

Best Practices for Including Aboriginal Peoples in the Curriculum

ISSUES	DO	DON'T
<p>Key Concepts/Understandings Are Incorporated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Connections to curriculum are appropriate to the context. ➤ Aboriginal perspectives are embedded/an integral part, not sidebars/examples only. ➤ Aboriginal history, issues, world-views, perspectives are reflected across all grades from kindergarten to grade 12. ➤ The teaching of anti-racist education principles is incorporated. ➤ Cross-curricular connections ensure that inclusion is across the curriculum. ➤ Holistic nature of Aboriginal world-view is acknowledged. ➤ Value placed by Aboriginal world-views on harmonious relationships with the environment and the cycles of life is an integral part of inclusion. ➤ Spirituality/traditional teachings are embedded as an integral part. 	<p>Do make cross-curricular connections by including Aboriginal experiences in science, art, music, language, as well as history, geography and social studies.</p> <p>Do teach students to deconstruct bias in learning resources.</p> <p>Do include circle teachings as part of classroom practice and instruction.</p>	<p>Don't limit inclusion to social studies and history.</p> <p>Don't ignore stereotypes in learning resources.</p> <p>Don't teach isolated units on Native peoples. They are an integral part of the curriculum.</p>
<p>Authenticity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Aboriginal voices are present. ➤ Aboriginal perspectives are evident. ➤ The holistic nature of Aboriginal world-views is evident. ➤ Aboriginal people are depicted as real people. ➤ Oral history is validated. 	<p>Do invite Aboriginal elders, artists and storytellers and others from the Aboriginal community into classroom.</p> <p>Do include Aboriginal authors and literature.</p> <p>Do use videos and novels that represent authentic Aboriginal voice.</p>	<p>Don't use materials that affirm “Imaginary Indian” stereotypes like Indian princesses, warriors.</p> <p>Don't appropriate Aboriginal cultural items such as eagle feathers.</p> <p>Don't make inclusion at a level that is ‘tokenism’.</p>

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<p>Accuracy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The information and the perspectives included are accurate. ➤ Timeframe is accurate. ➤ Place references with respect to nations are accurate. 	<p>Do ensure that information is accurate by confirming that resources are recommended for use in TDSB schools.</p> <p>Do review the resources in your classroom and school library for bias.</p> <p>Do make sure maps include a time period reference and accurately locate Aboriginal peoples of that time period.</p>	<p>Don't use unreliable or stereotypical resources.</p> <p>Don't assume that all websites you encounter have accurate information.</p> <p>Don't use maps without a timeframe reference.</p>
<p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rich knowledge base and complex Aboriginal cultures of past and present are validated. ➤ Contributions in both the historical and contemporary context in Canada are acknowledged and valued. ➤ While still acknowledging the devastating impact of colonization on Aboriginal cultures, Aboriginal peoples are portrayed in a way that empowers. ➤ Inclusion of Aboriginal peoples is more than superficial and generic. Inclusion is meaningful and acknowledges individuality of both peoples and nations. ➤ Inclusion acknowledges value placed within Aboriginal world-views on harmonious relationships to the environment. ➤ Aboriginal nations are viewed as autonomous and self-governing nations. ➤ Aboriginal cultures are not objectified through artifact-based approaches. 	<p>Do acknowledge and validate the contributions of Aboriginal peoples in both the past and within contemporary society.</p> <p>Do ensure that contributions of Aboriginal people go beyond the inclusion of toboggans and teepees and include the wealth of knowledge and successful endeavours across a wide range of fields e.g. environment, architecture, agriculture, government, medicine, art, music and theatre.</p> <p>Do ensure that Aboriginal peoples have a past, present and a future.</p> <p>Do acknowledge strengths even within adverse conditions.</p> <p>Do emphasize the need for the self-determination of Aboriginal peoples to be respected.</p>	<p>Don't put Aboriginal peoples and their cultures into the 'primitive' category.</p> <p>Don't represent Aboriginal peoples and cultures only in the past.</p> <p>Don't rely solely on artifact-based approaches to study Aboriginal cultures.</p> <p>Don't overuse generalizations and generic references.</p> <p>Don't present Aboriginal peoples as 'environmental saviours' (or in other stereotypical ways) when teaching about their valued relationship with Mother Earth.</p>

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<p>Distinctness and Diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Unique status of Aboriginal peoples in Canada is acknowledged. ➤ References to Aboriginal peoples are culturally specific when appropriate to context. ➤ Various histories of Aboriginal peoples are acknowledged in their own right and not just in relation to interactions with European cultures. ➤ Aboriginal holidays/days of significance are acknowledged and celebrated. ➤ Diversity of cultural groupings is acknowledged. ➤ Diversity within cultural groupings is acknowledged. 	<p>Do acknowledge the diversity within any cultural grouping.</p> <p>Do acknowledge the distinct and unique differences amongst Aboriginal nations.</p> <p>Do ensure that the history of Aboriginal peoples reflects change over time and does not simply assign Aboriginal peoples to a place 'frozen in time' in the distant past.</p>	<p>Don't use more general terms for Aboriginal peoples when the context calls for more specificity (i.e. naming the nations).</p> <p>Don't assume that all Aboriginal peoples interacted with others in the same way.</p> <p>Don't assign 'expert' knowledge of Aboriginal peoples and their cultures to someone just because they are Aboriginal.</p>
<p>Eurocentrism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A balance of perspectives is presented. ➤ Presentation of Aboriginal peoples in the curriculum does not superimpose predominantly European values, attitudes and beliefs on Aboriginal experiences and perspectives. 	<p>Do look for opportunities to broaden your knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal people and issues.</p> <p>Do ensure a balance of perspectives is presented.</p> <p>Do acknowledge Aboriginal histories in their own right.</p> <p>Do constantly examine and challenge your own biases and assumptions.</p> <p>Do look for ways to include Aboriginal peoples across the curriculum.</p>	<p>Don't call attention to the faults and ignore the positive aspects of Aboriginal peoples.</p> <p>Don't superimpose Eurocentric frame of reference on what is included/not included, valued etc.</p> <p>Don't present Aboriginal cultures as being 'inferior'.</p> <p>Don't use stereotypical images such as "Braves", "Redskins" as team mascots.</p>

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<p>Pedagogy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Study of Aboriginal peoples is rooted in contemporary times. ➤ Approaches are issues based and lead students to understand the roots of the social, political and economic realities of Aboriginal peoples today. ➤ Aboriginal people are viewed as integral part of Canadian history and within contemporary Canadian communities. ➤ Sacredness of Aboriginal beliefs/traditions is honoured. ➤ Holistic nature of Aboriginal world-views is reflected in teaching approaches that support the growth of body, mind, spirit and emotions in respectful ways. ➤ Elders, authors, storytellers, community members are an integral part of teaching/learning process. 	<p>Do use respectful teaching strategies.</p> <p>Do engage students in deconstructing bias.</p> <p>Do ensure that the study of Aboriginal peoples is rooted in contemporary times and helps students understand how the past led to the present realities.</p>	<p>Don't have students create dreamcatchers, masks, or other sacred cultural objects except in context and in the presence of an elder or Aboriginal teacher.</p> <p>Do not conduct Aboriginal ceremonies without an Aboriginal elder.</p> <p>Don't have students rewrite Aboriginal stories that have been passed down in the oral tradition as cultural 'teachings'.</p>
<p>Use of Terminology/Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Terms used accurately. ➤ Language used is that which empowers, validates and supports the inclusion of Aboriginal experiences, perspectives and histories in respectful, accurate, authentic ways. 	<p>Do use a credible source to refer to in using terms in relation to Aboriginal people (e.g. Aboriginal Voices Guide).</p> <p>Do use the recommended terminology when referring to Aboriginal peoples.</p> <p>Do refer to each nation by name rather than the more generic overuse of Native/Aboriginal people as a collective.</p> <p>Do use the term 'nation' rather than 'tribe'.</p>	<p>Don't refer to 'regalia' as costumes.</p> <p>Don't use the term 'Aboriginals' or 'Natives' as a collective noun.</p> <p>Don't accept derogatory terms such as squaw, brave, wild Indians, savages.</p> <p>Don't use Eurocentric language such as Columbus 'discovered' America.</p> <p>Don't overuse generalizations such as 'those peoples' or 'Native peoples' when the context calls for specificity.</p>

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<p>Visual Images</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Contemporary images present Aboriginal peoples in a variety of contexts (within urban, rural, reserve communities) and across a range of socio-economic circumstances. ➤ Images depict Aboriginal peoples contributions across a wide range of endeavours (art, music, science, business, mathematics, medicine, etc). ➤ A balance between historical and contemporary images is represented. ➤ Images are realistic and not exotic. ➤ Images are accurately depicted. 	<p>Do discuss the stereotypical and thus dehumanizing effects of using “Braves”, Redskins, Black Hawks, and Indians as team mascots.</p> <p>Do deconstruct visual images in leaning resources when encountered.</p> <p>Do ensure that contemporary images and people are present in the classroom and in the school.</p>	<p>Don't use highly stereotypical materials like Indian In the Cupboard, Peter Pan, Pocohontas, etc.</p> <p>Don't use materials that reinforce stereotypes of the ‘drunken’ or ‘homeless’ Indian or the Indian as a thief or as warlike.</p> <p>Don't let stereotypical images go unchallenged.</p>

Adapted from Aboriginal Voices in the Curriculum: A Guide to Teaching Aboriginal Studies in K-8 Classrooms, 2003 published by the Toronto District School Board (available by contacting Library and Learning Resources 416 397-2595)