



SENSE OF BELONGING

IDENTITY

CULTURE

LANGUAGE

HISTORY

LAND

ELDERS

COMMUNITY

Respect

Relationships

Relevance

Resilience

Responsibility

Reconciliation

Reciprocity



The Aboriginal Lens

— Education for Reconciliation

The Aboriginal Lens is a guide for those who work in education and are committed to taking up the “Calls to Action on Education” as stipulated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This framework is designed to help educators challenge the current, established systems of belief that support Eurocentric practices that have silenced other ways of knowing and being. The lens focuses our efforts and can be used to examine and assess policies and practices. The framework also works to address the needs of the collective and the community, as well as providing common reference for teachers.

Respect requires:

- Listening to and learning from the voices that have been silenced.
- Learning from the stories and experiences of Aboriginal knowledge-keepers.
- Creating a safe space where everyone belongs in the circle.
- Valuing multiple knowledge systems, diverse cultures and perspectives.

Relationship-building requires:

- Understanding protocols for acknowledgment of traditional territories.
- Supporting Aboriginal students so that they can be successful.
- Understanding privilege to create equity.
- Bringing together Aboriginal students, Elders and community members.
- Creating space where Aboriginal students, Elders and community members can come together in school.

Relevance requires:

- Creating living links in the process of infusion that includes Elders and artists in the classroom as well as examining current issues in the struggles of Aboriginal people in BC.
- Incorporating the Aboriginal world views and making them an essential component of the curriculum.
- Recognizing the legacy and continuing impacts of colonization.

Responsibility requires:

- Understanding that each of us has a role to play in supporting the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- Working to break down barriers intended to keep people separated or marginalized.
- Seeking Ministry support for opposing systemic racism and other forms of discrimination.
- Employing the lens of Aboriginal Ways of Knowing and Being in all classrooms, schools and school districts.

Reciprocity requires:

- Working to achieve nation-to-nation relations guided by the spirit and intent of the Royal Proclamation of 1763.
- Eliminating power differentials in decision-making; genuine cooperation can only take place where there is a meeting of equals.
- Teaching and learning must be as an interactive sharing of knowledge; students should not be viewed as passive recipients of knowledge.
- Support for teacher-led, teacher-created resources, workshops and in-services by the Ministry of Education.
- Sharing successes of reconciliation with community.

Reconciliation requires:

- Recognizing Canada’s attempted genocide of Aboriginal people by sharing the truth about Canada’s history (policies of assimilation and attempted genocide).
- Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to Aboriginal history including residential school and ongoing intergenerational impacts.
- Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect.
- Developing an action plan, strategies and other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Establishing ways for Aboriginal students to see themselves reflected in school curriculum and communities.

Resilience:

- Acknowledging that despite 150 years of forced assimilation policies, First Nations, Inuit and Métis continue to assert, defend and develop their identities and cultures.
- Understanding resilience as building capacity for children and youth to overcome risks from the legacy of colonization.
- Working with allies to implement the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in our schools, districts and curricula.
- Celebrating the diversity, strength, leadership and beauty of Canada’s Indigenous peoples.



The BCTF gratefully acknowledges the ground-breaking work on the Four R's by Dr. Verna Kirkness and Dr. Ray Barnhardt in *First Nations and Higher Education: The Four R's—Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility*, 1991, Dr. Jo-ann Archibald | Q'um Q'um Xi'em in *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit*, 2008.