



## Supporting decolonization within the college educational environment Dialogue circle \_ Teaching, research, and Indigenous communities

*Enjeux de la recherche* section of the ACFAS Conference, May 30-31, 2019  
At Cégep de l'Outaouais (Gatineau, QC) on the unceded territory of the Anishinabeg

### PRESENTATION OF THE PROCESS

This gathering broaches the issue of decolonization in a cross-cultural perspective and calls for a critical approach of reconciliation in order to address some of the resulting issues that arise in the specific context of the teaching relationship within the college network. It is connected with many other initiatives aiming to implement social justice and self-determination principles by challenging individual and collective relationships with language, identity, territory, as well as power and privilege dynamics.

The college network, along with key actors within the graduate studies and research sectors need to define where they stand on the complex issues and challenges faced by civil society towards shifting relationships still conditioned by colonialism, cognitive imperialism and cultural domination.

In this context, changing how we learn, teach and research also implies looking at the way certain pedagogical practices, methods and truth regimes related to scientific disciplines and research are contributing to the perpetuation of systemic socio-economic and cultural inequities.



### Here are some questions that guided our reflection and discussions:

How can we support each other and support all those involved in the teaching relationship towards reshaping the college educational ecosystem in a cross culturally relevant and safe manner?

How can we avoid exploiting the reality of Indigenous people (and other ethnic groups) and thus prevent the risk of a perpetuating colonization or resist forms of substitutive colonization?

How can we support, celebrate and value the presence and contributions of diverse Indigenous actors—particularly the presence of Elders—to the college learning environment, while also acknowledging their expertise and respecting proper cultural protocols?

How do we conciliate different ethical, pedagogical and epistemological spaces in the graduate studies context?



#### **ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

The decolonization of the college learning environment is based on realities faced by the graduate studies sector's as well as current research. This process also sometimes depends on relevant, albeit isolated initiatives, or on other actions which are lead with next to no Indigenous input or dialogue between Anglophone and Francophone institutions/actors.

Creating and living together is conducive to reconsider some of our relations, our stands, attitudes and ways of being alive. So, decolonizing, both individually and collectively, is also an act of imagination.

Celebrating the growing cultural diversity of our learning environments, the outcome of such a decolonization process aims to make education and research more relevant from the perspective of everyone involved, through increasing our capacities to address and respond to social and (cross-)cultural issues.