



# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Global Competencies through Indigenous Perspectives

A Report of Indigenous Community Collaboration and Policy Responses | 2019

# Wiinawah

Inclusive for Us

## Global Competencies through INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES

Thunder Bay is located on the inherit lands of the Ojibwe people of Fort William First Nation.

### Key Partners

Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee

Ministry of Education

Ontario Public Supervisory Officers' Association (OPSOA)

District School Board Ontario North East

Lakehead District School Board

Colleen Kappel | Superintendent of Education

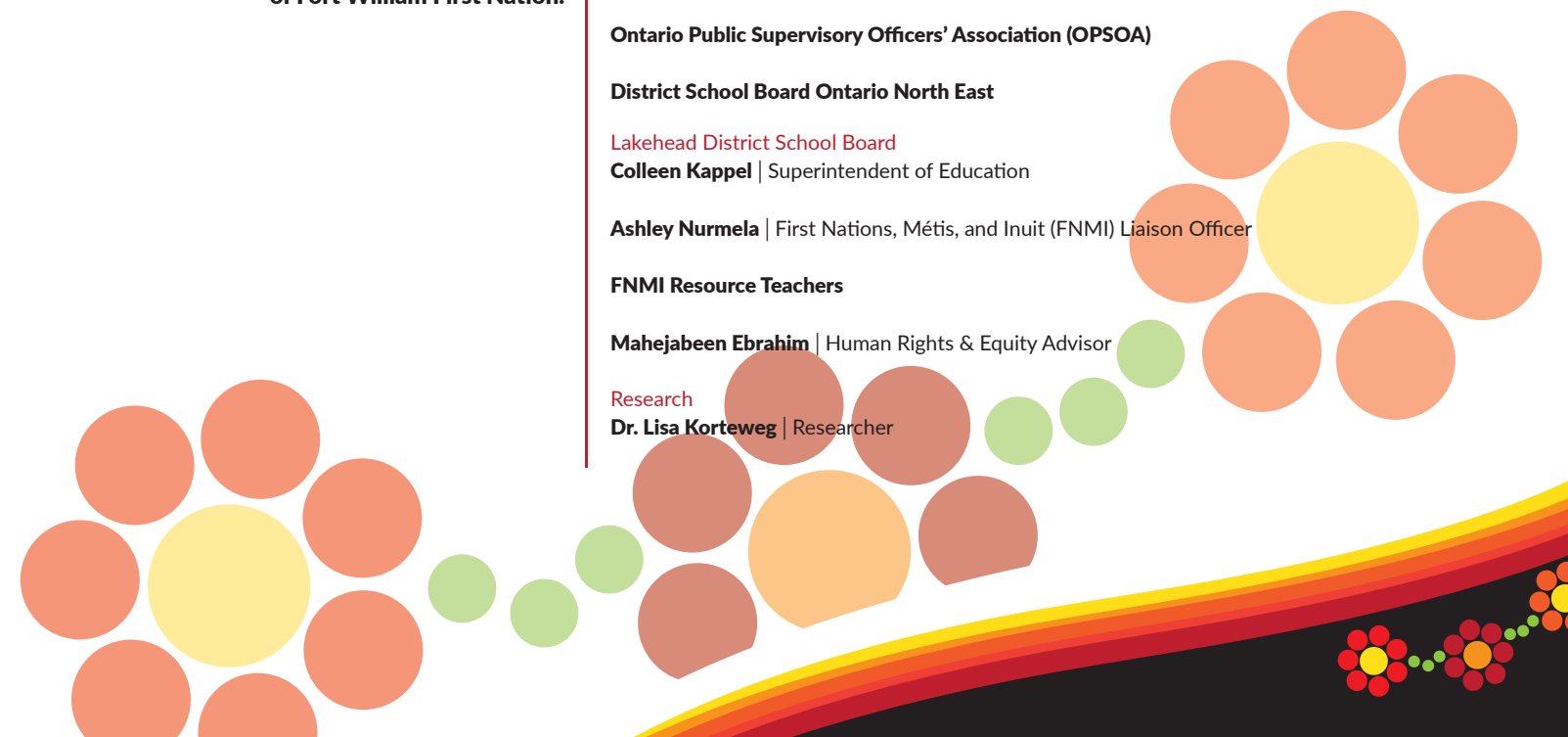
Ashley Nurmela | First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) Liaison Officer

FNMI Resource Teachers

Mahejabeen Ebrahim | Human Rights & Equity Advisor

Research

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This report is intended to help school boards, administrators, principals, teachers, equity officers, trustees, parents, and community members explore the following questions:

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**What are Indigenous perspectives of learning principles and global competencies? Why do Indigenous perspectives and Indigenous knowledge matter?**

**How do we engage in community conversations with local Indigenous education partners?**

**How do we include both knowledge systems—Indigenous and Euro-western—in school discussions, implementation and practices?**

**What is “two-eyed seeing” as a model for generating global competencies for all children?**

**How is reconciliation an important global competency for Ontario education?**

## Going Forward—Reconciliation as a distinct 21<sup>st</sup> Century Global Competency

Indigenous education partners were clear they want more conversations, consultation, and collaboration to discuss global competencies, learning principles, educational priorities with each other, schools and community groups. Conversations need time to emerge, flow, and generate real dialogue. The GCIP Project Team believes that Ontario education can become a world leader in reconciliation as a global competency by focusing on decolonizing curriculum, indigenizing pedagogies and land practices through two-eyed seeing. Focusing on reconciliation to make a difference in shaping our civic and community relationships for the better, Canadian educators need to promote the competency of reconciliation—“within ourselves and our families, in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools, and workplaces” (TRC, 2015, p. 20)<sup>12</sup>.

As documented in a series of paintings by Indigenous and non-Indigenous art students (appendix C)<sup>13</sup>, Ontario students are more than ready to engage in this complex competency of reconciliation between Euro-western and Indigenous knowledge systems, languages and cultures, grappling with an ongoing process of relationships, reciprocity, respect and responsibility (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991)<sup>14</sup>. As our students stated in their paintings:

**“hear and heal through conversations with one another to understand through true listening and a better Canada and world”;**

**“understand others and acknowledge their pain for respectful relationships”;**

**“hope is an openness that we can make positive change”;**

**“openness needs to come from every one and every view”;** and

**“understand how all generations and Peoples work together in friendship”.**

**Indigenous ways of knowing is the crucial key to equip the young people of Ontario as global citizens with two-eyed seeing of fluid and integrated Indigenous and western learning competencies. All Ontario students deserve an enlarged awareness and enriched set of competencies, skills and sensibilities to learn deeply, and to thrive in an increasingly complex and challenging world. It is rich Indigenous knowledge systems, cultural perspectives, holistic engagement frameworks, infused with the spirit of reconciliation and merged with Ontario’s 6-Cs that will provide all students the best competencies to flourish and contribute in an increasingly global and fragile world.**



Summer  
A Reconciliation  
Art Project

1 of 4

The heart of the work  
gives us hope as we  
continue our journey  
together.

<sup>12</sup>The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015a). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*. Retrieved from [http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Full Report Global Competencies through Indigenous Perspectives, Appendix A, (2019) <https://www.lakeheadschoools.ca/aboriginal-education/>

<sup>14</sup>Kirkness, V. J., & Barnhardt, R. (1991), First Nations and higher education: The four R's—Respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 1-15.

## Recommendations to Ontario school boards for global competencies in a post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada era

The GCIP Project Team learned that the principle of deeper learning in this era of the post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (TRC) is to engage in ongoing conversations that include and honour Indigenous knowledges as vital for all students' global competencies through a model of two-eyed seeing. The GCIP Project Team recommends that all school boards engage in this collaborative envisioning process with the Indigenous community to address following questions.

**Are there Elders, Indigenous community members and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers who are collaborating on the vision and prioritization of competencies for the school board?**

**Are there local traditional territory knowledge holders and fluent language speakers contributing to the visioning of two-eyed seeing competencies as global competencies for curriculum, teaching and learning?**

**Do these community conversations and policy engagement collaborations honour the significance and vital contributions of Indigenous knowledge historically, in the present, and into the future?**

**Do these community conversations enlarge and enrich the acknowledgement and realization of Indigenous knowledge as complex and sophisticated knowledge systems equal to Euro-western knowledge systems?**

**Are the community conversations large enough and sustained enough to include a wide variety of Indigenous Peoples, cultures, languages, and diversity of knowledge and Land experience that better reflects the complexity and breadth of Indigenous families in your schools?**

**How does your school board's collaborative project of global competencies involve reciprocity and moving towards greater reconciliation with Indigenous peoples?**



## Why are education policies focusing on global competencies?

### Background

On a regular cycle, the Ontario Ministry of Education launches curricular and education policy discussions to renew and reframe the next set of learning goals or competencies for future generations. Across Canada and internationally, ministries are refocusing their priorities to provide students with the opportunity to develop the critical thinking and academic capacity needed for thriving in an increasingly global future.

“Global competencies (e.g. transferrable skills), are being recognized by researchers and employers as essential for student success in an interconnected world. The term “global competencies” encompasses knowledge, skills and attitudes/values. The need to develop global competencies has always been at the core of learning and innovation. What’s new in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the call for education systems to explicitly emphasize and integrate competencies in teaching and assessment practices.”<sup>1</sup>

The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2015)<sup>2</sup> has reasoned that, “Today, schools need to prepare students for more rapid economic and social change than ever before, for jobs that have not yet been created, to use technologies that have not yet been invented, and to solve social problems that we do not yet know will arise.” The Council of Ministers of Education of Canada (CMEC) in their video guide, Pan-Canadian

Global Competencies (Vimeo, 2018)<sup>3</sup>, describes these 21<sup>st</sup> century skills as, “building on strong foundations of numeracy and literacy, global competencies ... this policy is a Pan-Canadian effort to prepare students for a complex and unpredictable future with rapidly changing political, social, economic, technological, and ecological landscapes.” The Global Competencies through Indigenous Perspectives Project Team (GCIP Project Team) underline our understanding of Pan-Canadian as including Indigenous Peoples—First Nations, Métis and Inuit—in the creation, development and implementation of global competencies into school frameworks and practices. The GCIP Project Team believes a stronger recognition and emphasis of Indigenous knowledge in global competencies will enrich and enlarge everyone’s understandings and abilities.



<sup>1</sup> See MoE: <http://ilr-ria.cforp.ca/ILR/GC/images/Framework%20of%20GC1.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - OECD (2015). Editors: H. Dumont D. Istance & F. Benavides. *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inform Practice* (Full Report). <http://www.oecd.org/education/cei/thenatureoflearningusingresearchtoinformpractice.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Council of Ministers of Education of Canada - EMEC (2018). Pan-Canadian Global Competencies: Video retrieved from <https://vimeo.com/254518651>

[https://www.cmec.ca/682/Global\\_Competencies.html](https://www.cmec.ca/682/Global_Competencies.html)

### Context

Lakehead District School Board is located in close proximity to Indigenous communities. Through ongoing relationships with Indigenous education partners, cultural and linguistic differences are being blended together with the aim to find solutions to serious challenges including systemic barriers. The GCIP Project Team believes a tremendous opportunity is available to all Ontario schools to engage Indigenous families, partners and organizations to collectively better face the serious, growing challenge for all Canadians in the near future.

**How do we create human beings who are competent to handle, problem-solve and succeed in an increasingly complex global world of lightning speed technologies, massive climatic changes, unprecedented migrations of displaced peoples, and intense disruptions to ecological-environmental and socio-cultural-political systems?**



## Community

- Focus on the principle of *Wiinawah*: Inclusive for us—in order to build trust and stronger relationships with one another in education.
- Remember that none of us can heal until we all heal together. When Indigenous students and families are suffering, the whole system is suffering. When Indigenous students and families are healing, then everyone in the school and system can heal.
- Global citizenship needs to be linked to Canada's Truth & Reconciliation Commission and the important competency of reconciliation.
- Well-being and healing: All people have to remember the serious reluctance of northern families to send their youth to Thunder Bay (the largest urban centre in the area) for schooling. Families and communities want to know what schools are doing to make it safe for their youth and to promote their well-being considering the findings of the Ontario Chief Coroner's inquest into the death of seven First Nations youth (2016)<sup>11</sup> and in this era of reconciliation.

## Culture

- Looking at everything through Indigenous cultural lenses builds confidence and capacity for youth.
- Learning from multiple and diverse perspectives, different languages, ages (Elders, Knowledge Keepers), communities, abilities, makes us all stronger—students, educators and the school community.
- Role of Ceremony is another important “C” skill along with → character → community → creativity
- Indigenous learning comes from listening but it goes well beyond listening to human beings. We need to listen to all of creation.
- Focus on land-based learning so that it becomes experiential and embodied, not just in the classroom where it is abstract and can be distorted.



<sup>9</sup> Following the examples of Styres (2011), Korteweg and Oakley (2014), and Tuck and McKenzie (2015), “Land” is capitalized in this report to recognize the collective community of all animate and inanimate beings, of which humans are just one part. Often “Land” is conceptualized in Indigenous epistemologies to describe the complex, interrelated, more-than-human connections of humans within and as part of the natural world, including relations and interconnectedness of plants, animals, rocks, lakes, elements, and ancestral and spiritual presences.

<sup>10</sup> See Battiste, 2013; Simpson, 2014; Styres, 2011 for additional information

<sup>11</sup> Office of the Chief Coroner, Verdict of Coroner's Jury. Seven First Nations Youths, 2016.

<https://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/DeathInvestigations/Inquests/VerdictsandRecommendations/OCCVerdictsSevenFirstNationsYouths.html>

# What We Learned | Land, Language, Community and Culture



Emphasis was put on those Indigenous knowledge points most repeated by our Indigenous community partners inside a "Two-Eyed Seeing" model by Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall (2015)<sup>7</sup>. Two-eyed seeing is the core competency:

**"To see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing, and to see from the other eye with the strengths of western ways of knowing, and to use both of these eyes together"**<sup>8</sup>

Using Marshall's Two-Eyed Seeing model was an effective framework to reconcile the combination of western-based global competencies with the rich inherent principles of local Indigenous knowledge.

## Land

- Indigenous knowledge belongs to the Land<sup>9</sup> and comes to the people by respecting and being on the Land. Land is our first teacher.
- Indigenous learning of the history of this Land comes by listening to the stories, and gives us greater grounding, well-being, and confidence in who we are as Indigenous peoples.
- Land as a knowledge source and pedagogy, where the elements, ancestors, more-than-human animals, spirits, language, and stories are all interconnected with the people, over millennia or time immemorial as a system of relations and knowledge that continue living to this day.<sup>10</sup>

## Language

- Indigenous learning is complex and sophisticated, and holds strong from the land, in the language, and lifelong.
- For every little thing that Indigenous People do, there is a word for it; however, the problem is when you teach Indigenous language in the classroom it becomes just words; there is no action to it and it does not become part of the collective experience.
- Indigenous language needs to be connected to actions, not studied as disembodied or abstract, on the blackboard or screen, or just in 2-dimensional text. There needs to be more language immersion programs or programming where the language can actually live as actions.
- Making holistic and spiritual connections with all of creation is so important and Indigenous People do this with the language. Indigenous People need youth to understand their connections with Land, spirit, human and creation.



<sup>7</sup> Marshall, M., & Marshall, A. & Bartlett, C. (2015) Two-eyed seeing in Medicine. In M. Greenwood, St. de Leeuw, N. Lindsay, & C. Readings (eds), *Determinants of Indigenous Peoples' Health in Canada: Beyond the Social* (pp.16-24)  
<sup>8</sup> Bartlett, C., Marshall, M., & Marshall, A. (2012). Two-eyed seeing and other lessons learned with a co-learning journey of bringing together indigenous and mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing. *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*, 2, 331-340.

# What are the global competencies and what is the role of Indigenous knowledge?

There are six global competencies and groupings that are at the foundation of the Ministry of Education's (2016) policy document, *21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies: Foundation Document for Discussion*<sup>4</sup>, as well as the CMEC policy's chart of six Pan-Canadian global competencies. Each competency is well defined and can be understood as the following six "Cs":

1. Critical thinking/problem-solving
2. Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship
3. Capacity for self-aware/self-directed learning
4. Collaboration with others for inquiry/team work
5. Communication of ideas/literacies
6. Citizenship for global participation

Global competencies are important for all students, but in particular, for Indigenous students as they are the fastest, youngest and largest growing demographic in Ontario and Canada (See: StatsCan, 2016)<sup>5</sup>. Canadian education systems are built upon a Euro-western knowledge system exclusive of Indigenous knowledge systems that have been here since time immemorial, stemming from the land and Indigenous languages, responsive to the environment, and sophisticated in its sustainability. By seeking to acknowledge, learn and fuse global competencies already inherent and essential to local Indigenous knowledge systems, Ontario's education can become more enriched for multiple perspectives and more equitable as relevant competencies for all children and youth.

**This project allowed the GCIP Project Team to co-inquire with our Indigenous partners into those learning skills or competencies that are already vital in Indigenous knowledge systems and implicitly contributing to the strengths and well-being of our communities.**

The GCIP Project Team first sought guidance from Elders and Indigenous community members who are the Knowledge Keepers of language, experience and wisdom, to direct us towards the competencies needed by all youth to problem-solve, create and communicate how to cope with the complexities of an ever-changing global world. We engaged in collaborative conversations (Kovach, 2010)<sup>6</sup> about the Ministry's six global competencies alongside models of Indigenous learning principles to explicitly reference Indigenous knowledge frameworks, as we aimed to embody a key global competency—authentic collaborative inquiry—with the Indigenous communities for students' growth, success and well-being.



<sup>4</sup> [http://www.edugains.ca/resources21CL/21stCenturyLearning/21CL\\_21stCenturyCompetencies.pdf](http://www.edugains.ca/resources21CL/21stCenturyLearning/21CL_21stCenturyCompetencies.pdf)  
<sup>5</sup> <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hltfst/abo-aut/index-eng.cfm>  
<sup>6</sup> Kovach, M. (2010). *Conversational method in Indigenous research. First Peoples Child & Family Review*, 14(1), 123-136.

### What were the responses to Ontario's 6 global competencies?

The Indigenous community's responses and critical points of the collaborative discussions were documented by a graphics note-taker who visually displayed the ideas and collective wisdom on this mural. The mural caught the attention of Indigenous community members in different focus groups and fueled more stories and engagement in the policy process. Community members and Elders spoke eloquently, generously and at great length resulting in a rewarding experience for all.

# Global Competencies through Indigenous Perspectives



...none of us can heal until we all heal together...

