

THE ABORIGINAL KIDS IN MY CLASS

*Students with diverse culture
and language needs in
regular classrooms*



May 11, 2007

The Aboriginal Kids In My Class

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Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
THE ABORIGINAL KIDS IN MY CLASS	4
ABORIGINAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE	5
ABORIGINAL EDUCATION IN BC	5
A FEDERAL APOLOGY	5
ABORIGINAL EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT AGREEMENT	5
ABORIGINAL SUPPORT PROGRAM	5
ABORIGINAL SUPPORT WORKERS	5
WHO ARE OUR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS?.....	5
THE MEDICINE WHEEL	5
BEHAVIOURAL CHALLENGES.....	5
INSTRUCTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	5
SUCCESSFUL INSTRUCTION	5
ABORIGINAL STUDENTS WHO STRUGGLE	5
GETTING TO KNOW YOUR STUDENTS – THE ABORIGINAL WAY	5
DISTRICT T CULTURAL EVENTS	5
CULTURALLY SENSITIVE LANGUAGE.....	5
APPENDICES.....	5
CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS	5
CLASSROOM RESOURCES.....	5
PROFESSIONAL BOOKS	5



THE ABORIGINAL KIDS IN MY CLASS

Student diversity is a reality in Delta classrooms! When Special Programs surveyed parents and staff, both groups raised the issue of needing more information about how best to address student learning in Delta classrooms.

To this end, we have created this booklet on Aboriginal students to accompany the previously published documents describing students with learning, behaviour and ESL challenges. This edition of *The Kids in My Class* contains some basic information about Aboriginal students and Delta's Aboriginal Program and suggestions for effective instruction.

Teachers are encouraged to share their concerns with the Aboriginal Support Worker assigned to their school as an initial step in receiving support.

We hope you find this information useful in helping you develop an inclusive classroom where all students are active, successful learners.

Kathy Guild

Director – Special Programs

Should you have any specific questions please don't hesitate to phone (604 946-4101) or email any of the following support people in Special Programs:

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Aboriginal Advisory Committee

We would like to thank the members of Delta's Aboriginal Advisory Committee for their input into this Document and for the thoughtful, caring guidance and direction in providing the best possible educational opportunities for our Aboriginal students in Delta.

Nadine Bobb	Parent Representatives
Carmen Carriere	
Rhonda Carriere	
Karen Fitzpatrick	
Beth Fortin	
Sandra Foster	
Joan McClellan	
Brian Payer	
Charles Foster	Tssawwassen First Nation Representative
Faye O'Neil	Support Worker Representative
Heather King	Trustee Representative
Garnet Ayres	School Board Representative
Karl Moser	Administrative Representative
Paul Leroy	DTA Representative
Angelika Hedley	Teacher Representative
Kathy Guild	Director of Instruction – Aboriginal Education
Gladys Rosencrans	Coordinator– Aboriginal Program



Aboriginal Education in BC

Students of Aboriginal ancestry are identified as school-aged students who are self-identified as being of Aboriginal ancestry (First Nations, status and non status; Métis; and Inuit). Aboriginal identification is made on a voluntary basis

British Columbia schools have not been successful in ensuring that Aboriginal students receive a quality education, one that allows these students to succeed in the larger provincial economy while maintaining ties to their culture. Growing recognition of this problem led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in 1999:

"We the undersigned, acknowledge that Aboriginal learners are not experiencing school success in British Columbia. We state our intention to work together within the mandates of our respective organizations to improve school success for Aboriginal learners in British Columbia."

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/agreements/

Education is important and always has been for Aboriginal peoples. Education meant survival in the past and this still applies today. The Elders say, "Words are for your mind as food is for your body."
Shared Learnings

The Ministry of Education provides enhanced funding to school age students of Aboriginal Ancestry. This funding is part of a larger policy framework and is meant to provide culturally appropriate educational programs and services to support the success of Aboriginal students

Adapted from: Policy Document: K-12 Funding
Aboriginal Education BC Ministry of Education



Aboriginal peoples make up 3.5 percent of the total BC population. The Aboriginal population of BC is 20 percent of the national Aboriginal population.
Shared Learnings

The population of Aboriginal peoples in Canada is growing 5 times faster than the non- Aboriginal population. Children under 15 years of age account for 30.6 percent of all Aboriginal people in BC, compared to 17.7 percent for BC's general population. (Statistics BC, 2001)
Shared Learnings



A Federal Apology

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Excerpt from the Statement of Reconciliation

Sadly, our history with respect to the treatment of Aboriginal people is not something in which we can take pride. Attitudes of racial and cultural superiority led to a suppression of Aboriginal culture and values. As a country, we are burdened by past actions that resulted in weakening the identity of Aboriginal peoples, suppressing their languages and cultures, and outlawing spiritual practices. We must recognize the impact of these actions on the once self-sustaining nations that were disaggregated, disrupted, limited or even destroyed by the dispossession of traditional territory, by the relocation of Aboriginal people, and by some provisions of the Indian Act. We must acknowledge that the result of these actions was the erosion of the political, economic and social systems of Aboriginal people and nations.

Against the backdrop of these historical legacies, it is a remarkable tribute to the strength and endurance of Aboriginal people that they have maintained their historic diversity and identity.

Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern
Development • Ottawa, 1997 • Gathering Strength --
Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan

Did you know?

Aboriginal peoples provided a democratic model for North American government. *Caucus* is an Aboriginal word. Some dictionaries trace the origin of the word “caucus” to an

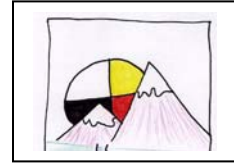
Algonquin word for counsel: “caú-cau-asú”.

The constitution of the Iroquois Confederacy in Ontario — the “great law of peace” — is widely recognized as one of the most democratic political structures, as it is based on the principles of persuasion, compromise and consensus building.

Shared Learnings



Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement



DELTA SCHOOL DISTRICT

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT AGREEMENT

PREAMBLE

The Enhancement Agreement sets the framework for the development and implementation of our Aboriginal education program. The goals of our program are to assist Delta Aboriginal students to be successful in school and to learn about Aboriginal culture. The success of Aboriginal students is a collective responsibility of the school district, the home, and the Aboriginal community. We have established a strong partnership which we will continue to strengthen in our shared commitment to improve Aboriginal student results.

The Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee is a collaborative group representing the Aboriginal Community of Delta. This includes parents of Aboriginal students, Aboriginal Community members, Tsawwassen First Nation and representatives from the Delta School District. The committee's mandate is to provide guidance and direction for the Delta School District Aboriginal Program.

The Committee has played a key role in the development of the Delta Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement and will continue to monitor and implement this agreement in collaboration with the Aboriginal community of Delta.

The Committee acknowledges and honours The First Nations in whose traditional territories the School District resides: Tsawwassen First Nation, Musqueam First Nation, and the Wilson Family.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Enhancement Agreement is:

- a. To ensure Aboriginal students achieve social and academic success in the Delta School District.
- b. To honour and actively support the revitalization of the histories, cultures, languages and governance of the Aboriginal people whose traditional and adopted territories are served by Delta School District.
- c. To celebrate the accomplishments of our Aboriginal students.

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- d. To celebrate and acknowledge Aboriginal culture as an important part of our schools.

PRINCIPLES

The performance areas for enhancement will be in areas where data is:

- appropriate for Aboriginal students
- tracked over time
- interpreted cautiously when numbers are small
- related to the goals of Delta School District accountability contract and school plans
- effectively used to implement intervention for improvement
- reported in the Delta School District Annual Report on Aboriginal students.

PERFORMANCE GOALS

Delta School District is committed to improving Aboriginal student achievement. Student achievement will be measured using classroom, district and provincial assessments. Other areas related to student achievement and school participation will be monitored: graduation rates, grade-to-grade transition rates, and attendance.

Student Achievement

- a. Goal: Improve literacy skills of Aboriginal students in Kindergarten and Grade 1.
- b. Goal: Improve literacy and numeracy skills of Aboriginal students in the intermediate grades.
- c. Goal: Improve Aboriginal student performance and participation in provincial exams.

Student Graduation and Retention

Goal: Improve transition rates from grade to grade (Grade 7 to Grade 8, Grade 8 to

- d. Goal: Improve number of graduates who go to post-secondary programs.
- e. Goal: Improve attendance of Aboriginal students:

Aboriginal Cultural Enhancement

- h. Goal: Increase the knowledge of Aboriginal culture and history for all students.
- i. Goal: Improve Aboriginal student sense of belonging to school community.



ABORIGINAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

WHAT DOES THE DELTA SCHOOL DISTRICT'S 'ABORIGINAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM' DO?

The Aboriginal Educational Program assists Aboriginal students (Metis, First Nation, Inuit, Status, Non Status, including any portion of ancestry) achieve greater success in school. This is accomplished by providing Aboriginal Support Workers along with Aboriginal community members, who are familiar with and sensitive to the value, beliefs and needs of the Aboriginal community. It is this cultural sensitivity and awareness that acts as a bridge between the two cultures, necessary in assisting Aboriginal students maintain academic success. By raising cultural awareness and by being sensitive to cultural issues, a bridge can be built to assist Aboriginal students in being successful participants in school.

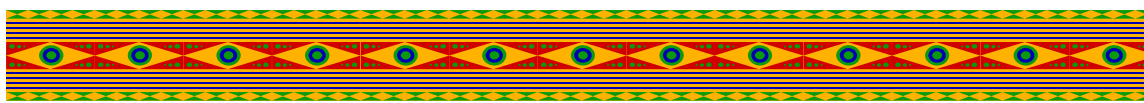
The 'Aboriginal Education Program' provides:

Cultural awareness: Aboriginal Support Workers will assist with classroom instruction, follow cultural protocol and liaise between school and community. Aboriginal students gather once a week as one nation to celebrate their unique cultural ancestry. The students will experience an annual powwow, field trips, history lessons, crafts, traditional teaching and learn respect for themselves and others.

One/One Counselling: Act as student's advocate and develop a support network. Will connect students with the aboriginal community.

Home/School Liaison: Will liaise between school/personnel, parents/guardians and community agencies.

The Aboriginal Education Program may vary somewhat from site to site as each school program is unique to the focus of the Aboriginal Support Worker. This program however does not replace Learning Assistance or any Special Education programs for which the student qualifies, however, the Delta School District's Aboriginal Education Program will provide interim tutorial support when needed.



Goals:

- To improve student success in school.
- To improve cultural awareness of students and school staff.

The Aboriginal Kids In My Class



Delta's Aboriginal Program

Did you know...

- It is not a *privilege* to come to the Aboriginal Program but a program requirement?
- There is an Aboriginal Support Worker (ABSW) in every school, whether there are Aboriginal students identified or not?
- ABSWs monitor attendance and grades?
- Aboriginal Kindergarten students are eligible for full day Kindergarten?
- It is a district program as well as a school program?
- The Program is not just about making crafts? There are many important cultural teachings that go with it.
- Different Workers have different areas of knowledge and expertise and different ways – they are not all experts in everything.
- The ministry provides funding for full day Kindergarten for Aboriginal students?

Making the most of the Program:

- Aboriginal Workers have a big part to play in enhancing student success
- Aboriginal Workers have assigned schools – all requests for support should go through the Worker assigned to the school
- Workers have valuable knowledge of the student and their families
 - It is very important that any support people who are working with Aboriginal students should include the Worker in discussion and planning
 - ABSW's should be included in team meetings, care meetings, behavioural issues and suspensions
- Invite the Aboriginal Workers to staff meetings to educate staff
- Distribute a job description so staff are clear about the role of the ABSW
- Workers are Aboriginal so they can connect with families much more easily –trust takes a long time to establish
- ABSWs can often connect with and calm down potentially explosive situations
- Coordinate and input services
- ABSWs are strong advocates for children and families
- They provide an important liaison with families

It is very important that any support people who are working with Aboriginal students should include the Worker

- Workers should have access to all files

Aboriginal Support Workers have a wealth of expertise and resources. They are available to come into classrooms and teach classes about aboriginal culture. They have lessons and resources to support the Aboriginal Learning Outcomes of the IRP's.



Aboriginal Support Workers

All schools in Delta have the services of an Aboriginal Support Worker who is the first person to consult with questions about supporting Aboriginal students in the regular classroom. Support Workers bring extensive formal and informal training to their position but just as important are their life experiences and cultural heritage as Aboriginal people. Their unique understanding and sensitivity to the values, beliefs and needs of the students' Aboriginal community, as well as the needs of the school system, make them valuable assets to school staff.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide individual or small group sessions to support Aboriginal students to remain in school.
- Provide a positive and effective Aboriginal role model.
- Provide cultural, social and emotional support to promote cultural growth and behavioural change in Aboriginal students
- Act as an advocate and/or liaison for the Aboriginal student and family.
- Make home visits
- Participate in the school based working team meetings in regard to individual student need assessment and behavioural goal planning (IEP).
- Advise school personnel on Aboriginal culture and values
- Assist in organizing Aboriginal culture awareness activities for all students.
- Organize and supervise recreational activities (e.g., athletics, games, crafts, camping, outdoor education) with an emphasis on culture, socialization, and self-reliance
- Maintain records and documents relating to :
 - o student social/emotional progress and growth,
 - o intervention strategies,
 - o summarization of work done with a student.



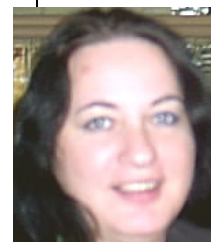
Shana Smith



Faye O'Neil



Arnie Leon



Tylyn Fasciglione



Kenny Awasis



Alainna Genesisius



Working With Aboriginal Families

Our families are our communities.



The Support Workers are Aboriginal therefore they have a better cultural understanding with families –*trust takes a long time to establish*

- The 'Family' is very important in Aboriginal culture, although it may look different than Non-Aboriginal families. The importance of establishing positive relationships with both the child and their family cannot be overemphasized.
- Native families sometimes have different values and ways of doing things
 - Consider whose standards we are using?– i.e. child guidance and discipline, family responsibilities, use of Ritalin, etc.
- Many Aboriginal students have a large extended family. It is common practice for adults other than the students' parents—(grandparent, aunts, uncles, cousins, older siblings)—to take on the role of the adults involved with the school.
- Older siblings may be required to help out at home and often take care of younger children.
- Be aware of respectful language
- Family events and gatherings are very important—students may be out of school for several days at a time to attend them.
- Family responsibilities are especially important during hunting and fishing times. Absences may be necessary during these times. They are learning their cultural traditions.
- Family cultural ceremonies that are not optional which means they **will** miss school
 - This may affect their ability to take part in extracurricular activities, and to complete homework and assignments on time.
- Sixty-five percent of Aboriginal children live on reserve and 50 percent of children in urban settings live with two parents. In comparison, 83 percent of non-Aboriginal children live with two parents (Statistics Canada, 2001 Census).
- About 5 percent of Aboriginal children living in urban areas no longer live with their parents, but live with other relatives or nonrelatives, compared to 0.6 percent of non-Aboriginal children (Statistics Canada, 2001 Census). Many of these children are in foster care.
- In Delta
 - 55% of Aboriginal students are identified as academically 'at risk'.
 - 54% of Aboriginal students graduate with a Dogwood Certificate compared with 86% of non Aboriginal students.
 - *Statistics are generally considered to be a conservative estimate*
- There is a higher rate of foster care and adoptions among Aboriginals
 - be careful of assignments that employ or explore 'family'
 - they may not be able to research their family tree and family ties.
 - this may cause trauma, a feeling that they **should** know
- Accomplishment of native people are not shared
- Role models are not evident



Cultural Tradition and Protocol is Important

- When cultural traditions are questioned, students feel inadequate, ashamed.
- Students wonder “Why they are telling us not to do that?”
- Traditional values and protocols (the rules of correct or appropriate behaviour for a particular group of people) are important in many things.
 - i.e. funerals, names, coming out, hair, seasonal events
- Be respectful of protocols - please contact Aboriginal Support Workers who have a working knowledge of protocol and culture.
- There is protocol to start meetings, introduce people. etc.

Respecting Traditional Territory
All non-aboriginal peoples are immigrants to Canada.

In BC, virtually no treaties (including land transfer) have ever been signed. We need to remember that this is still the traditional land of the Aboriginal People. Since we are guests on someone else’s land, it is important that we acknowledge this at meetings and in our buildings through welcome songs, drumming, smudging, and similar ceremonies. We anticipate that all people will be respectful of such protocol.

We also need to respect that Residential schools have left a legacy of cultural and family destruction; Aboriginal people are working to rebuild this

Connecting with our kids becomes easier when we are familiar with this history.

CAUTION!

Certain songs and dances belong to specific individuals, families, or clans. Permission is required before using the song or dance.



The 1884 outlaw of the potlatch was expanded in 1914 and 1918 to prohibit sacred rituals, gatherings, and ceremonies of Aboriginal peoples and was in place until 1951.

Shared Learnings

Elders are always given preferred seating and served first at gatherings and ceremonies of Aboriginal peoples.

Shared Learnings

Smudging (the ceremonial burning of sweetgrass) is an important healing and cleansing ceremony.

From 1927 to 1951 it was illegal for Aboriginal peoples to gather or engage in any discussion of land claims without the permission of a missionary or Indian Agent.

Shared Learnings



Language Development and Usage

Conversational competency does not equal academic success

Aboriginal students may communicate and interact well with classmates but be floundering academically. *Basic*

Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) may be learned quickly.

However, *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiencies (CALP)* may not be adequate to meet the demands

of school. If your students have difficulty understanding your language arts or social studies lessons, they may have acquired BIC skills but lack CALP

- Many Aboriginal people say culture *is* their language - because of the way it shapes their thinking—their ways of knowing.
- Only about 25 percent of Aboriginal people in Canada can carry on a conversation in an Aboriginal language.
- Language patterns tend to endure for three generations

The Inuit people have no words for “time” or “history.” There is no word for “goodbye” in Halq’emeylem

Shared Learnings

Did you know that...

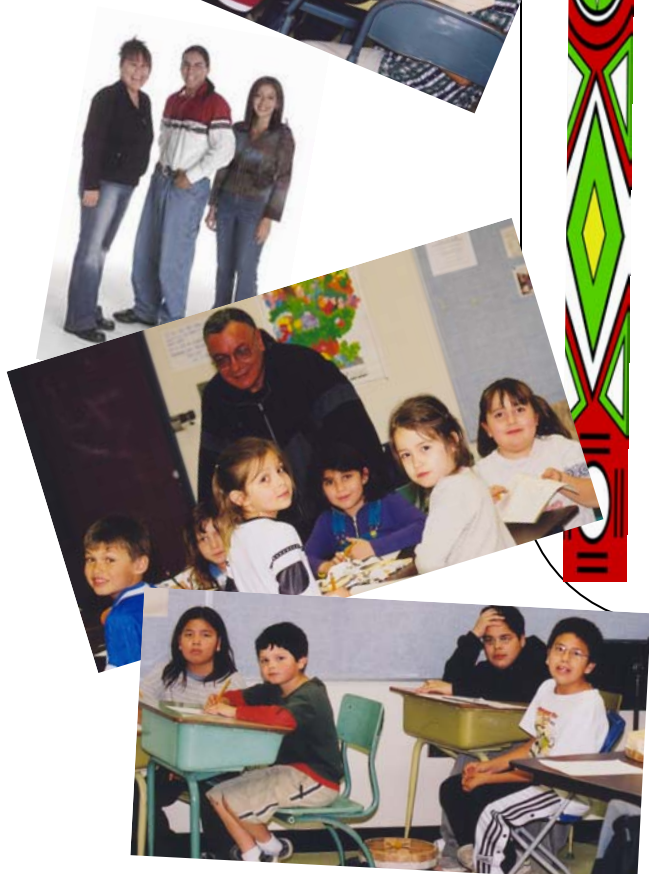
- speakers of Aboriginal languages often speak in softer tones?
- they listen carefully to voice inflection and so may be very sensitive not only to what is being said but *how* it is being said?
- Aboriginal people often use humour—
 - there is a lot of laughter in Aboriginal conversations.
- the pause time for European people tends to be less than two seconds, but pause time for Aboriginal peoples tends to be about four or five seconds?
- generous wait time has been shown to increase the length and quality of student responses?
- Aboriginal students may find it difficult to take part in class discussions where, typically, students jump into the conversation as soon as the previous speaker has finished?





Who Are Our Aboriginal Students?

Through the process of assimilation and acculturation, many Aboriginal people learned to be ashamed of their cultural identity.
Our Words Our Way



Don't assume you **don't** have an Aboriginal student in your class.

All Aboriginal students are not visibly identifiable. They could be any student. They have many different looks.

Skin, hair and eye colour will not establish identity and in many cases, neither will family names.

Aboriginal students wear the same clothes, use similar language and display similar attitudes. Some Aboriginal students may even be blonde, blue-eyed and fair in complexion!

Often students will be more comfortable talking about their culture in a one-to-one situation, rather than in a large group.

Beware of stereotyping and labeling!

Many Aboriginals don't self-identify because "we get treated different"

Common stereotypes are that the person is a struggling learner (only about 50% of population is 'at risk') Learning Disabled (same percentage as rest of population), have behavioural problems (over-identified in this category)

Most kids in Delta do not come from the Tsawwassen First Nation - most are off reserve or 'other' The reports in the media that reinforce the stereotypes are harmful

Be aware that not all students want to be identified as Aboriginal in front of their peers.
Please respect this privacy.



The Medicine Wheel

The Medicine Wheel is representative of Aboriginal Culture. Spirituality is interwoven in Aboriginal culture and inseparable from their beliefs and ceremonies. The Medicine Wheel symbolizes each person's individual life journey. The Circle represents the Circle of Life, including Spiritual, Mental, Physical and Emotional health. Within the Medicine Wheel are The Four Directions and the Four Sacred Colors. In Aboriginal thought, a whole person consists of spirit, heart, mind and body – the capacity to see, feel, know and do. The four quadrants of a Medicine Wheel represent these elements of life. Medicine wheels are places for energy and healing, teaching and understanding. They are used for reflecting on life and for celebrations. Each stone is a "tool" to help us understand ourselves in relation to the universe and teaches us to respect ourselves and our relation to other life forms. The teachings of the Medicine Wheel emphasize the importance of balance in life and how to achieve it.

Our Words, Our Way

- The Medicine Wheel is used all around the world and is a valuable tool that can be used for problem solving and for finding balance in one's life.
- The Circle is used to illustrate the four elements involved in the learning process cycle: to see, to feel, to know and to do.
- Each type of learner has a place within the circle. Whether the students learn best by seeing, feeling, knowing or doing indicates whether they are intuitive, emotional-relational, mentally-centred or physically-centred learners.

Workers will look at situations and behaviour in a 'Medicine Wheel' context, which students will understand



The Aboriginal Kids In My Class



The Legacy of Residential Schools

Adapted from: <http://www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal/issues/schools-e.html>

Residential schools were established for one reason: separation of the children from the family and to eradicate aboriginal culture which was not worth preserving

Children experienced:

- severe punishment for minor infractions such as speaking their native languages.
- loneliness, sickness, confusion and abuse, all to be borne in lonely silence.
- the suffocating heat or freezing cold of the buildings;
- the painful need for someone to talk to;
- the pain of separation from their families;
- the bad tasting, indigestible food;
- the painfully abusive and harsh discipline;
- mental, sexual and physical abuse;

They were taught that:

- aboriginal traditional values were wrong and primitive, and that white Canadians came from a more "advanced" form of social organization.
- their homes were "dirty" and "cold," their parents dressed "funny" and "smelled bad."
- to believe that the ceremonies and rituals which harmonized the spiritual and social life of the community and gave its members a sense of personal significance and group identity, were "heathen" and "the work of the Devil."

When children did return, parents found their children:

- no longer interested in helping the family
- had to be told everything
- "talked back", refused to "listen."
- engaged in violent arguments, foreign to most aboriginal cultures

As a result...

The residential school experience continues to plague First Nations education.

Now parents and grandparents who attended residential schools have strong, ingrained biases against education because of what they experienced.

Even today...

Provincial education curriculums have not change to reflect the educational needs of aboriginal children.

The cross-Canada average of the percentage of aboriginal children that complete Grade 12 is about 20%, and even lower in northern regions.

Aboriginal children continue to have difficulties fitting in to the existing schools, which are still designed around a culture alien to their own.

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TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

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TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Most of our students are second or even first generation to be in public school. Their parents and grandparents went to residential schools and their experience continues to have significant impact.


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Behavioural Challenges


Of course, Aboriginal students will display the same range of behaviours as all children, but it is important to determine the function of any perceived misconduct. The actions may well be a result of anxiety and frustration of learning, fear of failure or ridicule, lack of awareness of expectations, cultural differences or avoidance of stressful situations. If you have concerns in this area consult with your Aboriginal Support Worker and the child's parents.




Aboriginal people believe that each child has a gift to give the world, and that we must nurture the gift to benefit all people.

Consider:

- 'hurt before you get hurt'
- acting out and thwarting the system 'shows power'
- incomplete work may be due to no one being home to do homework with, parent skills may not be adequate
- oral tradition of learning for Aboriginal people may be in conflict with classroom style
- Residential School legacy
- kids learn how to act from parents and other role models
- conflict of values – parents may say they value school but they really value cultural traditions such as smoke house



Data suggests Aboriginal students continue to be overrepresented in special education behaviour categories. For example, in 2001, 9.4% of Aboriginal students were represented in this category, as opposed to 2.4% of



If kids are engaged in their learning at an appropriate level there will be fewer behavioural issues.



INSTRUCTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The majority of Aboriginal youth do not complete high school; leave the school system without skills for employment; without adequate language and cultural knowledge of their own people; and feel that schooling experiences erode their identity and self-worth.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) final report, (1996)

- **There is no “learning style unique to Aboriginal learners.”**
- Aboriginal cultures were built on oral traditions. As a result of the influence of these oral traditions, many students’ parents and grandparents have little reading material in their homes. Because of this, some Aboriginal students may have had less early experience with reading than students from other cultures and may view reading as being less important.
- Our kids learn a different way – they are often (but not always) visual learners
- Many children won’t speak up – to them, watching is important
- Just because aboriginal students are quiet and soft spoken doesn’t mean they are not smart and understanding
- Looking someone in the eye may be seen as a sign of disrespect
- The heart of traditional Aboriginal learning is experiential and usually involves active ‘hands on’ learning
- Encourage students to be ‘doing something with their hands while listening with their ears’
- **Be aware of respect, use correct terminology (textbooks often use culturally insensitive terms such as “Indian”)**



When assessing the learning needs and preferences of Aboriginal students, especially those who may be struggling with school, one effective approach is to recognize and build on their strengths





SUCCESSFUL INSTRUCTION

These strategies
work equally
well with your
non-Aboriginal
students

It really helps when you...

- become familiar with the community and bring resources and elders from the community to school
- introduce conversations about events and topics that are familiar and important to each child
- learn and use some vocabulary words such as greetings, caring phrases, please, thanks, etc. in children's home languages
- use materials that show culturally relevant images and symbols
- read and tell stories that are familiar to students from their cultural backgrounds
- model and scaffold appropriate attending, speaking and listening behaviours
- explicitly teach vocabulary that students need to understand in order to participate in school activities
- ask Workers to come in to share with the class
- make sure to include books with cultural content

Don't assume that all Aboriginal students know their culture

- Don't ask them about their Aboriginal culture because they might not know
- This may cause trauma



- *parents may not be able assist with homework for a variety of reasons*
 - *own reading ability*
 - *work constraints*



Aboriginal Students Who Struggle

When assessing Aboriginal students for learning difficulties, all avenues must be explored. It is important when to supplement the traditional testing model and to collect data in a portfolio.

Transition is important – at all times - from pre-school to graduation. The Aboriginal Worker will be a valuable asset for both students, parents and staff in this process.



Consider:

- **family situation**
 - family composition?
 - siblings?
- **the language(s) used in the home**
 - parent's command of English?
- **proficiency with language**
 - interpersonal communication proficiency?
 - cognitive academic language proficiency?
- **relevant health records**
 - available/complete?
 - pertinent information?
- **educational experience** -
 - interruptions in schooling?
 - past learning history?
- **learning style and preferences** –
 - best instructional approach?
 - comfort in cooperative groups?
 - perceived responsibility as a learner?
- **nature and extent of family support** –
 - actively involved parents or guardians?
 - role of other family members?
- **parents' or guardians' goals**
 - expectations with respect to the child's future?
 - parents' or guardians' goals differ from the student's goals?
- **culturally based behaviours**
 - possible cultural explanations for behaviours?



Input from the Aboriginal Support Worker, the classroom teacher, and the parents should all be considered during the assessment process.



Getting to Know your Students – the Aboriginal Way

We are teaching not only the child who comes to school but also the child who is a member of a family, a community and a culture
Our Words, Our Way

It takes a whole community to raise a child.

Important things to think about

These four principles are a blueprint for 'strength-seeking' instead of 'flaw-fixing' interventions. The goal is to create environments where all students can thrive and grow.

Personal Support System

Who are the significant people in a student's life?
What are the student's relationships with family, friends and community?
Who does the student rely on for support?
What people strengths does the student have?

Life Experience and Challenges

What life challenges does the student face?
How is the student coping with these challenges?
What difficulties has the student overcome?
How does the student ask for help with these challenges?
Who does the student ask for help?
How can the student be helped with these life challenges?

Self-Esteem

How does the student feel about himself or herself?
What are the student's hopes and dreams?
Does the student feel in control of his or her life?
How does the student treat others?
How can the student be supported in developing self-respect and strength?

School Support System

How can the student be supported in developing:
a sense of belonging
a sense of mastery
a sense of responsibility and independence
a sense of sharing, generosity and compassion?



District t Cultural Events

Delta Pow Wow

Last weekend in April

Recognition ceremony

usually coincides with National Aboriginal Day

Pow Wow Dancing

Pow Wow Drumming Lessons

Raven's Tricksters

West Coast drumming and dancing group

Family Nights

Various presentations at different schools

Aboriginal Youth Leadership Conference

Spring Camp

Field Trips



The Aboriginal Kids In My Class

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Culturally Sensitive Language

Be aware that some references can, even unintentionally, extend to racial connotations. Don't assume that all meaning and intentions will be understood.

The following terms are considered offensive to many Aboriginal people.

Buck - is often used as a pejorative term for adult males across North America.

Chug – insulting reference to a female Aboriginal, insinuating drunkenness and immorality.

Eskimo - considered pejorative (largely because of a belief that the word came from an Algonquian word meaning "eater of raw flesh") and the term *Inuit* has become more common.

Geronimo/Pocahotas/Chief/Injun/

Redman – terms often directed to Aboriginals, perhaps in jest or trivially, considered stereotypic and insulting.

Half-breed - a term once widely used to describe people of Aboriginal and white European parentage, considered an impolite and offensive slur.

Indian - 'Indian' has generally been replaced by 'Aboriginal peoples' as defined in the Constitution Act of 1982.

Squaw - is the female counterpart to the Indian male "savage" implying lustful, immoral, unfeeling and dirty.

Tribe – a term for 'a group of people who share a common ethnic, culture or historical tradition', but usually implying a more primitive society. 'Nation' has exactly the same definition and is more respectful.

TeePee – *Tipi* (correct spelling)

First Nations people - refers to Aboriginal people of a First Nation, a self-determined political and organizational unit (band/reserve) of the Aboriginal community.

Indian - an historical government term referring to the original inhabitants of North and South America and still used to define some Aboriginal peoples under the Indian Act. **'Indian' has generally been replaced by 'Aboriginal peoples' as defined in the Constitution Act of 1982.**

Inuit - a distinct Aboriginal people, the Inuit generally live in northern Canada and Alaska.

Metis - a term for people of Aboriginal and European ancestry. They were recognized as Aboriginal people in the Constitution Act of 1982.

Native peoples - term for Aboriginal peoples established in the 1970s by the federal government as a more appropriate term than Indian



Appendices



Cultural Considerations

Aspect	Observations/Descriptions	Strategies
<p style="text-align: center;">BACKGROUND – What are the dynamics that impact children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are '<i>Hidden Rules</i>' or cultural expectations in all cultures • We can't presume the children have had the same experiences • The children's experiences may be 'different' as opposed to 'lacking' • Children have varying levels of cognitive development • Children may be 'silent' and appear to be not engaged • The impact of traumatic events such as Residential School or refugee experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The trauma lives on even though the children or parents may not have directly experienced them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand and value where the children are coming from
<p style="text-align: center;">CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS (values, customs, expectations, etc.) Applies the to their perception of school classroom and teacher</p>	<p>In some cultures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expressing a lack of understanding or asking for help from the teacher is considered impolite or may be perceived as showing vulnerability • observing, listening and imitating, rather than active engagement, are often highly valued learning modes • avoiding eye contact may be a way of showing respect. • definition of 'Family' is often different • cooperative group work is not the norm • Elders are highly valued as role models and teachers • there are taboos on certain types of physical contact • the group is considered more important than the individual and personal praise is not considered appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly demonstrate an appreciation of diversity • Develop an understanding of the child's culture • Build on rather than suppress/diminish own culture • Maintain high expectations for success



<p>COMMUNICATION STYLES/ABILITIES Culturally or cognitively influenced behaviours impacting use/engagement with oral language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •spontaneity, questioning authority and initiating talk, may be seen as negative •background or experiential knowledge may not be well suited to the task •ability to read non-verbal cues may not be well developed • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid forcing the students to speak • Strongly emphasize oral language development and experiential learning • Encourage the children to learn from mistakes • Allow extra “wait time” for students to hear, understand and formulate their responses. • Watch for body language, facial expression, signs of frustration • Periodically check to ensure students are understanding • Be conscious of the vocabulary you use • Model and teach the vocabulary of the theme/topic • Storytelling/oral language is just as important as reading to child - preserves culture as well as being a good literacy experience • Use explicit, sequential instruction and directions • Use visual and other non-verbal cues to present key ideas •
<p>LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The classroom must reflect an understanding and valuing of where the children are coming from •Self-confidence significantly influences ability to learn and participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the students feel secure – that it is safe to take risks in their learning • Relationship with Families is absolutely key - with parents as well as children • Differentiate expectations for students with varying ability • Use more than one method of presentation • Clearly mark transitions during classroom activities • Use cues or attention getters such as “Watch”, “This is important.”, • Teach to the student’s learning mode - most learn best kinesthetically. • Don’t expect children to sit and listen for long periods of time.
<p>BEHAVIOUR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behaviour is ‘communication’ • what could that mean • may be a result of a passive parenting style • may be a reflection of different cultural expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare what the behaviour is like when the child is engaged in a favored activity as opposed to one that is perceived as frustrating or hard • Determine the cause of the behaviour (frustration, fear, anxiety, lack of understanding, etc.) • Model appropriate language and behaviour



Classroom Resources

Student books (some in sets of multiple copies) available for loan from Special Programs or Aboriginal Support Workers

Arctic Stories
Baseball Bats for Christmas
Bird of the Island
Broken Circle
Buffalo Hunt
Crests of the Haida
Colours of the Islands
Cedar, The
Birth of Nanabosho
Boy Called Slow
Buffalo Dreams
Building An Igloo
Buzzing Mosquitoes
Canoe Race, The
Caribou Girl
Dream Catchers
Eagle Feather An Honour
Elders are Watching
Everybody Needs a Rock
Fire Stealer
First Strawberries
Fish for Supper
Floating and Paddling
Forest, The
Frog Girl
Giving Thanks
Going To Visit Kou-Kum
Grandma's Birthday
Great Ballgame: A Muskogee Story
Hats, Hats, Hats
Hide and Sneak
House of Snow, Skin, and Bones
How the Pinto Got Her Colour
How Jack Rabbit Got His Very Long Ears
I Can't Have Bannock But the Beaver Has a Dam
I Like to Help
I See
Inikshuk Book
Island Fun

La Quete Spirituelle De Petit Ours
Little Bear's Vision Quest
Little Duck - Sikihpsts
Little Water and the Gift of Animals
Little White Cabin
Lonely Inukshuk
Long March
Loon's Necklace
Louis Riel
Maple Moon
Mas Book, The
Mayuk The Grizzly Bear
Me
Meet My Family
Messenger of Spring
Moccasin Goalie
Moccasins
Mom's Bannock
Morning on the Lake
"Mush-hole" Memories of a Residential School
My Best Friend Leonard
My Grandma Makes Bannock
My Kokum Called Today
Nanabosho Dances
Nanabosho Steals Fire
Nanabosho Soaring Eagle & The Great Sturgeon
Nanabosho How the Turtle Got It's Shell
Northern Alphabet
Northern Lights: A Soccer Trail
Old Bag of Bones
Old Enough
Oddles of Noodles
Promise is a Promise
Raven and the Moon and the Oystercatcher
Ravens Fly High
Red Parka Mary
Return of the Buffalo
River Lost, A
Rough Faced Girl
Salmon for Simon
Saved By The Orca
Secret of White Buffalo
Skating Rink, The
Sky Sisters
Smiler's Bones
Sootface, An Ojibway Cinderella

The Aboriginal Kids In My Class



Springtime Mud
Storm Boy
Storm Makers Tipi
Ten Little Rabbits
Totem Poles
Touching Spirit Bear
Tracks
Trip To Town
Two Pairs of Shoes
Up and Down
Very Last First Time
Vision Seeker, The
Wave of the Sea Wolf
We Are All Related
Where Did You Get Your Moccasins?
Where I Live
Wolf Family
Yellow Line

Professional Books

FIRST NATIONS: THE CIRCLE UNBROKEN, VIDEOS 5-7.

Lorna Williams and Gary Marcuse (Series Directors). Gary Marcuse and Svend-Erik Eriksen (Producers). Montreal, PQ: National Film Board of Canada, 1998. 1 hr., 39 min. (Video 5), 1 hr., 6 min. (Video 6), 1 hr., 6 min. (Video 7), inc. Teacher's Guide (64 pp.), \$129.95 (Set). Order Number: C9198 064 (Video 5), C9198 065 (Video 6), C9198 066 (Video 7), 193C 9198 067/EC008 (Set).

First Nations: The Circle Unbroken, explores the themes of healing and renewal in First Nations communities. Four video programs, all revised and shortened from their original production format, in order to be suitable for classroom use, comprise Video 5.

Grade 4 and up / Ages 9 and up.

NATIVE SOLDIERS – FOREIGN BATTLEFIELDS

Janice Summerby

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Printed in Canada

THE TRANSFORMING IMAGE: PAINTED ARTS OF NORTHWEST COAST FIRST NATIONS

(UBC Museum of Anthropology Research Publication)

by [Bill McLennan](#) (Author), [Karen Duffek](#) (Author)

The Transforming Image brings together some of the most intriguing images, many revealed for the first time since the objects were collected at the beginning of the 20th century. The written text by Karen Duffek brings forward new insights derived from the project's detective work, linking painted images to communities, histories, and the hands of individual painters.

LEARNING BY DOING NORTHWEST COAST NATIVE INDIAN ART LEARNING BY DESIGNING PACIFIC NORTHWEST COAST NATIVE INDIAN ART, VOL.1

by [Karin Clark](#) (Author), [Jim Gilbert](#) (Author)

This book provides valuable information about the complex variations of Northwest Coast designs.

A good reference and guide book for teaching Pacific Northwest Coast art.

A comprehensive look at a unique art form... an adjunct to teaching Native art and studies in the classroom.

This well researched and richly illustrated book will be of great benefit to anyone...

The Aboriginal Kids In My Class

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FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL THE FIRST PEOPLE OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST COAST

© 1999 ISBN: 189511653

Author(s): Diane Silvey, **Illustrator:** Joe Silvey

Publisher: Pacific Edge Publishing Ltd.

From Alaska to California, the peoples of the Pacific Northwest shared some similarities in culture, but their languages, customs, and beliefs differed. Each chapter of this text-like, but appealing, resource includes an overview "Looking Ahead" and a summary "Looking Back". Other aids include sidebars with questions to ponder before and after reading a story and a "First Nations Today" bar that illustrates or elaborates on the chapter's topic. "What do you think?" boxes encourage debate on current topics such as "Now that we have other choices for clothing materials, do you think people should still kill animals for clothing?". A chapter on rights and freedoms contains the Thirty Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in condensed form with indications of those rights that have been denied to First Nations People. The author ends with "A Journey of Hope: A True Story". It is the story of a young First Nations mother who becomes a teacher.

Comments: Buy direct from publisher: www.classroomresources.com or 1.800.668.8806 Teacher's Guide available for 49.95

THE SACRED TREE

(ISBN 1-896905-00-5) English Edition – \$12.00

THE SACRED TREE CURRICULUM GUIDE

(ISBN 1-896905-32-3) \$ 48.00

This beautifully illustrated book presents many of the universal concepts and teachings handed down through the ages in Native societies throughout North America concerning the nature, purpose and possibilities of human existence. The book uses the ancient symbol of the medicine wheel as a mirror which reflects not only what a person is, but also what they might become through the development of their potentialities.

SHARED LEARNINGS: INTEGRATING BC ABORIGINAL CONTENT K-10

accesss from Ministry of Education website: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/shared.htm>

This book is designed to provide teachers with guidance in integrating Aboriginal topics in all subject areas at an introductory level. The aim is to provide a guide for educators to assist in creating a greater sensitivity to and respect for the richness and diversity of the Aboriginal peoples of British Columbia.

OUR WORDS, OUR WAYS: TEACHING FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT LEARNERS

A print version of this resource is available for purchase from the [Learning Resources Centre](http://www.learningresourcescentre.com) or may be downloaded at no cost from Alberta Education.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/OurWords.asp

The files of this resource are in PDF. The resource can be downloaded as an entire document or by individual sections.

This resource was developed in collaboration with the Aboriginal Learning Services department of Edmonton Catholic Schools. The resource provides information about Aboriginal cultures and perspectives, and sample strategies for meeting the needs and recognizing the gifts of Aboriginal students.

RETURNING THE FEATHERS

AUTHOR: M. JANE SMITH:

The Aboriginal Kids In My Class

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PUBLISHER: CREEKSTONE PRESS

M. Jane Smith is a Gitksan storyteller born and raised in Gitanmaaxs in northwestern BC. She grew up listening to the Gitksan stories that began her education and gave her a sense of belonging. She has carried on the tradition, sharing the layered drama, humour, and lessons of the stories with children and adults in both English and Sin'algax. These five stories capture her powerful voice for the first time in print. 80pp.

NATIVE AMERICAN CRAFTS OF THE NORTHEAST AND SOUTHEAST (NATIVE AMERICAN CRAFTS)

by [Judith Hoffman Corwin](#) (Illustrator) ISBN 0-531-15594

Native American art and decoration is filled with creative energy...

DREAMKEEPER (2003) DVD

Starring: [Victoria Aberdeen](#), [George Aguilar](#) **Director:** [Steve Barron](#)

In South Dakota, in an Indian reservation, an old storyteller Indian (August Schellenberger) asks his grandson Shane (Eddie Spears), who is in trouble owing money to some bad guys, to take his old pony and him to Albuquerque to the great powwow, an Indian meeting. While traveling, Grandpa tells mysterious Indian tales of love, friendship and magic.

NATIONS OF THE PLAINS (NATIVE NATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA)

by [Bobbie Kalman](#) (Author) ISBN 0-7787-0460-2

The plains region was home to many native nations. For hundreds of years, these peoples followed the giant, wandering herds of buffalo upon which they were dependent. Clear, informative text and beautiful illustrations help describe the cultures and the ways of life of the different native nations who called the plains their home.

NORTHWEST NATIVE ARTS: BASIC FORMS (PAPERBACK)

by [Robert E., Sr. Stanley](#) (Author) ISBN 0-88839-506-X

The Wolf, The Eagle, The Killer Whale. Learn how to draw these and other powerful illustrations of the native arts with help from this step-by-step guide. Using his own original designs, the author takes you through the process from the beginning, shows you how to first draw the basic forms in native art, including ovoids and U-shapes.

NORTHWEST NATIVE ARTS: CREATIVE COLORS 1

by [Robert E., Sr. Stanley](#) (Author) ISBN 0-88839-532-9

The first in the NW Native Arts series. It includes 27 templates to create authentic Northwest Coast Native art. Use these templates to create pictures of real and legendary creatures revered by the Native people of the NW Coast.

NORTHWEST NATIVE ARTS: CREATIVE COLORS 2 (NORTHWEST NATIVE ARTS) (PAPERBACK)

by [Robert E., Sr. Stanley](#) (Author) ISBN 0-88839-533-7

This is the second coloring book in the NW Native Arts series. It includes 20 different templates

CANADA'S FIRST PEOPLES

By Ron Munro (Author) ISBN 1-55041-442-9

"Canada's First Peoples" connects to the present with an account of the relationship between the First Peoples and the newcomers to Canada. The recent struggles to obtain self-government and renew Native cultures suggest a new age for the First Peoples that seemed unlikely thirty or forty years ago. This book is based on, and carefully linked to, the popular CBC/Radio-Canada series *Canada: A People's History*, which is available to schools across the country on video and DVD.