Classroom implications for First Peoples Principles of learning

* Carefully examine what is considered important to teach and learn and why- what is important to learn and how we choose to structure the learning
* Carefully examine how what is being learned affects self, family, community and land
* Connecting learning to community- bringing in community members- developing relationships between learners and community (people and land)
* Multiple access points for students to learn
* Multiple means of expression (representing what they learn)
* Making explicit connections to social responsibility and learning
* Link learning to local context first then expand outwards- begin by checking with local first nations communities/indigenous organizations to find appropriate/authentic resources
* Engaging with parents and extended family
* Developing healthy relationships between teachers and learners (fundamental to student success)
* Cross curricular experiences
* Experiential/hands on learning (relevant)
* Providing choice and flexibility -so aspects of whole self needs are met- appropriate levels of autonomy- what they learn, how they learn, how they represent what they learn
* Using humour
* Respectfully incorporating use of circle for group discussion
* Providing opportunities for mentorship
* Need to be willing to see ourselves as learners- develop our own understandings first
* Needing to understand that what is taught reflects cultural values
* Meaningful inclusion of Indigenous content/perspectives across all curricular areas in respectful and authentic way that is integral and not an add on
* Realizing that Indigenous knowledge is unique and that teaching resources appropriate in one community may not be in another
* Recognizing that one’s identity (both teacher and learner) impacts what is determined as relevant to teach and learn
* Recognizing that culture is complex- may identify with many cultural contexts and may have different identities depending on what is valued at home, community, school, classroom
* Avoid generalizations about learners based on cultural stereotypes
* Development of positive personal and cultural identity for Indigenous learners is more complex because of perceptions of Indigenous peoples held by society as a result of legacy of colonial laws that sought to destroy First Peoples’ languages and cultures
* Need safe opportunities for learners to articulate and express their identities
* Provide learning opportunities to teach and learn from students in different grades/ages
* Provide leadership opportunities
* Explicitly model learning processes for students
* Provide necessary scaffolding and gradual release as learner develops mastery
* Realize that learning is about understand concepts and application of knowledge, not just memorizing information
* Revisiting concepts multiple times, providing learners with opportunities to deepen their knowledge by layering their understanding
* Providing for flexible scheduling- so learners have time they need to learn what they need to know and understand
* Helping learners become aware of the natural consequences (to themselves and others) of their actions- letting them make mistakes and learn from them
* Using story and narrative to teach across curricular areas
* Providing learners opportunities to share stories and voices and learn from those of others
* Understanding oral tradition- value and legal implications
* Ensuring First peoples knowledge can be shared before using it- double checking source of material- ie. Not written by non-Indigenous person or published without permission)
* Asking what protocols might be attached to specific knowledge or process- don’t know? Ask.
* Being comfortable with asking respectful questions
* Not assuming Indigenous learners will share everything about their home and community lives in school or classroom

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