

Fund for Innovative Teaching
Final Report - IDS400 Performing Canada in an Age of Reconciliation

1. Summary of the learning activities planned and undertaken

The learning activities we had proposed in the grant application were to explore performances of commemoration and memorialization that happened during 2017 to celebrate, critique, or respond to Canada's sesquicentennial. We planned to pair the performances with theoretical texts that introduced issues of power, colonization, and construction of public memory, and use activities like performative writing, interpretive urban walks, dialogue circles, guest lecture workshops, and embodied exercises to create performance-based responses to the ideas and issues important to them. We also planned for the students to create both individual and group projects to share their academic, theoretical, and personal analysis of Canada's sesquicentennial that would culminate in a public presentation of some kind. Our goals were to facilitate knowledge and skill transfer, bridging theory and practice. Creating and presenting at a public event emphasized student knowledge creation and experiential learning, and was a way to give back to both UFV and the larger community.

We followed this framework in our actual delivery of the course, using embodied pedagogy to frame the class activities we used to discuss and respond to the texts and performances. We focused heavily on self-reflection in order to challenge ourselves to question our privileges and positionality while we critically analyzed settler responsibility and decolonization. Our various guest speaker workshops employed other methods, and overall the students were exposed to a wide range of teaching styles, artistic, and theoretical methods.

For assignments, the students maintained a reading and reflection journal where they responded to the various texts and performances we focused on; they created a personal performance response that required them to position themselves in relation to the texts and performances we had engaged with (some students created art work, others created games and activities, and some wrote songs and poems), paired with a formal written paper contextualizing their understanding of the material and class; and as their final project, the class planned and created a public performance response Canada's 150th celebrations. The students were responsible for all decisions, planning, and building of their project, and they presented their work as part of the *Interpret Festival* in April 2018.

2. Individuals involved in the delivery of the planned project activities and outcomes

This project turned into a very large collaboration. In the fall of 2017, we submitted the course outline to the Indigenous Studies Curriculum Committee, and received very rich, detailed feedback that we incorporated into the reading lists and structure of the class. The overarching focus on personal reflection on positionality and power, for example, came out of the process we went through ourselves in the planning of the course. The planning required us to think deeply and critically about decolonization in our work, which we

continued as we guided the class into similar terrain. During the semester, the class was attended by two of UFV's Elders, and a number of guests: Joanna Shepherd (Kinesiology), Wenona Hall and Sakej Ward (Indigenous Studies), Linda Pardy (Communications), Sandra Shields and David Champion (Visual Artists). Each guest offered a different perspective on decolonization, embodied practices, and methods of engagement. Anna Griffith led the course, with Heather Davis-Fisch as co-facilitator and the faculty member doing most of the organizing in Fall 2017.

3. Description of the degree to which the significant goals and/or objectives of the proposal were achieved

Overall, our course met many of the significant goals we had:

- An overarching aim for our project was to encourage student learning and success in multiple ways and from many different knowledge bases. Our guest instructors, the Elders who shared their perspectives, and the interdisciplinary makeup of the class offered a wide variety of knowledge, opinions, and expertise to the students.
- We wanted the class to foster reflection on personal values and positions as a way to engage with what it means to be Canadian, and what means to promote decolonization in a Canadian context. The reading list we generated for the class, the critical reading and reflection journal the students undertook, and the interdisciplinary project they collaborated on, all required a deep level self-reflection on what it means to decolonize as individuals and as a class.
- Our design was to foster learning as something that happens in multiple spaces through multiple access points and from multiple perspectives. Structuring the class through embodied and performance pedagogy and integrating an interdisciplinary range of guest instructors facilitated this. Students brought together theoretical and artistic work for their final project.
- Experiential learning was foundational to the Class Public Art Practice final exam. Students generated ideas and a decision process, planned, budgeted, and built their installation for *Interpret*, and then reflected on the process, experience, and learning that happened through the project.