



First Nations Education Council March 2021 Highlighter

The First Nations Education Council, as a team, advocate for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students, youth and staff to ensure their sense of belonging, physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs are met in a culturally appropriate manner.

Next FNEC Meeting Mon. April 12, 2021

Deadline for Proposals is Monday, March 29, 2021 two weeks prior to a FNEC meeting.

2020 First Nations Role Models **Wrenn Yano & Morgan McKay**



Reminder:

Spring break is March 15-26, 2021

First Nations Department will be closed.

Lake City Secondary (Columneetza Campus)



Ms. Robbins grade 8 and 9 Shuswap class recently learned to make these neat birch bark baskets in February. Thank you to Ms. Robbins for teaching and sharing her culture with our students! "Grandmother's traditional baskets were made every summer. Baskets were made by the women in each family. In the early spring, the women would gather the materials for the baskets. The young women learned from their grandmothers how to make birch bark baskets. The Shuswap birch bark baskets were used to carry food, berries, and water. The baskets were mostly used to carry berries picked in the summer. The birch bark baskets were made from birch trees, spruce roots, and choke cherry tree branches. The best time to gather the birch bark was in May and June." Photo & story submitted by Jeannie Robbins, Shuswap Language Teacher

Enhancement Agreement Goals:

1. *To increase First Nations Students' Sense of Belonging at School.*
2. *To Increase the quality of academic success for all First Nations students.*
3. *To increase the knowledge and understanding of local First Nations history, culture, governance, languages and communities for all students.*

Please take a look at our Enhancement Agreement on SD27 Website under Programs, First Nations.

Project Proposal Funding

Deadline for proposals is Mon. Mar. 29, 2021 4:30 p.m. (always 2 wks. prior to FNEC meeting)

Proposal information can be found on the SD27 website under **Programs, First Nations** then under **Target Funding Criteria**.

Please ensure that your proposal is signed by the appropriate member of the First Nations Education Committee for your area as well as your Principal.

Schools are reminded to send in a final completion report and photos to First Nations Education Committee once their events have taken place. Digital photos are appreciated so they can be used on the website.

2020-2021 FNEC Meeting Schedule:

Monday, October 19, 2020
Wednesday, November 25, 2020
December: No meeting
January: Monday, January 18, 2021 Cancelled
February: Monday, February 8, 2021
March: Monday, March 8, 2021
April: April 12, 2021
May TBA
June TBA

FIRST PEOPLE'S PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING #5 Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge

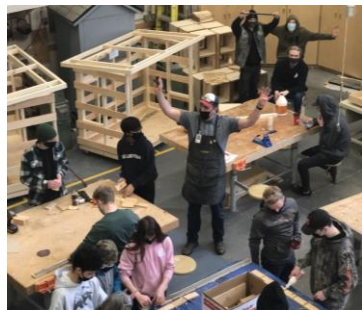
See page 3!

Lake City Woodwork Class Project



At the WL Campus, Teacher Andrew Hutchinson is working with his class to build drum frames for community members.

They formed a very efficient production line to create their masterpieces.



Photos submitted by Dancing Water Sandy,
First Nations Curriculum Development Teacher

Pink Shirt Day Fun



Sisters Micki, Lilia and Jori Sawyer-Ned at 100 Mile Elementary School - proud to show their support for Pink Shirt Day February 24, 2021.
Submitted by Penny Reid

First Nations Role Model 2020 Wrenn Yano



First Nations Role Model Wrenn Yano at school; baking cupcakes for a Social Justice Bake sale.

She is a busy young lady!

National Indigenous Peoples Day Poetry Contest deadline fast approaching!

Remind of our Poetry Contest for Kindergarten to Grade 12 students regardless of ethnicity. Lots of *great prizes to be won!*

See our First Nations Website "Contests" section

From the staff at First Nations Education Department

Cheryl Lenardon, Assistant Superintendent, SD27

*Jerome Beauchamp,
First Nations Liaison*

*Tracy Hubner,
First Nations Department Secretary*

First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL) #5

This document is designed to help explore the FPPL which were articulated by a group of Indigenous educators, scholars and knowledge-keepers from BC in 2006. This following information is taken from www.firstpeoplesprinciplesoflearning.wordpress.com

Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge

This principle reflects the understanding that Indigenous peoples hold an extensive wealth of knowledge, even if this knowledge has not always been recognized by post-industrial Euro-centric cultures (Battiste, 2005). It also recognizes that Indigenous knowledge contributes to the non-Indigenous understanding in the world. As one example, educators are now growing in their understanding that the First peoples Principles of Learning represent a highly effective approach to education that, among other things, supports deep learning, inclusivity, and responding to learners' needs.

What is Indigenous Knowledge (IK)?

IK can be broadly defined as the complex knowledge systems that have developed over time by a particular people in a particular area and that have been transmitted from generation to generation. It includes ecological, scientific, and agricultural knowledge in addition to processes of teaching and learning. It also encompasses both the traditional and the contemporary as Indigenous knowledge continues to expand and develop. Because Indigenous knowledge has often been referred to as "traditional knowledge", some people view it as unchanging knowledge based only in the past. Instead it is "an adaptable, dynamic system based on skills, abilities, and problem-solving techniques that change over time depending on environmental conditions" (Battiste, 2005). The body of IK can no more be summed up than the body of knowledge of any other society. It is vast, and based on context, often connected to specific geographical areas.

Inclusion of non-appropriated Indigenous knowledge (in the form of curriculum, resources, pedagogy etc.) in schools serves multiple purposes. It honors the fact that Indigenous peoples do have a robust and deep knowledge base that has been previously either ignored or denigrated (often as a part of colonial policies); it makes room in our schools for Aboriginal learners to see elements of who they are reflected around them (an often necessary condition for the success of almost all learners), and it helps non-Indigenous learner develop understandings to bridge some of the divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Integrating the traditional Indigenous perspectives of teaching and learning can also be immensely valuable in creating a more responsive education system for ALL students.

Relation to Other Education Theory

Constructivism supports the belief that there is not one objective reality to which all learners aspire to know and understand. Instead, the learner makes sense of the world based on his or her experiences in it (von Glasersfeld, 2008). In this light, one can appreciate that there are different types of knowledge. While most societies tend to value some types of knowledge over others, one can also presume that there can be value found in knowledge systems of various cultures (Jegede, 1995).

Rather than criticize the learners' perspectives if they seem to contradict the paradigms being promoted in the classroom environment, an effective educational experience helps articulate learners' pre-existing conceptual understandings and uses these to help to create bridges to new understandings (Aikenhead & Jegede, n.d.) Jegede (1995) proposes that the cultural knowledge held by the learner, even when it may seem to come into conflict with other concepts being taught, needs to be recognized, and can in many cases be used to help learners understand concepts stemming from other cultural world-views. However, it is important to not view what has been traditionally taught in formal education as the pinnacle of learning. Providing opportunities for multiple ways of understanding the world can lead to a deeper understanding of the complexities of knowledge.

Principles of Learning #5 continued:

Implications for Classroom and School Include:

- The willingness of educators to see themselves as learners, and seek to develop their own understandings first.
- Understanding that education systems are not value neutral. Instead what is taught, and how it is taught reflects cultural values. Helping learners understand this may help them navigate through differing cultural beliefs.
- Ensuring meaningful inclusion of Indigenous content and/or perspectives in all curricular areas (without appropriation).
- Recognizing that Indigenous knowledge is connected to specific contexts. There is great diversity in First Peoples across not only Canada, but also within BC. Because of this, it is important to understand that teaching resources that might be appropriate and relevant in one community might not be appropriate for another community or school district.
- Starting local. When deciding upon content that will be incorporated into the school or classroom, begin by checking with any local First Nations communities or Aboriginal organizations. Some may be able to help provide resources that are appropriate.
- Recognizing that local Aboriginal people can also be effective resources. This can be facilitated by developing relationships with the local community of Aboriginal organization(s).

Implications for Specific Curricular Areas

While each of the following areas is described separately (and briefly), it is recognized that multidisciplinary educational experiences may better reflect the holistic emphasis of the FPPL. In general, the explicit inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and perspective in the curriculum is based on the understanding that the First Peoples perspectives and knowledge are a part of the historical and contemporary foundation of BC and Canada. Practical applications of Indigenous knowledge are balanced with deeply respectful spiritual practices leading to informed decision-making that is in the best interest of self, others and the world around us (Michell et al, 2008).

For Sciences – It is important to understand that there are additional perspectives of science that are not reflected in how science has been taught in schools (which is not always in accord with how science is practiced outside of schools, what many refer to as contemporary science). Increasingly, both Canadian and international research has been “discovering” truths that have already long been known and shared by First Peoples. Incorporating First peoples’ perspectives and knowledge in school science can “broaden all people’s worldview and understanding of our interconnected relationship with the earth and environment. Hence, incorporating First Peoples’ perspectives in school science has the potential to resolve social, cultural, and environmental crises that impact all humanity” (Michell et al. 2008)

In “Education Indigenous to Place” (2007) Barnhardt and Kawagley share the richness of Indigenous knowledge in the context of Alaskan First Peoples. In BC, the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the First Nations Schools Association (FNSEA) have developed a *Science First Peoples 5-9 Teacher Resource Guide* to help educators understand how to integrate local Indigenous knowledge into classrooms.

For English Language Arts – it is important to understand that the word “story” in First Peoples’ contexts has a different meaning than it does in post-industrial Euro-centric contexts. Stories are narratives (traditionally oral, but now also written) that are used to teach skills, transmit cultural values and mores, convey news, record family and community histories, and explain our natural world. In First Peoples contexts, stories do not equate with the construct of “short story” as is often taught in BC classrooms. They do not necessarily follow what is often taught as the conventional story structure (i.e. follow the “story arc”), and can often have complex circular or cyclical structures. The story is an evolving form in Indigenous cultures, as is evidence by the powerful work of many contemporary story tellers who create story through spoken work, song, writing, and music. The explicit inclusion of Indigenous literature (in its various forms) in BC schools and classrooms is based on the understanding that this is the land from which that literature originates.

Principle of Learning #5 continued:

In BC, provincial courses such as English First Peoples 10, 11, and 12 have rich teacher resource guides that can help educators navigate through potential resources to help teach these courses.

For Social Studies – It is important to reframe some of the conversation around the history of Canada. There is increased awareness of the need to “teach social studies from the perspective of peoples who have been traditionally marginalized in, or excluded from, national narratives told in schools. This shift in outlook reflects a move away from engaging students with any singular conception of a national past, integrating multiple perspectives in the telling of Canada’s stories of origin, its histories, and the movements of its People” (Scott, 2013). This shift includes an age-appropriate examination of the effects of colonization and the legacies of governmental policies over the history of Canada, including Residential School policies that have a significant effect on our society today. An inclusion of First Peoples perspectives in Social Studies classes requires a critical examination of what is considered important to teach and learn.

For Math – As with other curricular areas, there is growing recognition that education should be culturally responsive, and Math is no exception. Recent work on curricular resources in Math, such as *Thuuwaay, ‘Waadlu x an’: Mathematical Adventures* (Nicola & Jovanovich, 2011) demonstrates that the learning of Math can be approached through a culturally relevant lens. FNEESC/FNSA have also developed a *Math First Peoples* Teacher Resource Guide for grades 8/9 to help educators integrate First Peoples knowledge into Math. In addition to these resources, exploring Math through an Indigenous lens is a part of the UBC Aboriginal Mathematics K-12 Network.

For Health and Physical Education - the emphasis on the need for balance integration of all aspects of being, and the interconnectedness of a person’s physical, mental, spiritual and emotional aspects are of particular significance to the teaching and learning in Health curricula. In addition, as has been noted, the health of human being is linked to the health of the land and environment.

Relation to Other Educational Theory

The Concepts of culturally relevant and culturally responsive curricula support the need to integrate indigenous knowledge in all curricular areas. This process has come to be termed by many researchers as “culturally relevant” or “culturally responsive” teaching, and it has been identified as a necessary element of student success (Allen & Labbo, 2001; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Young, 2010). However, the inclusion of First Peoples’ knowledge and perspectives into classrooms for all students is necessary for more than culturally relevant or responsive education. The knowledge and languages of First Peoples in BC are connected to the land in this province. BC First Peoples’ languages and knowledge are not taught and learned anywhere else in the world; they are a part of the collective history and contemporary knowledge of BC and Canada.

Implications for the Classroom and School Include:

- Integrating Indigenous knowledge and perspectives in all curricular areas as an integral part of all learning (and not as an “add-on”). This often requires educators to see themselves as learners and seek to develop their own understandings first.

Next month we will look at the sixth Principle in the Principles of Learning.

Learning embedded in memory, history and story.