

# Principles for Indigenizing at snə́weyət̓ lelə́m

## Developing the Principles

**The Principles for Indigenizing at snə́weyət̓ lelə́m** were developed in the fall of 2019 through a series of dinner conversations held at the Musqueam 51st Hall. A group of Elders and community members working in the field of education were brought together by Elder and Musqueam Special Advisor to the President Gail Sparrow to meet with a few Langara faculty and staff to talk about perspectives on and experiences of education. Our dinners were informal with more than a few laughs punctuating stories of all kinds. Our conversations touched on values and beliefs held by Musqueam community, intergenerational approaches to pedagogy, child rearing, the role and status of women, and the role of the community in educating children. We also discussed the effects of colonization, including lived experiences of residential school and public schools, as well as resurgent practices of language and cultural revitalization.



In the weeks between each dinner, the faculty and staff from Langara met to debrief and reflect on what we had heard, what questions may have arisen for us, and what themes were emerging. We often returned to the [First Peoples Principles of Learning](#) developed by the First Nations Education Steering Committee to help ground our reflections. After our final dinner, we synthesized the themes that we had begun to hear over the discussions into the seven Principles for Indigenizing that appear here. We returned to the 51st Hall for a wrap-up conversation later in the winter, and shared the Principles with the group of community members for their perspectives and feedback. The resounding response we heard when we shared the Principles was, “Did you really need to put that down on paper? That is just the way the world works!”

The dinners, meetings, release time, and respectful compensation for Musqueam community members that allowed for the development of these Principles were funded through a grant from Employment and Social Development Canada titled "Indigenous Ways of Knowing in Early Childhood Education Training." In addition to developing the Principles for Indigenizing, the project enabled time and resources in order to rewrite and pilot Indigenized curriculum for the Foundations in Early Childhood Education course. Carolyn Wing, a faculty member in ECE led the project in its entirety. Lauren Mitchell, a Musqueam community member and Langara Early Childhood Education Diploma graduate collaborated on the curriculum development and pilot implementation in order to weave in Musqueam knowledge, pedagogy, history, and culture. Natalie Knight, a Curriculum Consultant in the Teaching and Curriculum Development Centre and Rainbow Choi, Manager of Musqueam Relations for Educational Initiatives at Langara also supported the process and participated in the dinner discussions.

**hay ce:p qə to everyone who contributed to this project. Special thanks and gratitude to Salishan Catering for providing delicious and nourishing food for our conversations.**

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We hope that these **Principles for Indigenizing at snəwəyət leləm** can meet you where you are at in your own personal and professional journey of decolonizing. They may be used to spark your imagination, to point towards different ways to consider your classroom and curriculum, or to help you recognize things you are already doing in your teaching practice that you can build on, strengthen, and develop further.



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- **Being in respectful relationship** with land, community, and non-human beings is a guiding principle of Indigenous education woven through all aspects of knowing, being, and doing.
- **Place-based knowing** values and emphasizes students' relationships to the place that they are learning in as well as the place that they are from.
- Valuing our **relationships with the land** prioritizes knowledge that comes from and reflects the land that we are on.
- Learning occurs within **intergenerational relationships** in the family and community and involves **accountability** to these relationships.
- **Holistic education** recognizes and supports the intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of learners.
- **Learning through story** is valued and practiced because it connects memory, history, and accountability to the future.
- **Language** reflects what is valued in a culture including relationships with place, land, and human and non-human beings.