

# A Call to Action: Decolonizing Academic Libraries

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## Introduction

This project aims to expand on the work done by the Canadian Federation of Library Association's Truth and Reconciliation Committee. Their 2017 report outlines various ways libraries can respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions 94 Calls to Actions.

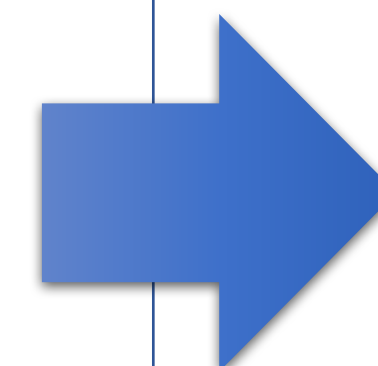
This project asks...



**How can critical information literacy instruction support the decolonization of academic libraries?**

## Libraries as Colonial Institutions

- In the past, libraries and books were used as tools for assimilation.
- Literacy (reading and understanding the written word) was used to measure civility (Edwards, 2005).
- Libraries have and continue to participate in the oppression of Indigenous peoples in Canada by positioning Indigenous knowledge and philosophies as Other (Biermann, 2011).

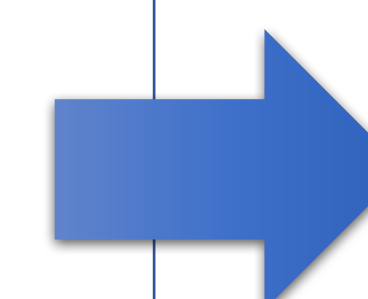


**“The globalization of knowledge and Western culture constantly reaffirms the West’s view of itself as the centre of legitimate knowledge, the arbiter of what counts as knowledge and the source of ‘civilized’ knowledge.”**  
(Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 2010, p. 63)

## Critical Information Literacy

Critical information literacy (IL) is...

- Beyond library literacy skills i.e. using the library catalogue and searching for articles.
- Informed by critical pedagogy theory, e.g., Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968).
- Resists the “banking model of education”.
- Encourages students to be critical thinkers.
- Acknowledges that there is power embedded in the process of seeking, retrieving, and disseminating information.



## Critical IL and Decolonization

In the context of critical IL, decolonization is dismantling oppressive settler colonialist values embedded within concepts of information. Critical information literacy instruction can support decolonization in academic libraries by...

- 1) Encouraging librarians, teachers, and students to identify and challenge privilege and power within the context of information and libraries as it relates to settler colonialism, e.g., hierarchies in library classification systems (Lee, 2008).**
- 2) Encouraging students to question Western concepts of authority, e.g., the privileging of the written word (Maracle, 2017).**
- 3) Acknowledging Indigenous knowledge systems, e.g., stories, personal testimonies, memories and lived experiences as valid ways of knowing.**



## Allyship

- Not an identity but a process (Blair & Wong, 2017).
- Responsibility to educate oneself and never stop learning.
- Know when to listen.
- Embrace discomfort.

## Contact

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