

**DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS
EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE****Future of Education and Skills 2030: Conceptual Learning Framework****Meaningful reconciliation: indigenous knowledges flourishing in B.C.'s K-12 education system for the betterment of all students****8th Informal Working Group (IWG) Meeting
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1. This draft paper was submitted by the Ministry of Education, British Columbia, Canada with contributions from Denise AUGUSTINE, Jo-Anne CHRONA, Colleen HODGSON, Lorna WILLIAMS.

2. This draft paper was written by Lorna WILLIAMS, from the University of Victoria, Canada.

This is still a “working document”

For ACTION: Participants are invited to **COMMENT** before 5 November 2018.

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Abstract

B.C. has a dark history with the treatment of Indigenous peoples. Residential schools, forced assimilation, stripping of land and rights over hundreds of years have residual effects and societal consequences today. To begin a journey to heal relationships requires truth, apology, commemoration and action to address the past.

There are a variety of positive efforts taking place in B.C.'s education system today to support reconciliation. The goal is to support a rich and meaningful shift in the system that involves being honest about the narrative of Canada and those Indigenous to the land. Systemic impact can be achieved in built together, for the betterment of all children. To embrace reconciliation requires courage and commitment to address racism, build knowledge, support language revitalisation – all through collective efforts.

There needs to be an appreciation for Indigenous knowledges and an understanding of Canada's history with Indigenous people. The gifts of Indigenous knowledges have been undervalued through colonisation and there is an opportunity in B.C. to change this. There is also a responsibility to address persistent racism in B.C. schools and specifically educators' low expectations of Indigenous students. These efforts can be supported through language revitalisation – one of Canada's most important challenges.

Honouring the vibrancy, resilience, and energy of Indigenous communities in B.C. is a priority. Public education is critical to reconciliation. It is the door to engaging young people about Canada's collective history, legacy and identity. By 2030 Indigenous knowledges will flourish in B.C.'s K-12 education system for the betterment of all students. The only way to achieve the vision is to truly embrace reconciliation. Indigenous knowledges flourishing in B.C.'s K-12 education system for the betterment of all students requires a personalised approach that enables Indigenous learners to see their cultures, languages and history genuinely reflected in the classroom and school community.

To embrace reconciliation, we must provide a welcoming and inclusive culture, support a knowledgeable and qualified workforce and honour jurisdiction in all that we do. All of B.C.'s curriculum contains Indigenous worldviews and perspectives – In all subjects and throughout all grades. Resources and supports have also been developed to compliment the curriculum. There are 17 provincial Indigenous language curriculums in use across BC public schools with more in development. Efforts to address racism in B.C. schools are well underway. A hands-on tool has been developed to support school districts with assessing and addressing inequities for Indigenous students. Today, all students in B.C. teacher education programs are required to complete Indigenous coursework and the provincial government has committed new Indigenous teacher education program seats.

Of course, the journey towards reconciliation in B.C.'s education system will not occur overnight. There is much work still to be done. Evidence of structural racism remains in B.C.'s education system. It is not okay that B.C. Indigenous students feel less safe at school than non-Indigenous students and this needs to be addressed. We also have more to do strengthen course offerings in Indigenous studies. New teachers to B.C. require the foundation to feel confident engaging with Indigenous students, families and communities. There is also a wonderful opportunity ahead to implement the recently negotiated BCTEA agreement that honours jurisdiction.



Definitions

Indigenous Knowledges

Indigenous peoples agree that ‘Indigenous knowledges’ cannot be defined from a Western orientation, and there is no one definition. Indigenous knowledges are diverse and action-oriented, and not considered to be neither a subject nor an object. Although Indigenous knowledges are place-based and unique to a people, there are shared understandings of this knowledge, including:

Interconnectedness: Everything is connected, nothing is excluded, and everything is related.

Everything is in a constant state of flux and motion.

Sharing, caring, giving, kindness, harmony, balance and beauty are words spoken about the world and contributions to the health and well-being of a community.

Knowledge that is expressed, transmitted, transferred and practiced in varied forms.

Indigenous People

Indigenous peoples are diverse and represent a vital part of the population, in and across many countries. Although there is no global definition of Indigenous people; some countries refer to Indigenous people as those who were first at contact; others, as nomadic peoples. Other countries use the term Aboriginal. Indigenous is “originating or occurring naturally in a particular place,” whereas aboriginal is “inhabiting or existing in a land from the earliest times,” also referring to human migration as “first to arrive in a region.”

Indigenous People in Canada

In Canada, the definition of Indigenous peoples is made up of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis People. Each group is unique and individual. The 2011 National Household Survey reports that of the over 232,000 Indigenous people in B.C., 67% were First Nations, 30% were Métis and just under 1% was Inuk (Inuit). First Nations people live both on and off reserves.

Inuit

Indigenous people of northern Canada (parts of Greenland and Alaska). Also used to describe the languages of the Inuit. Translated means “the people” or “the language.” Recognised in Canada as one of the Aboriginal Peoples under the Constitution Act.

Métis

Describes distinct Indigenous peoples and nation on the plains of western North America during the late 1700’s. Recognised in Canada as one of the Aboriginal Peoples under the Constitution Act.

First Nations

First Nations are Indigenous people south of the Arctic Circle. There are 634 recognised First Nations governments or bands in Canada, predominantly located in Ontario and British Columbia. British Columbia has the most diverse First Nations culture across Canada, with over 200 First Nations and more than 30 languages.

United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP)

Adopted by the United Nations on September 13, 2007, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is an international instrument to enshrine the rights that “constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world.” (Article 43*) The UNDRIP protects collective rights that may not be addressed in other human rights charters that emphasise individual rights and safeguards the individual rights of Indigenous people. UNDRIP is the product of almost 25 years of deliberation by U.N. member states and Indigenous groups.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was established on June 2, 2008 to document the history and impacts of the Indian residential school system in Canada. In both public and private meetings held across the country, the TRC provided former residential school attendees with an opportunity to share their experiences in residential schools. In June 2015, the TRC released an Executive Summary of its findings along with 94 "calls to action" for reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous peoples. The Commission officially concluded in December 2015 with the publication of a multi-volume report that concluded the Indian residential school system amounted to “cultural genocide.” This was also the largest class action lawsuit settled in Canada’s history.

Background/History

Recalling dark times can be painful, but necessary to ensure that all learners and educators understand that the treatment of Indigenous peoples in Canada and British Columbia (B.C.) had an enduring impact that can still be seen and felt today.

For more than 150 years, First Nations, Métis and Inuit children across Canada were taken from their communities and forced into residential schools under a policy of assimilation. B.C. had at least 18 of these schools, which were mandated by the federal government and operated by churches. While in residential schools, Indigenous children were not allowed to speak their language and they were taught that their culture was inferior. Abuse was rampant, and many families were never reunited. Parents who refused to send their children faced fines or imprisonment. Generations of Indigenous people suffered, leading to the breakdown of communities, families and traditions. Today, many young people can still feel the impact that residential schools had on their loved ones and their culture. The last residential school in B.C. closed in 1984.

In June 2008, the federal government issued a formal apology to the thousands of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people who endured this historical wrong. However, the ongoing process of reconciliation through education started in the 1970s with the government's recognition of the 1972 paper, *Indian Control of Indian Education* by the National Indian Brotherhood (now the Assembly of First Nations). This paper remains central to the efforts of B.C. First Nations as they grow an effective education system and help the Province serve the many First Nations learners who attend B.C. public schools.

Similarly, in 1988, *A Legacy for Learners* was released by the BC Royal Commission on Education. This report recognised the importance of making school relevant to Indigenous learners and called on governments to act, through providing equitable funding, reducing racial bias, and increasing teacher knowledge of Indigenous cultures, history and languages.

The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESEC) was established in 1992 to improve outcomes for learners and set the foundations for First Nations' control over First Nations schools in B.C. Fittingly, Volume Three of the 1996 report of The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) recognised that education is key to the revitalisation of First Nations communities and Indigenous people must have the opportunity to exercise self-governance in education. In the same year it was released, RCAP took root in the province—the First Nations Schools Association (FNSEA) was established to support quality education for First Nations learners. In 1999, B.C., Canada and FNESEC established, through a Memorandum of Understanding with the main education partners in B.C., a K–12 Education Partners Table with the mandate of working together and within their organisations to increase the success of Indigenous students.

Recognising the need for a Métis provincial voice in education, the Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) leadership ratified the Métis Nation British Columbia Constitution in 2003, establishing a Métis Nation governance structure representing 37 chartered Métis communities. In November 2016 MNBC signed the Métis Nation Relationship Accord II with B.C. The Accord recognises that education is a priority both for MNBC and B.C.

Partnerships began to appear around the province. Local Education Agreements, an important tool to allow First Nations to exercise control over the education of their students, allowed Canada and First Nations to reimburse school districts for educating Status First Nation learners living on reserve while creating a forum for conversation between those nations and districts. Similarly, Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreements committed Indigenous communities and school districts to collaborate for Indigenous learners.

While working with the public system to improve outcomes, First Nations continued to express their intention to pursue jurisdiction over First Nations schools. Negotiations between B.C., Canada and First Nations (represented again by FNESC) resulted in the Education Jurisdiction Framework Agreement, which included the British Columbia First Nation Education Agreement. This took place in 2005, days before the signing of the Kelowna Accord, and was followed by enabling legislation in Canada and British Columbia.

B.C. acted on its commitments before and after the supplementary Tripartite Education Framework Agreement (TEFA) in 2012-2018, including working with FNESC and other partners on curriculum modernisation—from the development of English First Peoples to embedding Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives throughout the entire K-12 curriculum.

Most recently, a new B.C. Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA) has been established that carries forward the commitments made in the 2012-2018 TEFA agreement and adds new commitments including ensuring students living on reserve have affordable transportation to B.C. public schools; establishing a local education agreement template for First Nations and; building sector capacity teams to support First Nations students' success.

There are a variety of positive efforts taking place today in B.C.'s K-12 education system that demonstrate a pathway to truly embracing the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action. The goal is not simply to update content on Canada's history – but to bring a richer, more meaningful shift to the system. This shift involves being honest about the narrative of Canada and those Indigenous to the land. For these efforts to have systemic impact they must be built together, for the betterment of all children and about all Indigenous peoples. All of this must be built within the inherent belief that the system is broken, not the child. A detailed timeline can be found in Appendix 1.

Changing Paradigms

Honouring the vibrancy, resilience, and energy of Indigenous communities in B.C. is a priority in the K-12 education system. Efforts to embrace reconciliation require the courage and commitment to address racism, build knowledge, support language revitalisation and embrace society-wide change born through collective efforts.

Addressing Racism

Structural racism has deep historic roots in Canada's education system. The residential school system was designed by the federal government and churches on the belief that Indigenous parenting, language and culture were harmful and the children needed to be separated from their homes to "civilise" and Christianise them. In 1953, at the height of the system, over 11,000 Indigenous children were in residential schools, where physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse was widespread. In both Alberta and B.C. residential schools, students were sterilised through sexual sterilisation acts. Many survivors recounted stories of electric chair punishment at these schools. Dr. Peter Bryce toured residential schools in Western Canada in 1907 and cited a death rate of 40% and referred to the health conditions in the schools as a "national crime." It wasn't until 1996 that the last residential school in Canada closed.

Evidence of structural racism persists in Canada's education system. There have been numerous reviews and reports since the 1960's that consider how well Indigenous students are being supported in Canadian or British Columbian public schools. Sadly, the Hawthorn report in 1967, the Sullivan report in 1988, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1996 and the more recent B.C. Auditor General report in 2015 all unwaveringly confirm that systemic and overt racism are prevalent in the educational experience for Indigenous students.

Racism can present in a variety of ways including verbal attacks, psychological abuse, social isolation, marginalisation, professional indifference, and denial of racism. Racism can also be expressed by educators having low expectations for students. Prevalence of low expectations was a key finding in the B.C. Auditor General's report in 2015. An example of the racism of low expectations was a higher proportion of Indigenous students receiving school completion certificates. School completion certificates are intended to recognise students with designated medical needs that have a modified learning plan and were being provided to Indigenous students that did not meet this criteria.

Understanding Indigenous Knowledges and Canadian History

In order for Indigenous knowledges to flourish, there needs to be an appreciation for these knowledges and an understanding of Canada's history with Indigenous people. The gifts of Indigenous knowledges have been undervalued through colonisation. Indigenous knowledges are complex. They encompass culture, language, systems of classification,

social practices, resource use practices, ritual and spirituality. These unique ways of knowing are important facets of the world’s cultural diversity.

Eurocentric knowledge focuses heavily on acquiring, writing, and storing subject matter which is fundamentally different from Indigenous knowledges that are danced, drawn, sung, practised and told through story. Indigenous knowledges cannot simply be acquired and taught in a Eurocentric model because the intangible elements are interlaced with the tangible. The value of Indigenous knowledges is the holistic approach it provides in a complex world where development is balanced with environment, the past is balanced with the future, need is balanced with sustainment for all and life is balanced with spirit. Indigenous knowledges share common fundamentals including the importance of interconnectedness, the fluidity and motion within the universe, appreciation for sharing, caring, giving, kindness, harmony, balance and beauty.

Indigenous knowledges cannot thrive without understanding the historical wrongs and impacts of colonisation. It is difficult to understand the present because the past has been lied about, hidden, denied, or erased. This lack of understanding perpetuates racism. Inadequate or incorrect education about colonisation and how it disadvantaged Indigenous peoples essentially transfers responsibility to Indigenous peoples for disparities in society – further perpetuating deeply embedded racist assumptions. A primary condition needed for Indigenous knowledges to flourish is learning the true collective history of Canada—enabling the truth to unveil a paradigm shift. A requirement is to acknowledge that Eurocentric education has monopolised the education experience for all students – ultimately attempting to impose assimilation.

Language Revitalisation

“Languages and wisdom are born of the land -they will never go extinct - we just need to slow down and listen long enough, deep enough...”

Denise Augustine, 2018

A combination of forced language suppression, official policies of cultural eradication, nation extinction and the passage of time has led to the near disappearance of many Indigenous languages once spoken in Canada. In today’s world, the Indigenous languages that have survived colonisation are increasingly threatened by the rising power and prevalence of English information technologies and by the general dominance of English and French in modern Canadian society.

The fragile state of Indigenous languages in Canada is the result of historical laws and policies designed to rid Canada of distinct Indigenous cultures. Canadian anthropologist Wade Davis (2009) compared the extinction of a language to the extinction of a species. The revitalisation of Aboriginal languages is currently one of Canada’s most important challenges. In 2016, there were 260,550 speakers of Indigenous languages recorded by Statistics Canada — less than one per cent of the total Canadian population. According to the 2016 census, many of these languages were spoken by less than 10,000 people – and some by only hundreds. More than two thirds of the over 70 Indigenous languages still spoken in Canada are endangered, and the others remain vulnerable, according to UNESCO’s endangered languages criteria.

A significant factor in the decline of Indigenous languages in Canada is due to the intergenerational trauma of residential schooling, where Indigenous languages were actively suppressed as a matter of policy. Young Indigenous children were often severely punished for using their mother tongues, which led to a loss of the languages for the next generations. A generation of Indigenous people called “silent speakers” now exists. These individuals understand their language fully, but trauma and stigma mean they cannot bring themselves to speak it.

Languages can become extinct when a community finds itself under pressure to integrate with a larger or more powerful group. Many indigenous peoples, associating their disadvantaged social position with their culture, have come to believe that their languages are not worth retaining. They abandon their languages and cultures in hopes of overcoming discrimination, to secure a livelihood and enhance social mobility or to assimilate to the global marketplace. The extinction of any language results in the irrecoverable loss of unique cultural, historical and ecological knowledge. Above all, speakers of these languages may experience the loss of their language as a loss of their original ethnic and cultural identity.

Collective Efforts

The residual effects and societal consequences of the oppression of Indigenous peoples are still occurring today. In Canada, a variety of disparities remain present for Indigenous peoples including food insecurity, unemployment or underemployment, poverty, limited access to housing, poor health and education. Embracing reconciliation requires collective efforts of sectors, governments and communities. The TRC calls to action identify education as one of five key areas identified requiring reform. Other areas include justice, child welfare, health and language and culture. Within the TRC there are 5 sections relevant to child and welfare, 7 sections relevant to education, 5 sections relevant to language and culture, 7 sections relevant to health and 18 sections relevant to justice. Reconciliation will be possible only when efforts in all of these domains are achieved.

Vision

Education is the door to quality of life and serves as an essential intervention to address inequities in society. It is also the mechanism through which cultural values are transmitted from generation to generation. The classroom provides the rich opportunity to intersect Western and Indigenous perspectives without any dominant relation. In the classroom, cultural, social and political perspectives are not motivated or shaped solely by one way of thinking or being. Not only is there a moral imperative for Indigenous knowledges to flourish, it is a right of Indigenous people. Research also shows that learning about Indigenous knowledges, benefits all students.

By 2030 Indigenous knowledges will flourish in B.C.'s K-12 education system for the betterment of all students. This can only occur if there is understanding of the past, recognition of the pain caused, reparation and action to transform behaviour. The vision statement reflects three underlying beliefs:

Indigenous knowledges have the power to support a paradigm shift in thinking.

- a. By embracing Indigenous knowledges, new pathways for education can be created.
- b. Colonisation is not an Indigenous issue, and decolonising thinking is a responsibility of non-Indigenous systems and peoples as a shared responsibility for a collective way forward with Indigenous peoples.

Although common principles may exist across Indigenous peoples, each has its own knowledge system.

- a. For example, B.C. is home to over 200 First Nations as well as thriving Métis and Inuit populations - each with its own culture, unique beliefs, ceremonies and protocols. The Indigenous knowledges are not static – they are as dynamic as the people and evolve over time.

Indigenous knowledges benefit Indigenous students as well as non-Indigenous students.

- a. Research across multiple countries shows that Indigenous knowledges benefit Indigenous students as well as non-Indigenous students. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students are keen to learn the history and culture of Indigenous peoples.
- b. Call to action # 63 from the Truth and Reconciliation report calls upon all Ministers to build “student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.” Indigenous education cannot only be about the education of Indigenous students, but all students to address this call to action.

Principles for success

The only way to achieve the vision is to truly embrace reconciliation. Reconciliation is a process to heal relationships that require truth, apology commemoration and action to address the past. This includes the ongoing impacts of colonialism and efforts to establish a more equitable society where gaps in social, health, economic outcomes are addressed. A key component of reconciliation is public education. This includes sustained efforts and discussion that engages young people about the history and legacy of residential schools, Treaties, Aboriginal rights, as well as the historical and current gifts of Indigenous peoples to Canadian society. Reconciliation is an opportunity to shape the collective Canadian identity and connect to the land and all people. In Canada, the federal and provincial governments are committed to not only beginning to reconcile for past injustices but are looking forward towards making meaningful changes in the future through measures such as the TRC and UNDRIP.

Truth and Reconciliation

The Truth and Reconciliation Committee documented the impacts of residential schools in Canada and provided a report that includes 94 calls to action to support reconciliation. The TRC recognised that reconciliation requires all Canadians to take ownership of the history and legacy of residential schools. Further, all Canadians need to assess and recognise their own biases and question these. Finally, all Canadians must recognise that change is required. There are three calls to action that are specific to the K-12 education system:

- #62 - Federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to make age appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students. This includes providing the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms and the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilise Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms. In addition, governments were asked to establish senior-level positions in government at the Assistant Deputy Minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.
- #63 - Calls upon all Ministers to maintain an annual commitment to Indigenous education issues that include implementing curriculum and learning resources on Indigenous peoples in Canadian history and the history of residential schools. This includes sharing resources and promising practises on teaching curriculum and building student intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect.
- #64 – Calls upon all levels of government that provide funding to denominational schools to require education comparable to religious studies, to include content on Indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

In 2007 the United Nations adopted UNDRIP, an international framework for reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors. In February 2018, Canada ratified Bill C-262, which aligns Canadian legislation with the Indigenous rights and international law of UNDRIP. The UNDRIP agreement has important implications for Canadian education systems. For UNDRIP, the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) instills the rights of Indigenous peoples to provide their consent in decision-making processes that affect them and their lands; including education, natural resource management, economic development, and health care. Similarly, Bill C-262 will ratify the right for all Indigenous students to a culturally sensitive education. Specifically, Indigenous people have the right to access education in their own culture and language, and have it taught in a way that is aligned with their cultural methods.

The implications for both UNDRIP and Bill C-262 in Canada means an overdue obligation to include culturally sensitive, inclusive, and equitable practices for Indigenous learners and historically accurate curriculum. This means changing the way the system is currently designed for Indigenous learners. The first change would incorporate the idea of self-determination, which Ole Henrik Magga, chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, defined as being fundamental for students to “preserve and develop the [indigenous] reservoir of knowledge.” Second is culturally pertinent education, which not only “stimulates a student’s curiosity” but also helps to preserve and protect that heritage for future generations. At the core of all these changes Indigenous consultation and consent should be sought for any decisions made.

Strategy

“Education is what got us into this mess – the use of education at least in terms of residential schools – but education is the key to reconciliation.”

Justice Murray Sinclair

The vision for Indigenous knowledges to flourish in B.C.’s K-12 education system for the betterment of all students requires a personalised approach to learning that recognises and supports the unique abilities of each and every student. This is especially true for Indigenous learners who should see their cultures, languages and history genuinely reflected in the classroom and school community. Today, more Indigenous learners are graduating than ever before, and that achievement is worth celebrating. But regardless of how far B.C. has come, there remains a long way to go before reconciliation is fully embraced in B.C.

Strategic priorities to support the vision include:

A welcoming and inclusive culture

Supporting a knowledgeable and qualified workforce

Honouring jurisdiction: the B.C. Tripartite Education Agreement

A Welcoming and Inclusive Culture

Healthy, welcoming and inclusive school environments can be achieved by addressing systemic racism and honouring Indigenous perspectives, cultures and languages. Sharing, caring, giving, kindness, harmony and balance are shared Indigenous principles and are critical components to ensure students feel connected and supported in their school environment. Education about the history of Indigenous peoples in B.C. and the importance of culture and language will help Indigenous learners feel more welcome and included in their school environments, while enabling non-Indigenous students—and teachers—to have a greater understanding and respect for their peers.

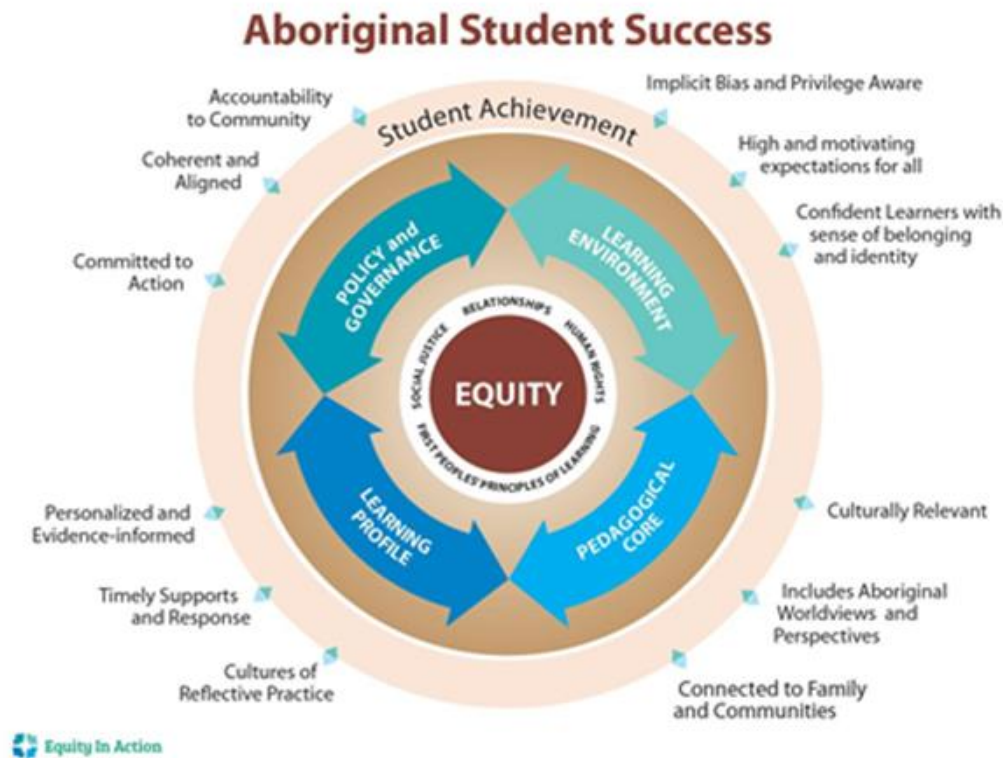
Addressing Systemic Racism

To address racism in B.C. schools, the Equity Scan project has been initiated. The project currently involves 20 public school districts (1/3) and is a multi-year project with the goals of identifying barriers and challenges that Indigenous learners experience within the school system. Consistent with UNDRIP, TRC and the Office of the Auditor General Report on Aboriginal Education, the approach is a hands-on, systemic model that empowers school districts to develop strategies and supports that address historic inequities in education.

Using the Equity Scan Toolkit, guiding questions and rubrics, all stakeholders and learning communities are engaged to receive feedback from across the system (i.e. district leadership, school administration, teachers, educators, parents, Indigenous communities, Indigenous leadership, Indigenous agencies, Indigenous Parents and community, etc.) to

build a school district profile for equity. Once constructed, school district stakeholders work together to determine what efforts will have the greatest impact for Indigenous students to support equity of opportunity. The Equity Scan model is in Figure 1.

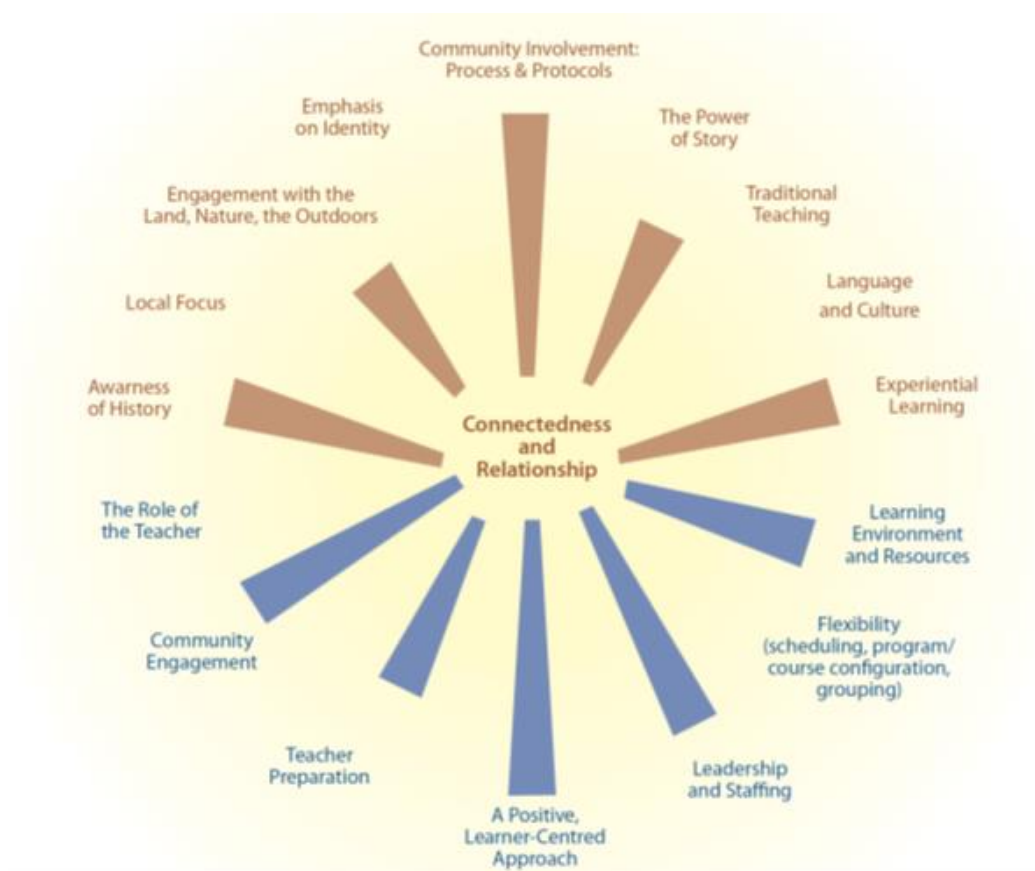
Figure 1.



Honouring Indigenous Perspectives and Culture

In B.C., as soon as a student enters the classroom, they are exposed to a K-12 curriculum that contains Indigenous worldviews and perspectives - in all subject areas and grade levels. The curriculum includes the history of residential schools. Many B.C. school districts have incorporated Indigenous education into lesson plans and learning activities for all students. A variety of resources have been developed that support the curriculum and underpin the importance of how Indigenous knowledges are shared with students. One example is the Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom, which provides a vision for Indigenous education in B.C. The resource was developed in partnership with five B.C. communities that included rural, urban, Indigenous and non-Indigenous members as well as representatives from the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and First Nations School Association (FNSA). At the centre of Indigenous perspectives is connectedness and relationship and a call to action for educators to connect to student, families and community in their approach. An image of the resource is seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2.



Supporting Indigenous languages

Language is the key factor to support Indigenous knowledges. In order to understand Indigenous knowledges, one must understand languages. However, many of the Indigenous languages in B.C. risk being lost. The B.C. Government has demonstrated a commitment to Indigenous language and reflected this within the Minister of Education’s 2017 mandate letter:

“Implement the new First Nations history curriculum, develop full-course offerings in Aboriginal languages and implement the educational Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.”

Canada is home to approximately 60 Indigenous languages spanning 10 separate and distinct language families. B.C. is home to approximately 34 Indigenous languages spanning 7 language families. Approximately, 60% of Canada’s First Nations languages are in B.C. In the 2017/18 school year about 1000 students between grades 8 through 12 were enrolled in Indigenous language courses in public schools. At this time, there are 17 provincially approved Indigenous language curriculum across B.C. and 6 more are being developed. The Ministry of Education provides funding to school districts to support the

development of Indigenous language curriculum in community partnership. The Ministry is working with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, FNESC and First Peoples Cultural Council (FPCC) to enhance language learning supports for teachers in schools.

Student Centred Practice

Strength-based, learner centred practices are required for Indigenous knowledges to flourish. This is about personalising learning to the individual student including building on their strengths and interests. When students are engaged in a topic that motivates them, they seek out new understanding and skills. It is not only the customisation of topic to students that support learner centred practice, but the ways to learn. Indigenous ways of learning focus on experiential knowledge and empowering the student. The teacher is there to listen, observe and guide. To fully engage Indigenous students, teachers need to explore opportunities to connect with students in a variety of ways of knowing.

In 2012, B.C. began a journey to transform education with the primary focus is to create a more personalised learning experience where students are supported to pursue their passions and interests. In this education delivery model, the teacher supports students with rich learning through concepts and competency-driven approaches. This approach aligns much more closely with Indigenous knowledges and perspectives.

Personalised options enable students to participate in choosing course content. An inquiry-based, hands-on approach encourages students to take more personal responsibility for learning. Teachers have greater flexibility in creating learning environments that are relevant, engaging, and novel, promoting local contexts and place-based learning. Courses are not designed to stream students into easier or difficult pathways. All courses allow for different teaching methods and all students can access any course. There are expanded course options in each subject area and the course options reflect a broad diversity and respond to emerging trends and student preference. The First Peoples Principles of Learning were established to support strength-based learner centred practice in B.C. The principles reflect shared values across Indigenous peoples.

Supporting a Knowledgeable and Qualified Workforce

To support a knowledgeable and qualified workforce, B.C. is making efforts to increase the number of Indigenous educators as well as provide training and development opportunities to existing teachers.

Educator Professional Development

“We have to start addressing the way we teach our children about Aboriginal people.”

Murray Sinclair

Educators have a key role to challenge the status quo to support reconciliation. Teacher assumptions can have direct and significant impact on students – particularly when there

are differences between the cultural beliefs and languages of the teacher and students. Teachers who are aware of their pre-existing biases can change their assumptions with respect to students. Learning Indigenous knowledges and perspectives provides teachers with the opportunity to establish new levels of awareness and ways of being.

The importance of teacher education programs and professional development cannot be underscored enough to support educators with Indigenous knowledges and perspectives. Teachers require theory, research and practice to draw upon and to translate into a meaningful educational experience for students. It is important to note that in B.C., educators of Indigenous ancestry may feel as ill-equipped to teach Indigenous knowledges and perspectives as their non-Indigenous colleagues, because both have learned in a Eurocentric education system.³²

Even before entering the classroom, teachers in B.C. are required to complete pre-service coursework on Indigenous knowledges and perspectives. This change has been in place since 2012 and coursework includes historical context on First Nations, Inuit and Metis learners. In addition to these efforts, FNEESC, FNSA, BCTF and local school districts provide further resources and professional development. The B.C. Teachers' Federation provided approximately 400 workshops on Indigenous education in the 2017/18 school year and a variety of resources through an online teaching resource centre. Over the last 3 years FNEESC and FNSA developed the majority of First Peoples teacher resource guides and over 2000 teachers a year participate in FNEESC and FNSA conferences and workshops.

Increase Indigenous Educators

On average, 80 pre-service Indigenous teachers graduate annually from B.C. post-secondary institutions. This was approximately 5 per cent of teachers certified in the 2017/18 school year. Based on a recent survey in B.C., 3 per cent of educators and 6 per cent of administrators surveyed identified as Metis, First Nations or Inuit. These rates are well below student self-identification representation of 11.6% in the 2017/18 school year. To address this, the B.C. government has invested in Indigenous teacher education programs over the past two years and increased spaces for 35 new Indigenous teachers.

Honouring Jurisdiction: BCTEA

The British Columbia Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA) is the only funding agreement of its kind in Canada, where federal, provincial, and First Nations governments collaborate to improve outcomes for First Nations learners. The agreement recognises the rights of First Nations to pursue jurisdiction over First Nations schools. The tripartite agreement has resulted in significant accomplishments to date, including the establishment of comparable funding formulas, savings for First Nations schools, and enabling First Nations schools to access provincial exams and B.C.'s Dogwood Diploma. The partnership also provides venues for the parties to discuss their individual and collective responsibilities, ensuring students have the services they need.

The recently negotiated agreement carries forward B.C.'s commitments made in the 2012–2018 Tripartite Education Framework Agreement for another 5 years to 2023. The agreement ensures that the more than 13,000 First Nations students living on reserve are provided with a quality educational experience and funding. The Federal government provides approximately \$100 million through this agreement to support First Nation schools and provide funding to FNESC for services. The new BCTEA creates a special grant to ensure transportation needs are met for First Nations students living on reserve. The agreement also supports local education agreements and establishes School District teams to support First Nation student outcomes.

Reflections for B.C.

The journey towards reconciliation in B.C.'s education system will not occur overnight. Justice Murray Sinclair suggests it will take "as long to heal as it took to inflict the damage." Horton and Friere's book, *We Make the Road by Walking* suggests that the best way to create tomorrow is to act in the present day and learn as you go. The courage to make the road by walking is already being felt within B.C.'s education system. A number of actions have been taken to support reconciliation including:

Creating an Inclusive Environment: All Students Experience Indigenous curriculum, Language, and History

Responding to the December 2015 final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), B.C.'s transformation of the education system ensures that all students experience First Nations languages, cultures, and histories, including the legacy of residential schools.

Curriculum development teams including FNEESC representation have worked to incorporate Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, and principles of learning in every subject area and at all grade levels.

Creating an Inclusive Environment: The Revitalisation of First Nations Languages

All students, particularly those of First Nations ancestry, should have the opportunity to learn an Indigenous language whenever possible and should do so with the support of the First Nations community. At present, 16 provincially approved First Nations language curriculum documents are providing choice for students and strengthening the presence of First Nations culture, history, and languages in classrooms.

FNEESC and the Ministry have collaborated on an in-depth research project on how to better support First Nations language curriculum development.

The Ministry also continues to support partnerships between school districts and communities in the development of curriculum documents for First Nations languages.

Addressing Racism of Low Expectations: Changes to Limit Use of the Evergreen

As recommended by the BC Office of the Auditor General and FNEESC, the Ministry changed the student credential order, in February 2016, to limit the use of the Evergreen non-graduation school leaving certificate to students with special needs and an individual education plan.

Honouring Jurisdiction: First Nations School Access to Provincial Exams and the Dogwood Graduation Certificate

In 2015/16 the Ministry in partnership with FNEESC, started providing access to provincial exams for students attending First Nations schools. It began as a pilot in three schools and now exams are offered to students in any First Nations Schools Association school that wishes to participate.

In 2015/16, for the first time ever, First Nations students studying on reserve in a non-B.C. system school were granted B.C.'s universally recognised Dogwood certificate.

While progress has been made, there is additional work still to be done to ensure that Indigenous knowledges are flourishing in B.C.'s education system. Results from B.C.'s student satisfaction survey in 2015/16 indicate that Indigenous students feel less safe at school than non-Indigenous students across elementary, middle and high schools. Indigenous students reported higher rates of feeling bullied, teased and picked on in the elementary years. There is also more work to be done to bring Indigenous knowledges to classrooms. The 2015 OAG report indicates that more can be done to strengthen course offerings such as First Nations 12, English First Peoples 10, 11 and 12. One specific concern is the lack of Metis content in the curriculum.

We also know that new teachers in B.C.'s education system are struggling to support Indigenous students and families and the delivery of Indigenous curriculum. A 2016 survey of new teachers in B.C. suggests that 53 per cent of respondents indicated they do not feel their teacher education program supported them to understand how to work with Indigenous students, families and communities. New teachers from out of province are currently not required to complete any education on Indigenous knowledges and perspectives.

There is also a wonderful opportunity ahead to implement the recently negotiated BCTEA agreement and ensure the commitments outlined, are honoured and brought to reality.

Creating an Inclusive Environment: Strengthening Indigenous resources and supports

Implement the new ERASE anti-bullying program with specific focus on Indigenous students.

Enhance curriculum resources and supports to bring greater focus to Métis people.

Expand Indigenous language offerings throughout K-12.

Honouring Jurisdiction: Implement the newly negotiated BC Tripartite Education Agreement

Put in place supports to ensure the development and implementation of strong Local Education Agreements.

Establish appropriate reporting mechanisms at the district and provincial level to monitor the success rates of First Nations students and inform effective strategies.

Take appropriate measures to ensure that the transportation needs of all First Nations students are met.

Supporting a Knowledgeable and Qualified Workforce: Teacher Training and Indigenous Educator Representation

Engage with post-secondary schools to review and enhance Indigenous content in pre-service teacher training programs

Explore additional resources and supports for currently certified teachers and new teachers entering the profession from outside B.C.

Support Government's commitment to establish 15 new teacher education program seats for Indigenous educators on 2019.

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Abstract

In this paper, we describe the nature of indigenous knowledge: It is interconnected where everything is connected, nothing is excluded and everything is related. We discuss the challenges to bring indigenous knowledge into the curriculum; it is in a constant state of flux and motion and it is about sharing, caring, giving, kindness, harmony, balance and beauty. Indigenous knowledge is expressed, transmitted, transferred and practices in varied forms and all learning and teaching are to help develop a “whole human being”. However, it can be challenging to bring indigenous knowledge into the curriculum.

Introduction to Ti wa7 szwatenem

The title of this article is in the Lílwat language, from the eastern Pacific coastal mountains of what is now Canada. In this language, the language of the author, there are various ways to speak about knowing. Zwatan' describes what a person knows and the closest word that could be translated as knowledge is emham; to be skilled at doing something or to be good at something. A7xa7 is the state of wholistic knowing, knowing after a lifetime of training, practice and study. Like most Indigenous languages the language focuses on the process, on the action not the object (Battiste, p27). How do we become “emham” or to “zwaten” or to become “a7xa7? For each individual it is a process from before birth and continues throughout life. When asked to describe the term Indigenous Knowledge, it is a struggle today to try to define it because of the disruption of the languages and lives of Indigenous peoples around the world due to colonisation and the need to discuss the term in another language and worldview. The knowledge of Indigenous peoples is of value today as Indigenous peoples rebuild their lives from near annihilation and furthermore all people can learn from the knowledge of Indigenous peoples.

There are many terms used to describe Indigenous Knowledge in the literature such as Traditional Knowledge, Traditional Ecological knowledge, traditional environmental knowledge, Indigenous technical knowledge, local knowledge, Aboriginal knowledge, and community-based knowledge. It has been dependent on the disciplines that are discussing Indigenous knowledge and for what purposes. Much of the scholarship by Indigenous peoples themselves have largely focused on research from an Indigenous perspective. In order to discuss Indigenous knowing from an Indigenous worldview, Indigenous researchers have had to justify how their research could be accepted as such. The recent literature in this area has been very helpful and contributed greatly to the discussion on Indigenous knowledge (see the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Manulani Meyer, Shawn Wilson and Marie Battiste).

Indigenous peoples agree that Indigenous knowledge cannot be defined from a Western orientation. Indigenous knowledge is diverse, there is no “one definition”. It is action oriented, not an object or subject. Indigenous knowledge is difficult to define, and it is not a product or object to be defined and studied in isolation (Little Bear 2012). Indigenous knowledge is connected to the land where it emerged and it exists, it comes with the people, animals, plants, water, earth, sky and trees. Indigenous knowledge is connected to the spirit and sacredness, it is both thinking and feeling, and reveals itself in the physical actions. It is oral and transmitted orally. This view of Indigenous knowledge is reflected in the languages of the land. For example, in Diné, the word K'í means “understanding interdependent compassionate relationships as they manifest in life, earth/sky, self/family/community and ancestors/descendants”.

Indigenous worldviews have developed over millennia and are expressed and shared in the vast web of stories, songs, dances, art designs, symbols and images. The stories metaphorically relate central ideas of interdependence and respect for plants, animals, places and for those behaviours that each generation must learn in order to maintain a reciprocal relationship with the natural world (Snively, Williams 2017).

THE NATURE OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

In this section, I am going to try to convey how Indigenous peoples understand Indigenous knowledge. When I use the term Indigenous I am speaking of the peoples who are connected to the land, stories, languages from the beginning of time. Although Indigenous knowledge is place based and unique to a people, there are shared understandings. To try to convey the understandings I will use the language of my own people and how I came to understand “Indigenous knowledge” so that non-Indigenous peoples can find resonance with the understanding from that people and when possible I will include the language of Indigenous peoples from around the world to come closer to conveying what we mean by “Indigenous knowledge” while using the language and worldview of English.

Interconnectedness - everything is connected, nothing is excluded, everything is related

Knowledge and how we come to know is connected to place and people. When we say “people” we include all people, our ancestors and those that follow us, our descendants. We begin gatherings, times when we come together to learn, discuss and make decisions, by acknowledging the land we are on, the ancestors who walked that land and left their memories there, and we acknowledge the people who will come after us, as our actions will affect them. We acknowledge all our relatives—the air, earth, animals, plants, insects, water, all that share the place and space, seen and unseen. As a young girl, a teaching that has guided my life was told by my mother, that before entering the forest where we were going to dig roots for our basket making that I needed to stop and to cleanse my thoughts. We do that by consciously brushing our minds, some people actually use a tree bough to brush their bodies, to shift their thinking and feeling to a positive frame. The way my mother explained it to me was, in the course of living, comes negativity. Something makes us annoyed and angry, someone else might bring annoyance and anger into our midst which we absorb, if we don’t consciously remove those feelings we bring them into our relationship with the trees and the roots that we are harvesting. It affects the work we do - how we approach our task and how successful we will be. My mother said, “if you approach your work in an angry way or you are carrying anger, the roots will hide”. This is an example of what we mean that everything is connected. Our feelings, thoughts, actions, spirits are all present we cannot separate any part.

Everything is in a constant state of flux and motion.

Everything is animate and has spirit, energy and knowledge (Little Bear, 2000). This understanding leads to seeing in a wholistic way. Indigenous peoples are socialised to relate holistically in life, to see everything as a set of patterns in a whole. For example, a class I brought to the land of the WSÁNEĆ people, a story was told to, that helped my class to see what we mean by this when our WSÁNEĆ guide to the land showed us the place where his people would wait with their canoes to cross a strait. They would wait for the moment when the tides and ocean currents and the wind were flowing in perfect alignment, they would board their canoes and paddle off toward their destination, with these conditions they could travel in safety and travel with very little exertion to reach their destination on the mainland; crossing the Salish Sea from Vancouver Island to mainland British Columbia.

Sharing, caring, giving, kindness, harmony, balance and beauty.

These are the words I hear when I am listening to Indigenous people speak about their world and how they contribute to the health and well-being of the community. In the Indigenous world the focus is on family, the extended family and community. In Lílwat, the word for family members, friends, community and a gathering of people is the same word, nsnukwnukw7a. The root of this word nukw' means to help. Sometimes it is thought that because we concentrate on community that we don't have a sense of self or individualism that is not the case. In order to be an active contributing member of a community, individuals who are self-aware, who know their gifts and expertise are essential. The Indigenous peoples use stories, singing, dancing and ceremonies to maintain a sense of community. Harmony, balance and beauty are evident in the way people use language, the cadence of their voice when conversing and telling stories, in the way they move and walk on the land and amongst people.

All our learning and teaching are to help us to be a “whole human being”, in the SENĆOŦEN language of the WSÁNEĆ on Vancouver Island the word is ELTELNIWT. It means that all knowledge is connected and inseparable from the land, ancestors and community (p.c. Elliot, J., WSÁNEĆ knowledge keeper).

Indigenous knowledge is expressed, transmitted, transferred and practices in varied forms

Psychologists and neuroscientists have long studied the healthy and unhealthy ways to respond to VUCA. Each of the constructs—volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity—have unique features but are also highly interrelated, and therefore often discussed under the umbrella of uncertainty. Below, we provide a brief review of the literature on how humans deal with unpredictable situations.

Uncertainty in the brain

For example, due to the oral nature of knowledge sharing, a primary tool was the “story”. A story can be told in telling or through songs, dances and images. For example, in the Lílwat tradition, there are many genres of stories such as, the spetakwelh—these are the teaching stories, the stories that help people to live life in a good way, some of the stories in this group are called the “trickster” stories or “coyote stories”, they are stories of the life challenges of coyote. In some of the stories coyote runs into trouble because he out thinks himself, or he thinks only of himself and forgets he is part of a family or community. Note here, I am using the pronoun himself, in Lílwat we have the term ti7 which can refer to he, she or it, in our stories coyote can be male or female unless it is made clear in the story that coyote is one or the other gender. The main thing is these stories are for teaching purposes for how to behave in the world of the Lílwat. Also, within the stories we learn about the land, about all our relatives on the land, plants, animals, fish, birds, insects and land forms. We have creation stories, and stories about the transformers, the beings that travelled and changed the land forms and all life forms on the land. Flood stories and how the people coped with the flood. On our land we can still see what the water did to the land and we can see how our people survived the land, our stories and songs help us to remember. Another set of stories are called nsququqel', these stories are about life experiences. When people travelled and returned home, people would gather so that the traveller could tell all the they saw, heard, experienced while travelling. When a Lílwat hunter returned, and the people looked after the animals the hunter brought home and

distributed the meat to the families, the hunter would tell about the hunt, how the animals came in a dream, and directing where the hunter went to hunt. The hunter would describe the land, such as the creeks and streams and rivers, did they have debris and deadfall that people needed to clear, what plants were in abundance and where, what state the medicine plants are in, how healthy are all the various animals. The hunter would report seeing other hunters, and then describe in detail the relationship with the animals that came to be hunted. That way the whole community learned about the state of the land and knew what they needed to do to support the land and animals. They also had an opportunity to have a relationship of respect and gratitude to the hunter and the animal that gave itself for the sustenance of the community. Other stories are told to make people laugh, sometimes laugh at themselves and their foibles. Stories were in the form of dances and songs. Some stories were told only in certain seasons. Stories are repetitive. Some stories last several days. Grandmothers and grandfathers tell stories; a story doesn't stop until every child is asleep. Stories are told as an interruption, when least expected, those stories are often for a specific person for a specific reason, no one says who it is for or why, the listener hears or comes to be aware of the message in the story that is pertinent to them. Stories are how we learn what we need to know to be a "good human being".

Wisdom

To Indigenous peoples we learn from everything—all experiences, plants teach us, animals teach us, water teaches us, people no matter age or gender, teach us. We are always learning, feeling, and thinking and doing. We learn from what we hear, see, feel and we know that everything we learn must be put to use for everyone and ourselves. It must be purposeful and useful to others. Elders in a community are often called knowledge keepers. As noted above, much of our knowledge is kept and recorded in memory with the use of stories, songs, dances, and other memory tools. This knowledge is held for when it is needed and of use. Indigenous peoples train their whole lives to synthesise information, see patterns. Indigenous peoples do not impose their knowing on others unless it is asked for and often advice is given in very indirect ways. Each listener takes what is meaningful to them, sometimes a story listener might come to a teaching from the story years after the telling. The story teller too is a learner, gaining insight from the new telling, by the energy generated by the listeners. In listening to other stories in a telling and listening community there is a knowledge and wisdom exchange. In Hawai’ian, a’o is the word for the exchange of expertise and wisdom, sharing is cyclical and shared action (Galla, 2017). In the Indigenous world, the old ones, the elders are looked to for mentorship and guidance. An elder gives because they can for the well-being and health of the community.

Challenges and Traps We Face in Defining Indigenous Knowledge

In the effort to define Indigenous knowledge to include in school curricula and in academia we encounter many pitfalls, some are listed below:

- Pan Indigenous—generalising and simplifying Indigenous knowledge and wisdom. There are many commonalities and shared understandings, but each Indigenous peoples' knowledge and wisdom is unique to the land where it emerges. There is a diversity and plurality of Indigenous knowledges.
- Naming and articulating Indigenous knowledge in another language, most likely English or French, requires Indigenous knowledge be defined through the lens of another cultural worldview.
- Due to hundreds of years of colonial policies to obliterate Indigenous languages, cultural and spiritual practices, separation of people from their land, separation of the generations by removing children from the care of their parents, imposing Christianity and Euro western values, today Indigenous knowledge can be distant from its roots.
- The Indigenous languages generally have been written only in the past 40 - 50 years. So many Indigenous peoples are developing ways to access their knowledge and wisdom through a literary medium.
- The ways that Indigenous peoples transmit and transfer their knowledge and wisdom through varied and multiple practices generally have not been accepted in the world of academia and schools.
- Professionals such as teachers, professors, lawyers, linguists, health care providers, anthropologists, all professional educated in every discipline lack knowledge about Indigenous peoples from an Indigenous perspective, what people might know about Indigenous people is from a Euro western perspective.
- Indigenous Knowledge is filtered through a Euro western lens. Indigenous peoples portray and act their knowledge rather than explaining in a disconnected abstract process.

Learning and Teaching in an Indigenous World

In 2003, I designed a course at the University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, called Learning and Teaching in an Indigenous World. The course was presented in a series of four separate activities: pole carving, weaving, drumming, and singing and storytelling. The course was designed for all participants to experience an Indigenous learning process while engaged in a collective activity. The course attempted to create learning where the learner gains knowledge and understanding from their experience while being engaged in practical activities, asking themselves questions, seeking understanding from making connections from their prior experiences and the current situation. In the Indigenous world the teacher/mentor rarely asks direct questions or gives instruction. Learners ask themselves questions, and through observation, watchful listening learns from the modelling of the teacher. The class follows an oral tradition with talking circles for sharing information, thoughts, and feelings.

Expert/novice relationships with rich modelling/observation opportunities are abundant. From an early age children and youth work alongside those who are more knowledgeable, skilled and adept. There are ample opportunities to be involved in creative and innovative practices. They engage in family and community activities that are contextually based and time appropriate. These learning opportunities are relational, interdependent, integrated and holistic. Much of the work on the land is difficult, intense, monotonous, tedious and tough, so the work is eased with humour, fun, play, quiet talk and silence. Maintaining spirit, physical, mental and emotional balance is important in everyday life. Much of the teaching is designed so that the learner is able to observe and practice with some watchful guidance. They have opportunities to develop their own unique practice. The feedback on accomplishments is usually quiet appreciation. The teaching practice lends itself to habit formation, identity affirmation, and knowledge integration. Learning is purposeful and of benefit to the self, family and community.

Lilwat language concepts on teaching and learning

The following are the concepts in the Lilwat language which are embedded in the teaching and learning process and were shared at the beginning of the classes and revisited throughout the course at the most optimum times. Note: Tim Hopper, a faculty colleague who joined the Storystick class organised a website, so that you can hear the Lilwat words and provides a phonetic pronunciation guide for the words below. <https://sites.google.com/site/lulwatprinciples/home>. These concepts are from the Lilwat First Nation, but they resonate with other Indigenous peoples as sustaining the teaching and learning process.

Cwelelep – being in a place of dissonance, uncertainty in anticipation of new learning, to spin like a dust storm. We all feel the excitement in the pit of our stomachs when we are on the verge of doing something we want to do but it is new, and we aren't sure we can master it, like pushing off the first time we are going solo on a bicycle. When we are learning we need to make friends with that energy, make use of it to do what is new to us and to get passed our fear of the unknown and our feelings of inadequacy.

Kamucwkalha – refers to the felt energy indicating group attunement and the emergence of a common group purpose, a group is ready to work together, to listen to one another and speak without fear. When the Lilwat7ul gather to make decisions, they first spend time

visiting, telling stories, often funny ones so everyone is laughing. They might share some food and they have time to catch up with everyone. There can be singing and drumming. There is no particular order to events; it is time for connecting. Then the meeting begins, with someone describing what is bringing the group together. Learning is individual but takes place in a group. Every task requires the combined gifts of a group. We need to practice learning to read the environment; both land and groups of people. The group needs to know that their learning affects and is affected by the whole community and beyond. In the class we learn by being in service to the community.

Celhcelh – each person is responsible for their learning, it means finding and taking advantage of all opportunities to learn and maintain openness to learning. Each person must take the initiative to become part of the learning community by finding their place and fitting themselves into the community. It means offering what knowledge and expertise you have to benefit the communal work being carried out.

Emhaka7 – each person does the best they can at whatever the task and keeps an eye on others to be helpful. To work respectfully and with good thoughts and good hands

A7xa7 - how teachers help us to locate the infinite capacity we all have as learners. Developing one's own personal gifts and expertise in a wholistic, respectful and balanced manner. Knowing is the fine synthesis of the mind, feeling, spirit and body.

Kat'il'a - finding stillness and quietness amidst our busyness and need to know. Learning to keep oneself calm is necessary on the land and for living in close quarters with a large group of people

Responsibility – each person is responsible for helping the team and the learning community to accomplish the task at hand in a good way, entering the work clear of anger and impatience

Relationship – each person will be conscious of developing and maintaining relationships — with the people, the task, the teachers and guides, and the communities beyond the learning community. It also means relating what you are experiencing to your past knowledge and to what you will do with what you are learning.

Watchful listening – oriented to an openness to listening beyond our own personal thoughts and assumptions, being aware and conscious of everything around you as you focus on the task at hand

Self-reflection

Reflection is an important tool for learning in the Indigenous world. The one writing assignment in the class was for students to keep a reflection journal, they were encouraged to write about their class experience after every class, mid-way into the course the whole class community had an opportunity to share what they had learned to that point, what stood out for them about learning in an Indigenous world. At the end of the course they looked at their journals and wrote an essay about their experience.

Ceremony

Ceremony is critical to the experience; in each of the activities, ceremony was built into the experience. In the “pole” activity a group was assigned to organise the ceremonies. One of the challenges was how does a group honour the protocols and values of the entire community and context. For example, in the “pole” activity we needed to honour the land

of the Lekwungen, the land on which we were meeting and Elder instructor/lead carver Butch Dick's people. We also needed to honour lead carver Fabian Quocksister's people the Leikwelthout, in the final ceremony his family was involved in the planning and the ceremony, it was the first time some of their family songs were performed away from their land. The students needed to make sure that it was done in a respectful and conscientious way. Because it was a University of Victoria accredited course taking place at the university involving the university community we also needed to be cognizant of their protocols. Ceremonies help us to connect with one another in community, to remember that our actions and existence is part of a bigger picture in place and time. It is a time to include our ancestors and to remember our descendants. We are all related—everything we do reminds us that we are related and connected to everything; we are not alone. Giving thanks and gratitude in ceremony helps us to keep this in mind. Our learning is not only for us alone, it is for the community, our ancestors and for those yet to come.

Fun and Humour

It was important in the class to have fun, to be playful and to laugh. When you watch gatherings of Indigenous people you will witness many times when people tell jokes, tease each other, tell funny stories to provoke laughter. If people are serious or working intensely then there is an interruption for laughter to break the tension.

Challenges faced to teach and learn in an Indigenous world

Over six iterations of the Learning and Teaching in an Indigenous World course the following are some of the challenges faced; it is important when changing habituated practice that the leaders in the institution support and seek to understand the complexity of the change process.

- *Time* – courses are timetabled and offered in blocks of time. Compromises were made by the university, students, Indigenous communities to adjust. Sometimes the classes went beyond the class time, or extra times were added to accommodate the activity.
- *Learning community* – in schools and universities classes are made up of homogeneous groupings based on age, grade, ability, subject, and discipline; in the Indigenous world, the community learns together except during puberty training. In these courses there were students who were undergraduate students, graduate students, Indigenous community members, non-Indigenous community members, faculty, and grade school students. Accommodations and compromises had to be made for space allocation and grading,
- *Grading and marks distribution* – as the course was largely based on an oral tradition and activity based, the grading and student marking and standing could not be followed in the usual way. The course was on a pass/fail basis, which was a compromise. In the Indigenous world people are engaged in their learning, and the value is what they achieve for themselves and what they give back to their community. It is expected that much of the learning will take place after the learning experience. Syllabi construction was a challenge, having undergraduates and graduate students learning together was a challenge, the structural system for each group was different. Grading in the western educational world is based on stratification and status, when one succeeds another fails; and it is based on everyone learning the same thing to the same standard. In the Indigenous world a

community of people is dependent on the uniqueness of each individual and each individual bringing their own creativity, ability, expertise to the community.

- *Identifying and recognising the teachers, instructors, experts, professionals* – this was a particular challenge. Who can teach, and who determines a teacher’s expertise had to be considered. For example, instructor compensation and teaching responsibilities. The Indigenous people who are experts in the knowledge that was required for the classes are not recognised as experts in the Euro western system’s certification process. As the faculty instructor I didn’t have any expertise in their areas of expertise. A special dispensation was necessary to have them serve as course instructors. In the school system, Indigenous peoples are asked to teach and to provide their expertise which cannot be found in schools or higher learning institutions, but they are not compensated or recognised for their expertise.
- *Spirit and ceremonies* – in the Indigenous world everything has a spirit and in the first class in the series a log was going to be carved into a totem pole as the activity to learn the Indigenous processes of teaching and learning. When the log arrived, as is the custom to the Lekwungen and Liekwelthout, a ceremony was held to cleanse the log, to welcome it to our community, and to cleanse the space where it would be carved. In the education system this could be looked upon as a “religious” ceremony and it would defy the Secularism Act. It was decided that I would invite students to participate but it would take place outside class time. Participation was optional. Most of the students participated and wrote about the experience in their reflection journals.

What is the Struggle to bring Indigenous Knowledge into the Curriculum

In the discussion above are some challenges that came to light in the experience of one course. In the experiences over the past 50 years of bringing Indigenous knowledge in to the Canadian curriculum the following are some of the challenges that were faced. They are not in hierarchical order, just a listing.

- There is a belief that Indigenous knowledge does not exist, Indigenous knowledge is primitive and uncivilised and is not needed in the modern world.
- The official languages of Canada are English and French, so all learning takes place in those languages.
- The system of schooling was transported to the country from Europe, particularly British and French at the time of colonisation.
- The curriculum is designed and developed according to a set of standards that are guided by a Euro western worldview and by educators schooled in a western system, even when there is consultation with the Indigenous community the developers interpret what is said according to an accepted pattern.
- Educators feeling that they do not know anything about Indigenous peoples, they did not learn in their own schooling either in grade school or university. Often teachers said they were afraid they might make a mistake.
- In all the years of attempting to bring Indigenous content into the curriculum, educators and the public believed that Indigenous content was only for Indigenous learners.

The conditions that are needed to add and embed Indigenous knowledge in the curriculum are a willingness to learn and understand Indigenous history, worldviews, and knowledges by educators. Making curriculum available is a major step but both educators and the public need opportunities to learn and ask questions; a willingness to modify institutional structures to include Indigenous Knowledges. It is necessary to put into place assistance in overcoming beliefs that were promoted about Indigenous peoples. When seeking advice and expertise by Indigenous peoples, honour and respect their perspective but know that you are listening through a Euro western lens. Other important elements include:

- understanding and incorporating Indigenous values, traditional communication and learning styles that are well suited to multi-modal, experiential learning;
- deep observation and reflective learning;
- telling stories and using metaphors;
- mentorship and apprenticeship learning; and,
- learning in a community; and learning by sharing and providing service to the community. (Williams et al, 2008)

Indigenous knowledges are place-based so education systems are required to work in collaboration with Indigenous communities and people to build the knowledges of the local area into the school system. Learn from each other but remember each Indigenous world is unique.

In the course of the settlement and creation of Canada, the Indigenous peoples, like Indigenous peoples around the globe suffered dislocation from their home territories; they became displaced from their sense of self, history, and meaning. I have listened to people speak of their sense of not belonging in either world, not being able to make sense of their lives. I have witnessed children and listened to youth who could only fight as a way of responding to any situation. I have witnessed these children and youth find other ways of engaging without violence. It took being in a warm and caring environment where there was a long-term commitment to the well-being of all students and attention to the physical, emotional, spirit, and intellectual development of all members of the program community. The adults in the program supported students to complete tasks, show up, do the best job they can, be open to learning new things, taking care of each other, helping one another, overcoming barriers and obstacles, and knowing they can make decisions about their lives (Williams, 2017). I have listened to students talk about and demonstrate the strength they acquire from learning about themselves in courses and experiences in school. The children, youth and adults who are in Indigenous language immersion programs are strong, capable, giving and they are comfortable with their identity. These children can cross the borders between the Indigenous world and non-Indigenous world without losing a sense of self (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; McIvor & Mccarty, 2017).

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