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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Weaving Relations Through Indigenous Education: From Good Relations to Right Relations

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Acknowledgements and Introductions



Installation by Edward Heap of Birds





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Context for Indigenous Education in Canada

Policy Directives:

- Association of Canadian Deans of Education national Accord on Indigenous Education (2010) - Revision
- Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and 94 Calls-to-Action (2015)
- Local Education Enhancement Agreements
- United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People Act
- DRIPA (British Columbia, 2019) - Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People Act
- DRIPA Action Plan (BC, 2022)
- Treaty rights and responsibilities

Changing Standards for the Profession

- British Columbia (2021): Standard #9
- Alberta (2020)

Curriculum Reform

- K-12 schooling: e.g., BC First Peoples Principles of Learning
- Teacher education



Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Responsibilities fall to individuals rather than promote systemic change
- Obscures difficult conversations about colonialism and racism
- Fails to recognize distinctive histories and sovereignty of Indigenous peoples
- Assumption of sameness of Indigenous priorities
- Ahistorical

Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015)

- Fast become a vehicle for attention, expression, and action
- Calls-to-Actions in Education
- Storytelling and witnessing
- Diversely understood by educators
- Focus on residential schools
- Truth before reconciliation
- Colonization is in the past
- Linking education and awareness to practice

Hare, J. (2020). Reconciliation in teacher education: Hope or hype. *Reconceptualizing teacher education: A Canadian contribution to a global challenge*, 19-38.

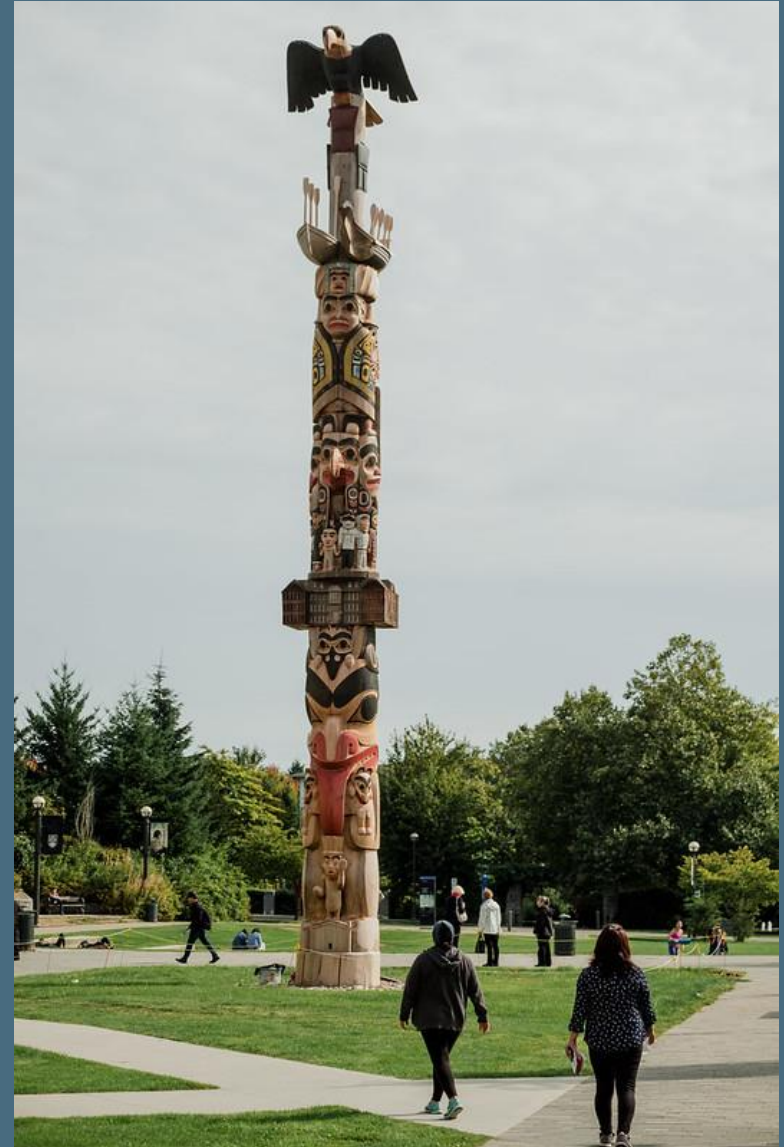


UNDRIP As a Framework for Reconciliation

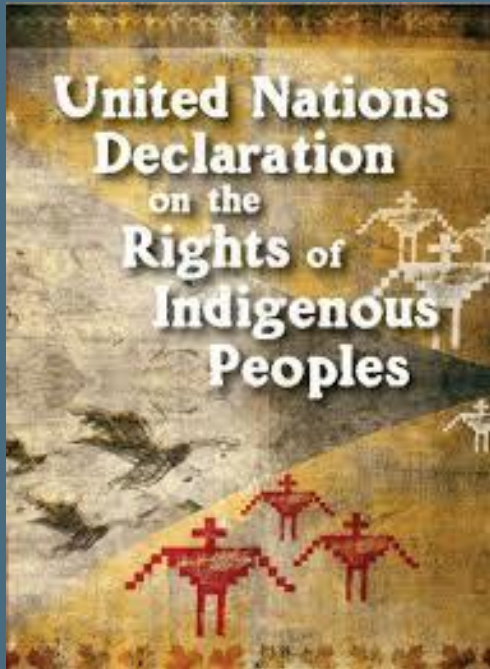
43. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.

44. We call upon the Government of Canada to develop a national action plan, strategies, and other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Government of Canada (2015). TRC Calls-to-Action



Article 14 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) states:



1. Indigenous peoples have the right 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.
2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.



- Contains 89 Articles which assign government responsibilities
- 4.2 Develop and implement an effective recruitment and retention strategy to increase the number of Indigenous teachers in the K-12 public education system. *(Ministry of Education and Child Care, Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training)*
- 4.3 Co-develop and implement a framework for the involvement of Indigenous Education Councils in school district financial planning and reporting. *(Ministry of Education and Child Care)*
- Four primary goals
 - Distinction-based approach
 - Join or Consent-based decision-making



Retrieved from https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/ministries/indigenous-relations-reconciliation/declaration_act_action_plan.pdf

BC Leadership Context

The Spirit of Leadership: Leadership Competencies for Systems Leaders

- **Dimensions of practices updated in 2020**
- **Reflect First Peoples Principles of Learning and developed in consultation with BC Indigenous leadership group**
- **Aspirational for supporting personal professional growth**
- **Through knowledge of the self, you influence other systems**



1. Stewardship for the Future of All Children

Quality of education for all children and for the future that education empowers. The courage to create a future that is inclusive, just, and sustainable.

2. Fostering a Culture of Curiosity and Inquiry

A culture of inquiry is curious, transparent, and active. It is lived through daily practices and cultivated in systems that support shared and collaborative systemic inquiry.

3. Growing the Capacity of Self and Others

Influence, affirm, and nurture those around you and nurture and sustain your own growth and leadership journey

4. Contextual Literacy

Understand, speak, and interact within systems that you work, and ensure district level priorities are supported through all the complex interactions of these systems.

5. Aligning Structures with Vision for Learning

Articulate and facilitate bold visions for learning, but also align systems such that all communities in your district support those visions.



Stewardship for the Future of All Children

System leaders have a responsibility for a quality education for all children and for the future that education empowers. A quality education, and educational systems that nurture powerful learning, must foster a future in which children feel confident and secure not only in their identity, but in their relationships with others and with the environment. The district should, in other words, both teach about and help enact a more just and sustainable society.

Indigenous Perspectives and Considerations

- Respect for all things; teachings come from the interconnectedness of self, land, sea, and sky.
- Be intentional with your actions, words, and thoughts; heart and spirit energy effects all things.
- Reach back to connect to the teachings of the ancestors and embody them and to share them with those who are still to come.
- Care for self and others by lifting each other up.



Culturally Responsive Framework (2022)

4 Domains for Action + 2 Functional Domains

- **Respect, collaboration, leadership, accountability**
- **Teaching and learning, Policy development**

Learning Journey of knowing/doing/being

Leadership:

Knowing/Doing/Being

Personal level examples/Departmental level examples

Reconciliation Through Educational Leadership

Learning and unlearning

Reconciling colonial history

Education and awareness

Understanding how non-Indigenous people continue to benefit and be invested in policies and practices

Role of anti-racism and decolonization?

Politics of good relations



Politics of Good Relations:

“We promote and facilitate reconciliation by building relationships, respect and trust between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.” Reconciliation Australia

- Emphasis on changing relationships
- Working respectfully and in collaboration
- Working to overcome division and disadvantage (the gap)
- Forgiveness, healing, and reparation
- Positive two-way relationship based on respect and trust



Living in 'right' relations

- the obligations of settler societies to live up to responsibilities when part of a relationship (e.g. UNDRIP, Treaty, Reconciliation Action Plan)
- the rights of Indigenous people are relevant to all educators
- Advancing Indigenous education priorities
- Uprooting colonial relations
- Emphasis on educational self-determination and sovereignty as prevailing objectives in education
- Accountability to Indigenous relations and Indigenous futures

Gram-Hanssen, I., Schafenacker, N., & Bentz, J. (2022). Decolonizing transformations through 'right relations'. *Sustainability Science*, 17(2), 673-685. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11625-021-00960-9>

TABLE TALK



Reflecting on leadership within a culturally responsive framework, in what ways do characteristics of right relations have meaning, expression, or relevance?

Are there areas where right relations could be enhanced in the framework?



Accountability to Right Relations Through Educational Leadership

- **How comfortable are you putting aside your own priorities for Indigenous priorities?**
- **How are Indigenous people part of decision making?**
- **How does school curriculum reflect the aspirations of Indigenous families/communities?**
- **How do school and district staff learn from Indigenous knowledge keepers or leadership?**
- **What school and district policies reflect input from Indigenous people?**
- **What do you do in your personal and professional spheres of influence to uphold/protect Indigenous people's rights?**

Practices for Living in Right Relations:

- Land Education
- Relationality
- Building capacity for Indigenous leadership



Land Education

Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy (2014)

- Problematizes the relationship between land and settler colonialism, uncovering how settler colonial projects are maintained and produced – Colonialism is concerned with the land
- Encompasses specific geographies that hold physical, spiritual and linguistic dimensions of Indigenous people's knowledge and life lived in a place
- Includes urban places as “storied Indigenous land”
- Surfaces Indigenous connections, functions, and obligations to land, family, and community
- Takes in to account Indigenous rights and sovereignty

Tuck, E., McKenzie, M., & McCoy, K. (2014). Land education: Indigenous, post-colonial, and decolonizing perspectives on place and environmental education research. *Environmental education research*, 20(1), 1-23.

Land Education in Leadership



Acknowledgement – politicized entanglements in settler colonialism on-going erasure

How are IWK embedded in Country part of school planning?

How do educational goals/outcomes contribute to Indigenous self-determination?

Curricular and pedagogical conversations that unsettle benefiting and investments in Land/Country.



How can knowledge of Country be known and experienced differently in your educational context?

What are the possibilities for a land education approach in your school or district that is accountable to Indigenous people's self-determination?



Relationality

- **Central to Indigenous worldviews**
- **Recognizes a broad set of relationships**
- **Different histories and experiences put us in relationship to one another (Donald, 2012)**
- **Right relations is a matter of relating different to one another and the land.**
- **Critical pedagogy of examining self in relationship to Indigenous people, place, and perspectives**

Relationship to Indigenous People, Place, and Perspectives

- **Socialized in to a colonial thinking and society**
- **Racism and colonialism operate together**
- **Assumptions/biases/beliefs**
- **Racism of low expectations**
- **What is the relationship of educator/settler identities to Indigenous histories, identities, and current realities?**
- **How have these understandings been constructed over time? How do they impact educative practice?**
- **Perfect Stranger (Dion, 2007), Settler Moves to Innocence (Tuck & Yang, 2012)**

Dion, S. D. (2007). Disrupting molded images: Identities, responsibilities and relationships—teachers and indigenous subject material. *Teaching Education*, 18(4), 329-342.



Perfect Stranger Stances

- **Mission schools were but, but that's in the past. People should be over it.**
- **Indigenous ways of knowing (IWK) are simplistic and limited. I can't measure that.**
- **Indigenous education is only important if I teach Indigenous learners**
- **We give Indigenous learners every opportunity; if they don't want to come to school, there is nothing we can do.**
- **Indigenous students don't come to school ready to learn.**
- **They come with a lot of trauma. We should focus on just keeping them safe. Academics are not important.**
- **If you're not Indigenous you should not be taking up Indigenous knowledge...it's appropriation**

Unpacking Assumptions/Bias



Which of these assumptions have you heard or experienced in your school/district context?

What other assumptions have you heard?

What is your response? How do you help others to unpack their bias?



Being in Relationship to Indigenous Knowledges in Classrooms and Schools

- What/knowledge or perspectives are privileged in classrooms? And why?
- What Indigenous perspectives, histories, knowledges are missing? And why?
- How are Indigenous knowledges and perspectives positioned in the curriculum?
- Where can dominant paradigms/knowledge be challenged and balanced with Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum?
- What Indigenous perspectives, issues, priorities, goals, topics are relevant to Country?
- What relationships have you forged with Traditional Custodians of the lands where you work?
- What planning and professional development is guided by Traditional Owners to improve cultural responsiveness?



Pathways to Leadership for Indigenous Educators

Indigenous educators play a significant role in creating environments that are culturally responsive, empowering, inclusive of Indigenous knowledges, and promote Indigenous sovereignty (National Congress of American Indians, 2019).

On Country Education
Teacher Initiative



University of South Australia

STUDY ▾ RESEARCH ▾ CONNECT ▾ VISIT

Aboriginal Pathway

DEGREE LEVEL Non Standard YEAR 2024





Practices

Recruitment

- Plant seeds early – improve graduation rates
- Mentorship and introduction to the profession
- Traditional vs. non-traditional pathways (laddering, certificates)
- Partnerships with Indigenous communities
- Funding

Retention

- Creating employment opportunities
- Seek Indigenous voice
- Create leadership opportunities
- Affinity groups



How does your engagement with Indigenous family or community empower them in ways that commit to self-determination?

How do you advocate for Indigenous educators to advance in their careers?

What is needed to create pathways for leadership? Structures? Resources? Strategies?



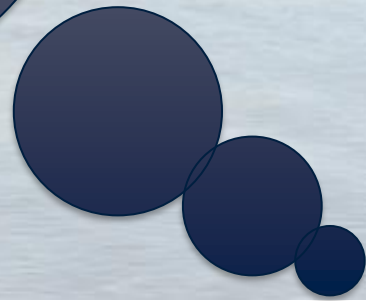
Living in 'right' relations with Indigenous people and communities: (uneven power relations can be changed: righted)

- the obligations of settler societies to live up to responsibilities when part of a relationship (e.g. UNDRIP, Treaty, Reconciliation Action Plan)
- Advancing Indigenous education priorities
- the rights of Indigenous people are relevant to all educators
- Uprooting colonial relations
- Emphasis on educational self-determination and sovereignty as prevailing objectives in education
- Accountability to Indigenous relations

Gram-Hanssen, I., Schafenacker, N., & Bentz, J. (2022). Decolonizing transformations through 'right relations'. *Sustainability Science*, 17(2), 673-685. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11625-021-00960-9>

What Indigenous priorities and aspirations do you uplift, elevate, or respond to in attending to 'right' relations in your leadership?

If different histories, knowledge, and experiences put us in relationship to Indigenous people, what are conditions for 'right' relations in your own educational context?





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Miigwech – thank you



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Unsettling Pedagogy for Leaders



What is new to you?

Where do you see opportunities for changing relations in your school or curriculum?

Would Indigenous students see themselves reflected?

What resources are needed to support building these relationships?

What is the work of decolonization and anti-racism in the work of reconciliation?





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