

NORTHERN STUDIES 10

MODULE 5: BECOMING CAPABLE

INTRODUCE THE PRACTICUM AT THE BEGINNING OF THE COURSE



NORTHERN STUDIES 10

MODULE 1: NORTHERN IDENTITY

START WITH THE END IN MIND...



Education, Culture and Employment

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment wishes to acknowledge the contributions of many community members throughout the Northwest Territories who have added their voices to the building of Module 5: *Becoming Capable*. The contributions and the process of development reflect the desire of the Department to listen to community members to ensure that the topics and methods of educating their children reflect the people who call the North their home.

We particularly thank several groups that were instrumental in the development of the resources including:

The Wise People Committee

Jane Arychuk, Joanne Barnaby, France Benoit, Dianne Blesse, Ted Blondin, Merril Dean, Velma Illasiak, Kyla Kakfwi-Scott, Stephen Kakfwi, George Kurszewski, Anna Pingo, Myrna Pokiak, Beverly Masazumi, Mattie McNeill, Lawrence Nayally, Wendy Stephenson, Oree Wahshee, John B Zoe

Pilot Educators who contributed to this module

Marnie Villeneuve, Anna Pingo, Mike Johnston, Shirley Snowshoe, Kate Johnston and Angela Kadlun

This module is designed to help students on their journey of becoming capable people through making a strong connection to a mentor in their community. The mentor will share their knowledge and talents with the students by teaching them a Northern skill of the student's choice. Through time spent together, the students will learn much more than a specific skill; they will gain respect for their mentor and themselves, a stronger sense of identity as a Northern person and appreciate the importance of patience and determination needed to complete a project to the best of their ability. They will also be required to communicate their learning to a chosen authentic audience.

Above all, it speaks to the fundamental importance of the relationship between the community and school as the foundation for change. It addresses new (for schools) methods of learning and creative ways to learn while respecting the traditional knowledge and practices which have made our territory strong.

*Honourable Jackson Lafferty
Minister, Education, Culture and Employment
ECE, Education Renewal and Innovation Framework:
Directions for Change, 2013.*

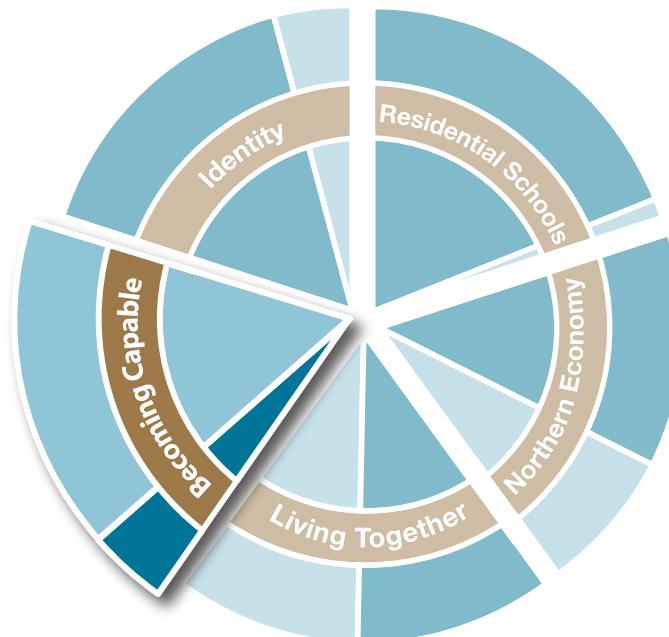
MODULE 5: BECOMING CAPABLE

Welcome to the Northern Studies 10 Module called *Becoming Capable*. Unlike other modules which have varying teacher-directed activities, Module 5 is mostly student-led. It is called a *practicum*, as students should be selecting a learning activity which is not 'book' learning.

The Module Components

Guided Inquiry – This module has a small Guided Inquiry involving 3 teacher-led activities of approximately 3 hours total. These activities are designed to assist students in selecting their skill or talent and to find mentors in their community who have the skill set to match what they hope to learn. The Guided Inquiry helps students to think about *what does it mean to be a capable person?*

Student-Led Inquiry – The majority of the time allocated for Module 5 should be student-led (22 hours) for a total of 25 in-class hours. Students may need to also work outside of class time to complete their inquiry. The module is designed to help students become capable people. The Student-led Inquiry essential question is *how does working on a specific Northern skill or talent, with a mentor, help enrich my sense of belonging in the North?*



BECOMING CAPABLE RESOURCES

Some of the resources you will need in order to teach the *Becoming Capable* module are found in the course binder and on the memory stick. The exception is utilizing local organizations and especially community resources to partner mentors with students. The key to the success of this module is the relationships built between the students and their mentors.

Materials List:

Within this *Becoming Capable* Module you will find the following resources:

- Binder with printed copies of activities and related worksheets
- 3 Videos: *Dene a Journey*,
NS10 Module 5: *Becoming Capable* (for teacher use) and
NS 10 Module 5: *Becoming Capable* (for student use)
- USB memory stick

» NOTE: Begin Module 5 near the beginning of the course

It is highly recommended that Module 5 be introduced early on in the course. The student-led inquiry requires students to find a community mentor to teach them a Northern skill or perhaps practice a talent they have already identified. A key responsibility of the teacher is to build an inventory of community resources or find people who can help their students understand the many resources that exist in their community. Selecting a skill and initiating a relationship with the mentor requires individual support from the teacher and can be time consuming. Making these connections early in the course will allow students and their mentors to arrange work times.

Ideas from Teachers

I've been teaching this course for several years now. I now know to introduce the practicum just after the students do the Student-led-Inquiry in Module I. Actually, some of them were already excited as they had seen what others had done last year so they knew it was coming. Giving them extra time to think about what they wanted to work on made it so much easier than waiting until the end of the course.

Northern Studies 10 pilot teacher.

Summary of Activities Including Learning Objectives and Suggested Time

| Activity | Time* | Learning Objective |
|--|-------------|---|
| Activity 1: Capable Northern People | 60 min | Students will identify the traits, skills and talents of a capable Northern person. Students will recognize how skills and talents contribute to a person's identity and to the health of a community when shared with others. |
| Activity 2: Contributing to Community | 60 min | Students will learn that all people have talents. Many people believe that these talents have been given to them for use within our communities. Students will identify their own talents as well as others. |
| Activity 3: Finding My Talent | 60 min | Students will determine what makes a practicum project successful and meaningful using criteria they develop together. Students will investigate possible skills or talents and choose one they'd like to do for their practicum. |
| Activity 4: Student-Led Inquiry | 20 hours | Students will work under the guidance of a mentor to complete a practicum. This practicum is a practice and development of their identified skill or talent. |
| Activity 5: Authentic Assessment | 2 – 3 hours | Students will communicate to an authentic audience how working on their talent or skill, with a mentor, enriches their sense of belonging in the North. |

For this 25-hour module, it is recommended that the student-led inquiry take 23 hours including two hours reserved for presentations. Teachers might find that more or less time is needed to complete the activities.

Good luck with the *Becoming Capable* module!

“Learning skills from other people is allowing them to make those connections with their community and really become part of the community and part of the North.”

Northern Studies 10 pilot teacher

WHY IS A PRACTICUM PART OF NORTHERN STUDIES 10?

Northern Studies 10 was developed through the guidance of a Wise People Committee (see list of names in acknowledgement section). This committee emphasized the importance of a practicum where students had the opportunity to develop their talents through the mentorship of a knowledgeable person from their community. The following reasons describe some of the thinking behind *Becoming Capable*.

1. To Identify a Skill or Talent and Share it

Becoming Capable is a practicum designed to give space for students to select a skill they want to learn and potentially develop their talents. As the Łutsel'Ke Elders explain, we are each given talents with which we are to help our community. It is essential that students and teachers have a conversation about what it means to be

capable (*Activity 1*). It is also important that students be given the space to recognize the difference between a skill and a talent, to identify their own talents and to recognize the talents in others (*Activity 2*).

The students will create a work and study plan which will help them succeed in developing their talents.

Łutsel'ke Elders (1995)

All youth are told that they are unique and that they must seek their uniqueness. Experiences are provided that will encourage them to participate in all areas of development. Hereditary traits are explored in order to seek areas of strength.

Whatever uniqueness is displayed is respected as long as it works for the betterment of the people. Uniqueness that causes problems for others is considered unacceptable and is discouraged by relating consequences in the form of stories or with shunning.

When a young man or woman shows interest in developing a certain talent, they are placed to work with a mentor. This mentor does not have to be in the immediate family. This kind of special training is allowed however, only after the basic needs of their families have been met.

As the person becomes more and more capable in their talent, they are acknowledged by the community and are being expected to share their talent. For example, someone who is known to have learned to build, will be expected to help where there is building going on. Another example is where a musician is expected to play when the occasion arises for live music. Once the person has become accomplished, it is expected that he or she will act as a mentor to another young person, thus perpetuating the talent for the good of all.

Dene Kede, Module 5 Developing our Talents, p. 16. Copyright 2004, Education, Culture, and Employment. Reprinted with permission.

2. To See the Value of Land-Based Learning

A key principle of *Becoming Capable* is to learn traditional skills, in on-the-land settings where possible. Traditionally, all learning took place on the land. Northern survival skills were taught under the guidance of a recognized expert. By learning land-based skills through on-the-land activities, students will also be given opportunity to recognize the spiritual element of the land through stories, significant places and their names. Land-based learning will also help students to truly develop a *sense of place*. Where this sort of learning is not possible or practical, teachers, students and communities are encouraged to remain faithful to the spirit of the practicum as much as possible.

3. To Have Intergenerational Conversations with Knowledgeable Community Members

The practicum is an opportunity for students to engage in meaningful activities with their community. By improving their capability with a traditional skill, students can be exposed to local stories, traditional protocols, the living history of the NWT and the spiritual element of the land. During this practicum, students can explore the important stories and questions that shape the North. During the practicum work, it is important that a safe space is created between the student and the mentor where respectful conversations will contribute to the value of the 'process' of developing a Northern skill, as opposed to just focusing on the skill itself.

The meaning comes from the context and the process, not the content. Meaning comes from the performance (or practice) of a culture. It's how we collectivize meaning.

Leanne Simpson, Dancing on our Turtle's Back, 2011



"My mentor taught me some things about hunting. He taught me how to listen for sounds in the forest. He taught me how to read tracks and even to tell how fresh they are." Anonymous.

NWT Parks & Recreation



Madeline Drybones and her granddaughter, Diya, share stories while stretching a caribou hide in Lutselk'e.

Tessa Macintosh

4. To Develop a Sense of Belonging to the Northern Community

Although the explicit focus of Module 1 is identity, each of the other modules in Northern Studies have students exploring their identity in some way – which will help them enrich their sense of belonging in the North. This *Becoming Capable* module, which they should be working on throughout the entire course, is their opportunity to connect everything they've learned. *Becoming Capable* asks students to reflect on their learning, not just from the practicum, but from the other parts of the course. A capable person understands how culture, family, language, core beliefs, the land, significant stories, and economic factors shape our collective Northern identity. After they have completed their practicum project, students need to share their learning with an authentic audience. During this sharing experience, students should explicitly detail in some way how learning a skill and working with their mentor has helped them to enrich their sense of belonging to the North. This is true for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.



James Lockhart, Culture and Language teacher at Lutselk'e Dene School, plays hand games with the highschool students as part of an on-the-land program.

Tessa Macintosh

5. Inquiry-Based Learning¹

Inquiry is a dynamic process of being open to wonder and puzzlement and coming to know and understand the world. As such, it is a stance that pervades all aspects of life and is essential to the way in which knowledge is created. Inquiry is based on the belief that understanding is constructed in the process of people working and conversing together as they pose and solve the problems, make discoveries that arise in the course of shared activity. Inquiry is a study into a worthy question, issue, problem or idea. It is the authentic, real work that that someone in the community might tackle.

Becoming Capable is an essential part of the Northern Studies program and should be given a central place in the course.

Part of what Northern Studies particularly strives to achieve is building connections between the learner and their northern community and environment. This is most clearly expressed in the practicum module. Student choice of their inquiry, on-the-land learning, research and presentation of their learning to audiences that go beyond the teacher, are key parts of making these inquiries meaningful and powerful – and part of their development as capable people.

p.11 Northern Studies Curriculum

¹ <http://inquiry.galileo.org/>

6. Authentic Assessment

An authentic audience is someone other than you, the teacher. The audience should be genuinely interested – such as their mentor or family members. An authentic audience can have a dramatic impact on your students' motivation and effort as they see their work as 'out there' rather than just for you to grade. In this type of assessment, the teacher is no longer the only person involved. Peers, family, Elders, community or an online community can be invited to participate in the assessment process. Teachers and students should work together to ensure that the learning in the practicum is assessed beyond the classroom walls. Students should know this from the outset of the practicum.



Roland Notaina of Ulukhaktok explains to 15 year old Darla Evyagotailak how to use a GPS. It's part of her Junior Ranger training.

Tessa Macintosh

In Summary, the Practicum Strives to:

- i. connect a student's contemporary reality to a traditional Northern skill or talent
- ii. have students make connections within their communities to better understand the place they call home
- iii. have students actively engaging in projects which matter to them
- iv. involve authentic assessment by mentors, community members and teachers
- v. connect school and community
- vi. involve both the demonstrated learning of a skill and the ability to meaningfully reflect upon their learning
- vii. provide an opportunity to summarize all their learning from each of the 5 modules through this culminating task (optional)

ACTIVITY 1

CAPABLE NORTHERN PEOPLE

Learning Objective

Students will identify the traits, skills and talents of a capable Northern person. Students will recognize how skills and talents contribute to a person's identity and to the health of a community when shared with others.

Time

60 minutes

Curricular Link

Outcomes that should be addressed through this activity include:

| Component | Skills Outcome | Module Outcome |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Capable Person | S. 8. c, d, | 5.5, 5.6, 5.2 |
| Dene: A Journey | S.9.a, j | 5.8 |

Preparation and Materials List

- Photocopy a class set of the handout, *Capable Northern People*
- Preview and prepare video, *Dene A Journey* (15 min).

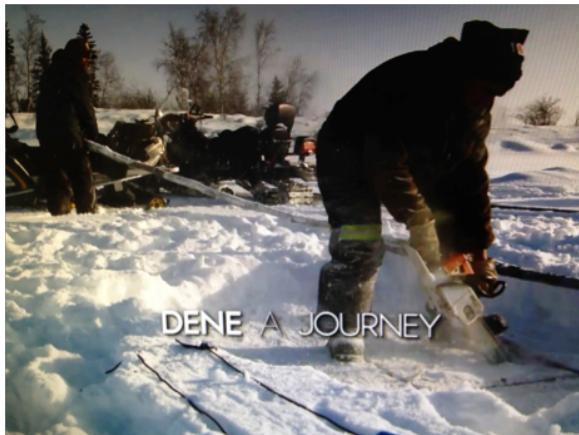
Possible Assessment Activities

- Written reflection on, 'How do our skills and talents contribute to our identity?' Refer to Activity 1 in Module 1 to remind students about what shapes our identity (where you are born, gender, sexual orientation, culture, language, family, stories, political environment, religion, media, peers, etc...).
- Personal response to video, *Dene a Journey*.

Making the Connection for the Teacher

In Northern Studies 10, we are trying to help all our students on their journey to become capable people. Traditionally, these were skills which were essential to survival. Without the ability to know the land, trap, hunt, fish, locate medicines, get along in the group, know where to go in which season - among many other skills - people of the North would have perished. In today's world, the need to be capable is just as great, but some of the skills needed are different. This activity is designed to focus students on the traits of capable people and to know the difference between a skill and a talent and to think about the importance of sharing your talents with the community as a capable person.

Students will watch the 15 min video, *Dene A Journey* and reflect on how each character is building their identity by choosing to learn a particular skill or talent. The purpose of showing this film is to inspire students to choose a practicum project that is creative and meaningful to them. The hope is for students to complete their practicum project on the land since this is a traditional form of teaching. The people, the stories and skills that come from the land offer rich learning experiences for students that will connect them to the local culture in whatever community they live.



Dene A Journey is an APTN documentary series that follows a journey of discovery for different Dene as they undertake a task of discovering their traditional Dene language and culture by going out and experiencing time-honoured activities. If students are interested they can watch the full episodes by searching APTN Dene a Journey in their web-browser.

Steps

Capable Northern People (30 min)

1. Handout *Capable Northern People* and ask students to brainstorm the traits of a capable Northern person. Ask the students to be general and not identify one person in particular. This will create a wide range of traits for discussion. They should put one or two traits on their paper to start.
2. Next, arrange the students in two lines (line A and line B) so that they are facing a partner while holding their worksheet. Each set of partners will likely find one or two traits on each other's worksheet that they didn't have on their own list of traits and add them to their own. After 1-2 minutes, direct the students in Line A to move one person to the right. Each set of partners will do the same thing. Do this until Line A gets back to their original partner. They should now have a full sheet of traits that describe a capable person.
3. Discuss the difference between a talent and a skill (practicums can be talents or skills).

| Skill | Talent |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Something that can be learned through practice and training.• It is developed and doesn't always come easily.• It can be acquired through hard work.• It can be practiced so much that it appears to be a talent. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A natural gift or ability.• Requires little effort. We don't necessarily think about it, we just do it.• Natural talents in an area can make learning a new skill very easy. |

4. Discuss what a capable person may have looked like 100 years ago. How has the meaning of 'capable person' changed or stayed the same over time?

Dene A Journey (25 min)

1. Watch the video *Dene A Journey* (13 min).
2. Have a class discussion about how each person in the video is becoming a more capable Northern person. What are the skills and talents of each person and how does that shape their identity and sense of belonging?
3. Tell them that they will be doing a practicum and they will select a skill or a talent that they will need to be working on throughout the rest of the course. Don't expect them to know what they want to work on at this time.



Angela Hovok Johnston, mentor, teaching Urbah Syed how to make moccasins.

Tessa Macintosh

"You're not only teaching them the skills of sewing, but you're also teaching them life skills too, and you have a bunch of stories you can tell them so they can learn from them."

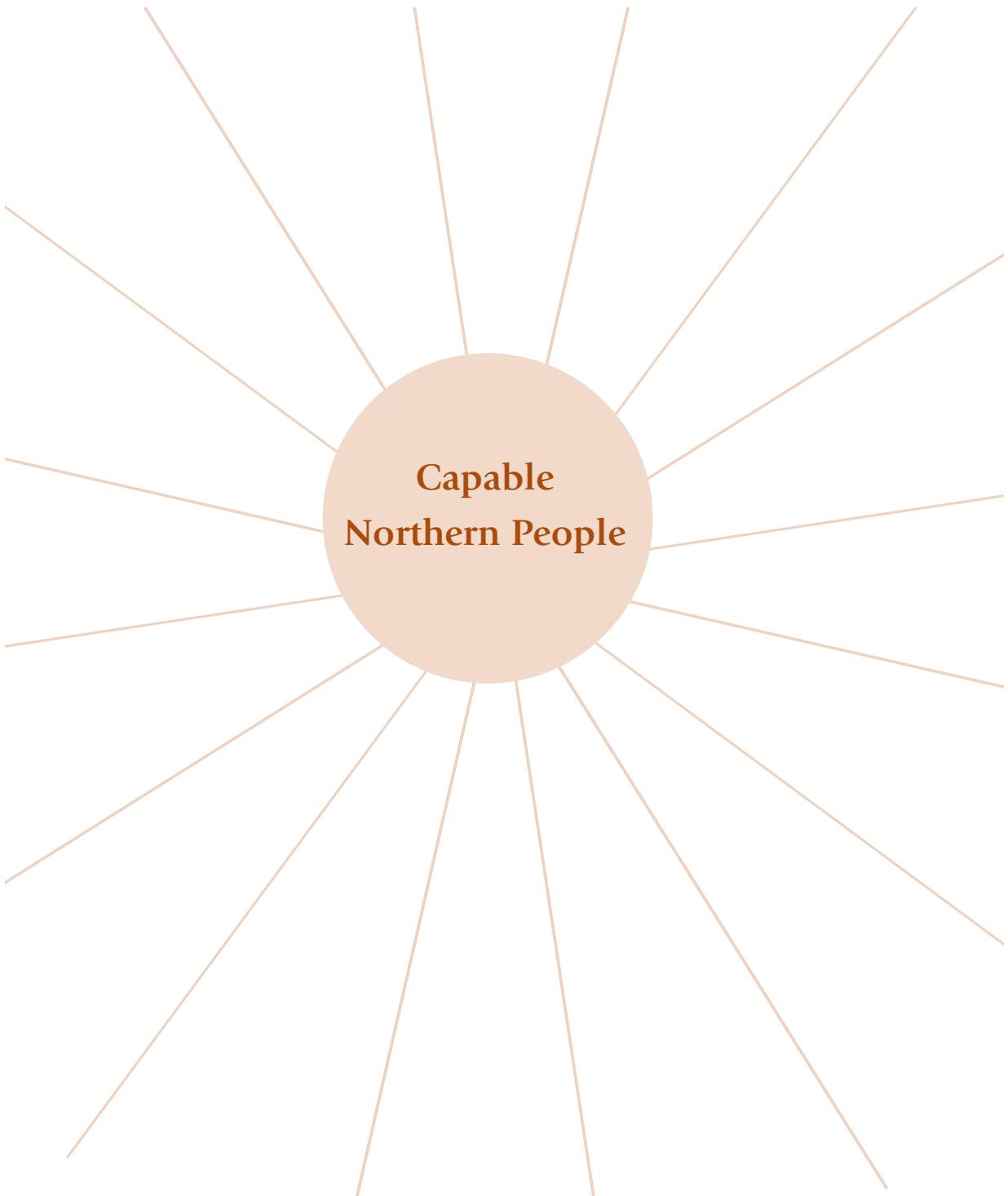
Northern Studies 10 mentor.

Ideas from Teachers

I asked students "What are the talents of your parents, grandparents, and family members? Do you share any of these talents with your family members?" I also asked them "Identify a capable person in your life. Why do you look up to them?" I found these questions helped with thinking about what it means to be a capable person.

Northern Studies 10 pilot teacher.

CAPABLE NORTHERN PEOPLE



ACTIVITY 2

CONTRIBUTING TO COMMUNITY

Learning Objective

Students will learn that all people have talents. Many people believe that these talents have been given to them for use within our communities. Students will identify their own talents as well as others.

Time

60 minutes

Curricular Link

Outcomes that should be addressed through this activity include:

| Component | Skills Outcome | Module Outcome |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| My Talents | — | 5.2 |
| Becoming Capable | — | 5.5 |

Possible Assessment Activities

- Teacher observation of *My Talents*?
- Student reflection on, "How did it feel to read the talents that my peers identified in me?"

Preparation and Materials List

- Photocopy the handout, *Developing Our Talents*
- Tape, scissors, markers (for students)
- Scrap paper (one for each student)
- Chart paper (one for each group of 4 students)
- Prepare the video, *Becoming Capable*

Making the Connection for the Teacher

A capable person is one who meets the criteria set out in *Dene Kede* or *Inuuqatigiit* and is a recognized community expert in some way. In the context of Northern Studies, a capable person is someone who has realized the potential of their talents. In this activity, students will prepare for their practicum by thinking about their own skills and talents and what contributions they make to their community.

For a student who already has an identified talent, the practicum will offer the opportunity to go further toward becoming an expert or perhaps using their talent to teach another person. For a student who feels drawn to exploring a talent in which they have little experience, the practicum will be an opportunity to learn and gain experience. Both learning experiences are valid and valuable and we encourage teachers and students to use the practicum as a place where students, talents and community can meet.

As you can see from the excerpts from *Dene Kede*, the idea of 'talent' is a very important one in Dene culture. Although not all Northern Studies students are Dene, our education system believes that all students do have special talents. Encouraging students to find their own talents and realize their own powerful ways of knowing makes all students better learners. Take some time to think about your own learning and your own talents – if you share your experiences and model your talents, it may help your students to see you as a lifelong learner as well. It may help students if you ask them to think about their own family. Ask them to think about the sort of things that come easily to them; that may help them see where their talent lies. Often, it is easier for others to see our talents than for us to see our own.

It may be helpful to get the students to talk to some of the people who know them best for insights into their own talents – this may be within the classroom setting as suggested in this activity, or for homework.



Gus Adjun has been mentored by his father, Collin, to be an incredible fiddler. Gus contributes to his community by playing at community events. His contribution adds to the community well-being on many levels.

Mindy Willett



In this image, people are enjoying dancing, including his Dad, while Gus is playing his fiddle.

Mindy Willett

Steps

My Talents (30 min)

1. Hand out *Developing our Talents* and ask students to read it quietly or as a full class. When they are finished reading, review the difference between a talent and a skill and answer any questions they may have.
2. On a piece of paper, ask students to write in the middle "My Talents Are" and get them to help each other tape the sheet to their back. Ask students to identify each other's talents by roaming the classroom and writing at least one talent on each student's back. When they are finished, students can remove the sheet from their back and read all of the talents their peers wrote down for them.
3. Ask the students to circle the one they feel is the talent that contributes the most to their community.
4. Ask students to work as a class or in groups to draw a picture of their community. This can be done on large chart paper or on the whiteboard. Be sure they include symbols for all aspects, such as their home, family, friends, neighbours, gas station, work, school, day-care, Elders home, recreational activities, religion, cultural locations, etc...
5. Ask them to tape their talents on the aspect of the community where it contributes the most. In each group, ask students to identify areas of the community that benefit most from their talents? What areas don't?

Becoming Capable (30 min)

1. Play the video *Becoming Capable*, for your students. It provides a very small sample of projects previous Northern Studies students have completed. The video should give students an idea of what they may want to work on. Ask students to pay particular attention to the pride the former students feel in their work.

DEVELOPING OUR TALENTS²

Read the following and consider which talents you have and which talents you see in others. It is important to remember that skills and talents can be different. For example, you may be very good at hockey (a specific skill), but your talent may be larger – something like ‘athletic’.

As described in *Dene Kede*

- Talents are gifts that come to individuals from the Creator.
- Everyone is born with a talent but it must be discovered and developed.
- A person’s talents can be discovered when the person is very young.
- A person’s talent must be discovered.
- An individual should share their talent.
- Things come easily to those with talent.
- People in one’s family may know the talents of the family members.
- Elders are often able to see talents in the young. If the young are able to take the advice of Elders, they can discover the talents in themselves.
- Elders with finely developed talents and wisdom are mentors for the young who showed talents in their areas.
- The talents were meant by the Creator to help people to survive and to live a better life.
- Talents that are not shared are left unused (can’t be shy or lazy). You receive back what you give away or share in the way of talents.
- A person’s talent is acknowledged by his community when the person is asked to or when one decides one is ready to participate in a public situation, for example: drumming at a dance or helping to build something.
- One does not have to sacrifice oneself to the community because of one’s talent. A person must be at peace with one’s talent.
- Talents today come in other forms that are useful to our lives: talents such as being a good truck driver, being a good teacher or being a good mechanic.
- Seek an Elder(s) for mentorship in the area of one’s talent.

² Dene Kede – Education: A Dene Perspective (1993)
Education, Culture and Employment

ACTIVITY 3

FINDING MY TALENT

Learning Objective

Students will determine what makes a practicum project successful and meaningful using criteria they develop together. Students will investigate possible skills or talents and choose one they'd like to do for their practicum.

Time

60 min

Curricular Link

Outcomes that should be addressed through this activity include:

| Component | Skills Outcome | Module Outcome |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Criteria | S.7 j | – |
| Finding My Talent | – | – |

Preparation and Materials List

- Prepare copies of *Project Ideas*
- Prepare 1 copy of each of the two practicum work plans provided.



Three boys in Aklavik practice a song they learned from their mentor

Gosia Rotkowska.

and who will help them complete their projects. Finding community members with the expertise and time to assist will always be a challenge, and we encourage teachers and students to begin making those contacts as soon as possible. In this activity, students will create criteria for choosing projects.

In order to establish which projects are acceptable within the Northern Studies course, it is useful to establish criteria or principles to judge possible projects. In this way, students and teachers will have a much better sense of what sort of project is acceptable and which is not. A list of possible criteria is provided – it is not exhaustive – and you and your class should spend some time creating your own complete list.

Students will review two practicum projects to help them articulate the elements of a successful and meaningful practicum project. This helps to set the stage for what the expectations are when they choose their own skill or the talent they want to work on.

Making the Connection for the Teacher

Choosing a good practicum project is essential to the success of the project. Students must choose a topic which interests them and is within their ability to complete considering all the criteria developed as a class. The previous activities, where students identified talents and interests, should help guide students toward a project of interest. Ensuring student success, however, will require that students think deeply about how

Steps

Criteria (30 min)

1. For discussion: What do you think would make a practicum successful and meaningful for you? What will the barriers be to the practicum and how can we overcome them? (ex. Finding a mentor, the project becomes too difficult, you lose interest in your project, the project was too short or too easy etc...)
2. As a class, develop a set of criteria for what makes a good project to help develop a skill or talent and that answers the module's student-led inquiry question of, *how does working on a specific Northern skill or talent, with a mentor, enrich my sense of belonging in the North?*

Some of the criteria could include:

- My project is about the North.
- My project will allow me to develop one of my talents or skills.
- My project is useful to my community.
- There are recognized experts who can help me with my project.
- My project will challenge me to do my very best.
- My project is manageable within the timeframe and resources available to me.
- My project will increase my knowledge and if it is a skill I already have I will grow my knowledge in this area and/or I will teach others.
- My project can be shared with an authentic audience.

3. What other criteria should the students consider?
4. Hand out a copy of *Project Ideas* to each student.
5. Ask students to fill in the table from the list of ideas given to determine if a project is acceptable or not. Ask them to put each of the ideas on the list through the set of criteria you developed as a class. This will help them decide which column to place the idea within and may also help them to narrow down what they want to do.

Finding My Talent (30 min)

1. Share the two models of a practicum work plan description provided. These are samples of what students should be thinking about. Discuss as a class what tools they think they need to help them complete the project. Do they need a calendar with all the steps outlined (selection of mentor, date of presentation etc.)?
2. So far the students have been given several examples of projects. Ask students to select one of the ideas they have for their own project and to use the criteria developed as a class to see if it is acceptable.
3. When the majority of the class thinks they know what project they want to do, ask the students to share any of their project ideas by writing them on the board. If there are several students who want to practice the same skill or talent, that is more than welcome. How can the students work together? What barriers might this present? Begin brainstorming a list of resources and mentors for these projects until each student has a plan.

Ideas from Teachers

To address some of the practical issues with choosing a project, I individually checked in with each student after they selected the Northern skill they'd like to learn and asked them 'Do you really want to spend 20 hours on this? Is this project realistic? Is there someone in the community you think will work with you?' This helped to weed out some of the projects the students weren't passionate about.

Northern Studies 10 pilot teacher.

PROJECT IDEAS

| Acceptable | Not A Good Fit | Not Sure |
|------------|----------------|----------|
| | | |

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Wayne Gretzky | Making Moccasins | Repairing small engines |
| Telling traditional stories | World War 2 | My Grandpa |
| Medicines in the bush | Paddling | Learning to swim |
| Building a Fire | Setting nets under the ice | Spirituality |
| Sitting on the Land and Water Board | Teaching young children my language | |
| Making a music video | A film about my hometown | |
| Building snowshoe trails | Trapping | woodworking |
| Getting my boater safety certificate | Getting a driver's license | Hand-games |
| Camping overnight | Making drymeat | Put on a play |
| Preparing food for a community feast | Starting a community garden | Sir John Franklin |
| Making a presentation to community leaders | | Learning Power Point |
| Photography | Doing a Northern Games demonstration | |
| Learning to introduce myself / greetings in an official language | | |
| Make something traditional (quill, moose-hide, tan, snow-shoes, drum) | | |
| ...add others.... | | |

PRACTICUM WORK PLAN

Example 1 – Porcupine Quill Embroidery

Project choice: *porcupine quill embroidery*

My talent: *artistic expression and creating things*

How this project will develop my talent: *I will learn about a different technique to use to express by designs and ideas*

Why I chose this talent to identify: *it is a skill that not many women in my community are practicing anymore and I'd like to help make sure that it survives*

How this project and developing my talent will benefit my community: *it might encourage other young people to learn the craft and could encourage the Elders to teach it to others*

Mentor

Name: Sarah Hardisty

The particular talents or expertise of my mentor:

Sarah is an Elder from Jean Marie River who has been tanning hides and sewing all of her life. She does beautiful bead work as well as quill work. She also knows about other traditional activities. Many years ago she was commissioned by the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau to create a traditional outfit from hide. Even the buttons are made of hide! And she put very traditional designs in quill work on the jacket.

How I identified my mentor:

My teacher lived in Jean Marie many years ago, and when I told her what I was interested in doing, she mentioned that Sarah is living in Fort Simpson now.

How he/she/they will help me to develop my talent: *Sarah knows how to do quill embroidery. She always used to collect and dye the quills herself, too. I'm not sure if I'll be able to do the gathering, but I'd like to try the dying. My teacher said that Sarah is a very patient teacher, as she learned how to bead from her. And while she is very encouraging, she isn't satisfied with sloppy work. She makes you take it out and do it over again. And if you keep messing up, she doesn't just do it for you, but shows you again how to do it. She also knows about the traditional designs and colours, and I'm looking forward to thinking about how those might be different from the patterns we create today.*

In working with my mentor, I'll need to plan for (e.g. scheduling/availability, language ...): *Sarah is much older now, so I'll have to make sure that we schedule our learning times at the best time of day for her. And she likes to go back to Jean Marie to see her family on some weekends, so I'll have to be flexible. Sarah speaks English, but is much more comfortable speaking Slavey. This could also be a good opportunity for me to learn some Slavey, at least for the items that we are working with and about the actions that we are doing.*

I'll need to get her permission to take photographs while she is working, and I'm thinking I might take some video as well.

Required Information and Resources

| | Who/what | Where and/or how obtained | Notes |
|----------------|--------------------|--|--|
| People | Sarah Hardisty | Asked her niece to introduce us | |
| Information | ? | ? | ? |
| Tools/supplies | Porcupine quills | Gallery of the Midnight Sun in Yellowknife | I'm not planning to go, but maybe my friend who is will pick some up for me |
| | Hide | An aunt of one of my friends tans hide. I'm going to see if I can buy some from her. | I need to use northern tanned hides – the commercial tanned hides are too tough – I remember trying to bead on it once and it was awful! |
| | Needles and thread | I already have some, but might need to buy more, probably from Yellowknife. | I'm not planning to go, but maybe my friend who is will pick some up for me |
| | Scissors | I already have good ones for both the hide and thread | |
| | Dyes | Buy from Northern | |
| | Paper | For planning my designs – I've got extra heavy paper so that I can cut out my pattern to trace onto the hide after | |

There might be other tools and supplies that I will need but don't know about yet.

Learning Demonstration Plan

Audience: band council

Format: presentation and display of finished product and photographs of my work in progress.
I will also do a write-up to explain what I learned.

Location: band office

Tools: table with back-board (to display my project and the photos), computer and projector
(I might do a PowerPoint and might have video to show)

Assessment: I'd like to get some feedback from the people who come to see my project, but
I'm not sure what to do about this yet

Things I Learned that I Didn't Expect to

Before starting my project I realized that . . .

This could also be a chance for me to learn some Slavey by working with my mentor. There might be other related skills, like tanning hides and dying quills that would also be good to learn.

During my project work I realized that . . .

Using animals is a really cooperative activity in many communities, especially if we want to make sure things aren't wasted. For example, while a couple men hunted and brought back the moose, many others helped to butcher the meat, and 2 women took the hide for tanning together. One of the men took the antlers for carving, and someone else took the bones. It requires cooperation to ensure that we don't waste.

After completing my project I realized that . . .

I do really care about preserving the skills from my ancestors. But although I liked doing the quill embroidery, and liked learning about the stories that the traditional designs represent, I would also like to explore how modern ideas, and my own designs could be used.

Steps and Timeline

| Action/activity | Target date | Completed | Reflection |
|---|---------------------|-----------|---|
| Meet with Sarah to find out what I need and to plan when I can meet with her | Mid November | 10 Nov | We planned to meet on Wednesday evening for about an hour, and for 2 hours on Saturdays. I will work on my project in between those days so that she could mostly help me fix up things, and move on to the next stage. |
| Buy supplies and tools that I need | End of November | 28 Nov | The only things I had to get from YK were dyes. There was someone in Ft. Simpson who had some quills that I was able to buy. |
| Meet with Sarah and complete my project Also take any pictures and video of us working together that I might use | December | 8 Jan | We met as schedule during the first 2 weeks of December, and then during Christmas holidays I finished up and only had to stop by to see her once in January. I've learned some of the Slavey words connected with my project, but now I want to learn how to write them so that I can include them in my presentation. |
| Put my presentation together – build the PowerPoint, select and pictures, edit video if needed | January | 19 Jan | I didn't do any video after all – getting pictures of my project at different stages seemed to work better. I labelled the parts in both English and Slavey. I needed help from the Language Coordinator at the school board office to get the correct spelling of the Slavey words. |
| Practice my presentation in front of my family and then do it at the band council meeting | 3rd week of January | | After I practiced in front of my parents and auntie, I realized that I had to put less on each slide, and not go through the slides so fast. Once I made the changes, I showed my cousin, and then it went well at the band office. |

PRACTICUM WORK PLAN

Example 2 – Story Telling in my Language

Project choice: Telling a story in my language

My talent: ? not sure, but I want to do this

How this project will develop my talent: I will practice my language and be able to tell one story in my language

Why I chose this talent to identify: I really wish I knew my language and this is just one small way I can work on it. I know what my gramma says sometimes but I don't ever use it myself.

How this project and developing my talent will benefit my community: it might encourage other young people to learn and it might make the Elders feel good and maybe me too.

Mentor

Name: My grandmother (name removed for anonymity) and my Mom

The particular talents or expertise of my mentor: My grandmother is almost unilingual in our language. She can speak some in English but not much...just like me in my language.

How I identified my mentor: It was easy. She lives near me and I knew she would help me if I asked.

How he/she/they will help me to develop my talent: I am going to ask my Mom to come with me because I won't be able to explain everything. With my Mom's help I will ask my Grandmother to tell the story about how our lake got its name and the traditional story around it. I'm going to record her so that I can practice by listening to the recorder. When I have questions I can go back to her and ask.

In working with my mentor, I'll need to plan for (e.g. scheduling/availability, language ...): My grandmother is usually at home, but she's always busy working on something. I do know though that if I give her some time, she'll help me. I just need to be respectful and not assume she will always want to help when I don't plan ahead.

Although she is my Grandmother I'll get her permission to take photographs as well as the recording so that in case I want to use them somewhere else I'll have her permission.

Required Information and Resources

| | Who/what | Where and/or how obtained | Notes |
|----------------|-------------------|---|---------------|
| People | Grandmother | With My Mom | |
| Information | ? | ? | ? |
| Tools/supplies | Recorder | | |
| | I'll use my phone | I have to make sure my phone is charged | |
| | Camera | Same as above | Same as above |
| | Note paper | I have a binder for my project | |

There might be other tools and supplies that I will need but don't know about yet.

Learning Demonstration Plan

Audience: name removed for anonymity

Format: *I'm going to meet with a speaker from my community. She's agreed to assess me while I tell her the story in my language. I will have practiced in front of my Grandmother and mother but it will still be a bit scary to do it in front of her.*

After I've shared the story I will also make a class presentation to share my story and learning with others.

Location: school

Tools: Video camera

Assessment: *(name) ... is going to listen to me and she is a linguist. Since my teacher doesn't know our language she has agreed that most of the assessment will be done by... (name). My teacher will assess me on my class presentation when I describe the things I've learned.*

Things I Learned that I Didn't Expect to

Before starting my project I knew that . . .

This would be a chance for me to learn some (my language) by working with my mentor.

During my project work I realized that . . .

I know some nouns but I didn't really know the little words that help make a sentence make sense. I had to keep asking my mother, what is this ending, what is that ending, but once I got that, it made more sense. I started to listen to conversations around me and what surprised me was that by learning a simple story really well, I could pick out little bits of things that other people were saying.

After completing my project I realized that . . .

Not only did I learn to tell a story in my language but by just being with my grandmother, and mother for that amount of time I had so much fun. We also made food together and by visiting and working on this project it made her happy, and that made me happy.

Steps and Timeline

| Action/activity | Target date | Time | Reflection |
|--|--------------------|---|---|
| Gather all my materials | 10 Oct. | 30 min total | ...I have a recording device on my phone but I needed to practice with it to make sure my grandmother's soft voice could be heard, as well as mine. I also needed to make sure I can get a good picture. |
| First meet with my mother so she understands the project | By mid October | 30 min | I sat down with my Mom and explained the full project and what my purpose is. I know I'm going to need her help along the way as she's the one who speaks both languages. I was happy because she supported me and said she will help out. |
| With my Mom, record my grandmother | By end of October | 2 hours | We went to my grandmother's house. She had made bannock which was really nice. I think she was happy I was going to be learning this story in our language. I know the story in English so that helps. We spent more than two hours because at first I didn't record her and we talked about how to tell the story in a short version. I didn't want to take on more than I could handle. When we agreed we had to record her a couple of times because I forgot to put the volume up. This was okay and my grandmother told the story again. |
| Downloading story to computer and practicing | By end of November | 10 hours (that's what I planned but I think it took more) | I found it really hard at first. I listened to it and tried to find one or two words that I knew but there were so many in between that I didn't know. I had to try to find time when my Mom wasn't busy either so she could translate for me. We ended up writing down (I've learned the word transcribing) the words into spellings that I can understand. Then she translated those words underneath so that although I was listening to my grandmother I was also reading and memorizing. I took each sentence and practiced it over and over and then added the next one until I had it all ready. I actually had a friend record me at each stage so you can see from the beginning until now what I've learned. |

| Action/activity | Target date | Time | Reflection |
|---|----------------------|---------|--|
| Practice my presentation in front of my Mom and Grandmother | 3rd week of December | 2 hours | It was kind of scary to do the story in front of my family but they helped when I got nervous. They suggested I start it by introducing myself and saying where I'm from and what I'm going to be doing...so then I had to learn all that, although I knew most of those words. |
| Share the story of where our town got its name in my language to a speaker from my community. | Beginning of January | 1 hour | She was a nice lady so it was okay. I introduced myself in my language (she's known me all my life so that was a bit weird). I then told her the story. After I was done she told me I pronounced a couple of words wrong and explained a few more details about the story that she thought was important to include. But, she also said she was thrilled that I had done this as part of school and that if I ever wanted to practice speaking with her she would help me. It felt really, really good. |
| Preparing presentation for school | Middle of January | 5 hours | I had to edit all the videos I took of my Grandmother and then of me learning into one presentation. I had already learned these skills in media class so that was okay. My teacher helped me with some of it. |
| Presentation in front of class | End of Jan. | 20 min | Because I had made a video I just had to introduce myself and my project and then press play. That was the best part. My friends were supportive as they thought it was really cool I was learning our language. Hardly any of us can speak much and we talk about that. We always say, oh, I want to learn my language but it seems so impossible. This little bit made this one little thing possible. I think we should just try and do something rather than nothing. I also told the story to my little sister when I tucked her in to bed. That felt good. |

ACTIVITY 4

STUDENT-LED INQUIRY

Learning Objective

Students will work under the guidance of a mentor to complete a practicum. This practicum is a practice of their identified skill or talent.

Time

20 hours + work outside of class as needed

Curricular Link

Outcomes that should be addressed through this activity include:

| Component | Skills Outcome | Module Outcome |
|-----------|----------------|---------------------|
| Practicum | S. 10 d | 5.1, 5.3, 5.6, 5.7, |

Preparation and Materials List

- Will vary depending on choice of student.

Possible Assessment Activities

- On-going formative assessment from mentor
- Assessment of habits of mind

Making the Connection for the Teacher

At this time, all students should have chosen their practicum. Reinforce to students, the importance of practice, even where talent exists. Remind them of the role that adults and Elders play in being able to help them discover and develop his or her talent. For this reason, they should try to spend time in the company of talented people so they can come to know them. Ask family members for help if they have skills in this area – encourage them to go and visit a talented Elder and to share what they are doing and to seek advice.

As the students begin each project, ensure the family knows by sending a note home explaining the projects the students are going to be working on. List ways in which families members can help the students. The family will already have ideas of their talents and will likely be pleased to see their child working on their talent through the school. In the note, mention any plans you may have for a time where students will be sharing what they've learned and invite them to come.



Circle of moccasins

Angela Hovok Johnston

Steps

Practicum

1. There are specific steps for ensuring a successful practicum as each location has different opportunities and challenges. However, there are a few guidelines which can help.
 - The role of the teacher is as a facilitator. You are not expected to be an expert.
 - The timing of classes needs to be flexible. Perhaps select every Friday for students to work on their projects – or perhaps students can work on their projects whenever they have finished any of the other work from the other modules. One teacher reported that students were so interested in their moccasins that they took their sewing with them to every class and could be seen in the hallway, at break and at lunch working on their moccasins. This shows interest and pride and should be encouraged.
 - While it can be overwhelming to have different projects happening at the same time and working with different mentors, the rewards are worth the effort. Remember to ask for help from others in the school should you be having difficulties.
 - Start the practicum early in the course so that students have time to select a mentor and work on their chosen project.
 - Have fun!



A student in Aklavik, under the guidance of Lorna Storr, learned how to make a traditional meal.

Gosia Rotkowska.



She practiced it on her own a few times and then taught her fellow classmates. She then prepared the meal and shared it with the Elders when they came in to see all the other students' practicum presentations.

Gosia Rotkowska.

"And I wanted to learn the story from my Jijuu because stories are a huge part of my culture and my family. If we don't learn about storytelling, when we're young, then they will be lost. My grandparents are still very great storytellers and it would be a great honour to be able to tell their stories to people in the future."

Dannika Peterson, Fort McPherson

ACTIVITY 5

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

Learning Objective

Students will communicate to an authentic audience how working on their talent or skill, with a mentor, enriches their sense of belonging in the North.

Time

2 hours

Curricular Link

Outcomes that should be addressed through this activity include:

| Component | Skills Outcome | Module Outcome |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Practicum – authentic assessment | S.2 a, S.3a, c, g, S.4a, S.5 e, S.8 d, S.9 a, S. 10 d | 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 5.7, 5.8, |

Preparation and Materials List

- Will vary depending on choice of student.

Preparation and Materials

Will vary depending on how class decides to share learning with an authentic audience.

Possible Assessment Activities

- Presentation to Elders and/or mentors.

¹ Dene Kede 9 Module 5: Developing our Talents, pg. 8

² ibid

³ ibid

⁴ ibid

⁵ Pg. 33

Making the Connection for the Teacher

When putting together the practicum the Wise People Committee turned to the *Major Cultural Understandings* written in *Dene Kede 9: Module 5, Developing Our Talents*. The following is a summary of some of those *Major Cultural Understandings* to consider when working with your students.

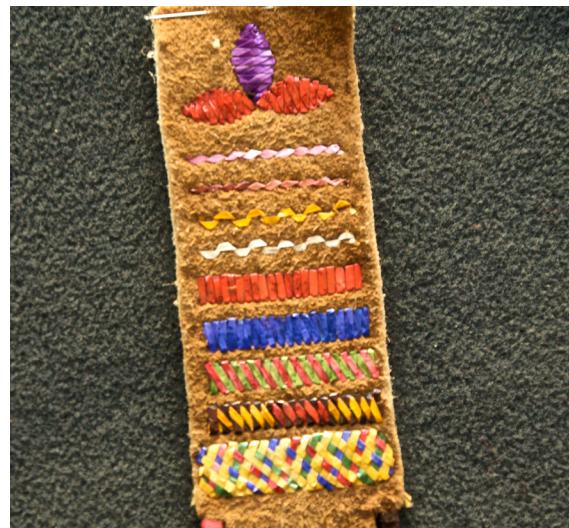
As stated in *Dene Kede 9*, “a person’s talent is acknowledged by his or her community when the person is asked to or when one decides one is ready to participate in a public situation, for example: drumming at a dance or helping to build something.”¹ The curriculum also states that their talents are meant to be shared, however, “a person does not have to sacrifice oneself to the community because of one’s talent [but rather] be at peace with one’s talent.”² The teachings also state that, “a person with a talent must not boast about it or ridicule others who do not have it.”³ This is important to note because while we are asking students to share their talents with an authentic audience, care must be taken to not put the students in a situation that makes them feel uncomfortable, or where they are perceived to brag. Our *Dene Kede* curriculum tells us the student should be sharing what they have learned, but in doing so, also remain humble.⁴ Students should be reflecting on the work habits related to their talent and show that they have grown through trying a new experience and taking opportunities to learn. They should also be sharing what they still have left to learn to gain mastery.

It is VERY important that a student is not asked to perform prematurely. This may be humiliating for the student. As explained in *Dene Kede*, “performance or sharing occurs when a person has developed a level of skill that can be sincerely acknowledged.”⁵ A student that has not met their own expectations could share with the teacher as an individual so as to honour these teachings.

It is hoped that the students had spent some time with a mentor and preferably on the land. Ideally students will be able to articulate how working with their mentor on a skill or talent has helped them to learn skills and to develop their relationship with the land, with one another and with the spiritual world. If students have spent the majority or all of their time in the classroom rather than on the land, an attempt can still be made to connect their project with their knowledge of the land.

For example, in the pictures to the right the students are working with Lucy ann Yakeleya, one of the North's most talented quill artists. Through spending time with Lucy ann, the students realized how incredibly difficult the art of quill work really is. They gained more respect and appreciation for Lucy ann and other artists who are maintaining this traditional art form. Although they were not on the land, nor did they harvest the moose or the porcupine, through stories shared and discussions in class the students did learn about the spiritual elements associated with harvesting both of these animals. Although several youth worked with Lucy ann, each developed their own skills at a different level of complexity. During their oral presentation they showed their own individuality and creativity. This is important because while it is acceptable for several students to work on the same talent or skill, it is important that they each share what they learned as individuals.

All students, as part of their summative assessment, should be reflecting on how this experience helped them grow. They should be articulating what they learned including about their skill or talent as well as the other things they have learned while working on this new skill. Students should be able to answer the Student-Led Inquiry question, *'How does working on a specific Northern skill or talent, with a mentor, help enrich my sense of belonging in the North?'*



An example made by Lucy ann Yakeleya to show the students different types of quill stiches.

Tessa Macintosh



One of the students working on her quill work. It is obvious that she is at the beginning stages of this skill.

Tessa Macintosh



Students working with Lucy ann Yakeleya to learn how to do traditional porcupine quill work.

Tessa Macintosh

Steps

Sharing My Talent

1. Discuss as a class how students wish to share their work. Depending on what students have worked on it may include a class party where parents, mentors and Elders are invited. Perhaps some students learned how to make traditional food and their sharing could include preparing it for the class party. Depending on the class size and the range of presentations you may need to have different types of sharing. For example, one student may be sharing their talent at a local band council meeting, while another went on the local radio.
2. However, sharing their work with an authentic audience is only part of the assessment. Students should have received on-going assessment from their mentors throughout the process. This form of assessment, called formative assessment, is very valuable. Examples may include a mentor who made a student rip out incorrect stitches on a moccasin, or making them put up the tipi poles again and again until they are strong enough to hold a person. Inviting the mentor to be part of the summative assessment should also be considered.
3. For other ideas on assessment read the accompanying assessment suggestions in the *Getting Started* binder.

I share with my students how my mother used to make me take my stitches out on my moccasins. I used to get so upset having to do it over but she was always right – the moccasins looked better when I listened to her. It's important to try our best and if we have to redo something, that's part of the learning – to be able to accept criticism, to listen, to be patient, and to do our very best work.

Northern Studies 10 Pilot teacher.

