

Piluiankita'suaqn wjit Teliagewey aq Kisaknutmaqñ

Piluwitahasuwawsuwakon

Changing attitudes and walking towards the truth

Wabanaki Wholistic Framework Educators Guide



**A'fis ujit l'nueyey
kina'matmkewey**

**Litposuwakon 'Ciw
Skicinuwi-Kehkiketuwakon**

**Office of First
Nation Education**

**Bureau d'éducation
des Premières nations**

The purpose of this document is to support educators who wish to include Wabanaki¹ and other Indigenous perspectives and voices into their practice. Specifically, this document includes information on steps a New Brunswick educator can take, and some important information the educator can use when seeking to include Wabanaki ways of knowing, being and doing into their classroom practice.

We would like to thank the following individuals for providing content, guidance, and feedback on this companion document.

Council of Elders

Dr. Andrea Colfer
Opolahsomuwehs, Dr. Imelda Perley
George Paul
Dr. David Perley
Patsy McKinney
Eldon Bernard
Noel Milliea

And the following educators,

Debbie Warman
Tracy Landry
Sarah Francis
Matthew Sweezey
Laura Taylor
Gordon Francis

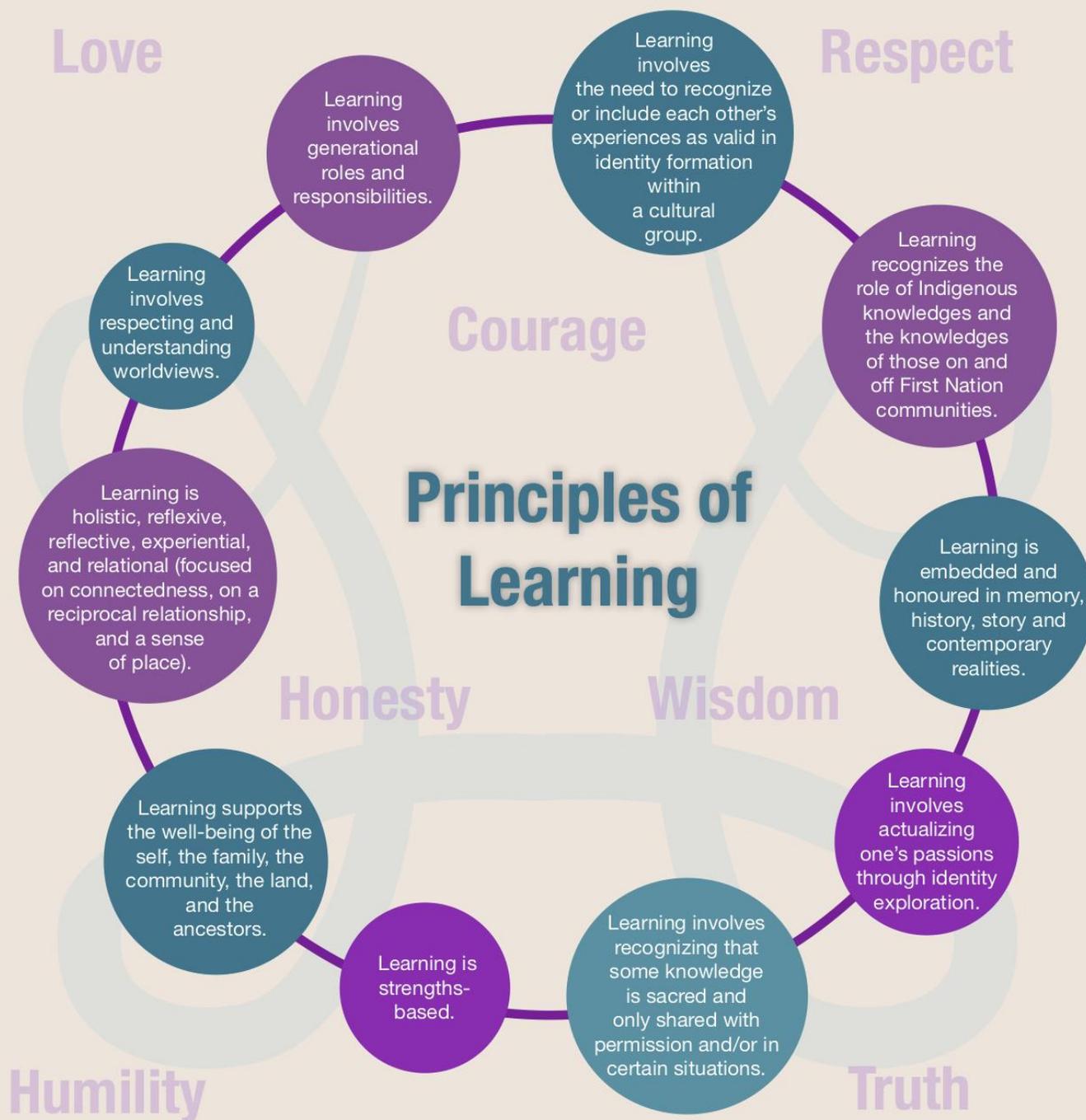
And the following individuals from Education and Early Childhood Development:

Bill Patrick
Kate Charette
Kelly Harris
Craig Williamson

¹Wabanaki- People of the Dawn. A confederacy of five related Indigenous nations including the Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqey, Pesktomuhkati, Penobscot, and Abenkaki nations. New Brunswick was established upon a large portion of the Mi'kmaw Nation, almost the entirety of the Wolastoqey Nation, and a portion of the Pesktomuhkati Nation.



Office of First Nation Education



Using the Wabanaki Framework

The primary purpose of the Wabanaki Framework is to guide the development of curriculum and educational resources to ensure that Wabanaki ways of knowing, being and doing are meaningfully included across the curriculum. As an educator, we hope that you find the Framework inspiring and useful as you plan your lessons.

We would like to emphasize that it is not our intention that the work of implementing the Wabanaki Framework fall only upon the shoulders of the classroom teacher. Much of this work is intended to occur at both the departmental and district level to support educator efforts through curriculum and resource development. Instead, we hope the Framework, and this supporting guide, can be a useful tool in enabling educators to meaningfully include Wabanaki perspectives, histories, cultures, and knowledges in their educational practice, and to be aware of the future direction of new curriculum and resource development.

Note on Ceremonies

The Wabanaki Framework includes references to ancestral teachings, ceremonies, and traditions which are deeply sacred to Wabanaki Peoples. Much of this content can be found within the Wabanaki Identity: Worldviews, Languages, Cultures, and Traditions theme of the Framework. Elders and community members who wrote the content of the Framework feel that knowledge of traditions, cultures, and ceremony are vital to Wabanaki Peoples and must have a place in our schools, however ceremonies must only be performed by Wabanaki Elders, traditionalists and other knowledge keepers.

We respectfully ask that non-Indigenous educators who are not Keepers of Sacred Ceremonies and traditions avoid leading students in making regalia, drums, dream catchers, smudge bowls, talking sticks, or, naming ceremonies, smudging, or other ceremony.

Any activities initiated by a Wabanaki Ceremony Keeper, Elder or Traditionalist must remain under their guidance throughout the process. Ceremonies must not be separated from the peoples to whom they rightly belong.

Some lesson plans may be available online that include activities such as making a headdress, a “native style drum” or a dreamcatcher. We ask that you do not do these activities. Invite a Wabanaki resource person to conduct these activities with your students.

Relational and Specific Wabanaki Knowledge

Teaching about a cultural practice or ceremony under the guidance of Wabanaki Elders, Traditionalists and Ceremony Keepers is encouraged, however the knowledge of how to perform specific activities or Ceremony may not always be appropriate as some knowledge is only intended for a very specific audience.

An Elder, Ceremony Keeper or Traditionalist may choose to share relational knowledge with your class (for example teachings on reciprocity, living in harmony with all beings, respect and responsibility) rather than specific knowledge (for example how to build a Sweatlodge). It is often this relational knowledge which is far more valuable to your students than the specifics of how to do Ceremony. The “why” of this significant cultural content is necessary for non-Indigenous students; the “how” is not.

Non- Wabanaki Indigenous Cultural objects and ceremonies

Much of the content you will find online related to Indigenous Peoples does not come from this region and instead often comes from nations in Western Canada and the United States. Some common examples that you may be familiar with from popular culture include Dream Catchers and West Coast Totem Poles. While there is nothing wrong with teaching about these things and highlighting the diversity that exists between Indigenous Nations, it’s important to specify where they come from and why you are teaching about them, as well as to emphasize Wabanaki cultures as they are far more relevant to New Brunswick students.

Avoiding Cultural Appropriation

According to this entry in [Britannica](#):

Cultural appropriation takes place when members of a majority group adopt cultural elements of a minority group in an exploitative, disrespectful, or stereotypical way.

One aspect of cultural appropriation that impacts Indigenous Nations is the reducing of important cultural objects (like regalia) into exotic fashion, sports mascots or Halloween costumes. Here is a helpful blog post from Facing History Canada:

<https://facingcanada.facinghistory.org/respectful-inclusion>

There is not always complete agreement on what is, and what is not, cultural appropriation, but the right to make that determination rests solely with the people whose cultural traditions and practices are being adopted by the majority group.

Learning from and about Wabanaki Peoples and sharing this knowledge with students is not cultural appropriation and is encouraged!

Elders evaluation and validation of learning materials and plans:

Elders have asked that lesson plans and learning materials that include sacred and ceremonial teachings be evaluated by Elders and Knowledge Keepers. This is also good practice for all plans

that include teachings on Wabanaki ways of knowing, being and doing, Wabanaki histories, experiences, and Treaty Education.

While materials provided by EECD and the districts have been created by or reviewed by Elders and Knowledge Keepers working with EECD and districts, it is recommended that you contact the First Nation Education Subject Coordinator in your district for assistance in reviewing lesson plans or teaching materials and connecting with an Elder, or utilize the World of Wisdom platform to bring an Elder into your class virtually.

Bringing Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Language Carriers into your classroom:

Working with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Language Carriers, and other Wabanaki community members is an important part of building an ongoing relationship. As such, bringing someone into your classroom should be part of an ongoing, genuine effort to include Wabanaki ways of being, knowing, and doing into your practice.

Your first step should be to reach out to your First Nation Education Subject Coordinator. They will be able to provide you with information that you need to know and help you begin this work. Your subject coordinator may ask you about what work you have already done and be able to suggest some actions prior to an Elder visit.

First Nation Subject Coordinators

ASD – West	Sarah Francis	sarah.francis@nbed.nb.ca
ASD – South	Laura Taylor	Laura.taylor2@nbed.nb.ca
ASD – East	Tracy Landry	tracy.landry@nbed.nb.ca
ASD - North	Matthew Sweezey	matthew.sweezey@nbed.nb.ca

World of Wisdom

You can also invite Elders and knowledge keepers into your classroom through the World of Wisdom platform. All sessions are virtual. This can be a good solution if you're unable to bring someone in physically. To book a session with an Elder, click [here](#):

Or visit:

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/SpeakwithWisdomKeeper@nbed.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/>

For more information, and for other World of Wisdom services, visit:

<https://world-of-wisdom.ca/>

Honoraria is covered by the Office of First Nation Education for this service.

Frequency of meeting with Elders

EECD and school districts continue to respond to the request by Elders Council that teachers have opportunities to learn from and meet Elders multiple times per year. As we collectively work to build these opportunities for educators, we also invite you to seek out opportunities to learn from Wabanaki Peoples including professional learning, cultural events, and Elder visits in schools.

Working with Elders, Traditionalists and Ceremony Keepers:

- The title of Elder is gifted based upon a person's knowledge and connection to ceremony rather than on age alone. Elders may be younger than expected.
- A variety of titles may be used (Elder, knowledge keeper, etc.). You can ask the person which title they would like to be identified with.
- It is best to be specific in your request if possible. (e.g. a classroom visit of 90 minutes including smudge and storytelling on Mi'kmaw worldviews). Each Elder has knowledge in different areas of specialty and may not be able to fulfill your request.
- Elders and other Wabanaki leaders may advise you to avoid a specific topic or teaching for a variety of reasons. We kindly ask that you respect and comply with this advice.
- Please ensure that you meet, or have someone meet, the Elder prior to the event. It is generally best to invite Elders to arrive a half an hour before the event begins so that you have some time to speak to each other, and offer them a beverage.
- It is considered impolite to interrupt an Elder or to openly contradict them.
- Elders should always be served first at any gathering where there is food or drink.
- Looking after their material needs is important. This includes ensuring they know where the bathrooms are, greeting at the door, taking their coat, helping them set up the space.
- Protocols and preferences of each Elder vary, and it is best to get to know the Elder and learn about what their needs are. Your district also has specific protocols. Ensure that you follow those.

Here are some general protocols:

- Offer tobacco to an Elder (one of the four sacred medicines) covered in red cloth with your left hand. As you are offering the tobacco, let the Elder know what the request is for. For example, "I would like to offer this tobacco for speaking with us today". The Elder could refuse your request if they feel they are not able to assist. Offering the tobacco from your left hand to their left hand signifies a heart to heart connection.
- Avoid commercial tobacco if possible favoring natural or ceremonial tobacco. Finely ground red willow can be used as a natural alternative to tobacco, and is accepted by Elders. See the resources section at the end of this document for a ceremonial tobacco provider.

Honoraria

Speak to the First Nation Education Subject Coordinator in your area regarding honoraria and other arrangements for the Elder. In many cases this may have already been arranged by the

Subject Coordinator, or in some cases by EECD. It would be expected that all travel, meals, and accommodations would be covered as well. While honoraria and payment for services vary, districts and EECD consider Elders to possess advanced levels of knowledge analogous to or greater than that of a specialist.

Land Acknowledgments

While some controversy persists in the exact terminology that should be used when conducting a land acknowledgement, they are generally appreciated by Indigenous Peoples. We encourage statements that focus on actions that are being taken to promote truth and reconciliation. Your district Indigenous Education team can help with this.

Here is a sample that can be customized depending upon your location and context:

“We (I) respectfully acknowledge the territory in which we gather as the ancestral homelands of the Wolastoqey/ Mi’kmaw/Peskotomuhkati People. We strive for respectful relationships with all the peoples of this province as we search for collective healing and true reconciliation and honour this beautiful land together.”

Contact for other information and support:

While an educator’s first point of contact on matters pertaining to Wabanaki Education would be the Subject Coordinator in their districts, you can also reach out staff at the Office of First Nation Education for further information, or support with this document, and with the Wabanaki Framework. We welcome all feedback and recommendations.

Resources

While a variety of sources of traditional, natural, and ceremonial tobacco would be appropriate, Elders have recommended the following resource: <https://motherearthtobacco.com/ceremonial-tobacco-sales.html>

Wabanaki Collection- <https://www.wabanakicollection.com/>

World of Wisdom- <https://world-of-wisdom.ca/>

Office of First Nation Education One Site (available only inside of network)
https://collabe.nbed.nb.ca/sites/OFNEPL/_layouts/15/start.aspx#/SitePages/Home.aspx

First Nation Caring Society <https://fncaringsociety.com/>

MMIWG2S <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>

UNDRIP <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation reports: <https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>