

**Weaving Worlds:  
Enhancing the Learning  
of Aboriginal Students**

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# **k'é (Diné)**

- **understanding interdependent, compassionate relationships as they manifest in life**
  - **earth - sky**
  - **self - family - community - nation**
  - **animals**
  - **plants**
  - **ancestors - descendents**

# **Yalomatua (Fiji)**

- a state of being which is said  
to reflect maturity of spirit  
and sacredness of being**

# **Poto (Tongan)**

- **one who is clear or skillful**
- **knowing what to do, when to do it and doing it well**

# **ELTLNIWT (Sencoten)**

- **To be a whole human being**

# Teaching / Learning

- hard work
- persistence
- self discipline
- consistent effort
- responsibility
- cooperation
- commitment
- mutual respect
- tolerance

# Teaching / Learning

- **spiritual dimensions of life**
- **conformity and uniqueness**
- **kinship and interpersonal relationships**
- **restraint behaviour**
- **compassion**
- **generosity**
- **fairness**

# Indigeno

us

- deep observation
- gaining knowledge by active participation in family ceremonies, social life, land, economic activities
- multi-age, multiple mentors, peer learning

# Euro

Western  
Instruction  
didactic

- emphasis on passive knowledge acquisition
- attempts to create homogeneous settings
- single, expert, specialist knowledge



# Indigenous

- listening, indirect
- learn by being actively involved, holistic
- self generated
- self regulatory
- self motivated learning
- enabling conditions to move a child to more mature roles
- foster responsibility for learning -celhcelh

# Euro

- focus on mental Western formal settings
- age segregated
- separate children from adults
- distance children from realities of life
- social pressures to contend for power, prestige, wealth
- social stratification
- social inequity

# **Indigenou s**

- **demonstrate and value individual differences in understandings, performance, abilities, and levels. and areas of competence**
- **value every person's contribution**

# **Euro Western**

- **strive for uniformity**
- **performance is calibrated to a normed standard**
- **sets up classes of failures, middle performers and high achievers**

# Lil'wat stages of maturity

- ka tselha
- celhcelh
- emhaka7
- selselpus
- kwez'an'tsut
- a7xa7

# Aboriginal learners in the literature

- low achievers, lack of retention
- lack of motivation
- passive learners
- low literacy and numeracy
- early school leavers
- violent, silent
- hungry, tired, ill, aggressive,
- high representation in foster care, incarceration, learning disabilities, homeless,
- loss

**Enhancing the  
learning of First  
Nations, Métis and  
Inuit learners**

**restoration**

**collaboration**

**visibility and acknowledgement**

**positive force**

**Create opportunities  
and tools for inclusion  
and understanding  
building**

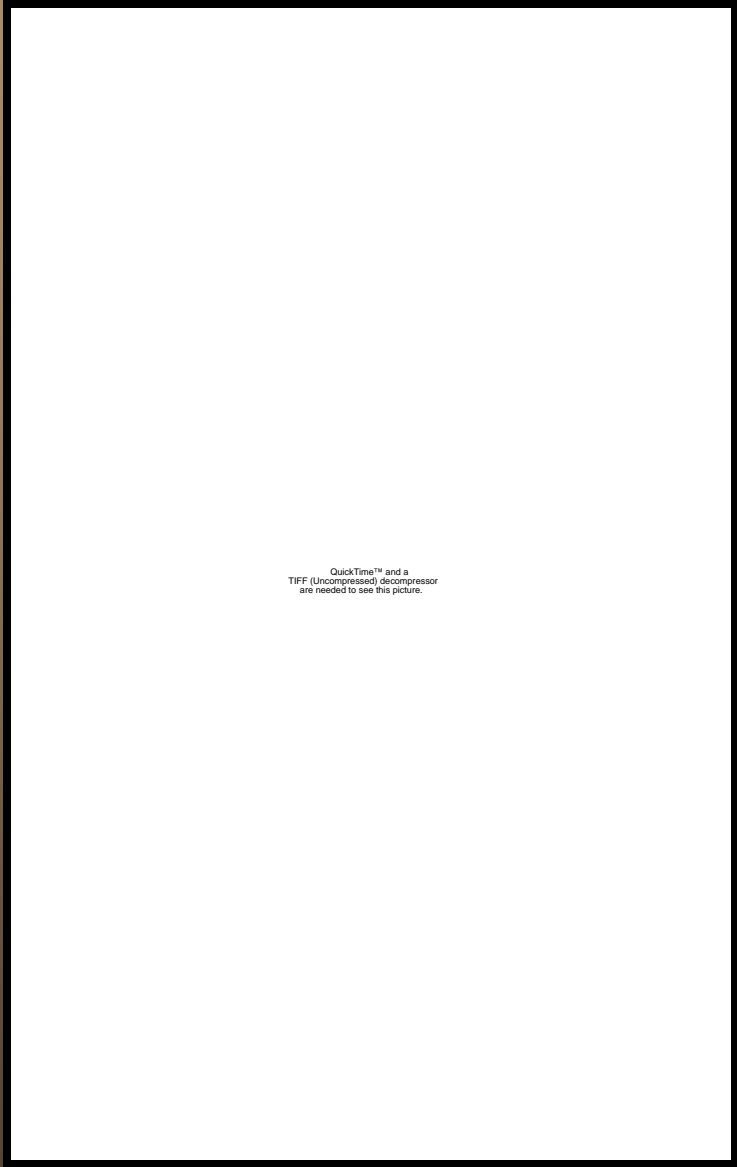
**Introducing one world to the other**

**Indigenous - Euro western**

**youth - adult**

**land - virtual abstract reality**

**Create processes of**  
**celebrating - strengths**  
**resilience, giftedness**  
**sense of selfhood**  
**feelings of competence**  
**community, belonging, relationships**



**Learnin  
g**

**Through**

**Doing**



**Learnin  
g**

**Through**

**Service**



# Learning Through Reflection





# Learning Through Ceremony

# **Create, maintain support networks**

- **peers, friends, class mates, cohorts**
- **mentorship and apprenticeship learning**
- **teachers - “He believed in my potential and was always encouraging me”. “She inspired me to work harder”.**
- **parents - active in education life**
- **parents - create a network of support amongst themselves**
- **intergenerational relationships fostered, nurtured, supported**

# Transitions

- moving - housing, schools, communities
- primary, elem., middle, high school, pse.

## What helps?

- making friends
- talking with parents, family members, siblings
- teachers
- counsellors, support staff
- community leaders, elders, mentors

# Attitudes

- **positive attitudes - parents, school staff community members, leaders, students**
- **High Expectations + Support from parents, educators - EXPLICITLY COMMUNICATED TO STUDENTS**





**Identity  
and  
Learning  
from  
the  
Land**

# Knowledge Keepers





# Identity

- **Pride of heritage, value heritage**  
(“ I am proud of who I am”)
- **Knowledge of who I am**  
(from parents, elders, community members)
- **Acceptance**  
(It’s ok to be Aboriginal here.”)
- **“Initially people are racist, but they realize that we have a story to tell.”**

# Generations



# Goal setting

- **education seen as meaningful, purposeful**
- **optimistic and hopeful about future**
- **clear definite goals for the future**
- **connect school learning to personal, family, community vision**

# Kamucwka1ha



# Community

- **provide opportunities to be active in community affairs, work alongside**
- **leadership roles**
- **support community learning activities**
- **cultural, land based, language learning**
- **collaborate with the school**
- **understand colonization and decolonization**

# **Extra-curricular activities**

- **school and community support for involvement**
- **active school life**
- **active community life**
- **social justice, arts, sports**

# Institutions

- “ ...the school has a positive energy”
- “...every time I step in I feel welcome”
- “...sometimes I prefer to there, even more than home”
- “...I feel safe there”
- “...they build on my strengths”



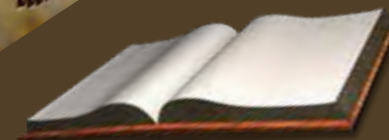
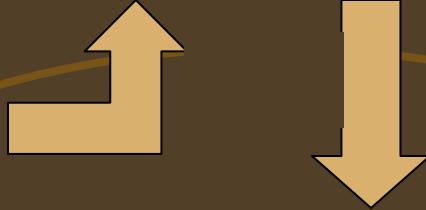
# Sharing Our Ways of Knowing





# **Schools for Restoration**

- **nurture Indigenous values**
- **a safe haven for learning**
- **culturally based teaching and learning**
- **connect curriculum content to culture and identity**
- **understand and help to heal the pain, trauma, consequences of colonial practices and policies**
- **acceptance and respect**



ELTLNIWT