



# First Nations Education Committee October 2017 Highlighter

The First Nations Education Committee, 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  
Monday, Nov. 6,  
2017

Reminder:  
Deadline for Proposals  
is Monday, October  
23, 2017 at 4:30 p.m.

Phyllis Webstad  
Orange Shirt Day  
Was a Success!



Reminder:

First Nations Education  
Department will be closed  
for Fall Break November  
13-17, 2017

## First Nations Role Models update

August 4-6, 2017 First Nations Role Models Shantae Guichon and Dallas George and their families travelled to Kamloops to take part in the annual Kamloopa Pow Wow, the largest Pow Wow in Western Canada. Our Role Models marched in the Grand March proudly representing School District 27. The Kamloopa Pow Wow Society always look forward to hosting our First Nations Role Models from the Cariboo. Thank you to their families for providing the chaperoning on this most memorable trip. Thank you to Bev Guichon for photos.



## 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 Monday, Oct. 23, 2017 at 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 go on the website.

### 2017-2018 FNEC Meeting Schedule:

Monday, October 2, 2017  
Monday, November 6, 2017  
Monday, December 4, 2017  
January: CANCELLED  
Monday, February 5, 2018  
Monday, March 5, 2018  
Monday, April 9, 2018  
Monday, May 7, 2018  
Monday, June 4, 2018

## Star Blanket Project at Dog Cr. Elem./Jr. Sec.



2016-2017 School year saw Dog Creek Elementary/Jr. Secondary School undertake a year long project creating Star Blankets. Star Blankets are given as gifts for special occasions in First Nations Culture. Historically they have significant cultural and ceremonial meaning. Teacher Louise Harry, Principal Jane Hancock, staff member Sandra Archie and several others ensured every child in the school created their own star-quilt blanket. In making of the quilts, students learned the valuable cultural stories and lessons related to this project. Originally quilt blankets were used as bed coverings. Then they began to appear in important places; door coverings for shelters or dwellings at ceremonial events. They were worn by healers during ceremonies and most importantly, star quilts have been part of the tradition of “give away” in special circumstances; births, deaths, illness. The students at Dog Creek kept with tradition and they all gifted their creation to someone special. The students shared that this was a hard project but no one gave up. The school proudly displayed 20 quilts at Boitanio Park’s Aboriginal Day in June. Thank you to Louise Harry and the Shuswap people in Dog Creek School area who shared their wonderful Shuswap culture with our staff and students.

## Orange Shirt Day September 30, 2017



Orange Shirt Ceremonies took place on Friday, September 29, 2017 at Williams Lake and also 100 Mile House. Many speakers shared their stories of Residential School with the students. Traditional and healing songs were drummed and sang in honor of the people who attended Residential Schools. Orange Shirt Day is an important part in acknowledging Truth and Reconciliation. Thank you to everyone who took part in this important day.

## FIRST PEOPLE’S PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING #2

**Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).**

See page 3 & 4 for further information on this important Principle of Learning!

### First Nations Role Model Applications out now!!

We will continue with the two part application process, so please be sure to read thoroughly. Candidates will apply in Oct./Nov. with the deadline of December 1, 2017. We will gather the candidates together here in the SBO for 2 separate days of activities in the New Year. Together the candidates will learn what a Role Model is and how to be a positive Role Model. They will learn valuable First Nations protocol for Role Models. They will work on public speaking and take part in some fun activities to get to know one another. They will learn the history of our Role Model Program and be briefed on events that the Role Models attend.

In this first part of the application process, they will learn how to complete Form 2 and write an essay as required. Role Models will come out of this first part with more confidence. They will be comfortable in knowing fellow candidates not just seeing and meeting them the night of the celebration. Letters of reference are not required until they enter into the Form 2 process which will be due February 27, 2018. See SD27 Website, Programs and First Nations for application information.

### *From the staff at First Nations Education Department*

*Jerome Beauchamp,  
Director of Instruction, Education Services*

*David DeRose, District Principal, First Nations Education*

*Tracy Hubner,  
First Nations Department Secretary*



# First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL) #2

## **Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place**

This principle reflects the indigenous perspective that everything is interconnected and that education 1) is not separate from the rest of life, and 2) relationships are vital.

☑ Learning is holistic...

Effective learning environments pay attention to the whole child, including the physical, mental, social/emotional, and spiritual aspects of the learner. The holistic nature of life and education are central and critical to the discussion about Indigenous views of education because they underpin first Peoples' understandings of human development and learning.

The holistic nature of life and education reveals itself in multiple ways. The first of these is that there is not a natural separation between the concept of education and the rest of a person's experience. Learning is not viewed as an action separate from any other part of life. In a contemporary context, a person's experiences in school needs to be an authentic part of students' life experiences rather than be designed or experienced as a preparation for a life to be lived later. This emphasizes an understanding of education as contextual and integrated into all aspects of daily life. Where possible they should be a part of real-life situations, but where that is not possible, they should reflect real-life situations so that the knowledge learned is directly transferable to the learner's life. In this way the learning also helps to create and support community.

The holistic and integrative nature of life and education also manifests itself in the concept of the four aspects of a whole and healthy being. Some Indigenous peoples use the concept of the Medicine Wheel to identify four aspects of being: mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional (Brown, 2004; Cajete, 1994; Calliou, 1995; Regnier, 1995; Weenie, 1998). It is important to note that these aspects do not exist in isolation from each other; they are viewed as equal and integrated parts of the whole, and each must be attended to simultaneously in the development of the whole person.

Of particular relevance to a discussion of Indigenous worldviews with respect to education is the understanding that each of these four aspects carries equal value and weight. The development and attention to the spiritual and emotional domains of a person is as important as the consideration given to the mental and physical. A complete integration of the four aspects of the person can be seen as running contrary to a post-industrial Euro-centric worldview which some might argue, compartmentalizes these aspects of people's existence, with only some being contained within the domain of education or schooling. Ermine (1995) writes that "[w]estern science has habitually fragmented and measured the external space in an attempt to understand it in all its complexity (p.103). He contends that this paradigm for understanding our existence hinders the ability to fully appreciate the holistic nature of life.

It is important to understand that "spiritual" in First Peoples' contexts does not equate with religious beliefs. It is not a discussion about worship. It is embedded in the understanding how the world works, and is core of First Nations cultures. Doige (2003) indicates that "[o]ne's spirituality is the inner resource that facilitates knowing oneself, one's surroundings, and finding meaning for one's self in connection and relation to those surroundings" (p. 146-7). Katz and St. Denise (1991) also indicate that in Aboriginal ways of being in the world, both "the spirit and the heart are essential ways of knowing" (p. 31). The importance of nourishing the spirit is an integral part of learning.

The other aspect of the person that cannot be separated from the mental and physical aspects of the person is the emotional or "affective" capacity of a person. In fact, Brown (2004) posits that not only are the heart and mind connected, but that the heart is the root of the mind. Thus the development of the affective capacity is essential to the development of the cognitive capacity" (p.19). This attention to the emotional nature of life moves the concept of learning beyond mental capabilities and processes. To further support this idea, Brown (2004) asserts that because the heart and mind are connected, "educating the mind alone is absurd" (p.10). Adding to this concept is the fact that in some first Nations languages, the word for mind and heart is the same word.

☑ Learning is ... reflexive

Learning is reflexive. It builds upon itself, exponentially increasing as learners develop new knowledge and deeper understandings of how everything is ultimately connected.

☒ Learning is ... reflective

Learning does not happen without reflection. Reflective thinking is a key process in coming to understand new concepts and determining the relevancy of information and ideas. It helps to make sense of new experiences and use them to learn by connecting them to what is already known.

The emphasis on reflection is evident in a process of teaching and learning common to many First Peoples. In many of the stories shared by elders, there is an intention to help the listener learn what he or she needs to learn without explicitly saying what the lesson is. Often this story is repeated several times in a life time and each time the listener is expected to decide for him or herself what needs to be learned from the story.

☒ Learning is ... experiential

Meaning is made from direct experience. Learning is achieved by doing and thinking, through engaging in a hands (and minds on) approach. It “provides a tactile and tangible connection between knowledge and life” (Battiste, 2002). The experiential aspect of making meaning from learning also reinforces the need for meaningful reflection.

☒ Learning is ... relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).

A recurring theme that surfaces in an examination of First Peoples' perspectives of education is the importance of relationship. The concept of “we are all related” is understood by most First Peoples in British Columbia. It is a phrase echoed in many documents and uttered by many peoples. Imbedded in this concept is the belief that as human beings, we all share commonality and what affects one person affects others as well. Treating all people as related (or as kin) requires and reinforces a way of being in the world that helps shape our actions. The concept of relationship also encompasses relationship to self, relationship to others (current and past) and relationship to place.

The concept of relationship also encompasses “community”, and it is through the context of knowing one’s community that one can understand him or herself. It is also asserted that “...context is essential in education and determines the meaning and application (added emphasis) of teaching and learning” (Cajete, 1994, p.165). Context can be understood to relate not only to the people, community, and place that one is a part of, but also to the purpose of learning.

In all discussions of relationship in indigenous contexts, there is both a sense of belonging to and relating to others. This is tied to the idea of collective identity and responsibility (Cajete, 1994; Dene Kede, 1993; Greenwood & de Ledeeuw, 2007; Kirkness, 1998). Learning is a highly social process that nurtures relationships within the family and the community. In this context, the meaningful incorporation of First Peoples’ world views, with their associated knowledge bases, values, beliefs and preferred pedagogical practices, into the education system, would benefit both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners.

This principle also emphasizes the relationship to the land. In First Peoples’ cultural constructs, living and learning is inextricably tied to sense of place and connection to the land. The community and natural environment are regarded as the “classroom”, and “land was regarded as the mother of all people” (Kirkness, 1998, p. 10).

### **Relation to Other Educational Theory**

The importance of reciprocal relationships in learning is also echoed by Scardamalia and Bereiter (1994), who also suggest that knowledge building is supported by intentional social interaction where participants provide constructive response to each other’s work. In addition, the positive effect of collaborative learning is supported by Rogers and Ellis in their explanation of collaboration within the framework of distributed cognition (Rogers & Ellis, 1994) whereby knowledge is shared throughout networks of people.

The emphasis on the experiential nature of learning supports the constructivist approach to learning which emphasizes “knowledge and competence as products of the individual’s conceptual organization of the individual’s experience” (von Glasersfeld, 2008, p. 48). Learners actively engage in experiences

that allow them to develop new understandings based on the interaction of their prior experience and perceptions and the new experience. They construct knowledge through their learning experiences. The emphasis on experiential learning is also supported by Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) in their emphasis on using authentic activity for learning.

Moon (2001) refers to the use of reflection as a significant learning tool in the processes of making meaning, working with meaning, and transformative learning - a continuum of "deep learning" processes where ideas are linked to each other, and integrated together before being restructured into new understandings.

A link to sense of place is also echoed in situated learning, another concept in constructivist pedagogy. Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) emphasize that in order for learning to take place, activity and enculturation are paramount. They argue that knowledge is "situated, being in part product of activity, context and culture in which it is developed and used" (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989, p. 32). Knowledge is a tool to be developed and used in the appropriate, authentic context to become meaningful and learned effectively. While they emphasize the link between the learning and the activity, one can argue that the space or place of the learning also influences what is learned. In a similar vein, constructivist theorists view learning as highly contextualized; knowledge does not exist independent of the culture and history of people and place (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

#### **Implications for Classroom and School Include:**

- ☒ Developing a healthful relationship between teacher and learner. Relationship between teacher and learner is often considered one of the primary indicators of student success for many students.
- ☒ Integrating family (including extended family) and community members into the learning experiences.
- ☒ Helping learners develop relationships with the surrounding community (both people and land).
- ☒ Developing cross-curricular learning experiences for learners.
- ☒ Including as much experiential learning as possible.
- ☒ Ensuring learners see relevancy in what they are learning.
- ☒ Providing choice and flexibility in activities so that different aspects of the whole self can be attended to.
- ☒ Using humor.
- ☒ Helping learners develop the skills they need for effective self-reflection.
- ☒ Respectfully incorporating the use of the circle for group discussion.
- ☒ Creating collaborative and cooperative learning opportunities.
- ☒ Providing apprenticeship options for learning.
- ☒ Providing opportunities for learners to mentor other students, or be mentored by others.
- ☒ Providing multiple access points for all learners in learning activities so that everyone can access opportunities for learning.
- ☒ Providing multiple ways for learners to represent their learning.

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

***"Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions."***

**Note: Be sure to check more ideas out on the Google dock site**