

# CENTRE FOR INDIGENOUS EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

## A Message from CIER Director, Dr. Sandra Styres:

I hope this message finds you all safe and well as we peak over the palisade and emerge from the realities of a global pandemic and as we attempt to recover from the ever-present mental, emotional, spiritual and physical exhaustion resulting from constantly shifting lockdown measures. It certainly has been a year fraught with violences, political dissonances, and ongoing social and political injustices. Not to mention the complex and intergenerationally compounded grief and trauma our communities experienced with the uncovering of the mass and unmarked graves at what were former residential school sites.

As I am writing this, I look out the window at the rain and am renewed once again as I am reminded to be thankful and find hope in the fact that no matter what darkness swirls around us, no matter what crisis we face, Creation is still fulfilling its roles and responsibilities – and so can we. As such, I am forever grateful for lethi'nihsténha Ohwentsia'kékha's teachings about how we are to be in right relationship with one another. This present day is an opportunity for us all to really and truly open our eyes, hearts and minds to the realities around us and to take a stand against racism, inequities, violences, as well as political and social injustices wherever we find them. Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer said it best when she stated that “the well-being of one is linked to the well-being of all”.

I am so pleased that the Centre has been able to play a small role in holding space and creating opportunities for your voices to be heard through your amazing work. I want to thank everyone who participated in Centre activities. Of the many happenings the centre has engaged in this year there are three items of special note that I would specifically like to address in this final newsletter for 2021/2022 academic year. First, the responses to the virtual Speaker Series and special panel discussions such as Tea Time with the Kaska Aunties and the artist panel entitled Indigenous Resistance and Resurgence: Re-imagining Indigenous Arts as Education and Research have been overwhelmingly positive and something we hope to continue and expand upon next year – particularly as things begin opening up for in-person activities. So, if you are a Black, Indigenous and/or Person of Color (faculty or student) we would love to have your work showcased in our speaker series beginning in the Fall 2022. As well, please let us know if you would like to propose a session in which you or a group of individuals can cohere around a topic or issue of relevance and concern to our communities (i.e. panel discussion, joint presentation, etc.). Second, this year the Centre received some special funding that allowed us to be able to offer two BIPOC students a CIER Educational Research Award in the amount of \$500.00 each based on several careful criteria that focused on an applicant's demonstrated contributions to education, educational research, and community engagement. Needless to say, the award was highly competitive and the centre received numerous submissions. The adjudication committee spent a great deal of time and effort in carefully reviewing

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each submission as there were so many excellent applicants. Good News! Due to the ongoing restrictions to in-person activities, the Centre had a small surplus in its funding budget which meant that this year we were actually able to offer (one-time only) the CIER Educational Research Award to six (not just two) successful applicants. Third, after lengthy construction/delivery delays due to covid, the CIER computer lab space has now been completed and will be operational for the fall 2022 academic term. Following local protocols we have requested an Elder (who has accepted our protocols) to engage in ceremony to name the space. The launch of the newly constructed computer lab, digitally immersive land-based space, and the new Deepening Knowledge website is scheduled for June 20th.

I wish you all happiness, health, and wellness as we wind down this term and get ready to go our separate ways for the summer. As I look forward to another year in our journey together, I would like to leave you with the words of Dr. Eber Hampton that are as relevant today as they were when he wrote them in 1995:

*"Standing on the earth with the smell of spring in the air, may we accept each other's right to live, to define, to think, and to speak."*

## Announcing the 2021-22 CIER Award Recipients!

We were very excited to launch the OISE Centre for Indigenous Educational Research Award this year! This award, to be granted annually, is intended to recognize students who identify as Black, Indigenous or as a Person of Colour (BIPOC) and who demonstrate solid academic standing, involvement in educational research excellence, and service through positive and significant contributions to education, educational research, and community engagement. It also aims to break down some of the financial and administrative barriers that BIPOC students often face in engaging in educational research-related activities such as some of the costs associated with presenting at conferences, and adherence to cultural customs such as giving honouraria to Elders, offering of tobacco, and/or gifting protocols.

In this first year of the award, we received many applications and the selection process was difficult with excellent candidates. However, we are pleased to have had a special one-time opportunity to offer the award to six qualified students! We thank all those who applied and look forward to receiving more applications next year!

Congratulations to Harriet Akanmori, Louis Busch, Diane Hill, Joel Mukwedeya, Ryan Neepin, and Kayla Webber for this achievement! Read on to learn more about this year's award winners.

*Congratulations*

Harriet Akanmori  
Louis Busch  
Diane Hill  
Joel Mukwedeya  
Ryan Neepin  
Kayla Webber

## Student Stories:

### Harriet Akanmori



**HARRIET AKANMORI DAKWA** is a career teacher deeply desirous of seeing youth of African descent in the GTA thrive and break boundaries. Her PhD. Research on the school-to-prison pipeline amongst Black youth and how this can be interrupted through an Africentric approach to rehabilitation is testament to this passion.

*"As an African Indigenous woman, I proudly embrace my rich African cultural origins and heritage, and seek to highlight how African Indigenous worldviews and traditional cultural knowledges can be used as a basis to define, promote, and establish a community-based African Restorative Justice model and Africentric alternative for diversion of Black youth from the Youth Criminal Justice system towards a more culture-specific rehabilitation programming."*

Read more about Harriet's story and research [here](#).

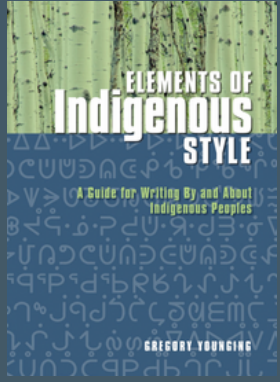








# Resource Spotlight



Gregory Younging's "Elements of Indigenous Style" offers Indigenous writers and editors—and everyone creating works about Indigenous Peoples—the first published guide to common questions and issues of style and process. Everyone working in words or other media needs to read this important new reference, and to keep it nearby while they're working.

- This guide features:
- Twenty-two succinct style principles.
  - Advice on culturally appropriate publishing practices, including how to collaborate with Indigenous Peoples, when and how to seek the advice of Elders, and how to respect Indigenous Oral Traditions and Traditional Knowledge.
  - Terminology to use and to avoid.
  - Advice on specific editing issues, such as biased language, capitalization, and quoting from historical sources and archives.
  - Case studies of projects that illustrate best practices."

Find it at [brusheducation.ca](http://brusheducation.ca)

**KAYLA WEBBER** is completing their Ph.D. in the Social Justice Education Department at the Ontario Institute Studies for Education, University of Toronto, specializing in Women and Gender Studies. Webber identifies as an Afro-Indigenous woman whose bloodlines and ancestors come from various lands, specifically Trinidad, Grenada, and Nova Scotia, but was born and raised in an Afro-Caribbean community in Toronto. Webber has held various academic, non-profit, government, and corporate sectors. Webber is an 1834 Fellow Alumni and has researched and addressed the discrimination and lack of funding for Black Womxn who are experiencing Mental Health in the post-secondary systems. Furthermore, they are also the Co-Chair for the Indigenous Education Network at OISE, UofT, and a Board Member for a non-profit organization named For Youth Initiative.

**Kayla Webber**



*Kayla Webber is currently undertaking research into past and current relationships among Indigenous, Afro-Indigenous, and Black communities to inform sustainably healthy future relationships, with a focus on housing, especially housing for Indigenous, Afro-Indigenous, and Black Women and Girls who have and/or are experiencing gender-based violence(s)/sexualized violence and how that housing is necessary for their health and safety.*

## Faculty Speaker Series

The CIER was pleased to host its Faculty Speaker Series for a second year! This is an online series featuring the research and work of BIPOC faculty members at OISE. This year, we had the opportunity to hear from Dr. George Dei and Dr. Jennifer Brant in two exciting talks on their recent research. Find out more below!

### Indigenous Methodologies in Educational Research - Dr. Jennifer Brant



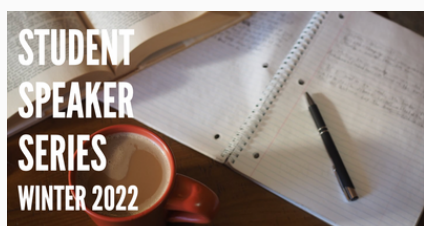
On February 16th, Dr. Jennifer Brant shared her work on Indigenous Maternal Methodologies, and discussed her engagement with Indigenous methodologies and Indigenous feminisms more broadly. Her presentation also documented the way she honours her identity as a Yakonkwehón:we and tends to the ethical and relational responsibilities of enacting Indigenous research in educational settings. Dr. Brant highlighted her current research on reconciliatory education in teacher education and offered concrete examples of how innovative approaches to research design, grounded in Indigenous ways of doing research, can carve out theorizing spaces for liberatory praxis. You can find out more about Dr. Brant's work [here](#).



Last fall, we were also pleased to host George Dei as he presented his research on African Elders and Eldership! If you have not yet had a chance to watch the recording, you can view it [here](#). We look forward to continuing the CIER Faculty Speaker Series next year! If you are a faculty member and would like to present your work, or if you'd like to recommend a faculty member for the series, please let us know at [cier.oise@utoronto.ca](mailto:cier.oise@utoronto.ca). We can't wait to start planning the Fall 2022 series. See you then!

## Student Speaker Series

The CIER was also excited to host the "Student Speaker Series" for a second year! This is a series of online events that showcases the work of BIPOC student researchers at OISE. This semester we heard from six different students as they presented their work! Some additional events were postponed until next year so stay tuned for some more



exciting talks coming up in the fall semester as the Student Speaker Series enters its third year. If you would like to nominate yourself or another student to present, please email us at [cier.oise@utoronto.ca](mailto:cier.oise@utoronto.ca)—we would love to hear from you! In the meantime, read on to find out more about this year's speakers. You can view all recorded talks on the CIER OISE Student Speaker Series YouTube Channel, [here](#).



### Who Owns the Land: Centering Indigenous Conceptions of Land in Africa: The Case of Kenya — Wambui Karanja

Wambui Karanja is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Social Justice Education, OISE/UofT. Her research interests are in decolonizing theories of Land and education, Indigeneity, Indigenous pedagogies and Land rights, modernization, globalization and feminist theorizing grounded in decolonial, anti-colonial, anti-racist and Afrocentric frameworks.

Watch the recording [here](#).

### Youth Participatory Action (YPAR) Research as a pedagogy for advancing Indigenous education — Kaitlind Peters

Kaitlind is a member of Aamjiwnaang First Nation and a PhD Candidate in the department of Curriculum and Pedagogy at OISE. Her research focuses on Indigenous and reconciliatory education. In this talk, Kaitlind will discuss her thesis work around Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) as a pedagogy for advancing Indigenous education. Kaitlind will talk about how Indigenous youth understand and make sense of their participation in YPAR projects and the impact of YPAR on Indigenous self-determination, resurgence, and self-understandings of educational success.

Watch the recording [here](#).



*"Land... is seen as a source of education, a source of knowledge for Kenyans and Africans...a source of identity"*  
- Wambui Karanja

*"YPAR research is designed to transform systems and institutions to promote greater justice"*  
- Kaitlind Peters

*"The colonization of the body has disconnected us from that ability to reflect on what our body is telling us...dreaming...is the ultimate connection we have to listen to what our body is telling us..."*  
- Kimberly Todd

*"We must trouble and problematize ontological claims to the primacy of Eurocentric knowing as the starting point of knowledge"*  
- Marie McLeod

*"I do think that with ethical guidance, and as a result of stretching the temporal margins, students are able to cross between past, present, and future quite well"*  
- Daniela Bascuñan

*"Adopting the symbolism of Sankofa—go back and get what was lost—as the conceptual framework of my study really allowed me to allude to the power of knowing your history and your cultural knowledges"*  
- Harriet Akanmori





## The Decolonial Potentialities Inherent in Dreaming for the Teacher and the Classroom: Reawakening the Dreamer — Kimberly Lorraine Todd

Kimberly L. Todd is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Social Justice Education at University of Toronto. Her area of study is teacher praxis, dreaming and decolonization. She has over a decade’s worth of experience in the field of education. Kimberly is an educator, researcher, and curricular resource designer. She has worked as an ESL teacher in South Korea, an elementary educator in the United Arab Emirates and in a First Nations Community in Saskatchewan. She has also designed curricular resources for NGOs. She is currently working on a SSHRC funded research project as a research assistant at U of T and as part time Professor at Seneca College.

Watch the recording [here](#).

## What do they know? The Complexity of Epistemic Racialization and Epistemic Oppression — Marie McLeod

Marie McLeod is a PhD candidate in the Department of Social Justice Education at the University of Toronto. Her research is dedicated to providing scholarship to apply an anti-racism lens to Western traditional epistemology, given the dominance of its framing assumptions and concepts.

Watch the recording [here](#).



## Stretching the temporal margins: circumventing the harms of settler colonial curriculum with young children —Daniela Bascuñán

Daniela Bascuñán is a doctoral candidate at the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. As a teacher, she engages a practitioner inquiry stance with elementary students. Daniela’s classroom work sensitizes young children to consider their lived stories, learn about historical asymmetries found in colonial narratives of encounter, and explore contested current issues. She guides students to consider expanded notions of kinship as they explore their place in the world.

Watch the recording [here](#).

## Research on Indigenous Ghanaian/African Cultural Knowledges and the rehabilitation of systems-involved Black youth — Harriet Akanmori

Harriet Akanmori is a final year PhD. Candidate in the Social Justice Education Dept., OISE, University of Toronto. As a sociologist in Education, her qualitative research explores the intersection of Education and Criminology, specifically the school-to-prison pipeline in the Greater Toronto Area. Keenly interested in the concepts of social equity and access, she is currently researching how the marginalization of minority youth of African descent in Ontario schools is implicated in their over-representation in the Youth Criminal Justice System in Ontario, and is seeking long term solutions to successfully interrupt this trajectory by exploring alternative strategies to reintegrate them into the socio-economic fabric of Canadian society.

Watch the recording [here](#).







# Artist Panel: Indigenous Resistance & Resurgence: Re-Imagining Indigenous Arts as Education and Research

*"What's your favourite teaching shape? ... Which shapes do we want to use to get deeper into information?"*  
- Ange Loft

*"It's really about the process—it's not the final outcome, it's the process and what knowledge is gained, what community relations are made... the sharing of ideas and gifts with one another"*  
- Tannis Nielsen

*"In my art...I'm telling a story...I'm looking for people to kind of share my experience or understanding... to create a conversation"*  
- Vanessa Dion Fletcher

*"I'm often looking to put things back into relation with people, places, community"*  
- Maria Hupfield

*"In terms of my education and research...it's shifting to bring in those Indigenous models...to really honour and put them into practice in the classroom... in the way I want to be introducing myself...how students can learn to collaborate instead of compete"*  
- Jennifer Wemigwans

The CIER was very excited to host an engaging and inspirational Artist Panel Discussion on April 7th, 2022! Titled "Indigenous Resistance & Resurgence: Re-Imagining Indigenous Arts as Education and Research," the panel aimed to activate and develop Indigenous artistic actions and panelists engaged in critical conversations regarding the politics of reconciliation in education and research. Speakers discussed their own artistic practices and experiences, and explored the ways art might act as a catalyst in forging new respectful and meaningful relationships. Interdisciplinary performing artist and previous CIER Artist-in-Residence Ange Loft led a wonderful conversation with a panel of well-known Toronto-based artists and educators: Vanessa Dion-Fletcher, Maria Hupfield, Tannis Nielsen, and Dr. Jennifer Wemigwans. Thank you to these artists and educators, and to all who joined us! For anyone who missed the event, the link to the recording is available [here](#). We hope to continue this conversation soon! Read on to find out more about each of the panelists.

## About the Artists:



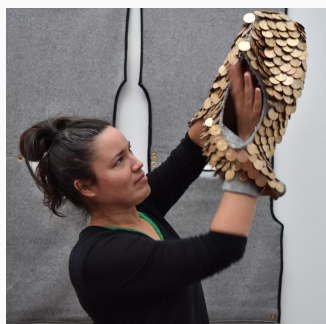
**ANGE LOFT** is an interdisciplinary performing artist and initiator from Kahnawà:ke Kanien'kehá:ka Territory, working in Tsi Tkarón:to. She is an ardent collaborator, consultant, and facilitator working in arts based research, wearable sculpture, theatrical co-creation and Haudenosaunee history. She is a vocalist with music collective Yamantaka//Sonic Titan.



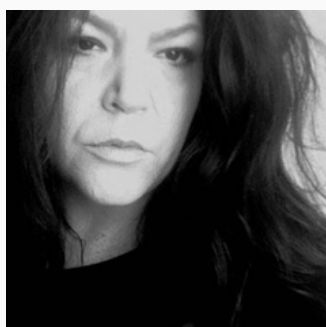




**VANESSA DION FLETCHER** is a Lenape and Potawatomi neurodiverse Artist. Her family is from Eelūnaapëewii Lahkëewiitt (displaced from Lenapehoking) and European settlers. She Employs porcupine quills, Wampum belts, and menstrual blood, to reveal the complexities of what defines a body physically and culturally.



**MARIA HUPFIELD** is a 2020-2022 inaugural Borderlands Fellow at The Vera List Center for Art and Politics at the New School and the Center for the Imagination in the Borderlands at Arizona State University and was awarded the Hnatyshyn Mid-career Award for Outstanding Achievement in Canada 2018. She has exhibited and performed her work through her touring solo exhibition *The One Who Keeps On Giving* (organized by The Power Plant) 2017-2018, and solo *Nine Years Towards the Sun*, at the Heard Museum, Phoenix, 2019-2020. She is co-owner of Native Art Department International with her husband, artist Jason Lujan. Hupfield is a member of the Anishinaabek People and belongs to Wasauksing First Nation in Ontario, Robinson Treaty, through her mother's family. She's currently a Canadian Research Chair in Transdisciplinary Indigenous Arts, and Assistant Professor in Indigenous Performance and Media Art, at the University of Toronto in Mississauga (UTM).



**TANNIS NIELSEN** is a Métis Woman (of Saulteaux/Anishnawbe and Danish descent,) with twenty years of professional experience in the arts, cultural and community sectors, and ten years teaching practice at the post-secondary level. Tannis holds a Masters in Visual Studies Degree (M.V.S.) from the University of Toronto, an Art and Art History-Specialist Degree from U of T, as well as a Diploma in Art and Art History from Sheridan College, in Oakville, Ontario. Tannis currently teaches in the painting and drawing stream at OCAD-U. While at OCAD-U, Tannis has served on the Indigenous Education council, the Equity and Diversity Committee, The Aboriginal Engagement Committee at UBC-O and has sat as Advisor to the Toronto District School Board, a member of the Toronto Native Community History Project.



**DR. JENNIFER WEMIGWANS** takes pride in working to invert the conventional use of media by revealing the potential for Indigenous cultural expression through new technologies, education and the arts. Her book, *A Digital Bundle: Protecting and Promoting Indigenous Knowledge Online*, speaks to the convergence between education and Indigenous Knowledge in a networked world. She is an assistant professor in the Adult Education & Community Development program at UT OISE.





## Aunties and Advocates: Land and Life in Kaska Homelands

The CIER was very pleased to welcome back a group of Kaska Dene Aunties, and Advocates for this special event on January 19th, 2022! In "Aunties and Advocates: Land and Life in Kaska Homelands," the group shared updates on their advocacy and work as land defenders in Kaska homelands (what is now the Yukon, NWT, and Northern BC). This was a follow-up to our first March 2021 session, which many may remember — Tea, Tu Cho, and Teachings, and this event too was coordinated and moderated by Yukon Community Advocate and OISE Ed.D Student in Social Justice Education, Amanda Buffalo. The group shared a lot about ongoing projects such as Mothers of the Land, CourtWatch, and Youth for Dignity, as well as the plans for Liard Aboriginal Women's Society's recently-won Google Impact Challenge for Women and Girls—congratulations and Sógá Sinlā to Amanda, the Aunties, and Advocates for taking time for tea and sharing with the CIER! The recording for this year's event is available [here](#). If you would also like to view the first 2021 session, "Tea, Tu Cho, and Teachings," you can also find it, [here](#).



### (Some of) Our Programs



## Coming Up: CIER Computer Lab Launch

Finally, the CIER is very excited to announce the launch of the CIER Computer Lab Space at OISE! After delays caused by Covid-19, the new space is now complete and will be available for use starting in the Fall 2022 academic term. This spring, an Elder will be engaging in ceremony to name the space. We look forward to sharing the name and more information with you soon! In addition to the computer lab, a digitally-immersive land-based space and the new Deepening Knowledge website will soon be made available. The Launch event is scheduled for June 20th—we hope you will have a chance to check it out soon! Keep an eye on your email inbox to learn more.

*And, once again, a big thank you to all who joined us for the CIER events and activities this year! We are looking forward to another exciting year and wishing everyone a nice summer. If you have any questions or suggestions for the Centre, please do not hesitate to email us at [cier.oise@utoronto.ca](mailto:cier.oise@utoronto.ca). See you again in September!*