

# Framework for Indigenization of Teaching and Learning

## CORE PRINCIPLES TO GROUND THE FRAMEWORK

The aspiration of the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement and The Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning is to be a university where Indigenization of teaching and learning can prosper. To realize this aspiration, we will concentrate our efforts on enhancing respect for Indigenous knowledge systems through six strategies.

Each principle will be advanced with goals that will guide efforts to actualize Indigenization throughout the university. We acknowledge the needs of Indigenous students, faculty, staff, and community and the challenges that will be present in the coming years. With this in mind, we will invite feedback from all partners in education to grow our comprehension of the work needed to achieve the stated outcomes.

### CORE PRINCIPLE 1: Respect for Indigenous Knowledge Systems

When Indigenous knowledge is granted equitable position to Western knowledge, teaching and learning can become inclusive and supportive. To promote and experience respect for Indigenous knowledge systems we need a community of educators invested in Indigenization. Being leaders on campus who promote “...the respectful, meaningful, ethical weaving of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit knowledges, lived experiences, worldviews, and stories into teaching, learning, and research.”<sup>i</sup> will grow acceptance of Indigenous pedagogies. The transformation would be profound and wholistic.

#### GOALS

- Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members would be regular co-educators.
- Following the principles of “ethical space of engagement”<sup>ii</sup>, courses would integrate Indigenous and Western knowledge systems side by side, valuing both equally.
- Oral traditions and lived experiences would be central to instruction, curriculum, and assessment.
- Indigenization would be ongoing, visible, and embedded in everyday practices.

### CORE PRINCIPLE 2: Recognition of Historical and Ongoing Colonial Impacts

The University will strive to create and maintain a learning environment where the truth about Indigenous history on this land is told by Indigenous people and accepted by all. A courageous examination of policies and practices will present an opening for acceptance of the reality that colonial policies are not a “thing of the past”.<sup>iii</sup> Building capacity with educators and learners provides opportunities for transformational change. Classrooms on campus can create safer space for courageous conversations as we strive to build pathways toward Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation.

## GOALS

- Learners would experience accurate accounts of colonization (historical and contemporary), residential school history, land dispossession, cultural suppression, and resistance.
- Educators would use methods that test Eurocentric norms and center Indigenous perspectives.
- Educators would be trained to recognize and respond to the emotional impacts of colonial histories.
- The goal would not just be inclusion, but transformation — dismantling colonial systems and rebuilding with Indigenous leadership.

## CORE PRINCIPLE 3: Commitment to Truth and Reconciliation

Beginning with understanding the dual history of this land in concert with Indigenous community is a step to a truthful education. To successfully engage in reconciliation education must accept the truth about the lived experience of Indigenous peoples on this land. This truth must be told by those who have experienced it. While this may be difficult to hear at times, we must work to ensure that all learners engage with the full history and ongoing impacts of colonization, while honoring the resilience, knowledge, and leadership of Indigenous peoples.

When Indigenous knowledge is granted equal status to Western knowledge, teaching and learning can become inclusive and supportive. Acceptance that the Indigenous knowledge systems that are rooted in observation, experience, and relationship to the land and have been here since time immemorial can enrich the learner experience on campus.

## GOALS

- Educators would actively work to enhance learning with Indigenous pedagogy in their classrooms and institutions.
- Educators would continuously reflect on their own positionality and learn from Indigenous perspectives.
- Indigenous learners would feel safe, respected, and affirmed in their identities.<sup>iv</sup>
- USask would maintain deep, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities.

## CORE PRINCIPLE 4: Community Engagement and Co-Creation

We envision teaching and learning rooted in respectful relationships, guided by Indigenous voices, and co-created with communities, kēhtē-ayak (Elders), Lii Vyeu (The Old People), and Traditional Knowledge Keepers are fundamental to this relationship. This belief is predicated on the understanding that communities are central to education. Their knowledge, leadership, and protocols shape curriculum, pedagogy, and Institutional culture. Teaching and learning are grounded in reciprocity, responsibility, and care. Students learn not only from books, but from the land, Elders, and lived experiences. Educators walk alongside communities, honoring their sovereignty and wisdom.

## GOALS

- All interactions would follow cultural protocols, including ceremonies, gifting, and proper introductions.
- Exploration and inclusion of First Peoples Principles of Learning<sup>v</sup> into instruction and curriculum.
- Acceptance of the importance of protocols to relationships and knowledge acquisition.<sup>vi</sup>
- Curriculum would reflect the specific histories, languages, and teachings of local Indigenous communities.

## CORE PRINCIPLE 5: Wholistic Approach to Teaching and Learning

We strive to create and maintain learning spaces and opportunities built on the principles of inspiring hope, instilling confidence, and instigating transformative practice in teaching and learning.<sup>vii</sup> This will be accomplished through approaching teaching and learning with an emphasis on the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual well-being of all involved. A wholistic approach to learning encourages learners to explore the interrelated areas of knowledge and the influence on one another.

### GOALS

- Courses will be taught in ways that reflect their natural connections — science with storytelling, math with land-based knowledge, history with ceremony.
- Learners will learn through movement, art, land, and community.
- Schools and universities would shift from hierarchical, colonial models to relational, community-rooted ones.
- Educators will strive to create belonging and connection with Indigenous learners through collaborative projects, discussions, and experiential learning opportunities.

## CORE PRINCIPLE 6: Reciprocity and Relational Accountability

Building and maintaining educator-learner relationships is a fundamental principal for the educator-learner relationship to transform from transactional to a rational, ethical, and community-centered relationship. We commit to fostering authentic learning relationships with educators and learners. Founded on the principle of reciprocity, the educator-learner relationship will be based on mutual benefit and a commitment to give back to one another. Approaching this relationship with a humble disposition will create space for reduced hierarchies. This will open a door for a dialogue about the learning journey and thoughtful reflection on personal responsibility. In the end, there is space and place for stronger, trusting relationships and truly equitable partnerships.

### GOALS

- Learners will learn through direct engagement with the land, community, and cultural practices.
- Educators will enhance curriculum, instruction and assessment by prioritizing relationship-building with learners and communities.
- Educators will engage in ongoing learning about their own positionality and responsibilities.
- All learners will be taught how to engage respectfully and responsibly with Indigenous knowledge and communities.

## Resources

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- <sup>i</sup> Arcand, E., Arcand, L., Badger, B., Battiste, M., Blair-Dreaver Johnston, A., Buffalo, M., Campbell, M., Creely-Johns, M., Cummings, N., Duquette, R., Fleury, N., Halfe, L., Hamilton, M., Henderson, M., Kayseas, F., Kayseas, E., Keewatin, M., Lewis, K., Linklater, L. J., ... Tsannie-Burseth, R. (2021). ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan. University of Saskatchewan. <https://indigenous.usask.ca/documents/lets-fly-up-together.pdf>
- <sup>ii</sup> Ermine, W. (2007). The ethical space of engagement. *Indigenous Law Journal*, 6(1), 193–203.
- <sup>iii</sup> Chrona, J. (2022). *Wayi Wah! Indigenous pedagogies: An act for reconciliation and anti-racist education*. Portage & Main Press.
- <sup>iv</sup> Ermine, W. (2007). The ethical space of engagement. *Indigenous Law Journal*, 6(1), 193–203.
- <sup>v</sup> Chrona, J. (2022). *Wayi Wah! Indigenous pedagogies: An act for reconciliation and anti-racist education*. Portage & Main Press.
- <sup>vi</sup> Weenie, A., Ermine, W., Lewis, K., Swan, I., Sasakamosse, M., Cappel, J., & Pelletier, D. (2024). *Cree pedagogy: Dance your style*. Canadian Scholars.
- <sup>vii</sup> Poitras Pratt, Y., & Bodnaresko, S. (2023). *Truth and reconciliation through education: Stories of decolonizing practices*. Brush Education Inc.