

Student Centred Research

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Engaging in learning together

- How have students typically engaged in data to improve the school and classroom?
- How can we deepen student involvement to improve conditions within a school/classroom?



Share a story with you today

- Secondary school in Toronto
 - Student Census Data shows:

What happened in the story?

- We started with student focus groups
- Student Equity Program Advisor:
 - conducted the groups
 - coded the data
 - shared the data with the students
- SEPA & team shared the data with the administrators and superintendent of the school
- SEPA & team worked with a small group of educators to engage in professional learning to understand the data so that the educators could facilitate learning with their fellow staff

Students

Learning Question:

How have students typically engaged in data to improve the school and classroom?

- What role did the student's have in the process discussed?

Linda Tuhiwai Smith

- According to Tuhiwai Smith, “decolonization” is concerned with having “a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values that inform research practices”.
- Her comments highlight the need for researchers to critique their own “gaze” and to reflect on the potential for their representations to be encoded as the “truth”, and for alternative readings to be marginalised.

<https://nycstandswithstandingrock.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/linda-tuhiwai-smith-decolonizing-methodologies-research-and-indigenous-peoples.pdf>

Linda Tuhiwai Smith

- Whose research is it?
- Who owns it?
- Whose interests does it serve?
- Who will benefit from it?
- Who has designed its questions and framed its scope?
- Who will carry it out?
- Who will write it up?
- How will its results be disseminated?

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Connecting to your practice

From Linda Tuhiwai Smith's work:

- What role do you see these questions playing out in your work?

Story: Student Action

- SEPA & group of students unpacked the focus group data
 - co-planned to have students unpack the data with the staff
 - Four sessions that staff rotated through
- Then as part of the learning for adults, we had a concern for the safety for students in sharing the data

Story: Student Action

Students created Student Equity Council:

- **Goal:** Be part of the shift in culture
- 2 Students created a process to create the Council
- Same students interviewed applicants
- 12 students became the Council
- Same student led the learning about equity for 3 months and council created two sessions for Gr 9 students
- Gr 9's all homerooms – Racism, Sexism

Did it all work?

Still a work in progress, Year 2 after student focus groups:

- Student Equity Council continues
- Planned connection between Student Equity Council and the Staff Equity Committee
- Staff Equity Committee learning and facilitating staff learning at staff meetings
- Administrator learning continues



Linda Tuhiwai Smith & the Story

- What did we learn?
- What could we do differently?
- How did we limit student action?

Can it all really work?

- Whose interest does student voice serve?
- How do we change the structures to align with student voice and action?



Questions/ Final Thoughts