

# First Peoples Principles of Learning

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FIRST  
PEOPLES

# PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

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

Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.

Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge.

Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.

Learning involves patience and time.

Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.



For First Peoples  
classroom resources  
visit: [www.fnesc.ca](http://www.fnesc.ca)



- Today we will begin our work using the lens of the First Peoples Principles Of Learning

# Process

- each table has a facilitator
- each table has 1 of the nine principles of learning
- each table has people, and each person will be heard
- the principle is on a large placemat with lots of room for drawing, writing , creating
- fill the room with dialogue, what interests you, gives you pause, makes you wonder about this principle
- fill your page with words, thoughts, drawing.....
- share your thoughts with us, one surprise or an ah ha.....

Please begin your  
dialogue ....

Learning ultimately supports the well-being of self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits and the ancestors. <sup>(1)</sup>

- uniqueness of each learner is valued and appreciated
- each person enters this world with specific gifts that can be nurtured as they grow
- responsibility of the adults in a child's life to acknowledge those strengths so that gifts can flourish

learning ultimately supports... the well-being of the family and community <sup>(1)</sup>

- there is a need to balance individual achievement against responsibilities to and for the family and community
- what is learned by individuals needs to benefit his or her family and community
- this connects back to “we are all one”
- what affects one person affects all others

# learning ultimately supports... the well being of the land <sup>(1)</sup>

- the community and natural environment are regarded as the “classroom”
- it is an understanding that “people belong to the land”, in contrast to people “own” the land
- the health of human beings is tied to the health of the land
- what is learned needs not to jeopardize the health of the land

learning ultimately supports ...the well being of the spirits, and the ancestors<sup>(1)</sup>

- people owe their lives to those that have come before
- learning should respect what has been learned from those ancestors



# Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place) (2)

- holistic
- everything is interconnected
- education is not separate from the rest of life
- relationships are vital
- 4 aspects of being: mental, physical, spiritual and emotional
- with respect to education, each aspect carries equal value and weight
- spiritual, in FP context does not equate with religious beliefs
- one'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 ( Katz&St. Denise)

# learning is reflexive... (2)

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

# learning is reflective...<sup>(2)</sup>

- learning does not happen without reflection
- when stories are shared by Elders, there is an intention to help the listener learn without explicitly saying what the lesson is
- stories are often repeated in a lifetime with expectation that the listener will decide for themselves what needs to be learned from the story

# learning is experiential.. (2)

- learning is made from direct experience
- by doing and engaging hands-on and minds-on approach
- there is a tactile connection between knowledge and life

# learning is relational...<sup>(2)</sup>

- we are all related
- as human beings we share commonality .... what affects one person affects others
- treating all people as related requires and reinforces a way of being that help shape our actions
- encompasses relationship to self, to others, current and past, and to place
- knowing ones community, then one can understand him or herself

# Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions. <sup>(3)</sup>

- each person takes responsibility for his or her own actions
- actions have consequences
- we are all related and how will actions affect others
- need for authentic learning situations
- need for learner's autonomy - providing motivation and a learner's understanding of themselves as a learner and their strengths

# Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities. (4)

- the responsibility of teaching belongs to everyone
- this strengthens the community
- the responsibility for learning belongs to the learner
- Elders share stories, learners determine what they should take from the story to help them at this time and place
- Elders are significant teachers, a knowledgeable person who understands the things needed to be learned by young people
- Elders are models for learners
- respect for Elders is embedded in peoples' consciousness

# Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge. (5)

- the understanding that Indigenous people hold an extensive wealth of knowledge, even if it has not been recognized by post-industrial Euro-centric cultures. ( Battiste)
- Indigenous knowledge contributes to the non-Indigenous understandings of the world
- First Peoples Principles of Learning represents a highly effective approach to education, inclusivity and recognizing multiple ways of meeting learner's needs, and uncovering pre-existing conceptual understandings
- Indigenous Knowledge can be defined as a complex knowledge system that has been developed over time by a particular people in a particular area and that has been transmitted from generation to generation.



# Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story. <sup>(6)</sup>

- knowledge was kept in an oral tradition
- oral tradition still highly valued
- oral narratives are used to teach skills, transmit cultural values and mores, convey news, record family and community histories and explain the natural world
- spiritual and emotional truth were expressed through metaphor and symbols in stories
- emphasis on story and history help learners to organize new concepts that develop from their learning
- oral tradition is very precise and follows a procedure
- historical and cultural context in oral tradition helps the learner understand what and who has come before and how it has influences what is now and how each person came to be.

# Learning involves patience and time. (7)

- learning is an individualist process and cannot be rushed
- learning happens when a person is ready
- most effective when learning can be applied in an authentic context
- all people in a group contribute according to their gifts
- group members learn from one and other
- group decisions made through consensus takes time, patience and encourages people to listen and understand differing perspectives
- consensus builds strong communities

# Learning requires exploration of one's identity. <sup>(8)</sup>

- identity connects people to each other and the land
- it includes developing an understanding of ones' place in the world
- understanding factors that contribute to how people see themselves
- know strengths and innate abilities, capacity to learn
- connects to the duty to contribute to others, family community, land.

Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations. (9)

- sharing depends on the type of knowledge
- some freely shared, others not
- stories are not meant to be re-written as one's own
- knowledge within various First People Communities is not intended to be shared, such as ceremonial practices that incorporate song and dances that belong to certain families
- some held by specific people, families, clans, or communities and permission must be gained
- ownership of knowledge = intellectual property or similar to copyright.

# Contributions

- The Principles were created by members of the First Nations Education Steering Committee 2006/2007
- Explanation of the principles comes from the work of Jo-Anne L. Chrona 2016

# What next....coming together

- We ask that we keep those ideas and points of reference, surprises and wonderings present as we proceed through the work of the next 2 days.

Thank you