2024 AAU Teaching Showcase Abstracts

Differentiating Indigenous Projects of Social Change in Education

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To begin, I draw on Indigenous scholarship to characterize four Indigenous projects of social change: reconciliation, decolonization, Indigenization, and resurgence. Broadly, reconciliation can be seen as a strengthening of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, decolonization as a removal of coloniality in all forms, Indigenization as an integration of Indigenous presence into dominant social structures, and resurgence as a sovereign assertion of traditional Indigenous cultural and governance practices. I then suggest that awareness of these distinct but overlapping projects is useful in post-secondary. For example, while efforts to Indigenize program requirements are laudable, Indigenous authors often critique such efforts as being superficial when they do not include Indigenous language or other forms of grounded, land-based Indigenous knowledge. Such efforts, then, are best lead by Indigenous knowledge keepers, Elders, or scholars. Decolonial efforts, on the other hand, should be undertaken by everyone. An understanding of how these projects differ can, thus, facilitate a nuanced response to the growing calls to decolonize and indigenize post-secondary.

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