



## FAQs



### ► *Why has this resource been developed, and what can it contribute to my teaching practice?*

This resource has been developed in response to desire on the part of teachers for more guidance and information on how to incorporate First Peoples materials into their instruction and assessment practices. Educators and communities have long recognized a need for increased information and support in the use of culturally appropriate and meaningful First Peoples content, materials, and teaching methods. This desire for support reflects an awareness and recognition that

- there is value for all students when First Peoples content and worldviews are incorporated in classroom learning experiences in a meaningful and authentic way
- there is a need to continue developing educational approaches that better meet the needs of Indigenous students
- it is important to personalize and customize learning experiences in response to class makeup and individual students' learning needs
- First Peoples literature, creative works, role models, and other learning resources are more widely available now than in the past, and this availability is continuing to improve
- Indigenous communities in Canada, both on-reserve and off, continue to make education a priority
- Indigenous communities themselves contain the most accurate and authentic source of teaching about First Peoples – their traditions, environments, ecologies, directions, priorities, etc.

At the same time, many teachers are aware

- of limitations in their own knowledge of Indigenous peoples, cultures, and histories
- that there exists considerable diversity among First Peoples in BC, and that it is often inappropriate to base teaching on broad generalizations

Teachers are often anxious about perpetuating misconceptions, making mistakes, or giving offence when approaching First Peoples topics. And while they may be willing to engage with their local Indigenous communities, they recognize the importance of keeping their primary focus on day-to-day student learning and are acutely aware of how challenging and time consuming the necessary networking can be.

That is why this guide has been developed. It provides an array of ideas and suggestions that can be applied in whole or in part to incorporate local Indigenous content and authentic First Peoples texts into a K-3 classroom. By following the suggestions provided here and remaining open to respectful dialogue and consultation with members of the local First Nations communities, teachers will benefit their students and expand their own comfort with this material. And while mistakes will inevitably occur (as in any undertaking), a mistake arising from application of the suggestions provided here will not prove as serious as the mistake of failing to work toward a more accurate portrayal of First People realities in the classroom or a pedagogy that is more inclusive of Indigenous learners.

## ► *What is meant by “First Peoples”?*

The term “First Peoples” refers to Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) peoples in Canada, as well as to Indigenous peoples around the world.

- **Aboriginal:** an umbrella term used in the *Constitution Act*, 1982, to refer to three distinct categories of Indigenous peoples: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. Often the term Aboriginal is used interchangeably with the terms “Indigenous” or “First Peoples.” Using the term Aboriginal is growing in disuse as people are encouraged to specify First Nations, Inuit, or Métis, or use Indigenous.
- **First Nations:** the self-determined political and organizational unit of the Indigenous community that has the power to negotiate, on a government-to-government basis, with BC and Canada. Many First Nations prefer “First Nations” rather than “First Nations community.”
- **Indian:** A term that has been used historically by explorers and settlers to identify Indigenous peoples in South, Central and North America. In Canada, the term has legal meaning in the *Indian Act*, which defines who has Indian “status” for purposes of the Indian Act. For some Indigenous peoples, the term “Indian” confirms their ancestry and protects their historic relationship to with the federal Crown. For others, the definitions set out in the *Indian Act* are not affirmations of their identity. In terms of these curricular resources, Indian is used in historical and legal contexts. For example, it is the *Indian Act* which still has legal and governmental importance today.
- **Indigenous:** the original people of a territory or region. In Canada, the term may be used interchangeably with “First Peoples” or “Aboriginal” and has increased in popularity in recent years.
- **Inuit (singular: Inuk):** original peoples whose origins are different from other Indigenous peoples in North America. The Inuit generally live in northern Canada and Alaska. The word Inuit means “the people” in the Inuit language of Inktut.
- **Métis:** a person of European and First Nations ancestry. The Métis established homelands in various parts of Canada, with unique traditions, language (Mishif), ways of life, collective consciousness, and a distinct nationhood.

Students may sometimes encounter other outdated terms such as “Native” or “Eskimo” in relation to First Peoples. Where appropriate, use these as opportunities to teach the appropriate terms and the value of inclusive, respectful language. When referring to specific First Nations, it is preferable to use the name of the nation.

## ► *What are First Peoples Principles of Learning, and why are they important?*

First identified in relation to the English 12 First Peoples curriculum, the “First Peoples Principles of Learning” articulate an expression of the shared wisdom of Elders and educators within First Peoples communities in BC.

The following First Peoples Principles of Learning apply to all areas of curricula from Kindergarten to Grade 12:

### **First Peoples Principles of Learning**

Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).

Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.

Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge.

Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.

Learning involves patience and time.

Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.

These principles were first articulated by a diverse team of Indigenous educators, scholars, and knowledge-keepers during the development of English 12 First Peoples.

Teachers across the province are encouraged to look for opportunities to use these principles to guide their classroom practice.

A poster form of the Principles of Learning is available online ([www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/PUB-LFP-POSTER-Principles-of-Learning-First-Peoples-poster-11x17.pdf](http://www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/PUB-LFP-POSTER-Principles-of-Learning-First-Peoples-poster-11x17.pdf)).

### **► *What are authentic First Peoples texts?***

Authentic First Peoples texts are historical or contemporary texts that

- are created by First Peoples or through the substantial contributions of First Peoples
- depict themes and issues that are important within First Peoples cultures (e.g., identity, tradition, role of family, importance of Elders, connection to the land, the nature and place of spirituality as an aspect of wisdom, the relationships between individual and community, the importance of oral tradition – see Themes and Topics later in this section for more examples)
- incorporate First Peoples story-telling techniques and features as applicable (e.g., circular structure, repetition, weaving in of spirituality, humour)

### **► *Why is it important to use authentic resources?***

In the past, resources dealing with Indigenous content have contained inaccurate information, and/or have not fairly represented the unique experiences and worldviews of First Peoples. Regardless of how well-intentioned or well researched these resources may be, FNEC advocates that only authentic resources be used in the classroom to ensure that First Peoples cultures and perspectives are portrayed accurately and respectfully.

An increased use of authentic First Peoples resources will benefit all students in BC:

- Indigenous students will see themselves, their families, their cultures, and their experiences represented as being valued and respected.

- Non-Indigenous students will gain a better understanding of and appreciation for the significance of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples and cultures within the historical and contemporary fabric of this province.

### ► *How do I know if a resource is authentic?*

Identifying authentic texts can sometimes be a challenge. To assist in this process, FNEESC has published the resource guide, *Authentic First Peoples Resources K-9* (FNEESC, 2016). This guide is available at the FNEESC website: [fnesc.ca/authenticresources](http://fnesc.ca/authenticresources).



All of the resources listed in this resource guide are authentic and acceptable for use in educational settings.

The current edition of guide lists only print resources that are written for a **student** audience and that are available province-wide. Future editions of this guide may be produced to include additional media, as well as teacher resources and new print titles that become available.

Educators wishing to conduct their own evaluations of additional resources should consider the following guidelines:

- Consult with your local school district Indigenous contact to determine what locally developed texts are available.
- Ensure that proper copyright protocol have been respected, particularly when using resources (e.g., songs, artwork) found online.

### ► *What do I need to know about First Peoples stories or narratives?*

Story is one of the main methods of traditional Indigenous learning and teaching. Combining story and experience is a powerful strategy that has always been used and continues to be used by First Peoples, and its power can also be brought into the classroom.

Stories enable holistic learning. They meld values, concepts, protocol, practices, and facts into narratives. Stories also develop important skills of listening and thinking.

#### *Purposes and Forms*

Different stories have different purposes. Traditional and contemporary First Peoples stories are told for

- teaching – life lessons, community responsibilities, rites of passage, etc.
- sharing creation stories
- recording personal, family, and community histories
- “mapping” the geography and resources of an area
- ensuring cultural continuity (e.g., knowledge of ancestors, language)
- healing
- entertainment

Where appropriate, talk with students about the purposes of specific stories used in the classroom.

First Peoples stories also take many forms. Although most of the stories used in this guide are in prose form, stories can also be told in song, dance, poetry, theatre, carvings, pictures, etc.

### ***First Peoples Worldviews***

Although First Peoples worldviews vary from community to community, the following elements have a place within the worldviews of many First Peoples:

- connection with the land and environment
- the nature and place of spirituality as an aspect of wisdom
- the nature of knowledge – who holds it, what knowledge is valued
- the role of Elders and knowledge-keepers
- the relationships between individual, family, and community
- the importance of the oral tradition
- the experience of colonization and decolonization (e.g., residential schools, the reserve system, land claims)
- humour and its role

Elements of First Peoples worldviews are reflected in authentic texts.

### ***Copyright and Protocol***

It is important to recognize that local cultural protocols exist. Permission for use of First Peoples cultural materials or practices such as stories, songs, designs, crests, photographs, audiovisual materials, and dances should be obtained from the relevant individuals, families, Elders, hereditary chiefs, Band Councils, or Tribal Councils. This authorization should be obtained prior to the use of any educational plans or materials. Consult your local district Indigenous contact for advice and assistance in approaching the appropriate person(s).

All of the stories and resources cited in this teacher resource have been cleared for classroom use, and **no additional permission is required**. However it is still important to acknowledge the source of every story shared in the classroom, both author (where applicable) and region. For maps showing First Peoples of BC, consider one of the following resources:

- First Peoples Languages Map of British Columbia  
<http://maps.fpcc.ca/>
- First Nations of British Columbia  
[www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-BC/STAGING/texte-text/fnmp\\_1100100021018\\_eng.pdf](http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-BC/STAGING/texte-text/fnmp_1100100021018_eng.pdf)

### ***Story, Legend, and Myth***

Because of the connotations often associated with the terms “legend” and “myth” (i.e., that they are fiction), it is preferable to use the terms “story,” “traditional story,” or “narrative.”

If students ask “Is it true? Did this really happen?” there are a number of responses that might be appropriate, depending on the specific story, the context, and the age of the children. Consider the following replies:

- Sometimes you have to figure out for yourself what you believe to be true. Here’s what I think is true ...
- The purpose/moral of this story is \_\_\_\_, and that’s the most important truth.

- Many of the Chehalis people [for example] believe this story to be true.
- This story is so old that no one can say if it is true or not.
- I wasn't around when this story was first told so I cannot tell you if it is or is not true, but I hope you enjoyed it, or learned something from it.
- (Of particular relevance when discussing any differences in the teachings of two or more stories) The great spirit gave us all the gifts that we have, and we are all individuals with different ways of seeing. That's why we have differing beliefs, practices, clans, crests, and Nations.

### ► *What themes and topics might I encounter in First Peoples resources?*

An effective integration of authentic First Peoples resources will draw attention to recurring themes topics that are characteristically part of the worldview of many Indigenous peoples. The fact that many of these are consistent with themes that primary teachers already use in their classrooms facilitates the integration of First Peoples content. Using these identified themes in a deliberate and thoughtful way can serve to address multiple curriculum areas at the same time.

Though not a finite list, the following identifies a range of these themes and topics:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ▪ art                                       | ▪ racism & stereotypes  |
| ▪ balance                                   | ▪ relationality & connectedness   |
| ▪ beliefs                                   | ▪ relationship to the natural world   |
| ▪ ceremony                                  | ▪ relationship with spirit world  |
| ▪ citizenship & service                     | ▪ respect   |
| ▪ collaboration and co-operation            | ▪ rights and responsibilities   |
| ▪ competition                               | ▪ rites of passage  |
| ▪ conflict & conflict resolution            | ▪ roles of teacher & learner  |
| ▪ decision making                           | ▪ seasonal cycle, seasonal activities   |
| ▪ diversity                                 | ▪ self-reliance   |
| ▪ dreams & visions                          | ▪ sharing, fairness   |
| ▪ Elders and knowledge-keepers              | ▪ storytelling  |
| ▪ family                                    | ▪ structure and hierarchy   |
| ▪ family and community roles                | ▪ sustainability & continuity   |
| ▪ feasts                                    | ▪ symbols and symbolism   |
| ▪ feelings                                  | ▪ time and place  |
| ▪ food                                      | ▪ tradition   |
| ▪ games                                     | ▪ tradition and modernity   |
| ▪ generosity                                | ▪ Traditional Ecological Knowledge  |
| ▪ grief & loss                              | ▪ traditional knowledge   |
| ▪ humour                                    | ▪ traditional technologies<br>(transportation, tools, food gathering<br>prep & storage) |
| ▪ identity                                  | ▪ Tricksters  |
| ▪ inclusivity & belonging                   | ▪ vitality  |
| ▪ language                                  | ▪ ways of learning  |
| ▪ listening                                 | ▪ well-being  |
| ▪ nurturing                                 | ▪ wisdom  |
| ▪ ownership                                 | ▪ worldview   |
| ▪ performance (song, dance, drama,<br>etc.) |   |
| ▪ protocol                                  |   |



### **► *How do I find out which resources are appropriate for my local area?***

Wherever possible, you are encouraged to use resources representing your local area. It is important for all students in BC to have an understanding of the culture(s) of the First Peoples in the area in which they live.

The FNEC resource, *Authentic First Peoples Resources K-9*, provides region of origin information for all the resources it cites. For additional support in identifying resources local to your area, consult with your district Indigenous contact or local Band council education co-ordinator. The Ministry of Education maintains an up-to-date online list of school district Indigenous contacts: [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/AB.do](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/AB.do).

At the upper primary grades, as students begin to expand their horizons beyond their local communities, it is appropriate to bring in resources from other areas as a point of comparison. Indeed, some curriculum expectations require a focus on “Indigenous peoples of BC.” This also provides an opportunity to emphasize the diversity of First Peoples cultures within British Columbia and Canada, and across North America.

The classroom units contained in this teacher resource suggest some of the many ways these themes can be addressed using specific strategies and authentic texts.

### **► *I’ve encountered an unfamiliar Indigenous language word. I’m afraid of being disrespectful if I mispronounce it. What should I do?***

If the language is from your local area, try to find a speaker of the language to teach you.

If this option is not available to you, or if the language is not local, the First Voices website ([firstvoices.com](http://firstvoices.com)) is a valuable resource. This site contains audio clips and other language learning resources for a number of First Peoples languages in Canada.

If all else fails, make your best guess, and tell your students that it might be wrong. In addition, know that, just like English, many First Peoples languages have local dialects, and pronunciation may vary from one area to another.

### **► *What First Peoples pedagogies should I try to incorporate in my classroom?***

This learning resource is guided by the recognition of ways of learning inherent in First Peoples’ world views. While each First Nation has its own unique identity, values and practices, there are commonly held understandings of how we interact and learn about the world.

An effective integration of First Peoples learning methods will include

- a commitment to learner-centredness, supporting students in developing their own personal learning, while encouraging a sense of personal responsibility for learning

- a focus on experiential learning rather than an exclusive reliance on teacher-led discussions (for example, having students engage directly with the local First Peoples community through field studies, interviews, and the involvement of guest speakers)
- an emphasis on awareness of self and other in equal measure (for example, establishing a classroom environment that respects the contributions of each member and provides time and opportunity for even the more reticent students to contribute to group processes)
- a recognition of the value of group process (for example, being especially sensitive to the time it takes for groups to come to consensus or to the teachable moment)
- a recursive approach to resources – revisiting the same text or activity more than once over the course of the school year
- support for varied forms of representation (for example, providing ample opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding through the use of drama, art, media, dance, song, music, etc.)

Many of these approaches are simply a matter of good teaching practice, and are reflective of what educators are already doing in classrooms across the province.

### **Oral Tradition**

Oral tradition is a means by which cultural transmission occurs over generations (other means include written records and physical artefacts). Among First Peoples, oral tradition is extremely important and may consist of told stories, songs, and/or other types of wisdom or information, often incorporating dance or various forms of visual representation such as carvings or masks. In addition to expressing spiritual and emotional truths (e.g., via symbol and metaphor), oral tradition provides a record of literal fact – including laws, beliefs, customs, histories, and other forms of cultural knowledge.

The maintenance of oral tradition is considered critical in virtually all First Peoples cultures, and effective integration First Peoples texts will include opportunities for student to experience stories in their oral form. In this way, students will come to fully appreciate the significance of a living oral tradition.

#### **One Teacher’s Experiences: Strategies for Reading Aloud**

In teaching my students, I often guide them by examining the lessons from the stories with them. I teach my students to think about the lessons and apply them to their own experiences.

To begin my story in the classroom, I turn off the lights. I instruct the children to follow me with their eyes while I move about in the telling. Their hands are on their desks and no one speaks except for the storyteller. I finish the telling and switch on the lights.

I then help the children re-write the story. I point out to the children how to look at the story from the differing perspectives of the various characters. For example, Wiigyat was driven by his hunger and the Gitxsan were defending their food. How would the students feel if someone was stealing their food? What should they do if they are hungry like Wiigyat?

Although the authentic texts cited here are primarily print resources, the classroom units in this guide allow for a number of ways to incorporate the oral tradition. Consider the following approaches:

- Invite an Elder or other community member to read the story aloud to the class.
- Have students take turns reading a story, in whole or in part, to the whole class or to smaller reading groups.



- Invite older students in the school to create audio recordings (e.g., podcasts) of the stories for use in your classroom.

For more information about the oral tradition in the classroom, refer to the unit “The Oral Tradition” in the FNESC/FNSA *English First Peoples 10-12 Teacher Resource Guide* (available online: [fnesc.ca/learningfirstpeoples/efp](https://fnesc.ca/learningfirstpeoples/efp)).

## **Listening**

As part of the oral tradition, listening skills are paramount to First Peoples teaching and learning. Listening was and continues to be critical in traditional First Peoples cultures as the first step in committing something to memory and for

- language learning
- learning the geographical features that delineate the food gathering boundaries of one’s territory
- learning the proper protocols to follow in a variety of situations
- hearing the sound of changing weather conditions that might affect personal safety
- picking up the sound of a game animal in time of hunger
- hearing the approach of an enemy
- making thoughtful decisions in collaborative settings

Whenever possible, look for ways to incorporate thoughtful, meaningful listening activities in your classroom. One such strategy is to bring students to a quiet spot (preferably outdoors), and have them imagine themselves in a situation where listening really matters. Students should assume a comfortable position, free their hands of any objects, and observe five minutes of absolute silence. They may close their eyes or concentrate on a single point during this time, but they must not move, speak, or make eye contact with each other. When five minutes have passed, ask students to share their immediate impressions of the experience. What sounds did they hear? Did they learn anything about the surrounding area from listening intently? Were any sounds surprising or unexpected? What was going through their minds as they listened and concentrated? Were they relieved or disappointed when the listening time was over?

As part of listening activities, talk about the importance of silence. In traditional First Peoples cultures, silence has a particular value and purpose of silence (e.g., to demonstrate respect, to train and discipline warriors and hunters, to strengthen the body and mind). Silence also offers opportunities for personal reflection. Recognize that some Indigenous students in your classroom may come to classroom activities in a more reflective way, and may incorporate silence often as part of their thinking and learning processes.

(For one example of an activity focussing on listening, see “Sample Lesson Plan 1 – Listening: The First Lesson for Aboriginal Children” in *Shared Learnings*, available online [www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/pdfs/shared.pdf](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/pdfs/shared.pdf).)

## **Connecting Learning to the Land and Place**

Connection with place, with the land, is the foundation of Indigenous knowledge. This means that each Indigenous group holds unique worldviews, technologies and pedagogies according to their environment and territories. Indigenous knowledge, passed on through the generations, was and is essential for sustaining life. Survival for First Peoples depends on their particular knowledge of the land, their unique relationship with the environment, and their shared values and practices through which they made sense of the world.

The concept of place goes far beyond the physical space. It includes a crucial sense of place – the memories, emotions, histories, and spiritualities that bind people to the land.

Five concepts of place have been identified, common to most First Peoples:

- Place is multidimensional. More than the geographical space, it also holds cultural, emotional and spiritual spaces which cannot be divided into parts.
- Place is a relationship. All life is interrelated. Relationship encompasses both human relationships and the relationships between people and the land.
- Place is experiential. Experiences a person has on the land give it meaning.
- Place is local. While there are commonalities, each First Nation has a unique, local understanding of place. Stories are connected to place.
- Place is land-based. Land is interconnected and essential to all aspects of culture. Making connections with place in English First Peoples courses is an integral part of bringing Indigenous perspectives into the classroom. Peoples' perspectives are influenced by the land they are connected to. That means including experiential learning in local natural and cultural situations.

(Adapted from Michell et al., *Learning Indigenous Science from Place*, p. 27-28.)

Wherever possible, look for opportunities to take learning outside in order for students to make connections with the land and place they are situated on. This may be as simple as a nature walk or an outdoor story reading, or it may involve a more complex study of a local habitat or environment.

Particularly for older students, a more structured outdoor education program can provide additional opportunities to

- address the learning needs of students who may not thrive in a conventional classroom setting
- engage in experiential learning
- nurture respect for the natural environment
- foster healthy living practices
- teach self-discipline and instil pride

### ***Traditional Ecological Knowledge***

Traditional Ecological Knowledge, or TEK, is the most popular term to denote the vast local knowledge First Peoples have about the natural world found in their traditional environment.

Some people consider the term misleading because “traditional” suggests that the knowledge is stuck in the past, where in fact it is dynamic and continually being renewed. As well, the use of “ecological” can be seen as limiting, for the knowledge referred to is holistic and goes beyond the discipline of ecology, and embraces many topics such as spirituality, astronomy, medicine, and technology. However, “ecological” in its broader usage can refer to the idea that TEK is rooted in the local landscape.

One way of understanding TEK is to consider it not as just a database of collected information, but as a process of participating in relationships, as explained in this quote:

*Native understandings of TEK tend to focus on relationships between knowledge, people and all of creation (the “natural” world as well as the spiritual). TEK is viewed as the process of participating (a verb) fully and*

*responsibly in such relationships, rather than specifically as the knowledge gained from such experiences. For First Peoples, TEK is not just about understanding relationships, it is the relationship with Creation.*

(Deborah McGregor, "Linking Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Western Science: Aboriginal Perspectives from the 2000 State of the Lakes Conference." *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* XXVIII, 1(2008):139-158. Page 145.)

TEK is, above all, local knowledge based in people's relationship to place. It is also holistic, not subject to the segmentation of Western science disciplines (botany, zoology, astronomy, physics, etc.). Knowledge about a specific plant may include understanding its life cycle, its spiritual connections, its relationship to the seasons and with other plants and animals in its ecosystem, as well as its uses and its stories.

TEK is widely used in biological and environmental sciences, and is largely considered to be complimentary to, and equivalent with, Western scientific knowledge. The environmental knowledge of generations is important to fields such as resource management, climate change, and sustainability. For example, at the federal level, a TEK subcommittee reports to the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, which makes recommendations to the Minister – based on TEK in their own local regions – about species that may need to be listed.

It is important to recognize that TEK is the intellectual property of the First Nation that holds it. Many people share much of their knowledge with others, but some knowledge and wisdom, due to cultural protocols, is considered private and is not shared.

### ***Teacher Reflection***

For classroom teachers, assessment is an ongoing practice. Apart from providing feedback for students and parents, it can yield information about their own teaching practice. By reflecting on the results of their assessments, teachers are able to adjust their teaching practice to find the best way of meeting students' learning needs. When delivering these units it is a good idea for teachers to ask themselves the following questions:

- What worked well?
- What didn't work so well?
- What would I do differently next time?

Since many of the resources and approaches to teaching contained in this resource may be new or unfamiliar, teachers are encouraged to engage in conscious and structured reflection throughout the units. This will help build comfort with these topics and allow teachers to adjust their delivery of these lessons in ways that serve both them and their students.

### **► *How do I make connections with the local First Nations communities?***

Bringing in First Peoples perspectives into the classroom means in part connecting with the local First Nations community. It is important to understand, respect and practice the local protocols when:

- inviting Elders and other knowledgeable community members into the classroom to speak
- interacting with the natural world when going out on field trips

- visiting local First Nations lands and territories
- holding special events such as a celebratory feast

Most communities have protocols in place to be followed when working with Elders and knowledge-keepers. This may include showing respect by offering a gift to the person, or perhaps to the land when on a field trip.

Make contact with the local First Nations through workers in schools or through the local Band Council. There may be a school district staff member such as an Indigenous district principal, Indigenous support worker, resource worker or other liaison person to help with the initial contact. (A list of Indigenous contacts by district is available at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/AB.do](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/AB.do)). Guidance can also be sought from local learning centres and community organizations such as friendship centres, First Nations offices, Tribal Councils, or cultural centres.

### ► *What protocols should I follow when inviting First Peoples guest speakers into the classroom?*

It is important to follow protocols when inviting a member of a First Nations community or Indigenous organization to a classroom or school. Below are some general considerations and processes. There are also often protocols specific to local communities. School district Indigenous contacts or community education departments can also provide guidance regarding those specific protocols.

These considerations can also be adapted when taking students on field trips or into field learning experiences that will be led or facilitated by member of a First Nation or Indigenous organization.

#### **Before the visit**

- Determine the purpose of the visit (how it is connected to the curriculum or learning standards for the class or course). If it is not directly connected to the curriculum, be clear about the intended learning standards so that the guest visit is meaningful experience for all involved.
- It is a culturally appropriate protocol for guest speakers to be provided with a gift and/or honorarium for sharing their time and knowledge.
  - Consult with the school district's Indigenous contact or First Nations community to determine the appropriate amount or gift (if the speaker has not already indicated an amount for an honorarium).
  - Determine where funds will come from in advance. Check to see if the school or PAC can contribute.
  - If the school and/or school district requires any paperwork to be completed before payment can be issued, ensure that this is done well in advance of the visit so that payment can be issued at the time of visit or as soon as possible afterward.
- Talk with the speaker about the details of the visit:
  - date and time of the visit
  - the course and grade levels of the students, and approximate number of students
  - the content and learnings that have led up to the visit.
- Ask the speaker about any specific needs:
  - Are there any hand-outs that need to be photocopied in advance, or any equipment or supplies needed?
  - Is there any specific information that students should know before the visit?

- Are there any specific protocols that the students and adults need to follow during the visit?
- Is there anything else that will help make the visit more comfortable for the speaker (especially if it is an Elder)?
- Would it help to have the classroom space organized in a specific way?
- Ask for permission to take photos or make audio or video recordings (if desired).
- Ask the speaker for some background information that can be used to introduce the speaker to the students (for example, where the speaker is from, their role or occupation, noteworthy experiences or accomplishments).
- Arrange arrival details: Ensure everyone knows where the speaker will be met. For example, arrange to have the speaker met in the parking lot, at the front door of the school, or in the main office. In some situations, the speaker may need transportation from home. If possible, include students in the greeting.
- Ensure the students are prepared prior to the visit:
  - Connect speaker's visit to students' previous learning.
  - Review respectful behaviour with students, including non-verbal communication.
  - Model for students how to introduce themselves.
  - Brainstorm with students questions that they can ask.
  - Prepare students to provide a thank-you to speaker.
- Ensure office staff and administrators know that a guest is expected.

### **Day of visit**

- Prepare physical space of classroom. Set up any necessary equipment.
- Welcome guest, offering water/tea/coffee. Let them know where washrooms are located.
- Introduce speaker to students and if appropriate do acknowledgment of territory.
- If students will be introducing themselves to the speaker, consider a talking circle format, saying name and where they are from. Ensure there is time for questions/discussion at the end of the session.
  - Have student(s) formally thank the speaker and present gift or honorarium.
  - If possible, debrief the session with speaker.
  - Walk the guest out.

\* It is important that the teacher stay present for the session, as this models for the students a valuing of the knowledge and time of the speaker. If any behavioural challenges occur, it is the teacher's responsibility to address them, not the speaker's.

### **After the visit**

- Debrief the session with the students.
- Do follow-up activity with students.
- Have students follow up with thank-you letter.
- Touch base with the speaker to ensure that honorarium was received (if not presented on day of session).

## **► *What's the most appropriate way to include local community resources?***

Community resources are integral to creating a learning environment that is consistent with First Peoples ways of learning. In addition to providing rich learning experiences for students, community resource people are sometimes the only available source of oral texts. However, to ensure that these experiences are educationally relevant and culturally appropriate, teachers are encouraged to consider the following guidelines:

- Consult your district Indigenous contact to ensure that proper protocols are followed. Find out if your school or district has any support documents to assist.
- Determine the nature of the presentation (e.g., story reading, demonstration, interview, response to students' presentations). Ensure that the guest speakers are clear about the structure and purpose of their visit, and the time allotted. There should be a direct relationship between the content of the presentation and the curricular learning standards. Review any materials they may use, especially any handouts, for appropriateness.
- Be aware of any district guidelines for external presenters, and ensure that guests have met these guidelines.
- Provide time for students to prepare for the guest by formulating focus questions.
- If the guests are willing, ask students to audio- or video-record the visit. This can provide a valuable resource for later reference and for other classes.
- Have students give appropriate thanks to the guests.

### ► *What other resources and sources of information can I access?*

Consult the following organizations for information on a wide range of First Peoples education initiatives and topics:

- First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC)  
[fnesc.ca](http://fnesc.ca)
- Ministry of Education – Indigenous Education  
[www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/indigenous-education](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/indigenous-education)
- Ministry of Education – Indigenous Education Resources  
[curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/indigenous-education-resources](http://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/indigenous-education-resources)
- First Nations Schools Association (FNSA)  
[fnsa.ca](http://fnsa.ca)
- First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC)  
[fpcc.ca](http://fpcc.ca)
- First Voices  
[firstvoices.com](http://firstvoices.com)
- Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC)  
[mnbca.ca](http://mnbca.ca)