

ESSAY

NAVIGATING INDIGENOUS/INDIGENOUS-CENTERED TRAJECTORIES IN COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the impacts and importance of best practices in community archaeology in Alaska from the standpoint of two students navigating the transition between undergraduate and graduate studies and careers in archaeology. Both have shared a similar trajectory and learning environment. However, both have unique lived experiences and epistemological backgrounds shaping how they situate themselves in their research and envision their futures in archaeology. Writing from positions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous, the authors engage in conversation through a series of anecdotes, exploring the value and impact of current and emerging “best practices” in community-engaged archaeology. Through their experiences in Togiak, Alaska, the authors examine how it has and continues to shape the way they see themselves moving forward in the field, as well as how they envision archaeology in the future. Additionally, the authors highlight potential issues, concerns, impacts, and opportunities they face as students within the field of archaeology and how they have navigated them.

INTRODUCTION

Our journey and developing understanding of community archaeology in Alaska began with our experience first as undergraduate students and later as research assistants and graduate students working in the community-led project *Temyiq Tuyuryaq: Collaborative Archaeology the Yup'it Way*, an ongoing partnership between Kristen Barnett and the community in Togiak (Barnett this volume). We became involved with the project during a time when we were struggling to understand our positions within archaeology and academia. As we began conceptualizing this article, we realized we had no idea where to begin. After much thought, discussion, and reflection, we decided to share our experiences as students navigating the transition

between undergraduate and graduate studies who have decided to engage our studies and early careers to work within community-based frameworks and projects.

Through dialogue with each other, we answer a series of questions that intend to situate our role as learners (Baskin and Baskin 2021; Smith et al. 2018; Tuck and Yang 2012). We want to share/tell stories and anecdotes of our individual and collective journeys through academics and the personal experiences that have shaped our trajectories, highlighting community archaeology's influence on us. It is necessary to distinguish between our identities, one as Indigenous and one as white but both practicing Indigenous and Indigenous-centered research. Indigenous

research/archaeology is practiced by someone who has an Indigenous identity, whereas Indigenous-centered research/archaeology is done by someone who is likely not Indigenous, but works within the same frameworks, methods, and theory (Sanger and Barnett 2021).

We explore what we have been taught and exposed to in our classrooms, how this influenced what we envisioned community archaeology to be, and how these understandings translated to our fieldwork experiences. We will share our experiences of the transition from undergraduate to graduate students and how our roles in the field have changed. Then we will articulate where we envision ourselves in the future and what tools and resources best support students who want to engage in collaborative archaeological practices.

JAYDE

My name is Jayde Morningchild Grimard. I come from the prairies, from Treaty 6 territory, and was born in *Amiskwaciwâskahikan* (Edmonton). I am a member of Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation. I am Plains Cree from my dad's side, and Saulteaux, French, and Métis from my mom's side. While I am Cree and Anishinaabe, I was raised primarily in Cree territories. I was born to two teen parents, I am the eldest of five siblings, and the eldest of many cousins. I share my heritage, my family, and where I come from because as a Cree person, kinship and place are important.

NATASHA

My name is Natasha; I am white and grew up on coastal Vancouver Island in British Columbia to a pair of "hippie" (alternative) parents. My family originates from Scotland and Germany. I am the eldest of three, with two younger brothers; the youngest was born when I was 10. Throughout my life, I have been exposed to and experienced numerous different forms of schooling, including French immersion, Waldorf, homeschooling, and the international baccalaureate, which sparked my interest in education systems: specifically, how they serve or do not serve students, families, and teachers. This interest has been supported and guided through Indigenous-centered archaeological methods, theories, and frameworks.

EMBARKING ON A JOURNEY IN ARCHAEOLOGY? WHAT WERE YOU TAUGHT COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY TO BE?

JAYDE

At the University of British Columbia (UBC), a bachelor of arts requires students to complete two science courses. I completed my undergraduate degree in history, with a minor in archaeology. History drew me in with its storytelling methodologies. Archaeology was more complicated. I took a first-year archaeology course in my second year for my science credit and then essentially said, "Why not? Why not study archaeology as well?" It wasn't until after I had declared my minor in anthropological archaeology that I came to understand that there was something called community archaeology. As a young child, on a class field trip to the Royal Alberta Museum, I was exposed for the first time to the idea that my culture, Plains Cree and Saulteaux, could be and was locked up behind glass cases. I realized archaeology was extractive, and as I grew, I also realized it to be colonial. In my methods courses, my bioarchaeology courses, and even in a theory course, community archaeology was not fully explored. Rather, I was presented with orthodox methods and culture replacement theories. There was an acknowledgement of colonial legacies, but also the perpetuation of those colonial narratives.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when classes were online, I took four archaeology courses that were all very different from each other in their approach to methods, theory, and analysis. Despite their differences, these courses had a common denominator: the instructors talked about Indigenous peoples or presented subject matter about Indigenous peoples, but there were no Indigenous people teaching me. It was during this time I read Sonya Atalay (2006; Atalay et al. 2014) for the first time, which was trajectory-altering for me. Finally, maybe there was something I could do, somewhere I could go after I graduated. However, I did not quite visualize where that was. This was a very difficult time for me, and for many Indigenous peoples across North America, when 215 unmarked graves were located in *Tk'emlups* (Canadian Press 2023). My father had just died, his death almost a direct result of the ongoing legacies of settler-colonialism and residential schools, and three months later, the news broke about *Tk'emlups*.

Meanwhile, I was taking a course about how to manage a GIS database for Indigenous nations. What is archaeology? Why was I doing this? I did not know.

NATASHA

As a teenager, I chose to specialize in history as my humanities elective and subsequently decided to attend the University of British Columbia to pursue a degree in history. Like Jayde, I also took anthropological archaeology courses to fulfill my science requirement. I took two introductory courses, which I enjoyed, prompting me to adjust my degree to include a minor in anthropological archaeology. At the time, I liked archaeology because I was still learning similar content to my major, but it was considered a “science,” and I thought it would increase my chances of securing a job after I graduated.

I took courses on methods, paleoanthropology, and cultural resource management, which I enjoyed at the time, despite missing out on many of the lab components due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as most of my degree was completed online. Reflecting on the many scholars we read (e.g., Lewis Binford or Louis Leakey), the stories, methods, and ideas taught were primarily shared through a western-orthodox lens, with little to no Indigenous representation, despite using archaeology as a tool to study Indigenous groups. Having been brought up in a western-dominated world where I had always been taught this way, for the most part I did not question this framing.

JAYDE

I struggled for over a year with what it meant to study archaeology, grappling with its colonial legacies and implications beyond academia and my own position in it as an Indigenous person, alongside resurfacing traumas from living within a settler-colonial state. Balancing my well-being and academics (like most students, they were tied together) after the passing of my father was a difficult task when almost everywhere I looked in the institution, I was reminded of colonial violence. I very nearly did not finish my degree, due in part to one mandatory 300-level archaeological theory course I had to take. I had taken it twice and had to withdraw both times. That course served as more of a general survey of archaeological theories, processualism, post-processualism, etc. With everything that was occurring in the world, I struggled to engage and find relevance in that course. During my second attempt at the

course, I was simultaneously enrolled in another archaeology course on evidential reasoning that was cross-listed with philosophy. This might have been the first course where collaborative archaeology was discussed more fully up to this point in my progress toward my degree. It was framed as “community-oriented” or “community-based”; however, despite feeling inspired by collaborative archaeology, it felt incomplete. For me, collaborative archaeology should not be the end goal of all archaeology, but rather a pathway to a recontextualized archaeology; one that results in Indigenous sovereignty and one that ultimately puts management of land, resources, culture, and belongings in the hands of traditional and ancestral stewards and knowledge-keepers of the land. Throughout that semester, I had found myself shifting between being pro-collaborative archaeology and simply anti-archaeology, and I was struggling to find a place where I fit.

NATASHA

I do not think I was exposed to the concept of community archaeology until I took a theory class with Kristen Barnett. That class changed my entire perspective on the discipline of archaeology and caused me to question, for the first time in my degree, what my role was in archaeology and if I should even have one. I distinctly remember completing a theory assignment where we were asked to interrogate our epistemology, social position, axiology, and ontology (Walter and Andersen 2013). This was the first time I was properly exposed to these concepts, and I had difficulty knowing what to write. Who was I? What experiences and lenses had shaped my beliefs consciously and subconsciously? What was my role in the colonial nature of our discipline? How has this molded my belief system and values?

The transformative role this class played in my development came to a head when I asked Barnett if I should continue pursuing archaeology or if I should only study white people. For the first time, I realized how problematic my role as a white archaeologist wanting to pursue Indigenous-centered research could be. Barnett’s perspective on my question changed my trajectory because she emphasized that having an awareness about my role and that of the discipline’s in perpetuating colonial norms gave me a responsibility. Once my eyes were opened to the problems of orthodox archaeology, it was very privileged of me to believe that it was something I could remove myself from, because that is not an option for many individuals.

From our conversation, I realized that despite my positionality and background, there was a place for me in archaeology, especially because I was now critiquing orthodox archaeology and developing a greater understanding of my positionality, a long process of learning and unlearning.

JAYDE

In my second-to-last year of undergrad I was taking that same archaeological theory course for the third and, thankfully, final time. But it was not the same. Taught by Barnett, an Unangan Indigenous scholar, I finally saw myself represented in this discipline when I walked into that classroom on the first day of class and smelled burning sweetgrass. The medicine was being used because next to the classroom, ancestral remains were being stored, something I had no prior knowledge of despite having been in that classroom before. Looking back on it, I wonder if the discomfort I felt all the times I had entered that classroom before was because of that; those students, Indigenous or otherwise, could be in a space with human remains and not have that disclosed.

TOGETHER

The way that Barnett taught the theory course introduced us to a whole new level of questioning. It was a space that welcomed interrogation of the discipline and encouraged self-interrogation of our individual perspectives and priorities. Barnett also introduced us to Togiak and to a project based on genuine partnership and consisting of collaborative, community-led archaeology. We both applied to the field school and were accepted.

WHAT ROLE DID TOGIAK PLAY IN YOUR DECISION TO PURSUE GRADUATE STUDIES WITH AN EMPHASIS ON COMMUNITY / INDIGENOUS-CENTERED ARCHAEOLOGY?

NATASHA

At the beginning of each field school, we spend a week at Togiak School, where we participate in Experiential Learning Week (E-Week). The purpose is for Togiak School students to experience hands-on learning in creative and engaging ways. During the 2023 field school, we got to take E-week classes relating to food systems,

dialogue, and technology. To me, E-week is an example of best practices in community archaeology. In the classrooms, with the shared role of learners, we built relationships, which allowed us to begin to break down colonial norms of what it means to be a student. My exposure to E-week also allowed for an opportunity to reframe what it means to be a researcher, specifically an outsider, by not using an orthodox approach to research through the extraction of knowledge and enforcement of colonial hierarchies. We, along with the Togiak students, were learning about the Old Village, and we were also learning about community goals and interests and how community desires were being prioritized through Barnett's partnership.

E-week, emphasizing the importance of hands-on, place-based learning, benefited not only the Togiak students but also us as UBC undergrads, where this was the first time many of us had experienced learning in this kind of environment. For me, this exposure highlighted many of the problems within the dominant western schooling system. I have observed for myself the struggles that western-centered schooling can produce through standardized testing, large class sizes, outdated curriculums, and the continued perpetuation of a dominant nationalist narrative that leaves out more voices than it includes.

In our first year in Togiak, the tensions between western schooling and Indigenous education were apparent. Eurocentric frameworks for education do not prioritize Indigenous knowledge and voices. They perpetuate narratives of Indigenous peoples as "in the past" and "unable to keep up with modernity," which furthers the promotion of deficit models that negatively impact youth (Brayboy and Lomawaima 2018). Out of this experience, I found myself wanting to help support changes in rural Alaska, state-mandated curriculum to incorporate intergenerational learning, focusing on hands-on, place-based learning that reflects and builds upon the work that is already being done by the community. For me, the decision to pursue graduate studies was not about a master's in archaeology but instead about continuing to build a relationship with the people of Togiak through community archaeology.

JAYDE

Once we were in the field, we were exposed to many different archaeological methods such as excavation, mapping using photogrammetry and light detection and ranging, ground penetrating radar (GPR), field curation, and learning to be accountable for each choice made during field-

work. When Natasha and I, alongside another field school student, were given the opportunity to do GPR in the cemetery beside our field camp, it opened another door to a set of unique responsibilities. The cemetery was part of the Old Village, with many community members' relations buried there. The cemetery consists of burials over an extensive period and includes old-style Yup'ik burials, Russian Orthodox burials, and Judeo-Christian burials, reflecting the region's history with colonialism. The three of us, alongside Barnett, became responsible for making decisions regarding how to conduct the GPR, how to do it respectfully and in a way that honoured the relations there. There is an old-style women's house, an *ena*, which sits near the field camp. When we first arrived in the field camp, we introduced ourselves, explained why we were there as students, and asked for permission. Similarly, those of us working on the GPR, before commencing data collection, repeated this protocol; however, this time with more time and added details, as the *ena* lay within the grid that we established for the GPR. When setting up our grid, we chose markers to delineate the grid that were both a part of the landscape and temporary: such as tying flagging tape to grass, as opposed to putting in stakes. GPR is intended to be minimally invasive, but we were still operating it within the final resting place of so many community members, and so we took care in where we stepped and kept ourselves grounded in where we were and why we were there. We had two days of good, sunny weather to do the work, and it was a heavy but impactful two days.

This experience led to additional GPR work, which has become a focus of my graduate studies. I study applications of the technology to strengthen sovereignty and build something new, following a desire-based approach to research (Tuck 2009). Desire-based research shifts focus away from trauma-based research, or deficit modelling, both concepts that had often guided research on Indigenous communities. However, we are more than our traumas and deficits. As well, after processing the initial collection of data, the question arose of how GPR works when working with permafrost, given the unique landscape of Togiak, and how it affects the results. Our first time in the field we used GPR in the cemetery; the following field season when we returned as research assistants, we used GPR on the beach, exploring the potential of finding more of the Old Village buried under the sand. This was inspired by observing daily changes on the beach from the tides and seeing potential house-posts buried in the sand.

TOGETHER

For both of us, our first field season in Togiak shaped how we understood community archaeology in theory and practice and how we could see our research and academic trajectories. Togiak played a huge role in our decision to pursue graduate studies. When looking at graduate school programs, neither of us chose archaeology; instead we chose Togiak, community archaeology, and the opportunity to learn further. The framework used for research in Togiak follows Lori Lambert's Indigenous Research Paradigm; a spiderweb-conceptual model, which emphasizes the importance of Indigenous perspectives and methodologies through a nonhierarchical, place-based, and culturally specific framework (Lambert 2014).

WE HAVE BOTH RETURNED TO THE SAME COLLABORATION AS GRADUATE STUDENTS AND RESEARCH ASSISTANTS. WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM THESE NEW POSITIONS?

TOGETHER

In the fall of our final year of undergrad, we were invited by Kristen Barnett and Sven Hakaanson, Jr. to attend a two-day workshop hosted by the University of Washington, called Collaborative Archaeology in the Alaskan Arctic (CAAA), an opportunity that was a privilege for us as undergraduate students. By this point, we both knew we would return to Togiak as research assistants in the spring. We were amid our applications to graduate school, further committing ourselves to the project. Being at the workshop and actively engaging in discussions on the future of collaborative archaeology in Alaska was special because it felt like our voices and opinions meant something. This opportunity allowed us to think further about our role in community archaeology and how we envision its future.

In our experience, a big part of the transition from undergraduate students to research assistants and later graduate students was a greater responsibility and a deeper commitment to the project. As research assistants, we were both still students and learners, but we were included in project planning, preparation, and the daily organization of fieldwork and navigating relations. In Togiak, our responsibilities to the community had not changed with our altered role; however, the privilege of returning further strengthened the relationships we had made previously

and allowed us to see how our goals more clearly aligned with community values for our research projects.

This new role also changed our in-camp dynamics because we had more experience in the field than the undergraduate students participating in the field school, but we were also still learners. This was challenging to navigate at times because we had to balance the idea of being responsible versus having authority. We were responsible for many things around camp under the direction of Barnett. Responsibility, in this case, can relate to our understanding of our obligations to our changing roles have shaped them for ourselves (Schneider and Hayes 2020; Wilson 2008). Relationality is important to consider when understanding one's own responsibility. We had a responsibility to the community, to our supervisor, and to the undergraduate students.

Additionally, both of us had the opportunity to work in Barnett's lab, the Indigenous archaeology Lab for Indigenous Futures (IaLIF) at UBC, alongside other previous field school students. We were in a liminal state because we had completed our undergraduate degrees but were not yet graduate students before we went into the field for the second time as research assistants. While working within the lab, we helped develop an accessioning system for belongings at their new temporary home, prompting us to reflect further on data management and data sovereignty. While working with field-curated data from previous years, it became evident to us how important intentionality and proper field curation protocols were in a way that we had not realized when we were in the field. We also worked on purchasing lab equipment and learned about the complexities of setting up a lab and working with university bureaucracies and budgets. In this area, we have more to learn.

WHAT SUPPORT, EDUCATIONAL, AND/OR PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES ARE NECESSARY TO HELP YOU CONTINUE TO GROW?

JAYDE

Having an opportunity to attend a workshop like the CAAA, which created a space that centered on collaborative archaeology, aided in our learning and exposure to current and past work in Alaska. While collaborative archaeology is a growing discipline, it is still not the norm for most archaeology in practice. Getting to hear and listen to other questions that arose in the workshop provided us with opportunities to reflect and consider what our own

needs could be as students. We often do not know what we need until we realize something is missing. Being invited to the workshop so early in our academic careers set a tone for what to expect from professional events such as this.

As an Indigenous student, I had found myself often feeling alienated in my classes. I was connected on campus to other Indigenous students; however, very few shared the same course of studies with me. Slowly as time went on, and I became more embedded within the department, I would meet other Indigenous students in archaeology, but they were far and few between. Likewise, as a student interested in collaborative archaeology and decolonizing practices, realizing that there were others who had the same qualms about the discipline was incredibly validating.

The CAAA workshop was a space that allowed us to engage with others in the discipline who were talking about the same things, both from an Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspective. It also was important to hear from scholars who were already embedded within the discipline and from other graduate students, some of whom are now building a support group for graduate students doing archaeology in Alaska (LaZar et al. this volume).

NATASHA

Similarly, attending the CAAA workshop allowed me to begin to see myself working in community archaeology in the Alaska Arctic. One of the ways this was done was by meeting peers and later career scholars in the field and listening to them articulate challenges they had faced and what they see as "best practices." Listening to this dialogue was very insightful, and it made me think about what early career scholars require in terms of support, education, and professional resources.

One of the most important and challenging dynamics to navigate in graduate school is your relationship with your supervisor, and if you work within their projects, then your changing roles and responsibilities within this relationship. In my experience, my supervisor Kristen Barnett has consistently reiterated that needs and interrelationship dynamics are in flux, meaning that the terms of this relationship can be renegotiated throughout my mentorship. To me, one of the important elements to creating a positive and effective relationship with your supervisor is to maintain consistent, open communication throughout your relationship. I have found that this has allowed me to learn greatly, while also feeling as though I am receiving help and am not alone as I navigate the complicated politics and

processes within institutions, such as working on grant applications or learning how to build respectful relationships with community members. I also think it is important to learn from as many scholars within the discipline as you can. Hearing and learning about other peoples' experiences doing fieldwork or learning about their research practices is invaluable as I have found it has helped cement an understanding of my own values and opinions.

Doing community archaeology in the Alaska Arctic has many unique aspects that can cause challenges for early career scholars, one of which is related to the remoteness of rural villages. The financial resources alone required to visit are expansive. In my case, I largely rely upon the resources and experiences of my supervisor, including her extensive connections and relationships in the Bristol Bay region. I have greatly benefited from this, and Barnett's connections have also facilitated my budding relationships and connections with community members. Another challenging aspect for me to navigate is to consider what happens when my degree and research project end. How does this change my relationship with the community? Knowing my potential short-term involvement, perhaps a more minor role with the community in the future, how much of a relationship should I be trying to develop? Is it best to leave this primarily within the boundaries of my supervisor? These are questions I am still in the process of navigating.

Another form of support that I think early career scholars struggle with is where to find community archaeology in scholarship. Given my limited exposure to community archaeology during my undergrad, I initially found myself not knowing where to look or how to locate Indigenous perspectives in archaeology. These experiences, including more recently as a teaching assistant has shown me the significance of each assigned/suggested reading and the implications. I believe a broader, more diversified selection of readings that showcase diverse perspectives from different scholars would be beneficial for students during undergraduate and graduate programs. This would help show ways to critically engage with materials and interrogate different perspectives, which would be helpful for students as they navigate not only classroom expectations but also how we see and position ourselves within them. I believe the challenges of locating Indigenous perspectives are not unique to archaeology and that other disciplines could also benefit from increased inclusion of more perspectives and backgrounds.

Due to my research focus on education, I have found more ease in educational journals than purely archaeological ones. I found the CAAA workshop very helpful in finding examples of community-based archaeological work that was being done in Alaska that I had not been exposed to. This was because the workshop brought together a group of scholars with similar interests in developing best practices for the discipline in this region. This workshop exposed us not only to examples and ideas of where to begin looking for information but also allowed us to develop relationships with later career scholars in community archaeology, from whom we could take inspiration and learn lessons. Being exposed to this opportunity early on in our careers was helpful because it set the bar high for what we can expect to see in the future of community archaeology in Alaska.

TOGETHER

Upon completing our respective undergraduate degrees, it felt natural to continue working within Barnett's partnership with Togiak. We believe we have been fortunate in our positions due to our early exposure to community archaeology and the experiences we have acquired in our field. Talking to our peers, we have noticed just how unique our situation is. We are already involved in a project that we feel aligns with our values. It has allowed us to explore our interests while remaining centered on the people of Togiak's wishes and goals. We have heard from many of our peers about the challenges of communicating, creating, or finding research frameworks and methods with their supervisors. For us, the CAAA workshop helped us learn about the resources needed for community archaeology in the Alaska Arctic, and it also allowed us to begin developing relationships within the field.

However, the resource and connection that we feel has been most helpful so far is our connection and relationship with each other. We have supported each other as we learned to navigate our roles in the project and learn the ropes of academic institutions. Our different backgrounds have shaped how we situate ourselves within the discipline, but they have not hindered our ability to support each other's development. Rather, it has been immeasurably helpful to have an accomplice in navigating and disrupting colonial institutions from a position as a student; and to be honest, it is nice when one of us can speak up for the other (Flewellen et al. 2021).

HOW HAVE YOUR EXPERIENCES INFORMED YOUR FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN ARCHAEOLOGY AND EDUCATION?

JAYDE

When I was seven and my mother was only 21, she packed us into our car for a spring break trip down to Drumheller, Alberta, where we rented a small cabin in the middle of a canyon surrounded by millions of years of earth processes that created the landscape around us. This was the moment that sparked my interest in the past, but it would grow, as my understanding did that the past was connected to the present and to the future, not just for the land but for the people who lived, live, and will live. We are no longer focusing on merely the past but on the present, with considerations of the future of people and not just the future of archaeology as a discipline. After returning from Togiak in spring 2023, I began working in cultural resource management (CRM) in British Columbia. As a student, I continue to do so, but only part-time during the school year and full-time in the summer, taking off the necessary time to be involved with Togiak. CRM is vastly different from the frameworks we were taught in Togiak, including excavation methods. In Togiak, we were slow and intentional, a contrast from the “fast-paced” work in consulting archaeology, which often involves work in response to small to large-scale developments. This is not to say that CRM and the people who work within it are not intentional, but there are different responsibilities and priorities that must be met to remain compliant with British Columbia’s Heritage Conservation Act, and to be accountable to the nations whose land the work occurs on as well as the clients and the province. Data sovereignty and data management also work incredibly differently. In CRM, I have learned that after excavation, many belongings end up in repositories to sit for an indefinite amount of time, where communities are often inhibited from managing their own belongings in their own nations due to provincial guidelines that constitute what “appropriate” repositories are. Meanwhile, in Togiak, and with the framework of data sovereignty, belongings are cared for by Barnett and student lab workers in IaLIF until it is time for them to go home at the community’s request and discretion.

My experiences in CRM have further demonstrated to me the uniqueness of community archaeology in Togiak and the need for more widespread adoption of similar

frameworks elsewhere. Every community will have different needs and expectations, with different experiences and challenges, which requires individualized goals and plans for each community. I was fortunate to become a part of this project, with an existing collaborative, community-led framework focusing on youth, intergenerational dialogue, Indigenous futurisms, and data sovereignty. Working with GPR has helped me redefine working within trauma-based models and instead focus on desire-based models, and the intersection of technology, Indigenous futurity, and sovereignty. I have also found myself inspired by several Indigenous writers and scholars. Through reading these authors, in addition to my participation in research in Togiak and other life experiences, my understanding of the time has shifted to follow a less linear progression of past, present, and future.

NATASHA

My experience with community archaeology and Indigenous-centered research in Togiak has changed the trajectory of my academic journey and changed the ways I see myself in the future, in terms of my career and potential education directions. Before these experiences, I could not ascertain a clear vision for my interest in education and would have never considered pursuing education as a career; however, this has shifted through my experiences in the field as a student, research assistant/teaching assistant, and graduate student. Seeing the needs and desires of students being prioritized through E-week and through learning from Indigenous frameworks, I believe using Indigenous-centered archaeological methods can be a pathway towards the reclamation of education sovereignty for communities. This is supported by my experiences in school and observing the experiences of my peers and family.

Despite pursuing a master’s in anthropology, I am unsure if I will professionally or personally identify as an archaeologist in the future. Barnett’s partnership with Togiak focuses on supporting the youth and their futures, and this is an endeavour that I wish to bring with me into my future career and experiences. I believe my experiences in community archaeology in Togiak have grounded my interests, narrowing my current research into the intersection of Indigenous-centered archaeology and education as a pathway towards the reclamation of educational sovereignty for communities.

There is a lot of work that needs to be done within the disciplines of archaeology and education to improve and decolonize the colonial apparatus. While at times this feels daunting, I am optimistic and inspired by the scholarship and work being done within these fields (Brayboy and Lomawaima 2018; Lomawaima and McCarty 2014), including the work highlighted in this special issue. The CAAA workshop is an example of how scholars can connect with the next generation to help foster a supportive environment, allowing wisdom and lessons to be shared while exploring current “best practices.”

CONCLUSION

Throughout our essay in this special issue, we have shared our perspective on the experiences and resources needed by early career scholars and students in terms of “best practices” in community archaeology in Alaska. Over the past six years, the two of us have shared many experiences, including our undergraduate experience at UBC, our exposure to community archaeology, and the writing of this essay. While there are many similarities, we also come from vastly different backgrounds, with one coming from island hippies on the Northwest Coast and the other coming from the Prairies and having a distinct Indigenous identity. These different perspectives offer variation within this article, demonstrating different needs. We have learned from each other and continue to do so. We bounce ideas off each other, share resources, and are constantly reflecting together and independently on our roles as students and researchers in this discipline. Collaboration is one of the most significant contributors to creating and nurturing best practices through exposure to community archaeology, building relationships with communities, building relationships with scholars who work in the region, and access to workshops and experiences that promote ideas like those shared at the CAAA workshop.

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