



III Caribbean Conference on Affirming Methodologies

Connections and Understandings
through Indigenous and Local Ways of
Knowing

Belize 20-23 May 2024

Abstracts Booklet

Note: Abstracts are shown in alphabetical order as per first authors' last names.

Extended abstracts that were not received in time for the publication of this booklet will be added in an updated version.

Towards A Critical Feminist Mentoring Approach with U.S. STEM Women Students

Makini BECK, Melinda HOWARD, Jillian CADWELL, Elizabeth WARGO, Ke WU, Sarah BARK (WiSEN Group)

Research Topic & Objective:

WiSEN, the Women in Education STEM Mentoring Network, is a NSF funded mentoring program for women students across four 4-year U.S. institutions. The project explores critical feminist co-mentoring as a means to foster a network built on critical dialogues and relationship building among STEM women students in higher education institutional spaces.

Methodology: Critical feminist mentoring is an asset-based approach that builds on student strengths and cultural wealth to help increase their participation in STEM fields. Effective mentoring has been cited as one of the most critical factors for the persistence of women in STEM, particularly those with intersectional, racial and ethnic identities (Ireland et al., 2018). Prior research shows that mentoring programs that were developed specifically for minoritized women may improve their academic success and persistence through intellectual and cross-cultural connections (De Four-Babb et al., 2021; Cobb-Roberts et al., 2017) and recognition of their cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). As we pilot the WiSEN model, research data will fill important gaps in knowledge regarding best practices for mentoring minoritized women in STEM. Our critical feminist mentoring approach uses four main conversation topics to support student cultural strengths and intersectional identities. Those conversational topics are: Understanding Institutional Power, Leveraging Cultural Wealth and Intersectional Identities, Networking for Systemic Change, and Co-Mentoring Future Leaders.

Expected Contributions:

WiSEN's ultimate desired impact is to contribute to more women thriving in STEM education and careers. If this impact is realized, the U.S. will better solve our STEM related problems in industry and our communities. The knowledge base tells us that if WiSEN participants engage in critical feminist co-mentoring experiences, they will be more likely to be engaged in a STEM community that provides vital support, graduate with a STEM degree, and persist in a STEM career.

References

Cobb-Roberts, D., Esnard, T., Unterreiner, A., Agosto, V., Karanxha, Z., Beck, M., & Wu, K. (2017). Race, gender and mentoring in higher education. In D. A. Clutterbuck, F. K. Kochan, L. Lunsford, N. Dominiquez & J. Haddock-Millar (Eds.), *Sage Handbook of Mentoring* (pp. 374–388). Sage.

De Four-Babb, J., Unterreiner, A., Cobb-Roberts, D., Kern, A., Thorsos, N., & Wu, K. (2021). Now that we know what we know: A 10-year retrospective of a Women's cross-cultural peer-mentoring. To be presented April 2021, AERA Annual Meeting-Virtual Format

Ireland, D. T., Freeman, K. E., Winston-Proctor, C. E., DeLaine, K. D., McDonald Lowe, S., & Woodson, K. M. (2018). (Un)Hidden Figures: A Synthesis of Research Examining the Intersectional Experiences of Black Women and Girls in STEM Education. *Review of Research in Education*.<https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X18759072>

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race ethnicity and education*, 8(1), 69-91.

Presenters' Biography:

Dr. Melinda Howard, Gonzaga University Biology.

Makini Beck, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in the School of Individualized Study and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Rochester Institute of Technology.

Dr. Jillian Cadwell, Ph.D., Research Associate Faculty, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, WSU Tri-Cities.

Dr. Elizabeth (Liz) Wargo, Assistant Professor, Education Leadership, University of Idaho.

Dr. Ke Wu, Ph.D. Professor in the Department of Mathematical Sciences and Associate Dean of Graduate School, University of Montana.

Sarah Bark is a Project Management Specialist at RIT.

We-searching: Mentoring through Indigenous and Heritage Knowledges

Laurette BRISTOL, Vonzell AGOSTO, Dee COBB-ROBERTS, and Nilsa THORSOS

Objectives:

As authors, we are four women involved in a larger international and informal peer mentoring network established in 2011 (Bristol, Adams & Guzman 2014). The group members in various configurations have engaged in an inquiry into women's experiences in academia and how they draw on cultural epistemic resources to respond to the challenges of being women of colour in academia (Agosto et al., 2016; Johannessen & Bristol, 2016; Cobb-Roberts & Esnard, 2020). Over the years, our collegial bonds have morphed into friendship and familial ties across borders. We deliberately use the expression 'we-researchers' as an expression of collective feminist methodologies. For us, the turn to 'we' is community and belonging-oriented. This works to support our articulation of how we draw on our varying indigenous knowledge (Black- American, Latina American and Afro- Caribbean) to thrive in our work within academia.

We took a reflexive approach to examine mentoring ideas/ideals and asked: How do we as researchers (we-searchers) remember our mentoring relationships? How is the indigenous knowledge we carry into our work within academia sourced as a resource to further conceptions and cultural traditions that support academic goals for ourselves and others? We sought to identify ideal mentor (Rose, 1999; Bailey et al., 2016) prototypes held by women in academia. In doing so, we affirm the Indigenous heritage knowledge/s that are typically devalued within dominant conceptions of what is ideal in the academy.

Methodology:

The study is designed using the principles of pre-qualitative research to inform how meaning is co-constructed. Acting as a comadre (midwife or godmother), one of the authors (comadre A) created and executed an interview protocol to help interviewees curate scenarios, images, recollections, and dreams about guidance in their decision-making and relationships with people and places (Santamaría & Jaramillo, 2014). A virtual interview was completed, lasting 90 minutes each, with each of the three participants. The transcripts were shared with the interviewees, and specific guidance was provided to support the review and analysis.

The virtual chat generated episodes and ideas about the qualities and characteristics of someone who would be most helpful in academic journeys. For these authors, the ideal mentor is one who 1) models reliance on ancestral or elder heritage knowledge, such as stories of struggles against racism, sexism, and colonialism; 2) approaches the mentoring relationship as a mutual investment involving risk and benefit (i.e., fulfilment in realizing

commitments similar to those of the mentee; 3) are direct in their communication about a situation even if what they are communicating is a shortcoming in the mentee's attitude, skillset, or performance and 4) are connected to those from who they draw support to sustain themselves and others (i.e., mentees).

Methodologically, the protocol can be and used to expand existing examinations of mentoring. Outcomes include knowledge of creating and working within communities of support and strategies for mentoring across borders while resisting the tyranny of an expert mentor (Morrison & Kim, 2020).

Expected contributions:

We advance the notion that socio-cultural learning occurs in cultural milieus and undermines the all-knowing mentor who guides others. Mentoring ideals are reliant on ancestral knowledge and dominant knowledge. Access to both knowledge bases was provoked by disjuncture, interrogation, and reflection. The process and outcomes aid in revisioning and reframing of the ideal mentor for women in academia and thus enable resistance against the tyranny of an expert mentor (Morrison & Kim, 2020). In pairing indigenous with heritage knowledge probing, the intangible knowledge one gains from one's cultural repertoire and uses to navigate the cultural milieus of academia were exposed.

We acknowledge the lens provided in the pairing of indigenous with heritage knowledge. Combined, they allow us to shift our gazes to inherent and inherited assets that can be drawn upon to challenge the positionalities of hegemonic power. This allows us to create space where there may be none (limbo) while working to perforate Western notions of mentoring to support academic continuity and establish iterative and spiral notions of mentoring. This is reflected in the indigenous storytelling approach employed in the study to conduct the interviews. Questions do not follow an assumed chronological order of what may have happened in the mentoring experience: first, second, third, or fourth. Rather, the questions turn in on themselves and call the responder to also turn in on self, such that self reflects on self-reflecting on self. This organising protocol allows for a deeper understanding/ view/ reflection of experience and facilitates the tracing of understandings and sense-making in experience to its roots.

References

- Agosto, V., Karanxha, Z., Unterreiner, A., Cobb-Roberts, D. Esnard, T. Wu, K. & Beck, M. (2016). Running bamboo: A mentoring network of women intending to thrive in academia [online]. NASPA Journal about Women in Higher Education (NJAWHE). DOI:10.1080/19
- Bailey, S. F., Voyles, E. C., Finkelstein, L., & Matarazzo, K. (2016). Who is your ideal mentor? An exploratory study of mentor prototypes. *Career Development International*, 21(2), 160-175.

Bristol, L., Adams, A.E. & Guzman Johannessen, B.G. (2014) Academic Life-support: The Self Study of a Transnational Collaborative Mentoring Group. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 22(5), 396-414, DOI: 10.1080/13611267.2014.983325

Cobb-Roberts, D. & Esnard, T. (Eds.). (2020). *Mentoring as Critically Engaged Praxis: Storying the Lives and Contributions of Black Women Administrators*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Johannessen, B. G. G. & Bristol, L. (2016). Mentoring in and outside institutional politics, policies and practices. In B. G. G. Johannessen (Ed.). *Global Co-Mentoring Networks in Higher Education: Politics, Policies, and Practices*, pp. 7–25. Basel, Switzerland: Springer.

Morrison, J. A., & Kim, J. H. (2020). Resisting the “tyranny of an expert”: A journey towards relational research. In *Preparing Students for Community-Engaged Scholarship in Higher Education* (pp. 43-60). IGI Global

Rose, G. L. (1999). What do doctoral students want in a mentor? Development of the ideal mentor scale. The University of Iowa.

Santamaría, L. J., & Jaramillo, N. E. (2014). Comadres among us: The power of artists as informal mentors for women of color in Academe. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 22(4), 316-337.

Presenters' Biography

Laurette Bristol is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Education, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados. She has over 25 years' of experience in the education policy and practice arena in the Caribbean and Australia. Her research emphasizes the historical impact of the colonial experience on classroom practices, prefiguring post-colonial educational aspirations and actions. More specifically, she has an international research profile that spans the fields of professional development, mentoring, leadership, and school transformation.

Vonzell Agosto, Ph.D., Dr. Vonzell Agosto is a Professor of Curriculum Studies in Educational Leadership & Policy Studies and Department Chair of the Department of Leadership, Policy, and Lifelong Learning.

Deirdre Cobb-Roberts, Ph.D., Professor of Social Foundations and Department Chair of Educational and Psychological Studies at the University of South Florida. Her research focuses on gendered racism in the faculty and administrative ranks of Black women in higher education. She interrogates the structures of power that potentially affect the interpretations of institutional climates, cultures, and experiences, as well as the mentoring practices and performance as Black women administrators, across multiple spaces.

Nilsa J. Thorsos is a Professor of Education at National University and serves as the chair of the Teacher Education Department. She has authored several articles, books, book

chapters, and editorials and serves as editor or a reviewer for peer-reviewed books and journals. Her research interests include linguistics (raciolinguistics, neurolinguistics), literacy, language acquisition/loss, bilingualism, special education, teacher preparation, and mentoring in higher education.

“Succulencies of Relation”: Caribbean Literary Comparison & Anthropocene Fiction

Christopher De SHIELD

In their essay “Thinking the Postcolonial Contemporary”, Watson and Wilder (2018) claim that “self-reflexive critical practices” are the legacies that “best characterize the spirit of postcolonial critique” (p. 9). Taking cue from this assertion, I assess my own theoretically-informed teaching practice by evaluating a specific course, Special Topics in Literature: Anthropocene Fiction, as a case study.

In Anthropocene Fiction, students appraise the role imaginative literature plays in addressing anthropogenic ecological collapse by engaging scientific, philosophic, theoretical, and journalistic accounts of the current climate crisis and reading literary treatments and responses in speculative fiction, philosophical novels, and ‘ecological’ short stories and poetry.

Because the course balances a desire to centre Caribbean texts and theory with the desire to provide students with resemblances and affinities – what Édouard Glissant might term “Succulencies of Relation” – to contexts further afield, it necessarily involves methodologies of literary comparison. And while inherited comparativist frameworks have been critiqued for their “colonial genealogy” (Hulme 2005, p. 47) and for their tendency to masquerade Eurocentric provincialisms as universals (Krishnaswamy 2008 p. 4), the present-day global urgencies Anthropocene Fiction takes up still call for “translocal solidarity, postnational democracy, and planetary politics” (Watson & Wilder 2018, p. 9).

Contextualising the course within critical debates in postcolonial studies around the theme of comparativism (Cheah 1999; Felski & Friedman 2013; Krishnaswamy & Hawley 2008; Lionnet & Shih 2011), I survey methodologies for ecocritical literary comparison attuned to Caribbean concerns (Brathwaitean tidalectics, Glissantian relational poetics, Heiseian eco-cosmopolitanism, among others) thereby working to dismantle colonial conditions of knowledge production surrounding my own Belize-based pedagogy and engaging in the twin projects of provincializing Europe and de-provincializing the Global South as a strategy for constructing a sustainable ecocritical pedagogy.

References

- Apter, E. S. (2013). *Against world literature: On the politics of untranslatability*. Verso.
- Brathwaite, K. (1983). *Caribbean Culture: Two paradigms*. In J. Martini (Ed.), *Missile and capsule*. Universität Bremen.

Brathwaite, K., Mackey, N., & Funkhouser, C. (1999). *Conversations with Nathaniel Mackey*. We Press.

Cheah, P. (1999). Grounds of Comparison. *Diacritics*, 29(4), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1353/dia.1999.0026>

Cilano, C., & DeLoughrey, E. (2007). Against Authenticity: Global Knowledges and Postcolonial Ecocriticism. *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 14(1), 71–87. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isle/14.1.71>

DeLoughrey, E. M. (2005). *Caribbean literature and the environment: Between nature and culture*. Univ. of Virginia Press.

DeLoughrey, E. M. (2007). *Routes and roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island literatures*. University of Hawai'i Press.

DeLoughrey, E. M., & Handley, G. B. (2011). *Postcolonial ecologies: Literatures of the environment*. Oxford University Press.

Glissant, É. (1989). *Caribbean discourse: Selected essays*. University Press of Virginia.

Glissant, É., & Wing, B. (1997). *Poetics of relation*. University of Michigan Press.

Heise, U. K. (2008). *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global* (1 edition). Oxford University Press.

Heise, U. K. (2017). *Imagining extinction: The cultural meanings of endangered species*. <http://chicago.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.7208/chicago/9780226358338.001.0001/upso-9780226358024>

Krishnaswamy, R., & Hawley, J. C. (Eds.). (2008). *The Postcolonial and the Global* (NED-New edition). University of Minnesota Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctttszqx>

Lionnet, F., & Shi, S. (2011). *The Creolization of Theory*. Duke University Press.

Lionnet, F., & Shih, S. (2005). *Minor Transnationalism*. Duke University Press.

Stanford Friedman, S., & Felski, R. (2013). *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses*. Johns Hopkins University Press. https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/1/edited_volume/book/72090

Watson, J. K., & Wilder, G. (2018). *The postcolonial contemporary: Political imaginaries for the global present*.

Surviving the US Academy: Culturally Affirming Strategies of Afro-Caribbean Women

Talia ESNARD & Deidre COBB-ROBERTS

Caribbean people have long migrated to work beyond their shores. The literature has largely captured the experiences of seasonal workers, trade workers, teachers, and nurses, but with a lesser focus on women in academe. We acknowledge that when Afro-Caribbean women migrate into spaces where they are racially and culturally in the minority, they become isolated, but with a consciousness and awakening about the structures of inequality and oppression that exist within the academy (Fournillier, 2010). We also note that when Afro-Caribbean women enter racialized contexts, their notions of identity shifts, with varied experiences of cultural assimilation, dissonance, and retention (Esnard & Roberts, 2018). However, we need to find out how cultural beliefs and practices of Afro-Caribbean women academics are situated within the contentious spaces. The study, therefore, takes forward this question by examining the experiences of Afro-Caribbean women within the US academy, but with attention to the relevance of structure and culture to their institutional experiences and responses. Using an Afro-Caribbean Feminist lens and narrative inquiry, the work delves into yet unexplored data with six Caribbean women living and working in the US. The presentation will speak of how Afro-Caribbean women are represented across academic and administrative spaces, the structures of power that impact their personal and professional journeys in the academy, and the use of culturally affirming methods to negotiate their pathways. The presentation will speak about their bicultural identities and competencies, but with specific explorations of their Caribbean heritage and the strength that this brings to their resilience within the US academy. Findings will be discussed in relation to the importance of culturally affirming practice for surviving marginalized academic contexts.

Key words: Survival; US; Afro-Caribbean women; Culturally affirming strategies.

Stepping Forward to Reparations: Using Anthropology to build a global digital classroom in a Post Colonial Era

Deneia FAIRWEATHER

How do we build a more inclusive educational system in a post-colonial era? How do we build a more supportive educational system in a post-colonial era? How do we address youth empowerment in a post-colonial era? These are the guiding questions that serve as a foundation for a global digital classroom curriculum called Anthropology in Motion (AIM) 2.0. AIM 2.0 is an inquiry based toolkit that focuses on how to repair the injustices of the past through sustainable development. In this curriculum, youth and young adults (aged 16-24) use problem and project based learning (PBL) techniques to move beyond decolonization toward a data driven investigation into why we need reparations. Reparations, often considered a divisive term, is associated with either compensated emancipation and a path toward reconciliation or an unrealistic solution that could bankrupt a nation.

Aim 2.0 emphasizes postcolonial epistemologies, emancipatory voices and practice theory and shows how youth and young adults understood the intention of reparations while realizing, appreciating and understanding the value of seventeen sustainable development goals introduced by the United Nations in 2015. Using the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG) and CARICOM's Ten Point Plan for Reparations as a guide and foundation for applying anthropology, and primary data collected about the diverse cultures and communities of African Diaspora, this paper advocates for a vision of democratizing education and creating global communities of practice that will empower youth and young adults to be active, uplifting and consistent participants in their communities.

Caribbeanist perspectives on digital cultural and language preservation: Community engagement, repatriation and restitution

Nicté FULLER MEDINA, Griselly PADRON, Ethan MORELAND, Krystal SUAREZ_ARIZMENDI

Recent developments in Caribbean linguistics have underscored the need for the establishment of online Caribbean corpora (Rickford 2022). At the same time, there is a growing literature on innovative perspectives rooted in Southern epistemologies (Pennycook and Makoni 2022) and in Caribbeanist epistememes, in particular (Nakhid et al., 2022). Employing a decolonial framework, which aims to center local ways of knowing and doing, this paper addresses a critical gap in Caribbean digital data availability. We report on the creation of two digital repositories of sociolinguistic interviews in Belizean varieties of Spanish and in folklore narratives in Belize Kriol as part of the umbrella project *Language, Culture and History: Belize in a Digital Age* (Fuller Medina 2022). This project re-imagines linguistic data as patrimony and folklore narratives as linguistic data. With this focus, the main aims of the project lie in digitally preserving legacy sound recordings from Belize with a view to providing broad access to scholars and communities to interpret local epistemologies and build locally relevant and useful knowledge while, at the same time, providing a site from which communities can assert their presence in the face of historical erasure. Guided by post-custodial archival theory (Bastian 2002), UNESCO principles on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, and Southern and Caribbean epistemologies (Pennycook and Makoni 2022; Nakhid et al., 2022), our research engages with the legal, ethical, and technical challenges inherent in the creation of digital repositories of minoritized cultures and language varieties. Our approach involves collaboration with local community organizations focused on language activism, cultural documentation, and digital preservation; capacity building among student interns; repatriation and restitution within a decolonial framework; and leveraging the resources of regional organizations like Digital Libraries of the Caribbean.

References

Bastian, J. (2002). "Taking Custody, Giving Access: A Postcustodial Role for a New Century," *Archivaria: The Journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists* 53

Fuller Medina, N. (2022). Data is patrimony: on developing a decolonial model for access and repatriation of sociolinguistic data. *archipelagos*, (6).

Nakhid, C., Nakhid-Chatoor, M., Santana, A. F., & Wilson-Scott, S. (Eds.). (2022). *Affirming Methodologies: Research and Education in the Caribbean*. Taylor & Francis.

Pennycook, A., & Makoni, S. (2020). *Innovations and challenges in applied linguistics from the global south*. Routledge.

Rickford, John R. (2022). The value of online corpora for the analysis of variation and change in the Caribbean. In Shelome Gooden, and Bettina Migge (Eds.), *Social and structural aspects of language contact and change*, (pp. 213-232). Berlin: Language Science Press.

Native American Conversations about the Culture of Higher Education

Jennifer HARRINGTON, Anne GRANT and Ke WU

Research Topic:

Inclusion of Indigenous Methodologies and Methods is a pathway that Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) might better support Native American faculty (NAF) assessed through in-depth conversations with NAF describing and reflecting on their journeys. Native American epistemologies, methodologies and methods were incorporated and served as a guide for how our work unfolded.

Objective:

The objective of this research is to understand how IHEs can become better environments for increasing representation and facilitating success of Native American faculty.

Methodology:

We adopted a mixed-methodological approach for this research. Data collection used principles of Indigenous Research Methodologies and Methods (IRM&M) with Talking Circles (TCs). TCs are used by some Native American and First Nation peoples, often in conjunction with peace-making and/or healing (e.g. Baskin, 2005; Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009). We chose this method to create a safe, equitable and healing space for meaningful conversations. The project researchers shared a meal with participants prior to the TC for relationship-building (e.g. Duffié, 1989; Kovach, 2009; Obie, 2016; Restoule, 2006). A smudge of sage or sweetgrass was available before and after the TC. Researchers posed questions asking Circle participants about their experiences in higher education. Conversation unfolded naturally and was influenced and guided by Indigenous and local ways of knowing. Overall, we conducted 10 TCs. The conversations were digitally audio-recorded and were transcribed. Data analysis was guided by a hermeneutic paradigm as developed in Patterson and Williams (2001) and IRM&Ms as developed by Wilson (2008), Kovach (2009), et al.

Findings:

These findings are important research from our perspective because there are differences between Native American and Western ways of thinking. Within Native American epistemologies, stories are not just stories in a Western sense, they are metaphors which carry multiple levels of meaning, meanings that can change across time (Waters, 2021).

We met with individuals or small groups of Native American Faculty for a meal or tea/coffee to get to know each other prior to gathering for a Talking Circle. This approach allowed for revelatory and impactful conversations. Sage and sweetgrass permeated the meeting rooms as the facilitators began to share sets of questions with the Native American Faculty. The questions asked about the path of each faculty member into higher education, what supports they had and what kind of barriers they encountered. Faculty hearing other faculty share challenges and successes validated their own experiences.

Most of the Talking Circles lasted for two hours or less. Two of the Talking Circles extended into five hours of discussion over two meetings each. The Native American Faculty who participated in the Talking Circles bonded with each other that extended beyond the meeting and many remarked that the experience was therapeutic. A few of the Faculty continued to build relationships beyond the Talking Circle.

Themes of the discussions found across the Talking Circles include the barriers many encountered on their journey through Higher Education like racism, bias, lateral violence, and imposter syndrome. More than one faculty member shared that they felt pulled between their culture and academia. Indigenous culture was not present on campuses for many of the faculty while they were getting their education. The absence of Indigenous epistemology, ways of knowing, at IHE's, impairs recruitment and retention of Native American Faculty.

Significance:

Conducting research with Native American Faculty guided by Indigenous Research Methodologies and Methods facilitated an evolving understanding of the necessity and significance a more diverse and inclusive research approach. Building relationships with the Native American Faculty required the researcher to be accountable and equally vulnerable during the Talking Circles. Analysis took a much different shape than if one were attempting to be an objective researcher.

Within Native American epistemologies, the emphasis on experiential observations and understanding through stories are presented as a contrast to the reductionist nature that underlies much of Western science which seeks to force natural experience and knowledge into predetermined categories without adequately acknowledging the limitations of this approach (Deloria and Wildcat 2001:4).

The Native American Faculty revealed through the Talking Circles that if IHE's are to become better environments for increasing representation and facilitating success, then Indigenous ways of knowing, Indigenous cultures, and Indigenous communities must be included and supported in areas like inclusive and Indigenous curricula and a cultural leave policy for faculty. The Talking Circles gave space to address inequity, insecurity, but also allowed for laughter and connection.

Intentional changes to academic culture to be more inclusive of multiple ways of knowing, including research methodologies and methods, is one step that IHEs can take to increase representation of Native American Faculty in higher education.

Presenters' Biography

Jennifer Harrington, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, Native American Natural Resource Program Director, Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, University of Montana.

Anne Grant, amskaapikani (Southern Band of Blackfeet) and a'aninin (People of the White Clay), Program manager of the National Science Foundation-funded Willow-AGEP and Native-FEWS projects, University of Montana.

Ke Wu is a Chinese immigrant to U.S., a Professor in the Department of Mathematical Sciences and Associate Dean of Graduate School at the University of Montana.

Dance as Methodology: Embodying Liberation through Haiti's *Ibo*

Truth HUNTER

Abstract/Overview:

In this movement-based workshop, participants will undergo an exploratory process of using dance and the body as a methodology for developing embodied knowledge. We will learn three movements from a Haitian dance called *Ibo*. This dance reflects a refusal to submit to enslavement and highlights the human spirit's indomitable desire to be free. The purpose of this workshop is to show how the dancing body can be used as a site for: (1) integrating the mind, body, and spirit and (2) constructing embodied knowledge.

Significance:

Historically, colonizers uprooted, banished, and hid Indigenous knowledge systems resulting in the absence of their presence in mainstream education (Heleta, 2016; Quijano & Ennis, 2000). The aforementioned absence has negatively impacted racially minoritized communities in higher education in deeply personal ways. Afful-Broni et al. (2021) explain, "This is the problem of colonial and colonizing education that removes learners from their past, heritage, histories, cultures, identities, and Indigenous knowledge systems and spiritual values" (p. 3). These acts of disembodiment can be attributed to the dominance of Western and Eurocentric knowledge systems that uphold the principle of cartesian dualism with its emphasis on the mind-body split (Martin, 1996). This Western and Eurocentric way of knowing posits that the source of knowledge should stem primarily from the mind as evidenced by reason, logic, and pragmatism (Dilliard, 2012). As a result, the body takes a subordinate role in the construction of knowledge as it is assumed to be a less reliable source (Dilliard, 2012).

However, contemporary educators and researchers are challenging the colonial legacy of disembodiment by experimenting with decolonial interventions that seek to mend the mind-body connection (Nguyen & Larson, 2015). In this workshop, I intend to contribute to these emerging interventions by using a Haitian dance, *Ibo*, as a case study for understanding (Martin, 1996):

1. The full integration of the mind, body, and spirit (Rendón, 2012).
2. How the body can be used as a site for the construction of embodied knowledge (Green, 2002).
3. How dance is a vehicle for embodied liberation (Daniel, 2005)

Haiti, the first Black republic in the Western hemisphere, stands as the embodiment of resistance, revolution, and independence for the African Diaspora as a whole (James, 2009). This history of rebelling against enslavement is documented in Haiti's repertoire of dances,

particularly the dance Ibo depicts breaking loose from chains and confronting their oppressors. The dance is named after an ethnic group in Nigeria because this group had a reputation for rebelling against enslavement (Martin, 1996).

Workshop Outline:

I. Exploration of Dance as Methodology through Ibo

We will explore dance and the body as methods for acquiring embodied knowledge from a Haitian worldview.

II. Dance (10 minutes)

I will teach participants three movements that tell a story of breaking free from bondage.

III. Mind-Body-Spirit Connection (10 minutes)

After teaching the dance, I will lay out laminated cards on the floor with vocabulary words that reflect embodied sentiments such as freedom, liberation, wholeheartedness, fearlessness, and courage. These words are designed to help participants articulate how the movement made them feel and how the movement supported them by evoking particular emotions.

IV. Co-Constructing Embodied Knowledge (10 minutes)

I will ask participants to move to the cards that most reflect their embodied experiences and then I will ask participants to share the connection between the feeling and the movement that they just embodied. Participant reflections will be captured on a large post paper to show the collective embodied knowledge created in the space.

Takeaways

Participants will walk away from this workshop, with an understanding of how:

1. The body can be a central site for developing knowledge
2. African Diaspora dances can be used as primary sources of knowledge to disrupt coloniality in learning, teaching, and research

References

Afful-Broni, A., Anamuah-Mensah, J., Raheem, K., & Dei, G. J. S. (2020). Africanizing the school curriculum: Promoting an inclusive, decolonial education in African contexts. Myers Education Press.

Daniel, Y. (2005). *Dancing wisdom: Embodied knowledge in Haitian Vodou, Cuban Yoruba, and Bahian Candomblé*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

Dillard, C. B. (2012). *Learning to (re) member the things we've learned to forget: Endarkened feminisms, spirituality, and the sacred nature of research and teaching*. Black Studies and Critical Thinking. Peter Lang New York.

Green, J. (2002). Somatic knowledge: The body as content and methodology in dance education. *Journal of dance education*, 2(4), 114-118.

Heleta, S. (2016). Decolonisation of higher education: Dismantling epistemic violence and Eurocentrism in South Africa. *Transformation in Higher Education*, 1(1), 1-8.

James, C. L. (2009). *The Black Jacobins*.

Martin, L. (1996). Six Haitian Vodou Dances. *Visual Anthropology*, 8(2-4), 219-249.

Nguyen, D. J., & Larson, J. B. (2015). Don't forget about the body: Exploring the curricular possibilities of embodied pedagogy. *Innovative Higher Education*, 40, 331-344.

Quijano, A., & Ennis, M. (2000). Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America. *Nepantla: Views from South* 1(3), 533-580. <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/23906>.

Rendón, L. I. (2012). *Sentipensante (sensing/thinking) pedagogy: Educating for wholeness, social justice and liberation*. Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Exploring Indigenous and Local Ways of Knowing - Decolonizing Caribbean Educational Research Endeavors Toward Transforming Curriculum Approaches

Anthazia KADIR

This presentation offers an autoethnographic account of my journey engaging with teaching and research in a Caribbean context. Hence, using my experiences at the University of the West Indies, Cavehill, Barbados, I will share the transformational possibilities that may exist when we include research methodologies that affirm and value indigenous and local ways of knowing. To this end, this presentation will demonstrate that the remnants of colonization, which arguably still possess the mindset of Caribbean intellectuals, are resonant within educational research practices in the Caribbean.

Therefore, to move towards decolonizing and transforming educational research endeavours from the wounds of colonialism, this presentation will share my doctoral research design to demonstrate the necessity of using Indigenous and Local Ways of Engagement, such as ole talk, as strategies for transformation.

Hence, using autoethnography as a delivery and qualitative research method, this presentation will examine the Caribbean's colonial past towards providing a theoretical and practical template for engaging with decolonization as a praxis rooted in contemplation, compassion and emancipatory explorations. As such, in the context of subverting the paternalist ideologies learned at the breast of plantocracy, this presentation will propose educational research approaches that can transform curriculum work in the region.

Key Words: Curriculum Approaches, Decolonization, Emancipatory, Indigenous, Ole-Talk,

Biography

With a teaching and research resume that spans Canada and the Caribbean, Anthazia's sense of identity is rooted in the entanglements of Caribbean cultures and discourses. To this end, she works at the intersections of de-colonization as praxis, pedagogies of re-turning and re-membling, transformative curriculum practices, radical contemplative pedagogies and narrative research. She received her teaching qualifications at the Cyril Potter College of Education, Guyana, a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) from York University, Toronto and a master's in education - Curriculum Studies at the University of New Brunswick, (UNB) Canada. Currently she is teaching at the University of the Virgin Islands and completing her doctoral work at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, where she examines curriculum inquiry/work as a practice saturated with wonder, histories, cultural and linguistic nuances, and an embodiment of place.

Crossing Bridges – Ancestral spirits and Descendant beings

Camille NAKHID

Exploration and centering our own ways of sharing knowledge through reciprocal understanding, relationship, and responsibility carries with it the expectation that we remain mindful of others' ways of sharing knowledges. This is the embodiment of Affirming Methodologies – whether it is African (Ubuntu - *I am because you are*), Māori (Naku te rourou nau te rourou ka ora ai te iwi - *With your basket and my basket the people will live*), or Samoan (Teu le va – *looking after your relationships*) – or the many other ways of being and knowing around the world. This reciprocity and mutual sharing of knowledges predates colonization, contemporary religious practices, or social media connections as evidenced in the commonalities of diverse traditional practices. What we have come to know of others and of their ways of sharing knowledges, however, have been taught to us within restrictive educational systems, or we have learnt them from sources informed and controlled by colonial or discriminatory structures and ideologies. This presentation tells of an encounter that the author had in the land called Australia which led her to reflect on how little we know of one another, and that much of what we do know and the ways in which we respond to this knowledge are in opposition to how our ancestors related to and shared knowledges with each other.

Writing about or researching others lies outside the spirit of Affirming Methodologies. Such an approach supposes a lack of engagement with persons and cultures and indicates that the person's cultures and ways of knowing have not been central to the process. As a researcher, when we write and research, it must be with those whose knowledges and being are centred so that we learn about them what we may not have known before. Just as we are cognizant of and acknowledge our histories and heritages in the application of culturally relevant research methodologies to our research in a Caribbean context, so must we do the same when our research is with those who do not have the same, even if similar, heritages and histories. Positionality is fundamentally important beyond a simple declaration in a thesis or research study. It needs to be a considered and reflexive enactment within the research process and in complementarity with Affirming Methodologies. This would mean that we remain mindful of our research relationships, so that they honour those with whom we write and research, and in so doing, honours the relationships between their ancestors and ours.

Biography

Camille Nakhid is a professor of social science and public policy at Auckland University of Technology. Professor Nakhid has done research into culturally relevant research methodologies, queer ethnic communities, family and community among Pasifika youth, factors impacting on migrant resettlement, and Māori and Pasifika educational achievement. In 2018, Camille was recognised for services to ethnic communities and

education in the New Years Honours List, becoming a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit.

Community building, cultural preservation and the Landships of Barbados

Allison RAMSAY

The cultural institution, the Landships of Barbados can be used to illustrate community building during the colonial and post-colonial periods in Barbados. Established circa the 1860s, the Landship is a land interpretation of what occurs on a sea going vessel. It is a re/interpretation of British naval culture and an example of creolisation as British and Afro-Caribbean cultures are evident in this organisation.

By the 1930s, over sixty Landships and 3000 crew “sailed” across Barbados with their headquarters called docks established in various communities from the north to the south of the island. The commanders, admirals, captains, nurses, deck boys, dinkie nurses, military police and other rank and file contributed to the longevity of this organisation which created a space for the black working class to belong and be recognised in the villages and tenancies across Barbados. By the late 1980s, the number of Landships declined for various reasons and the remaining ships merged together to form the Barbados Landship Association.

The public has witnessed the public aspect of the Landship through its parades and performances which have entertained spectators. Public performance continues to be part of the identity of Landships. The public space is where Barbadians see cultural preservation in action through for example “naval manoeuvres such as “man over board” and the “wangle low”, plaiting the maypole and the use of nautical language such as “full steam ahead”. The passing on of this intangible cultural heritage through oral tradition is part of the Landship’s cultural preservation within the Barbadian community.

In the post-independence era, the Landship has become synonymous with Barbadian cultural identity. The importance of the Landship to community building and its preservation has been recognised by the government with Landships such as BLS Cornwall, BLS Iron Duke, BLS Director and BLS Rodney participating in state events. On Barbados’ Independence Day on November 30 1966, a combined squadron of Landships was on parade at the Garrison Savannah when the Union Jack was lowered and the Barbados National Flag was raised. The presence and tradition of the Landship at Independence Day parades has continued. In the 1970s when the Barbados Tourism Board sought to revive the island’s Crop Over Festival, the Landship was called to the national stage and has remained a part of the annual Crop Over Festival for over forty years. On November 30, 2021 when Barbados transitioned from a monarchy to a republic, the Barbados Landship Association was part of this momentous occasion as one of the unarmed units on parade.

This paper seeks to discuss how the Landship has had a community building role in Barbados as a popular past time and institution embedded within the communities of this society. It explores the importance of the Landship's structure in functioning similar to a mutual aid/friendly society. Friendly societies and forms of savings through susu/meeting turns/box were essential for black working class families to progress and aided them in times of sickness and death. The paper notes a few strategies put in place to ensure the survival of the Landship, namely the partnership of the state and the Barbados Landship Association with schools which continues to promote cultural preservation of this aspect of the intangible cultural heritage of Barbados and community well-being with a focus on the youth.

Biography

Allison O. Ramsay, Ph.D. is a Lecturer in Cultural/Heritage Studies in the Department of History at The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago. She holds a B.A. in History (First Class Honours) from The UWI Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, a M.A. in History from the University of the South Pacific, Fiji and a Ph.D. in Cultural Studies (High Commendation) from The UWI Cave Hill Campus. Her research interests include fraternal organisations, museums, Caribbean culture, heritage and history, Cultural Studies and Heritage Studies. Allison Ramsay is the co-editor of *Independence, Colonial Relics and Monuments in the Caribbean* with Jerome Teelucksingh published by Rowman and Littlefield in 2024 and is the author of several book chapters and journal articles on Caribbean culture, history and heritage.

Piecing Together Sovereignty: Crafting Crowns from Found Objects as a Portal into Caribbean Women's Stories of Adversity and Agency

Tracie ROGERS

This presentation discusses the methodological approach adopted for an arts-based research project utilizing collaborative artmaking, therapeutic storytelling, and photography to explore resilience amongst women from the Caribbean and its diaspora. Through a series of individual in-depth interviews, participants recounted stories of hardship, contemplating how conceptions of womanhood shaped both their experiences of and responses to adversity. Thereafter, participants collected found objects from their homes or public spaces with symbolic or intrinsic connections to the stories shared during the interviews. In subsequent interviews, participants used these objects to craft crowns whilst critically reflecting on their experiences of adversity and personal agency. The data generation process culminated in co-creating a portrait featuring the participants wearing or holding their crown. The creative direction of the portrait session was a co-created process photographed by the researcher. This paper discusses how the use of found objects and portraiture becomes a catalyst for visual storytelling about social, cultural, and political aspects of Caribbean women's lives. Ultimately, the co-created portraits became visual metaphors which tapped into profound aspects of women's identities and lived experiences. In the presentation, the researcher outlines how this collaborative visual methodology generated nuanced qualitative data about women's lives imbued with hallmarks of Caribbean epistemology, orality, and communion. Thus, the research engagement organically fostered decolonising acts of reflexivity, resistance, and re-storying of survival narratives.

Keywords: Caribbean women, storytelling, participatory-action research, visual methodology, portraiture, arts-based research

Biography

Tracie Rogers is a Lecturer and Researcher in the Department of Sociology, Psychology and Social Work at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus in Jamaica. Grounded in anti-oppressive principles that honour human dignity, her work centres indigenous perspectives, decolonising methodologies, and unapologetically amplifies marginalised voices. Guided by trauma-informed practices, Tracie integrates social justice and activism into all aspects of her research and teaching.

Not Fat, Just Thick!: An Exploration of Acceptable Female Fatness in Trinidad and Tobago

Keisha SAMLAL

Within the wider fat studies scholarship, women's fatness has been reified as a specific gendered construction of fatness (Fikkan and Rothblum 2012; Saguy 2012), rooted in conceptualisations of deviance and transgressiveness outside of the ideals and norms expected of women's bodies (Downing Peters 2014). Through numerous discourses around health, fitness, aesthetics, and morality, fat women have been socially constructed as the bearers of a 'spoiled' identity that require personal responsibility and action in order to be rectified (Powell and Fitzpatrick 2015; Clark 2018). This 'spoiled identity' has further implications for how fat women are perceived and treated, leading to experiences of discrimination and stigma in varying contexts. While the general fat studies literature consistently and empirically supports these observations, there is a failure to recognize culturally specific body types and identities outside of western realities, due to an overrepresentation of western societies in the wider body of research. The exception to this has been the exploration of fat women's bodies as valuable within tribal and rural communities in African countries (Wrigley-Asante et al 2017), however, these discussions still centre western notions of the ideal woman's body in their understanding the potential positive value of fat women and emphasize the changing cultural norms and values due to processes of Westernisation. Interestingly, the Caribbean as a unique historical and cultural space provides a rich site for the interrogation of fat women's bodies that troubles the dominant dichotomous presentations of good and bad bodies for women, based on the standards and values embedded in notions of the ideal woman's body. This paper, therefore, presents the 'thick' woman's body as a unique and culturally relevant 'liminal' body identity for women in Trinidad and Tobago, supporting a small but important body of Caribbean scholarship on women's fatness.

The findings emerge from a doctoral study that investigated the identities and experiences of fat women in Trinidad and Tobago. The study also sought to identify the institutions, axes of significance and wider systems of power that are present and active in the social constructions of women's fatness. To support this, a detailed and thorough review of the socio-historical contexts that have traditionally constructed and organised women's bodies in the Caribbean was included, given the importance of the colonial period in historicising contemporary Caribbean issues. Adopting intersectionality as the theoretical framework, and complemented by narrative inquiry as the research design, data was collected through in-depth narrative interviews between April and July 2021. Purposive sampling was used to identify a sample of 11 women who were 18 years and older, residing in Trinidad and Tobago

and had either self-identified, or have been identified by others as “fat”. Fat/fatness was not defined using any standardised measure of body weight and size, but rather built on experiential and social understandings of fat/fatness, determined by the participants themselves. The intention here was to acknowledge and account for a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of the notion of fatness within the local context.

The study produced numerous findings around women’s fatness in Trinidad and Tobago, providing evidence to support the existence of a collective negative identity for fat women. Women’s fatness was confirmed to be a gendered experience of fatness in the local context and was constructed, understood, and experienced in relation to the conceptualizations of the ideal woman’s body. Interestingly, a key finding was the presence of different fat body types for women in the local context, presenting gradations of fatness. The thick woman’s body was located outside of the ideal woman’s bodily standards; however it was considered to be a type of acceptable fatness for women, that was highly valued and viewed positively from an aesthetic perspective. The thick woman’s body emerged as a liminal place and space upon which historically, contemporarily, and culturally relevant meanings and values are inscribed and read within Caribbean society. Based on this finding, there is firstly a need to not only emphasise the importance of the cultural standards of femininity and acceptability around women’s fatness within the regional context (Gentles-Peart 2016; Barned and O’Doherty 2018), but also secondly, to critically examine the meanings and social construction of women’s fatness that do not neatly align with the wider western fat studies scholarship. Of significant importance here is the exploration of a gendered body type identity that is specific and relevant to the Caribbean space and exists outside western conceptualizations of women’s fatness and bodies.

Keywords: Fat women; fat woman’s body; thick woman’s body; ideal woman’s body; Caribbean.

References

- Barned, Claudia, and Kieran O’Doherty. 2019. “Understanding Fatness: Jamaican Women’s Constructions of Health.” *Fat Studies* 8 (1): 25–43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21604851.2019.1532231>.
- Clark, Sheryl Laura. 2018. “Fitness, Fatness and Healthism Discourse: Girls Constructing ‘Healthy’ Identities in School.” *Gender and Education* 30 (4): 477–93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2016.1216953>.
- Downing Peters, Lauren. 2014. “You Are What You Wear: How Plus-Size Fashion Figures in Fat Identity Formation.” *Fashion Theory* 18 (1): 45–71. <https://doi.org/10.2752/175174114X13788163471668>.

- Fikkan, Janna L., and Esther D. Rothblum. 2012. "Is Fat a Feminist Issue? Exploring the Gendered Nature of Weight Bias." *Sex Roles* 66 (9–10): 575–592. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-011-0022-5>.
- Gentles-Peart, Kamille. 2016. *Romance with Voluptuousness: Caribbean Women and Thick Bodies in the United States*. London: University of Nebraska Press.
- Powell, Darren, and Katie Fitzpatrick. 2015. "Getting Fit Basically Just Means, like, Nonfat': Children's Lessons in Fitness and Fatness." *Sport, Education and Society* 20 (4): 463–84. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2013.777661>.
- Saguy, Abigail. 2012. "Why Fat Is a Feminist Issue." *Sex Roles* 66 (9–10): 600–607.
- Wrigley-Asante, Charlotte, Samuel Agyei-Mensah, and Faustina Adomaa Obeng. 2017. "It's Not All about Wealth and Beauty: Changing Perceptions of Fatness among Makola Market Women of Accra, Ghana." *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 38 (3): 414–428. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sjtg.12200>.

Overstanding Rastafari philosophical and Indigenous approaches to Law: A Third World Approach to International Economic Law

Yentyl, WILLIAMS

This topic demonstrates how Rastafari philosophy as an indigenous Caribbean approach can reinforce the aims of legal approaches to understand the law through local ways of knowing. The objective of this presentation, 'Overstanding Rastafari philosophical and Indigenous approaches to Law: A Third World Approach to International Economic Law' is to demonstrate that methodologies that affirm and value indigenous and local ways of knowing, should not be refined to Caribbean studies, as this would limit their innate potential to have broader impact across all disciplines. As such, this contribution puts forth the claim that Caribbean epistemologies must be integrated across all academic disciplines, especially given their abilities to contribute to decolonising academia. This presentation builds on the authors' first co-published contribution on Walter Rodney's (1969) Rastafari-inspired concept of Groundings as a methodological approach and reasoning as the method (Williams, Gray & Eugene 2023), to outline how indigenous and local ways of knowing can be woven into an international economic law approach. The expected contribution is to reaffirm Rastafari philosophy as an indigenous Caribbean approach applicable for legal analyses and, Groundings as an indigenous Rastafari-inspired methodology and reasoning as its tool, for research communities beyond Caribbean studies.

Reflections on the supervisory process of the use of a culturally affirming methodology in undergraduate student research

Shakeisha WILSON-SCOTT and Sueshana BAILEY

Effective research supervision is a critical component in the process and outcome of a successful research paper at any academic level. This paper delves into the experiences, lessons learnt and recommendations for guiding student research using a culturally affirming approach. Introducing a 'new' methodological lens can be daunting for many student researchers, especially at the undergraduate level. Successful buy-in by the student requires a shared understanding of the rationale and value of the proposed methodology for the study. Continuous dialogue, reflection and introspection were important in the learning phase, and included debunking the notion of an automatic relevance of a western approach for the research process. The novelty of a culturally affirming methodology, especially within the field of Hospitality and Tourism Management, meant that adequate time had to be committed to teaching and exploring the methodology. Reflexivity was a critical iterative process that helped the student researcher to examine, interrogate and absorb the dimensions of the liming methodology before commencing fieldwork. The supervisor-student relationship was found to depict some of the principles that are embedded in indigenous or culturally affirming methodologies, that is, it required openness, transparency, mutual respect, accessibility, and free flow discussions. The specific experiences from this supervisory process and documented lessons, present strategies that can be used to guide other research supervisors and students who are interested in culturally affirming approaches in general, or more specifically liming as a research methodology. The challenges encountered and researcher deliberations also provide opportunities for an expanded discourse and development of a methodology on which more needs to be written.

Key words: research supervisions, culturally affirming approach, liming, western methodologies, hospitality and tourism management

Biography

Shakeisha Wilson Scott is a lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Psychology and Social Work, University of the West Indies, Mona. She is a core member of the CRM network and has done immense work with the team on affirming methodologies. Her other research interests include working with persons with disabilities, persons living with HIV/AIDS and youth empowerment.

Sueshana Bailey is a past student of the Knox Community College, Spalding, Jamaica. She is currently employed in the hospitality sector but maintains a key interest in the use of affirming Caribbean methodologies.