



**A FIELD GUIDE TO**

# **EMPOWERING STUDENTS**

*Through*

**LEARNING  
ON THE  
LAND AND WATER**



FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE  
FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION





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**Empowering Students Through Learning on the Land and Water: A Field Guide**

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### Excerpt from the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FNESC, 2008)

- ▶ Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors
- ▶ Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place)
- ▶ Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities
- ▶ Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge
- ▶ Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story
- ▶ Learning requires exploration of one's identity
- ▶ Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations

### The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

**Article 11: 1.** Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.

**Article 13: 1.** Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

**Article 14: 1.** Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

A FIELD GUIDE TO

# EMPOWERING STUDENTS

*Through*

## LEARNING ON THE LAND AND WATER

### Project Sponsors



The **BC First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESEC)** is committed to supporting First Nations in their efforts to improve the success of all First Nations students in BC. FNESEC facilitates collaborative services related to advocacy, research, professional development, program administration, and information sharing.



The **First Nations Schools Association (FNSA)** represents First Nations controlled schools in BC and has a mandate to support those schools in creating effective, nurturing, and linguistically and culturally appropriate education environments that provide students with a positive foundation in all academic areas.



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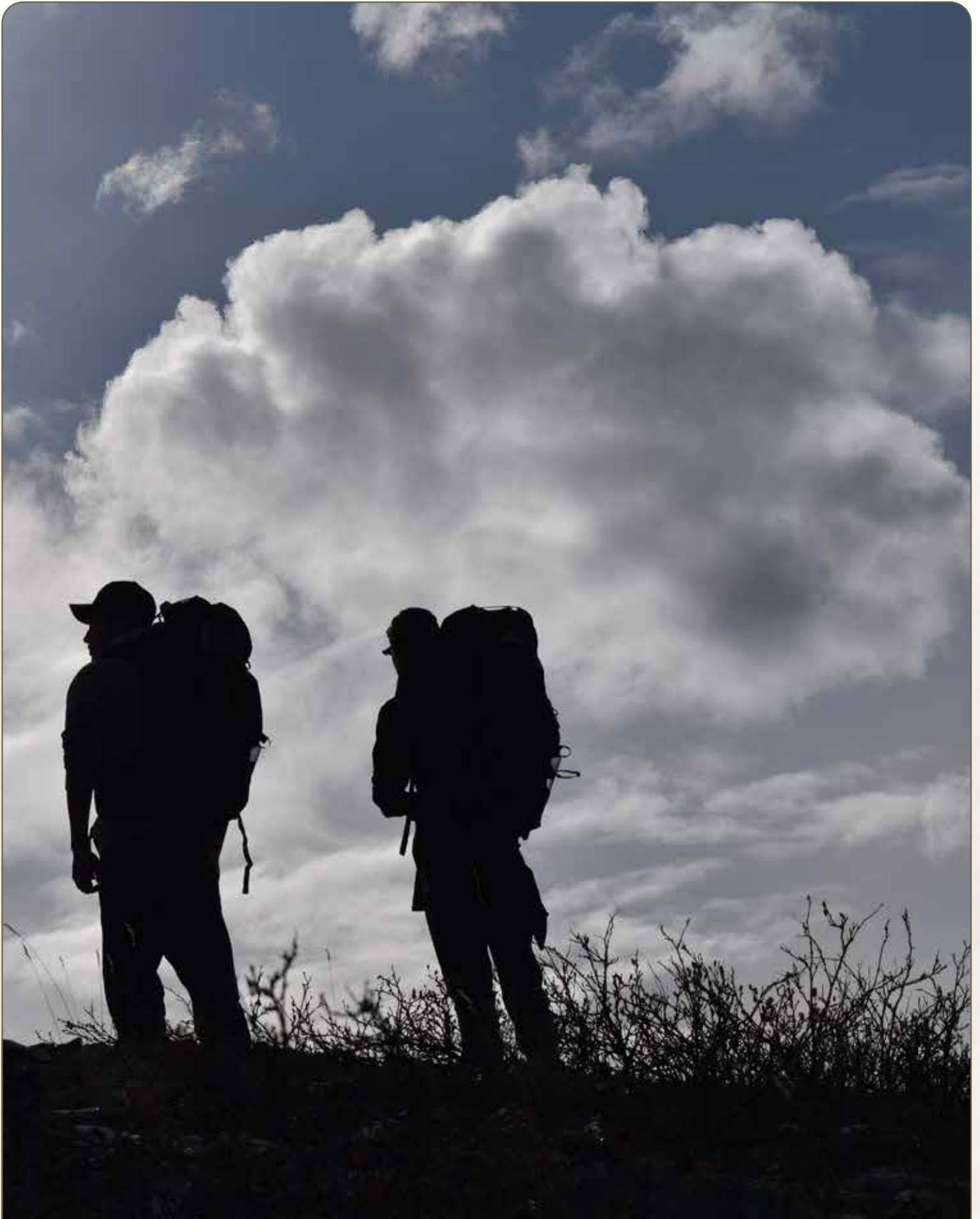
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## SECTION 1

# Introduction

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“Students being on the land and water – our territories, lakes, rivers, and seas – is a part of language and culture learning, and language and culture learning is the foundation of First Nations education. They are all inseparable. This should be a primary focus for our students’ growth and development.”

Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant

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The connections between First Nations’ languages, cultures, values, and territories run deep. For students to fully understand and develop a strong sense of identity and a strong understanding of their own language, culture, and history, their connections to the land and water must be honoured. Learning on the land and water can foster students’ thoughtful engagement with and reflection on place, and how it influences who they are as First Nations people. It helps students of all ages better understand how their knowledge and spirituality connects to and comes from their territories. It strengthens their self-confidence and well-being. It is vital for their overall growth and development.

This Guide was created by the BC First Nations Education Steering Committee and the First Nation Schools Association to help educators consider the design and implementation of learning opportunities on the land and water that are meaningful and connected to the curriculum – for the benefit of learners and to enhance the revitalization and transmission of First Nations languages and traditions.

**Note:** This Guide is meant to support the implementation of opportunities for students to learn from and about the places they come from, building stronger relationships with the land, waters, plants, and animals around them. For ease of reading, this Guide primarily uses the terms “on-the-land” or “land-based” learning. In this document, the terms are meant to be inclusive of the broader connections of place, water, identity, and homelands.

The creation of this Guide was informed by a February 2025 Principal Network, a February 2025 Parents Conference, and a March 2025 On-the Land Focus Group. The generous thoughts and knowledge shared by the focus group participants are highlighted throughout this resource. Additional feedback is always welcome.

## 1.1 What is On-the-Land or Land-Based Learning?

“On-the-land learning is inherently an Indigenous approach to teaching, knowing, and being. It creates a connection to place, but not just any place – a connection to our ancestral homelands. It is how our people learned before formal schools and classrooms were places of learning.”

Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant

In this Guide, land-based or on-the-land learning and teaching generally refers to culturally-based learning activities that take place outside of the school building, whether outdoors on or near the school property, or on more distant landscapes or sites of significance in the territory. However, the concept of land-based learning involves far more than outdoor education or simply doing activities outside.

On-the-land learning is a multi-faceted concept, and it is unique for different people and different communities. It brings together principles related to, among other things, the importance of language, spiritual and cultural knowledge, traditional ways of healing, the geography of stories, the value of diverse worldviews, land protection and First Nations rights, food sovereignty reciprocity, and reconciliation.

“We need to expand our concept of land-based learning activities. It is about our relationship with the land. It is about our history, our territory, the names of our people. Our land, our language and our people are connected. And the language is how that is expressed.”

FNESC and FNSA Guide to Language Revitalization, 2023

On-the-land learning can enhance regular school programming and help students experience relevant, active learning opportunities that are directly related to their lives, communities, and identities. First Nation representatives and parents have also emphasized that land-based activities are especially beneficial for connecting with students who

are not regularly engaged with school, and they help build students’ self-esteem and relationships with their peers and educators. On-the-land opportunities often provide students more voice in determining what their education can look like, which builds their confidence in all aspects of their lives.

“Some kids tend to be quiet, but when you give them agency in activities that are meaningful to them and reinforce who they are and who they can be, “silent leaders” may arise. Seeing these kids walk taller, chin up, and not afraid to be vocal about their wants and needs is powerful.”

Input at a 2025 First Nation School Principal Network



“Teaching trapping skills to our young people provided opportunities for them to grow in ways we didn’t see in the classroom – to see their joy in learning in the face of challenges.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

“Land and water-based learning can spark shifts in students’ learning, allowing them to reframe their relationship with “school” and reshape their education journey.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

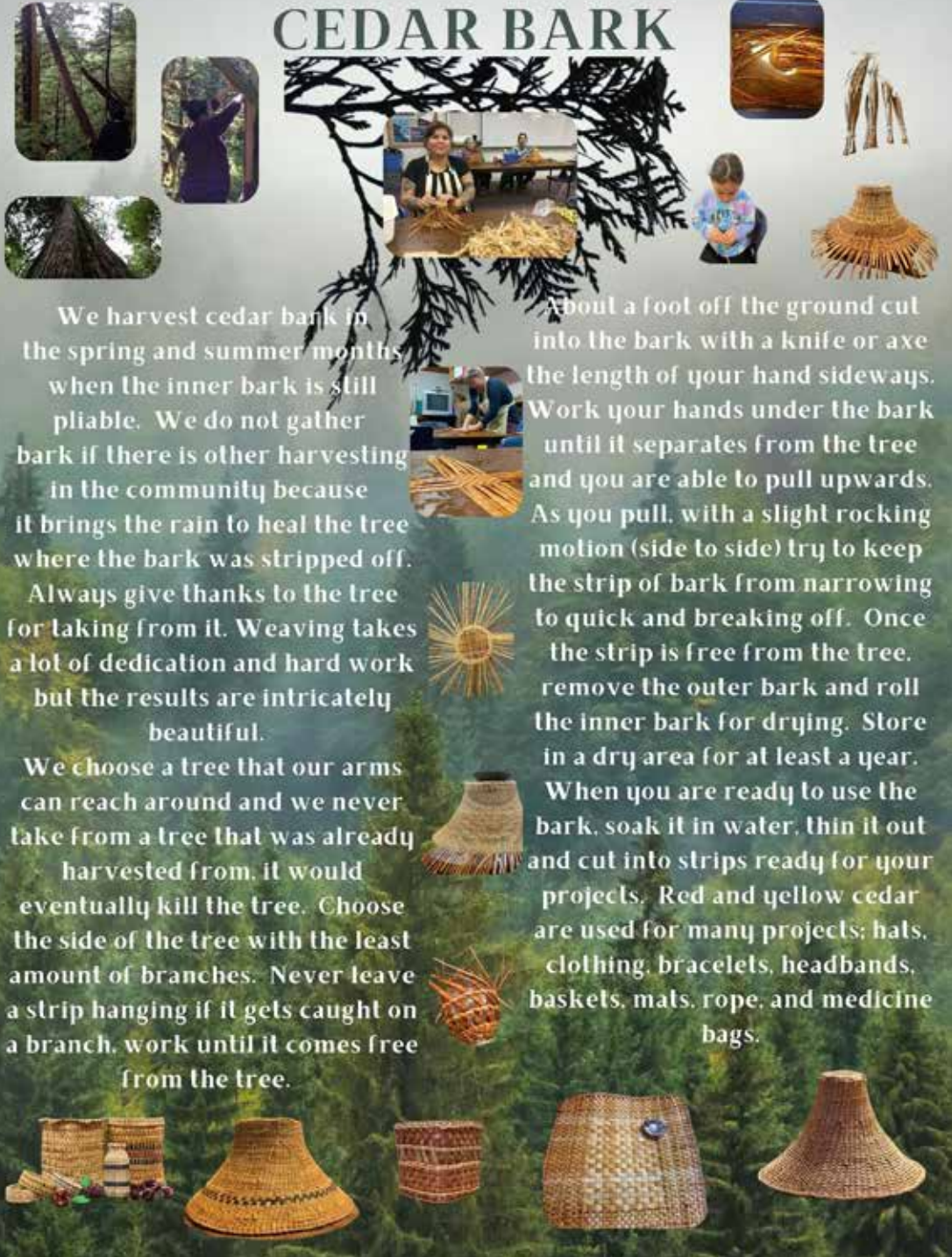
“When students finish school, these are the types of opportunities they will remember for the rest of their lives.”

**Input at a 2025 First Nation School Principal Network**

Land-based learning opportunities can also be aligned with the curriculum so that students’ learning can be assessed and recognized – even providing credit toward graduation at the high school level. According to the established schedule and number of hours, outdoor activities can provide “pieces” of a course. That topic is explored in more detail in Section 4 of this Guide.

- ▶ The intention of this Guide is to provide a range of ideas that First Nation school representatives are encouraged to use as relevant for their needs and contexts. While perspectives of land-based learning share similarities, they are necessarily as diverse as the landscapes they come from. All of the suggestions included within this resource can be adapted as needed for each community’s circumstances.
- ▶ For more information about First Nations language learning, FNEC and FNSA have published *A Guide to Language Revitalization: Promising Education Practices for Consideration by First Nations Schools* (2023). That resource, which was created with extensive input from First Nations representatives, provides suggestions for offering land-based learning opportunities and working effectively with Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Input provided for that publication is included throughout this document.
- ▶ FNEC and FNSA have also published a *Guide for Developing and Implementing Modular Courses* (2024), which was also created with input from a focus group of First Nation school representatives. Modular courses are short-term, flexible, experiential learning opportunities that cover a portion or all of the Learning Standards for an approved grade 10 - 12 course that counts toward a student’s graduation. These opportunities often are of high interest to students, and they generally encourage high levels of student engagement. Many of the suggestions for creating and implementing modular courses also relate to on-the-land learning, and input provided in the development of the Modular Course Guide is also included in this Guide, as relevant.

# CEDAR BARK



We harvest cedar bark in the spring and summer months when the inner bark is still pliable. We do not gather bark if there is other harvesting in the community because it brings the rain to heal the tree where the bark was stripped off.

Always give thanks to the tree for taking from it. Weaving takes a lot of dedication and hard work but the results are intricately beautiful.

We choose a tree that our arms can reach around and we never take from a tree that was already harvested from. It would eventually kill the tree. Choose the side of the tree with the least amount of branches. Never leave a strip hanging if it gets caught on a branch. Work until it comes free from the tree.

About a foot off the ground cut into the bark with a knife or axe the length of your hand sideways. Work your hands under the bark until it separates from the tree and you are able to pull upwards. As you pull, with a slight rocking motion (side to side) try to keep the strip of bark from narrowing to quick and breaking off. Once the strip is free from the tree, remove the outer bark and roll the inner bark for drying. Store in a dry area for at least a year.

When you are ready to use the bark, soak it in water, thin it out and cut into strips ready for your projects. Red and yellow cedar are used for many projects: hats, clothing, bracelets, headbands, baskets, mats, rope, and medicine bags.



## SECTION 2

# What Is The Value Of Land-Based Learning Opportunities?

On-the-land learning is crucial for First Nations students, as it provides a deep connection to their cultural heritage, fosters a sense of identity, empowers them to protect their land, and allows for the transmission of traditional knowledge from Elders to younger generations, all while promoting environmental stewardship and students' overall well-being through a direct relationship with their homelands and the natural world.

- **Language and culture revitalization:** Learning directly from the land allows for the passing down of traditional practices, stories, and knowledge about plants, animals, and the environment. It supports the preservation of culture and world-views, and supports reconciliation by helping to revitalize languages that are at risk of disappearing. First Nations languages are deeply intertwined with and shaped by the landscape.

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“Our language connects us to our land. It connects us to the source of our knowledge. Language is not a tool; it is our identity.”

**FNESC and FNSA Guide to Language Revitalization, 2023**

“Any time you’re on-the-land is an opportunity for language acquisition.”

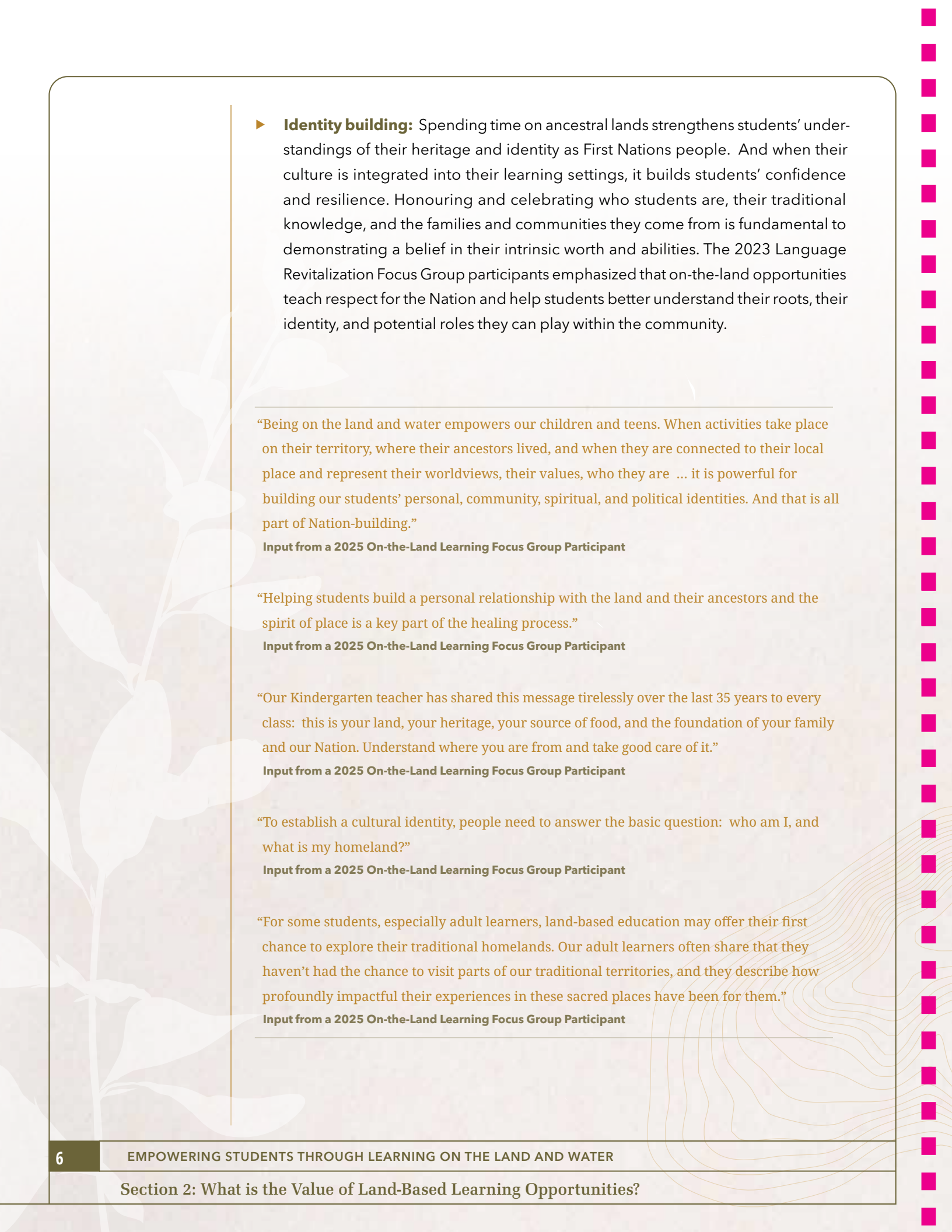
**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

“The more we participate in activities on-the-land, the more we are connected to our language. And the more we learn about the language, the stronger our connection to the land.”

**FNESC and FNSA Guide to Language Revitalization, 2023**

“When we go out for land-based learning, our focus is often on cultural activities. This helps people learn to be comfortable out there, not afraid, understanding that it is a safe place. Then language learning can be added.”

**FNESC and FNSA Guide to Language Revitalization, 2023**

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- **Identity building:** Spending time on ancestral lands strengthens students’ understandings of their heritage and identity as First Nations people. And when their culture is integrated into their learning settings, it builds students’ confidence and resilience. Honouring and celebrating who students are, their traditional knowledge, and the families and communities they come from is fundamental to demonstrating a belief in their intrinsic worth and abilities. The 2023 Language Revitalization Focus Group participants emphasized that on-the-land opportunities teach respect for the Nation and help students better understand their roots, their identity, and potential roles they can play within the community.

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“Being on the land and water empowers our children and teens. When activities take place on their territory, where their ancestors lived, and when they are connected to their local place and represent their worldviews, their values, who they are ... it is powerful for building our students’ personal, community, spiritual, and political identities. And that is all part of Nation-building.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

“Helping students build a personal relationship with the land and their ancestors and the spirit of place is a key part of the healing process.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

“Our Kindergarten teacher has shared this message tirelessly over the last 35 years to every class: this is your land, your heritage, your source of food, and the foundation of your family and our Nation. Understand where you are from and take good care of it.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

“To establish a cultural identity, people need to answer the basic question: who am I, and what is my homeland?”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

“For some students, especially adult learners, land-based education may offer their first chance to explore their traditional homelands. Our adult learners often share that they haven’t had the chance to visit parts of our traditional territories, and they describe how profoundly impactful their experiences in these sacred places have been for them.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

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- **Community building:** Shared experiences on the land can foster inter-generational knowledge transfer, bringing together Elders and young people to pass on skills and teachings. Land-based learning opportunities can connect people to shared memories and stories, and the science that First Nations have practiced for thousands of years. Land-based activities also connect students with other community members (especially Elders and Knowledge Keepers), which can help students be aware of and share their successes and talents, incorporate community knowledge into their growth and development, practice ways to honour the Nations' traditions and protocols, and listen to and respect the views of Elders and Knowledge Keepers, planting the seeds of reciprocity.

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“Our community embraces and appreciates the opportunities for our students to really experience our territory, so our land-based learning efforts help to build community connections and confidence in the school.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

“Collaborating with family members and having community representatives involved in land-based activities has innumerable benefits. When everyone is working together it creates unscripted teaching and learning; students get to see adults, who usually have different roles and jobs, socializing and working together with a common goal and getting things done. It shows protocols first-hand. It reinforces how people relate collectively.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

“If schools can incorporate land-based experiences into their ongoing operations, it makes the learning more exciting and relevant for everyone. This makes it a great teacher retention tool, too.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

“Many of our parents work in Natural Resources and are Guardians of the Land, and our students can share in their experiences: hunting, fishing, exploring the land, visiting traditional places. And when they do ... their pride and wonder are breathtaking!”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

- **Students' physical, mental and spiritual well-being:** Spending time in nature and connecting with the land are important for the physical, mental, social, and spiritual wellness of students and their families. Outdoor opportunities help reduce stress and anxiety. They provide a safe space for healing and they build the resilience of families and communities. Research shows that youth who have strong attachments to their culture and the land are less likely to commit suicide or become involved in gangs and violence. And when Elders are involved, land-based opportunities also offer a chance for Elders to share their wisdom and directly provide cultural and spiritual guidance to students, and for the Elders to enjoy time teaching and sharing their knowledge with the students.

"Land-based learning is beneficial for students' physical education and health. Too many kids are too sedentary. Being on the land and water is a great way to get students out and moving."

Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant

"We find that being outside together, walking with our students on our lands, is the most natural way for us to provide counselling – to talk, reflect, heal, and learn together."

Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant

"Playing in the Owl Trails almost daily has nurtured our students' resilience, problem solving, and love for being outside. Students building small shelters, making fires, and taking great care in all they do is healing: this is our paradise."

Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant

"Sometimes, simply 'being' in our traditional homelands serves as medicine and a way of learning. During some of our multi-day camping trips in our traditional territories, our adult learners expressed that their favourite moments occurred during the trip's scheduled 'downtime,' when students could rest, explore, and nurture their own meaningful connection to the land. Some chose to just sit and 'be' for hours."

Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant

- **Students' sense of belonging in school:** First Nations students must know that their schools, families, and communities are connected, and that their school honours and respects their community and culture. Both large and small cues in education settings can make a significant difference in whether students feel like they belong in the school. Belonging is the feeling that we're part of a learning community that values, respects, and cares for us, and to which we can contribute.

School-organized land-based learning opportunities can play a role in creating a learning environment that reflects and celebrates students and their communities. In this way, land-based activities build stronger student connectedness to school, which generally leads to higher student performance, greater motivation, safer learning spaces, improved student behaviour, lower school drop-out rates, and improved health outcomes. A positive sense of belonging can be preventative, protective, and restorative, and students who experience adversity or personal challenges often benefit from positive relationships even more than their peers.



- **Engagement in learning:** To promote student engagement and achievement, schools and learning activities should be relevant to and reflective of all students and their lives, and as much as possible learning activities should be meaningful and personal. On-the-land learning opportunities reflect students' lives and interests, and they are experiential and explorational. Land-based learning and teaching approaches provide opportunities for relevant, hands-on, and interactive learning that can engage and excite learners in ways that classroom-based learning may not.

As highlighted in a 2023 Focus Group Meeting on Promising Practices for Language Revitalization, on-the-land learning opportunities make it possible to deconstruct the classroom environment, and “allows our worldview to come through, rather than fitting learning into a classroom box.”

“The context of the classroom really limits the experiences that you have when you are speaking the language. It’s unnatural. It’s really important to be able to honour the language by having those true experiences.”

**FNESC and FNSA Guide to Language Revitalization, 2023**

“Land-based learning transforms the educational environment beyond the classroom, allowing students and educators to connect more authentically and encouraging opportunities for shared, collective learning as a school community.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

- **Environmental stewardship:** On-the-land learning can be used to reinforce to students that the land is not a resource. It helps students be aware of their place within, and their responsibility to, their territories and the wider world. Through land-based learning, First Nations students learn how to be good stewards of the land (how to hunt, fish, trap, and monitor the lands, waters, and species), and they can experience the importance of protecting the land and treating it with respect, as their ancestors did before them. This makes on-the-land learning an important form of environmental and climate change action.

“Land-based learning is not just doing things on the land. It is interacting with the land the way our ancestors did –not only for the “things” the land and waters gave them, but also for the knowledge and identity it provides us.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

“Our Water Unit explored our traditional routes on the water, as we passed ancient fish weir posts and visited an ancient traditional hand-made island: a spectacular time on the land and water.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

► **Empowerment and advocacy:** By deeply understanding and feeling a strong connection to their homelands, First Nations people are better equipped to advocate for land rights and environmental protections. On-the-land learning activities can help young people be part of a process for discussing and addressing First Nations governance, jurisdiction, and reconciliation. First Nations' place names and land-based activities powerfully signify the recognition and continued presence of First Nations' laws, history, governance and sovereignty that have existed since time immemorial, in keeping with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report, and the Commission's Calls to Action, which emphasize that the state has an obligation to provide an education that supports First Nations' rights.

**Food security, capacity and sovereignty** are also directly related to land and water rights and learning. Building knowledge and understandings is a key component of reviving First Nations' traditional food systems, processing, and resource management strategies. Food security is associated with greater quantities and improved quality of foods that are accessed in sustainable ways, which promotes community health and lasting positive socio-economic impacts.

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"Food is a manifestation of community and connectedness."

Jess Hausti (Land-based educator) cited on [www.truenorthaid.ca](http://www.truenorthaid.ca)

"Food brings comfort and stirs memory, encourages well-being, and drives tradition. It sustains income and ensures survival."

[www.truenorthaid.ca](http://www.truenorthaid.ca)

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► **Broadening awareness of First Nations rights:** There are also numerous benefits for non-Indigenous students who have opportunities to participate in land-based learning. These students will also find the activities engaging, interesting, and healing. Non-Indigenous students will learn more about First Nations peoples' traditions and contemporary realities, building allies and cross-cultural understandings. Land-based opportunities can lead to better environmental protections by changing all students' relationships with the land. On-the-land experiences can also provide opportunities for First Nations students to share their understandings and build pride and self-confidence, and for reducing barriers between students with various backgrounds.



Photo courtesy of Clayton Grice



A 2021 report by the UNESCO Canadian Commission, *Land as teacher: understanding Indigenous land-based education* (<https://en.ccunesco.ca>) states:

*Indigenous land-based education holds the potential to create a new generation of Canadian citizens that have never been seen before by immersing them in a respect-based worldview of the land from their earliest days. It's a positive example of what the future may hold as we try to tackle complex global environmental challenges.*

### VOICES OF FIRST NATIONS PARENTS

Participants in a 2025 First Nations Parents Club Conference were asked to share their thoughts about the benefits of on-the-land learning opportunities. This is what they said.

#### Land and water-based learning experiences ...

- ▶ provide opportunities for students to show their strengths.
- ▶ build interconnectedness and create healthy relationships.
- ▶ help students connect with their families and communities.
- ▶ promote self-identity, pride, self-discipline, confidence, self-sufficiency, and a sense of belonging / connection to where we come from.
- ▶ facilitate physical activity, better food choices, healthy living, and stronger bodies / minds / spirits.
- ▶ promote language and culture learning.
- ▶ pass down oral stories and histories and teach traditional roles.
- ▶ promote life skills.
- ▶ teach critical skills like harvest protocols, tool making, fishing, harvesting, setting traps ...
- ▶ introduce children to traditional foods.
- ▶ get students off-line and expand minds.
- ▶ teach students about our territories, traditional storytelling, medicines, permissions, protocols.
- ▶ teach land awareness and connect us with mother earth.
- ▶ create memories and promote gratitude.

## GOING TECH-FREE

A growing challenge in all education settings is students' increasing use of technology and devices.

Some students may be reluctant, or even refuse, to participate in on-the-land trips because it will limit their IT and internet access. Other students may face frustration when they are involved in a land-based experience and they miss their devices. Growing screen addictions is a widespread concern.

### What can help address this issue?

- ▶ Tell students ahead what they can expect. Be clear about whether they can bring their devices and whether they will be able to connect to the internet. Explain rules for screen time, such as how much they can use their devices and when.
- ▶ Acknowledge that their screen time will be limited, but emphasize all of the exciting and fun aspects of the trip. If relevant, have older students talk about how much they enjoyed similar opportunities – even without their devices.
- ▶ Think about which students are more likely to opt out of opportunities and invite them to take on leadership roles to encourage their involvement.
- ▶ Offer course credits, bonus credits, work experience credits for the experience ... find incentives.
- ▶ When on the trip, keep kids busy. When they are active and engaged, students will think about their devices less and less.

“When we go out, we are busy surviving on the land from dawn to dusk. At the end of the day, we have bonfires with marshmallows and hot dogs. We make our trips so well planned the students are always busy. They often forget about their screens when they are actively doing other things.

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

“Time on the land, learning traditional skills, provides balance to our children’s learning in a technologically overwhelming world.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

“A real challenge is dealing with device addiction. Many learners are resistant to land-based opportunities because of it. Getting them out can be difficult. Getting them used to their devices not working in some locations is difficult. We do find that once they are out and the activities begin, it is better – but breaking the addiction is difficult – sometimes for chaperones and staff, as well. They also need guidance about putting down devices to supervise and participate.”

**2024 Modular Course Focus Group Input**



## INDIGENOUS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

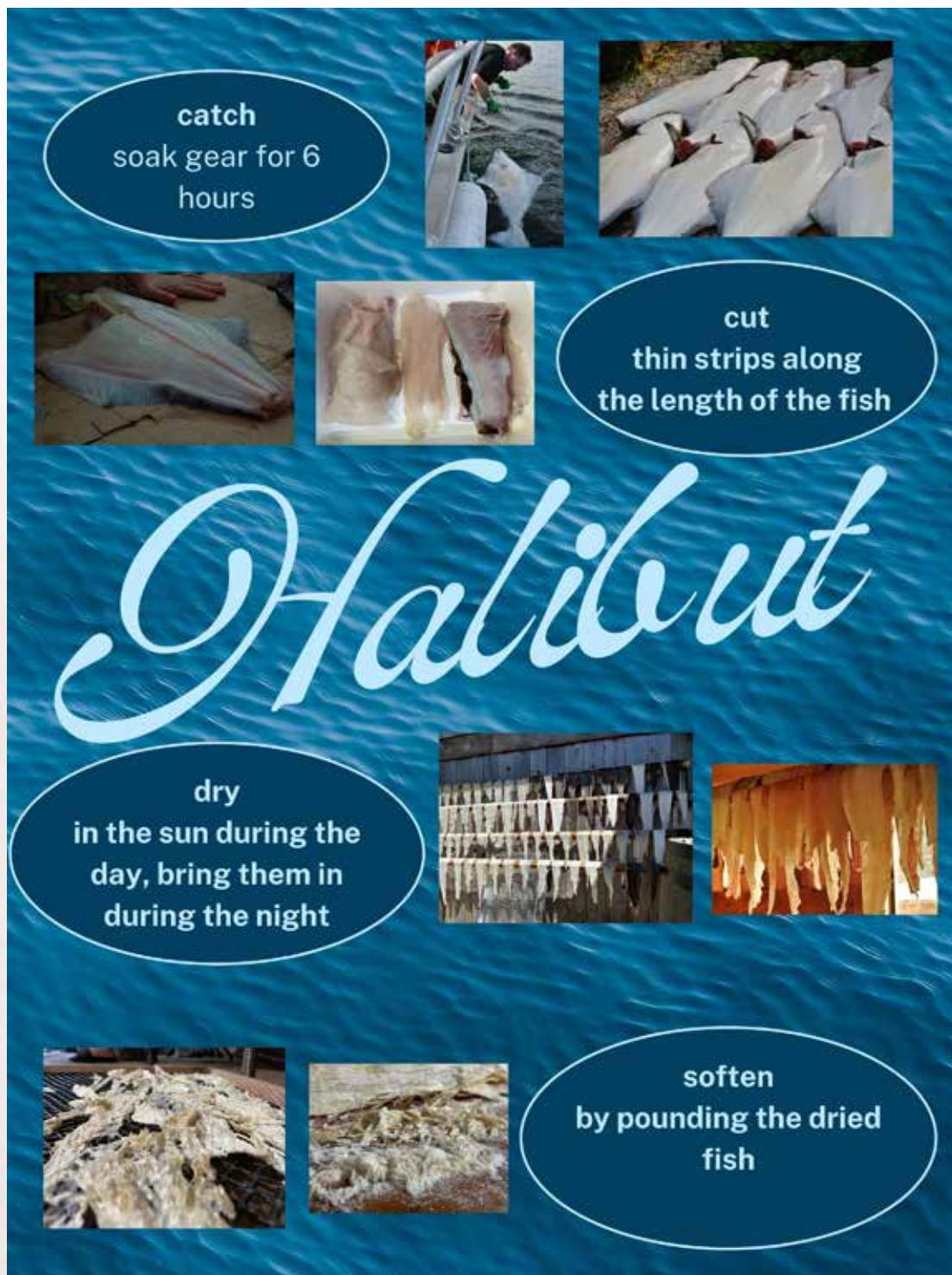
**Indigenous food sovereignty** is the ability of Nations to feed their own people on their own terms. It is the act of going back to our roots as Indigenous peoples and revitalizing traditional practices. It is related to First Nations' rights and is purposefully connected to hunting, fishing and gathering of food and medicine, and understanding the preparation and honouring of all food and medicine resources on our traditional territories.

**Students can learn about food sovereignty through topics such as ...**

- ▶ Trading and trade routes
- ▶ Cooking and preserving foods and medicines
- ▶ Hunting, trapping, fishing, harvesting and gathering on the land and water
- ▶ Growing food in gardens, greenhouses, on farms, food forests, indoors, using hydroponics, aquaponics
- ▶ Beekeeping
- ▶ Seed saving
- ▶ Composting and sustainable food production
- ▶ Sharing cultural foods and respecting local food producers and providers



Photos courtesy of Clayton Grice








## SECTION 3

# Planning a Land-Based Learning Opportunity



Outdoor activities – particularly those that take place at a site that is removed from the school – often require extra planning and additional supervisory and/or administrative support. Depending on school policies and the activities planned, a range of safety and contingency plans may be needed, and informed students consents and parental guardian consents are critical. (See Appendix One for a Sample Consent Form).

Some of the key considerations when planning an outdoor activity include:

- ▶ Protocols and permissions (see section 3.3)
- ▶ The size of the group and the adequate number of chaperones / supervisors
- ▶ How to accommodate students with exceptionalities and make opportunities accessible for individuals with mobility issues
- ▶ Scheduling (see 3.4)
- ▶ The necessary budget for the activity (see section 3.5)
- ▶ Safety and emergency response considerations (see section 3.6)
- ▶ Ensuring that students, staff and volunteers have the necessary equipment and clothing, and adequate food and water
- ▶ Transportation – of students, equipment, support personnel, volunteers / participants, etc.
- ▶ Necessary training for staff and/or students for the activities to be undertaken.

Every community and situation is different; it is important to take the time to consider what unique logistical challenges you need to address when implementing outdoor activities.



### 3.1 Choosing an Activity and Focus

When thinking about possible activities, there are a few considerations that may be helpful.

- ▶ What would relate to your school's mission or guiding principles? What are the founding statements that ground the opportunity?
- ▶ What are you hoping to achieve? What are your goals for the opportunity?
- ▶ What would your students find fun and interesting? What would spark their curiosity and engage them?
- ▶ What's feasible given available resources (people, time, funding, expertise ...)?

Clearly another fundamental issue when choosing an activity is the age of participating students. Age-appropriateness may be related to community traditions and protocols, students' learning capacity at differing stages of development, and, of course, safety considerations.

It is important to be realistic about what can be done, and to plan an opportunity that can be implemented given your capacity - time, staff availability, and funding. Starting small is very reasonable; being able to complete the project is most important. You also don't need to make all of the decisions about what you can manage at once. Some activities are straightforward, while some require more discussion and refinement.

**Plan and implement one step at a time, and build your comfort and confidence at a pace that works for your school community. Allow staff to grow and become comfortable leading student experiences outdoors, so they can develop their abilities to make larger opportunities happen in the future.**

If you are just beginning to integrate land-based learning activities into your curriculum, it may be beneficial to start with something simple. The following activities can be conducted with basic materials and are sometimes possible on or near the school grounds in a short period of time.

- ▶ Nature walks
- ▶ Berry-picking
- ▶ Culturally-themed scavenger hunts
- ▶ Ethnobotany projects (identifying / naming / describing plants and animals)
- ▶ Songs and storytelling outdoors
- ▶ Talking about the significance of traditional places while being outdoors together
- ▶ Sharing cultural teachings / protocols
- ▶ Talking about traditional foods and methods of preparation
- ▶ Wildlife observations
- ▶ Journaling about the experience of being on the land or water

The Walking Forward web site (<https://walkingforwardfp.weebly.com>) shares 30 walks with First Peoples perspectives, articulated by Nadine McSpadden and Heidi Wood, Indigenous Educators. The knowledge shared is rooted in their own learning through community and shared with permission. The walks are organized according to four themes that emerged from the First Peoples Principles of Learning. Most of the walks could be placed in multiple themes and demonstrate the interconnectedness of the learning.

If you are already working with Knowledge Keepers and/or educators who are familiar with traditional land-based practices, and if strong infrastructure and capacity to support land-based learning is available, more extensive projects and possibly multi-day camps may be possible.

At a 2023 Focus Group meeting on Promising Practices for Language Revitalization, participants discussed the difference between a school “visit” to a territorial site and an on-the-land activity that becomes a school “tradition.” If an on-the-land learning and teaching activity is intended to become a “tradition,” it must be built into the school’s annual schedule and budget planning, and there must be ongoing contact with staff and experts who can bring students on the land safely and effectively.

“If you do something just once, it is not a tradition, it is an event. A tradition is something you do at the same time of the year, each year, forever.”

Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant

“There are benefits that come from returning to specific places repeatedly, with the intention of building strong relationships with places of significance. Students can develop a deeper understanding of why the places they visit are important, and they can become experts on their own homelands.”

Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant

The topics that might be addressed through an on-the land learning opportunity are almost endless. Just a few examples identified by First Nation schools include:

- ▶ Trapping / hide-tanning
- ▶ Fishing / seafood / seaweed harvesting and processing
- ▶ Outdoor ceremonies
- ▶ Field trips to places of significance
- ▶ Drum making
- ▶ Teaching about traditional medicines
- ▶ Meat processing for a feast
- ▶ Nature walks
- ▶ Exploring the night sky
- ▶ Summer language learning camps
- ▶ Berry and mushroom picking
- ▶ Ethnobotany projects (identifying / naming / describing plants and animals)
- ▶ Songs / storytelling outdoors
- ▶ Teaching traditional place names
- ▶ Bark gathering
- ▶ Cedar harvesting
- ▶ Sharing cultural teachings / protocols
- ▶ Talking about traditional foods and preparations
- ▶ Paddle making
- ▶ Basket making
- ▶ Building a smokehouse
- ▶ Harvesting
- ▶ Canoe journeys
- ▶ Visits to archaeological sites
- ▶ Mapping and mapmaking
- ▶ Seasonal tourism impacts
- ▶ Shelter construction
- ▶ Horseback riding
- ▶ Ice fishing
- ▶ Survival skills (making fire, an emergency shelter ...)
- ▶ Wildlife safety
- ▶ Wildlife monitoring
- ▶ Invasive plant extraction
- ▶ Community gardening

Appropriate activities may differ according to participants' grade levels, and sequential learning goals can be identified for students of varying ages.

- ▶ For example, berry picking and purposeful walking trips can be appropriate for all grade levels, with more detailed plant and animal knowledge included as part of the experience for secondary students.
- ▶ Students can build their stamina, skills and situational awareness over time by expanding their participation in activities, such as walking vs walking 2 km vs walking 2 km in cold and snow vs walking 2 km in cold and snow in brush with ice on the ground. This highlights traditional and natural learning progressions and the hard work of completing tasks on traditional sites.

It is particularly important to carefully prepare for specific issues related to travel if the Nation extends across the border, requiring attention to necessary travel documents, health coverage for participants while outside of Canada (staff, students, and volunteers), etc. Indigenous exchanges are also becoming more common, and if trips will involve visiting the homelands of other Indigenous peoples internationally, similar issues will need to be addressed.



There are many ways to choose an on-the-land learning topic.

- ▶ You may want to create an advisory committee with Elders and Knowledge Keepers who can identify short-term projects, more extensive trips, and/or a schedule of seasonal activities that can be implemented each year.
- ▶ The school's Language and Culture Teacher may provide a list of land-based activities that are appropriate and will complement students' learning in the classroom. General classroom teachers can then align the ideas with their teaching and the learning standards, promoting cross-curricular opportunities.
- ▶ Students may be asked to share ideas for knowledge and skills they are especially interested in.

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"We pre-plan our activities collectively. Each year, our Language and Culture teacher shares their year-plan, and then helps classroom teachers come up with specific ideas for their classes that relate to their own plans and classroom content."

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

"Using 'backwards design' may help identify long-term activities. For example, we knew we were going to take students out on the land in the spring, so we planned preparatory activities throughout the school year. One activity was creating walking sticks. Students learned what types of wood to use, how to carve a stick, they decorated their walking sticks ... and then they used them for stability while we were hiking on the land in the spring. Or students might make their own snowshoes for a winter land-based experience. One group of high school students learned to make kayaks through a year-long course – culminating in a trip on the water at the end of the school year."

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

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"At the beginning of each year, I ask families and students what land- and water-based activities they would like us to offer. Later in the year, when we are implementing those activities, I can say: 'Remember when you said you were interested in this? Now we are doing it.' This gives students a stronger sense of ownership for their own learning. We use a similar approach for home-ec. I asked students for a list of what foods they want to learn to cook. I made a long list of those things. As we cook those foods, we tick them off ... and students get to see (and taste) that we are doing what they asked for. It promotes buy-in for learning."

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

- ▶ Families may be excited to contribute ideas for topics they think are relevant and important. They may also be willing to share their own skills and expertise through land-based learning activities.

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"Some families don't realize they are holding important knowledge that will benefit all students. We assure families they have the best understanding of their children and their needs. We encourage families to be involved in school activities, and we also encourage them to take their kids out of school for family harvesting, canning and smoking trips. But when we do, we ask parents to involve their kids in all aspects of the experience."

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

“Sometimes families allow our school to use their facilities, such as fish camps, seaweed camps, trapping camps, cookhouses ... for a variety of activities with students. Allowing us to access sites and facilities that already exist is invaluable. Ask and you may be surprised what is possible.”

Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant

#### SAMPLE ACTIVITIES SHARED BY FIRST NATION SCHOOLS

- ▶ *There are many activities and community engagement events that we hold during the school year to promote language and culture learning, including a yearly potlatch hosted by our students, a week-long school/community camping trip to a culturally significant location in our territory, gatherings at the Big House, etc.*
- ▶ *In the winter, our students go hunting and trapping, learning how each animal is dressed and how the different hides are prepared. The students do hands-on activities such as preparing food for winter, canning berries, fruit, salmon and moose meat, as well as learning the process of smoking the salmon and moose meat. They gather medicines, and learn how to sew moccasins, key chains, headbands, handbags, and change purses.*
- ▶ *Our outdoor education capacity continues to evolve and expand. There are increasing trips to our territories that are single day trips or multiday and overnight trips. Canoeing and water safety are opportunities of focus, as well as hiking, wilderness and survival skills, and all the cultural components that come along with this. Learning to live on the land is integrated with learning of the land as it relates to responsibilities for specific regions. To support this, an outdoor ed facilitator provided training, which included work with students and teachers, and also a leadership training with a small group of staff to teach the skills needed to work with youth on the territories. Students also participate in field trips that take them to neighboring communities to become familiar with regional relationships.*
- ▶ *Community members are invited to share their talents with our students. In our fish unit, students can experience how salmon is prepared for canning and smoking. The canned salmon is used for the students' lunch program so they can sample what they helped prepare, which is part of the teaching. The garden teacher teaches students about growing their own food on the land, from planting seeds to harvesting and all the care in-between. This year the students were taught how to make strawberry jam from strawberries grown by their own hands! Students will also learn how to make sauce from tomatoes grown from their garden and enjoy that in spaghetti served in the hot lunch program. This program has been a great success.*





# SETTING A HALIBUT GEAR



To set a halibut gear, you need to have anchors, weights, long line (skates), buoy lines, buoys, hooks, gaffs, knives, clubs, gangions and bait. You need to plan around the tides and the weather. You have to pack all the gear down to the setting spot an hour and a half before slack water. On the way out, you will bait the hooks. You will pick a setting spot that is flat and not too rocky on the bottom. We usually set off the beach where we throw our first anchor, buoy line and buoy over. Once it hits bottom, then we will set out the lines with someone passing gangions with baited hooks that are spaced apart, taking into consideration how many skates you have and how many hooks. When you finish with the hooks, you will add another anchor, buoy line and buoy; that way if something goes wrong you can pick up from either end of the gear. Before leaving it to soak for 6 hours, we check to see that it is not drifting or moving off the spot. After 6 hours we will pick up the gear. Some people pull by hand, some have a capstan puller, and others use a drum on a bigger boat. It's very dangerous, you can easily get hooked, knocked/pulled over, tangled, backlashes, falling on deck, or getting cut with a knife are just some of the dangers.

When we pick up the gear, we have a couple of people watching and ready to grab the hooks and the fish as they come to the surface, someone to club and bleed the fish, someone driving the boat and snapping the hooks closed for the next set, and someone coiling the skates. Once the gear is up, we will slowly head back as all the fish are cut and cleaned. Some of the catch will be used for fresh bait for the next sets, some will be meals, and halibut will be cut for freezing, drying, or canning.





## 3.2 Identifying a Team

Successfully planning, implementing, and assessing a land-based opportunity usually requires a team, including people who have a variety of roles and responsibilities. The size and composition of the team will necessarily vary, depending on the scope and nature of the activity. For example, nature walks likely will not require extensive collaboration, while annual, multi-day journeys will likely require significant input.

As highlighted by participants in the 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group, too often Language and Culture teachers are expected to plan and implement land-based experiences and events. Instead, all school staff can lead and contribute to the opportunities – which may require training and professional-development for staff who may need to build their confidence in this area.

The roles and responsibilities of the team should be clearly defined in order to avoid confusion and ensure that all requirements are met.

- ▶ For public schools, district staff may be available to help with land-based opportunities. District leadership may be involved in budgeting and planning. Staff of district Indigenous Education Departments may help lead and oversee experiences.
- ▶ The **school principal** is responsible for overseeing all school programming. In regard to on-the land learning, the principal will usually:
  - collaborate with everyone involved in the opportunity to enhance its success.
  - approve the plans, including the topic, how many credits will be offered, if applicable, and how the credits will be tracked.
  - approve the budget for the activity (and be prepared for unexpected expenses that might arise).
  - assist with logistical issues, such as scheduling, location, and purchasing of equipment.
  - confirm that appropriate safety precautions are in place, such as plans for student medical issues (e.g. epi pens, medications, ...), ensuring people involved with course delivery have necessary certifications / licenses, etc.
  - be attentive to policies and procedures (and potential liabilities), such as ensuring appropriate consents are in place (see Appendix One for a sample consent form).
  - inform relevant community departments / agencies about course activities (e.g. tell the clinic that students are going on a field trip, or inform the public works department that is responsible for emergency response ...).
  - ensure there are effective back-up plans, as the unexpected can – and often will – happen (cancellations, travel problems, illness, accidents, weather issues, etc.).

“It is important for the principal to make it clear that they will be monitoring the development and implementation of the opportunity, making suggestions and helping with changes as needed. And lay out the ground rules from the start. Explain the expectations and consequences at the beginning. Try to avoid any misunderstandings or surprises.”

**2024 Modular Course Focus Group Input**

- Ideally, an **activity lead** or coordinator should be selected to help plan and implement the opportunity, and one or more *educators* should help align the learning with the curriculum and should help assess student learning. In some circumstances, the principal, Language and Culture teacher, or another educator may be the lead. In school districts, an Indigenous Education staff member may be the lead. In many cases, the activity lead will work collaboratively with Elders or Knowledge Keepers on the planning and implementation of the opportunity. If possible, a school may add an on-the-land learning coordinator position, possibly hiring a graduate from their school to fill this role.

In any case, the activity lead should:

- carefully plan the opportunity, including making time for meetings and discussing the plans with other team members.
- ensure that the activities are aligned with the Learning Standards, and that appropriate assessment and reporting of student learning have been planned (see sections 3.6, 3.7, and 3.8)
- ensure there will be effective supervision and management of students in the learning activities.
- consistently update the principal and School Governing Authority or district staff, if relevant, as the planning unfolds, including providing information about the budget and spending, any scheduling issues that arise, travel plans (if relevant), needed materials, etc.
- be attentive to and encourage student attendance.
- make *and confirm* all travel arrangements.
- identify and follow all safety protocols, such as addressing student health and medication needs, providing for the safe inclusion of students with physical and learning exceptionalities, planning for consistent communications (e.g. using walkie talkies, being prepared for cell phone service disruptions, etc.), being prepared for all weather conditions / potential changes, etc.

- remind experts to go “slow and steady;” i.e. help experts who are not trained teachers understand how to effectively engage students so they enjoy and benefit from the course experience.

A key role of the principal and activity lead is ensuring that all necessary permission forms, contact information, etc. are gathered and readily available when needed. Staff should have on-hand information about students’ allergies, medications, parent or caregiver / emergency contact information, student medical numbers, etc. It can be useful to hold a final meeting or dinner with all team members a few days ahead of the trip to review all plans and preparations.

- While educators have expertise related to teaching and instruction, and First Nations language teachers have expertise in language and in education, not all language teachers are experts on the BC curriculum and not all regular classroom teachers are experts in traditional land-based practices. As a result, some educators who may want to integrate land-based learning into their teaching may be intimidated to do so. Forming relationships with **Elders and other Knowledge Keepers** who can share their traditional expertise and skills can help bridge this gap.

Additionally, land-based opportunities provide an excellent chance to work with other experts and professionals, such as scientific teams, archeologists, etc. who are working in and around the community.

If the opportunity will involve one or more experts (e.g. Elders, Knowledge Keepers, etc.), they may be invited to work with the principal and lead to help schedule, plan, and organize the opportunity, including identifying necessary materials and an appropriate location. The expert(s) can:

- help teach students the relevant skills and knowledge.
- provide feedback to students and possibly help promote student self-assessment and reflection on their growth.
- help outline and confirm necessary resources prior to the activity.
- help plan for daily routines (i.e., set up, safety precautions, wrap-up routines, equipment and resource storage, etc.).
- help ensure that the activity aligns with community protocols for respecting the Nation’s language and culture, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers.



“If you have people who have relevant knowledge to share, you can do this!”

Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant

- **Other support people** may also be involved with planning and implementation, such as chaperones, volunteers, education assistants, personal assistants, staff of other community departments, including guardians, conservation and fisheries officers, etc.

The roles and responsibilities of these support people should be clarified and communicated to ensure that everyone feels comfortable with the expectations and to help make the experience a success.

Land-based opportunities can encourage meaningful participation from all kinds of volunteers and community staff. But it is important for the principal and project lead to be attentive to the school's policies and procedures related to criminal record checks for all adults who will be involved with students. FNEC and FNSA have prepared a Criminal Record Check Pamphlet for First Nation Schools with more information. See [www.fnsa.ca](http://www.fnsa.ca).

- **Students** can also be involved as much as possible. The more opportunities students have to take the lead, the more ownership they feel over their learning experiences, and the more likely they are to want to do well. When students are invited to share their ideas and opinions, we're telling them that we value who they are and what they think. Providing students with leadership experiences builds their capacity to communicate confidently and advocate for themselves.

When learners are active participants in their own growth, they can become their own teachers. They become more aware of their gifts and areas for further development, thereby better understanding and developing their own identity as learners. Knowing their strengths and challenges helps students understand how they can grow and contribute – to their families, communities, and their land and the environment. Evidence suggests that when students have an active role in their learning, they learn to set and achieve goals, develop greater independence, and graduate more often.

Feeling useful and needed also contributes to students' willingness to build relationships and engage confidently in school. When children and youth are given chances to provide support and help others, their well-being and self-identity improve. Land-based activities provide perfect opportunities for students to meaningfully practice their leadership skills and see first-hand how they can influence positive change.

Further, students' contributions to the organization and implementation of land-based opportunities can be connected to the learning standards and credits for students, and linked to potential work experience opportunities, peer tutoring, or Career-Life Connections and Career-Life Education courses.

“Everything that we do, we always involve youth – even as young as twelve years old, if they’re willing to work. That way, they already have this idea that they are part of a bigger team.”

**FNESC and FNSA Guide to Language Revitalization, 2023**

- On-the-land learning opportunities provide especially meaningful opportunities to be innovative and involve **families** as co-planners, volunteers, and participants. As such, they can build stronger family-school connections – a fundamental aspect of school and student success.

A wealth of evidence shows that strong school-family relationships produce multiple benefits for students, including higher grade point averages and test scores, better attendance, enrollment in more challenging courses, improved social skills, and improved behaviour at home and at school. When families are visible within the school, students understand that their families value learning and feel a stronger attachment to their learning.

On-the-land learning represents an exciting way to involve families in helping to organize, supervise, and lead activities, sharing their time and showcasing their special skills and talents – and reinforcing to students that their learning matters to everyone. Parental and family involvement can be encouraged by offering honoraria for parent volunteers, or providing gas cards for families who will transport themselves to the site of the activity.

“Invite parents to every event and cultural activity you offer. When students see their families in their school, they feel school is more connected to their lives and their experiences.”

**2024 Attendance Counts Workshop Participant Feedback**

“Our Nation is so supportive of this type of education, that people who work for the Nation are provided two weeks of paid cultural leave for on-the-land learning. Every community is different and can help in different ways. The key is to be creative.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

First Nations parents and families have also expressed their perceptions about the value of on-the-land learning. When asked what can help encourage student attendance, participants in a Parents Workshop stated: “Implement programs and activities that help students feel excited about attending school, including: language and culture activities; more on-the-land opportunities; ... activities “kids don’t want to miss.”

## Program Team Sample Worksheet

OPPORTUNITY

DATES

OVERVIEW

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

ROLE / CONTRIBUTIONS

CONTACT INFO AND NOTES

PROGRAM STAFF

EXPERTS / GUESTS / VOLUNTEERS

COMMUNITY AGENCIES

STUDENT LEADERS

FAMILY MEMBERS



### 3.3 Respecting Protocols and Community Approval Processes

A key component in selecting and planning an activity is ensuring that proper protocols and approval processes are followed by everyone involved. For example, it may be necessary to ensure that Chief and Council supports learning opportunities that relate to the exercise of First Nations rights to their lands and resources. It is vital to collaborate with the Nation and share the dates and plans for activities, and to check about any possible restrictions – such as campfire bans, etc.

For some activities it may be necessary to acquire appropriate permissions for access to lands and cultural sites and for knowledge sharing. School Governing Authorities may provide advice or approval in some cases.

- ▶ There may be protocols for finding, being around, or handling artifacts, culturally modified trees, etc.
- ▶ Some communities may have specific protocols for handling animals that have been trapped or fish that have been caught.
- ▶ There could be considerations related to acceptable roles and responsibilities for community members of different ages, etc.
- ▶ Students may need to learn about appropriate land acknowledgements, knowing where territorial boundaries begin and end, and respectfully requesting permission to undertake activities on someone's land.
- ▶ Teaching place names and the importance of specific sites within the traditional territory may be associated with particular meanings or teachings that should be understood.
- ▶ Elders and Governance may need to be consulted if significant images or stories will be used.

It is important to check with Elders or community leaders to ensure that appropriate protocols are understood and followed – recognizing varying considerations for different families or clans. Advanced planning and permissions are crucial.

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*“If a land-based program is well established, you can take students to a deeper level of understanding. Involve the students in research in the community about appropriate practices and protocols.”*

**FNESC and FNSA Guide to Language Revitalization, 2023**

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*“We are reintroducing our children to our family’s traditional use area. We explain how it has been handed down through the generations. We explain our spiritual connections. We make sure they get the feel of the land, the smell of it ... we teach them the history of the land. That is important for all children.”*

**FNESC and FNSA Guide to Language Revitalization, 2023**

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“We have a huge map of place-names in the hallway of our school. It was created [when] Elders came together and created a place-name map, to claim the extent of their territory. ... We can explore and learn about literally hundreds of place names. They all have realms of significance from the sacred to practical. ... Elders and several other knowledgeable community members culturally inform learning experiences through the telling of traditional history as well as the stories and teachings associated with the place.

Elders and guest speakers are provided a suggested list of questions that can be used to guide the experience:

- What does the place name mean?
- Are there stories connected to the place? What is its history?
- How can we interpret the place name today?

In addition, sustainability factors are discussed and questions might include: How did the ancestors live sustainably with this place? How can we live sustainably in place again? With sustainability as the focus, we ask questions related to housing, food security, water, energy, and waste management.”

**WSÁNEĆ School Board and Tye Swallow, 2018**

Additionally, planning to follow important protocols may include identifying any appropriate honoraria / thank you gifts and providing proper acknowledgment for everyone who contributes to the opportunity. It is important to offer Elders and Knowledge Keepers who are helping with the activity appropriate compensation for sharing their skills and understandings with students. In some communities, it is customary to give Elders gifts that include cash honoraria when they share their time and expertise, but some educators report that this protocol may not always align with standard administrative procedures. It is critical to understand the Nation’s perspective to ensure you are respecting established protocols for compensating language and culture experts who support school efforts.

### **Additional Considerations for Involving Elders**

Not every activity will require that Elders are active participants. As described by the Language Revitalization focus group members, in some communities there are very few Elders available to participate in language work, and they should not be overburdened; it is important to be aware of the possibility of fatigue, and determine the best ways to mitigate those risks. You may want to consider whether each activity is the best use of the Elders’ time, or whether their attention would be best spent on other types of language projects. For example, some communities decide that Elders, as mother tongue speakers, should focus on language documentation projects that can then be used to develop educational resources. It is critical to understand your community’s priorities and be attentive to these issues, as Elders may overcommit due to their passion for language and culture transmission.

Sensitivity to Elders’ past experiences is also important - which includes being mindful of the suitability of all Elders for all learning settings. It is also important to remember that the safety and well-being of students in the learning program is paramount, and not everyone is the right fit for a role that involves direct interactions with children.

“You really need to be protective of the Elders’ time. You have got to make sure that everybody knows that if they are going to do this, then they are joining an Elder who is really serious, and they need to mirror that.”

**FNESC and FNSA Guide to Language Revitalization, 2023**

“We need to remember patience and respect, and consider Elders’ lives. If necessary, we adapt our activities to meet their needs. We also need to understand the significant responsibilities of Elders and Knowledge Keepers outside of school. They are responsible for ceremonies, funerals, gatherings ... those take time and energy, and they can take an emotional toll, as well. We need to accommodate this, have back-up plans, so we can pivot when needed.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

If Elders will be involved in an opportunity, a key consideration is ensuring that students are well prepared to interact with Elders in hospitable and respectful ways so that they are ready for the knowledge being shared. Respecting an Elder means learning about and following appropriate etiquettes and traditional protocols, honouring their important role, and valuing the knowledge and time they are sharing.

“Sometimes I create a lesson for my students before an Elder visits, which includes information about social structures and the traditional name and biography of the Elder.”

**FNESC and FNSA Guide to Language Revitalization, 2023**

The health and safety of Elders is vital. Some Elders may have reduced mobility or limited stamina, and this needs to be taken into account when planning for programs that require physical activity. Working with Elders requires responding to their needs and feelings, including giving them space and allowing them to talk about issues in ways that are safe and comfortable for everyone involved.

“Safety is a challenge with involving Elders. That’s why having accessible activities is important.”

**FNESC and FNSA Guide to Language Revitalization, 2023**

It is important to maintain good communications so Elders feel informed and ready for the activities they will be supporting. For example, it is beneficial to talk to Elders about the goals and intended outcomes of learning activities so they feel included and able to contribute in the best ways possible. It is also critical to confirm their availability and the schedule for all activities more than once, to ensure they are still able to take part as expected. Also, a designated staff member should accompany the Elder, assisting with coffee and water refills, navigating to and from the washroom, entering and exiting vehicles, and providing any other supports as needed.



## Sample Elder Involvement Checklist

Elders are often an integral part of land-based learning, but they must be appropriately honoured and respected. This checklist is meant to help you consider important aspects of including Elders in on-the-land activities. All items may not apply in every context, and there are blank spaces in each section to include extra applicable items for each community and specific activity.

### CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

- ☐ Have you consulted with the Elder about the goals and design of the activity?
- ☐ Have you reviewed expectations for language, knowledge, and other sharing in a timely way?
- ☐ Have you communicated enough logistics about the activity (e.g., time, what you think will happen in the activity, number of students to be involved, etc.)?
- ☐ Have you confirmed the activity with the Elder shortly beforehand?
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### COMPENSATION

- ☐ Are you following community protocols for compensating Elders?
- ☐ Have you received administrative approval for the compensation?
- ☐ Have you organized the logistics for compensation (e.g., cash honorarium, gifts, etc.)?
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### COMFORT

- ☐ Have you scheduled the activity at a time that is convenient for the Elder?
- ☐ Have you confirmed that all aspects of the activity are safe and feasible for the Elder?
- ☐ Have you arranged transportation for the Elder?
- ☐ Have you arranged for support staff or translators to assist the Elder, if needed?
- ☐ Have you planned for breaks and refreshments?
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### CULTURAL PROTOCOLS

- ☐ Have you identified someone to greet the Elder, bring them to the site, and escort them home?
- ☐ Have you prepared students to interact with the Elder respectfully?
- ☐ Have you taught students the relevant protocols of your Nation?
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### 3.4 Scheduling the Activities

One of the most important considerations in planning on-the-land activities is scheduling.

- ▶ A key consideration for everyone involved with organizing an on-the-land opportunity is ensuring adequate time is made available for all of the work involved. Rushing or planning at the last minute can increase the possibility of problems or risks.
- ▶ Not only is adequate time and attention needed for effective planning; adequate time may be needed to prepare the site, ensure consents are in place, make required arrangements, coordinate with other community agencies (if relevant), gather the necessary supplies, etc. It is important to identify who will perform these tasks and when – without staff having to spend too much of their free time making the activity happen.
- ▶ Scheduling activities might also depend on factors such as other important community events, the schedule of any synchronous online / Connected Classrooms courses students are taking, the availability of school staff, including EAs, etc.
- ▶ Unexpected circumstances continually arise – unplanned community events, travel difficulties, weather delays ... The principal and activity lead may need to find ways to ensure the learning opportunity remains a priority and activities are rescheduled, if needed. Not implementing a planned activity can leave everyone disappointed – staff, experts, volunteers, and especially students.
- ▶ Land-based learning also requires considering the traditional and seasonal timing of activities, as well as the right environmental conditions.

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“Changes in the climate mean we will have to adapt sometimes. Forest fires mean we have to be more adaptable. Some seasons, berries aren’t there when we would normally harvest them. But talking about these changes with students is important learning.”

2024 Modular Course Focus Group Input

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- If relevant, the availability of the participating experts is a primary consideration, and the number of students to be involved and the types of activities that are planned may also impact scheduling decisions.

“When scheduling, one of our first considerations is the needs and comfort of Elders who will be helping with the opportunities.”

**2024 Modular Course Focus Group Input**

“We have to schedule opportunities according to weather, tides, and the availability of participants and family volunteers.”

**2024 Modular Course Focus Group Input**

Depending on the nature of the experience, it may have little impact on the school’s regular schedule, or it may have a significant impact. Several First Nation schools in BC have planned the school calendar to focus on in-school learning 4 days each week, to allow one day for on-the-land learning activities. This approach emphasizes to the school community that land-based learning is a priority.

Other schools have extended their calendars, beginning before September and continuing after June, with longer breaks during the school year. In that way, students are in school for the same length of time; school is just in session in different periods of the year in order to incorporate more seasonal activities into the curriculum.

There are, of course, significant challenges associated with school calendar adaptations. Change is always difficult to accept, and for parents who have children attending multiple schools, varied schedules could cause difficulties in terms of childcare and/or vacation scheduling. In addition, some teachers may be concerned about losing their lengthy summer break. Recognizing such challenges, schools could consider altering their calendar incrementally—such as starting school a week or two early and possibly extending the school year and/or increasing the breaks during the winter and spring accordingly. Making small adaptations can allow parents, students, and teachers to gradually determine their comfort with an altered calendar. Using other project funding to implement summer opportunities may be another way to experiment with adjusted learning time.

It may also be helpful to share with families some of the other potential benefits of an adapted calendar. For example, some evidence suggests that shortening the summer break helps to maintain learning over the summer (i.e. avoid summer learning loss) and eliminate the amount of review required each fall, which is an attractive benefit for many educators and families. Longer breaks at various times of the year may also reduce student and teacher burn-out and reduce the exhaustion often felt at the end of June.



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“We tell our teachers to do their planning so they can meet the learning standards within the timeframe of four days a week so we allow time for land-based learning. That way staff understand that language and culture learning is a priority that we plan around, rather than a superficial or supplemental activity. We need to reframe thinking.”

**FNESC and FNSA Guide to Language Revitalization, 2023**

“It is useful to think about how to match the calendar of the school with the calendar of nature. We need to incorporate seasonality into learning opportunities and our structures.”

**FNESC and FNSA Guide to Language Revitalization, 2023**

“Some teachers instinctually do course and unit planning according to the seasons. In other cases, we need to help staff be intentional about matching seasonal rounds.”

**2024 Modular Course Focus Group Input**

“We use a seasonal round calendar to identify yearly activities, such as our blueberry picking camps, our Orange Shirt Day events .... It also helps simplify our planning and administrative procedures. When things happen regularly, we can create routines and materials for those things, allowing us to focus on improvement and build on what we are doing over time.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

“Can we shift from wedging language and culture into the curriculum, to identifying our language and culture and seasonal learning, and fitting the curriculum into that?”

**2024 Modular Course Focus Group Input**

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**See Appendix Seven for a sample seasonal rounds plan.**

### Sample Scheduling Tool

	LEARNING FOCUS	DAY-LONG ACTIVITIES	MULTI-DAY TRIPS	SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY EVENTS
JULY		Water craft and safety training	Canoe to Old Fort	Old Fort Gathering
AUGUST	Salmon fisheries	Fish camp: all grades day trip Community gathering	Fish camp for middle schoolers	
SEPTEMBER				
OCTOBER				
NOVEMBER				
DECEMBER				
JANUARY				
FEBRUARY				
MARCH				
APRIL				
MAY				
JUNE				

# Gitga'at Seasonal Rounds





### 3.5 Preparing the Budget

Clearly, budgeting for a land-based activity is an important consideration. For First Nation schools, First Nations Language and Culture Grants allocated by FNEC and FNSA would be an appropriate source of funding for on-the-land learning. First Nations may also be able to provide supplemental funding to help.

Some of the items that might be considered in developing a budget – depending on the type of experience and delivery approach – include:

- ▶ Program coordination fees, if relevant
- ▶ Fees for project development, if the scope requires significant planning
- ▶ Honoraria for Elders, Knowledge Keepers, families, volunteers, etc.
- ▶ Honoraria or fees for other experts / people to help with transportation (e.g. bus or boat operators)
- ▶ Travel expenses (such as bus, boat charter, fuel, related insurance, gas cards for staff, volunteers, and families who will transport themselves, etc.)
- ▶ Food costs (e.g. bag lunches for day trips, or meals for longer outings)
- ▶ Equipment, materials and supplies, including necessary clothing and footwear
- ▶ Fees and wages for experts
- ▶ Learning materials
- ▶ Training
- ▶ Related community events
- ▶ Rental costs for facilities

The principal and School Governing Authority or district staff, as relevant, should be fully informed of all planned expenses – and should be notified immediately if unexpected expenses arise. The principal is also usually responsible for establishing any contracts related to implementation.

The principal, activity lead, and experts should discuss the purchase of any necessary specialty equipment, technology, supplies, and resources. It is important to plan for purchases well in advance to have everything ready when the activity begins. An inventory list of the equipment and materials can be created, so the items can be appropriately tracked, stored, and made available for future use; having a list of what has been purchased can help reduce costs of future projects.

It is also useful to consider the availability of video recording equipment and cameras. It is important to document exciting activities – to celebrate, capture, and share evidence of student learning. When students are involved in the documentation, it is an added learning opportunity.

“For all of our school’s major field trips and special projects I tell the staff – don’t forget to take photos and get quotes and feedback from the kids. Ask them what they liked. Capture their experiences. We can share and use that invaluable information – highlighting what our school is doing.”

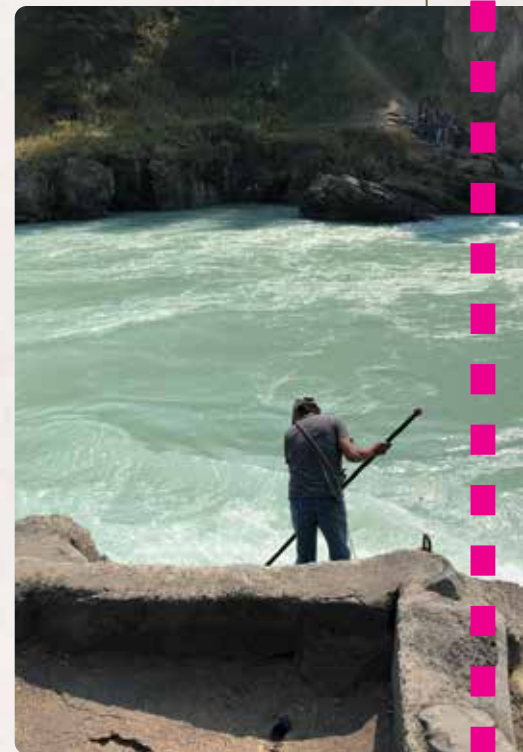
**2024 Modular Course Focus Group Input**

“We send out newsletters that have pictures showing our students doing exciting, important learning activities, such as on-the-land opportunities. The families appreciate it; they love seeing their children and teens looking happy, having fun, doing things they enjoy. It makes the whole community feel positive about the school.”

**2024 Attendance Counts Workshop Participant Feedback**

“We always make sure someone on staff can do videography and record our experiences. This maintains a thread from year-to-year and helps us build momentum over time. It also supports students’ reflections on the experience after it is over. Students can be involved in documenting and editing footage, which is a great opportunity for them to earn credit. They can learn to add captions in English and in our language. These skills can lead to employment opportunities.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**



Photos courtesy of Clayton Grice

### 3.6 Planning for Safety

“Communicate, communicate, communicate. Update families and the community about what is happening – if things are going well, everything is happening as expected, or if anything has changed and you are adapting your plans accordingly. Put announcements on the school web site if you can, such as: ‘everything is going well and these are the exciting things we are doing.’”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

While each experience will vary significantly in terms of the scope of safety considerations, planning should always involve careful attention to any necessary safety guidelines and to documenting what steps are taken to reduce risk. Activities should always be age- and ability-appropriate. They should also be designed with both physical and emotional safety in mind. For example, young children might need their parents to accompany them, or some students may need to connect with their parents virtually if they become homesick. Addressing students’ emotional needs may impact on budget planning and decisions about communication options.

**If experts are involved in designing and implementing the activity, they will be an excellent source of information about related safety issues and precautions. Community Knowledge Keepers can be invaluable in helping to identify potential safety concerns and precautions.**

It is important to find a suitable site for the opportunity and to visit the actual location for the activity before taking your group there, even if is local. Find the easiest access points, note any unique features, such as big trees, to serve as boundaries and gathering places, and look for open areas for games. Write clear directions to the site for everyone who will be driving there. Consider how students who have exceptionalities can be accommodated. Determine the restroom options; adult learners and Elders value knowing ahead whether there will be flushing toilet facilities, outhouses, or if more natural methods will be necessary, and it is useful to outline the distance to restrooms in case any participants have mobility challenges.

If any preparations for or components of the activity will take place indoors, that location must also be considered carefully. The floor space should be large enough and configured to accommodate the number of people participating, with enough room for participants to safely move around, free from tripping hazards or other obstacles. The space must have proper ventilation, and adequate time should be spent preparing the location prior to beginning work.



## Sample Supply List

ACTIVITY	
DATES	
Attention getter (whistle, drum, rattle, etc. to get students' attention if needed)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pads to sit on	<input type="checkbox"/>
Butterfly clip boards if students will be writing notes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Large zip lock bags for written notes (in case of rain) or for collected items (if relevant)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Large garbage bags / inexpensive rain covers for unexpected showers / weather changes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name tags to match the activity (e.g. leaf shaped, fish shaped, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Magnifying glasses, binoculars, dip nets, buckets, small clear containers, weather instruments ... as needed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunscreen, water, and snacks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Camera / phones to take pictures or video	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walkie talkies / satellite phones, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
First aid supplies (appropriate for the location and scope of the activity)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety equipment, such as guns, knives, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>

The range of safety considerations will vary depending on the site and activities. Preparation for weather conditions, adequate communication devices in the event of an emergency, protection from hazards, boat safety equipment and devices, etc. may be necessary. Depending on the activity and ages of students, learning to be on the land or on the water may require training for motorbike and quad safety, boat safety, gun safety and certification .... Proper safety instructions should be incorporated into the learning – possibly planned and delivered collaboratively with the experts as part of an orientation for students and, if relevant, volunteers. Some schools have found it useful to collaborate with the RCMP on safety issues for the preparation and implementation of land-based experiences.

Students may also learn valuable safety and survival skills by participating in activities such as orienteering ... the sport of navigation. Students can be involved in orienteering from a relatively young age, gradually building their map-reading skills from exploring the school grounds to navigating remote terrain.

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“Staff and students can take certification trainings together. There is nothing more gratifying than taking a course with your students so you are all learning alongside each other.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

“These activities are really exciting, which sometimes means the kids don’t think about potential dangers. I’ve had to cancel a trip because students wouldn’t take the safety precautions seriously. We have to instill a “safety first” mentality in the kids. We need to demonstrate that their safety is our first priority.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

“Take advantage of teachable moments – when things change and students see how adults react to unexpected circumstances. Debrief how you handled things – what you did right, and what you did wrong. For example, we were at a fishing camp with kids, and I chased a bear out of our camp in the middle of the night because it was stealing our fish. After, I had to talk to the kids about whether that was really a good way to handle the problem. I confessed it was probably not the best idea, and we were able to discuss better ways to deal with situations like that.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

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## Additional Suggestions Related to Safety

- ▶ Think about “what if” scenarios. Prepare, prepare, prepare. Be extra cautious; don’t imagine how you might respond IF something happens; know what you will do WHEN something happens. Ask yourself ... have we done everything we can in case something goes wrong.
- ▶ Be as transparent as possible with parents about all aspects of the activities and be explicit about potential risks – which should be embedded in permission slips. Be honest about the fact that being on the land and water, even in a well-planned and supervised environment, has associated dangers. A clear, point form list will ensure informed consent from parents and students.
- ▶ Provide alternatives for students who do not participate, being deliberate about how they will gain the relevant knowledge, skillset, or learning standards if they are unable or unwilling to participate. Although full participation is ideal, it may not always be possible.
- ▶ Communicate regularly with the school principal and School Governing Authority or district staff, as relevant; keep them informed throughout the planning and implementation about all safety considerations. And think about what methods will work in all conditions – cell phones, VHF radios, walkie-talkies, Starlink, etc. Buying a satellite phone or SPOT device can be a worthwhile investment.
- ▶ Provide a detailed agenda for travel / field trips taking place; the principal and community / district staff must know where you will be, when. And reach out if things change.
- ▶ As needed, incorporate relevant training into the experience – for students or staff – or offer mini-versions of these trainings.
- ▶ Think about the safety and comfort of students, but also teachers, other school staff, volunteers, etc. Remember that employers have obligations related to workplace safety, such as:
  - Ensure the health and safety of workers at a worksite.
  - Eliminate hazardous workplace conditions.
  - Ensure that workers are aware of all health and safety hazards to which they are likely to be exposed in their work.
  - Establish occupational health and safety policies and programs.
  - Provide, and maintain in good condition, protective equipment and clothing as required and ensure that these are used by all workers.
  - Provide workers with the information, instruction, training, and supervision necessary to ensure their health and safety.
  - Ensure that workers are aware of their safety rights and duties.
- ▶ Ensure transportation vehicles are in good condition, and bus drivers / boat operators are safe, skilled, and adequately insured.
- ▶ Be prepared for tides, changing weather, water conditions, etc.
- ▶ Consider potential liabilities and insurance needs, involving the community, principal, or school district leadership as relevant to ensure there is adequate coverage for school transportation and emergencies.





Photos courtesy of Clayton Grice (left) and Garry Klugie, Lake Babine Nation (right)

- ▶ Determine the insurance requirements for adults who will be using their own vehicles.
- ▶ Ensure adequate adult supervision, depending on the nature of the activities.
- ▶ Provide all required equipment (e.g. safety glasses, lifejackets, proper boots, headphones, helmets, compasses, warm weather gear, etc.)

## Sample Certification Checklist

ACTIVITY		
DATES		

CERTIFICATION	COST	WHO WILL ARRANGE IT
FoodSafe		
First Aid (basic or wilderness first aid)		
Chainsaw operations		
Swiftwater safety / boat safe		
Drone / radio operations		
Dive training		
Bear / moose / wildlife awareness		
Gun safety (e.g. Canadian Firearms Safety Course)		
Knife safety		
Other:		
Other:		
Other:		

### Sample Safety Considerations Checklist

ACTIVITY	
DATES	
We have arranged for adequate supervision	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have discussed the plans and behaviour expectations with students, volunteers, Knowledge Keepers, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have appropriate consent forms	<input type="checkbox"/>
We held a meeting with parents to explain the experience and what to expect	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have adequate safety / first aid equipment and training	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have adequate communication devices	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have talked to students about what to bring / pack	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have a defined itinerary that we have left with the school / band office, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have checked all equipment / machinery / transportation to ensure it is in good working condition	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have all relevant health information for all participants (health cards, information about health conditions / allergies, etc., emergency contact information)	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have an emergency procedures plan / we are prepared to handle a serious injury or illness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety equipment, such as guns, knives, etc. is available.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>

More information about safety considerations and risk management is included in Appendix Three.



## Additional Suggestions for Planning a Land-Based Learning Opportunity

- ▶ It is important to schedule adequate time for the team involved to meet and plan the opportunity. Time should be taken to ensure the teacher and expert have a shared understanding of the schedule, needed materials, learning activities, logistics of the activities, safety considerations, etc. These details should then be communicated clearly to the principal – providing updates as needed.
- ▶ When planning, prepare students for on-the-land activities by implementing related classroom activities. Explain the purpose of the activity. Review expectations for behaviour and safety considerations, and any other protocols that may pertain to the field trip. Practice safety skills, and involve students in deciding some of the rules for the outing. Talk about what is and is not appropriate to wear and bring during the outing.
- ▶ Provide information that will help enhance the learning experience for students. Participating students could be responsible for researching a particular place-name, story, area, or activity before the land-based opportunity is taking place, ideally sharing what they learned as part of the experience.

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*“In the classroom, before or after an outdoor activity, we can share our own stories about how things came to be – which connects us to the land. We can talk about how we came to be in our place, on our territories. Our stories are our truths. Our stories carry the most important messages. We are the people of the land, inseparable, interdependent.”*

**FNESC and FNSA Guide to Language Revitalization, 2023**

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It is also valuable to encourage students to retell their experience after the activity to build in more learning and use of the language. That can be orally, and also through art and writing projects.

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*“Language learning is also in the retelling after the activity – talking about the activity we did, using our language. Where did we go? How did we get there? What did we see? What did we do? We can make the language and culture learning mirror each other.”*

**FNESC and FNSA Guide to Language Revitalization, 2023**

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- ▶ Have a “Plan B” ready in case logistical issues arise and the activity can’t be implemented as expected.

## Sample Land-Based Learning Activity Planner Checklist

Land-based activities can help learners make valuable connections between the language, culture, land and identity. This planner may be helpful for planning and organizing land-based language learning activities.

<b>WHAT</b>	What is the activity? (e.g. berry picking)
<b>WHO</b>	Age and grade levels
<b>PROTOCOLS</b>	Did we appropriately seek guidance and approvals for the activity? For example, did we consult with Elders / Knowledge Keepers? Did we ask enough questions to make sure the activity is appropriately implemented?
<b>LANGUAGE</b>	What vocabulary and grammar will be taught? Do we need to research any specific vocabulary? (e.g. vocabulary for types of berries; grammar of shape-classifiers, etc.)
<b>CULTURE</b>	What cultural lessons can be incorporated? (e.g. the significance of berries in ceremony and as a food staple)
<b>PLACE</b>	Where and when will the activity take place? (e.g. at the berry patch in the late spring)
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	How will we get to the location of the activity (e.g. by bus, boat, walking, carpooling, etc.)
<b>PEOPLE</b>	Who will be involved? (e.g. Elders, teacher, EAs, students, parent volunteers)
<b>MATERIALS and EQUIPMENT</b>	What materials or resources are needed? (e.g. buckets for berries, long sleeved shirts and good footwear, thank you gifts for Elders and volunteers, etc.)
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	What permissions are needed? (e.g., from parents, community members, ...)
<b>COSTS</b>	What are the associated costs? (e.g. bus costs, gas, meals and snacks, potential overtime or lieu time, etc.)
<b>PLANNING</b>	Will this be a one-time activity or an annual event (i.e. is it intended as a "visit" or a "tradition")? If we want it to be annual, do we know who can organize and support it each year, and will it be regularly included in the school budget? Have we considered learning progressions / expanding the knowledge and experience of students based on grade levels?
<b>OTHER</b>	

## Sample Logistics Checklist

ACTIVITY	
DATES	
We have visited the site(s) to confirm it is appropriate / safe	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have created a timetable / itinerary / safety and emergency preparedness plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have confirmed all volunteers and experts	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have created a meal plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have purchased needed food and supplies	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have coordinated as necessary with families	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have coordinated with other involved agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have made necessary arrangements for camping etc., if relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have transportation confirmed	<input type="checkbox"/>
We are ready for videotaping / recording / documenting the experience	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have an emergency procedures plan / we are prepared to handle a serious injury or illness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>



## CLAM DIGGING



Gather rain gear, boots, headlight, clam fork, gloves, buckets and head out on a boat to get to your spot at least an hour before low water.



First you push your clam fork into the beach, next you lift it out pulling aside the clams you will keep. If you destroy the clam's shell it's important that you keep it, if it won't survive. Once you've picked your clams and everyone is done-or the tide is coming up to fast, you will head back home.



To shuck the clam you will cut the abductor muscles by sliding your knife along the inside of the top shell, then the bottom. To clean the clam, cut off the siphon and pull the membrane off with it. Wash to get rid of sand, then chop to store for freezer. We use for fritters, deep fry the mantle (like calamari) and clam chowder.



# KIEL SEAWEED

## HARVESTING

With your sacks you will go out on a boat at low tide to harvest seaweed. Stay away from the curly ones and the ones that are already turning color at the tips. Tear off where the seaweed is latched onto the rock and put in your sack. When finished picking, make squares to completely dry in the sun before storing. After it is dried it is ready for frying or roasting.

To chop seaweed, you will need to collect salal leaves and gather salt water. Lightly spray the square of seaweed with salt water and fold into a bentwood box and place the salal leaves in between the layers, creating cakes. Then you will chop the cakes into small pieces and lay out in the sun until dry.





## SECTION 4

# Connecting the Learning Activity to the Curriculum

“This year, our students are going to do a seal hunt in May. We have been building toward that event since September. Everything about the seal hunt can be incorporated into courses. It relates to science, home-ec, math, PE, social studies ... We have been offering firearms proficiency training and we have been practicing being out on the ocean. Our students will be taking the lead and ownership of the event. The learning activities easily fit throughout the curriculum.

Teachers need to know the breadth of the curriculum. We can come at an experience from the perspective of what kids want and what we want for our learners – and then we can’t go wrong. If we pre-plan, taking the time to think about what would benefit our kids, what they want, and what is happening in the community, we can bring in the content we need them to learn. All teachers can do this – and it is powerful.”

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

“The Applied Skills Design and Technology curriculum is a great foundation for so many of our activities. For example, designing and building shelters relates to the use of technology and the use of tools. The connections are right there for us to use.”

**2024 Modular Course Focus Group Input**

“These activities extend naturally from the school’s PE program and are exciting ways to scaffold PEH into traditional spaces. The science connections are endless. We can study astronomy and how it was used for navigating the territory. We can study geographic landscapes and flora indicators of direction, as well as animal pathways and biology.”

**2024 Modular Course Focus Group Input**

## 4.1 Aligning with the Learning Standards

As described in the introduction to this Guide, land-based activities can be connected to the curriculum to help ensure the teaching is planned, intentional, and can provide credit to high school students who successfully complete the learning. Specifically, teachers who are leading an outdoor experience, possibly working with the principal and the expert(s) involved, can link the course to the Learning Standards of the BC Curriculum.



In the BC Ministry of Education curriculum (which is followed by almost all First Nation schools in BC), the “Learning Standards” identify what is essential – what students are expected to know, be able to do, and understand at each grade level. They describe in broad principles what educators are expected to be teaching in their classrooms. The Learning Standards are the components of the curriculum that are assessed and reported on.

It is important to note that the BC Curriculum is designed to be used in new and innovative ways; it allows significant flexibility for educators to decide how new ideas are shared and how students will demonstrate their learning. The curriculum is intended to be relevant and reflect students’ identities. Any course can be localized to a community or to students in the classroom. Teachers, classes, and courses are not tied to any specific learning resources; teachers and schools can be creative in their choice of learning tools and activities.

Depending on the number of hours and the scope of the Learning Standards covered, an on-the-land activity may result in any number of credits being assigned for participating students, or related activities offered over the course of a year or several years may result in 4 credits.

- ▶ **A short summary of the BC Curriculum is included in Appendix Four.**
- ▶ **See also** <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/overview> or <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum>
- ▶ **Appendix Five includes scenarios to illustrate how land-based learning opportunities can be intentionally connected to the curricular Learning Standards.**
- ▶ **First Peoples curriculum resources, developed throughout the past two decades, are essential for supporting educators – covering every major subject area from K-12. Teacher resource guides have been developed by experienced teachers and educational leaders from throughout BC, with content that is reflective of First Peoples pedagogies, including a holistic, cross-curricular, and hands-on approach to teaching and learning. The guides provide suggestions for effectively weaving First Peoples knowledge into various curricular areas, emphasizing the importance of using authentic resources and collaborating with local First Nations wherever possible. See [www.fnesc.ca](http://www.fnesc.ca) for more.**

## Additional Suggestions for Aligning Land-Based Learning and the Curriculum

- ▶ Many opportunities will encompass Learning Standards from multiple courses – and these kinds of cross-curricular connections are encouraged. However, it is usually best to keep the scope limited; in choosing Learning Standards, quality is more important than quantity, and it is important to be realistic about how much can be accomplished in each activity.
- ▶ Pre and post trip activities in the classroom can match the curriculum, so students learn content in school, experience it in the field, and review it when they are back in class.

### 4.2 Assessing the Learning

For each on-the-land opportunity (especially those that will result in credit), it is critical to develop a common understanding of what is being assessed and how it will be assessed. The teacher – with contributing experts, if relevant – should be able to articulate what it will look like or sound like when students are able to demonstrate proficiency with the Learning Standards.

**“Make sure students understand the course expectations up front. They need to understand what they have to accomplish by the end.”**

**2024 Modular Course Focus Group Input**

It is also important to decide how students will be able to demonstrate their competency in relation to the Learning Standards for assessment purposes.

- ▶ Students should be able to clearly see their progress as they improve and are able to complete tasks.
- ▶ Focusing on effort and enthusiasm rather than product alone is important, so students do not become discouraged or disinterested in their cultural learning if they find it difficult.
- ▶ As with other subjects, using a multi-faceted approach to assessment is ideal.

For example, students showing how they can cut fish is a powerful way to demonstrate learning for assessment. Students might also keep a written, photo, audio, or video journal of their learning as a record of their growth and a reflection on their learning.

Contributing experts and project leads can also help write report card comments with teachers.

Land-based learning provides students with a great opportunity to engage in self-assessment and reflective practices. Students are often more willing to try self-assessment when they are involved in experiential learning activities because they often receive constant, immediate feedback from the teacher, EAs, volunteers, family members, and experts while they are trying and developing new skills.

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**“We find the key part of assessment is students communicating their own learning.”**

**2024 Modular Course Focus Group Input**

**“All experiences [in our land-based learning program] are intended for participants to learn about themselves in relation to their homeland. As such, reflection is an integral component and outcome of the program. In order to facilitate personal reflection, time is provided at each place-name of cultural significance for participants to write about and share how each experience made them feel, what they learned, and what they will carry with them into the future. During our third year we published a collection of participant voices ...”**

**W̱SÁNEĆ School Board and Tye Swallow, 2018**

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“I can” and “I know” statements and rubrics are helpful when assessing students. The learning intentions of the activity can be turned into a series of “I can” and “I know” statements, which can then be used to create a rubric. Students can complete rubrics as a form of self-assessment, and rubrics also provide evidence for evaluation purposes. Teachers can use selected evidence to fill out the rubric themselves and reflect on how the student’s self-evaluation aligns with their own perceptions. If they do not align, the teacher can meet with the student to discuss the differing opinions and talk about their varying responses – a very powerful learning opportunity.

**Examples of planning and assessment tools are included in Appendix Five.**

### **Additional Suggestions for Assessment**

- On-the-land activities often include students of different ages and grade levels, as well as different ability levels – which should be considered in planning for assessment. Students should be provided mechanisms to demonstrate their learning in ways that respect each student’s particular strengths, needs, and learning styles.



- ▶ The Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC) website includes some useful framework documents for establishing effective classroom assessment processes using the new curriculum.
- ▶ FNEC and FNSA have also created a Reporting Handbook for First Nation Schools that shares information related to assessing and reporting student learning – including information to support student self-assessment. Please see an excerpt from that Handbook in Appendix Six.

### 4.3 Assigning Credits for High School Students

A key part of planning a land-based learning opportunity is deciding how to translate the experience into credits for high school students.

**While instruction and assessment can be planned and implemented collaboratively with the experts who are sharing the skills and knowledge, ultimately the assigning of a grade or mark is the responsibility of the certified teacher who will be reporting on student progress.**

According to the BC curriculum, there is no required number of hours per credit, but a general practice is to consider a standard 4-credit course to consist of approximately 120 hours of instruction and practice. A 2-credit course would consist of approximately 60 hours of instruction and practice.

These criteria may help guide your determination of a credit structure, but it is important to note that if students are able to demonstrate competency with fewer hours, credit can be assigned. The goal should be designing courses that are sufficiently challenging for students, while allowing them to earn credit for the competencies and content they master. The hours are meant as a guide, not as a rule.

**Anyone who has questions about assigning credits is welcome to contact [graduation@fnesc.ca](mailto:graduation@fnesc.ca) to discuss this more.**



## Lgumaat'm gagoom seagull eggs



To get seagull eggs we need to go out on a boat and look for rocks that are away from the mainland, this removes the threat of predators such as mink, weasels, land mammals, and other birds. We start checking these rocks the first week of June. It can get pretty rough, so we need to check the weather before we go. Because we are in open water, we have to time it just right to get off the boat and onto the rock in the swells. Once we are on the rock, we pick as quick as we can, to move to another rock. You don't need special gear, just a container to hold the eggs in and maybe a hat since the seagulls are flying overhead the whole time. If there is a lot of grass, you need to move it out of the way to check for nests, they will do their best to hide them. They use grass, twigs, feathers, and seaweed to build their nest.

Otherwise they just find a little nook in the rocks to lay their eggs. When you are finished gathering the eggs, store them safely for the ride back home. It is important to pick seagull eggs on time or you might end up with eggs that have already developed into chicks inside.

Make sure to only pick the bigger eggs, the smaller eggs will be gyedml eggs that are close to hatching. Our people used to bury the eggs underground to keep cool. Now you can store in the fridge. You can eat them fried, boiled, scrambled, and use them to bake with. You need to bring them to a hard boil for 10 minutes to cook properly. When you bake with them your cakes will be orange in color. As is our custom, we only take what we need and use what we take.



## 4.4 Connecting the Land-Based Learning to Other Opportunities

In addition to providing students with an opportunity to explore their interests and gain credits toward graduation, land-based learning can expose students to career possibilities, which can help to inform students' education and employment choices and set them up for success after graduation.

Some opportunities may also involve activities that lead to certifications, which will help students work toward their education and career goals, such as safety, first aid, or other certificate training as part of the experience.

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"We work in partnership with other community departments – especially Treaty, lands, and Resources. They include our school in their projects, like their archeological work. They invite us to bring our students out to be exposed to all kinds of work. It plants seeds for what students want to do in the future. And as soon as our students graduate, they get picked up for all kinds of employment in our community right away."

**Input at a 2025 First Nation School Principal Network**

"We regularly collaborate with the Nation's natural resources Department, and they involve students in their activities. Students are also included with our Guardians initiatives. This really helps simplify some of our safety concerns. They can help bring kids to and from our learning sites, and we are confident our kids will be safe with them. They can also help connect our students to employers they work with."

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

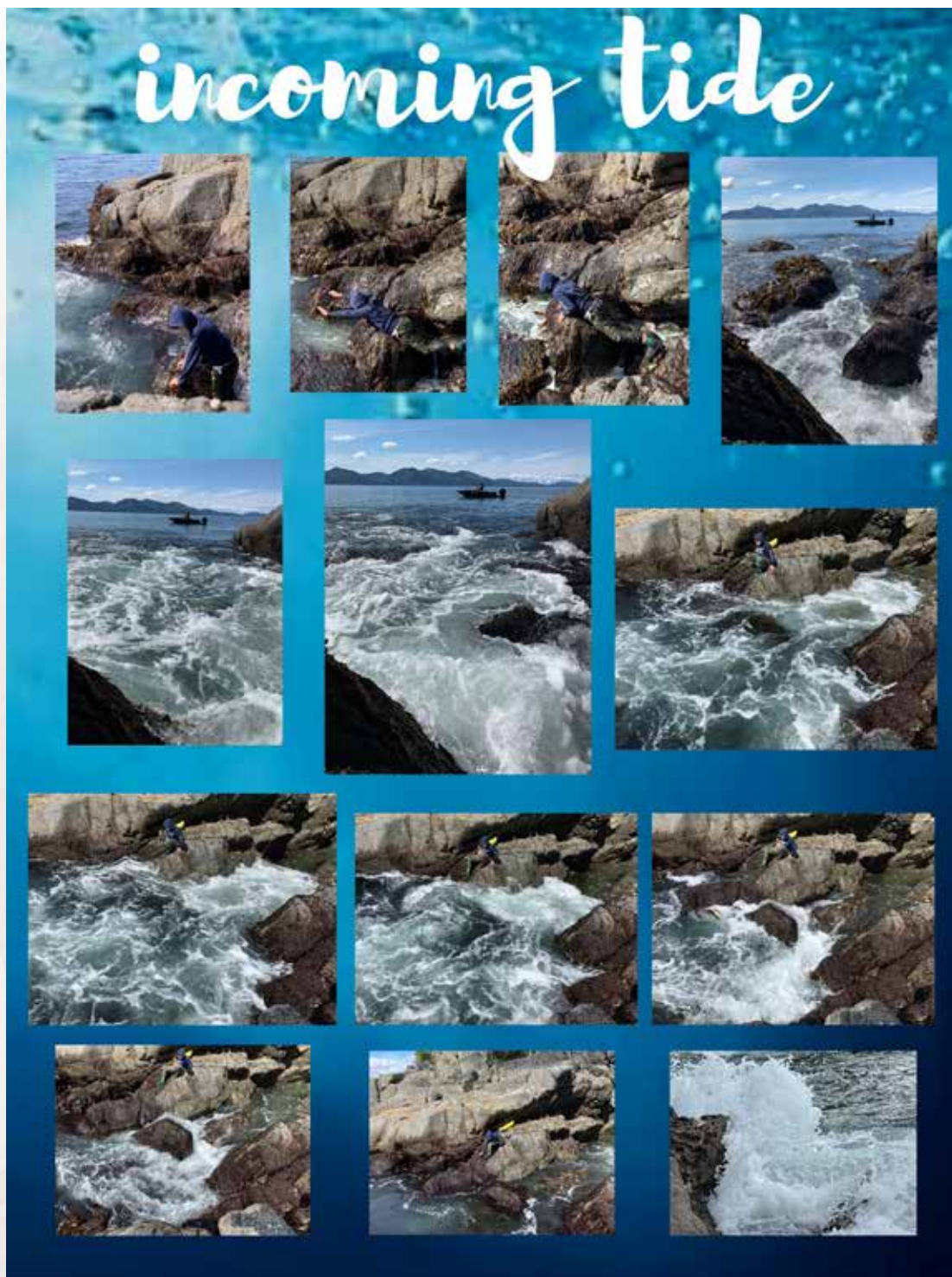
"You never know what these opportunities will lead to. For example, it provides students with experiences and certificates that they can put on their resume, or can help them gain employment."

**Input from a 2025 On-the-Land Learning Focus Group Participant**

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Considering how to include a range of possible benefits is valuable.





## SECTION 5

# Wrap Up

## 5.1 Documenting the Experience

It is very important to document the opportunity so it can be replicated or built on in the future.

You can also consider collecting data to evaluate and communicate the program's success. For example, are you documenting how many students participated, how many families were involved, what activities took place, and how the participants felt about the experience? How will you assess whether the activity had its intended outcomes?

Everyone involved can help with reflection and debrief - either through the formal completion of a survey, or informally through discussions. By doing this, opportunities can continue to improve. The plans, steps taken, and forms can be stored for future use, along with a list of the materials, equipment, technology, and supplies that were needed. Keeping a careful inventory will help with planning similar opportunities later.

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"After we complete a modular course, we can ask ourselves "What worked well?" "What didn't?" "What would we do differently in the future?" It is important to reflect on lessons learned."

**2024 Modular Course Focus Group Input**

"Set it up so others can pick up the information and get it done another time."

**2024 Modular Course Focus Group Input**

"Plan it; document it; build on it each year."

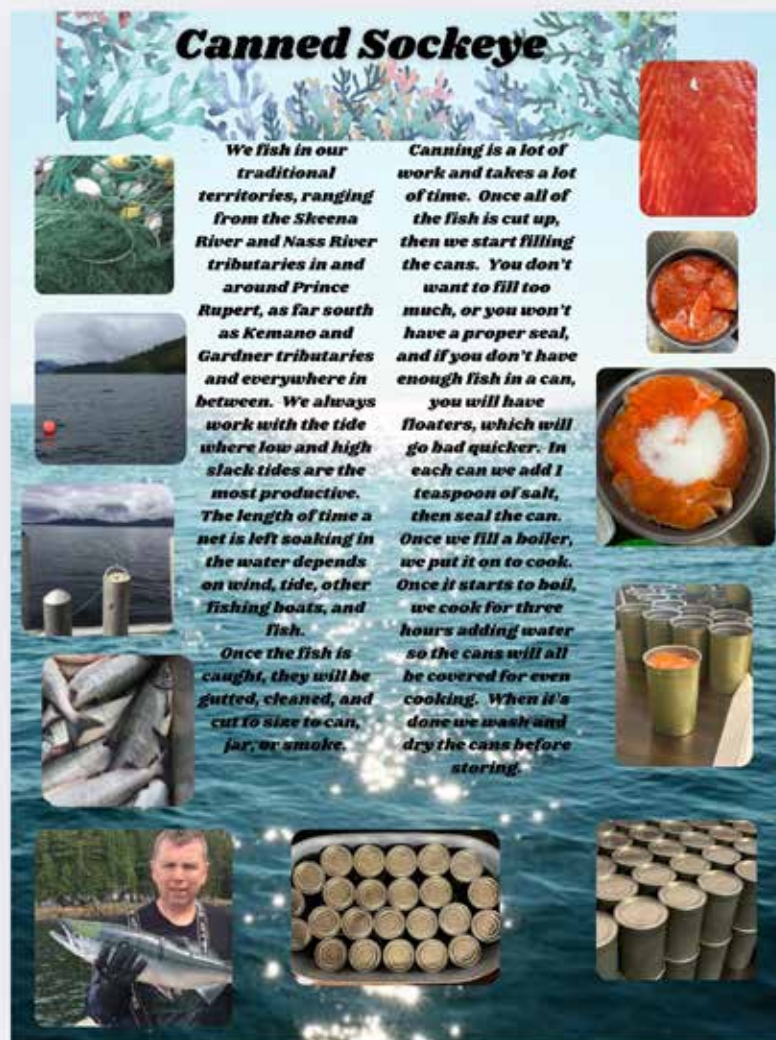
**2024 Modular Course Focus Group Input**

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## 5.2 Showcasing the Students' Learning and Recognizing Participants' Successes

A final and very important consideration is celebrating the success of everyone who participated in the experience. Depending on the topic and activities completed, students' achievements and the results of their learning might involve a grand opening ceremony, a dinner celebration (perhaps hosted by the students), a gallery walk for families to see the learning outcomes – any relevant opportunity for students to feel pride in their learning and show off what they were able to accomplish. The staff and experts who contributed to the course can also be recognized ... building enthusiasm for continued opportunities in the future.



Poster Courtesy of Cam and Eva-Ann Hill, Hartley Bay School





# Appendices

- APPENDIX ONE:** SAMPLE CONSENT FORM
- APPENDIX TWO:** LAND-BASED LEARNING PLANNING TEMPLATE
- APPENDIX THREE:** SAMPLE EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND RISK MANAGEMENT TOOLS
- APPENDIX FOUR:** BACKGROUND: WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT THE BC CURRICULUM
- APPENDIX FIVE:** SAMPLE CURRICULUM PLANNING TOOLS
- APPENDIX SIX:** EXCERPT FROM THE FNEC AND FNSA STUDENT REPORTING HANDBOOK
- APPENDIX SEVEN:** SAMPLE SEASONAL ROUNDS CULTURAL CALENDAR



## Sample Consent Form

*This sample consent form is not being provided as legal advice; it is expected that it will be adapted as necessary for each school and as appropriate for the scope of each activity.*

LAND-BASED LEARNING ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION (please see attached itinerary for more details)	
SUPERVISING TEACHER(S)	SUPERVISING TEACHER(S) EMERGENCY PHONE
DATES OF ACTIVITY	
DEPARTURE DATE + TIME	RETURN DATE + TIME
DESTINATION	TRANSPORTATION TO BE USED
STUDENT NAME	STUDENT CARE CARD NO.
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS (allergies, medications, health conditions, ...)	
PARENT/CONTACT NAME	PARENT/CONTACT PHONE
ALTERNATE EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME	ALTERNATE EMERGENCY CONTACT PHONE
I am interested in participating in this activity: <span style="float: right;"> <input type="checkbox"/> YES           <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> NO</span> </span>	
PACKING LIST (or attach a list, depending on the scope and duration of the activity) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rain jacket</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable shoes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone (<i>allowed / not allowed?</i>)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Emergency medication (if applicable, such as EpiPen, emergency inhaler, allergy medication, as approved by school)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> etc...</li> </ul>	



## Informed Consent Form

SCHOOL NAME
NAME OR PROGRAM / ACTIVITY

Students at <School> engaging in certain kinds of activities require specific consent from parents or guardians. This consent confirms that parents/guardians are allowing their child to engage in the general and specific activities outlined. <School> will disclose any anticipated risks beyond what would be reasonably known by parents / guardians and will indicate mitigation strategies to address identified risks. <School> will indicate the level of supervision for the activities.

DATES OF PROGRAM / ACTIVITY	LOCATION OF PROGRAM / ACTIVITY
-----------------------------	--------------------------------

This program will take place at <location>. The program may occur on the water and in the forest and the risks associated with this location include wildlife hazards, uneven terrain, isolated location, lack of access to emergency care <add other general risks>.

Activity	Risks (These include, but are not limited to, harm or losses caused by)	Mitigation Strategy	Initials
General Risks of activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor injuries may include: scrapes and bruises, sun related injury, dehydration, food-borne illness, stings and bites from insects. <input type="checkbox"/> Serious/catastrophic injuries may be caused by, include or lead to: Drowning, heat related injury, contact with wild animals, injury due to falling objects, allergic reactions to food.	<input type="checkbox"/> Students are given initial site safety orientations. <input type="checkbox"/> Expectations and hazards are explained to students. <input type="checkbox"/> Students will not be permitted to <> unless supervised by <School> or <School> staff. <input type="checkbox"/> All <School> staff are certified in first aid and receive additional safety training relating to the activities they are facilitating. <input type="checkbox"/> Students with allergies will bring an EpiPen and <School> and staff will be informed of all food allergies.	
Hiking	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor injuries may include: scrapes, sprains and strains, stings and bites from insects. <input type="checkbox"/> Serious/catastrophic injuries may be caused by, include or lead to: slipping or falling, hypothermia or hyperthermia, joint injury, stings and bites from animals, contact with wildlife, separation from the group.	<input type="checkbox"/> Groups will hike on clearly marked and designated trails. <input type="checkbox"/> Groups will carry a first aid kit and communication devices on the hike. <input type="checkbox"/> Groups will hike on clearly marked and designated trails. <input type="checkbox"/> Groups will carry a first aid kit and communication devices on the hike.	
Canoeing	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor injuries may include: sea sickness, physical injury, repetitive strain injury. <input type="checkbox"/> Serious/catastrophic injuries may be caused by, include or lead to: Wind, currents and waves, drowning, motorboat traffic, collisions with other paddlers, temperature-related illness such as hypothermia or heat exhaustion, changing weather conditions, contact with wildlife.	<input type="checkbox"/> All equipment will be inspected by instructors and students prior to departure. <input type="checkbox"/> All groups will be accompanied by a Paddle Canada certified instructor. <input type="checkbox"/> All instructors hold a minimum first aid qualification of CPR-C, will carry a first aid and hypothermia kit, along with emergency communication devices. <input type="checkbox"/> All canoers will be required to wear Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs). <input type="checkbox"/> A safety boat is available in the event of a serious emergency. On longer paddles over 1 hour a safety boat will accompany the group. <input type="checkbox"/> All boats will carry all safety equipment required by Transport Canada.	

Activity	Risks (These include, but are not limited to, harm or losses caused by)	Mitigation Strategy	Initials
Swimming	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor injuries may include: muscle strains or sprains. <input type="checkbox"/> Serious/catastrophic injuries may be caused by, include or lead to: Drowning, spinal injury, diving, slips and falls.	<input type="checkbox"/> Prior to swimming, students will be informed of the rules and boundaries of the swimming area and will be informed of water exit procedures in the event of an emergency. <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming is restricted to the <area>. <input type="checkbox"/> Any student who wishes to swim without a PFD must first successfully complete the LifeSaving Society Swim to Survive Standard (LSS STS). <input type="checkbox"/> Any student unable to meet the LSS STS standard must wear a secured PFD while in the water.	
Overnight stay	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative behaviour by other students. <input type="checkbox"/> Lost or stolen items.	<input type="checkbox"/> Teachers will ensure students know they are only to be in their assigned sleeping space. <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers will ensure students know to remain in their sleeping space after "lights-out."	
Motorboat travel	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor injuries may include: Minor cuts or scrapes, sun and heat related injury, seasickness. <input type="checkbox"/> Serious/catastrophic injuries may be caused by, include or lead to: Drowning, injury from collisions or accidents, hypothermia, stings or bites from marine life.	<input type="checkbox"/> All passengers will be required to wear PFDs. <input type="checkbox"/> All boats will carry all safety equipment required by Transport Canada. <input type="checkbox"/> Boat operators will hold all licenses required by Transport Canada and will be familiar with the waterways being travelled on.	
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Injury while crossing or navigating on a road. <input type="checkbox"/> Any motor vehicle or boat accident and resulting injuries.	<input type="checkbox"/> Qualified driver. <input type="checkbox"/> Reputable transport company and government-regulated ferry transportation. <input type="checkbox"/> Drivers plan their routes prior to departure and have knowledge of the roads. <input type="checkbox"/> Drivers will avoid traveling at night when possible.	

I understand that there are inherent risks involved in these activities and I give permission for my child to participate in all of the activities I have initialled. I recognize that these risks could result in losses that involve physical injury or death, emotional trauma, or financial (e.g. damaged or lost equipment or medical costs). I feel that I have fully informed myself about the nature of these activities, the risks that come with these types of activities, and the controls <School> intends to utilize to reduce the risks of these activities.

I have asked for clarification of anything that I do not understand about the program or the nature of the activity and have had my concerns addressed.

**I also understand and agree:**

1. All <School> students must abide by the Student Code of Conduct
2. That the physical demands of this particular program require that my child is medically, physically, and emotionally fit and fully able to participate in the activities. The program's instructors reserve the right to refuse my child's participation in any activity if they deem that they are not fit to participate.
3. That <School> and its instructors reserve the right to refuse my child's participation in any activity if they are deemed to be a hazard to themselves or other participants.
4. That the type of terrain and weather that my child will be traveling on or participating in requires that they have adequate clothing and personal equipment to keep themselves warm and dry. It is our family's responsibility to ensure that our child is properly equipped for the program.
5. That I am responsible for learning about the nature of these activities and understand that school personnel are available to answer any queries contact <contact name> at <contact email address>.

**Expectations of Students**

Students are expected to uphold the values and Student Code of Conduct of <School> and:

- Arrive with appropriate equipment, clothing and footwear.
- Always follow instructions of supervisors and instructors.
- Make safety of themselves and others a constant priority.
- Participate in a positive way.
- Understand that there are shared responsibilities and do their share of the work.
- Attend information sessions, read the information package and have their questions answered

**I CONFIRM THAT I HAVE READ THE ABOVE AND FULLY UNDERSTAND THE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES MY CHILD WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN AND THE ASSOCIATED RISKS OF THOSE ACTIVITIES.**

I confirm that I have read and initialed or signed all <#> pages of this informed consent document.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student



## Land-Based Learning Planning Template for Activities to Be Used for Credit

TOPIC/FOCUS
-------------

**Curricular Connections**

ACTIVITY(IES)
---------------

CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES	CONTENT
-------------------------	---------

Hours it will take to teach the identified Learning Standards?
--

Structure / schedule for the learning opportunity?
--

**Staff/Expert Roles and Responsibilities**

STAFF / EXPERT	ROLES / RESPONSIBILITIES

**Skills or Knowledge Students Need to Complete the Learning Opportunity**

SKILL / KNOWLEDGE	HOW WILL STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE THEY HAVE LEARNED THE KNOWLEDGE OR SKILL?

**Required Materials/Supplies**

ITEM	COST	WHERE TO BUY?

**Other Budget Items (e.g. honoraria, fees, wages ...)**

ITEM	COST	WHERE TO BUY?

Safety Considerations for the Learning Opportunity
--

Plans for Engaging Parents
----------------------------



## Sample Emergency Procedures and Risk Management Tools

**Note:** This information is being provided to help begin planning. The information will have to be adapted or expanded as appropriate for each trip and community.

Land- and water-based learning opportunities have inherent risk, and not all accidents can be prevented.

However, adequate planning will reduce the likelihood of problems arising, and will ensure that everyone is prepared to respond if challenges do occur. The responsible operation of outdoor programs requires an integrated, systematic approach to minimizing risk. Risk management also is not a one-time event; it is an ongoing evolving process of anticipation, adaptation and change in response to shifting circumstances.

“Duty of care” or “due diligence” obligations require that program staff take all reasonable steps to protect students from foreseeable risks by:

- ☐ Balancing level of risk with level of student ability and experience.
- ☐ Presenting activities in a manner that leads from simple tasks to more complex.
- ☐ Consciously striving to manage the levels of risk to which students, staff, and volunteers are exposed.
- Matching the planned activity (content, progression, skill level, and risk level) with appropriate participants is an important method of reducing risk in the field. This means that activities should be planned and adjusted to accommodate the age, experience, and skill levels of the participants.
- Safety obligations extend to planning appropriate responses to emergencies that may arise in the course of normal program activities; staff, volunteers, and students need to know what they are required to do in an emergency.
- Having suitably qualified staff organize and implement the activities is critical.

Outdoor programs are associated with various risk factors that generally fall within three categories: people, equipment, and environment. The greater the number of risk factors, the greater the chance that an incident will occur. Most serious accidents are a result of a combination of risk factors, not just one.

### RISK FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE LIKELIHOOD OF INCIDENTS OCCURRING

Answers to questions such as these will determine whether there is a higher or lower level of risk.

People	Equipment	Environment
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>SKILLS:</b> What is the skill level of the program leads (e.g. wilderness survival, map reading, paddling, communicating)? What is the skill level of the students and volunteers?	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>CLOTHING:</b> Is each person adequately outfitted?	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>WEATHER:</b> What is the forecast and how might the conditions (e.g., winds, rain, drought, cold ... ) affect people and equipment?
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>ATTITUDES:</b> Are people aware and attentive to safety issues? Are some students easily affected by peer pressure? Are some lacking in self-confidence?	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>SHELTER:</b> Is it adequate for the conditions?	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>TERRAIN:</b> Is the terrain relatively easy, moderate, or challenging?
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>HEALTH AND FITNESS:</b> Are individuals physically able to perform the activity? Have specific health considerations been identified?	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>USE OF SAFETY EQUIPMENT:</b> Are helmets, whistles, or lifejackets being worn? Are avalanche transceivers being used?	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>FLORA:</b> Is the area known to have poisonous plants or covered in thick brush?
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>AGES:</b> Are the participants young? High school or adult students? Will Elders be involved?	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>ADEQUACY OF SAFETY EQUIPMENT:</b> Are lifejackets approved? Has equipment been checked? Do radios work from the site?	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>FAUNA:</b> What is the probability of encountering wildlife species, such as bears or cougars?
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>GROUP SIZE:</b> Is the group size manageable? Realistic? Are there an adequate ratio of chaperones / supervisors?	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS:</b> Are communication devices appropriate for the site? Are communications protocols clear?	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>DRINKING WATER QUALITY:</b> Is a filtering system needed? Is one available? Do participants know how to use it correctly?



Risk management, in the context of outdoor programs, is the application of procedures and practices to manage the exposure of the school, staff, volunteers and students to risk. A risk management strategy requires that everyone involved in each opportunity is constantly looking for ways to reduce risk.

Risk Management Plans can be developed to identify potential problems and outline the steps to be taken to address all hazards that participants may face.

Overall, risk management planning should include:

- ☐ Identifying the range of emergencies that could arise
- ☐ Making adequate trip / activity plans
- ☐ Identifying potential hazards and assessing the risks
- ☐ Defining roles and responsibilities of key personnel during an emergency
- ☐ Planning and implementing reporting procedures for emergencies
- ☐ Planning and implementing safety procedures for staff and students
- ☐ Planning and implementing evacuation procedures, if needed
- ☐ Ensuring the availability of emergency service and contact information
- ☐ Identifying measures to prevent or mitigate the effects of emergencies if they occur
- ☐ Having adequate approvals in place and informing the community of all plans.

## **SAFETY / EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

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### **1. Designate an Activity Lead who is responsible for managing the trip, implementing safety and emergency procedures, and communicating with parents/guardians.**

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### **2. Pre-Trip Planning & Communication**

#### **Gather Information**

- Collect permission slips and waivers from parents / guardians before the trip.
- Develop a list of emergency contacts (school administrators, parents / guardians, local emergency services) and ensure all staff and chaperones have easy access to it.
- Collect and review student medical information, including allergies, medications, and any pre-existing conditions.

#### **Plan**

- Outline the trip itinerary, including the location, schedule, and planned activities.
- Identify potential hazards at the site and develop strategies to mitigate them.
- Prepare for changing weather conditions by planning for extra food, supplies for cold and wet weather, etc.
- Check that all students are bringing or have access to appropriate clothing and footwear to help prevent accidents or injury.
- Consider providing brightly coloured clothing or identifiable vests so chaperones can be easily seen and identified.
- Bring adequate sunscreen and insect repellent.
- Ensure all transportation being used is appropriate for the travel conditions.
- Determine a meeting point in case of an emergency.

#### **Communicate**

- Ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of any student medical needs.
- Plan for communications equipment – an adequate number that will work in a variety of locations.
- Establish a clear communication protocol for staff and chaperones, including how to report emergencies, contact each other, and communicate with the school.
- Discuss how to handle different emergency scenarios, such as a medical emergency, lost student, or weather change.

#### **Provide Training**

- Provide staff and chaperones with training on emergency procedures, first aid, and CPR (if relevant for the scope of the activity), and explain their roles and responsibilities during an emergency.
- Conduct safety briefings / review rules and emergency procedures with students.

---

### **3. During the Field Trip**

#### **Supervision**

- Maintain an ongoing attendance list and ensure that all students are accounted for at all times.
- Ensure that students are adequately supervised at all times.
- Establish and follow a system for monitoring where students are and ensuring that they are staying within designated areas.

#### **Medical Emergencies**

- Have a first-aid kit readily available and ensure that at least one staff member or chaperone is certified in first aid and CPR.
- Follow established protocols for treating injuries and contacting emergency services.

#### **Lost Student**

- Establish a protocol for locating a lost student, including contacting the school, parents / guardians, and local authorities.
- Designate a meeting point in case of a separation.

#### **Weather Changes**

- Monitor weather conditions and be prepared to take appropriate action in case of a weather change, such as seeking shelter or rescheduling activities.
- Provide updates to the school, community and parents about changing circumstances and plans.

#### **Other Emergencies**

- Have a plan in place for addressing other potential emergencies, such as a fire, evacuation, or security threat.

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### **4. Post-Trip**

#### **Debrief**

- Hold a debriefing with staff and chaperones to discuss the field trip and any emergency procedures that were implemented.

#### **Document**

- Document any incidents or emergencies that occurred during the field trip.

#### **Follow-up**

- Follow up with parents/guardians regarding any concerns or questions.

## SAMPLE RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION PLAN

(Dependent on ages of students and scope / type of activity)

ACTIVITY LEAD		ACTIVITY LEAD CONTACT	
Potential Risk	Risk Assessment	Mitigation Plans (what can be done to help prevent problems)	Response Plan (what to do in event of emergency)
E.g. For a day trip / nature walk with primary students  Students wandering / getting lost	Lower	Adequate adult supervision (adult : student ratios)  Prepare / practice with students prior to the activity  Bring whistles to help locate people  Explain expectations and procedures with adults and students before the activity  Check and bring adequate communication devices  Let relevant community departments know about the activity before we go	Immediately notify the Activity Lead of the problem  Coordinate a search  Activity lead to notify the principal of the situation  Notify any community agencies, if additional assistance is needed
Wildlife encounters			
Cold weather			
Fire			
Water emergency			
Serious illness			
Other			



## DUE DILIGENCE CHECKLIST

The following checklist is intended to help program leads; it is offered as a guideline only.

### Do you keep the following types of records or documents?

- ☐ Inspection reports and equipment maintenance records
- ☐ Records of meetings where safety issues were discussed
- ☐ Records showing how safety rules are enforced
- ☐ First aid certificates
- ☐ Health and safety related purchases
- ☐ Records of safety trainings showing date, attendees, and topics covered
- ☐ Incident reports and records of corrective actions taken to solve problems
- ☐ Data on the frequency and severity of accidents

### Do your records show that you ...?

- ☐ Have clear health and safety policies
- ☐ Include health and safety issues on planning meeting agendas
- ☐ Require contractors to conform to health and safety policies and plans for the activity
- ☐ Assign responsibility for identifying hazards
- ☐ Implement appropriate controls to mitigate identified hazards
- ☐ Investigate incidents and take action to correct reported hazards

### For group or personal student equipment:

- ☐ Necessary safety equipment is available at no cost to everyone participating.
- ☐ The quantity of equipment is adequate for the activity.
- ☐ The equipment was manufactured for the purpose in which it is used.
- ☐ The equipment is in good condition, and has been repaired and maintained as required.
- ☐ The type and amount of use an item has received can be documented (such as a log-book).
- ☐ Equipment is retired as required.
- ☐ All necessary safety, first aid and emergency response equipment is readily available.

## Safety Talks

It is important to inform participants of the inherent risks of an activity, and to provide proper and adequate instructions on what they will be doing and how they should do it. Safety talks are a good way of remind staff and volunteers of hazards and the procedures to be followed to avoid injuries to themselves and students.

- Safety instructions to program participants can be given before activities take place.
- Talks can include information about proper equipment use and technique.
- Written information can assist new staff and volunteers in learning the important points and remind experienced staff of key information.

Everyone's safety talk will be different, influenced by scope and location of the activity. A sample outline is included on the following page.

## SAMPLE SAFETY TALK OUTLINE

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

- ☐ Introduce the planned activities.
- ☐ Explain to participants that everyone shares responsibility for safety.

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### 2. TRIP SPECIFICS

- ☐ Talk about the trip details (e.g., geographical area, weather forecast).
- ☐ Identify the activity lead(s).
- ☐ Describe inherent risks (e.g., cold water, falling, hypothermia, other environmental conditions).
- ☐ Explain proper use of equipment.
- ☐ Demonstrate proper technique (e.g., how to sit and paddle, how to cross a ski slope).
- ☐ Explain what to do in case of an emergency (e.g., if someone falls in the water, if someone gets lost).

---

### 3. PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- ☐ Explain the health and safety expectations and rules.
- ☐ Explain the responsibility of participants to look after themselves and others.
- ☐ Ask participants to notify program leads if they identify any problems with equipment, and to report any incidents or accidents.

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### 4. CLOSING

- ☐ Confirm that all participants have signed consent forms.
- ☐ Ask if there are any additional questions.

## Background: What to Know About the BC Curriculum

### What is “curriculum”?

Curriculum is a sequence of planned experiences that are intended to help students achieve proficiency—which means making sure that all students reach an expected level of competence. The curriculum is something like the “building codes” for learning; “building codes” do not specify what every structure will look like, but they do set out minimum, fundamental standards that facilities must meet. Similarly, curriculum does not define what students will learn, practice, and demonstrate throughout their time at school. It provides a framework, with benchmarks, to ensure that all students have opportunities and are adequately supported so they build critical understandings, knowledge, and abilities that progress across grade levels.

The curriculum does not specify exactly what *content* every student will know when they leave a classroom, grade, or school. It is not an overview of a specific course or a textbook that explicitly lays out the content that every student will master. It is not a detailed description of what students will do each day in every classroom.

Curriculum is a foundation for instructional methods, planning, resources, and assessments; it is a description of what, why, how and how well students should learn – laid out in a systematic and intentional way. Curriculum provides a guide for all educators so that there is a common understanding of what is essential for teaching and learning throughout the education system. Educators use the curriculum to help them decide which resources, teaching strategies, learning experiences, and assessments will foster quality learning so that every student has access to rigorous and challenging academic opportunities.

### What Is the foundation of the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC) Curriculum?

The BC Curriculum has been designed to allow educators to personalize student learning and create opportunities for all learners to access the curriculum. That means the curriculum is a broad set of standards that can apply to students who have very different interests, backgrounds, and unique strengths and challenges.

The curriculum is also based on the principle that students learn better by doing – by engaging in meaningful, authentic, and interesting activities. This represents a shift away from past education approaches that primarily involved students passively listening, studying written materials, and filling out worksheets.

The BC curriculum emphasizes the “competencies” of each subject area. That means the curriculum addresses how students need to be equipped intellectually, personally, socially, and emotionally if they are to succeed throughout their lives. The competencies are at the centre of the curriculum.

Students are still expected to learn content, but the curriculum is less rigid in terms of the specific information that all students need to know. Educators are expected to teach students the subject-matter they need to learn in order to successfully progress to higher grade levels, but there is flexibility in how that outcome will be achieved. An emphasis on “competencies” means that teachers are expected to design lessons that use content as a tool to help students develop their ability to think and do, and to demonstrate their understanding. Together, doing, thinking, and understanding mean that students are learning.

*“The deep understanding and application of knowledge is at the centre of the new model, as opposed to the memory and recall of facts that previously shaped education around the globe for many decades.”*



## Core Competencies, Literacy, and Numeracy Foundations

Three “[Core Competencies](#)” have been identified, which underpin all subject areas.

**Communication:** the knowledge, skills, processes, and dispositions (or personal characteristics) associated with our interactions with others.

Through communication, students acquire, develop, and transform ideas and information. Students use communication to make connections with others, share their ideas, express their individuality, further their learning, and get things done. The communication competency is fundamental to finding satisfaction, purpose, and joy.

**Thinking:** knowledge, skills and processes associated with intellectual development.

Their competency as thinkers allows students to take subject-specific concepts and content and transform them into new understandings. This competence includes specific thinking skills – like being able to use techniques to solve math equations. It also includes “habits of mind,” which relate to how students respond when they are confronted with problems, situations and questions that don’t have immediate answers. The thinking competency also involves building awareness of how we plan, monitor, and assess our own learning – which is sometimes referred to as metacognition. The thinking competence involves building our ability to process information from a variety of sources – including our thoughts and feelings, and what we sense and experience – to create new understandings.

**Personal and Social:** the set of abilities that relate to students’ identity in the world, both as individuals and as members of their community and society.

The personal and social competency includes what students need to thrive as individuals, to understand and care about themselves and others, and to find and achieve their purposes in the world.

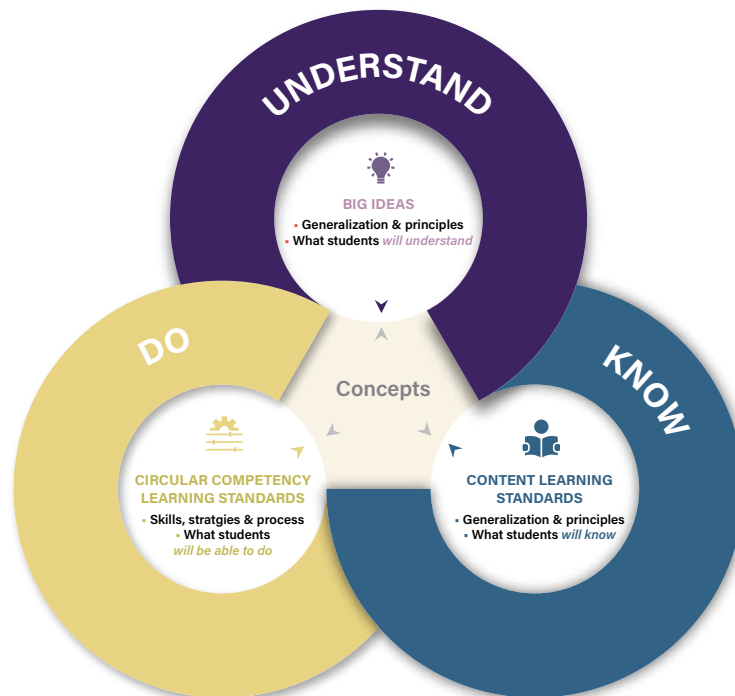
In addition to the Core Competencies, literacy and numeracy are central to BC’s K-12 curriculum and assessment approaches. Strong literacy and numeracy skills directly support students in their growth into healthy and capable adults.

The BC curriculum recognizes that students must be able to apply literacy and numeracy skills beyond English Language Arts and Math classes, and literacy and numeracy education is integrated into all subject areas throughout the curriculum.

## Curriculum Model (<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/overview>)

In the BC curriculum, all areas of learning are based on a “Know-Do-Understand” model to support a concept-based, competency-driven approach to learning.

The three elements – the Content (Know), Curricular Competencies (Do), and Big Ideas (Understand) – all work together to support deeper learning.



### BIG IDEAS | UNDERSTAND

The big ideas consist of generalizations and principles and the key concepts important in an area of learning. They reflect the “understand” component of the know-do-understand model of learning.

The big ideas represent what students will understand at the completion of the curriculum for their grade. They are intended to endure beyond a single grade and contribute to future understanding.

### CONTENT | KNOW

The content learning standards – the “know” of the the know-do-understand model of learning – detail the essential topics and knowledge of each grade level.

### CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES | DO

The curricular competencies are the skills, strategies, and processes that students develop over time. They reflect the “do” in the know-do-understand model of learning. While curricular competencies are more subject-specific, they are connected to the core competencies.

## Learning Standards

The “Learning Standards” identify what is essential – what students are expected to know, be able to do, and understand at each grade level. They describe what educators are expected to be teaching in their classrooms. The competencies are embedded and evident in the Learning Standards. The Learning Standards are the components of the curriculum that are assessed and reported on.

It is important to note that the BC Curriculum is designed to be used in new and innovative ways. For example, text is defined as any oral, visual, or written communication, including digital. This allows educators significant flexibility in how new ideas are shared and how students demonstrate their learning. In the English Language Arts classroom, the broad definition of “text” means that students can listen to or create podcasts, design social media campaigns, or focus on the oral history and protocols of the community they are teaching in. This definition of text also applies to other subject areas, which means educators in a science or social studies classroom have a wealth of options available to them if a student is struggling to decode written text or write at grade level. Students can use speech to text software (a common feature of most learning management systems), or students can record themselves on a smartphone, explaining their thinking rather than requiring students to show their thinking using written output only.

Also, the curriculum is intended to be relevant and reflect students’ identities. Any course can be localized to a community or to students in the classroom. For example, the Grade 7 social studies curriculum focuses on the ancient world up to the 7<sup>th</sup> Century. A teacher of Grade 7 social studies can choose to focus the entire course around the history of the local community. Or, if all the students in a class are fascinated by a particular topic, the teacher can focus course content on that topic while meeting the Learning Standards and competencies.

Teachers, classes, and courses are not tied to any specific learning resources. Teachers are not expected to work through a specific textbook. Textbooks may be a tool teachers use, or teachers may use other types of resources as well or instead. Teachers and schools can be creative in their choice of learning tools; students can build and demonstrate their competencies in a variety of ways. To assist educators in making informed choices, a number of important materials and resources have been created to help incorporate unappropriated First Peoples’ perspectives across the curriculum. See <https://www.fnesc.ca/learningfirstpeoples/> for more information.

The flexibility of the BC Curriculum means that teachers can continually grow and evolve in how they implement learning opportunities. Teachers will ideally work with others to plan, find appropriate and interesting resources, and explore new teaching strategies and activities. Teachers are encouraged to try and introduce new approaches into their practice gradually, as they develop their own skills and understandings.

## Cognition and the Curriculum

The BC Curriculum was created using Webb’s “[Depth of Knowledge](#)” as a framework for shaping the increasing complexity of what students are expected to know, do, and understand as they progress from Kindergarten to Grade 12. This means that many of the very complex Curricular Competencies students are expected to demonstrate in grade 12 begin in kindergarten.

For example:

- In Kindergarten students are expected to share things they like and don’t like.
- In Grades 2 or 3, students are expected to explain why they like or do not like things.
- In Grades 4 or 5, students are expected to have opinions, not just likes and dislikes.
- In Grades 6 or 7, students are expected to share their opinion and explain why they hold the opinion.
- By the time students are in Grade 12, they are expected to be able to express an opinion and support it with well researched evidence. They should also be able to understand that other individuals may hold different opinions and there is room for people to have varying opinions and still work collaboratively together.

A similar progression is found in the content of the BC curriculum. Concepts are introduced in the early grades, and students develop deeper understandings of the content through use of the Curricular Competencies as they progress through each year.

## Working Toward Lifelong Learning

The development of the Core Competencies included in the BC Curriculum (communication, thinking, and personal and social) begins with families before students enter school, and it continues throughout each individual’s life. Opportunities to develop competencies arise in formal and informal settings, inside and outside of school. Throughout their lives, students move from demonstrating competence in relatively simple and highly supported situation, to demonstrating independence in more complex and varied contexts. Students do this in school, and they do this in their families and communities. Competency development does not end with graduation from school; it continues in ongoing personal, social, educational, and workplace contexts.

Families, students, school staff, and community members all contribute and can work in partnership to help students grow in their awareness, understanding, and ability to demonstrate the Core Competencies that are the foundation of the BC Curriculum.

## Sample One

COURSE(S) Language & Culture: root digging	
CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES AND LEARNING STANDARDS Dependant on the grade level and the courses you wish to cover with this activity. i.e. Root Digging may offer opportunities for ADST, PHE, Social Studies, and English competencies and learning standards to be met and assessed	CONTENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural stories that relate to the place</li> <li>• Language and vocabulary that supports the learning</li> <li>• On the land safety</li> <li>• Rules and expectations for on-the-land learning.</li> <li>• Protocols and traditions associated with the subject.</li> <li>• Cross curricular content co developed or supported by classroom teachers.</li> <li>• Use relevant seasonal knowledge to enhance activity</li> <li>• Specific vocab that supports the learning experience on the land</li> </ul>
Hours it will take to teach the identified Learning Standards?	20-30 hours
Structure / schedule for the learning opportunity?	One full day trip X 2 per year + classroom / foods lab instructional opportunities

### Staff/Expert Roles and Responsibilities

STAFF EXPERT	ROLES / RESPONSIBILITIES
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be part of the planning team.</li> <li>• Approve the plans and the budget.</li> <li>• Help confirm consents for students participating in the activity.</li> <li>• Inform the School Governing Authority about the course.</li> <li>• Prepare the contract/honorariums for knowledge keepers.</li> </ul>
Language Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the project planning and develop resources for knowledge keeper.</li> <li>• Identify all resources / funding / equipment needed, and plan for how those will be accessed.</li> <li>• Identify an appropriate location for the learning activities and confirm arrangements (any costs, specific times, etc.)</li> <li>• Supervise students during the activities.</li> <li>• Prepare resources</li> <li>• Work directly with the staff and knowledge keeper(s) and help make and confirm all travel arrangements.</li> <li>• Work with the staff and knowledge keeper(s) to ensure student safety.</li> <li>• Determine an appropriate assessment strategy.</li> </ul>
Knowledge keeper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm all resources needed</li> <li>• Inform language teacher of any dietary needs</li> </ul>

### Skills or Knowledge Students Need to Complete the Learning Opportunity

SKILL / KNOWLEDGE	HOW WILL STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE THEY HAVE LEARNED THE KNOWLEDGE OR SKILL?
Identify a geographical feature	Use the content from the language teacher and classroom teacher to identify a geographical land feature.
Understand a story/legend	Able to retell the story or give a summary of one through different medias.
Safety and precautions	Demonstrate their ability to safely use tools when harvesting roots.
Preservation of roots	Demonstrate their ability to properly store roots for future use.
Identification of flora and fauna in the area	Demonstrate their ability to correctly identify flora and fauna within this specific area of the territory and respectfully harvest designated species for the purpose of this activity.
Use of correct terminology in English and the Language	Demonstrate an ability to use Language related to this activity and general conversation while out on the land.



### Required Materials/Supplies

ITEM	COST	WHERE TO BUY?
Shovels for each student or groups of two.	25 x \$10 = \$250	Local hardware store
Buckets for each student or groups of two.	25 x \$10 = \$250	Local hardware store
Honoraria for knowledge keeper(s)	\$300	L&C or other budget
Fuel for bus	\$250	Local gas station
Gas card for knowledge keeper(s) (if they aren't riding the bus)	\$50	Local gas station
Food and water	\$500	Supermarket

### Safety Considerations for the Learning Opportunity

- Participants will need to be adequately supervised.
- Participants will have to be adequately trained for proper harvesting techniques

### Assessment Tool

LEARNING OPPORTUNITY) On-the-land learning-digging roots		
LEARNING STANDARD	PROFICIENT	COMMENTS
Apply cultural teachings of knowledge keeper(s) and curricular teachings of teaching staff	I can apply cultural knowledge and protocols when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Digging roots</li><li>• Doing land acknowledgments</li><li>• Giving thanks with an offering</li><li>• I am out on the land</li><li>• I am listening to an elder, guest and knowledge keeper</li></ul>	

### Considerations

Ensure proper measures are in place which supports sequential learning for different grades. All students will be exposed to the same activity, but different grades will have slightly different takeaways. Younger grades will be focused on cultural exposure, whereas older grades will begin to decipher and interpret deeper understandings of the language, culture, land and protocols. When assessing student for what they learned on a trip, language teachers will need to diversify their strategies.

## Sample Two

COURSE(S) Language & Culture: berry picking	
<b>CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES AND LEARNING STANDARDS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehend key information in slow, clear speech and other simple texts</li> <li>• Comprehend simple stories</li> <li>• Use various strategies to support communication</li> <li>• Seek clarification of meaning</li> <li>• Develop and demonstrate safety, fair play, and leadership in physical activities</li> <li>• Analyze and describe the connections between eating, physical activity, and mental-well-being</li> <li>• Use of materials, tools, and technologies in a safe manner, and with an awareness of the safety of others.</li> </ul>	<b>CONTENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural stories that relate to the place.</li> <li>• Language and vocabulary that supports the learning.</li> <li>• On-the-land safety.</li> <li>• Sustainable harvesting practices.</li> <li>• Rules and expectations for on-the-land learning.</li> <li>• Protocols and traditions associated with harvesting.</li> <li>• Cross curricular content co developed with or supported by classroom teachers.</li> <li>• Stories and lived experiences by knowledge keepers.</li> </ul>
Hours it will take to teach the identified Learning Standards?	20-30 hours
Structure / schedule for the learning opportunity?	One full day trip with classroom opportunities.

### Staff/Expert Roles and Responsibilities

STAFF EXPERT	ROLES / RESPONSIBILITIES
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be part of the planning team.</li> <li>• Approve the plans and the budget.</li> <li>• Help confirm consents for students participating in the activity.</li> <li>• Inform the School Governing Authority about the activity.</li> <li>• Prepare the contract/honorariums for knowledge keepers.</li> </ul>
Language Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the project planning and develop resources for knowledge keeper.</li> <li>• Identify all resources / funding / equipment needed, and plan for how those will be accessed.</li> <li>• Identify an appropriate location for the learning activities and confirm arrangements (any costs, specific times, etc.)</li> <li>• Supervise students during the activities.</li> <li>• Prepare resources</li> <li>• Work directly with the staff and knowledge keeper(s) and help make and confirm all travel arrangements.</li> <li>• Work with the staff and knowledge keeper(s) to ensure student safety.</li> <li>• Determine an appropriate assessment strategy.</li> </ul>
Knowledge keeper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm all resources needed and choose a suitable location.</li> <li>• Inform language teacher of any dietary needs.</li> </ul>

### Skills or Knowledge Students Need to Complete the Learning Opportunity

SKILL / KNOWLEDGE	HOW WILL STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE THEY HAVE LEARNED THE KNOWLEDGE OR SKILL?
Identify specific food plants	Use the content from the teaching staff and knowledge keeper to identify food plants.
Understand a story/legend	Able to retell the story or give a summary of one through different medias.
Safety and precautions	Demonstrate their ability to safely use tools when harvesting berries and how to sustainably harvest.
Preservation of berries	Demonstrate their ability to properly store berries for future use (with the help of teaching staff).

### Required Materials/Supplies

ITEM	COST	WHERE TO BUY?
Large cooler for berry storage	1 x \$100 = \$100	Local hardware store
Buckets for each student or groups of two.	25 x \$10 = \$250	Local hardware store
Honoraria for knowledge keeper(s)	\$300	L&C or other budget
Fuel for bus	\$250	Local gas station
Gas card for knowledge keeper(s) (if they aren't riding the bus)	\$50	Local gas station
Food and water	\$500	Supermarket

### Safety Considerations for the Learning Opportunity

- Participants will need to be adequately supervised.
- Participants will have to be adequately trained for proper harvesting techniques

### Assessment Tool

LEARNING OPPORTUNITY) On-the-land learning: berry picking

LEARNING STANDARD	PROFICIENT	COMMENTS
Apply cultural teachings of knowledge keeper(s) and curricular teachings of teaching staff	I can apply cultural knowledge and protocols when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Picking berries</li><li>• Doing Land acknowledgments</li><li>• Giving thanks with an offering</li><li>• I am out on the land</li><li>• Listening to an elder, guest and knowledge keeper</li></ul>	

### Considerations

Ensure proper measures are in place which supports sequential learning for different grades. All students will be exposed to the same activity, but different grades will have slightly different takeaways. Younger grades will be focused on cultural exposure, whereas older grades will begin to decipher and interpret deeper understandings of the language, culture, land and protocols. When assessing students for what they learned on a trip, language teachers will need to diversify their strategies.

### Sequential learning example

Each class will have the same base set of content, but higher grades will have more expectations and questions.

CLASS	TARGETED CONTENT	ASSESSMENT STRATEGY
K-1	Basic vocab, prayer, berry picking song, introduction to sustainable harvesting	<b>On site:</b> verbal (retelling) <b>In class:</b> written (drawn)
2-3	Vocab, prayer, song, location and significance, sustainable harvesting techniques	<b>On site:</b> verbal (retelling) <b>In class:</b> written and drawn.
4-5	Detailed vocab, proper harvesting techniques and acknowledgements, drumming, sustainable harvesting techniques	<b>On site:</b> verbal (retelling) <b>In class:</b> reflection or journal piece centered on the day's activities. Expression of sustainable harvesting.
6-7	Detailed vocab, proper sustainable harvesting techniques. Intro to land stewardship and helping one another harvest.	<b>On site:</b> verbal (retelling) <b>In class:</b> reflection or journal piece centered on the day's activities. One-page writeup on sustainable harvesting.
HS	Detailed vocab, proper sustainable harvesting techniques. Land stewardship practices and helping one another harvest.  High school or intermediate students have a great opportunity to use technology to document trip.  High school students can be given leadership roles when harvesting or being the helper to the knowledge keeper.	<b>On site:</b> verbal (retelling)  In class: short paper on the trip and the importance of sustainable harvesting and what it means to them.  <b>Cross curricular:</b> compile a short slideshow or film using photos and videos about what they did on the land.  <b>Observational:</b> how well did the students do? Did they work well with others? Do they understand the concepts of sustainability and stewardship?





## Excerpt from the FNESC and FNSA Student Reporting Handbook for First Nation Schools in BC May 2024

### Evidence-Based Suggestions for Student Reporting Practices

Evidence suggests that student reporting practices should:

- Provide students and parents with timely, meaningful updates on students' progress, in formats that are clear, accessible, and do not use excessive education jargon. Parents generally do not want long summaries of learning standards and teaching approaches; instead, they want user-friendly, updated information about whether their children and teens are progressing according to relevant expectations, a description of any issues that need to be addressed, and confirmation that their students are on track for school success and graduation.
- Involve self-assessment and opportunities for students to communicate their own learning progress, which leads to an increase in student confidence in their abilities, more accountability for their own learning, and usually greater student satisfaction. More information about this issue is included further in this Handbook.
- Always reflect a strengths-based perspective, building on the belief that all students can learn and grow, that schools are responsible for supporting that growth, and that students should be encouraged to learn *and* demonstrate their learning in different ways and at different rates.

### Student Self-Assessment and Reporting

(Adapted from MECC K-12 Student Reporting Policy. Communicating Student Learning Guidelines. 2023)

Student self-assessment and goal setting can be meaningfully integrated in all types of reporting formats. Helping students build their capacity to reflect on their schoolwork can help them be mindful of their own growth and is a key part of the learning process; it promotes personalization, inclusion, diversity, and student engagement. Self-reflection and goal setting are important parts of learning and development both during the K-12 school years and in life beyond the classroom. Focusing on these skills: amplifies student voice; helps teachers and parents support students in achieving their goals; promotes student responsibility for their learning; and helps foster a lifelong- learning mindset.

Research shows that students have accurate perceptions of themselves and their own development, and incorporating student self-reflection into learning, assessment and reporting processes also nurtures student growth and confidence.

Teachers can support students with self-reflection by:

- Understanding and clearly articulating the intended learning for the lesson and connections to the Learning Standard.
- Setting and sharing success criteria for each lesson so students understand the expectations for the learning and can identify when they have achieved mastery.
- Working with students to intentionally notice, name, and describe their learning.
- Asking open-ended questions to prompt student self-reflection and help build their metacognition language and skills.
- Promoting and talking with students about authentic experiences and learning opportunities.
- Encouraging students to communicate and document their strengths and areas of future growth.
- Helping students identify and celebrate their unique learning preferences and styles.

**Teachers can help students with goal setting by:**

- Providing guidance through ongoing, deliberate conversations and feedback.
- Facilitating ongoing conversations focused on learning and life aspirations to encourage students to develop and refine individualized learning goals.
- Helping students develop action plans to support their goals and help them navigate challenges.
- Promoting learning opportunities related to specific goals, such as introducing students to suitable resources, opportunities, other teachers, or community partners.
- Helping students recognize and celebrate their successes.
- Involving parents in conversations about student goal setting.

**Teachers can share information with parents about students' self-reflection and goal setting in numerous ways. For example ...**

- ☐ Teachers can regularly help students think about the importance of attendance and how their engagement in school is impacting their own learning and well-being, and parents can be contacted and involved in discussions about these issues throughout the school year.
- ☐ Student led conferences are a natural opportunity for students to share about their self-reflection and goals, which can increase parents' enthusiasm for participating in meetings with teachers.
- ☐ Report card comments related to student self-reflection and goals can also be particularly meaningful to parents.

## Sample Seasonal Rounds Cultural Calendar

### SEPTEMBER

DATES	GRADES	TOPIC	CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	TEAM LEAD(S)
4 – 6	10 - 12	Fall Campout – Camp Construction	Shelters	
			Berry Harvesting	
			Wellness	
			Cranberry picking & sharing	
			Welcome ceremony	
11 - 13	8 - 9	Fall Campout – Camp Construction	Caribou weed and balsam bark - separate into K-3 and 4-7 groups	
			Welcome new teachers; Elders Tea	
			Water cycle, clean water, watersheds	
11 - 13	6 - 7	Fall Campout		
6	K - 7	Cranberry picking		
9		Elder's Tea		
9	K - 7	Plant Gathering		
10	K - 12	Welcome Ceremony		
24	K - 12	Orange Shirt Day		

### OCTOBER

DATES	GRADES	TOPIC	CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	TEAM LEAD(S)
2	K – 7	Beaver Dam	Beaver habitat, life cycle, beaver lodge & dam design Classroom session Oct. 3	
15	4 - 7	Watersheds	Water cycle, clean water, watersheds	
16	K - 3	Watersheds	Water cycle, clean water, watersheds	
18	All	First Nation Day	Moose meat cutting; hide tanning	
			Beaver hide skinning	
			Songs and stories	
			Stick Gambling	
			Plant display	
			Regalia display	
			Community Potluck dinner	
			Construction	
23 - 25	10 - 12	Fall Campout – Camp Construction	Wellness	
			Plant harvesting & water sampling	
			Community evening: meat cutting	
			Fleshing	
			Sewing projects	
	K – 12	Meat cutting   Beaver skinning	Tracking, butchering, cutting	
	K – 12	Moose Hides		
	K – 7	Sewing		
	8 – 12	Moose Hunting		



### NOVEMBER

DATES	GRADES	TOPIC	CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	TEAM LEAD(S)
21 - 22	4 - 7	Snaring	Snaring, animal life cycles, deadfall traps	
21		Elder's Tea	Topic - snaring	
	K - 12	Moose Hides	Scrapping	
	K - 7	Sewing	Sewing projects	

### DECEMBER

DATES	GRADES	TOPIC	CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	TEAM LEAD(S)
	K - 12	Moose Hides	Scrapping	
	K - 7	Sewing	Sewing projects	
2 - 3	4 - 7	Snaring	Snaring & snaring protocol, animal life cycles, deadfall traps	

### JANUARY

DATES	GRADES	TOPIC	CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	TEAM LEAD(S)
	K - 7	Sewing	Sewing project	
	K - 12	Moose Hides	Scrapping	

### FEBRUARY

DATES	GRADES	TOPIC	CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	TEAM LEAD(S)
	K - 7	Sewing	Sewing project	
	K - 12	Moose Hides	Scrapping	
4 - 5	4 - 7	Snaring	Snaring & snaring protocol, animal life cycles, deadfall traps	
	8 - 12	Trapping	Snaring wolves - Snaring & snaring protocol, Animal life cycles	
13 - 14	10 - 12	Winter Campout	Construction	
			Wellness	
			Plant harvesting & water sampling	
19	4 - 7	Beaver Dam visit	Explore dam and lodge, food trails; seasonal changes; life cycle; measure creek, pond	
20	K - 3			
27 - 28	8 - 9	Winter Campout	Construction	
			Wellness	
			Plant harvesting & water sampling	

### MARCH

DATES	GRADES	TOPIC	CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	TEAM LEAD(S)
6	8 - 12	Ice Fishing	Ice fishing with nets	
7	K - 7	Ice Fishing	Ice fishing with rod	
4	4 - 7	Watersheds Unit	Water cycle, clean water, watersheds, seasonal changes	
5	K - 3			
	K - 7	Sewing	Sewing project	
	K - 12	Moose Hides	Scrapping	

**APRIL**

DATES	GRADES	TOPIC	CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	TEAM LEAD(S)
	K - 12	Moose Hides	Fleshing	
	K - 7	Sewing	Sewing project	
	10 - 12	Outdoor leadership	Bear hunt; tracking, butchering	

**MAY**

DATES	GRADES	TOPIC	CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	TEAM LEAD(S)
7 - 9	10 - 12	Spring Campout	Fish camp	
21 - 23	8 - 9			
13	K - 7	Watersheds Unit	Water cycle, clean water, watersheds, seasonal changes	
14				
26	4 - 7	Peeling Bark	Pine, birch, balsam trees	
	K - 12	Moose Hides	Tanning	
	K - 7	Sewing	Sewing project	
	10 - 12	Outdoor leadership	Bear Hunt	
28 - 30	6 - 7	Spring Campout	Fish camp	


**JUNE**

DATES	GRADES	TOPIC	CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	TEAM LEAD(S)
3	K - 7	Beaver Dam visit	Explore dam, seasonal changes, life cycle	
4 - 6	4 - 5	Spring Campout	Fish camp	
17	4 - 7	Plant Gathering		
	K - 7	Moose Hides	Smoking	
20	K - 12	Aboriginal Day		
	K - 12	Celebration Ceremony		
	K - 9	Salmon Release		





## Resources Used



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A FIELD GUIDE TO

# EMPOWERING STUDENTS

*Through*

**LEARNING  
ON THE  
LAND AND WATER**



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