

Fostering Indigenous-Western Relationships Through Collaborative Story Creation

Wiidosem Youth Services in Thunder Bay, Ontario
Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario

Samra Brkic
Department of Neuroscience, Carleton University



Background



Many Indigenous youth from the Nishnawbe Aski Nation in Northwestern Ontario move to Thunder Bay to pursue a high school education.



Moving away from their family, community, and culture often generates stress, which may lead to additional hardships.

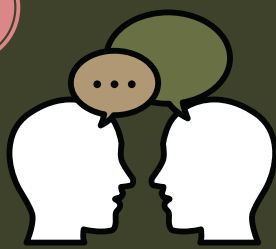
Project Briefing

1



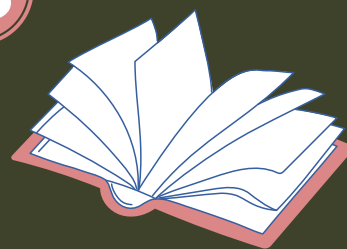
Online Group Discussions

2



Virtual One on One Chats

3



Story Creation

5 Carleton & 8 Indigenous story creators

Co-created stories using made-up characters intended to possess personality traits of the story makers.

Goals

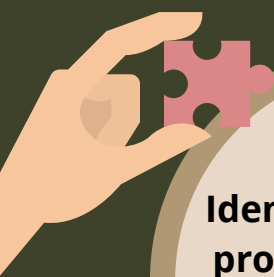
Establish genuine relationships between Carleton and Indigenous story creators.



Provide the story makers with an outlet to express their emotions, interests, and ideas.



Identify factors that promote or impede communication and relationship building.



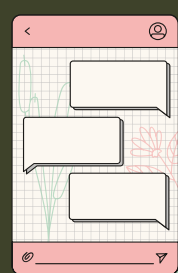
Promote collaborative research practices.

Approach

A successful partnership requires collaboration.

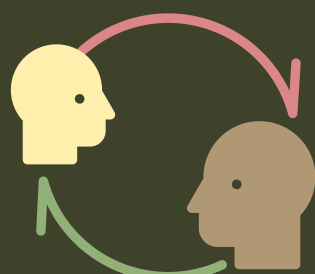
1

Relationship Focused Approach
Carleton story creators strived to form personal relationships with the Indigenous creators through casual conversation.



2

Bi-directional Communication
The two groups communicated in settings that promoted equal discussion from both parties.



3

Emphasis on Co-creation
Stories were co-created in small group settings to promote active collaboration and facilitate the exchange of ideas.



The project aimed to incorporate both Indigenous and Western ways of knowing...



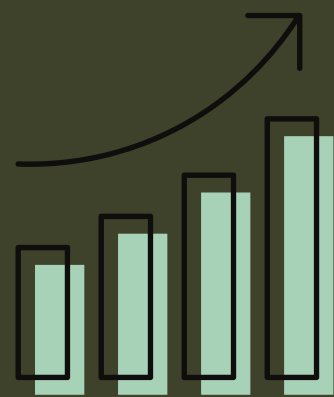
Click on the fire for campfire stories



...ensuring that both parties' values were being equally represented.

Outcomes

Nervousness and stress hindered communication between the two parties in large online group settings.



Relationships were easier to foster in 1 on 1 virtual settings when partners were able to discuss matters on a more personal and casual level.

Having these personal conversations led to a more collaborative story creation process.

