

SHARING SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION PRACTICES THAT WORK KICHI-ASOTAMATOWIN: LAND & TREATIES EAL CURRICULUM

The Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations,
Immigration Partnership Winnipeg, the Treaty Relations Commission of
Manitoba, Community Engaged Learning/University of Manitoba, and
KAIROS Canada
Various Locations, Manitoba

Area of Practice:

Partnerships with Indigenous-led Organizations

Video:

<https://youtu.be/v41DA853pUc>

A Pathways to
Prosperity Project

April 2022

BACKGROUND ON THE ORGANIZATION AND IMPETUS FOR THE PROGRAM

The Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO) is a non-profit organization that acts as an umbrella for settlement service providers in Manitoba. It was formed in 2016 through an amalgamation of two organizations, the Manitoba Immigrant and Refugee Settlement Sector Association (MIRSSA, established in 2007) and the Manitoba English as an Additional Language Organizations (MEALO, established in 2012). MANSO's mission is to facilitate newcomer integration by providing leadership, support and a unified voice for settlement and integration organizations. MANSO supports its members through communication, networking and professional development activities and strives to promote a welcoming Manitoba that supports and engages newcomers.

In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action #93, which states the need to: "...reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools," MANSO, Immigration Partnership Winnipeg, the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, Community Engaged Learning at the University of Manitoba, and KAIROS Canada have been developing the Indigenous Orientation Toolkit (IOTK). The goal of the IOTK project is to facilitate opportunities for newcomers to understand Indigenous history, debunk stereotypes and negative perceptions, and build bridges between communities.

The Kichi-Asotamatowin: Land & Treaties EAL Curriculum is one part of the IOTK project. The goal of the curriculum is to assist teachers in introducing newcomer adults to the foundational history of Indigenous nations and their historical and contemporary contributions to the development of Canada. The preparation of the curriculum started in 2018 and the curriculum was first launched in 2021.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

Name:

Kichi-Asotamatowin: Land & Treaties EAL Curriculum

Description:

Kichi-Asotamatowin: Land & Treaties EAL Curriculum aims to assist teachers in introducing newcomers to Indigenous history and culture, customs and beliefs, reconciliation, and contemporary issues faced by Indigenous peoples. The exploration is centred on First Nations' and Metis peoples' perspectives on land and Treaties. The activities, combined with self-exploration and leadership, are intended to support personal growth and solidarity, and help newcomers contribute to community reconciliation efforts.

The curriculum is aligned to the Canadian Language Benchmarks (from Literacy up to CLB 7/8) and also includes the requirements of Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA). Currently, the program is delivered in some of the LINC programs in Manitoba. However, the curriculum also contains content-based teaching materials that are useful for informal language programs including conversation circles/classes or one-on-one tutoring.

While the curriculum was initially developed to be used in-person, each level includes a PowerPoint presentation that can be used or adapted online. A series of leveled PowerPoint presentations have also been developed to introduce students to the topic, “Who are the Indigenous Peoples in Canada?” The curriculum also includes teacher notes, activities, additional resources and assessment tasks, as required by PBLA. All materials of the curriculum have been approved by Indigenous consultants and educators.

Goal(s):

The curriculum is intended to assist teachers in introducing newcomers to the foundational history of Indigenous nations and their historical and contemporary contributions to the development of Canada. The curriculum aims to support newcomers’ personal growth and solidarity, and to help them contribute to community reconciliation efforts.

Target Client Group(s):

The main target client group consists of EAL teachers and newcomers at Literacy Foundations up to CLB 7/8.

Delivery Partners:

Delivery partners include Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (including their Indigenous Consultation Circle and the Indigenous Newcomer Sector Table), the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, the Community Engaged Learning Coordinator at the University of Manitoba who is Indigenous, and KAIROS Canada.

Human Resources:

Human resources include two project managers, one from MANSO and one from Immigration Partnership Winnipeg. In addition, the curriculum was developed with the support of seven individuals who were part of the writing team, acted as consultants or as a photographer.

Funding:

The curriculum is funded by Canadian Heritage and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

KEY FEATURES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THIS BEING A PROMISING PRACTICE

Effective:

The curriculum was developed with the collaboration of Indigenous experts and LINC experts, covering all LINC levels. While most of the writers who worked on the curriculum were not Indigenous, the Indigenous partners developed all the themes and provided relevant resources. The Indigenous partners also read through the draft versions of the curriculum, provided key insights and corrections, and approved all the materials. Furthermore, the curriculum includes materials that were created specifically for adult learners. Finally, the materials have been designed to help form relationships between communities by finding commonality in different communities and cultures.

Efficient:

The curriculum was specifically designed to include all CLB levels, especially those at Literacy and Stage 1, since it is much more difficult to find teaching materials on Indigenous topics at these levels. It was also designed to be used by other language programs, not just LINC programs, so that conversation classes/circles, community language groups, and one-on-one tutoring would also benefit from these materials.

Relevant:

It is very rare for newcomers to arrive in Canada with accurate information about the history of the First Peoples in Canada. The curriculum was designed to educate as well as to build bridges between the two communities. In addition, MANSO learned from EAL teachers that students often show great interest and enthusiasm about Indigenous topics. However, many EAL teachers reported being reluctant to teach Indigenous history due to concerns about whether it would be acceptable for them as non-Indigenous individuals to teach Indigenous history, and due to a lack of appropriate teaching materials. In other words, MANSO identified a need among many EAL teachers to clarify that Indigenous history can be taught by non-Indigenous individuals and a need for appropriate, vetted, and authentic Indigenous teaching materials.

Sustainable:

MANSO has developed strong partnerships with organizations and agencies who are also committed to this work. The Kichi-Asotamatowin: Land & Treaties EAL Curriculum is the first module that has been developed as part of the IOTK project. Additional modules centered around other themes (such as Bimikawesiwan: Assimilative Policies and Iyowadwakiya: Worldviews and Spirituality) are in the process of being prepared. There are a total of seven themes that should be completed by March 2023. There is also a clear process in place to guide the hiring of writers and consultants for each module, to seek the input and guidance of Indigenous individuals and educators, and to share the finalized materials and resources with the settlement language sector, both regionally and nationally.

Transferable:

MANSO and partners are happy to share their learning, ideas, and suggestions with anyone who is interested. The materials are publicly available on MANSO's website and may be distributed, adapted, and utilized under Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike Licensing (CC BY-NC-ND). The development, partnership, and planning process is clear and replicable to anyone who is interested in a similar project. Although the curriculum was designed to focus on the First Nations and the Métis in Manitoba, the curriculum can easily be adapted to other regions in Canada and the United States with minimal modifications required.

Innovative and Forward Thinking:

To MANSO's knowledge, the curriculum is the first resource of its kind to be developed by an umbrella organization with the collaboration of Indigenous experts and LINC experts, covering all LINC levels and useable by both formal and informal adult EAL programs. Normally, those teaching Indigenous topics to adult EAL learners have to adapt resources designed for K-12 learners, or reach out to Indigenous experts outside of the sector. With this curriculum, teachers can use materials created specifically for adult EAL learners.

Differs in Definable Ways from Other Similar Practices:

While there is a growing body of similar resources across the country, the Kichi-Asotamatowin: Land & Treaties EAL Curriculum is more comprehensive in terms of language levels addressed and is more accessible and useful for informal language programs.

High Client Uptake:

The curriculum and resources are used by a variety of LINC programs, are being explored for settlement agencies, and have received strong positive reviews. MANSO also offers a teacher launch of each module so that there is an opportunity to share best practices, answer questions, and provide an opportunity where teachers can learn from one another.

High Client Retention:

Initial qualitative feedback from EAL teachers suggests that teachers greatly appreciate the curriculum and that they intend to continue to use it in their classes.

Strong Evidence of Successful Outcomes:

During the development process of the curriculum, MANSO organized a meeting with EAL teachers to allow them to interact with the materials and ask questions to the writers and consultants. During this meeting, participants expressed their appreciation for the curriculum and project. A sample quote is the following:

“Thank you for the graciousness offered to teachers who are learning and willing to share these stories, reminding us learning is lifelong, and the acceptance that mistakes may be made along the way and that is a normal process. This gives us the hope and courage to deliver to the best of our ability information to newcomers.”

Furthermore, to follow up with language providers on the use and outcomes of the curriculum, MANSO offered a Land & Treaties Teacher Training session (March 16, 2021), and a Land & Treaties Curriculum follow-up session (September 14, 2021). The first was a train-the-trainer event featuring Indigenous teaching and learning, and reviewing and discussing the curriculum. The September session re-visited the curriculum, reviewed a newly developed dialogue (based on previous feedback from teachers regarding the need for pre-teaching resources), plus discussion and questions. For both sessions, MANSO sent out a survey to gather feedback on the event, the curriculum, and its implementation in the classroom. With the feedback from both sessions and their surveys, MANSO evaluated the curriculum outcomes, revised its contents, and produced additional resources.

Overall, funders and language programs have described the curriculum as a promising practice and provided positive feedback. Examples include:

“Here, all of the CLB 4/5 classes will be doing this curriculum next term! (...) The students and instructor who worked on this throughout this term absolutely loved the content and the feeling of belonging and understanding more about Canada and all of the people who live here.”

“Thank you to all of you for supporting this huge project. Bridges are being built and newcomers are learning and growing and gaining understanding about their Indigenous relations.”

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION STRATEGY

To date MANSO has conducted mainly qualitative evaluations of the curriculum. This was accomplished by seeking EAL teachers’ feedback at various points in time. Overall, the feedback sought aimed to learn more about the CLB levels of their students, the method of instruction, the impact of the curriculum on the teachers and students, students’ engagement with the material, and the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum. Whenever possible, feedback sought also included student testimonials and student stories.

MANSO has posted a post-teaching survey for teachers on their website to evaluate and further improve the curriculum. Eventually, MANSO also aims to seek funding for a more in-depth evaluation of the curriculum. This evaluation would include interviews, focus groups and surveys with teachers and students. For example, students would be asked to complete pre- and post-curriculum surveys to assess what they have learned and what they would still like to learn about Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Kichi-Asotamatowin: Land & Treaties EAL Curriculum

<https://mansomanitoba.ca/resources/kichi-asotamatowin-land-treaties-eal-curriculum/>