

David Harris Flaherty Undergraduate Library Scholarship 2022 Recipient
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Award-winning Essay

UVic Libraries: Accessibility and Connections

As a first-generation learner and third-year Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) student at UVic, the library has proven to be an incredibly valuable resource. Since the BSW program is distance-based, I rely heavily on the library's digital resources and the librarians and staff for support. The library provides me with easily accessible digital course reserves, e-books, academic journals, and citation help. Moreover, I greatly appreciate the opportunity to access personalized help through online research consultations and the multiple other library services for distance students, and I recognize the privilege of being able to access these resources from my own home. Not only does the library make me feel connected and supported by the UVic community but accessing the library's resources has greatly improved my academic achievements.

This semester I completed a research paper for my SOCW 354 Indigenous Perspectives on Practice Issues course with Cheryl Aro (PhD Candidate). This course critically examines colonization and the implications for social work practice with Indigenous peoples, families, and communities. For the research paper, I decided to explore the topic of Indigenous child welfare with a focus on resistance, healing, and wellbeing among Residential School and Sixties Scoop survivors and Indigenous youth-in-care today. After my initial searches on the UVic library website for "Indigenous child welfare," I was overwhelmed by the number of academic articles and books related to the topic. However, considering the history of oppressive research conducted by non-Indigenous researchers on Indigenous peoples that often use a colonial and

deficit-approach (Wilson, 2008), I was cautious to avoid replicating these harms. It was at this point that I sought assistance from the UVic library staff to guide me in the right direction for this paper.

After contacting the UVic library staff, I was given helpful advice about Boolean searches, the library's social work research guides, and I was introduced to some specific Indigenous scholars and journals. Following the staff's advice, I was able to use the UVic library's database to find relevant resources that center Indigenous perspectives, such as the Indigenous Child Well-being Research Network and the First Peoples Child and Family Review. From these library resources, I located an article by Clark et al. (2020) which discusses Secwépemc kinship and their approaches to healing and wellbeing. This work profoundly transformed my research paper as I recognized the unique concerns of Secwépemc communities and the significance of sovereignty over child welfare that is central to Indigenous peoples' wellbeing, healing, and resistance (Clark et al., 2020).

I am incredibly grateful to the UVic library and staff for offering a wide range of easily accessible digital resources. The quality and breadth of my research paper greatly improved after receiving advice from the UVic library staff. Moreover, using the library's databases provided me with access to Indigenous knowledge and perspectives that inform my future decolonial and anti-oppressive social work practice. Going forward, I am positive that the UVic library, staff, and its resources will continue to support and enrich my learning as a social work student.

References

- Clark, N., More, J., Kenoras-Duck Chief, L., Johnston-Virgo, D., Matthew, S., Anonymous, Manuel, N., & Derrick, J. (2020). "No one cares more about your community than you": Approaches to Healing with Secwépemc Children and Youth. *First Peoples Child & Family Review*, 15(2), 67-86. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1080810ar>
- Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Fernwood Publishing.