



 4 Seasons of Reconciliation

# INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

MODULE 07

An Elder weaves sweet grass into a braid in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan (2017)

INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

## MODULE 07: PREFACE

*How do we improve our relations with Indigenous Peoples?*

In this module we will:

- \* identify some of the appropriate terms and protocol when working with Indigenous Peoples;
- \* explore how non-Indigenous individuals and organizations could interact with Indigenous Peoples;
- \* examine the implementation of Calls to Action in the workplace.



# TERMINOLOGY



TERMINOLOGY:

# INDIGENOUS

In Canada and in many places around the world, First Peoples prefer the term ‘Indigenous’ to describe themselves, as opposed to terms such as: ‘Indian’ ‘Native’ and ‘Aboriginal’ which are colonial terms. Indigenous is a collective noun in Canada for First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

*“We are people indigenous to our territories, so Indigenous is the term that should be used.”* – World Council of Indigenous Peoples

It is important to avoid using phrases such as “Canada’s Indigenous peoples” or “Canada’s First Nations/Métis/Inuit” as this implies domination and ownership of Indigenous People. (We would not say Canada’s Black people for example) “Indigenous Peoples of Canada” is more appropriate. The word ‘*Indigenous*’ should also be capitalized at all times. Canadian Press’s Stylebook has adopted this change in 2017.

TERMINOLOGY:

# ABORIGINAL

The term 'Aboriginal Peoples' gained popularity as the collective noun for First Nations, Inuit and Métis in the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and was widely adopted by government and organizations. It remains the term used Under Section 35(2) of the *Constitution Act* of 1982, and defined as including "the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada." Though the term Aboriginal is still in widespread use, many organizations, as well as the federal government, have begun using the term Indigenous instead.

For many, the problem is with the term itself, as the root meaning of the word '*ab*' means '*away from*' or '*not*' in Latin. Thus the word Aboriginal can mean '*not original*'.





TERMINOLOGY:

## INDIAN & NATIVE

The term 'Indian' was first used by Christopher Columbus in 1492, believing he had reached India. For this reason avoiding the use of the terms like "Indian" or "Native" is highly recommended with the exception of when they are used in legal matters, in direct quotation or in titles and names such as the *Indian Act*, *Native Women's Association* or the *Osoyoos Indian Band*.

Under the *Indian Act*, the term *Indian* is the legal identity of an Indigenous person who is "pursuant to this Act [and] is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian". A number of categories in the *Indian Act* include:

- *Status Indians* are those who are registered as 'Indians' under the *Indian Act* and possess an *Indian Status Card*.
- *Non-status Indians* are those who lost their status or whose ancestors were never registered or lost their status under former or current provisions of the *Indian Act*.
- *Treaty Indians* are those members of a community whose ancestors signed a treaty with the Crown and as a result are entitled to treaty benefits.

TERMINOLOGY:

# FIRST NATIONS

A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word “Indian”, which many found offensive. It is used to identify Indigenous peoples who are neither Métis or Inuit. The term “First Nation” has also been adopted to replace the word “Indian band” in references to communities or bands in order to emphasize their sovereign title to the land.



TERMINOLOGY:

# INUIT

The Inuit are the Indigenous inhabitants of the North American Arctic, from Bering Strait to East Greenland. As well as Arctic Canada, Inuit also live in northern Alaska and Greenland, and have close relatives in Russia. A common cultural heritage and a common language unite them. There are about 40,000 Inuit in Canada.

Until recently, outsiders called the Inuit ‘Eskimo’ which is derogatory. Now they prefer their own term, “Inuit,” meaning simply “people” or ‘Inuk’ when referring to an individual.



TERMINOLOGY:

# MÉTIS

Métis people are one of three (3) distinct Indigenous Peoples recognized under Canada's Constitution (the others are First Nation, and Inuit peoples). Prior to Canada's manifestation as a nation, a new Indigenous People emerged out of the relations of Indigenous women and European men. While the initial offspring of these First Nations and European unions were individuals who simply possessed mixed ancestry, subsequent intermarriages between these mixed ancestry children resulted in the genesis of a new Indigenous People with a distinct identity, culture and consciousness in west central North America – the Métis Nation. There are Métis people in nearly every province of Canada.

“*Métis* means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation.” – the Métis National Council



A Métis dancer performs with her troupe while wearing a traditional Sash (2017)





OFFICE CONSOLIDATION

CODIFICATION ADMINISTRATIVE

# Indian Act

# Loi sur les Indiens

R.S., 1985, c. 1-5

amended by  
R.S., 1985, c. 32 (1st Suppl.)  
R.S., 1985, c. 27 (2nd Suppl.)  
R.S., 1985, c. 17, 43, 48 (4th Suppl.)

L.R. (1985), ch. 1-5

modifiée par  
L.R. (1985), ch. 32 (1<sup>er</sup> suppl.)  
L.R. (1985), ch. 27 (2<sup>e</sup> suppl.)  
L.R. (1985), ch. 17, 43 et 48 (4<sup>e</sup> suppl.)

September, 1989

Septembre 1989

TERMINOLOGY:

# INDIAN ACT

The Indian Act is federal legislation that regulates ‘Indians’ and reserves and sets out certain federal government powers and responsibilities toward First Nations and their reserved lands. The first Indian Act was passed in 1876, although there were a number of pre-Confederation and post-Confederation enactments with respect to ‘Indians’ and reserves prior to 1876. Since then, it has undergone numerous amendments, revisions and re-enactments. The Indian Act is considered a fundamentally racist document as it originally banned traditional religious and cultural practices, denied Indigenous People the right to vote, and restricted various types of trade with non-Indigenous people, amongst a host of other discriminatory provisions.

A photograph of a group of people in a social setting. In the foreground, a man with a long, dark braid and glasses is seen in profile, wearing a light blue shirt. He is looking towards the right. In the background, several other people are visible, including an older woman with white hair wearing a teal jacket. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an indoor evening event. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the image, containing the text 'WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' in bold, white, uppercase letters.

**WORKING WITH  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

# RESEARCH

Whether you work in a classroom or an office it is important to identify whose traditional or treaty lands your school resides on. Acknowledging Traditional Territories in your school is not only becoming standard protocol but demonstrates respect towards Indigenous Peoples. Acknowledging the territories also means acknowledging our Nation-to-Nation relationship and the treaties that bind Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples together.

Complete some research into the Indigenous community or communities (if more than one), their history, governing parties, worldviews, culture and traditions. Such knowledge is also an important step to establishing a relationship with the community and its members in the future (see slide #20).

Recognize that there are many dynamics at play when working with Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous governments, and organizations.



WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

# STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

***“We [I] would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional and unceded territory of the Abegweit Mi’kmaq First Nation.”***

-From the *Canadian Association of University Teachers* ‘Guide to acknowledging First Peoples and Traditional Territories’.



WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

# PROTOCOL

It is often customary among Indigenous Peoples to have a set of governing protocols when working on a traditional territory. Examples of protocol might involve acknowledging the host Nation, its Peoples and their territory at the start of any function. It is also not uncommon to give a gift to your hosts, as such is a way to honor the relationship and the spiritual governing principal of *reciprocity*.

Protocol may also exist when working with or inviting an Elder or Knowledge Keeper in the workplace or at an event. It is best to simply ask what Indigenous protocols are involved instead of assuming.



Two Row Wampum Treaty Belt

A person wearing a red jacket is seated at a wooden workbench, focused on a task. The workbench is cluttered with various tools and materials, including several knives with different handles, a wooden bowl, pieces of fur, and other hand tools. To the right, a wooden crate contains more tools, including a pair of scissors. The background shows a white fabric backdrop and some wooden poles, suggesting an outdoor or semi-outdoor workshop setting. The overall scene conveys a sense of traditional craftsmanship and manual labor.

# WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS STUDENTS



Truth and  
Reconciliation  
Commission of Canada

**Truth and Reconciliation  
Commission of Canada:  
Calls to Action**



MEETING THE TRC'S

## CALL TO ACTION #62

Put plainly Call to Action #62 requests:

- The mandatory teaching of age-appropriate curriculum on Residential Schools, Treaties and Indigenous Peoples' historical and contemporary contributions.
- The inclusion of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge in the classroom, especially in regards to the teaching of Canadian history and the legacy of Residential schools.
- That all students have an understanding of Indigenous history and culture, in an effort to build their capacities for intercultural understandings, empathy and mutual respect.
- The identifying teacher training needs as related to the above.

This professional development course combined with the secondary and post-secondary units *of 4 Seasons of Reconciliation* are a direct answer to the points listed in this Call to Action.

***“Education got us into  
this mess and education  
will get us out.”***

**-Justice Murray Sinclair, TRC Chair**



TEACHING INDIGENOUS STUDENTS:

# LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

An important consideration in the classroom:  
How do Indigenous students see themselves in their school environments?

It is important to develop supportive, respectful and positive learning environments for Indigenous students. Part of creating this supportive environment as educators is in ensuring Indigenous students are able to see themselves reflected in materials and resources used in the classroom. It is then that Indigenous students have the opportunity to see themselves in a positive way; to see the truth, the strength and the validity of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives reflected in the curriculum.

It is also an opportunity for non-Indigenous students also to see Indigenous Peoples in a positive way, and to understand the value of other perspectives and other cultures and other groups of people.



An Elder picks medicines in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan (2017)



TEACHING INDIGENOUS STUDENTS:

# IDENTITY

As a result of many factors such as the Residential School system, the 60s Scoop or the over-representation of Indigenous children in the foster care system, there exists an intergenerational impact on the understanding of identity for many Indigenous students. For many Indigenous children, there has been a disruption in the transmission of the knowledge, values, teachings and understandings of their own identity, culture and history.

The classroom for many students, Indigenous or non-Indigenous, becomes the primary environment where they discover and form their cultural identity. For this reason it is important that students see themselves and their culture not only in the context of a single history or social studies lesson but throughout their entire school experience. When Indigenous children have the opportunity to be connected with their own identity, then they understand more deeply who they are and how they're connected with everything around them.

Non-Indigenous students and teachers then also have the opportunity to understand through Indigenous knowledge and perspectives what their relationship is to this land, to the people of this land, to one another, to animals and water and to what that can look like. In the end we can all benefit from learning about Indigenous perspectives and knowledge.

TEACHING INDIGENOUS STUDENTS:

## IN THE CLASSROOM

When teaching the *4 Seasons of Reconciliation* Unit, or any other Indigenous resource in the workplace or the classroom, it is advised not to single out or publicly identify Indigenous students present as it is up to them to self-identify. It is also important to refrain from asking them directly for their experiences or opinions about the material being covered.

Instead, focus on creating an inclusive classroom environment where Indigenous students feel comfortable offering their comments or experiences to the classroom discussion, if they so choose. Some Indigenous youth are well versed in their history and culture and may choose to add to the discussion while others, because of the intergenerational impact of residential school or other factors, may not. Be mindful that these students may be learning anew alongside the non-Indigenous students.



TEACHING INDIGENOUS STUDENTS:

## HOW TO PROCEED

When creating a supportive learning environment and including Indigenous knowledge in the classroom, please do not go about this solo. Reach out to your Indigenous colleagues, or local Knowledge-keepers and Elders for support. When searching online look for Indigenous authors and sources. Whenever possible consult the Indigenous Nation or community whose territories your workplace resides on. Look for ways to include them in the classrooms, for example their flags, heroes, veterans, stories, innovations, etc.

It is important to note that when you engage with Indigenous People, it should reflect a joint partnership approach within a collaborative context. Historically settlers have had a paternalistic, and often authoritative, relationship over Indigenous Peoples; one in which they lead the priorities and agenda and then invite Indigenous Peoples into that framework. When learning or collaborating with Indigenous Peoples it is therefore important to help undo this dynamic rooted in colonialism by spending most of your time during initial meetings by listening.





TEACHING INDIGENOUS STUDENTS:

## MOVING FORWARD

Reconciliation can begin by a simple visit to your local Indigenous community or urban Indigenous organizations, with the question: *“How can we include Indigenous perspectives and contributions in our workplace (or in the classroom)?”*

Learning directly from Indigenous People is key in this era of reconciliation. Learning from books or online resources is not a replacement from direct interactions where one listens to Indigenous Peoples and their knowledge and perspectives. Active listening is a change in behavior for the better instead of starting off an interaction with a set agenda or ‘project’.

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INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

## MODULE 07: SUMMARY

*How do we improve our relations with Indigenous Peoples?*

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- \* identified some of the appropriate terms and protocol when working with Indigenous Peoples;
- \* explored how non-Indigenous individuals and organizations could interact with Indigenous Peoples;
- \* examined elements of the implementation of Calls to Action in the workplace.