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Academic Writing Pathways: Embracing the Intersections of Indigenous Wisdom/Knowledge and Western worldviews in Scholarly Inquiry

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Roots and Foundations / Background

Western postsecondary educational institutions are often described as highly assimilative, drawing on Eurocentric thought, culture and conventions, and deeply embedded in the colonial mindset, contributing to substantial attrition rates among Indigenous students and emerging scholars (Amell, 2016; Black & Hachkowski, 2019; Louie, 2019; Nelson et al., 2019). Such institutions have tried to address this through decolonization and Indigenization initiatives, such as Indigenizing the curriculum and incorporating Indigenous perspectives (e.g., Fredericks et al., 2014); however, individual researchers and educators working within a Western academic environment still typically maintain, promote and conform to positivist traditions of academic writing even when they explicitly question and dismantle the coloniality of knowing, doing and being through their research and teaching practices (McDowall & Ramos, 2018).

Journeying Together / Project Approach

1. Encompass a Decolonized process for gathering data, as we weave the voices of Indigenous Scholars, Knowledge Keepers, and Elders, along with scholarly data and oral storytelling for our decolonized literature review.
2. Facilitate Talking Circles for Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty members and students to share their experiences with and perspectives on academic writing, positionality and identity as reflected through writing.
3. Co-design 'Workshops & Conversations' for graduate students and emerging scholars to review academic writing in the context of decolonization of writing conventions, as well as initiate facilitated peer mentor writing support groups, and evaluate these activities through additional Talking Circles.

Weaving Knowledge Threads / Literature Review

- Western notions of literature reviews do not account for Indigenous ontology and epistemology, which are based in the concept of relatedness (Rogers, 2023).
- Western influences on academic writing can influence the research process; from the literature, or information that we seek, to how we go about collecting this data, and how we analyse and evaluate what is relevant (Waters, 2023; Chambers et al., 2018). Here, we engaged with literature that may both provide an alternative structure and information regarding wiser practices as well as guide our internal, and collaborative struggles.

Walking the Path of Stories and Finding Our Places / Navigating the Literature Review Process, and Locating Self in this Work

As a means to create **relationality**, and to understand ourselves in relation to this work, Chelsie Wampler and Rochelle Deloria engaged in **dialogue** and **ongoing reflection**.

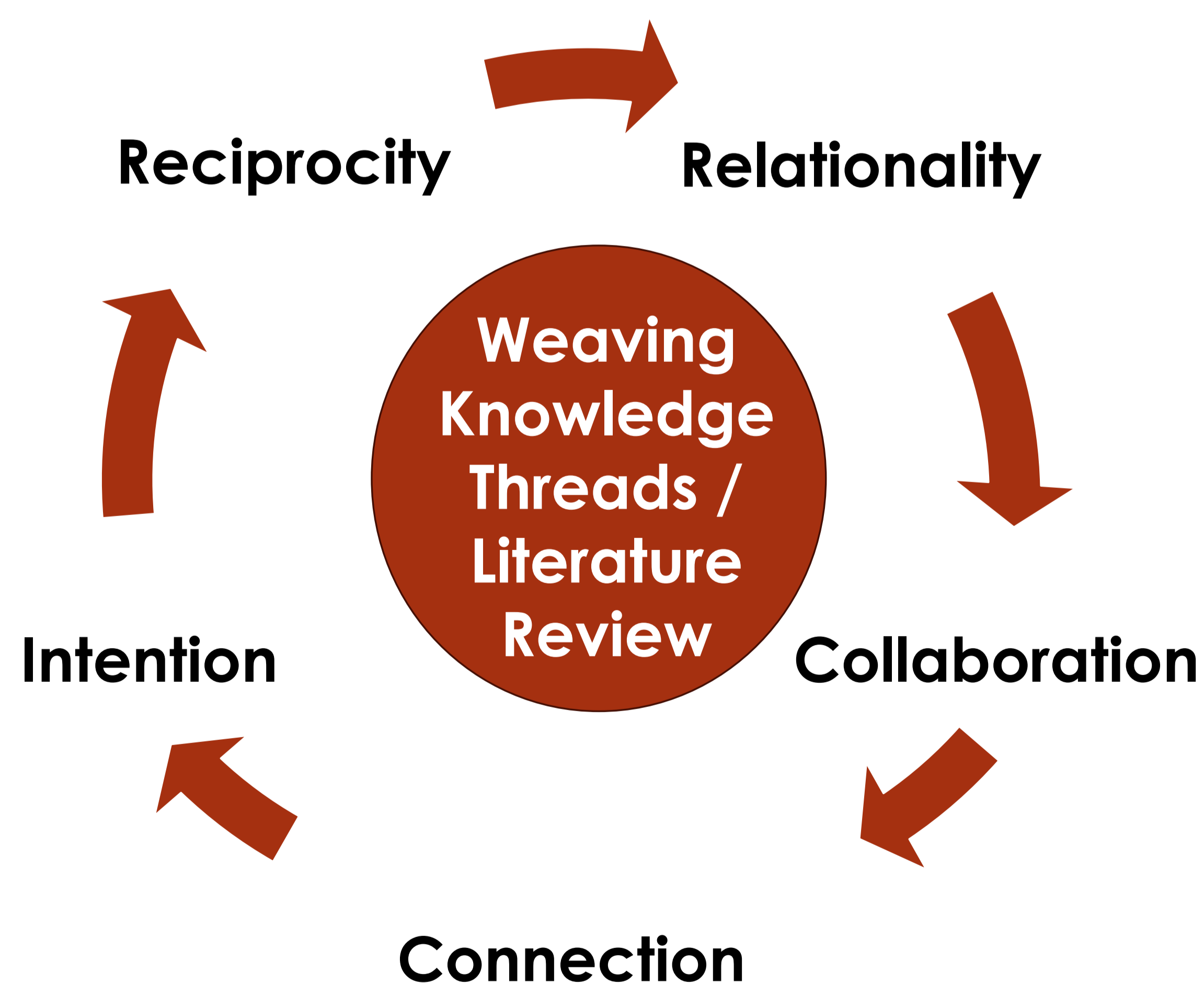
Rochelle Deloria, in approaching this work as a second-generation Filipino Canadian settler: I hope to bring forward my worldviews and expressions as I engage in this work. I continue to struggle with the idea of how to best approach it as an outsider, and trouble my place in between the Western and Indigenous worlds and spheres of understanding.

"We talk about the struggle of honouring different ways of knowing, to push against the grain of what colonial writing concepts have placed upon us: What is academic writing? What counts as academic? Who creates the academy?"

Chelsie Wampler is approaching this work as a Metis woman from Treaty 6 Territory. My paternal grandfather was from the Fort Vermillion Metis Settlement and my paternal grandmother was Dane-za from Beaver First Nation. My maternal family are settlers from the Ukraine. My research experience thus far has been immersed within Indigenous Research Methodologies. I am constantly learning and evolving as I strive to dismantle colonial structures that perpetuate the status quo, in hopes of allowing space for Indigenous World Views.

"We want to be cognizant that literature reviews and scoping reviews like most aspects of research are rooted within a Eurocentric worldview, which often ignore Indigenous Ways of Knowing and being. While we both have experience with more traditional ways of gathering and sorting through research, we want to be mindful of the importance of decolonizing the way in which we seek out information, and make sure we are completely open to new learning throughout the process"

Figure 1: Circle of Engagement / Engagement Process



Emerging Insights / Preliminary Findings

- Drawing on work from Indigenous Scholars in their efforts to decolonize the literature review process, we are ensuring we are **accountable** to one another, as well as the other members of our research team (Chambers et al., 2018; Rogers, 2023; Tynan & Michelle, 2023; Waters, 2023)
- **Dialogue and conversations** are central to moving away from the individualistic immersion in the literature towards a collective team reflective process (Chambers et al., 2018; Tynan & Michelle, 2023).

References

