

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.

Statements of Best Practice

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.

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.
- _ As recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (**TRC**), 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. (Note: They are fairly compensated and offered tobacco/traditional gifts as appropriate.)
- _ 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. (See PD Resources for examples of courses/training)

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. (Note: They are fairly compensated and offered tobacco/traditional gifts as appropriate.)

- _ 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

Vignettes

for Indigenization 

This section includes descriptions of what the Best Practices might look like when applied in a variety of contexts.

Vignette 1: Including Indigenous Content and Voices in a Small Non-Profit

I work in a small non-profit rural organization. We do not have funding for special Indigenous events such as Elder visits or workshops. I must be creative to find ways to incorporate Indigenous content and voices into my classroom. I introduce my students to the land acknowledgement for our area and teach them the names of the Indigenous communities that we live with. I keep an eye out for local Indigenous celebrations and ceremonies (e.g., National Indigenous People's Day, pow-wow, etc.), and share information about these events with my learners. I use resources available freely on the internet such as:

- [The Word "Indigenous" Explained](#) (a 2-minute CBC video)
- [Namwayut: We are All One. Truth and Reconciliation in Canada](#) (a 4-minute video)
- The National Film Board featuring Indigenous film makers and content
- Indigenous Voices in the Classroom curriculum
- Rural Routes: Elders Speak curriculum
- [Canadian Indigenous Culture for CLB 2](#)
- Artwork by Indigenous people
- Virtual tours available from the Glenbow Museum, the Royal Alberta Museum, and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (especially the Spirit Panel Project)

See Resources for the Classroom for links to some of the above resources.

Vignette 2: Bringing Indigenous Voices into the Class

I work in an ESL program that does not specifically ask me to teach about Indigenous issues. I consciously make an effort to fill this gap by first asking myself “Can I, even in some small way, make Indigenous voices a part of this classroom experience?” Through this I have discovered that I can do the following:

- _ Share a personalized local land acknowledgement to my students at the beginning of every class
- _ Incorporate Indigenous terms/vocabulary into my grammar worksheets
- _ Teach novels by Indigenous authors
- _ Showcase Indigenous artwork in my classroom

My goal is to generate conversations with my students which will introduce them to the contemporary and historical truths of Canadian Indigenous peoples.

Vignette 3: Addressing CLB Competencies while Listening to Indigenous Voices

I work in a LINC program, and Indigenous content does not seem to align with the Real World Tasks required by PBLA. I have discovered ways to address CLB competencies while at the same time having learners listen to Indigenous voices and learn about Indigenous experiences, worldviews, and histories related to colonization and oppression. (Note: The CLB content described below is only a small portion of what was done in class related to Indigenization.)

- _ **CLB 1: Writing/Speaking:** Students copy a short recipe for bannock for personal use. They then give the instructor directions as s/he makes bannock. This leads into other activities related to their own traditional foods.
- _ **CLB 2: Reading:** Students engage in short conversations about their own homes using “there is” and “there are”. Students then read a short text about traditional First Nation houses. They learn new vocabulary through matching activities. They rely on graphics and visual clues when interpreting meaning. They identify basic details in the short text.
- _ **CLB 3: Speaking:** Students take a picture of an Indigenous cultural artifact on a museum field trip (or a museum virtual tour, for instance, a 3D Indigenous object on the Royal Alberta Museum website, or a Spirit Panel in the Canadian Museum for Human Rights). In class, students take turns giving a short description of the object and why they identified it

as significant.

- **CLB 4: Listening:** Students listen to a video of an Elder describing a medicine wheel. They learn that the medicine wheel is a teaching and healing tool for many Indigenous peoples. As they listen, they draw and label the medicine wheel being described.
- **CLB 4: Speaking:** Students learn how the talking circle is used as a way to reach consensus in a way that respects everyone’s voice. They then take part in a talking circle to come to an agreement on guidelines for the classroom.
- **CLB 5: Reading:** The class reads a beginning-reader novel about an Indigenous person’s experience of Residential Schools. They learn the long-term effects and consequences of Residential Schools on Indigenous peoples. Along with other more critical and problem-solving activities, students are given an excerpt of a narrative text, with the paragraphs scrambled. They number or sort the paragraphs into the correct order.
- **CLB 5: Reading:** Students read a plain language text about the Indian Act and answer comprehension questions where they identify purpose, main ideas, and important details. They scan to locate relevant terms. Students follow up with a web search about the Indian Act.
- **CLB 6: Listening:** Students listen to a video of an Elder describing First Nations principles of learning. They relate those ideas to their own experiences of learning, both here and in other countries. They answer comprehension questions identifying gist, factual details, and some implied meanings, opinions, and key words and phrases.
- **CLB 7: Writing:** Students read a news article about an instance where an Indigenous person has been racially profiled in their locale. They write a letter to their local MP expressing their concern and making specific recommendations for change.
- **CLB 8: Writing:** After reading or hearing a personalized Residential School narrative and doing a web search to learn more about the history of Residential Schools, students write 3–4 connected paragraphs to compare or contrast their own experience with colonialism or boarding schools and the experience of Indigenous people in Canada.

Vignette 4: Avoiding Mistakes When Attempting to Indigenize our Stage II Classrooms

As settler-descendants who teach newcomers, we understand that we have a responsibility to Indigenize our classes in an effort to honour the calls to action by The TRC. Additionally, we understand that while we are afraid of making mistakes, we cannot shy away from 'going there' with our classes but must do so respectfully and mindfully. We should be patient and gentle with ourselves and understand that we will make mistakes, but we also have to start somewhere. Keeping a growth mindset as we approach these hard conversations will help us to expand our abilities and improve our practices.

To honour and recognize my role in Truth and Reconciliation as a settler-descendant and teacher of newcomers, I create a space in my classroom for Indigenous people to share their voices, experiences, the truth about what happened in Canada and that inequities, discrimination and racism still exist here.

To do this in my CLB 5 and CLB 6 classes, I have incorporated activities such as the following:

- _ Teach feelings vocabulary to check-in on students to see how they are feeling. These are hard topics and having common words to describe how we are feeling can be very helpful.
- _ Similarly, teach idioms for sadness and related vocabulary.
- _ Work together as a class to create a land acknowledgement while maintaining the critical awareness that a land acknowledgement is not a box to be checked, but a conscious effort to be mindful of and grateful for the land that we are standing, working, playing and living on.
- _ Look for opportunities to Indigenize other events and classroom activities (e.g., using the class land acknowledgment in other contexts).
- _ Share how the impacts of government policies and historical events persist and are still felt today in the form of intergenerational trauma.
- _ Focus on language and teach caution when using words such as "all" and "every" and the value of more open words such as "some" and "a few," etc.
- _ Have discussions about how things used to be by sharing first-hand information, voices, videos and stories from Indigenous peoples about the Indian Act and Residential schools (among others). Similarly, acknowledge how racism and inequities (access to clean water, racism in sports) still exist by sharing recently published stories and examples.
- _ Have discussions about sympathy and empathy.
- _ Discuss elements of how to tell great stories using transitions and feelings.
- _ Use Indigenous stories to discuss legends and to explain the past. Afterwards, have students demonstrate connections by sharing their own stories of their countries and

- cultures in class projects/presentations.
- _ Foster and encourage connections and similarities between cultures and their traditions, music, art, stories, food, dance, etc.
 - _ Do not end on a traumatic note. Discuss responses to government policies and events through Indigenous stories (*When We Were Alone, Fatty Legs*) and have students demonstrate their learning and connections through journals, presentations, videos, etc.
 - _ Focus on the strength, knowledge and beauty of people and cultures that couldn't be destroyed by trauma and loss.
 - _ Invite guest speakers to share voices and experiences while being mindful of protocol when asking.
 - _ Discuss the importance of knowing the truth and telling others, including children, about the truth of what happened in Canada, and that while we are taking small steps forward, we aren't where we need to be yet.

Vignette 5: Teaching a New Level and Indigenizing a Lower Level Classroom

I typically teach Stage II, but next semester, I will teach a CLB 3 class for the first time in several years. I want to Indigenize my class in a level-appropriate way and recognize my role in the TRC as a settler-descendant and teacher of newcomers. I want to create a space in my classroom for Indigenous people to share their voices, culture, art, music, food, clothing and stories.

To do this, I plan to incorporate activities such as:

- _ Teach feelings vocabulary to check-in on students to see how they are feeling. Some hard conversations will likely take place and having common words to describe how we are feeling can help.
- _ Similarly, teach content related vocabulary.
- _ Invite guest speakers to share voices, ideas and experiences while being mindful of protocol when asking.
- _ Read a simple land acknowledgement, show pictures of the local landscape and ask: Whose land is this? What are you thankful for? Who should we thank? (Focus on the area you are located in and share that each region and group is unique and has their own language, traditions, culture, ideas.)
- _ Explain that we have a tradition in many organizations in Canada — we often say a land acknowledgement at the beginning of a special event. Why do we do this? Why is this important?
- _ Look for opportunities to Indigenize other events and classroom activities (e.g., using the

- class land acknowledgment in other contexts).
- _ Focus on lessons that bring an awareness of Indigenous people and their contributions to the fabric of Canada — who they are, the many languages they speak, art forms, celebrations, songs, ceremonies and stories they've contributed while giving recognition and respect.
 - _ Have students draw connections to their own cultures and encourage these discussions.
 - _ Use images of Indigenous Canadians along with other minority groups as examples for grammar items, discussion starters, pre-listening or reading activities, in order to include Indigenous people as a valued and valuable segment of the Canadian landscape/ population.
 - _ Discuss the wealth of traditional knowledge of the Indigenous people of Canada in the weather, clothing, transportation and housing themes with examples of the adaptiveness of materials used from local areas to thrive in Canada's harsh winters and the continued (or modernized) use of some of these traditions (dog teams, canoes, longboats etc.).
 - _ Have conversations to discuss that residential school problems are still present-day problems as Indigenous peoples are still dealing with its impacts. These discussions are imbedded in the LINC themes throughout the term, for example:
 - _ For health: Discuss and read a simple statistics table or graph about indigenous health or suicide rates compared to other Canadian populations. Similar activities for the employment and housing themes could also be developed. Additionally, for health, include traditional Indigenous ways of healing and natural remedies (healing circles and the peace pipe).
 - _ For education: Read about an Indigenous adult returning to finish high school or learning to read and discuss why this might happen.

These activities demonstrate that discrimination and inequity persist for Indigenous peoples in Canada, and while small steps are being made, we must continue to do better

- _ Discuss myths, stereotypes, misconceptions and facts. How can we challenge stereotypes? How can you be an ally? Teach the strength and issues while focusing on language. Teach caution when using words such as "all" and "every" and the value of more open words such as "some" and "a few", etc.
- _ Understand trauma's effects on students' past and current experiences. Online learning may not be the best platform for some content as teachers are unable to gauge reactions and students may be isolated from social supports common to face-to-face learning.

Some resources I plan to use include the Indigenous Education CLB 3 modules on Tutela, ESL Library, and Canada's Indigenous People in [Best of the Westcoast Reader](#).

References and PD Resources

for Indigenization 

This section includes resources that informed this document and resources (academic articles, websites, videos, tutorials, courses, etc.) for professional development and further learning on this topic.

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Resources for the Classroom

for Indigenization

This section includes resources (lesson plans, curriculum, readings, videos, podcasts, etc.) to use in class.

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Community Resources

for Indigenization 

This section includes community sources for learner support, guest speakers, etc.

Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary

<https://www.afccalgary.org/>

Alberta Indigenous organizations and service directory

<https://www.alberta.ca/Indigenous-organizations-and-service-directory.aspx>

Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association

<https://anfca.com>

Indigenous Education for Newcomers

<https://www.centrefornewcomers.ca/indigenous>

Métis Nation of Alberta

<http://albertametis.com/contact/>

University of Alberta, Aboriginal/Indigenous Resources

<https://www.ualberta.ca/indigenous/index.html>

Fieldtrip suggestions

- _ Indigenous Tourism Alberta <https://indigenoustourismalberta.ca/>
- _ Glenbow Museum, Calgary (virtual tours available) <https://www.glenbow.org/>
- _ Royal Alberta Museum, Edmonton (virtual tours available) <https://royalalbertamuseum.ca/>
- _ Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Interpretive Centre (UNESCO-designated World Heritage Site) <https://headsmashedin.ca/>
- _ Fort Calgary <https://www.fortcalgary.com/>
- _ Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park <https://www.albertaparks.ca/parks/south/writing-on-stone-pp/activities-events/public-tours-programs/>
- _ Tsuu T'ina Nation Culture Museum <https://tsuutinamuseum.com/>
- _ Indigenous Events, Alberta.ca <https://www.alberta.ca/indigenous-events.aspx>