

First Nations Pedagogy For Online Learning

- Sylvia Currie,
scurrie@sfu.ca

Nicola Valley Institute of Technology

- June Kaminski, RN MSN PhD(c),
June.Kaminski@kwantlen.ca
Kwantlen University College

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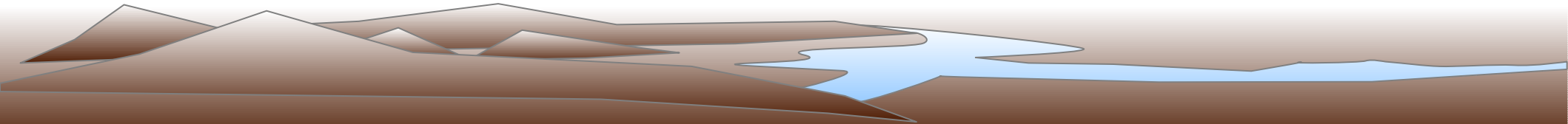
Project Summary



3-phase BCcampus-funded project lead by Nicola Valley Institute of Technology in partnership with Kwantlen University College.

The project proposes to:

- 1) research best practices in developing and implementing online learning opportunities for aboriginal learners,
- 2) develop a resource website that will support these instructors and curriculum designers, and
- 3) support dialogue and sharing of ideas across institutions and community stakeholders.




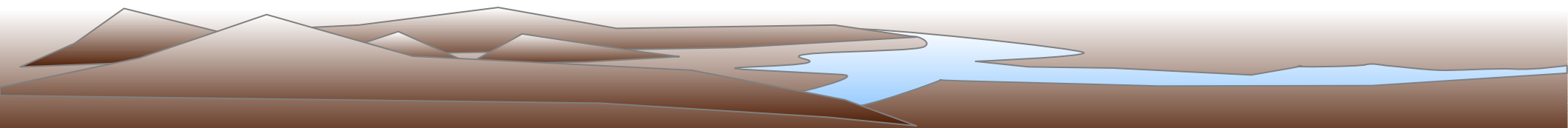
First Nations Online Learning

- Providing appropriate online content and learning strategies for First Nations students is challenging
- Want to provide an accessible, comprehensive resource that provides direction and technique
- Need to explore and incorporate Pre-Colonial and First Nations situated Pedagogy into online course design and delivery
- Need to propose teaching and learning strategies that meet First Nation student needs and that fit the online environment





Purpose of this Workshop

 This workshop will address the first phase of the project: best practices. Working with workshop participants we will explore effective instructional strategies and essential elements of an online course that ensure success for Aboriginal learners.



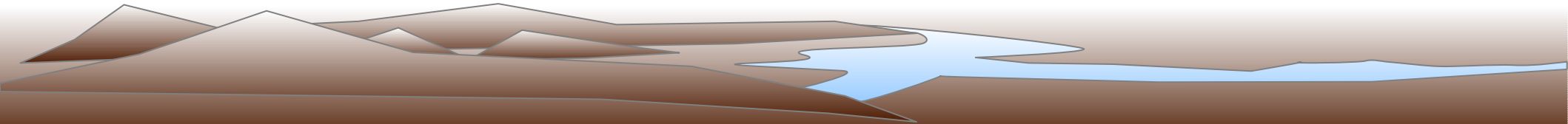
What do we mean when we say First Nations Pedagogy?

-  Although the notion of Pedagogy is essentially Colonial or Eurocentric in origin, it can be used to draw well-deserved attention to the distinct and noteworthy ways that Pre-Colonial education was offered and engaged in.
-  Distinct practices used for millennia to teach both “theory” and hands-on practical knowledge were repressed and banned during Colonization, yet the methods have endured and are both unique and extremely valuable in the 21st century



Value of First Nations Pedagogy

- Online content that is designed using First Nations Pedagogy methods is not only valuable for aboriginal students – it would be very powerful to teach ALL students in this way BUT all aboriginal students have the legal right to be taught using these methods, no matter what educational context they are studying in
- In fact, the efforts to afford a liberal education for all university students is a mere whisper of the potential that First Nations pedagogy promises: a well rounded, holistic, intelligent professional.



First Nations Pedagogy

Teaching in a way that learning includes:

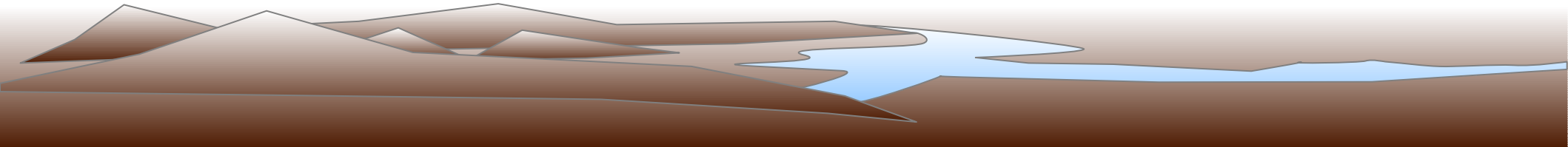
- Respectful relations,
- Building on experiential learning,
- Listening well,
- allowing Space,
- Story-telling and story-making,
- supporting Quaternity,
- Dialogue,
- Positionality,

- Relevance,
- Reciprocity,
- Reflectivity,
- Elders - informed,
- Ecologically situated,
- Creative,
- Visual-auditory learning space
- Within a self-governance philosophy and
- Natural world context.







FIRST NATIONS PEDAGOGY

- Pre-Colonial educational approaches are profoundly different from those of the current mainstream educational system
- **Holistic** (physical, mental, spiritual, emotional) growth and development of the person, Experiential learning, Oral tradition, and Student-centeredness are key elements of the First Nations pedagogical approach
- Further, and of vital importance, is the fact that it is grounded in **Spirituality**



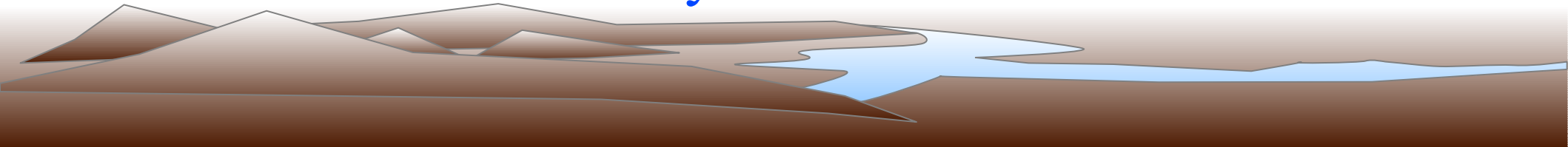
ELDERS & FORMAL EDUCATION

-  The Aboriginal peoples of North America had their own systems of formal education prior to the arrival of Europeans – systems which were highly successful
-  Elders possess formal knowledge and expertise
-  Through **Orality**, the Elders provide lessons on how to go about living a proper life
-  Elders impart tradition, knowledge, wisdom, and values



ELDERS & FORMAL EDUCATION

- Elders are the carriers and emblems of communally generated and mediated knowledge. In the western paradigm, such relations and processes of knowledge transmission is "informal". Yet, these same processes are at the heart and soul of what is 'formal' to Indigenous knowledge.
- Elders are first and foremost teachers and role models. They are vital in the teaching process, from infancy to adulthood and beyond.



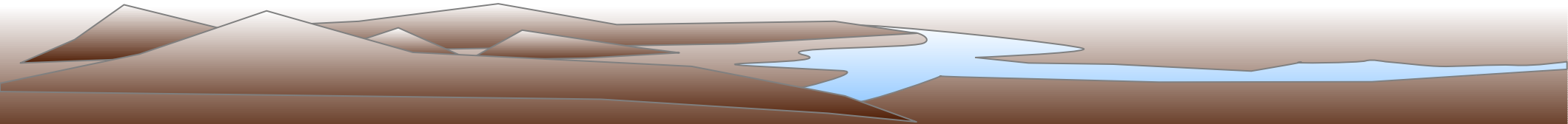
ELDERS & SOCIAL LEARNING

- Learning is always socially situated, socially constructed, socially produced and socially validated within social settings which exist as contextual settings.
- Elders teach others about culture, tradition and about the vision of life that is contained in First Nations philosophies and handed down in ceremonies and traditional teaching.



ELDERS AND EDUCATION

- ☪ Native thinking processes, bodies of knowledge and structures of knowledge transmission are uniquely different from those underpinning white western institutions. Non-formal education, informal learning and formal learning are socially organized and socially situated practices. Obstacles to Elders' participation in formal education must be identified and overcome.
- ☪ Elders are keepers of tradition, guardians of culture, the wise people, the teachers.



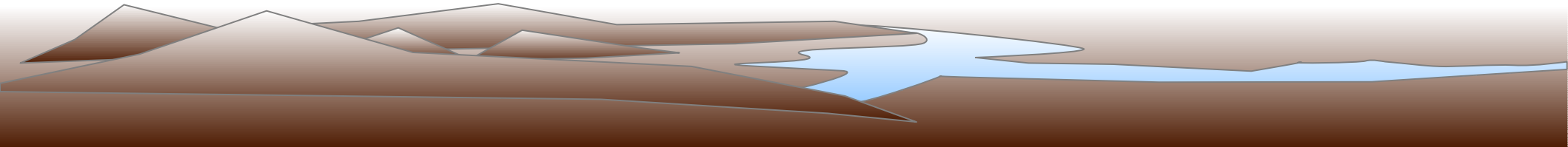
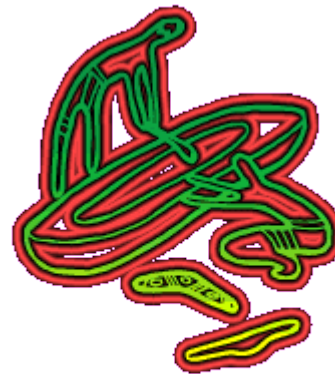
RESPECT

- Respect stems from the belief that every individual is responsible for themselves, and it is the responsibility of others to teach respect.
- In the past, before European influences, First Nations people had their own social systems which addressed issues such as discipline and respect.
- Respected **personal space**.
- **Code of silence** was taught from an early age.



RESPECTFUL RELATIONS

- Accept and live with other's differentness
- Resolve conflicts
- Compassion, empathy, understanding
- Listening well
- Allowing space
- Respecting self
- Respecting others
- Respecting nature



Pillars of First Nations Pedagogy



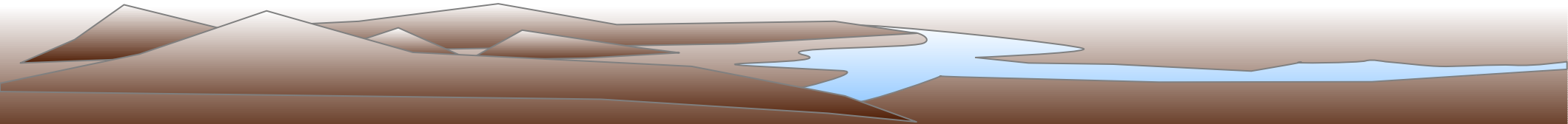
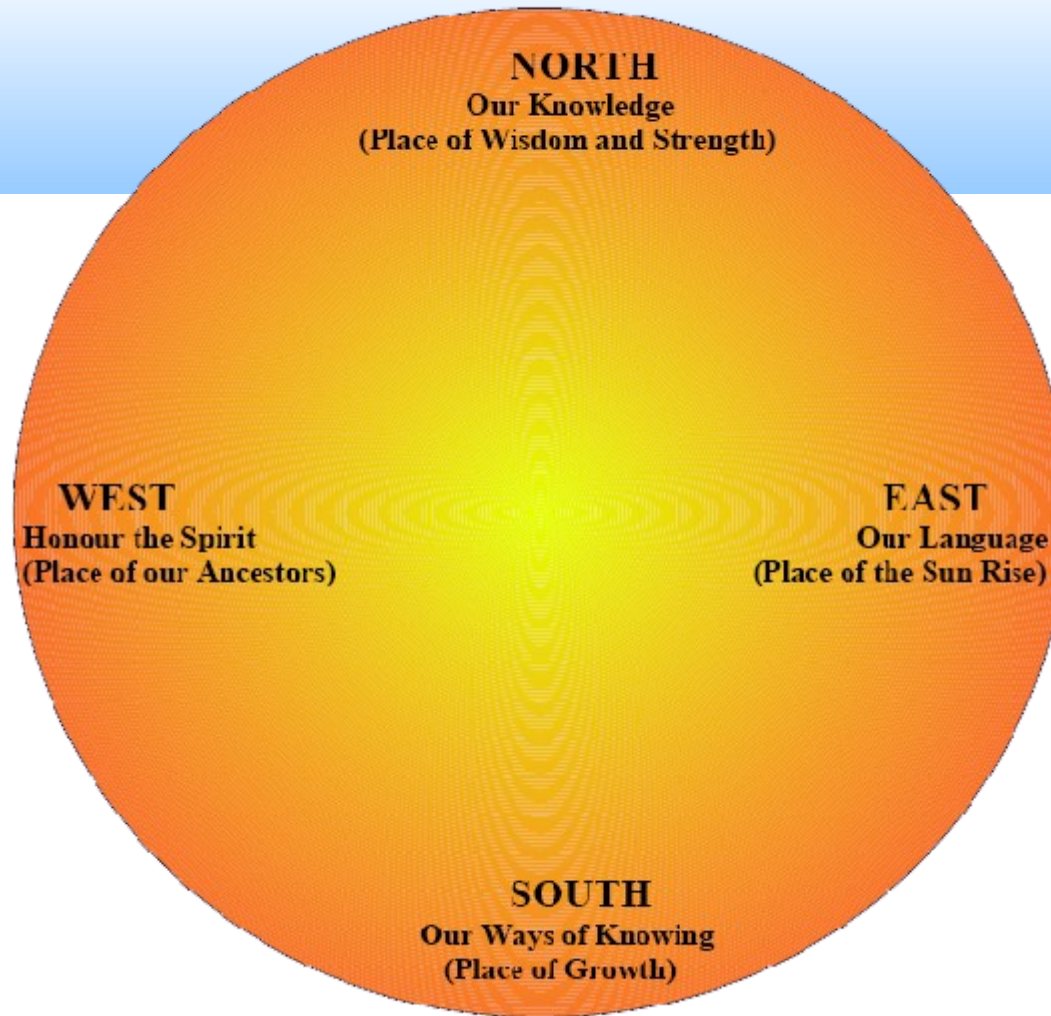
- **Respect** (for self & others, nature, knowledge)
- **Relevance** (e.g orality)
- **Reciprocity** (sense-making, skill-building)
- **Responsibility** (provide appropriate activities)

STORY TELLING & MAKING

- Stories are used to illustrate, to learn, to highlight, to share traditional nuances, to bring new knowledge, and to understand the world and contexts in which we live.
- Teachers need to begin to tell and make stories
- Learners need to feel comfortable sharing their stories vocally, in writing, in art
- Online stories can be applied using Journals, forums, blogs, wikis, chats



TEACHINGS OF THE FOUR DIRECTIONS



CIRCLE TALKS

In its simplest form a circle talk:

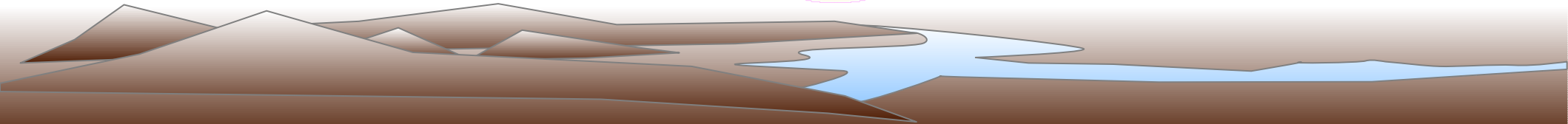
- is done in a complete circle
- only the person holding the stick talks, all the rest listen
- the stick is passed around in a clockwise direction
- a person talks until they are finished, being respectful of time
- the circle talk is complete when everyone has had a chance to speak
- a person may pass the stick without speaking, if they so wish
- if desired, the stick may be passed around again
- what is said in the circle stays in the circle
- a circle is used to discuss issues of importance
- is extremely respectful of everyone as individuals and what they have to say.



QUATERNITY

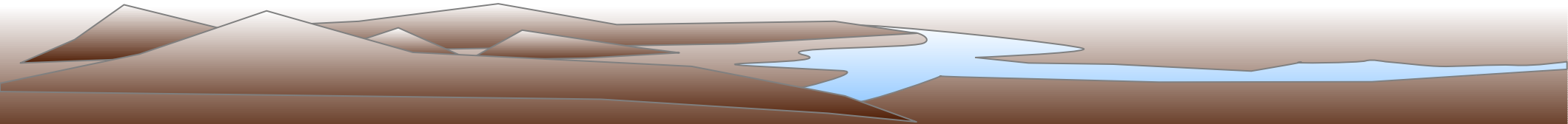


Cyclically organized, repetitive, and centre-focused discursive pattern of writing that is intrinsic to First Nations discourse: does not conform to the classic trinity of introductory, body, and conclusion which is European, that tends to be uni-dimensional, monologic, definite, linear, text-bound



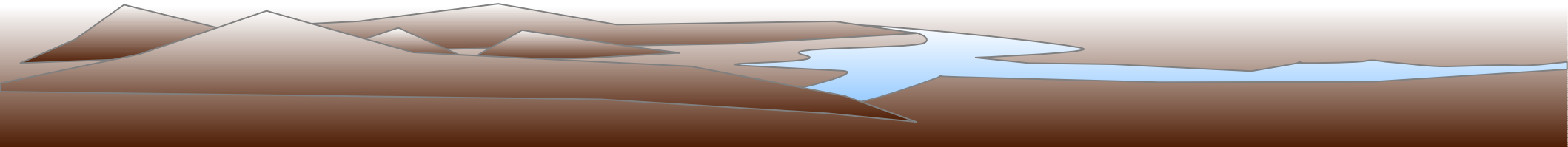
First Nations Academic Discourse

- ☪ **Oral Discourse** – focus on audience, purpose, immediacy, spontaneity
- ☪ Shifts academic discourse to a **socially relevant act**
- ☪ Redefines as **multidimensional, interactive process**
- ☪ Recognizes **social and political context of knowledge**
- ☪ Listening to elders and engaging in **corrected-until-correct dialogue** = “getting it right” through repetition and retelling



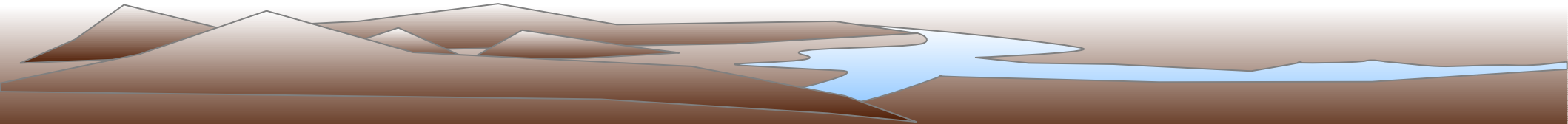
Quaternity Pedagogical Model

- ☉ 1. **Storytelling** – poem, song, story, novel, joke, drama, anecdote
- ☉ 2. **Oral History**
- ☉ 3. **Oratory** – editorial, speech, sermon, talk
- ☉ 4. **Reportage** – print, book, manual, thesis, newsletter, brochure



First Nations Literacy

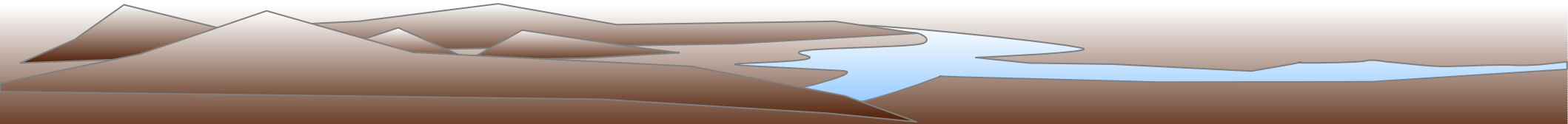
- Narrative
- Artistic
- Cultural
- Language
- Need to develop culture, identity, avoid assimilation



Sacred Canopy

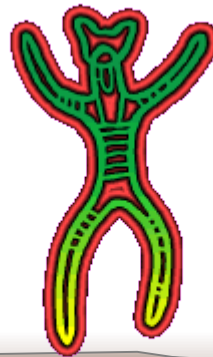
Includes Pre-Colonial
First Nations:

- Ideology
- Community
- Culture
- Land

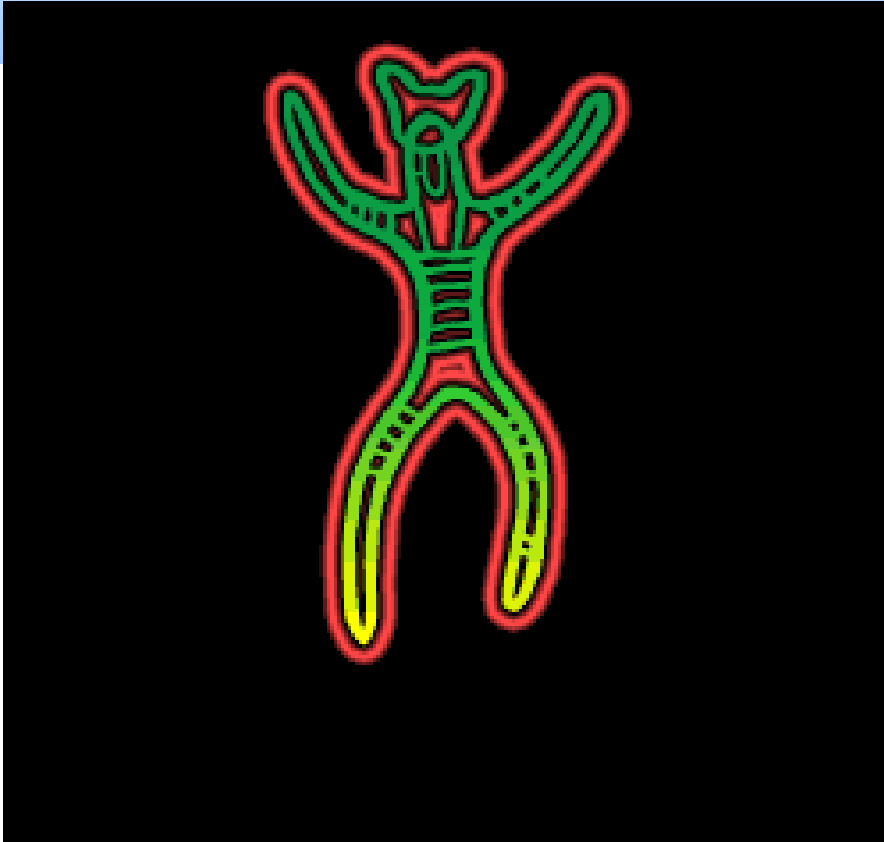


POSITIONALITY

- the notion of **one's frame of reference** or positionality is one that is highly supported and advocated by various Elders who challenge the limited vision of modern Canadian education. Our Elders tell us that we each must know who we are and how we engage and interconnect with our surroundings.



Holistic Perspective






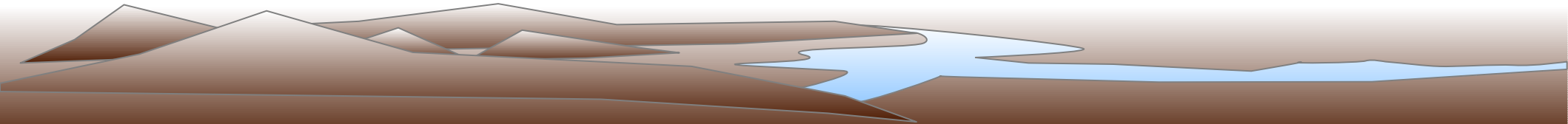
☪ Pedagogy must be
Holistic in Scope:

- ☪ **Body** (physical)
- ☪ **Mind** (intellectual)
- ☪ **Heart** (relational)
- ☪ **Spirit** (soul centered)

Economically Sound
Capacity Building

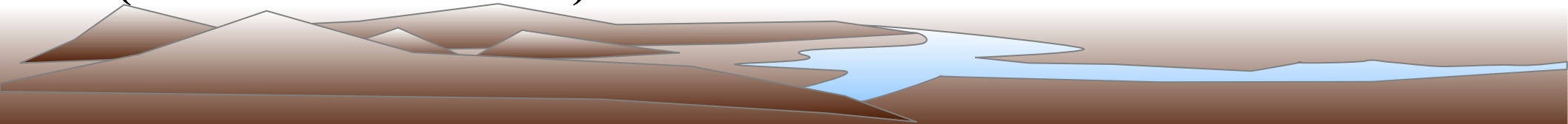
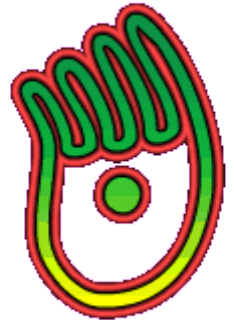
NURTURANCE OF GIFTS

-  The nurturance of each person's special gifts, talents and abilities so that s/he would be able to share their gifts with the community is a central tenet of Pre-Colonial teaching and learning.
-  Spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional growth was cultivated
-  Vision Quests, Meditation, Intuition, Dreaming and Rites of Passage are all valid methods of gaining knowledge



FIRST NATIONS KNOWLEDGE

- is a living process to be absorbed and understood, not a commodity to possess
- preference for experiential knowledge
- values ability to learn independently by observing, listening, and participating
- preference for multiple intelligences approach
- values introspection, reflection, meditation, prayer, self directed learning
- is structured by language and symbolic, verbal, and unconscious order
- is both empirical (based on experience) and normative (based on social values)



INHERENT ABORIGINAL VALUES

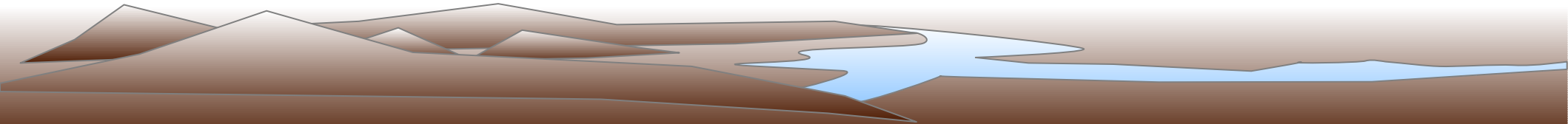
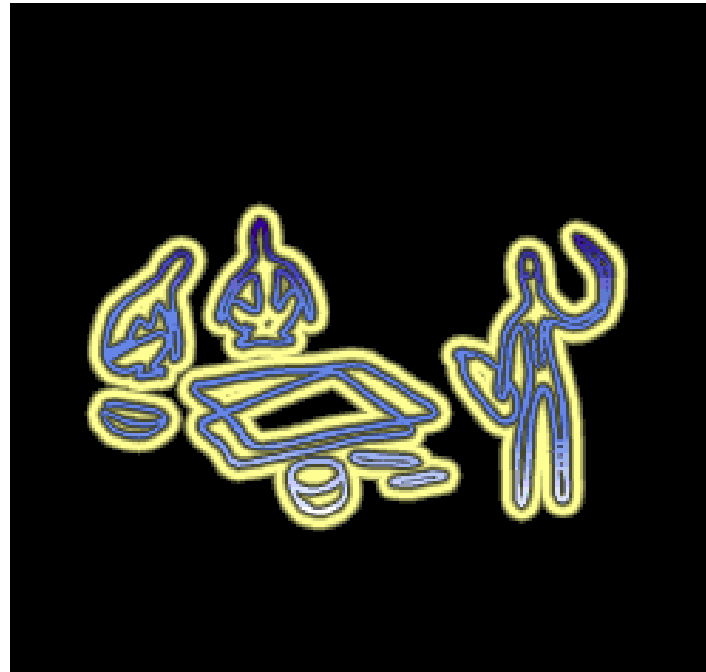
- Rights and freedoms of the individual
- Rights and freedoms of the group
- Respect for elders
- Respect for land and Community
- Respect for self
- Sacredness of life
- Spirituality
- Wisdom
- Honour and Fortitude
- Generosity
- Extended family
- Peace, Harmony
- Acceptance
- Quietness, Patience, Dignity
- Connectedness of all living things



Seven Sacred Gifts or Teachings

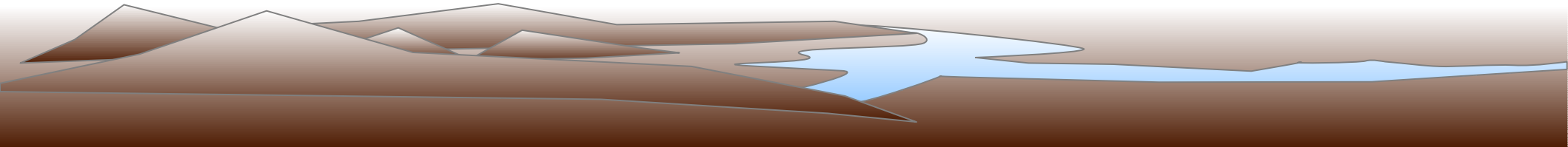
Given by the Creator at birth to use as medicine

- ☪ Respect
- ☪ Humility
- ☪ Compassion
- ☪ Honesty
- ☪ Truth
- ☪ Wisdom
- ☪ Love



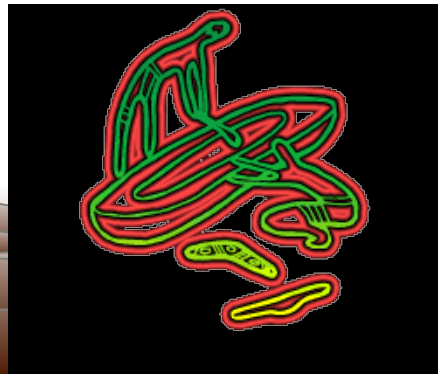
Culturally Relevant Methods

- ☪ **Circles:** full participation develops oral and aural functions: speaking and holistic listening
- ☪ **Smudging and Medicine Plants/Objects**
- ☪ **Prayer/Giving Thanks**
- ☪ **Dreamwork**
- ☪ **Sweat Lodge Ceremony**
- ☪ **Dance and Arts**
- ☪ **Vision Quests, Fasting, other Ceremonies**







Important Goal: Decolonization

- ☛ We must be actively involved in the transformation of knowledge
- ☛ A Postcolonial framework can not be constructed without First Nations peoples renewing and reconstructing the principles underlying their own world-view, environment, language, and how these construct our humanity
- ☛ We know deep inside ourselves, the pattern of life



REFERENCES

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-  Pitawanakwat, J. *Informal learning culture through the life course: Initiatives in Native organizations and communities*. New Approaches to Lifelong Learning Working Paper #40-2001.
-  **For more information you can visit First Nations Pedagogy at:**
<http://firstnationspedagogy.com>

