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Decolonizing “Multicultural” Counseling through Social Justice

Chapter 7

Story Sciencing and Analyzing the Silent Narrative Between Words: Counseling Research from an Indigenous Perspective

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Terms like multiculturalism, competency, and sensitivity have been overused in research and clinical practice in counseling and psychology. As long as these terms are defined by an epistemology that is not from the community under investigation, the practice of research will merely be one of ongoing neo-colonialism. Researchers, including those doing supposedly “multicultural” scholarship, generally adhere to the requirements imposed by academia or funding sources that are not situated within the communities at the center of their inquiries and that have little or no contact with the communities. When this is the case, researchers may be required to engage in the research process and to report findings in a manner that does not reflect the investigative needs of disenfranchised communities on whose backs they are building their careers, furthering a process of marginalization and colonization.

Relying on empirical methodologies, ethical standards, and procedures that are not based in the lived experience of communities being studied can be a great detriment to acquiring knowledge that is actually beneficial to the community. For example, a Native community may have done research for millennia through the use of oral traditions, such as storytelling; however, researchers from a Western, non-Native perspective may not see these as valid research methods and may, instead, insist that these practices should be validated by a Western rationality framework. This is in itself a hegemonic, colonizing practice: it is a great imposition on communities to insist that their methodologies should be subjected to and validated by Western empiricism. Unfortunately, this practice is so commonplace and so accepted—even in the world of “multicultural” counseling and psychology research—that most researchers never entertain the thought that their research may be undermining or even causing harm to the population being studied.

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Another problem in much of the research being conducted in Indigenous communities—often by scholars who see themselves as progressive advocates—is that the research must adhere to Western standards of ethical guidelines. This becomes problematic in relation to tribal etiquette and exchange of information. I know of specific instances in which community elders, through the practice of oral tradition, have shared valuable data that could be used to help their communities. Funding sources, however, will not allow the data to be used unless there is clearance from a human subjects board and signed written consent forms. This requirement can be deeply offensive to the community leaders who often are operating from spiritual frameworks; any future possibility of further investigation may not be possible because of such a breach in “multicultural manners.”

In this chapter, we delineate some methods that can be useful when pursuing research in Indigenous communities. Data collection as well as data analysis will be explored from an Indigenous framework in the hope that these ideas may begin to shift the research paradigm towards one that is community-based. The hope is that “participatory research method” is not just used as jargon, but represents a real shift in the power dynamics of how new knowledge is pursued within communities. In particular, some marginalized communities have been over-researched and have developed research fatigue. This occurs in large part because of the way that knowledge is sought from a Western framework. As such, communities have become resistant to any further investigation.

Research in Aboriginal communities has been a method of colonization due to the illusion that science is neutral and objective (Duran 2006). Many of the studies conducted in Aboriginal/Native communities represent replicas of Western paradigms that are imposed on Native communities, and thus perpetuate hegemony disguised as an attempt to “help.” Sinha (1984) illustrates this point:

[M]odern psychology has been a product of the West and has been imported wholesale to Third World countries.... Too often, problems taken up for research have been mere replications of whatever had been done in Europe or the United States with little relations to the needs of the country. Such unimaginative replications of Western research have been decried and called caricatures of Western studies...one is disappointed by their artificiality, triviality, and lack of relevance to real life psychological phenomena. (pp. 20–21)

Murray (1991) and Said (1978) make the point that many of these studies are invalid because the methods employed intrude into Native lifeworlds and fail to contribute to the community’s liberation.

Fortunately, there are changes on the research horizon and new approaches and methods are being developed that honor communities (Wilson 2008). Aboriginal researchers, clinicians, and theorists are developing research processes that are more relevant to Native research needs, especially as they apply to transforming the life-world through liberation (Duran 2006; Martin 2003; Rigney 1999; Steinhauer 2002; Wilson and Pence 2006). Unfortunately, despite this movement there is still pressure from academia and funding sources to comply with a strict scientific method that is entrenched in Western philosophy. Therefore, the Native researcher finds herself or himself in a quandary, wanting to acknowledge Tribal research methods, while needing to conduct research within restrictions and controls imposed by Western-oriented institutions.

Many Indigenous researchers attempt to fill the paradigmatic gap between the Western logical positivistic mindset and traditional forms of epistemological understanding by conducting qualitative research. This is done at the risk of not being considered a *real* scientist. At times, qualitative researchers compromise further by gathering data using qualitative methods, and then “crunching” the meaning into thematic units through “sophisticated” statistical methods. Applying such quantitative methods can drain most of the soul from the precious narrative collected through qualitative means from the holders of knowledge within the community. (This is the worst case scenario. There are instances in which this does not occur or may not occur as deeply so as to remove the soul from the data.) Recently, however, there have been important evolutionary developments in these methodologies that are aligned with a decolonizing perspective on research.

Towards Analyzing the Silent Spaces Between the Words

Most qualitative research can be categorized into one of five areas of inquiry that rely on analyzing or making meaning of spoken or written narrative (Creswell 1998). These include:

- Biographical study, which is described by Denzin (1989) as the “use and collection of life documents that describe turning points in an individual’s life” (p. 69).
- Phenomenological study, in which the researcher is trying to get at the essence of reality as experienced in human consciousness as the things in themselves (Polkinghorne 1994). This is an ambitious form of research in that the researcher is using the psyche to explore itself. One of the main tenets of this method is that the researcher attempts to suspend all bias through what is known as “bracketing” (Stewart and Mickunas 1990).
- Grounded theory, which attempts to develop or find a theory that is explanatory (Creswell 1998).
- Ethnography, which requires that the researcher gathers information through participant observation, immersing herself or himself in the lifeworld of the group being studied (Creswell 1998). This method has been used in many Native communities.
- Case studies, which focus on understanding a unique person or program. In some cases, these can be seen as throwbacks to the medical model of grand rounds in which physicians gathered around the table and dissected cases in order to achieve an informed diagnosis, leading to a relevant intervention.

Once the narrative data are gathered, there are many methods to which they can be subjected to in order to uncover their meaning for the community and researcher. A common approach to analyzing narrative data is thematic interpretation, wherein content is the exclusive focus (Riessman 2008). Thematic analysis has its roots in phenomenology.

In our high-tech world, there are computerized algorithms that use artificial intelligence to interpret narratives. Although this might help solve the problem of bias, it introduces another problem by excluding the human reflective component that is critical to knowing the essence of the phenomenon being examined.

Structural analysis is not only concerned with thematic content but also is attentive to the narrative form (Riessman 2008). In this method of analyzing data, the structure of language and how humans communicate are important to the understanding of the narrative. When working with different Tribal communities, it becomes apparent that meanings of words in the English language vary from one group to the next. Merely subjecting narrative from different communities to simple thematic analysis would miss a large part, if not all, of the meaning being transmitted in the narrative. To understand the nuances of how narrative is expressed, the researcher must have a deeply rooted understanding as a participant observer so that the researcher does not have to translate these ideas. This point speaks to the fact that Native researchers—who do not have to take this quantum leap into the linguistic nuances of the Tribal world—would be better at interpretation and more efficient. It can take non-Native researchers a long time to learn how to interpret these fine linguistic meanings, and it is unlikely that computerized models would be able to accomplish this task.

The third option of interpretive analysis is what Riessman (2008) calls dialogic or performance analysis:

[Dialogic analysis] interrogates how talk among speakers is interactively (dialogically) produced and performed as narrative. More than the previous two, this method requires close reading of contexts, including the influence of the investigator, setting, and social circumstances on the production and interpretation of the narrative. Simply put, if thematic and structural approaches interrogate “what” is spoken and “how,” the dialogic/performance approach asks “who an utterance may be directed to,” “when,” and “why,” that is for what purposes? (p. 105)

Dialogic analysis considers the presence of the investigator as well as the importance of the interaction. This method allows for cultural nonverbal communication to be analyzed, making it more valid in analyzing narratives from Aboriginal people where much of the communication occurs in the silent spaces between words. In order to interpret the silence between the words, the researcher, or story scientist, must have a deep connection to and understanding of the meanings of these the silences.

An example of how some Native people interpret the communication encounter is apparent in an experience I had during a hiring interview with a Tribal council. During the interview, few questions were asked and most of the conversation was friendly and not job-related. The council had my resume in which my experience and publications were provided. A few weeks later an elder from the council approached me and told me that she did not know I had written a particular book. The fact that she did not ask anything during the interview and the fact that she did not know about the book indicated that she had not read my resume. At that point, I realized that she had resorted to another type of narrative interpretation because I had been offered the job. When I investigated the matter further, I learned why she thought I would be a good selection: she saw the way I moved and this told her that I could do the job. This

was a clear example of how dialogic analysis was part of her lifeworld and she took into account much more than the verbal or written narrative I presented.

Research Transference

Although the latest research trend in Indigenous communities involves community-based participatory research (CBPR) methodologies, this approach is not necessarily free of power and colonial influence. The mere fact that most inquiry originates in university settings demonstrates the one-sidedness of research because, at some level, it is serving the needs of the university or the university-based researcher. This is not to say that there are not some benefits to the community being studied, but power differentials continue to feed the distrust in Indigenous communities. As long as power rests with the individuals designing and implementing the study, and the community has little power to influence the course of events and research, the process of participatory research will continue to be hindered in its ability to be pro-justice (Nelson and Prilleltensky 2005). This aspect is challenging because power dynamics are not always obvious because of their sometimes-subtle nature (Nel 2010; Nelson and Prilleltensky 2005).

CBPR is usually conducted on a continuum of participation modes (Cornwall 2003). According to Nel (2010), “This continuum of participatory approaches starts with *functional* participation at the conservative end, followed by *instrumental* and *consultative* modes of participation. At the radical end of the continuum is *transformative* participation” (p. 106). Transformative participation occurs when research findings bring about change from within communities, such as alleviating problems and suffering (Kelly and Van der Riet 2003). Unfortunately, very few studies, even within the realm of multicultural counseling and psychology, attain transformative or liberation levels of participation (Cornwall and Jewkes 1995).

Transformative processes can be restricted or impaired when communities do not have power over the methods or analyses used in researching their communities. In addition, transformative/liberation research cannot occur if the analysis is restricted to Western concepts and metaphors. The use of Western empirical jargon at the grant-writing phase and the implementation phase of research is a barrier to achieving the full ideal of participatory research in most instances (Duran 2006). Further, economic advantage becomes an issue that distorts the perception of balance in most university-led research projects. It is an accepted practice that the academic institution can gain in excess of 50% of the research budget for overhead costs. Most of the time the “participatory community” is not privy as to how these funds are used and the academic institution uses these funds for an all-encompassing item called “overhead.” The economic issue has more than symbolic significance to most Native communities that are dealing with serious economic disparities. When a Native community realizes that an academic institution is gaining one-half or more of a five-million-dollar research project, the community feels used, which in turn impacts the research results and sets up the community for future lack of

participation. Again, the lack of economic participation adds to the feeling of lack of power and participation in all of the research process. This area is usually ignored by researchers because it is merely a university policy that is out of their control. From the community point of view, however, this is not acceptable; tribal communities are beginning to resist this practice and exercise their power by not allowing research to occur if the economic issue is not made participatory.

As long as the research has a linear method in which data have to be extracted and analyzed, the participation will be less than transformative regardless of whether the method is quantitative or qualitative in nature. A different conceptual framework that fits the community's conceptual life-world needs to be made part of the method in order for the community to begin feeling that their way of seeing the world is congruent with the research process. The fact that much research conceptualization is done in the mind of the principal investigator as a follow-up of previous research increases the existing trust barrier in the minds of tribal and community members and a feeling of subtle colonization ensues. For example, if the research proposal must be substantiated by what already exists in the research literature, then the foundation of the proposal is research that is based on Western empiricism and underlying that method is Western philosophy, which in many instances is felt as a tool of social control and colonization. The fact that the funding sources also have a predisposed idea of what they will fund and what method is acceptable to them is problematic because the proposal itself will have a trajectory that is not participatory from the start, and this will affect the process through the end of the project. Again, this leaves the community feeling used and the results of the research will not give the community or tribe the needed transformative power that is so direly needed in many of these communities in order for them to heal from some of the health, economic, and other issues present in their lifeworld.

As it is practiced presently, most CBPR projects can be categorized as instrumental and consultative modes of participatory research (Cornwall 2003). The instrumental mode of participatory research occurs when community ideas are included in the research aims and some responsibilities are delegated to community members. The consultative mode views the community as a stakeholder and the aim of the research is to enhance awareness and understanding by the community (Nel 2010). Community participation is limited in both the instrumental and consultative modes in that final authority rests with the academic entity that is operating at the discretion of funding sources that are usually far removed from the community and their concerns. In most research projects that are conducted in Native communities, the principal investigator is an academic and not a community member or someone who has been involved in community work over an extended period of time. Communities that have been colonized and subjected to many types of hegemony from the academy react with silent distrust that creates a negative transference to the process. Psychological transference, the unconscious redirecting of feelings, can have a deep impact on the process of research while no one is aware that there is an ongoing resistance to historical processes that are triggered by hegemonic memories that become transference reactions. Lately, some of these communities are finding their voice and demanding agency in all facets of research.

Story Science as an Approach

In order for participatory methods to become liberating and transforming, the overall approach needs to be changed. This new approach can best be defined and categorized at this point as *Story science* (Kubo 2011, personal communication). Story science is an approach to understanding issues in communities and within individuals and a way of achieving insight through narrative. Narratives that inform insight have been part of Indigenous oral traditions for millennia and are an integral part of how Indigenous peoples perceive their world. Yet, dominant society's empirically based research has privileged literacy and numeracy over oral traditions, thus invalidating the most basic way to make sense of the Indigenous lifeworld.

What we can write down or count is perceived as more valid and credible than what we can convey interpersonally (Kubo 2011, personal communication). Maynes et al. (2008) wrote:

Scholars in the social sciences have often regarded life histories with unease and suspicion.... Within positivist strains of social science, life stories are reduced to the status of the anecdotal, adding color or personal interest but unreliable as a basis for generalization. (p. 5)

For example, we no longer make deals based on a conversation or a handshake—we need a written legal contract instead. American and Canadian Indigenous oral histories, as well as dominant-culture-written histories, attest to how Native people were presented with written contracts that made no sense to Natives and were then used to confiscate land and resources. Furthermore, until statistics, such as the percentage of land and resources taken from Native peoples, can be used to validate what we, as Native people, may already feel inside (i.e., that stark inequities exist in our society), we may not be taken seriously. In short, we have stopped relying on our intuitive ways of knowing, and stopped practicing our most fundamental human ways of communicating with one another.

Storytelling is fundamentally human, and narrative is a basic frame of being human (Young and Saver 2001). Our brains are wired for stories. Human beings begin to attend more to spoken language when we hear what we know is the typical beginning of a story: phrases like, “a long time ago,” or “it happened that way.” Neuroscience informs us that stories are where the most deeply ingrained belief systems are manifested. Young and Saver (2001) wrote, “recent advances in cognitive neuroscience suggest a regionally distributed neural network mediates the creation of narrative in the human central nervous system” (p. 72). Young and Saver note that once we lose our ability to construct narrative, we lose ourselves. This loss of self has been experienced in many Native communities through the process of historical trauma; as such, it is critical that storytelling and narrative be revitalized in communities in order to restore self-identity as well as communal/tribal identity. Storytelling is the oldest form of narrative and occurs in the direct and active interaction between storyteller and listener.

Without realizing it, most of us shape our decisions and actions based on the cultural narratives or stories that surround us. Even though most Aboriginal communities have suffered tremendous devastation to their culture, language, and

environment, the stories have prevailed through oral tradition. These stories have been the lifeline that have provided resiliency that has allowed our communities not only to survive but also to reconnect and reinvent what it is to be Aboriginal within the context of historical trauma and the horrendous symptoms that this has brought onto our communities. One surviving story in Aboriginal country is how Aboriginal science was practiced and how the insights of these studies were used to improve the community as well as to ensure survival.

The power and value of story science lie in its capacity to reach deeper levels of understanding and uncover new knowledge that traditional literate and numerate scientific inquiry is less effective at detecting and communicating. By using narrative frameworks as devices of inquiry, story science evokes authentic information about human experiences. For example, an interview protocol could invite participants to “tell a story about a time long ago and what mothers did when they found out they were pregnant.” This allows researchers to listen to and interpret that information from within their own deeply human schema, connecting researchers with the subject of their inquiry on an emotional and historical level, as well as on a formal cognitive level (Kubo 2011, personal communication).

The experience for researchers and participants is entirely different from administering a survey to gather the same type of data. Story science requires that the researcher give up the control that she or he has in a fixed interview format that is designed for efficiency, and instead to encourage equality in the process of telling and hearing a story (Devereux 1967). Story science will produce another level of anxiety for researchers who have been socialized into the “efficient” fixed interview or quantitative data gathering and analysis methods when working with Native people.

Further, many of the people from tribes of North and South America have a different way of communicating verbally than do most English-speaking researchers. There is a cadence and set of rules that are part of the Native style of communicating, especially among elders and members of the community who still live in a traditional lifeworld. This cadence requires that the researcher be very mindful of the slightest intent to speak on the part of the storyteller, and that the researcher pays close attention to the nonverbal narrative during the silence that occurs in between words. Most communication between people in the USA and Canada requires that there be very little or no space for silence. The exact opposite is true when speaking with key informants in Native communities. When speaking to elders, there are times that the silence in between exchanges may take several minutes; there are instances where the silence may even require days before a response is given. Many researchers find this excruciating and they invariably try to fill in the silence. Once they slip into this familiar turf of filling the silence, the discussion is essentially over. The elder/informant will know that the method of communicating is not what she or he understands as the process of communication and will respond politely from this point on, but there may be little substance offered in the conversation.

Another consideration that researchers interested in story science must be aware of is that Western linearity may be replaced by random curvilinearity. Random curvilinearity occurs when a Native speaker does not adhere to the spatio-temporal

rules of relating that are found in most conversations held in Euro-American day-to-day verbal exchanges. The Native speaker may start in the middle of a story and tell a parallel story that may seem to be tangential, and then end the story by telling the beginning with or without a parallel story that also may start in the middle, beginning, or end. Maynes et al. (2008) write, “Confusion and misunderstanding can occur when participants in a conversation do not share the convention of temporal ordering of a plot” (p. 5). If the researcher tries to re-direct the informant towards their own level of spatio-temporal comfort, the informant will more than likely be polite and comply, but the hidden essence of the phenomenon that is being sought will more than likely be lost.

Story science considers the layers of belief systems embedded within stories as a framework for data analysis; as such, it reveals patterns of experience of a subgroup within a society. Trends and patterns revealed in a set of stories from a community may challenge the validity of dominant societal belief systems, or illustrate the ways in which a dominant narrative may denigrate people’s lived experience and may even cause harm within otherwise functional communities (Kubo 2011, personal communication). It is also worth noting that within Aboriginal understanding “the story” is a live entity and has a spirit. Therefore, a person is not telling the story *per se*; instead, the story is telling itself and, in this way, the story takes on a quality that brings life into the process. The story does not entail merely content which objectifies the story, as in Western cosmology. As the story comes to life in the process of telling, it transforms the material world as well as the human participants.

A story scientist will analyze the stories contained in interviews and field observations in the context of other layers of narrative present in the culture, community, and larger society, rather than presenting a qualitative analysis in isolation (Kubo 2011, personal communication). The presentation of findings from a story science-based inquiry will take a narrative form, such as a set of stories presented to an audience, a film, or a website containing a range of stories in multimedia formats. At times, the life-force of the story itself will provide a different layer of story which may allow for the story scientist as well as the community participant to bring insightful analysis to the community situation that is being explored and transformed.

A story science framework presents many opportunities for CBPR—community residents can help develop interview protocols, administer them, and participate in analysis and reporting. But the essential element of any story science inquiry is the opportunity for stories to be told, and to transform behavior and beliefs of participants, researchers, and audiences of practitioners. Yes, at the risk of sounding heretical, the transformation that is possible through story science is not just for the community being researched. The research paradigm that dictates that the community is “being researched” places the community in the place of the same age-old place as the research “subject” that is the *sine que non* of social science research (i.e., you must have a subject in order for inquiry to occur). Once you place the community as the research subject, the narrative message becomes clear to the community: “We must have a problem or are sick and in need of being a research subject in the study.” This sentiment rings true regardless of how much community participation is gained in the research project. Story science transcends the idea of

having a subject–object relationship; and only the entity of the story remains, which transforms both the (so-called) subject and object of the research. The process, then, is truly participatory because both participants and researchers are servants of the story and not the “research project.”

Story sciencing takes the approach that the community has had and continues to have traditional methods of pursuing inquiry. Research or story sciencing then becomes an organic process in which it will be difficult to distinguish the researcher from the research. From the very beginning, the people who are taking a lead in the inquiry must be able to give up their position of privilege and power in order for the silent spaces between the words to emerge from the community; this enables their ideas and needs for inquiry to emerge to the forefront. At this point, the old-style academic researcher can take on the role of advisor when needed or perform such functions that the community story scientists may need assistance with. A possible protocol or research outline may take on the following form:

- Through contact with the Tribe/community a need will be made known. These needs could be related to physical health, mental health, economic concerns, administrative issues, and many others.
- Once the need is known, it is important that the reason for the need is understood in a historical context. A question that can be asked at this point is: “If this were 1491, would we be having to create this project/intervention/prevention?” Asking about a time before colonization or historical community trauma will then elicit memories and knowledge of historical events that have led the community to have a need to address the particular issue. This in turn will help the community objectify the problem and realize that the problem is not the culture or who they are as Native people. Many projects fail at this point in that they persist in pathologizing the community. In turn, the projected pathology is internalized by the community. This internalizing of the projected pathological model can become part of the belief that it is the culture that is at fault, which can lead people to lose hope that there can be a solution.
- After the community becomes aware of historical trauma and its effects and impact on their lifeworld, the community can then begin to develop their method of inquiry into developing a pre-postcolonial intervention.
- The intervention development must rely on knowledge that needs to be revived by accessing the keepers of knowledge through oral tradition. At this point, the process of gathering stories and narratives that directly inform the issue at hand needs to follow methods that are congruent with traditional forms and etiquette of gathering such information. It is imperative that community experts/ethnographers are central to this process because they know the method that will yield the information that is needed in order for the process to be valid. The ethnographers should be able to make sense of the spoken word as well as the silence between the words.
- Initial analysis and results of the narratives should be presented to the keepers of knowledge and oral traditional history for their further validation of the results. This step is what is usually called *member checking* and is left out in many of the studies.

- At this point, the results of the narrative analysis can be integrated into a model that will yield a culturally responsive intervention that adheres to traditional etiquette as to how the intervention is to be presented. It is important to consider using words other than *intervention* because the word itself may imply pathology. If the word is used, it must be explained that the word is only being used as metaphor and not as a possible descriptor as to what the community has to receive in order for harmony to be restored. The intervention must also be phrased in a way that the community understands that this intervention is needed in order to reverse the effects of historical trauma. By phrasing the intervention as such, the historical context is again taken into account and the community will be more open to change and transformation.

Engaging in Story Sciencing

It appears that the issues that are discussed in this paper may make true participatory or transformative inquiry more difficult because, at times, it takes a leap of faith to go from theory to praxis. How is the Aboriginal researcher to write a proposal that follows the form of inquiry and search for answers in their community if all she has at her disposal are the rules of research imposed by academia and federal funding sources? In order to try to be of assistance to the community, the prospective scientist will have to resort to the rules of science as prescribed by the prevailing system of doing science. Once the researcher is forced into this paradigm, the ideal has been compromised. Not all is lost though, because the researcher can be truthful with the tribe or community and let them know that there are underpinnings of colonization in the proposed inquiry. These underpinnings can then be examined by the community or tribe and perhaps they can be addressed during the actual data gathering. In this manner, consciousness about the intent of the study and any problematic underpinnings will allow for the project to come closer to the ideal of true participatory research.

Another way of circumventing the needs for scientific colonial jargon on the part of the funding source and university is for the researcher to translate the proposed inquiry into language that is congruent with the community/tribal traditional form of inquiry. Either way, the people involved in doing the inquiry will have substantially more work than if they just succumb to the usual way of conducting research. The fact that researchers are tied to time constraints because of their academic responsibilities makes the extra interpretation problematic, especially if the researcher is on a tenure-track trajectory in which their work will be judged in terms of quantity to the point of how many actual research papers are published in refereed journals. (Refereeing poses yet another colonial imposition that should be obvious and not dealt with at length in this chapter.) When academia and funding agencies continue with the practices of not deferring to traditional tribal approaches to inquiry, they are adding to the ongoing historical trauma and the effects. It is ironic that most attempted research in Aboriginal communities, at least in their wording, are designed

to remedy the impact of the effects that historical trauma has imposed on Aboriginal peoples, while actually perpetuating this trauma.

Story sciencing researchers in Aboriginal communities should consider the methodological notions put forward in this paper. In gathering data, researchers must understand not only methodology, but also the historical context of the community in which they are working. It does not suffice to study phenomena out of context because most of the people living in Native communities have a deep understanding of how history has impacted them, including the trauma imposed by research that was intrusive and meaningless. Through the implementation of story science approaches—including taking the interpretation of text beyond the bounds of dialogic analysis—knowledge attained will be more valid and will also help bring a new transforming narrative to the community.

Challenges abound in the area of research, and we should be working towards actual solutions that come from the tribes or communities with whom we are working. Funding sources and academia should take notice that social problems continue to abound. The social contract that is unwritten is that academia is to serve the society. Funding sources, which are mostly taxpayer funded, also have a social responsibility to be responsive to the community or tribe, not just in providing funding but also in providing funding in a culturally responsive manner. Achieving these ideals requires that academics and people in charge of funding sources make an attempt to learn what is needed in tribal communities. In addition to learning about the needs, they should make an attempt to learn and immerse themselves into the lifeworld of the community on whose behalf they are making sometimes life- and death-funding decisions. If these simple recommendations are developed and implemented, we will be on the road to a new trajectory in which we will be making participatory transformative research a reality.

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