Crash Course in the Brian Deer Classification

Summer 2021 iSkills

Ashley Edwards, Simon Fraser University Library

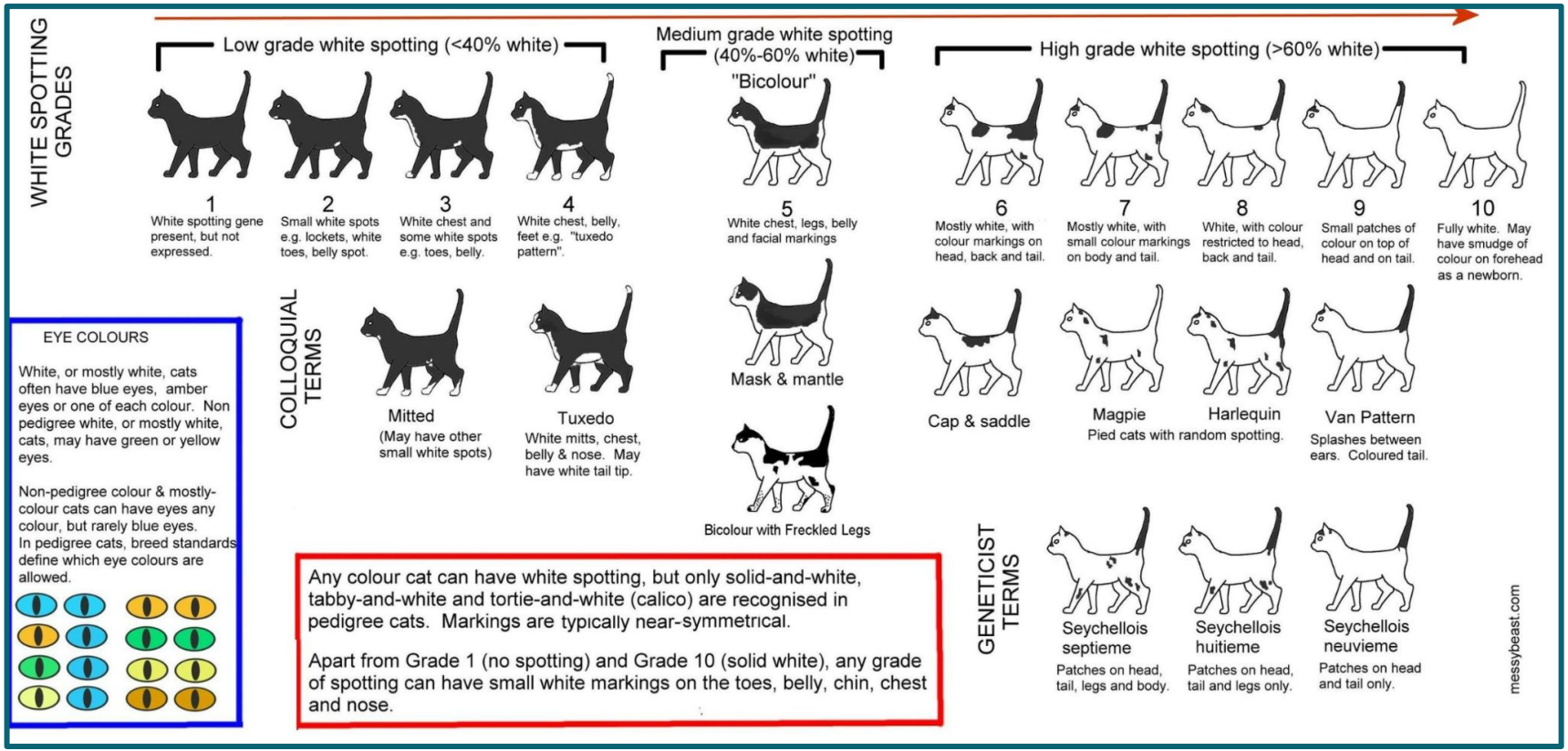
Situating myself and my work

Learning Objectives

Library Classification	Brian Deer Classification	Classification Challenges
Summarize the concepts behind library classification	Summarize the concepts behind the Brian Deer Classification system	Recognize the challenges in using Western classification systems for Indigenous knowledges

Agenda

- Explore what classification is, and why we do it
- Introduce the colonial roots/foundations of libraries and the library profession
- Consider classification as places/acts of colonization and assimilation
- Introduce Brian Deer, and his classification system
- Share my experience in modifying the BDC
- Questions



Note: Bicolour cat patterns. Messybeast, 2014, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bicolour_Cat_Patterns.jpg#file

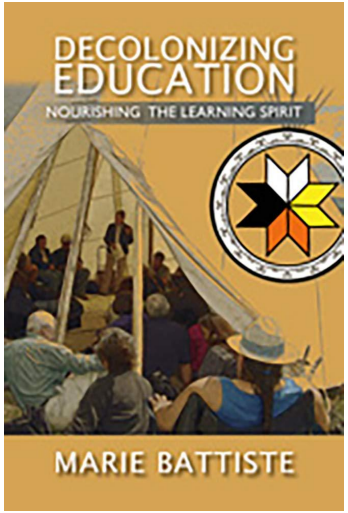
Why do we classify?

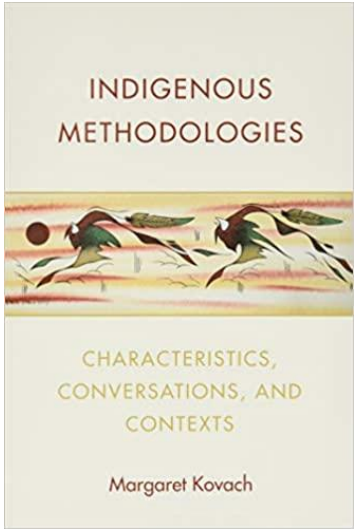
“To classify to human.” Bowker & Star (1999, p. 1)

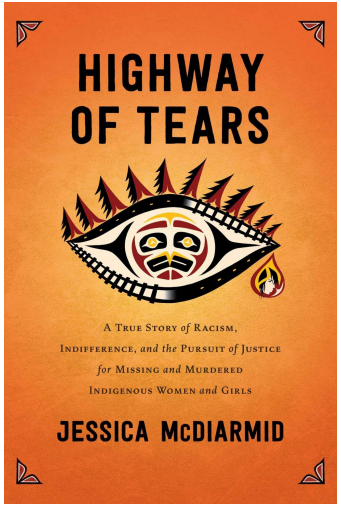
“Classification, however, although necessary in systems of language, contributes to hierarchies of power.” Vaughan (2018, p. 2)

“Information scientists work every day on the design, delegation, and choice of classification systems and standards, yet **few see them as artifacts embodying moral and aesthetic choices that in turn craft people's identities, aspirations, and dignity.”**

Bowker and Star, 1999, p. 4 (emphasis added)

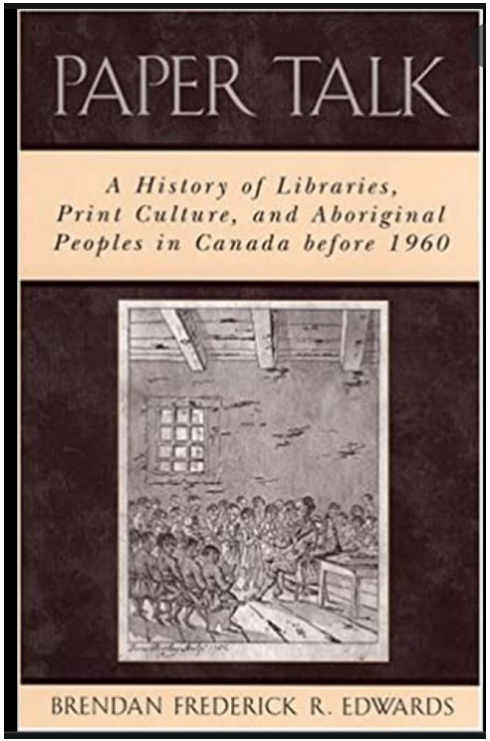






E96.2 B355	E76.7 K68	HV6250.4 W65 M33
History, America: Indians of North America - General Works, Canada, General Works/Indian Schools	History, America: Indians of North America - Study & Teaching, Research	Social Sciences, Social pathology, social & public welfare, criminology; Special classes of persons as victims, Women
371.829 97071	305.897 071072	362.88089
Social Sciences: Education: Schools & their activities; Special Education	Social Sciences: Social Groups	Social Sciences & Social Problems; Social welfare problems & Services

Classification activity



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1. Contexts and Foundations: Placing this history: literacy, books, libraries, and First Peoples

2. The Nineteenth Century: "Read, write, and worship God daily": The Missionary's tools: the written word, books, and education

3. First Quarter of the Twentieth Century: Books in the schools and Aboriginal literacy initiatives

4. 1930 through 1960: Community development, philanthropy, and educational neglect: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal literary perspectives

Conclusion: Knowledge keepers: libraries and the printed word

Appendix 1: Approved Supplementary Reading Books for Indian Schools, 1931-1938

Appendix 2: Day School Libraries, 1943

Libraries are colonial institutions, and therefore sites of racism and assimilation.

“What is signified by the placement of Indians of North America after Pre-Columbian American and before Discovery of America? The use of that problematic last phrase implies that Indians were **either gone by the start of American history, or just didn’t matter enough to be counted as part of it.**”

Kelly Webster and Ann Doyle (2008), “Don’t class me in antiquites: Giving voice to Native American materials”. (emphasis added)

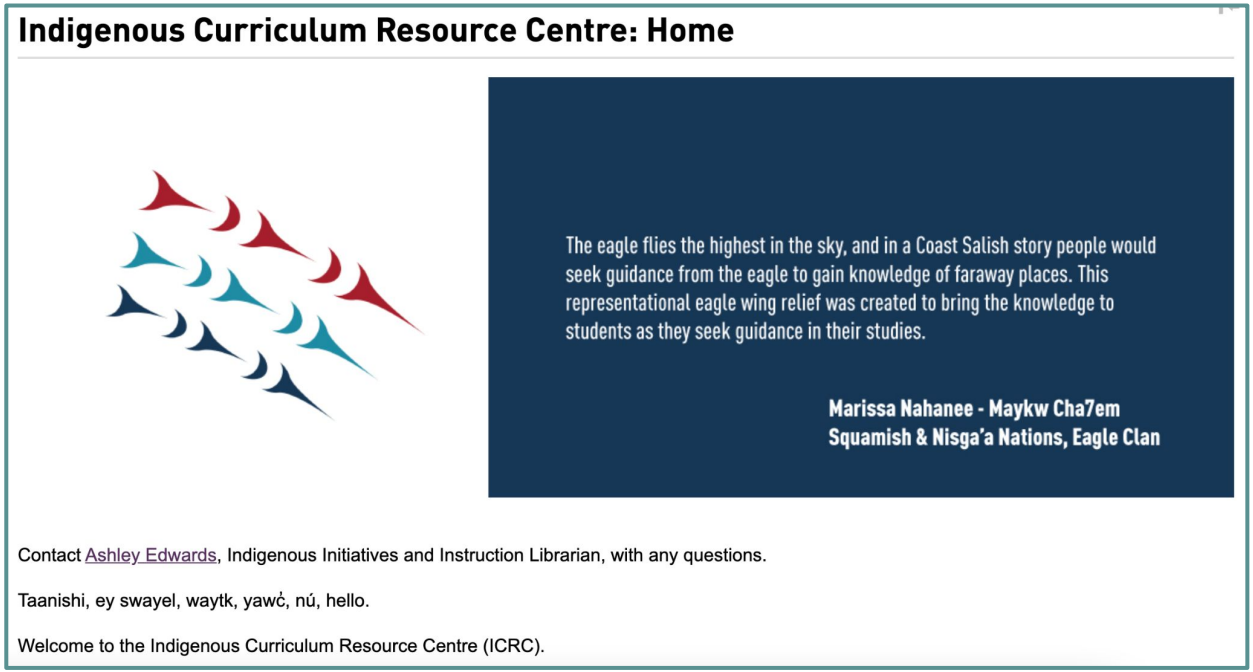
“…. The source of indigenous knowledge and wisdom arises from the people - past, present, and future - and is existential to their very being."

Peters, W.M.K. (2016). The embodied library: The culmination of all who came before. In C. Callison, L. Roy and G.A. LeCheminant (Eds), *Indigenous notions of ownership and libraries, archives and museums,* (pp. 25-39). IFLA Publications.

Brian Deer Classification System

- Developed by a Mohawk librarian from Kahnawake (located in present day Quebec)
- One of the first Indigenous librarians in Canada
- Developed the system in the mid 1970s, while he was working at the National Indian Brotherhood library
- System is based on Indigenous knowledge structures
- Designed to be flexible for the collection

SFU Library's Indigenous Curriculum Resource Centre (ICRC)



Indigenous Curriculum Resource Centre: Home

The eagle flies the highest in the sky, and in a Coast Salish story people would seek guidance from the eagle to gain knowledge of faraway places. This representational eagle wing relief was created to bring the knowledge to students as they seek guidance in their studies.

Marissa Nahanee - Maykw Cha7em
Squamish & Nisga'a Nations, Eagle Clan

Contact Ashley Edwards, Indigenous Initiatives and Instruction Librarian, with any questions.

Taanishi, ey swayel, waytk, yawċ, nú, hello.

Welcome to the Indigenous Curriculum Resource Centre (ICRC).

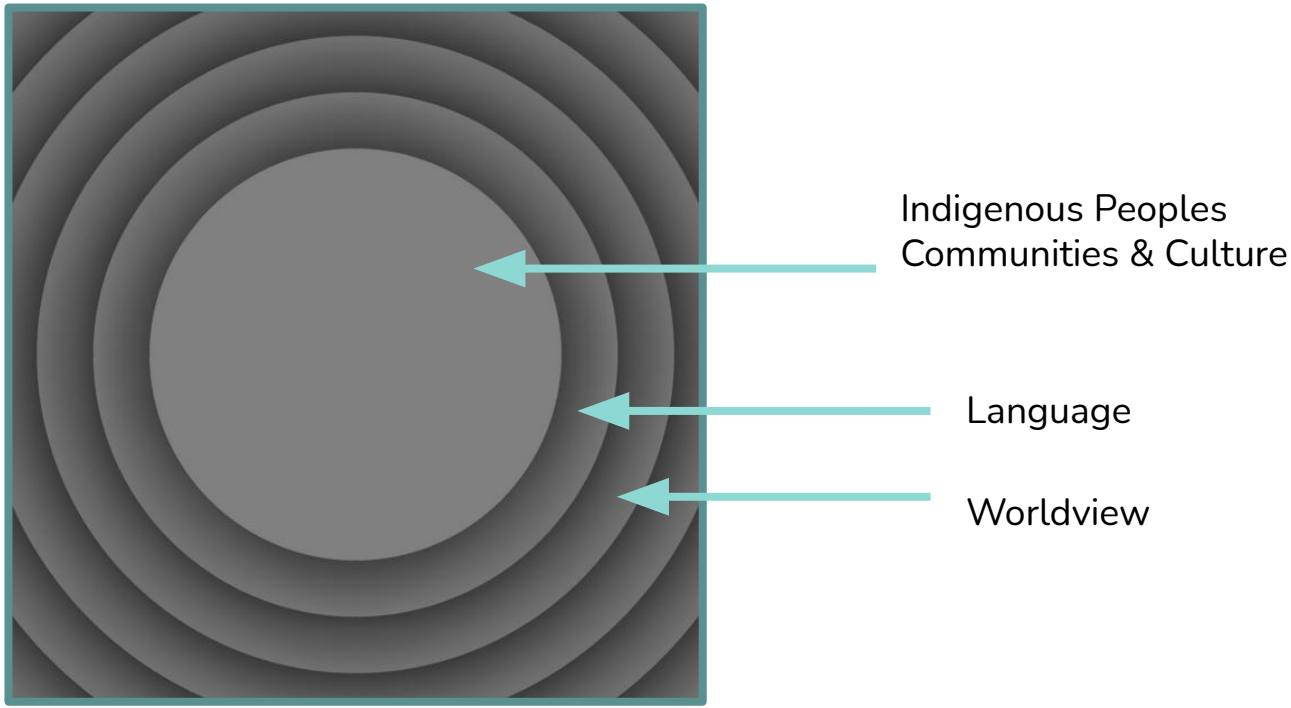
	Xwi7xwa	UBCIC	ACCI	SFU	Notes & academic faculty
A	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	
B	History: BC	History & Culture: BC		History & Culture: BC	
C	History	History & Culture: North America	History & Culture: North America	History & Culture: North America	
D	International	History & Culture: International, General Arch & Anth.	History & Culture: International	History & Culture: International	History, some sociology (?)
E	Education	Education	Education	Education	Education
F	Economic development	Economics & Finanical Systems	Economics & Financial Systems	Business & Economics	Business and Economics
G	Community development	Governance, Self Government, and Politics	Governance, Indigenous Self Government, & Politics	Governance, Indigenous Self Government, & Politics	Political science, Public Policy
H	Criminal Justice/Traditional Justice Systems	Colonizing Gov't policy research, analysis, impacts, outcomes	Anthropology	Sociology and Anthropology	Sociology added to reflect SFU department
I			Archaeology		
J	Constitution (Canada) & First Nations	Justice System	Justice System	Justice System	Criminology
K	Self Government			Archaeology	Archaeology > See ACCI for subdivision starting point
L		Law, Legislation, and government policy	Law & Legislation	Law & legislation	Some overlap with "Justice System" ; would incorpate IBCIC's H section
M	Rights and Title	Rights and Title	Rights and Title	Rights and Title	Criminology, Law, Indigenous Studies

Chart comparing the modified Brian Deer Classification systems

	ICRC Classification Main Headings	Faculty
A	Reference	
B	Indigenous Peoples: Communities & Culture: BC	
C	Indigenous Peoples: Communities & Culture: North America	
D	Indigenous Peoples : Communities & Culture: Rest of the World	History, sociology
E	Language	Linguistics
F	Worldview (i.e. Spirituality and philosophy)	Philosophy, Indigenous Studies
G	Tangible & Material Culture	Contemporary Arts, SIAT
H	Intangible Culture & Literature	English Literature, Indigenous Studies, Communication, Dance, Publishing
I		
J	Education	Education
K	Sociology and Anthropology	Sociology added to reflect SFU department
L	Archaeology	Archaeology
M	Community Planning	Urban Studies, Semester in Dialogue (?), Recreation, Gerontology, Labour Studies
N	Roles & Relationships	GSWS, Indigenous Studies, Gerontology
O		
P	Health	Health Sciences, Biomedical Physiology & Kinesiology, Psychology/Mental Health
Q		
R	Nature & Ecological knowledge	REM, Environmental Sciences, School of Sustainable Energy Engineering, Faculty of Science, Biology and Molecular Biology/Biochemistry

Chart mapping SFU faculties to the ICRC Classification System

The ICRC Classification System

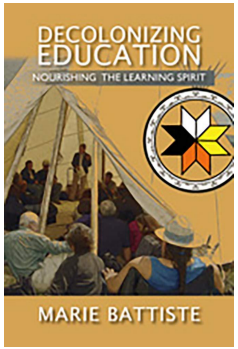


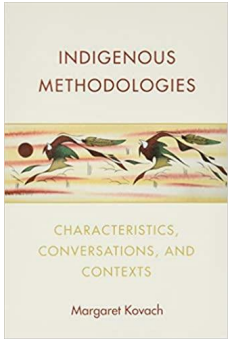
The ICRC Classification Sneak Peak

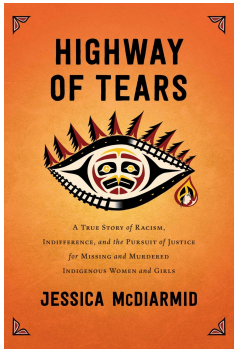
F - Worldview (i.e. Spirituality and philosophy)

F - Worldview, Belief, Spirituality – Philosophy & Ideology [use geo & Nation cutters]

- FA - Educational experience
  - FAA - Curriculum Materials & Development
    - FAAA - Textbooks
  - FAB - Curriculum Content Analysis
  - FAC - Student experience (i.e. studying the topic)
- FB - Creation Stories (Cutter by Nation or community)
- FC - Indigenous philosophy
- FD - Dreams, visions, prophecy
- FE – Ceremonies, Rites, Traditions
  - FEP – Rites of Passage
- FG – Dance Ceremonies
  - FGG – Ghost Dance
  - FGS – Sun Dance
- FH - Medicine Women/Men & Shamanism
- FJ – Feasts
- FK - Animals
- FL – Sweat Lodge
- FP – Potlatch
- FR – Prohibition of Potlatch & other cultural/spiritual expression
- FZ – Non-Indigenous Religion/Spirituality [general – not history]







JC M38	AT K68	VS M33
Education: Indigenous Education (Canada general)	Reference: Research methodologies and techniques	Justice System: Crimes against Women
E96.2 B355	E76.7 K68	HV6250.4 W65 M33
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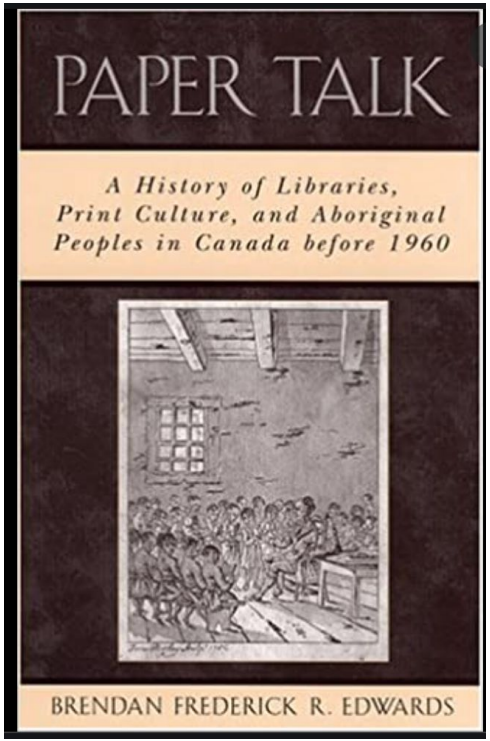

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Questions?

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