WESTERN AND NORTHERN CANADIAN PROTOCOL (WNCP)

Our Way Is a Valid Way

Professional Educator Resource

A WNCP Professional Development Resource for Educators

Cover Blanket Graphic
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History and culture roll across the provinces and territories in colourful unity, blending in spiritual and creative energy that accentuates the beauty of the First people. Diversity as well as Unity become the celebration as we join forces to share the wealth of learning and living. This work, based on the cultural blankets that represent the provinces and territories features, was created by Natalie Rostad Desjarlais of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

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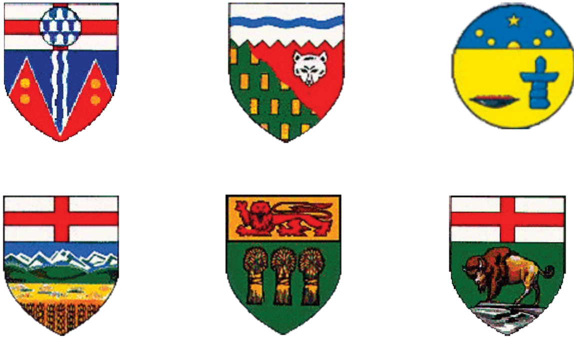

Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for
Collaboration in Basic Education

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Preamble

The Common Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Language and Culture Programs, Kindergarten to Grade 12

The Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) for Collaboration in Basic Education published the above ground breaking framework in 1996 for teaching and learning Aboriginal language and culture. The Common Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Language and Culture Programs and resources such as *Our Way Is a Valid Way* play a critical role in making FNMI students feel a sense of pride in their heritage and in enhancing their resiliency, improving their achievement, and helping them experience the relevance of education in their lives.

The *Our Way Is a Valid Way* resource, which includes the Professional Educator Resource and the Personal Educator Reflections, stems from the foundational work brought forward in *The Common Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Language and Culture Programs*. This resource is a direct outcome of the strategic opportunity provided by the WNCP for partners to learn from each other, build best practices, and incorporate the knowledge of the history, cultural heritage, and perspectives of western and northern Canada's FNMI peoples into WNCP activities and products.

This resource is intended to enhance all teachers' understanding of the diverse FNMI traditions, values, and attitudes, and of the historical and contemporary realities of FNMI peoples in western and northern Canada. It is only through the increased awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the rich and long-lasting history, culture, and contributions of FNMI peoples that teachers can design learning experiences for all students that contribute to their analysis, understanding, and appreciation of FNMI issues and challenges within Canada's political, socio-economic, linguistic, and cultural realities.

The guiding questions in the creation of this resource are as follows:

- What aspects of WNCP Indigenous Ways of Knowing should be weaved into the K–12 professional development resources for teachers?
- What are the professional development methods of delivery that respectfully reflect the cultural aspects of ways of knowing, intellectual property rights, and holistic learning environments?
- What practices promote success for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students?
- What supports enhance teachers' understandings of WNCP peoples?
- How can the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit professional development resource be effectively implemented in school jurisdictions?

The content of this resource was gathered from many sources, including feedback from consultation sessions, a comprehensive literature review, and knowledge from community Elders and cultural advisors. All sources conveyed the importance of incorporating FNMI content, perspectives, and world views into professional development materials and resources to develop awareness and understanding. This resource intends to develop awareness and understanding by addressing each of the questions listed above in an authentic way.

Acknowledgements

The development of *Our Way is a Valid Way* professional development resource is a collaboration of many groups and individuals who came together to support a common understanding of Aboriginal perspectives from across northern and western Canada. The WNCP FNMEID acknowledges the wisdom of the many Cultural Advisors, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers who shared their cultural understandings. The collective wisdom of communities, vetting groups, and the WNCP Charter 3 Working Group is also acknowledged.

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- Northwest Regional Learning Consortium (NRLC)
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Other

The performance projects in Appendix A and the *Personal Educator Reflections* framework were created by Solange Lalonde as part of her graduate work at the University of Lethbridge in the Masters of Education, Literacy Cohort program.

Thank you to Solange Lalonde for permission to use the image of the inuksuk.

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Introduction

Background Information

The Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) is a group of members representing the governments of Alberta, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Saskatchewan and Yukon. The WNCP focuses on collaboration in education and envisions “education systems based on shared expectations, values and beliefs about education that are rooted in western and northern Canadian experiences and perspectives including those of First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) peoples.”[1] To this end, the WNCP has developed a number of resources, including *The Common Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Language and Culture Programs, Kindergarten to Grade 12* and the *WNCP Common Tool for Assessing and Validating Teaching and Learning Resources for Cultural Appropriateness and Historical Accuracy of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Content* (CTfAV).

Development Process

In developing these resources, WNCP drew upon consultations with school jurisdictions, FNMI parents, and community members; upon information from stakeholders; upon research; and upon Traditional Elder validations.

What Is *Our Way Is a Valid Way:* Professional Resource for Educators?

Our Way Is a Valid Way: *Professional Educator Resource* is a professional development tool to help educators deepen their understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit perspectives, histories, cultures, traditional practices, protocols, and languages. As low FNMI student achievement continues to be a serious concern across Canada, provincial governments are responding by seeking out better ways to meet the needs of FNMI students and to enhance their educational outcomes. This includes supporting educators with culturally relevant professional development opportunities to deepen their awareness of the diversity and complexity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and cultures as well as the daily realities and challenges of FNMI students.

The resource includes five themes.

1. Land and People
2. Traditional Ways of Knowing
3. Oral Traditions, Storytelling
4. Residential Schools
5. Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Education

[1] Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) for Collaboration in (Kindergarten to Grade 12) Education, p. 1

The strategies and activities accompanying each of the five themes encourage educators to

- build safe and respectful classroom learning environments where FNMI students feel welcome, supported, and represented in the general school culture
- infuse culturally-relevant FNMI perspectives across curriculum
- build collaborative relationships with their FNMI communities
- examine one's own personal beliefs and opinions about First Nations, Métis and Inuit students and education
- deepen one's understanding of FNMI histories and current issues

Purpose of This Resource

Our Way Is a Valid Way, which includes the Professional Educator Resource and Personal Educator Reflections, is intended to provide foundational knowledge for beginning educators who wish to develop an understanding of FNMI perspectives and cultures. The package may also provide experienced teachers with a deeper understanding of their local context and FNMI community. Educators are encouraged to use this resource as a professional development tool and share their new knowledge and understanding with others in their professional learning community.

Overview of the Resource

Quality professional development is essential to improve educators' knowledge, skills, and attributes, including developing awareness and understanding of Western and Northern Canadian cultural understandings. This resource package was created by the WNCP Charter 3 Working Group to support the following three overarching goals:

- Educators make informed decisions about curricular programming using critical thinking and understanding of historical events.
- Educators take responsibility to carefully select learning activities that allow opportunities for students to participate in the practices and use of FNMI culture; understand the perspectives and underlying knowledge of their FNMI culture; and willingly reflect on their relationships with themselves, on one another, and on the natural world.
- Educators facilitate student personal growth by creating a learning environment that is meaningful and respectful of the needs of the whole child and that acknowledges his or her world view.

By reading the information in the Professional Educator Resource and by completing the Personal Educator Reflections, educators can develop the knowledge, skills, and attributes that contribute to their understanding of FNMI cultures and FNMI content in curriculums across western Canada.

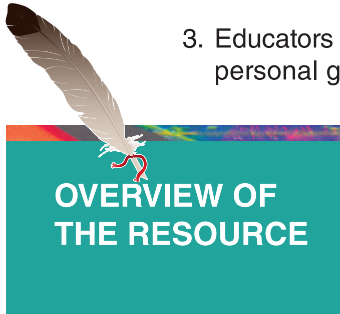
The following overview of the Educator Resource is based on an Understanding by Design template which was created by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005).

Educator Resource Overview Stage 1 Desired Results	
ESTABLISHED GOALS	**TRANSFER**
1. Educators make informed decisions about curricular programming using critical thinking and understanding of significant historical events. 2. Educators take the responsibility to carefully select learning activities which allow opportunities for students to participate in the practices and use of FNMI culture; explore the	*Educators will be able to independently use their learning to…* 1. evaluate historical events and make meaningful connections between the past and the present 2. analyze resources and demonstrate a cultural understanding of key concepts and knowledge common to Western Canadian Ways of Knowing through the resources they select in cultural programming 3. modify and adapt their learning environment to support and engage FNMI students

Established Goals continued

perspectives and underlying knowledge of their FNMI culture; willingly reflect on their relationships with themselves, one another, and the natural world.

3. Educators facilitate student personal growth by creating a learning environment that is meaningful, cognizant, and respectful of the needs of the whole child, their connections to the wider community and learning that recognizes and captures their foundational view of the world.



OVERVIEW OF THE RESOURCE

MEANING

UNDERSTANDINGS

Educators will understand that…

1. key historical events over the last 500 years have had a significant impact on FNMI cultures
2. community is ultimately the source of valuable support, ideas, content, and resources and the laws of relationship, using language and culture, are integral to a perspectives-based Aboriginal education
3. indigenous worldviews incorporate many ways of knowing, including the Seven Sacred Teachings, Medicine Wheel Teachings, Tipi Teachings, All My Relations Teachings, Seven Generations Teachings, and Circle of Life Teachings

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. In the pursuit of understanding the impact of historical events on FNMI cultures, educators will keep considering the following:
   - What do you have to remember vs. what can you just look up?
   - How and why has the balance of power changed over time?
   - Why do people move? When do they “have to” move and when do they “choose to” move?
   - How might the Canadian government have better protected human rights?
   - Whose story is this? Whose voices aren’t we hearing?
   - How are stories from other places and times about me?
   - Why am I writing? For whom?
2. In the interest of providing effective cultural programming, educators will keep considering the following:
   - To what extent is our instruction engaging and effective?
   - To what extent does current cultural programming reflect the diversity of language, tradition, and cultural orientations and practices from the community?
   - How will we know that teachers really understand the “big ideas”?
   - How does where I live influence how I live and teach?
   - How can technology enhance understanding?

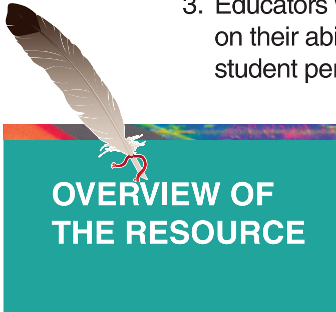
Essential Questions continued

3. In the intention of honouring indigenous values, educators will keep considering the following:

- Why should we study other cultures?
- What happens when cultures interact?
- How does a native speaker of a language differ from a fluent foreigner?
- What is healthful living? What is wellness?
- What strategies do effective teachers use to create positive connections with students?
- What systemic actions will improve student learning and performance?

Stage 2—Evidence

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE
1. Educators will be evaluated on their understanding of how historical events inform their curricular programming based on the following criteria: • identifies key events • draws and supports conclusions • explains historical context • connects insights to personal experience	1. Knowledge, Skills, and Attributes • Educators accurately provide interpretations that illustrate insight to significant historical events. • Educators thoroughly analyze historical events, examine relevant evidence, draw insightful conclusions, and make perceptive assessments. • Educators analyze the issue with a clear sense of scope and context, fully considering pertinent political, economic, and social factors. • Educators perceptively connect insights, personal experience, and historical events to demonstrate understanding of how the past has influenced the present.
2. Educators will be evaluated on their ability to select learning activities that allow opportunities for students to embrace their FNMI culture based on the following criteria:	2. Knowledge, Skills, and Attributes • Educators can identify FNMI perspectives, appropriately follow FNMI cultural protocols, and are able to provide learning opportunities for students to reflect on their relationship with their culture and cultural practices.



- thinks critically
- selects appropriate resources and instructional strategies
- modifies learning plan to reflect community values

3. Educators will be evaluated on their ability to facilitate student personal growth based on the following criteria:

- represents ideas and cultural programming that embrace Aboriginal worldviews
- enhances learning opportunities by accessing community supports
- proposes solutions

- Educators perceptively identify culturally appropriate learning activities that address the educational and curricular needs of the students. Educators select instructional strategies that are supported by regional FNMI educational stakeholders and align with curricular outcomes.
- Educators show an in-depth understanding of issues related to FNMI students and FNMI education by modifying and adapting their curricular programming to reflect FNMI perspectives in their subject.

3. Knowledge, Skills, and Attributes

- Educators understand FNMI worldviews embrace the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual development of a student as integral components to curricular and cultural programming.
- Educators demonstrate a strong determination in the pursuit of a deeper understanding of FNMI worldviews through collaboration. Educators use a number of strategies to engage in consulting the FNMI community and FNMI educational stakeholders. Educators actively promote effective interpersonal interaction and the expression of ideas and opinions in a way that is sensitive to the feelings and knowledge base of others.
- Educators accurately and thoroughly describe relevant obstacles, and they address these obstacles using creative solutions. Educators seek counsel and support from the FNMI community.

Introduction

Are you a new teacher in a remote, northern school, or are you an experienced teacher who, for the first time, have First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in your classroom? Perhaps you have already been teaching Aboriginal students for a few years and would like some support in working more effectively with your students and their communities. Or, maybe you are an Aboriginal teacher who was not raised within your culture and you are beginning the exciting journey of reconnecting with the culture of your ancestors. Whatever situation you find yourself in, it is our hope that this resource will help deepen your understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit languages and cultures and provide useful tips, activities, and teaching strategies you can use today.

Indian? Native? Indigenous? A Word on Terminology

First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples have been defined and referred to by the Constitution of Canada by many names over time. Many of these names have changed as they were erroneous and did not capture the distinct place the Aboriginal peoples hold in Canadian society. According to the *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Policy Framework (2002)*[1],

- *Indian* refers to indigenous peoples under Canada's Indian Act. In the 1970s, we stopped using the term *Indian* and instead use the preferred term, *First Nations*. The term *Indian*, however, is still used in the Constitution of Canada and includes the three legal definitions of Indians in Canada:
  - Status Indians: First Nations peoples registered under the Indian Act
  - Non-Status Indians: First Nations peoples who were never registered under the Indian Act or who lost their status under the former Indian Act
  - Treaty Indians: First Nations peoples whose ancestors signed a treaty with the Crown and are, therefore, entitled to treaty benefits
- *Natives* is also a term that refers to the First Peoples who lived in Canada prior to the arrival of Europeans
- *First Nations* is the preferred term by the Assembly of First Nations and by many Aboriginal peoples; it also refers to the 652 distinct governments of the First peoples of Canada representing 53 Aboriginal languages
- *Aboriginal peoples* are the descendents of the original inhabitants of North America; this term is also used in other parts of the world to refer to the first peoples of that area
- *Indigenous peoples* is a term widely used to refer to the descendents of the original inhabitants of an area and is often used on a global scale.

The Diversity Among First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Students

Canada is home to a rich cultural diversity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. To a large extent, First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities share some similarities in cultural values, beliefs, and languages; however, each culture is distinct and unique and has evolved over time in a direct relationship with the particular land that each group occupies.[2] For example, an Aboriginal community on the plains will have very different ceremonies, traditions, dance, stories, song, languages, sacred object, and seasonal food gathering practices than an Aboriginal community that lives in woodlands, in the mountains, near the ocean, or up north. There is even a rich diversity in languages, lifestyles, beliefs, and traditional laws among communities living within a similar geographical region, such as the plains.

Within your classroom you may have noticed that there is even diversity among students of the same culture. While some may live a traditional lifestyle at home, others may not practice their culture at all. Some students may live in a rural area, on a settlement or reserve, while others live in an urban area. Some students may speak their Aboriginal language, while others do not. Some may have a close connection to their tribal lands and traditional territories, while others do not. Some students may be proud of their cultural heritage, whereas others may be ashamed of their heritage and choose not to identify themselves as an Aboriginal person. Taking time to learn about each student will help you respect and appreciate each student's unique situation and value the different perspectives and contributions each student brings to the classroom.

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples in Canada

First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples are the fastest growing population in Canada, despite the popular belief that First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures are 'a dying race'. According to the 2006 Census, the Aboriginal population had increased by 45 per cent since the 1996 Census. This is almost six times faster than the eight per cent growth rate in the non-Aboriginal population during the same time. There are over 1,172,790 First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples living in Canada today.[3]

Today, First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples continue to experience the oppressive forces of colonialism that have disrupted their traditional ways of life and attempted to destroy their cultures over many years in Canadian history. Aboriginal lands, traditions, beliefs, worldviews, languages, education, and parenting have been attacked, devalued, and believed to be inferior to European ways. A significant number of Aboriginal people died after contracting European diseases, such as influenza and smallpox. New western social structures have been imposed on Aboriginal peoples that were incompatible with traditional living, such as in child-rearing practices, diet, and housing.[4] This has had devastating effects on the current quality of life experienced by First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples today. Marie Battiste (2010) writes, "Aboriginal peoples in Canada have been relegated to systemic poverty. They are the most economically disadvantaged Canadians by all standard measures. They suffer the worst educational systems created in Canada, the worst conditions of life, the most unemployment, the lowest incomes, and the poorest health."[5] If you have never visited a reserve or a First Nations, Métis or Inuit community or even spent time with urban First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, it may be difficult to understand just how serious the situation is. The reality of this in our classrooms is experienced as low student engagement, which has a significant effect on overall student success and whether a student completes high school.[6]

First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples have remained strong and resilient despite many ongoing issues and challenges. It is believed that a balance in traditional and western education is the key to positive change, and we are now beginning to see evidence of this as teachers and schools begin to work together and build collaborative partnerships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, parents and/or guardians, and communities.

First Nations Peoples

The term *First Nations* refers to a distinct nation or group of First Nations peoples. Before Europeans arrived in what is now called Canada, many different First Nations peoples inhabited this land. Each nation has its own rich and distinct culture, language, traditions, and protocols; many based on a matrilineal society. Each group also had their own traditional government with hereditary leaders or leaders chosen by the people of the group. These leaders were usually group members that had many skills and had earned the respect of the people. Traditional Elders, spiritual and medicine people, and wise women supported leaders and provided council and guidance. Traditional Elders also played an invaluable role in teaching children and others their community's history, traditions, and ceremonies. First Nations groups often formed friendships and alliances with one another in ways that were beneficial for both groups, helping maintain peaceful relationships with one another.[7]

Extended families were, and continue to be, important in First Nations communities (as well as Métis and Inuit communities), with the responsibility of raising children shared among parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and great grandparents.[8] Traditional Elders were, and still are, highly respected and occupy a distinct place in First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities as the keepers of wisdom and knowledge.[9]

The Métis

"Métis people are of mixed First Nations and European, Canadian or other ancestry. They identify themselves as Métis, which is distinct from First Nations and Inuit peoples. The Métis history and culture draw on diverse ancestral origins such as Scottish, Irish, French, Anishanabe and Cree. According to the Métis National Council, Métis means a person who self-identifies as Métis is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples, and is accepted by the Métis Nation (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada 2002)."[10] The Métis population continued to grow into a 'New Nation' and have their own culture, language, and government. In the Yukon, Traditional Elders have asked that those of mixed heritage are not seen as separate from First Nations people.

The Inuit

Inuit peoples are Aboriginal peoples from the Arctic regions of North America. Inuit means 'the people' in the Inuit language of Inuktitut. Inuit living in the western Arctic are called Inuvialuit, and Inuit living in the central and eastern Arctic are called Inuit. Most Inuit peoples live in Nunavut, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, Labrador, and northern Quebec. Inuit peoples also live in Greenland, Russia, and Alaska. Some Inuit people in Canada have moved to southern provinces to work or attend school.

History: Prior to European Contact

Living on the land was challenging, especially in areas where the land and climate is often harsh. Aboriginal peoples needed to be resourceful, skillful, and adaptable in order to survive and thrive. Traditionally, First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples lived according to the seasons and moved along well-established routes to follow food—whether it was game or wild plants and berries.[11] Each member of the community worked together as a group and was given certain responsibilities. For example, children often were in charge of checking snares and traps on homemade skis or snowshoes.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples had a sacred relationship with the land. The land is both provider and teacher. Many landmarks—such as medicine wheels, inukshuks, or buffalo jumps—are significant and hold teachings and stories from the past.

There were many natural resources available to Aboriginal peoples. The particular geographic location of each group shaped their seasonal activities. For example, large game like moose, caribou, deer, bison, and sheep were hunted year round. In the wintertime, wolves, wolverines, lynxes, foxes, beavers, muskrats, minks, martens, ermine, and squirrels were trapped and rabbits were snared. Geese, ducks, and wild grouse were hunted in the fall. Fish—such as pickerel, pike, whitefish, trout, Arctic char, and salmon—were also available and eaten fresh or dried. Sea mammals like seals, bearded seals, walruses, beluga whales, and narwhals were hunted in the north. Wild plants, roots, berries, bark, and fungi were gathered both for food and medicines.[12] Aboriginal peoples only took from the land what they needed; they followed local harvesting protocols when gathering plants and animals for food and medicinal purposes. Living on the land required First Nations people to work together as a group, helping and sharing with one another in order to meet the needs of the community. This encouraged a sense of equality, where everyone played a unique role and all were valued in meeting the needs of the group. Today, many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples continue to participate in their traditional seasonal activities.

History of Aboriginal and European Relations

"In the most profound sense of the term they (First Nations peoples) are Canada's founding peoples."[13] First Nations peoples were active participants in the fur trade and significant contributors to the development of trade across North America. First Nations were also significant as "allies of successive French and British governments in their struggles against the English colonists and later the Americans to the south."[14] When Europeans first arrived in the southern areas of Canada, they relied heavily on First Nations and Inuit peoples for survival. As more and more settlers arrived, they began cutting down trees and clearing the land for farming. First Nations peoples in the south were made to sign treaties with the federal government as a way of containing them on small areas of land. Meanwhile, in the Yukon, the discovery of gold in the Klondike in the 1800s brought thousands of European prospectors to the north. The building of the Alaska highway in 1942 brought in even more Europeans to the region; for many First Nations peoples, it was their first encounter with Europeans.

Between 1871 and 1921,[15] treaties were signed between First Nations peoples and the federal government. For the federal government, the treaties represented political and economic control over the land and First Nations peoples. It also meant having the primary responsibility of the needs of Aboriginal peoples under the Constitution of Canada. For the First Nations peoples, the treaties represented a sacred, permanent relationship between First Nations peoples and the federal government.[16] They understood that the treaties meant that they would share the land and have peaceful relationships with the settlers. They also believed that the treaties would help protect their languages, traditions, and cultures.[17] Sadly, many of the promises were never kept. Much of the reserve lands were lost to dishonest deals with government Indian agents who were assigned to make deals with the bands, tricking then into selling some of their land for very little. Some also lost valuable mineral and natural resources on their land.

When First Nations peoples signed treaties, their lives changed forever. Once free to travel in pursuit of food, they were now forced to learn a new way of life that was controlled by the government. First Nations people on the prairies were subjected to the pass system, where they were confined to small areas of reserve land or settlements and they were not permitted to leave without written permission from their local Indian agent. The *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People* reveals the system was "official policy on the prairies," generally used only from 1885 through the 1890s, used "occasionally into the 20th century," and not always effectively enforced.[18]

In 1876 the Indian Act reinforced the authority of the Canadian government over First Nations peoples and regulated nearly every aspect of their lives in an attempt to promote assimilation. The Indian Act disrupted the traditional governance of the peoples and the

ways they worked together as a community. It disrupted traditional forms of government and determined who qualified to be a band member and who could vote in band elections. The Act made it illegal to gather for the purpose of discussing politics or economic issues or even to raise funds for land claims. The Act restricted important cultural ceremonies, dances, and practices that were necessary in transmitting their cultures. Many communities were forbidden to practice important ceremonies, such as the Potlatch, or had their regalia or sacred objects removed and placed in museums. The Act also had a negative impact on the roles of women and Traditional Elders within the communities. In 1951 First Nations women lost their status, their rights to live on their reserve and their treaty benefits when they married non-Status men. They also could no longer inherit reserve land from their families. This was later repealed by Bill C-31 in 1985. Although the Act has been amended over the years, it continues to influence the lives of First Nations peoples in Canada to this day.

Throughout the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, waves of influenza and smallpox epidemics claimed the lives of thousands of First Nations peoples. Many died of starvation. Promised farming equipment often did not arrive, reserve land was often poor in quality and it was extremely difficult to make a living. Poverty, unemployment, poor health was the norm. Later, their children were taken and placed in Residential schools. In the 1960s children were once again taken from their parents or guardians in, what is now referred to as the "Sixties Scoop", to become assimilated by living with non-Aboriginal people. To this day, many of these children are struggling to reclaim their cultures, languages, and identities.

Between the mid-1970s and the late 1990s, the Canadian government negotiated land claim settlements with northern First Nations and Inuit peoples in the Northwest Territories, Yukon, Quebec, and Nunavut, which became a territory in 1999. These agreements specified land and hunting rights, financial compensation, and opportunities for economic development.[19]

The effects of colonial oppression and government's and church's attempts at assimilating First Nations, Métis and Inuit people over the years has created the challenging situation that is the daily reality of many of our Aboriginal students today. Now, many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples continue to live in poverty, are unemployed, are over-represented in prisons, have limited educational opportunities, and experience very poor health.[20]

Fortunately, we are living in a generation when things are beginning to change. First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities are beginning to engage in a revitalization of their cultures, focusing on healing and taking the leadership on meaningful change within their respective communities. Both the federal and provincial governments are beginning to recognize their responsibility in responding to the needs of Aboriginal peoples by providing culturally relevant inclusive education for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. Canadians are beginning to appreciate the role that Aboriginal peoples play in society, in the economy, and in the enrichment of our diverse and vibrant country. Education plays a vital role in bringing about significant change in any society; and schools and teachers in Canada are beginning to value, respect, and respond to the needs of their First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, parents and/or guardians, and communities in meaningful ways.

In Conclusion

First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples comprise of an incredibly diverse and vibrant part of Canadian history and culture. Despite many challenges and efforts to assimilate them into mainstream Canadian cultures, Aboriginal peoples continue to remain distinct with distinct languages and cultural practices. As teachers, we have a valuable role to play in welcoming, valuing, and incorporating First Nations, Métis and Inuit histories and cultural perspectives into our curriculum and classrooms. In doing so, we create space for Aboriginal students to thrive within Canadian schools while enriching our own experience of reality. Success for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students and communities means being able to succeed in school without having to compromise one's values, beliefs, and cultural identity.

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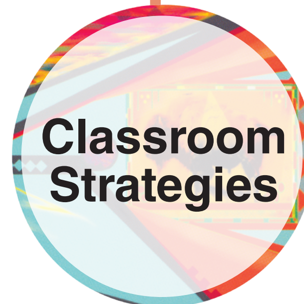


IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- **Field trip to pick berries**
- **Preforming sessional activities (e.g., fish camps during summer months—July, August; picking medicines—August, September**
- **Cultural Camps**
- **Creating family trees; tracing local genealogies**
- **Connecting students with Traditional Elders/community people to learn about land and people questions**
- **Teachers can also learn about the local Indigenous languages, begin by learning greetings**
- **Create murals (something representational) that represents the local FNMI in the foyers of schools**
- **Learn about the origins of FNMI place names (e.g., street and road names)**

Resources

Yukon

- "My Old People Say"
- "Yukon First Nations Clans, Citizenship, Governance and Languages"
- "Reading Voices"
- "Traditional Plants and Medicine Booklet"
- "Old Crow Experiential Program" (Grades 1–9)
- "Part of the Land, Part of the Water"
- Government of Yukon Heritage Department

Alberta

- "Walking Together" interactive resource
- "Our Words, Our Ways"
- Aboriginal Studies, Chapter 1
- Aboriginal Studies, Chapter 4
- ATA, "Education is our Buffalo"
- ASBE, "First Nations, Métis, Inuit Education"

Manitoba

- Native Studies Teachers' Resource Book (3 volumes, early, senior and middle years)
- "The Way We Speak" (annotated bibliography)
- "Success for all Leaners"
- "Gladys Cook's Story" (DVD, Anglican Church)
- "From Apology to Reconciliation"
- "Teacher's Guide" (Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba)
- Louis Riel Institute

Saskatchewan

- "Office of the Treaty Commissioner" (www.otc.ca)
- Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre (Language, culture, protocol documents)
- Gabriel Dumont Institute (information on Métis peoples)
- Gift of Language and Culture (website, Cree specific)
- School division work on Treaty education

Other Locations

- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (www.aandc.ca)
- Truth and Reconciliation (www.trc.ca)
- RCAP
- Provincial education websites

Note:

Be discerning about Aboriginal content. Seek credible, authentic resources and look for validation from "experts" (e.g., approved by educational organizations, community leaders/Traditional Elders and educational ministries). Seek local, regional, provincial, national, and international Indigenous resources.

Land and People Teaching Strategies

Teachers can deepen their understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures by exploring how FNMI people are connected to the land as well as analyzing the significant historical events that have impacted FNMI communities today.

1. Students will bring a map they find at home, in the community, or printed from an online resource; and they will place the map on their desks. Allow time for students to walk around the class and observe the variety of maps that have been collected.
2. Inquiry Questions
   - What do the names on the maps reveal?
   - How have maps changed over time?
3. Map Quest
   - Study a variety of online and print maps.
   - **Elementary levels:** Connect maps to social studies themes relating to community.
   - **Secondary levels:** Connect maps to social studies themes relating to community, government, significant historical events, and demographic/statistical information.
   - Make connections from past to present by looking for connections to FNMI traditional territories, place names, treaty maps, and residential school maps.
4. Mapping History
   - **Elementary levels:** Create a community map that reflects FNMI historical place names, languages, and locations of significant events.
   - **Secondary levels:** Create maps that include traditional territories, treaty areas, and residential schools.
5. Connecting Past to Present
   - **Elementary levels:** Study an FNMI community closest to their geographical area, and complete the “My Community” Medicine Wheel Chart.
   - **Secondary levels:** Within the context of an FNMI community closest to their geographical area as well as FNMI communities across Canada, complete a jigsaw activity that incorporates a 5W chart on topics which may include the following:
     – treaties
     – land issues
     – Indian Act
     – disease
     – residential schools
     – 1960s scoop
   - **Secondary levels extension activity:** Use Statistics Canada information to connect demographic information to historical events and contemporary issues in FNMI education.

6. Subject Context

   Within your subject context, make connections to the following events, taking into consideration subject sensitivity and regional protocols:

   - Treaties: How do control and consensus conflict with each other? How do they relate?
   - Reserves: How does where you live affect how you live?
   - Indian Act: How is what you do a reflection of who you are? How and why has the balance of power changed over time?
   - Disease: How does disease/illness impact an individual? How does it impact a community?
   - Poverty: What are the most significant impacts of poverty; mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally?
   - Residential Schools: How does the education system influence a child?
   - 1960s Scoop: How does where you live affect who you are?

7. Community Connections

   - Invite FNMI community members to talk about their connections to the land.
   - Visit a significant site in a regional FNMI community.

Resources

Maps

- Atlas of Canada
  http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/index.html
- Canadian Geographic
  http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/mapping/historical_maps/
- 8th Fire
  http://www.cbc.ca/doczone/8thfire/map.html
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
  http://fnpim-cippn.inac-ainc.gc.ca/index-eng.asp
- Aboriginal Mapping Network
  http://nativemaps.org/?q=taxonomy/term/90

Instructional Strategies

- Gallery Walk Teaching Strategy
  http://www.facinghistory.org/resources/strategies/gallery-walk-teaching-strateg
- 5W Chart
  – http://www.enchantedlearning.com/graphicorganizers/5ws/
  – http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/pdf/5Ws.pdf
- Jigsaw Activity
  http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/strats/jigsaw/index.html
- Cooperative Learning
  http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/strats/coop/index.html

Connecting Past to Present Content

- 8th Fire
  - http://www.cbc.ca/doczone/8thfire/
  - http://www.cbc.ca/doczone/8thfire/aboriginal101.html
  - http://www.cbc.ca/doczone/8thfire/resources.html
  - https://www.cbclearning.ca/media/wysiwyg/Learning-Resources/8thfireguide.pdf
- Library and Archives Canada
  http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/aboriginal-heritage/020016-1000-e.html
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
  http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/
- Aboriginal Perspectives
  http://www3.nfb.ca/enclasse/doclens/visau/index.php
- Office of the Treaty Commissioner
  http://www.otc.ca/

Extension

- High School Completion Rates
  http://www.vitalsignscanada.ca/en/research-82-learning-aboriginal-canadian-high-school
- Current Events
  http://www.cbc.ca/aboriginal/
- Assimilation
  http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/truth-reconciliation/

Websites

- Office of the Treaty Commissioner
  www.otc.ca
- Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre (language, culture, protocol documents)
  http://www.sicc.sk.ca/
- Gabriel Dumont Institute (information on Métis peoples)
  http://www.gdins.org/
- Gift of Language and Culture (Cree specific)
  http://www.giftoflanguageandculture.ca/

LAND AND PEOPLE

My Community

Name: ____

Who

What

When

Where

As students research maps they have brought to class, or maps they are studying in the classroom and online, they can record some details about the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities which are a part of their community.

Mapping History

Community: ______________________________

Use resource material to complete the following chart. When you have completed your research, answer the question below. If the community you are studying did not have treaties, complete the chart for an FNMI community that did sign a treaty.

TREATIES, LAND CLAIMS, & SELF-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENTS

What	Why
Who	Significance
Where	

Treaties: How do control and consensus conflict with each other? How do they relate?

____

____

Students can work in groups or individually to complete the series of charts. A blank chart is included so you may add topics that are not represented in the resource. One suggestion is to perform a jigsaw activity where a group of students is responsible for researching one topic and they become the “experts” to teach the other groups about their specific topic. Students might create a slide presentation, a poster, or a podcast for their assigned topic.

Mapping History

Community: ____

Use resource material to complete the following chart. Once you have completed your research, answer the question that follows.

LAND ISSUES

What	Why
Who	Significance
Where	

Land Issues: How does where you live affect how you live?

____

____

____

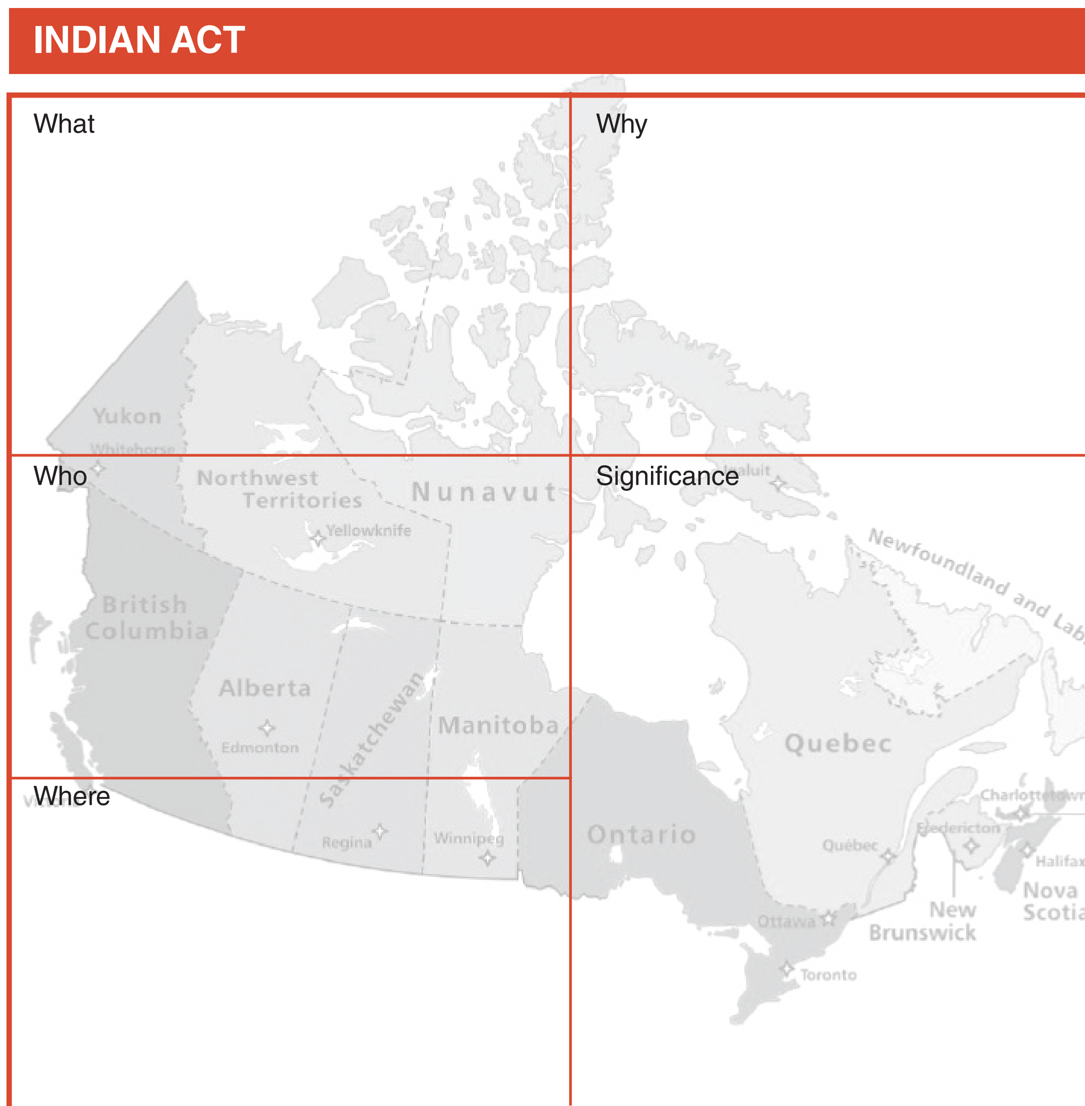
____

Mapping History

Community: ____

Use resource material to complete the following chart. When you have completed your research, answer the question that follows.

INDIAN ACT



What	Why
Who	Significance
Where	

Indian Act: How is what you do a reflection of who you are? How and why has the balance of power changed over time?

____

____

____

____

____

Mapping History

Community: ______________________________

Use resource material to complete the following chart. When you have completed your research, answer the question that follows.

DISEASE

What	Why
Who	**Significance**
Where	

Disease: How does disease/illness impact an individual? How does it impact a community?

____

____

____

____

Mapping History

Community: ____

Use resource material to complete the following chart. When you have completed your research, answer the question that follows.

POVERTY

What	Why
Who	**Significance**
Where	

Poverty: What are the most significant impacts of poverty mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally?

____

____

____

____

Mapping History

Community: ______________________________

Use resource material to complete the following chart. When you have completed your research, answer the question that follows.

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

What	Why
Who	Significance
Where	

Residential Schools: How does the education system influence a child?

____

____

____

____

Mapping History

Community: ______________________________

Use resource material to complete the following chart. When you have completed your research, answer the question that follows.

1960s SCOOP

What	Why
Who	Significance
Where	

1960s Scoop: How does where you live affect who you are?

____

____

____

____

____

Mapping History

Community: ______________________________

Use resource material to complete the following chart. When you have completed your research, answer the question that follows.

What	Why
Who	Significance
Where	

Inquiry Question:

____

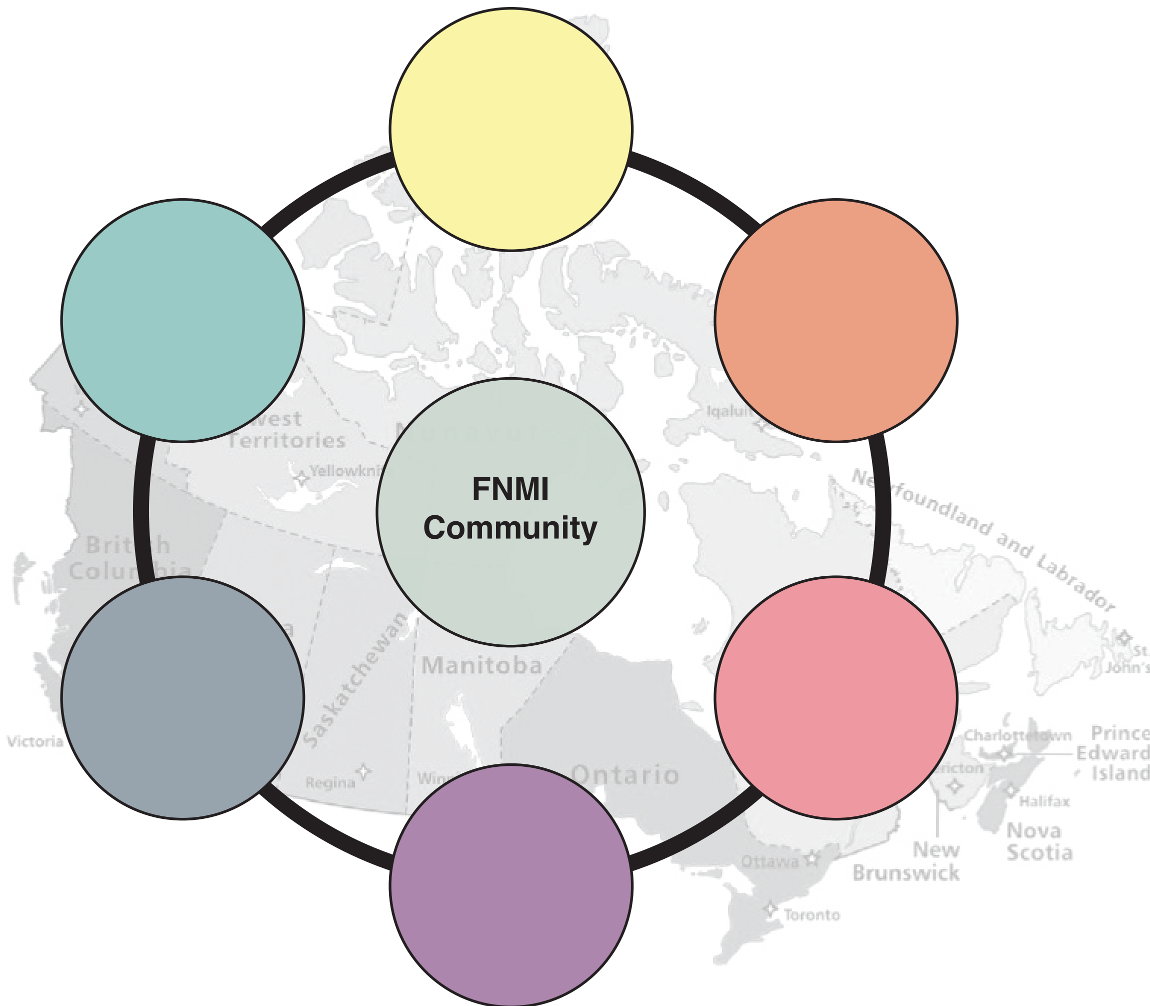
____

____

____

Mapping History Summary Sheet of Key Findings

FNMI Community: ________________________________



Topics can include the following:

- **treaties**
- **Indian Act**
- **residential schools**
- **land issues**
- **disease**
- **1960s scoop**

Students can fill in the circles with the topics they have studied. This resource is the beginning of a concept map for students to record the key points from their research on each of the topics. This graphic can also be used by the teacher as a demonstration tool to display the topics and/or key findings.

Map of Canada

Yukon
Whitehorse
Northwest Territories
Yellowknife
Nunavut
Iqaluit
British Columbia
Victoria
Alberta
Edmonton
Saskatchewan
Regina
Manitoba
Winnipeg
Ontario
Ottawa
Toronto
Quebec
Québec
Newfoundland and Labrador
St. John's
New Brunswick
Fredericton
Prince Edward Island
Charlottetown
Nova Scotia
Halifax

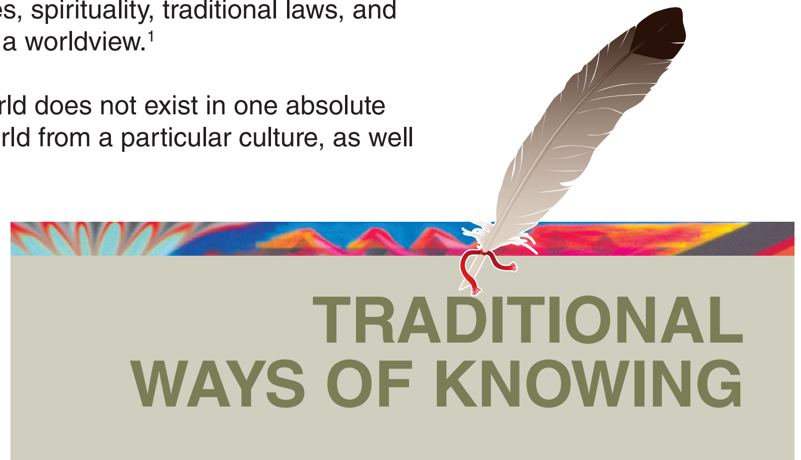
This is one map that teachers can use to hand out to students if there are no other maps available. The map is from Wikimedia Commons, which contains images that are reproducible and do not require copyright permissions.

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Maps

What Is a Worldview?

Each group of people around the world has a unique way of interpreting their experience of reality, and then expressing this interpretation through their beliefs, values, and behaviours. Together, these interpretations, beliefs, values, languages, spirituality, traditional laws, and behaviours form a group's culture. This is also known as a worldview.[1]

As an educator, it is important to understand that the world does not exist in one absolute sense for everyone but that each one of us views the world from a particular culture, as well as from a particular point in time and from a particular place in the world. Each interpretation of reality is one among many different interpretations of reality based on each individual person and their culture's cosmology, stories, philosophy, history, family, and lineage, language and relationship with the land.



Problems often arise when we take for granted that our interpretation of reality is the only one, or the best one. Whether we are aware of it or not, we tend to judge others according to our personal and limited perspective. However, Little Bear (2000) writes, "No matter how dominant a worldview is, there are always other ways of interpreting the world." [2] Wade Davis also reminds us that, "The world in which you were born is just one model of reality. Other cultures are not failed attempts at being you; they are unique manifestations of the human spirit."

Many non-Aboriginal people today are beginning to appreciate other worldviews and appreciate the value of understanding reality from different perspectives. For example, Wade Davis, photojournalist for National Geographic and author of *The Wayfinders* (2009), urges Western nations to value Aboriginal knowledge and wisdom in order to learn that "there are other options, other possibilities, other ways of thinking and interacting with the earth."[3] In the book, *Wisdom of the Elders* (1992), scientists Peter Knudtson and David Suzuki also urge others to consider Aboriginal ways of being in their search for a new global environmental ethic.[4] Physicist F. David Peat, in his book, *Blackfoot Physics* (2002), encourages his readers to explore First Nations, Métis, and Inuit worldviews and points out how some of the 'new' scientific insights emerging today, particularly in the field of metaphysics, have actually been embedded in Aboriginal philosophy and teachings for generations.[5]

Western Public Schools

Western (Euro-Canadian) public schools were created and designed from within a particular worldview and is based on the opinions and beliefs about learning held within that worldview. This is largely taken for granted by teachers and students who share the same worldview. For them, schools are 'neutral' as many beliefs, values, and behaviours are shared and they see their cultures reflected in every aspect of the school and program delivery. However, for students whose worldview differs from the mainstream Western worldview, schools are often experienced as harsh and foreign places, where their cultures, languages, unique perspectives, and traditional ways of knowing are completely ignored. This has led to feelings of low self-esteem in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students; low student engagement in schools; and many students giving up on school completely and dropping out before finishing high school.

Current research in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education shows the importance of student self-esteem and high student engagement for success at school. Studies show that self-esteem is nurtured in an environment that respects and values students' unique First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, languages, and worldviews.[6] Students who are more engaged in school experience greater educational success. Valuing different worldviews in the classrooms helps us support student success by becoming more responsive to the diverse perspectives, ideas, humour, and experiences of our First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students.

Traditional Ways of Knowing

'Traditional ways of knowing' refers to the various worldviews, cultural beliefs, languages, values, and behaviours that are held and practiced by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples today. These worldviews developed long before European settlers arrived on this land and can be described as a holistic and relational understanding of existence that has been continually shaped by each nation's relationship with the particular land they occupied.

Although each Aboriginal group is unique and distinct from one another, they do share some common threads within their worldviews. For example, the belief in a higher power—often called Creator, the Great Spirit, or the One Who Knows—and the importance of prayer as a way of expressing gratitude to the Creator. The Traditional Elders of each nation also taught that everything in existence is imbued with energy, or spirit, and is in constant motion.[7] They understood this energy as forming a huge web of invisible threads that connect everything that exists on the earth to each other.[8] Each nation understood their interdependence with the land and with all of existence; they were not higher or more important than the other[9] but that each had a rightful place in the cosmos. Each nation understood their responsibility to care for one another, that we are related to all that exists, and that to help or hurt another being is to help or hurt oneself.

Aboriginal languages and ways of communicating with one another served to strengthen relationships with one another as well as with plants, animals, insects, the land, winds, waters, Creator spirit, and the spirits of their ancestors.[10] Maintaining these relationships required following well-established protocols and practices[11] and learning one's history, cultural knowledge, and traditional laws and was considered a lifelong process[12] that was vital to the survival of family and community.[13] The profound experience of these interrelationships among all of existence shaped a holistic and cyclical understanding of the universe.[14]

Within Aboriginal worldviews there is no separation between mind, emotions, body, and soul.[15] Concepts of knowledge, education, and learning are understood to engage all three realms and were integrated into one's daily activities at every stage of life that required one's active participation. There is no end goal or pinnacle of absolute knowing or absolute truth. Instead, knowledge is to be personally interpreted by each individual, with all perspectives and experiences considered equally valid[16] and every person and experience looked upon as a potential teacher. Through the practices of stillness, prayer, reflection, and contemplation, each person is encouraged to access a place deep within for direction, wisdom, and guidance. It is within this sacred place inside of ourselves that we experience a reality beyond the limitations of our innate perceptions of sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch.

Within traditional ways of knowing, the concept of education involves 'lifelong learning' [17] and is understood as finding one's purpose in life[18] while striving for balance, harmony, and wholeness.[19] Learning involves critical thinking through spirit, heart, mind, and body[20] and being patient with oneself, having a good sense of humour,[21] and being open to making mistakes. Learning was process-oriented, rather than product-oriented,[22] with

many processes overlapping and occurring simultaneously.[23] The wealth of each nation's knowledge and truths are encoded into their many stories, songs, dances, various forms of singing, ceremonies, and traditions and is passed down orally to each successive generation.

Traditional Elders actively participate in guiding children in developing a quality of silence, keen observation skills, and a heightened sensitivity to their sacred connection to all existence. Within traditional ways of knowing, children learn the highest values of their community, including respect and the rules of appropriate conduct and behaviour [24] within the supportive circle of their family and community.[25] Children are encouraged and invited to actively participate in ceremonies, storytelling, and talking circles; to observe others; and to engage in introspection, experiential learning, and prayer.[26] Children also learn through mentorship as well as participating in apprenticeships, learning games, formal instruction, tutoring, and traditional sports.[27]

Within traditional ways of knowing, living a good life entailed a journey in self-discovery. The task of each individual is to explore his or her unique character and passions in order to discover Creator's purpose for him or her.[28] There is a high value placed on being mindful to 'always think the highest thought' [29] and in striving for balance and wholeness in all of their relationships.

There are many beliefs and philosophies within each First Nations, Métis, and Inuit traditional ways of knowing that help to guide their community in living a good life. Some examples of these include the Seven Sacred Teachings, Traditional Laws, Tipi Teachings, All My Relations, Seven Generations, Medicine Wheel Teachings, and Circle of Life Teachings.

Seven Sacred Teachings

The Seven Sacred Teachings are character education courses based on the Anishinabek way of knowing and being. Toulouse (2007) strongly believes that character traits within the teachings need to be embodied in the communities they intend to serve.[30] The seven teachings specific to the Anishinabe are: love, respect, wisdom, humility, bravery, honesty, and truth. These traits are imbedded into programs and curriculum within the school and traced back to traditional ways of knowing to emphasize the importance of Anishinabek culture.

Traditional Laws

Aboriginal cultures share a belief that people must live in respectful, harmonious relationships with nature, with one another, and with themselves. The relationships are governed by what are understood as laws, which are gifts from the Creator. The laws are fundamentally spiritual, imbuing all aspects of life. As fundamental as this perspective may be, each Aboriginal culture expressed it in unique ways with its own practices, products, and knowledge.[31]

Tipi Teachings

According to Cree Elder Mary Lee, the Tipi Teachings embrace the values held in the community by the female members. The hearth of the fire at the center of the tipi has the same name in Cree as the collective for women. The shawl worn by the women shares the same name as the hide that wraps the tipi and symbolizes the woman embracing everyone in the community. Mary Lee shares the importance of tipi teachings: "It is the spirit and body of woman, because she represents the foundation of family and community. It is through her that we learn the values that bring balance into our lives."[32]

All My Relations

Thomas King (1990) describes the All My Relations teachings as the understanding of the interconnectivity of individuals and all living things, including the spirit world.[33] This represents the kinship within our immediate community between our family, relatives, and clan members and radiates through all interactions and social organizations. King states that All My Relations is "an encouragement for us to accept the responsibilities we have in this universal family by living our lives in a harmonious and moral manner."[34] With this sense of kinship comes a sense of responsibility to be in respectful right relationships with all of existence because we are related to everything.

Seven Generations

The teachings of the Seven Generations remind us to consider the implications of decisions on others. The other identified in the teachings moves beyond those in your community and region, but the entirety of the planet and the subsequent seven generations that will have to deal with the consequences of your actions.[35] Long-term thinking, critical thinking, and altruism are the defining characteristics of the seven generations teachings.

Medicine Wheel Teachings

Castellano (2000) identifies the medicine wheel as the "holistic character of Aboriginal knowledge and experience."[36] The Circle of Life is represented in the medicine wheel, and the two lines that intersect represent a sacred balance between all living things and natural forces. The colours in the wheel are the stages of life and the movement of the natural world. The medicine wheel is a part of the Blackfoot, Cree, and Dakota culture[37] but has been adopted by many Aboriginal cultures because of the relevance of the representations to various ways of knowing.

Circle of Life Teachings

The circle is a universal symbol of connection, unity, harmony, wholeness, and eternity. In a circle, all parts are equal. Everything in life is viewed as being circular and necessary. For example, the stages in a person's life is circular: a person is born, grows into childhood, matures, and becomes old, at which point thoughts and actions become childlike again. Just as all seasons are necessary in the natural world, all human experiences of grief and happiness, for example, must be welcomed and are necessary for overall balance.

Valuing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Worldviews in the Classroom

Teaching and learning take place within the rich and complex context of the school community. Student engagement and learning become enriched when students feel safe and experience a sense of belonging within their school community.[38] Creating warm and caring schools and learning environments where First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students feel safe and valued has a positive influence on student engagement and learning.[39] This is accomplished through positive, inclusive, and respectful attitudes as well as through the presence of affirming First Nations, Métis, and Inuit images—such as art, posters, books, videos, and positive messages celebrating diversity—throughout the school.

In creating a classroom community that values First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, it may be helpful to reflect on the following questions:

- What is my understanding of other cultures?
- Am I taking time to learn about my First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students' cultures?
- Am I aware of the way culture affects interaction styles?
- How does my classroom currently reflect the language and culture of my First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students?
- Am I choosing teaching materials that portray Aboriginal peoples as vibrant and diverse peoples and recognize their contributions to Canada?
- Am I providing a safe place where my students can take pride in their culture?
- Am I observing community celebrations and important cultural events?
- Am I using community members and resources when appropriate and possible?
- Are my assessment tools sensitive to inherent cultural bias?
- What am I doing to make the parents and/or guardians of my students feel welcome in my classroom?
- How often to I contact my students' parents and/or guardians with positive messages about their children?
- What am I doing to build trusting relationships with my First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities?

In Conclusion

Valuing the unique perspectives that your First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students bring to the classroom not only supports their educational success, but it also enriches your entire classroom community by offering multiple perspectives on everyday issues, ideas, and events.

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Land and People Are Resources

- Traditional Elders and storytellers could be invited to come into the classroom to share legends, etc.
- Engage students by having an Elder/community member take them onto the land to pick willows during the best picking time and, then, teach students how to make cultural baskets (science, math, etc.) and create story bags.
- Have story circles that are in themes using WNCP Curriculum Framework. The stories would be about themselves and, therefore, students would be developing their identities and self-esteem.
- Acknowledge days/months that celebrate FNMI peoples as well as other cultures. Examples include hosting heritage fairs and displaying artwork.
- Publish journals and art.
- Weave FNMI language into teachings.
- Dispaly maps that show place names of traditional places.
- Share stories of trees and the significance of the sap.

Relationship and Protocol Ideas

- Protocol is different in each territory. Following protocol is important in developing relationships, accessing and sharing knowledge, and speaking with a Traditional Elder. Depending on the community, different processes and rules govern protocol.
- School leadership will help develop a certain, perhaps positive, attitude towards FNMI protocol.
- Policies may be changed to reflect priorities. FNMI peoples engaged in decision making process from the outset. It is importantto note that school leadership sets the pace and the direction.

What can be done at the grassroots level?

- Implement transition workers and cultural liaisons between band schools and provincial schools systems. They are important allies that teach protocol and build relationships between the two school systems.
- Cultural liaisons are bridges between homes and schools.
- Strategies are needed to build capacity for teaching positions.
- Bring teaching programs into the community.
- Coordinate school year calendars among jurisdictions so teachers can collaborate.
- Blend professional learning communities (e.g., band school and provincial school teachers partner with each other to develop, create, and learn)
- Incorporate mentorship and apprenticeship relationships among professionals.

- **Learning about the FNMI people groups in the school and acknowledge their traditions, etc.**
- **Developing a library and acquiring resources about "ways of knowing"; can be a story box or bag**
- **Taking students 'out on the land' to experience (experiential learning) some of the 'philosophies,' like Tipi Teachings and associated protocols students learn by listening, observing, doing**
- **Inviting a Traditional Elder into the school and classroom; or, teachers can visit the community**

TRADITIONAL WAYS OF KNOWING

Resources

- 8th Fire
- Kandeasowin ("Ways of Knowing in Ojibwa) by Kathy Absolon

Note:

Understand that the community essentially comes to a standstill when there is a death (a "passing") in the community and that students may need the time away from school activities. Kinship structures are close, and extended family values are extremely important within aboriginal communities.

Have discussions about validity/authenticity of resources. Seasonal activities will affect school schedules and activities.

Understand that there are aspects of "Ways of Knowing" that are sacred and not available to outsiders.

Traditional Ways of Knowing Teaching Strategies

Teaching about worldviews is a process of trying to make the invisible, visible. When addressing issues like culture, beliefs, and values, it is important to be aware of personally held beliefs and values within the local culture and community. By completing the Teacher Reflections, teachers can develop their own awareness about their personal worldviews before entering into a discussion with students.

Introducing Worldviews

1. Think-Pair-Share (1-minute discussions)
   - Do you have an accent?
   - When does someone become aware they have an accent?
2. Literacy Quest
   - Use a collection of children's literature written from an FNMI perspective. Be sure to use locally approved resources.
   - Discuss some common elements of the stories, which may include some or all of the following characteristics of traditional ways of knowing:
     - interdependence with the land
     - no one higher or more important than another
     - responsibility to care for one another
     - importance of living a good life
   - Read a collection a fairy tales—such as Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, and Cinderella—and discuss the difference between fairytales and legends.
3. Traditional Ways of Knowing Content (Refer to resource material.)
   - Seven Sacred Teachings
   - Traditional Laws
   - Tipi Teachings
   - All My Relations
   - Seven Generations
   - Medicine Wheel Teachings
   - Circle of Life Teachings
4. Subject Context
   - Make connections to traditional ways of knowing to the subjects you teach.
   - Consider asking these inquiry questions:
     - What makes a good leader?
     - What can we learn from great leaders of the past?
     - What makes a hero different from a villain?
     - How am I connected to the main character in the book?
     - How does where I live influence how I live?
     - How does language communicate culture?
     - How does language reflect and shape culture?
     - What happens when cultures collide?

- How do you study the unobservable?
- How does what we measure influence what we conclude?
- What is worth fighting for?
- What causes change?
- What remains the same?
- How am I connected to people in the past?
- How do patterns of cause and effect manifest themselves in the chronology of history?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy?
- Who and what do we memorialize?
- How and why do beliefs change?
- To what extent do our policies, priorities, and actions reflect our educational beliefs?
- What is health and wellness? What role does balance play in health and wellness?
- How do we best represent part and whole relationships?
- How are equality and fairness similar? How are they different?
- How do physical structures affect organization?
- How and why do people change?
- What are the differences between needs and wants?

5. Using Traditional Ways of Knowing Contexts in the Classroom
   - Seven Sacred Teachings

     Select a character in literature and evaluate the extent to which the character demonstrated the seven character traits: love, respect, wisdom, humility, bravery, honesty, and truth.
   - Traditional Laws

     Demonstrate knowledge of cultural practices related to stewardship (e.g., taking only what you need).
   - Tipi Teachings

     Discuss how language reveals what a community values and how hurtful language can cause negative impacts. This can be connected to citizenship education.
   - All My Relations

     Create a concept web of how the community is interconnected. The community studied can be a student's family, the school community, an ecosystem, or events in history.
   - Seven Generations

     Use statistical information about consumer behaviour and sustainable development. Consider waste, recycling, environmental impacts, and issues related to student's lives.

- Medicine Wheel Teachings

  Create classroom protocols that respect maintaining a balance in how students care for themselves and others. These protocols can be used as part of a health unit, or they can serve as a foundation for group activities.

- Circle of Life Teachings

  Use circle graphic organizers to discuss relationships in communities, stages of a life cycle, or mathematical principles.

Resources

Video/Audio

- Accents
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UgpfSp2t6k
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJ-WhzsW7wc

Instructional Strategies

- Instructional Strategies Online
  http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/index.html
- Think-Pair-Share
  http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/strats/think/

Literacy Quest

- Government
  - BC: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/documents.htm
  - AB: http://www.education.alberta.ca/teachers/fnmi/resources.aspx
  - SK: http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/school-subject-areas/k-12-student-resources
  - MB: http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/eng/ao31048.html
  - YK: http://www.yesnet.yk.ca/firstnations/index.html
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  http://education.scholastic.ca/images/SCH/special_offers/aboriginal_resources/aboriginalresources_2012.pdf
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  - http://curriculum.org/storage/30/1278480166aboriginal.pdf
  - http://r4r.ca/en/resource/aboriginal-literature-in-canada

Compare and Contrast Graphic Organizers

- http://teacher.scholastic.com/reading/bestpractices/vocabulary/pdf/sr_allgo.pdf
- http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson275/compcon_chart.pdf
- http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/GO/compare_contrast.htm

TRADITIONAL WAYS OF KNOWING

Literacy Quest

Book Title: ____________________

Author: ____________________

The main ideas in my book are: ____________________

Idea 1

Idea 2

Idea 3

Idea 4

Idea 5

Students can read a variety of locally approved books that are told from an FNMI perspective. This graphic can be used to record some of the common themes/ideas that are present in the different books.

Compare and Contrast

Literature Selection #1

Literature Selection #2

How are they alike?

How are they different?

Students can read a series of fairy tales—such as Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, or Cinderella–and use this sheet to document the similarities and differences between them.

Examples of FNMI Worldviews

Seven Sacred Teachings

Circle of Life Teachings

Tipi Teachings

Spiritual

Intellectual

Physical

Emotional

Traditional Laws

All My Relations

Medicine Wheel Teachings

Seven Generations

This graphic can be used by educators as a visual for the classroom, or it can be used by students as a concept map to record key points about worldviews. Students and educators can also add additional worldviews. This is not intended to be a conclusive list.

Characteristics of Traditional Ways of Knowing

TRADITIONAL WAYS OF KNOWING

This graphic can be used by educators as a visual for the classroom, or it can be used by students as a concept map to record key points about traditional ways of knowing. Students and educators can also add additional items. This is not intended to be a conclusive list.

Character Sketch Using Seven Sacred Teachings

TRADITIONAL WAYS OF KNOWING

Mark an "x" at the point where you believe the character, ____________________, is a reflection of…

Teaching	4	3	2	1	Opposite trait
LOVE	4	3	2	1	____________
RESPECT	4	3	2	1	____________
WISDOM	4	3	2	1	____________
HUMILITY	4	3	2	1	____________
BRAVERY	4	3	2	1	____________
HONESTY	4	3	2	1	____________
TRUTH	4	3	2	1	____________

Fill in the blanks to describe the trait you feel is opposite to one of the Seven Sacred Teachings.

Students can use this graphic organizer to record their position as to the extent that a character in a piece of literature or video reflects that qualities that are embodied in the Seven Sacred Teachings.

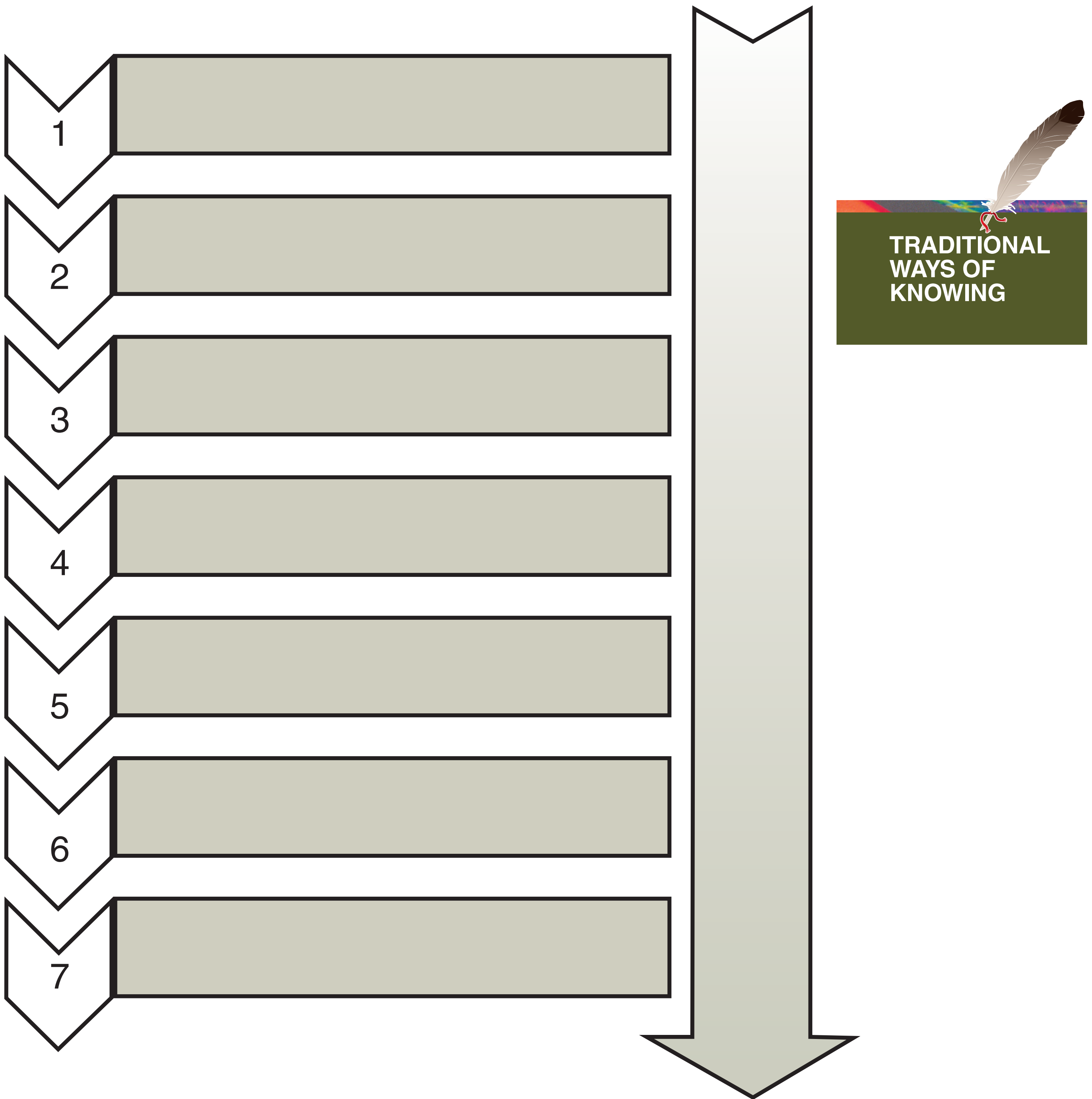
Tipi Teachings

This graphic organizer can be used by both educators and students. Educators can use this organizer as a visual in the classroom or as an instructional tool. Students can record words that relate to the topic they are studying and the key points they need to understand.

All My Relations

This graphic organizer can be used by both educators and students. Educators can use this organizer as a visual in the classroom, or as an instructional tool. In any context where the theme is interconnectedness, this sheet can be used to reflect how different items/ideas interconnect and have an impact on one another.

Cause and Effect Using Seven Generations Teachings



Students can use this graphic to brainstorm different courses of actions they are considering and the long term impacts of their decisions. Students can also use this sheet to develop historical thinking by exploring how current situations evolved from previous events.

Medicine Wheel Teachings

This graphic organizer can be used by both educators and students. Educators can use this organizer as a visual in the classroom or as an instructional tool. Students can record information in a wholistic representation.

Circle of Life Teachings

This graphic organizer can be used by both educators and students. Educators can use this organizer as a visual in the classroom or as an instructional tool. One suggestion is to use this organizer for any instance where there might be a process or cycle being studied.

Storytelling

From the days of our distant past to the present day, human societies have always engaged in storytelling. Stories are unique to each culture and are filled with symbols, metaphors, and images that hold a particular meaning for that nation.[1] Stories are told in many ways—orally, in song, in drumming, with pictographs and petroglyphs, through medicine wheels and tipi rings, and using other creative art forms. Stories are an expression of each nation's perceptions, attitudes, and interpretations of the world as they experience it.[2] Storytelling moves the spirit and is a way of making meaning, of finding one's unique place in the world and making sense of the mysteries of life.[3] Stories are a teaching tool; and for children and youth, listening to stories has been and continues to be a significant part of the learning process.

Storytelling is considered one of the earliest art forms and involves an oral sharing of personal and/or traditional stories. Storytellers are not merely entertainers; they are highly skilled professionals[4] and teachers. Just as important as the content of the story is the way a storyteller tells a particular story, as this also expresses cultural customs, traditions, norms, gender roles, and humour.[5] Storytelling is a holistic experience for both the storyteller and listeners, involving their minds, bodies, emotions, and spirits.[6] The listeners' role requires full participation and higher-order thinking skills. Stories are to be patiently listened to, remembered, and reflected upon.

Stories often have many layers of meaning, and it is the listener's responsibility to find his or her own personal meaning in the story.[7] In other words, there are as many interpretations of one story as there are listeners. Stories are not frivolous or meaningless or told without an intention or purpose. It is also valuable for listeners hear a story more than once as a story is considered to be a living entity and often contains many truths. These truths reveal themselves according to time, place, and the listeners' readiness to receive those truths.[8]

Not too long ago, all nations around the world relied on oral transmission and storytelling to pass on cultural knowledge. It is only relatively recently in human history that information began to be written down and recorded in books. Because of this new reliance on the written word, especially in western cultures, oral storytelling began to lose its value.[9] Today, many people in western cultures consider stories to be 'books' or 'movies' to entertain children. Sadly, this one-sided, non-interactive way of telling stories teaches children to be passive listeners.

Aboriginal Storytelling

Like many other non-western cultures around the world, Indigenous cultures continue to be mainly oral with only a small portion of their histories, traditions, knowledge, and stories written down.[10] Oral traditions are passed down from one generation to another; and stories, songs, dances, rituals, and ceremonies continue to be an essential means of expressing this knowledge.

Storytelling plays a vital role in binding a community together as well as educating children and youth in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.[11] Traditionally, stories were told by Traditional Elders—as knowledge-keepers and historians—as well as community members who have earned the title of 'Storyteller.'

There are many different kinds of stories—sacred stories, secret stories, legends, and men's and women's stories.[12] Embedded in these stories are each nation's values, beliefs, life lessons, and information about particular traditions, ceremonies, rituals, and protocols.[13] There are also restrictions on who can tell which particular story as well as appropriate times and places for telling stories.[14] Sacred stories are told only by a certain person and permission is needed to share these stories.

Many stories describe a people's relationship with the land or explain the origins of sacred place names and landmarks.[15] Some stories recount the great deeds of a community's heroes, providing positive role models for children to look up to and allowing them feel a sense of pride and confidence in their community.[16]

Although the stories of each First Nations, Métis, and Inuit nation are distinct and unique, there are a few common characteristics. For example, each nation has its own origin or Creation story, which is thousands of years old and retold the same way at each telling. Creation stories describe the origins of each nation and embodies the spiritual connection between that nation, the land, and the rest of existence.[17]

Each nation has their own cultural heroes. For example, Gwich'in have Atachuukaih; and the Southern Tutchone have "Ts'ürk'I" (Crow who made the world), Äsùya" (Smart Man or Beaver Man) and the Kaska have Tsá'egūyā tsá (cultural hero).

Another commonality is the character of 'Trickster,' who goes by many names, depending on the nation, and has the ability to transform himself into other creatures. You may have heard of him as Coyote, Raven, Wisakedjak, Weesakichak, Nanabozhoo, Naapi, or Nannabush. Using humour and a healthy dose of the unexpected, Trickster stories teach important life lessons to children and adults while also modelling cultural values like humility, honesty, courage, kindness, and respect for others.[18] Within Aboriginal cultures, stories contain moral lessons and instructions on how to behave. As children grow, the stories often became more serious and contained spiritual teachings.[19]

For over a century, residential schools interrupted the transmission of culture to children and youth. Many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities have been re-establishing the use of storytelling as a means of restoring Aboriginal cultural practices, traditions, and history.[20] The inter-generational transmission of knowledge through storytelling was, and continues to be, vital for cultural survival, and many nations around the world continue to practice their oral traditions to pass on valuable cultural knowledge.

Storytelling in the Classroom

As educators working in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities across Canada, you are required to interact and communicate with many different groups of people. Incorporating Aboriginal ways of teaching, through storytelling, is one way of being culturally responsive.[21] Traditional stories can be shared in the classroom by storytellers. However, when considering inviting a Storyteller to the classroom, requests should be made for age appropriate stories. When an educator invites a Traditional Elder to tell stories in the classroom, she or he must be knowledgeable about the request. Some stories must be told the same way each time to teach a specific lesson. If not, the story will lose meaning and the message will be lost. Stories may not always be age-appropriate. Check with a local Traditional Elder or community member to make sure you are following proper protocol. Another useful guide is the *WNCP Common Tool for Assessing and Validating Teaching and Learning Resources for Cultural Appropriateness and Historical Accuracy of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Content.*[22]

Personal stories are another way of incorporating Aboriginal ways of teaching and learning in the classroom. Sharing your own personal stories with your students allows many of them to hear about a life that is different from their own.[23] Students often respond by sharing their own stories. Over time, classrooms become a community of storytellers in which students can learn from each other. Allowing students to tell their personal stories in a safe and caring classroom environment helps build self-esteem. Many of the stories that we tell (and retell) about our lives enable us to reflect on significant moments that have marked us in some way.[24] Stories celebrate each student's distinctive voice and unique expression, as each student may tell the same story in a completely different and novel way. Storytelling acts as an exchange of cultural ideas. Personal storytelling promotes trust, relationship building, and equality by valuing all students as voices of experience.

Storytelling allows students to develop their active listening and critical thinking skills. These are skills that are not nurtured in front of a television. You probably have noticed that you already use storytelling in your classroom to highlight a particular point, even when teaching math and science. Using storytelling across all subject areas in this way helps students build conceptual bridges between their own experiences and new knowledge.[25]

In Conclusion

Storytelling is a valuable and powerful teaching tool. Finding time for storytelling in the classroom can be difficult, especially when constantly pressured to increase students' academic performance. In higher grade levels there is less and less storytelling incorporated into teaching and learning. However, thinking beyond the textbook and incorporating storytelling into your classrooms has many long-term benefits for all students.

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Oral Traditions, Storytelling

Teaching Strategy Approaches

- Learning styles
- Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)
- Experiential, holistic teaching strategies
- Knowledge and understanding of local/regional FNMI people; contextual
- Language revitalization programming
- Protocol

IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Classroom Strategies

- **Inviting a storyteller**
- **Studying novels**
- **Role-play stories (Students should always model positive behaviours. Teachers should enact any necessary negative portrayals.)**
- **Using technology (phones, ipad, ipod, etc.) and animation**
- **Using storytelling in the classroom as a way of finding "voice"**

Resources

- Canadian Council on Learning
  www.ccl-cca.ca
- Office of the Treaty Commissioner
  www.otc.ca

Note:

Understand that there are "sacred stories" not available to everyone.

Oral Tradition, Storytelling Teaching Strategies

Culturally responsive teaching includes finding ways to weave storytelling into teaching practices. In developing a relationship with students, educators can use stories and narratives about themselves to share experiences and understandings. Educators can create a learning environment that fosters trust and respect by connecting personal narratives about the places they have been or events they have attended. Using stories about turning points in life, educators can address a wide range of curricular outcomes at any grade level; but more importantly, they can connect with their students on a personal level.

Turning Points

1. Class Discussion: What are some of the turning points in your life?

   Educators can discuss the role of education in their lives, perhaps why they chose a career path in education and personal experiences of overcoming obstacles.

2. Students can create a timeline of their life and record turning points that include significant events.

   Use the timeline graphic organizer to record key events and experiences

3. Students can choose their most significant event to share with the educator, a partner, small group, or in a class activity.

   For group or class activity, conduct a talking circle where only one student speaks at a time. Pprior to starting the talking circle, review active listening skills.

4. Curricular Connections
   - social studies: events that changed the course of history
   - science: life cycles
   - language arts: character development
   - math: integers, number lines

Literacy Connections

1. Select books that have been approved by educational and FNMI community stakeholders and through the WNCP/CTfAV process.
2. Read out loud to students and discuss the themes and messages from the stories.
3. Allow students the opportunity to share with a partner, in a written response, or as a class the connections they make from the stories and how the stories relate to their personal lives. This metacognitive skill can be incorporated at any age and it is an important element of literacy that can connect to all subject areas.
4. Students can complete a story planner outline/graphic organizer that captures the key points and allows for personal response.

The following link outlines a digital storytelling activity that can be extended depending on access to technology and subject context:

http://www.jasonohler.com/storytelling/index.cfm

Community Connections: Traditional Elders as Guests in the Classroom

Inviting Traditional Elders into the classroom to share their gifts of storytelling and oral tradition is a powerful way to include FNMI perspectives in the classroom. Each community will have procedures and protocols to follow. A list of provincial and territory resources is listed below.

If possible, arrange a field trip to a significant site where a Traditional Elder can share information about the site. By including a Traditional Elder and FNMI community members, educators can be sure to follow proper protocols. Land-based learning is a very effective way for students to understand FNMI worldviews.

Resources

Graphic Organizers

- Reproducible Timeline Graphic Organizers, pages 67 and 68 of this resource
- Reproducible Listening/Viewer Notes, page 89 of this resource

Turning Points Activity

- Frog Lifecycle (visual)
  http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Frog_lifecycle.jpg
- Active Listening
  http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Active-listening-chart.png
- Talking Circles
  - http://www.firstnationstreatment.org/talkingcircles.htm
  - https://education.alberta.ca/media/307199/words.pdf (page 163)
  - http://www.sd61.bc.ca/edsrvs/ANED/educationalResources/Aboriginal_Definitions_Talking_Circle_Guidelines.pdf (page 5)
- Timelines
  - http://havefunteaching.com/worksheets/graphic-organizers/
  - http://audneal.typepad.com/my_weblog/2010/03/blueprints-brainstorming-themes-organizational-styles.html
  - http://socialstudies.mrdonn.org/timelines.html
  - http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/timeline-30007.html

Literacy Connections

- http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/storymap/
- http://www.dailyteachingtools.com/language-arts-graphic-organizers.html

Educational Community Resources

- Dene Kede—Teacher Resource Manual
  http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/files/K-12/Curriculum/dene-kede/Teacher-Resource-Part-1-Orientation.pdf
- Aboriginal Elders and Community Workers in Schools
  http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/aborigininal-elders-community-workers

- Shared Learnings
  http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/shared.pdf
- Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into Curricula
  http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/abpersp/ab_persp.pdf
- Walking Together
  http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aswt/
- Our Words, Our Ways
  https://education.alberta.ca/media/307199/words.pdf
- Handbook for Yukon Teachers
  http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/Handbook_for_Yukon_Teachers.pdf

ORAL TRADITIONS, STORYTELLING

Spiraling Learning

Experienced Adult

X

Key Experience

Increasing Knowledge, Skill, and Wisdom

Integration

Child X

Land | People | Spirit | Self

Throughout the year, students are exposed to various cultural key experiences. Most experiences, because of their holistic nature, can be experienced in similar form many times over several years. Each time, students will learn what they are ready for, learning more complex skills and gaining more understanding as time goes on. This is spiralling learning.

Image and description from Dene Kede - Teachers Resource Manual http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/files/K-12/Curriculum/dene-kede/Teacher-Resource-Part-1-Orientation.pdf

My Timeline

Event ______ • Reaction

Event ______ • Reaction

Event ______ • Reaction

Event ______ • Reaction

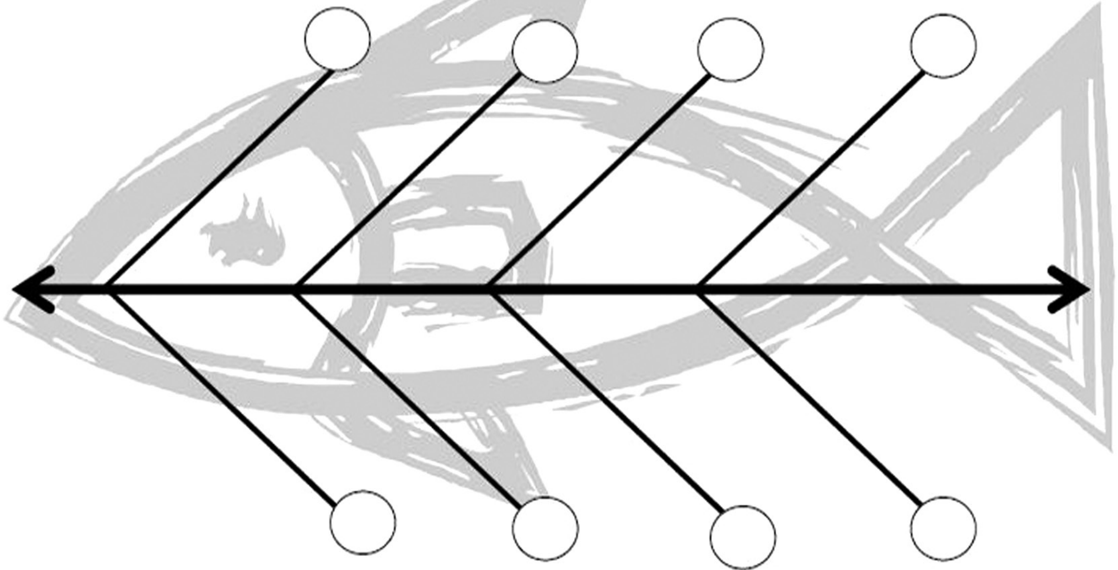
Event ______ • Reaction

Event ______ • Reaction

Most Significant Turning Point

Students can use this sheet for a variety of timeline activities. When considering storytelling, one activity that is culturally appropriate in the classroom is to have students tell narratives about their own lives. In the event box, students can number and record the events they consider to be turning points in their lives. The purpose is to have students make some personal connections as to how an event or situation can change the course of their lives.

Timeline

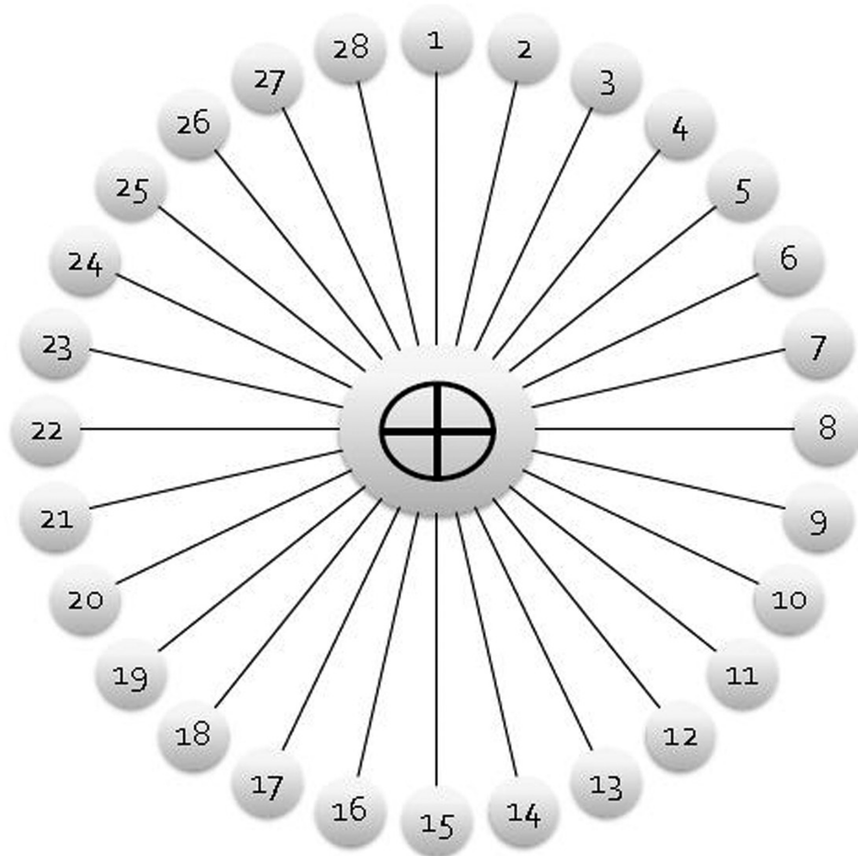


# Event	Significance

Most significant event:

Students can use this sheet for a variety of timeline activities as well. Another suggestion for the timeline graphic organizers is when students are working with a peer; perhaps one student can present events from his or her life and the other student can record the significant events. This resource might also be helpful if there is a Traditional Elder or Storyteller who shares a story with the class. Students can record the events on a timeline such as this.

Talking Circle Class List

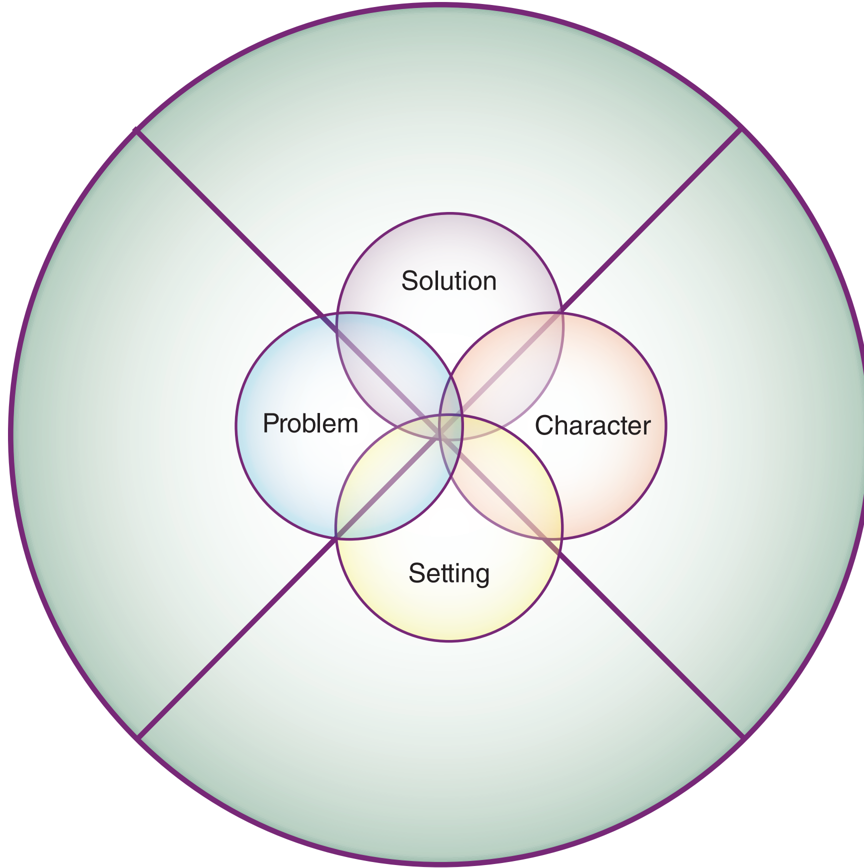


1	15
2	16
3	17
4	18
5	19
6	20
7	21
8	22
9	23
10	24
11	25
12	26
13	27
14	28

This graphic organizer can be used by both educators and students. Educators can use it as a record sheet for talking circle discussions, and students can use it to record key words from each student as they share information in a talking circle.

Story Planner

Theme: ______________________________



Series of Events

If students are writing and creating their own stories, this graphic organizer can be used to record the character, setting, problem, and solution of a story. If students are working on reading comprehension, this graphic organizer can be used to respond to the selected story.

Story Response

Reaction

Event

Reaction

Event

Reaction

Event

Event

Reaction

Students can record key events and their personal reactions to these events on this graphic organizer. The events can come from literature, personal experiences, or presentations in class.

Pre-Residential School Experience

First Nations and Inuit peoples already had effective educational practices in place to teach their children how to live rich and fulfilling lives according to their community's cultural principles, beliefs, and values before the arrival of European settlers on this land.

Within Aboriginal worldviews, *learning* was considered a lifelong process and not seen as separate from the rest of everyday life. The purpose of education was not to accumulate individual credentials, but to support and guide individuals in finding their unique purpose in life with wisdom and excellence.

First Nations and Inuit peoples transmitted the wealth of their knowledge to their children experientially through modelling social order, respect, and dignity as well as through direct participation in community life. In some cultures, children were considered adults by the age of 12 and were taught traditional laws, cultural values, knowledge, and skills from within the supportive circle of their entire community.[1] Traditional Elders played an invaluable role in teaching their community's culture, cosmology, songs, dances, and history through storytelling.[2] Children learned respectful behaviours and protocols while observing and participating in traditions, ceremonies, and other activities. Participating in games, traditional sports, direct lessons, and mentorships also allowed children to further develop particular knowledge and skills.[3] When seeking guidance, children were encouraged to be reflective, to go inward, and to communicate with the Creator or the One Who Knows through prayer and gratitude.[4]

Arrival of Europeans

During the 1700s, European settlers began arriving to Canada by the thousands in pursuit of more land and a better way of life. Many settlers relied on the First Nations to teach them how to survive. To ensure political and economic control of the land, the federal government entered into treaties with First Nations peoples, which ended in confining First Nations peoples onto reserves. Inuit people were gathered into settlements, and laws were passed that governed almost every aspect of Aboriginal life. Between the mid-1970s and the late 1990s, the Canadian government negotiated land claim settlements with northern First Nations and Inuit peoples in the Northwest Territories, Yukon, Quebec, and Nunavut (which became a territory in 1999). These agreements specified land and hunting rights, financial compensation, and opportunities for economic development.

First Nations leaders across Canada understood the importance education would play in the future of their communities. They made sure that provisions for the education of their children were provided in the treaty agreements. Many leaders expressed that they wanted the schools in their own communities, and they expected that the schools would be respectful of their respective cultures. Some communities even chose to give up significant portions of their annuities in order to establish schools for their children.[5]

Residential Schools

Before residential schools were established, industrial schools operated both on and off reserves. The chief aim of these schools was to train Aboriginal children and youth in skills so that they could work and assimilate into mainstream society. Many of the students who attended industrial schools had a positive experience at these schools and learned valuable

skills in farming, blacksmithing, printing, boot-making, sewing, carpentry, and other skilled trades. However, proper education and training to rise above becoming merely a skilled laborer was never offered.

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

From the 1890s until the 1990s, the Canadian government operated a residential school system developed for First Nations and Inuit children in partnership with a number of Christian churches. The intention of the government in setting up these schools and residences was to assimilate Aboriginal peoples into mainstream Canadian society. They wanted to accomplish this by taking First Nations and Inuit children from their homes to eliminate parental and community involvement and influence during the children's formative years.[7] This severely disrupted family and community life as parents were unable to raise their children and Traditional Elders could not teach cultural traditional knowledge and practices. Meanwhile, at school, the values and culture of the schools clashed with Aboriginal values and cultures. Forbidden to speak their languages and threatened with severe punishments and/or beating, Aboriginal children were taught that their cultural beliefs and practices were sinful. They were expected to become Christians and then live their lives as Christians.[8] Over time, many students became ashamed of their families, languages, and cultures and carried this shame into adulthood.

Ministers, priests, nuns, missionaries and participating RCMP officers set up the schools as their way of "saving" Aboriginal children and converting them to the Christian faith. They taught the classes and supervised the students from morning to night. Often, school staff were overworked, underpaid, and, in many instances of staff shortages, unqualified.

At first, many parents chose not to send their children to residential schools. They were often punished by not receiving their family allowance or even by being sent to jail. However, in 1920, amendments to the Indian Act made it mandatory for First Nations and Inuit parents to send their children to school. Some Métis and non-status First Nations families also chose to send their children to these schools,[9] hoping for a good education and a better future for their children. Many children ran away from residential schools in an effort to return home and escape abuse inflicted on them.

In residential schools, students spent only half day in the classroom and the rest of the day was spent learning a trade. Some students benefited; but students most received an inferior education and did not have the same educational opportunities as children in the provincial school system. Sixteen-year-old graduates often left residential schools with a grade two or three education.

Many Aboriginal children did not see their parents for years. The absence of loving parental and family involvement meant that children lacked role models. Deprived of a traditional family and community life, Aboriginal children lived in over-crowded, under-funded, and often unhealthy living conditions. Many students never made it back home, as over half of all Aboriginal students attending residential schools died of unfamiliar diseases like tuberculosis, measles, smallpox, or chickenpox.[10] Many students committed suicide. For other students it took years before they were able to return home due to long distances home and a lack of transportation.

Discipline was often harsh at residential schools, and children were vulnerable to neglect and abuse. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) has documented the emotional, physical, and sexual abuse that many children experienced during their time spent at residential schools.[11] The impact of this was devastating. Thousands of students returned to their homes unrecognizable to their families and communities. The communities themselves had also changed with the loss of the children. Parents, families,

and communities experienced deep pain as almost all communities were affected. Whole communities were silent since their children were taken away. Many former students turned to drugs, alcohol, and violence to cope.

Note: This is an emotional section. If this topic is brought into schools and classrooms, ensure mental health professionals are available to help students and Traditional Elders/presenters deal with the topic.

Residential School Timeline

- **1892** Residential Schools are established in partnership with a number of Christian churches.
- **1920** Amendment to the Indian Act makes it mandatory for First Nations and Inuit children to attend residential schools.
- **1986–1994** The United Church, the Anglican Church, and the Presbyterian Church apologize for attempting to impose European culture an values on Aboriginal people.
- **1991** Phil Fontaine becomes the first Aboriginal leader to publically disclose his experiences of abuse at residential school.
- **mid-1990s** Thousands of former residential school students begin to take legal action against the churches that ran the schools as well as the federal government that funded them. Former students ask for compensation for the injuries they had sustained, as well as for their loss of language and culture.
- **1996** The last residential school closes its doors in Saskatchewan. The Royal Commission publishes a comprehensive report of First Nations issues.
- **2007** The court approves the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history. The agreement calls for the establishment of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation.
- **2008** The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada is launched.
- **June 11, 2008** Prime Minister Stephen Harper issues an apology to former residential school students on behalf of all Canadians, recognizing that the primary purpose of the schools was to remove children from their homes and families in order to assimilate them into mainstream Canadian culture. He said that such a policy was wrong and had no place in this country.
- **April 29, 2009** The Roman Catholic church has a decentralized system and, previous to this date, various Roman Catholic organizations apologized. On April 29, 2009, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI “expressed his sorrow at the anguish caused by the deplorable conduct of some members of the Church and he offered his sympathy and prayerful solidarity.”[12] AFN leader Phil Fontaine called this “an unofficial” but welcomed apology.

Current Implications and Impact of Residential Schools

Many Canadians view residential schools as a dark chapter in our country's distant past and something best forgotten. However, the legacy of residential schools continues to shape and impact the lives of the approximately 80,000 former students, who are still alive today, as well as the children and grandchildren of all former students. Many of these grandchildren are students in our own classrooms today.

Historically, the loss of children to residential schools devastated First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities and led to the weakening of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit family responsibilities.[13] While entire communities suffered the loss of their children at home, their children's experiences at the schools stripped many of them of their cultural pride and identity. Many children experienced cruelty and abuse, which left them emotionally scarred for the rest of their lives.[14]

While the last of the approximately 150 federally funded residential schools closed its doors in Saskatchewan in 1996, the assimilative beliefs and attitudes that infused residential schools have not changed. These beliefs and attitudes toward First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples can be observed in the social, economic, and political challenges that most Aboriginal peoples and communities face every day of their lives.[15] These beliefs and attitudes are also present in our schools and, if left unexamined, will continue to oppress Aboriginal students and hinder their educational success.

Many former students of residential schools have asked for help and support through counselling. In 2008, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was launched to

> *…reveal to Canadians the complex truth about the history and the ongoing legacy of the church-run residential schools, in a manner that fully documents the individual and collective harms perpetuated against Aboriginal peoples, and honours the resiliency and courage of former students, their families, and communities; and guide and inspire a process of truth and healing, leading toward reconciliation within Aboriginal families, and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, churches, governments and Canadians generally. The process will work to renew relationships on a basis of inclusion, mutual understanding, and respect.*[16]

This process of healing continues to this day.

In the Classroom

As teachers we know how important it is that parents are actively involved in their children's education. However, due to their own negative experiences, many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit parents and grandparents feel uncomfortable and choose not to participate in their children's schools. Others may believe that they do not know enough about the Western school system to enable them to support their children effectively.[17] Lack of trust in Western governments often makes it difficult for the education system and other government agencies to provide assistance in a meaningful way.

In Conclusion

A deeper understanding of the legacy of residential schools on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples enables teachers to identify and challenge stereotypes and discriminatory practices that may currently be present in their schools and classrooms. Effective teachers today strive to prepare their Aboriginal students for life in the modern world but not at the cost of losing their cultures.[18] Teaching Aboriginal students history from within Aboriginal perspectives helps students understand the historical and social forces that have shaped their experience.[19] Rather than ignoring this dark chapter in Canada's past, understanding

and teaching the true history of residential schools not only honours First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, but also significantly contributes to the healing of both the oppressed and the oppressors.

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- **Teachers and students researching (inquiry activity) residential school**
- **Interviewing survivors, Traditional Elders, etc.**
- **Hosting a heritage fair**
- **Talking circles**
- **Mapping out a day in the life of a student in residential school; researching how children arrived at residential school**
- **Passport activity in an actual residential school; experiential learning (e.g., Museum of Tolerance)**
- **Mapping out the location of residential schools throughout Canada**
- **A panel discussion of the Apology and the healing process**
- **Providing counselling services, as needed, to students and others**

Classroom Strategies

IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Resources

- www.otc.ca (Office of the Treaty Commissioner)
- www.trc.ca (Truth and Reconciliation website)
- *Kiss of the Fur Queen* by Thompson Highway (book, grades 11–12)
- Modify programming from the Asper Foundation (sensitive teaching)
- Aboriginal Healing Foundation
- Assembly of First Nations

Note:

Teachers should know that this is a very sensitive topic and should be treated with respect and care. Provide school community with the option to participate with ceremony and prayer throughout the whole learning process. (Traditional Elder guidance is important.) Be cognizant of local spiritual traditions and practices (ceremonies) surrounding the engagement of sensitive learning such as residential schools, and be prepared for local protocol (e.g., gifting for Traditional Elders).

Residential Schools Teaching Strategies

One of the most profound ways for an educator to prepare to teach about residential schools is for the educator to connect with the regional FNMI community and learn about the residential school experiences from the area. Educators can access narrative accounts through various multi-media and print resources available in bookstores and online.

Before teaching the topic of residential schools, it is important that educators consult their FNMI communities and their regional school authorities; then educators need to use their professional judgement in deciding how to present the content in class. The activities in this section are designed for an educator to address the timeline of events and to provide an activity for connecting with the regional FNMI community.

Schools in the Community

1. Class Discussion: What is the role of schools and education in the community?
   - Collect student responses and encourage students to also record their caregivers' responses as well.
   - Use Medicine Wheel Teachings Graphic Organizer to collect responses on the role of education physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually.
   - Summarize the main points in a concept map or list.

2. Positive School Environments
   - Create public displays in your school that reflect the language, culture, and community leaders from the FNMI community.
   - Celebrate FNMI people who have contributed to the educational needs of their communities.
   - Connect with FNMI parents and caregivers and invite them to school functions and activities.
   - Conduct an informational evening for parents and caregivers that focuses on resources available to help support student learning.

Residential Schools

3. Class Discussion: Residential Schools

   Depending on the age/grade level and on regional protocols, compare the current role of schools and education in the community to the legacy of residential schools.

4. Inquiry Questions
   - What causes change?
   - How am I connected to people in the past?
   - How and why do beliefs change?
   - How does the education system affect society?
   - What is worth fighting for?

5. History of Residential Schools
   - Use locally approved resources to study the residential school experience.
   - Create a classroom timeline of the significant events relating to residential schools.
   - Students can write a journal entry from the perspective of a residential school student from any point in history.
   - Students can research the statistics of local residential schools. Be mindful of the sensitive issues students could come across.

6. Connecting Past to Present
   - Research the legacy of residential schools and the political reactions.
   - Study the issues related to truth and reconciliation and the Apology.
   - Debrief students and provide supports when dealing with sensitive issues.

7. Connecting with Community
   - Invite FNMI community members to the classroom to discuss the role of education within their community. Complete listening forms and reflections after each speaker's presentation. Depending on the student population and school protocols, speakers can discuss historical or contemporary issues in education.

Resources

Graphic Organizers

- Reproducible Medicine Wheel Teachings Graphic Organizer, page 84 of this resource
- Reproducible Listening/Viewer Notes, page 89 of this resource

Instructional Strategies

- Writing to Inform
  http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/strats/writinginform/index.html
- Timelines
  - http://socialstudies.mrdonn.org/timelines.html
  - http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/timeline-30007.html
- Journal Writing
  http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/strats/journal/index.html
- Letter to the Government
  http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/correspondence-project-lesson-letters-1083.html?tab=5#tabs

Connecting Past to Present Content

- CBC.ca—“Residential Schools”
  http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2008/05/16/f-faqs-residential-schools.html
- Turtle Island Native Network
  http://www.turtleisland.org/resources/resources001.htm
- Assembly of First Nations—“The Story”
  http://www.afn.ca/index.php/en/about-afn/our-story
- Truth and Reconciliation—“Residential Schools”
  http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=4
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada—“Indian Residential Schools”
  http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015576/1100100015577
- Parliament of Canada—“The Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission”
  http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/researchpublications/prb0848-e.htm

Connecting with Community

- Dene Kede—Teacher Resource Manual
  http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/files/K-12/Curriculum/dene-kede/Teacher-Resource-Part-1-Orientation.pdf
- “Aboriginal Elders and Community Workers in Schools”
  http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/aborigininal-elders-community-workers
- “Shared Learnings”
  http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/shared.pdf
- “Integrating Aboriginal Perpectives into Curricula”
  http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/abpersp/ab_persp.pdf
- Walking Together
  http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aswt/
- “Our Words, Our Ways”
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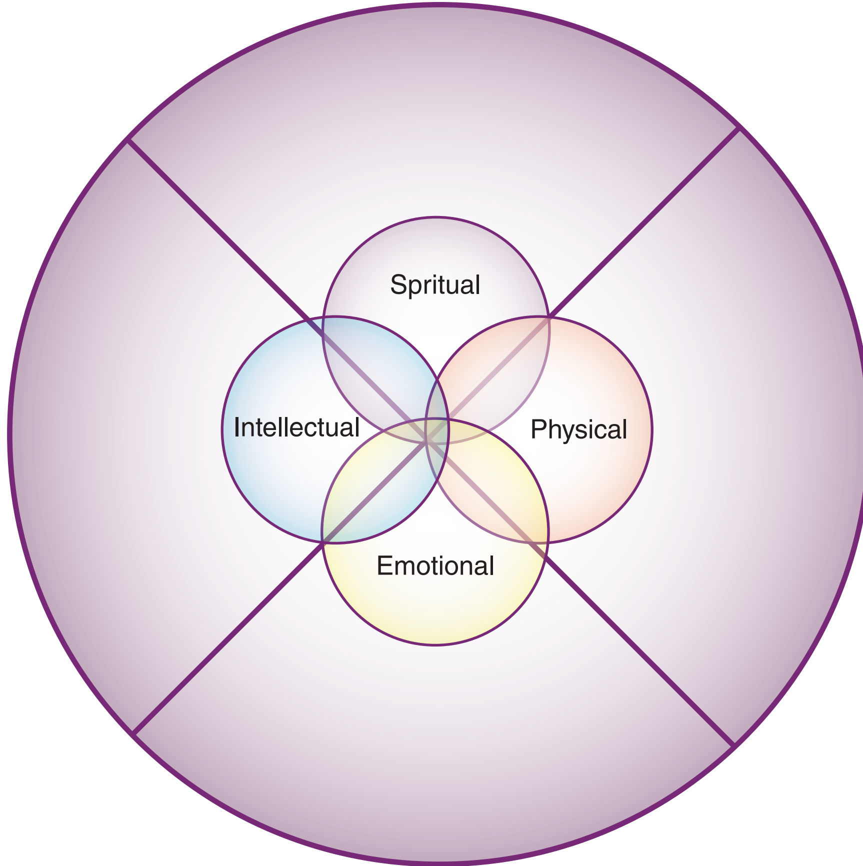
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Individual/Group Response Form

What is the role of schools and education in the community? How does education affect the community physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually?



What would happen if the education system did not fulfill these roles? What would happen to educational stakeholders and students physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually?

The purpose of this graphic organizer is to bring students through a two-stage process. First, discuss and record the role of schools in addressing the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs of a student. Second, record the impact on society if the education system did not fulfill these roles. After examining the current education system, make connections to significant historical events related to residential schools.

Residential School Inquiry Questions

What causes change?

How is the past connected to the present?

How and why do beliefs change?

How does the education system affect society?

What is worth fighting for?

This graphic organizer can be used by both educators and students. These questions are designed to have students thinking critically about issues related to residential schools. The wording allows students across different grades to respond at their level of understanding. Educators can use these questions to focus student research as topics for position papers or as a reflective process to increase student awareness.

Residential Schools Timeline

Pre-Residential School Experience	
Arrival of Europeans	
1892	
1920	
1986–1994	
1991	
Mid 1990s	
1996	
2007	
2008	
11 June 2008	

Students can fill in the sections with the topics they studied in relation to the history of residential schools. Students can record the key points from their research on each of the time periods listed. These dates come directly from the educator resource, it is not intended to be an inclusive list. Educators may want to include additional dates.

Impact of Residential Schools

Implication/Issue:

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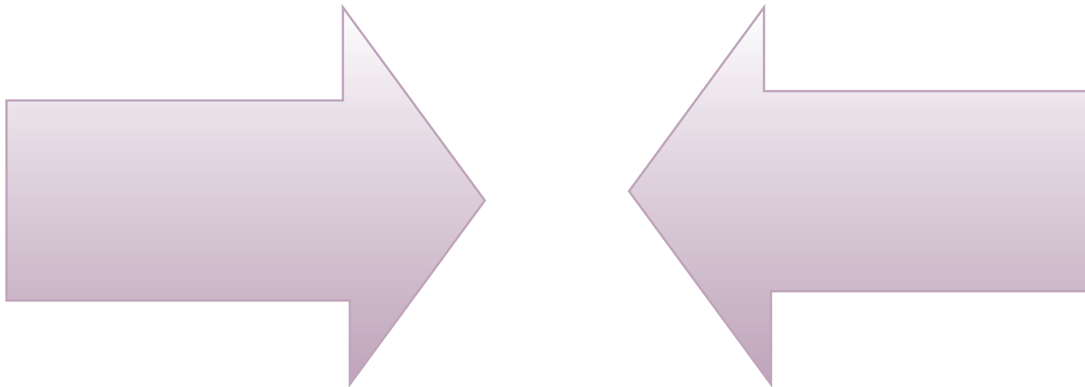

Implication/Issue:

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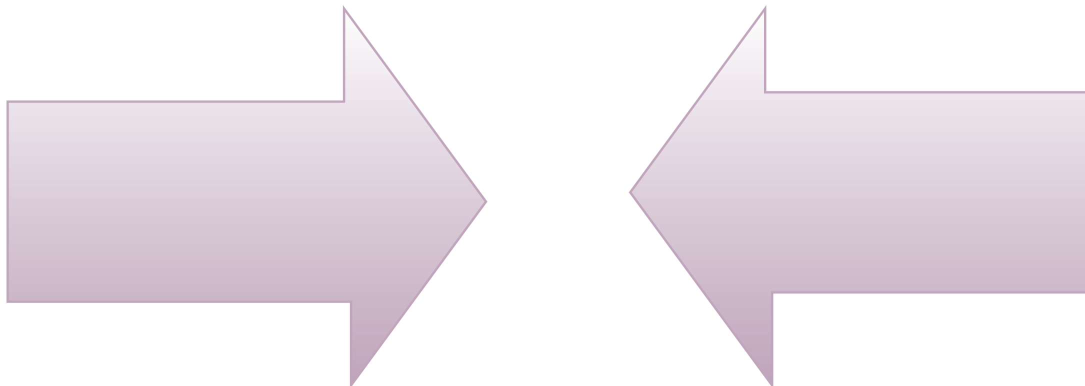
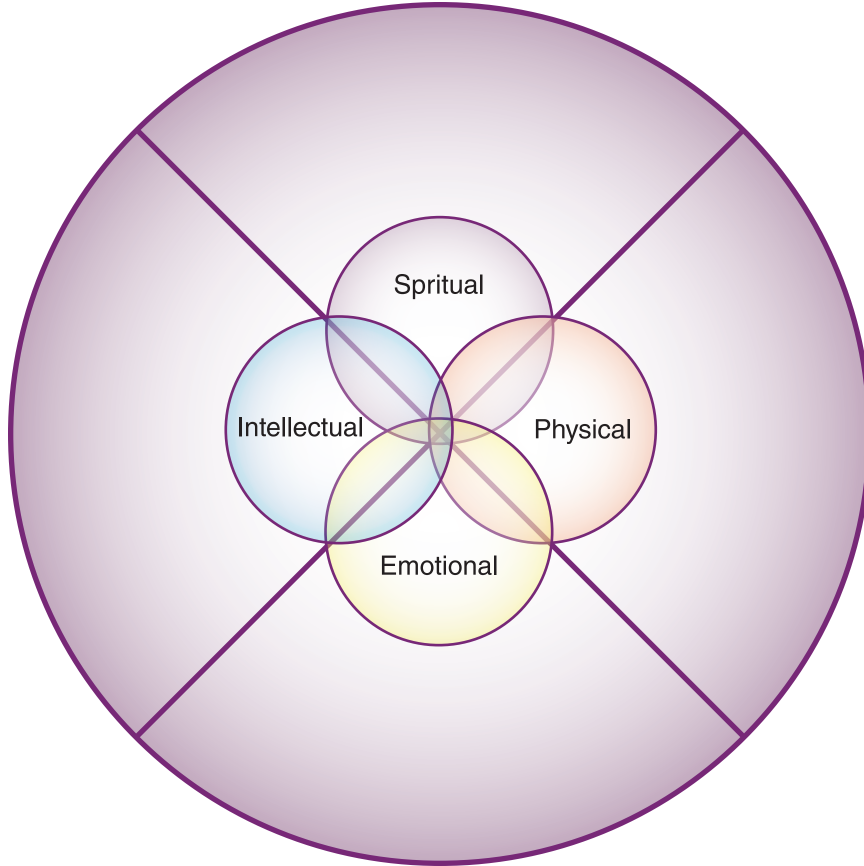


Students can use this graphic organizer to record the opposing worldviews of European and FNMI peoples and issues that create and result in conflict. This sheet provides an opportunity for educators to assess student understanding of more than one perspective.

Impact of Residential Schools



This graphic organizer can be used by students to record the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual impact of residential schools on FNMI peoples. The lines on the bottom can be used for personal reflection or to answer a question posed by the educator.

Listening/Viewing Notes

Name:	**Date:**
Presenter/Presentation:	
Presentation Topic:	

Facts from Presenter/Presentation	**Personal Reflection**
Summary Presenter's Perspective	

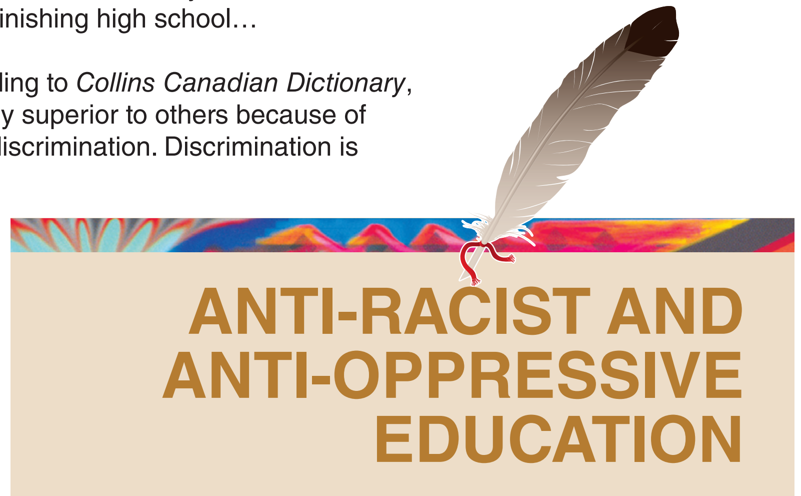
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Students can use this sheet to record information from a guest speaker or from a visual presentation. If a Traditional Elder or traditional storyteller presents to students either in the classroom or at a significant site, this response form can be filled in after the presentation.

What Is Racism?

A third grade First Nations girl that nobody wants to play with at recess; a Métis boy who 'never tries' in school so why bother trying to teach him; an Inuit girl who loves to read but cannot find a single book in the school library about her culture; the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students who drop out of school before finishing high school…

What do these examples have to do with racism? According to *Collins Canadian Dictionary*, the term *racism* is "the belief that some races are innately superior to others because of hereditary characteristics."[1] Closely related to racism is discrimination. Discrimination is the act of showing prejudice against people who are believed to be different, such as those of another race, religions, sexual orientation, and/or skin color. Prejudice and bigotry are acts of judging, intolerance, or even irrational hatred for other races, religions, sexual orientation, and/or skin color.



Systemic or institutionalized racism occurs when the privileging of one cultural group over another is built in to a system's policies and procedures. In this situation, one cultural group is believed to be superior while other cultural groups are looked upon as inferior. This type of racism is often normalized, taken for granted, and silent. Here are some examples of systemic racism that may be present in some schools:

- a provincial curriculum that focuses mainly on knowledge from the mainstream culture[2]
- the use of educational images (e.g. signs and posters) that mainly feature people and children of the mainstream culture
- a lack of flexibility in school policies and procedures, such as attendance and testing, that often exclude Aboriginal students and families who may need help and support

For people who are of the same mainstream Euro-Canadian culture as their school, these examples might go completely unnoticed as their effects are not personally felt or seen. In fact, some people believe that racism is something that took place in the past or happens in other places around the world. However, for people who differ from the mainstream Euro-Canadian culture, the experience of racism is often pervasive. Racism is present in situations where there is an imbalance of power, which serves to privilege one group over another. Racism may be experienced by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students in the form of stereotyping, prejudices, overtones, verbal attacks, belittling, humiliation, hostility, name-calling, racial slurs, negative experiences with teachers, feeling misrepresented or misunderstood, or lacking the feeling of belonging.[3]

Racism and Personal/Social identity

Each one of us is born into a social group. As we grow and develop, our understanding of who and what we are is a reflection of the larger group we belong to. When we are young, we tend to see ourselves as others see us; therefore, how others define us and respond to us plays a significant role in the construction of our self-concept and social identity.[4]
When students of the mainstream culture see themselves reflected in their schools, their cultural identity is affirmed and strengthened. You may have heard the term, *white privilege*. This refers to how people in North America with white skin do not have to think about their own racial identity within mainstream culture because it is reflected all around them.[5] When Aboriginal students attend schools where their culture is negated, ignored, or rejected, these students personally feel negated, ignored, and rejected. Some students respond to this by

altering their personal and social identities in an attempt to fit in and establish a sense of belonging. Other students internalize their experiences, which manifests as low self-esteem and low self-worth.[6] Some students choose to stand their ground and fight back and, then, are punished for this. Still others choose to simply remove themselves from the situation and drop out of school.

Research shows that issues of personal and social identity are directly linked to educational achievement, where students who are ashamed of their culture and try to hide their cultural identity tend to have low engagement in school and lower rates of success. Students who are proud of their heritage, have a strong cultural identity, and feel safe in expressing their identity experience higher academic achievement.[7]

History of Colonialism

In the past many schools were, and in some case continue to be, oppressive places for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students. For generations, residential schooling was the primary method religious organizations and governments used to assimilate Aboriginal children into mainstream Euro-Canadian culture by eroding their cultural identity. Within the schools, very clear 'colour lines' demonstrated who was superior and who was inferior.[8] This had a devastating impact on the cultural and social structures within Aboriginal communities, the effects of which are present to this day.

School Has a Culture?

So often when we use the term *culture*, we are referring to other ethnic groups and/or ethnic characteristics. In actuality, culture exists everywhere. For example, the Canadian public school system has a culture; and each school has its own subculture, which can be observed in student dress codes, rules governing behaviour, language spoken, grades, prevailing attitudes, and even foods available in the cafeterias. These aspects of school seem 'neutral' and 'normal,' but they clearly reflect the norms of middle-income Euro-Canadian culture and are designed to benefit middle-income Euro-Canadians.[9]

Where schools should be a path to freedom and self-fulfillment for all students, the world of the school is still a place of daunting challenges and obstacles for people who are different from the mainstream culture.[10] First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students in particular, are immediately placed at an academic disadvantage as soon as they enter a school system based on a singular, monocultural view of learning and teaching.

It is easy to take it for granted that most educators in provincial schools are from the mainstream Euro-Canadian culture. Most Canadian educators have been raised within the mainstream Euro-Canadian school and secondary system and have been taught only one way to teach. When First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students come to class with different perspectives, beliefs, and behaviours, they are often corrected and guided to the perceived "right way" of thinking, learning, and being. This is also known as the hidden curriculum, where values, opinions, and norms of the mainstream Eurocentric culture are transmitted to minority cultures. Many Aboriginal educators have also attended a mainstream western university or teacher college where they have been taught the "right way" to teach. This instruction is from a single western cultural framework. Unless this is identified and questioned, even Aboriginal educators can unknowingly take on the role of 'oppressors' in their own classrooms. Some Aboriginal educators attend Aboriginal teacher education programs where this issue is identified and addressed. Although few educators are consciously racist, many do not realize that their attempts to 'help them become more like us' is actually oppressive and damaging.[11]

Curriculum also mainly reflects the mainstream Euro-Canadian culture, where outside of social studies there is comparatively very little mention of the contributions First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples have made to this country. Across the curriculum, Euro-Canadian knowledge is held up as universal and the highest standards in terms of accuracy and validity.[12] Meanwhile Traditional Ways of Knowing are looked upon as quaint, superstitious 'folk knowledge.' Social struggles and power relationships take place daily in the classroom, where First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students may encounter authoritative relationships with educators and principals, racist attitudes, and beliefs about the inferiority of their cultures. This creates an intolerable classroom environment for Aboriginal students, who are made to feel stupid when they cannot learn effectively under these circumstances.[13] Often a student who receives poor evaluations is unfairly labelled, which then contributes to their teacher having little or no academic expectations from Aboriginal students. These lower expectations become self-fulfilling prophecies when the labelling is internalized by the students.[14]

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students and their families are usually blamed for their academic failures. It is believed that Aboriginal peoples are poor because of their own lack of motivation or ability. There is little understanding of the fact that they are confronting a school system that has little understanding of their histories; socioeconomic realities; or particular needs, hopes, fears, issues, and challenges.[15] In 'blaming the victim,' schools and educators create self-fulfilling prophesies for their students and absolve themselves of any responsibility.

Anti-Racist Education

Until recently, schools have been foreign to local Aboriginal communities. If you visit a reserve, you will probably notice that the school building and teacher residences look very different from the rest of the community.[16]

After recognizing how schooling has failed First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students for over a century, many principals, educators, and scholars are currently looking for ways to introduce meaningful change in their relationships with Aboriginal communities and to address the needs of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students more effectively. Part of this ongoing work is an honest look at school structures, programming, policies, curriculum, pedagogy, beliefs, and attitudes to identify any personal or systemic racism, whether it is conscious or unconscious.

In Conclusion

Anti-racist education is for everyone and is a direct investment toward a better and brighter future for all. Embracing and valuing diversity opens us up to new ways of thinking about our everyday lives. Learning more about the experiences of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples deepens our own understanding of our common humanity. Becoming aware of racism in all of its forms promotes understanding, compassion, patience, and understanding for one another. This is the essence of good teaching.

It is morning recess. There is a little third grade girl on the playground; she is showing her friends her beaded head band, and in return, is learning 'cat's cradle' with a length of string. Inside the classroom, a Métis boy has finally worked up the courage to tell his teacher that he is often hungry when he gets to school and finds it hard to concentrate on his studies, and that he misses his grandfather who recently passed away. An Inuit girl is helping the librarian shelve a new batch of books that just came in. She is beaming with pride as she discovers books about Inuit cultures, traditions, and Traditional Elder stories. And, finally, the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students who have been thinking about giving up and dropping out of school are reflecting on their teacher's warm words of encouragement and decide to stay just one more day, and then another…

Endnotes

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Anti-Racist and Anti-Oppressive Education

Resources

"White Privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack" article (Peggy McIntosh);

Jane Elliot, "Indecently Exposed" (video)

Barbara Coloroso "The Bullied, the Bully and the Bystander"

Nel Noddings – the ethics of care

Spencer, "Who moved my cheese?"

"Charlie Squash goes to town" Video (national film board)

The FNMI community

Who are people?: "Smoke Signals," "Dance me Around" (humour); "Tipi Tales" (younger audience)

Classroom Strategies

- **Keeping a journal that documents initial and informed understanding**
- **Questioning/reflecting/discussing societal and individual value systems**
- **Having groups that focus on social justice issues (e.g., injustices), which may have potential of developing into 'action' groups.**
- **Encouraging volunteerism (social activism initiative)**
- **Interviewing candidates, perhaps creating a video or newsletter to be accessible to the entire school community**
- **Role-play or role-reversal activities (Students should always model positive behaviours. Teachers should enact any necessary negative portrayals.)**
- **Getting to know the community by learning about the organizations or groups and developing relationships (Who are the people in your neighbourhood?)**

Note:

Find resources that are representative of the diversity within the community. Understand the community and prepare appropriately (e.g., dress, behaviour etc.).

Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppressive Education Teaching Strategies

It is important for teachers to understand the context in which FNMI educational issues originate. It is also essential that educators recognize that the education system in Canada is not only a part of the problem; it is a powerful means to a solution towards reconciliation and healing. The work of dealing with anti-racist and anti-oppression education begins with the individual educator in a process of self-discovery and reflection on professional practice. Complete the Educator Reflections and consider the following promising practices.

Resources for this section will include organizations, funding opportunities, and programs that may help in creating a positive learning environment for all students.

ANTI-RACIST AND ANTI-OPPRESSIVE EDUCATION

Meaningful Ways to Practice Anti-Racist Education in Your Classroom and in Your School

- Examine your own beliefs and opinions regarding both Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal peoples and ask yourself, “Why do I believe this?”
- Observe your own teaching practices and see if you have certain tendencies. Here are some examples to watch for. Do you spend more time helping non-Aboriginal students? Do you face the non-Aboriginal students while teaching with your back or side to the Aboriginal students? Do you have lower expectations of certain students? Do you avoid phoning the parents of Aboriginal students?
- Celebrate and value cultural diversity and the gifts that each student brings to the classroom.
- Encourage cultural pride and celebrations.
- Be sure that the cultures of all of your students are represented in your classroom—posters, books, cultural materials, etc.
- Infuse Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum wherever possible.
- Invite First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Traditional Elders and guests into the classroom and model respectful behaviour for your students.
- Become more involved with the Aboriginal communities in your area and attend community events.
- Have high expectations of all of your students, especially your Aboriginal students.
- Create a classroom community where all of your students feel safe, that they belong, and are welcome and valued.
- Deal with racist behaviour as it happens and use these opportunities to model tolerance and compassion for others.
- Teach Canadian history inclusively, including the Residential School system and the Sixties Scoop, and include the many positive Aboriginal contributions to this nation so that all students may deepen their understanding of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations.
- Honour the First Nations whose land your school occupies with a plaque at the door of the school.
- Learn all that you can about the cultures of your Aboriginal students, and respect and value their knowledge and Traditional Ways of Knowing. Incorporate this into your teaching wherever you can.

- Read books, listen to music, and view art and films by Aboriginal authors, musicians artists, and film makers. Bring these materials into the classroom where possible and appropriate.
- Share the leadership in your classroom by promoting student autonomy and allowing students to lead activities as and when they feel comfortable to do so.
- Get cross-cultural and inter-cultural training to deepen your understanding, and build your communication skills.
- Talk freely and openly about racism, discrimination, prejudice, stereotypes, and bigotry. Read books on this topic with the class and facilitate discussion and storytelling among the class.
- Encourage your principal and fellow staff to examine your school's anti-racist policies, and make improvements where needed.
- Encourage your principal and other staff to talk about issues of racism in the school. Notice how school programming may be benefiting some students while leaving other students out.

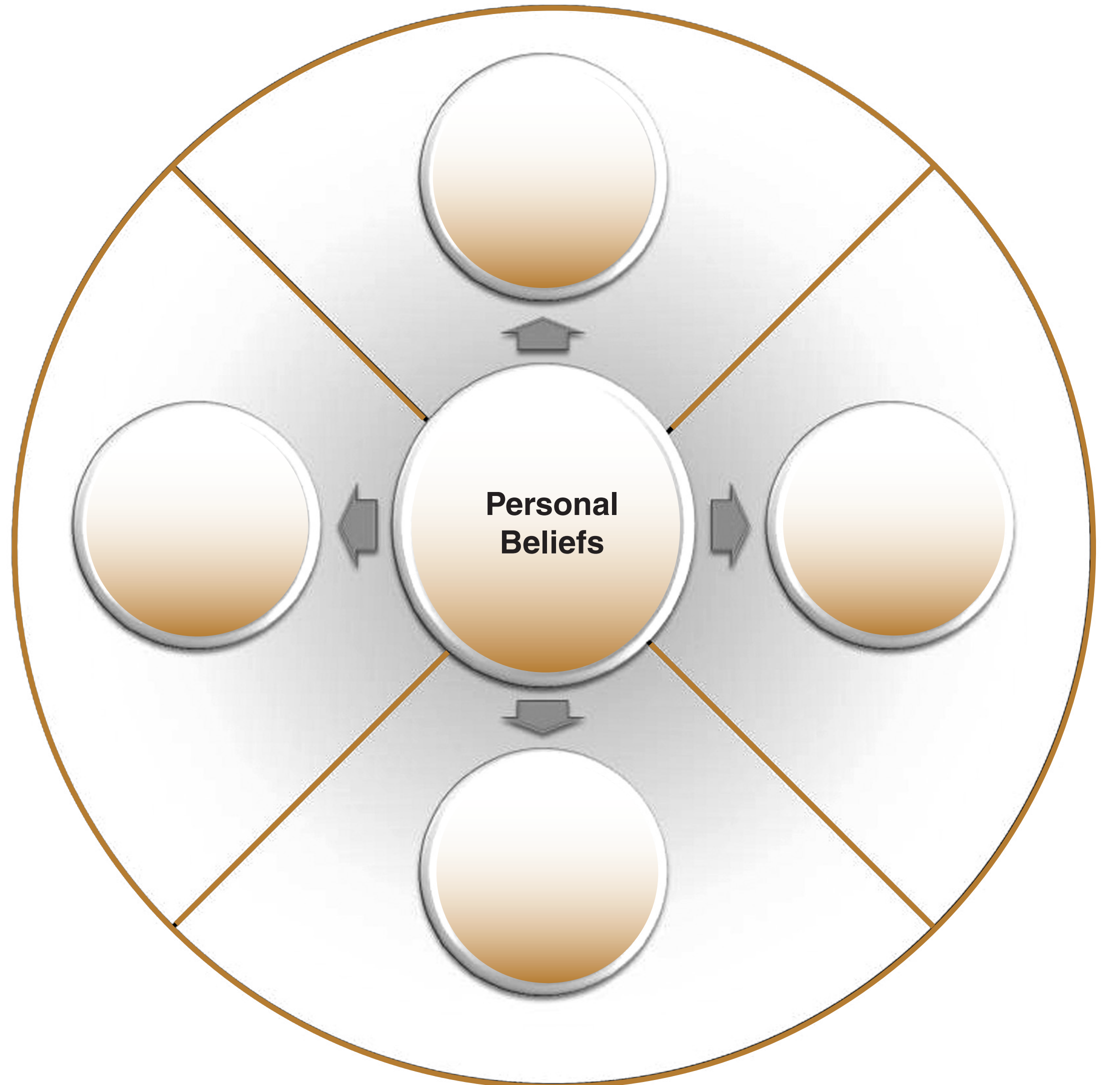
Resources

- UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization—Building Peace in the Minds of Men and Women
  - http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/
  - http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/strengthening-education-systems/languages-in-education/indigenous-education/
  - http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/priority-areas/links/indigenous-education/
- United Nations: Cyber Schoolbus
  http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/peace/frame.htm
- Imagineaction: A Student-Driven Social Action Movement
  - http://www.imagine-action.ca/
    Register an account using a school email address or contact the Canadian Teachers' Federation. Funding is available for social action projects.
  - http://www.imagine-action.ca/NewsArticle.aspx?id=4
- Jane Goodall's Roots and Shoots
  - http://www.janegoodall.ca/roots-shoots.php
  - http://www.janegoodall.ca/what-we-do-aboriginal.php
- Critical Thinking Consortium: Social Action Projects
  http://tc2.ca/uploads/PDFs/Social Action Projects/IA_Handbook_K-4_EN_FINAL.pdf

  Note: Resources for social action projects for grades 5–8 and 9–12 are available through the imagineaction website (http://www.imagine-action.ca/).

ANTI-RACIST AND ANTI-OPPRESSIVE EDUCATION

Personal Beliefs Cause and Effect



Use this graphic organizer with students to explore personal beliefs which relate to a particular issue or event. The purpose is to connect personal beliefs with behaviour and to foster a greater awareness of building positive relationships and communities.

Calendar of Cultural Events in the Community

Month:

S	M	T	W	T	F	S

Notes:

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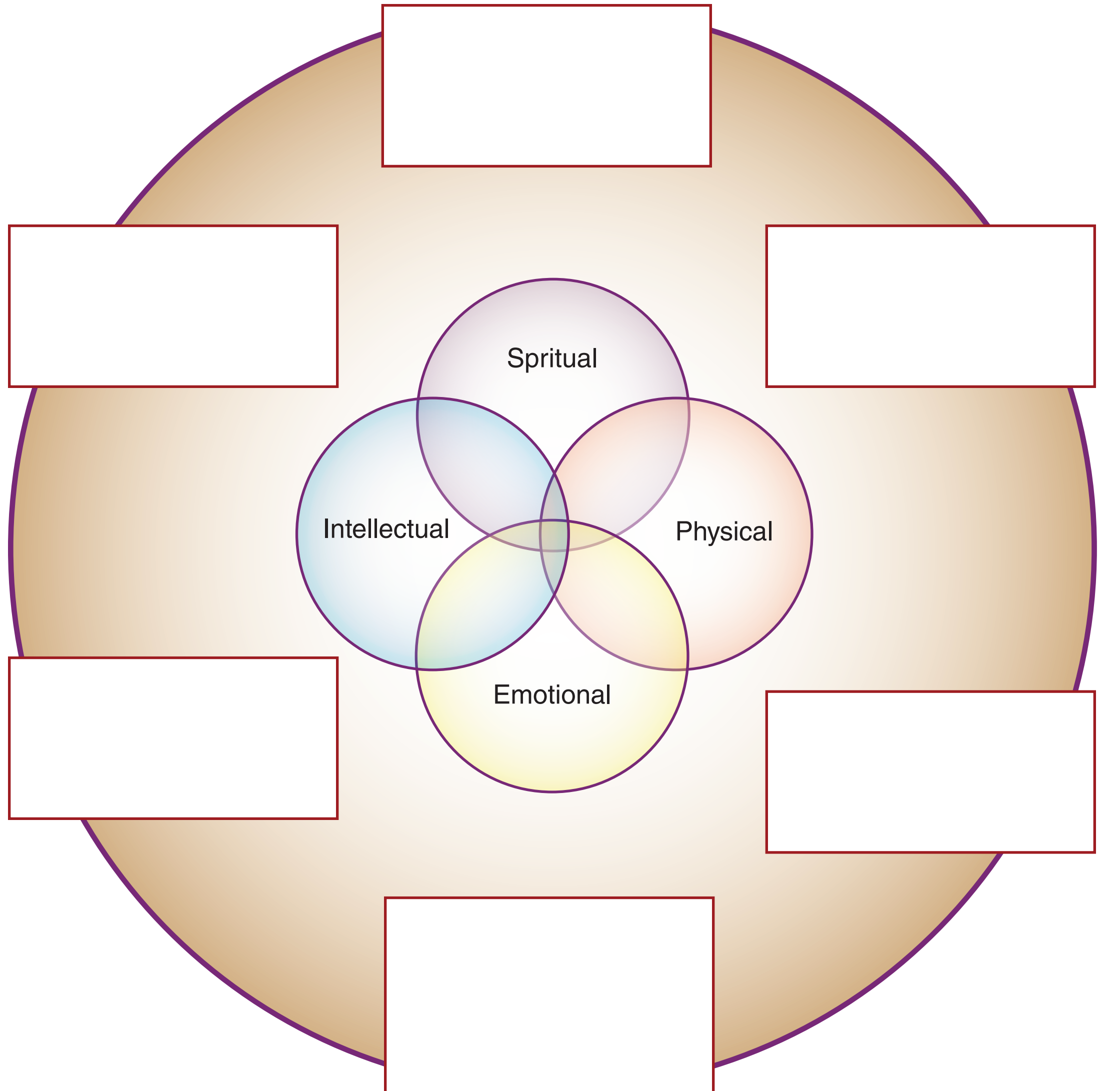
This calendar can be used by an educator as a classroom visual or for personal use. Educators—with input from students, parents, and comunity members—can record community cultural events.

Promoting Peace: What Does Peace Look Like?



This graphic organizer can be used by both educators and students. Educators can use it in establishing classroom protocols and guidelines. Students can use it as a reflective process to consider and record their personal beliefs about what peace "looks" like.

Personal and Community Qualities That Promote Peace and Acceptance

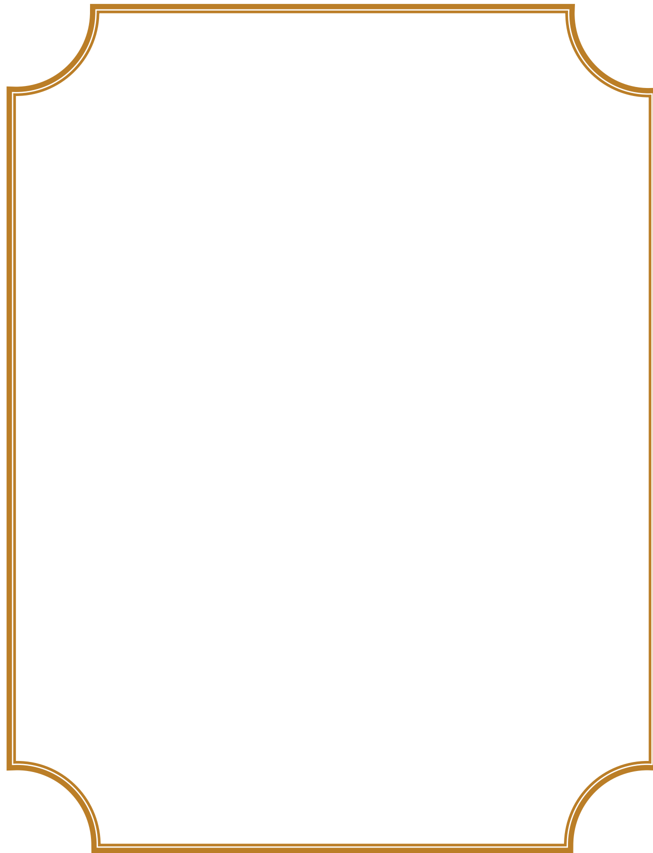
This graphic organizer can be used by both educators and students. Educators can use it in establishing classroom protocols and guidelines. Students can use it as a reflective process to consider and record their personal beliefs and community qualities that promote peace and acceptance.

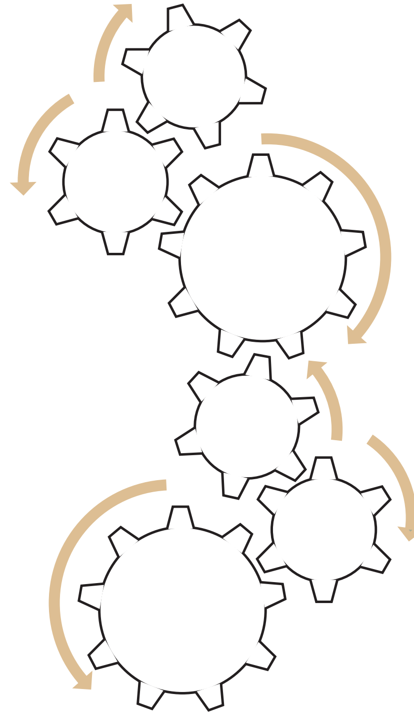
Anti-Racism Action Plans

Identifying Racist Behaviours	Addressing racism and promoting peace
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

The purpose of this graphic organizer is to articulate an action plan that addresses racist and oppressive behaviours in the classroom and in the community.

Honouring Community Leaders





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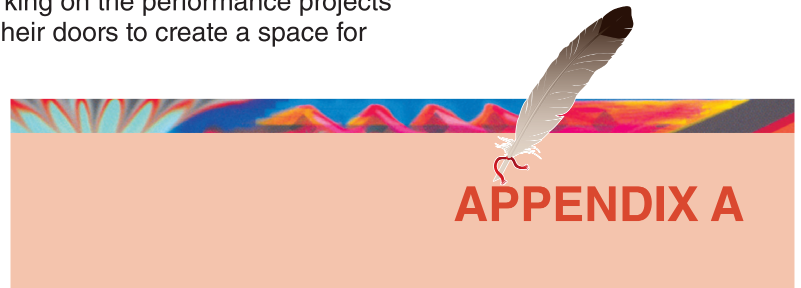
This graphic organizer can be used by both educators and students. Educators can use it as a classroom visual to post a picture of an FNMI community leader and to highlight how this person is interconnected in the community. One suggestion is for students to research the contributions of Aboriginal service men and women in the Canadian Armed Forces and to complete and display this graphic organizer in celebrating their achievements (http://www.veterans.gc.ca/public/pages/history/other/native/natives_e.pdf).

Performance Projects

When school communities and FNMI communities come together to create cultural and educational displays, there is an authentic opportunity for peace education to flourish. The performance projects extend beyond the school to become a repository of community knowledge, which serves as a testament of community strength and vitality. The use of technology can bridge old and new ways of knowing and make gathering the community input necessary to complete the performance projects more readily available. Technology is a tool that can help ensure an ongoing and continuous relationship with the purpose of constructive educational planning. Collaborating and working on the performance projects gives school authorities the opportunity to literally open their doors to create a space for learning, for sharing, and for building community-centred schools.



Once educators have completed the activities in the Personal Educator Reflections component, there is great value in sharing responses with other educators from the school community and with FNMI Traditional Knowledge Keepers. One way to connect and collaborate within communities is to select one or more of the following performance projects to reflect collective learning and understanding. The projects involve contributions from students, educators, and the FNMI community; and they can range from a classroom activity to an international project.

By working together and by creating performance projects, communities are working together to acknowledge how their past and future are connected to each other. This level of understanding requires interaction, discussion, and collaboration—it is not an understanding that can be attained in isolation. Publically acknowledging and displaying significant aspects of FNMI cultures and worldviews is also an important expression of reconciliation and peace education.

The following are suggestions for arts-based projects:

1. Métissage Messages
2. Photographic Displays
3. Community Collages
4. Video Productions

Creating performance projects within a school community provides limitless curricular connections to various subject areas and learning styles. Students have the opportunity to explore multiple literacies, and they can demonstrate their understandings in ways beyond text alone. Performance-based projects open the doors to mentorship connections, where community artists can become an important part of a student's learning.

Métissage Messages

In the five themes, there are Personal Inquiry Responses that address significant issues for each the topics. The key points in each educator's reflection statements can be used as a point of entry into a conversation with educators and FNMI community stakeholders. Weaving personal responses together is a process called *métissage*; it is a braiding of personal narratives in a way that showcases that each strand and each story has the opportunity to be seen and appreciated.

The following are some guidelines for creating a métissage piece for public performance (Simpkins, 2012):

- Narrative métissage is a mixture of oral and written traditions.
- Usually 4–6 individuals write an autobiographical text on a particular theme of the group's choosing. They do not discuss the theme, but leave it to each individual to interpret the theme.
- They write the piece in 3 to 5 segments. (They can incorporate accompanying images and sounds.)
- The writing takes the format of poetry, narrative, memoir, etc. or can be a mixture of these genres.
- The authors meet to purposefully mix/weave the segments together using points of affinity/difference in a way that retains the integrity of the individual voices/texts and, at the same time, creates one long text—this is the métissage piece.
- After the weaving is done, the authors then perform/share the métissage with an audience (each author reading his/her segment as it appears in the longer métissage piece), inviting the audience to weave their own interpretations into the fabric of the métissage.
- The common themes and ideas—how our lives overlap and are inter-connected or don't, how we share/don't share the same emotions—these points of affinity and difference portray the human condition.

For the performance project, communities can select one or a combination of personal inquiry questions or can choose to create personal responses on a specific theme. Educators and community members can complete their personal responses independently and then set a time to meet to weave the autobiographical texts together. The time spent together discussing each other's responses provides communities an opportunity to engage in authentic discussions on significant topics affecting FNMI students and FNMI content. Participants can choose to intertwine texts, photographs, songs, artefacts, dance, and other various art and media selections they create. Videotaping the performances and collecting electronic copies of the information help to create a body of regional research.

To add another element of depth to this project, educators can connect some of the topics/ content to the curricular and cultural planning within their subject area. Students can be encouraged to respond to the same questions and their personal narrative responses can be included in the performances as well.

Photographic Displays

Photographs found in existing personal and community collections as well as photographs that are purposefully taken provide a rich visual and cultural resource. Participants—students, educators, and FNMI community stakeholders—can select, capture, and collect photographs and images that connect to the five themes.

The assortment of photographs can be complied and used to create a social documentary that reflects the multiple perspectives and standpoints from within the community. Here are some ideas for using photographs to create a social documentary (Mitchell and Allnutt, 2008):

- Find (not take) seven or eight photos that appear (to you) to be linked to some sort of theme or narrative.
- Organize the seven or eight photos into a small photo album.
- Provide a title, a short curatorial statement of 150–200 words, short captions with each photo, and acknowledgements (where appropriate).
- Contain each aspect of the text material (curatorial statement and captions) to what can be placed within an album window.

Adaptations to this project could include having a community discussion about the found photographs and then extending the project to having participants take photographs that reflect similar and contrasting points of view. Visual literacy skills can be developed as participants uncover implicit and explicit messages contained in each image. The titles of the photographs and curatorial statements can also be used as a focus of discussion and as an entry point to a community conversation.

Photographic displays can be displayed in the community either by creating a gallery of printed images or by creating a multimedia presentation. There are many ways to use technology within this project as well as many mentorship opportunities among students, educators, and community members.

Community Collages

According to Butler-Kisber (2008), "collage is defined as the process of cutting and sticking found images and image fragments from popular print/magazines onto cardstock." The process of using multiple images inherently allows for opportunities to portray different perspectives on a single theme.

Participants—students, educators, and FNMI community stakeholders—can collect images they find that relate to one or more of the themes. When everyone gathers together, the images can be displayed and participants can begin to analyze, select, and organize the images while discussing why they chose the visuals they did. Through the process of choosing pieces that relate to a theme, various points of harmony and discord will occur. By displaying the images that reflect the similarities and differences in the group, there is an opportunity for each person's perspective to be presented and acknowledged.

This project can be extended to include a written component that further articulates the conversation taken part within the group. Written responses can be included as part of the visual collage as rationale statements, or they can be reflections on the completed collage. Displaying the collage and/or written texts provides a legacy for future community members to appreciate and study.

Video Productions

Video productions are powerful ways of giving a community the opportunity "to participate in representing their culture rather than consume television controlled by southern advertisers and corporations" and to "separate the reality that [is] being projected into their homes from the reality of their own rich cultural heritage" (Rahn, 2008).

Students, educators, and FNMI community members can work together to create videos that can be presented to the larger community, to the school community, and copies can be made available to all of the participants. Performance projects using videos can relate to the five themes or questions raised from the content of the five themes. Participants can craft and design questions or issue topics and they can bring their inquiries forward to Traditional Elders and FNMI community stakeholders. The videos captured can be very valuable as a representation of knowledge that is difficult to capture in text or image alone.

Video projects can be extended from using hand-held phones and video cameras to using more sophisticated technologies. Students can create documentary-style projects for broadcast in the community, both locally and internationally. As the conversation extends from the school and local community to a larger regional, national, or international community, all of the people involved can actively participate in drawing connections to the topics and to the living history of the people around them.

PERFORMANCE
PROJECTS

APPENDIX A:

Performance Projects: Métissage Messages

The performance tasks present an opportunity to collaborate and connect with others to create a reflection of the community and to leave a legacy of understanding. Take a moment to reflect on the following prompts and respond with an open mind to the possibilities of how understanding informs action, collaboration, and community.

My intent in participating in a performance task is to…

My greatest hopes for this project are…

Performance Projects: Photographic Displays

The performance tasks present an opportunity to collaborate and connect with others to create a reflection of the community and to leave a legacy of understanding. Take a moment to reflect on the following prompts and respond with an open mind to the possibilities of how understanding informs action, collaboration, and community.

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APPENDIX A:

Performance Projects: Community Collages

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Performance Projects: Video Productions

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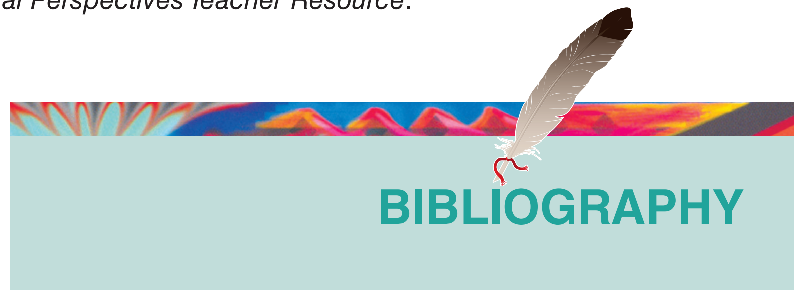

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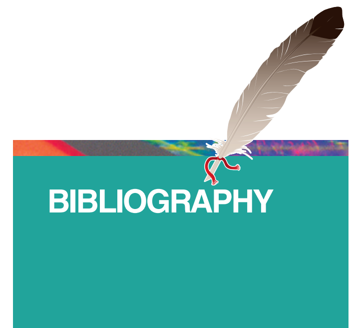

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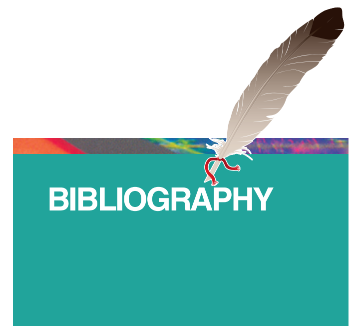

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