

## ATESL Best Practices Checklist for Indigenization

*EAL providers and instructors own their responsibility to take part in ongoing reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous people who call Canada home. In their practice, they seek to learn and transform, centre Indigenous voices, dismantle racism, and foster reconciliation.*

### Use the ATESL Best Practices Checklists:

#### *For Individuals*

- To identify areas to consider when taking on a new, unfamiliar responsibility
- To reflect on your own practice
  - What am I doing well?
  - What am I doing that could be improved?
  - What am I not doing that I could or should be doing?

#### *For Professional development and teacher training*

- To identify goals to aspire to and specific steps to take to meet those goals
- To focus discussion after class observations
- To focus team meeting discussions
- To develop workshops/presentations

#### *For Programs*

- To identify strengths that distinguish your program (e.g., to justify the worth/value of the program to the broader institution, to funders, to learners, to community stakeholders)
- To identify gaps in a program or practice (e.g., to identify constraints to address, to identify initial and ongoing actions, to determine a focus for professional development, to justify requests for funding)

**94. EAL providers acknowledge that they have a role in ensuring that the Calls to Action issued by The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) result in long-term reconciliation across Canada.**

- Land acknowledgement and treaty recognition statements recognize and honour the historic and ongoing presence of Indigenous peoples in the community, and the treaty obligations between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous people who call Canada home.
- Recognizing that building reconciliation is a shared responsibility between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, the program facilitates the establishing of relationships between Indigenous people and newcomers to Canada.
- Newcomers to Canada are called to be part of this long-term reconciliation process as part of settlement and language classes. (Best Practices 96-98 below identify ways that newcomers can be part of the reconciliation process.)
- Programs support instructors to incorporate Indigenous contributions, histories, worldviews, and ways of learning and knowing into language and settlement programs and to recognize Canada's colonial past.
- The program seeks to recruit staff from the Indigenous community in the hiring and promotion process.

**95. Instructional staff take part in professional development activities that increase background knowledge, encourage reflection of their own biases and assumptions, incorporate other ways of knowing and learning, and expand their capacity and confidence as they incorporate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in their classes.**

- Professional development and workshops are facilitated by Elders or knowledge keepers in the community.
- Professional development opportunities address some of the following:
  - Indigenous cultures, including, for example, Indigenous ways of knowing and learning, the medicine wheel, the land, celebrations, stories, natural remedies, foods, etc.
  - The need to understand truths in the Calls to Action for Truth and Reconciliation, including historical accounts of Treaties, the sixties Scoop, the Indian Act, Residential Schools, the 1885 Resistance, the Métis land dispossession through scrip, Inuit High Arctic relocation, and the ongoing consequences of these injustices in the form of intergenerational trauma and ongoing racism, inequities, and injustices
  - Reflection on their responsibility as individuals (settlers or descendants of settlers) and EAL instructors in responding to the call for truth and reconciliation
  - Decolonizing or anti-colonial teaching approaches and anti-racist or abolitionist teaching approaches
- Professional development activities go beyond knowledge transfer and include opportunity for instructors to engage in critical self-reflection, talking circles, experiential learning, visual learning, peer mentoring, collaboration, transformative learning, land-based learning, and affective learning, etc.
- Instructors are encouraged to seek input, support, and mentoring from willing Indigenous colleagues and Elders when incorporating teaching and learning materials that relate to Indigenous cultures, worldviews, histories, historical or contemporary events, etc.
- Program staff and instructors are encouraged to enroll in courses/training about Indigenous cultures and histories, in Indigenous language courses, and/or in courses/training related to transformative teaching approaches to support anti-racism, Indigenization, and decolonization.

**96. The program centres Indigenous relationships and voices as essential to newcomer settlement and language training.**

- Indigenous advisors, mentors, and Elders are welcomed in EAL programs and classes to share their way of life, experiences, histories, education, governance, knowledge of the land, values, etc.
- Indigenous peoples speak for and represent their experiences, worldviews, histories, cultures, traditions, and so on, through the following:
  - Indigenous guest speakers
  - Recordings/videos featuring Indigenous perspectives and voices
  - Literature by Indigenous authors
  - Learning materials designed by Indigenous educators and authors
  - Empathy-building activities such as blanket ceremonies, storytelling, presentations, etc., facilitated by Indigenous people
- Learners begin building relationships with Indigenous people from all walks of life.
- Learners engage with narratives of Indigenous people with whom they can relate on other dimensions (e.g., as parents, as students, as teachers, as members of other professions, etc.).

**97. Indigenous content is woven into language and settlement classes in a way that honours Indigenous peoples' longstanding histories and heritages in the lands now called Canada, dismantles racism and misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples, and fosters relationships and reconciliation.**

- Class content incorporates the teachings, images, legends, art, and cultures of the Métis, First Nations, and Inuit peoples of Canada, from their own perspective or in their own voices through the following:
  - Public celebrations (e.g., pow-wow, National Indigenous Day)
  - Beliefs and values (e.g., Seven Sacred Truths, the medicine wheel, Métis kinship connections, significance of the land)
  - Natural remedies, food, music, dance, etc.
- Class content encourages learners to connect to Indigenous cultures through shared experiences and values, and through a shared understanding of the importance of maintaining one's identity and culture.
- Class content honours and recognizes Indigenous peoples' resilience, contributions, and continued presence in the Canadian cultural landscape by highlighting the following:
  - Indigenous people's contributions to works of literature, media, arts, etc.
  - Indigenous people's contributions to the community
  - Stories of struggle and resilience
  - Materials that centre Indigenous people's perspectives
  - National Indigenous History Month (June); National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21); and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30)
- Class content focuses on the significance of the land where the program is located, through the following:
  - Land and treaty acknowledgements to connect learners to the land they are in and honour the Indigenous peoples of that place
  - Land-based learning
  - Stories of encounters between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples on that land, highlighting the need for reconciliation
- Class content recognizes intergenerational trauma and the need for reconciliation as a result of treaties and Residential Schools, along with some of the following:
  - Other historical injustices including the pass system, the 60s scoop, the Indian Act, dispossession of lands from Métis, etc.
  - Present inequities and injustices (e.g., access to healthcare, ongoing apprehension of children, homelessness, and poverty) as rooted in colonial injustices and not individual deficits
  - The moral obligations of people living and working in Canada to be involved in political and social efforts, including the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action; Prime Minister Harper's apology on behalf of Canadians for the Indian Residential School system; the REDress project, the Daniels decision, etc.
- Current events related to Indigenous issues (e.g., the lobster fishery dispute, decades-long land claims, and Métis rights recognition) are explored in class in light of the significance of the land, historical injustices, settler responsibilities, and the need for reconciliation.

- Cultural appropriation and misrepresentation is avoided by ensuring the following:
  - Indigenous voices are heard when their cultures, experiences, worldviews, perspectives, ways of knowing, and sites of knowledge are discussed (whether in person, or through video/audio/written accounts).
  - Objects associated with Indigenous cultures or beliefs are not used or presented in a way that disrespects their role or value.
- Curriculum content and textbooks are free from biases and stereotypes, or, where they exist, those biases and stereotypes are identified and challenged. For example:
  - Proper terms are used when discussing Canadian Indigenous peoples: First Nations, Inuit, Métis. Terms such as “native,” “Eskimo,” “Indian,” “half-breed,” and “red man” are not used.
  - Movies, TV shows, print media, songs, textbooks, and videos that are used in class do not portray or depict fictional or stereotyped stories of Indigenous peoples.
  - Characters representing Indigenous peoples are accurately portrayed.
- Learners recognize the role of stereotypes and racist ideas as colonial strategies to diminish and oppress Indigenous peoples.
- Teaching and learning resources provide Indigenous perspectives from vetted sources.

**98. Instructors incorporate pedagogies that value Indigenous ways of knowing and learning, highlighting connection to place, collective orientation, and shared learning.**

- EAL instructors recognize that, like the Indigenous peoples of Canada, many of their students come from learning traditions that prioritize spiritual teaching, and that emphasize connection to place, communal harmony, and shared learning over individuality, competition, and linear thinking. As such, instructors seek to balance Eurocentric pedagogical approaches by incorporating pedagogies that privilege communal learning and the sharing of learners' experiences and voices through, for example:
  - Talking circles
  - Storytelling
  - Experiential learning
  - Visual learning
  - Collaboration
  - Peer mentoring
  - Reflection
- Instruction related to Indigenous content goes beyond the confines of the classroom in the form of land-based learning, museum exploration, celebrations, advocacy, volunteering, etc.
- Learning activities on Indigenous topics prioritize problem-solving, reflection, affective inquiry, and anti-racist/decolonizing approaches.
- Instructors recognize that, like Indigenous peoples, many of their learners have experiences, stories, and histories of colonization and cultural oppression. As such, instructors do the following:
  - Provide warnings and permission to leave when content has the potential to trigger memories of past traumatic experiences
  - Give learners a choice in whether and how much to share of their past experiences
  - Provide a safe space and opportunity for learners to reflect on and share their own experiences, stories, and histories related to colonialization and cultural oppression
  - Foster a critical, anti-colonial approach where learners recognize systemic inequalities, and analyze and deconstruct systems of power and oppression