like in our organizations” (2018). A key part of our organization as academic economists is the classroom.

A growing body of research points to the importance of the classroom environment in fostering inclusivity in the economics discipline. Women and underrepresented minorities report particularly low levels of feelings of belonging in their introductory economics courses. They are less likely to feel comfortable asking questions in class and to feel that their professor cares about whether they learn the material, and they are more likely to feel different from a typical economics student. Feelings of belonging are likely important to success in the profession, as they are associated with better performance in introductory courses and continued pursuit of a degree in economics (Bayer et al. 2020). Bayer, Hoover, and Washington (2020) similarly find that Black, LatinX, and Native American students experience discouragement due to professor focus on top students. This is antithetical to the approach we propose, which focuses broadly on creating community in the classroom.

Creating community can start with small, low-cost steps. Porter and Serra (2020) find that inviting female economist alumnae to speak to students enrolled in introductory economics courses increases the likelihood that female students major in economics by eight percentage points. Helping students see themselves as professional economists can be a means of fostering inclusion. Bayer, Bhanot, and Lozano (2019) find a simple welcoming email with information on diversity in economics to incoming first-year underrepresented racial/ethnic students increases the chance of completing an economics course by 20 percent (110). Sending a second email with information featuring the diversity of economists and economic research leads to an 11.4 percentage point increase in the likelihood of first-generation students taking economics.

Incoming students with less exposure to economics are likely to have large information gaps ex-ante. Again, this helps a broader set of students imagine themselves as part of our profession.

Bedard, Dodd, and Lundberg (2021) find that issuing an encouraging nudge not only increases attendance of an information session but increases the likelihood of majoring in economics, with effects particularly large for women and Hispanic students. At the same time, Pugatch and Schroeder (2020) find that sending introductory economics students an email with basic information about the economics major increases the probability that male students will major in economics but it has no similar effect on female students. More research is needed to understand how the framing of economics as a profession impacts students' choice of courses and majors. Our focus is on how to create belonging once students arrive in our economics classes. This has the potential to both impact our current students and also affect how those students "introduce" their peers to economics courses.

Our approach, in some sense, contributes to the small but influential literature that calls for a decolonization or Indigenization of the economics discipline.[5] Applying the decolonization agenda to economics classrooms would involve changing both *what* we teach and *the way* we teach (Kits 2018; Kvangraven and Kesar 2022). Kits suggests that economics instructors have a responsibility not only to teach their students about the economic history of colonialism but also to expose their students to Indigenous perspectives. As an example of the former responsibility, Kits describes how she starts her principles of ecological economics course by positioning the economy within its social and ecological context, including the Treaty context, which opens up discussion about the history of Indigenous peoples and their relationship with the land. Similarly,

[5] Decolonization is the process of deconstructing the colonial ideologies that prioritize Western thought and approaches (Cull et al. 2018). Decolonization through Indigenization manifests as a fundamental shift to include Indigenous perspectives and approaches, inform scholarship through Indigenous ways of knowing, and relying on cultural practices and protocol in our institutions.

Kvangraven and Kesar offer three approaches to decolonizing what we teach: they suggest that economics instructors should contextualize the economy within broader social processes, taking the focus off of the individual; challenge the discipline's claims to objective neutrality; and explicitly discuss power imbalances that guide socioeconomic phenomenon. Neither paper provides less guidance on how to approach the latter responsibility of changing the way we teach, but that is our focus here.

While the terminology of decolonizing or Indigenizing the teaching of economics may sound far removed from the experience and training of most economists, similar ideas are increasingly emerging in mainstream economics, including in this journal. In synthesizing the lessons of a new introductory economics course at Harvard with the potential to attract a more diverse set of students to the discipline, Bayer et al. (2020) construct a set of best practices based on student comments and "prior work on effective teaching practices" (366). The elements they recommend (along with brief descriptions) in a new approach to teaching economics are as follows:

- personal connection (exploring conditions students face in their own lives)
- real-world exposure (analyzing real-world problems rather than hypothetical examples or abstract ideas)
- social value (teaching skills that have a social impact)
- career value (teaching skills valued by potential employers)
- scientific inquiry (engaging students in the process of scientific discovery)

Their focus is largely on creating connections between students and the content of the course. We expand upon this idea to include building a community of learners where faculty and students are connected in exploring the material together.

Our focus on the importance of community and relationships in the classroom is similar to the approach advocated for by Native American economist Ronald Trosper in his recently published book *Indigenous Economics* (2022). He lays out a vision of economic development where relationships and community well-being are considered alongside the production and distribution of material goods and services. He argues that Indigenous definitions of wealth not only include material possessions, but also the strength of relationships with all of those around them (5). By focusing on the strength of relationships in the classroom, we are taking an Indigenous approach to sharing knowledge. Effectiveness in the classroom is not only measured by an increase in student knowledge but also by the strength of our connection with students as members of the same community.

Applying Indigenous approaches to economics instruction

Our approach to teaching economics is largely based on creating a welcoming environment where students feel they are part of a community of learners that values their engagement. Above, we have shown how this resonates with research on diversity in economics as a profession. This section provides practical guidance for instructors interested in using Indigenous principles in their approach to teaching.

It is possible to to apply Indigenous approaches to any type of course, even those without a topical focus on marginalized communities. As we note throughout the section, certain types of courses may lend themselves more readily to the adoption of Indigenous principles. However, even incremental progress toward inclusion is valuable. We hope that the information contained

in this section will supply instructors with the confidence to begin to make those incremental changes.

In this section, we share how our course design processes reflected very different journeys on the path toward utilizing Indigenous ways of creating and sharing knowledge. We discuss the importance of setting the tone in the classroom, and we provide examples of how to do so. We also summarize what we have identified as some of the principles of Indigneous-influenced economics courses. Finally, we talk about how to translate those principles, or the course ethos, into applied teaching strategies.

Getting started

The philosophy of relationality may serve as a useful guidepost for the process of creating belonging in the economics classroom. Relationality, which is based on the inherent interconnectedness of all things, is significant in Indigenous pedagogies and practice (Campbell et al. 2020). With respect to economics course design, relationality suggests that no one instructor can, or should attempt to, embark on a process of Indigenization in a completely independent fashion. In particular, non-Indigenous instructors should not expect to be able to achieve an "Indigenized classroom," as they do not have the lived experience to serve as experts on Indigenous perspectives. They can, however, draw on Indigenous pedagogies and approaches by doing their own research. There may also be learning through relationships with Indigenous professors, being mindful not to put undue burden on Indigenous experts who are so often asked to educate others.

Laurel and Larry approached course design quite differently. Here, we share these different approaches as examples.

Laurel:

Non-Indigenous instructors like myself who have been educated within Western institutions often lack a model for decolonized teaching and learning. For these instructors in particular, the journey to decolonize and Indigenize university courses requires input from Indigenous educators and scholars.

My journey was guided by Jennifer Ward,[6] the Lead Educational Developer, Indigenous-focus at the University of Alberta's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). I designed my courses in consultation and collaboration with Jen. While at the CTL, Jen led workshops on decolonizing and Indigenizing your courses, co-hosted a podcast episode about teaching remotely from an Indigenous perspective (with Jordon Long and Dr. Paul Gareau), and mentored countless other instructors like me. I am forever grateful for the privilege of learning from and with Jen and for having Jen be such an integral and empowering part of my journey.

Larry:

While Laurel's journey was one where she sought out guidance on creating a more Indigenous and inclusive classroom, my own journey was guided more by trial and error and a reliance on the community-oriented values of my tribal and family communities. I have taught economics and business courses for over 17, but I only recently added the term Indigeneity to my vocabulary. Almost by accident, I became the director of the

[6] Dr. Jennifer Ward passed away in March of 2022. For an overview of her work to impact education see Novak (2022) in the reference list. The article is hosted on the website for the University of Alberta Centre for Teaching and Learning, where more resources can be found on this subject.

UNC American Indian Center in 2017, and that shift in academic and social circles began a more purposeful approach to seeing myself as Indigenous and to examining how that identity impacted all aspects of my career. I had always known I was Lumbee and I grew up in a Lumbee community. However, growing up Lumbee never resulted in a critical examination of Lumbee identity or the role of colonization in shaping my life experiences.

What I did know was that when I stood in the front of the classroom, I wanted students to see me as one of them. I valued their relationships as much as I valued their education. As it is rare to see others teach, I just assumed this was the norm until an alumn of our executive MBA program said to me recently that what he remembered about me in our core economics course was that it felt like I was there to learn from them as well. This was quite moving, especially as he was over a decade removed from my class. Being part of the class extends well beyond the classroom as I share not only academic lessons but personal ones as well. I mention my ADHD and anxiety in my faculty bio and often discuss them in class. I want students, especially those from marginalized backgrounds, to see themselves in me as they strive to reach their career goals.

Support for transforming curricula and teaching practices based on Indigenous approaches is increasingly available through campus institutes for teaching and learning, with universities in Canada paving the way.[7] There are also teacher-learning networks such as the Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network (now operating under the Networks of Inquiry and Indigenous Education), serving instructors across institutions with the goal of creating a more inclusive learning environment for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike (McGregor

[7] See examples from the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Calgary, Simon Fraser University, and Queen's University.

2014). In the spirit of relationality, we encourage instructors to take advantage of the resources available to them. We provide a non-exhaustive list of resources in Appendix Table 1.

Setting the tone

In our experiences, creating community in the classroom starts early in the term. It is important for instructors to intentionally set a tone that fosters feelings of belonging and growth mindsets (Bayer et al. 2020). Belonging is achieved when students feel that they are integrated into their classes and that they belong in their chosen department. The growth mindset is achieved when students believe that it is possible to improve and that their performance in a course is a function of their effort. Research from other disciplines suggests that the first week of class lays the groundwork (Hermann et al. 2010), in particular when instructors focus on creating connections (Kreizinger 2006) and setting clear expectations (Wilson and Wilson 2007).

Setting the tone is particularly important for courses taught at Western institutions that deviate from the lecture-based, one-directional model of learning that has become standard in economics courses. For some students, Indigenous pedagogies may be immediately accepted and welcomed, whereas for others, there may be a transition period. As instructors, our job is to walk students through the transition.

Laurel:

> When we take steps to decolonize our courses, we provide students with a learning experience that may be unfamiliar to them. The adjustment is often easier if we explain the rationale behind course design decisions. In the first week of the course, I issue a statement like the following:
>
> *This course is taught at a Western institution in a settler-colonial state. At every institution, certain perspectives and models are privileged. This course questions that*

privilege in an effort to decolonize our thinking. The learning objectives for the course are twofold: to acquire new knowledge about economics, and to decolonize the way we think about economics.

Larry:

The downside of not carefully planning my approach, as Laurel has, is that my students seem to be distributed bimodally. There are those who are all-in for starting managerial economics with a story about my support for LGBTQ+ rights or a special research-based introduction on Juneteenth, while others react negatively. The strong student support of my approach is reflected in four executive MBA and one undergraduate teaching awards. But the pushback is often memorable, as one student wrote the following in my anonymous evaluations during the summer of 2022:

> If I had wanted a degree in some sort of Native American studies or African American studies I would not have pursued an MBA (MBA 773).

I've learned to take different approaches for core and elective classes and for larger and smaller courses. Overall it takes courage and a willingness to experiment to deviate from established norms in teaching economics and in my case, teaching in a business school.

Introducing students to Indigenous approaches may help instructors set the tone in the first weeks of a course. One Nehiyawk, or Plains Cree First Nations, teaching that can help foster a sense of belonging and connectedness is a belly button teaching known as tante ohci kiya (Ward 2018). Just as our belly buttons remind us of our literal connection to others, this teaching translates to "who are you connected to?" Students are asked to introduce themselves to their classmates by sharing about their important relationships to people and place, and in so doing, they cultivate a deep understanding of themselves and each other.

As another example, instructors may use the principles of sharing circles as a model for classroom discussion. Sharing circles are an example of an Indigenous helping technique traditionally used for ceremony, meetings, social gatherings, and the sharing of information (Hart 2002). Students may be asked to learn about the responsibilities of sharing circle participants and how these responsibilities can inform our approach to promoting an inclusive classroom. Hart (2002) gives the following guiding principles for sharing circles:

- Respect for everyone in the circle
- Fostering a supportive environment
- Being careful not to judge or criticize others
- Maintaining confidentiality

We are not suggesting that non-Indigenous professors run their own sharing circles. For that, they should hire an Indigenous training consultant. However, we do see this as an excellent starting point for establishing norms around communication in the classroom.

The underlying goal is to set the tone such that we empower students to find their own answers. This model of active learning is achieved when students feel a sense of belonging and safety. Safety is largely a function of respect, but it is also a function of clear and accurate expectations for the classroom environment. Therefore, in order to set the tone effectively, instructors necessarily must explain the course ethos to students, as we describe in the next subsection.

Course Ethos

We borrow from a set of Indigenous principles to create a course ethos that can guide interactions in the classroom. We refer to these principles collectively as *teaching well,* or increasing the value of relationships as part of the classroom experience without causing harm.

Teaching well is drawn from the concept of *living well* developed by Ron Trosper in *Indigenous Economics* (2022):

> Living well consists of pursuing actions that strengthen humanity's relational goods created by relationships with nature and with each other. The added value of improved relationships can include additional material goods and services, so long as the additional material income is shared with all beings in the relationships. The aim of good living is to increase the value of all relationships without harming them (5).

Trosper's concept of living well is the foundation of an economic framework that is informed by Indigenous principles, especially the primacy of relationships and community. This framework not only helps us re-evaluate how we define our objective functions in economics, but can also serve as a template for teaching. We propose that teaching well includes, but is not limited to, the following principles:

1. **Reciprocal Learning** - According to Tanaka et al., "each student is a person who is becoming (2007, 105)." Instructors are also people who are becoming. We suggest a course ethos that recognizes that we are all at some point on our path toward knowledge acquisition. Practically speaking, this means that instructors should expect to learn from students, students should expect to learn from the instructor, and students should expect to learn from each other.
2. **Cooperation instead of competition** - Consistent with prioritizing the value of relationships, we suggest minimizing competitiveness in the classroom. Instead, the classroom is a community of learners who benefit from each other's successes. Instructors need to create a course environment where learning is not a zero-sum game. Drawing on Tanaka et al., we can relate this principle to the concept known as

Kamucwkalha in Lil'wat (a traditional language spoken in southern British Columbia). Kamucwkalha is "when the energies of people in a group come together, and collectively everyone becomes clearly focused towards a common goal", allowing all members of the group to draw strength from one another (106).

3. **Student empowerment** - An instructor's role is to curate materials and facilitate learning, but the ultimate responsibility to learn rests with the student. Tanaka et al. discuss an Indigenous learning experience where "the development of a sense of responsibility for personal learning within the context of a learning community" is emphasized (99). Choctaw historian, Deveon Mishesuah, encourages her students to continually "question what they are being taught" (2003, 477). Students are better prepared for the real world when they have the ability to find answers and evaluate information on their own.
4. **Many "correct" answers exist** - Consistent with Indigenous notions of relationality, everything must be understood and assessed within a particular context and within a holistic framework (Cull 2018). Accordingly, there are many "correct" answers, depending on the context and the perspectives adopted. At the same time, some answers do not exist. We advocate for a classroom that recognizes the relationality of all things. This isn't a contentious idea in economics, as we excel at showing how answers depend on underlying assumptions.

Teaching Strategies

In this subsection, we provide suggestions about how to translate the course principles into practical teaching strategies as well as how to use the course principles to guide content selection. We note that many of the proposed strategies will be easier to implement in certain

types of courses, such as those with smaller enrollment and those that involve repeat interactions with students over the course of an entire semester. Although it may not be possible to adopt all of the recommended teaching strategies, we again advocate for marginal changes pursued in the spirit of creating an inclusive classroom. We also recognize that our proposed strategies comprise a non-exhaustive list of examples and that other instructors may be employing strategies that align with the principles in the previous section but do not appear in this section.

Engaging students

Instructors who wish to draw on Indigenous pedagogies will **deprioritize the role of lecture-based instruction**. Lecture as a mode of information delivery may be standard in economics courses taught at Western institutions, but it is largely incompatible with at least two of the course principles outlined above: reciprocal learning and student empowerment. Lectures are based on a one-directional model of learning that necessarily undermines the notion that everyone in the classroom is intended to learn from everyone else. Lectures also imply that students are merely consumers of knowledge. Instructors can design their classes to contain a mixture of lecture and discussion, thereby encouraging students to produce their own knowledge. Instructors who teach online courses may wish to record short asynchronous lectures and dedicate synchronous class meetings to discussion.

Another strategy to encourage students to produce their own knowledge is to **emphasize experiential learning**. Battiste (2002 15) writes, "The first principle of Aboriginal learning is a preference for experiential knowledge. Indigenous pedagogy values a person's ability to learn independently by observing, listening, and participating with a minimum intervention or instruction." If courses are inflexible to providing experiential learning opportunities as a part of

the regular curriculum, instructors may wish to incentivize experiential learning outside of the classroom. Larry and Laurel have both offered extra credit to students for participating in extracurricular activities of their design. Larry integrated experiential learning into the final assignment of an economics elective:

> After three Muslim students were murdered in Chapel Hill in 2015 (see Neff and Dewan 2019), I was at a loss for how to respond. One of the slain students, Deah Barakat, had been working to start a dental clinic for Syrian refugees. That especially resonated with me as I was teaching an undergraduate course on international development at the time. In our first class meeting after the murders, I told the students that they could carry out community service instead of writing a final paper. It was pretty open-ended at the time, and I have added more guidelines over the years. Each year about 5 to 10 students out of a class of 40 choose the community service route. Rather than write a case study related to economic development, they write a research and reflection piece on their project. Overall I've been amazed at the effort and creativity many of the students have dedicated to their projects. One student organized and institutionalized a reoccurring pig pickin, that continues to raise thousands of dollars to fight childhood hunger (Sasser 2015). Another created a flyer posted along our main college strip in support of the local homeless population that read, "Not all of our neighbors live in houses. It's our responsibility to love them too (Soltani 2023)."

Actively engaging students in their communities is not possible in many situations, given constraints on resources and time. However, economists have at their disposal a set of low-cost tools that engage students in the learning process while moving away from a traditional lecture format, economic games. Atwood et al. (2023) provide a useful and recent overview of the three

main online platforms used for running economics experiments in class. They suggest these experiments support the creation of an inclusive classroom "by creating an environment where students see themselves as economic decision-makers and recognize the importance of economic thinking in achieving their own goals and purpose" (2023, 2). Larry has found that using economic simulations in the classroom requires patience and a leap of faith. Setting up and administering games can take much of an hour-long class period, but students are engaged and help generate the key takeaways from the experiment. These games can be both fun and memorable.

Building community

In order for students to see themselves as part of a community of learners, course and grading design should **promote cooperation rather than competition**. There are many ways in which instructors may promote cooperation in their classrooms. For example, instructors may provide students with opportunities for collaborative work. This could take many forms. Instructors could assign students to small group discussions during their class meetings or encourage students to complete select coursework collaboratively. We would advise instructors to provide students with flexibility in selecting their groups and to allow students to opt out of collaborative work, being mindful that some students may have other responsibilities outside of the classroom that make schedule coordination difficult.

Larry has started to see himself as part workshop facilitator as he walks into the classroom. He is collecting icebreaker activities and trying novels ways of starting class on the first day:

> Last year in my international development class I walked in on the first day of class with an "Everyone is Awesome" Lego kit that celebrates positivity and kindness. Before doing anything else in the class of 45 students, I asked the students to assemble the set with the constraint that each student could only add at most seven pieces to the build. After getting the set together, we collectively came up with a set of lessons learned: 1) Communication is key. 2) Declining marginal returns to the number of students working on the project. 3) Dividing this particular set into smaller projects wasn't feasible.. 4) Classroom design was poorly suited to this activity. 5) There was a cost to involving everyone in putting the Lego set together, but prioritizing equity as worth it.

Evaluation

Relatedly, instructors should **think carefully about how their methods of evaluation promote or discourage cooperation**. Inclusive classrooms informed by Indigenous pedagogies should minimize grading students on a curve. When students are pitted against one another to achieve a desired grade distribution, instructors are effectively using competition to motivate student performance. Students in a classroom influenced by Indigenous pedagogies would ideally understand that learning is a not a zero-sum game.

Careful design of evaluative materials should further reflect the Indigenous notions of relationality. Toward this end, instructors may wish to avoid multiple-choice or high-stakes examinations. Multiple-choice questions can be antithetical to the principle that a single, correct answer may not exist. Examinations that force students to select from a fixed set of answers are could suffer from cultural bias that would tend to disadvantage Indigenous students or other students belonging to underrepresented groups (Bell, 2004). We propose that, whenever possible, instructors evaluate students based on how well they are able to support an informed opinion

rather than based on how well they are able to recall specific details from lectures or readings. There are many different types of evaluative materials that encourage critical thinking, such as essay-based quizzes, research projects, annotated problem sets, and term papers. The proposed methods of evaluation admittedly increase the time cost of marking and assigning grades relative to methods of evaluation that rely on a single answer key, and these costs may be prohibitive for instructors with high enrolment in their courses.

Course content

Instructors striving to create more inclusive classrooms should focus not only on how they set up their classrooms and interact with their students but also on what materials they promote. In the selection of course materials, instructors of any economics course can **bring marginalized voices forward.** Instructors can choose from a host of strategies to achieve this objective, for example: assigning readings by diverse authors, in particular elevating the scholarship of Indigenous scholars or adding a requirement that students cite Indigenous scholars in their term papers. The experience of researching the backgrounds of the authors produces knowledge in and of itself. Another productive strategy could be to invite Elders and Indigenous community leaders to share their knowledge through guest lectures. Larry and Laurel have invited guest speakers to their classes to share their perspectives on a variety of topics. Larry discusses his work with Indigenous Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) consultant, Vivette Jefferies Logan[8]:

> I work with an Indigenous DEI consultant, Vivette Jefferies Logan, who has been a guest speaker in each of the three iterations of a workshop I teach that aims to help MBA

[8] Vivette Jeffries-Logan can be contacted at biwaconsulting@gmail.com or by reaching out to Larry Chavis.

> students empathize with frustrations caused by inequality and systemic bias. My approach to DEI has been strongly shaped by Ms. Vivette's visits to my classroom. Her key assertion is that we all have privilege that we can leverage to help others. This shifts the conversation from one of blame to one of cooperation.

In early 2023, Vivette Jefferies Logan and Leah Goodridge, a lawyer with extensive experience in racial justice (see Goodridge 2022), visited Larry's one-day MBA course entitled Race, Equity, and Organizational Belonging. A student shared the following anonymous feedback in the course evaluation:

> Larry provides an incredible learning environment for this topic. He is uniquely positioned as both an economist and a member of the Lumbee nation to offer a unique perspective on diversity, equity, and inclusion. I thought the class, both the async and sync, were incredibly powerful. I also appreciated that the learning environment was a safe space. We all learn and grow, and while I held beliefs in my teens that would have incensed 25-year-old Larry (and frankly incense 37-year-old me!), I felt that I was accepted for my whiteness and that we could have an open dialogue. The speakers Larry chose were powerful, and I particularly appreciate the spotlight focused on indigenous people, as prior to this course, I don't think I had an appreciation for the plight of Native Americans. Larry, I sincerely, thank you for this course; this was easily the highlight of the online program for me (MBA 899).

This particular course helps a broad set of students feel comfortable discussing difficult issues related to race and inequality because of its use of economic data as a starting point for a difficult conversation.

Teaching in a post-2020 world

Many of the steps that instructors would take to decolonize and Indigenize their courses are similar to the steps they took to adapt their approaches during the COVID-19 pandemic. Flexible teaching strategies such as relaxing attendance requirements and providing students with space to deal with life outside of the classroom are both consistent with Indigenization and consistent with the post-2020 realities. Larry was particularly focused on reducing student stress in his core MBA economics courses during 2020 and 2021:

> Given the constraints on my time and the number of students in a course, I still use a combination of short answer math-based questions and multiple choice questions on some exams. I poured myself into creating practice assignments for each week of the course with a set of video answer keys where I worked through each problem. The problems on the exams were mostly variations of these practice problems. I also created similar video keys for the homework assignments. I went back through several years of grades for the course and was able say that every student who had done the following had passed the course: submitted all four homework assignments, attended all ten classes sessions, answered the discussion questions embedded in the asynchronous lectures, and was an engaged member of their group project. I could show the students effort was correlated with passing the course and they could focus on learning rather than economics standing in the way of their degree. Overall I was looking to build student confidence while helping them relax and engage with the material.

Conclusion

Deloria et al. argue for the need to move beyond "viewing Indigenous people as relics of the past" and recognize that Indigenous people can actively contribute new knowledge to our society. They go on to write that "centering Indians in discussions of constitutionality, education, and training, and actual jurisprudence will lead to understanding issues in new ways" (2018, 15). Similarly, we contend that using Indigenous approaches to education in the economics classroom introduces a new solution to the lack of diversity in the economics profession. Building belonging in the classroom can create a discipline that is welcoming to a broader range of students.

In this paper, we have shared research-driven practices for inclusive teaching as well as our personal stories. This structure itself has Indigenous roots. As Bryan Brayboy wrote in his seminal work that lays out Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education, "Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being" (2006, 430). We understand that this is difficult, as we both hesitated in moving away from our training as economists. However, we take to heart Bryaboy's contention that "the statistical power of 'n' is not necessarily the marker of a 'good, rigorous' study(440)." Valuing stories also pushes us to broaden our definition of "proof" (440). This is especially true as the urgency to diversify the economics discipline demands that we act before collecting all the data and results we would like to have as economists.

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Appendix

As stated in the text, this list is not meant to be exhaustive but is meant to provide a starting point for further inquiry.

Table 1: Resource List

Source	Title	Type of Resource	Location
Queen's University Centre for Teaching and Learning	Decolonizing and Indigenizing	Teaching resources	https://www.queensu.ca/ctl/resources/decolonizing-and-indigenizing
University of Calgary Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning	Indigenous Ways of Knowing Couse Design	Teaching resources	https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/resources/indigenous-ways-of-knowing-course-design
University of Saskatchewan	Indigenization	Teaching resources	https://teaching.usask.ca/curriculum/indigenization.php#ProgramSuccesses
Simon Fraser University Indigenous Curriculum Resource Centre	Indigenizing curriculum	Teaching resources	https://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/academic-integrity/indigenous-initiatives/icrc/indigenizing-curriculum
Networks of Inquiry and Indigenous Education	The Networks: Deepening learning through inquiry, innovation and teamwork	Teaching resources	https://noiie.ca/about-us/
Amanda Bayer and the AEA's CSMGP	Diversifying Economic Quality (Div.E.Q.)	Teaching resources	http://diversifyingecon.org
Federal Reserve Bank of New York	Who is Being Trained in Economics? The Race, Ethnicity, and Gender of Economics Majors at U.S. Colleges and Universities	Data	https://www.newyorkfed.org/data-and-statistics/data-visualization/diversity-in-economics#interactive/overview

J. L. Kincheloe	Critical Ontology and Indigenous Ways of Being	Supplemental readings	*Key Works in Critical Pedagogy. Bold Visions in Educational Research vol 32.* ed. Hayes, K., S.R. Steinberg, K. Tobin, K. Sense Publishers. 2011.
V.J. Kirkness and R. Barnhardt	First Nations and Higher Education: The Four R's - Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility	Supplemental readings	In *Knowledge Across Cultures: A Contribution to Dialogue among Civilizations.* ed. R. Hayhoe and J. Pan University of Chicago Press, 2001.
S. Pete, B. Schneider, and K. O'Reilly	Decolonizing our Practice - Indigenizing our Teaching	Supplemental readings	*First Nations Perspectives,* 5(1): 99-115, 2013.
A. Curley and S. Smith	Against Colonial Grounds: Geography on Indigenous Lands	Supplemental readings	*Dialogues in Human Geography,* 10(1): 37-40, 2020.