

First Peoples Principles of Learning:

An Integration of First Peoples' Principles Through An Understanding of Lenses

Summary Slides from FPPL presentation by Paul Fraser and ideas from:
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FPPL Principle 1:



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

OVERARCHING POINT (BIG IDEA):

The primary purpose of learning is for well-being. Teaching that does not support the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors, is not desirable.





Implications for Classroom and School Include:

- Critically examining what is/has been considered important to teach and learn and why it is/has been considered important (i.e. asking what agenda it serves).
- Critically examining what is being learned in terms of how it affects self, family, community and the land.
- Connecting learning to the broader community. The classroom should extend beyond the walls of the classroom and school.
- Ensuring that there are multiple access points for students to learn.
- Ensuring that learners have various ways to represent what they learn.
- Making explicit connections to the social responsibility aspect of learning.
- Connect learning to broader community. Bringing in community members reinforces the links between school and the rest of the learners' lives.
- Beginning with looking at local contexts when examining concepts, topics or subject material, and then move outward.
- Engaging as much as possible with parents and extended family.

FPPL PRINCIPLE 2:

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

Overarching Point : THE BIG IDEA

- The indigenous perspective is that everything is interconnected and that education:
 - 1) is not separate from the rest of life, and
 - 2) relationships are vital.



Principle 2:

Implications for Classroom and School Include:

- Developing a healthful relationship between teacher and learner. Relationship between teacher and learner is often considered one of the primary indicators of student success for many students.
- Integrating family (including extended family) and community members into the learning experiences.
- Helping learners develop relationships with the surrounding community.
- Developing cross-curricular learning experiences for learners.
- Including as much experiential learning as possible.
- Ensuring learners see relevancy in what they are learning.
- Providing choice and flexibility in activities so that different aspects of the whole self can be attended to.
- Using humour.
- Helping learners develop the skills they need for effective self-reflection.
- Respectfully incorporating the use of the circle for group discussion.
- Creating collaborative and cooperative learning opportunities.
- Providing opportunities for learners to mentor other students, or to be mentored by others



FPPL PRINCIPLE 3: Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions

BIG IDEA:

This principle highlights the understanding that each person must take responsibility for his or her actions, and that all actions have consequences. It is understood that actions may have consequences for the individual as well as for others.

- This principle also focusses on the need for authentic learning situations, and the need for learner autonomy
- The consequences of one's own actions can only genuinely occur when the learner has made autonomous choices.



FPPL PRINCIPLE 3:

Implications for the Classroom and School May Include:

- Providing learners with appropriate levels of autonomy and choice in their learning. This might include some choice in what they learn, in how they learn, and in how they represent what they have learned. How this looks will depend on the age and skill sets of the learner.
- Helping learners become aware of the natural consequences (to themselves and others) of their actions. This might include letting learners make mistakes and then helping them to learn from those mistakes (as long as those mistakes do not cause harm to themselves or others).



FPPL PRINCIPLE 4: LEARNING INVOLVES GENERATIONAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

BIG IDEA:

The understanding that teaching and learning is the responsibility of ALL members of a community. As people develop their skills and knowledge in particular areas, it is expected that they will, in turn, teach others.





Implications for Classroom and School Include:

- Providing learning opportunities for students to teach and learn from students in different ages/grades.
- Providing leadership opportunities in a range of contexts.
- Connecting the classroom and school to other members of family and community.
- Inviting Elders into the school and classroom to share their knowledge.
- Bringing learners into the community to learn from people in other contexts.
- Providing opportunities for learners to mentor younger students, or be mentored by older learners or adults.
- Explicitly modelling learning processes for students.
- Providing necessary scaffolding and gradual release as the learner develops mastery.

PRINCIPLE 5:

Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge

BIG IDEA:

The understanding that Indigenous peoples hold an extensive wealth of knowledge, even if this knowledge has not always been recognized by post-industrial Euro-centric cultures. It recognizes that Indigenous knowledge contributes to the non-Indigenous understandings in the world.





Implications for the Classroom Include:

- The willingness of educators to see themselves as learners and seek to develop their own understandings first.
- Understanding that education systems are not value neutral. Helping learners understand this may help them navigate through differing cultural beliefs.
- Ensuring meaningful inclusion of Indigenous content and/or perspectives in all curricular areas (without appropriation).
- Recognizing that Indigenous knowledge is connected to specific contexts. There is a great diversity in First Peoples across not only Canada, but also within BC. Because of this, it is important to understand that teaching resources that might be appropriate and relevant in one community might not be appropriate for another community or school district.
- **Start local!** When deciding upon content that will be incorporated into the school or classroom, begin by checking with your local First Nations communities. Some may be able to help provide resources that are appropriate.



Principle 6: Learning is Embedded in Memory, History and Story

BIG IDEA:

In First Peoples' cultures, knowledge was traditionally kept in an oral tradition.

- In addition to expressing spiritual and emotional truth (e.g., via symbol and metaphor), story provides a record of literal truth (e.g., regarding events and/or situations).
- This tradition (both content and process) helps to create the learners' concept of the world. The emphasis on history and story help learners to organize new concepts that develop from their learning.





Implications in the Classroom and School May Include:

- Using story and narrative to teach across curricular areas.
- Providing learners with opportunities to share their stories, and their voices.
- Understanding the oral tradition, as well as its value and legal implications in Canada.
- Providing learners with the opportunities to listen to and connect with the stories of others.
- Understanding that all education systems are constructs based on specific sets of cultural values; what is considered important to learn is based on sets of the cultural values in a particular context, including the place (land) where the learning occurs.
- Thinking critically about what we consider important for students to learn and about how we choose to structure their learning experiences.

FPPL PRINCIPLE 7: LEARNING INVOLVES PATIENCE AND TIME

BIG IDEA:

Learning is an individualistic process that cannot be rushed or arrived at according to a pre-determined schedule (including specific age).

- refers to the understanding that learning happens when a person is ready for it, and that learning is most effective when it occurs in a setting where the learning can be applied in an authentic context. The need for patience and time is also a requirement to develop thorough conceptual and transferable understandings, rather than surface level familiarity.





FPPL 7

Implications for Classroom and School May Include:

- Ensuring that learning is about understanding concepts, and the application of knowledge, rather than only memorization of information.
- Revisiting concepts multiple times, providing learners with opportunities to deepen their knowledge by layering their understanding
- Providing for flexible scheduling in schools and in classrooms so that learners can take more or less time to learn what they need to know and understand.
- Providing opportunities for multiple opportunities to access learning in different ways.

Principle 8:

Learning requires exploration of one's identity

BIG IDEA:

the importance of identity in relation to learning. Identity is what connects people to each other, to communities, and to the land.

- The exploration of one's identity includes developing an understanding of one's place in the world, in addition to being able to identify all the factors that contribute to how people see themselves.
- These factors include their strengths and their challenges, their innate abilities (gifts) and capacities to learn.






Implications in the Classroom May Include:

- Understanding that how educators identify themselves impacts their pedagogical choices.
- Understanding that one's identity (both teacher and learner) impacts what is determined as relevant to teach and learn.
- Recognizing that "culture" is a complex construct and that learners usually identify with many cultural contexts (including, but not being limited to, heritage).
- Recognizing that learners may feel that they have multiple identities based on significant differences between what is valued at home, in their communities, and in their schools and classrooms.
- Avoiding generalizing about learners based on cultural stereotypes (i.e. all Indigenous learners don't make eye contact, are shy, follow traditional ways).
- Recognizing that the development of positive personal and cultural identity in many Indigenous learners is made more complex because of the perceptions of First Peoples held by many people in the larger society as well as the [legacy of colonial laws in Canada](#) that sought to destroy First Peoples' languages and cultures.
- Creating safe opportunities for learners to articulate and express their developing identities.

PRINCIPLE 9:



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

BIG IDEA:

Whether or not knowledge is shared depends on the type of knowledge, who holds that knowledge, and the context. Some knowledge is freely shared, while other knowledge is not. Some knowledge is held by specific people, families, clans or communities, and permission must be gained from the holder(s) before it is shared.

Some narratives or “stories” cannot be retold unless permission is given by the person, family, clan, or nation to whom the story belongs. Being told a story is not implicit permission to retell it, such as reading a story from another culture does not mean one can rewrite it as one’s own.



Implications for the Classroom and School May Include:

- Ensuring that First Peoples knowledge can be shared before using it. This can mean double checking the source of material (ensuring that that a story was not written down by a non-Indigenous person and published without permission).
- Asking about what protocols might be attached to specific knowledge or process.
- Being comfortable with asking respectful questions.
- Not assuming that Indigenous learners will share all aspects of their home and community lives in the school or classroom.

Sources and Content Origin:



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<http://www.firstpeoplesprinciplesoflearning.wordpress.com/>

<https://swwlibrary.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/fppl-explained.pdf>