



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.

Building and Applying Indigenous Foundational Knowledge Through a Community of Practice

INTRODUCTION

This guide is intended to facilitate conversation after viewing:

- **Building and Applying Indigenous Foundational Knowledge in Classrooms and Schools Through a Community of Practice**

Prior to viewing the video, it is recommended that you review the key understandings below as well as:

- **Supporting Awareness, Understanding and Application of Indigenous Foundational Knowledge: A Planning and Implementation Tool**
- **Creating and Sustaining a Community of Practice for Instructional Leaders: Acquiring and Applying Indigenous Foundational Knowledge**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Alberta’s commitment to reconciliation began as it did for all Canadians, with the Calls to Action from the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Report**. Action 63, within the report, created the pathway for education to be used as a means of honoring Canada’s commitment to reconciliation. Canada’s commitment became Alberta’s commitment. In June of 2016, key education stakeholder organizations came together with the Minister of Education to sign the ‘Joint Commitment to Action’, with the goal of advancing reconciliation through education. Today, teachers and leaders across the province of Alberta are striving to acquire and apply foundational knowledge about First Nations, Metis and Inuit, for the benefit of all students.

This video showcases Indigenous lead teachers from Elk Island Catholic Schools and Evergreen Catholic Schools, who participated in two very successful, but separate Communities of Practice (COPs) over the course of a year, with the goal of acquiring and applying Indigenous foundational knowledge in their classrooms and schools. The lead teachers engaged in on-going professional learning opportunities, meaningful and facilitated professional dialogue, and self-reflection - all important components of an effective COP. The two COPs came together at the end of the year to share their successes, discuss their challenges and learn from each other.

KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

- Successful planning and implementation related to acquiring and applying Indigenous foundational knowledge within schools and across a district is possible when education stakeholders work collaboratively to address seven essential conditions: shared vision, leadership, research and evidence, resources, teacher professional growth, time and community engagement. The conditions are interconnected and need to be considered both individually and as a whole.
- Creating communities of practice is a successful strategy in acquiring and building Indigenous foundational knowledge. Key components of a COP include working collaboratively with a group, interacting with the COP on a regular basis, and engaging in context based dialogue related to supporting their school community in acquiring and applying Indigenous foundational knowledge.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

- An Elder, Indigenous consultants, an Indigenous Knowledge Keeper and an Indigenous professor participated in the culminating event at Ma-Me-O Beach. Indigenous consultants, Knowledge Keepers and Indigenous community members also participated in each district's COP discussions throughout the year as well. Why is it important to include the Indigenous community when schools or districts engage in their journey in acquiring and applying Indigenous foundational knowledge in their schools? Who have you included in your journey to date and what was their involvement?
- In the video, the lead teachers discuss their work in acquiring and applying Indigenous foundational knowledge, as it relates to the seven essential conditions outlined in the resource **Supporting Awareness, Understanding and Application of Indigenous Foundational Knowledge: A Planning and Implementation Tool**. Reflect on your work to acquire and apply Indigenous foundational knowledge in your school or across your district. Of the seven essential conditions, which condition(s) do you believe you have attended to with success? Which condition(s) might you still need to address more deeply in your school or district? How might you engage your school community in using this resource to collaboratively design and implement plans related to acquiring and applying Indigenous foundational knowledge in your school or district?
- In the video the lead teachers were led through a pipe ceremony, experienced a smudge, shared bannock burgers together, and engaged in circle talk - all within an authentic Indigenous environment. Why is experiential learning important when acquiring and applying Indigenous foundational knowledge? How does learning within an authentic Indigenous environment impact the learning? How might you engage your school community in experiential learning?
- The design of any COP is unique, and each COP will look different, depending on the purpose and needs of the participants. The success of a COP is the creation of an environment of mutual respect and trust in which there is a growing willingness to share ideas, expose one's knowledge gaps, ask difficult questions, and listen carefully to each other. The **Creating and Sustaining a Community of Practice for Instructional Leaders: Acquiring and Applying Indigenous Foundational Knowledge** shares a different perspective on a community of practice. How is the COP outlined in the document different from the COPs viewed in the video? How are they the same? How might you set up a COP in your context? Who would you include in your COP?
- How does contextualizing the learning impact our abilities to acquire and apply Indigenous foundational knowledge throughout our schools and school communities?

REFERENCES

Creating and Sustaining a Community of Practice for Instructional Leaders: Acquiring and Applying Indigenous Foundational Knowledge

<http://empoweringthespirit.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Creating-and-Sustaining-a-Community-booklet-Apr2019.pdf>

Supporting Awareness, Understanding and Application of Indigenous Foundational Knowledge: A Planning and Implementation Tool

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxSnLb5DGYeWQlhUQ1FnczVpMjg/view>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Of Canada

http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Empowering the Spirit

<http://empoweringthespirit.ca/>



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