

Course Outline

Learning from Indigenous Perspectives
on Land-Based Learning



About the Project

This document was developed as part of the SSHRC-funded research project, *Designing and Implementing Environmental Inquiry Strategies in Urban Early Years Programs in Canada, 2020-2024*. The project was based at The School of Early Childhood at George Brown College, Toronto, Ontario under the direction of Dr. Monica McGlynn-Stewart. (mmcglynnstewart@georgebrown.ca)

Introduction

This document presents an opportunity to begin to develop or deepen understandings of Indigenous perspectives on Land-Based learning. It is an outline for a 12-week course with topics, readings, videos, and discussion questions. Some weeks also include suggestions for picture books that relate to the topics. All the resources are by Indigenous authors/creators.

This outline can serve as the basis for either in-service or preservice learning.

For practicing educators, each week begins with short videos and readings suitable for in-service educators who have limited time in their week. These resources can be used for self-directed professional learning, as a community of practice guide, or as a learning resource integrated into regular staff meetings.

Picture books by Indigenous authors are also included in most weeks and will support the educators as they bring their learning into the classroom. [See annotated picture book bibliography.](#)

For pre-service educators who are still completing their education and training, each week contains suggested further reading from *Braiding Sweetgrass* (Wall Kimmerer, 2013) and *Wayi Wah! Indigenous pedagogies: An act for reconciliation and anti-racist education* (Chroma, 2022). Both books offer opportunities to continue to explore Indigenous Knowledge and perspectives more deeply.

In addition, there are links to supplemental reading/viewing/listening suggestions at the end of the course outline, and a reference list with more resources [can be found here.](#)

WEEK ONE

Topics | Indigenous Worldviews, All My Relations

[Excerpt from: Kimmerer, R. W. \(2013\). Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants. Milkweed Editions. \[book\]](#)

Robin Wall Kimmerer wrote *Braiding Sweetgrass* to examine the relationship between living things and human efforts to nurture a more sustainable world through Indigenous traditions and perspectives. In the book, the author provides the audience with a unique outlook on how to care for Mother Earth.



Reflect on the Skywoman story. How does it shape your view of your relationship and responsibility to the earth?

[Government of Alberta. \(n.d.\). Well-being. All My Relations. Excerpt from Aboriginal Perspectives. \[pdf\] \[6 pages\]](#)

This document is an excerpt from *Aboriginal Perspectives* which comes from the Government of Alberta and offers First Nations, Metis, and Inuit perspectives. The phrase “all my relations” reminds us of who we are and our relationships with our family and relatives, including all human and non-human relations (e.g., animals, birds, fish, plants, all animate and inanimate forms that can be seen or imagined). This phrase may begin or end a prayer, speech, or story. Each nation has their own way of expressing all my relations in their own language, however the meaning always remains the same. This document also highlights Indigenous principles, described as laws, that emphasize fundamental ways of thinking within this worldview.



How are the Indigenous principles and laws similar and different from what you learned from your family, culture, and education?

[Indigenous Worldviews \[video\] \[16 minutes 40 seconds\]](#)

This video shown in Module 1 is part of the Indigenous Canada course offered by the University of Alberta. It explains that despite the diversity of Indigenous peoples, there are some recurring concepts across Indigenous worldviews, ways of knowing, and perspectives. The video focuses on four different Indigenous worldviews. Indigenous ways of knowing that are shared demonstrate connections to the Land and learning from the Land. The teachings are meant to guide humanity to live good lives together. The video shares principles such as balance, importance of relationships, the philosophy of interconnectedness, responsibility, All My Relations, environmental stewardship, and more.



What parts of the video were particularly interesting or surprising to you?

Children's Books

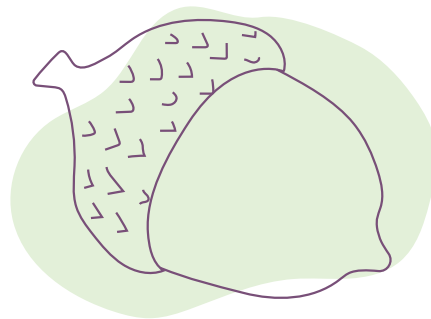
[Walking Together](#) by Elder Albert Marshall and Louise Zimanyi

[When We Are Kind](#) by Monique Gray Smith

Extending Your Learning

[Kimmerer, R. W. \(2013\). Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants. Milkweed Editions. \[pages 3-32\]](#)

[Chrona, J. \(2022\). Wayi Wah! Indigenous pedagogies: An act for reconciliation and anti-racist education. Portage & Main Press. \[pages 1-20\]](#)



WEEK TWO

Topics | Gratitude and Reciprocity, Two-Eyed Seeing

[Bioneers. \(2019, Jun 12\). The Honourable Harvest - Robin Wall Kimmerer \[Video\]. YouTube. The Honourable Harvest \[video\] \[3 minutes 30 seconds\]](#)

In this video Robin Wall Kimmerer, an Indigenous author and plant ecologist, shares the teaching of The Honourable Harvest. The Honourable Harvest is a guideline for interacting with the rest of nature in a respectful, grateful, responsible, and reciprocal manner.



As you watch this video, consider ways to demonstrate gratitude and giving back to the Land.

[TedXTalks. \(June 13, 2016\). Etuaptmumk: Two-Eyed Seeing | Rebecca Thomas | TEDxNSCCWaterfront. \[Video\] \[14 minutes 22 seconds\]](#)

In this video, Rebecca Thomas, a spoken word artist, explores Etuaptmumk - Two-Eyed Seeing. Two-eyed seeing can be defined as using one eye to see with the strengths of Indigenous Knowledges and ways of knowing, and the other eye to see with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing, and then discovering how to use both eyes simultaneously for the benefit of everyone.



The Western approach to knowledge often encourages us to think of the best or one true way of knowing. How does Two-Eyed Seeing challenge this and offer a new way to benefit from different perspectives?

Children's Books

[We Give Our Thanks](#) Written by Sara General and Illustrated by Alyssa M General

[Giving Thanks](#) Written by Chief Jake Swamp and Illustrated by Erwin Printup, Jr.

Extending Your Learning

[Kimmerer, R. W. \(2013\). Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants. Milkweed Editions. \[pages 33-62\]](#)

[Chrona, J. \(2022\). Wayi Wah! Indigenous pedagogies: An act for reconciliation and anti-racist education. Portage & Main Press. \[pages 21-30\]](#)

WEEK THREE

Topics | The Seven Teachings, Thirteen Moon Teachings

[Imagica Pictures. \(2016, Dec 18\). Clip from Manitou Api: Where The Sun Rises - The Seven Sacred Laws \[Video\]. YouTube. \[12 minutes\]](#)

The short clip follows Elder Dave Courchene of The Turtle Lodge in Pine Falls, Manitoba as he describes the sacred laws as symbolized by various animals.



Consider which of the Seven Teachings you most resonate with. Why is this?

[Our Stories \(n.d\). Thirteen Grandmother Moons. \[Article\]](#)

This is an interactive resource that describes each of the 13 Grandmother Moons and where it is located on the Turtle's Back.



How could paying attention to the teachings of each moon keep you connected to Mother Earth?

Children's Books

[The Seven Teachings by Elder David Courchene](#)

[The Story of the Seven Sacred Teaching Animals by Kirt Bobbie](#)

[When The Trees Crackle With Cold: A Cree Calendar by Bernice Johnson-Laxdal and Miriam Korner](#)

Extending Your Learning

[Kimmerer, R. W. \(2013\). Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants. Milkweed Editions. \[pages 63-97\]](#)

[Chrona, J. \(2022\). Wayi Wah! Indigenous pedagogies: An act for reconciliation and anti-racist education. Portage & Main Press. \[pages 31-56\]](#)




WEEK FOUR

Topics | Traditional Teachings, Medicine Wheel Teachings


[The Preservation Project. \(July 19th, 2019\) What is the Medicine Wheel? Teachings by Jeff Ward. \[Video\] \[4 minutes 47 seconds\]](#)

In this video, Jeff Ward from Membertou First Nation shares Medicine Wheel teachings.

 *Reflect on your own life and the lives of those around you. Do you feel in balance? If you feel you are out of balance, why is that? What needs to change in your life?*

[Hopi Martin \(n.d\). Seasonal Pedagogy. \[Website\] https://edgeofthebush.ca](https://edgeofthebush.ca)

This website describes an approach to supporting young children's Land-Based play based on the Ojibwe Sacred Circle teachings.

 *How could children (and their educators and parents) benefit from this approach to supporting children's learning?*

Extending Your Learning

[Kimmerer, R. W. \(2013\). Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants. Milkweed Editions. \[pages 98-120\]](#)

[Chrona, J. \(2022\). Wayi Wah! Indigenous pedagogies: An act for reconciliation and anti-racist education. Portage & Main Press. \[pages 57-75\]](#)

WEEK FIVE

Topic | Indigenous Relationships to the Land

[Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. \(2015, May 7\). First Nation Relationship to the Land. Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples Blog. \[blog post\] \[6 paragraphs\]](#)

This blog post discusses the spiritual connections and relationships that First Nations have with the Land.

 *If we all grew up learning from the Land, how might this impact how we live?*

[University of Alberta. \(2021\). Indigenous Relationship to the Land Part 1 \[Video\]. Coursera. \[video\] \[8 minutes 50 seconds\]](#)

This video, part of the Indigenous Canada course offered by the University of Alberta, speaks about Indigenous relationships to the land as well as how these relationships have been impacted by colonial settlement and the Western perspective of land as a resource to be used. The video highlights the differences between Indigenous and Western worldviews. Indigenous ways of being center relationships, animacy, the rights of the land, responsibility for the land, and the interconnectedness of beings.

[University of Alberta. \(2021\). Indigenous Relationship to the Land Part 2 \[Video\]. Coursera. \[video\] \[11 minutes 7 seconds\]](#)

This video, part of the Indigenous Canada course offered by the University of Alberta, speaks about the Denesoline people who have lived on a large area of land around Great Slave Lake for many thousands of years.

Children's Books

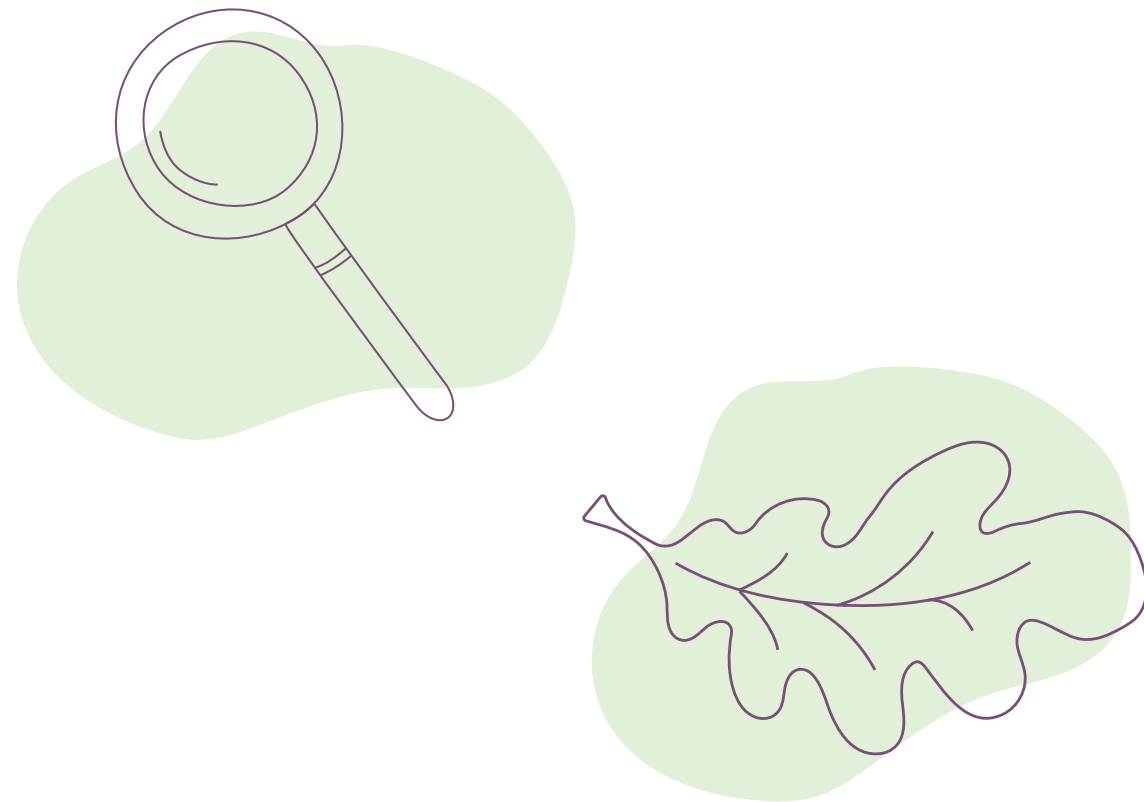
[Sweetest Kulu by Celina Kalluk](#)

[We All Play by Julie Flett](#)

Extending Your Learning

[Kimmerer, R. W. \(2013\). Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants. Milkweed Editions. \[pages 121-155\]](#)

[Chrona, J. \(2022\). Wayi Wah! Indigenous pedagogies: An act for reconciliation and anti-racist education. Portage & Main Press. \[pages 76-114\]](#)



WEEK SIX

Topic | The Teachings of Plants

[Mishkos Kenomagwen: The Teachings of Grass by Robin Wall Kimmerer \[video\] \[21 minutes\]](#)

In this video, Robin Wall Kimmerer, professor of Environmental Science and Forestry and citizen of the Potawatomi Nation, weaves Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) with modern botanical science.



"If plants are our teachers, what are their lessons, and how might we become better students?" (Wall Kimmerer, 2015)

[George Brown College Indigenous Knowledge Keepers Series -Joseph Pitawanakwat. \(January 2023\). \[video\] \[56 minutes\]](#)

Children's Books

[A Walk on the Tundra by Rebecca Hainnu and Anna Ziegler](#)

[Berry song by Michaela Goade](#)

Extending Your Learning

[Kimmerer, R. W. \(2013\). Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants. Milkweed Editions. \[pages 156-204\]](#)

[Chrona, J. \(2022\). Wayi Wah! Indigenous pedagogies: An act for reconciliation and anti-racist education. Portage & Main Press. \[pages 115-121\]](#)

WEEK SEVEN

Topic | Protecting Land and Water

[First Nations, Métis & Inuit Education Association of Ontario. \(n.d\). Theme 4: Relationship with Land and Water. \[Video\] \[4 mins 56 seconds\]](#)

[Learning How to Care for Mother Earth with Elder Dave Courchene \[video\] \[3 minutes 32 seconds\]](#)

This video is Elder Dave Courchene - Nii Gaani Aki Inini (Leading Earth Man) sharing his knowledge with us on Mother Earth and how we may incorporate more of her into our lives to keep her healthy.



“How can we incorporate more Mother Earth into our lives?” (Courchene, 2020)

[Nibi is Water / Nibi Aawon Nbiish by Joanne Robertson \[video\] \[6 minutes\]](#)

Joanne Robertson, the author of Nibi is Water speaks about the importance and our relationship with water.

Children’s Books

[Nibi is Water Written by Joanne Robertson](#)

[The Water Walker Written and Illustrated by Joanne Robertson](#)

Extending Your Learning

[Kimmerer, R. W. \(2013\). Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants. Milkweed Editions. \[pages 205-240\]](#)

[Chrona, J. \(2022\). Wayi Wah! Indigenous pedagogies: An act for reconciliation and anti-racist education. Portage & Main Press. \[pages 122-176\]](#)

WEEK EIGHT

Topic | History and Treaties

[Restoule, J., \(n.d.\). We Are All Treaty People. University of Toronto | OISE | Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. \[website\]](#)

This resource details our rights and responsibilities as treaty people and fosters the understanding behind the conditions upon which we have agreed to share the land.



What does saying, “We Are All Treaty People” mean to you?

[First Nations, Métis & Inuit Education Association of Ontario. \(n.d\). Theme 10: Treaties. \[Video\] \[4 mins 30 seconds\]](#)

[Anishinabek Nation. \(July 6th, 2016\). Hayden King on Treaties. \[Video\] \[11 mins 34 seconds\]](#)

Hayden King, the Director of Centre of Indigenous Governance at TMU answers questions about treaties such as: How do Indigenous people view treaties and how does the Crown view treaties? Why is there a lack of knowledge on the part of non-Indigenous people around treaties and the treaty-making process? How do newcomers to Canada fit into treaties in a modern context? What is the “One Dish One Spoon” wampum? What does saying, “We Are All Treaty People” mean to you?

Children’s Books

[Alex Shares his Wampum Belt Written by Kelly Crawford and Illustrated by Don Chrétien](#)

[Treaty Baby Written by Sara General and Illustrated by Alyssa M. General](#)

Extending Your Learning

[Kimmerer, R. W. \(2013\). Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants. Milkweed Editions. \[pages 241-276\]](#)


[Chrona, J. \(2022\). Wayi Wah! Indigenous pedagogies: An act for reconciliation and anti-racist education. Portage & Main Press. \[pages 177-183\]](#)

WEEK NINE

Topic | Indian Act

[Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. \(2015, Jun 2\). 21 Things You May Not Have Known About the Indian Act. Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples Blog. \[blog post\] \[7 paragraphs\]](#)

This blog post explains the Indian Act, a government tool used to forcibly assimilate Indigenous people into Canadian society - for example, separating and restricting Indigenous people from practicing their traditions and culture as well as limiting their movements on and off the reserves.

 *Why was it believed to be necessary to create a separate set of laws in Canada just for First Nations people? Why does the Indian Act still exist?*

[The Ontario Educational Communications Authority. \(n.d.\). The Indian Act Explained \[Video\]. In The Agenda with Steve Paikin. TVO. \[video\] \[25 minutes 34 seconds\]](#)

Steve Paikin interviews author Bob Joseph about his book, 21 Things You May Not Know about the Indian Act: Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples a Reality.

Extending Your Learning

[Kimmerer, R. W. \(2013\). Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants. Milkweed Editions. \[pages 277-302\]](#)


[Chrona, J. \(2022\). Wayi Wah! Indigenous pedagogies: An act for reconciliation and anti-racist education. Portage & Main Press. \[pages 184-196\]](#)

WEEK TEN

Topic | Residential Schools

[Legacy of Hope Foundation. 1000 Conversations across Canada on Reconciliation. \[pdf\]](#)

This resource supports educators to begin conversations about residential schools, their impact on Indigenous communities, the process of reconciliation, and healing.

 *What does reconciliation mean to you?*

[TedX Talks. \(June 25, 2018\). Canadian Shame: A History of Residential Schools | Ginger Gosnell-Myers. \[Video\] \[15 minutes 25 seconds\]](#)

Ginger Gosnell-Myers's work concentrates on removing barriers between Indigenous peoples and all Canadians. She speaks on the truth of residential schools and how it can create intergenerational trauma.

Children's Books

[Phyllis's Orange Shirt Written by Phyllis Webstad and Illustrated by Brock Nicol](#)
[Stolen Words Written by Melanie Florence and Illustrated by Gabrielle Grimard](#)

Extending Your Learning

[Kimmerer, R. W. \(2013\). Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants. Milkweed Editions. \[pages 303-347\]](#)

[Chrona, J. \(2022\). Wayi Wah! Indigenous pedagogies: An act for reconciliation and anti-racist education. Portage & Main Press. \[pages 197-198\]](#)

WEEK ELEVEN

Topic | Reconciliation, Land Acknowledgements

[Calgary Foundation. \(2019, Jan 27\). Land Acknowledgement \(Full\). YouTube. \[video\] \[5 minutes 43 seconds\]](#)

This video features Indigenous Elders speaking about the connection between the land and Indigenous ways of being, principles of balance, and the interconnectedness between all beings. In this land acknowledgement, the Elders share the Indigenous teaching of the animacy of the land. From animals to plants to rocks, everything is alive and imbued with purpose.



Review and reflect on your understanding of the importance of Land Acknowledgments as you watch, listen, and read.

[York University. \(2019, Jan 14\). New video explores the importance of understanding the land acknowledgment. \[video\] \[8 minutes\]](#)

The video was created collaboratively by the Centre for Aboriginal Student Services (CASS) at York University, Osgoode Hall Law School Professor Deborah McGregor, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Environmental Justice, School of Social Work Professor Ruth Koleszar-Green, special advisor to the president on Indigenous initiatives, and Amy Desjarlais, traditional knowledge keeper. It explores the questions: What is the land acknowledgement? Why is it important and what does it mean?

[Native-land \[website\]](#)

A website where non-Indigenous people are invited to locate themselves in relation to the traditional landholders and relevant Treaty relationships in order to honour the land they are on.

Extending Your Learning

[Kimmerer, R. W. \(2013\). Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants. Milkweed Editions. \[pages 348-379\]](#)

[Chrona, J. \(2022\). Wayi Wah! Indigenous pedagogies: An act for reconciliation and anti-racist education. Portage & Main Press. \[pages 199-214\]](#)

WEEK TWELVE

Topic | Land-Based Learning

[The National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education. \(2020\). What is Land-based learning? A Digital Forum \[Video\]. \[video\] \[1 hour 6 minutes\]](#)

In this video, Willie Ermine, Knowledge Keeper and Ceremonialist, Sturgeon Lake First Nation, Saskatchewan, Lisa Michano-Courchene, Pic River First Nation, Ontario, and Patsy McKinney, Under One Sky Monoqonuwicik-Neoteetjg Mosigisig, New Brunswick, discuss Land-Based education for young children. They discuss the connections to Land that are grounded within Indigenous Knowledge and share their experiences as educators.



How can we incorporate Indigenous perspectives on being, knowing, and doing in our practice in early learning settings?

[UNESCO Canadian Commission. \(2021\). Land as teacher: understanding Indigenous land-based education. \[Article\]](#)

This article discusses Indigenous land-based education and how it encompasses different concepts, for example “importance of language and the geography of stories, cosmologies and world views, land protections and rights, relationality and accountability, a connection to reconciliation, and much more”.

[Diane Kashin & Dr. Hopi Martin. \(2021\) Listening to Land as Teacher in ECE Webinar Recording. \[Webinar video\] \[1 hour 33 mins\]](#)

Extending Your Learning

[Kimmerer, R. W. \(2013\). Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants. Milkweed Editions. \[pages 380-386\]](#)

[Chrona, J. \(2022\). Wayi Wah! Indigenous pedagogies: An act for reconciliation and anti-racist education. Portage & Main Press. \[pages 215-217\]](#)

Supplemental Reading/ Viewing/ Listening

[Bell, N., Conroy, E., Wheatley, K., Michaud, B., Maracle, C., Pelletier, J., Fillion, B., Johnson, B. \(2010\). Toronto Zoo: Ways of Knowing Guide. Gage. \[pdf\] \[99 pages\]](#)

The resource explores Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee traditional knowledge, as expressed via worldviews, values, beliefs, and stories that relate to the essential idea of supporting sustainable ties with the land. This guide concentrates on the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee nations, as the shared caretakers of the Great Lakes area. The intention of the authors is that the knowledge contained in this guide will be useful to everyone who reads it, and that varied methods of knowing will be respected.

[Anti-Racist Educator Reads: Braiding Sweetgrass \[audio\] \[~1 hour\]](#)

This audio resource discusses race and racism in schools. There are 5 episodes that focus on Robin Wall Kimmerer's Braiding Sweetgrass.

[BanffEvents. \(Jan.14, 2015\). Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science: Dr. Leroy Little Bear Talk. \[video\]\[21 mins 32 seconds\]](#)

Indigenous academic Leroy Little Bear compares Blackfoot Traditional Knowledge to Western quantum physics.

[Different Knowings.\(October.13th, 2016\). Rick Hill: What is Indigenous knowledge? \[Video\] \[3 minutes 6 seconds\]](#)

Rick Hill, artist and writer from the Six Nations Community explores the question, "What is Indigenous Knowledge?"

[Martin Brokenleg. \(December 1st, 2015\). First Nations Principles of Learning. \[Video\] \[8 minutes 58 seconds\]](#)

[Project H.O.M.E. \(2016, Jan 26\). Reconciliation Begins with the Land \[Video\]. YouTube. \[5 minutes 30 seconds\]](#)

Isaac Murdoch from Serpent River First Nation discusses the significance of our relationship with the Land and why we must include care for the Land when discussing reconciliation.

[Nbsiing by Cole Forrest \[video\] \[5 minutes\]](#)

Cole Forest, who currently lives in Toronto but has returned to his community in North Bay, faces his concerns and connects with his ancestors during his return to his home community,

[Callaghan, H., & Taylor-Leonhardi, L. \(2018\). Decolonizing and co-constructing contexts that welcome Indigenous practices and knowledges in early childhood education. Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario \(AECEO\), 2, 17-26. \[article\] \[9 pages\]](#)

This article discusses the dominance of developmentalism in early childhood education and care over other ways of thinking and knowing, minimizing of spiritual aspects, and preventing questioning of the status quo in practices and assumptions. Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators consider how Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing intersect with the framework document How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years.

[Matheson, R. \(n.d\). Land Acknowledgements and Why They Matter. Guelph University. \[Video\] \[5 mins 39 seconds\].](#)

[Bawaadan Collective. \(2021, Dec 9\). Missisakis : On The Indigenous History Of The Tkaronto Islands. \[Video\] \[9 minutes\] Youtube.](#)

Missisakis investigates the significance and history of the Toronto Islands from a Mississauga viewpoint. This video offers an introduction that spans centuries, as the audience is urged to learn more about this history from Indigenous historians and heed their calls to action.

[Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society. \(November 26, 2014\). Leanne Simpson and Glen Coulthard on Dechinta Bush University, Indigenous land-based education and embodied resurgence. \[Audio\] \[40 minutes 18 seconds\]](#)

Leanne Simpson and Glen Coulthard on Dechinta Bush University, Indigenous land-based education and embodied resurgence