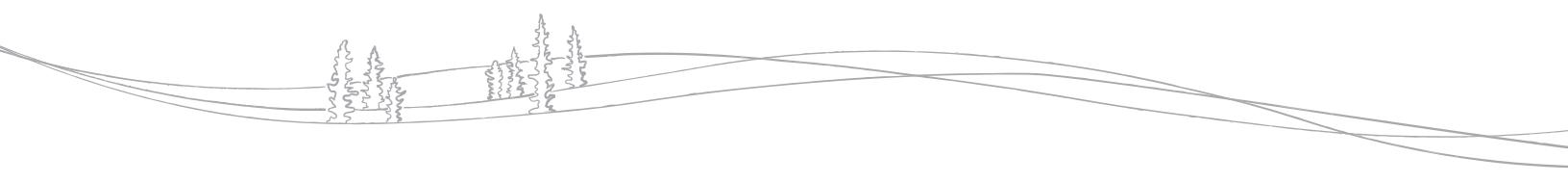


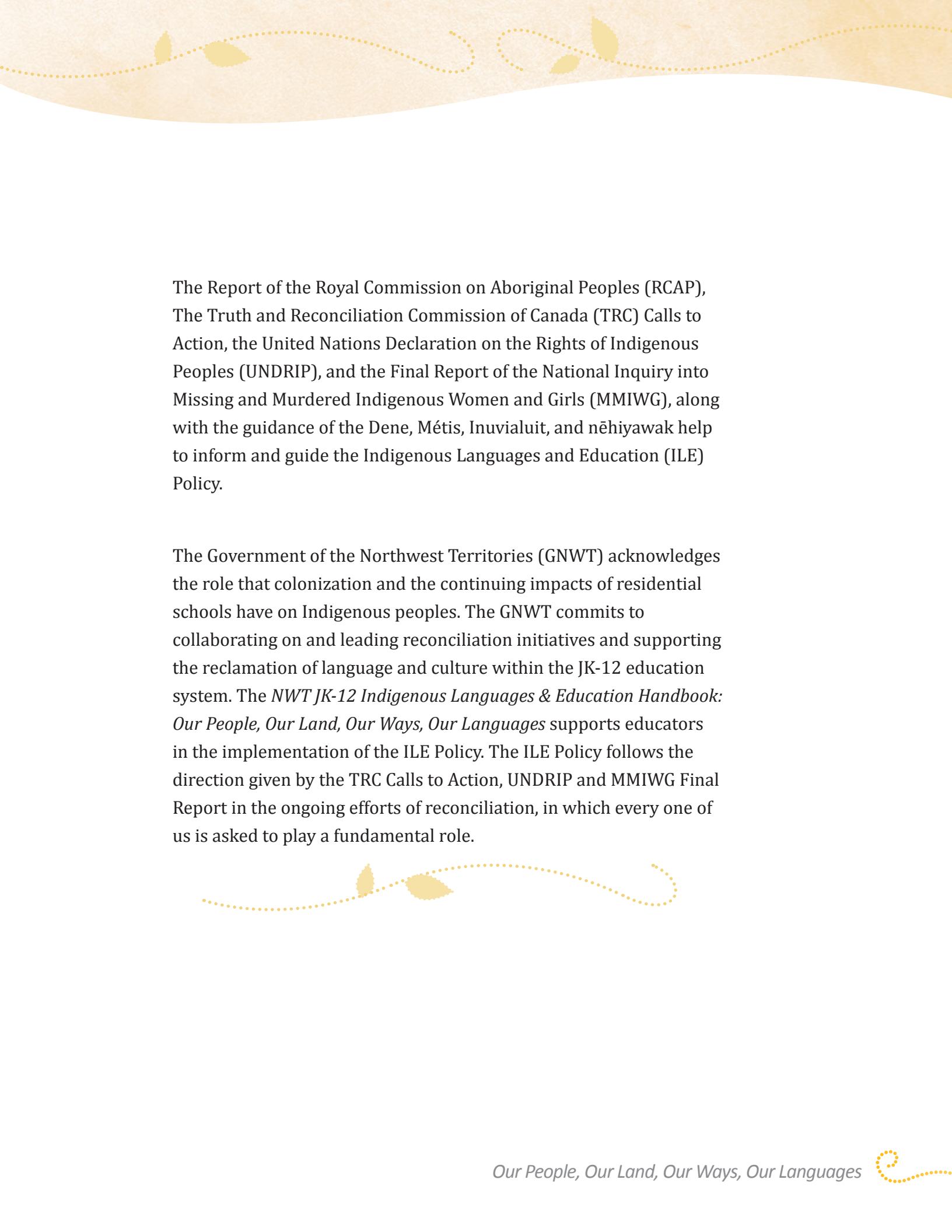
# NWT JK – 12 INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES & EDUCATION HANDBOOK:

OUR PEOPLE, OUR LAND,  
OUR WAYS, OUR LANGUAGES



Government of  
Northwest Territories





The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Calls to Action, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), along with the guidance of the Dene, Métis, Inuvialuit, and nēhiyawak help to inform and guide the Indigenous Languages and Education (ILE) Policy.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) acknowledges the role that colonization and the continuing impacts of residential schools have on Indigenous peoples. The GNWT commits to collaborating on and leading reconciliation initiatives and supporting the reclamation of language and culture within the JK-12 education system. The *NWT JK-12 Indigenous Languages & Education Handbook: Our People, Our Land, Our Ways, Our Languages* supports educators in the implementation of the ILE Policy. The ILE Policy follows the direction given by the TRC Calls to Action, UNDRIP and MMIWG Final Report in the ongoing efforts of reconciliation, in which every one of us is asked to play a fundamental role.





Terminology describing the identity of Indigenous peoples in Canada has varied over time. For the most part, the collective terms Indigenous and Indigenous peoples are used throughout this handbook to refer collectively to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples throughout Canada. When referring to the Dene, Métis, Inuvialuit, and nêhiyawak in particular, we have tried to use terms common to the North. There are times in this handbook when historical quotes are presented. In some of these quotes, the terms used are considered to be outdated and/or derogatory by many people. These terms appear because of historical references or specific government policy.



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# Acknowledgements

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) acknowledges the contributions of the Elders and Knowledge Keepers whose wisdom, traditions, and lived experiences guided the creation of the *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit* curricula. These documents were instrumental in the development of the *Indigenous Languages and Education (ILE) Handbook: Our People, Our Land, Our Ways, Our Languages*.

The *ILE Handbook* Advisory Committee met in 2017-18 to discuss and inform the development of this document. The contributions of the following people were essential:

- Elders and Knowledge Holders from all regions who contributed their expertise.
- Regional Indigenous Language and Education (RILE) coordinators who shared insight from their regions.
- Indigenous language instructors (ILI) and other educators who continue to share their knowledge with their colleagues.
- The educators who opened their classrooms to share wise practices.

We are grateful for everyone who has contributed to this handbook. It is a collection of teachings, experiences, and wise practices from which all educators can draw to strengthen Indigenous education and support language revitalization in the NWT.

Mársı | Masì | Máhsı | Quana | ᑕᑯᓈᓂ |  
Quyanainni | kinanāskomitin | Merci | Thank you





# Implementing the Indigenous Languages and Education Policy

The *NWT Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 Indigenous Languages and Education (ILE) Policy* is in place to support education bodies in welcoming all students within learning environments that centre, respect, and promote the Indigenous worldviews, cultures and languages of the community in which the school is located.

## RESOURCES SUPPORTING EDUCATORS TO IMPLEMENT THE *ILE POLICY*



The *ILE Handbook* is intended as a resource for educators, including principals, program support teachers, classroom teachers, Indigenous language instructors and support assistants, as they implement the *ILE Policy*.



An *Indigenous Languages and Education (ILE) Team* is to be established in every NWT school. This team serves to support all school staff and lead school-wide initiatives related to Indigenous language and culture.



The *Regional Indigenous Language and Education (RILE)* coordinator works as a liaison between the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and regional education bodies. They support schools in the implementation of the *ILE Policy* and Indigenous language programming.

## RESOURCES SUPPORTING SCHOOL AND EDUCATION BODY LEADERSHIP TO IMPLEMENT THE *ILE POLICY*



The *NWT School Funding Framework* outlines the funding formulas associated with the *ILE Policy*. This framework ensures that all designated funding is used specifically for Indigenous language and education programming.



The *ILE Procedures Manual* details the funding conditions and reporting expectations associated with the *ILE Policy* for education bodies.



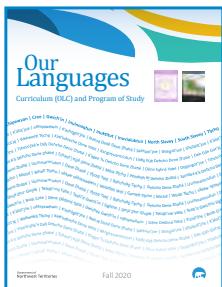
The *Education Accountability Framework* contains information related to planning, funding, and reporting on Indigenous language and education programming.



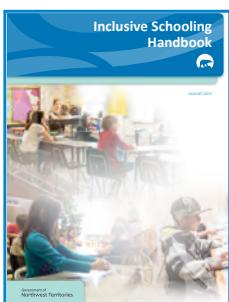
## Documents and Supporting Guidelines for the *ILE Policy*



**Dene Kede** (1993, 2002, 2003, and 2004) and **Inuuqatigiit** (1996) are the foundational curricula documents that shape and inform the pedagogy of teaching and learning within our culture-based education system. These documents support the intent and wisdom of the Elders and serve as rich and invaluable resources for educators.



**Our Languages** curriculum (**OLC**) (2020) is a competency-based curriculum that provides NWT Indigenous language educators with the instructional strategies and learning outcomes for core Indigenous language classes. The foundational curricula **Dene Kede** and **Inuuqatigiit** shaped this curriculum. The OLC focuses on students' attainment of five language learning levels: *Emergent*, *Beginner*, *Intermediate*, *Advanced*, and *Capable*. The curriculum is supported by assessment tools, teacher guides, and a variety of resources including the **OLC** website which can be found at [www.ourlanguagesnwt.com](http://www.ourlanguagesnwt.com).



The **Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling** (2016) and the associated guidelines provide direction to education bodies from the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to ensure that schools in the NWT are implementing inclusive schooling and student support as mandated by section 7(1) of the Education Act (1996). Its vision is to ensure that all students have access to quality education by effectively meeting their diverse needs in a way that is responsive, accepting, respectful, and supportive. This directive is supported by the operational document: **Inclusive Schooling Handbook** (2017).



**NWT Key Competencies** clarify and establish guidelines for the developmental stages of being and becoming an **NWT capable person**. NWT Key Competencies emphasize the connectedness of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. Key Competencies are broad capabilities that individuals have and develop across a lifetime and in a variety of environments. When these environments are consistent with the values and principles of the foundational statements, they are supportive of capable people. Key competencies work together and influence each other. This *ILE Handbook* describes the environment and systems that enable the capable person to flourish.



# Introduction to the Indigenous Languages and Education Handbook

The *ILE Handbook* is intended to support an ongoing spiral learning journey for all educators. It serves as a guide for implementing the *ILE Policy* and sharing the wise practices used in Indigenous languages and education programming. Language revitalization and Indigenizing education, like reconciliation, are ongoing processes in which all of us play a fundamental role. The practices documented in this handbook should be revisited regularly by educators with the intent of developing a deeper understanding of the practices as their experiential knowledge grows.

- Schools work toward Indigenizing teaching and learning practices, Indigenizing the content of curricula and programming and providing opportunities for all JK-12 students to engage in authentic and relevant key cultural experiences throughout the school year.
- Schools that provide Indigenous language instruction must offer dedicated time for Indigenous language instruction within the regular education program and actively implement the *Our Languages* curriculum.

Each section of the *ILE Handbook* corresponds to the defined principles of the *ILE Policy*:

- Schools actively implement *Dene Kede* and/or *Inuuqatigiit* to bring forward, in all instruction, the Indigenous worldviews, cultures, and languages of the community in which the school is located.
- Schools welcome all students within learning environments that centre, respect, and promote the Indigenous worldviews, cultures, and languages of the community in which the school is located, through building the school-community relationship, offering educator training, and employing a whole school approach to Indigenous language use.



Valuing traditional languages creates a welcoming school environment in the community. Colville Lake School celebrates Indigenous languages with signage in K'áhbamí Túé kädá.





## THE **ILE HANDBOOK** FOCUSES ON FOUR INDIGENOUS TEACHING AND LEARNING PRACTICES:



All northern students, such as Kairyssa Jacobs from Princess Alexandra School, need to be provided opportunities to grow relationships with the spiritual world, the land, other people and themselves to develop their unique identities.

- **Holistic** – focusing on the development of a human being as a whole person – physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually.
- **Relational** – nurturing relationships with self, family, Elders, community, the land, and the spiritual world.
- **Spiral** – revisiting familiar themes over time with increasing complexity.
- **Experiential** – purposefully engaging learners in direct experiences, hands-on activities and focused reflections to develop new skills, new attitudes, or new ways of thinking.

There are many Indigenous teaching and learning practices that are celebrated and promoted across Turtle Island, Denendeh, and Nunakput, such as reciprocity, humility, sharing, and kindness to name only a few.

The *ILE Handbook* has chosen to focus on the above four teaching and learning practices to honour Elders who have shared their wisdom in *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit*: the NWT foundational curricula.

# Elements of the Arctic Rose

The Arctic Rose pattern is used in traditionally made clothing and accessories across the NWT. This Arctic Rose provides a visual design for the *ILE Handbook*.

The image provides important insight into the rich histories and varied Indigenous cultures of the Territory. The Arctic Rose signifies the peoples' deep connection and relationship with the land. Variations of this rose pattern are distinctive to each region of the NWT reflecting the adaptability, creativity, and innovation of the Indigenous peoples of this land.

The Arctic Rose situates this handbook. It is the metaphor guiding our work as educators in Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, being, and believing. It leads us to the understanding of a system of education that is rooted in the land, spirituality, and reconciliation.

The shape of the Arctic Rose further illustrates the foundational Indigenous philosophies that are identified in the *ILE Handbook*.

Providing culturally rich experiences makes learning engaging and purposeful. Grade 9 students from East Three Secondary School compare muskrat mitts to the muskrat they trapped during culture camp.



**Holistic** – just as the rose is dependent on many integral elements for healthy growth and development, a child's education must take into account the whole of knowing, doing, being, and believing.

**Relational** – the rose exists in a reciprocal relationship with its environment. A capable person's growth is dependent on relationships with the land, others, self, and spiritual world.

**Spiral** – the rose's petals emanate from the center in spiral formation. Both *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit* speak to spiral learning. Learning opportunities must build in complexity to shape growth.

**Experiential** – the rose is alive and endures the elements of life outside itself, as do learners who draw upon hands-on learning experiences.

## Relational Elements: Our Land, Our Ways, Our Languages

SURROUNDING THE ARCTIC ROSE ARE THE ELEMENTS OF OUR LAND, OUR WAYS, OUR LANGUAGES. AS THE SUN, RAIN, AND SOIL WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT FOR THE GROWTH OF THE ARCTIC ROSE, THE RELATIONAL ELEMENTS OF **OUR LAND**, **OUR WAYS**, AND **OUR LANGUAGES** DO THE SAME FOR THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A **CAPABLE PERSON**.

Being and becoming a **capable person** requires that students develop a deep understanding of the land on which they live and the cultural ways and languages of Indigenous peoples in the NWT. The support required for every person in the NWT to fulfill their potential as a **capable person** can be drawn from the following relational elements:

**Our Land:** Connecting to the land and understanding one's relationship to the land is crucial for a **capable person** to understand their history, find their place in the world, and make informed decisions for the future.



**Our Ways:** Drawing from a solid foundational understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, being, and believing empowers a **capable person** to make informed choices when navigating contemporary issues.

**Our Languages:** Supporting language reclamation and revitalization efforts, as a speaker and/or as an advocate, recognizes the importance of Indigenous language as an integral aspect of identity and culture.



## Educational Commitments:

### Creating a Welcoming Environment, Indigenizing Education and Strengthening Indigenous Language

**EDUCATIONAL COMMITMENTS** CONNECT TO THE RELATIONAL ELEMENTS OF **OUR LAND**, **OUR WAYS** AND **OUR LANGUAGES** THAT ALLOW THE **CAPABLE PERSON** TO FLOURISH.

To strengthen and nurture the connection between a **capable person** and the **relational elements**, the following three **educational commitments** must be implemented:



#### Our Land

**Creating a Welcoming Environment:** Schools validate the unique Indigenous worldviews of their community by creating learning environments that value and reflect Indigenous cultures. Schools are enriched by respecting and connecting with ancestors, Elders, families, and the community.

#### Our Ways

**Indigenizing Education:** Education is a complex relationship between curriculum, educational programming, and experience. Indigenizing education involves recognizing the value of rooting education in the worldviews, cultures, and languages of the community.

#### Our Languages

**Strengthening Indigenous Language:** Indigenous languages connect people to culture and sense of identity. The revitalization of Indigenous languages is a vital step in reconciliation. It is the responsibility of every educator in the NWT to support efforts to revitalize Indigenous languages.



## Action Areas:

EACH OF THE EDUCATIONAL COMMITMENTS HAVE THREE ACTION AREAS.

There is a similar structure to each action area of the *ILE Handbook*:

**ACTION AREA OVERVIEW:** an explanation of the action area.

**CONSIDER THE BENEFITS:** research on the action area and educational practices that positively affect students.

**TAKE ACTION:** engagement strategies and wise practices from the NWT.

**CONNECT AND REFLECT:** opportunities to make connections and reflect on Indigenous education and language revitalization personally and professionally.





# Our People

## Being and Becoming a Capable Person





# Our People: Being and Becoming a Capable Person

The teachings of our Elders remind us all that children are born capable. It is the primary goal of teaching and learning within NWT schools to identify and nurture the gifts, skills, and talents with which everyone is born. The heart of the Arctic Rose can be used as a symbol of this collective goal of teaching and learning within NWT schools:

to assist each student in being and becoming a capable person.



JK student Kaeon Yatsallie-Kotchea learns through playing and sharing experiences with his classmates.

The concept of a “capable person” can be found within the foundational curricula of the *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit*.

It is our collective responsibility to provide the environment and opportunities for students to strive in being and becoming a **capable person**.

The *Dene Kede* curriculum defines capable people as individuals who have integrity in their relationships with the spiritual world, the land, other people, and themselves. (*Dene Kede*, 1993a, p. xiv). By providing a variety of opportunities and experiences for children to see and value their own worth (while being and becoming **capable people**), it ensures that they can “survive.” In this context, survival refers to a strong connection to the land, the spiritual world, other people, and themselves.

In *Inuuqatigiit*, the concept of a capable person is aligned with the concept of “**a good person**.” Inuit Elders explain that “being good” means you have “self-respect, patience, and strength; you share and are understanding and respectful of others; and you are humble, honourable, and respectful of the laws that govern society and the natural and spiritual worlds. As you grow in experience, you are to strive towards wisdom, honouring the Elders who had achieved this” (*Inuuqatigiit*, 1996, p. 32). By striving to develop these qualities in themselves, a capable person grows holistically. This helps to create a balance between the physical, mental or intellectual emotional, and spiritual wellbeing of each child. The Elders also teach that there are two worldviews that exist in the NWT: the Indigenous and the Western worldviews. Both have strengths and exist in an interconnected relationship, which affords a more complete understanding of the world.





Celebrating and inviting students to community events recognizes their skills, gifts and talents. Domitelle shares and teaches her gift of jigging with adults and Elders at a territorial gathering.

Individuals who live in ways that combine and appreciate both worldviews develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values of an NWT **capable person**. The concept of a **capable person** requires education systems to balance the Indigenous and Western ways of teaching and learning.

Balancing Indigenous and Western worldviews is a guiding principle among Indigenous groups in the NWT and across Canada. Many people in the NWT are familiar with the Tłı̨chǫ concept of “Strong like Two People.” At the opening of the community school in 1972, Tłı̨chǫ Chief Jimmy Bruneau stated that he “understood that times were changing and that people needed the knowledge and skills that they could learn in school. He wanted children to be educated, but not at the cost of losing their language and culture” (Tłı̨chǫ Government, 2014).

*“Cheko, nàowo  
nàke t’à elexèh’t’ee  
hoghàgeètq nldè dq nàke làanì  
nàgetso ha...”*

*If the children are taught  
in both cultures equally,  
they will be strong like two people.”*

*~ Elder Elizabeth Mackenzie  
(Zoe, 2007, p. 17)*

Tłı̨chǫ Elder Elizabeth Mackenzie further elaborated, stating, “If we worked according to his (Chief Jimmy Bruneau’s) word... one person would be like two persons: one, knowing everything of the white culture and two, knowing of our ancestors’ culture. That person would become very strong, if we know everything like two persons, though we are only one person, there may be no one greater than us” (Dene Kede, 2003, p. 3).

A similar concept by the M’ikmaw people from Eastern Canada, is “Two-Eyed Seeing.” This concept has been embraced by groups across Canada as a guiding principle for inter-cultural collaboration. The M’ikmaw concept means “to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing, and to see from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing, and to use both of these eyes together” (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012, p. 335).

All Northern students must have the opportunity to grow and develop as an NWT **capable person**. Students in the NWT must form intercultural understanding, respect, and value for both worldviews. All students benefit when they are “Strong Like Two People.”

# Being and Becoming a Capable Person:

## Research Informing a Capable Person Philosophy, Pedagogy and Practice

The idea of “a capable person” in present day research can be found in many related programs, projects and initiatives that celebrate decolonization and Indigenous education. Examples of these teaching include the Dene Law, Ojibwe Good Life Teachings, Tipi Teachings, Seven Sacred Teachings, Circle of Courage, The Six Directions, Learning from Native Science, Medicine Wheel, Holistic Lifelong Learning Models, and Circle of Life Teachings (Western Northern Consortium Protocol Resource *Our Way is a Valid Way*, (2013, pp. 33-34).

Métis educator and researcher, James (2016) presented a bicultural perspective that investigated the concept of ‘a capable person’ through interviews with twelve NWT Dene, Métis, Inuvialuit, and Cree Elders. James asked the Elders to draw upon their personal life-experience narratives and, using the research method of re-storying, explored their narratives about raising children through discussion of their understanding of what makes ‘a capable person.’ Through this exploration, a metaphor emerged which compared education in the Northwest Territories to the form of an Indigenous tipi. The tipi metaphor

explains how an individual develops into a capable person and what influences that growth. The four structures of the tipi are: the centre with its grounding influences showing the circle of self and identity; the tripod of relationality that encourages searching for meaning in time, people, and place; the spirals emanating from the centre of the narrative

space, with their recurring influences of the Elders’ ancient and spiritual teachings; and the “canvas” covering of the tipi that represents the outside influences surrounding learners as they grow and develop into capable people. James encourages educators to pay attention to these four shaping influences (grounding, relational, recurring, and outside influences) as these help each educator and student find ways of becoming, being, and believing as ‘a capable person.’

The teachings referred to by James (2016) are drawn from both the WNCP resource and her research. They serve to

both rebuild and acknowledge the values of Indigenous education within the current education system as well as reconcile them with related ideas drawn from both traditional and contemporary educational practices.



NWT Elders encourage embedding 'a capable person' philosophy, pedagogy, and practice into early learning centres and schools. This way educators can cover the continuum of education which respects learners at all stages of their growth and development. In the following excerpt from the *Dene Kede* curriculum, the elders expressed that:

Among the Dene, it is said that the child is born with a Drum in its hand...The child is born with integrity. The child has worth. It is the birthright of the Dene child to be acknowledged and respected for this. The child who is not respected cannot become what it is meant to be ... [that is] a capable person (*Dene Kede*, 1993, p. xvi).

Education policy in the NWT acknowledges that Indigenous philosophies and caring for Indigenous children must reach across the continuum of schooling and be a priority for policy leaders and educators in supporting all students as capable people. If not, learners will become lost between two worlds, rather than becoming strong like two people (Tł'chǫ Government, 2014). It is therefore important for policy decision makers, caregivers, and educators to be aware of and apply elements of Indigenous approaches at all stages of development, and to understand the need to balance it with the Western counterparts.

When teaching, educators need to be aware of Western approaches embedded in materials and practices, and ensure Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, being, and believing are the foundation to support the being, becoming, and belonging of capable people.

By balancing these approaches, educators can create conditions that can help shape the

development of all learners who benefit from culturally sensitive learning environments. These balanced approaches will not only become a beacon of hope for Indigenous families and caregivers who benefit from culturally appropriate and quality education, but also for all people wishing to practice reconciliation, relationship building, and revitalization of language and culture, bringing hope for children and youth to grow and develop into the capable people they are meant to be.



Listen to Dr. James as she explains the concept of knowing, doing, being, and believing.

Dr. Angela James is Manitoba Métis whose great-grandmother was first cousin to Louis Riel. She is also an educational leader, scholar and researcher who lives in the Northwest Territories, Canada, where she has learned from the cultural and spiritual teachings of the Indigenous Elders, the Land, and the North. Formerly the Director of the Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat. But her real work as a capable person living the good life is with her family, as a wife, mother, grandmother, and dog mushing advocate, in the community of Yellowknife, the place that she has called home for over forty years.



# Capable Person

The Northwest Territories has 11 official languages and many unique regional dialects. These languages are tightly woven together with culture that are deeply rooted in the values and beliefs of the Indigenous people of the Northwest Territories. Across the north and in many communities, people have spoken about the concept of a CAPABLE PERSON. Every Elder and language speaker presents and interprets this term depending on their background, experiences, and perspectives. Each definition is beautifully descriptive but collectively they all celebrate the importance of the term CAPABLE PERSON.



Watch the video of Lucy Lafferty discussing the bigger meaning of a Capable Person

Hunikliqaa Hapiqraliaq  
“person who is capable”

Iñutlaran  
“person who is capable of doing it”

Sapinngitaa  
“capable of doing”

Inuum Isuma  
“whole being”

Duuleh Nilii  
“intelligent, able to do”

Dene Dúyí Le  
“person who is capable and smart”

Dene Dúle Ts’íljí  
“have the ability to be capable”

Denezhots’idisho  
“person who is capable and knowing”

Denezaogulj  
“how we live”

Inuk Ayuunngituuq  
“person who can do it or is capable of doing it”

Døahxe  
“well-rounded, independent, healthy in knowledge and ability”

Dø Gølzøq  
“smart person, intellectual connected to their head”

Dø Edàizeh  
“clever, skillful, and smart person, grow with knowledge and experience”

Dene Edaríya  
“capable person”

kaskihtâwin ayisiyiniw  
“capable person”

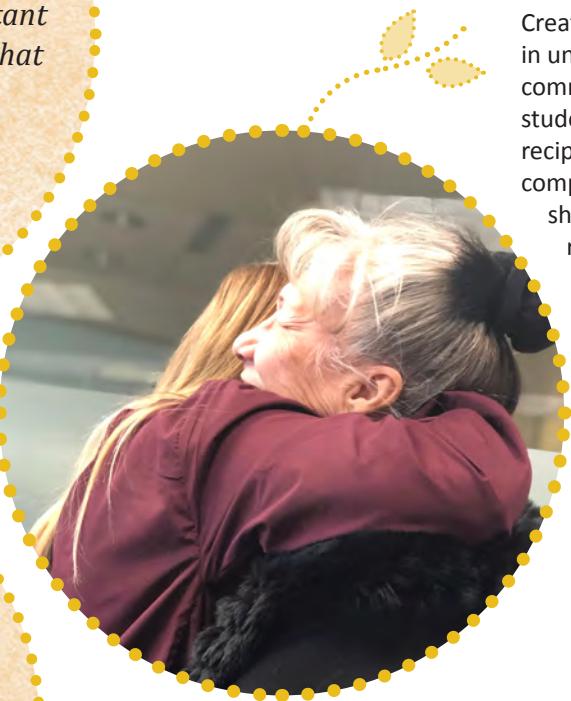
Indigenous spirituality allows us to connect mind, body, heart, and spirit. Alongside an Elders prayer for safe travel, Joseph Charlo leads students in a water offering prior to a canoe trip.

*Whether you want to be a hunter or a doctor, being a capable person must first start with what was inherently taught to them – this gives the strength to help accomplish ambitions. It is so important that this is done so the strength of what was, remains in what is and what will become.*  
~ Dan Summers, Beaufort Delta Divisional Education Council, Educator



*Whatever trail they took at this time would be the trail they would follow in their life. Thus, much guidance was given the young girls to help them stay on the right trail. (Adele Hardisty, Dene Kede gr. 7, 2002)*

Creating relationships is key in understanding our place in community. Northern studies students show the importance of reciprocity by offering a warm hug of compassion after Elder Ruth Mercredi shares her lived experiences in residential schools.



*"Every culture has a worldview whether it is stated or not. It gives people a characteristic perspective on things which run through every aspect of their lives. This perspective tells the people what is important and why. It tells the people how they must behave in life. Perspective explains life for a people and gives it meaning." (Dene Kede, 1993, p.xxii)*

*"We know who we are by our relationships."*  
~ Sharla Greenland  
(Chief Operating Officer, Gwich'in Tribal Council)



Students should be able to identify their personal interests and strengths as they continue their journey in being and becoming a capable person. Weekly land based key cultural experiences allow Ayden Tambour an opportunity to try new activities such as archery.



Watch the video of Elder Paul Andrew talking about the importance of teachers in the North.



Indigenous Language Instructors are our language holders who work to carry on a vital part of culture and share their gifts in engaging ways with youth. Brenden Bekale and Victoria Drybones practice Tłı̨chǫ scrabble games to use in their classroom.

## A Capable Person

*No two children think and interact with the world in the same way and there is no hierarchy between the intelligences of children.*

*Velma Illasiak  
(Regional Indigenous Language & Education coordinator, Beaufort Delta Divisional Education Council)*



Taking time for self-reflection is part of a person's own spiral learning which allows them to develop and grow. During the Education Leadership Program (ELP) principals have conversations on many topics. They are given collaborative opportunities to discuss their thoughts on creating an effective school that is reflective of the community.

## CONSIDER THE BENEFITS

### Capable Person

#### Being and Becoming a Capable Person

"Long ago it was all about survival, being capable of surviving. So that as community members, as family members, as parents, you were entrusted with giving to the community, even as children. Those elements that bring promise, joy, love, pride, respect, all those elements to a community, even as a very young girl I remember hearing that.

So sometimes the things that they would pass on to us are things like, just the basic things, like feeding ourselves, feeding the environment, making sure that the things that we did were respectful of ourselves, and respectful of others, and took into consideration those ... I think sometimes we forget that as people we were never ever said like at any point that we were capable, we were just given the skills, the tools, to provide for others and ourselves in a society setting. And as a part of a family, we had roles, some of them gender specific, others not. And I think in that way our parents were trying to build us into somebody that could take care of themselves and could help take care of others." – Pauline Gordon (James, 2016, p. 111).



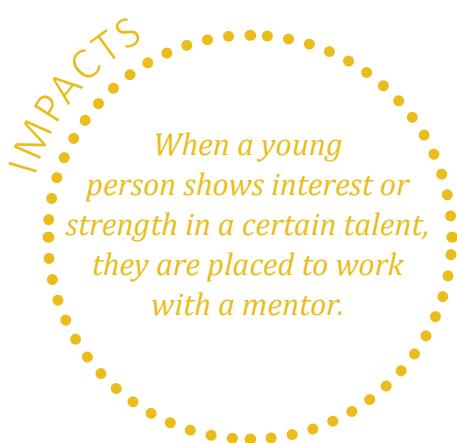
Watch video of Chloe Dragon Smith describing Walking In Two Worlds

"A capable person is a person that knows how to raise a family, how to provide for the family, and ...how to pass down his knowledge to younger generations...He has been taught to be a person that knows the things that he does, you know. And that's from the older people, the Elders, that the one that teaches this person and he's the one that takes over/ And that he passes it on." – Mike Beaver (James, 2016, p. 126)

**To foster capable people, they must have opportunities to discover their gifts, talents, and skills.**

"A person is given a talent so that people can rely on that person. A person with a talent has responsibility for his own people and for their future. But that talent can appear in many ways. For example, people will say of someone, "That person holds laughter in his mouth." This person is meant to create laughter for his people. Laughter is a gift for people from creator. It is just as sacred a gift as any other talent." – Fibbie Tatti (Dene Kede, 2003, Module 5, p. 18)

"What it means to me is that you truly know who you are, who your parents are and where you're from and that you know your surroundings... your relationship with the land, and all the teachings that your parents, your grandparents and, sometimes, even your great grandparents had given you. And all these combined make you who you are and usually, the focus point for your elders is that they've taught you to survive, and that makes you a capable person." – Margaret Ireland (James, 2016, p. 151)



## TAKE ACTION

### Capable Person

- Create integrated and connected learning opportunities. Through authentic experiences students can see connections between school and community.
- Provide grounding for students by allowing them to see their community, families, and values within your classroom and school walls.
- Support students to share 'what they know'. Let students take the lead in language learning, land-based skills, technology, arts, music, mathematics, sports, or any area that they can share their gifts.
- Look through a lens of kindness. Remind yourself to use this lens to better understand your students and families. Learn about your students, their families, and the community – where they are coming from and what they can bring to the table.

#### Wise Practices: South Slave Divisional Educational Council (SSDEC)

Chief Sunrise Education Centre on the Kátł'odeeche reserve connects students, staff, Elders, family, and community members for Sandy Creek Thursday. Every week they participate in a variety of experiences that honour and respect the whole child. Experiences include prayer, language, crafting, hunting, and seasonal activities.

#### Wise Practices:

##### Beaufort Divisional Educational Council (BDDEC)

All schools actively create *Community of Learning* classrooms. This provides teachers a framework to create meaningful relationships, rooted in community values within the classroom, to build capacity for oracy, teambuilding, thinking routines and self-regulation so that learners will be connected and see their own worth.

- Take time for self-reflection. Cultural humility is a lifelong process of not only learning about someone else's culture but starts by examining our own beliefs and cultural identities.
- Inquiry based projects allow for students to choose their own interest and develop their skills.
- Take time to build relationships. Time put into this will help you find more success learning alongside your students.
- Use a strength-based approach when building Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and Student Support Plans (SSPs) for your students. Provide opportunities for staff, families, and students to engage in this process.
- Encourage students to take healthy risks. Let them master challenging environments to find their own boundaries and where their strengths lie.



## CONNECT AND REFLECT

### Capable Person

Consider using these questions to make connections and reflect on your personal and professional journey towards Indigenous education and language revitalization.

How do you nurture your own gifts, skills, and talents? Who is a person that has helped support and nurture your gifts?

In what ways do you create opportunities for your students in being, and becoming an NWT Capable Person? How can you assist students in seeing and valuing their own self-worth?

Reflecting on Chief Jimmy Bruneau's concept of "Strong Like Two People," how does this concept impact your learning and growth as a capable person? How does this impact your teaching or work with students? What does this concept mean for your students?

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) states: *Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places, and persons.* How does this connect to NWT Capable Person?

The Final report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommended 94 Calls to Action. The Calls to Action can be seen as a gift from residential school survivors as it was based on their stories and bravery that the report was written. This asks Canada to strive to be better, to heal, and do better for future generations. How do we 'take action' in an authentic and purposeful way for ourselves and our students?



Watch the YouTube video, "TRADITIONAL SPIRIT" written and recorded by Paulatuk youth; Rihanna, Richard, Jody and Susan.

## NOTES

## Capable Person







# Our Land

## Creating a Welcoming Environment



# Our Land: Creating a Welcoming Environment

## ***Creating a Welcoming Environment***

requires schools to form collaborative relationships with the community so that families, Elders, community members, and educators all have a role in the education of the students. When all educators and school staff understand and respect the Indigenous worldviews, culture, and languages of the community, it creates a school environment that acknowledges and validates the experiences of the community. NWT schools are an extension of their community.

Students, parents, and community members should enter into a school that is inviting, safe, and reflective of the Indigenous community's language, culture and experiences.

Learning hinges on relationships between ideas, people, life experiences, languages, spirituality, identity, and culture. All are rooted in the place where the students live and learn, making it essential to connect to the land and people of that place. A classroom is not merely a room in a school. It should be a safe space where staff, students, and community can collaborate to understand both the historical and contemporary context of the land and people to deepen connections to the community. The land outside the school is considered an integral part of the classroom.

It is vitally important for NWT schools to centre, respect, and promote the worldviews, cultures, and languages of the Dene, Métis, Inuvialuit, and nēhiyawak peoples in a



purposeful and thoughtful manner. When the school values the unique Indigenous worldview of the community, it validates for the community that culture is important.

When students see the culture of the community reflected within the school environment and embedded in educational content, there is a deeper connection to the school. Learning then becomes more engaging, relevant, and valued. When community members feel welcomed and safe within the school, they feel invited and become actively involved in supporting their children in their education.

Honouring the Indigenous worldview of the community further recognizes and works toward reconciling a past in education that omitted the histories, identities, and cultures of the community. It reinstates the value of these worldviews to their rightful place and confirms their contributions to the global community.



Watch the video of Velma Illasiak talking about resilience and acceptance of students

THIS SECTION OF THE HANDBOOK DETAILS THREE ACTION AREAS THAT HELP EDUCATORS UNDERSTAND HOW TO DEVELOP A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT:

### **Building the School-Community Relationship**

**Relationship:** focuses on growing connections between families, communities, and educators.



### **Strengthening Training for Northern Educators**

**Educators:** ensures that school staff learn about and engage in the community in which they are living and working.



### **Fostering Student Wellbeing**

**requires that the school supports each student's wellbeing in a holistic way through connections with Indigenous language and culture.**



# Building the School-Community Relationship

## Building the School-Community Relationship

**Relationship** recognizes that traditionally, the care and education of children was the responsibility of the parents, guardians, Elders, family, and community members. A positive and healthy relationship between the school and the community can be developed when a welcoming environment exists. By providing authentic learning experiences, schools can reflect the Indigenous worldviews, cultures, and languages of the community. Parents, Elders, and community members have much to offer the NWT school system through collaboration in school planning and activities. However, some may feel that the school is not a safe place due to the continuing impacts of residential schools or as a result of their personal experiences. Through meaningful and respectful relationships, people can talk openly, develop shared visions, and make decisions together. This goes hand-in-hand with the partnerships that must be created in order to develop trust, respect, and practice reciprocity.

Nurturing students' connections to their communities, cultures, and environments can help to create

- Sahtú drummers use the drum beat to provide support and encouragement for their young men during a regional handgames tournament.

positive partnerships between schools and communities, boost student achievement, and increase the community's overall environmental, social, and economic strength.

The school should be an open and inviting place for all community members as the school and community are intrinsically connected. The engagement of all partners, which includes: students, family, Elders, community, school staff, educators, and Indigenous governments, is essential for the development of a **capable person**. School and community need to work together to build, maintain, and strengthen this relationship.



Watch the video of Dëneze Nakehk'o speaking on individual wisdom and creating brave spaces in schools



It is important to understand and respect factors that may prevent one or both partners from reaching out. The impact of colonization has caused distrust in the education system. Some may feel intimidated by the school environment and may not feel they have a role or voice in their children's education. Some students do not see how the school connects to their lives or they may struggle to build relationships with and trust staff because teacher turnover can be high in some communities. Schools must ensure they have created culturally safe environments. Educators may be unsure where to start with relationship building. As this may be the case, it is important for educators to recognize their worldviews and reflect on how that influences their teaching practices. Through this, schools begin to build capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect.

*When spring began,  
I joined the Chief and seven  
Lutselk'e hunters on their traditional  
caribou hunt. We packed our snowmobiles and  
headed north, above the treeline, to the Barren  
Lands. We were gone for a week in one of the most  
remote and rugged terrains. It was an experience of epic  
proportions – unlike anything I've done or seen before.  
When we came back, we were hauling caribou on the sleds  
behind our snowmobiles. In keeping with the Dene tradition  
of food sharing, the hunters gave portions of the meat to  
family members, friends and Elders. In the end it left me  
with a spiritual appreciation of the Indigenous way of  
life, a sore back, a new group of friends and a set of  
memories I'll cherish for a lifetime.*

*~Robin Dhanoa, Teacher, Łutselk'e  
(NWTAA Newsletter, May 2018)*



Tania Larsson, founding member of Dene Nahjo shares traditional knowledge of tanning tools through community initiatives such as the Urban Hide Tanning project.

Sambaa K'e band office together with the school organize a camp day with their students. Chief Dolphus Jumbo joins in the fun by providing a treat.



*Building connections with my students and their families will always be my priority as an educator. I moved to the NWT 17 years ago and have always jumped at the chance to participate in cultural activities. These opportunities have helped me to strengthen relationships while simultaneously shining a light on the talents and leadership of my students. Watching students evolve from learner to teacher has been such a blessing – sharing gifts of sewing, beading, drumming, hand games, and all aspects of camp life with their peers are moments I will always treasure... I will always welcome opportunities to learn more about the traditions and language of my students. The rich culture of the NWT has captured my heart!*

~ Amy Wilkinson, Learning Centre Teacher,  
École St. Patrick High School, Yellowknife

*This is my 11<sup>th</sup> year in Dettah and 15<sup>th</sup> in community schools across the NWT, and I still love going to work everyday.*

*I love knowing generations of families, and watching the children grow up. It's a special honour and responsibility to be trusted enough to get to do that...I love working in our community school; and the opportunity that gives us to work with many families and to support the whole child. It's an exciting time in education, and I'm lucky to be part of an outstanding team.*

*~ Lea Lamoureux, Principal,  
Kaw Tay Whee School, Dettah  
(NWT TA Newsletter, Dec. 2018)*

All community members play a role in the growth and support of capable people. It is important to build positive relationships within the community.



# Building the School-Community Relationships



Local Environment and Natural Resource officer shows a student from East Three Elementary School methods of harvesting.

## CONSIDER THE BENEFITS

# Building the School-Community Relationship

### **Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit emphasize school-community relationships**

“Positive learning can happen whenever there is an educational partnership between the child’s family, the community, educators, and the school system” (*Inuuqatigiit*, 1996, p. 15).

As in traditional Dene education, the people of the community are asked to help in the education of our children. The students learn what the community feels is valuable and become connected with the community. This opens possibilities for students to give back to their communities, to receive recognition from them, and to develop their self-esteem and identity based on their values and perspectives (*Dene Kede*, 1993a).

### **Learning must be rooted in place**

When schools make connections with families and communities, they affirm the value of language, cultural practices, and knowledge of the place in which the school is located. When educators and the community work together, they can create education that is equitable and just (Goulet & Goulet, 2014).

### **Relationship building is reconciliation**

Educators need first to recognize and then overcome colonial practices and ways of thinking in order to build relationships with students, families, and communities in the NWT (Battel, Lowman & Baker, 2015; Goulet, 2001).

*IMPACTS*  
*Families and the community will support and work with the school to provide opportunities for being and becoming a capable person.*

*IMPACTS*  
*With Elders' and Knowledge Keepers' guidance and leadership, the relationship between school and community will strengthen.*

*IMPACTS*  
*Students see themselves reflected within the school and in educational programming and feel safe and supported in their cultural identity.*

## TAKE ACTION

### Building the School-Community Relationship

- Acknowledge community achievements by naming rooms after Elders, posting portraits of local community leaders, and visibly highlighting the strengths of community members.
- Look for a community mentor for advice and support to foster and maintain positive relationships. Invest time outside of the classroom to build relationships with Indigenous students, families, and community members.
- Make connections with families early in the school year. Invite them to participate in classroom activities throughout the year and keep the lines of communication open.
- Research the connections that currently exist with local Indigenous communities and organizations. Pursue partnerships with the community and local organizations on events and activities.

Wise Practices:  
Sahtú Divisional Education Council  
(SDEC)

On Friday afternoons the whole school gathers to participate in traditional activities outdoors where community members are encouraged to participate.

Wise Practices:

Yellowknife Education District 1 (YK1)

A community liaison staffing position was created to provide Indigenous students and families with a connection at the school and to help educators connect with the people, language and culture of the community.

- Learn about and participate in local history, cultural protocols, traditions, and languages of the region and community. Volunteer. Take a risk to be an active member in the community to demonstrate reciprocity: for example, coaching, helping with fundraisers, or running a group.
- Encourage and support community members to take active roles in the school. If they are language speakers, encourage and create opportunities for them to model language use with students.
- Rethink school to home communication. Some schools make home visits in pairs while other schools host the event at an alternative site such as a recreation or friendship centre. Another option may be to do a phone or virtual call.



## CONNECT AND REFLECT

### Building the School-Community Relationship

Consider using these questions to make connections and reflect on your personal and professional journey towards Indigenous education and language revitalization.



.....

In what ways does your school celebrate or acknowledge its relationship with the Indigenous community?

What are the strengths of this relationship?



.....

What challenges exist in moving this relationship forward?



.....

Take a moment to think about a close relationship you have formed with a member of the community. What has this relationship taught you?

How has this learning influenced you as an individual and as an educator?



.....

How do you contribute to the building of a strong school-community relationship through reciprocal actions, as both an educator and a member of your community?



.....

What guidance, advice or resources would you share with a new teacher to help them strengthen the school-community relationship?

## NOTES

# Building the School-Community Relationship

# Strengthening Training for Northern Educators

**Strengthening Training for Northern Educators** is essential in order to provide educators with the background and context from which they can learn more about the community in which they live and work. This training, on top of the cultural teachings and knowledge from *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit*, provides the basis for educators to contribute to the ongoing development of positive relationships with students, parents, and the community at large. Developing an understanding on the impacts of colonization, which encompasses the legacy of the intergenerational effects of residential schools, is crucial as we move forward in the reconciliation process. This consideration is realized through individual and school-wide initiatives that develop cultural competency.

The *ILE* Policy requires educators to reinforce and emphasize Indigenous worldviews, cultures, and languages in all aspects of classroom learning. Through this policy, Northern educators become familiar with the background knowledge and the lived experiences of their students.

The effectiveness of this mandate depends upon a review of curriculum, pedagogy, resources, expectations, and relationships.

NWT educators and school staff should look for opportunities for informal and formal mentorship. These relationships are key to helping teachers connect with the community and transition into the school.

Furthermore, educators benefit from self-reflection to become aware of unconscious biases in their instructional approaches. Self-reflection and willingness to become an active member of the community will lead to more effective teaching and a higher degree of job satisfaction in the long term. Only through this may the educator examine their position of privilege, assumptions, and biases through their personal worldview.

*Through participation in the Education Leadership Program (ELP) and the New to the NWT Educators Conference (N2NEC), new teachers and principals work with Elders, experienced teachers and principals from across the Territories in a host community. Connections are made through on-the-land activities and interactions with community members. Through a place-based learning approach, ELP and N2NEC participants gain a deeper understanding of land and community. The hope is that these experiences support new teachers and principals to work effectively within their own NWT communities.*

*~Colleen Eckert, ECE Professional Development Coordinator*



The **New to the NWT Educators Conference** (N2NEC) in Yellowknife provides an overview of the NWT education system as well as a full-day session on the history and legacy of colonization, with special emphasis on the impact of residential schools. The goal of the training is to develop culturally competent teachers.



**Community or Regional Cultural Orientation Days** offer an opportunity for educators to learn about the worldviews, cultures, and languages of the Indigenous community in which they are working. The intent is that these days are organized and planned by or with the local District Education Authority (DEA).



The **Teacher Induction and Mentorship Program** pairs new and experienced Northern teachers. The goal of this program is to support the new teacher in their transition into the school.



The **Educational Leadership Program** (ELP) is a mandatory summer training program for principals in the NWT. It is also open to teacher-leaders with a minimum of two years' experience in NWT schools. This experience is to highlight place-based training that draws from both Indigenous and Western ways of knowing.



The **Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training** (ICAST) is a mandatory training program for all GNWT employees. All NWT educators are encouraged to complete this training. The goals of ICAST are to create awareness and understandings of the impact of colonization, increase awareness of collective roles in reconciliation, and provide the necessary foundation and tools to become culturally competent.



*Being part of a school and community that has continually realized the importance and benefits of investing in culture programming has created many smiles, experiences and memories for our students and teachers that will last forever. On the land trips, camps, traditional craft projects, hunting and trapping, Elder's lessons of skills and knowledge, drumming and hand games; what wonderful things to get to experience within a school and at the same time such an amazing way to learn, and gain knowledge and respect for one's culture.*

*~ Chris Stanbridge, Teacher, Chief Jimmy Bruneau School, Behchokò*

Strengthening understanding of Indigenous practices is a continual learning process. It is important to respect customs or practices of the community and take a role. YK1 ILE team leads take time with Elders and Knowledge Keepers at camp to develop their cultural understanding.



Watch Velma Illasiak, Sharla Greenland, Gladys Alexie, Maureen Pokiak and Chauna MacNeil in a conversation around relationship building

## Strengthening Training for Northern Educators



Educators develop relationships and community knowledge through cultural experiences. Chief Jimmy Bruneau School staff, Chris Stanbridge and James Lafferty, take time with community members to do an on the land trip.

*As teachers get to know their community better, they become more confident in their teaching, it makes them feel less stressed, and improve their teaching practices.*

*~ Mattie McNeil, Elder (Former Educator), Hay River*

## CONSIDER THE BENEFITS

### Strengthening Training for Northern Educators

#### Teacher induction and mentorship programs benefit everyone

“The first year is predictive of success and retention in the career. New teachers are influenced more by their first school setting than by their teacher education practicum training. Supported teachers and administrators can influence many things, which affect new teachers. Supported teachers use a wider variety of teaching practices and strategies as well as more challenging activities to engage students. Supported teachers have better planned instruction, a wider range of materials, more confidence and better classroom management” (ECE, 2018b, p.55).

#### Education for reconciliation shifts the paradigm

To ensure that education is equitable, it is necessary for all educators to hold a basic understanding of the processes and conditions that have led to the current state of education. Creating such awareness

among educators can be difficult because “Canada has generated as its self-narrative a description of a generous, liberal and progressive society that has overcome its earlier bigotry and prejudices” (Battiste, 2013, p. 125).

Privilege is less visible to those who are accustomed to taking their advantages [unknown and known] as a given and many educators are unaware of the ways they participate in systems that perpetuate the colonization and oppression of Indigenous Peoples (Dei & Lara-Villanueva, 2021; Freire, 1968).

Many Canadians struggle to understand the ways that the history of colonialism in Canada has presented challenges and barriers that specifically affect Indigenous people. Well planned in-servicing of teachers in the history and legacy of residential schools can have profound impacts on their understanding of, and their relationships with, both students and the communities they live in (Dion, 2007; Lewthwaite et. al., 2013, 2014).

*Educational leaders' and principals' participation in professional development that includes cultural pedagogy ensures that education in the NWT is welcoming, culturally safe, and place-based.*

*Students will benefit from the cultural competence that their educators develop. Educators will use their awareness and understanding, along with reflection and action, to improve the teaching and learning environment for students.*

## TAKE ACTION

### Strengthening Training for Northern Educators

- Listen carefully and observe the school culture and school-community interactions. Ask for advice and clarification from staff members from the Indigenous community. Include Indigenous practices, ceremonies and cultural protocols in professional development, meetings and school events.
- Use Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices (STIP) hours and Professional Learning Communities (PLC) for in-services and collaboration with other teachers or community members.
- If you are a newcomer to your community, allow yourself to be a student of the local culture so that knowledge of culture, students, and relationships can strengthen your teaching.

#### Wise Practices: Dettah District Education Authority (DDEA)

All classroom teachers participate in the Wiiliideh Yati classes with their students to strengthen their language skills and model language learning.

Watch the video of Lillian Elias discussing the significance of effective communication between students, and teachers



#### Wise Practices: Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS)

All educators attend camp prior to their class to build relationships with the Elders, learn language, and traditional knowledge. This ensures educators have the background to deliver pre and post teaching lessons to their students.

- As an educational leader in your community, make Indigenizing content and pedagogy a priority in your school by participating in professional development activities about Indigenous education and learning by connecting with Indigenous peoples.
- Participate in local cultural events such as drum dances, community gatherings, feasts, and traditional sports.
- Coordinate and/or engage in training opportunities with Regional Indigenous Languages and Education (RILE) coordinators and ECE.
- Seek out and engage in professional development opportunities beyond the mandatory trainings to increase your cultural competence.





## CONNECT AND REFLECT

### Strengthening Training for Northern Educators

Consider using these questions to make connections and reflect on your personal and professional journey towards Indigenous education and language revitalization.

What was the most helpful cultural training that you have experienced?

What did you learn?

To what extent was it successful for deepening your understanding of place and your students' needs?

Why do you think it was successful?

What lessons have you learned since you began teaching in your community?

What do you wish you had known when you first started?

As an educator, how can you further decolonize your practice?

In what area do you believe you or your school requires more in-servicing in to grow your practice and your school environment to reflect the Indigenous language and culture of the community?

Who could provide or arrange for this additional in-service?

## NOTES

# Strengthening Training for Northern Educators



# Fostering Student Wellbeing

**Fostering Student Wellbeing** requires educators to support the development of each student as an NWT **capable person** in a holistic manner. Elders in the NWT have explained that each child is born with inherent gifts. In order to nurture those gifts as a **capable person**, students must be well in body, mind, heart and spirit. This also follows the teachings of the NWT Elders, as presented in the *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit* curricula, which affirm the importance of developing the whole child.

NWT schools aim to cultivate healthy culturally safe environments that nurture student gifts through the development of physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual self.

Schools can holistically support and assist with the development of student wellness by collaborating with the community. Providing cultural programming, offering school activities that are connected to place, creating opportunities for students to develop a positive identity, and providing opportunities for students to give back to their community are just some of the ways this can occur (Toombs, Kowatch & Mushquash, 2016).

Educators should be mindful that all students will be at different stages in terms of their personal connection to the land, language, and culture of their community. It is imperative that NWT schools are culturally safe environments. This means that no shame or guilt should be placed on students on what they do or do not know about their culture or the culture of the community they live in. Educators should be aware of their role in the education system and the impact of their role on students.

*The (Inuit) values are a guide to help one become a good person. Being "good" means you have self-respect, patience, and strength; you share and are understanding and respectful of others; and you are humble, honourable and respectful of the laws that govern society and the natural and spiritual worlds. As you grow in experience, you are to strive towards wisdom, honouring the Elders who had achieved this.*

~ *Inuuqatigiit*, 1996, p. 32

*In order to survive and to live life to its fullest, Dene Students must develop respectful relationships with the land, the spiritual world, other people and themselves.*

~ *Dene Kede*, 1993a, p. xxxi

NWT educators need to develop their cultural competencies, which include acquiring the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to work respectfully to support NWT students, while practicing cultural humility (Ward, Branch & Fridkin, 2016).

Together, schools and communities can guide students to strengthen their wellbeing and foster development of their identity, through opportunities to strengthen relationships with the land, the spiritual world, other people, and themselves.

(*Dene Kede*, 1993a).

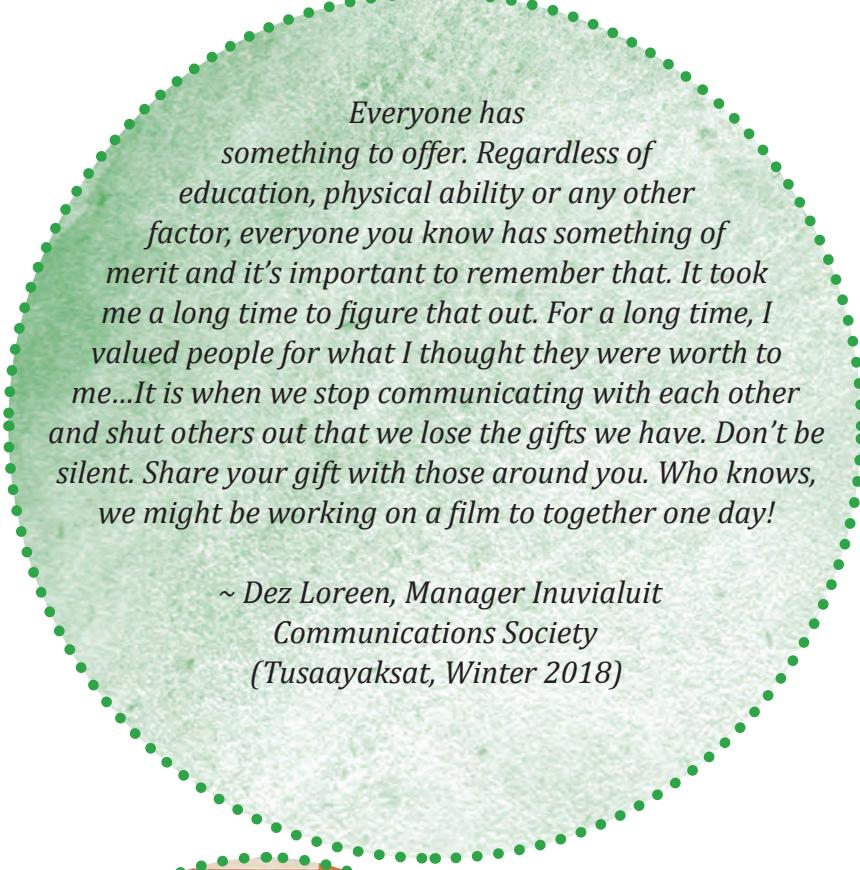
Traditionally, parents, Elders and community members worked together in educating the child. As the child grew and their skills developed, the expectation was that they would then give back to the community with the knowledge they had been gifted. This reciprocal form of teaching is also highlighted in *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit*. When creating these documents, the Elders intent was to share their knowledge and wisdom as a gift to educators with the expectation that this would be the foundation of the education system and that educators would create a space for these teachings.



Local Indigenous youth should be celebrated as role models within schools. Handgames captain Chase Yakelaya shares his strong leadership skills with his team.



Watch the Youtube video “DON’T GIVE UP,” a song created and recorded by Tuktoyuktuk youth that speaks to the strength in overcoming social and personal challenges.



*Everyone has something to offer. Regardless of education, physical ability or any other factor, everyone you know has something of merit and it's important to remember that. It took me a long time to figure that out. For a long time, I valued people for what I thought they were worth to me...It is when we stop communicating with each other and shut others out that we lose the gifts we have. Don't be silent. Share your gift with those around you. Who knows, we might be working on a film together one day!*

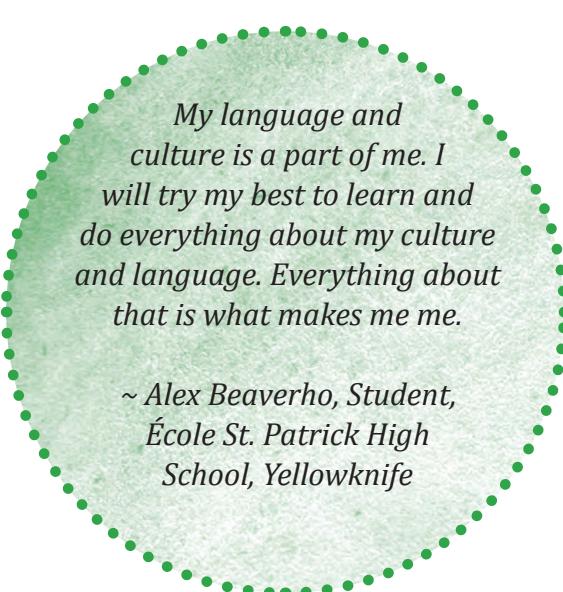
~ Dez Loreen, Manager Inuvialuit Communications Society (Tusaayaksat, Winter 2018)



Students' unique identities are strengthened when given the opportunity to share their gifts. Rochelle Smith celebrates her passion for fiddling.



Providing opportunities for children to learn from mentors builds healthy relationships. Elder Michel Louis patiently guides young Dylan the important teachings of the drum.



*My language and culture is a part of me. I will try my best to learn and do everything about my culture and language. Everything about that is what makes me me.*

~ Alex Beaverho, Student, École St. Patrick High School, Yellowknife



Read Dayle Cole's poem about  
being an Indigenous youth  
balancing in both worlds

Creating a safe place for our  
Northern students gives them a  
sense of belonging and connection.  
Iris and Setua Kotchea share joy  
connecting on the land.

## Fostering Student Wellbeing



## CONSIDER THE BENEFITS

### Fostering Student Wellbeing

#### Indigenous children and youth need the opportunity to develop their gifts

Priorities of Indigenous education include children, youth, adults, and Elders having the opportunity to develop their gifts in a safe and respectful space. This means that all community members are able to contribute to society (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and are physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually balanced.

This ability to give and to be well comes directly from the joining of the sacred and the secular. It is about fostering identity, facilitating wellbeing, connecting to land, honouring language, infusing teachings, and recognizing the inherent right to self-determination (Iseke, 2010; Marule, 2012; Toulouse, 2016).



#### Culture is a key factor in wellbeing and positive self-identity

Culture is a dynamic and adaptive system of meaning that is learned, shared, and transmitted from one generation to the next and is reflected in the values, norms, practices, symbols, ways of life, and other social interactions of a given culture. It is the foundation of both individual and collective identity, and its erosion can adversely affect mental health and wellbeing (Kirmayer, Brass & Tait, 2000; Krueter & McClure, 2004).

During springtime Keith Wolki learns to be patient as he waits for his fish under the ice.



Watch the video of Dianne Lafferty speak on [defining] Dene identity

IMPACTS

*The school and community work together using the teachings from Dene Kede and/or Inuuqatigiit to support the development of the student, their relationships with the land, the spiritual world, other people, and themselves.*

IMPACTS

*Educators follow a holistic model of education and understand that wellness encompasses the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing of their students.*

## TAKE ACTION

### Fostering Student Wellbeing

- Engage in respectful relationship building with families and community. Ask yourself 'What does this look like?', 'What does this feel like?'
- Provide opportunities for students to develop their sense of self-identity through cultural activities on the land and in the community.
- Learn about traditional medicines and foods with your students.
- Engage students in traditional forms of physical activity such as snowshoeing and traditional Dene or Inuit games and learn their cultural significance such as developing survival skills.
- Have open dialogue about self-care and the various ways to engage in self-care. Give time and space for students to identify what works for them and support students to engage in these self-care strategies.
- Make sure that students are aware of community resources that are accessible.
- Support students to identify ways to be active and make contributions to the community.
- Have students volunteer for roles in ceremony when appropriate and when they are comfortable to do so. Encourage the use of the language of the community during these opportunities whenever possible.

#### Wise Practices: Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS)

Restorative Practices are based on Indigenous pedagogy that looks to give students voice as they build relationships, navigate conflicts and self-advocate.

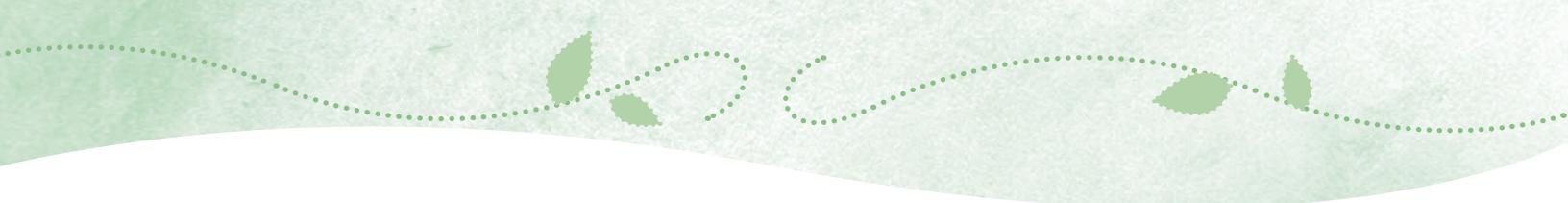
#### Wise Practices: Ndilǫ District Education Authority (NDEA)

Each school day starts with a morning prayer. Although they are a public school, they are on the traditional territory of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN). Morning prayer is traditional practice in following protocol.

- As a school, plan ways to celebrate Indigenous role models from your school, community, or the larger world.
- Provide opportunities and support for students to be mentored in the school and/or community and develop opportunities for students to become mentors.
- When establishing the use of sharing circles, be sure to ask for support from community members to ensure you are following proper cultural protocols for the region.
- Build relationship with the Regional Indigenous Language and Culture (RILE) coordinator, the Regional Inclusive Schooling Coordinator (RISC) and the Regional Indigenous Language Coordinator (RILC) as support people.
- Develop an understanding of cultural safety and learn trauma informed practices. Implement these practices into your daily interactions with students, families, and colleagues.



Watch the video of Wade Vaneltsi and Tamara Voudrach speaking about mental health and fostering student wellbeing through empowering youth voices



## CONNECT AND REFLECT

### **Fostering Student Wellbeing**

Consider using these questions to make connections and reflect on your personal and professional journey towards Indigenous education and language revitalization.



How do you support your students' journey towards developing their cultural identity and celebrating their strengths/gifts?



In what ways have you helped create opportunities for your students to make connections with the community and experience the benefits of helping others?



How do you promote physical activity in your class/school?

How do you connect those activities with traditional forms of physical activity?



Do you have a mentorship program for all students?

If not, how could it be established?

If so, how could it be expanded to include community mentors and students as mentors in the community?



How do you model self-care and nurture self-care for your students? How does fostering student wellness help you to focus on your own wellness needs?



What do 'well buildings' look like?

## NOTES

# Fostering Student Wellbeing







# Our Ways

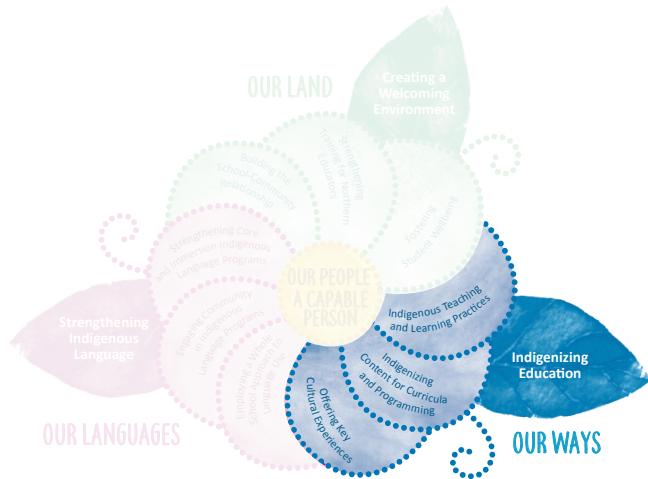
## Indigenizing Education



# Our Ways: Indigenizing Education

**Indigenizing Education** is an ongoing process of teaching and learning that pays respect to and honours the Indigeneity of a place. Indigenizing education involves recognizing the value and place of Indigenous knowledge in curriculum. It requires a strengths-based, learner-centered practice that is holistic, relational, spiral, and experiential and is rooted in the culture, worldviews and practices of the community.

Battiste and Henderson (2000) explain that Indigenous learners are diverse, as is every classroom, and it would be false to assume there is one specific way to teach Indigenous students. Indigenous practices can be used to teach all students effectively. When educators include and celebrate Indigenous knowledge systems, they are ensuring that both Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students learn Indigenous perspectives and are given the opportunity to see the gifts of the Indigenous community in which the school is located.



Participating in Indigenous cultural ceremonies is important for all northern students. Weledeh Catholic School drummers honour and remember residential school survivors during Orange Shirt Day.



Watch the video *Four Directions* by Dark Sparks and Weledeh students that acknowledges language reclamation, the importance of community relationships and youth resiliency



THIS SECTION OF THE HANDBOOK DETAILS THREE ACTION AREAS THAT HELP EDUCATORS UNDERSTAND THE THEME OF INDIGENIZING EDUCATION:

### **Indigenous Teaching and Learning**

**Practices:** encourage pedagogy in the classroom that authentically respects and builds on the strengths of both Indigenous and Western ways of knowing and learning.



### **Indigenizing Content for Curricula and Programming**

**Indigenizing Content for Curricula and Programming:** asks educators to use content and themes that are relevant to students and reflect Indigenous worldviews, languages, cultures, and communities.



### **Offering Key Cultural Experiences:**

**Offering Key Cultural Experiences:** ensures that schools are equipped to offer, and students have access to, authentic and relevant cultural experiences.



# Indigenous Teaching and Learning Practices

**Indigenous Teaching and Learning Practices** involve bringing Indigenous teaching and learning concepts to all aspects of our teaching practice. As educators, it is about how we create the environment of giving “equal credence to and having the flexibility to draw from Indigenous approaches as appropriate. Indigenizing education means that Indigenous approaches are seen as normal, central, and useful, rather than archaic, exotic, alternative, or otherwise marginal” (Merculieff & Roderick, 2013, p. 42).

To Indigenize education and schooling, schools must actively plan and teach using the NWT foundational curricula of *Dene Kede*, *Inuuqatigiit*, and the use of Indigenous teaching and learning practices. The *ILE*

*Traditionally, the instruction of the child began by first having them simply observe a task being done. When the time came for them to try it themselves, the job would often be done in small tasks. For instance, girls would chew and make miniature kamit and boys made and used miniature tools. Children would be given responsibility for looking after a younger brother or sister and learning about child care. Learning was also incorporated into play. Games of spear throwing or playing with dolls were early experiences of adult work.*

~ *Inuuqatigiit*, 1996, p. 22

*Handbook* outlines practices that are **holistic**, **relational**, **spiral**, and **experiential**. When we adjust our teaching practices to include Indigenous worldviews, concepts, experiences, and values, we provide an opportunity for Northern students to develop a deeper understanding of who they are, the place where they originated or presently live, and the possibilities of where they can go.

## Indigenous Pedagogy

There are many Indigenous principles of learning that are beneficial to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. In the *ILE Handbook*, the focus is on holistic, relational, spiral, and experiential learning. These ways of knowing are interconnected. Indigenizing teaching and learning is synonymous with best practice teaching strategies for all students. Many popular pedagogical practices, including inquiry-based learning, student-centred teaching, place-based education, and self-reflection, have been practiced by Indigenous communities for millennia.



Watch Velma Illasiak speak on the importance of both Western and Indigenous education to thrive in a modern world

## Holistic teaching and learning

Indigenous pedagogy focuses on the development of a human being as a whole person – physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. Self-awareness, emotional and social growth, and spiritual development are valued.

Traditional teachings highlight the importance of harvesting animals for sustenance. Braydon Krengnekta holds a fish that was caught and will be used as a source of food to provide for the Angik School community.



## Relational teaching and learning

Indigenous beliefs affirm that we are all related to each other, to the land, and to the spiritual world. These relationships make us interdependent with one another.

Learning should emphasize relationships with self, family, the community, the land, and the spiritual world. Relational learning also recognizes the importance of intergenerational knowledge, sharing, and reciprocity. Elders and Knowledge Keepers are experts and have clear roles to play in passing on wisdom and knowledge. This is a reciprocal and honoured relationship.

Providing opportunities for families to attend school-based camps helps build strong community relationships. Domitille Lennie learns about plucking ducks from her mother Lizelle Cook.

## Spiral teaching and learning

Traditionally, children learned by repetition of a skill or task during key cultural experiences. Subsequently, as they matured, they were given the opportunity to learn the skill at a more complex or advanced level. New learning was contextualized in the previous learning so that skills and knowledge could be continuously built and expanded. Cultural humility is the process that requires individuals to understand the value of learning from others. Individuals must engage in self-reflection and understand their role as life long learners. Children learn through observation and, when they feel ready, they are encouraged to practice the skill.



Learning starts when children are exposed to new experiences. They will gain more complex understanding over time. Tracy Modeste observes the grade 8/9 students harvesting moose meat.



## Experiential teaching and learning

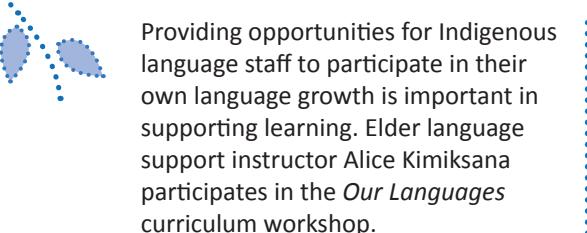
Experiential learning engages students in direct experiences, hands-on activities, and reflections in order to develop new skills, new attitudes, or new ways of thinking.

Elders say we need to use all our senses to fully understand the world. Christina Boggis and her students use hands-on activities to explore plants during a science class.

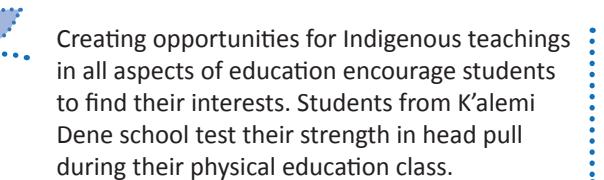


*Doing things on the land and using language to connect with the land helps me feel more in touch with language and culture.*

~ Angela Koe, Support Assistant,  
Chief Paul Niditchie School,  
Tsiigehtchic



Providing opportunities for Indigenous language staff to participate in their own language growth is important in supporting learning. Elder language support instructor Alice Kimiksana participates in the *Our Languages* curriculum workshop.



Creating opportunities for Indigenous teachings in all aspects of education encourage students to find their interests. Students from K'alemi Dene school test their strength in head pull during their physical education class.



Watch the video of Elder Paul Andrew discussing importance of Indigenous teachings when working with students with exceptionalities

## Indigenous Teaching and Learning Practices

*I like having hands-on instead of watching a person teaching something to you. It gives you more knowledge and you will not forget what you did with hands-on, like skinning caribou legs or arms, cutting fish and carving caribou skinning tools.*

~ Jazzlynn Tetlichi, Student,  
Chief Paul Niditchie School,  
Tsiigehtchic

Using the land as classroom can provide authentic learning opportunities that engage our students. Colin Rose shares in the caribou hunt experience with his students Coby Elanik and Matthew McLeod.



## CONSIDER THE BENEFITS

### Indigenous Teaching and Learning Practices

#### Teachers should recognize their role as a learner

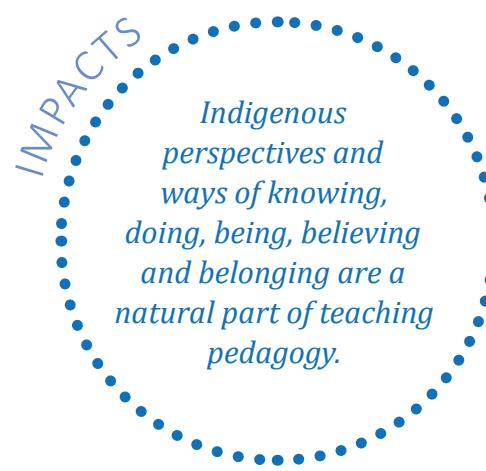
Ultimately, teachers honour Indigenous cultures by learning about them and applying that knowledge to their teaching. Teachers who adopt a reciprocal approach to education and position themselves as learners alongside their students are also consistently identified as the most effective and with the most job satisfaction (Kavanagh, 2006; Marchant, 2009).

The principle of humility is a common component that links Indigenous worldviews around the globe. By reflecting on what has shaped our views and what may have impacted the views of others, we can cultivate compassion and learn from others (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Lewthwaite et al., 2013 & 2014; Marchant, 2009; Tanaka, 2016).

“The Northern teacher has an added responsibility to know and understand not only the historical significance of education for Aboriginal communities but also to know and understand contemporary social, political and economic realities. These teachers are also learners, engaged in a process of coming to know and understand a new way of teaching, of learning and of living...” (Burleigh & Burm, 2012, p. 23).

#### Pedagogy and practices that honour Indigenous learners complement all learners

Traditionally, young people were allowed and encouraged to follow their interests. Community members, their first teachers, would encourage their strengths. Inquiry-based, experiential learning through authentic and meaningful tasks has a long and successful legacy in Indigenous education. This approach has been credited with nurturing such 21<sup>st</sup> century skills as collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity (Bass et al., 2011).



## TAKE ACTION

### Indigenous Teaching and Learning Practices

- Go beyond simply recognizing culture in the school. Embed Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, being, believing and belonging into daily classroom practices and lessons.
- Provide opportunities for oral presentations and feedback, in addition to written assignments. School leaders, through their own learning and actions, will encourage and provide staff with opportunities to learn, collaborate, share, and reflect on wise practices in Indigenous education.
- Use assessment and evaluation practices that are inclusive, reflective, fair, and authentic. Students should have an opportunity to receive feedback from authentic audiences such as families, Elders and community members.
- Provide opportunities to build relationships. Emphasize cooperative and collaborative learning. Provide opportunities for intergenerational connections. Instead of relying on teacher-led discussions or textbooks, focus on experiential learning by modeling tasks and processes and guiding students in practice.

#### Wise Practices:

##### Beaufort Delta Divisional Education Council (BDDEC)

Nunamin Illihakvia program is designed to engage students in two knowledge systems, Inuit traditional knowledge and modern scientific knowledge through a blended approach of seeing Elders and educators work together to plan and deliver lessons on-the-land and in the classroom.

#### Wise Practices: Dehcho Divisional Education Council (DDEC)

Classroom teachers incorporate Indigenous ways of being using traditional practices such as following the Dene Laws, sitting in circle, passing to the left and using the land as a classroom for seasonal teaching.

- Use a strength-based approach. Know and build upon students' prior knowledge, interests, strengths, and learning styles.
- Use an inquiry-based approach. Support students in making decisions about their learning that integrate who they are and what they already know about their home and community experiences.
- Spiral learning experiences should be the foundation of teaching practices in all subject areas, including key cultural experiences both within the school and on the land. This should be cyclical and individualized.
- Design lessons so that students find learning relevant to their lives. For example, teach outside of the classroom environment, provide hands-on opportunities, and invite guests and role models to speak or provide work experience opportunities.
- As school leaders, be accountable for initiating inclusive practices that honour Indigenous worldviews. Provide adequate in-servicing and professional development opportunities for all school staff.

## CONNECT AND REFLECT

### Indigenous Teaching and Learning Practices

Consider using these questions to make connections and reflect on your personal and professional journey towards Indigenous education and language revitalization.

Describe what the following concepts mean to you: holistic, relational, spiral, and experiential.

How do these concepts relate to education? How does your practice incorporate these concepts to meet the needs of all students?

How do your students, their caregivers and the community define success?

How can you better honour the gifts, talents and interests of the students in your school?

In what ways does your school draw upon local traditions, cultural protocols, ceremonies, and practices?

What actions does your school take to honour the local Indigenous culture?

How can you be an agent of change to Indigenize your school?

Reciprocity is a key component of Indigenizing education. Have you learned from your students already and how can you invite them to teach you more? What do you give back in return?

How do you practice reciprocity with your students, colleagues, family and friends in a culturally respectful way?

## NOTES

# Indigenous Teaching and Learning Practices

# Indigenizing Content for Curricula and Programming

**Indigenizing Content for Curricula and Programming** refers to connecting **what** is taught to **where** it is taught. Fortunately, the foundational NWT curricula, *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit*, and all new curricula in the NWT follow the NWT Key Competencies. As well, some NWT subject specific curricula documents have been developed to provide educators with the direction required to develop long range, unit, and daily lesson plans in culturally appropriate and relevant ways. In these documents, common outcomes between the curricula are threaded together and Indigenous themes are utilized to meet the related outcomes.

*We are not defined by residential school history. When you take into account our long, long history, it is a bump on the road. It is not who we are as people. Our children must know the dark part of Canada's history but we don't want to take the rocks we've been carrying in our backpacks and simply put them into theirs and make it their burden to carry into the future. We need to help them understand our gonawo – knowledge so they can be strong and know who they are.*

~ Dr. John B. Zoe, Tł'chǫ Government  
Senior Advisor/Chief Lands  
Claims Negotiator

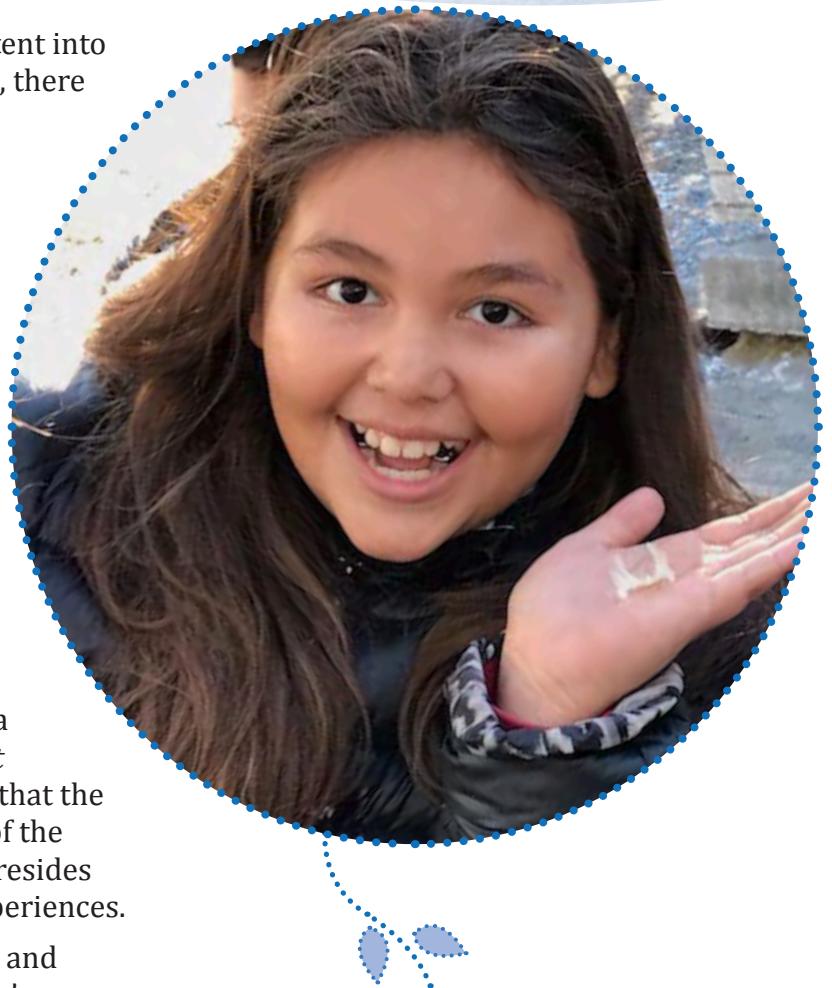
Learning activities throughout the grade levels and subject areas should be developed using Indigenous content and experiences to meet the required NWT curricular objectives. In addition, educators are encouraged to support the integration of Indigenous languages, which creates an environment in which capable students can thrive.

It is important, nonetheless, that educators supplement these foundational documents with additional resources as they gain experience and knowledge.

Northern educators must integrate *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit* into their classroom instruction. There are many other resources that can be included in classrooms to further explore and broaden understanding of Indigenous knowledge with students. The use of these resources will benefit both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners. For many years, Indigenous worldviews have been excluded from curricula or have been misrepresented. Educators can take this important step in reconciliation and, through their efforts to Indigenize curricula, can build all students' capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect as called for in the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC, 2015a).

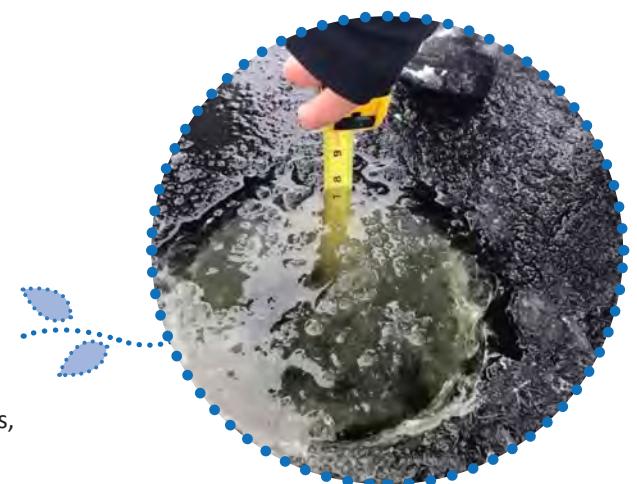
When incorporating Indigenous content into school curriculum and programming, there are many factors to consider.

- Acknowledge and celebrate the diversity among Indigenous peoples and Indigenous sources of knowledge.
- Use authentic Indigenous resources. Be sure the resources you choose do not misrepresent Indigenous peoples or promote stereotypes. If in doubt, ask for help from your Regional Indigenous Language and Education (RILE) coordinator, Elders, or community members.
- Infuse the foundational curricula of *Dene Kede* and/or *Inuuqatigiit* within all subject areas. Be sure that the land, knowledge, and language of the community in which the school resides are reflected within learning experiences.
- Use resources that acknowledge and celebrate the Indigenous peoples' contributions to the community and the NWT.
- Create opportunities to learn from and with your students. Take opportunities to learn from Elders and community members alongside your students (Antoine et al., 2018).

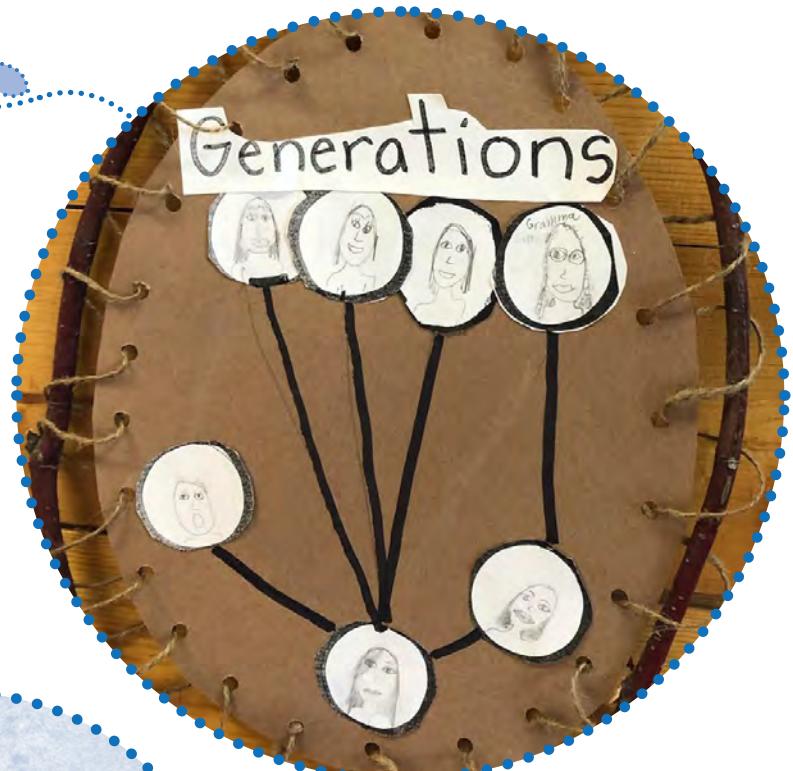


Taking time to use local Indigenous legends creates a rich curriculum for students. Anna Yakelaya – Grimaloski shares her knowledge of a traditional Dene legend by showing the moose antler she found in a sucker fish.

Students should be given opportunities to do purposeful tasks that combine traditional and contemporary knowledge. In the Beaufort Delta, high school students are able to integrate land based experiences into math and science. This information can be collected and used to determine safety factors, and seasonal harvest cycles.



Providing opportunities for students to share Indigenous histories affirms the importance of community. In Nahanni Butte grade 4 students create family projects in social studies.



*Elders are the foundation, the knowledge of who they (Dene) are. Elders are the keepers of the knowledge and keepers of the land.*

~ Margaret Vandel, Elder, Dehcho (ILE Handbook meetings, 2018)

Enjoyable Indigenous language and culture experiences positively influence a child's learning. École Allain St. Cyr Kindergarten student practices speaking Wiiliideh Yati to the moose puppet during camp.





Indigenous culture should be reflected in the curriculum for all students to broaden their perspectives. Paul William Kaeser High school incorporates traditional food such as ptarmigan into their food studies course.

## Indigenizing Content for Curricula and Programming

*I believe it is very important to incorporate Aboriginal content and use age appropriate resources written to the language level to support the students' varied interests, aptitudes and abilities. Creating differentiated learning experiences engages the students in a variety of meaningful activities and contexts for learning about Aboriginal issues, cultures and perspectives. I organize activities that are personally meaningful that connects them to each other, the people, curriculum, community, and environment. The students are always active in interpreting and exchanging meanings using appropriate language, prior knowledge, and developing appreciation for other cultural perspectives.*

*~ Steve Lafferty, Indigenous Language Instructor,  
Joseph B. Tyrell School,  
Fort Smith (NWT TA Newsletter, 2019)*

## CONSIDER THE BENEFITS

### Indigenizing Content for Curricula and Programming

#### Indigenizing curriculum is a part of reconciliation

Rethinking education to honour Indigenous students and build bridges between all students includes critical thinking activities and research projects that challenge stereotypical images, address current Indigenous issues and confront colonial history in authentic partnerships with Indigenous communities (Kirkness, 1999).

The inclusion of Indigenous resources (i.e., text, video, online, human) and worldviews (i.e., philosophies, traditions, language, contributions) within the curriculum is vital to a meaningful Canadian education.

Understanding treaties and the constitutional rights of Indigenous Nations in Canada is also an integral component. There is a shared responsibility of all Canadians for social justice, concern for the environment, and healing (Toulouse, 2013; Tupper & Cappello, 2008).

#### Students do best when their community, land, language and culture are reflected in the curriculum

Ways of believing are connected to place for many Indigenous peoples. The relationship to the land is passed along from generation to generation and rests at the very core of many peoples' identities. This intimate knowledge of place and land is an extension of their spiritual beliefs. It is important to acknowledge the meaning, power, influence and spirit of a place in content for curricula and programming (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; James, 2016; Kavanagh, 2006; Little Bear, 2009).

Studies have found that using varied and authentic resources increases motivation, stimulates interest and helps to contextualize learning (Oura, 2012).

*IMPACTS*  
By developing partnerships between educators, community and territorial organizations schools will better reflect the authentic worldview, culture, and languages of the community.



Watch the video of Sharla Greenland sharing the importance of 'relationship repair'

## TAKE ACTION

### Indigenizing Content for Curricula and Programming

- Plan for students to explore appropriate land claim and/or self-governance structures in collaboration with the local government, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and other community leaders.
- Seek out authentic, quality teaching and learning resources from other Indigenous educators and scholars when local resources are not available. Acknowledge the nation or community from which they originated and respect any relevant cultural protocols. If possible, adapt these to better represent local knowledge or information with appropriate permissions and at the advice of a community cultural advisor.
- Celebrate both historical and contemporary Indigenous knowledge. Recognize, with equal importance, the traditions of the past and the adaptable, dynamic systems that contribute to Indigenous knowledge today.

#### Wise Practices: Sahtú Divisional Education Council (SDEC)

Staff plan lessons based on themes that correspond with the season. Learning about the chosen theme occurs in all subjects and includes the language of the community.

#### Wise Practices: Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency (TCSA) Culture Based

Integrated Plans and the Tłı̨chǫ History Project have been created to support educators with the integration of Tłı̨chǫ language and culture into all school subjects.

- Recognize the unique regional differences in Indigenous knowledge. For example, natural resources, governance, cultural practices, and understanding of climate change.
- Ensure Indigenous histories, perspectives, and actions are authentically presented and examined to identify how these have led to opportunities, challenges, conflicts, and agreements.
- Seek out community support for accurate use of terminology regarding Indigenous peoples.



Watch the video of  
Dene Nakashko talking  
about the importance of  
'uncomfortable truths'  
towards reconciliation



## CONNECT AND REFLECT

### Indigenizing Content of Curricula and Programming

Consider using these questions to make connections and reflect on your personal and professional journey towards Indigenous education and language revitalization.

How do you currently use the *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit* curricula?

List explicit curriculum connections you have made and materials you have used in addition to lessons and learnings from these foundational documents.

How have these curricula influenced you?

Who are the Knowledge Keepers in your school and community who can help you to understand and integrate the *Dene Kede* and/or *Inuuqatigiit* curriculum and help you to evaluate Indigenous resources to use in your classroom activities?

How can you show reciprocity for their support?

How do you incorporate the traditional values of your community into your educational practice, both explicitly and implicitly?

What are some additional ways you could do so?

If you require help for ideas, reach out to the cultural resource people that you listed above.

What are some of the important topics in your community right now? E.g., self-government, caribou management, language revitalization, Indigenous arts, infrastructure, housing, childcare, climate change.

How can you involve community members when addressing these topics with your students as part of teaching the mandated curriculum?



## NOTES

## Indigenizing Content for Curricula and Programming



# Offering Key Cultural Experiences

**Offering Key Cultural Experiences** is the backbone to Indigenous education. Students learn best by doing. The creation of key cultural experiences consists of opportunities for students to learn skills, develop cultural understandings, and build knowledge, together enabling a student to develop the competencies of a **capable person**. The significance of each activity is strengthened by the inclusion of traditional teachings such as: being on the land, storytelling, traditional practices, and the use of Indigenous languages. *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit* are the foundational documents for offering key cultural experiences.

Key cultural experiences are intended to be whole experiences rather than parts of an experience. They are often hands-on to engage the senses and are delivered in a spiral fashion. These experiences should reflect the traditional ways that children learn by being exposed to very basic skills which advance in complexity as students grow more knowledgeable. Key cultural experiences use Indigenous content and use Indigenous teaching and learning practices. Through participation and close observation in key cultural experiences, educators can learn new ways to Indigenize their practice and begin to develop a lived understanding of the community's worldview.

*Culture camp is my favourite memory of the year. The Elders would teach us cultural things. Being there with the entire school and learning together is the best!*

*~ Regan Grandjambe, Student,  
Chief T'Selehye School,  
Fort Good Hope*

These cultural experiences may take place on the land, in the community, or in the school. The experiences should include students having time to interact and learn from Elders and community members. Elders will often share stories with the students. Their stories will unfold around a certain topic in a holistic fashion. They will revolve around a point with many concrete stories and examples, lasting for a significant period of time, until the point is firmly established.



The truth or meaning is often implicit, rather than explicit, and embedded in the story. It is up to the listener to draw from the listening experience what is required.

This is the Elders' way of causing the listener to think and reflect. Educators play a critical role in these meaningful experiences by ensuring that the students experience pre-teaching lessons that prepare the students and post-teaching lessons that allow the students to reflect on the skills and knowledge gained through their participation. These key cultural experiences are not provided in isolation, but are culturally authentic and, when possible, done in the Indigenous language.

Follow up activities that extend student learning should continue to utilize Indigenous practices while linking to subject area curricula.

*I think my dad really was a good teacher for me... Everywhere he went, he would take me along... taking kids out on the land, they have to be out there to see for themselves... they gotta feel it and do it themselves. That's the only way to learn, exactly, that's how I was taught.*

~ Elder Mary Effie Snowshoe, Fort McPherson (James, 2016, p. 102)



Watch the video of Sharon Allen talking about the need to access Indigenous Knowledge Holders in schools

Developing cultural knowledge such as how to place snow blocks and what type of snow to use, take time to learn and grow through continued practice. Students from Mangilaluk School work together to build an igloo.

Traditional Dene games are a way for students to develop their observation and participation skills. Naveah Gargan practices throwing snow snake during winter sports.



*I absolutely love watching the children enjoy and embrace their Dene culture inside the classroom. I am happy to be a part of connecting their traditions and culture with their school experience. This is so important because we need to get kids excited and engaged in learning their language in order to keep our Dene culture alive and vibrant. Every year, the kids at our school look so forward to our spring cultural camp that I organize. They start asking about it really early in the year and that makes me happy to know they value it. We skin muskrat, beaver, pluck ducks, clean fish, make medicine from spruce gum and more. It is also a nice time to introduce our culture to our southern staff and provide a time for everyone to work together outside.*

*~ Regina Lennie, Indigenous Language Instructor,  
Chief T'selehye School, Fort Good Hope  
(NWT TA Newsletter, 2019)*

Creating authentic lived experiences helps our students develop cultural competencies. Deninu school shows students like Brielle McKay how to prepare moose meat.





Watch the video of Joe Dragon speaking about finding our 'fit' in community

## Offering Key Cultural Experiences



Encouraging language with hands-on experiences creates a connection to land, animals and others. Teacher Ty Hamilton uses the Wìiliìdeh Yatiì during a trip on the land with his students.

*When I started going to culture camps at school, I was learning so much, and now I go, it's like I'm one of the leaders and can share knowledge and traditional ways with my teachers and peers. I like when I get the opportunity to go out with younger students and help them with learning the skills and Dene ways of life.*

*~ Ty Lafferty, Student, École St. Patrick High School, Yellowknife*

## CONSIDER THE BENEFITS

### Offering Key Cultural Experiences

#### Key cultural experiences are good teaching practices

Key cultural experiences are authentic, hands-on, or activity-based. They are experienced repeatedly over time to enable students to become more skilled or knowledgeable, in a spiral fashion, at their own pace. A key experience may be composed of several activities that, together, represent a holistic and balanced experience which includes learning about one's relationship to self, others, the land and spirituality. In this way, key cultural experiences naturally lend themselves to teaching that is spiral, experiential, holistic, and relational (*Dene Kede Teachers Resource Manual*, 1993b).

Authentic tasks and classroom experiences that respect and build from this body of knowledge and the students' own experiences and worldview are correlated with enhanced academic success, greater self-efficacy and higher rates of school retention among Indigenous students (Demmert, 2001; McCarty & Lee, 2014; Mmari et al., 2010).



## TAKE ACTION

### Offering Key Cultural Experiences

- Plan, advocate, and look for key cultural experiences with local cultural experts and Elders. These may include on-the-land trips, hunting, trapping, fishing, gathering, or preparing traditional food or medicines. It is also beneficial to consult with your RILE coordinator.
- Prepare and pre-teach students to follow cultural protocols. Be aware of regional differences. Teach respectful ways of being with Elders. Demonstrate reciprocity to show respect for the Elder's knowledge.
- Ask Elders if they would like assistance with the paperwork required to work in the schools such as payment details or applying for a criminal record check.
- Design key cultural experiences for students to experience spiral learning opportunities. Guide students to find connections between these experiences and their prior learning. Encourage reflective practices.

**Wise Practices:**  
Commission scolaire francophone des  
Territoires du Nord-Ouest (CSFTNO)  
Schools engage with the Indigenous  
community to deliver authentic  
cultural experiences. This includes a  
week long spring camp where students  
of all grades participate and learn from  
the community through  
experiential learning.

#### Wise Practices:

##### Dehcho Divisional Education Council (DDEC)

The school participates in a fall camp outside of the town. The camp is planned by school staff, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers and includes language. The purpose of these camps is to allow students to experience the languages in culturally authentic ways.

- Be open to new experiences and go beyond your comfort zone. These may be challenging or uncomfortable at first, but view these experiences, traditions and practices through a new lens.
- Host classroom visits with Elders and Knowledge Keepers.
- Encourage the use of and teach about the value of oral storytelling as a way of learning in the classroom and on the land. Learn and appreciate how Elders provide information through oral storytelling.
- Embed key cultural experiences in unit plans for a wide variety of themes and consult Knowledge Keepers to gather ideas.
- Encourage student-centered learning where key cultural experiences are valued. These may include listening to stories, observing, hands-on activities or interviews.



## CONNECT AND REFLECT

### Offering Key Cultural Experiences

Consider using these questions to make connections and reflect on your personal and professional journey towards Indigenous education and language revitalization.

What key cultural experiences does your school currently offer?

How do these experiences demonstrate spiral learning?

How does your school encourage and support the integration of key cultural experiences for all students and in all grades?

What additional key cultural experiences would you like to see your school offer?

What resources and supports are needed to make this a reality?

What challenges must be overcome?

Describe a key cultural experience you used in your teaching practice.

How did you integrate Indigenous practices into this experience?

How did you integrate this practice into your subject area?

## NOTES

## Offering Key Cultural Experiences







# Our Languages

## Strengthening Indigenous Language



# Our Languages: Strengthening Indigenous Language

**Strengthening Indigenous Language** is more important now than ever. Language is the foundation of culture. Schools play a key role in the language revitalization process. It is a tragedy that many youth today have not heard the stories of their Elders in their ancestral language. Few youth possess the fluency of their language to understand, pass on knowledge, or be captivated by stories that once were told in the ancestral languages.

However, despite the loss and despair from the last century, there has emerged a strong movement toward Indigenous language revitalization and reclamation. It is truly an exciting time with many possibilities. Many people are taking steps to reclaim their language. Many early childhood centres, schools, post-secondary organizations, communities in the NWT, and jurisdictions across Canada have embarked on active campaigns to revitalize Indigenous languages.

This movement is founded on the belief that Indigenous languages cannot only survive, but thrive, if sufficient time, energy, and resources are committed to their revitalization. This goal is supported by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).



It is a time to strengthen our support for Indigenous language instruction. More Indigenous people are learning their languages than in any other time in the recent past. In the NWT there are nine official Indigenous languages. Schools teach the Indigenous languages of the community in which the school is located.

In the fall of 2020, the *Our Languages* curriculum was completed and is now the mandatory curriculum in all schools that offer Indigenous language instruction in the NWT. The motto of the curriculum is **Together We Can Grow Our Languages**. This statement asks for a commitment by all residents, students and school staff.



Listen to Sarah Jerome's experience with language-loss and the responsibility to reclaim it





Watch the Dark Sparks video *Four Direction* project made by youth from Fort Providence and teacher Diana Gargan as they share a message about their culture and community

*Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons. States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected and also to ensure that Indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.*

~ Article 13.1 UNDRIP, 2007, p. 13.

THIS SECTION OF THE HANDBOOK DETAILS THREE ACTION AREAS THAT HELP EDUCATORS IN STRENGTHENING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE:

**Strengthening Core and Immersion Indigenous Language Programs:** focuses on supporting the Indigenous language programming within a school.

**Engaging Community in Indigenous Language Programs:** recommends that the school and the community work collaboratively to strengthen revitalization efforts.

**Employing a Whole School Approach to Language Use:** ensures that Indigenous languages of the community are used, where and when possible, throughout the school.



# Strengthening Core and Immersion Indigenous Language Programs

## Strengthening Core and Immersion

**Indigenous Language Programs** are critical to Indigenous language revitalization. Both core and immersion programming depend on the combined support of parents, Elders, all educators and community leaders.

All language learners need encouragement and support as they embark on their learning journey so that they experience the joy of learning and speaking their ancestral language.

In most NWT schools, Indigenous language programming is offered as a core language program with instructional time averaging at least 90 hours a year. Schools find ways to increase the time allotted by adding language-rich, authentic cultural experiences to their school program. Furthermore, all staff members should embed language into their classroom teaching. A few schools in the NWT have implemented Indigenous language immersion programs, and others have recently begun the immersion implementation process.

Vibrant Indigenous language programs not only benefit students but also helps to strengthen cultural connections or opportunities for an entire community.

This approach highlights the critical need for effective and successful school programming through collaboration with community members who are intent on reclaiming their ancestral languages. Research-based strategies are being used to enrich language programs and instructional strategies,

particularly in the newly mandated *Our Languages* curriculum (OLC). OLC is a JK-12 competency-based curriculum that provides NWT Indigenous language instructors with instructional strategies and learning outcomes for core language classes.

Learning any language can be a challenge and it is hard work. In core language programs, instructional time plays a critical role in a program's success, as does the number of successive years a student is enrolled in language classes. One of the negative impacts of colonization is that the school setting, is often their first introduction to their ancestral language.

Studies show that the human brain, particularly in the early years, has enormous aptitude for receiving, understanding and responding to multiple languages when immersed. It is also important that the exposure is with full sentences in authentic situations.

All educators and school staff play a role in supporting the Indigenous language programs. Principals and program support teachers, as instructional leaders, need to prioritize and support core and immersion programming. All school staff need to be advocates for Indigenous language programming and become language learners themselves.

*What I enjoy most is passing the language and culture on to the young people. It is so much fun watching the students playing games, having conversations and having fun all in an Indigenous language. To teach this class we have been following the new "Our Languages" curriculum. Instead of having the students memorize single words or just repeating after me, we have been trying to encourage the students to make conversation. To do this, we teach them the vocabulary, then use games, songs, puppets, story books and technology to get them to speak in the language. We also go out to the community or invite Elders into the classroom to create conversation with students.*

~ Mary Joan Lafferty, Indigenous Language Instructor, École Sir John Franklin High School, Yellowknife (NWT TA Newsletter, 2019)



In Indigenous language immersion classes, the teacher and students stay in the language all day which allows for faster language growth. Edith Mackeinz creates authentic experiences in her JK class. Quinn Highfield practices using her language to greet the Elder puppets each morning.



Although using Indigenous languages takes all school staff, language instructors are often seen as cultural leaders since they share their commitment and passion for language revitalization. In Łíídl̨ Łéé, Sharon Allen and Bernice Gargan continue to collaborate and create dynamic language lessons for their students.



Watch this video of Gladys Alexie and Maureen Pokiak discuss the importance of having two language speakers in the classroom



Watch the video of Erica Thompson discussing how to support language instructors accessing professional development opportunities in the community

## Strengthening Core and Immersion Indigenous Language Programs

*I feel connected to language and culture because the language is within us and it's important for us to learn it."*

*~ Addy, Student, Elizabeth Mackenzie Elementary School, Behchokô*



Playing Barrier Games (as described in the *Our Languages* curriculum) gives opportunities to practice asking questions, explaining, clarifying or giving instructions. Elder Frank Arrowmaker uses images to help demonstrate word order in Tł'chǫ to students at Jean Wetrade school.

## CONSIDER THE BENEFITS

# Strengthening Core and Immersion Indigenous Language Programs

### Key cultural experiences are good teaching practices

In a full immersion program, ideally, all activities and learning, except for English language classes, are in the Indigenous language. The best chance for children to become capable, within a core language program, is to take best practices from full immersion programs and to provide the students as much time in the language as possible (OLC, 2020, p. 6).

When the language class is “liberated from its regular time slot on the timetable and expanded into other areas of the curriculum it provides a more authentic context for learning”. The language program also benefits from “principal support, positive reinforcement, improved staff attitudes and enhanced status” (Jones, 1995, p. 156).

“One of the main principles of a concentrated approach to language instruction is the expectation that the Indigenous language instructor and the students will stay in the language of instruction in all classroom interactions. This requires discipline on the part of both instructors and students. High expectations for all will result in greater language learning. Instructions, explanations, commands, directions, praise, questions and responses must all be spoken in the target language” (OLC, 2020).

### Learning Indigenous languages has many benefits

Dr. Leroy Little Bear says that “the most important aspect of human learning is the language. It acts as a repository for all of the collective knowledge and experiences that a people, a society, or a nation has” and that “social healing and progress will occur only when Aboriginal people again think in the sacred modes via their languages, hence the importance of Aboriginal languages as a major component of curricula” (Little Bear, 2009, p. 22).

“The appropriate use of languages in literacy provision and education has a beneficial effect on access to learning, inclusion in schools, and learning outcomes. The use of mother tongues in education impacts positively on children’s attendance and performance in school” (Fontaine, 2012, p. 6).

*IMPACTS*  
By using a whole school approach to Indigenous language use, students will see value in the language. They will connect concepts they have learned to the land and place of their ancestors.

*Indigenous language instructors are often viewed as language champions. To ensure the instructors increase their own language fluency and pedagogy, they must receive continued professional development and support.*

## TAKE ACTION

### Strengthening Core and Immersion Indigenous Language Programs

- Support the Indigenous language instructors to stay in the target language at all times.
- Encourage students to teach each other and to create their own Indigenous language resources to be used in classrooms, throughout the school and the wider community.
- Host Indigenous language experiences where students present projects in classrooms and assemblies.
- Encourage the sharing of resources with other schools where the same language is spoken.
- Encourage school staff to access the OLC website which has many resources that could be used throughout the school.  
<http://ourlanguagesnwt.com>
- Create a dedicated classroom for the Indigenous language class.
- Support language speakers to bring language into other spaces such as the gym, kitchen or playground.

#### Wise Practices:

Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency (TCSA), Dehcho Divisional Education Council (DDEC) & Sahtú Divisional Education Council (SDEC)

As of 2022, Immersion programs have been implemented in schools in each of these education bodies. Indigenous language immersion programs are growing in the NWT as schools and communities prioritize language revitalization and reclamation.

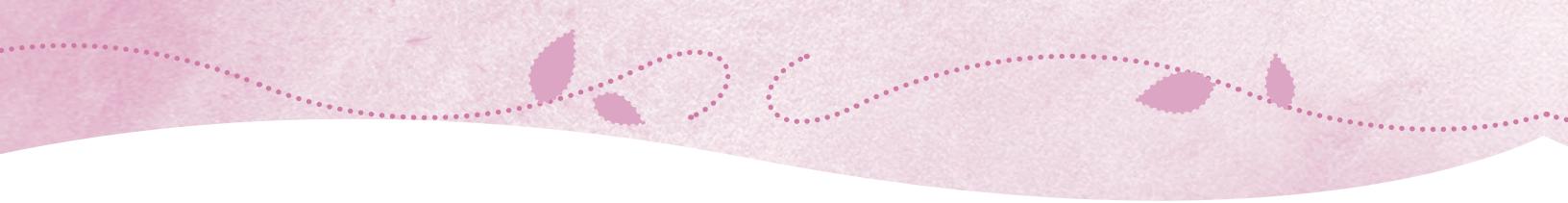
#### Wise Practices:

Beaufort Delta Divisional Education Council (BDDEC)

Each day begins with all staff and students coming together in the foyer to do prayer and language lessons. In multi-aged groupings, everyone learns new phrases and vocabulary based on the cultural calendar and plays in the language.

- Reusing language in different situations is an important part of spiral learning. Principals should schedule core language classes in longer time slots so students have the opportunity to engage with the language in a more in-depth way.
- Principals and educational leaders must become language learners and model the use of the languages within schools. They need to encourage all school staff to participate in language activities.
- Create an “Indigenous Languages Only” zone within the language classroom or school. While challenging, exclusively speaking the Indigenous language will help learners (including other educators) who enter the classroom to develop their language skills.
- Combine authentic cultural experiences with language learning. Land-based experiences and hands-on learning in the classroom should include Indigenous language when possible.
- Share the language that is being used in the classroom and school with family so that the language can be used at home.





## CONNECT AND REFLECT

### Strengthening Core and Immersion Indigenous Language Programs

Consider using these questions to make connections and reflect on your personal and professional journey towards Indigenous education and language revitalization.

In addition to the Indigenous language instructor, who are your school's Indigenous language speakers?

Describe how these individuals are essential language resources and champions.

How do Indigenous language instructors and educators of other subject areas partner to enrich the education provided in all classrooms?

To what extent does the school leadership team, including principal and program support teacher, also work with the Indigenous language instructor to support language growth?

How has the decrease over time in Indigenous language use affected your community?

If unsure, seek out a local friend from your community and learn about their observations of this decline.

To what extent have you or others in the community noticed an increase in desire for and efforts in language revitalization?

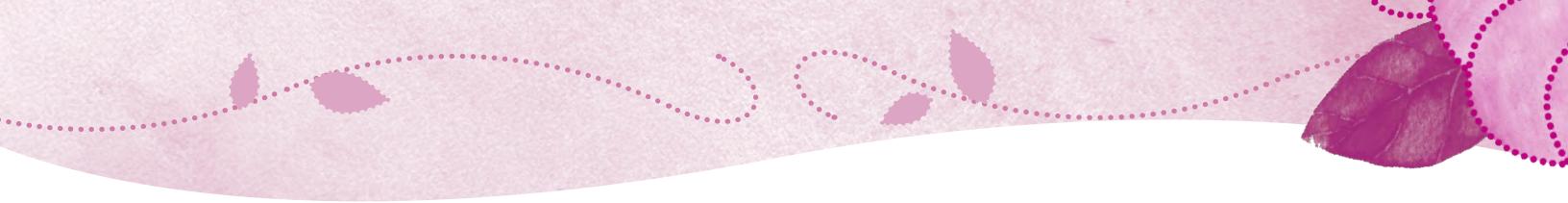
How do you think this affects your community?

If your school currently offers Indigenous language immersion programming, describe it.

If so, what are your plans to demonstrate support for the program?

If not, does your school have plans to create such a program?

What are the challenges in the creation of an Immersion program?



## NOTES

## Strengthening Core and Immersion Indigenous Language Programs



# Engaging Community in Indigenous Language Programs

**Engaging Community in Indigenous Language Programs** are emphasized in the *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit* curricula and reminds educators that community involvement can take many forms. Schools need to create a welcoming environment where language speakers such as Elders or other community members feel invited so that students can practice authentic conversations.



*I contacted some community members and guests before they came to visit my class. I wanted them to be aware of my students' language skills and areas of interest. I shared with them all of the sentences my students learned for the unit. That way I hoped they would speak with my students within the range of language they could understand. I wanted my students to experience success.*

~ Sharon Allen, Dene Zhatié Teacher,  
*Łíídlu Kęę*, (OLC, 2018, p. 25)

Elders hold the knowledge of traditional skills and language. Freda Alunik provides valuable wisdom and time to the school community by sharing her culture with grade 7 students in Inuvik.



Listen to Dorothy Ruben and Edith Mackinzo discuss their language reclamation journey through the GNWT's Education, Culture, and Employment Mentor-Apprentice Program (MAP).

Students can also go into the community to engage with the Indigenous language. This may include participating in a culture camp, attending a local government meeting, speaking on the local radio, or using language in the grocery store. School leadership should support Indigenous language instructors to engage Elders or community language speakers in programming. This approach gives opportunities for students to use their language with speakers who are not their teacher.

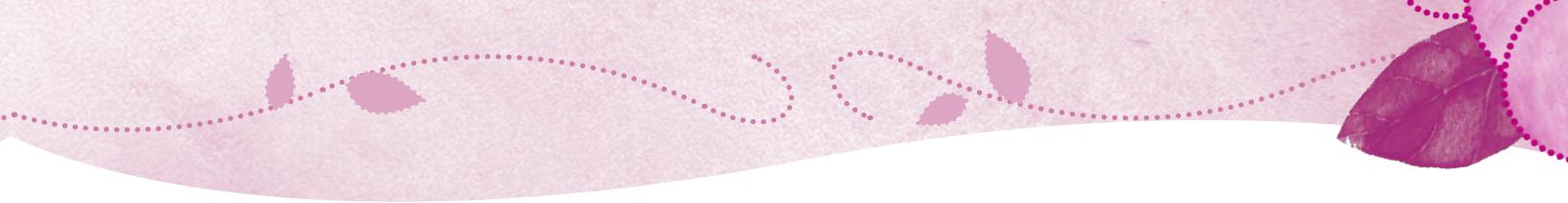
Indigenous language revitalization and reclamation efforts work best when the community and school prioritize language learning and use.

*Language and culture is important for me because it was passed down to me by my family. It's what I grew up with and it's what makes me who I am.*

*~ Victoria Gordon, Student, Moose Kerr School, Aklavik*

Working with local radio stations helps students contribute to their community and find an authentic and purposeful use for language. Mezi Community School students have fun using their Tłı̨chǫ language.





*It's time we are all working on the same moose hide.*

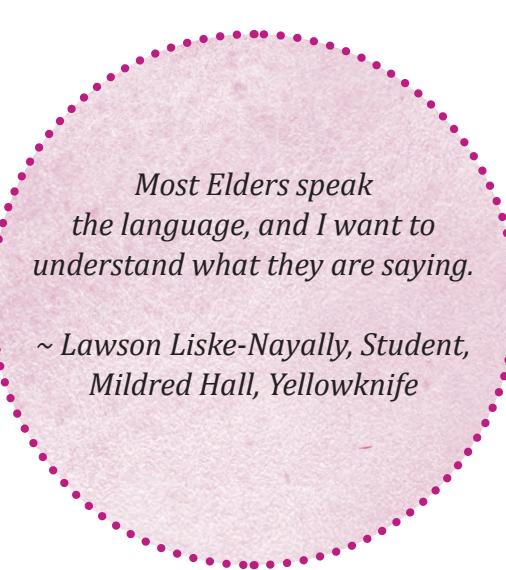
*~ Seamus Quigg,  
Former Superintendent,  
Sahtú Divisional  
Education Council*



"It is the responsibility of all school staff to ensure that students are understanding how the stories and experiences provided by the Elders fit together" (Dene Kede, 2002, p. 28) with school programs. This means creating an environment that connects stories and experiences together in welcoming spaces. Dëneze Nakéhk'o, Indigenous Cultural Support Worker, listens to Elders Verna Crapeau and Edward Doctor on traditional names and travelling routes.



We can all learn from Elders. Including community members and Elders in teaching allows students to value their unique skills and talents. Lillian Elias, Shannon Kailek and Donna Johns work together on traditional crafts.



*Most Elders speak the language, and I want to understand what they are saying.*

*~ Lawson Liske-Nayally, Student,  
Mildred Hall, Yellowknife*



Watch this video of Elder Irene Kendo sharing her joy in teaching Gwich'in with Tsiigehtchic students



## Engaging Community in Indigenous Language Programming

*Relearning your languages is not easy; it has to be a passion. It has to be something that you care so much about that you'll do anything to get it. It is a lot of work. Our work is cut out for us – each and every one of us. Each and every one of you has that responsibility.*

~ Sarah Jerome, former NWT Language Commissioner and Language Champion (NWT Indigenous Languages Action Plan 2018-2022, 2018, p. 18)

Inviting community members into the school affirms that schools hold a responsibility in a child's education, but it is a shared responsibility with the community. As an RCMP member (Community and Indigenous Policing) April Bell, shares the gift of beading with students.

## CONSIDER THE BENEFITS

### Engaging Community in Indigenous Language Programs

#### Communities and schools are in a reciprocal relationship in terms of language revitalization

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) recognized the importance of community in leading language revitalization efforts, stating in its *Calls to Action* that “the preservation, revitalization and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities” (TRC, 2015b Action #14.iv, p. 2).

Krashen (2013) has studied the reciprocal relationship between school and community in terms of language acquisition and language learning. He points out that language is acquired naturally if learners have authentic real-world experiences, understand the context, and have some basic knowledge upon which to build. Schools should prepare students to be active participants. He wrote that the classroom is no substitute for the outside world – its goal is to “bring the students to the point where they can use the outside world for further acquisition, to where they can begin to understand the language used on the outside” (p. 59).



Elders’ stories of the land help root us in place. Morris Neyelle takes time to share traditional and personal stories of Délı̨nę that reinforce the connection between people and places.

#### Elders play a vital role

Strengthening relationships between Elders and youth can change perception and commitment towards shared language revitalization goals. Prolonged, repeated, and goal-orientated interaction between Elders and youth, such as collaborative learning about language loss or situationally authentic language practice, changes attitudes and builds momentum to revive languages (Zeldin et al., 2000).



Watch the video of Renie Koe speaking to her students about the benefits and joys of reclaiming their Gwich'in language.

*Families need to feel language use is a priority in the school. Language revitalization will foster positive relationships and is an important part of reconciliation.*

*Community members who have worked with children in the school are more likely to continue to use the language with the children when they see them outside of the school.*

## TAKE ACTION

### Engaging Community in Indigenous Language Programs

- Use social media platforms to share Indigenous language learning. This may lead to greater language use in the community.
- Have students and teachers create a community resource map as a visual representation of the community and the skills people have and are willing to offer.
- Set community-wide language challenges that encourage everyone to use the Indigenous language. When the community and school collaborate, students see the relevance of Indigenous languages.
- Create mentorship opportunities by connecting students with Elders. The students practice and learn the language and show reciprocity by giving respect to the Elders for the wisdom they have received.

#### Wise Practices:

##### Sahtú Divisional Education Council (SDEC)

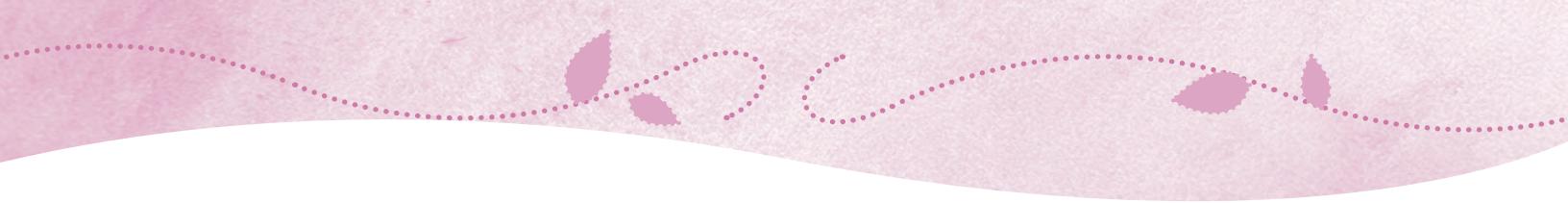
Each Thanksgiving there is a feast held where the community is invited. School staff work together with the assistance of students to cook the meal, set up the gym and do take down. Students are engaged with learning about and practicing Dene laws. This serves as an opportunity for the community to visit the school and for students to engage with Elders in the language.

#### Wise Practices:

##### Dettah District Education Authority (DDEA)

The students write, direct, produce, star in, and edit short films in the Wiiliideh Yati. The continued project titled *Frostbite Films* has supported language revitalization by empowering students to learn and then teach their language to others. The films began as one word, and now students have produced a film entirely in the language. These are shared with the community through social media.

- Support the use of community radio programs as authentic ways for the school and community to collaborate on language use.
- Invite community members, who are fluent Indigenous language speakers, to participate in school or on-the-land activities to increase language use and to share traditional knowledge.
- Organize Heritage Fairs as a school-wide initiative and encourage the use of language during the presentation. Invite the community to view and judge the projects.
- Host Indigenous language focused events where students are expected to use their language, at their own level, including feasts, talent and fashion shows, handgames and drum dances.



## CONNECT AND REFLECT

### Engaging Community in Indigenous Language Programs

Consider using these questions to make connections and reflect on your personal and professional journey towards Indigenous education and language revitalization.



- What is the Indigenous language fluency rate in your community?
- Who are the language keepers and fluent speakers who can provide support to the school?
- How can you develop language learning relationships with them?
- How can you and your students incorporate their Indigenous languages into your classroom context?
- What kind of community resources can your students create as a part of their class work that could benefit the community/region/territory and incorporate Indigenous languages?
- How can you support your students to engage in language use in the community?



## NOTES

# Engaging Community in Indigenous Language Programs

# Employing a Whole School Approach to Language Use

**Employing a Whole School Approach to Language Use** requires intentional actions to bridge the gap created by colonization. *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit* speak to the role of language in learning and forming one's view of the world.

Students' language proficiency improves when all staff use Indigenous language in their daily instruction, classroom routines, and conversational interactions in the hallways. All staff must be language learners and continue to develop their use of conversational phrases and specific vocabulary to enrich their daily lessons.

*To encourage all of our teachers to learn more of the language and also help with relationship building, I asked my Aboriginal language teachers to work with one teacher each to build lessons together. One group picked physical education and the children were taught how to use the language associated with sport. Because it was physical, the children were engaged and enjoyed using the phrases as they played the games. It helped with the Aboriginal language retention for both the student and the teacher. This was an excellent opportunity for both teacher and student to be learners together. That is what teaching and learning Aboriginal language is all about!*

~ Velma Illasiak, former Principal at Moose Kerr School, Aklavik (OLC 2020, p. 28)

Indigenous language instructors are language leads when implementing a whole school approach to language use. Renie Koe starts each school day with all students and staff of Chief Paul Niditchie School practicing conversational language based on themes.



Creating new ways to encourage language use at home is vital for language revitalization. During COVID-19 students, teachers, and families joined teacher Sally Drygeese in learning the Wiiliideh language.

*We are all  
Indigenous language  
teachers.*

~ Linsey Hope, Director of Education,  
Tłchǫ Community Services Agency  
(Cultural Orientation Day, 2018)

Learning a new language is not easy and requires time and commitment. Educators new to the community may feel uncomfortable or afraid to make a mistake. It can also be very difficult for Indigenous educators from the community as not all will have their language. Be respectful of each other.

Using Indigenous language signage in the hallways helps promote language use in all areas of the school. Seasonal displays can be made that encourage language use and create an environment that values the Indigenous language of the community.



Strong language learning programs involve everyone in the school and community. Principals are the lead in setting the standard by modeling and expecting that Indigenous languages be used throughout the school. However, everyone, including education staff, support staff, and students, must take responsibility. The whole school approach takes commitment, energy, effort and collaboration.

Schools that truly engage in employing a whole school approach to language use are fulfilling an important role in helping to strengthen and revitalize the Indigenous language of the community and fostering reconciliation.



Student ownership in setting language goals can be encouraged by learning their own strengths and interests. Language speaker James Lafferty helps Layden Judas in building an axe handle.

*I believe that when teachers learn Indigenous languages they can connect and engage with the land and people.*

~ Rosemary Andrew, Indigenous Language Instructor, Chief Albert Wright School, Tulita

*When we do our circle in the morning and I don't know how to say something in Gwich'in, I'll ask the kid next to me, "Hey, can you teach me how to say that?" And you see their eyes just light up.*

~ Cliff Gregory, Teacher, Chief Paul Niditchie School, Tsigehtchic



Authentic experiences let children practice speaking their language in a purposeful environment. Judy Wedawin, secretary at Jean Wetrade School, uses Tł'chǫ when delivering the breakfast program.

## Employing a Whole School Approach to Language Use

All school staff play an important role in sharing and using the language. Doris Bourke, the custodian at PWK High School, takes time to show students how to harvest and use land-based foods.



## CONSIDER THE BENEFITS

### Employing a Whole School Approach to Language Use

#### A whole school approach can improve student achievement and help Indigenous languages flourish

Schools can incorporate language routines into their day. Routines reinforce the language and also provide the opportunity to introduce new phrases. This simple routine helps consolidate language learning and prepares learners to start thinking, listening, and speaking in their language (Archibald, 2008; James, 2016; Kirkness, 1999).

#### Revitalizing Indigenous languages is a shared responsibility

When students, colleagues, and community members begin to see that a teacher respects the language enough to learn and use it, a door to learning and exchanging roles opens. Students will be excited to teach their teachers more words, and Indigenous community members might begin to share more information about culture and tradition (Battiste, 2013; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Kavanagh, 2006; Marchant, 2009).

IMPACTS

*When  
educators take  
risks and learn to use  
Indigenous languages,  
relationships are  
strengthened.*



Creating curricular themes that align with a cultural calendar allows all teachers the ability to incorporate language and culture into their lesson plans. East Three students in Inuvik work in teams to complete a cultural “Amazing Race” along with their teacher.

## TAKE ACTION

### Employing a Whole School Approach to Language Use

- Use the Indigenous language of the community whenever possible, such as in greetings, introductions, classroom requests, and subject area vocabulary.
- Use Indigenous language in school announcements, assemblies, and special events. Beginner speakers should learn and practice Indigenous languages despite discomfort or fear of making mistakes or failure.
- Beginner speakers can download the appropriate regional language app. They contain a variety of games and activities that educators can use to augment language learning through a relaxed and playful activity.
- Encourage fluent language speakers to remain “in the language” as they interact with students and staff. Staff can help with this by learning the survival phrases (see p. 76).
- Ensure that ceremonies that use the language, including prayer, feeding the fire, paying the land and lighting the qulliq are incorporated into school routines.
- Understand that, as an educator, it is an act of reconciliation to learn and value the Indigenous language. Additionally, it will facilitate the teacher developing a greater insight into and understanding of the culture and history of the community.

#### Wise Practices: South Slave Divisional Education Council (SSDEC)

QR codes are used throughout community buildings and schools that attach language visuals to audio.

#### Wise Practices:

##### Beaufort Delta Divisional Education Council (BDDEC)

All educators and support assistants go to the Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik class with their students daily. Students and staff learn the language, culture and traditions together.

This practice allows for all educators to reinforce what is being learned in language class throughout the day. Staff are using the Oral Proficiency Scale, provided by OLC. All staff are assessed along side students on their language learning journey.

- Maintain an open line of communication between homeroom classroom teachers and Indigenous language instructors so that connections can be made across the disciplines.
- Share games and learning activities developed for Indigenous language classrooms during breaks in the school day.
- Have ‘Indigenous-Languages-Only’ minutes or immersion sets scheduled at least once a week. Challenge classes to use the language at their own level for those minutes. Suggest themes to be discussed or provide pictures for the entire school to describe. Each week try and increase the number of minutes that the entire school is staying completely within the language.
- Strategically plan curricular themes and lessons to include Indigenous language vocabulary.
- New speakers can begin their language journey by learning how to introduce themselves, and by incorporating language goals into their professional learning and teaching plans.

## CONNECT AND REFLECT

### Employing a Whole School Approach to Language Use

Consider using these questions to make connections and reflect on your personal and professional journey towards Indigenous education and languages revitalization.

Reflect on your language learning journey.

Are you just beginning? If so, who can support you in furthering your language skills?

How can you include language learning and use in your daily routines and lessons?

If you are further on your language journey, how can you assist others who are just beginning their journey?

If you have traveled to another country or place that has a language other than yours, what are the phrases that you have learned in that language (if any)?

How does that compare with the phrases you have learned in the community where you live in now?

Below are some very basic phrases that a new teacher would be expected to learn. Within the parentheses are ideas to further your skills. Think about what other phrases would be useful for engaging with your students on an on-going basis.

- *Good morning, good afternoon*
- *Hello, how are you? (and you?)*
- *Good, not-good, (tired, hungry, excited)*
- *Thank you*
- *My name is (what is your name?)*
- *I am from (where are you from?)*
- *Can I go to the washroom? Can I get a drink of water?*
- *Good for you. (Listen, settle down, high five)*
- *See ya later!*

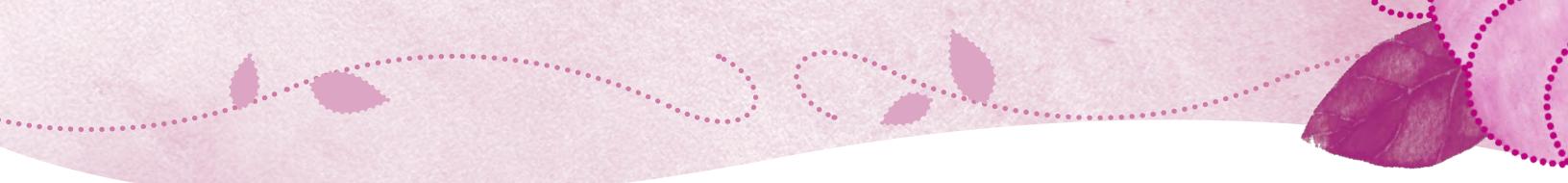
There are also known phrases that really help when trying to learn a language. These are called “survival phrases” as they help learners stay in the language. We encourage you to learn these phrases to help you on your language journey.

- *I want to learn \_\_\_\_\_ (name of language in blank).*
- *How do you say \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_? (put word and name of language in blanks)*
- *Can you say it slower?*
- *Can you say it again?*

## NOTES

## Employing a Whole School Approach to Language Use





# Appendices



# Indigenous Languages and Education (ILE) Team

## PURPOSE

Each school is asked to establish an Indigenous Languages and Education (ILE) team. The purpose of this team is to bring together those who are leaders in Indigenizing education and Indigenous language revitalization. They serve as a support for other educators in the school and as the leaders in school-wide initiatives.

## TEAM COMPOSITION

It is suggested that the ILE team have representation from classroom-based teachers, Indigenous language instructors, culture support instructors, a representative from the administration team (principal or vice-principal), and the program support teacher (PST). Some smaller schools have decided to have all staff on the ILE team. Staff in these schools included all educators, support assistants, custodians, bus drivers and members of the DEA.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

Implement the *ILE Policy* and *ILE Handbook* in each of the nine action areas, through school-based initiatives and with all staff by:

- Using *Dene Kede* or *Inuuqatigiit* in the development of the school ILE plan.
- Ensuring that the school ILE plan aligns with the School Improvement Plan, Operating Plan and Annual Report.
- Ensuring the school calendar reflects cultural orientation days, Indigenous seasonal activities and the dates of regular ILE team meetings.
- Communicating to and engaging all staff, families, and community members with the school ILE plan.
- Completing on-going reflective assessment of the nine action areas and determine next steps for continuous growth of the school ILE plan.

## ILE TEAM SUPPORTS

The team has various supports available to them for guidance. Some of those supports at the regional level include the Regional Indigenous Language and Education (RILE) coordinator, the superintendent, assistant superintendent and comptroller.

School-based supports include the Indigenous language instructors, cultural support workers, PSTs, etc.

Community supports include community Elders, Knowledge Keepers, leadership and families.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment's (ECE) Indigenous Language & Education (ILE) coordinators are an additional support that can be accessed through your RILE coordinator.



Staff at Deh Gah school, work together for language and culture revitalization.



BELOW IS AN ILE TEAM CHECKLIST THAT CAN GUIDE THE PRINCIPAL AS THEY ESTABLISH THIS TEAM WITHIN THEIR SCHOOL.

## ILE TEAM CHECKLIST – INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES & EDUCATION (ILE)

### ILE TEAM COMPOSITION

A collaborative team approach is important to support Indigenous languages and education (ILE) in NWT schools. All staff are responsible for ILE, but some schools have chosen to create an ILE Team to lead school wide initiatives. Below are examples of people who should make up the ILE Team:

- Administration
- Indigenous Language Instructors
- Classroom-Based Teachers
- Cultural Resource Experts
- School Support Staff (PST, Counsellor, Support Assistant, etc.)
- Other (RILE, School Elder, DEA member, Secretary, PAC member, community member, student leaders, etc.)

### ILE PLAN ACTION AREAS

ILE Teams lead the implementation of the ILE Policy to ensure that all students are welcomed within learning environments that centre, respect, and promote the Indigenous worldviews, cultures, and languages of the community in which the school is located. The foundational curricula of *Dene Kede/Inuuqatigiit* and the ILE Handbook are supportive documents. The nine action areas as outlined in the ILE Handbook are:

- Building the school-community relationship
- Strengthening training for northern educators
- Fostering student wellbeing
- Indigenous teaching & learning practices
- Indigenizing content for curricula and programming
- Offering key cultural experiences
- Strengthening core and immersion Indigenous language programs
- Engaging community in Indigenous language programs
- Employing a whole school approach to language use

### ILE TEAM SUPPORTS

There are employees of the education body and community that can be a support to the ILE Team:

- Regional Indigenous Language & Education (RILE) coordinator
- ECE Indigenous Language & Education (ILE) coordinators
- Education Body – Principal, Superintendent, Regional Staff, Comptroller, DEA member
- Indigenous Language Instructor & Cultural Resource Experts
- Community Elders & Knowledge Keepers

### ILE TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

- ILE Team will want to ensure they:
- Align the school ILE plan with the Education Accountability Framework
- Connect ILE plan with their cultural orientation days
- Set regular dates for ILE team meetings
- Set ILE team meeting agenda
- Communicate with and engage all staff in the school ILE plan
- Set annual timeline for developing/implementing nine action areas
- Determine next steps for the continuous development of the school ILE plan

# Terminology and Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Capable Person</b>	A capable person is ready, willing and able to learn and contribute to their communities. A capable person is motivated to act, can recognize relevant skills and information, to draw upon and knows how to do so appropriately. A capable person is one who demonstrates integrity in relationships that honour self, others, the land, and the spiritual world. A capable person finds the value in both Indigenous and Western worldviews and values a lifestyle that combines and appreciates both ways of being, knowing, doing and believing.
<b>Colonization</b>	Settler colonialism is one of many types of colonialism, all of which imply social, cultural, and most significantly, economic domination.
<b>Core Language Classes</b>	A core language program is one where instruction happens within the school day and focuses on language learning. Instructional time averages 90 hours a year. Students receive instruction for all other subjects in English.
<b>Culture</b>	The living expression of ideas, behavioural norms, worldviews, and traditional knowledge of a group of individuals who have a historical, geographic, religious, spiritual, racial, linguistic, ethnic, or social context, and who transmit, reinforce and modify those from one generation to another. Culture includes heritage: things we inherit from the past and bring forward to the future.
<b>Cultural Appropriation</b>	Is the act of taking or using objects from a culture that are not your own, typically without permission, understanding or respect for that object or culture from which it comes. Examples of cultural appropriation include the inappropriate and unacknowledged use of traditional dress, music, food, knowledge, or art, or making a profit from the selling of traditional items.
<b>District Education Authority (DEA)</b>	The District Education Authorities (DEAs) are composed of elected and/or appointed individuals who represent their community's interests in the planning and delivery of educational programming in their school(s).



Term	Definition
<b>Divisional Education Council</b>	<p>The Divisional Education Council (DEC) is composed of one DEA member from each community within the region. There may be additional members representing regional organizations who also sit on the DEC. The DEC is jointly responsible for the governance and direction of schools in their region. DECs have been established for the: Beaufort Delta, Sahtu, Dehcho, South Slave, Commission scolaire francophone des Territoires du Nord-Ouest. The Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency (TCSA) operates with the authority of a DEC and each Tłı̨chǫ community has representation on the TCSA. However, each Tłı̨chǫ community does not have a DEA. In Yellowknife, Yellowknife Education District No.1 (YK1) and Yellowknife Public Denomination District (Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS)) operate with the authority of a DEA. These are the only two education bodies with the ability to raise operating funds through taxation. The Dettah and Ndilq DEAs are the most recently established education bodies and they contract their superintendency through YK1.</p>
<b>Decolonization</b>	<p>A process of (re)claiming Indigenous identities in former colonial states, of asserting the validity and status of cultural practices, knowledge, and experiences that have been discounted due to Eurocentric systemic imposition, and of dismantling racism and privilege by challenging colonial practices within political, social, economic, judicial, administrative, and educational structures.</p>
<b>Dene Kede</b>	<p>A foundational curriculum that encompasses the language, culture and the way in which five Dene regions view the world: Gwich'in, Sahtú, Dehcho, Tłı̨chǫ and Akaitcho.</p>
<b>Education Bodies</b>	<p>See Divisional Education Council</p>
<b>Educational Programming</b>	<p>A program of education, from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12, based on the curricula established or approved by the Minister of Education.</p>

Term	Definition
<b>Elders and Knowledge Keepers</b>	Elders and Knowledge Keepers are individuals identified and recognized by the community as leaders, traditional knowledge holders, and/or language speakers, who have strong traditional and cultural skills.
<b>Experiential</b>	Experiential teaching and learning practices purposefully engage learners in direct experiences, hands-on activities and focused reflections in order to develop new skills, new attitudes, or new ways of thinking.
<b>Holistic</b>	Holistic teaching and learning practices focus on the development of respectful relationships with self, others, the land, and spiritual world.
<b>Indigenizing Education</b>	A pedagogical shift within schools and classrooms that centers on Indigenous content and processes, where every subject at every grade level is examined to consider how and to what extent current content and pedagogy reflect Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge. This is strengthened through teaching and learning practices that are holistic, spiral, experiential, and relational.
<b>Indigenous Languages and Education Team</b>	Each school is encouraged to have an Indigenous Languages and Education (ILE) team. The ILE team should include school leadership, classroom teachers, Indigenous language instructors and support staff who are eager to integrate language and culture into the school environment. This team serves as a support for other educators in the school and acts as the lead in school-wide initiatives, recognizing that Indigenous language and education programming is everyone's responsibility.



Term	Definition
<b>Indigenous Language Immersion</b>	A language immersion program is one with the goal of acquiring the language through instruction and activities that are only (or mostly) in the language being taught. In most immersion programs, students are in the target language for all or most of the day.
<b>Inuuqatigiit</b>	A foundational curriculum document, developed by Inuit and Inuvialuit educators and Elders from the eastern and western Canadian Arctic, grounded in the belief of the Elders that education must be community-based.
<b>Key Cultural Experiences</b>	Authentic and relevant learning opportunities and experiences that reflect, validate, and promote the worldviews, cultures, and languages of the Indigenous peoples of the NWT. The significance of each activity is strengthened by accompanying storytelling and traditional teachings, being on-the-land, and includes use of Indigenous languages.
<b>Learning Environment</b>	The diverse physical locations, contexts and cultures in which students learn, including schools, classrooms, and on-the-land. This also includes the worldviews, cultures and languages reflected within the school climate, classrooms and school-community relationship.
<b>Reconciliation</b>	The ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful nation-to-nation relationships with Indigenous peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation, and partnership. Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that had and continue to have destructive impacts on Indigenous peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.
<b>Relational</b>	Relational teaching and learning practices nurture relationships with self, family, community, the land, and the spiritual world.

Term	Definition
<b>Spiral</b>	Spiral teaching and learning practices see curriculum and material revisited repeatedly over months and across grades, gradually getting into deeper layers of complexity.
<b>Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices (STIP)</b>	An initiative that provides education boards across the territory the option to re-direct up to 100 instructional hours to allow for improved teacher planning, assessment, collaborative practice, and ongoing professional development.
<b>Teaching and Learning Practices</b>	Methods of instruction, learning activities, and pedagogies used to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Indigenizing education fosters teaching and learning practices that are holistic, spiral, experiential, and relational.
<b>Worldview</b>	A worldview is a way of perceiving and conceptualizing everything in existence through a set of beliefs, values, and ways of knowing, including how people interact with the world around them – the land, animals, and others. The worldviews of Indigenous peoples are distinct, and each Indigenous culture expresses this worldview in different ways, with different practices, stories and traditions.



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# Photo Credits

Pg. 7 Students at Colville Lake School, Colville Lake; photograph courtesy of SDEC.

Pg. 8 Kairyssa Jacobs from Princess Alexandra School, Hay River; photograph courtesy of SSDEC.

Pg. 9 Kaycee Campbell, Mila Eldridge & Tyra Bain from East Three Secondary School compare muskrat mitts to their trapping, Inuvik; photograph courtesy of BDDEC.

Pg. 10 (from top to bottom) Sarah Allunik, Nita Lucas & Payton Larocque from Inualthuyak school, Sachs Harbour; photograph courtesy of BDDEC. Berry Picking in Dettah, Dettah; courtesy of DDEA. Paul Boucher leads Daylen Powder in prayer song at Paul William Kaeser High School, Fort Smith; photograph by Paul Boucher.

Pg. 13 Kaeon Yatsallie-Kotchea from Charles Tetho School, Sambaa K'e; photograph by Monica Kreft.

Pg. 14 Domitelle Lennie from Weledeh Catholic School, Yellowknife; photograph by NWT Recreation and Parks Association.

Pg. 16 Dr. Angela James at MAP training session, Yellowknife; photograph by: Bill Braden

Pg. 18 (from top to bottom) YCS Prayer offering: Joseph Charlo doing water offering, Yellowknife; photograph by Amy Wilkinson. Northern Studies: St. Patrick's High School student shares hug with Ruth Mercredi after completing the module on Residential Schools, Yellowknife; photograph by Amy Wilkinson. Sandy Creek: Ayden Tambour tries his hand at archery during culture camp at Sandy Creek, Kátł'odeeche First Nation; photograph by Delores Fabian.

Pg. 19 Brenden Bekale and Victoria Drybones during Tł'chǫ training at CJBS, Behchokǫ; photograph by Judy Whitford.

ELP - During ELP principals doing self-reflection on their school's culture and language programming, Dettah; photograph by Judy Whitford.

Pg. 26 Verna Crapeau hangs dryfish for Mildred Hall students, Yellowknife; courtesy of YK1. Adreana Boucher from Deninu School during ILES Action Planning, Ft. Resolution; photograph by Judy Whitford. Miller Franson snowshoe racing at Moose Kerr School, Aklavik; photograph courtesy of BDDEC.

Pg. 27 Sahtú drummers supporting their young men during regional handgames tournament, Yellowknife; photograph by Jennie Rausch.

Pg. 28 Tania Larsson from Dene Nahjo sharing traditional knowledge of tanning tools, Yellowknife; photograph by Judy Whitford.

Pg. 29 Chief Dolphus Jumbo helps students at camp, Sambaa K'e; photograph by Monica Kreft.

Pg. 30 RCMP join the Helen Kalvak Elihavik School, Ulukhaktok; photograph courtesy of BDDEC.

Pg. 31 ENR demonstrates how to harvest a wolverine, Inuvik; photograph courtesy of BDDEC.

Pg. 37 (from top to bottom) New to the NWT Educators conference begins with cultural protocol from the region, Dettah; photograph by Colleen Eckert. Teacher Ian Brown learns about snaring from Elder Paul Mackenzie, Yellowknife; photograph by Judy Whitford. Kari Anderson and Melanie Weins work together in a mentorship program, Yellowknife; photograph by Ryan Nichols. ELP helps principals develop a stronger cultural understanding, Tsu Lake; photograph by Colleen Eckert. Participating in activities such as the Blanket Exercise help create a collective awareness on Indigenous history and contemporary issues, Łíídlı̨ Kéé; photograph by Judy Whitford.

Pg. 38 ILE team leads spend time on the land with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, Blachford Lake; photograph by Scott Willoughby.

Pg. 39 Chris Stanbridge and James Lafferty prepare for a trip with community members, Behchokǫ; photograph by Chris Stanbridge.



Pg. 45 Chase Yakeleya leads his École Sir John Franklin High school team, Yellowknife; photograph by Amy Wilkinson.

Pg. 46 Rochelle Smith shares her fiddling talents, Hay River; photograph courtesy of SSDEC.

Pg. 46 Elder Michel Louis mentors Dylan Stanbridge in drumming, Behchoko; photograph by Jacqueline Stanbridge.

Pg. 47 Iris Kotchea & Setua Kotchea spend time on the land together, Sambaa K'e; photograph by Monica Kreft.

Pg. 48 Keith Wolki ice fishing with Angik School, Paulatuk; photograph courtesy of BBDEC.

Pg. 53 Weledeh Catholic School drummers lead prayer song during Orange Shirt Day, Yellowknife; photograph by Judy Whitford.

Pg. 54 (from top to bottom) Betty Barnaby takes staff berry picking, Fort Good Hope; photograph by Judy Whitford. Paul William Kaeser School creates a space for a visual representation of Northern Studies content, Fort Smith; photo courtesy of Marnie Villeneuve. École Allain St. Cyr practices traditional games during Physical Education class; photograph by Zakaria Traoré.

Pg. 56 (from top to bottom) Braydon Krengnektak hold a fish caught during the spring, Paulatuk; photo courtesy of BDDEC. Liselle Cook and daughter Domitille Lennie pluck ducks together at camp, Dettah; photograph by Judy Whitford.

Pg. 57 (from top to bottom) Tracy Modeste teaches her students (Adam McPherson, Landon Bayha and Kadence Bavard) how to cut moose meat, Tulita; photograph by Jessie Campbell. Christina Boggis creates experiential opportunities for students in Dettah, Dettah; photograph courtesy of DDEA.

Pg. 58 Students in Ndilq participate in head-pull, Ndilq; photograph courtesy of NDEA.

Pg. 59 Colin Rose, Coby Elanik and Matthew McLeod participate in a caribou hunt, Aklavik; photo courtesy of BDDEC.

Pg. 65 Anna Yakelaya-Grimaloski shares her knowledge of a Dene legend taught at École St. Joseph School, Yellowknife; photograph by Judy Whitford.

Pg. 65 Measuring ice thickness applies many math and science principles, Beaufort Delta; photograph courtesy of BDDEC.

Pg. 66 Kindergarten students at École Allain St. Cyr practice using Indigenous languages with puppets, Yellowknife; photo courtesy of Zakaria Traoré.

Pg. 66 Charles Yohin school students create social studies projects, Nahanni Butte; photograph courtesy of DDEC.

Pg. 67 Paul William Kaeser High school cooking class, Fort Smith; photograph by Marnie Villeneuve.

Pg. 73 Mangilaluk School works together to build an igloo, Tuktoyaktuk; photograph courtesy of BDDEC.

Pg. 74 Naveah Gargan practices snow snake, Hay River; photograph courtesy of SSDEC.

Pg. 74 Brielle McKay cuts meat, Fort Resolution; photograph courtesy of SSDEC.

Pg. 75 Ty Hamilton takes students from KDS on the land, Ndilq; photograph courtesy of NDEA.

Pg. 82 (from top to bottom) Coby Elanik greets Elder Mrs. Annie B. Gordon in Gwich'in class following cultural protocol, Aklavik; photograph by Judy Whitford. George Tatsachelie shares his knowledge about Wiiliideh River with high school students, Yellowknife; Photograph by Judy Whitford. Ndilq students use Indigenous language during the daily snack and lunch program, Ndilq; photograph courtesy of NDEA.



Pg. 84 Sharon Allen and Bernice Gargan collaborate on a written project for their language classes, Łíídlı́ Kúé; photograph by Judy Whitford.

Pg. 84 Immersion student in Délı̨nę use puppets as an authentic audience, Délı̨nę; photograph courtesy of SDEC.

Pg. 85 Tłı̨chǫ Elder Frank Arrowmaker plays a Barrier Game with students from, Gamètì; photograph by Judy Whitford.

Pg. 90 Freda Alunik works with grade 7 students at East Three Secondary School, Inuvik; photograph courtesy of BDDEC.

Pg. 91 Mezi Community school students using Tłı̨chǫ on the local radio station, Whatì; photograph courtesy of TCSA.

Pg. 92 Dëneze Nakehk'o, Verna Crapeau and Edward Doctor use the map to discuss traditional names and travelling routes, Enodah; photograph by Judy Whitford.

Pg. 92 Lillian Elias, Shannon Kailek and Donna Johns work on traditional crafts, Aklavik; photograph courtesy of BDDEC.

Pg. 93 April Bell creates beading projects with students, Hay River; photograph courtesy of SSDEC.

Pg. 94 Morris Neyelle shares his knowledge of Délı̨nę, Délı̨nę; photograph by Judy Whitford.

Pg. 98 Renie Koe makes Indigenous language fun using word dice at Chief Paul Niditchie School, Tsíigehtchic; photograph by Judy Whitford.

Pg. 99 Sally Drygeese leads Wiiliìdeh language classes online during COVID 19, Dettah; photograph by Lea Lamoreaux.

Pg. 99 School signage promotes language throughout the school, Yellowknife; photograph by Gina Williams.

Pg. 100 James Lafferty helps Layden Judas build an axe handle, Behchokò; photograph courtesy of TCSA.

Pg. 100 Judy Wedawin leads the breakfast program in Tłı̨chǫ, Gameti; photograph courtesy of TCSA.

Pg. 101 Doris Bourke, harvests and prepares ptarmigan with students, Fort Smith; photograph courtesy of Marnie Villeneuve.

Pg. 102 East Three Secondary School students work on a cultural "Amazing Race", Inuvik; photograph courtesy of BDDEC.

Pg. 107 Deh Gáh school staff having a feast together, Fort Providence; photograph by Kim Hardisty.



