Chapter 32
Using the Medicine Wheel for Curriculum Design in Intercultural Communication:
Rethinking Learning Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

In December 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released its calls to action for reconciliation related to the oppressive legacy of Indian Residential Schools. Required actions include increased teaching of intercultural competencies and incorporation of indigenous ways of knowing and learning. Intercultural Communication as a discipline has primarily been developed from euro-centric traditions based in three domains of learning referred to as Bloom's taxonomy. Scholars and practitioners have increasingly identified problems in the way that intercultural competency is taught. The decolonization of education is implicated in finding solutions to those problems. Indigenization of education is one such effort. This chapter posits the Medicine Wheel, a teaching/learning framework that has widespread use in indigenous communities, for use in instructing intercultural communication. Bloom's taxonomy of the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains, is missing the fourth quadrant of the Medicine Wheel, spiritual. Examples of the spiritual quadrant are offered.

INTRODUCTION

What good is education without love?[1]

On December 15, 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) released its final report (Honouring the truth, 2015) and a list of 94 calls to action related to Canada's responsibility to engage in measures for reconciliation related to the oppressive legacy of colonization that was manifested

in the institution of Indian Residential Schools (Calls to Action, 2015). The calls to action are addressed to all sectors of Canadian institutions, governing bodies and citizens in the areas of:

- Child welfare,
- Health,
- Language and culture,
- The justice system,
- Public service and
- Education.

Call to action number 62 asks educational institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms and to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms (Calls to Action, 2015, p.7). Additionally, call to action number 63, addressed to the Council of Ministers of Education, asks the ministers to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues. Item 63.3 specifically calls for building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect (p. 7). There are also five calls to action for skills-based training in:

- Intercultural competency,
- Conflict resolution,
- Human rights, and
- Anti-racism directed to lawyers;
- Law, medical and nursing schools;
- Training for public servants and for business management and staff (pp. 3, 7,10).

Intercultural communication as an academic discipline has the opportunity to contribute a great deal to meeting all of these calls to action. Indigenization of post-secondary education, specifically in teaching intercultural communication, is one way that instructors can meet this challenge. The focus of this chapter is to provide a framework for engaging in this task.

BACKGROUND

Colonization of the Americas and many other parts of the world by European powers, and the accompanying attitudes that viewed indigenous peoples as sub-human, is a legacy that continues to divide and oppress peoples throughout the world through practices of racism and prejudice (Miller, 2011). The negative effects of Indian Residential Schools, where indigenous children were taken from their families and sent to institutions that were meant to rid them of their culture and where they often suffered abuse and even death, is a part of history that Canada is only starting to acknowledge and come to terms with (Canada's Residential Schools, 2015). The truth and reconciliation process in Canada, as in other parts of the world, is meant to begin a spiritual healing between communities and lead to the breaking down of barriers to relationship building.

The field of intercultural communication generally has a reputation as being a positive influence in helping individuals and groups from differing cultures to overcome barriers in relating to each other

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