

Two Voices on Aboriginal Pedagogy: Sharpening the Focus

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Abstract:

This paper is the story of the paths we have taken to the shared realization that the strategies and epistemological underpinnings of Aboriginal education need to move out of the margins and into the centre of education in Canada, not only for Aboriginal students, but for *all* students. Between August, 2010 and April of 2012, we were seconded for two years from our Vancouver classrooms to work as Faculty Associates in the teacher preparation program at Simon Fraser University. There we came face to face with the British Columbia Teacher Regulation Branch's mandate that Aboriginal education courses must be taught to pre-service teachers. Part of our purpose was to cultivate strategies using Aboriginal pedagogy to inform pre-service teachers about how to develop practice and ways of communicating with their students. Here we describe how, after returning to our school district, we changed our teaching practices through actualizing Aboriginal pedagogy.

Keywords: Aboriginal education; Aboriginal pedagogy

The Journey

The work of becoming an ally to Indigenous people and of braiding Indigenous epistemologies and pedagogies into existing curriculum is a wonderful and creative challenge, full of transformative and transcendent moments. It is also, however, messy. None of us is perfect in our practice, and we can choose to see ourselves as ever journeying, rather than having arrived. This is perhaps the most important message contained here: Indigenous Education is a commitment to work for change, and it is a response to at least fifty years of activism on the part of Indigenous people. We may walk forward slowly, but we walk forward together.

Aboriginal societies have a variety of unique and diverse educational systems (Kirkness, 1999; Pewewardy, 2002), but there are core learning principles and teaching practices that hold true for many First Nations peoples across the continent (Cajete, 1994; Warner, 2006). Indigenous pedagogy recognizes the whole child (as a physical, spiritual, mental and emotional being) and that learning best develops skills in a recursive, holistic, child-centered environment (Ledoux, 2006). Within traditional Indigenous cultures everyone is respected and considered to have important contributions to make to the community, so children are taught to view all those with whom they have contact as being related to them, including the land. Aboriginal people live and learn from the environment (Snively and Williams, 2005), which creates respect for the relatedness of everything in the natural world (Kawagley and Barnhardt, 1998), so Indigenous pedagogy recognizes the interrelatedness of the world and the vast number of interconnected factors that might affect a child's wellbeing. The paramount goal of education is to prepare children to be positive, participating and contributing members of their society (Cardinal 1999, Kirkness 1999). As Dolores van der Wey (2001) suggests, "in the school curriculum, if individual and environment continually specify one another, if one is shaped by the other, then curriculum must fit within that dynamic form. School curriculum and indeed schooling events, then, must be shaped in a way that acknowledges they are events of life itself" (p. 62).

In 2008 the First Nations Steering Committee of British Columbia (FNESC) articulated this principle as "learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors" (n.p.). Through our work and community connections, we have come to believe that these concepts are important for all of our students. This paper describes the ways in which our respective teaching praxes have developed as a result of our work as seconded Faculty Associates (FAs) at Simon Fraser University (SFU). More specifically, we describe the ways in which we have subsequently sought to disrupt pedagogical hegemony with a more balanced approach built on Indigenous pedagogy.

Travelers

Shannon Leddy is a Saskatchewan born Métis. As an art and social studies educator in the mainstream school system in British Columbia she always felt in two worlds, both an insider and an outsider. In her work at SFU as an FA in the teacher preparation program, she moved between her opposing identities regularly with her pre-service teachers, colleagues, and in the schools where much of her work was performed. Her life-long habit of participant observation, to borrow the qualitative term, continually informs and inspires her practice. Shannon's underlying goals in all of her teaching, and in her graduate studies, are linked to the inclusion and consideration of Indigenous perspectives and to place-based learning that nurtures both locally relevant habits of mind and global perspectives.

Shirley Turner is a United Kingdom born secondary science educator with a strong focus on ecological education through the lens of Aboriginal epistemology. As a lesbian woman with a fluid gender identity, Shirley was aware of the importance of examining power structures and assumptions well before she began to unpack another aspect of her identity (namely, white privilege) while travelling in Australia. Upon immigrating to Canada in 1995, she faced the new challenge of learning about and understanding the effects of colonization on the First Nations in her new home.

When the authors first met in 2010, Shirley was deepening her understanding of First Nations pedagogy and epistemology in science education. Her work at SFU led to a practice of merging these two perspectives. She shares her commitment to this hybrid approach with colleagues and students, both as a graduate student, and as a classroom teacher. Using the foundation provided by Aikenhead and Michell (2011), Shirley continues to develop a holistic practice of science education that focuses on process skills within a place-based ecological approach as a starting point for wider scientific knowing.

Although our respective disciplines appear divergent on the surface, both of us recognize the power and potential of looking beyond specific curricula, learning to see both the forest and the trees as we go. We bring the Indigenous education pedagogy training we received at SFU to bear in our current educational work with the Vancouver School Board.

Landmarks

We had the privilege of working with several seasoned Aboriginal educators while at SFU, and were introduced to the work of Susan Dion (2009) through Delores van der Wey. Dion's arts-based approach to antiracist education seeks to place Aboriginal pedagogy at the centre of education. She describes the challenges she faced in working with teachers who are allies of Aboriginal peoples but were not always well versed in Aboriginal epistemologies themselves. Her work focuses on the theme of relationship, including the allies' relationships with their own subject areas, as they struggled to include already tightly packed curricular requirements with new perspectives on Indigenous people and identity. At the core, Dion is looking for new methods to introduce Aboriginal content to the curriculum in meaningful ways that do not reproduce colonial stereotypes.

Prior to their work at SFU, both authors were already familiar with the work of Indigenous ecological educator, Gregory Cajete (1994). His place-based perspective values the interaction of both the individual and the community with nature and locale as vital elements of education. He advocates for learning from the world itself through observation and experience, stating "learning and teaching unfold through time, space and place forming a path" (p. 68). We have used Cajete's metaphor of path finding to structure this paper.

Meyer (2006) has also provided inspiration in the examination and development of our respective practices. Her approach to Aboriginal epistemology, and its position within the academy, centres on the holistic and place-based nature of Indigenous knowing. The development of that knowledge is tied to both relationships with the land and its rhythms, as well as to the people of the land, past, present and future. Her focus on triangulation of body, mind and spirit as a function of time and place has informed our journeying as we moved between the school system and university setting then back again. Common ways of knowing, achieved phenomenologically through the body and through our consideration of *how* we know, tie us together, creating bonds that afford deeper exploration and more profound understanding.

Carol Schick and Verna St. Denis (2005) write specifically about the difficulty of Indigenous integration in the academy in the context of mandatory classes within teacher education programs. Their practices include readings on the nature of power and subjugation and an autobiographical assignment in which they ask students to locate themselves in relation to Aboriginal people, often to stirring effect. It was their frank discussion of the resistance with which their program was met that particularly inspired us both. Having encountered similar resistance within our own practices at SFU, it was reassuring to read that the problem is shared across educational contexts. In large part, the ways in which we have continued to push our own work in directions that meaningfully include Aboriginal content is a direct result of reading Schick and St. Denis. In looking at our own praxis, we are better positioned to see how we may also help others, especially our students.

In addition to this foundational approach, Marie Battiste (2000) has built her practice on raising concerns around Aboriginal issues in education. Her calls for the decolonization of education ring true to us, and her rationale is poignant: "Teachers and institutions can easily ignore Indigenous knowledge, people and histories, rationalizing that there are too few or no Indigenous students in their class to make any reasonable effort for inclusion, and far more immigrant students whose cultures need to be included" (p. 103). Battiste points to the tension between multiculturalism and Indigeneity in a way that reveals how, even within the broad category of non-white others, there is still a colonial hierarchy at play.

We recognize the value of the contributions of early scholars in this work—the trailblazers who have created paths for us to widen with our own work. Many educators, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, do bring the concerns of Aboriginal people and their representation to their classrooms and institutions (Sefa-Dei, 1996; Hare, 2003; Archibald, 1993, 2008; Kanu, 2011). Their work has enlightened and inspired us, and we humbly join our voices with theirs.

On the Road

Looking back, the travelled landscape appears familiar, but before setting out on this journey our first task was to locate our selves in cultural and curricular space in a process Meyer (2008) characterizes as the triangulation of meaning. In our work at SFU we were directed toward Dion's (2007) methodology to explore our pre-existing relationship with Aboriginal people. This was an intensely personal process that often manifested great discomfort and resistance amongst our colleagues. When we subsequently pursued this activity with our pre-service teachers it became clear that the earlier the intervention into the dominant discourse could be affected, the easier it was to transform thinking. This process is akin to mapping the territory not just superficially, observing the surface appearance, but peering beneath our cultural assumptions and the dominant discourse in search of what roots us to place and anchors us in space. In phenomenological terms, and in keeping with our metaphor, it entails the establishment of a Husserlian *epoché*, or horizon. As Cajete (1994) points out, there is not just one place or space but multidimensional perceptions including our relationships with our communities and families, the ecological environment, our cultural heritage, pedagogical locations, historical and political positioning both within and outside institutions. This is primarily a philosophical position that informs our stance in the world and for both of us it is an approach that remains open to new experience as we apply our growing understandings in educational contexts.

Before planning a journey one must know where we stand in order to use existing maps, and this is the essence of the body and mind dimensions of Meyer's (2008) triangulation process. However, the post-colonial matrix in which we find ourselves needs to be interrogated so that we can explore the epistemologies that have been marginalized, particularly if we want to explore new pedagogical horizons. One of the tools that we found particularly useful for re-locating ourselves in curricular space was the First People's Principles of Learning (FNESC, 2008) developed collaboratively by the First Nations Steering Committee on Education, the First Nations Schools Association, and the British Columbia Ministry of Education. This document facilitates an Aboriginal perspective on education (see Appendix).

Our different disciplinary backgrounds have given rise to a variety of strategies that are centered on Aboriginal pedagogical principles. Our efforts are focused on seeing education as "holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place" (FNESC, 2008, n.p.). In seeking to enact Aboriginal pedagogies within Shannon's practice, she finds ways to help students see their community for its broader situation, both geographically and culturally. They begin to see the urban landscape for the complex matrix of interrelationships that it is, and they are invited into dialogue with it. In Shirley's practice the emphasis is on cultivating an understanding of interconnectedness between ourselves and the environment through experience. While Shirley's approach fuses Indigenous epistemology and western science, Shannon fuses it with her arts-based practice. In both cases, the effect is that students and their learning are approached holistically, and learning is connected to the lives of students beyond the school setting.

Planting our feet firmly in a place-based perspective allowed us to consider our educational assumptions so that we could move into re-shaping our practice. We first applied our insights by embodying the First Nations principles of learning in the teacher training module work during instructional time on campus in order to develop a deeper understanding of the Aboriginal lens for everybody involved. The pre-service teachers were encouraged to frame their work in classrooms using these principles as landmarks during their long practicums to mark their unfolding path (Cajete, 1994).

The persistence of cultural stereotypes and the predominance of the settler's version of the past complicate the task of troubling the present (King, 2003), let alone mapping a path towards a contemporary understanding of Aboriginal culture. This is an individual task, and we all stand in different places. As Meyer (2008) states, "spirit as a point in this triangulation is all about seeing what is significant and having the courage to discuss it" (p. 229). Part of the journey that we have found mutually encouraging is sharing the process of finding our way, in our case a pedagogical path that cuts across disciplines and cultures. As Cajete (1994) offers, "education is, at its essence, learning about life through participation and relationship in community, including... the whole of Nature" (p. 25). The underlying interconnectedness of our community in its various locations is literally what makes the map. As these understandings grow, so does the level of detail and the possibilities for learning, with a sharper focus on the reciprocity that underlies a respectful relationship of any kind. This is central to an understanding of Aboriginal epistemology and perhaps best summed up by Chief Seattle: "Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect" (as cited in Jeffers, 1991, p. 2). We both take this process to heart and have applied it in our return to our school district; we have made it a priority to re-shape our teaching to reflect a commitment to nurturing connections with the world for our students (Cajete, 1994). This has taken different forms for each of us, including a permaculture

garden and an identity-based arts program. Because there is no road map, each educator needs to find their own way in, with, and through the web of interconnections. However, the first step appears to be recognizing our fundamental interconnectedness in order to disrupt the dominant discourse (Dion, 2007).

Stepping away from valuing knowledge for its own sake and moving towards applying it to our own practice liberates us from routine repetition. On a learning journey it is necessary to adjust one's pace for the company one keeps. Different students bring different skills, knowledge and perspectives that need to be woven into the fabric of mutual understandings. In any given curricular space there are many ways to explore the defining features and appreciate the multidimensional perspectives that integrate it into the wider context. A process-oriented approach that values the exploration above reaching a specific destination needs to be refined. We have both benefitted from the process of learning the limits of our understanding and looking beyond them to see new spaces for investigation. In this way, we literally track, as Cajete (1994) suggests, "the state of each thing in its interaction with everything else . . . in the process of seeking wisdom, vision . . . and the concentric circles of living they represent . . . the manuscript of existence in a place and through time" (p. 56). Each investigation is a uniquely creative act that can potentially enlarge the learning community within which it is enacted.

Plotting our Route

In exploring our research question about the ways that we implemented Aboriginal pedagogy in our current settings we adopted Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) narrative inquiry approach in a collaborative narrative process. Each of us wrote an individual account of the enactment of our understandings of First People's Learning Principles in our current school settings. Our accounts were drawn from a variety of sources including reflections on teaching, teaching planning notes, documentation of our module work at SFU, personal reflections, professional development reflections, and the content of professional communication such as e-mail messages. We coded each other's narrative accounts using three *a priori* categories that arose from our literature search: *relationship*, *place*, and *time*. In this process our research questions are about the changes in our practice on return to the school setting:

1. How do educators situate themselves through relationship to implement Aboriginal education?
2. How have place and time influenced the trajectory of our professional development?
3. What is our current practice in nurturing connectedness in our ongoing teaching/learning?

We synthesized a researcher-constructed case narrative for each other in the analysis stage, and then both read each other's account in a member-checking step. The case narratives are reported in the third person to reflect the reciprocal interaction between us as short descriptive texts with minimal interpretation, and were developed through successive re-reading of all data for each other in order to capture a comprehensive, but reduced, account. Their creation allowed a focus on our individual issues and practice while continuing to look for commonalities to examine in more depth (Stake, 2006).

Situating Ourselves Through Relationship

Educating ourselves about the place in which we dwell is a key theme for Shannon in building relationships that situate us as teachers and students, creating room for collaborative meaning making. Her first task is always to situate herself in the post-colonial matrix (Schick & St. Denis, 2003) before she applies her insights to her teaching practice; that is, she includes questions of voice, privilege, and representation as trans-curricular aspects of her work (Dion, 2009). Prior to her work at SFU she was aware that there was room in her practice for growth beyond the scope of simply enriching the social studies curriculum with content presented from her Aboriginal perspective. She now explores ways in which agency can be promoted with all stakeholders—students, student teachers, FA colleagues, and school colleagues. She is searching out strategies and tools that take her beyond sharing content and move towards addressing systemic issues of marginalization. It is not enough for her to share the message. She is seeking ways to know that it has been received/learned and applied.

In Shirley's case, as a new Canadian, her relationships with Aboriginal people through the Kwakwaka'wakw community on Quadra Island were central to making meaning of being in a Canadian context. Although she first encountered the net effect of colonization in Australia, it was in her new Canadian setting that she began to detect it more readily. By learning to see Canada as a previously occupied place (King, 2003), Shirley began to understand the importance of Aboriginal perspectives on ecology, sustainability and environment. Her friendships with Aboriginal people have exponentially increased her understanding of place-based learning and have deeply informed her perspective that Aboriginal education and ecological education are compatible paradigms. In her teaching practice, Shirley made a conscious choice to put First People's Learning Principles to daily practice when she returned to secondary teaching. The message she conveys carries both weightiness and joyfulness: We are all connected.

Situating Ourselves in the Confluence of Place and Time

At SFU Shannon had the opportunity to examine her relationships with colonialism and Aboriginal people more closely through an introduction to the work of Dolores van der Wey and Verna St. Denis. She was assigned to a teacher preparation module that focused on sustainability, working with holistic and locally sensitive pedagogical strategies that paralleled Aboriginal principles of learning and informed her understanding of how she might move beyond content with Indigenous perspectives on education. This led to a widening of her perception of the context within which schooling takes place and a re-examination of the tools that might be used to foster the deconstruction of systemic assumptions that the white Euro-Canadian dominant culture is superior.

Taking time out of the mainstream school system to work with pre-service teachers was an opportunity for her to reflect on her own practice. She also had the opportunity to mentor pre-service teachers in a variety of districts and school settings that expanded her knowledge of schooling in the Lower Mainland. These experiences contributed to a wider appreciation of the challenges facing educators as the BC Ministry of Education brought in mandatory coursework on Aboriginal peoples as a core part of the syllabus for teacher education. Her reflexivity during her work at SFU opened up new directions for growth, and when she reentered the school system two years later her practice had evolved to place Aboriginal content at the centre of her work in the classroom. One way that she expresses this is by placing the responsibility to learn firmly with her students at the beginning of the

year with the assertion that she can teach her students nothing. Instead, she can speak and demonstrate and enact, inviting the students to join her in the dialogic process of knowledge construction.

In her current classroom practice, Shannon has been piloting a research process as part of her current degree. Her process involves introducing students to examples of Aboriginal self-expression through contemporary arts, including literature, film, and visual arts and guiding them towards meaning-making through dialogue. Students made their own connections with the work presented and then developed research questions that would help them better understand what they have been seeing/hearing/learning. With assistance, students design their own learning, and can note deepening standpoints beyond their initial understandings as they go, ultimately facilitating a shift from individual to collective perspectives.

Through her work with the Indigenous Perspectives Teacher Education Module (IPTeM) at SFU, Shirley had further opportunity to sift through her own understanding of the persistence of colonial control as she assisted pre-service teachers in seeing it for themselves. Working with Dolores van der Wey and Kau'i Kellipio, and encountering the work of Carol Schick and Verna St. Denis (2005) and Susan Dion (2007), Shirley continued to find support for not only the infusion of Aboriginal pedagogy within education, but also the importance of using it as a place to begin. She moved Aboriginal pedagogy and related epistemology from the margin to the centre, both in the training of teachers, and within classroom practice. Working through the occasional resistance of both colleagues and students, her sense of the urgency for this work grew.

In both her work as an FA and as a secondary science educator, one of the critical issues Shirley has identified is the Eurocentric focus on content knowledge rather than process. Adopting the First People's principles of learning, and the understanding that learning requires time and practice, she has shifted her own teaching practice from mainstream education to a district specialty program for at risk youth. Here, her broad base of knowledge in both Aboriginal epistemology and pedagogy are hallmarks of her work. She encourages students to see themselves as connected both to each other and to the larger human and more-than-human community.

New Horizons

Shannon returned to work in an arts education mini-school program on the Eastside of Vancouver. Her main teaching focus is on identity, influenced by the First Peoples Principles of Learning's assertion that "learning requires exploration of one's identity," (FNESC, 2008, n.p.). She seeks logical, narrative, empirical, and aesthetic points of entry into each topic, weaving them into a bigger picture for her students, identifying ways to nurture appreciation of the books, stories and art works that constitute her content. She begins each year with an overarching theme and selects curricular material that purposefully directs and redirects students back to the theme throughout the year, increasing the opportunity for expanded learning and for meaningful connections. Further, as students begin to see their own learning over the year as both constructed and interconnected, they can begin to see all learning, and therefore knowledge, as constructed and interconnected. For example, a recent year's curriculum included the 1989 Spike Lee film, *Do the Right Thing*, Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, Harper Lee's 1960 novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and John Wyndham's 1955 novel, *The Chrysalids*. Projects and discussion of each of these resources circulated around the theme of social alienation, and the social

construction of self and other, giving students ample opportunity to develop their learning and insights to key socio-cultural issues.

Shannon uses a modified form of narrative analysis to help students begin to grasp the underlying assumptions in the literary works they study. Students are gradually introduced to the notion that they live in a culture that tends to see the world in linear terms, based on a Eurocentric value system. As Leroy Little Bear (2000) asserts, “the linearity manifests itself in terms of a social organization that is hierarchical in terms of both structure and power” (p. 82). In contrast, she suggests to students that there are multiple ways of being and knowing, and that a hierarchical view is not always useful in building a healthy community.

Through the school in which she now teaches, Shirley had the opportunity to implement a new course offering called Sustainable Resources Agriculture 12. For this course, the class built a permaculture schoolyard garden, including a chicken coop, as a point of accountability for the students with the aim of creating a relationship with immediate environment of the school. Produce from the garden and eggs from the chickens are used in the preparation of healthy school lunch menus, and kitchen scraps are used either as feed for the chickens or for the compost system. In this way, she shows students how to move towards more sustainable ways of life, establishes the importance of local knowledge, and cultivates her students’ sense of agency. Shirley’s use of a permaculture garden with her classes acts as a focus on their immediate environment that addresses what Meyer (2008) calls “that which feeds: physical place and knowing” (p. 218). She uses the cyclical nature of the garden to show how our actions can have different consequences depending on our choices and factors beyond our control. Last year the school garden was half full of plants that volunteered from the use of compost when her Sustainable Resources 12 class used it to fertilize the beds; she has used this opportunity to work with the abundance of the natural world, underlining how it is a result of sustainable practice (Cajete, 1994). Each of these ideals is embedded within Aboriginal pedagogies. Because some of the students are far from their traditional homes, both literally and metaphorically, this practice creates a learning opportunity that is mimetic of traditional teaching, but adapted for a contemporary urban environment.

Where We Find Ourselves

Approaching Aboriginal education from two different perspectives, our experiences complement one another in concluding that moving Aboriginal education away from the margins and towards the centre at all levels of practice is a positive and necessary step. We know, as do many others working both within and outside of Aboriginal education, that the story of Canada, and indeed the story of education, is still in the grips of the dominant discourse (Archibald, 1993; Battiste, 2000; Cajete, 1994; Dion, 2009). White Eurocentric perspectives still dominate textbooks, offering a settler’s version of reality (St. Denis, 2007; Hare, 2003; Kirkness, 1999). Moreover, in the face of multiculturalism and its incumbent preoccupation with pluralism, the enactment of a uniting pedagogy is crucial in the rewriting of educational practices in this country (Battiste, 2000). Placing Aboriginal education at the centre of the re-writing process increases the potential for meaningful dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. It also makes room for students to learn deeply and holistically about the places they live and about their own context, in historical, ecological, social and political ways (Dion, 2007). Placing Aboriginal education at the centre means that knowledge acquired and accrued through experience and interaction is valued on the same level as knowledge acquired by rote or exclusively text based strategies, and by the latent colonial messages inherent in old approaches (Pewewardy 2002; Warner, 2006).

Locating students, relationships, place and time at the centre of our teaching practices has shown us both the power of Aboriginal pedagogy. It invites students to shift from mere knowing to understanding, in keeping with Meyer's (2008) assertion that "knowledge is power, but understanding is liberation" (p. 275). When we help our students understand themselves as connected and contextual, they begin to feel their own agency, can critically perceive political and social messages, and are potentially empowered to participate meaningfully in nurturing their own learning and visions for a collective future.

Though it would seem that a science educator and an art educator would have wildly divergent perspectives on the implementation of educational curricula, we have found that the strategies of Aboriginal education allow for a holistic approach to learning that defies older reductionist ideas about meaning making and curricular content. Learning in relation to place, time, and connectedness affords students the ability to define and explore their own interests, intrinsically motivated by the knowledge that they *can*. Teaching, considered as a vocation, can no longer afford to cling to its colonial roots (Archibald, 1993). Multiculturalism is neither strong enough nor stable enough to meaningfully disrupt the dominant educational discourse nor reform established pedagogy (St. Denis, 2007). Knowledge can be shifted to understanding when we collectively look at the world as whole and connected; ourselves as receptive, active and contextual; and learning as temporal, conceptual and cumulative. Shifting Aboriginal education to the centre has the potential to move educational practice back to its roots in a given place and forward to an inclusive and meaningful understanding of ourselves within that environment.

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Appendix

First Peoples Principles of Learning

First identified in relation to English 12 First Peoples, the following First Peoples Principles of Learning (FNESC, 2008) generally reflect First Peoples pedagogy.

- ❖ 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.

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.