Chapter 3
Resisting the “Tyranny of an Expert”: A Journey Towards Relational Research

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ABSTRACT
As more and more universities push for engaged scholarship following Boyer’s mandate, it is paramount that faculty and graduate students consider what community-engaged scholarship means in general as well as what it means to develop as reflexive researchers who are fully-engaged partners in the research process, especially when working with Indigenous communities. The purpose of this chapter is to document how a graduate student works on her Bildung of becoming an engaged scholar, fostered by her faculty mentor. In so doing, the researchers aim to affirm Indigenous ways of knowing and researching and further question what it means to be a community-engaged scholar.

INTRODUCTION
Community-engaged scholarship has a purpose of connecting universities and their students to pressing needs within local and global communities (Barinaga & Parker, 2013). While this is a noble and important goal, one also must keep in mind the-colonizing role that universities have often played in communities, especially Indigenous and minority communities, across the world (Barinaga & Parker, 2013; Smith, 1999/2012; Grande, 2008). It is with this caution in mind that Barinaga and Parker (2013) encourage community-engaged scholarship to be enacted through decolonizing methods, which attempt to address power imbalances that are often present between the academy and community members. They argue

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that reflexivity in such practices allows researchers to become “utterly concerned with overcoming the objectification of people living and working at the site of research inquiries, by moving from making them ‘objects of study’ and transforming ourselves into subjects who can see them as having agency in the production of situated knowledge” (p. 7).

As more and more universities push for engaged scholarship following Boyer’s plea (1996), it is paramount that faculty and graduate students consider what community-engaged scholarship means in general as well as what it means to develop as reflexive researchers who view ourselves as fully-engaged partners in the research process, especially when we are working with Indigenous community partners. One should understand where the research process must begin, how it must be conducted, and who benefits from it. One also must understand how one should change and grow as a researcher through this process. Against this backdrop, in this chapter, the researchers (a faculty mentor and a graduate student) share a journey of the graduate student becoming an engaged scholar working with an Indigenous community. The purpose of this chapter is to document how a graduate student works on her Bildung of becoming an engaged scholar, fostered by her faculty mentor. In so doing, the researchers aim to decolonize our own ways of knowing and researching, to honor Indigenous ways of knowing, and further question what it means to be a community-engaged scholar.

LINKING COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP WITH AN INDIGENOUS PARADIGM: A FRAMEWORK FOR RELATIONAL RESEARCH

A good place to begin a conversation about how community-engaged scholarship can be informed by an Indigenous paradigm is with Cree scholar Shawn Wilson, who said,

*The source of a research project is the heart/mind of the researcher, and ‘checking your heart’ is a critical element in the research process. The researcher ensures that there are no negative or selfish motives for doing the research, because that could bring suffering on everyone in the community. A ‘good heart’ guarantees a good motive, and good motives benefit everyone involved.* (2008, p. 60)

As Smith (1999/2012) and other Indigenous scholars have noted, Indigenous peoples have been one of the most “studied” people in the world, studied as objects of research, not subjects whose knowledge and voices were included in research conversations. Most often, Indigenous people were not a part of the decision-making processes involved in research, and there was not a true interest in how research might benefit Indigenous communities. Indigenous epistemological and ontological constructs were ignored and discounted by Western-focused researchers who imposed their own ways of understanding the world onto the research process (Smith, 1999/2012; Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009) and entered into research without “a good heart” (Wilson, 2008). Therefore, the very notion of research is often viewed with a more-than-skeptical eye by many Indigenous communities (Smith, 1999/2012).

Hence, becoming a community-engaged scholar who partners with an Indigenous community requires a “good heart” that can only be achieved through fostering a decolonizing mindset that resists the “tyranny of the specialist” (Spivak, cited in Childs & Williams, 1997, p. 22). Pondering the implications inherent in the history of colonized peoples and their very tenuous relationships with research in general (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 1999/2012), it is important to look to Indigenous scholars who have outlined principles