

Indigenizing the curriculum:  
An Annotated Bibliography of Teacher Resources

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December 14, 2020

## Overview:

As a preface, I am not an indigenous person and as such I feel unprepared and ill equipped to bring indigenous perspectives to my course material and methods. This is why I am motivated to assemble this resource guide in order to equip myself to further indigenize the curriculum and generate greater value for indigenous ways of knowing in myself and my students because indigenizing the curriculum is for all humans (Four Arrows 2019 p.1).

Indigenizing the curriculum in Canada is an epistemological process of re-evaluating our relationship with and definition of knowledge. In a society that claims to be multicultural and inclusive, it has favoured eurocentric ideas and ways of thinking while pushing aside alternatives. Gaudry & Lorenz acknowledge that “indigenization represents a move to expand the academy’s still-narrow conceptions of knowledge” towards awareness and accepting of non eurocentric views (2018, 218). This is an important process because it will create greater levels of inclusivity in our society in terms of accepting different world views.

Indigenizing the curriculum has a couple of different parts. Four Arrows identifies these parts as decolonization, which is “about correcting revisionist history” and “challenging conquest masquerading as law” and indigenization (2019 p. 3). The process of decolonizing is about acknowledging our past faults as part of our story and choosing to build towards greater levels of inclusivity as individuals and as a society. The step of Indigenizing the curriculum involves adding the perspectives of first nations people to and alongside what is being taught.

How to indigenize the curriculum seems to be a larger obstacle than it is. A committee created at Simon Fraser university to investigate this process identifies “that many faculty members wish to Indigenize their courses, but do not know how to do this or what resources are available to help them” (Walk This Path With Us, 2017 p. 33). Many people think that indigenizing the curriculum will add benefit for everyone and not just first nations people and at the same time do not know how to do it. Four Arrows encourages educators that indigenizing curriculum can be as much about shifting the way education is done even when content knowledge is lacking (2019 p.10). Thus, educators do not necessarily need to learn new content, rather they can adjust their practices to align with indigenous principles (FNESC poster). This can be done through assessment and evaluation practices other than letter grades, use story to teach lessons or incorporating the idea of ecology and the interconnectedness of all things into the lessons activities (Four Arrows 2019, p.10-11). These recommendations make it easy for educators to adjust existing plans and curriculum and does not have to be an overhaul of their entire teaching careers.

The controversy that is created from this process is based on a power struggle. “[T]he group that controls the meanings and diffusion of knowledge exercises power and privilege over other groups” (SFU 2017 p. 96) proves that limiting a society’s relationship with power is a means of control. Indigenizing the curriculum is a way of liberating indigenous people from the systemic oppression of colonial mindsets that have been perpetuated through curriculum. While everyone and not only First Peoples will gain from this curriculum shift, the perception of loss of power and influence can cause resistance. While the literature is sparse on articulated opposition, there is systemic evidence of a delay between spoken values and the living out of those values. For example, according to Patricia Doyle-Bedwell, the choice of Dalhousie University to have a white professor teach indigenous history “highlights the lack of space for Indigenous professors and “Indigenous knowledge perspectives” in Canadian universities” (Hamilton 2018). Indigenization struggles not against open opposition, rather it is an epistemological struggle against mindsets and ways of thinking.

As a struggle against mindsets it is important that teachers such as myself are well equipped with resources to follow through on inclusive education. This collection of resources is about indigenizing the Social Studies Curriculum in regards to explicitly including First Nations perspectives and principles of learning. Furthermore, these resources have been selected to help make the hidden curriculum visible by providing tools to help investigate how significant events in Canadian history have impacted First Nations people groups in Canada.

FNESC First Nations Education Steering Committee *First People’s Principles of Learning*. <http://www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/FNESC-Learning-First-Peoples-poster-11x17-hi-res-v2.pdf> accessed Dec 2020.

Four Arrows. (2019). The Indigenization Controversy: For Whom and by Whom. *Critical Education* 10 (18), 1-13.

Gaudry, Adam. & Lorenz, Danielle. (2018). Indigenization as inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonization: navigating the different visions for indigenizing the Canadian Academy. *AlterNative*, 14(3). 218–227. <https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/doi/pdf/10.1177/1177180118785382>

Hamilton, Graeme. (2018, May 25). As universities 'Indigenize,' some see a threat to open inquiry. *National Post*. <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/as-universities-indigenize-some-see-a-threat-to-open-inquiry>

SFU Aboriginal Reconciliation Council (2017) *Walk this Path With Us*. Simon Fraser University. [https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/reconciliation/SFU-ARC%20Walk%20This%20Path%20With%20Us\\_Full%20Report\\_Sept5.pdf](https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/reconciliation/SFU-ARC%20Walk%20This%20Path%20With%20Us_Full%20Report_Sept5.pdf)

## Resources

*BC First Nations Land, Title, and Governance Teacher Resource Guide*. (2019). First Nations Education Steering Committee and First Nations School Association. <http://www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/PUBLICATION-Governance-BCFNLTG-2019-09-17.pdf>

Very Useful

This teacher Resource guide aims “to help facilitate the respectful and meaningful inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into the BC classrooms” (BC First Nations Land... 2019 p.8). It is not intended to be a course or subject specific guide. Instead it suggests learning material and activities on a thematic basis. This gives the teacher the flexibility and professional discretion on what and how to include the content in their classroom.

One suggestion that the resource makes very clear is the importance of connecting with first nations groups and history local to the students’ education “and learning about how First Nations governance works in practice” (Ibid p.9).

A Highlighted activity and handout comes from page 16-17. It is a guide to building a First Nations Governance Profile

Indian Act, R.S.C c. I-5 (1985). <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-5/>

Limited use but very significant  
Value

This is a primary source document which includes the most recent amendments. This is significant for evaluating how the present government of Canada interacts with First nations groups in Canada and is useful for evaluating how the government might be thinking about current events involving first nations groups

Limitation

This document is long and uses a legal jargon unfamiliar to students and is unlikely to hold much personal significance to non-Indigenous students. Thus this document is most useful in small portions related to other sources or topics discussed in class.

*Indian Residential School & Reconciliation: Teacher resource guide.* (2015). First Nations Education Steering Committee and First Nations School Association. <http://www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/PUBLICATION-IRSR-10-rev-2b-Full-Document-2020-07.pdf>

Very Useful

This is a resource guide for Social Studies 10 and focuses explicitly on residential schools. It is divided into four parts: residential school history, the lasting impact of those schools, resistance to the oppression they caused and reconciliation. This publication includes lesson plans, suggested articles, assessment ideas, potential handouts and activity guides.

This resource is the product of First Nations groups creating education resources and therefore represents a first nations perspective. As such the activities and lessons are planned to incorporate First People's pedagogical values and learning principles.

This resource is also designed to be part of the BC curriculum making it very helpful specifically to teachers in BC as they move forward in indigenizing the curriculum.

Resources that help with teaching residential school topics are even more important than other topics because of the sensitivity of content created as a result of the intense abuse and damage that was cause through them to both individuals and entire societies.

Wilson, Kory. and Henderson, Jane. (2014). *First-Peoples: A guide for newcomers.* City of Vancouver <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/First-Peoples-A-Guide-for-Newcomers.pdf>

Very Useful

This is a primer for newcomers to the vancouver area to become familiar with First Nations groups in the area. It is written much like a textbook and could be used as a textbook for teaching a unit on First Nations in Vancouver, or simply to inspire teachers as they plan.

Value

This primer is an excellent introduction for people in the Metro Vancouver Area who don't know where or how to get started learning about First Nations groups in their own neighbourhoods. It is written by First Nations women and thus can be trusted to present a first nations perspective and understanding. As a primer it is an excellent

source of information for both teachers and students who are starting to learn about and build connections with local first nations groups. As this primer is for the Vancouver area its usefulness is limited to the region of the Coast Salish people including the Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

The primer is useful to teachers to help them get their bearings on local first nations groups, strong images, maps and charts, including a wonderful Myths & Facts Chart on page 36.

Here I will highlight Chapter 11 as a guide to learning in the community. As a guide this chapter can help teachers create community experiences as both a method of learning and content of learning held in value by First Peoples groups.

The limitations of this primer are that it is very long.

Pages of Interest:

Map of Salish Sea p. 19

Myths and Facts p. 36

Timeline of Indian Act p. 44

Map of treaties p.47

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Tik Tok, youtube videos

VERY useful

<https://www.tiktok.com/tag/inuit?lang=en>

<https://www.tiktok.com/tag/indigenous?lang=en>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUulYAbg3Jo>

Yes, this is a general resource and not a specific one. Not quite what is requested in an annotated bibliography...and still significant because the entries continue to evolve and change to address and include more content. They remain relevant to students' methods of communication. The content is

These short messages created by indigenous people deliver perspectives and content of first nation people in the format that youth and students are familiar with. They do not have the academic rigour of peer reviewed articles and that is kind of the point. Learning embedded in story, and the value of lived experience as evidence means that these short snippets have value for teaching and learning.

## MAPS

Indigenous Services Canada (2019). First Nations in British Columbia [Map].  
[https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-BC/STAGING/texte-text/inacmp\\_1100100021016\\_eng.pdf](https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-BC/STAGING/texte-text/inacmp_1100100021016_eng.pdf)

Limited use.

This map helps students to visualize the geographic relationship between reservations and cities. As a publication of the Government of Canada the information can be seen as reliable. However, as a publication of Canada it is also information created by the group that has historically been oppressing the First Nations People and is best used in comparison with other maps when teaching students about the social studies skills of perspectives and geographic relationship, which is also linked to the First People's learning principle of being connected to the land.

UBC Museum of Anthropology. (1994). First Nations of British Columbia [Map].  
[https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-BC/STAGING/texte-text/fnmp\\_1100100021018\\_eng.pdf](https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-BC/STAGING/texte-text/fnmp_1100100021018_eng.pdf)

Limited use

Building on creating connections with the geography, this map helps students to visualize the traditional territory ranges of the First Nations of the British Columbia area. This map does a good job of showing how the First Nations boundaries and modern political frontiers do not coincide. As a black and white image it can even be useful to engage with students providing colour to learn the regions. While the map is itself a product of UBC museum and thus can be assessed to follow a strong degree of academic rigour, it is still available through the government of Canada website and does not show how traditional territories overlap. It used a western, colonial understanding of set boundaries.

This map shows the approximate traditional territories of the First Nations which entered the BC Treaty Process, as described in their statements of intent to negotiate a treaty. It also shows the areas in which Final Agreements are completed and in effect.  
[https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-BC/STAGING/texte-text/trynegc\\_1100100021020\\_eng.pdf](https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-BC/STAGING/texte-text/trynegc_1100100021020_eng.pdf)

Native Land (2019) The Land you Live On: An Education Guide.

[https://native-land.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/teacher\\_guide\\_2019\\_final.pdf](https://native-land.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/teacher_guide_2019_final.pdf)

AND Interactive map: <https://native-land.ca/>

Very Useful

This tool is created by a Vancouver based First Nations group. The PDF is a guide to teachers, mostly in terms of how to use and engage with the digital map that shows traditional territories, languages and treaties.

As a tool made by indigenous people it can be deemed valuable as first nations content and point of view. However it is also an open source format and as such does not meet a strict standard of academic rigour. The amount of overlap between the territories does a much better job of showing students how first nations understanding of territory was not strictly delineated as the government maps are. This tool is therefore an excellent source to use beside government maps as comparisons when teaching perspectives and geography skills.

BC Teacher Federation. (2015). Timeline History of Aboriginal Peoples in British Columbia.

<https://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/AboriginalEducation/AboriginalTimelineHistory.pdf>

### **AVOID!**

This document does not seem to represent a first nations perspective.

This is a four page poster timeline of the First Nations People in British Columbia from 1492 to 2015. While this is a convenient and good looking timeline of First Peoples in British Columbia, and the creation by the BCTF should lend it credibility, this source fails as something to include while indigenizing the curriculum. The dates represented and events seem to be significant only so far as they pertain to european's. For example, pre-contact is the first hedging indicating only that people were here in BC before colonists arrived. Furthermore, using the term Aboriginal when the people refer to First Nations, while perhaps not wrong at one point in history, is no longer appropriate. Being consistent with terminology and words is important especially when creating representations for students who are in the process of learning.



