NARRATIVE IS UNIVERSAL
Narrative is a universal phenomenon; oral history is the oldest tradition in all cultures of the world. 1-3

NARRATIVE IS NECESSARY
Narratives are the tools through which all human beings make sense of the world. It is how we order our experience and therefore how we both learn and express our personal and social identities. Stories tell us who we are. 1-2, 4-5

NARRATIVE IS RELATIONAL
Narrative is an essential aspect of human culture. It creates and maintains human communities. We forge our relationships and our identities in a constantly evolving socio-cultural narrative. Through narrative we become members of a community, and through narrative we educate our children to think about and meaning-making, story-telling enables us to relate to one another. 2-3, 8, 9, 14-22

Knowing one another’s stories fosters understanding. Attending to each other’s stories makes us better people – more empathic and more civic-minded; people who are more appreciative of diversity and less afraid of difference. 2, 6, 23, 50

CULTURAL COMPETENCE IS RELATIONAL
The quality of our intercultural relationships depends not only on our abilities to tolerate difference, but also on how we understand one another. Narrative creates experiences that allow for a reimagining of what is possible, and results in a change to the story we tell ourselves about who we are and who we are in relationship. 3, 8, 9, 19-20, 31-35

The power of narrative to increase our levels of intercultural understanding and competence is reflected in changes in our attitudes and behaviours. Intercultural understanding changes our worldviews and expands our ways of knowing. 12, 15, 28

References
Culture as Knowledge - Ways of Knowing

Culture and knowledge are often treated as separate entities and their intrinsic relationship not taken into account. When one approaches the culture-knowledge dichotomy from the paradigm of culture as knowledge, opportunities for new understandings of intercultural communication and competence become possible. As Western science moves beyond linear thought, the inter-relatedness of all things becomes ever more evident. Consideration of both Indigenous ways of knowing and Western ways of knowing can more fully inform our pedagogical narratives. Intercultural communication is then no longer about ethnicity, language, religion, or nationality; it is now about diverse knowledges within and between people in societies. It is about ways of knowing.

Narrative as Pedagogy

Narrative is how we learn about ourselves and about others; it is how we form our scripts and schemas, and is therefore quite simply how we learn everything. Narrative, as a teaching strategy that is common to all cultures, and used successfully to teach many subjects, is also an effective tool for teaching and learning intercultural competence. Teaching for diversity, also called multicultural education, culturally relevant and/or culturally responsive teaching, antiracist education, and social justice teaching requires that we provide such cross-cultural learning. “In this global era, if we are to understand ourselves and others, we need to teach the interconnectedness of human experiences by [...] Indigenous pedagogies such as storytelling, proverbs, legends and myths.” Our narratives embody our ways of knowing and are our most effective means of communicating descriptive and/or experiential knowledge.

Research Purpose is to increase our understanding of teaching competencies necessary in multicultural education and help to support the professional development of educators. The project offers opportunities for advancing the teaching efficacy of all instructors through the incorporation of Indigenous pedagogies. It contributes to the greater educational community through increased intercultural competence in students and educators.

Hypothesis

Making use of Indigenous teaching methods such as narrative can increase intercultural competence in educators and help to confirm that employing Indigenous pedagogies is a practical strategy for use in decolonizing education and building stronger communities, both within the education system's community of practice and the community at large.

Initial Research involved collaboration with Indigenous community members and teachers that confirmed the benefits of narrative teaching and suggested strategies for incorporating Indigenous pedagogies into curriculum. Identified strategies addressed education at levels of classroom, institution, and government. Specific strategies to increase the use of Indigenous pedagogies, particularly narrative, in classrooms were identified as:

1. Create time and space for narrative.
2. Model oral storytelling.
3. Encourage storytelling in students.
5. Use real life stories (case studies).
6. Utilize imagination through visualization and “what if...?” questions.
7. Invite Indigenous leaders, elders, artists, and writers into the classroom.
8. Have the class participate in activities that benefit the community.
9. Create assignments that encourage students to discover their own personal story and the stories that are relevant to their chosen fields.
10. Use reflective exercises to integrate the students’ own stories with lessons.

Implementation involved incorporating four of the strategies identified in the initial research stages into the delivery of a post-secondary sociology course. Two classes of students (one receiving narrative instruction) were selected to complete an Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) both pre- and post-course. The IDI is a statistically validated survey tool based on The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). This model explains the relationship between learning and increased levels of intercultural sensitivity (competence). Increases in IDI scores can be interpreted as increases in intercultural through increased knowledge and understanding.

Evaluation of the research results showed an increase in intercultural competence in those students benefiting from Indigenous content and pedagogy.