FINAL DRAFT

ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES AND CULTURE IMPACTS ON LITERACY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT OUTCOMES

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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OVERVIEW

The objective of this paper is to give an overview of First Nations language programs, resources and research that describe the impact of student and teacher cultural competency in First Nations language and culture on literacy and student achievement and outcomes.

In the 1972 Indian Control of Indian Education Policy Paper First Nations asserted that:

“We want education to give our children the knowledge to understand and be proud of themselves and the knowledge to understand the world around them.

We believe in education: ...as a preparation for total living; ... as a means of free choice of where to live and work; ... as a means of enabling us to participate fully in our own social, economic, political and education advancement.

The time has come for a radical change in Indian education. Our aim is to make education relevant to the philosophy and needs of Indian people.”

This was supported by further statements that indicated the deep concern for language and culture as an integral part of First Nations education. Specifically First Nations asserted:

Language is the outward expression of an accumulation of learning and experience shared by a group of people over centuries of development. It is not simply a vocal symbol; it is a dynamic force which shapes the way a man looks at the world, his thinking about the world and his philosophy of life. Knowing his maternal language helps a man to know himself; being proud of his language helps a man to be proud of himself.

…the younger generations can no longer speak or understand their mother tongue. If the Indian identity is to be preserved, steps must be taken to reverse this trend.

While much can be done by parents in the home and by the community on the reserve to foster facility in speaking and understanding, there is a great need for formal instruction in the language. There are two aspects to this language instruction:

(1) teaching in the native language, and

1 AFN First Nations Control of First Nations Education, It’s Our Vision, It’s Our Time, Ottawa: 2010
(2) teaching the native language.

It is generally accepted that pre-school and primary school classes should be taught in the language of the community. …..

The need for teachers who are fluent in the local language is dramatically underlined by this concern for the preservation of Indian identity through language instruction. Realization of this goal can be achieved in several ways:

- have teacher-aides specialize in Indian languages,
- have local language-resource aides to assist professional teachers,
- waive rigid teaching requirements to enable Indian people who are fluent in Indian languages, to become full fledged teachers.

Funds and personnel are needed to develop language programs which will identify the structures of the language: i.e., syntax, grammar, morphology, vocabulary. This is essential, not only to preserve the language, but to encourage its use in literary expression.

Serious studies are needed to adapt traditional oral languages to written forms for instructional and literary purposes.

In places where it is not feasible to have full instruction in the native language, school authorities should provide that Indian children and others wishing it, will have formal instruction in the local native language as part of the curriculum and with full academic credit.

While governments are reluctant to invest in any but the two official languages, funds given for studies in native languages and for the development of teaching tools and instructional materials will have both short and long term benefits.²

First Nations Treaties provide the historical and legal foundation for the creation of the Canadian State. Many of the earliest Friendship Treaties affirmed a comparable standard of life between the Treaty signatories. Treaties from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries explicitly identify the provision of education as a Treaty Entitlement and confirm First Nations jurisdiction over education. These are among the Treaty and Inherent rights recognized in Section 35 of Canada’s Constitution Act, 1982.

Canada also has a responsibility to uphold First Nations rights to language and identity as a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Among other

² National Indian Brotherhood, Indian Control of Indian Education, Ottawa: 1972
matters, the Convention confirms that all children have the right to an identity without unlawful interference, and commits Canada to providing education in a manner that affirms First Nations cultural identities, languages and values.

Canada’s international obligations to uphold First Nations rights to language and identity are also affirmed in Article 13 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which calls upon States to take effective measures to protect the right of First Nations peoples:

“to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing system and, literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.”

The Declaration also calls upon Nation States to work with First Nation peoples to develop and implement effective measures to ensure First Nations are empowered to “establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.”

The AFN in its First Nations Control of First Nations Education position paper re-asserts what was stated in 1972 that:

First Nations languages, knowledge, and diversity are an important national heritage that must be protected, supported and preserved. Recognition and respect is vital for the success of comprehensive First Nations learning strategies that will lead to meaningful and improved learner outcomes.

For successful implementation of First Nations language education, the government of Canada must recognize and support the Policy Objectives and Goals identified in the National First Nations Language Strategy as approved by the Assembly of First Nations in Resolution No. 12/2007.

Further, stated in the 2010 position paper is the right to integrated early education programs that encompass immersion, head start and other language and culture oriented early learning as follows:

Federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations’ governments must ensure that every First Nations child regardless of residency, has access to integrated early learning programs and services including, but not limited to, language nests, immersion programs, Head Start programs, daycare, pre-kindergarten and preschool. Actualization of this policy requires that

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3 National Indian Brotherhood, Indian Control of Indian Education, Ottawa: 1972
First Nations communities be provided with the supports and resources necessary to run these programs.

Federal, provincial and territorial governments must work with First Nations, locally and regionally, to develop and implement strategic plans to ensure that early learning initiatives promote school readiness, the holistic development of the individual and high quality culturally relevant programs and services.⁴

In November 2007, discussions began between the Assembly of First Nations, the Canadian Council on Learning and the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre to explore the possibilities of holding a series of Community Dialogues in different regions of the country. The purpose of those dialogues would be to test how First Nations communities could use a First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model to help address their learning needs.⁵

The *First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model* is one of three Learning Models that were developed in consultation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Elders, learning professionals, community practitioners, researchers and analysts. The sources and domains of knowledge the model are as follows:

*Lifelong learning for First Nations people is rooted in the individual’s relationships within the natural world and the world of people (self, family, ancestors, clan, community, nation and other nations), and in their experiences of languages, traditions and ceremonies. These sources and domains of knowledge are represented by the 10 roots that support the tree (learner) and the Indigenous and Western knowledge traditions that flow from them.*

*The model affirms the importance of integrating Western and Indigenous knowledge and approaches to learning. Thus the learning tree depicts the co-existence of Indigenous and Western learning within the root system, and their ultimate convergence within the trunk, the site where individual development and the process of lifelong learning is manifested.*

As a result of the dialogues it was found that all the participating communities were similar in that they all viewed the sessions as opportunities to focus on education as a top priority; the interrelatedness of all programs and services, (particularly those including leadership) and how they impact on holistic lifelong learning.⁶

⁴ AFN First Nations Control of First Nations Education, It’s Our Vision, It’s Our Time, Ottawa: 2010
⁵ AFN Community Dialogues on First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning, Learning as a Community for Renewal and Growth, Ottawa: 2008
⁶ Ibid p. 27
There was a strong emphasis on learning on the land, with Elders playing a prominent role in sharing traditional knowledge in the language. Language, culture, ceremonies, documenting histories, songs, stories, sacred sites, gathering medicines, kinships/clans, naming ceremonies and bringing this knowledge to the classrooms and to all community members were important to all of the participating communities.

The result of the three Community Dialogues clearly indicated that communities have strong commonalities. The following shared priorities resulted from the dialogues:

1. To live in safe, healthy communities – living in balance (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual);

2. Increase parental and community involvement by providing opportunities for learning through teaching of traditional values throughout the lifespan; in the home, at school (including Early Learning), on the land and in the community and workplace;

3. Understanding and becoming aware of our generational ties through clan/kinship and genealogy;

4. Increase the use and fluency of their languages among learners of all ages and in all areas of community life;

5. Ensuring the active and meaningful engagement of Elders throughout the community, as teachers, decisions makers and role models;

6. Providing more learning spaces to facilitate the transfer of historical, linguistic, cultural and Indigenous knowledge;

7. Building trusting relationships through consistent communications with all agencies, organizations and families; Increasing community understanding of the roles and responsibilities of their territorial stewardship, through experiencing the teachings on and from the land;

8. Provide mentoring/employment opportunities for all professions and for all community members, with a focus on the youth.7

As stated in the United Nations Report of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Study on Lessons Learned and Challenges to Achieve and Implementation of the Right of Indigenous Peoples to Education indigenous education is key as follows:

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7 AFN Community Dialogues on First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning, Learning as a Community for Renewal and Growth, Ottawa: 2008
Section II (2) Indigenous peoples have historically been among the poorest and most excluded and disadvantaged sector of society. A major factor contributing to the disadvantaged position of indigenous peoples is the lack of quality education - which may be defined as education that is well resourced, culturally sensitive, respectful of heritage and that takes into account history, cultural security and integrity, encompasses human rights, community and individual development, and is designed in a way that is implementable - depriving millions of indigenous children of the basic human right to education.

Section II (5) Education is recognized as both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights and fundamental freedoms, the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalized peoples can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities. Education is increasingly recognized as one of the best long-term financial investments that States can make.

Section II (6). Education of indigenous children contributes to both individual and community development, as well as to participation in society in its broadest sense. Education enables indigenous children to exercise and enjoy economic, social and cultural rights, and strengthens their ability to exercise civil rights in order to influence political policy processes for improved protection of human rights. The implementation of indigenous peoples’ right to education is an essential means of achieving individual empowerment and self-determination.

Section II (8). Quality education must recognize the past, be relevant to the present, and have a view to the future. Quality education needs to reflect the dynamic nature of cultures and languages and the value of peoples in a way that promotes equality and fosters a sustainable future.

As stated previously the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples contains provisions that reaffirm and establish the basis for the contemporary understanding of indigenous peoples’ right to education.8

Article 14 (1) provides for educational autonomy for indigenous peoples, provided that such arrangements meet minimum standards for education. This provision specifies that indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education

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in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. Article 14 (1) reaffirms article 29 (2) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which provides individuals and bodies with the liberty to establish and direct educational institutions, subject to the observance of certain core principles.

Article 14 (2) emphasizes that indigenous individuals have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination of any kind. Hence, it reaffirms already existing human rights provisions, such as article 13 (1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 14 (3) determines that States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures so that indigenous individuals, particularly children, have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and language. It follows from the provision that indigenous peoples living outside their communities also have the right to have access to an education in their own culture and language, whenever possible.

Section IV of the United Nations Report of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples concluded very clearly that the importance of traditional ways of teaching and learning along with control of curricula and learning institutions is dependant on financial and infrastructure support in order to implement these initiatives. As such it is essential to have legal provisions in place to give recognition to education through the establishment of indigenous learning centres and organizations.

Section IV (56). Examples of important existing education legislations include those recognizing the integration of indigenous perspectives and languages into mainstream education, culturally appropriate curricula, mother-tongue-based bilingual and multilingual education, intercultural education and the effective participation of indigenous peoples in designing education programmes. Policies of complementary education for indigenous peoples permit the implementation of intercultural education in schools and colleges with the aim of moving towards multiculturalism and the recognition of the diversity of peoples.

Section IV (60). Allocating targeted financial resources for the development of materials, testing proposed culturally appropriate curricula, teaching indigenous languages, providing support for training and incentives for teachers in rural schools and developing education programmes in cooperation with indigenous peoples are also effective initiatives. An equally important consideration for communities located in isolated and sparsely populated areas is that the allocation of funding for infrastructure should not be made based on a school-to-population ratio.
INTRODUCTION

Based on the priorities reported by First Nations through research, national positions, community dialogues and international rights, this study is a review of the overall impacts of student and teacher cultural competency in First Nations language and culture on literacy and student achievement. The literature clearly states that indigenous knowledge inclusion is essential to positive student achievement and outcomes in a First Nations context. This knowledge is imbedded in education programming through:

- Teacher practices
- Multi media technology
- Indigenous charter schools
- Regional curriculum development
- Mentorship programs
- Effective teacher education
- Community/parent relationships

The literature also cautions against measuring success using western euro-centric values as they simply do not work in a traditional First Nation context:

It is important to examine studies that emphasize contemporary educational programs designed for Aboriginal students that may appear to be successful due to high student completion rates, yet fail to address systemic racist beliefs about Aboriginal students.

For example, Brigham and Taylor (2006) examine a provincially run program designed for First Nations students who reside in northern Alberta called the Aboriginal Youth Career Pathway Initiative. The initiative was developed to increase First Nation student high school completion rates and provide students with valuable workforce experience through apprenticeships.

According to the study, students felt that they had benefited from the program in many ways. Benefits included (in order of most commonly mentioned) gaining new knowledge and skills, helping them to make career choices, helping them financially, helping to complete high school by gaining high school credits, helping them pass time, developing networks for future employment opportunities, and helping to increase self-esteem or self worth….However, the authors also point out systemic

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barriers encountered by students. These barriers were not always obvious to the student participants but emerged in interviews with participating employers who had low expectations of the students and/or took advantage of the students in various ways. (Brigham and Taylor - 2006).

Having students earn high school credits through many hours engaged in such activities as mowing lawns, picking up garbage, and picking weeds does not benefit the learners. This kind of "training" is reminiscent of the historical industrial and residential schools for Aboriginal youth, who received fewer hours per day on academic subjects and more on daily chores. Although these types of tasks may be typical for new apprentices, schools and other agencies must ensure that the learning that they are sanctioning is meaningful….It is important to question the criteria used to measure the successfulness of programs and practices. For example, can practices that lead to student success but promote the dominant culture’s values and norms be considered effective? Berger and Epp (2006)

They examine this important question in their study, which focuses on Nunavut schools that are modeled on southern mainstream frameworks. Two practices used by non-Inuit teachers that appear to lead to student success are examined. Adopting rigid southern-style discipline strategies and using praise and rewards are two practices that are not aligned with Inuit culture but seem to increase Inuit student success rates in the classroom by non-Inuit teachers.

The choice to use specific strategies should be considered cautiously, with input from parents and the community. Culturally appropriate alternatives should always be considered. The existence of "problems" to be solved by these practices should remind us of the problem of locating Qallunaat [non-Inuit] schools in Inuit communities, and the need for Inuit education to be defined and controlled by Inuit. 10

CULTURAL COMPETENCY AT THE POST SECONDARY LEVEL

According to the Association of Universities and Colleges Canada (2010) First Nations language accessibility, student outcomes and recruitment and retention of First Nations faculty were continuous challenges. The following excerpt from the AUCC study illustrates this fact:

First Nations’ language accessibility

The 2010 survey further probed questions of use and teaching of Aboriginal languages in a university setting. Results show that 59 percent of respondents provide First Nations’ language courses while the 2005 survey documented teaching of First Nations’ languages was available in 50 percent of respondent institutions. Furthermore, 37 percent of responding universities reported initiatives in place to promote, preserve or enhance the use of Aboriginal languages, and 16.7 percent of respondents documented using Aboriginal languages as language of course instruction.

Given the complexity of geographical distribution of Aboriginal languages in Canada, and more granular and local language usage patterns existing within catchment areas of universities, we queried universities on the number of First Nations languages offered in their institution…. fewer than 40 percent of institutions offer no Aboriginal language courses. Surprisingly, however, more institutions offer two or more Aboriginal languages than offer a single one, 31.9 percent versus 23.4 percent, respectively. Strategically, several institutions commented on partnerships and collaborations with local Aboriginal community organizations to fulfill student access to Aboriginal languages. The advantage of combining language acquisition with reaffirmation of cultural concepts is a strong point for these partnerships.

Graduate programs with an Aboriginal focus

Earlier in this report on the 2010 survey, questions were raised about preparing the next generation of Aboriginal faculty in universities. The pathway to a faculty career is dependent upon advanced graduate credentials, usually doctoral degrees or a terminal degree in a profession and a graduate degree, for example, law and a master’s degree in advanced legal studies.

Previously, the 2005 survey found 35.2 percent of respondents had initiatives to recruit and support Aboriginal students in graduate programs. In the 2010 survey… 44.7 percent of respondents report that their institutions are engaged in recruiting Aboriginal graduate students. This increase from the 2005 survey is further supported by an added 20 percent of institutions reported to be working toward graduate program initiatives for Aboriginal students.

Tracking student success

Universities and provincial governments have developed sophisticated evaluative methods to guide strategic planning, budgeting and funding.
Institutional research operations deal with almost every aspect of the university and its surrounding environment from tracking high schools across the country to estimate probabilities of a student accepting an offer of admission, to parsing costs of outsourcing grounds maintenance as compared with keeping an institutional unit with an inventory of equipment and workers to perform similar tasks. Given this degree of sophistication in data collection and analysis, responses to the 2010 survey question asking for information on trends in Aboriginal student success are not satisfying. The 2005 survey mentioned difficulty with finding data on Aboriginal student success rates, and also commented on the number of institutions responding positively when asked if they collected information on the number of students, faculty and non-academic staff who are Aboriginal.

Critical mass of Aboriginal staff

A strategic issue for the next generation of Aboriginal students is the next generation of Aboriginal faculty and staff members in the university..... The small number of Aboriginal faculty in many universities, along with a smaller number of Aboriginal administrators, is distributed over an institution which typically may have hundreds or thousands of other employees. Previous experience in Canadian universities with minority groups has shown that extra effort and organization are required to support these minority groups.....this challenge may be in transition because of increased centralization of administration of Aboriginal Affairs.....

Another enabling factor in dissipating isolation of Aboriginal faculty and staff within the university may be the effect of increases in on-campus activities with an Aboriginal focus.11

LANGUAGE IS A CRITICAL INDICATOR OF STUDENT SUCCESS

There are a wide variety of ways to teach language and culture as indicated in the First Peoples’ Heritage, Language and Culture Council report. The study indicates that the following types of teaching and learning of language and culture work best at the community level:

**IMMERSION**

This method of language teaching surrounds (immerses) learners in the language they are trying to learn. The language is used to communicate and to teach about other subjects. All activities, including meals, stories, daily routines and group activities are done in the language. Rather than teach the language alone, knowledge, skills and activities are taught by using the language. This

11 AUCC. (2010). *Answering the call: The 2010 inventory of Canadian university programs and services for Aboriginal students.* Canada: AUCC. Pg. 24-25
method is more of a way of living (completely surrounded by the language) than a way to teach.

NATURAL APPROACH
This approach is based on the idea that a second language is learned in a similar way to a first language. When babies first learn language, they are never taught about grammar or language structures; they naturally learn without any instruction. Therefore, second language learners should also naturally learn language with little or no formal language instruction. Natural approach activities include reading, conversation, language games, and regular daily activities in the language.

COMMUNICATIVE/TASK-BASED APPROACH
This approach is based on the idea that the main purpose of language is to communicate. Therefore, language learning should be focused on communicating and completing tasks in the language. With this approach, learners are not taught about the language, but instead are taught to do things in the language. For example, instead of learning weather vocabulary, a learner learns how to have a conversation about the weather.

TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE
This method of language teaching is based on body movement and speech together. Body movement is related to the mind, and if body movement occurs at the same time as speech, a learner will remember the speech more easily. It can be used to teach almost anything, including actions, object names, and storytelling. For example, while the language teacher calls out actions, learners perform those actions, and will remember the actions and words together.

THE SILENT WAY
The basic idea of this approach is to allow the learner to discover, to experience and to have as many opportunities to use the language as possible. Instead of teaching, the teacher sets up opportunities for learners to learn independently. For example, a teacher could tell a story and have learners look at pictures related to the story. By doing this, learners are responsible for figuring out which words in the story go with each object in the pictures. In this approach, it is also important for the learner to make mistakes in order to learn. For example, a learner could guess the wrong name for an object several times before learning the correct name. In the end, the learner will remember the name for the object better than if the teacher had given the correct name right away.12

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FIRST NATIONS DRIVEN INITIATIVES

As we described earlier, the Canadian Council on Learning worked in collaboration with Aboriginal groups to develop models to meet the particular needs of Aboriginal learners.

As education systems across Canada struggle to meet the needs of Aboriginal students, many Aboriginal groups have expressed their desire to create their own measures of progress and success in learning and education, rather than being held to standards to which they do not necessarily ascribe. “One size does not fit all; there are many kinds of learners, many kinds of learning, and many ways of demonstrating our accomplishments. Without better research and data, we won’t know where we are, where we want to go, and if we’re getting there.” In collaboration with the Canadian Council on Learning, members of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities have developed three lifelong learning models to be used as frameworks for measuring the lifelong learning progress of Aboriginal peoples.

Ongoing work will focus on identifying appropriate indicators with which to apply these models. Low literacy is one of many challenges facing Aboriginal communities across Canada. Addressing the underlying causes of low literacy can contribute to overcoming many of these challenges: “When we use traditional methods of teaching and learning by and for Aboriginal people, literacy nurtures a positive identity, and connects us to the land, to our families, to our communities, to our languages and to our ancestors.”

A PROVINCIAL APPROACH TO LITERACY

The following is an example of a provincial approach to literacy. Because of significant results we identified in the literature, Alberta is described herein as an exemplary example of literacy efforts. According to the Literacy Framework for Alberta’s Next Generation Economy:

Literacy is not just about reading and writing. While reading and writing provide the necessary foundation for learning, literacy is fundamentally about an individual’s capacity to put his/her skills to work in shaping the course of his or her own life. Literacy involves “reading the word and the world” in a variety of contexts. Individuals need literacy skills to obtain and use information effectively, to act as informed players and to manage interactions in a variety of contexts whether the context is making

decisions about health care, parenting, managing household finances, engaging in the political process or working….

The knowledge, skills and attitudes associated with high school completion are the basic building blocks for effective communication, further learning, problem-solving and active citizenship. These “foundational” literacy skills equate to level 3 on international adult literacy survey measures. The international adult literacy survey conceptualizes literacy skills along a continuum of proficiency. Level 1 describes individuals with very poor literacy skills unable to determine the correct dosage on a medicine bottle. Those at level 2 can deal with simple, clear text but will be challenged to learn new job skills. Individuals at level 3 are viewed as having skills adequate to cope with the demands of today’s society. Individuals at levels 4 and 5 have strong skills and can process complex and demanding information.\(^{14}\)

In a study on literacy it was observed that adult foundational literacy skills had not increased in the decade between the first international survey in 1994 and the second in 2003. Survey findings indicated a troubling lack of financial literacy. Specifically, the survey concluded that “most Canadians feel ill-equipped to make economic decisions, with more than half not knowing if their mutual funds are insured and with four in 10 unable to do basic interest rate calculations.”

The following is a description of basic adult literacy levels utilized by the Government of Alberta:\(^{15}\)

**Description of Adult Literacy Levels:**

**Level 5** – Very strong skills able to find information in dense text and make high-level inferences or use specialized background information.

**Level 4** – Strong skills able to integrate and synthesize information from complex or lengthy passages.

**Level 3** – Adequate skills for coping in a complex advanced society. Equivalent to the skill level required for high school completion and college entry.

**Level 2** – Weak skills, can deal with simple clearly laid out material. May be able to cope with everyday demands but will have difficulty with new situations.

**Level 1** – Very poor skills, may not be able to determine the correct dosage from the label on a medicine bottle.

\(^{14}\) Government of Alberta Living Literacy: A Literacy Framework for Alberta’s Next Generation Economy. 2009

\(^{15}\) ibid
Literacy is critical and the new 3 R’s now have expanded to a more comprehensive skills set. That is…” reasoning, resilience and responsibility are requirements of the workers in the next generation economy to find science, technology and environmental solutions to increasingly complex problems.”

According to the study:

Literacy levels have a significant influence on life outcomes – the ability to learn, health status, civic participation and social engagement, economic performance, and involvement with the justice system. However, the overwhelming majority of Canadian adults with low literacy skills believe that their skills are adequate and do not see a need to invest in raising their literacy levels. As well, many adults who completed high school or post-secondary education have allowed their literacy skills to erode through lack of use.

Literacy skills are required by everyone in every situation – life wide and throughout our lives – life long. Increasing the literacy skills of Albertans is an important contributor to enhancing and maintaining the quality of life of individuals, families, communities and the province.

The following diagram illustrates the vision of enhancing and maintaining a high quality of life built on vibrant communities and a healthy environment:

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16 Government of Alberta Living Literacy: A Literacy Framework for Alberta’s Next Generation Economy, 2009
17 Ibid p. 4
According to the study Alberta’s success in having a population with highly developed literacy competencies is dependent upon the commitment and collaboration of many partners, including the following:\(^\text{18}\)

**Individuals and Families**

Literacy development begins and is maintained in the home. The foundation for school literacy and lifelong learning is laid in the early years through families talking, story telling and reading together. These activities ensure that children have the necessary early language and emergent literacy building blocks when they start school. Literacy development continues through adulthood with daily use needed to maintain skills and keep up with the evolving demands of new technology and media.

**Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement is key to the development of literacy skills. Numerous studies attest to the profound influence of parents. Early literacy develops from the many parent-child interactions around everyday experiences such as noting signs while shopping, informal parent commentary on what’s happening throughout the day, and listening to stories.

**Schools and School Jurisdictions**

Schools and school jurisdictions are critical builders of literacy. Alberta’s programs of studies in the Kindergarten to Grade 12 system support students to develop the abilities to think deeply about what they read and to express themselves accurately and expressively in a variety of contexts in a variety of media (such as multimedia, speech, hypertext, text messaging and symbols).

**Volunteers, Community Groups and Public Libraries**

Every year, thousands of volunteers contribute their skills and time in settings such as Community Adult Learning Councils, volunteer tutor programs and public libraries to mentor others - adults and children - to assist them with basic reading, writing and/or math. Family literacy programs, preschool programs, community centres and public libraries are just some examples of the many online and on-site opportunities for individuals and families to engage in literacy.

**Training Organizations and Post-Secondary Institutions**

Public post-secondary institutions and private training providers provide a range of credit and noncredit programs ranging from adult basic education, diploma and degree programs, occupational training, apprenticeship training, professional development and general interest courses.

\(^\text{18}\) Government of Alberta Living Literacy: A Literacy Framework for Alberta’s Next Generation Economy. 2009
Employers and Employee and Industry Associations
The impact of literacy skills on labour market outcomes is clear. Adults with higher literacy skills work more, experience less unemployment, earn more and rely less on employment insurance and social assistance. Where workplaces provided literacy and essential skills training for their employees, the results included improvements in safety records, worker confidence, productivity and performance, labour relations, quality of work, and increased staff retention.

Government of Alberta
The Government of Alberta has a range of initiatives to support literacy development through early learning, basic education (Kindergarten to Grade 12), advanced education (community-based and post-secondary institutions) and workforce development policies and programs. 19

The following table illustrates examples of some of the government programs that support literacy programming:

Table 2:
Examples of Alberta Government Actions that Contribute to or Impact Literacy

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Life Stage</th>
<th>Program/Initiative</th>
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<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>• Parent Link Centres</td>
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<td>• Initiatives for optimal early childhood development including child care staff</td>
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<td>training and accreditation</td>
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<td>• Math, Science and Technology Awareness and Promotion</td>
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<td>Children and</td>
<td>• Healthy Alberts School Communities Strategy</td>
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<td>Youth</td>
<td>• Healthy Kids Alberta Strategy</td>
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<td>Youth</td>
<td>• Connecting Learning and Work (career development information and assistance)</td>
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<td>• Advancing Futures Bursary Program for youth-in-care</td>
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<td>• Youth Technopreneurship</td>
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<td>• Internships for new graduates seeking work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Age</td>
<td>• Supports and services to enable persons with disabilities to be as independent as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>• Grant support to cover tuition, textbooks and supplies and income support for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Workplace Essential Skills Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>• Supports and services to support independence and enable participation in community life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For All Ages</td>
<td>• Work Foundations</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Support for public libraries including the Alberta Public Library Electronic Network</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Supports and services for persons with disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Public infrastructure for schools, post-secondary institutions and other facilities</td>
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VALUES AND GOALS OF LITERACY PROGRAMS:

The literature clearly indicates that literacy is more than the ability to read and write. It involves the knowledge, skills and abilities – the competencies - that enable individuals to think critically, communicate effectively, deal with change and solve problems in a variety of contexts to achieve their personal goals, develop their knowledge and potential, and participate fully in society. According to the research: 20

- **Literacy is lifelong.** The development and maintenance of literacy competencies is lifelong. It begins at birth with early learning experiences and continues through adulthood. Literacy requirements evolve over time throughout the life course and with advances in technology and new media.

- **Literacy is complex.** In our knowledge-based society, literacy competencies extend beyond reading and writing to extracting and critically analyzing information to solve problems in different settings such as school, advanced education, work and in the community.

- **Literacy has personal, social and economic benefits for everyone.** Individuals with stronger literacy skills have been shown to have higher income, better health, greater social and civic engagement, life long access to learning and less involvement with the justice system. Everyone has a responsibility to develop and maintain literacy competencies.

A vision is critical and the literature indicates a literacy vision is essential to encompass the literacy competencies required to participate fully and successfully in living, learning and work. Therefore, there are necessary values, literacy policies, programs and services required that: 21

- Are learner-centred and responsive to the strengths, abilities and needs of individuals.
- Acknowledge and value the language, culture, spirituality and traditions of learners, families and communities.
- Are delivered through collaborative partnerships.
- Support innovation and excellence in teaching and learning.
- Are based on shared responsibility and accountability.
- Are developed and implemented through open, honest, consistent and transparent processes.

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21 Ibid pg 6
The necessary goals for a successful literacy program, as indicated by the research, must encompass a framework for action which is built around four interlinked goals.22

1. **Increase Literacy** – in order to have a minimum of level 3 on international adult literacy measures.

2. **Build Awareness** – based on increased understanding of the importance of literacy and its lifelong benefit for all.

3. **Enhance Opportunities** - Inclusive and accessible programs and services provide quality learning opportunities for more individuals to develop, enhance and maintain their literacy skills.

4. **Facilitate Partnerships** - Collaborative partnerships that support a continuum of literacy development for all ages.

In order to increase literacy, build awareness, enhance opportunities and facilitate partnerships several measures are proposed as follows in order to **evaluate successful literacy acquisition**:

- Participation rate of Grade 1 students in Early Childhood Services (ECS) Programs in a prior year.

- Percentage of students in grades 3, 6 and 9 who achieve the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on achievement tests.

- Average scores of children and youth (grade 4, age 13 and age 15) on international and national assessments (Programs in International Reading Literacy Study, Pan-Canadian Assessment Program and Program of International Student Assessment).

- High school completion rate of students within five years of entering Grade 10.

- Numbers of adults participating and progressing in foundational literacy programs (less than high school equivalency or levels 1 and 2).

- Employer satisfaction with the skills and quality of work from education system graduates.

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22 Government of Alberta Living Literacy: A Literacy Framework for Alberta’s Next Generation Economy. 2009 pg. 6
FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES AND CULTURE IMPACTS ON LITERACY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT OUTCOMES REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Number of employer-supported workplace literacy/essential skills programs.
- Introduction of new approaches to literacy development in adults.
- Proportion of adults who score level 3 and higher on international adult literacy measures (will require the introduction of standardized assessment).\(^{23}\)

FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES RESOURCES

According to First Nations languages research only 31% (53) of BC First Nation communities have recordings of their language available as a community resource:

- Many of these recordings are old and need to be digitized so they can be used with modern equipment. Also the sound quality is often poor and the recordings are not archived, so it is difficult to use them as a language learning resource.\(^{24}\)

- Only about 52% (88) communities have any sort of curriculum materials for teaching the languages. Many of these curricula are very limited and have not been developed for many levels of language learners.

- Only about 39% (66) of communities reported having access to a FirstVoices.com archive of their language. However, other communities may use different archiving systems. A language dies when its last speakers do. If children are no longer learning the language, a language is on the verge of extinction. Among the fluent speakers of B.C.’s First Nations languages, 52% are 65 years and older, while 39% are aged 45 - 64. Less than 2% of fluent speakers are under the age of 25.

THE NEED TO ACT

The literature indicates that there is an increasing awareness among B.C. First Nations communities with respect to the critical endangerment of their languages as follows:

Many individuals, families, schools and organizations are working


tirelessly in their language revitalization efforts. Some examples of these efforts include: pre-school language immersion nests; master-apprentice immersion programs; language and culture immersion camps; school language programs, community and post-secondary language classes; language teacher education and certification; the development of collaborative language plans; and archiving.25

In spite of the accomplishments, these efforts are not enough… If we … want to sustain the complex cultural and knowledge systems embodied in B.C.’s First Nations languages (spirituality, philosophy, human values, oral and musical traditions, scientific and environmental expertise, medical knowledge, cultural practices, social and community relations, artistic skills and traditions), immediate action needs to be taken. Substantial and ongoing resources, both human and financial, are needed to revitalize all of B.C.’s First Nations languages. As the window of opportunity narrows with each fluent speaker that passes away, we urge leadership, governments and communities to work together to form a comprehensive plan to be put into immediate action. This plan must include clear steps towards language revitalization including planning, immersion programming, documentation and expanding existing programming.26

WHAT IS LOST WHEN A LANGUAGE IS LOST?

Language loss is part of the loss of whole cultures and knowledge systems. This includes, but is not limited to, history, stories, spirituality, philosophy, human values, oral and musical traditions, scientific and environmental expertise, medical knowledge, cultural practices, rituals, social and community relations, and artistic skills and traditions.27

CULTURE

The loss of a language means the loss of thousands of years worth of cultural nuances, rituals and practices. It is through language that a culture is transmitted. Each language holds unique ideas, philosophy, points of view, and intricate details of a culture including everything about a way of life such as family and community relations, systems of politics and power, food and health, art, songs and dance, spirituality and values, history, biology, biodiversity, natural and physical sciences, and interconnectedness with the environment. Every culture has adapted to unique environmental, social and political circumstances, and the language holds an accumulation of the experiences and circumstances of the people.

26 Ibid p. 5
27 Ibid p. 7
IDENTITY
Language is an expression of a peoples’ identity. It is one of the most important ways people identify themselves and distinguish themselves from others. People identify who they are, who their relatives are, and where they are from through language. Language is also the vehicle for the transmission of information, stories, history and teachings across generations. Through language people are connected with their history, their ancestors and their land, and as a language declines, so too does the sense of identity of a people.

HEALTH
The loss of language is directly related to the troubling health issues many First Nations are facing today. Knowledge of one’s language is related to physical, mental and spiritual health. It is an expression of ways of life, ways of thinking, and cultural understanding. Language revitalization plays a vital role in community growth, healing, education, development, strong families and reconnection to the past. A healthy language means healthy individuals, healthy communities, and contributing members to society.28

KNOWLEDGE
Each language encompasses immense cultural, historical, scientific, and ecological knowledge. This knowledge is vital not only for the language communities themselves, but also for the sum of all human knowledge. The knowledge contained in each language greatly contributes to all human knowledge. A language may be the key to answering fundamental questions in humanities and in sciences. For example, linguistic theories depend on examples from a great number of languages: Every time a language dies, there is less evidence to understand the patterns, structure and function of human language, cognition and language acquisition and transmission…..

As National Geographic points out on their Enduring Voices29 website, “eighty percent of species have been undiscovered by science, but that doesn’t mean they’re unknown to humans, because the people who live in those ecosystems know the species [and how they are interrelated and coexist] intimately and they often have more sophisticated ways of classifying them than science does.30

The following table illustrates the levels of language endangerment:

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It should be noted that a language can fall into more than one level of endangerment. For one variable a language may seem to fall into a certain level of endangerment but for another variable it may fall into a different level of endangerment.\textsuperscript{31}

The following diagram illustrates the steps to language revitalization. It is noted that there are several steps that are inter-dependent which make language and culture learning so critical. They are:

**Steps to Language Revitalization**

![Diagram: The First People's Council 8 Steps to Language Revitalization](image)

Some sample language revitalization resources are as follows:

**First Peoples’ Council Resources and Capacity-building**

The First Peoples’ Council language program thoroughly evaluates all the projects from each program and reviews recommendations made by communities on an ongoing basis. This evaluation and review process allows the First Peoples’ Council Language Program to identify gaps and needs in the programs, and to develop resources and provide support accordingly. The First Peoples’ Council Language Program works independently and also collaborates with B.C. First Nations language revitalization experts to develop resources and to provide training and support for community projects.

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The following is a detailed list of language and culture resources:

**8 Steps to Language Revitalization (with accompanying tools)**
This poster outlines an eight-step cycle to community language revitalization. Each step is accompanied by a tool(s) with details, worksheets and samples. (Created by the First Peoples’ Council Language Program).

**Indigenous Language Institute: Awakening Our Languages Handbook series**
These handbooks contain comprehensive “how-to” information on language revitalization. (purchased from the Indigenous Language Institute)

**Language and Culture Immersion Programs Handbook**
This resource contains ideas for immersion activities, tips for immersions and immersion methods. (created by the First Peoples’ Council Language Program)

**Wordless Picture Books**
These children’s story books contain no words and can be used by speakers of any language to tell stories in their language. (purchased)

**Granny and Grampa Connections Box and DVD**
This kit contains anatomically correct culturally appropriate dolls and cultural learning tools. The DVD highlights the importance of early childhood education and care. (created in conjunction with the First Peoples’ Council, Success By 6 and Province of B.C.)

**Culture Camps for Language Learning: An Immersion Handbook**
This is a complete manual for planning and implementing a Language and Culture Immersion Camp. (created by the First Peoples’ Council Language Program)

**Master-Apprentice Manual and Resource Package**
This manual is a complete guide to participating in the First Peoples’ Council Master-Apprentice Program. (created by the First Peoples’ Council Language Program)

**Visual Model (concept) of Language Authority and Language Plan Development**
This visual representation provides an overview of the scope and responsibilities of a Language Authority and Language Plan Development.

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3-Phase Plan to Language Authority and Language Plan Development
This resource provides a framework for the first 3 years (phases) of Language Authority and Language Plan Development work. (created by the First Peoples’ Council Language Program)

Language Authority and Language Plan Development “Best Practices”
This is a compilation of best practices taken from final reports submitted to the First Peoples’ Council by the communities. (created by the First Peoples’ Council Language Program)

Pre-School Language Nest Kits
These useful kits contain materials and resources for Pre-School Language Nests such as: culturally appropriate language learning toys, Pre-School Language Nest operating manual, TPR 1 and TPR 2 books, flashcards, picture games, and story boards (the First Peoples’ Council contracted Chief Atahm School Curriculum Resource Department).

Pre-School Language Nest Operating Manual
This summary is based on Chief Atahm’s manual and was created for communities looking at starting a Pre-School Language Nest (the First Peoples’ Council contracted Chief Atahm School Curriculum Resource Department).

Capacity building

First Peoples’ Council Website and Language Toolkit
Our website provides updated information regarding proposal calls for funding, employment postings, language related news items and announcements, publications, samples of previously funded projects in B.C., links to useful and related sites, as well as a language toolkit. The language toolkit includes a glossary of linguistic terms, resources, tools, and FAQs for carrying out language revitalization and research work.

FirstVoices Website
This innovative and dynamic website is a group of web-based tools and services designed to support language archiving, language teaching & culture revitalization. Communities can record, document and archive their languages using this site. Administrators, teachers, and community members can also use the tools this site provides to share, teach and learn the languages.
First Peoples’ Language Map of British Columbia
This online map uses the data from the First Peoples’ Council database of Language Needs Assessments to provide up-to-date information on each of B.C.’s First Nations languages and language content. This ongoing project also identifies First Nations and Community Language Champions.

Pre-School Language Nest Training
Each year the First Peoples’ Council organizes a training event that addresses needs and gaps in the program. The First Peoples’ Council collaborates with Pre-School Language Nest experts from within B.C. and from around the world to offer practical and useful workshops and seminars. Pre-School Language Nest practitioners build their capacity by learning about language immersion methods and activities for young children as well as participating in hands-on training.

Master-Apprentice Program Training
All the Master-Apprentice teams come together once a year for three days of training to meet each other, and to share their challenges and successes. First Peoples’ Council has engaged the support of experts to provide resources and mentorship, and to share their expertise with hands-on training activities that replicate daily activities at home or in the community. (p. 55).

Language Authority and Language Plan Development Networking and Capacity-Building Conference
The First Peoples’ Council Language Program developed four major resource tools especially for the Language Authority and Language Plan Development program: Visual Model (concept) of Language Authority and Language Plan Development, 3-Phase Plan to Language Authority and Language Plan Development, “Best Practices” compilation, and the 8 Steps to Community Language Revitalization model. These new resources were presented at the conference. The First Peoples’ Council Language Program also enlisted the expertise of B.C. First Nations language revitalization experts to attend the conference and distribute resource tools, facilitate hands-on workshops and provide opportunities for participants to share and network.

FirstVoices.com Training
The FirstVoices.com staff provides training to community administrators to ensure that everyone has the knowledge to use the FirstVoices website and understands what is required to archive their language online. These administrators can then apply for funding to continuously update and add to the archives of their languages. FirstVoices.com staff also provides administrators, teachers and website users with ongoing technical support, as well as updates and training for any technology upgrades to
the FirstVoices website.

**Ongoing Support**
The First Peoples’ Council Language Program continuously provides one-on-one support to communities with proposal writing, reporting, and program implementation. The First Peoples’ Council also widely distributes resources to communities as needed.

**Presentations and Workshops**
The First Peoples’ Council shares resources and expertise and regularly attends regional, provincial, national and international conferences and meetings related to First Nations language, culture, arts, wellness and education.  

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**THE DECLINE IN LANGUAGES**

The loss of language signifies a corresponding loss to indigenous knowledge. As indicated earlier in this document, a loss in language and culture contributes to poor educational outcomes. The following excerpt from the literature speaks to all that is lost. A number of factors contribute to the continued language loss of First Nations today. Some causes of language loss are:

- The …public education system often fails First Nations children by neglecting to include and honour First Nations languages and cultures in curricula.
- First Nations community members lack opportunities, resources and support to teach, learn, use and maintain their First Nations languages.
- Governments provide inadequate support and infrastructure for First Nations language programs in schools and communities.
- Poverty, abuse and substance abuse issues take precedence over language revitalization.
- Many First Nations people live in urban centres, and are not surrounded by fellow community members who can use their ancestral language.
- Many First Nations languages have not yet created words and phrases for modern ideas and objects, and are therefore not considered useful First Nations people, languages and cultures are largely excluded from government, commerce, industry, arts, higher education and media.

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35 ibid
• Many people hold the attitude that speaking only English is somehow better for children to be successful in today’s society. The myth exists that bilingual children lag behind their monolingual peers.  

PROMISING PRACTICES

CULTURE CAMPS FOR LANGUAGE IMMERSION

In immersion, language is learned through natural communication and by living life in the language. In immersion, language can be learned through listening, speaking, interacting and doing activities with fluent speakers using the language. Immersion activities are culturally relevant daily activities done in the language. “Immersion is intended to be a fun, interactive program that encourages and supports language learning through Elders modeling best practice methodologies.”

"Culture camp programs take place in First Nations communities and are usually run by First Nation communities themselves. Participants and a team of instructors must be committed to the process. Fluency assessments take place in a non-threatening way to see if participants have grasped the material taught. Other assessment instruments to determine language fluency levels include:  

• Informal interviews (ask participants if they know the language)  
• Demonstration of ability (see how participants use the language)  
• Self-reported surveys  
• Ask participants what they learned each day (review)  
• Ask participants to do action to see if they understood  
• Start conversations by asking questions  
• Show participants how to do something in the language and ask them if they understand.

Immersion as a tool to teach language and culture is effective in many unique ways:  

- People learn a language best when they are surrounded by the language, when they don’t hear any English, and don’t use translations (Hinton, 2002). Language is learned by hearing it and understanding the meaning through context, gestures, and activities.

37 ibid.
38 ibid.
39 ibid.
o Language learning through immersion activities takes less effort than in a typical classroom. If learners and speakers do things together and talk about what they are doing, then the learners automatically understand what is being said. During immersion activities, learners are absorbed in activities rather than straining to consciously learn the language. During their concentration and absorption in activities is when language learning truly happens (Hinton, 2002).

o Learners need to hear words and phrases many times and eventually learn to say those words and phrases themselves. By repeating daily routines in the language, learners have the opportunity to hear the same words and phrases repeated in the context of natural communication.

o Immersion is the best way to learn a language and culture at the same time. Since language and culture are completely interconnected (and one cannot be completely understood without the other), language should be learned along with its culture. It is by living the culture and doing hands-on activities while speaking the language, that the language and culture will be learned and fully understood.  

The following diagram illustrates how language and culture are interconnected.

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This immersion teaching methodology illustrates how learning a First Nations language requires learning First Nations culture and learning First Nations culture requires using the language.\textsuperscript{41}

Inherently we use language in all day-day activities, which make up a culture i.e. food, clothing, art, songs, dance, family, friends, relationships, technology and spirituality.

Language and culture camps are most successful when conducted in remote settings, outdoors or on traditional sites such as an old village or on a sacred area of a traditional territory or community.

**STRENGTHENING ABORIGINAL SUCCESS**

In 2008, the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC) developed *Learn Canada 2020*, a declaration aimed at improving education systems, learning opportunities, and overall education outcomes across Canada. Through *Learn Canada 2020*, “ministers of education recognize the direct link between a well-educated population and a socially progressive, sustainable society.”\textsuperscript{42}

*Learn Canada 2020* also identified (the) ministers’ objective to eliminate the gaps in academic achievement and graduation rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students across Canada. Based on the belief that all Canadians have the reasonable expectation of benefitting from education, CMEC initiated a gathering to “establish a new relationship among leaders in Aboriginal education that respects jurisdiction and develops consensus on shared opportunities” (CMEC, *Summit on Aboriginal Education Backgrounder*).

The Council of Ministers of Education Canada met on February 24-25, 2009 to discuss strengthening aboriginal success. The objectives of the summit were as follows:\textsuperscript{43}

1. to raise the public profile of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education and to promote awareness of the need to eliminate the gaps in education outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners at the elementary-secondary and postsecondary levels;

2. to engage and build support for partnerships, based on dialogue and engagement strategies, with national and regional Aboriginal organizations;


\textsuperscript{42} CMEC. *CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education: Strengthening Aboriginal Success, Summary Report*, Saskatchewan: 2009

\textsuperscript{43} ibid
3. to identify potential areas for action to meet the goals of Learn Canada 2020;

4. to engage with the federal government on Aboriginal education and to discuss opportunities to develop strategies to effect policy change; and

5. to build intergovernmental networks for future dialogue, collaboration, and opportunities to work together on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education.

By drawing on transcripts of speeches, comments, and reports shared at the summit, the following themes were identified as opportunities to work together, strengthened by collective action:44

- Strengthening Aboriginal Language and Culture
- Enhancing Equity in Funding
- Increasing Access, Retention, and Graduation (postsecondary education and adult learning)
- Sharing Responsibility and Accountability
- Planning for Transitions: Seamless Systems for Learners
- Reporting and Benchmarking Success: Data
- Providing Programs and Services
- Engaging All Partners in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education

STRENGTHENING ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

According to the CMEC literature language is the foundation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures. For learners to achieve success in education, affirmation of their language and cultural identity is essential. The summit identified building blocks for approaches based on language and culture, including: curricula, curriculum resources, cultural content, diverse perspectives, instructional methods, programs, and services.45

It is also important for non-Aboriginal learners to appreciate First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples’ heritage, present-day cultures, and contributions to Canada.

National Aboriginal organizations (NAOs) advocated for a holistic approach to education. This vision for First Nations learners was described by National Chief Phil Fontaine of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) as “...learners who [will] achieve their full potential, supported by a comprehensive system under First Nations jurisdiction that addresses

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44 CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education February 24-25, 2009 Strengthening Aboriginal Success Summary Report 2009
45 ibid
their intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical needs through quality lifelong learning, grounded in First Nations languages, cultures, traditions, values, and worldviews.” AFN would like to see “all provinces mandate their schools, universities, and colleges to expand their mandatory requirements to include Native Studies courses for all diploma and degree courses in high schools, universities, and colleges” (February 24, 2009).

Summit participants stated that more parity is needed between on-reserve and provincial schools. The physical condition of schools contributes to the overall teaching and learning experience. Infrastructure for on-reserve schools is the responsibility of the federal government. Summit participants expressed the need for the federal government to address their concerns and priorities for change.

In Canada, the federal government invests in elementary and postsecondary education for Aboriginal people through a variety of methods such as grants and other financial support. Although significant, the level of federal government support has been capped since 1996 at an increase of 2 per cent per year. Many summit participants identified shortfalls in federal funding levels for elementary-secondary and postsecondary Aboriginal learners as a factor in unsatisfactory educational achievement.

AFN advised that First Nations elementary and secondary schools have lower funding levels than provincial schools on a per student basis — approximately $3,000 less per student. National Chief Phil Fontaine emphasized that postsecondary education is also an important part of lifelong learning. When support for postsecondary education is capped or limited, it does not allow First Nations learners to access further education. “This cap does not keep pace with inflation or population growth, which is at 6.2 per cent in First Nations communities” (February 24, 2009).

The following is a summary of education programs and services designed to help eliminate the gap in academic achievement between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners. It highlights existing programs and services and new ideas that are categorized under each of the four pillars of lifelong learning identified in as part of the CMEC’s *Learn Canada 2020* declaration (2008). They include:

46 CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education February 24-25, 2009 *Strengthening Aboriginal Success Summary Report* 2009
47 ibid
EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Community-based early-childhood centres for both urban and rural Aboriginal people (e.g., federal Aboriginal Head Start Program)
- Early-years/transition-to-kindergarten assessment programs and intervention services
- High-quality language-learning resources
- All children learn about First Nations cultures and histories

ELEMENTARY TO HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEMS

- Transition-to-school supports and services
- Mentors
- Instructional methods and resource supports
- Active community and family engagement is provided through community-school programs; as well as the provision of family supports to enable students to participate more fully in local programs (e.g., meals, transportation, child care):
  - Culturally sensitive curricula
  - First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit language programs (regionally adapted to meet local needs)
  - Citizenship: elementary level — curricula and associated resources adjusted/broadened to reflect treaties and other “Aboriginal”-sensitive materials
  - Citizenship: high-school level — public awareness of Aboriginal history, role, and rights (treaties) (e.g., First Nations, Inuit, and Métis history and culture in curriculum relative to European culture [English/French], relative to influence)
- Recognition of Aboriginal traditional knowledge
- Transition-to-school and workplace supports and services

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

- Transition-to-school supports and services
- Mentors
- Instructional methods and resource supports
- Active community and family engagement, perhaps through community-school programs; provision of family needs so students can participate more fully (e.g., meals, transportation, child care)
- Culturally sensitive curricula
- First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit language programs (regionally adapted to meet local needs)
- Recognition of Aboriginal traditional knowledge
- Recognition of need to eliminate the current federal 2-per-cent cap on postsecondary funding
• Civic studies: at the secondary level, familiarize students with the history of Aboriginal peoples, as well as their historical roles and rights (treaties); specifically, include more First Nations, Métis, and Inuit history and culture in curriculum relative to European culture (French/English), so that the role/influence of Aboriginal peoples is better appreciated
• Equitable funding for all Aboriginal groups (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis)
• Recognition of Métis eligibility (currently not acknowledged in federal programming)
• Equitable funding for postsecondary students (loans/bursaries/scholarships)
• In-school intervention supports
• Transition-to-school and workplace supports and services

• ADULT LEARNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
• Equitable and targeted programs
• Private-sector engagement
• Employment placement (affirmative action)\(^{48}\)

PROVIDING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

CMEC Summit participants shared ideas about a variety of programs and services. In their deliberators they asserted an important contributor to success for Aboriginal learners is to ensure that their educators understand and appreciate the value of culture and history for Aboriginal learners. For example:\(^{49}\)

Beyond educational supports and services, participants expressed that improving overall social conditions for Aboriginal learners is an important factor in improving learning outcomes, and that improving learning outcomes will lead to improved social conditions. Specifically, all representatives of the national Aboriginal organizations and many representatives of the regional Aboriginal organizations indicated that adverse social conditions, such as poverty, must be addressed as a prerequisite to improved student outcomes.

\[\ldots\ldots\ldots\text{“success in education and training is dependent on, not merely influenced by, the conditions experienced by the individual related to their housing, their health, and their ability to meet their basic physical and social needs. Any measures implemented to improve education outcomes must address the linkages between these outcomes and the basic human needs of the individual”}\ .\]

\(^{48}\) CMEC, CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education: Strengthening Aboriginal Success, Summary Report, Saskatchewan: 2009 pg. 21

\(^{49}\) ibid
• …….lifelong learning for Aboriginal peoples inherently contains educational and social aspects. For this reason, it is necessary to address socioeconomic factors, including gender, in the planning, development, and implementation of any measures related to education and training (February 24, 2009).……. Education is a key part of any poverty-reduction strategy. Our children are generally less well-equipped — socially, emotionally, and physically — to undertake school programs. Their disadvantaged position and different day-to-day experiences are not taken into account by school curricula. It is no wonder that they are unable to benefit fully from the school system”….. As well, summit participants identified early childhood development (ECD) and early intervention programs as important building blocks for lifelong learning. In order to eliminate the educational-achievement gaps experienced by Aboriginal learners, it is believed that investments in ECD are essential. Focusing on achievement and holistic development in the early years creates an environment to further an individual child’s and family’s progress.

• Recognizing the importance of ECD, CAP suggested that “early childhood development is an essential education program needed to ensure that all Aboriginal children, regardless of residence, have the very best start in life” (February 24, 2009).50

**ENGAGING ALL PARTNERS IN FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION**

Eliminating the educational achievement gaps experienced by Aboriginal learners across Canada requires meaningful involvement of Aboriginal peoples in all orders of government. The CMEC dialogue results indicated that:

The summit confirmed the willingness of all participants to work together to create a shared and successful future. In addition, private-sector engagement and interventions, such as promoting apprenticeship training to Aboriginal learners, provide potential opportunities for Aboriginal learners to experience success within learning and working environments.51

**AN ABORIGINAL EDUCATION ACTION PLAN**

The Manitoba Aboriginal Education Action Plan (AEAP) was announced in October 2004. The Aboriginal Education Directorate provides overall coordination for the AEAP, which was developed to provide a comprehensive strategic

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50 CMEC, CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education: Strengthening Aboriginal Success, Summary Report, Saskatchewan: 2009 pg. 17
51 ibid.
approach to support improved outcomes for Aboriginal learners within the education system.  

One of the objectives of the Manitoba action plan is to increase high school graduation rates. The following are some of the objective activities:

**Family Involvement in Aboriginal Student Success**

*Helping Your Child Succeed in School: A Guide for Parents and Families of Aboriginal Students* was launched in September 2006. Developed by Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth with input from Aboriginal people, the guide recognizes how partnerships with families, schools, and communities support Aboriginal students. It suggests activities that Aboriginal families can use to support their children’s learning at home and in school. The guide is also available in a CD format, with narration in two Aboriginal languages, Cree and Ojibwe.

**Community Schools Partnership Initiative (CSPI)**

The CSPI began in January 2005 to support schools in lower income communities to enhance learning outcomes for students. Community schools are encouraged to develop partnerships by bringing together with parents, community agencies, and services. These partnerships can provide a broad range of services that strengthen and support schools, families, and communities. In the 2005–2006 school year, the Province funded 15 projects of $45,000 each to assist schools to build community

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partnerships and to form strategic plans. Five additional projects are being funded in 2006–2007, for a total of 20 project schools.

**Aboriginal Perspectives and the New Social Studies Curriculum**

Manitoba schools began system-wide implementation of a new provincial Kindergarten to Grade 12 social studies curriculum, starting with Kindergarten to Grade 4 in the 2006–2007 school year. With its focus on inclusion, citizenship, and recognition of diversity, the curriculum embeds concepts related to Aboriginal (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) perspectives at each grade to support students' academic success. Curriculum learning outcomes related to Aboriginal culture and history fall into two categories.53

a. Specific learning outcomes intended to develop knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal perspectives for all students. Beginning in Kindergarten and continuing through every grade to Grade 11 (Grade 12 optional), all students in Manitoba have the opportunity to learn about Aboriginal perspectives in Canada. As well, all students in Grades 3, 7, and 8 focus on indigenous peoples in other places in the world.

b. Distinctive learning outcomes intended to enhance the development/understanding of language, identity, culture, and community for Aboriginal students. Aboriginal students have the opportunity to engage in deeper study of perspectives and issues related to their particular language, culture, and community. The distinctive learning outcomes are intended for First Nations, Métis, or Inuit students in educational settings that include locally controlled First Nations schools. They can also be taught in Aboriginal-controlled schools in off-reserve or urban settings, or where there is agreement in the school or school division.54

**Cultural Competency and Diversity Education**

Cultural competency is an essential aspect of building a more inclusive and appropriate school and classroom environment for all learners, including students of Aboriginal and other cultural backgrounds. Therefore, it is important that all educators are responsive to the needs of diverse learners and can communicate and interact appropriately with Aboriginal learners and their families.

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54 ibid.
Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners benefit from school environments and programs that welcome diversity and provide opportunities for students and educators to learn about the cultural, linguistic, and religious aspects of historical and contemporary communities. Initiatives that recognize these characteristics include:

- building inclusive curricula that challenge bias and prejudice
- integrating Aboriginal perspectives that reflect different world views and experiences
- developing teacher support materials on integrating Aboriginal perspectives
- developing a Grade 12 Aboriginal Studies course
- developing a multi-year ethno cultural equity action plan that will renew and enhance Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth’s commitment to diversity and equity education

**Increase the Number of Aboriginal Teachers**

In Spring 2006, an Aboriginal Teachers Questionnaire (ATQ) was distributed to all Manitoba certified Teachers teaching within the provincial public and First Nations school systems to gather information about the number of Aboriginal teachers in the province, their education background and where they are teaching. A statistical analysis of the survey was completed. The survey findings will form a Profile to outline the need to increase the number of Aboriginal teachers within the public school system.

The Community Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (CATEP) is offered by the University of Winnipeg as part of their Teacher ACCESS program. Aboriginal education assistants currently employed in Seven Oaks and Winnipeg School Divisions can earn their Bachelor of Education through summer, evening and weekend coursework. University College of the North (UCN) is developing its own teacher education program. A transition process is underway to transfer the mandate for the Northern Teacher Education program from Brandon University to UCN.

**Essential Skills (ES) and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)—Igniting the Power Within**

The former Advanced Education and Training (AET), now Advanced Education and Literacy (AEL) and Competitiveness, Training and Trade (CTT) formed a dynamic partnership with First Nations and Métis organizations to answer a growing need for ES and PLAR information and training. This collaboration, led by CTT, has resulted in Igniting the Power Within, a four-level certification training program for local first-point-of-contact advisors and counsellors in Aboriginal communities. This training
has developed the capacity of participants to use ES and PLAR within their services.

Essential Skills are the foundation on which people can be successful at training, education and work, as well as at home and in their communities. They are essential for the achievement of goals throughout life. Essential Skills are described in various occupational profiles. They include: reading text, working with others, thinking skills, continuous learning, writing, oral communications, document use, numeracy (mathematics), and computer use.

MODELS OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE LEARNING

The Ontario Aboriginal Programming Plan (Simcoe County District School Board) 2008-2009 Board Improvement Plan highlights an ongoing commitment to literacy, numeracy, safe schools and employee excellence. To ensure ongoing program planning for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students that is sustainable and long-term the system goals should be included in all programming initiatives.

The Ministry of Education, therefore, established overall goals to be addressed in their program planning. They include: 55

1) High levels of student achievement
2) Reduce gaps in student achievement
3) High levels of public confidence.

In creating success for First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) a more wholistic approach to education is necessary. This wholistic approach includes addressing the emotional, physical, spiritual and mental aspects of the human experience. This includes the integration of the inner and outer world of the student to create meaning. If students are not honoured and they do not experience positive peer and teacher relationships in school then they do not get to the place where education has meaning to them and consequently are not able to progress so that mental learning can take place.56

The research indicated that the following factors should be considered in holistic program planning initiatives: 57

- Promote a positive self-concept through school programs and cultural activities
- Create a welcoming school atmosphere and space for students and parents/grandparents
- Create a positive cultural environment which encourages school

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55 Ontario Aboriginal Programming Plan (Simcoe County District School Board) System Goals and Board Improvement Plan 2008-2009.
56 ibid
57 ibid
participation and graduation success

- Promote community partnerships which will help promote the academic, social and cultural well-being of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students
- Identify and introduce culturally appropriate learning resources into district schools
- Ongoing assessment and instruction which is geared to the learning needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners
- School improvement plans should include programming which addresses the learning needs of FNMI students.  

Programming initiatives must be supported by evidence based research conducted by teachers, educators, administrators and the community. Research conducted in collaboration with First Nations, Métis and Inuit community partners is an integral part of planning effective school programming which addresses student needs and promotes school success. The initiative includes:

- academic research
- literature reviews
- case studies
- teacher knowledge through Professional Learning Communities (PLC’s)
- consulting with the First Nations, Métis and Inuit community including Elders/Traditional Teachers

The following is an example from the literature of a First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Programming Plan 2008-2009.  

**Teachers/Educators**

1. Guidance Part 1, 2 and Specialist Additional Qualification Course (First Nation, Métis and Inuit Focus)
2. Cultural Awareness Training (Principals, teachers, staff)
3. Professional Learning Community (PLC)
4. Resources

**Students/Parent Programming**

- Students Leading GPP30 Course with a First Nation, Métis and Inuit focus
- Seventh Fire Alternative Learning Program
- Native Language Courses/ Native Studies Courses
- First Nation, Métis and Inuit Youth Symposium

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59. ibid
60. ibid
Literacy & Michif Language After-School Program
Celebrating First Nation, Métis and Inuit local, national events
Collection of Self Identification Data
Pilot Projects - Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project

Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework

Summary of goals, strategies and performance measures:

High Level of Student Achievement

a. Build capacity for effective teaching, assessment, and evaluation practices.
b. Promote system effectiveness, transparency, and responsiveness.
c. Significant increase in the percentage of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students meeting provincial standards on province-wide assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics
d. Significant increase in the number of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit teaching and non-teaching staff in school boards across Ontario

Reduce Gaps in Student Achievement

a. Enhance support to improve literacy and numeracy skills.
b. Provide additional support in a variety of areas to reduce gaps in student outcomes.
c. Significant increase in the graduation rate of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students
d. Significant improvement in First Nation, Métis, and Inuit student achievement
e. Significant improvement in First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students’ self-esteem
f. Increased collaboration between First Nation education authorities and school boards to ensure that First Nation students in First Nation communities receive the preparation they need to succeed when they make the transition to provincially funded schools
g. Increased satisfaction among educators in provincially funded schools with respect to targeted professional development and resources designed to help them serve First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students more effectively

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61 Ontario Aboriginal Programming Plan (Simcoe County District School Board) System Goals and Board Improvement Plan 2008-2009. pg. 3
62 ibid
High Levels of Public Confidence

a. Build educational leadership capacity and coordination.
b. Build capacity to support identity building, including the appreciation of Aboriginal perspectives, values, and cultures by all students, school board staff, and elected trustees.
c. Foster supportive and engaged families and communities.
d. Increased participation of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit parents in the education of their children.
e. Increased opportunities for knowledge sharing, collaboration, and issue resolution among Aboriginal communities, First Nation governments and education authorities, schools, school boards, and the Ministry of Education.
f. Integration of educational opportunities to significantly improve the knowledge of all students and educators in Ontario about the rich cultures and histories of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

The wholistic teaching model requires educators to plan programming, lessons, curriculum or activities which take into consideration the four elements of the human condition.

The process follows the circle which is a symbol of the cycle of life. Circle is a methodology which shows us the interconnectedness of people, place and things. For human beings to live in balance we must address each one of the elements of the circle which makes up the human condition.

When a student goes to school (physical action) and something negative happens causing them to be upset (emotional feelings) then they find it difficult to find meaning in either what is being taught or in the place where they attend school (spiritual – place of meaning). This is the place where students get stuck and therefore are unable to move to the mental realm of the circle, where students are open to learning. The wholistic learning/teaching model allows real learning to take place that is long-term and enduring for the student. For First Nation, Métis and Inuit students’ school is about relationships therefore the teacher and classroom relationships are an integral part of education.

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63 Ontario Aboriginal Programming Plan (Simcoe County District School Board) System Goals and Board Improvement Plan 2008-2009. pg. 6
64 ibid pg. 7
Another example from the research regarding program planning and research is the following: 65

Schools included in this study were selected by the Ministry of Education, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Aboriginal school authorities, school districts and the principle investigators. The criteria for selection of these schools include: student success on provincial exams or standardized test, student attendance, retention and graduation rates, parent and community satisfaction, culture and language programs, percentage of graduates enrolled in post-secondary schools, creative programming and instruction and staff development.

These case studies include 20 First Nation and provincial schools throughout Canada. Some schools are Band controlled schools funded by Indian and Northern Affairs, others are school board run and provincially funded, and some schools are described as “hybrid” schools which are funded jointly by all three such partners. The schools included in the Bell 2004 and Fulford 2007 studies include many best practices in addressing First Nation, Métis and Inuit student success.

Common Success Factors included:

1. Strong Leadership including a strong Governance Structure (long tenure in terms of school leadership was deemed important)  
2. Multiple programs and support for learners  
3. Exceptional language and cultural programs  
4. Secure and welcoming school climate for children and parents  
5. Respect for First Nation, Métis and Inuit culture and traditions which made learning relevant  
6. High percentage of First Nation, Métis and Inuit staff and quality staff development  
7. Assessment linked to instructional and planning decisions (within yearly school improvement plan)  
8. Vigorous community partnerships and beneficial external alliances

Important Preconditions for Learning included:

- Attendance  
- Behaviour  
- Wellbeing (using a holistic approach)  
- Capacity building in all aspects of school

(Teachers, educators, staff, parents and students)

Four Systemic/Structural Factors Affecting First Nation, Métis and Inuit Student Success in First Nations’ Schools included:

- Funding
- Special Education
- Language and Literacy Initiatives
- Performance Measurement and Reporting.  

SASKATCHEWAN

Another example of First Nations literacy efforts is the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education policy framework which is based on an Aboriginal set of vision and principles as follows.

Vision:

A provincial education system that foundationally places First Nations and Métis ways of knowing in the learning program to create a culturally responsive education system that benefits all learners.

Framework Principles:

1. Because we value First Nations and Métis ways of knowing we are committed to ensuring that curricula and content foundationally reflect First Nations and Métis ways of knowing and accurately depict the contributions of First Nations and Métis peoples.

2. Because we value First Nations and Métis languages and cultures we are committed to supporting programs that integrate the teaching of language and culture.

3. Because we value relationships and authentic engagement we are committed to engaging children, youth, families, and communities in culturally responsive learning programs, and partnerships that lead to shared leadership, shared responsibility, and shared decision-making in the education system.

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66 Ontario Aboriginal Programming Plan (Simcoe County District School Board. (2009).  
Teaching and Learning on Turtle Island: Three R’s – Relationships, Respect and Reciprocity.  
Simcoe County: Simcoe County District School Board. Pg. 8

4. Because we value the environment and the natural world we are committed to ensuring opportunities exist for their inclusion within the learning programs so these values are respected and embraced in daily life.

5. Because we value accountability and the responsible management of public resources we are committed to continuous improvement through alignment of system initiatives, and working collaboratively with First Nations and Métis peoples to strengthen capacity within the provincial and federal education systems.

6. Because we value Constitutional and Treaty rights we are committed to mandatory Treaty education that honours the historical uniqueness of First Nations’ rights to education while acknowledging the federal government’s legal, constitutional, and fiscal obligations to First Nations and Métis peoples.

7. Because we value equity, social justice, and diversity we are committed to creating a provincial education system that affirms the identity of First Nations and Métis students and respects and reflects their diverse cultures in teaching and learning practices.68

Policy Statement:

The Ministry of Education commits to work collaboratively with all educational partners to build capacity and achieve transformational change within the provincial education system to create a culturally responsive learning program that benefits all learners.

Policy Goals:

1. Equitable outcomes for First Nations and Métis learners.

2. All learners to have knowledge and appreciation of the unique contributions of First Nations and Métis peoples to Saskatchewan.

3. Data collection and reporting on measures outlined in the Ministry’s First Nations and Métis Education Policy Framework that demonstrate accountability towards improved educational outcomes.

4. Shared management of the provincial education system by promoting and sustaining partnerships with First Nations and Métis peoples at the

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provincial and local level. 69

Strategies to achieving framework goals: The full implementation of this policy requires a shared approach to actualization. When the word “we” is used within the policy goals, it refers to all educational partners.

Specific strategies are offered as descriptions of actions to be taken by the Ministry, school divisions, and schools and communities to support the actualization of each goal. The strategies should be viewed as an assessment for learning process, as they offer opportunities to engage in a continuous cycle of improvement rather than a summative checklist of actions undertaken.

This Policy Framework is intended to guide the provincial education system’s strategic direction and future activities in First Nations and Métis education policy development, strategy implementation, and program evaluation.

The provincial education system has a major role to play to ensure social harmony and economic viability now and in the future. Not only does its mandate include the learning success of all children and young people, but it also strives to promote understanding and respect among diverse interests and groups and balances the development of the individual with a commitment to the common good. 70

Saskatchewan’s education system must continue to represent the people it serves at every level of planning and decision making. With the dramatic shifts in demographics in the province, this means that new and creative structures and processes are needed to ensure that First Nations and Métis peoples are involved and have a voice, but also that their numbers in the leadership of provincial schools reflect their numbers in the population.

Through partnerships and shared decision making, the provincial education system has taken some critical first steps. The challenge now is to continue this proactive approach towards a provincial education system that foundationally places First Nations and Métis ways of knowing along with the historical, contemporary, and future contributions of First Nations and Métis peoples. 71

69 Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. (2009). Inspiring Success: Building Towards Student Achievement. Saskatoon: Ministry of Education. pg. 16
70 Ibid pg 17
71 Ibid. pg 28
FIRST NATION HOLISTIC LIFELONG LEARNING MODEL

The First Nations learner lives in a world of continual re-formation, where interactive cycles, rather than disconnected events, occur. In this world, nothing is simply a cause or an effect, but the expression of the inter-connectedness of life. These relationships are circular, rather than linear, holistic, and cumulative rather than compartmentalized. See Appendix A for the model graphics. The mode of learning for First Nations people reflects and honours this understanding.\(^{72}\)

Lifelong learning for First Nations peoples is grounded in experiences that embrace both indigenous and Western knowledge traditions, as depicted in the tree’s root system, “Sources and Domains of Knowledge”. Just as the tree draws nourishment through its roots, the First Nations person learns from and through the natural world, language, traditions and ceremonies, and the world of people (self, family, ancestors, clan, community, nation and other nations). Any uneven root growth can destabilize the learning system. The root system also depicts the intertwining presence of indigenous and Western knowledge, which forms the tree trunk’s core, where learning develops.

A cross-sectional view of the trunk reveals the “Learning Rings of the Individual”. At the ring’s core are the four dimensions of personal development—spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental—through which learning is experienced holistically. The tree’s rings portray how learning is a lifelong process that begins at birth and progresses through childhood, youth and adulthood.

Learning opportunities are available in all stages of First Nations life. They can occur in both informal and formal settings such as in the home, on the land, or in the school. The stages of learning begin with the early childhood phase and progress through elementary, secondary and post-secondary education, to adult skills training and employment. Intergenerational knowledge is transmitted to the individual from the sources within the roots.

The First Nations learner experiences the various relationships within indigenous and Western knowledge traditions through their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical dimensions. The tree’s extended branches, which represent the individual’s harmony and well-being, depict the development of these experiences. The individual’s well-being supports the cultural, social, political and economic “Collective Well-Being”.

represented by the four clusters of leaves. Just as leaves provide nourishment to the roots and support the tree’s foundation, the community’s collective well-being rejuvenates the individual’s learning cycle. Learning guides—mentors, counsellors, parents, teachers, and Elders—provide additional support and opportunities for individuals to learn throughout their lifespan.  

LESIONS IN IMPROVING LITERACY

The literature indicates there are numerous approaches that illustrate promise in addressing the literacy challenges facing First Nations. They are as follows:

1. Aboriginal parents’ engagement in schools works to dispel harmful stereotypes, breeds confidence in parents and brings children closer to their teachers—all of which have a positive impact on learning. One of the outcomes of the historical use of education as an assimilationist tool is the reluctance of contemporary Aboriginal parents to become involved in their children’s schooling. There is strong evidence that students are more successful in school when their parents are involved in their education.

2. Parents are most likely to become involved in their children’s education when schools actively encourage their involvement. Schools can encourage parental involvement by offering meaningful roles in school governance: this is true for all parents, but this approach can be particularly effective among Aboriginal parents. Schools can enhance parental involvement by keeping parents informed. Once children leave elementary school, it often becomes difficult for parents to determine which teachers or school staff can provide information about their children’s academic progress. Schools can alleviate this problem by assigning an advisor to each student. The advisor serves as a contact person for both students and parents, and can provide general school information as well as details about particular students to their parents.

3. Creating a school climate in which Aboriginal students feel welcomed and valued can help overcome feelings of alienation toward schooling. Although the existence of racism toward Aboriginal students is often ignored or denied, recent research presents strong evidence of the widespread existence of such discrimination. For example, in a study of discrimination among Canadian teachers, 50 student teachers were asked to assess the records of 24 students and recommend their placement in remedial, conventional or advanced programs. Student teachers systematically devalued the performance of students whom they were led

to believe were of Aboriginal ancestry in comparison to their non-Aboriginal counterparts with identical student records.

The first step in eliminating the effects of racism in Aboriginal education is to acknowledge that it does exist and that specific efforts will be required to address it. In order to address racism in education, schools must have anti-racist policies and strategies to resolve problems when they arise. Such strategies include cultural and anti-racist education of staff and students. Other strategies include efforts to include Aboriginal content and approaches to learning within mainstream curricula.\textsuperscript{74}

Developing an understanding of Aboriginal approaches to learning increases Aboriginal students’ chances of success. A number of studies have demonstrated that, in different cultures, different aspects of learning are emphasized and valued. For example, researchers have observed that many Aboriginal students prefer co-operative rather than competitive learning, and that many learn through imitation, observation, and trial and error rather than direct instruction. Given that learning style factors can contribute to the alienation of Aboriginal students within classrooms, attending to these factors should contribute to more successful outcomes among Aboriginal students. In some jurisdictions across Canada, efforts are already underway to ensure that schools are more culturally inclusive of Aboriginal students and Aboriginal approaches to learning. For example, Manitoba’s Aboriginal Education Action Plan (2004) stresses family involvement in Aboriginal student success and proposes a framework for family involvement. The plan also highlights the need for more Aboriginal teachers and teacher education programs, as well as Cultural Competency and Diversity Education.

These initiatives are considered a vital component for success in Aboriginal education. Saskatchewan Learning’s Policy Framework for Partnerships between Education System and First Nations Authorities and Communities (2003) demonstrates a commitment to sharing the management of the education system with the Aboriginal community and setting up learning programs where Aboriginal history and culture are reflected in all subject areas. Saskatchewan seeks to abide by a number of policy principles which affirm the shared management of its education system with Aboriginal people and acknowledge that Aboriginal cultural differences need to be reflected in the curriculum, programs and teaching methods in schools attended by Aboriginal students.\textsuperscript{75}

1. Identifying students who are inadequately prepared to learn upon entry to school allows for their literacy needs to be met immediately.

\textsuperscript{74} CCL. (2007). \textit{First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model} (Draft). Ottawa: Canadian Council on Learning, University of Saskatchewan and First Nations Adult & Higher Education Consortium. Pg 5

\textsuperscript{75} ibid
2. The majority of teachers know how to identify speech and language challenges, low vocabulary, poor phonetic and phonemic awareness and other obstacles to the development of literacy in the young. If these obstacles are addressed when children first start school, the pain and difficulty of remediation later will be reduced. Systematic instruction in literacy has proven successful in improving the literacy levels of students whose initial performance was poor.

3. Diminishing the impact of student absenteeism and mobility also contributes to Aboriginal student success. Absenteeism and student mobility are significant obstacles to school success for students. Aboriginal students are among those who are more often absent and more likely to change schools. Greater attention to parental engagement should help to address the problem of absenteeism by building support among parents. An earlier Lessons in Learning—“Students on the move: Ways to address the impact of mobility among Aboriginal students”— contains a number of suggestions for addressing the needs of students who change schools; developing strategies for successful enrolment, transition and induction, transferring student information, and building flexibility to meet learning needs.  

REDEFINING HOW SUCCESS IS MEASURED

Current approaches that adequately measure experiential learning of First Nations, Inuit and Métis learning through experience—including learning from the land, Elders, traditions and ceremonies, and parental and family supports—is a widespread, vital form of learning.

Data that measure experiential, non-formal and informal learning for Aboriginal people are not available; experiential learning remains invisible and undervalued although it continues to be an important mode of learning. Existing research tends to reinforce an assumption that only formal education is associated with successful learning and, by extension, with success in life.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples affirms the disruptive impact of historical policies and legislation on the social, economic and cultural foundations of Aboriginal communities. The imposition of the residential school system, the loss of lands, reduced access to resources and prohibitions regarding the practice of traditional ceremonies and Aboriginal languages all took their toll on the health and well-being of First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

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77 Ibid pg. 12
Measurement approaches that focus on discrete stages in formal learning of youth often do not allow for the monitoring of learners’ progress during educational transitions, such as between high school and postsecondary school, when many Aboriginal learners enrol in university and college entrance programs to upgrade their skills.

UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) is examining data gaps and challenges in measuring health, human rights, economic and social development, environment, education and culture.

The UNPFII initiated this work in 2004 by convening an international expert workshop on data collection and disaggregation for Indigenous Peoples. The UNPFII has since organized a series of international meetings, including a workshop held in Ottawa in 2006, to discuss data gaps and challenges in measuring the well-being of Indigenous Peoples. The objectives of the Ottawa workshop were to:

- Identify gaps in existing indicators at the global, regional and national levels that assess the situation of Indigenous Peoples and impact policy making, governance, and program development;
- Examine work being done to improve indicators so that they take into account Indigenous Peoples;
- Examine linkages between quantitative and qualitative indicators, particularly indicators that look at processes affecting indigenous Peoples;
- Propose the formulation of core global and regional indicators that address the specific concerns and situations of Indigenous Peoples.

During this workshop, the Australian representative identified that current indicators must go beyond governments’ perceptions of success to ensure the “effective full participation of Indigenous people in all stages of data collection and analysis as an essential component of participatory development practice.”

The UNPFII has also identified other key issues, including: the need to align Indigenous-specific indicators with the United Nations’ eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 18 targets and 48 indicators; the need for Indigenous Peoples to participate in data collection; and the need to develop culturally appropriate indicators that reflect Indigenous perspectives.

The First Nations Research Centre has led the way in identifying the principles of ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP) required in data collection, analysis and dissemination. The Assembly of First Nations concludes that the failure of government and researchers to recognize the importance of OCAP as a
best practice in data ownership and collection has led to recurrent problems in obtaining quality information about First Nations communities.

Although non-Aboriginal federal, provincial and territorial governments have faced challenges in implementation they have determined that the following principles of aboriginal learning are essential to student success:

Learning is holistic
The learning process simultaneously engages and develops all aspects of the individual—emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual—and of the collective. Individual learning is viewed as but one part of a collective that extends beyond the family, community and nation to Creation itself.

Knowledge is not classified into hierarchical competencies or disciplinary specializations; all knowledge, including knowledge of language, culture and traditions, and all existence (humans, animals, plants, cosmos, etc.) are related by virtue of their shared origins (the Creator).

Information tends to be framed around relationships such as the interconnectedness of humans, animals, plants, the environment and the Creator.

Learning is lifelong.
Many Aboriginal Peoples such as the First Nations of the plains (Blackfoot, Cree, Dakota and others) use the Medicine Wheel—a circle divided into quadrants—to illustrate the progressive growth of self through a cyclical journey. The Wheel also conveys the passage of the four seasons, the integration of emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual aspects of human development, and the interconnectedness of all life. The Medicine Wheel presents learning as a lifelong process connected to all stages of human development, beginning before birth and continuing through childhood to old age. Knowledge and wisdom, acquired through a lifetime of learning are transmitted to younger learners in a process that repeats itself with successive generations.

Learning is experiential
The traditional Aboriginal classroom consisted of the community and the natural environment. Each adult was responsible for ensuring that each child learned the specific skills, attitudes and knowledge they needed to function in everyday life. Experiential learning is seen as connected to lived experience, as in learning by doing, and is structured formally through regular community interactions such as sharing circles, ceremonies, meditation, or story telling, and daily activities…. Although experiential learning is most often associated with activities that occur outside the formal classroom, it is a purposeful and essential mode of learning for First Nations, Métis and Inuit.
Learning is rooted in Aboriginal languages and cultures
Landmark documents on Aboriginal learning, including *Indian Control of Indian Education* (1972) and the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (1996), affirm the pivotal role that languages and cultures play in successful Aboriginal learning. Through language, Aboriginal Peoples transmit cultural knowledge from one generation to another and make sense of their shared experience. Aboriginal languages reflect the unique worldviews of Indigenous Peoples’ toward their land, contains the “knowledge of technologies and life’s rhythms of that specific place”, and “is nothing short of a living, working, practical toolkit for survival in that specific region.”

Language connects Aboriginal people to their culture’s system of values about how they ought to live and relate to each other. As Aboriginal languages encode unique ways of interpreting the world, they are seen as inseparable from issues of Aboriginal identity and the maintenance of Aboriginal knowledge systems.

Learning is spiritually oriented
Central to the Aboriginal worldview is the pre-eminence of spiritual development that derives from a reverence for life and affirmation of the interconnectedness of all beings.

To understand the reality of physical existence, to make ‘knowing possible,’ the individual turns inward to connect with the energy that manifests itself in all existence.

Spiritual experience is, therefore, equated with knowledge in itself and is manifested in the physical world through ceremony, vision quests and dreams. Therefore, knowledge is a sacred object, and seeking knowledge is a spiritual quest. Many Aboriginal people have conceptualized the learning spirit as an entity that emerges from the complex interrelationships between the learner and his or her learning journey...... that “when the spirit is absent, learning becomes difficult, unfulfilling, and, perhaps, impossible.”

Learning is a communal activity
The *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* noted the central role of family and community as lifelong educators:

“Traditional education prepared youth to take up adult responsibilities. Through apprenticeship and teaching by parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, skills and knowledge were shaped and honed. In the past, the respective roles of men and women in community life were valued and well established, with continuity from generation to generation, so that
youth saw their future roles modelled by adults and elders who were respected and esteemed within their world.”

Thus parental and family involvement in community learning can entail diverse roles: parents and family as the first educators in the home, as central partners with the school and as advocates and key decision-makers for all children and youth. Elders play a key role as facilitators of lifelong learning. They teach responsibilities and relationships among family, community and creation, reinforcing intergenerational connections and identities. Elders transmit the community’s culture through parables, allegories, lessons and poetry, presented over a long period of time. They play an important role in fostering culturally affirming school environments that link students, staff, families and community to Aboriginal cultures and traditions.

Learning integrates Aboriginal and Western knowledge Aboriginal learning is not a static activity, but rather an adaptive process that derives the best from traditional and As Inuit Elders have suggested, there is “great continuity between the past and the present, tradition and modernity. “From the earliest days of contact, Aboriginal parents have had the deeply held desire for education that would equip their children to reap the benefits of the knowledge and technologies of the Euro-Canadian society. However, they have maintained a parallel desire to preserve their own ways of knowing, cultural traditions and heritage. For Aboriginal students, education is not an “either or” proposition, but a “yes and” situation.”

Learning that integrates Western and Indigenous knowledge, research shows, can counteract the effects of cultural mismatch that have contributed to low participation of Aboriginal people in, for example, science and engineering and post-secondary programs. Over the last two decades, various learning projects in Canada and the United States have demonstrated the successful merging of Aboriginal and Western knowledge that offers students a balanced two way of knowing approach.

Finally, the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI) was established in 1995 as a joint project of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The Alaska Federation of Natives and the National Science Foundation, the AKRSI involves 176 schools and approximately 20,000 students (mostly Aboriginal) in a program to integrate local Aboriginal knowledge and pedagogical practices into all aspects of the education system. Over the years, the AKRSI has strengthened the quality of educational experiences and improved the academic performances of students in participating schools throughout rural Alaska.78

78 CCL. (2007). Redefining how success is measured in First Nations, Inuit and Metis
GAPS AND DEFICITS IN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE LEARNING

The gaps and deficits in First Nations language program and resources include, but are not limited to: lack of funding, limited access to Elders who speak the language, lack of funding for curriculum development. The literature indicates that specific programs that address the gap in post secondary education between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people include:79

Aboriginal control over curriculum development and delivery is supported by the literature in providing support to aboriginal students enrolling in postsecondary education. Providing the psychological support and emotional support for aboriginal students seems to set students up for success. These supports look like: more aboriginal faculty and staff in institutions, elder involvement, program delivery in aboriginal communities and teaching models that reflect aboriginal beliefs.

Indigenous Institutes of Higher Learning (IIHLs) are an excellent example of aboriginal control over curriculum development. These institutes are PSE level but are governed and managed by aboriginal people and are a model in providing a culturally sensitive curriculum. A great many of these institutes provide programs that help students bridge that gap between secondary and PSE.

Other programs including Aboriginal Head Start on-reserve are designed to help aboriginal children in their formative years. These programs offer assistance to developing children for academic readiness and offer parenting skills for parents.

Milestones should be set for Aboriginal educational achievement across the educational spectrum, including measures for achievement in early childhood “ready to learn, early literacy, and elementary and secondary school programs, in student engagement, and so on. The milestones should be quantitative in nature, so that it will be clear whether or not they are met. These milestones should be created collaboratively by Aboriginal communities, governments, and both mainstream and indigenous educational institutions. They will require compromises among the various agencies.

Enrolment and completion of PSE among the Aboriginal cohort needs to be tracked in an ongoing manner. This tracking must cover a rich level of detail that includes an analysis of different levels of PSE, different regions (urban, rural, remote) and different sub-groups (First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people) in sufficient numbers to allow for conclusions. The


establishment of unique identifiers that allow for the tracking of students across different systems is necessary. While it might be difficult to determine the exact nature of what should be tracked, some work in this area is being done already and an be built upon. If data are not collected, there is no way to measure progress or success.

It would also be helpful to track pathways from secondary to postsecondary education, including labour market experiences. Further, it would be helpful to track the aspirations, expectations, attitudes, and beliefs about education held by Aboriginal youth. More of this kind of tracking is needed so that education policy makers can respond directly to what learners need.

…… there is a lack of evaluative data on programs and services supporting aboriginal transitions from K-12 to PSE. Without quantitative evidence the efficacy or shortcomings of programming, it is difficult to make improvements that might be needed, or to assess that a program is a best practice. 80

There is a need for a “system-wide data infrastructure that allows for detailed longitudinal tracking in a K-20 perspective and across the educational jurisdictions in Canada. Post-secondary education is contributing to student success, however, next steps are required to address the following: 81

1. Create culturally appropriate academic and professional courses and programs in partnership with Aboriginal communities, that meet Aboriginal learning and employment needs;
2. Increase aboriginal representation in the teaching and decision making structures of postsecondary institutions
3. Expand partnerships with aboriginal organizations and learning institutions
4. Create and institutional climate where aboriginal learners and learning are welcomed, respected and valued.

Quality of academic preparation needs to be improved and must include measures to.82

1. Expand access to high quality early childhood development programs emphasizing family involvement in learning

80 ibid
82 Ibid
2. Establish a pan-Canadian effort……with jurisdictional flexibility regarding implementation, to improve academic preparation and increase high-school completion rates for Aboriginal students;
3. Establish or expand multi-faceted supports for children, youth, and their families to encourage and facilitate progression to PSE;
4. Ensure that teacher training curricula foster an understanding of Aboriginal culture and issues
5. Provide greater funding and promotion of continuing and developmental programs for the large number of aboriginal adults who need academic upgrading.

Barriers that need to be overcome must:

1. Address higher level and incidence of housing and child care needs of Aboriginal learners;
2. Promote the health and well-being of Aboriginal learners; and
3. Assist Aboriginal learners to deal with personal challenges unique to Aboriginal people and linked to their historical legacy and circumstances.
4. The literature indicates that such supports are most effective when delivered in a person-centered and holistic way, and that Aboriginal organizations and agencies are often highly effective in achieving this.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In summary we have identified promising and proven programs and resources that are contributing to positive education outcomes and learning experiences that are linguistically and culturally appropriate as indicated in the literature.

Language is the way a culture is transmitted—it represents the identity of a people and holds cultural, historical, scientific and ecological knowledge. When a language is lost, we all lose out on the knowledge held within it and the unique way its speakers view the world.84

The status of First Nations language is critical, and the literature illustrates that there is considerable work being done in communities to revitalize languages. These activities include:

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83 Statistics Canada & CMEC. (2010). A Literature Review of Factors that support successful Transitions by Aboriginal People from K-12 to Postsecondary Education. Ottawa: Atlantic Evaluation Group. Pg 60
- Collaborating to share ideas and resources, as well as overcome common challenges
- Creating new speakers by participating in immersion programs
- Recording, documenting and archiving languages
- Developing short- and long-term revitalization plans to benefit communities across language groups

The literature further indicates that many community members are mobilized and motivated, and they are creating a ripple effect in their communities by engaging families, friends and neighbours in their language revitalization efforts. Language champions, individuals, families, schools and organizations are working tirelessly in their language revitalization efforts. Some examples of these great efforts are as follows:

**Collaboration**

- Communities that share a language are developing Language Authorities to exchange ideas, collaborate, and share resources through conferences and workshops.
- Communities that do not share a language are networking, learning and helping one another overcome common challenges.

**Planning**

- Communities are developing short- and long-term revitalization plans by assessing their languages and setting goals and priorities.

**Individuals Using their Language**

- Fluent speakers, semi-speakers and learners are speaking to one another as much as they can in their language on a daily basis.
- Community leadership, staff and community members are greeting each other and incorporating their language into daily operations.

**Families Speaking the Language**

- Speakers are speaking to their children and grandchildren in the language.
- Some children are learning the language at home and in the community.

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86 B.C. 2010 report on the status of FN languages, Vancouver 2010
Creating New Speakers

- Communities are participating in …immersion programming such as the Master-Apprentice Program, Language and Culture Immersion Camps and Pre-School Language Nests to create new speakers and to improve the fluency of semi-speakers.

Language Champions

- Individuals are working to develop teaching resources, archives, documentation, and to teach the language to others.
- Community members are advocating for the future of their languages.

Mobilization

- Communities are eager and motivated to carry out language revitalization projects. They apply for funding regularly and have clear priorities and plans for what they need.
- Language revitalization conferences, workshops and trainings are held regularly, and attendance and interest is always overwhelmingly positive.

Education and Teacher Training

- Programs such as the Certificate in Aboriginal Language Revitalization educate and train community members in language revitalization strategies. (p. 24)
- Many speakers and learners are working towards receiving their teachers’ certification through language authorities or DSTC programs.
- Several post-secondary institutions offer B.C. First Nations language courses.

Archiving

- Communities are working on recording, documenting and archiving their languages. Some communities use FirstVoices.com as a tool.

Pre-school Language Nests

In Pre-school Language Nests children under five years old and their parents are immersed in their language, culture and an environment that encourages healthy families and building strong intergenerational ties. Community resource people participate as language and culture experts, and Pre-school Language Nest teachers are either fluent speakers or are in the process of becoming fluent speakers in their languages. Pre-school Language Nests address the need to create more speakers from younger
generations. In addition, Pre-school Language Nests create opportunities for young parents to learn the language and bring it back into their homes and daily lives, which is necessary for revitalizing a language.

**Language and Culture Immersion Camps**

Language and Culture Immersion Camps provide opportunities for fluent speakers of First Nations languages to pass on their language and culture to younger generations. Communities carry out these camps using traditional cultural activities including multi-generational gatherings and language immersion. Language and Culture Immersion Camps not only provide opportunities for community members (especially youth) to learn the language through language immersion, but also promote pride and motivation to learn the language and culture. (p. 25)

**Master-Apprentice Program**

The Master-Apprentice Program (MAP) is a one-on-one language immersion program. A “master” (a fluent speaker of a language) is paired with an “apprentice” (learner). The master and apprentice spend 300 hours per year together doing everyday activities using the language at all times. In this program, learners become more fluent which is especially valuable for languages where very few fluent speakers are left.

**Language Authority and Language Plan Development Program (LAP)**

In the LAP, all communities with the same language are asked to come together to collaborate in spite of geographical challenges, dialect, political and community differences. Communities are asked to work as a team to share resources, knowledge, funding, resource people, infrastructure, and expertise to develop a Language Authority and Plan for language revitalization.

The purpose of Language Authority and Language Plan Development is to:

- Govern language related initiatives
- Approve work done on the language
- Develop language-based policies
- Take responsibility for the revitalization and future of the language
- Develop a viable and sustainable plan for community language revitalization
- Plan and implement language revitalization projects
- Certify language teachers
OTHER PROGRAMS

Other examples of language revitalization strategies include:87

- FirstVoices: Language recording, documentation and archiving using FirstVoices.com technology
- Documentation of language
- Researching and providing statistical data
- Development of resource materials
- Language revitalization and planning strategies
- Training and certification
- Communication systems development
- Promotion of traditional approaches to learning and improving community and public understanding and appreciation of First Nations languages.
- Information Sharing: Organizing gatherings of language families to share ideas and develop strategies for language revitalization and developing mechanisms for sharing information, materials and other resources among First Nations language groups. (p. 26)

Language Revitalization Strategies

A living language is one that is thriving, healthy and has many speakers, especially young ones; it is spoken widely by families and communities in government, social and spiritual situations; it is used for real daily communication; and it is used in media, literature and all types of communication. Revitalizing a language means preventing it from being lost, bringing it back to life, and eventually ensuring that it is thriving, healthy and valued.

There are different language revitalization strategies for each of the eight steps, and the strategies that a community uses depend on the status of their language as well as their needs. This is a cycle, so it is important to return to the beginning step to re-assess the status of your language, gather increased community support and mobilization, review programs, revise plans, and carry out research and language projects as their needs. This is a cycle, so it is important to return to the beginning step to re-assess the status of your language, gather increased community support and mobilization, review programs, revise plans, and carry out research and language projects. (p.33)

As noted earlier First Nations language and its speakers must be central to the revitalization process. Also, planning and consulting should be continuously carried out throughout the entire process. The language revitalization process will only be successful if it is planned in consultation with remaining fluent speakers, community members, stakeholders, and local government. These groups are central to the revitalization process. Without support and participation, revitalization will not be successful since revitalization of the language depends on using and embracing the language in all aspects of every day life. A revitalization example in BC is:

**Assess the Status of Your Language**
Before beginning the planning and implementation steps, it is important for communities to be able know how many people speak the language, how often and what resources and level of motivation there is in the community.

**Community Mobilization and Support**
It is imperative that language revitalization efforts include all levels of community and leadership support. By educating the community, and promoting and celebrating the language, support, participation and encouragement will be gained.

**Language Authority and Language Plan Development.**
Communities with the same language are asked to come together to collaborate in spite of geographical challenges, dialect, political and community differences. Community members work as a team to share resources, knowledge, funding, resource people, infrastructure, and expertise to develop a Language Authority and Language Plan Development.

**Language Revitalization Research**
It is important for communities to be aware of previous work that has been done on language revitalization in … and around the world, as well as in their own language.

**Goal Setting**
Based on their needs and priorities…. communities must set realistic and reachable long and short-term goals for the revitalization of their language, and then decide on projects that will help to achieve those goals.

**Planning and Research**
Once communities have set their goals and decided on projects, they should look to other successful models to plan their own language revitalization project.
Information Sharing. Organizing gatherings of language families to share ideas and develop strategies for language revitalization, retention and maintenance; and/or developing mechanisms for sharing information, materials and other resources among First Nations language groups.

**Language Revitalization Projects**

Carry out the well planned projects to meet language goals.

Immersion Programming. This is the most successful method of creating more speakers and increasing the fluency of semi speakers of First Nations languages by providing them with opportunities to be immersed in the language through daily and traditional cultural activities.

Pre-School Language Nest (immersion pre-school for very young children and parents)

Master-Apprentice Program (one-on-one immersion program for learners committed to becoming fluent by intensively working with a fluent speaker)

Language and Culture Immersion Camps (Opportunities for fluent speakers of First Nations languages to pass on their language and culture to younger generations through traditional cultural activities)

Training and Certification. Developing programs for training and certifying First Nations language teachers and resource people in the community.

Documentation of Language. Recording, documenting and preserving First Nation languages.

Development of Resource Materials. Developing materials to increase languages use and proficiency.

FirstVoices Development. Language archiving using FirstVoices.com technology.

**Create More Opportunities for Language Use**

Broaden the domains of language use by transforming it from a language that is only used in the language learning environment to a language that is used in all aspects of daily life. This will make the language more useful, meaningful and functional to community members and increase its relevance to them.

**Self-Sustaining Language Use**

Aim to revitalize the language to a point where language revitalization initiatives are only a small portion of the language use and most of the
language use naturally occurs in daily life and is easy for community members. Revitalize the language to a point where it is functional and is used in every day occurrences.  

Lessons learned in the research indicate that accurate information and data can help educators decide what actions to take to improve their schools. An examples is as follows:  

Data collection efforts must not be directed at monitoring First Nations schools’ success in meeting arbitrary targets and/or identifying ‘good’ and ‘bad’  

First Nations schools are responding to a long history of difficult issues. These include relatively high rates of unemployment and poverty, high numbers of students with special needs and limited funding to address these challenges. Any measure of student success for First Nations schools may reflect these realities, as it is difficult to separate these issues from measurements of learning.  

Establishing appropriate measures, first and foremost, should be based on clear expectations of what schools and students should achieve. First Nations schools were created to provide unique, culturally sensitive education environments that reflect and respect the needs of their students and the communities they serve. As such, their values and expectations are not always comparable to those of other schools and education systems. Measurements and data used in First Nations schools must reflect the schools' distinct standards.  

It is important to use of a range of data and indicators in interpreting the effectiveness of school programming and planning for school improvement. Student achievement data, satisfaction surveys, descriptions of successful school practices and demographic information all can be valuable for school planning.  

FIRST NATIONS REGIONAL LONGITUDINAL HEALTH SURVEY  

The First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey (RHS) is a national holistic health survey that collects and reports data concerning the on-reserve First Nations population in Canada. It is longitudinal in nature and the content of the survey is based on both Western and traditional understandings of health and well-being.  

The RHS was designed and implemented in response to the lack of reliable information on the health and wellbeing of First Nations. It acknowledges the need for First Nations to control their own health information. The survey allows for measuring changes in First Nations well-being over time, rather than simply providing comparisons with the well-being of mainstream society.

The first RHS was piloted in 1997 and involved First Nations and Inuit from across Canada. In 2003, Phase 1 was completed and involved 22,602 surveys collected from 238 First Nations communities (Inuit communities did not participate in Phase 1). It is expected that the RHS will be released every four years, with Phase 2 and Phase 3 being released in 2007–08 and 2010–11, respectively.

As the first survey under complete First Nations control, the RHS is recognized as the “survey of choice” for First Nations. Control and ownership of the survey rests with First Nations under the direction of a national First Nations Information Governance Committee, which includes representatives from regional and national First Nations organizations across Canada.

“Compared to other national surveys of Indigenous people from around the world, the 2002/2003 RHS was unique in First Nations ownership of the research process, its explicit incorporation of First Nations values into the research design and in the intensive collaborative engagement of First Nations people and their representatives at each stage of the research process.” —Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (2006)

The RHS is premised on the understanding that First Nations health and well-being is “the total (First Nations) health of the total (First Nations) person within the total (First Nations) environment.”

Within a First Nations cultural paradigm, vision is considered the most fundamental of all the principles. Visioning First Nations’ well-being involves examining the ideal state of First Nations health and well-being, including physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health issues. It establishes a baseline of the current situation, by which First Nation communities and stakeholders can measure their progress toward the ideal vision.

Relationships—Ways of Relating to Time
The southern quadrant refers to how First Nations relate to people and identifies the experiences that they encounter as a result of relationships built over time. It has the potential to reveal—at a particular point in time—
attitudes about and understanding of individual, community and national wellness issues.

Reason—Analysis
With the western quadrant, also referred to as “learned knowledge,” the individual becomes reflective, meditative and self-evaluative, and the broader determinants of health—such as education, income, family structure and housing conditions—are examined.

Action—Behaviours
The northern quadrant, also referred to as “movement,” represents strength. It explores what actions have been done to reduce identified barriers to community well-being and identifies the ways to nurture First Nations people. This component activates positive program changes that will achieve the vision of First Nations to develop healthy children, families and communities.

The cultural framework provides the basis for the RHS content and influences what themes are covered, what questions are asked and, as a result, what type of information is produced. Indicators of wellness for First Nations are not useful unless they also address issues related to education, culture, language, worldview and spirituality. The framework helps justify and ground the content that falls outside typical health issues. 89

RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study we have found that there are several factors that are required to ensure student success. They include multiple programs and supports for learners and secure and welcoming school climate for children and their parents.

High quality indigenous staff and vigorous community partnerships are also essential to program success. Important pre-conditions for learning is an essential component to success in terms of attendance, student behaviour, wellbeing and capacity building in all aspects of the education process.

Systemic factors affecting student success in First Nations, as stated in the United Nations Report of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, indicate very clearly that the importance of traditional ways of teaching and learning along with control of curricula and learning institutions is dependant on financial and infrastructure support in order to implement these initiatives. As such it is essential to have legal provisions in place to give recognition to education through the establishment of indigenous learning centres and organizations. Therefore, for successful programming and outcomes to occur

funding, language and literacy initiatives and performance measurement and reporting are essential.

Based on the literature findings there must be multi-partner commitments and collaborations that affirm that Indigenous knowledge is an integral and essential part of the national heritage of Canada that must be preserved and enhanced for the benefit of current and future Canadians. The Government of Canada must work together with First Nations to ensure that Indigenous knowledge is respected and promoted in all funded education programs and in an appropriate range of documents and contexts.  

It is also recommended that traditional lifestyles and intergenerational use of Indigenous Knowledge be affirmed for the benefit of the next generations. Language and culture must be supported through knowledge innovations in educational institutions and supported by research and innovations in classroom methodologies. Principles, guidelines and respectful protocols are required to ensure First Nations language and cultural knowledge and heritage are protected, promoted and revitalized within a First Nations learning context.

First Nations capacity to oversee the use of language and cultural knowledge must be nurtured and research and capacity building in traditional knowledge and pedagogy funded and supported. This requires indigenizing post-secondary education and supporting professional capacity building for First Nations language and culture literacy education.

Enabling legislation and policies are required to recognize First Nation language and culture and affirm the role of language and culture in the learning process. Canada’s obligations to fund First Nations education must be reaffirmed and diversity and flexibility in policy and practice must be an integral part of education renewal. This must also be supported by a comprehensive network of First Nations education scholars to facilitate long term evaluation, accountability and innovation.

Language loss is part of the loss of whole cultures and knowledge systems. This includes, but is not limited to, history, stories, spirituality, philosophy, human values, oral and musical traditions, scientific and environmental expertise, medical knowledge, cultural practices, rituals, social and community relations, and artistic skills and traditions.

For learners to achieve success in education, affirmation of their language and cultural identity is essential. The building blocks for approaches based on language and culture, include: curricula, curriculum resources, cultural content, diverse perspectives, instructional methods, programs, and services.

In conclusion, First Nations language and culture education and literacy has personal, social and economic benefits for everyone. Children with literacy skills have been shown to have higher income, better health, greater social and civic engagement, life long access to learning and less involvement with the justice system, therefore, everyone has a responsibility to develop and maintain First Nation literacy competencies.

If we teach our children,
They will teach their children.
DOCUMENTS OUTLINING OBJECTIVES FOR FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES


This policy paper is an updated version on the 1972 policy paper, *Indian Control of Indian Education*, produced by the AFN Chiefs Committee on Education and the National Indian Education Council. The goal is that this update will help governments and First Nation communities build policies, programs, services and systems to meet the goals of First Nations education, to eradicate poverty and to establish identity in First Nations children. The paper argues that a sense of identity can only be established when a child is allowed to be shaped by a distinctive First Nations environment which includes exposure and teachings concerning customs, language, history, and culture. The paper re-asserts First Nations inherent Aboriginal and Treaty rights to education, as well as, the key elements of education by which other programs are measured in this document. The key elements are: “language immersion, holistic and culturally relevant curricula, well-trained educators, focused leadership, parental involvement and accountability, and safe and healthy facilities founded on principles that respect First Nations jurisdiction over education.” The measures of success are three-fold: a.) Ensure First Nation lifelong learners have access to an education system with programs and services grounded in First Nations languages, values, traditions and knowledge; b.) Build and sustain First Nation capacity and institutional development so as to deliver a wide spectrum of quality programs and services across the learning continuum, and c) Implement First Nations control of First Nations education.


This is an AFN document that discusses goals, proposed activities and a series of expected outcomes in the near term, mid-term and long term future. Similar to the United Nations *Study on Lessons Learned and Challenges to achieve the Implementation on the Right of Indigenous Peoples to Education* the model outlines plans for increasing indigenous teacher training, accessibility to indigenous education driven efforts and the quality of services and programs in education.

This document was developed by the AFN Education Secretariat and involved three community dialogues (one from a Yukon community, another from a Saskatchewan community and a third from an Ontario community). The dialogues were designed to assess how success was measured in First Nation learning. By introducing the *First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model* (the results of a February, 2007 workshop that involved First Nations learning professionals, community practitioners, researchers and governments) to the three communities, AFN was able to determine how the tool could be used to improve the outcomes of First Nations learners and enhance community well-being.


Mandated by the Human Rights Council in resolution 9/7, the Expert Mechanism presents a study that outlines the lessons learned and challenges surrounding the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples to education. The study acknowledges that while education is a fundamental human right, traditionally indigenous people have been among the most marginalized in society and have been deprived of the basic right to a quality education. A quality education is one which is resourced, culturally relevant, respects heritage and accounts for history. The findings of the study concur with other literature reviewed including: 1) the lack of indigenous control over education programming, 2) a lack of consultation and collaboration over educational resources and services intended for indigenous people, 3) lack of consultation with indigenous people concerning legislative decisions on aboriginal education, 4) lack of consideration given to participation and independence of aboriginal people in program and service delivery including first language education (mother tongue), 5) lack of mother-tongue bilingual educational access, 6) lack of respect for indigenous history and culture, 7) a shortage of resources, teachers and poor quality schools, 8) lack of indigenous resources, 9) underfunded multi-lingual programs, 10) inadequate teacher training and lack of funding for indigenous students, and, 11) lack of culturally designed curricula.

First Nations language community programs and resources literature review documents:

AUCC. (2010). *Answering the call: The 2010 inventory of Canadian university programs and services for Aboriginal students*. Canada: AUCC.

This document outlines the programs and services for Aboriginal students in Canadian post-secondary institutions. The report states that
engagement and communication has increased between university leaders and Aboriginal community leaders. It also reports the challenges still facing university communities including: financing for initiatives, improving the status of student financing, affordable housing and childcare services, making university safe for aboriginal students, recruiting, developing, and retaining aboriginal faculty into programs, and finding new ways to allow for respect and recognition of Aboriginal knowledge and the role of elders. Combined with traditional knowledge the opportunity for capacity building, lifelong long learning and First Nations control are all possible.


Dr. M. Battiste, Director of the Apamuwek Institute prepared this research document for the National Working Group on Education and the Minister of INAC. The purpose of the document was to advise the National Working Group on Education and the Minister of INAC as to the educational framework and recommendations to improving First Nations educational outcomes – from the perspective of indigenous knowledge. Dr. Battiste notes that most educational institutions view indigenous knowledge as multi-cultural or cross-cultural education and then the education is reduced to Eurocentric interpretations of another culture. This discussion ties not just to learning about one’s culture, but the necessity of identifying with that culture through a unique cultural lens that is distinctive of a pedagogy based on the rich language and cultural tapestries of First Nations.


This draft document outlines the First Nations holistic lifelong learning model which may be used as a framework for the measure of success in Aboriginal learning success. The model was developed as a result of consultations between First Nations learning experts, community practitioners, researchers and analysts.


The Canadian Council on Learning reports that while data is scarce regarding literacy levels on Aboriginal populations, the 2003 International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey was able to collect enough information that indicates that adult literacy among the Aboriginal populations is well
below the national average. Naturally, weak literacy skills translate into poor labor prospects. Education can remedy this situation – but it must be an education that meets the unique cultural and traditional backgrounds of students.


The Canadian Council on Learning recommends a more holistic approach to the areas of measurement and learning. In 2007 the CCL developed and delivered a series of workshops with First Nations, Inuit and Métis and the outcome was a draft of three holistic learning models to map out a holistic way of approaching lifelong learning. This document reports on the progress of that initiative, outlining the key characteristics of holistic lifelong learning, the data gaps and challenges that persist, the three Models that were developed, and how each model can be used to develop a national framework to measure lifelong learning.


This document summarizes the educational programs and services designed to eliminate the gap in academic achievement between the aboriginal and non-aboriginal learner. At the summit, one of the themes was that of strengthening aboriginal language and culture, recognizing that theme as one of the essential building blocks of aboriginal student success. Areas discussed included curriculum, resources, cultural content, different perspectives, alternative instructional methods, programs and services. The collaboration between aboriginal and non-aboriginal entities was viewed as a key driver of success.


This handbook operates under the premise that language and culture immersion is the best method for transmitting language and culture from one generation to the next. Participants of these camps learn simply by being fully immersed into traditional culture and language situations. This handbook explains all of the different components of the program from the goals of camp to budget planning to the activities of the camp itself. This form of language and cultural immersion corresponds to recognizing that a language itself carries a full system of cultural knowledge including history,
songs, dance, art, medicine, cultural practices – in short, the identity of a culture.


D. Daniels, Language Program Coordinator and H. Amrhein developed this handbook which was funded through the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation of B.C. The handbook was developed as a practical tool for elders, community members, teachers and all others involved in the language and culture immersion camps that are available in many B.C. First Nations communities. These camps are part of an initiative through the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation and the New Relationship Trust that provide support and funding for language and culture immersion camps. The document discusses language learning principles, games and activities and elements that make this initiative successful.


The FPHLCC is a provincial Crown Corporation that is dedicated to First Nations’ languages, arts and culture. The mandate of the corporation is to develop strategies to assist First Nation communities to restore and sustain their heritage through First Nation language and culture preservation and enhancement. As such, this document examines the state of First Nation languages in B.C. and what some of the revitalization efforts look like. The report examines the critical state of First Nations languages in B.C. and then outlines what is being done and what further action is required to revitalize languages.


This two page fact sheet provides an overview of the status of First Nations languages in B.C. Many of the First Nations languages are in danger of extinction and therefore revitalization efforts are critical. Efforts are being made to revitalize language in B.C. communities through the sharing of ideas and resources, creating opportunities through immersion programs, recording/documenting/archiving languages and developing both short and long term revitalization plans.

This document provides a framework for literacy and was designed through a consultative process with adult literacy learners, parents, and representatives in the public school system, post-secondary institutions, community organizations, libraries, employers, industry associations and Government of Alberta ministries. The document makes the case that literacy is essential to economic productivity, a stronger society and better health and well-being for society. While the Government of Alberta is promoting English literacy in this document, the same arguments presented (societal and individual well-being and economic prosperity) apply equally to First Nations mother tongue language learning.


The action plan for Manitoba focuses on four primary objectives, namely to: 1) increase high school graduation rates, 2) increase access to and completion of PSE, 3) increase successful entry into and participation in the labor market, and, 4) improve the research base for aboriginal education and employment. The report outlines a series of activities in place to meet this set of objectives.


This document outlines the guidelines and processes of the First Nation Student Success Program through the Government of Canada. The goal of the program is that First Nations people are able to enjoy the same opportunities as mainstream Canadians. This program is new and is designed to enable First Nations to enhance their students’ learning experiences and thereby improve academic success. The program also allows First Nations instructors to improve areas of literacy, numeracy and student retention. The program is designed to be school based and priority is given to regional First Nation organizations that represent “an aggregation of First Nation schools.


*Teaching and Learning on Turtle Island* is part of the Simcoe County District School Board First Nation, Métis and Inuit Student Plan for
2008/2009. The objective of the plan is to promote the academic, cultural and social well being of Aboriginal students. The methodology to accomplish this is the “development and implementation of culturally appropriate and respectful resources, workshops and programming.”


This document highlights practices and recommendations that support positive learning outcomes for indigenous students involved in the Canadian public school system. Barriers are outlined, as are opportunities. Themes emerging from this report include the integration of indigenous knowledge into the classroom, providing mentorship programs to students, educating students about their unique history and its effects and building relationships in the community.


This report discusses the First Nations and Métis Education Policy Framework for Saskatchewan. The idea behind the framework is to guide strategy across all levels of the educational system, building capacity through culturally affirming curriculum and resources, supportive policies, co-managed partnerships and a series of holistic programs and services. Embodied in this framework is an attempt to integrate indigenous knowledge and ways of being into the educational experience.


This report discusses the transitions Aboriginal people face to post secondary education and the challenges and barriers they must overcome to experience success. It concludes that there is a wide gap between aboriginal post-secondary education attainment levels between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people. The research emphasizes that access to transition programs, aboriginal control over curriculum development and delivery (for example: indigenous institutes of higher learning), support programs that include counseling and funding, child care, mentorship programs, career counseling - all within the K-12 system and at the post-secondary level.
APPENDIX A

REDEFINING HOW SUCCESS IS MEASURED IN FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND METIS LEARNING

Overview:

First Nations, Inuit and Métis have long advocated learning that affirms their own ways of knowing, cultural traditions and values. However, Aboriginal Peoples also desire Western education that can equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to participate in Canadian society. First Nations, Inuit and Métis recognize that “two ways of knowing” will foster the necessary conditions for nurturing healthy, sustainable communities.

Over the last four decades, the importance of Aboriginal learning to community well-being has become a critical issue as First Nations, Inuit and Métis people continue to experience poorer health and higher rates of unemployment, incarceration, and youth suicide than non-Aboriginal people. Increasingly, Aboriginal communities are administering educational programs and services formerly delivered by non-Aboriginal governments. They are developing culturally relevant curricula and community-based language and culture programs, and creating their own educational institutions. Yet as Aboriginal people work to improve community wellbeing through lifelong learning, they recognize the need to identify appropriate measurement tools that will help them assess what is working and what is not.

The following diagrams are holistic lifelong learning models that are living documents that will be revised and adapted as First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities, institutions, researchers and governments continue to explore the models’ efficacy as tools for positive change.

Each models uses a stylized graphic to convey the relationships between learning purposes, processes and outcomes across the lifespan. The three images attest to the cyclical, regenerative power of holistic lifelong learning and its relationship to community well being.

91 http://www.ccl-cca.ca/pdfs/RedefiningSuccess/Summary_Redefining_How_Success_Is_Measured_Fn.pdf
For First Nations people, the purpose of learning is to honour and protect the earth and ensure the long-term sustainability of life. To illustrate the organic and self-regenerative nature of First Nations learning, the Holistic Lifelong Learning Model uses a stylized graphic of a living tree. The tree depicts the cycles of learning for an individual and identifies the influences that affect individual learning and collective well-being. A full description of the First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model is available at: www.ccil-cca.ca.
The Inuit Holistic Lifelong Learning Model uses a stylistic graphic of an Inuit blanket toss (a game often played at Inuit celebrations) and a circular path (the “Journey of Lifelong Learning”) to portray the Inuit learning journey and its connection to community well-being. A full description of the Inuit Holistic Lifelong Learning Model is available at: www.ccl-cca.ca
The Métis understand learning in the context of the “Sacred Act of Living a Good Life,” a perspective that incorporates learning experienced in the physical world and acquired by “doing,” and a distinct form of knowledge—sacred laws governing relationships within the community and the world at large—that comes from the Creator. To symbolize these forms of knowledge and their dynamic processes, the Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model uses a stylized graphic of a living tree. A full description of the Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model is available at: www.ceh-ccs.ca.
### Place Where Learning Occurs (Sources of Learning)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Learning (Rings of Truth)</th>
<th>Place Where Learning Occurs</th>
<th>Home</th>
<th>School/Institution</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Workplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Learning</td>
<td>Formal Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal Learning</td>
<td>Extent to which parents read to children</td>
<td>Access to First Nations-specific early childhood education program</td>
<td>Access to organized activities (reading programs, play groups)</td>
<td>Interaction with family who help understand traditional practices</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary/Secondary Education</td>
<td>Formal Learning</td>
<td>High School graduation rate</td>
<td>Exposure to school field trips to sacred sites</td>
<td>Participation in First Nations ceremonies and festivals</td>
<td>Practice of First Nations traditional skills (hunting, trapping, fishing)</td>
<td>Availability of internship programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal Learning</td>
<td>Use of First Nations language at home</td>
<td>Participation in sports and recreation programs at school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary Education</td>
<td>Formal Learning</td>
<td>Participation in distance learning courses leading to a certification</td>
<td>University completion rate</td>
<td>Availability of community-based post-secondary programs</td>
<td>Availability of apprenticeship programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal Learning</td>
<td>Exposure to First Nations culture and traditions at home</td>
<td>Access to Aboriginal student centres and/or support programs</td>
<td>Access to a community library</td>
<td>Use of celestial bodies (interpreting seasons, navigation, weather)</td>
<td>Availability of non-formal workplace training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Learning</td>
<td>Formal Learning</td>
<td>First Nations adults returning to school to complete high-school diploma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participation in formal workplace training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal Learning</td>
<td>Reading non-work related material at home</td>
<td></td>
<td>Community involvement and volunteering</td>
<td>Knowledge of traditional medicines and herbs</td>
<td>Self-directed learning through the Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergenerational Learning</td>
<td>Formal Learning</td>
<td>Proportion of teachers in school who are First Nations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal Learning</td>
<td>Intergenerational transmission of First Nations culture at home</td>
<td>Involvement of Elders at schools</td>
<td>Exposure and interaction with Elders who help understand language and culture</td>
<td>Extent of use of traditional practices</td>
<td>Use of First Nations language in the workplace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>