



Digital Collections Stewardship Discussion Guide for Indigenous Practitioners

Facilitating learning groups for the DCS course series

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The Digital Collections Stewardship Discussion Guide for Indigenous Practitioners

The Digital Collections Stewardship courses are designed to be self-paced, however we know that this can often pose challenges for the learner, especially around feelings of isolation and lack of motivation. This guide provides a framework for organizing, structuring, and leading a group of learners through the courses.

Throughout this guide, “learning group” may also be understood as a learning circle or community of practice. While terminology may vary among communities, the emphasis is on collective learning, relationship-building, and shared responsibility. Learning groups are lightly facilitated study groups for people to learn together. They provide a collaborative learning environment that can increase motivation as the group sets attainable goals together and connects their learning to practical application. Learners in a group share ideas and insights, answer each other’s questions, and expose each other to new perspectives and solutions. They form bonds as a community and reflect on progress, boosting confidence.

Digital collection stewardship is not solely a technical practice. It is also a relational responsibility that supports care, continuity, and transmission of knowledge across generations. Learning circles provide opportunities to share experiences, strengthen relationships, and collectively explore stewardship approaches that reflect community values, cultural protocols, and Indigenous systems of knowing.

This **Discussion Guide** is intended for anyone organizing learning groups or leading discussions for any of the DCS courses. It provides a framework for organizing, structuring, and leading a group of learners through the courses, and includes discussion questions, activities and tips for creating valuable and engaging discussions based on the DCS courses and the activities of the workbook. It is intended to be used as a companion to the Digital Collections Stewardship Workbook and incorporates information from WebJunction’s Learning Group Facilitation Guide.

The **Digital Collections Stewardship Workbook for Indigenous Practitioners** is intended for Digital Collection Stewardship learners and contains the activities for all 8 DCS courses. In it, the individual learner captures their intentions, plans, and priorities for implementing digital collections at their institution. It is also intended to serve as an action plan for the learner’s overall digital collection stewardship work.

Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Stewardship

Many Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities approach digital collections through principles of Indigenous data sovereignty, recognizing the rights and responsibilities communities hold regarding the collection, stewardship, access, use, and sharing of their knowledge and cultural expressions.

Learning circle discussions should consider:

- Collective Benefit
- Authority to Control
- Responsibility
- Ethics

as articulated through the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance and how they respond to community values and needs.

Participants are encouraged to consider how these principles intersect with digital stewardship decisions through the course series.

We thank Selena Ortega-Chiolero for developing this edition of the *Digital Collections Stewardship Discussion Guide for Indigenous Practitioners*.

Facilitating your learning group

Foster Relationships and Relational Accountability

Participants bring different experiences, responsibilities, and knowledge systems to the circle. Understanding who each participant is, who they represent, and what responsibilities they carry helps create an environment grounded in trust, reciprocity, and mutual learning.

In this section, you'll find suggestions for building social cohesion with your group, from preparing the meeting space to establishing norms for learning together. Whether you're convening your group face-to-face or online, you can promote a sense of community that increases motivation to learn.

Create a Welcoming Environment

First impressions are important for learners entering the group space for the first time. Whether you are meeting in person or online, be aware of the environment and do your best to create a positive, welcoming atmosphere for learning.

Setting up the **in-person space**:

- Set up chairs in a circle for a non-hierarchical arrangement.
- Provide name tags (and/or table tents); orient participants to restrooms, login for Wi-Fi, etc.
- Adjust room lighting and temperature if possible.
- Add colorful touches, such as flowers or posters.
- If possible, provide snacks and beverages and allow for brief breaks to ensure participant comfort.
- Be sure to orient participants to their environment, ensuring they are aware of all available entrances/exits, quiet spaces for reflection, restrooms, etc.

Setting up the **live-online space**:

- Request learners join the first session early so they can test their audio and video, and get comfortable with the interactive features, without using group time.
- If possible, find a volunteer to troubleshoot technical situations with participants in the background so the entire group is not delayed by one person's tech issues.
- Try to orient yourself so that the strongest light in the room is on your face, so the other learners can see you and your expressions clearly.
- Consider your background. Is it full of details that might distract learners? Can you use a "blur background" feature to hide this?

Consider Cultural Safety

Recognize that participants may represent Tribal Nations, Indigenous communities, or organizations with different cultural protocols. Encourage participants to share any protocols or considerations that may support respectful engagement. When possible, acknowledge the Indigenous homelands where participants are gathering and respect their connections to those lands.

Create a Group Atmosphere

Social cohesion begins to develop within an hour of people being together. Some ideas for encouraging social cohesion include:

- Agreeing on a group name
- Establishing rituals (traditions, habits, weekly activities)
- Using plural pronouns (we instead of I)
- Opening and closing reflections
- Land acknowledgements (when appropriate)
- Sharing community updates
- Celebrating participant accomplishments and milestones

Start with a Check-in

Take some time to go over what a Learning Group is and help members understand what to expect. Clarify your role as a *member* of the circle, not the teacher. You are all learning together.

Then get to know each other. For your first session, you might start with introductions. As the facilitator, be prepared to go first and model this.

- Who you are (name)
- Where you are from (community or Nation)
- Where you work
- Your institution's current status with digital collections (i.e., just planning, getting started, have existing collections) and what brought them to that work
- Your role in creating digital collections at your institution
- Share a place, person, teaching, or experience that influences how you approach stewardship

For subsequent sessions, use this check-in time to take the pulse of the group experience:

- What's working well for you in the courses? What's not working?
- What's working well in the learning group? What's not working?
- What might you need help with?
- Recap what your group covered in the previous session
- What have you learned or accomplished since then?

Establish Norms for Learning Together

Starting with your first session, agree to set norms or ground rules with your participants. These can be customized or changed later, if the group agrees.

You may want to display or distribute copies to help remind participants. The goal is to create a safe zone for constructive participation.

Sample norms to follow:

- Be present and listen when others speak.
- Speak one at a time and from personal experience.
- Take responsibility for your own learning and support that of the group.
- Help us stay on time.
- Accept that all ideas are valid, recognizing multiple ways of knowing.
- Lean into your discomfort. Explore ideas where there is disagreement rather than dismissing them.
- Provide timely feedback.
- Avoid personal attacks and don't take disagreements personally.
- Respect confidentiality. Acknowledge that the learning group is a safe space for discussion.
- Respect cultural protocols and community authority.
- Acknowledge and respect that some knowledge may not be appropriate to share outside the group.
- Honor both silence and reflection as valid forms of participation.
- Have fun! Enjoy the social aspect of your learning community.

Tips for Fostering Discussions

During a learning group meeting, your primary role is to foster healthy and productive discussions that further the group's learning. It is a balancing act between providing enough direction and control to stay on track with the topic of the session and providing autonomy to the group members to discover their own best paths to learning. It takes practice. The following tips are good to keep in mind.

Keep discussions ontrack

Provide a meeting agenda and set time guidelines for the flow of the discussion. You may appoint a timekeeper in the group to call out when it's time to move to a new agenda item.

Use a "parking lot" if needed to record any runaway topics or unanswered questions. Doing this shows that you hear the concern and that it will be revisited, while allowing you to refocus the group on the course or discussion at hand.

It's up to you to let group members know when they are veering off-topic. Be ready to sideline conversations or tangents that could get your group off-topic by saying things like:

- "We'll be learning more about that in the next session."
- "Let's put that in our parking lot and circle back after we get through this course."
- "We are now discussing something that isn't on our agenda. What does the group want to do?"

Maintain awareness

Be observant and learn to read the energy of the room. Throughout the meeting, take the pulse of participants' engagement and mood. Who seems really motivated today? Who is particularly quiet? Is one learner quiet because they are struggling? Ask somebody who is a few steps ahead if they don't mind helping out.

Acknowledge individuals frequently, visibly, and sincerely, and encourage other participants to do the same. This applies to online discussions as well as in-person.

Ensure that everyone can participate

Ensure that all participants feel supported, seen, heard, and encouraged.

As facilitator, be mindful of different personalities, and create opportunities for everyone to have a chance to participate in discussions. This may involve asking targeted questions or checking in with participants who haven't yet spoken. Use a strategy such as, "Let's go around the group and hear what everyone thinks about ..."

You want to be intentional about surfacing differences of opinion, particularly if you sense that some group members are holding back and reluctant to challenge the dominant opinion. You could say, "I think we're trying to avoid disagreeing with each other. Who would be willing to voice a different opinion?"

Listen actively

Expect to listen more than speak. Listen intently to understand what each group member is saying. If it isn't clear, paraphrase what someone has said, that is, repeat back what you heard. For example, "What I'm hearing is [paraphrase]. Is that right?" Ask probing questions such as, "Can you tell me more about that?"

Encourage multiple ways of knowing

Encourage participants to explore how different systems may approach stewardship challenges. Solutions grounded in community knowledge, lived experience, and cultural practice should be valued alongside technical and institutional approaches. Elicit different viewpoints and perspectives. You might ask participants to consider the idea or situation from a different angle, such as putting themselves in the place of a community member wanting to donate much-loved items of family history that don't match the collection the library is trying to build.

Weave Together Perspectives

Aim to get group members to comment and build on each other's thoughts and ideas. Ask questions such as "Jackie, what would you add to Ellen's comment?" Conclude each discussion with a wrap-up of the key takeaways, asking the group for additions or edits to your summary. Alternately, you could ask a group member to summarize.

Manage questions

Encourage participants to consider whether a question is best answered through technical guidance, community consultation, Elder knowledge, Tribal governance processes, or a combination of approaches. Remember that you are not the teacher of the group. When a question comes up, emphasize that the group members are their own valuable resource. Probe for knowledge-sharing with questions like:

- "Did anyone else run into the same problem?"
- "Where would you start looking to figure that out?"
- "Have you thought of looking for ideas from other practitioners in the discussion forums within the self-paced course?"

Flip frustrations into constructive dialogue

Some stewardship discussions may involve historical harm, colonial collecting practices, or institutional mistrust. Facilitators should acknowledge these realities and create space for participants to reflect on how stewardship work can support

healing, accountability, and relationship-building, which is especially important for Tribal archives and museums.

If conversation in a session becomes contentious, it's a good time to remind members of the agreed-upon norms. (See page 7) You may even want to add a new norm in the middle of a conflict.

Take the lead in exploring multiple perspectives involved in a disagreement. Remind group members to avoid becoming emotional or argumentative but to state their point of view calmly and clearly. Call out inappropriate behavior and reinforce productive behavior.

Aim to reframe frustrations in a constructive way and use them as an opportunity for learners to work together. You might ask someone to give specific examples to back up their statement. This allows the group to look at a specific situation rather than a more general opinion. If someone disagrees with some part of the course content, ask them to be specific about what they recommend to improve it.

You may want to stop the discussion to focus on the emotions in the room, asking each person to say how they are feeling at the moment.

Step out of the facilitator role

If you are learning the course alongside your group members, you may want to share your comments and perspectives on the content. That's fine, but it's best to let the group know that you are stepping out of your role as facilitator.

You might ask a group member to assume the facilitator role for awhile. This invests leadership outside of yourself and reduces dependency on one person.

General Tips for DCS Course Discussions

In most cases, you will want to have all learning group participants enroll in and complete a course, including all course activities using the **DCS Workbook**, before the group meets to discuss the course. Each participant should bring their completed workbook activities to the discussion.

Most discussions can be completed in an hour; however, a few of the courses are longer, and for those you might decide to break up the discussion into multiple sessions. Those longer discussions are noted in this guide. The size and makeup of your group may also result in longer or shorter discussions. Expect to adjust the frequency and length of discussion sessions to meet the needs of your group.

The following is a suggested list of steps for running a group discussion:

- Begin your group discussion by having learners share their responses from the workbook activities. Depending on your group, you might wish to discuss all the activities from the course or just focus on one or two.
- As learners share their workbook responses, it's helpful to keep a visible running list of responses to refer to in your discussion.
- Next, discuss learners' responses to the workbook questions as a group. This step should make up the bulk of your group discussion.
- As a group, discuss any patterns you notice about responses. Are there similar responses to questions? Are responses to questions different from each other? Make sure to focus your discussion on the situations, goals, and decisions behind these responses.
- Try to answer any outstanding questions and address concerns as a group.
- Wrap up your discussion by having learners share any related experiences or resources with each other. Ensure that learners have a way to stay in contact with each other to follow up or provide support.

Repeat this process for each workbook activity.

About the brainstorming activities

In courses 1-3 of the series, the workbook suggests a group brainstorming activity. Depending on the activity and your group, you may wish to have learners complete the brainstorming activity at their individual organizations before your group session or wait and do the brainstorming as a group.

Moving at the Pace of Trust

Community-centered stewardship often unfolds according to relationship-based timelines rather than project-based timelines. Participants should be encouraged to recognize that meaningful consultation, trust-building, and community engagement may require additional time and flexibility. Additionally, if Elders are among your participants, recognition and acknowledgement of their needs is paramount. Ensure that they are comfortable and feel supported and safe to engage in the conversations.

Digital Collections Stewardship 1: Introduction

Refer to **Activities 1-3** of the workbook for the discussion questions.

Discussion tip: For **Activity 3**, consider conducting the brainstorming activity as a group during the session if possible.

Course overview

The first course in the series defines digital collections and introduces the digital stewardship lifecycle, a model that describes all the tasks and activities related to creating, organizing, managing, preserving, and sharing digital collections. This course also begins an exploration of how you might shape your own digital stewardship work to meet your community needs and institutional goals.

Learning objectives

Refer to these objectives as the overall goals of your group discussions.

After completing this course, a learner will be able to:

- Identify examples of digital collections.
- Describe what digital collections are, what they can include, and the purposes they can serve.
- Understand the range of physical objects that they can digitize, and the born digital objects that they might incorporate into a digital collection
- Describe digital stewardship, and each stage of the digital stewardship lifecycle.
- Begin adapting the digital stewardship lifecycle to reflect community priorities, cultural protocols, Indigenous governance structures, and stewardship responsibilities.

A Community-Centered Approach to Digital Collections

Refer to **Activities 1-4** of the workbook for the discussion questions.

Discussion tip: For **Activity 2**, it can be helpful for the group to agree ahead of time whether learners will be identifying internal, external, or both types of connections.

Course overview

This course encourages learners to consider how the collections they create do or do not represent the full range of people, groups, and organizations in their communities. This course also describes approaches that have proven successful for other libraries, archives, and museums to build and sustain respectful relationships that focus on mutual support and trust.

Learning objectives

Refer to these objectives as the overall goals of your group discussions.

After completing this course, a learner will be able to:

- Describe and plan for a community-centered approach to collections.
- Identify communities, knowledge systems, and perspectives that may have been excluded, overlooked, or represented through external narratives.
- Build their network so they can identify and connect with communities not represented or served by your collections.
- Engage in respectful collaboration with communities to build community-centered digital collections.
- Build and maintain trust and engagement with communities to sustain collaborations.
- Explore how relationships, reciprocity, and community authority influence stewardship decisions.

Digital Collections Stewardship 2: Preparing

Refer to **Activities 1-4** of the workbook for the discussion questions.

Discussion tip: For **Activity 1**, consider conducting the brainstorming activity as a group during the session if possible.

Course overview

This course supports learners as they prepare for digital collections stewardship. During this course, learners set goals for their institution and community and identify and/or create the policies and other documentation they'll need to guide their work. This course also provides initial planning questions and steps to help learners define and complete their digital collections project.

Learning objectives

Refer to these objectives as the overall goals of your group discussions.

After completing this course, a learner will be able to:

- Describe key steps needed to prepare for digital stewardship.
- Document their institutional and community goals for digital stewardship and document them with a Digital Stewardship Purpose Statement.
- Identify key policies, forms, and documentation that support digital stewardship, and when to use them.
- Identify any initial resourcing, staffing, and stakeholder needs for digital stewardship work.
- Assess how institutional policies align with Tribal governance, Indigenous data sovereignty, and community-defined access protocols.

Digital Collections Stewardship 3: Gathering

Refer to **Activities 1-3** of the workbook for the discussion questions.

Course overview

This course provides guidance to learners as they determine guidelines for the items they'll include in their digital collections, the appraisal and accessioning process, and sourcing items for their collections from partner organizations and community members. In your discussions, participants should consider Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), community cultural authority, and community review.

Learning objectives

Refer to these objectives as the overall goals of your group discussions.

After completing this course, a learner will be able to:

- Determine the types of items to include in their institution's digital collections.
- Select suitable methods to gather digital collections.
- Document their digital collection guidelines and procedures.
- Identify any collaboration or partnership opportunities for gathering collections and items.
- Incorporate cultural and community needs in collection curation decisions.
- Incorporate community consent processes, cultural protocols, and Indigenous data sovereignty considerations into collection development decisions.

Digital Collections Stewardship 4: Digitizing

Refer to **Activities 1-3** of the workbook for the discussion questions.

Course overview

This course provides an overview of digitization and the different technical processes, specifications, skills, and equipment required to create the digital objects for a collection.

Learning objectives

Refer to these objectives as the overall goals of your group discussions.

After completing this course, a learner will be able to:

- Describe what digitization is and entails to their staff and community.
- Understand the processes, technologies and skills involved in common digitization tasks.
- Identify digitization technology or resources they'll need to digitize your items
- Make decisions regarding the three basic strategies to accomplishing digitization work
- Plan for digitization and document relevant processes and workflows
- Evaluate digitization decisions through both technical standards and cultural stewardship responsibilities.

Digital Collections Stewardship 5: Enhancing

Refer to **Activities 1-2** of the workbook for the discussion questions.

Course overview

This course explores how to organize and describe digital collections to aid digital preservation and discovery and enhance the meaning and value of collections.

Learning objectives

Refer to these objectives as the overall goals of your group discussions.

After completing this course, a learner will be able to:

- Describe best practices for organizing and naming your digital collection files.
- Write appropriate descriptive and administrative metadata for your collections. Be culturally relevant when possible.
- Select metadata standards, schemas, and guidelines that fit your collections and systems that are guided by community values and needs.
- Examine how metadata can support Indigenous self-representation, language revitalization, reparative description, and culturally responsive access.
- Create a metadata plan for your institution.

Digital Collections Stewardship 6: Saving

Refer to **Activities 1-3** of the workbook for the discussion questions.

Course overview

In this course, learners review options for storing digital content and preserving it for the long-term.

Learning objectives

Refer to these objectives as the overall goals of your group discussions.

After completing this course, a learner will be able to:

- Describe the importance of, and resources required for digital preservation.
- Select archival storage options for your preservation files.
- Identify the tools or software needed for digital preservation.
- Begin to plan for maintaining long-term file integrity and access.
- Collaborate with your technical team to choose and implement preservation solutions.
- Consider long-term preservation as an intergenerational responsibility that supports cultural continuity and community access.
- Begin drafting a digital preservation plan for your institution.

Digital Collections Stewardship Workbook 7: Sharing

Refer to **Activities 1-3** of the workbook for the discussion questions.

Course overview

This course supports learners in providing equitable and culturally appropriate access to their digital content through online collections.

Learning objectives

Refer to these objectives as the overall goals of your group discussions.

After completing this course, a learner will be able to:

- Identify a digital collection sharing method that meets your institutional and community needs.
- Understand the range of functionality available in different types of collections management systems, and how to go about selecting one that best fits your needs. Include community voices in that decision making process.
- Determine and document any access and use considerations for your collections.
- Identify Intellectual Property needs and considerations for your collections.
- Evaluate how sharing decisions balance access, cultural protocols, community authority, and stewardship responsibilities.

Appendix: Indigenous Stewardship, Data Governance, and Reflection Questions

Purpose of this Appendix

Digital stewardship involves more than the management of digital files and collections. For many Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities, stewardship is a responsibility grounded in relationships—to ancestors, descendants, lands, waters, languages, and cultural knowledge systems.

Across Indigenous communities, there is growing recognition that digital collections, archives, museum collections, oral histories, research records, photographs, language materials, and other forms of cultural knowledge require stewardship approaches that respect Indigenous rights, governance systems, and cultural responsibilities.

This appendix introduces several frameworks that support Indigenous approaches to digital stewardship and provides reflection questions that facilitators and learners can use throughout the Digital Collections Stewardship course series.

These questions are intended to encourage thoughtful discussion and reflection. Not every question will apply in every situation. Communities may also have their own protocols, governance structures, and stewardship practices that should guide decision-making.

Indigenous Data Sovereignty

Indigenous Data Sovereignty refers to the right of Indigenous Peoples to govern the collection, ownership, stewardship, access, interpretation, and use of data, information, and knowledge about their communities, lands, cultures, and peoples.

Within digital collections stewardship, Indigenous Data Sovereignty recognizes that communities have inherent rights to determine:

- What knowledge should be collected
- How materials should be described
- Who may access materials
- How information may be shared and reused
- What restrictions or protocols should apply
- How stewardship responsibilities are carried forward across generations

Indigenous Data Sovereignty extends beyond legal ownership. It recognizes that communities maintain enduring relationships and responsibilities to cultural knowledge regardless of where materials are physically housed.

For many Tribal Nations, stewardship decisions are guided through Tribal governments, Cultural Committees, Elders, Knowledge Holders, clans, language

programs, archives, museums, and other community authorities.

CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance

The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance were developed by the Global Indigenous Data Alliance (GIDA) to complement existing data management frameworks and ensure Indigenous rights and interests remain central to stewardship decisions.

The CARE Principles include:

Collective Benefit

Data and knowledge stewardship should support the well-being, priorities, and self-determined goals of Indigenous communities.

Questions to consider:

- Who benefits from this work?
- How does this project support community priorities?
- What value is being returned to the community?

Authority to Control

Indigenous Peoples have the right to govern the collection, stewardship, access, and use of their data and knowledge.

Questions to consider:

- Who makes decisions about access and use?
- How are community governance structures involved?
- How are permissions documented and respected?

Responsibility

Stewardship carries obligations to support community capacity, relationships, and future generations.

Questions to consider:

- What responsibilities accompany access to this knowledge?
- How will relationships be maintained over time?
- How will future generations benefit?

Ethics

Stewardship decisions should minimize harm and maximize community-defined benefits.

Questions to consider:

- Could sharing this information cause harm?
- Are cultural protocols being respected?
- Are community values reflected in stewardship decisions?

FAIR Principles and Indigenous Stewardship

Many cultural heritage institutions use the FAIR Principles to support responsible management of digital information.

FAIR encourages materials to be:

- Findable
- Accessible
- Interoperable
- Reusable

These principles can be useful for organizing and preserving information. However, Indigenous communities have emphasized that not all knowledge is intended for unrestricted access or reuse.

For this reason, many Indigenous practitioners view FAIR and CARE as complementary frameworks.

When applying FAIR principles, facilitators and learners should ask:

- Accessible to whom?
- Reusable under what conditions?
- Who determines appropriate use?
- What cultural protocols should guide access?

The goal is not simply openness, but culturally appropriate stewardship that balances discovery with responsibility.

Local Contexts and Traditional Knowledge Labels

Local Contexts is an initiative that supports Indigenous communities in communicating cultural authority, responsibilities, and expectations associated with traditional knowledge and cultural heritage materials.

One of the most widely used Local Contexts tools is Traditional Knowledge (TK) Labels. TK Labels help communicate community-defined information regarding:

- Appropriate access
- Cultural authority
- Community attribution

- Seasonal restrictions
- Gender-specific knowledge
- Sacred or sensitive materials
- Expectations for future use

TK Labels do not replace legal copyright. Instead, they provide additional information that helps institutions and community members understand community expectations and responsibilities associated with Indigenous knowledge.

Facilitators may encourage learners to explore whether TK Labels, Biocultural Labels, or other community-defined access mechanisms could support their stewardship work.

The Global Indigenous Data Alliance (GIDA)

The Global Indigenous Data Alliance (GIDA) is an international Indigenous-led organization that promotes Indigenous Data Sovereignty and developed the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance.

GIDA works to ensure that Indigenous rights, interests, and responsibilities are reflected within data governance, research, archives, libraries, museums, and digital stewardship initiatives.

The CARE Principles have become widely adopted across cultural heritage, archival, museum, library, and research communities and provide an important framework for understanding Indigenous approaches to stewardship.

Indigenous Stewardship Reflection Questions

The following questions can be used throughout the Digital Stewardship Lifecycle and during learning group discussions. They are organized around themes commonly encountered in digital stewardship work.

Stewardship is not a one-time decision. It is an ongoing process of relationship-building, accountability, and care.

Relational Stewardship

Digital stewardship is fundamentally about relationships.

Consider:

- Who are the people, families, communities, or Nations connected to these materials?

- How are relationships reflected in the way materials are collected, described, preserved, and shared?
- Who has been consulted regarding these materials?
- Who has not yet been consulted?
- How will this work strengthen relationships within and beyond the community?
- How might this work contribute to healing, reconciliation, or relationship-building?
- How will future generations benefit from the stewardship decisions being made today?

Community Authority and Governance

Consider:

- Who has authority to make decisions regarding these materials?
- Are Tribal governments, Cultural Committees, Elders, Clans or Knowledge Holders involved?
- Does the institution recognize and respect community authority over knowledge?
- What permissions or approvals are required before materials are collected, digitized, described, or shared?
- How are community decisions documented and honored?
- If there are competing viewpoints, how will decisions be made?

Cultural Protocols and Sensitive Knowledge

Consider:

- Are there materials that should not be digitized?
- Are there materials that should only be shared within a community?
- Are there seasonal, ceremonial, family, clan, or gender-based restrictions?
- Have cultural authorities been consulted?
- How will restrictions be communicated and managed?
- Are Traditional Knowledge Labels or other community-defined access tools appropriate?

Description and Representation

Consider:

- Who created the existing descriptions?
- Do descriptions accurately reflect community perspectives?
- Are there harmful, outdated, or colonial terms that require revision?

- How can Indigenous languages be incorporated?
- How can community narratives and lived experiences be reflected?
- Would community members recognize themselves in the way materials are described?

Reciprocity and Community Benefit

Consider:

- What is the community receiving in return for sharing knowledge or materials?
- How are contributors acknowledged?
- How are results returned to the community?
- What opportunities exist for shared stewardship?
- How will relationships continue after the project concludes?

Long-Term Stewardship and Future Generations

Consider:

- How will these materials remain accessible over time?
- What preservation plans are in place?
- How will future generations understand the cultural context of the materials?
- What responsibilities are being carried forward?
- How does this work contribute to cultural continuity and knowledge transmission?

Reflection Questions for Facilitators

At the conclusion of each course discussion, facilitators may wish to ask:

- What stewardship responsibilities emerged during today's discussion?
- What relationships need additional attention or care?
- What voices are still missing from this conversation?
- What questions should be brought back to community leadership, Elders, or Knowledge Holders?
- How did today's discussion reflect community values and priorities?
- What actions should be taken before moving forward?

These questions are intended to be revisited throughout the Digital Stewardship Lifecycle. Stewardship is an ongoing process of listening, learning, relationship-building, reciprocity, and accountability.