

Transcript for Pulling Together: A Guide for Curriculum Developers, Session 2 (January 19, 2023)

Session Title: Meaningful Integration of Indigenous Epistemologies and Pedagogies

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Guest Speaker: Kenthen Thomas

TANYA BALL:

We are joining in for our week two session, Meaningful Integration of Indigenous Epistemologies and Pedagogies. Next.

Awesome, So let's start with our song to get us in the right mood. I love The Jerry Cans. It's such an uplifting song, so it's perfect for today. And that will allow some people, some more people to trickle in as we go.

[♪ "[UKIUQ](#)" BY THE JERRY CANS PLAYS ♪]

TANYA:

I love this song so much and it is so fitting for what we are going to talk about today, which is all about Indigenous ways of knowing and being. So one thing I guess, a question that I'm going to pose to people, and please put it in the chat. What is the difference? What is, who's the main character in the video that we just saw? Take any guesses. Everyone's saying the Land. Yes! The Land is, I would argue, that the Land as the main character because it's what we're focused on, even when the human beings are singing and doing their throat singing in their other singing, you can see the animals in the background. So the animals and the Land are incorporated into pretty much every single scene. So the culture is very intertwined in this video. Culture, the Land and the people. It's all in a relational component. So I wanted to throw that out there before we take the deep dive in. So today we're going to be talking about meaningful integration of Indigenous epistemologies and pedagogy. So this is pages 16 to 25 in the book. Next week we are going to be talking about engaging with Indigenous communities. That will be 27 to 35. I believe that is section four or five in the book. Next, please. Next slide.

Okay, so what are we doing today? We have our welcome, we have a little bit of housekeeping, our check-in to make sure that we're all on the same page. We're going to be talking, I'm going to be talking about Indigenous ways of knowing and being and how we can incorporate that into our pedagogy and teaching people how to, how to really teach Indigenous knowledges in a respectful way. We also have a guest speaker who's here with us today. This is Kenthen Thomas. He is an educator and storyteller. Can I pass on to you, Kenthen, just to briefly introduce yourself.

KENTHEN THOMAS:

Weyt-kp xwexwéytep everyone. Kenthen Thomas skwekwst. I'm here in Salmon Arm, British Columbia. We know this area as the Secwepemc. So I'm very honoured and humbled to be here, and I'll be sharing a quick little story with you later and then talking a little bit about my practices in education. How I infuse and integrate some of my Secwepemc ways of knowing and being into my teaching. practices. So kukwstsétsemc. Thank you guys for letting me share some space with you today and I look forward to joining you in a bit.

TANYA:

Amazing. Thank you so much Kenthen. There will be some time at the end of this session for a Q&A, if you have a question and it hasn't been addressed in a chat, or if you have a question for Kenthen or myself, we'll have some space afterwards to jump in on that. Next. There we go.

Okay, so today we're going to be talking about some big words. I say big words because these are some words that I actually didn't know until I got into graduate school. But they're often thrown around all the time within academia. And this is ontology, epistemology and axiology. Ontology, essentially it is the study of being, how people are. Epistemology is the production of knowledge, how do we come to know things? And axiology is the study of value, right? So if you keep going down, they all flow into each other. So our way of being informs how we get to know things, which then informs where we as a culture imprint our value systems. Next.

So these words are very, they're based off of Western concepts of philosophies. They don't necessarily make sense within Indigenous worldviews. So what I suggest and what is most common in academia and the discourse these days is instead of using the words ontology, epistemology, and axiology, I would encourage you to say Indigenous ways of being or Indigenous worldviews for ontology. For epistemology, it's Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous knowledges. That's epistemology. Indigenous axiology. I have only ever heard of it being called Indigenous axiology. So if anyone has any other suggestions, let me know because we're all still, still learning here. Next.

Okay, So this is where I want to start out just because this is where most of our knowledge is coming from, including myself actually, because I went to elementary school and learned alongside my peers. So there's a lot of problems actually with Western thinking. And number one, it's usually based on patriarchal knowledge systems, where typically white men are the only ones who have and can have objectivity. So if you think about this in history, think about, for those art history historians, those folks. Think about old, old paintings where you see men gathered around a table all wearing their white wigs, right? So that's where knowledge is seemingly coming from in Western ways of knowing, Western thinking, right? And the people, there are people that are outside of the table, like women and servants in particular paintings, but usually it is about the men and it is the job for the men to do the thinking. It's also very objective, right? So a lot of times, especially within library services, because that's my library brain coming in, is that we want to think about making things very simple. And in doing so,

people are seeking one single objective truth. This is especially true within the sciences and within the math field. But within Indigenous ways of knowing doesn't necessarily make sense. Because we have a holistic way of talking and being. Whereas in academia, in mainstream society, it's all about the brain and how we process information by the brain. It's a split up from the body. So those are seen as two different elements. It's also based on rationalism and a human centric way of doing and being. So that essentially means that there's a hierarchy of being. If you think about a triangle, the hierarchy is human beings are at the top of the triangle and then it goes down. And then flora and fauna typically are at the bottom of the triangle. So that's a problem that it's human centric because that's not how we do things, especially as we've seen with the video. It's not all about humans. It's about our relationship between each other. So it also only asks research within Indigenous, no, research within Western thinking. It really only asks questions to reinforce Western or settler colonial values. And this is from Eileen Morton Robinson's work on relationality. So really what all of this is to say is that this is a system that we've all been really raised with, but doesn't necessarily make sense within Indigenous worldviews.

Next, alright, so let's talk about them. What does Indigenous epistemologies or Indigenous ways of knowing, what does that even look like? Next. There we go.

So Indigenous ways of knowing can be broken down into five main categories. However, I'm sure that there are way more than five. First of all, Indigenous knowledges are personal. As I was saying, in a lot of scientific disciplines, they're looking for that single objective truth. Whereas in our way of knowing, we know and recognize that everything is subjective. Not only is everything subjective, everyone has their own biases coming to the table. Everyone is different and perceives differently, especially when it comes to intersections, right? So a lot of us have intersections with other communities, like the LGBTQ2S+ community or the Black community. Every single person is different, so we see knowledge as being personal. Indigenous knowledges are also orally transmitted. This is especially considering oral traditions. So traditional knowledge, that is the collective nature of knowledge gathering. So it's about telling stories and stories being seen as very complex. They're not just fairy tales about boy meets girl. They fall in love and they live happily ever after. That's not typically what Indigenous storytelling is about. It's about teaching you the deep philosophical knowledge and governing systems of how our Nations really operate. So storytelling is also really important because it really ensures that we connect to our memory and to our ancestors, right? So Indigenous folks we like, or at least Métis folks, we like to think seven generations behind us and even beyond, and then seven generations ahead. That way we can recognize our ancestors and pay homage to the work that they have done. But also keep in mind that we want to look after our children and our children's children and our children's children's children. You know, like we are the ultimate grandparents, in that way. So Indigenous knowledge is also experiential. Experiences on the Land is one example. So when you go onto the Land, if you are going berry picking, you're not just going to berry pick. You're also engaging in relationality in the sense that all of your senses are activated. You're smelling the berries, you're seeing the berries, you're hearing

the birds that are fighting you for the berries and who sometimes get the berries before you. Sometimes you leave the berries for them. It's something that really enlightens all of the senses. It's not just you going in there with your mind. Indigenous knowledges are also holistic. So it brings together the inner and the outer world. This can be defined as the spiritual, but also the physical. And even some Indigenous nations use the medicine wheel. The medicine wheel is divided up into four. So that's the emotions, spirits, spiritual, physical, and mental. So all of these pieces are working together. And we're all, we're all trying to find balance within that, right? So it's bringing things together. Indigenous knowledges are also very narrative. We love to use metaphors and self-reflections. The more that you know yourself, the more that you can help other people, really. Help other people, help your community. So knowing yourself is seen with extreme value.

Next, let's talk about Indigenous ontology. So this is Indigenous ways of being. So ontology is being. Epistemology is knowing. Next.

Indigenous ways of being are often tied into spirituality. However, spirituality is not the right word here. And I lean on a scholar, his name is David Delgado Shorter, and he writes a lot about the word spirituality and how words have impact. Words are really important. So when we hear the word spirituality, especially over time, the word has really gone down and it's seen as devalued, especially when you compare it to something like religion. So this is not what we're doing here. We want to ensure that we have our own traditions and our own ways of expressing things. So instead of using the word spirituality, we'll often use the word relationality when we're talking about spirituality. So Indigenous ways of being are all about being relational. Next.

Amazing. So what is relationality? I am coming from Treaty 6 Territory. Therefore, I have a lot of Cree influences. Can we add the author name to the chat? Oh, which author was I talking about? David Delgado Shorter. And the title of it is called Spirituality, is the article that I'm referring to. So relationality is, the way that I see it, is through wâhkôhtowin. Now, what wâhkôhtowin is the interconnectedness of our relations. So you'll often hear, especially within ceremony, people saying All our relations. That means we're all related. That's just not human to human. It's also human and more-than-human. And what are more- than-humans? They're the plants, the plants, air, everything else in between, animals, anything, ancestors. So more-than-humans can encapsulate a lot of different entities. So wâhkôhtowin is that we are all related. Miyo-wîcêhtowin is that we are moving forward and having those good relationships. And if these two items are in flow and are really working together in a positive way, what will happen is you will have pimâtisiwin, which is life, right? It's all rooted in, this is how life works, and how we relate to the Land is how we relate to everything.

Next. So reciprocity is a really big piece of relationality, especially when we're talking about the Truth and Reconciliation because we're trying to regain trust. Reciprocity is one way to do that. The Land, we start to see the Land or we know the Land is our relation and should be treated as

such. So we see the Land as a sister, an aunt, or an uncle. So if you see, if you think about a tree as a relative. It makes you think things about it, think about things a different way. And you really want to protect them from being exploited, right? So there's a really good quote by Robin Wall Kimmerer, and she says if a maple is an it, it's easier to talk down. But if a maple is he or she, we think twice, right? So that's really based on us being stewards of the Land and treating the Land with dignity and respect. So all of these are really important. Generosity, reciprocity are important to making pimâtisiwin , which is life, and making things move forward in a good way. Next.

No ceremony comes into this because ceremony is how we remember. It is our chance to renew these relationships and renew our commitments. It's our way. Remembering to remember, and ceremonies look different to each Nation. But what is similar is that we're renewing and we're reinstating our relationship and responsibility to the Land and also each other. So what this is it's a performance of our governance systems. And our governance systems are really etched into everything that we do. So that's how we govern ourselves, that's how we move forward with governing structures, it is all about relationships. There we go. So for urban Indigenous folks who have been disassociated from their Lands or taken away from their homelands, things are a little bit different. So ceremony looks different. And really what it is, is urban Indigenous folks, they tend to hub together and create different hubs of cultural sharing. And that allows storytelling to be happening. And then people can learn and reconnect to their cultures that way as well. Next.

Okay. So this is all about visiting or keeoukaywin. Okay. When this is from an article by Cindy Gaudet. What she talks about is the importance of visiting and just hanging out together in the same space, so we can have intergenerational and intercultural learning because visiting is where we tell stories and stories have immense value. It tells us who we are, how we're connected to our human and more-than-human relationships, and how to move forward in life in a good way. Each story has a different lesson. So depending on the lesson that you need to hear at a particular moment, that's the story that you need to listen to. Next.

So this is my big slide, my big bright yellow slide saying that visiting is so important that if you are going to be working with Indigenous communities, this is an aspect of relationship building. Getting out your teacups and hanging out with everybody. And you'll find the more time that you spend there, people are going to say, Hey. Where were you the other day? Because we enjoy seeing you and that's our way of teasing you and bringing you back in and saying, We miss you, come back. So get out your tea cups and know that visiting is okay, you know, and it's highly valued. Next.

So how do we incorporate all this stuff into the classroom? So for the next couple of slides, I have some of my own ideas of what I do in my own classroom settings. And you are more than welcome to use them if you please, if it makes sense in your classroom. Let's go through some next.

So how to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into the classroom? Get personal, share some stuff about yourself. The more vulnerable you are with yourself, the more accepting and the more that students will let their guard down and allow you into their space, and creating a safe space includes a bunch of different voices, Indigenous voices. This path pushes against the pan-Indigenous stereotype. Tell stories. Tell stories about yourself. Use your stories as your examples. Create holistic environments and assignments that allow students to incorporate all of these elements. During your lecture times, encourage them also to use their body to stand up and move around, have self-reflection assignments, Include various different resources on your podcast or on your syllabus like podcasts, videos, Twitter threads, anything along those lines, just to incorporate more oral storytelling. Next.

So for relationality really encouraged the Land to be a part of the process. If you can bring the students outside, great, but if you can't, because it's -40 and winter, maybe you can bring the outside inside. Maybe if you're teaching elementary students, for example, you can collect snow and bring the snow into the classroom and paint with that. Paint with sticks that have fallen down off the ground. Teach your students how you wish to be treated. This is that golden rule. It's all about dismantling power and dynamics in your classroom because we're all just human beings at the end of the day. And the more approachable that you are as an instructor, the more likely students will come to you for help. Create assignments with ceremony in mind. Revisit concepts multiple times over the semester. So this is actually my own tip for my brain. There's a lot of neurodivergent students in our classes. So having routine and revisiting things a lot of times, it helps with our memory. Centre yourself before teaching. That's actually one of the reasons why I start my class with a song. Because it allows me to settle into the classroom and also for the students to settle in as well. Last but not least, put your guard down. Have fun. I've learned this working with babies at the public library. The more fun that you have as an instructor and the more energy that you bring to the table, that's the energy that people will give back to you and the excitement that they'll have about the class and the stuff that you're teaching. Next.

I think this might be the last slide that I have. Yes. Okay, So visiting, encouraging visiting in the classroom. Offer a space for students to visit with each other. Even if you are dividing people up into groups, and there you say, give them a question to ask each other. If they end up talking about, at the end of it, about what they're doing on the weekend. That's okay. What's happening is we're creating a safe space for each other and creating community in the classroom. Invite guest speakers and go on school field trips, Bring food or have a potluck. Students love having potlucks. Encourage intergenerational learning. That means bringing kids into the classroom. If students have kids in the classroom, I always bring whiteboard markers. And then the kids will draw on the whiteboard, create their own artwork while we do our teaching session. It works out. Also creating bonus assignments to encourage community engagement. I always give an extra 3% to students who have engaged with Indigenous communities in one way or another. There we go Next.

Most of all listen to the students. The students know how they learn the best. What our job as instructors is to be as flexible as possible. And within your own boundaries. Gotta put that in there. Within your own boundaries so that you can be accessible to the students that are in your class who have all different learning abilities and all that other stuff. So at this point, I'm to move it on and pass it over to Kenthen and he'll talk a little bit more and flesh some of these out. You ready? Go for it, man.

KENTHEN:

Alright. Again, I'll just reintroduce myself. Weyt-kp xwexwéytep. Kenthen Thomas skwekwst. And before I begin, I'm going to do what we call doing the work of the storytelling. And that's just introducing some of my kyé7es and xpé7es or slé7es, and that's Dr. Mary Thomas, Mark Thomas, Herbie and Vera Johnny. And my parents are Phyllis and Gerry Thomas. And I share a blended family with a lady named Melissa and her two children from her side are Tristan and Lexis. And I have a son, his name is Susep Soulle. We share a big old blended family. And that's a beautiful thing. When I, when I work with students and teachers, I tell them that the reason why we introduce ourselves in that manner is to acknowledge that the ones who created this knowledge from these stories are the ancestors and our Elders. And the true, true belonging of these stories are for the future generations, the ones we call tellqelmúcw, the people that are yet to come. And those are the unborn, those are people that are still, still toddlers and infants, the ones that haven't heard the stories yet. So as a Knowledge Keeper, and I prefer to say Knowledge Sharer, I like to share that whatever limited knowledge I have from our ancestors all the way back, all the way to our tellqelmúcw, the people that are yet to come. So today I'm, that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to share a little story with you. But first I want to, I want to really touch on something that Tanya said in her relationality slide and that's having fun. That's my main point when I do storytelling exercises and storytelling workshops with teachers, other teachers and other. Our cats. Other teachers and our students. I tell them, have fun creating your stories. Have fun telling your stories. Because if you don't have fun, then you're giving your audience, your listeners, you're giving them permission to not have fun listening to your stories. I always tell them that to make sure that they have fun and creating and telling their stories. I have, I have the grand opportunity to share our stories all over the place. I've been, I've been all over. I've been, I've had the good fortune of being all over the world, Australia and New Zealand and over in Europe area. All over British Columbia, at different schools in different locations and with you fellows and ma'ams, I get to share stories all over. So I always try to try to really make sure that I'm in a good space and I have a good, good mind and good heart when I do this, so I can have fun as well.

So this story is called Sxste'lln Water Monster. And it's the story that asks you what kind of warrior leader do you consider yourself to be? And that's a question that I'm going to re-ask at the end of this story. But I like to tell it about, I like to tell a story within a story. This story was told to me by Paul Michelle. And Paul Michelle has a pretty cool title. He came back to the Secwepemc, where our ancestors lived and roamed and hunted and harvested for thousands upon thousands since time immemorial. And he came back about five, maybe about five, almost ten years ago, in between there somewhere. And he started working at TRU Thompson Rivers University and now he's the special advisor to, the special advisor in all things that are Indigenous to the school. So he takes this role very seriously. And one day he asked me into his office and I gave them tobacco. And he said, I'm going to share a story with you, and I was very grateful, and he shared this story with me. But he started out with his own story. And his story was a long time ago, when he was in his third year of university he was doing really well. He was getting good grades and he was showing up all the time. But he was coming up on his fourth year and he thought to himself, Boy, I don't want to do this anymore. I want to, I want to do something else. So he went to his dad, Joe Michelle, and Joe Michelle passed away, it is probably about almost 14, 15 years ago. He was a language speaker, an educator, and Knowledge Sharer on his own. He was very well regarded in all sorts of circles all over Turtle Island or North America. And so he went up to his dad and he said, Oh, like Dad, Hey, listen, I have to talk to you. I have to tell you something. I'm not going back to school in the fall. And his Dad said, Oh, what are you going to do then? And he said, Oh, I'm going to stay home and probably work at the lumber mill. Oh, that's going to be good for you. You're going to make a good living there. He thought to himself, Gee, this is going really well. And he goes and then I'll probably play hockey again, pick up, pick up the hockey stick, and play with all other buddies and cousins. And I'll probably just live around Chase area. Yeah, that'll be good. And his dad said, Oh, that's a wonderful decision, my son, I support you. And he goes, But. And Paul laughed. There is always that "but." He goes, Oh, what's the but about? And he goes, Oh, I just want to take you on a canoe trip tomorrow morning. Can you be at Sxste'lln Lake, Adams Lake at about seven in the morning, and we'll go for a canoe trip. Me and you, and I want to share a story, a legend with you. And Paul said, Okay. And he knew there was something underneath it. So he went, and he had his mind and heart set on what he wanted to do, but he was going to listen to his dad because he really respected and loved his dad. This is the story that Joe Michele shared with Paul Michelle on that canoe trip. And it's called The Story of the Sxste'lln Water Monster. And it starts off like all of our Secwépemc stories.

A long, long, long time ago. A long, long, long time ago, when our people, my ancestors the Secwépemc people, arrived here on Mother Earth. They finally, they finally were no longer the tellqelmúcw, the people that were yet to come, they were the people they were the qelmúcw. So they had to find a qelmúcw, [Secwépemc language] means a place for humans, all the people. They had to find somewhere that they could make their own home. One of the places that they chose was the southern, southern, southern side of the or the northern side of the Sxste'lln Lake. And they chose this area for a lot of different reasons. One was that they have

the world-famous sockeye salmon run, the sqlelten7úwł, right there in what was known as the Adams River, Sxste'lln River or some people know it as Lee Creek are Roderick Haig-Brown Park, and now we call it Tsútswecw. And they also had good hunting. They had deer to eat all over the place. And then on the other side of the lake, they had some of the best berries in all of the Secwepemcúłecw. They also had some elk over on the other side too. And it should have been a good living, but as all stories do, they have something that's wrong, something that makes people, makes people have to make decisions. And one of the things they had to do was make a decision because there was a water monster in the lake. The Sxste'lln water monster. And it was said to have lived high up in a middle of a mountain. And it had all these caves that went all over the place, all over the lake. Whenever those people tried to canoe on that lake, whether they canoed fast and they canoed as silently as they could, just floated in the lake. Whatever they did, these people, that water monster would hear these qelmúcw come down through one of those tunnels. And it would appear before them and go Shhhhh. Those humans that were in the canoe would never ever be seen or heard from again. So for years and years and years, the people were okay with portaging and staying close to the shore and going all the way around the lake. And if you've ever been to Adams Lake or Sxste'lln, you know how big that lake is and how long it would take to go all the way around in a canoe. So the people had to make a decision. What are we going to do? Are we going to keep living the way we know, the way we know? Keep being the way we are> Or are we going to do something about this water monster? So all of the people gathered together and they practiced the form of self-governance where everyone had a voice, everyone, even the young ones. And everyone talked about doing different things like poisoning the entire lake. And maybe the water monster would go into the water and poison himself and he would die. And they said, No, that's too drastic. We'll kill all living things. We'll kill our ecosystem. And it'll be hard for Mother Earth or tmúcw, the Land to recuperate. So they said tá7a, that's not a good idea. And it was a young one, a tiny young boy who stood up and he said, Why don't we just kill it? And everyone looked at each other and they said, Oh boy, that's a real good decision. And why didn't we think of that? So they all kinda chuckled. And they said, Well, let's start out with 32 of our best warriors, and they started out with 32. Then they narrowed that field down, a series of competitions and trials to 16. Then they went to eight. And finally they ended up with the four best warriors. Four best warrior leaders that the Secwepemcúłecw has probably ever seen. And they walked up to that first warrior that they came across and said weyt-k, you've been chosen. Are you ready? Are you ready to go battle a water monster? And this warrior leader was really full of himself. He knew he was strong, he knew he was agile. He knew he was quick witted and of a good mind. So he knew all these things about himself, and he wasn't afraid to share that reality that he lived in. So he looked at them and he said, Oh, look at me, of course, I'm ready and showed them his muscles. And he went, Oh boy, am I ever ready. And they said, Oh, they said, Can we ask what you've done to done to prepare for this journey, this challenge you've been gifted with? And he said, I don't need anything, any flexed again, they showed him as muscle and he said, Oh, look at me. They said, oh, mé7e, okay, okay. And he kept he kept on telling everyone about how great he was and they were like, Okay, okay. Get in your canoe and let's see. So he got into his canoe and he started rowing out into the lake. And he rode out into the lake. And after a while,

he started going in circles. And he went around in circles and he circled the entire lake and then it got, it started getting smaller and smaller and smaller and smaller until that water monster heard him. [Drumming, shhh] It came down through one of those tunnels [shhhh] That warrior leader was never, ever seen or heard from again. So they came up to the second one. They said, Hoo hoo, that happened, eh, mé7e, and they looked at him and he said, Are you ready? He was a lot like the first one. He said, Oh my, I'm ready. Look at me, and he did the same schtick as the first one, and they said, Okay, okay. Get in your canoe and let's see what you can do. He started the canoe across that lake, but instead of going around in circles, he started going this way for a while. And then he'd go back that way. Then he'd go this way. Many go back that way. And all those humans were standing on shore watching him and going, Oh, which way is he going? He's going this way, then he's going that way, and he's going this way and that way. And they said, Oh boy. And after a while, the water monster heard him and came down through one of those tunnels from the middle of the mountains. [Shhhh] Again, that warrior leader was never, ever seen or heard from again. They came up to the third warrior, and they said, Oh boy, I hope this didn't deter you. And he said, No, tá7a. And they said, Are you ready? And that warrior leader looked at him and he said, Mé7e, I'm ready. They said, What have you done to prepare for this challenge, this journey? And this one was much more humble. And he said, Oh, mé7e, thank you for asking. I'll explain to you. He said, I live my life in as good and kind of way as possible. I hunt. When I hunt and harvest I like to provide not only for myself but for my family, my kwséltkten and my Elders and all the people in the village the best I can. I tried to share. And when I, and every morning when I get up and I run up to, I run up to the top of the tallest mountain, that's for my stamina and my strength. And then I go into the coldest river every single morning and that's to help control my breathing. And then I also use it to hold my breath underwater. So that way I control the lack of oxygen to my lungs too. I train in a good way and I run all the time. Then he went on and on, just telling about things he did and the people were like, Oh, mé7e, gee, you sound like a good qelmúcw, a good, a good person. And he said, Ah ya. What have you done for this journey in particular? And he said, I, like I said, my life is about being ready for something like this. He climbed into his canoe and he started growing his canoe out into the lake. And as he was growing up there, he didn't go in circles, he didn't go this way or that way. He went straight out into the middle of the Lake. But when he got to the middle of Lake, all of a sudden he just started drifting. He took as his paddle out of the water and he was going straight into the middle of Lake. And at first he picked up his bow and arrow. He was going to shoot the water monster, but then he put it down. The humans on the shore were watching him with great interests. They thought this might be it. And then he picked up his spear and that water monster came down through one of those tunnels. And that man had his spear all ready. He went to go, he went to go, put it straight into his heart. But then he hesitated. And all the humans on the shore, were, What did he hesitate for?! What is he waiting for? And even the water monster was taken aback a little bit. But then he went. Shhhh And that human, that qelmúcw, that warrior, that leader was never ever heard or seen from again. So they came up to the fourth warrior, the last one, and they asked them the same question. They said, Oh, weyt-k, are you ready? And that man, that human, that qelmúcw, that warrior leader looked at them. And he looked at his entire village and he looked them in the

eyes the best they could. And he said, Tá7a. And they all laughed and sighed a big sigh of relief because they didn't want to lose their best, one of their best warrior leaders again for the fourth time. So they looked at him and they said, Mé7e, mé7e, yes, yes. You're not ready. And he goes, they go, Can we ask you why? And he said, look in the sun, that's just about to go down. And I'm afraid of the water monster. I respect it too much. Its power, its abilities, and it killed three of our best warrior leaders. What do you think chances I would have fighting it in the dark? So I'll be ready later. The man went down to the water and any washed himself four times. While he was washing himself, he asked for a prayer, a dream, a vision. And then that night he went to sleep. And in his dreams, he was given a beautiful dream that was of his ancestors. All of the ancestors that went all the way back since time immemorial, since his people first set foot here on Mother Earth, on the tmic, the Land. And many of them he didn't even know. Some names he had heard in stories, but many he didn't know. He introduced himself to everyone, but it was his kyé7e, his granny. She had not even passed away a year prior. He was still in mourning for her. So when he saw her, he felt these tears go down his cheek and he felt his heart beating really fast. And it was one of excitement for seeing his kyé7e, but too it was out of fear because he didn't know what to say to her. He didn't know how to express his gratitude and his sorrow all in one breath. So he just grabbed her and hugged her and he started to cry. And he could smell the smells that made her his kyé7e. He could smell the smells of fire, of salmon, of berries. And he went Oh, kyé7e, and he sat down with her and he held onto her hand as tight as he could. And he listened to every single story and every single teaching that his ancestors had for him. When he woke up the next morning, and he knew what he needed to do. He woke up and he said, and humans came running up to him, and he said, Why, sir, are you ready? And he said No. They said again, why? What do you have to do? And he said, I need to find the master carver and I need to build myself a brand new canoe, a cottonwood one. So the people told him a story of one man who lived up in the Soda Creek, Esk'etenc area west of our Williams Lake. There is this Carver who had traveled all the way up into the Haida Nation, all the way down to beyond Seattle. He learned from some of the best carvers and he became a master carver himself. And it was a gift he brought back here to the Secwepemcúlecw. When he got there, he went around the lakes and rivers and then he walked along the top of the mountains and he got all the way up there. And he handed him a little bundle of medicine. And the man said, What's this for? And he said, he told them the story of the water monster and everything. And the man said, Oh my, I will come and help you. So they went all the way back to Sxste'lln and together they found a beautiful Cottonwood tree. And together they carved it the best they could. And they made a beautiful canoe. Some say it was the fastest and most beautiful canoe the Secwepemcúlecw has ever seen any time, especially now. And they rode, they rode it on the side of the lake, all the way around. They went right around the whole lake and they said it was so fast and so sturdy and so straight and true. They, everyone was enamoured by this beautiful canoe. And then when he returned home, they ran up again. Are you ready? And he said, No, tá7a. They said, what now? And that man said, Oh, look at the sun. It's about to go down beyond the mountains and they said, Oh yeah, that whole thing with not fighting in the dark. Okay. So they took his reasoning one more time, and he went down to the water and washed himself four times, asking for a prayer, a

dream, a vision. Again, he went to sleep and he was gifted a beautiful dream that night. This time it was of the animal spirit guides. The animal spirit guides were once animal people. In our stories, the animal people are the ones who helped create the mountains and valleys, the rivers, the streams. Everything that you see here on the tmic, the Land, they built everything for us, for us humans. And they put together food, and they put together ways that we can help prepare, prepare, and keep ourselves alive and survive here on the tmic, the Land. So when they were finished their job, they became the animal spirit guides. And when they came in, there was the frog that went, Ribbit, ribbit. There was the wolf, going Hooowl, singing its love song to the moon. There was even Senxulec, the coyote, the trickster. He came running in. He's the one who would laugh and run away. And then, but Coyote was so much more than that. He did so many good things for the Land and for us qelmúcw, us people gave us so many lessons. And he sat down and he listened to every single story, every single teaching, and he tried his best to put it into his heart. When he was done, when he woke up the next morning, he knew what he needed to do. And of course, the humans came running up again. They go, Are you ready? And he said no. And they said, Ahh, you're killing us. Why? He said, Oh, because I need to, I need to, I need to get another paddle on the sphere to where the killing of water monster. He said, Where's that, where's that master carver? Did he leave? And they said, He left the day before. He shouldn't be too far. He was walking. So he chased him down through the lakes and he caught up to him, handed them some more tobacco and the man looked at it and he said, What's this for? And he told them the story again, how he needs a paddle, a spear. And the man said, Oh maah. So together they carved them out of some really good Yew wood. When he was done. When he was done, the humans ran to him again and said, Are you ready? And he said no. They said, Why and he said, Look at the sun. They said, Don't even talk about that. We know all about the sun and your fear and respect. Blah, blah, blah. And they walked away all kind of, they were getting frustrated. They wanted to get rid of the water monster and he was their only hope. So then he went down to the water, washed himself and he felt a little bad because he felt like he was letting them down. But he said I need a prayer, a dream, a vision. Anything. Can you help me tskéwelc kúkwpi7, the great one, the old one, the chief of all chiefs. That night he was given a dream. It was the same but different. He dreamt of his ancestors and he dreamt of the animal spirit guides all in one dream. Many of his ancestors he'd never met but, but he'd heard some of their names and stories, but it was his kyé7e. Oh, he loved her. He sat down with her and he could still smell those smells. the salmon smoke and berries. Oh, he loved being with his kyé7e one more time. They watched as all of the animal spirit guides came in. Ribbit, ribbit, the frog. Hooowl, the wolf. Hahaha, Senxulec, the trickster, the coyote. But he's so much more than that. And they listened to every single story and every single teaching. And he put it in his heart the best they could. But next morning he woke up and the humans came running up again. They said, Are you ready? And you better be ready. And he looked at them and he looked at them the best he could in his eyes and he said, No, I'm not ready. And they said, Now what?! And he said, I need to go to the sǫilye, the sweat lodge, and bathe myself and cleanse for this journey, this challenge. And I need, I need to set my mind and heart and all my, and my spirit at ease. And they said, Oh, mé7e. So they went with them and they helped him and they got all other grandfathers, the rocks, the sweat lodge rocks. And they

cleansed out the sweat lodge and they made sure. And he got his songs in order. And he was ready for his first round. In the first round, he prayed for all things, that is life, the music, the Land, everything. And then he cooled off. He went in for the second round where he prayed for all things female. Then he cooled off for the third round. He prayed for all things male. And then he cooled off. And then the fourth round he prayed for himself and that's how we try to do it the best we can here in the Secwepemcúílecw. Always put ourselves last and everything else before. So he, when he was finished, they had a big feast and he cleaned out and the left one grandfather on the sweat lodge, which shows a form of continuity of things that are yet to come for his next lodge, for his next sǫílye. And then they had a big feast. And this one kyé7e came up and she had a caribou hot buckskin hide for him. If anyone knows about caribou, or they're hunters, you know how hard it would be to come by caribou, even in today's time with our technologies, our cars and our ability to get from one side of the province to the other in almost one day. So to get a caribou hide in those days must have been something remarkable. He looked at this kyé7e and he said, Are you sure? She smiled and she said, Mé7e, and he took it. And he hugged her and she smelled like his kyé7e in his dreams. She smelled of smoke and berries and salmon, and he asked her. He whispered in her ear, Will you be my kyé7e? And she said, Ma ha. And he started to cry. She cried good tears and he knew that he found someone who really loved, love like his own kyé7e, his own granny. And he sat down. He sat down with them and he listened to all the stories that his people had for him and all their teachings. And then when he stood up, they said, Are you ready? And he said, No, tá7a. They said, Now what? He looked at the sun, he just pointed at it and they said, Oh, the sun again! Okay. Okay. They knew there was no talking to him about killing anything when the sun was going down. So the man went down to the water, wash himself four times. And again, he had a prayer, a dream, a vision. He had a dream that night. Same but different. His kyé7e again. Oh, he got to hug her for a third time and hold her, hold her hand as he, as they watched all of the animal spirit guides who were once the animal people, who helped create the mountains, valleys, the rivers, the streams. All that we know is tmic, the Land. And as they walked in, there was the frog ribbit, ribbit. There was the wolf, Hooowl! And there was Senxuxlec going Hahaha! And they sat down together and they listened to all the teachings and all the stories, and put it, he put it into his heart the best he could. Next morning he woke up and he knew what he needed to do. He woke up before the sun was up above the mountains. And he went, he put his caribou hide on. He inspected it and made sure it was good. He checked his breathing, he checked his strength, and then he checked his spear and made sure it was good. He checked his paddle, made sure it was good. Then he went down, he inspected his canoe, made sure everything was fine with that. He set his canoe in the water and he climbed in. The sun was just coming up above the mountains. And he started to row his canoe out into the middle of Lake. And he didn't go in circles, he didn't go this way or that way. He didn't he didn't hesitate. He just went straight out into the middle of the lake. The water monster heard and came down and appeared before him in the water. Appeared. And when the water, when the water monster appeared before him. When the water monster appeared before him, he grabbed his spear and he put it, and he plunged it into the heart of the water monster. And he battled with that water monster for four hours. And all of the humans on the shore, all the humans on the shore. All the humans on the

shore. They looked at him, and they watched this battle rage on for four hours. And they couldn't believe what they were witnessing. And finally the water monster died. And he started to go down into the water and the water, and the man, The warrior, the leader had him with this spear. And he felt, something in his mind, told them to let that water monster sink to the bottom of the lake and be done with it. But also there was something in his heart telling them otherwise. So he tried to lift it into his canoe, but he couldn't do it. So we call this community, his village. All the people from Sxste'lln, my ancestors. And they went out in their canoe, and they were really wary, but they were also in awe. There were some Elders on that lake that day that were almost 100. and were over 100, and they had never been in the middle of the lake and they were looking out and they were seeing it from a whole new perspective, and they couldn't believe that they had missed out on this all their life. When they got out there, they helped him load that water monster into one of the canoes and they brought it back to the shore. And the man got it to the shore and he felt like he should just, something in his mind felt like you should just dig a hole, put the water monster in there, and be done with it. But something in his heart, a teaching that he had received, told them differently. So then he said, Oh, and he thought of the scilia, the rocks, how he had honoured them, and how he'd burn them and heated them up with a fire. So he said that's what I'm going to do for this water monster. So he collected some wood, and he made an offering of some melámen, some medicines, sprinkled it on the water monster, honored it in a good and kind way. And then he started it on fire. And as he was watching the fire burn, he saw something, a swirl of smoke going up in the sky, and he looked at it and he could see it was the water monster. It had transitioned. It had transferred into the smoke. And that's when he realized that this was no water monster at all. It was an animal spirit guide who had been stuck in our human realm with us. And he looked at it, and he watched it go up in the sky, and he felt good about what he had done. He had released that water monster back to be with its own, the animal spirit guides. And that, my friends, is the story of how, how the Sxste'lln water monster, and this is the part where my Elders and ancestors will ask the question, What kind of warrior leader do you consider yourself to be? Are you the kind that goes around in circles? No direction, no real, real goal. Just going around in circles. Are you the second kind that goes this way and that way, this way, in that way, which might symbolize or show different sides of you. One time you could be good and kind and giving. Another time you could be downright a bully and mean to your co-workers and the people that work with you and alongside you. Are you, are you the fourth. Are you the third kind, who prepares in a good and kind way? Lives as good and good and kind and clean as possible. But when that challenge is right in front of you, for whatever reason, out of fear of success, out of fear of failure, you hesitate. Are you the fourth kind who, despite all the naysayers, the pundits, the peanut gallery, and despite all of the challenges and the things you don't have, the things you need, the tools that you need to succeed. You do it in as good and as kind a way as possible. And when that challenge is right there in front of you, you go straight to the heart of the matter. What kind of warrior leader are you? So that's the story of the Sxste'lln water monster.

But I'll finish off the first story. So my friend, Paul Michelle, when he was out in that canoe with his father, Joe Michele, that day, Joe Michele told him the story I just told you, and he asked them, he asked him bluntly, What kind of warrior leader are you? What kind of teacher are you, Paul? And that's when he realized that he was the third kind on that day, in that scenario. He said, Oh, mé7e, and he knew that he was afraid of success. And he knew that good things are ahead of him if only he would just go for it. Despite everything, conquer his fears and go for it and build the tools that he would need to be a good warrior leader. So he went back, he finished this fourth year. He got his master's, his PhD, and now he lives, now he lives a really good life as an educator, a teacher, a warrior, a leader.

So that's my story that I wanted to share with you today. I feel like I'm all for all four of those warrior leaders. Sometimes I spin out. Sometimes I go this way and that way. Sometimes I'm good and kind. Sometimes I'm a bully, and I try to, I try to push my knowledge or my ways of knowing and being onto others even though they're not accepting of them. I get mad about it. Sometimes I hesitate because I am afraid. I'm just like everyone else, I fear. But sometimes I'm the fourth kind. Sometimes I do do good things in such a way that I feel benefits everyone around me, even those that get to witness such events. So for me, integrating and infusing my Secwepemc ways of knowing, my biggest tool is through the stsptekwle, the stories. I enjoy sharing the stories and helping teachers, other educators learn these stories themselves. I got my undergrad and my, and I did my PDP in, I finished it in 2016, and I've been teaching ever since. I worked with School District 73 out in Tk'emlúps, Kamloops as an Aboriginal resource teacher. And that was my biggest tool was using the stories to help teachers in the ways to integrate the socioeconomic ways of knowing and being into their own teachings. Also they're a good way to see what lessons, what values you hold dear to you and in that moment in time. And also it's a good way to really engage and to make your lesson interesting with the students. And also, it's a good way to have fun. There's nothing funner than a good story and a good storyteller. It's always really good when we can get the teacher to a good level where they're confident and they feel like that story can come right out of them and can come out of them and straight from the heart right through their mouth. And you can see the students when that teacher really gets an affinity for storytelling, you can see the kids just engaged and really interested in there. They can't take their eyes off of their teacher and it's a beautiful thing when that happens. So I'll also, yeah, just like I said before, tell the teacher to have fun creating and learning and telling that story. Or the students, tell them to have fun doing all of that. Because if you don't, if you don't have fun, you're just giving your audience and listeners permission to not have fun listening. So if you have fun doing it, the whole thing from beginning to end, you'll, you're giving them permission to have fun. So kukwstsétsemc and thank you guys for sharing a short amount of time and stories. I'm always very humbled and honoured when I get to share the words and wisdom of my ancestors and Elders, so kukwstsétsemc, thank you. And have a great day.

TANYA:

Awesome. Thank you so much, Kenthen. Can I get everybody to emoji. You can do your hand clap. just as a big, big thank you for Kenthen. Yeah. I love that story. Oh my gosh. That blew my brain. I love, love, loved it. At this point, I want to open the floor up if anyone's open to asking Kenthen or even myself any questions. I'm letting us all off the hook here early.

GABRIELLE:

So I'll send out an email as well. If people want to send me an email, and I can forward it to you guys as well if there's any questions. That was wonderful though. Thank you. Valerie. Go ahead.

VALERIE:

Hay čx^w q̄ə. Thank you. Seeing is there was a large, large pause and I thought I would just take the opportunity to really raise my hands and say thank you to Kenthen for sharing that story. And it is a very common way to share how to make a thoughtful decision about the next action is presenting an oral history, an oral story that allows you to look to your Elders, to allow you to look at your situation and come to your own conclusion by the very basis of that story. So that was a wonderful story Kenthen, and I do appreciate the way that you shared it and thank you for connecting it to yourself as well. And acknowledging that at different times, you're not just one leader, you are, you were all versions at different times in our life and that our self-awareness and our reflection allow us to sort of think about what we want to be and what the outcomes could be. And so not only is it a way to consider how to relate to people, it's a great way to allow people to think about where they are and how they want to come to a different place in their life. And I just love how our Elders guide us through decisions by sharing those stories. And they don't shame us, they don't scold us, they just let us think about it. So really, really appreciate you sharing that. Thank you so much, hay ce:p q̄ə.

KENTHEN:

I feel like this story is a perfect example of non-interference learning and teaching. And that's what our, I was told by some Elders and ancestors, that that was a strong component of our Elders pre-, pre-contact, that we were we taught in a way without being interfering and I guess helicopter parenting and all those sort of catch phrases. And I think that's a really good example of how we did that and how Joe Michele exhibited that, exemplified that by not telling his son he was making a bad decision but saying, you know, your life is your life, but I just wanted to share this story with you, But I just want to share a story with you. And it made Paul shift his mind and his thoughts just a little bit enough to see, to intro, be a little bit introspective and realize what, what he might be giving away for something, for an easier, for an easier path, I guess. So to say. I like that for that reason. And not only that reason, but so many more.

GABRIELLE:

Actually a question in chat here from Jessica. I feel like classroom time is so short. I feel reluctant to take the time to tell a well-developed story because of all the other things I should do in class. How can we feel empowered to take the time a story needs?

KENTHEN:

The way I like to do is I take the whole period in a class. So let's say you're doing language arts or science or something like that, I'll take that whole period to tell that story. Then I'll just let the kids sit on it until next time I come back and then I'll work on their recall. I will ask them, What do you remember of the story? What's the important parts of the story? And I try to make them, I tried to get them to fill in that link between what I hope they learned and the story itself. So say it was a story about how Coyote made a tree fall in love with them. And that's just the story, like on the ground level, that's a story about Coyote realizing that the tree's breath helps him breathe. So if I was doing that for science, I'd say, well, what scientific component of the story makes it important for us and what we're about to do in our next unit, our next lesson, our next part of the curriculum. And eventually I'd want them to get around to his breath. His breath is the CO₂ and oxygen, the O₂. And then that way it fills that gap. And we can make links between the story and the learning we're about to do. So I would just say, put the story on its own and take the full hour to tell the story, or the full block to tell the story. And then to give them a day or two to digest it and then come back to it. And then always keep reverting back to the story. And retell it if you have to. Let them retell it and just fill in those gaps with their prior knowledge and their eagerness to learn. And that makes, the stories make the learning so much funner. Instead of, we're going to learn about oxygen, we're getting to learn about inert gasses. We're going to learn about gasses and all that. Just always tie it, always tie it into the stories themselves. I used it many times in my classroom where I'll tell a story. And then I'll, every single subject that we go through for the next 2 to 3 weeks we'll revert back to that story. Like I tell the story of how spider taught man to fish. And everything will be interconnected, interweaved into that story through language arts, right down to sciences and math.

GABRIELLE:

Thanks Kenthen. Marla had her hand up, I think. Is she still here?

MARLA:

Yeah, I did. Thank you so much. That was really fantastic. And it's been a long time since they've had a good story to. I think, you know, as you come into this space, we always consider where do we go from here? What are my next steps? I guess I'm probably more just going to ramble for a second and then maybe have an actual question. I just finished a program on face-to-face consciousness for my master's. And one of the things that I loved is that there was a real lack of luxury and so I think where I'm playing in my own teaching is how, to bring that relational approach and really present material to students that is probably more important to me, but it's also based off of their feedback and having them come into the space with their stories and how they're relating to it. I guess the curiosity that I had is maybe, you are working with K to 12 students, and how you have brought this work forward with it. Or if you've brought this work forward at a post-secondary level or with adult learners.

KENTHEN:

I think our take on our stories. They relate at all sorts of, all different levels in our educational journey. So I feel like no matter what the age is, everyone's going to pull something different from it. It depends on what you as the teacher, the guide or the, what kind of, what, portion of the journey you want to lead them on. So I think learning the stories first off and taking the stories and personalizing it, making it your own, and putting yourself into the story itself. In that way, the students will feel more, regardless of age, they'll feel more connected to it because they've already connected with you as a teacher. If you personalize it, then they can connect with the story even more so. And then I also like to get them to understand that we all have stories ourselves. We all have our own [Secwépemc language], which means our own personal stories. And I like to, I like to give them the freedom to share their own stories on their own, on their own level. If they, if they like to do art, they can share it that way. If they like to tell a story, then they can do it that way. If they sing songs, dance, whatever, however they want to tell there and share their story. It's up to them how they share. And then also, yeah, I've worked with students from post-secondary. I've worked with students from, of course, elementary because that's my specialty, elementary. Other than that, I think. Yeah, just put yourself into the story and make it connected. Yeah. I don't know. I think I hope that answered your question.

MARLA:

Yeah. No, I appreciate that. And I think that's something that I grapple with as the employee of the academy, right? Is how much self-disclosure is too much self-disclosure? Where is that fine line between being a human in the classroom, engaging in co-construction of learning, and that pressure that I think many folks, as was stated before, that sage on the stage. But what about this that I have to get to and forgetting that we're all coming into that space to learn together and that learning can look in different ways. I do a lot of online instruction where it's totally synchronous. And I think just a really good reminder of those multiple ways of sharing personal self from students and instructors and the multiple freedom that learning can be shown.

KENTHEN:

Yeah, I think, yeah, it just helps that connection so much more too when you're, when you have that ability and that confidence to share a little bit of yourself via, via the [Secwépemc language], via the stories, or even sharing their own personal stories. I feel are really strong, so yeah, that connection.

TANYA:

Any other last-minute questions? Can put it in the chat or raise your hand or just jump in.

KENTHEN:

I also put my email into the chat as well. So if anyone wants to further this discussion, I know when I'm asked, Does anyone have any questions? I have about 50 questions in my brain and I can't formulate a clear thought, so I always have to take a little bit of time to digest it and then, you know, a day or maybe even an hour or two to three days or a week down the road. All of a

sudden, I'll go, Oh, yeah, I should ask that. So if that's you, if that's your character like mine, then feel free to just email me and ask me that question down the line and I'll do my best to answer it.

TANYA:

All right. Thank you so much, Kenthen. Okay. So if we can give one more last thank you. Big thank you to Kenthen for sharing his stories with us, you're amazing. All right, and next week we will be learning the following section again. Can you pull up the slides there, Paula? It is page 27 to 35. Is there any other housekeeping items, Gabrielle, before?

GABRIELLE:

No. I posted the link to where all the video recordings are found on our event registration page. And yeah, I think that's about it. I think we're joined by Angie Tucker next week as our guest speaker as well. So this video recording should probably be ready by Tuesday next week for those who had to leave early. Amazing. And yes, the slides will be shared in that section as well. No problem. Thanks. Alright, then if you want to stick around, we'll be around for any of you who want to ask questions, but not in front of 40 other people. You're welcome to stay. Otherwise, we will see you next week. Thanks again.