

Incorporating and Developing Culturally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Education

By

Kathleen Marshall
Bachelor of Arts, University of Victoria, 2009
Bachelor of Education, University of Victoria, 2011

A Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTERS OF EDUCATION

Early Childhood Education

© Kathleen Marshall, 2015
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This project may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Michelle Tannock, Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Supervisor

Dr. Christopher Filler, Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Supervisor

Abstract

This project examines the importance of integrating and developing culturally appropriate practice in early childhood education. The guiding question for this project is how can I help teachers incorporate local Aboriginal content into their classrooms in a meaningful way? This project examines the ways Canada, New Zealand, and Australia integrate Aboriginal culture into their early learning environments while also looking at ways educators in British Columbia can begin to incorporate culture into their daily teaching practice. This project highlights ways educators can begin to incorporate culture into their classrooms by looking at differences in worldviews, as well as guiding principles educators can follow to ensure they are being culturally sensitive. The information gathered in this inquiry project is used to create a professional development workshop which districts could adopt as a first step in beginning to integrate local Aboriginal culture into their early learning environments.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate my project to my mom and dad who have supported my learning from day one, continue to push me to strive to better my education and become a better educator. I could not have done this without their love and dedication to my education.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Dedication	iii
Table of Contents	v
Chapter 1	1
Background	1
Terminology	4
Motivation	5
Statement of the Problem	6
Purpose of the Project	6
Summary	8
Chapter 2	9
Introduction	9
Scope and Limitations	10
History of Aboriginal Early Childhood Education	10
New Zealand	11
Australia	16
Canada	17
Comparison	22
Aboriginal Worldview	23
Developing Culturally Appropriate Practice	27
Teaching from the Land	30
Training Practitioners	30
Summary	34
Chapter 3	35
Introduction	35
Overview	36
Incorporating Aboriginal Content	38
First Peoples Principles of Learning	41
Summary	44
Chapter 4	46
Introduction	46
Looking Back	46
Looking Forward	48
Recommendations	49
References	51

Figures

<i>Figure 1: Te Whariki Woven Mat</i>	13
<i>Figure 2: Te Whariki Principles</i>	15
<i>Figure 3: Worldview Comparison</i>	25
<i>Figure 4: Iceberg Analogy</i>	40
<i>Figure 5: First Peoples Principles of Learning</i>	42

Tables

Table 1: Guiding Principles	29
-----------------------------------	----

Appendices

Appendix A: Power Point Presentation	53
--	----

CHAPTER 1

Students in Indigenous societies around the world have, for the most part, demonstrated a distinct lack of enthusiasm for the experience of schooling in its conventional form, an aversion that is most often attributable to an alien school culture, rather than any lack of innate intelligence, ingenuity or problem-solving skills on the part of the students.

(Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1998, p. 2)

Introduction

Aboriginal ways of knowing is a current topic of interest in education, however, I have yet to meet an educator who can clearly define what that means and looks like in a classroom. As educators, we are so frequently inundated with terminology and research that outlines best practice however, rarely are we offered any significant explanation or training on that terminology. I do not believe educators can fully understand the term Aboriginal ways of knowing without first understanding Aboriginal worldview and how it differs significantly from the Western worldview.

The most common question I am asked as an Aboriginal Education teacher is how do educators start incorporating Aboriginal content and pedagogy into their teaching practice? It is the aim of this project to not only highlight the importance of Aboriginal education for all students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, but also, to prepare a professional development workshop that will aid teachers who are wanting to begin to integrate authentic local Aboriginal culture into their classrooms.

Background

My interest in Aboriginal education can be traced back to my teaching and learning in Lillooet, B.C. After graduating from the University of Victoria with my Bachelor of Education, I moved to Lillooet, B.C. to begin my teaching career. Lillooet is a small rural community surrounded by six Aboriginal bands of St'at'imc people. The bands, Xwisten, Sekwekwas, Titqet, Caclep, Tskwaylacw and Tsalalh all speak a dialect of Upper St'at'imc which is taught in the public schools. While sharing many similarities, each band has their own unique set of traditions and cultures despite all living within a five mile radius of Lillooet. Prior to moving to Lillooet, I had very little experience working with Aboriginal students or communities. It was engrained in me, through my undergraduate degree, that children are children despite their culture. In other words, teaching Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal students was the same, a philosophy many teachers still adhere to.

I got my first contract position teaching grade one at an elementary school shortly after moving to Lillooet. I began planning lesson after lesson with no real regard for the cultural background of the students I was teaching. The first week of teaching was challenging, however, I quickly settled in, teaching my students my pre-fabricated lessons. My lessons would normally include an introduction, a brief lesson, and then would provide students a chance to practice and demonstrate their learning. This was how I was taught in University to plan lessons, and despite rising behavior problems in my classroom, I continued on teaching this way. Rarely did I incorporate storytelling or hands on learning in my classroom. I noticed my students behavior change when the St'at'imc teacher was in the room. I was confused why they could sit on the carpet so long and listen to her, but when I tried to give a lesson on the carpet they were constantly moving. After a discussion with the St'at'imc teacher, I realized my approach to

teaching my students was ineffective. I did not pay any attention to Aboriginal culture or worldview, but instead, was teaching solely from my Western worldview perspective.

With the St'at'imc teacher's guidance, I began learning about St'at'imc culture and began learning the language. I would participate in my students language lessons, learning how to introduce myself in St'at'imc language – a skill which later proved very valuable at community events. I began labelling my classroom with St'at'imc vocabulary. I realized that while I had not been outwardly fighting the culture, I had not taken the time to let the culture into my daily teaching and to participate in the local culture, something which helped me connect to my students. Twice a week, my students would hear local stories and learn to sing songs in St'at'imc, all with me by their side, learning alongside them. I will not exaggerate and say the behavior changed overnight, but as the year progressed, my connection with my students and the community deepened, causing far fewer behavior incidents in class.

I had several other contract positions working in Lillooet, and each time, I tried to incorporate more Aboriginal content into my classes to teach my students. I did, however, struggle with the fact that as a non-Aboriginal teacher, I was trying to teach Aboriginal content, something I was initially very uncomfortable doing. I realized over the course of my three years teaching in a rural community, that much of what the students know and connect to is based on the community which they grew up in, which, in the case of Lillooet, was Aboriginal culture. I needed to welcome this culture into my life and my classroom. I needed to start with culture and fit my curriculum into the culture rather than trying to fit culture into my curriculum.

Leaving Lillooet and moving back to Victoria, my questions surrounding integrating Aboriginal culture into early learning classrooms only grew. Moving to a different community meant learning a new Aboriginal culture. It is important to note that learning about a culture

takes time and is not something that happens overnight. Having started to integrate myself in the local culture in Sooke, B.C, I feel as though I am beginning to understand how to incorporate T'Sou-ke Aboriginal culture and worldview into classrooms. However, as my current position is to ensure classroom teachers are incorporating Aboriginal content into their classrooms, I am left with the question, how can I help teachers incorporate local Aboriginal content into their classrooms in a way that is meaningful and authentic for all children?

Terminology

Before continuing with my inquiry project, I believe it is important to outline the terminology that will be used in my capstone project. While I am engrossed in Aboriginal education and understand the terminology, it has become clear to me, through discussions with colleagues, that understanding common terminology is something I take for granted. In Canada, the term Aboriginal is used more frequently than Indigenous, however both terms refer to those who were on the land first or the first peoples. Aboriginal is the term used by the Government of Canada, and thus the term more frequently used. The term Aboriginal, in Canada, encompasses three groups of first peoples, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, thus Aboriginal is the umbrella term when referring to any and all of those groups. According to Greenwood, de Leeuw and Fraser (2007), "these three populations include many groups, each with their own identities, histories, rights and relationships to the nation state of Canada" (p. 6). In this project, I will be looking at research from other countries, including Australia and New Zealand. It should be pointed out that while in Canada we use the term Aboriginal when discussing our first peoples, these other countries tend to use the term Indigenous and thus for the purpose of this research paper, the terms Aboriginal and Indigenous will be used interchangeably.

Motivation

“In the last decade the British Columbia Ministry of Education has indicated an increasing commitment to including the Aboriginal or First Peoples perspective of teaching and learning in British Columbia Schools” (First Peoples Principles of Learning, n.d). In British Columbia, most Aboriginal content is found in the social studies or science curriculum documents, however, very little of the early years (kindergarten and grade one) curriculum surrounds learning about local Aboriginal communities, even in the two subject areas mentioned above (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2006). Incorporating Aboriginal content into the curriculum runs deeper than just teaching Aboriginal content, both past and present. Barnhardt & Kawagley (2005) highlight that there is a need to recognize the coexistence of multiple worldviews and knowledge systems and that mainstream school is based on a worldview that does not recognize Indigenous worldview (p. 10). While Barnhardt & Kawagely (2005) warn against overgeneralizations, they state that “Western science and education tend to emphasize compartmentalized knowledge that is often decontextualized and taught in the detached setting of a classroom or laboratory” (p.11). Assessment of knowledge is thus determined by what a student is perceived to know through different assessment types, as opposed to Aboriginal worldview where assessment of a skill depends on if that child can put the skill into practice (Barnhardt & Kawagely, 2005, p. 11). According to Barnhardt & Kawagley (2005) “Native people have traditionally acquired their knowledge through direct experience in the natural environment” (p. 1). “The Ministry of Education has directed its focus to helping educators understand that Aboriginal education is beneficial for all students,” thus, are working towards

introducing Aboriginal content and pedagogy into all curricular areas (First peoples principles of learning, n.d.).

Statement of the Problem

I believe most teachers understand the importance of teaching students in British Columbia about our Aboriginal history. However, in my experience, I often see teachers teaching students about the history of Aboriginal peoples instead of focusing on current local content. While the history of Aboriginal people is very important, it is my aim to introduce early childhood educators to teaching through an Aboriginal lens while also incorporating current and local Aboriginal content into their lessons.

While there is academic literature surrounding incorporating Aboriginal content into our current education system, very little is still known about teaching through an Aboriginal worldview lens, especially at an early childhood education level. I personally have observed teachers, myself included, who have become used to teaching subjects in compartmentalized ways, failing to pay attention to the connections and interrelations of all subject areas. My personal experience as an Aboriginal Education teacher has also lead me to notice that many teachers that I have worked with rarely tie learnings in class to the local community or natural setting in which they live, a skill which is extremely important when looking at Aboriginal worldview.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project will be to create an in-service professional development workshop that aims to provide teachers with tangible ways to incorporate Aboriginal culture into

their early learning environments. While I am approaching this topic from the perspective of a kindergarten and grade one teacher, the information presented in the professional development opportunity can be transferred to educators working in preschool or early childhood education facilities. While some of the examples in the professional development workshop will tie directly to curriculum that would not necessarily pertain to early childhood educators, I feel that early childhood educators would still benefit from this workshop.

It is the aim of the professional development workshop to help educators have a better understanding of Aboriginal worldview and to provide resources they can draw from. In this project I argue a need for school districts to offer specific professional development opportunities surrounding Aboriginal education which will increase teachers' foundational knowledge on local Aboriginal bands.

While Aboriginal education and culture is my passion, I understand teachers often feel overburdened by educational jargon and to do lists. I aim to expand teachers' resources on Aboriginal education by providing teachers with the background knowledge of Aboriginal worldview as well as foundational information on local Aboriginal bands from which they can build. It is the hope of this paper to help early childhood educators understand Aboriginal Worldview and to feel more confident when incorporating Aboriginal knowledge and understandings into their teaching facilities. The question I aim to answer is how I can help teachers incorporate local Aboriginal content into their classrooms in a way that is meaningful and authentic for all children.

Summary

I believe it is important to provide educators with a basic understanding of Aboriginal worldview before asking them to begin incorporating Aboriginal ways of knowing into their teaching practice. As a non-Aboriginal educator, I believe it is important to have a foundation on which to build when trying to teach Aboriginal content. It is my aim to help educators build resources and inspire them to incorporate Aboriginal ways of knowing into their classrooms.

In the following chapter, I will first look at the literature surrounding the history of New Zealand, Australia and Canada's approaches to integrating Aboriginal culture into early learning settings. From there, I will move onto identifying the similarities and differences between Aboriginal and Western worldviews by looking at the works of Barnhardt, Kawagely, Hewit and others. I will then look at the literature on integrating Aboriginal content into classrooms. Finally, I will review the literature on the importance of community involvement and support in incorporating Aboriginal content into your classrooms.

My personal experience both living and working in Lillooet, BC and more currently, working as an Aboriginal Education teacher, has led me to this topic for my capstone project. I believe that by increasing teachers' resources and foundational knowledge of local Aboriginal culture will lead teachers to incorporate more Aboriginal culture into their learning environments. While the "initial integration of Aboriginal content into various curricula was initially intended to support the success of Aboriginal learners" the "principals that govern traditional First Peoples' perspectives of teacher and learning have gained a more prominent place in the BC education system as equators are recognizing that they promote educational practice that is also effective for non-Aboriginal learners" (First peoples principles of learning, n.d.). I aim, through both the literature review and professional development workshop, to highlight the importance of integrating Aboriginal culture for all students.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

According to Kirkness (1999), the Canadian “approach to education has not been one of true integration where the Indian cultures are respected and recognized. Rather, it has been a process of assimilation where Indians are being absorbed into the non-Indian society” (p. 18). However, it could still be argued that our schools have not strayed too far away from this assimilative effect. Lee (2007) argues that “for the most part, however, Native students today are served by public schools both on and off reservations, and their focus, curriculum, teaching and learning standards are determined by mainstream non-Native institutions” (pp 196-197). Lee (2007) poses the question “How can education and the school place have meaning for Native students who may feel disenfranchised from the very society formal education is trying to promote?” (p. 198). With supporting literature, it is argued that in order to engage our Aboriginal students in the learning process, educators need to provide culturally relevant curriculum that directly reflects the place or community they live in.

This section will look at the history of early childhood education programs for Indigenous children in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, following how early childhood education have developed over time and how that evolved to where they are today. From there, the section will move on to discuss the importance of understanding Aboriginal worldview as a starting point for educators to implement Aboriginal curriculum and content into their educational settings. This section will then look at the literature surrounding the importance of community and elder involvement in classrooms as well as when beginning to integrate

Aboriginal curriculum and content into classroom teaching. Finally, teacher and practitioner training will be discussed.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of my literature review includes published peer reviewed journal articles, books, and government documents. It is important to note that much of my research comes from outside Canada as my area of inquiry in Canada is relatively new. Articles and data from Australia, and New Zealand have been included in this literature reviews as, in some ways, these countries have different models than Canada of integrating Aboriginal content and curriculum into early childhood education settings.

History of Aboriginal Early Childhood Education

The relationships between local governments and Indigenous peoples from Canada, New Zealand and Australia can all be described as complex. In all of these countries “colonization has taken its toll culturally, socially, economically and politically on the Indigenous people of the land” (Walker & Rodriguez de France, 2007, p. 28). When reviewing the history of early childhood education in each country, one must look at the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in each country. While the history of education in each country is different, it is a known commonality that all three countries have, at some point in history, had a difficult relationship with Indigenous peoples education and each country has tried assimilating Indigenous peoples to the mainstream culture (Martin et al., 2004, p. 21). One must go back in history and review the development of formal education for Indigenous people in order to begin to move forward in Indigenous early childhood education. In this section, a brief outline of the

history of early childhood education in each country will be presented. Much of the research of current early childhood education programs and curriculum comes from countries other than Canada and can be used as a model of what is possible in early childhood classrooms in Canada.

New Zealand

According to Walker et al. (2007), “early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand cannot be viewed in isolation from the country’s colonial history” (p. 28). Walker et al. continues by stating “as elsewhere, colonization has taken its toll culturally, socially, economically, and politically on the Indigenous people of the land” (p. 28). During the process of colonization in New Zealand, much of the attention was not on educating the young, but instead on infant survival, as there were heightened levels of infant mortality at this time (Walker et al., 2007, p. 28). Walker et al. (2007) expand by stating “education and even the care of their children were completely overshadowed by the drive to obtain a better life and to seek opportunities that were not available in Britain” (p. 28). The drive for better jobs lead to, for the first time, caring for children outside the family unit (Walker et al., 2007, p. 28). Prior to colonization, Maori children in New Zealand lived primarily in distinct tribal groupings, where the collective community aided in child rearing (Walker et al., 2007, p. 29). In 1840, the founding document outlining governance, land and treasured sites and objects, the Treaty of Waitangi, between the Maori and the Crown was signed (May, 2002, p. 19). The treaty outlined that “Maori would maintain absolute authority over their land and possessions, as well as those intangibles such as language, spiritual beliefs, values and practices” (Walker et al., 2007, p. 29). As Walker et al., highlight “despite the intentions of the Treaty, these conditions were not realized” (p. 29).

It was not until post World War II that early childhood education for Maori children became a priority (Walker et al., 2007, p. 30). According to May (2002), many of these institutions were charitable kindergartens for the poor (p. 20). The curriculum and education was, in general, “based on Western theories and philosophies” (Walker et al., 2007, p. 30). According to May, for both Maori and non-Maori children, “by the 1950s, those children not attending preschool came to be regarded as unfortunate; by the 1960s deprived or disadvantaged; by the 1970s-1980s disenfranchised; and by the end of the century, ‘at risk’ and a potential problem to society!” (p. 20).

The above quote demonstrates a shift in political, educational and societal opinions regarding the “best place for the rearing and education of young children and the changing role of the state in its support of early childhood education (May, 2002, p. 20). “Consensus developed in the 1970s about the need for an educational component in child care centers and a more integrated system of care and education” (Walker et al., 2002, p. 32).

By the 1980s, early childhood education had gained momentum. Walker et al., mentions “one of the greatest challenges during the 1980s was to improve early childhood services while also maintaining a strong sense of tradition, culture and diversity in the groups in New Zealand” (p. 32). As a result of these concerns, the first Kohanga Reo (language nest) centers opened, which outlined a Maori immersion program that operates in an early childhood setting (Walker et al., 2002, p. 32).

Evolving from the Kohanga Reo, is the Te Whariki program, which are “bilingual and bicultural national education curriculum guidelines for children in the early childhood years” (Walker et al., 2002, p. 33). The term Te Whariki can be translated in Maori as a woven mat for all to stand on (May, 2002, pp. 31-32). The name of the program provides a mental image of

culture being woven into existing curricula for early learning settings. Figure 1 illustrates the woven concepts of the Te Whariki program. The strands and principles are woven together, with no strand or principle taking a dominant role, but instead, each have a role when creating the woven mat. May (2002) suggests “the principles, strands and goals provided the framework, which allowed for different program perspectives to be woven into the fabric” (p. 32).

According to the Ministry of education document, “there is a growing understanding of the links between culture, language, and learning, and an increasing commitment to addressing the issues faced by children growing up in a society with more than one cultural heritage” (p. 17).

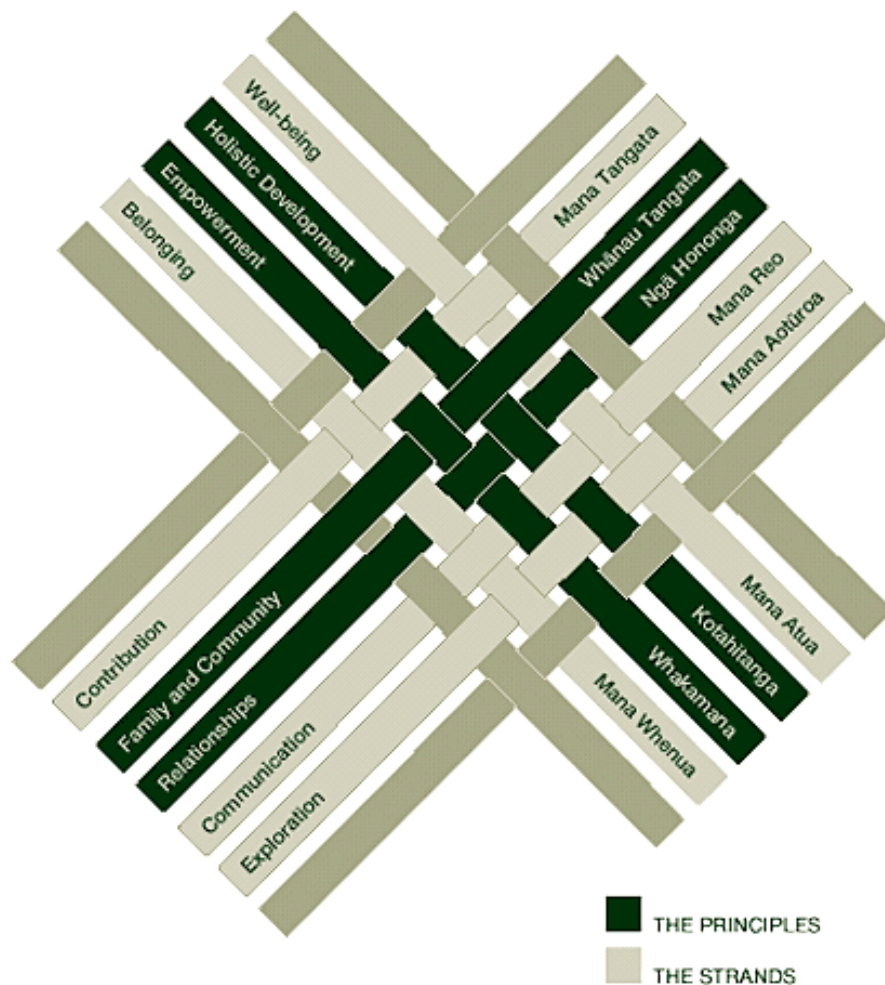


Figure 1: Te Whariki Woven Mat (Ministry of Education, 1996)

The Te Whariki curriculum outlines four major principles that are all woven into the mat and denoted in Figure 1. The principles are empowerment, holistic development, family and community and relationships and are outlined in the Figure 2 (Ministry of Education, 1996). The strands and goals for a Te Whariki program stem from the four principles and those goals help make up the curriculum for this early childhood program (Ministry of Education, 1996). In New Zealand, “the early childhood education services and organizations have been working together to develop common principles and cohesive policies” including “integrated training programs in colleges of education, Education to be More and the Government’s 1988 publication, Before Five” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 17). The development of the strands and principles for the Te Whariki program has been a part of helping to develop a common early childhood curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 17). These strands and principles express “a common view of what makes the curriculum for the early childhood years distinctive from other curriculums, such as in schools” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 17).

May suggests that by the year 2000, Te Whariki had a visual presence in early learning centers, however due to pressures on staff and lack of training, implementing the curriculum document was difficult (p. 32). While the Te Whariki approach still has some challenges ahead, the curriculum is still used in New Zealand early childhood centers. New Zealand has committed to a ten year strategic plan “that provides a plan of action for collaboration across the sectors that offer services in the early years as well as education for Maori and non-Maori children” (Walker et al., 2007, p. 38). The Te Whariki curriculum should be viewed as a model of a successful early childhood program, as, according the May (2002) “the key factor underpinning successful policy collaborations with government has been the necessity and ability of the diverse groups within the early childhood sector to find some common ground – a

whariki- ‘a mat for all to stand on’, but with the possibility of different patterns (p. 33). While there is still a long way to go, this unified approach demonstrates how New Zealand is achieving success for their indigenous population.

THE PRINCIPLES, STRANDS, AND GOALS FOR THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM

THE PRINCIPLES

There are four broad principles at the centre of the early childhood curriculum.

Empowerment

The early childhood curriculum empowers the child to learn and grow.

Holistic Development

The early childhood curriculum reflects the holistic way children learn and grow.

Family and Community

The wider world of family and community is an integral part of the early childhood curriculum.

Relationships

Children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places, and things.

NGĀ KAUPAPA WHAKAHAERE

E whā ngā kaupapa whakahaere kua whakatauria hei kawē i tēnei tikanga i roto i ngā kōhanga reo. Ko te mahi a ēnei kaupapa he whakatakoto huarahi mō ngā taumata whakahirahira me ngā tūmanako mō ngā mokopuna. I tua atu i tēnā ko te ārahi i ngā mahi ako, ā, ko te āwhina hoki i ngā mahi tātari.

Ko ngā whakamārama mō ēnei āhuetanga katoa ka whai ake.

Whakamana

Mā te whāriki o te kōhanga reo e whakatō te kaha ki roto i te mokopuna, ki te ako, kia pakari ai tana tipu.

Kotahitanga

Mā te whāriki o te kōhanga reo e whakaata te kotahitanga o ngā whakahaere katoa mō te ako a te mokopuna, mō te tipu o te mokopuna.

Whānau Tangata

Me whiri mai te whānau, te hapū, te iwi, me tauīwi, me ō rātou wāhi nohonga, ki roto i te whāriki o te kōhanga reo, hei āwhina, hei tautoko i te akoranga, i te whakatipuranga o te mokopuna.

Ngā Hononga

Mā roto i ngā piringa, i ngā whakahaere i waenganui o te mokopuna me te katoa, e whakatō te kaha ki roto i te mokopuna ki te ako.

Figure 2: Te Whariki Principles (Ministry of Education, 1996)

Australia

The history of Australian development and emergence of education follows a pathway that shares some similarities to the history in Canada in regards to colonization and assimilative practices. However, there are many things to be learned from Australian child care, as Australia has recently developed a Child Care Advisory Committee, a national program that aims to promote collaboration between the government and early child care facilities, as well as a National Council of Accreditation, and a Families First initiative (Martin & Rodriguez de France, 2007, p. 20).

Similar to the Canadian education system, Australian children were removed from their families and placed in mission schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Prochner, 2004, p. 20). The goal of these schools was to assimilate Aboriginal children into the mainstream culture. Instruction at the school was given in English and students were taught religious views and basic academic skills all while being introduced to mainstream culture, traditions and worldview (Martin et al., 2004, p. 20).

According to Martin and Rodriguez de France, “by the late 1960s a number of early childhood programs were established for Australian Aboriginal children following the example of programs in other countries” (p. 20). Many programs, such as Head Start, Maori Play Centers and the Aboriginal Family Education Centers, were borrowed from other countries and established for Australian Aboriginal children (Martin et al., 2004, p. 20). The 1960s were a time of increased interest in Australian Aboriginal preprimary education (Martin et al., 2007, p. 21). However, it wasn’t until the 1980s that specific child care services for Aboriginal children began emerging (Martin et al., 2007, p. 21). These programs were managed by the Aboriginal communities in which they were situated and “they aspire[d] to function as respite places and

provide safety for children, as well as to help them learn some activities that will prepare them for school” (Martin et al., 2007, p. 21).

In 1994, the Australian government implemented quality assurance systems for child care facilities, however, initially these did not pertain to Indigenous services being offered (Martin et al., 2007, p. 21). In 2003, a proposal was put forward to develop an Indigenous quality assurance system for Indigenous childcare, and by 2005 the quality assurance program began with the aims to “identify the child needs and preferences of Indigenous families and children, and guide the development of new and existing child care services” (Martin et al., 2007, p. 22).

In 2004, the Australian Government developed a *National Agenda for Early Childhood*, which is a holistic approach to early childhood education putting children at the center of learning (Martin et al., 2007, p. 24). While this program was not specifically developed for Indigenous children, the program encompasses students from all backgrounds and of all ability levels.

While the Australian system has made strides over the years, from mission schools to a National Agenda for Early Childhood, many advances need to continue to take place, such as advancing the cultural and language components of early childhood learning, in order for Australian Aboriginal children’s needs to adequately be met in the mainstream education system.

Canada

The history of education, specifically the lasting impacts of residential schools in Canada, cannot be ignored when looking toward the future of early childhood education programs in Canada as there are still lasting effects on families than can infiltrate our school systems. The

relationship between the Canadian government and Aboriginal people in Canada has been nothing short of tumultuous. According to Battiste (2005),

The persistent and aggressive assimilation plan of the Canadian government and churches throughout the past century, the marginalization of Indigenous knowledge in educational institutions committed to Eurocentric knowledge, and the losses to Aboriginal languages and heritages through modernization and urbanization of Aboriginal people have all contributed to the diminished capacity of Indigenous knowledge, with the result that it is now in danger of becoming extinct (p.2).

The history of the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada began at first contact in the 16th century. For “over 200 years Indigenous and non-Indigenous interactions focused on the fur trade and colonial marginalization” (Greenwood, de Leeuw, & Fraser, 2007, p. 6). During this time, disease infested blankets were traded killing many Aboriginal people across Canada, which is one example of the foundations of mistrust between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. In the 1763 the Royal Proclamation was signed which was the first official recognition of Aboriginal peoples rights (Greenwood et al., 2007, p. 6). According to Greenwood et al, “ although the policies set forth under the Royal Proclamation held with relative success for a little under 100 years, increased social pressure and land settlement by non-Aboriginal peoples promoted the government gradually to erode the rights of Indigenous peoples through social policy” (p. 6). “This period was marked by church and state intervention in Aboriginal lives” (Greenwood et al., 2007, p. 6). In 1876 when the Indian Act was signed, the governing and controlling of Aboriginal people led to assimilative practices and the birth of the Residential School System (Greenwood et al., 2007, p. 6). There were “over 80 residential schools and many more day schools” opened across Canada in a partnership between

the Federal government and various churches (Greenwood et al., 2007, p. 6). According to Prochner (2004), “an amendment to the Indian Act in 1895 permitted the government to forcibly commit children to the school(s)” (p. 8). It has now been documented that many forms of physical, emotional, mental and sexual abuses were committed within the Residential school, most of which left lasting scars on the individuals within them (Truth and Reconciliation, 2015, p. 4). Generally speaking, much of the distrust of the current education system on the parts of some Aboriginal people could be explained by this horrific past (Truth and Reconciliation, 2015, p. 258).

During the 1950s and 1960s “the residential school system was on the wane in Canada [and] more children were being schooled in band-operated schools or integrated into provincial schools” (Greenwood et al., 2007, p. 7). However, the government continued to intervene in child welfare policies that directly affected Aboriginal Children and families (Greenwood et al., 2007, p. 7). These policies, according to Greenwood et al. (2007), allowed the government to intervene in families’ lives for issues such as child neglect and sanitation (p. 7). “These policies reflected colonial constructions of right and wrong, acceptable and not acceptable” (Greenwood et al., 2007, p. 7).

In the more recent past, Aboriginal people in Canada have been demanding the Government of Canada invest more economically and philosophically into the future lives of Aboriginal people specifically in regards to education (Greenwood et al., 2007, p. 10). In the 1981, the federal government made funds available through the Child Care Initiative Fund which focused on training and education and also led to several educational initiatives, some of which were targeted at Aboriginal Education including the Meadow Lake Tribal Council Indian Child Care Program which “led to multiracial education initiatives in the years following (Greenwood

et al., 2007, p. 10). Several programs followed this initial increase in funding including over 6,000 child care spaces being created in First Nations and Inuit communities in 1995 (Greenwood et al., 2007, p. 10). Also in 1995, Aboriginal Head Start was funded which is a program, based on six components including parental and community involvement, health, social supports, education, nutrition and language and culture, that “would serve Aboriginal parents and children living in urban and large northern communities” (Greenwood et al., 2007, p. 11).

Several other initiatives have been developed over the more recent past including the First Nations Quality Child Care National Study (1998), the Early Childhood Development Agreement (2000), and the federal Aboriginal ECD Strategy began in 2002, which enhanced Aboriginal Head Start (Greenwood et al., 2007, pp 12-14). The primary goals of the First Nations Quality Child Care National Study “were to examine implementation models for the development of First Nations quality child care programs and to develop options for First Nations jurisdiction in child care (Greenwood et al., 2007, p. 12). The study found six guiding principles that quality First Nations childcare must have including,

It provides safe, loving and nurturing care for children; it meets the needs of children, families, and communities; it facilitates the passing on of the culture and language from generation to generation; it provides children with opportunities to learn their culture and language so they are instilled with a sense of pride about who they are; it fosters all aspects of children’s growth and development; and it gives children opportunities to learn and develop school readiness skills (Greenwood et al., 2007, p. 12).

The Early Childhood Development Agreement called upon the First Ministers to work with Aboriginal people in finding “practical solutions to address the developmental needs of Aboriginal children” (Greenwood et al., 2007, p. 12).

After much support and movement towards increased funding for Aboriginal education, “the election of Stephen Harper’s Conservative government on January 23, 2006, significantly shifted the contours of Canada’s child care policy from a national vision of child care service delivery to support for individualized parent choice” (Greenwood et al., 2007, p. 14). As such, many of the prior initiatives were put on hold while the Universal Child Plan came into affect (Greenwood et al., 2007, p. 14). The universal child plan had the conservative government pledge “to increase the availability of choices, support and spaces for Canadian parents needing child care options” (Greenwood et al., 2007, p. 14) So, instead of the previous funding specific to Aboriginal early childhood solutions, the funding in the Universal Child Care plan, went directly to families and very generally addressed space in early learning facilities as opposed to directly looking at Aboriginal children’s care needs.

Aboriginal early childhood education is currently in a state of change and development in Canada. While there have been positive changes from the early days of Residential schools in Canada, there is room for further development in Aboriginal Education. Moving forward, strengthening culture in early childhood education is a goal and recommendation of the Final Report of the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples which was published in 1996 (Prochner, 2004, p. 12). The Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples report (1996) sets out three main goals for developing early childhood education. The goals are “all schools, whether or not they serve mainly Aboriginal students, adopt curriculums that reflect Aboriginal cultures and realities; government allocate resources such that Aboriginal language instruction can be given high priority; and provincial and territorial schools make greater efforts to involve Aboriginal parents in decision making” (Royal Commision of Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). It is clear from looking at where we are in early childhood education that we need to continue to work towards such

recommendations as laid out by the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples (1996) in order to reach their founding goals which states “like all children, Aboriginal children need to master the intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual tasks of early childhood. Equally, they need grounding in their identity as Aboriginal people. We propose that all Aboriginal children, regardless of status or location, have access to dynamic, culture-based early childhood education.”

Comparison

The education systems of Australia, New Zealand and Canada, stemmed out of a colonial past. It is clear that in each country, “schooling for Indigenous children was dominated by efforts of Europeans to control their education” (Prochner, 2004, p. 12). In New Zealand and Canada, assimilative practices of the Residential and Mission schools were an example of European control and power. According to Prochner, “it was believed that schools could achieve social and economic stability by serving as a melting pot, blending together children of various backgrounds to create new Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders” (p. 10). It has, in each country, become understood that Aboriginal early childhood education needs to involve the parents and individual communities from which the program stems. While there is no doubt advancements have been made in Aboriginal early childhood education, there is still room for future developments in enhancing the experience of Aboriginal families and children.

Aboriginal Worldview

Individuals’ worldview is a learned behaviour, beginning at birth. According to Hewitt (2000) “our perspective on the world in which we live is shaped in part by the cultural imprint of

socialization” (p. 111). Hewitt continues by stating “each person learns to see the world in a particular way as a result of the interplay between their individual character and to socializing forces of the cultural group to which they belong” (p. 111). Every individual holds a uniquely individualized worldview that is shaped by unconscious influences (Hewitt, 2000, p. 111). In order to move forward in education, there is a “need to recognize the coexistence of multiple worldviews and knowledge systems, and find ways to understand and relate to the world in its multiple dimensions and varied perspective” (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005, p. 9). Hewitt highlights the importance of worldview in education by stating “a significant implication for education systems is the acknowledgment that learning is culturally based and thus every method of teaching and learning must take cognizance of the learner’s worldview” (p.111).

According to Battiste (2005) “the task for Indigenous academics has been to affirm and activate the holistic paradigm of Indigenous knowledge to reveal the wealth and richness of Indigenous languages, worldviews, teachings and experiences, all of which have been systematically excluded from contemporary educational institutions and from Eurocentric knowledge systems” (p.1). When trying to incorporate Aboriginal ways of knowing into Western curriculum, teachers are often left confused and frustrated as much of these two worldviews clash in their understanding of the world. As Kawagley and Barnhardt (1998) point out “the curricula, teaching methodologies, and often teacher training associated with schooling are based on a worldview that does not always recognize or appreciate indigenous notions of an interdependent universe and the importance of place in their societies” (p.2). It is imperative that we “devise a system of education for all people that respects the philosophical and pedagogical foundations provided by both Indigenous and Western cultural traditions” (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1998, p. 2).

Western education tends “to emphasize compartmentalized knowledge which is often decontextualized and taught in the detached setting of a classroom or laboratory” (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 2005, p. 2). While there are several learning environments that focus on emergent learning, in some early childhood education settings children are still taught from a predetermined curriculum. Western worldview also differs greatly from Aboriginal worldview in regards to competencies. According to Kawagley and Barnhardt (1998), “in western terms, competency is based on predetermined ideas of what a person should know, which is then measured indirectly through various forms of ‘objective’ tests” (p. 3). Western worldview focuses on learning occurring in a formal setting often called a school or center (Hewitt, 2000, p. 111). Hewitt argues, “experiences that take place outside the halls of an institution are often not recognized as ‘real learning’ despite the contribution they make to human growth and development” (p. 111).

Aboriginal worldview differs from Western worldview in many ways. Figure 3 from Kawagley and Barnhardt (1998) outlines many of the differences between Indigenous and Western Worldviews. While Figure 3 is not a complete list of differences, it provides a good starting point for educators to begin to understand some of the main differences. This list is not conclusive or absolute, but instead, just a guideline. It is also important to note, that most people do not necessarily fit in one column or the other, but have a blended worldview as each person holds a uniquely individual worldview based on their upbringing.

<u>Indigenous Worldviews</u>	<u>Western Worldview</u>
Spirituality is imbedded in all elements of the cosmos	Spirituality is centered in a single supreme being
Humans have responsibility for maintaining harmonious relationship with the natural world	Humans exercise dominion over nature to use it for personal and economic growth
Need for reciprocity between human and natural worlds – resources are viewed as gifts	Natural resources are available for unilateral human exploitation
Nature is honored routinely through daily spiritual practice	Spiritual practices are intermittent and set apart from daily life
Wisdom and ethics are derived from direct experience with the natural world	Human reason transcends the natural world and can product insights independently
Universe is made of dynamic, ever changing natural forces	Universe is made up of an array of static physical objects
Universe is viewed as a holistic, integrative system with a unifying life force	Universe is compartmentalized into dualistic forms and reduction or progressively smaller conceptual parts
Time is circular with natural cycles that sustain all life	Time is a linear chronology of “human progress”
Nature will always posses unfathomable mysteries	Nature is completely decipherable to the rational human mind
Human thought, feelings and words are inextricably bound to all other aspects of the universe	Human thought, feeling and words are formed apart from the surrounding world
Human role is to participate in the orderly designs of nature	Human role is to dissect, analyze and manipulate nature for own ends
Respect for elders is based on their compassion and reconciliation of outer and inner-directed knowledge	Respect for others is based on material achievement and chronological old age
Sense of empathy and kinship with other forms of life	Sense of separateness from and superiority over other forms of life
View proper human relationship with nature as a continuous two-way, transactional dialogue	View relationship of humans to nature as a one-way, hierarchical imperative
Time is circular with natural cycles that sustain all life	Time is a linear chronology of “human progress”

Figure 3: Worldview Comparison (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1998, p. 4)

Traditionally, Aboriginal people “acquire their knowledge thorough direct experience in the natural environment” (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1998, p. 3). There is a strong connection to the natural world, as traditionally it is viewed that the natural world has provided Aboriginal people with all that they require, thus they need to take care of the earth that has taken care of them for so long. According to Hewitt (2000), “Aboriginal worldview accepts that survival depends on cooperation and coexistence with the forces of nature rather than expecting to manipulate and control them” (p. 112). Instead of information being compartmentalized, for Aboriginal people “the particulars come to be understood in relation to the whole” (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1998, p. 3). The interconnectedness of all things, both living and non-living is foundational when describing Aboriginal worldview.

The first step to successfully incorporating Aboriginal content and ways of knowing into early learning environments is to begin to look at the differences between Western and Aboriginal worldviews. Agbo (2004) highlights this point when stating “that in order to effect social and educational change among First Nations, Euro-Canadians must recognize Aboriginal traditional concepts of knowledge and the unique place of Aboriginal worldview and epistemology as a necessary condition of Canadian social living” (p. 28). In doing this, it is imperative for educators to understand the current curricular documents in education are written from a western worldview. It is with the shared understanding of a predominantly western worldview imbedded in our curriculum that we can begin to make change in the way our students learn. As Hart (2010) states, “Indigenous worldviews highlight a strong focus on people and entities coming together to help and support one another in their relationship,” which, is foundational when beginning to implement Aboriginal worldview and content into learning environments (p. 3). According the Hewitt (2000), “our global perspectives would gain

immeasurably if we could incorporate some elements of this holistic worldview into our interpretation and understanding of the world we all inhabit” (p. 117).

Developing Culturally Appropriate Practice

Recognizing and appreciating that Aboriginal culture is valid and an important part of early childhood education is an important step when considering making change. Hewitt suggests that “Aboriginal children need to be encouraged to be proud of their culture” and there is a need to provide these children with opportunities to share their culture with other students (p. 115). In order to foster and appreciation and understanding of Aboriginal culture in early childhood educational settings, it is important for non-Aboriginal teachers and educators to be comfortable incorporating this content into their classrooms to begin to build a shared understanding. “Often a teacher’s own lack of knowledge about Aboriginal content and lack of familiarity with Aboriginal approaches to teaching and learning are reported to be a serious impediment to integrating Aboriginal perspective” (Zurzolo, 2010, p 276). It is important when beginning to develop a culturally responsive way of teaching that educators understand that each Aboriginal band in Canada offers a unique set of traditions and “thinking of nations as interchangeable [is] neglectful” (Zurzolo, 2010, p. 282). Ball and Pence (1999) echo this thought by stating that a “realization that one size, one approach cannot fit all” is imperative when recognizing and respecting diversity” (p. 47).

While in Aboriginal culture the notion of interconnectedness is focused on, it is important to understand that each band of Aboriginal people is unique and thus, educators should learn about the culture and traditions of local nations. As Ball and Pence (1999) point out, all educators, despite the community they are working in, need “to take stock of the community in

which they are working, consider the cultural values and wishes of parents who bring their children for care and involve parents as much as possible” (p. 46). As Ball and Pence (2001) suggest, community members need to work collaboratively with teachers and educators “to elaborate curriculum and program designs that address the community’s needs and goals for nurturing children” (p. 47). It is understood that both early childhood education (ECE) and early primary education, programs and curricula need to be co-constructed and co-delivered with local Aboriginal people (Endfield, 2007, pp 154-155).

According to Agbo (2004),

appropriate orientation into the community through proper training involves not merely acquiring theoretical knowledge about First Nations but of acquiring the necessary tools for shaping and implementing a culturally and socially orientated concept of teaching that teachers can sustain from within, recognizing the community resources in context and reinforcing and maximizing their teaching and their own self actualization (p. 29).

The above quote by Agbo highlights the importance of non-Aboriginal teachers gaining the appropriate training to teach Aboriginal students. Agbo (2004), continues by stating “the preparation of non-First Nation teachers of First Nations children should develop the teachers’ interethnic and intercultural skills in analyzing and finding alternative in teaching that contribute to a complete education” (p. 29). In other words, educators need to not only be provided time to adapt themselves to a First Nations community, but also, time is required when implementing curriculum (Agbo, 2004, p.29).

Many tools are required when beginning to integrate Aboriginal content into educational settings. In a study of ECE practitioners, Enfield (2007) developed the following guiding

principles that one may follow when incorporating Aboriginal content into their learning environment:

Broad core principles may be shared among communities, but flexibility is required to meet specific community needs
Communities need to be developed from the inside
Community members need to be consulted and involved in creating their own programs. People make the programs: language, culture, environment
There is a need to listen to communities and to be responsive
There needs to be room for “error” in order to gain experience, self-sufficiency, and sociocultural capital
There needs to be recognition of the wisdom of Elders as well as children, who are recognized as whole and competent
Programs must be child-centered
Children should be viewed in the context of their families and communities and empowered to find their voices
Culture is imperative for learning
The right stories need to be told about Indigenous peoples
Intercommunity relationship building is important
Access and education are needed for politicians and policy makers
Communities need to do their own research and use their own methodologies based on their culture, which differ from one community to another

Table 1: Guiding Principles (Enfield, 2005, p. 155)

While these principles are a starting place for developing culturally appropriate programming and curriculum, it is important to recall the overlying importance of the place in which you are teaching as each Aboriginal band has a strong connection to the land in which they are situated.

Teaching from the Land

There is “a holistic relationship between Indigenous peoples, their lands, their health and well-being, and the education of Indigenous children” (Greenwood & de Leeuw, 2007, p. 49).

This connection to the land holds significant meaning for Aboriginal people. Greenwood et al., point out that “the land has become an extension of Indian thought and being because, in the words of a Pueblo Elder, ‘It is this place that holds our memories and the bones of our people... This is the place that made us’” (p. 50). As educators, we must understand this strong connection in order to fully teach young students through a culturally responsive model.

Sobel (2004) states:

Place-based education is the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum. Emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their communities, enhances students’ appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens” (p. 7).

In Canada, much of our land can be seen as traditional Aboriginal land, as prior to colonization, Aboriginal people were on the lands first, so teaching through a place-based lens becomes appropriate. Teachers should not be expected to be seen as experts in this field, however, as Greenwood et al. (2007) argue “there must be ongoing community involvement, from the participation of elders and community representatives through to curriculum that rests both on local Indigenous knowledges and through broader, global, sense of Indigeneity” (p. 53).

According to Ball and Pence (1999), it is important to “ensure that early childhood students receive knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which children live from

individuals whom Native communities feel best understand those contexts” (p. 46). We must appreciate that each community has a unique set of traditions, some of which can only be taught by community members. There is a need to recognize and respect that the “carriers of community knowledge include elders and other respected community members, professionals in the community and the students themselves” (Ball et al., 1999, p. 46).

Training Practitioners

According to Zurzolo (2010), teachers in her study “considered the limitations of a non-Aboriginal person providing an Aboriginal perspective, and acknowledged their discomfort in discussing complex/risky topics like spirituality, land claims and treaty rights” (p. 282). These teachers also clearly defined that there was “fear and discomfort in getting something wrong” (Zurzolo, 2010, p. 282). Proper training and education surrounding the local Aboriginal bands they work with may help teachers become more informed and thus, willing, to begin teaching Aboriginal content and pedagogy.

In 1989, a partnership program between the Meadow Lake Tribal Council and the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria, created a new training program that would aim to incorporate language and cultural practices from local Aboriginal groups (Ball & Pence, 2001, pp 19-20). Through this experience, five “secrets” of success were offered by Ball and Pence in training ECE practitioners. According the Ball and Pence, the five secrets are that the whole community participates; program participants rediscover their cultural heritage; students live and study in familiar community surroundings; students become role models in the community; the program benefits the wider community.

These “secrets” while intended for training new practitioners, can be applied to currently practicing educators as well, not just those going through university ECE training currently. It is possible to use these principles to change your current teaching and to help develop a teacher training professional development day for ECEs and primary teachers who are interested in adding Aboriginal content and pedagogy into their existing practice.

Ball and Pence discuss, in the first “secret,” that ECE training needs to take into account the community in which the center or school is situated instead of offering a one size fits all training program. They suggest that “band and tribal councils take the lead in recruiting students, instructors, elders, program administrators and other community resource people” (Ball & Pence, 2001, p. 21). In addition to community being involved in the hiring process for centers, Ball and Pence call for community members to be involved with the creation of the training courses offered through universities. Currently, in many teacher training program across Canada, teachers to be are required to take one course on Aboriginal Education which, as pointed out by Ball and Pence, should encompass information from their local Aboriginal groups. However, this does not assist those teachers or practitioners that are already teaching or practicing.

Culture is unique to every individual. In the second point highlighted by Ball and Pence, educators need to become aware of their own cultural bias’ in order to make changes in the way the present information and curriculum in their educational setting. Ball and Pence discuss that “community-specific cultural practices become an integral part of the attitudes, knowledge and skills that the students need to learn to work effectively with families and children” (p. 22). In other words, teachers and educators need to understand the communities’ cultural values and traditions to help better prepare them to interact with students and families.

The third point, which Ball and Pence bring to our attention, is that students need to be surrounded by resources and curriculum. According to Ball and Pence, “Aboriginal students do not find their traditions and values represented in mainstream ECE curriculum and they often encounter negative stereotypes in resource materials that are presented as authoritative” (p. 22). Students need to see themselves represented in the school, whether that be through books, song, posters or a variety of other ways teachers and work towards integrating local Aboriginal content into their classrooms. Teachers must educate themselves on local resources or ask local resource people for assistance in bringing representation of Aboriginal culture to their classrooms.

The fourth point surrounds Aboriginal teachers becoming role models in their communities. However, non-Aboriginal educators become role models in their schools as they too are “becoming a source of information for community members” (Ball & Pence, 2001, p. 23). Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teachers and educators can be seen as role models in communities with the power to influence the teachings and learnings of children in a local community.

The final “secret” in practitioner training surrounds the benefits of the whole community. Once teachers begin the process of incorporating culture into classrooms, it was noted by Ball and Pence that “changes are slow and incremental, but revolve in all ways around what’s best for children and families” (p. 23). By incorporating Aboriginal knowledge into your classroom, not only do you become a role model, but also the whole community benefits from a sense of empowerment and control in their children’s learning.

The article by Ball and Pence outlines specific training practices that can be put into place in educational settings in a tangible way. Ball and Pence use these five secrets as a starting point for enhancing educators’ familiarity with Aboriginal content and worldview.

Summary

There are many ways educators can support and facilitate integrating culturally relevant curriculum into their learning environment. According to Hewitt, “Aboriginal children need to be encouraged to be proud of their culture and [be] provided with opportunities to share aspects of it with other students” (p. 115). In turn, Hewitt suggest that teachers need to not only develop their understanding of their local Aboriginal culture, but also be open to learning alongside, with and from students in their classrooms. The goal of this chapter was to bring to light the importance of two way schooling, where both the local culture of Aboriginal people and the dominant European culture are accepted and taught alongside one another (Hewitt, 2010, p.115). In order to teach the local culture of Aboriginal people, one must consult with community and elders when bringing knowledge into the classrooms.

The next chapter will outline the practical ways in which educators can bring Aboriginal content and culture into their classrooms. The third chapter of this capstone project will provide a place for educators to start by providing an overview, by way of professional development, where educators will learn about Aboriginal worldview as well as be provided with examples of how to start incorporating Aboriginal worldview into their learning environments. This chapter will include an outline for educator training which can be implemented by schools as professional development.

Chapter 3

Introduction

There are many reasons I chose to look at incorporating meaningful local Aboriginal content and pedagogy into early learning environments such as highlighting local culture and teaching students about the land. My main focus has been twofold; first, to improve learning for all students by educating teachers on Aboriginal worldview and pedagogy, and second, to teach students local Aboriginal content in a culturally sensitive way. As stated in chapter two, “often a teacher’s own lack of knowledge about Aboriginal content and lack of familiarity with Aboriginal approaches to teaching and learning are reported to be a serious impediment to integrating Aboriginal perspective” (Zurzolo, 2010, p 276). It is my goal, through developing a professional development workshop, to begin to educate teachers in attempts to further develop their knowledge as well as provide educators time to collaborate and inspire one another.

The target audience of my professional development workshop will be early primary teachers in the Sooke School district. My presentation will focus on the Aboriginal bands I work closely with in School District 62, Sooke, as these are the bands I have the most contact with and feel that I am able to educate teachers on. This presentation could easily be adapted to be effective in other school districts by changing the slides on the local Aboriginal bands to reflect the local culture of the school district using the presentation with assistance from Aboriginal education teachers, or other experts on these bands. It should be noted that the activities and terminology definitions in the presentation would be effective in any school district across British Columbia, and that all that would have to be adapted to reflect the local area would be the slides regarding the local Aboriginal Bands.

As an Aboriginal Education teacher, it is my responsibility to provide teachers with the background knowledge of local Sooke Aboriginal bands, which I have learnt through direct connection with these bands. It is also my responsibility to assist teachers in learning more about Aboriginal worldview and how to incorporate it into their learning environments. I believe it is important for all teachers to have this foundational understanding of Aboriginal worldview when educating students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. While teachers hold a large amount of autonomy over their own teaching, I believe providing teachers with the content knowledge in the form of professional development can be effective in bridging the gap between western and Aboriginal pedagogies. According to Battiste (2005),

the persistent and aggressive assimilation plan of the Canadian government and churches throughout the past century, the marginalization of Indigenous knowledge in educational institutions committed to Eurocentric knowledge, and the losses to Aboriginal languages and heritages through modernization and urbanization of Aboriginal people have all contributed to the diminished capacity of Indigenous knowledge, with the result that is now in danger of becoming extinct (p. 2).

In order to prevent such a rich culture from becoming extinct, I believe it is important to involve educators in the process of prompting change in the current education system to involve more Indigenous pedagogy by beginning to add Indigenous pedagogy to their early learning environments.

Overview

The professional development workshop I am planning will go through the following overview. First, I will begin the workshop by addressing terminology. This is an important step when teaching about Aboriginal people as many educators do not know the definitions of terms

such as First Nations and Aboriginal. Also, in order to create a shared understanding and begin to build a shared respect and appreciation for Aboriginal culture, educators should use the correct terminology in their learning environments.

Next, the presentation will move on to discuss the local Aboriginal bands School District 62 works with. As the participants I am reaching out to are both early childhood educators and early primary teachers, I feel it is important for participants to have an understanding of the local bands.

The presentation will then move forward to discuss the similarities and differences in Western and Aboriginal worldviews. It is my belief that unless educators are made to be aware of these differences, they cannot fully engage in incorporating authentic Aboriginal content into their learning environments. According to Hewitt (2000), “a significant implication for education systems is the acknowledgment that learning is culturally based and thus every method of teaching and learning must take cognizance of the learner’s worldview” (p. 111).

From here, I will move on to talk about the First Peoples Principles of learning. The participants in the workshop will get an overview of the principles then move onto the Principles of Learning activity that will encourage them to make connections between the principles and their learning environments. During this activity, participants will pair up and chose one of the Principles of Learning to focus on. Together, participants will identify ways the Principle they have chosen can be highlighted in the classroom. In other words, what activities can educators bring to their classrooms in order for them to meet one of these principles? As each partnership will have a different principle, time will be allowed for sharing participant’s ideas with the rest of the group.

Following this, the presentation will move onto another activity called the iceberg activity based on Barnhardt's (2005) iceberg image shown in Figure 4. During this activity, participants will share ways they have taught Aboriginal content as outlined by the curriculum, into their learning environments and, as a group, we will see if we can tie their ideas to local culture to make the activity connect deeper to local culture. From starting with what teachers have experimented with in regards to incorporating Aboriginal content, as a group we will apply what we have learned during the presentation to push ourselves to make local connections between the curriculum and local Aboriginal bands. Finally, the presentation will end with resource sharing and a question period.

Incorporating Aboriginal Content

There are many ways to incorporate Aboriginal content and culture into educational settings, including both content knowledge and Aboriginal pedagogy. Incorporating Aboriginal content knowledge into an educational setting can occur in a variety of ways including inviting local elders into your classroom, going into community to participate in a local activity, reading local stories or teaching about a school's local Aboriginal population. In the professional development workshop I am developing, I will provide the participants with suggestions of hands on ways they can incorporate Aboriginal content into the classroom, such as cedar weaving, pit cook participation, singing, storytelling and in community learning. It is my goal to also provide educators time to collaborate and share ways they have brought Aboriginal Content into their classrooms through discussion, then I will suggest ways they can deepen their understanding by tying their ideas to the local T'Sou-ke, Scia'new and Pacheedaht bands and helping educators understand local traditions such as highlighting the importance of salmon and

cedar for our Coast Salish peoples. For example, a common way I see educators add Aboriginal culture in their classrooms in to have the students make a scaled version of a button blanket, a traditional Northwest coast ceremonial blanket. Through my experience working with the local Aboriginal groups in Sooke, BC, I have come to understand that button blankets are actually not traditional to the local Aboriginal people, but instead, the local Aboriginal bands highlight to use of a traditional shawl for important ceremonies taking place in the longhouse. While highlighting the importance of button blankets is a great activity to have students participate in as it is reflective of Northwest Coast Aboriginal people, this activity can be enriched to reflect the local culture, which would be the making of a traditional shawl, with the help of local elders and shawl makers.

Figure 4 will be included in the power point presentation to illustrate the difference between surface or tokenistic integration and deeper cultural activities as outlined and defined by Barnhardt (2005). The above descriptor surrounding the button blanket versus the traditional shawl, would be an example of tokenistic understanding, as the button blanket activity is not actually grounded in local culture. Having students make a traditional shawl, on the other hand, would be an example of deeper cultural activity, which reflects local Coast Salish T'Sou-ke culture. This is an example of how learning about your local Aboriginal bands can aid educators in making small changes in their classrooms to reflect the local culture.

The iceberg activity, based on Figure 4, is an example of a group exercise that will be part of the professional development workshop I am creating. Educators will work together, first in break away groups, then as a whole group, to create a local version of the iceberg, brainstorming ideas of bringing culture into the classroom. As a group, we will then look at the ideas and place them on an iceberg template, deciding if the group generated ideas are surface or

deep culture, surface culture being a generalized way to incorporate Aboriginal knowledge, and deep culture being ideas that are rooted in local Aboriginal culture. From here, I will challenge educators to try to take the ideas that are surface, and change or adapt them to become local examples of deep cultural activities, by using the knowledge they gained previously in the workshop about local culture, as well as using each other, and myself as a resource. By practicing this activity with educators, it is the hope that they will be able to critically think about the culture they are bringing into their classrooms, and adapt it to reflect more meaningful local examples.

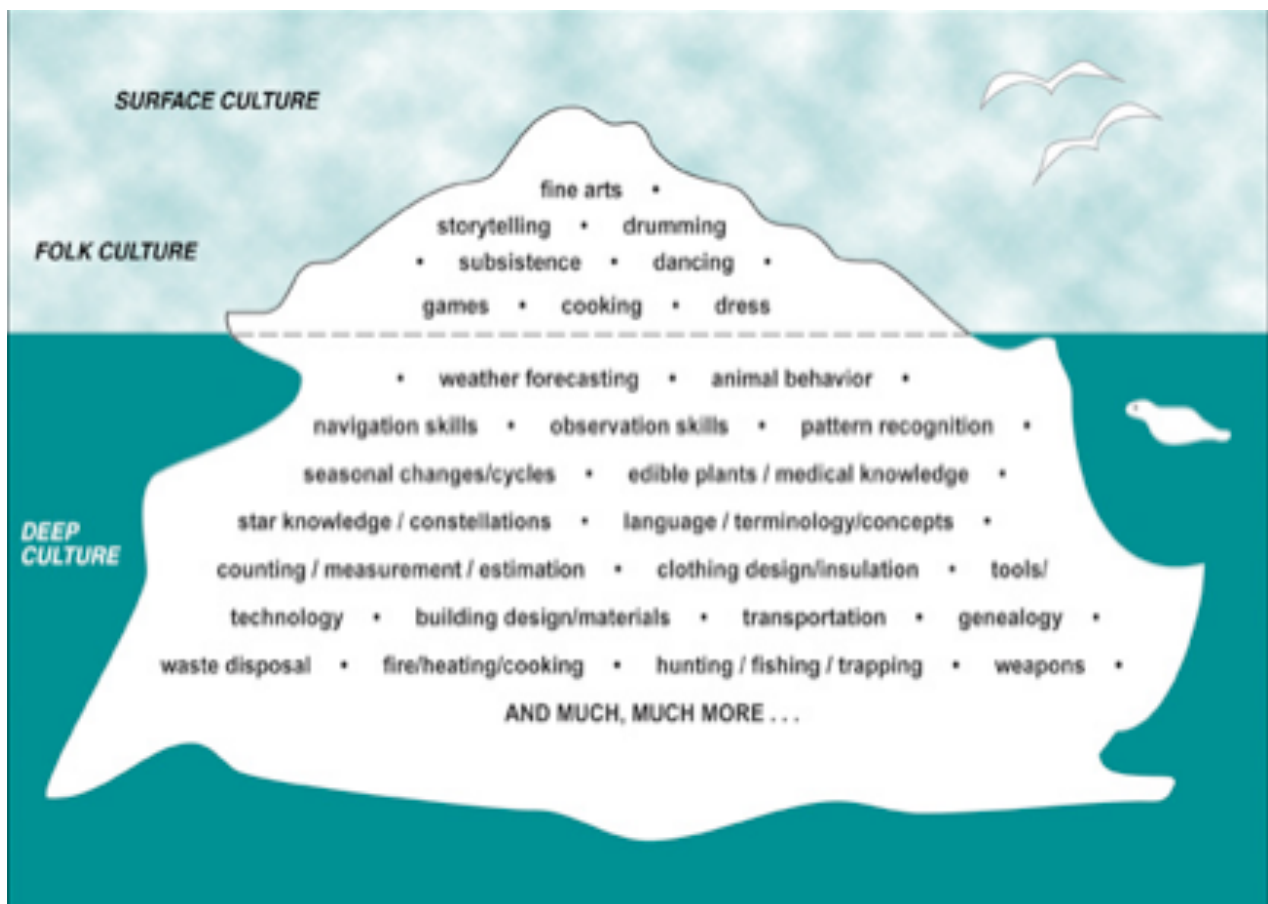



Figure 4. Iceberg Analogy (Barnhardt, 2005).

First Peoples Principles of Learning

There is a set of guiding principles, put out by the First Nations Education Steering Committee in 2008 that can serve as guiding principles for integrating Aboriginal culture into curriculum when teaching any subject area. The Principles of Learning were created as a partnership between the First Nations Education Steering committee and the British Columbia Ministry of Education and stemmed out of the creation of the English 12 First People's course (First Peoples Principles of Learning, n.d.). Highlighted in these principles of learning is the importance of not only Aboriginal content, but also the need to reflect Aboriginal epistemology and pedagogy (First Peoples Principles of Learning, n.d.). Figure 5 shows the principles of learning that were created and now are being implemented into BC Curriculum.

The principles of learning have grown in the years since they were first included in 2008 in the British Columbia curricula (First Peoples Principles of Learning, n.d). “Recently, the Ministry of Education has directed its focus to helping educators understand that Aboriginal education is beneficial for all students, and the First Peoples Principles of Learning are being introduced into all curricular areas” (First Peoples Principles of Learning, n.d).

Initial integration of Aboriginal content into various curricular was initially intended to support the success of Aboriginal learners; however, the principles that govern traditional First Peoples' perspectives of teaching and learning have gained a more prominent place in the BC education system as educators are recognizing that they promote educational practice that is also effective fore non-Aboriginal learners (First Peoples Principles of Learning, n.d).



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


fnesc 

Figure 5 First Peoples Principles of Learning (First Peoples Principles of Learning, n.d)

Currently, the British Columbia Curriculum is undergoing change to include more responsive, personalized learning, paying more attention to the individual, something that may be new to the British Columbia education systems but is not new to Indigenous peoples (First Peoples Principles of Learning, n.d). “These initiative echo what has already been known by First Peoples – that education is a complex process that is personal, holistic, embedded in relationship and is most effective when it is authentic and relevant” (First Peoples Principles of Learning, n.d).

During the professional development workshop I will lead, I aim to introduce educators to the principles of learning. While some educators may have seen this document, as it has been involved in the British Columbia curriculum since 2008, for early childhood educators this may be the first time they are seeing this document as they do not follow the same curriculum teachers do. As these principles are integrated into the K-12 British Columbia curriculum, I believe it is important for early childhood educators to begin to understand how they could use these guiding principles in their centers to aid in incorporating Aboriginal content. While early childhood educators are not guided by the same curricular documents teachers are, it is important to represent Aboriginal culture through all learning environments. There are many ways early childhood educators can begin to incorporate culture into their learning environments, such as playing traditional music, telling traditional legends or stories, sensory bins with local plants, early language activities with elders and local crafts.

During the professional development workshop, I aim to have educators look more closely at the Principles of Learning by, in break out partnerships, taking a principle and identifying a) where the principle shows up in curriculum or programming, and b) how the educators could bring Aboriginal culture into their learning environments for this specific

principle. For example, if a partnership was to take the Principle *Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities*, they would first look at what core competency this Principle fits into, and then how they could achieve students understand of this principle including how they could incorporate it into their classroom such as, inviting elders in to share local knowledge. Following the break out partnership discussions, we will share the ideas with the whole group and compile the ideas into a document of practical ways to incorporate the principles into classrooms that will be shared with participants.

Summary

I believe one of the greatest barriers to educators including Aboriginal content and pedagogy into their learning environments is a lack of knowledge or familiarity with their local Aboriginal cultures. Through the professional development opportunity I have created, I aim to increase educators' foundational knowledge and, together as a group, come up with tangible ways for educators to begin to take a step toward incorporating Aboriginal content into their classrooms by not only group generated ideas, but also resource sharing. Lee (2007) asks the question "How can education and the school place have meaning for Native students who may feel disenfranchised from the very society formal education is trying to promote?" (p. 198). In looking at this question, I believe educators can take a step towards helping make connections between the formal education Lee refers to and traditional local education that our Aboriginal bands can provide. According to Hewitt (2000) "the worldview of a group of people underlies every aspect of their life – their language, social systems, religious beliefs and even the way they go about their daily life" (p.111). With this in mind, I do not believe that educators can begin to incorporate Aboriginal content and pedagogy in their learning environments without first

establishing a foundational understanding of Aboriginal culture and world view and how it differs from Western worldview.

Through hands on activities and a collaborative workshop environment, I aim to provide educators with a deeper understanding of the local Aboriginal bands they work with in Sooke BC. Through this professional development opportunity, educators may become inspired to reflect on their teaching practice and incorporate Aboriginal content into their learning environments.

Chapter 4

Introduction

During the course of my masters program, my professional thinking has changed dramatically. Being a relatively new teacher, I understood coming into my masters that I would gain a better understanding of how to effectively teach early primary students. Through my experience living and working in an Aboriginal community, my masters program guided me to look more closely at teaching early primary education through the lens of Aboriginal ways of knowing. Over the course of my masters degree, my beliefs, actions and thoughts regarding education have changed and evolved.

Looking Back

Prior to enrolling in a masters degree, I believed the main goal of education was to get students to meet pre-determined outcomes. I tried to incorporate as many hands on ways to get my students to engage with the curriculum, however, at the end of the term, I would still sit down with the curriculum documents and check boxes to ensure I had met the outcomes. I believe part of this need to reach curriculum goals and check the boxes came from my inexperience as I had only been teaching for three years prior to enrolling in my masters degree. Through my work in this program, I have come to view education more holistically, understanding that subject areas do not need to be taught in isolation, instead cross curricular approaches to education are often more powerful and can provide students with a deeper understanding of the curriculum.

My professional beliefs have changed many times throughout my masters program. During the first two classes of my masters degree, the Primary Teachers Conference, and

emerging trends in early childhood curriculum, I began to understand the importance of free play in children's development. Free play was never something I introduced into my classroom as an approach to learning, but instead, was used as a time filler or break activity. Through working with colleagues and having authentic discussions, I came to realize the importance of allowing children the time to explore and play freely in early childhood education.

Another change in my thinking that stemmed from these two courses, was the notion of play centers. I always had play centers in my early primary classroom. Centers were arranged in boxes and children were to play with one center at a time and clean up the center before moving on to another center. It wasn't until the first two classes of my masters degree that I realized I had no reason for isolating play equipment and encouraging children to play in a certain way with the center they were at. Moving forward, I now understand the importance of allowing students to mix centers and play with them in creative, imaginary ways, that perhaps I would not have thought of and was stifling student creativity by forcing them to keep centers separate.

Another area which my thinking and actions have changed throughout my masters degree is in regards to the importance of nature in teaching and learning. Prior to this masters program, I rarely went outside with my students, and if I did, I used our outside play time as a break from our inside academic time. I did not attempt to merge the idea that students could learn academically outside, in nature. I now understand, through the teachings of many of the courses in this masters program, that learning from and with nature is extremely important in children's education. Not only does learning outdoors help facilitate students understanding of their local environment, but it also instills in children the importance of nature and helps connect children to the earth.

Another aspect that has changed for me throughout my masters degree is my role as an education professional. Prior to enrolling in my masters degree, I believed that it was my job as a teacher to impart wisdom and teachings onto the children in my classroom. I felt that I needed to have many, if not all, of the answers and that it was my job to provide answers to children in order for them to learn. Over the course of this masters program, I have come to realize that it is acceptable and almost encouraged, for me as the teacher, to learn with and alongside my students. Not only does this learning with your students promote inquiry, but it models for students a real life model of someone engaging in life long learning.

Looking Forward

I believe that my graduate experience will be extremely influential for the future of my professional career. Currently, I am teaching Aboriginal Education at the middle school level in the Sooke School District. Much of my inquiry has lead me to realize the importance of educating teachers on Aboriginal Education and attempting to get them to integrate Aboriginal practices into their classrooms. Moving forward in Sooke School District, I aim to help inform early childhood educators and early primary teachers on the topic of Aboriginal education through the professional development workshop I have created. In educating teachers on how to integrate Aboriginal content at an early age, I believe children will gain a deeper understanding of the importance of Aboriginal culture that will carry them through their schooling careers.

Moving forward, I anticipate my experience will be influential in my future career in that I hope to continue along my current path of teaching Aboriginal education and continue to support teachers who are wanting to integrate Aboriginal content or pedagogy into their practice.

In the years to come, I would like to get back to teaching early primary education and taking what I have learned in this masters degree and putting it into practice.

Recommendations

There is still the need for research to continue in the field of Aboriginal education and integrating local Aboriginal education into early learning environments. While beginning to conduct research for this inquiry project, I noticed a lack in Canadian research on integrating local Aboriginal culture into early learning centers. Another area I struggled to find research on was surrounding training teaching and early childhood educators. While there were articles on the importance and movement towards integrating Aboriginal content into the new British Columbia curriculum, I found that there were very few articles on training practitioners in how to do this.

I argue that there is a need for future research to be conducted in the area of training both teachers and early childhood educators in incorporating Aboriginal content and pedagogy into their learning environments. I would argue this training should be conducted at the time of certification, rather than retroactively in the form of professional development, however, I have created a professional development workshop to fill this gap.

While the professional development workshop was developed for School District 62, Sooke, it can be adapted to suit all school districts in British Columbia. The reason I have created this workshop for Sooke School district is that through my job as an Aboriginal education teacher, I have direct contact and knowledge on the three bands, T'Sou-ke, Scia'new and Pacheedaht that Sooke School District works closely with. In order to implement this professional development workshop in other districts across British Columbia, it is important to

have someone facilitate the workshop that has knowledge of the local bands that the school district works with. This facilitator could be a school district employee or a local Aboriginal elder, however, having someone that has background knowledge on local Aboriginal cultures is key for the success of implementing the workshop as many of the activities surround local culture and how to implement local culture in the classroom. With the above adaptation of bringing in a local expert facilitator, the professional development workshop I have created could be implemented in any school district across British Columbia.

References

- Canadian Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996) *People to people, nation to Nation: Highlights from the report of the royal commission on aboriginal people*. Retrieved from <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014597/1100100014637>
- Agbo, S. (2004). First nations perspectives on transforming the status of culture and language schooling. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 43(1), p. 1-31.
- Ball, J., & Pence, A. R. (1999). Beyond developmentally appropriate practice: Developing community and culturally appropriate practice. *Young Children*, 54(2), p. 46-50.
- Ball, J., & Pence, A., (2001). Training in first nations communities: Five “secrets” of success. *Interaction*. Spring 2001, p. 19-24.
- Barnhardt, R. (2005) Creating a place for indigenous knowledge in education: The Alaska native knowledge network. *Local Diversity: Place-Based Education in the Global Age*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. (http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/Curriculum/Article/RayBarnhardt/PBE_ANKN_Chapter.html)
- Battiste, M. (2005). Indigenous knowledge: Foundations for First Nations. Retrieved from: <http://www.win-hec.org/docs/pdfs/Journal/Marie%20Battiste%20copy.pdf>
- British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2006) *Social Studies K-7 Integrated resource package 2006*. Retrieved from: https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/pdfs/social_studies/2006ssk7.pdf
- Enfield, C.S., (2007). Defining quality: New insights for training practitioners. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), p. 145-157.
- First Peoples Principles of Learning (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://firstpeoplesprinciplesoflearning.wordpress.com/background-and-current-context/>
- Greenwood, M., de Leeuw, S., & Fraser, T.N. (2007). Aboriginal children and early childhood development and education in Canada: Linking the past and the present to the future. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), p. 5-18.
- Greenwood, M., de Leeuw, S. (2007). Teachings from the land: Indigenous people, our health, our land, and our children. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), p. 48-53.
- Hart, M.A., (2010). Indigenous worldviews, knowledge, and research: The development of an indigenous research paradigm. *Journal of Indigenous voices in Social Work*, 1(1), p. 1-16.
- Hewitt, D. (2000). A clash of worldviews: Experiences from teaching aboriginal students. *Theory into Practice*, 39(2), p 111-117.

- Kawagley, O., & Barnhardt, R. (1998). Education indigenous to place: Western science meets native reality. *Alaska Native Knowledge Network*. Fairbanks, Alaska.
- Lee, T.S. (2007). Connecting academics, indigenous knowledge, and commitment to community: High school students' perceptions of a community-based education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(2), p. 196-216.
- Martin, K., & Rodriguez de France, C., (2007). Australian early childhood education and care: The fourth discourse. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), p 19-27.
- May, H. (2002). Aotearoa-New Zealand: An overview of history, policy and curriculum. *McGill Journal of Education*, 37(1), 19-36.
- Ministry of Education (1996). *Te Whariki Early Childhood Curriculum*. Wellington: New Zealand.
- Prochner, L., (2004). Early childhood education programs for indigenous children in Canada, Australia and New Zealand: An historical review. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 29(4), p 7-16.
- Sobel, D., (2004). *Place-based education: Connecting classrooms and communities*. Great Barrington, MS: The Orion Society, 2004.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Honoring the truth, reconciling for the future: Summary of the final report of the truth and reconciliation commission of Canada*. Retrieved from http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Exec_Summary_2015_06_25_web_o.pdf
- Walker, R., & Rodriguez de France, C. (2007). Foundation of ECD in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 28-40.
- Zurzolo, C., (2010). Where does policy come from? Exploring the experienced of non-Aboriginal teachers integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum. *Our Schools, Our Selves*, 19(3), p 275-289.

APPENDIX A: POWER POINT PRESENTATION

7/21/15

Incorporating and Developing Culturally Appropriate Practice

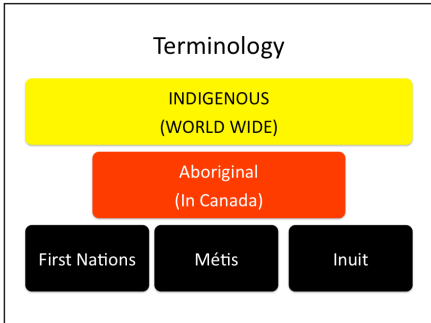
A workshop for Early Childhood Educators and Early Primary Teachers teaching in School District #62

Overview

- 1) Terminology – creating a foundation for discussion
- 2) Local Aboriginal Bands – a briefing on many of the bands School District 62 works with
- 3) Worldview

Overview

- 4) Principles of Learning – overview and activity
- 5) Iceberg Activity
- 6) Resource sharing
- 7) Questions



Terminology

- **Indigenous** is a global term which recognizes the people who are the original inhabitants of a place
- **Aboriginal** refers to the original people of North America who belong to historic, cultural and political groups
– This is the term used in Canada’s Constitution

Definitions from : The Blanket exercise. (2013) Kairos Canada

Terminology

- **First Nations** is not considered a legal term by the Government of Canada, but replaces “Indian” in common usage
- **Inuit** are Indigenous people of Canada and other Northern countries whose traditional territory circles around the North Pole

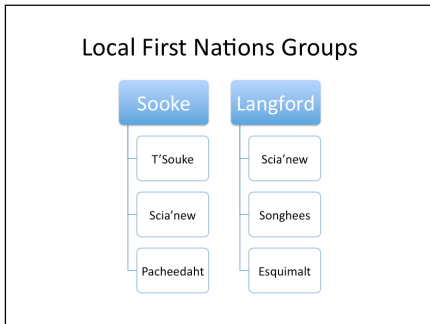
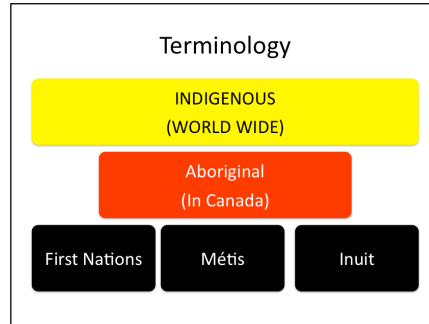
Definitions from : The Blanket exercise. (2013) Kairos Canada

7/21/15

Terminology

- **Métis** are descendents of French and Scottish fur traders and other early settlers, and Cree, Ojibwe, Saulteaux, Assiniboine and other Indigenous women

Definitions from : The Blanket exercise. (2013) Kairos Canada



Local Aboriginal Bands

- **T'Sou-ke First Nations (Sooke):**
 - Chief Gordon Planes
 - Population: 251 members as of February 2013
 - 2 T'Sou-ke Reserves cover 67 hectares
 - Band projects
 - Wasabi greenhouse
 - Solar Project
 - Fisheries

Reference: <http://www.tsoukenation.com>

Local Aboriginal Bands

- **Scia'new Nation (Beecher Bay):**
 - Chief Russ Chipps
 - Populate approximately 237 members
 - 8 reserves, totaling 308 hectares
 - Band Projects
 - Marina
 - Currently building Spirit Bay
 - Campground
 - Fisheries

Reference: <http://www.beecherbaybc.com>

Local Aboriginal Bands

- **Pacheedaht Nation (Port Renfrew):**
 - Chief Arliss Daniels
 - 4 Reserves totaling 180 hectares
 - Band Projects:
 - Fisheries
 - Campground

Reference: <http://www.portrenfrew.com/pacheedaht.htm>

7/21/15

Worldview

- Western Worldview and Aboriginal Worldview differ dramatically
- Western worldview tends to be more linear
- Aboriginal worldview more holistic or cyclical

Western Worldview

- “to emphasize compartmentalized knowledge which is often decontextualized and taught in the detached setting of a classroom or laboratory” (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 2005, p. 2)

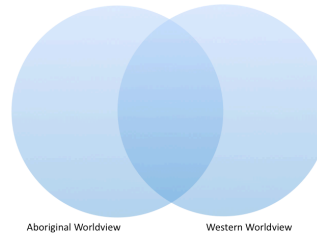
Aboriginal Worldview

- “acquire their knowledge thorough direct experience in the natural environment” (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1998, p. 3)
- “Aboriginal worldview accepts that survival depends on cooperation and coexistence with the forces of nature rather than expecting to manipulate and control them” (Hewitt, 2000, p. 112).

Indigenous Worldviews	Western Worldview
Spirituality is imbedded in all elements of the cosmos	Spirituality is centered in a single supreme being
Humans have responsibility for maintaining harmonious relationship with the natural world	Humans exercise dominion over nature to use it for personal and economic growth
Need for reciprocity between human and natural worlds – resources are viewed as gifts	Natural resources are available for unilateral human exploitation
Nature is honored routinely through daily spiritual practice	Spiritual practices are intermittent and set apart from daily life
Wisdom and ethics are derived from direct experience with the natural world	Human reason transcends the natural world and can produce insights independently
Universe is made of dynamic, ever changing natural forces	Universe is made up of an array of static physical objects
Universe is viewed as a holistic, integrative system with a unifying life force	Universe is compartmentalized into dualistic forms and reduction or progressively smaller conceptual parts

Time is circular with natural cycles that sustain all life	Time is a linear chronology of “human progress”
Nature will always possess unfathomable mysteries	Nature is completely decipherable to the rational human mind
Human thought, feelings and words are inextricably bound to all other aspects of the universe	Human thought, feeling and words are formed apart from the surrounding world
Human role is to participate in the orderly designs of nature	Human role is to dissect, analyze and manipulate nature for own ends
Respect for elders is based on their compassion and reconciliation of outer and inner-directed knowledge	Respect for others is based on material achievement and chronological old age
Sense of empathy and kinship with other forms of life	Sense of separateness from and superiority over other forms of life
View proper human relationship with nature as a continuous two-way, transactional dialogue	View relationship of humans to nature as a one-way, hierarchical imperative
Time is circular with natural cycles that sustain all life	Time is a linear chronology of “human progress”

Worldview



7/21/15

Principles of Learning

- Created in 2006/2007 as a partnership between the BC Ministry of Education and the First Nations Education Steering Committee
- Originally created to be part of the English First Peoples course to help guide the teaching of the course

Principles of Learning

“because these principles of learning represent an attempt to identify common elements in the varied teaching and learning approaches that prevail within particular First Peoples societies, it must be recognized that they do not capture the full reality of the approach used in any single First Peoples society”

(British Columbia Ministry of Education and First Nations Steering Committee, 2008, p. 11)

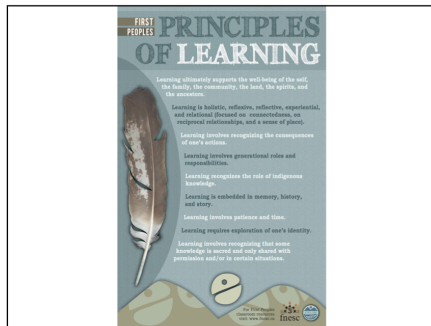
Principles of Learning

- Increasingly seeing more and more Aboriginal content in curriculum
- Move toward a more responsive education system with an increased emphasis on personalization

Principles of Learning

- “education is a complex process that is personal, holistic, embedded in relationship, as is more effective when it is authentic and relevant”

(First peoples principles of learning, (n.d.). Retrieved on July 18, 2015 from <https://firstpeoplesprinciplesoflearning.wordpress.com/background-and-current-context/>)



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

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of self
- Understanding that people owe their lives to ones who have come before
- Recognizes that each person is unique
- Encourages options for learners
- Community and nature are regarded as a “classroom”

7/21/15

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

- Relation to Non-Aboriginal Educational Theory
 - Emphasis on relationship and connectedness parallels constructivist learning (Vygotsky, 1978)
 - Supports constructivist concept that learning is socially constructed
 - Learning occurs as a result of individuals interaction with a group or community

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

Implications for Classroom and School:

- Connecting learning to a broader community
- Bringing in community members to make connections between community and school
- Begin looking at local contexts then moving outward
- Examine what is being learned in terms of how it affects self, family, community and the land

Learning is Holistic, Reflexive, Reflective, Experiential and Relational

- Reflects the indigenous perspective that everything is interconnected and that education
 - Is not separate from the rest of life
 - Relationships are vital
 - Learning is not viewed as an action separate to life
 - Learning should occur, where possible, in “real-life” situations

Learning is Holistic, Reflexive, Reflective, Experiential and Relational

- Relation to Non-Aboriginal Educational Theory
 - Reciprocal teaching: Scardamalia and Bereiter (1994)
 - Knowledge building is supported by intentional social interaction where participants provide constructive responses to others work
 - Experiential learning: von Glasersfeld (2008)
 - Learners actively engage in experiences that allow them to develop new understandings

Learning is Holistic, Reflexive, Reflective, Experiential and Relational

- Implications for Classroom and School:
 - Cross-curricular learning
 - Provide choice and flexibility
 - Create collaborative and cooperative learning opportunities
 - Hands on learning

Learning Involves Recognizing the Consequences of one’s Actions

- Each person must take responsibility for their actions
- All actions have consequences
 - Consequences could be individual and/or for others
 - How actions affect others (family, community, land)
- Need for Authentic learning situations

7/21/15

Learning Involves Recognizing the Consequences of one's Actions

- Relation to Non-Aboriginal Educational Theory
 - Chickering and Gamson (1987)
 - Effective learning environment respects and supports diverse talents and learning styles

Learning Involves Recognizing the Consequences of one's Actions

- Implications for the Classroom and School:
 - Helping learners understand natural consequences for their actions
 - Learning from consequences when they happen
 - Autonomy and choice in their learning

Learning Involves Generational Roles and Responsibilities

- Teaching and learning is the responsibility of all members of a community
- Responsibility of the learner lies with the learner
- Elders in communities are significant teachers

Learning Involves Generational Roles and Responsibilities

- Relation to Non-Aboriginal Educational Theory
 - Jonassen (1999) refers to behavior modelling and cognitive modelling as methods of supporting constructivist learning
 - Describe the traditional modelling done by elders
 - Learning apprenticeship model
 - Let students teach other students

Learning Involves Generational Roles and Responsibilities

- Implications for Classroom and School:
 - Providing learning opportunities for students to teach other grades
 - Inviting elders into the school and classroom
 - Bringing learners to community to learn from people in other contexts
 - Providing leadership opportunities

Learning Recognizes the Role of Indigenous Knowledge

- Understanding that Indigenous peoples hold an extensive wealth of knowledge
- Honors robust knowledge
- Makes room in schools for Aboriginal learners to see elements of who they are reflected around them
- Develops understanding of non-Aboriginal learners

7/21/15

Learning Recognizes the Role of Indigenous Knowledge

- Relation to Non-Aboriginal Educational Theory
 - Constructivism: Learners make sense of the world based on his or her experiences
 - Cultural knowledge needs to be thought about and taught (Jegede, 1995)

Learning Recognizes the Role of Indigenous Knowledge

- Implications for Classroom and School:
 - Understanding that education systems are not value neutral
 - Ensuring meaningful inclusion of Indigenous content
 - Recognizing that indigenous content is connected to specific contexts

Learning is Embedded in Memory, History and Story

- In Aboriginal culture, knowledge was traditionally kept in oral tradition
- Helps learners to organize new concepts that develop from learning
- Helps create concepts of the world

Learning Involves Patience and Time

- Learning is an individualistic process that cannot be rushed or arrived at according to a pre-determined schedule
- Learning happens when a person is ready or it or when it occurs in an authentic setting

Learning Involves Patience and Time

- Relation to Non-Aboriginal Educational Theory
 - Learning in a constructivist environment often requires more time
 - Also reflective of collaborative learning environments

Learning Involves Patience and Time

- Implications for Classroom and School
 - Understanding learning is about understanding concepts not the regurgitation of information
 - Recursive learning
 - Provide learners with the flexibility to take more or less time to ensure they learn what they need to know

7/21/15

Learning Requires the Exploration of One's Identity

- Recognizes the importance of identity in Indigenous culture
- Knowing one's own strengths and challenges is part of the responsibility a person has to his or her community

Learning Requires the Exploration of One's Identity

- Relation to Non-Aboriginal Educational Theory
 - Vygotsky: social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of knowledge
 - Social learning comes before development
- Constructivist theory: learner must make sense of his or her experiences in order to develop knowledge (von Glasersfeld, 2008)

Learning Requires the Exploration of One's Identity

- Implications for Classroom or School
 - Avoiding generalizations about one's learning style
 - Creating safe opportunities for learners to articulate and express their developing identities
 - Learners may feel they have multiple identities based on different values between home, school and community

Learning Involves Recognizing that Some Knowledge is sacred and only Shared with Permission and/or in Certain Situations

- Whether or not knowledge can be shared depends on different types of knowledge, who holds that knowledge and the context
- Being told a story does not give you permission to retell the story to others
- Permission must be gained by the knowledge keeper in order to share

Learning Involves Recognizing that Some Knowledge is sacred and only Shared with Permission and/or in Certain Situations

- Relation to Non-Aboriginal Educational Theory
 - Loosely tied to the notion of copyright

Learning Involves Recognizing that Some Knowledge is sacred and only Shared with Permission and/or in Certain Situations

- Implications for Classroom and School:
 - Ensure information can be shared before using it
 - Ask about what protocols might be attached to specific knowledge
 - Not assuming Aboriginal Learners will share all aspects of their home and community lives in the classroom

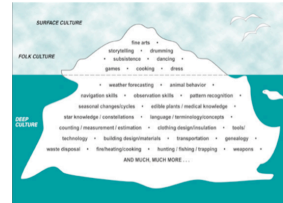
7/21/15

Activity

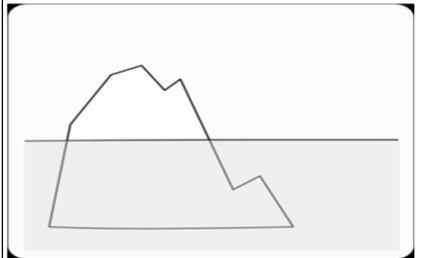
- With a partner, pick one of the principles of learning and answer the following:
 - What is your understanding of the principle
 - How SPECIFICALLY could you incorporate it into your classroom
 - What curricular areas does this principle fit into

Iceberg

- Barnhardt uses an iceberg analogy to highlight the difference between surface and deep culture



Iceberg Activity



Iceberg Activity

Now look at one or two examples of surface culture, and see if you can find a way to change the surface culture activity to a deep culture activity

Resources Available

- Aboriginal Education Department Staff
- School District 61 - <https://aned.sd61.bc.ca/resources.aspx>
- FNEC K-3 Document - <http://www.fnesc.ca/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/PUB-LFP-K-3-In-our-Own-Words-for-Web.pdf>
- Local Aboriginal people in community