

# ENSOULING OUR SCHOOLS DAY

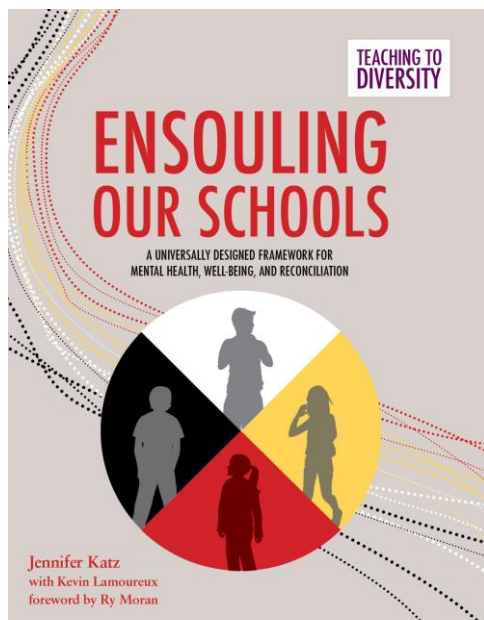
Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>

## Creating Compassionate Learning Communities

### PURPOSE OF THE DAY

To explore ways of integrating Indigenous worldviews and perspectives into learning environments.

To explore ways of enhancing Indigenous student achievement through creating a sense of belonging for all.



### MENU OF OPTIONS:

#### OPTION 1

What do the First Peoples Principles of Learning mean to us right now? How do these understandings move us forward?

#### OPTION 2

The 9<sup>th</sup> Standard & The Perfect Stranger

#### OPTION 3

Video:

Picking up the Pieces - The Making of the Witness Blanket

#### OPTION 4

Webinar Series:

Culturally Responsive Math  
Grades 1-6

#### OPTION 5

BC Context and Assumptions

#### OPTION 6

Authentic Resources

#### OPTION 7

Jennifer Katz:

Ensouling Our Schools



## THE WHY

1. The Langley School District has made a firm commitment to reconciliation.
2. The District is focussed on these areas as they align with our District Goal of having “all students successfully transition secondary school with dignity, purpose and plan for the future (with a focus on improving results for Aboriginal Students, Students with Diverse Needs, and Children in Care).”
3. In compliance with the Ministry School Calendar Regulation: “In each of the 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2022/2023 school years, a board must schedule at least one non-instructional day for the purpose of providing teachers with an opportunity to participate in discussions and activities that focus on both of the following:
  - a. Enhancing Indigenous student achievement
  - b. Integrating Indigenous worldviews and perspectives into learning environments”
4. Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives is an important component of the redesigned curriculum K-12. An important goal in integrating Aboriginal perspectives into curricula is to ensure that all learners have opportunities to understand and respect their own cultural heritage as well as that of others.

## THE WHO

School admin will work with staff to organize the day. The organization of the day may look different school to school. It is encouraged by both the LTA and the District that teachers participate in professional development on this day focussed on improving success for indigenous learners and on integrating Indigenous worldviews and perspectives into learning environments. However, some teachers may choose to participate in a different professional development activity. If they do, they are required to share their plan with their Principal in advance and it must be appropriate professional development (i.e. clearly connected to the employee’s professional practice and their work with their students). Teachers who elect to participate in self-directed Pro. D must send their principal a communication in advance with the purpose and a brief outline and then a short follow-up synopsis of their learning after the activity. This is the same process we have always followed in the past.

# THE WHAT AND HOW

A menu of options has been included below. School administrators can plan for the structure of the day as long as the purpose of the day aligns with the focus on enhancing Indigenous student achievement and integrating Indigenous worldviews and perspectives. The focus will be on the “what” and on the “how.”

**One component of the day should draw attention to the recently added 9<sup>th</sup> Professional Teaching Standard for BC Educators:**

Educators respect and value the history of First Nations, Inuit and Metis in Canada and the impact of the past on the present and the future. Educators contribute towards truth, reconciliation, and healing. Educators foster a deeper understanding of ways of knowing and being, histories, and cultures of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis.

*Educators critically examine their own biases, attitudes, beliefs, values, and practices to facilitate change. Educators value and respect the languages, heritages, cultures, and ways of knowing and being of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis. Educators understand the power of focusing on connectedness and relationships to oneself, family, community, and the natural world. Educators integrate First Nations, Inuit and Metis worldviews and perspectives into learning environments.*

# MENU OF OPTIONS

To frame the learning for the day, it is important that all participants:

1. Watch [the video on Indigenizing the Curriculum](#) – Interview with Jo-Ann Archibald (7:58 min) and;
2. Read the below excerpt from the [Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement](#).

## Nurturing Each Students šx<sup>w</sup>həli (spirit) and Their Gifts



This design was inspired by Musqueam Elder, Dr. Vincent Stogan and a teaching he shared about “Hands Back and Hands Forward”. When we gather to share our knowledge and to discuss important ‘work’, we stand in a circle to give thanks and show our support for one another by holding hands. We hold our left palm upward to symbolize reaching back to receive help from our Ancestors and those who have walked before us. We learn to use these teachings and our responsibility is to help those who came after us. We then extend our right palm downwards as a symbol giving help. This is the teaching of “Hands Back and Hands Forward”.

The design that I created for the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement is one of a Coast Salish Spindle Whorl with hands nurturing a spiral symbol. The left hand is in the colour white and is in an upward position symbolizing reaching back to the Ancestors for help. The right hand is the colour red and is in the downward position, symbolizing giving help and passing on the teachings from the Ancestors.

The most important focus of the design and the purpose of all the hard work for this Enhancement Agreement is ‘the student’. In the centre of my design is a representation of the student in a form of a spiral, an ancient symbol used in many different cultures around the world and found in pictographs and petroglyphs dating as far back as 10,000 years ago. The spiral has different meanings for each culture. It could be used to represent time, the sun, or water.

In my design the spiral symbol represents the student’s šx<sup>w</sup>həli (spirit) and it is our responsibility to nurture and protect the child’s šx<sup>w</sup>həli and their gifts. The spiral also represents ‘time’, all the time and good work that is in place to support the child by their:

- Elders
- Family
- Students
- Kwantlen
- Katzie
- Matsqui
- Inuit
- Cultural Presenters
- Waceyá Métis Society
- ya:yəstəl’ “Working Together” Advisory Committee
- Lexwey (Aboriginal Support Workers)
- School District #35 (Langley)
- Lower Fraser Valley Aboriginal Society
- Fraser Region Aboriginal Child & Family Services Society (Xyolhemeylh)
- Langley Child Development Centre
- Langley Aboriginal Services Committee

I’m sure there are more people, groups and organizations involved and, if I missed anyone, please forgive me as you are so important in this work. Thank you to everyone involved in supporting our students, my hands go up to each and every one of you. All my relations.

# OPTION 1

What do the First Peoples Principles of Learning mean to us right now? How do these understandings move us forward?

Estimated Time: 1-1.5 hours

## Learning Goals:

- to deepen our understandings of the First Peoples' Principles of Learning by exploring them from within our current learning context;
- to honour that learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, family and community by giving ourselves time today, as individuals and a community, to reflect on, share and listen to the impact of remote learning on us, our colleagues and our students;
- to consider what healthy and meaningful learning looks like for both us and our students;
- to reflect on the potential impacts of our understandings on long-term educational practice.

## Resources:

[First Peoples Principles of Learning](#)

Chrona, J. (2014). [First peoples principles of learning](#).

[Introductory Video](#) (19:08 min) or [Optional PowerPoint of Introductory Video](#)

## Access Options:

Please choose how you would like to participate in this learning today:

Option 1: Join the one-hour session being facilitated for your school community;

Option 2: Join a small group of colleagues and follow the below as desired;

Option 3: Reflect individually on the readings and questions below.

## Grounding Ourselves

1. Check in with each other. What emotion are we bringing into this space today?
2. Consider and share what you know about the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL) and then read Jo Chrona's [overview](#). What was affirmed for you? What was new for you? What is a question you now have?

## What does this mean to us at this time?

1. Silently reflect on what teaching looks like for you right now. What is working? What is hard? What have you gained? What have you lost?
2. With the above in mind, read through the First Peoples Principles of Learning. Ask yourself: **Which principle or principles most resonate with me in my current context?** (For those more familiar with principles- **Is there a principle that has solidified a deeper or new meaning, understanding, clarity or perspective?**)

*Facilitator's note:* Have a separate person read each principle aloud to the group. Consider reading them aloud twice, perhaps with the prompt in #1 sandwiched in between.

3. Share which principle or principles resonates with you most right now and why. Listen to your colleagues share.
4. Invite participants to share, in one word, how they are feeling at this moment. Do not discuss. Let it stand.

### What will we bring with us?

1. Select a principle you wish to delve deeper into.
2. Read the corresponding two-page description for your principle from the links below (Chrona, 2019).
3. Discuss the questions relevant for you from "below:

*What resonates most for you? Why?*

*How will this impact how you support your students' learning over these next few months?*

*How will it impact how you approach your own learning and well-being during this time?*

*In what ways do these principles interact and interconnect to create healthy and meaningful learning experiences and environments?*

*What is the impact if these new understandings and engagements with the principles transcend into long-term teaching practice?*

*What questions do you have? Where do you want to go next in your learning?*

*Facilitator's note:* An option is to have all participants share a thought, question, or next step in one visible place. To do this, create a virtual bulletin board that people can anonymously post their response to and read each other's. Participants could share at any time throughout the day no matter which learning option they decided on. Suggested tool: [Padlet](#).

### Links to Jo Chrona's descriptions of each principle:

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place)
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions
- Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities
- Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge
- Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story
- Learning involves patience and time
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity
- Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and-or in certain situations

# OPTION 2

## The 9<sup>th</sup> Standard & The Perfect Stranger

This option allows participants to understand the individual work needed to meet the 9<sup>th</sup> Standard of Teaching and how it will support their engaging of all students in their classroom. It is recommended that this is done as an individual reflective activity.

### Part 1: Reflect on the following questions:

*What influences and experiences have...*

- *positively shaped your knowledge of Indigenous people?*
- *negatively shaped your knowledge of Indigenous people?*

*How has your personal and family history shaped your worldview?*

*How do your values, beliefs, and assumptions compare to Indigenous peoples' worldview?*

*What are your reactions to the similarities and the differences in worldviews?*

### 9<sup>th</sup> Teaching Standard:

Educators respect and value the history of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis in Canada and the impact of the past on the present and the future. Educators contribute towards truth, reconciliation, and healing. Educators foster a deeper understanding of ways of knowing and being, histories and cultures of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis.

Educators critically examine their own biases, attitudes, beliefs, values, and practices to facilitate change. Educators value and respect the languages, heritages, cultures, and ways of knowing and being of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis. Educators understand the power of focusing on connectedness and relationships to oneself, family, community, and the natural world. Educators integrate First Nations, Inuit and Metis worldviews and perspectives into learning environments.

The 9<sup>th</sup> standard asks educators to “*critically examine their own biases, attitudes, beliefs, values and practices to facilitate change.*” The purpose of this activity is to provide the participant with opportunities to do this. The four R’s listed below provide the learner with a framework for engaging with the standard.

#### **FOUR R’s**

**RESPECT.** Respect cultural knowledge, traditions, values, and activities that individuals bring with them.

**RELEVANCE.** Relevance occurs when respect is embedded in the curricula, instruction, and policies.

**RECIPROCITY.** Which refers to the revising of relationships between student and instructor from a hierarchy to that of a relationship focused on mentorship. In this way both individuals are viewed as learners.

**RESPONSIBILITY.** This demands that the instructor shares responsibility for change, even if not personally disadvantaged by the barriers of the learner.



## Part 2: Watch [The Perfect Stranger \(5:09 min\)](#) and reflect on the following questions:

- *What resonates most for you? Why?*
- *What do I know and how have I come to know it?*
- *What do I need to know?*

**Video Description:** Lenape and Potawatami educational scholar Dr. Susan D. Dion introduces what she considers the all-too-familiar position of the "perfect stranger" that many teachers take with respect to Indigenous students within their classroom. As this position is problematically characterized by not knowing as well as not wanting to know about Indigeneity and, accordingly, not being implicated in relationships with Indigenous peoples, she suggests a few pedagogical practices that work towards disrupting this problematic position.

## Part 3: Watch [Considering the role of emotions in disrupting the "perfect stranger" position \(6:52 min\)](#) and reflect on the following questions:

- *How will you interrupt the relationship between fear and ignorance that Susan Dion refers to?*
- *What implications does all of this have for my teaching practice?*
- *What questions do you have? Where do you want to go next in your learning?*

**Video Description:** In this video, Dr. Dion offers further considerations for disrupting the "perfect stranger" position by focusing on the role that emotions play within this process. As learning about Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships often implicates teachers within a history of colonialism, oppression, and racism, the fear, guilt, and other emotions which might surface might become either a signal of learning or an impediment to. Herein, Dr. Dion suggests working with these emotions rather than around in order to work towards disrupting the "perfect stranger" position.

# OPTION 3

## Picking up the Pieces: The Making of the Witness Blanket

Watch [Picking Up the Pieces](#) (1 hour and 31 mins)

**Video Description:** Inspired to know more about his father's time at residential school, artist Carey Newman created the Witness Blanket - a national monument that commemorates the experiences of residential school survivors. The blanket is constructed from hundreds of everyday items collected from residential schools, churches, government buildings and cultural structures across Canada. Each object has a story to tell, each survivor has something to say. Narrated by the artist, this film weaves together those stories with his personal journey, examining how art can open our hearts to the pain of truth and the beauty of resiliency.



# OPTION 4

## Webinar Series: Culturally Responsive Math Grades 1-6

Hosted by Dr. Ruth Beatty, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education at Lakehead University and Danielle Blair. They bring both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators together to work with participants to explore the mathematics inherent in First Nation and Métis cultural practices.

Discover new skills that place Indigenous culture at the heart of mathematics teaching and learning. The series will help develop new skills, including Metis Finger Weaving and Coding while learning about Indigenous culture.

The following webinars have been recorded and can be watched at [Nelson's Website](#): *Please note that to register, it does require you to check off that you are ok to receive emails from Nelson. You can unsubscribe from this at the bottom of the first email you receive from them or you can email [adam.richardson@nelson.com](mailto:adam.richardson@nelson.com) to unsubscribe.*

- Session Six: Finger Weaving and Mathematics - Junior/Intermediate
- Session Seven: Coding and Patterns, Part 1
- Session Eight: Coding and Patterns, Part 2
- Session Nine: Integrating Learning and Experiences

# OPTION 5

## BC Context and Assumptions

This activity sets the focus of the professional learning work, giving an overview of Indigenous education in British Columbia and challenges participants to consider several common assumptions about Indigenous education and Indigenous learners.

Some of the key topics focussed on include:

- Inspiring our Learning – Opening thoughts from educators in BC
- Why focus on Indigenous education in BC?
  - Equity for Indigenous learners
  - Responsive education
  - The need for Indigenous education for all learners
- Assumptions we need to challenge to move forward

While watching the videos, there will be five opportunities for group discussions or personal reflection around the following key questions:

- Why the focus on Indigenous education in BC?
- Why mandate the integration of Indigenous content and perspectives K-12?

- Reflect on the assumptions about our system:
  - We should just focus on a *multicultural* approach
  - We teach in a culturally neutral education system
- Reflect on the assumption about who has responsibility for Indigenous Education:
  - Achieving Equity is the responsibility of the School District's Aboriginal Education department
- Reflect on the assumptions about responsibility and Indigenous knowledge:
  - Indigenous Education is an “initiative” or extra/add on
  - Indigenous approaches are “watered down” or “less than” approaches to education

Towards the end of the introductory video, participants will need to watch a second video from LFAS about the benefits of taking English 12 First Peoples

**Resources needed:**

[Introductory Video \(28:48 min\)](#)

[LFAS Video \(5:56 min\)](#)

## OPTION 6

### Authentic Resources

This activity offers guidance on authentic First Peoples resources, using resource guides created by First Nations Education Steering Committee and the Métis Nation British Columbia. Participants can be given time to consider and evaluate resources they currently use in their classrooms/schools. The video also features frequently asked questions and responses from a variety of B.C. thought leaders. Participants can be given time to consider and evaluate resources they currently use in their classrooms/schools.

**Key Topics:**

- Defining authentic First Peoples resources
- Considering existing resources
- Developing locally based resources
- Rubric for evaluating resources
- Frequently asked questions with responses from B.C. educators

**Resources needed:**

[Introductory Video \(35:16 min\)](#)

[Indigenous Education Resource Inventory](#)

# OPTION 7

## Jennifer Katz: Ensouling Our Schools

Teams may choose to make connections to Jennifer Katz's work with us around Ensouling our Schools which connects to First Peoples Principles of Learning and is focussed on creating a sense of belonging for all learners – both socially and academically.



Staff are encouraged to read [Chapter 3 of Ensouling our Schools](#) – The TRC and Indigenous Worldviews of Education and Wellbeing (pages 43 – 51).

Personally reflect:

1. Why are these Calls to Action being asked of us?
2. Would our communities and nation be better or worse off if these Calls to Action were fulfilled?

Review the [Calls to Action and Teacher Responsibilities](#) on page 175.

Personally reflect on which aspects you have implemented into your practice and which ones you would like to continue exploring.