



# INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

The National Centre for Collaboration

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

## WE ARE INDIGENOUS

The National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education (NCCIE) is uniquely Indigenous, elevating Indigenous perspectives of Indigenous education and incorporating Indigenous values. NCCIE is created by Indigenous peoples:

- to look at Indigenous education from distinctly Indigenous perspectives;
- to acknowledge the creativity and perseverance of Indigenous peoples in passing on knowledge to future generations;
- to amplify community voices and foster connections so that people across the country can learn from one another about Indigenous education; and
- to enhance opportunities for sharing and direct collaboration amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

NCCIE is hosted by First Nations University of Canada, which has a 40-year history of being Indigenous-owned, operated, and controlled. The Centre is grounded in principles of respect, reciprocity, and relationship, which are understood in Indigenous ways and honoured according to Indigenous protocols and customs.

First Nations University of Canada is situated on three campuses in the Province of Saskatchewan, including one in Regina on an urban reserve of Star Blanket First Nation (for more, go to [fnuniv.ca](http://fnuniv.ca)).

## A FEW WORDS ABOUT 'INDIGENOUS'

Indigenous is used as a general term when referring to First Peoples, recognizing that most people prefer the use of the name of their nation, such as Haudenosaunee, Nehiwayak, Anishinaabe, etc. The use of "Indigenous" is in no way intended to make generalizations about the distinctness and diversity of the original Peoples of Canada or the world. "Indigenous" is meant to be inclusive of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, non-status Indians and other rights holders classifications.

In addition, the phrase "Indigenous education" is used, recognizing that the many First Peoples of this land define and use the term differently in accordance with their language and cultural context.

## *Indigenous Education - Keeping Our Traditions Strong*

### OUR VISION

We highlight innovative and exciting examples of Indigenous education from across the country, celebrating the dedicated work by communities to strengthen Indigenous education for all generations. We connect people at the grassroots level where education is delivered and knowledge is passed on.

### OUR MISSION

We facilitate collaborative networking among communities, leaders, parents, educators, Elders, Knowledge holders, practitioners, policy makers and researchers to advance the success of Indigenous education across Canada and to support efforts in reconciliation for all Canadians.

### INDIGENOUS EDUCATION - An Introduction to the Centre

What is Indigenous education? This is a core question that was asked of community members across the country during NCCIE interviews, at regional workshops and the first national gathering. A distinctly Indigenous approach to working with Indigenous knowledges and peoples is to seek direction and insights directly from communities, rather than imposing a definition upon them. This is some of what they have told NCCIE when reflecting upon their perspectives on education for their peoples:

- Even though struggles to secure sustainable and equitable funding continue and gaps persist, the creativity of Indigenous peoples in Canada has yielded a profound diversity of distinctively Indigenous educational programs and experiences.
- Reflecting the many languages and diverse cultures of the First Peoples of Canada and the world, Indigenous education has many names.
- The phrase "Indigenous education" does not resonate with everyone. Many people understand it in terms of a People's "cultural knowledge" or one's "culture" or "life ways."
- Indigenous education - as it exists from coast to coast to coast across Canada - is distinct and original to the lands from which expansive and dynamic bodies of knowledge have developed over millennia.
- Indigenous education is holistic in nature and recognizes life-long learning as central to human development in all aspects of living.
- Indigenous education occurs on the land and in classrooms for learners of all ages and all backgrounds.
- In Canada, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education exist to strengthen Indigenous peoples and their futures.
- In this era of reconciliation, opportunities are increasing for all peoples - Indigenous and non-Indigenous - to learn about ways of seeing and being in the world that are different from a conventional worldview they were and are still being taught in school.

To celebrate and showcase the multitude of Indigenous educational experiences that exist around the country, NCCIE serves as an accessible, shared, informational resource for all peoples of Canada.

Listen to Dr. Mark S. Dockstator, President of First Nations University of Canada and the Centre's Founder, talk about Indigenous education and NCCIE's approach:

<https://www.facebook.com/NCCIECanada/videos/president-of-@%5B250284845029519:274:first-nations-u/229125337634676/>

## Indigenous Education - Keeping Our Traditions Strong

### NCCIE.CA: PRIVILEGING IMAGERY - AMPLIFYING VOICES

As a reflection of the primacy of oral traditions, the NCCIE.CA allows Indigenous peoples to tell their stories and share their experiences in their own words.

Watch and listen to video and audio recordings to hear the voices and see the faces of those directly involved in Indigenous education where it is happening - on-the-land, in classrooms, at community centres and other organizations.



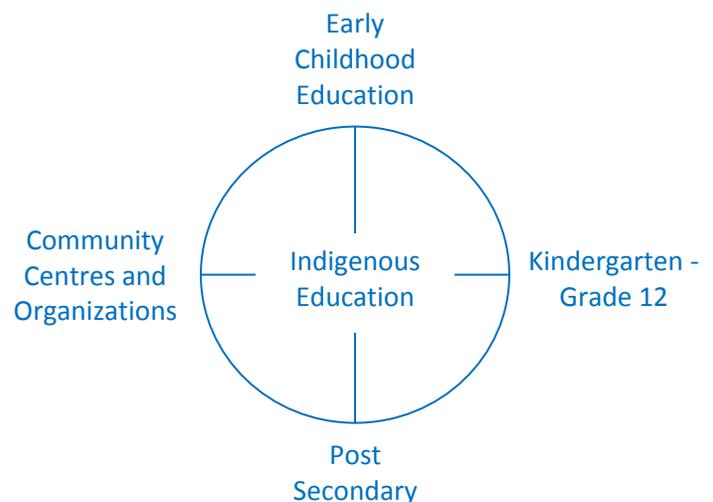
### NCCIE.CA and NON-INDIGENOUS VOICES

While most stories on this website are Indigenous in both voice and origin, we recognize non-Indigenous knowledge holders who demonstrate their care for Indigenous ways of knowing in respectful ways. With this in mind, you are likely to hear a few stories on this website from some non-Indigenous voices.

### INDIGENOUS EDUCATION AND HOLISM

Communities emphasize the holistic nature of Indigenous education:

- that it is for learners of all ages and all backgrounds
- that it is experienced everywhere - on-the-land, in classrooms, through community centres and other organizations,
- that it is as old as the land, integrating language, culture, and traditional knowledge, and
- that it shares knowledge for all aspects of living, including (to name just a few):
  - history
  - reconciliation
  - First Nation, Inuit, and Métis languages
  - Indigenous environmental science
  - medicines
  - First Nation, Inuit, Métis cultures, cultural practices, and knowledges
  - life skills and parenting
  - healing and wellness strategies
  - land-based skills
  - and more



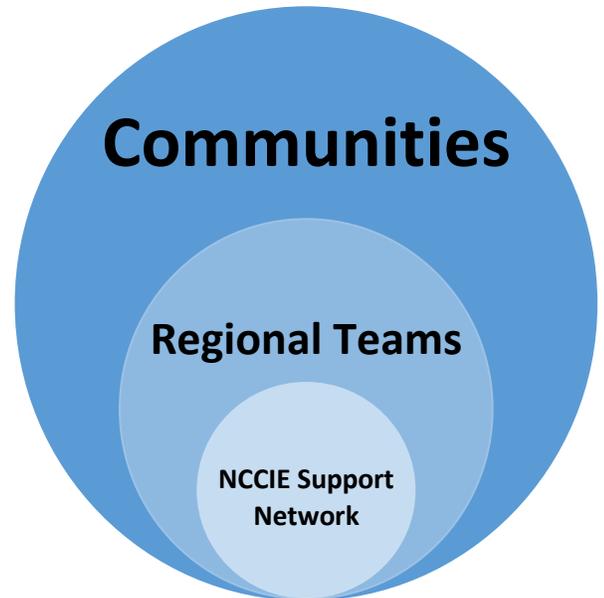
This illustration is from a background paper, *Indigenizing Education in Canada*, written by Dr. Jo-ann Archibald Q'um Q'um Xiiem and Dr. Jan Hare for the November 2-4, 2016 RCAP Forum, *Sharing the Land, Sharing a Future: A dialogue and conference marking the 20th anniversary of the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (visit: <https://www.queensu.ca/sps/rcap20>).

## Indigenous Education - Keeping Our Traditions Strong

### WHO ARE WE?

The diagram illustrates the primacy of communities in their relationships with NCCIE. In order to respect the diversity of peoples and voices across the country, the Centre privileges community voices, listening to and respecting their perspectives and interests.

The groups connecting with communities for NCCIE are the regional teams, which are based out of the regional hubs shown on the map. More regional hubs can be added over time. Regional teams reach out to and communicate with communities, seek approvals, gather the stories, and organize workshops. Each team has a Regional Lead (or Co-Leads), 'research associates' or 'interviewers,' and any administrative or technical support they may choose to recruit.



The NCCIE is founded by Dr. Mark S. Dockstator, President of First Nations University of Canada (FNUiv). Dr. Dockstator is supported by a national team of academic leaders and community members, all with histories of involvement in Indigenous education. Regional Teams are supported by administrative, logistical and technical assistance headquartered in Saskatchewan through First Nations University of Canada, which contributes time and space for the Centre's work.

FNUiv is an Indigenous-led and governed post-secondary institution. Project funding for the NCCIE was awarded to FNUiv in 2017 through a New Paths for Education grant program by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC, now Department of Indigenous Services Canada, DISC).

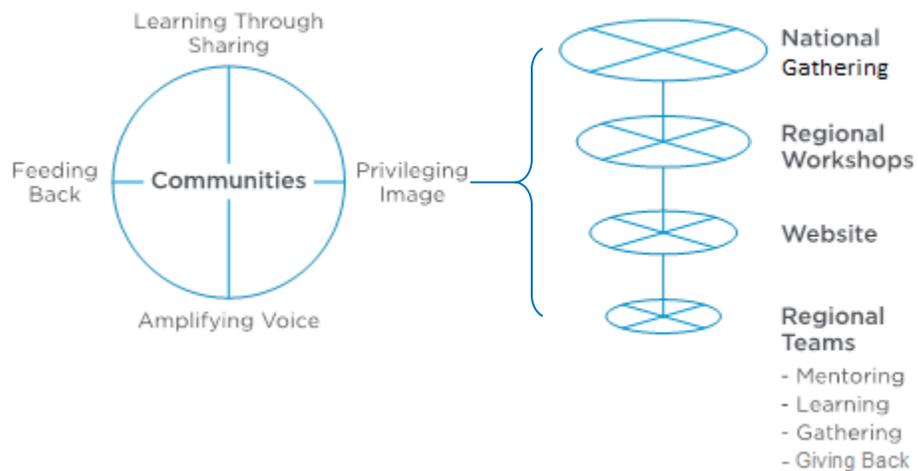
FNUiv selected three organizations through a proposal process to facilitate and implement the Centre's work. The Chanie Wenjack School for Indigenous Studies, Trent University, (Peterborough, ON) is tasked with coordinating the story-gathering process. Engineered Code (Regina, SK) is co-creating the website with Dr. Dockstator, and Creative Fire (Saskatoon, SK) provides administrative and logistical support to regional teams. A Content Support Team at First Nations University provides regional teams with technical support and is tasked with taking care of the many stories gathered by the regional teams.

## Indigenous Education - Keeping Our Traditions Strong

### WHAT DO WE DO?

The NCCIE offers different ways of sharing and learning about community stories of Indigenous education:

- **regional teams** work to develop relationships with communities and organizations, gain approval to **gather stories** about Indigenous education, and give information back to communities about NCCIE and its opportunities for collaboration, including:
  - **the NCCIE website** is a virtual meeting place that privileges imagery and amplifies Indigenous voices where individuals can search for and learn about Indigenous educational programs and experiences across Canada
  - **regional workshops** offer opportunities for people to meet in various locations across the country and discuss, in person, important issues pertaining to Indigenous education that are relevant to the peoples living there
  - the **national gathering** is an annual get-together bringing together Elders, youth, students, community members and parents to celebrate Indigenous education across Canada and to meet and learn from each other across the generations



This diagram is based on work by Dr. Mark S. Dockstator for: **First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey (RHS) 2002/03: The People's Report** (pages 8, 10; footnote 6).

## *Indigenous Education - Keeping Our Traditions Strong*

### HOW DO WE WORK? The Nature of Indigenous Research

NCCIE is a national research project that is distinctly Indigenous, from concept to design to implementation.

With respect to “research,” the NCCIE is different. As a uniquely Indigenous national project, the Centre does not view “research” in the same way as other mainstream organizations such as universities or provincial and federal governments.

Principles of respect, reciprocity, relationship, and responsibility are understood in Indigenous ways and honoured according to Indigenous protocols and customs.

In other words, from an Indigenous perspective, the work that is carried out for NCCIE places communities at the centre of the project:

- NCCIE works to **respect** community protocols, ethics processes, and decisions;
- NCCIE recognizes the importance of **relationship-building** and establishing trust;
- NCCIE accepts the **responsibilities** that accompany working with Indigenous knowledges and cultures;
- NCCIE acknowledges that one such responsibility in this work is honouring the central value of **reciprocity** and "giving back" to communities.

“Giving back” to communities from an Indigenous perspective means that the Centre cannot just "take" from communities, but must "feed communities" with knowledge, connections, and opportunities for direct collaboration and interaction.

### THREE QUESTIONS

With each individual's permission, the interview is either video-recorded or audio-recorded.

These are the three questions asked:

- How do you describe or define ‘Indigenous education’ from your perspective or in your language?
- Please describe your educational program - what is taught, who is the program for? etc.
- What is your vision for the education of your people over the next ten years?

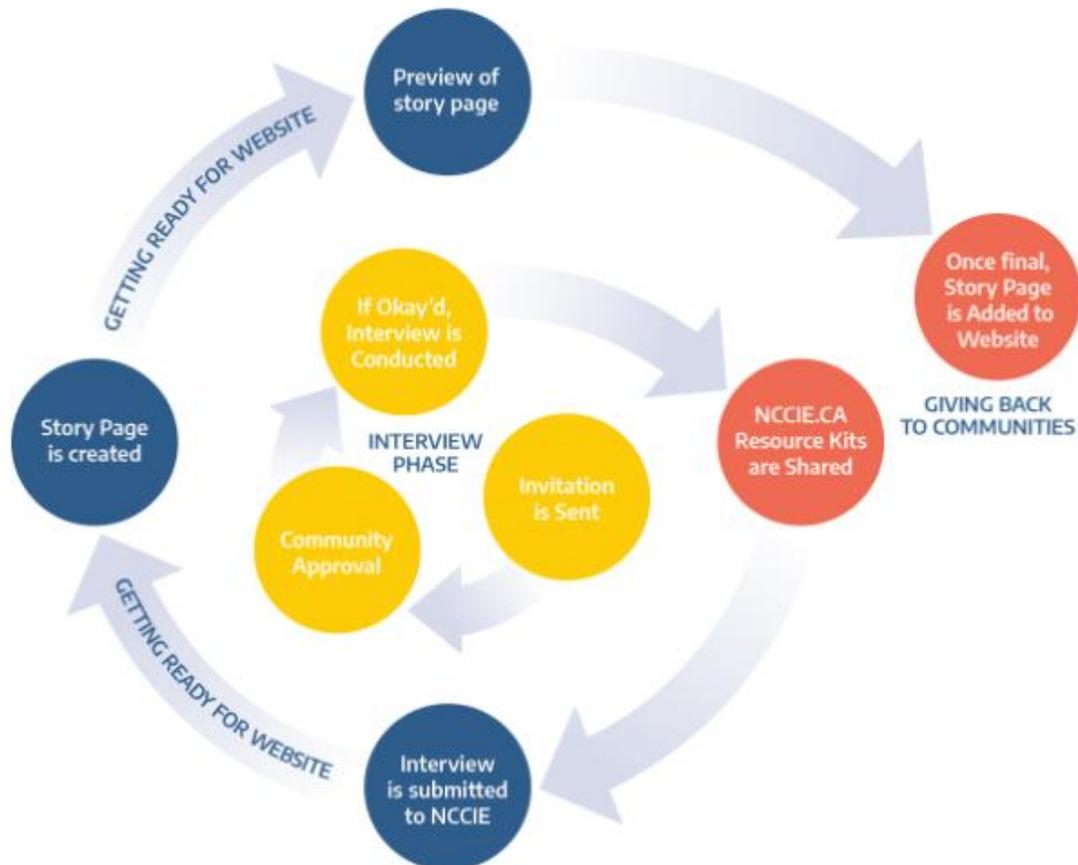
When you listen to a story that is posted on [nccie.ca](http://nccie.ca), you can hear insights and perspectives in response to these three questions.

## Indigenous Education - Keeping Our Traditions Strong

### THE STORY-GATHERING PROCESS - From Invitation to Website

The story-gathering process begins with an invitation (at the centre of the diagram) and culminates in a story appearing on NCCIE.CA. The diagram illustrates our emphasis on respect for community protocols as well as giving back to communities by:

- sharing Resource Kits to enhance people's experiences with the website
- increasing the number of stories shared on the website
- expanding the number of languages available for listening to stories



### INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

The importance of one's language in passing on knowledge is central to Indigenous education everywhere. Language is grounded in the lands where it is spoken and is integral to understanding Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

NCCIE is dedicated to privileging Indigenous languages in support of efforts to sustain them and people's abilities to converse and understand when listening to them.

A pilot project in the Centre's second year will see ten stories about Indigenous education programs translated into ten different languages. At the click of a button, you will be able to listen to and learn about these ten educational programs in the language of your choice. As NCCIE.CA grows, so too will the number of stories offered in different languages.

## *Indigenous Education - Keeping Our Traditions Strong*

### ETHICS AND COMMUNITY APPROVALS

Through a proposal process, FNUniv selected the Chanie Wenjack School for Indigenous Studies, Trent University, (Peterborough, ON) to coordinate the story-gathering process for NCCIE. Both Trent's Aboriginal Education Council and Research Ethics Board have approved the NCCIE project. Each Region, where applicable, has obtained ethics approval from a lead university, college, or research institute. When approaching a community, school, or organization, the Region seeks the requisite approvals to proceed. No work is done if approval is not received.

NCCIE's work is subject to community approvals. Community approval may be:

- written or verbal approval by the educator directly
- written or verbal approval by a principal and/or education authority/school board chair
- written or verbal approval by Chief and Council
- if a community has an ethics process and would like NCCIE to follow it, applications are submitted and approval sought

This project is not 'research' as the term is conventionally understood. No personal questions are asked, and no data analysis is conducted. The digitally-recorded stories that are gathered remain in their original form; changes are made only for colour-correction, sound, branding, and ensuring acknowledgement and recognition of each person who is interviewed, according to their wishes.

### TAKING CARE OF THE KNOWLEDGE BEING SHARED: Intellectual Property Considerations

All original content - the digital interviews and any other material shared during interviews - is the property of the person or organization who consented to the interview. The content is archived with and protected by First Nations University of Canada. If anyone who was interviewed wishes for their material to be amended or removed from the website, they may contact NCCIE and submit their request (click on "Contact Us"). All requests will be honoured.

### YEAR ONE

The first year of operation for NCCIE ends October 2018. During its first year:

- 17 different regional teams were established across Canada
- Ethics and community approvals were obtained
- Over 100 students, youth and community members were hired as regional interviewers, assistants and information technology support
- Capacity-building and training sessions were provided to regional teams for interviewing and working with the digital equipment
- Over 300 stories were gathered
- 10 regional workshops were organized
- 1 National Gathering was held

### YEAR TWO

- Grow the NCCIE library of stories about Indigenous education programs
- Indigenous languages pilot project

## *Indigenous Education - Keeping Our Traditions Strong*

- Work to establish new relationships and develop regional teams in parts of Canada not yet reached
- Indigenous governance project
- Cultural knowledge project and *Waniska*

### GOVERNANCE

During its first year, Dr. Dockstator, in collaboration with Trent University, established an oversight committee comprised of faculty and staff, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, from the Chanie Wenjack School for Indigenous Studies and Trent's Faculty of Education. Together, they provided guidance during the Centre's first year. The first several months of the project, the oversight committee helped:

- identify prospective regional leads in different parts of the country
- assist with the university ethics approval process
- raise questions and provide input into decisions

Various initiatives for the Centre's second-year are guided by the Elders Council at First Nations University, Kehte-Ayak.

Discussions will be held to explore a more long-term governance structure that honours Indigenous principles and values.

### NCCIE.CA AND RECONCILIATION

#### **Shining a Light on Education for Reconciliation**

The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, points to education as the key to reconciliation, stating, "Education got us into this mess and education will get us out of it."<sup>1</sup>

With a mandate to support and encourage a strong national presence for collaboration in Indigenous education across Canada, NCCIE.CA is meant to support this key element of reconciliation - education. NCCIE.CA serves as the gateway for educators across the country - and anyone interested in Indigenous education and reconciliation, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous - to share and learn from one another.

As articulated in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Final Report, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, "Too many Canadians still do not . . . understand that . . . we are all Treaty people."<sup>2</sup> What does it mean to be a Treaty person? How can we, as individuals whether we are Indigenous or non-Indigenous, learn about and respect this nation-to-nation relationship?

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/univcanada/posts/education-got-us-into-this-mess-and-education-will-get-us-out-senator-murray-sin/1559614157392830/>

<sup>2</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015). *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: A Summary Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, page 9.

## *Indigenous Education - Keeping Our Traditions Strong*

One of the aims of the NCCIE is to support efforts to reconcile this gap in people's educations and to explore these questions by providing a forum to share learning experiences intended for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners of all ages and in all classrooms (both indoor and outdoor). These educational programs are distinctly Indigenous and are presented from Indigenous perspectives.

Through NCCIE.CA, the Centre aligns well with the TRC Calls to Action that correlate with education (Calls 6-12), language and culture (Calls 13-17), and more (visit: [https://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](https://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)).

First, the NCCIE acknowledges the holistic nature of Indigenous education by 1) respecting that Indigenous education occurs throughout life, including early childhood learning, K-12, post-secondary, and community- and land-based learning, and 2) recognizing that education of Indigenous peoples occurs in all places and is as old as the land, integrating language, culture, and traditional knowledge with history, science, medicine, life skills, the arts, law, living in balanced relationship (sustainability), and more.

Second, NCCIE.CA celebrates the diversity of Indigenous education across the country, shedding light on innovative and effective programs that are deserving of equitable support as called for by the TRC. Over time, the NCCIE library aims to grow to include a wide array of Indigenous educational programs and experiences suitable for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students everywhere and of all ages. For example, you will be able to view stories about:

- vocational training programs for employment of Indigenous peoples, responding to Call 7.
- student support and success services that work to help Indigenous students stay in school and graduate, responding to Calls 9 and 10.ii.
- effective strategies for “closing the gap” (Call 10.i.),
- providing culturally appropriate curricula and programming (Call 10.iii.),
- protecting and teaching Aboriginal languages (Call 10.iv. and 14.iii., 14.iv., and 14.v.),
- involving parents and community members in teaching their children (Call Numbers 10.v. and 10.vi.),
- and more.

The NCCIE encourages direct communication among and between educators and practitioners. In its aim to further reconciliation objectives, NCCIE.CA connects educators with each other so people can reach out, build relationships, and learn directly from one another, breaking down barriers and working to dissolve stereotypes.

The TRC Final Report observes, “For Canadians from all walks of life, reconciliation offers a new way of living together.”<sup>3</sup> The NCCIE shines a light on education as a pathway to reconciliation for people of all ages, offering Canadians “from all walks of life . . . a new way of living together” to build lasting, respectful relationships today and for future generations.

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<sup>3</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015). *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: A Summary Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, page 22.