



## INDIGENOUS FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE: CONVERSATION GUIDE

This conversation guide is designed for use by instructional leaders and learning communities or as a self-paced study. It is designed to give each reader parts of “truth” that will lead individuals and groups in the direction of reconciliation. This guide is not a substitute for engaging in meaningful conversations with the Indigenous community.

### Weaving Indigenous Ways of Knowing in Classrooms and Schools

#### INTRODUCTION

This guide is intended to facilitate conversation after viewing one or all of the following videos:

- **Weaving Indigenous Ways of Knowing in Elementary Classrooms and Schools**
- **Weaving Indigenous Ways of Knowing in Middle Schools and Classrooms**
- **Weaving Indigenous Ways of Knowing in High Schools and Classrooms**

Prior to viewing the video(s) appropriate for your teaching level, it is recommended that you review the **Weaving Ways** resource and read the key understandings found below.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Competency 5 of the **Teaching Quality Standard** calls on teachers to develop and apply foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit contemporary and historical communities for the benefit of all students. The **Weaving Ways** resource was created to support and inspire teachers in the classroom to meet the expectation outlined in Competency 5 by weaving Indigenous knowledge systems with current practice in meaningful and authentic ways.

The video you will view provides practical examples of what weaving Indigenous knowledge systems with current practice looks like at the classroom level. The examples are meant to inspire you to consider how you might weave Indigenous knowledge systems into your own practice. The examples are not exhaustive; they are shared with you for reflection, inspiration and perhaps a starting point for your own journey.

ARPDC extends deep appreciation for the teachers captured in the video, who were willing to open their classrooms, and share their practice.

#### KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

The **Weaving Ways** resource is structured with four interrelated quadrants to support teachers in designing meaningful teaching and learning opportunities that weave together Indigenous ways of knowing with Western (current) pedagogical practices to foster reconciliation. The four quadrants include:

##### 1) Cultures of Belonging

Creating cultures of belonging is based on the idea of relationality. In relationality, everything in the universe is connected to a single whole. Given everything is connected in some way, we can begin to create a community where members see themselves reflected and a vital part of the relational space. Teachers and school communities can foster a culture of belonging that embraces Indigenous ways of knowing, teaching and learning through character education rooted in Indigenous philosophy. Examples of this might be created through a focus on the Seven Sacred Teachings, virtues projects, or embracing the Circle of Courage model. Incorporating a social justice lens further helps to develop critical consciousness in our community related to equality and equity, ethics, diversity, dignity and worth, hegemony, human rights, oppression, peace, race, and action.



**Families, schools, and youth organizations are being challenged to form new 'tribes' for all of our children so there will be no 'psychological orphans'.**

*Dr. Martin Brokenleg*

## **2) Instructional Design**

Valuing Indigenous and other knowledge systems in the learning begins with the instructional design teachers create. Teachers can create deeper learning opportunities that embrace Indigenous knowledge systems when they help students explore learner outcomes through an instructional design that embodies:

- Holistic learning (connection to the community, the natural world and spiritual values)
- Collaborative learning experiences (creating opportunities to work collaboratively with each other as well as the larger community)
- Relational learning (connecting content to reality through story, artifacts, personal reflections, and experiential or place based learning).

**Ethical Relationality: An understanding of human relationality that does not deny difference, but rather seeks to more deeply understand how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other.**

*Dwayne Donald*

## **3) Pedagogy**

Pedagogies that embrace Indigenous ways of knowing are fostered by approaches to teaching and learning where teachers purposefully think about how to include:

- Indigenous people (eg. Elders, Knowledge Keepers or other local Indigenous community members)
- Places (eg. learning from and on the land)
- Indigenous processes (eg. circle talk, smudging) into their practice

**Learn to see from your one eye with the best or the strengths in the Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing . . .and learn to see from your other eye with the best or the strengths in the (Western) knowledges and ways of knowing . . . but most importantly, learn to see with both these eyes together, for the benefit of all.**

*Albert Marshall*

## **4) Sharing Through Story**

Indigenous cultures share stories in many ways including song, dance, drumming, landscapes and art. Teachers are encouraged to tell their stories, as well as have students tell stories through a different lens, one which is inspired by indigenous historical and contemporary lifestyles.

**Storytelling moves the spirit and is a way of making meaning and finding one's unique place in the world and making sense of the mysteries of life.**

*Our Way is a Valid Way, pg 57*

## **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION**

- After viewing the video(s) and the Weaving Ways resource, what similarities do you notice between the beliefs/approaches shared in the two resources and your own pedagogical beliefs and approaches?

- Indigenous ways of knowing are often more about incorporating Indigenous processes into the learning opportunities rather than the teaching of specific content. Identify the Indigenous processes that were shared by the teachers in the video(s), and connect the processes to one or more of the quadrants in the Weaving Ways resource (cultures of belonging, instructional design, pedagogy and sharing through story).
- As you reflect on your teaching practice, in which of the 4 quadrants do you feel most confident? Share your classroom example(s) with your colleagues. In which quadrant do you feel least confident? What might you introduce?
- Share an example you viewed in the video(s), or read in the Weaving Ways resource, that has inspired you, and that you will introduce to your students.

## REFERENCES

### Alberta Education Teaching Quality Standard

[https://education.alberta.ca/media/3739620/standardsdoc-tqs-\\_fa-web-2018-01-17.pdf](https://education.alberta.ca/media/3739620/standardsdoc-tqs-_fa-web-2018-01-17.pdf)

### Weaving Ways Indigenous Ways of Knowing in Classrooms and Schools

<http://empoweringthespirit.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Weaving-Ways-Introductory-Document-10-09.pdf>

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### Empowering the Spirit

<http://empoweringthespirit.ca/>



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