

## **Literature Review: Culturally-Responsive Classroom Management for an Indigenous-Centric Public School**

### **Introduction:**

If we consider the history of public education over the last two hundred years, schools and the process of schooling have served various functions related to the shaping of young people. Overwhelmingly, the most widespread type of formal schooling usually involves one adult teacher responsible for a number of students, usually grouped by age, and thus, approximate developmental stage. Most school environments are highly structured and regulated spaces, intended to mold students into future citizens. Behavior in these spaces is monitored to ensure that each participant (including students, teachers, parents, and administrators) meets specific expectations, negotiated through systems of rules and consequences. Terminology such as *behavior management*, *classroom control*, *disciplinary plan*, *detention*, *suspension*, and *expulsion* make clear that behaviors that do not conform are often met with exclusionary consequences. Schools have a long history as places of hierarchal power, often concerned with managing students en masse, rather than in inspiring each learners' personal holistic growth.

Within the typical classroom environment, the teacher is in control of all activities, and students are socialized to understand appropriate classroom behavior. Often, classroom management is teacher-centric, rather than learner-centric, and works to enforce conformity, rather than cultivating a community of inquiry. Recent policies regarding achievement have similarly shaped pedagogical practice, prioritizing standardized tests and multiple-choice responses over multi-modal demonstrations and understandings of mastery. Unfortunately, this particular style of schooling has been normalized through many generations of learners, and serves as a default model for a majority of the current population, including many well-meaning parents, teachers, and administrators (myself included). Unredressed, this dominant model of behavior management has the potential to dramatically shift the culture of an entire school community, such that students function in fear of punishment, shame, and exclusion. Clearly, circumstances that elicit these emotions have the potential to undermine any efforts toward inclusion and holism, indicating the need for a careful examination of both the explicit and implicit aspects of the learning environment.

In reviewing the community feedback in the document titled "Reporting on the Vancouver School District, January 2011 Aboriginal Education Forums: Community Responses to Creating a School or Model with an Aboriginal Focus," several priorities stand out. Of primary importance is that the Aboriginal-focused school incorporate a holistic approach, nurturing mental, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of development for all learners. Related to this approach are several more specific aspects that the community has suggested as action items:

- a) On several different occasions, participants mentioned the importance of culturally relevant traditional knowledges, such as peacemaking, both as a

- link to traditional understandings of community, as well as a guiding principle toward a safe and inclusive school environment.
- b) Similarly, safety is a concern for many parents with regards to anti-racism and anti-discrimination within the school culture. This could be understood to include both explicit and implicit cultural cues that signal spaces as safe for all learners.
  - c) Community members expressed the need for finding and hiring “the best” teachers and administrators to staff the school, recognizing that Aboriginal ancestry may be helpful, but not mandatory. Sensitivity and a willingness to learn culturally-relevant pedagogical practice are vital.

Changes to behavior alone won't shift how a school functions as an institution. To create an Indigenous-centric public school that addresses the community needs requires that we recognize how power is used within schools as a means of control and exclusion, and intentionally disrupt these structures of power. If we re-conceptualize the learning community more holistically, considering students, teachers, families, and administrators as co-learners in the educational endeavor, there is flexibility in creating the structures needed to support the learning community. Therefore, in planning for the Aboriginal-focused school community, the purpose of this literature review is to provide strategies and tools that will help develop a culturally- responsive system of cooperative and inclusive behavior management that is sensitive to the inherent power structures within schools, as well as the specific requests of the Vancouver community.

Preliminary search terms included *culturally-responsive*, *culturally-relevant*, *Indigenous*, *Native American*, *classroom management*, *inclusive classrooms*, and *school discipline*. Subsequent searches included *anti-racism/anti-bias*, *conflict resolution*, and *nonviolent communication*. The findings are divided into three subsections: a) holistic educational approaches and strategies, b) culturally-relevant, culturally-responsive learning environments, and c) becoming a responsive co-learner/educator.

## I. Holistic Educational Approaches and Strategies

**Armstrong, J. (2004). Let us begin with courage. *The Center for Ecoliteracy*. Retrieved from <http://www.ecoliteracy.org/essays/let-us-begin-courage>**

Drawing on the Okanagan language and metaphors, Armstrong presents a distinct and culturally-centric framework from which to understand what and how education is regarded within her culture. The term *En'owkin* calls to mind the imagery of “liquid being absorbed drop by single drop through the head (mind)”, describing the integrative, gentle, nurturing process of learning. *En'owkin* is also the name given to the learning center by the community Elders, as well as the name of the process of collaborative community decision making.

*En'owkin* process is a consensus-making process, by which each person is requested to share their understandings of the issue at hand. All information is shared without prejudice. In the second phase, community members are asked to consider the “challenges”, shifting their thinking to reflect the Elders (connected to traditions and

land), the Mothers (daily well-being and relations), the Fathers (concerned with security, sustenance, and shelter), and the Youth (thinking innovatively toward the future). This way, all perspectives and sides can be integrated without force, so that a workable solution can emerge from the process. In this process, minority opinions are respected and addressed such that all community members are seen, heard, and integrated into the solution. While certainly not representative of the traditional knowledge of the Coast Salish communities, the En'owkin process serves as an example of how culturally significant practice can be integrated into classroom and school practice.

**Brown, F. L. (2004). *Making the classroom a healthy place: The development of affective competency in Aboriginal pedagogy. (doctoral thesis)*, pp. 185-239. Retrieved from <https://circle.ubc.ca/handle/2429/16109>**

The purpose of this thesis is twofold: to examine the Indigenous-centric pedagogies of the Native Training Institute, in order to suggest a theory of affective development for the healing, teaching, and holistic development of Aboriginal learners. I primarily focused on Chapter 7, *Epilogue: A Final Reflection on the Practical Application of a Holistic Theory of Cultural Pedagogy: Seven Circles of Transformation Toward a Path of Learning*.

Brown argues for the recognition and integration of affective development into pedagogical practices for Aboriginal learners. In this way, pedagogies move toward holistic conceptions of both the learner and the learning process, such that learning becomes a process of transformation and healing. The learner is considered in terms of mental, spiritual, emotional, physical, and volitional aspects. Similarly, the learning process is conceived of as a spiraling cycle of seven realms of transformational learning, arranged from innermost, outward as: a core of Aboriginal Knowledge, the Medicine Wheel that creates holistic space, positive learning identity, values that motivate, competencies that grow, ideals to grow toward, and visions that guide the learners.

**Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2003). *Safe and Sound: An Educational Leader's Guide to Evidence-Based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs*. Retrieved from <http://casel.org/publications/safe-and-sound-an-educational-leaders-guide-to-evidence-based-sel-programs>**

“Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process of developing the ability to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships, and handle challenging situations effectively” (p.1). For a practicing teacher, these are the vital “non-subject” teachable moments focusing on self and relationships within a learning community. This guide was developed by educational researchers for educators and administrators in response to the research-based requirements of No Child Left Behind to help schools compare and choose an SEL program that will suit their specific context and needs.

The report is divided into three sections. In the first, the authors make the case for the importance of SEL. In the second section, the particular research methods are discussed. The CASEL team conducted a wide survey of supplemental, nationally-

available school programs centered around SEL. The team determined various criteria and examined 80 programs, recommending twenty-two as the most complete and useful programs, as well as necessary frameworks and best practices to school to use when implementing SEL. In the third section, results of the study are presented in a series of easy to navigate charts, supplemented with resource lists, related websites, and organizations.

Of particular interest is the results chart that allows educators to choose according to the needs of their own school, as well as the objective critique of many popular programs currently in use. This is a marked departure from sales persons and sample packs that are typical of supplemental programs. Instead, this research is directly relevant to what school staff need, but may not have the time or resources to research with such depth.

## **II. Culturally-centered, Culturally-relevant, Culturally-responsive Learning Environments**

**Garrett, M. T., Bellon-Harn, M., Torres-Rivera, E., Garrett, J. T., & Roberts, L. (2003). Open hands, open hearts: Working with Native youth in the schools. *Intervention in School & Clinic, 38(4), 225-235.***

Written by a team of Indigenous professionals to reflect the aspects of “cultural discontinuity” experienced by Native youth, this article addresses the differences in the learning process between home and school culture based on differing values and expectations. Identity and a brief explanation of the general cosmology provide a basis for understanding, followed by a discussion of the wide range of acculturation experienced by Native peoples, enabling the readers, as teachers and service providers, to understand the contexts of their Native learners.

While addressing these issues broadly, the authors offer explanations and strategies so that teachers can incorporate a strength-based approach to their inclusive practices. Most suggestions offered can be easily incorporated to the benefit of both Native and non-Native learners, including incorporating multiple learning modalities, cooperative learning strategies, inviting Elder and community members into the learning environment, and modeling behaviors that emphasize personal choices.

**Hammond, H. (2004). *Culturally Relevant Classroom Management Strategies for American Indian Students*. Retrieved from <http://www.racismagainstindians.org/AcademicPapers/CulturallyRelevant.pdf>**

This article came through a Google Scholar search of the terms “culturally-relevant classroom management” and “Native American.” It seems to be published in various locations, though there is a line of copyright information attributed to the American Council on Rural Special Education. Although written in an academic style and language, the paper is problematic in many ways, including the deficit assumptions with which families were approached, as well as a reliance on stereotypical overgeneralizations that reify the very systems of oppression. The generalizations do

not speak specifically to the data, nor implicate the systemic sources of oppression, instead, citing cultural differences as the source of the community problems, rather than the creative and culturally-centered adaptation to the circumstances. As the paper was likely written by a non-Indigenous person with “good intentions,” it serves as a valuable example of how the concept of “cultural relevance” has been co-opted and mis-used.

**Mansfield, E. (1993). Balance and harmony: Peacemaking in Coast Salish tribes of the Pacific Northwest. *Mediation Quarterly*, 10(4), 339-353.**

The article was selected to potentially draw out a regionally-specific understanding of peacemaking that could be applied within the Aboriginal-focused school in Vancouver. In the article, Mansfield draws from historical documents, interviews and specific historical conflicts to understand the southern Coast Salish approach to peacemaking. In brief, harmony within and amongst families in a community is highly regarded, and in many instances, Elders or elder family members are asked to mediate conflicts. While interesting, the article is not very relevant to school management or classroom practice.

**Stevahn, L. (2004). Integrating conflict resolution training into the curriculum, *Theory Into Practice*, 43(1), 50-58.**

*Teaching Students to be Peacemakers* is a program developed by D.W. Johnston and R. T. Johnson (1995), by embedding the skills and strategies of conflict resolution within other content areas. Our author Stevahn explains the implementation of the program within a classroom, giving examples of how history, science, or literature content may provide rich contexts through which to teach the students how to identify interpersonal conflict. The article discusses two of many possible cooperative learning models through which the students elaborate upon the details of the conflict. The program suggests using a particular six step procedure that leads learners to a mutually beneficial result. Similarly, the role of a mediator is also introduced as a possible tool.

Stevahn’s contention is that through regular practice of identifying and solving conflict in their studies, students will be able to apply their skills to real-world interpersonal conflicts, in their home, school, and community contexts. These skills, she argues, support academic achievement, and safe school environments centered around respect and trust.

### **III. Becoming a Responsive Co-learner/Educator**

**Soodak, L. (2010). Classroom management in inclusive settings, *Theory Into Practice*, 42(4), 327-333.**

When students are safe, supported, and included in learning environments, many discipline and behavior management issues can be prevented. In this article, Soodak discusses the different aspects of fostering an inclusive learning community, sensitive to

student learning populations of diverse learning needs, cultural backgrounds, and school contexts. Specifically, inclusive classroom practice incorporates four aspects: Membership refers to a child's right to belong to the learning community, and have access to learning activities. Friendships are facilitated through respect and cooperation, rather than competition, and no child is left out. Collaboration is encouraged between students, teachers, families, and community members based on trust and respect. Fourth, behavioral strategies focus on positive support of student learning, by modifying learning contexts and teaching appropriate behaviors.

The author points to the shared responsibilities of community, parents, school staff, and students to cooperate in this effort, reimagining the power dynamics in the classroom. Also, our author offers three responses to misbehavior in the classroom, ranging from re-direction and reparations instead of punishments. Not the most useful article, but interesting in how it counters the punishment models of classroom management.

**Anti-Defamation League. (n.d). Checklist: Creating an anti-bias learning environment. Retrieved from [http://www.adl.org/education/default\\_anti\\_bias.asp](http://www.adl.org/education/default_anti_bias.asp)**

This is not a journal article, but instead a simple checklist of considerations for any teacher interested in "setting the stage" for an anti-bias classroom. It would certainly be useful in an urban setting as diverse as Vancouver, as it uncovers subtle biases reinforced through visuals and pre-printed materials.

**Weinstein, C., Curran, M., & Tomlinson-Clarke, S. (2010). Culturally responsive classroom management: Awareness into action. *Theory Into Practice*, 42(4), 269-276.**

This article focuses on the different aspects that support culturally responsive classroom management (CRCM), for a special topic issue of *Theory into Practice* called *Classroom Management in a Diverse Society*. The authors suggest three prerequisites that support the implementation of CRCM: first, recognizing that our own beliefs, biases, and assumptions about human behavior are ethnocentric by default. Secondly, we must acknowledge that differences exist among people regardless of belonging to specific racial/ethnic, class, or gender categories. And lastly, CRCM educators understand the very ways that schools and other institutions perpetuate and reflect discrimination imposed by society. These understandings require teacher reflection and acknowledgment of power, moving away from hegemonic tendencies to blame the students.

The authors build on this foundation to elaborate the different aspects of culturally responsive classroom management, including " (a) creating a physical setting that supports academic and social goals, (b) establishing expectations for behavior, (c) communicating with students in culturally consistent ways, (d) developing a caring classroom environment, (e) working with families, and (f) using appropriate interventions to assist students with behavior problems" (p. 270). Of particular use is the way in which classroom management is discussed as a habit of mind, as a teacher reflection

on practice, as a use of space and ultimately, as a way of understanding the behaviors of diverse learners, rather than simply a poster of rules and consequences. The reference list is a great resource, too.

**Chen, D., Nimmo, J., & Fraser, H. (2009). Becoming a culturally responsive early childhood educator: A tool to support reflection by teachers embarking on the anti-bias journey. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 11(2), 101-106.**

This article focuses on the process of becoming a culturally-responsive educator, suggesting a tool developed by the authors designed to facilitate self-reflection. Goals for achieving a culturally responsive classroom include a) nurturing learner identity, b) promoting communication amongst students of diverse backgrounds, c) fostering critical thinking around bias and justice, and d) cultivating appropriate responses to situations of bias and or injustice. To accomplish this, teachers must commit to a long process of reflections “*on action* (self-evaluation of practice) and *for action* (planning for the future), enabling teachers to think more deeply about their teaching in relation to the students they teach” (p. 102). In support of the process, the authors suggest independent reflection, as well as teacher mentorship.

The tool itself (included as an appendix) is divided into four sections: raising self-awareness, the physical environment, pedagogical environment, and relationships with families and communities. In this particular article format, the tool reads as a survey, a list of questions to which teachers can respond along a scale ranging from “Not yet” to “Consistently”, each question also providing space for goal setting. Results from an initial pilot study amongst practicing teachers and pre-service teachers is mentioned but not discussed. For our purposes, both the reflection tool, and discussion of teacher process is useful.

### **Synthesis:**

For many generations, schools have been institutions in which the norms and expectations of dominant society were pressed into the learners, intended to mold a populace of assimilated, obedient individuals. Metaphors representing the educational systems have shifted, yet the factory model, the banking model, and economic business models all share Eurocentric conceptions of education as an economy, in which some students benefit, and others do not, and all power is wielded from the top by the teacher. Thus, while the application of “teaching” has been increasingly standardized, the economic language has naturalized the disparate success of learners.

In considering the potential of an Indigenous public school in Vancouver, a school that is intended to be inclusive, holistic, and culturally-responsive, it is necessary to recognize that inclusive pedagogies cannot be built on top of punitive systems of discipline and economies of control. As this has been the dominant structure of public education for many years, it may be the default frame of reference for many faculty and staff working on the project. In response, this literature review intended to focus on research that addresses inclusive, supportive culturally responsive classroom management for teachers of Indigenous youth.

In the process of research, it became clear that no single resource addressed precisely the needs of the Vancouver Aboriginal-focused project. Many articles were relevant and could be applied to the Vancouver context, some articles were not relevant but included for documentary purposes, and in the case of the Hammond article, academic research was used to reinforce racist stereotypes of Indigenous youth. In all cases, even the most comprehensive of literature reviews requires a critical reading and the need for a sensitivity to Indigenous understandings. This process of research is a reminder of how, historically, research has been used to justify all kinds of grievous policies and plans that do not serve the interests of Indigenous communities.

In the last several years, politicians and school districts have responded to incidents of (tragic) school violence by adopting zero-tolerance policies that evict students for acts of aggression. Disruptive student behavior has consequently been redefined through the lens of violence. While sending the message that violence will not be tolerated in schools, these exclusionary policies have shifted school cultures by disproportionately affecting particular populations. Soodak writes, "Students of color and students with disabilities are at greatest risk of expulsion. In particular, students with emotional and behavioral problems have been overrepresented in reports of suspensions and expulsions and are most likely to be removed from inclusive settings" (p. 331). To be fair, this is a complex and layered correlation, affected by many factors, and yet, what is certain is that students most desperately in need of emotional support and connection are disenfranchised, punished, or expelled. Thus, even though pedagogical practices may intend safe inclusive educational experiences for all learners, when school climate is punishment-oriented and exclusionary, the inequitable success of all learners is further exacerbated. While the article is intended to primarily address inclusion broadly, and not specifically for Native American students, the argument for reparations instead of punishments applies equally. Soodak takes the approach that management is best considered from a preventative perspective, incorporating membership, access, friendships, collaborations with parents and communities, and positive emotional support to students. In this way inclusive pedagogical practice is supported by inclusive behavioral support within the classroom, within the school, and within the greater community.

Building on this idea, the report authored by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) elaborates the need for social and emotional learning (SEL) needs within schools, offering an extensive comparison of various supplementary school programs that address these needs. Included in the CASEL guide is also a discussion of the specific competencies of social and emotional learning, including: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making skills. Developed in response to the research-based requirements of No Child Left Behind, this guide is designed to help schools choose an SEL program that will suit their specific context and needs. Of particular interest to the Vancouver Indigenous School project are programs such as TRIBES, which may provide interesting aspects, strategies, or models from which to build in support of the culturally-based Vancouver Indigenous School. While none of the programs included in the guide are specific to Native populations, CASEL does elaborate about how incorporating SEL improves school environments both in terms of academic



achievement and school climate with regards to behavior.

Similarly, Dr. Brown's doctoral thesis *Making the Classroom a Healthy Place: The Development of Affective Competency in Aboriginal Pedagogy* proposes a holistic approach to pedagogy that incorporates the mental, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of learners, centered around Indigenous Knowledge. While the scope of this work does not directly address classroom management of young learners, it may be inferred that if teachers facilitate pedagogies that address these affective aspects, students will develop self respect, self esteem, and self control, potentially not requiring as much management from the teacher. In the epilogue chapter, Brown suggests seven circles of transformative learning, many of which could easily be translated and/or simplified into a set of guiding principles for an Indigenous school, such that instead of rules, the students would know these principles as expectations or agreements for a peaceful community.

Interestingly, the same keywords that resulted in Dr. Brown's thesis led also to an article entitled *Culturally Relevant Classroom Management Strategies for American Indian Students*. At first glance, the article was cited by many other articles, published by an academic journal, and seemingly on topic for this literature review. Upon a closer reading, it became clear that in spite of these indicators of legitimacy, the article was highly problematic. The author was offering an analysis of interviews conducted by pre-service teachers with rural families belonging to the Apache nation. While both the research question and specific method are confusing, the major fallacy is in the approach: the research seems to have been conducted assuming the deficit position of rural families, rendering the families as objects of study, blaming differences in culture as problematic, without offering any analysis of contexts of systems of oppression that have created the situation. These seem to be the results developed through conversations with parents, whose direct quotes are much more insightful than the researcher opinions that essentialize across all Apache peoples and across all Native Americans. The article does offer two useful suggestions to teachers working toward an inclusive classroom: extrinsic rewards can be confusing for students, and shame stops all learning progress. Clearly, not all "culturally-relevant" research operates from the same definitions or assumptions of inclusion, perhaps reminding us to be critical consumers of mainstream research.

By comparison, the article written by Garrett, Bellon-Harn, Garrett, and Roberts offers contexts for understanding the cosmological and ontological differences between dominant Western and Indigenous Knowledges. As a result, although the authors do offer generalizations across different Native populations, they do so to explain how and why cultural differences may result in particular behaviors in the classroom setting. Teachers may use the advice to understand, navigate, and incorporate different cultural perspectives in their pedagogical practices, in order to better facilitate the learning of Native youth. Additionally, the suggestions offered could easily be extended to help teachers in cultivating a classroom community inclusive of all learners.

Armstrong offers a glimpse into an even more specific model of inclusive, culturally-centered education in her essay *Let us Begin with Courage*. She offers the Okanagan word *En'owkin*, as a culturally-based metaphor for education, which informed the foundation for a community educational center, as well as a process of community consensus-making and problem-solving. In this case, Armstrong elaborates a beautiful

example of how for many Indigenous communities, Native language is intimately tied to identity and place, all of which inform conceptions of teaching and learning, and thus cannot be generalized. While the concept of *En'owkin*, in all of its forms, are not appropriate as a basis for the Vancouver Indigenous School project, it does provide a model of how an Indigenous word or concept arising from the greater Vancouver mainland may provide the basis for a culturally-specific, place-based understanding or metaphor for education, classroom community building, or as the basis or classroom relations. The search for this place-based peace keeping concept led to the Mansfield article called *Balance and Harmony: Peacemaking in Coast Salish tribes of the Pacific Northwest*, but little in this historical account can be applied to classrooms.

In terms of integrating culturally-responsive classroom management in the Vancouver Indigenous School project, Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke suggest a three-tier approach. In the article entitled *Culturally Responsive Classroom Management: Awareness into Action*, propose that faculty and staff begin with a reflective process becoming aware of their own assumptions and biases, as well as examining their roles within a school system designed to perpetuate social inequalities. In other words, no person is exempt, and no educational process is considered neutral or fair by default. This definition of “culturally responsive,” it is not application of essentialized rules for each category of learner, but instead is a guide to facilitation of learning so that each learner can reach their full potential. To become a culturally-responsive educator, one must willingly undergo a long process of unlearning, reflection, and reconsidering “equitable” or “fair” teaching practice.

To facilitate the process, Chen, Nimmo, and Fraser suggest a model of teacher mentorship and tool to guide reflection in their article, titled *Becoming a Culturally Responsive Early Childhood Educator: A Tool to Support Reflection by Teachers Embarking on the Anti-bias Journey*. Working from the understanding that the process is long and difficult, the authors offer strategies for examining self, pedagogical content, the classroom environment, and community relationships. Furthermore, the authors offer benchmarks for assessing success on the anti-bias journey in the form of student skills: a) nurturing student identity, b) nurturing student relationships, c) critical thinking skills around bias, and d) skills to intervene when confronted with bias and/or injustice. In this way, it can be surmised that rather than focusing on classroom management centered on punishments, the classroom can become a learning environment focused on conflict resolution and restorative justice. The tool is a questionnaire, which seems applicable to all faculty and administrators. Similarly, the checklist created by the Anti-Defamation League was intended for classroom use, but could easily be applied to all learning spaces, including cafeterias, gymnasiums, assembly halls, and after-school facilities.

## **Conclusion**

This preliminary survey of the literature seems to point towards a few themes that may be of use to the faculty and staff of the Vancouver Indigenous-focused School.

First, the relationships between students, teachers, parents, administrators, and community members should reflect the common goal of learning toward transformation,

modeling healthy, respectful communications and constructive problem solving. These teachings may draw from Traditional knowledge, or be contemporary strategies that draw from Traditional values. Furthermore, these values should be embedded not only in the academic content, but also in the daily practices, and school culture in such a way that all community members recognize the underlying principles of respect and community.

Secondly, the physical spaces and curricula should be closely examined for unintentional biases and implied stereotypes, considering how the learning spaces can nurture students in their emotional, physical, mental, spiritual, and volitional development. By incorporating a critical eye toward the implicit teachings and the invisible norms, the Aboriginal-focused school can be sensitive to how the traditional structures of mainstream schools work to marginalize and exclude learners. In this way, the classroom management plan is built upon a foundation of respect, trust, inclusion, and community relations, reflecting the focus on Indigenous Knowledge and ways of being, incorporating concentric rings of support within the learning community, moving away from punishment-oriented forms of behavioral control.

Finally, rather than finding “the best” teachers and administrators, the Aboriginal-centered school could *grow* the best teachers and administrators by nurturing them as co-learners in the community. Critical to this educational endeavor is the need for dedicated time and resources for this self-reflective process. Areas of focus for professional development could include an examination of personal conceptions of discipline, management, inclusive practice, inclusive behavior support, personal biases and assumptions, and understandings of one’s role as teacher within an inherently inequitable system of schooling. Professionally, rather than simply adding obligations to the teachers new to the Aboriginal-focused school, full time employment could include scheduled time for observing master teachers, opportunities to co-teach, and community-relations time. The incorporation of permanent substitute teachers and mentorship support amongst the teachers could facilitate the shift toward teachers as co-learners, while strengthening relationships between learning-community members. With a few structural changes, the role of teacher shifts from “person in charge” to “co-learner” such that just as the children are allowed the flexibility to learn and grow, so too are the teachers embraced in a supportive process of growth.

While none of the strategies are necessarily Vancouver-specific, or Aboriginal-only in nature, this literature review is intended to suggest possibilities that may be incorporated by the learning community to address their concerns in the development and creating of their new school. Free from the expectations to conform to dominant models of schooling, and mainstream classrooms, the Vancouver Aboriginal-focused school has tremendous potential to redefine the type of community education serves and reproduces. In this way, education is transformed to embody the metaphor of a garden in which the learners are nurtured, the teachers are carefully cultivated, and the community is transformed from within to disrupt hegemonic systems of control and exclusion.

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