

FNWS 103

**Decolonizing Ourselves
and Society:
Rekindling the Fire**



Best Practices Needs

- ★ To best prepare young people for the 21st century: they need a strong sense of self, of hope, of their culture, of belonging, & a way to support self
- ★ Strong need in Canada for more trades, tourism, technology, entrepreneurs, retail, hospitality, management, supervisors, and scholars
- ★ Need Literacy, Numeracy, Technical, Computer, People, & Entrepreneurship Skills to thrive in this Century.



Best Practice Foundation

- ★ **Connecting is critical** – in personal relationships, but also intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, connect home to school, and school to work
- ★ Need to acknowledge **Aboriginal Adult Literacy** as a distinct philosophy for learning
- ★ Embracing literacy from a holistic perspective - involves **embodied learning and performed knowledge**
- ★ **Intergenerational transmission** of knowledge is fundamental

Intergenerational transmission

- ★ From our Elders we learn our histories, languages, traditions, cultures, arts, medicines, sciences, and how to survive; their stories and experiences teach us who we are, where we come from and guide us in visioning for the future
- ★ They remind us that our knowledge is informed by a balance between body, mind, heart and spirit
- ★ Every story is a tool we can use



Stories as Best Practice

- ★ Every story is a tool we can use if want to. Through storytelling we learn how to see and interpret the world; we learn about our past, share stories of the present and vision together for the future.
- ★ Personal story is a valuable tool in the development of self-knowledge. Biography and autobiography point toward an author's ability to make sense of his/her own experiences and to understand their significance to him/herself and to others.



Ways to Bridge the Cultural Gap

- ★ Use storytelling to encourage students to express, reflect, evaluate alternatives, and justify their choices
- ★ Experiential activities
- ★ Involve high participation, and integrate purposeful listening, reading, speaking, and problem solving
- ★ Relate content to their daily lives and experiences
- ★ Employ cooperative learning
- ★ Build on student strengths
- ★ Utilize teaching strategies of demonstration, modelling, practice, and feedback.



Performed/Embodied Knowledge

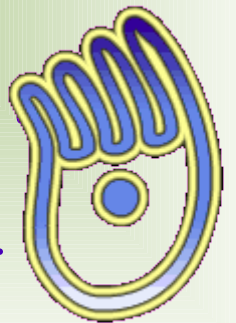
- ★ Teaches responsibilities and relationships among family, community and creation
- ★ Dancing, singing and the creation and expression of culture through art, as well as adherence to cultural protocol are all expressions of these types of First Nations knowledge
- ★ As humans we come to know our responsibilities through dreams, visions, ceremonies observing: also as keepers of the land



Postsecondary Rigor

In the epistemological sense there is no question that the tribal method of gathering information is more sophisticated and certainly more comprehensive than western science. In most tribal traditions, no data is discarded as unimportant or irrelevant. Indians consider their own individual experiences, the accumulated wisdom of the community that has been gathered by previous generations, their dreams, visions and prophecies, and any information received from birds, animals and plants as data which must be arranged, evaluated and understood as a unified body of knowledge...tribal knowledge systematically mixes facts and experiences which western science would separate by artificial categories.

The solution lies not in designing better access programs (although cognate support services are greatly needed) but in empowering students to take responsibility for their own academic progress; empowering the discipline embrace new approaches and ideas; and, empowering institutions to embrace the change resulting from the interaction between the former two.



Finding the Middle Ground

Mainstream K – 12 and Postsecondary need to:

- Establish a First Nations cultural space
- Equality/Equity in curriculum
- Respect for cultural difference
- Learning styles flexibility
- Attract Critical mass (more peers)
- Basic skills base development



Postcolonial Best Practice

- ★ Postcolonial is not only about the criticism and deconstruction of colonization and domination, but also about the reconstruction, visioning and transformation, operating as forms of liberation from colonial imposition. Is envisioning practices for transformation, acts of hope and finding light in the seeming darkness.
- ★ Indigenous humanities are a fairly new academic conception, although it has long deep roots and traditions in First Nations - literature, art, philosophy, history



Legends as Best Practice

- ★ Legends show societal structures that are multi-layered, adaptable, changing, interdependent, with relations of animals and humans based on cooperation, collaboration, and respect for the unknown, and in which each have gifts and transforming powers embedded within.
- ★ They offer multiple layers of lessons and teachings that inspire and enable people to find guidance for their daily lives
- ★ Represent the living and patterned, habitual, and ceremonial relationship in performance with the land and relationship building with others



Traditional Families

- * A complex combination of biological ties, extended family members, clan membership bands, adoptions and economic partnerships (ie hunting partnerships between communities): a dense network of relationships within which sharing and obligations of mutual aid ensured that an effective safety net was in place. Was the all encompassing mediator between the individual and the social, economic, and political spheres of the larger society.



Women's Lodge

- Young girls and women learned about the power and sacredness of being a woman and gender construction (puberty, menses, birth, creating, elder) in the Pacific Northwest Plateau (Wright)
- “A constellation of gender definitions, beliefs, and behaviours radiated from that place” (p. 251)
- Control of the woman's lodge indicates the overall importance of women in the society at large – they controlled significant space and had a critical place in society

First Nations Science

- ★ It wasn't until the 1970s that a group of western modern scientists started to look at Aboriginal knowledge and document the incredible knowledge in ecology, biology, astronomy, geology, architecture, navigation, and a whole area of medicine.
- ★ Aboriginal science knowledge has an emphasis more on the relationships between knowledge and people, plants, animals, and all of creation - on the spiritual component = much more holistic, it is a relationship

Best Practices in E-learning

- ★ Communication, Consultation, Partnerships
- ★ Show respect for History and Protocol
- ★ Acknowledge Ownership and Share Power
- ★ Rich visual environment
- ★ Design specifically for web
- ★ Storyboard the design
- ★ Explore constraints & opportunities

