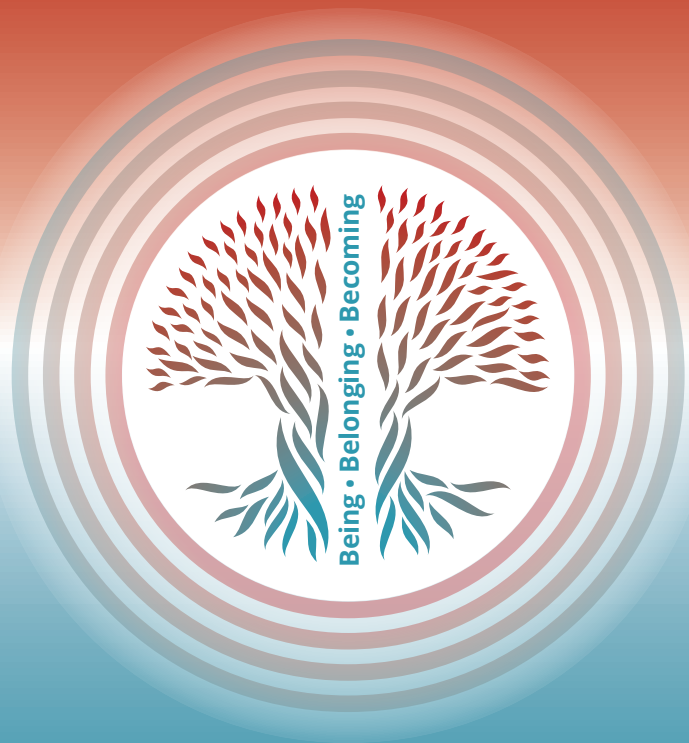


# Improving Transitions for Indigenous Learners



**What can we learn**  
from schools that are working in  
a spirit of collaborative inquiry  
to improve transitions  
for Indigenous learners?

A 2019 report from the  
Networks of Inquiry and Indigenous Education (NOIIE)  
offers ten case studies and a wealth of insights.

## Key findings

The goal of supporting students in transition requires us to re-imagine our learners as engaged in a journey that isn't defined by the spaces between—the transitions—but as part of a continuum of **being, becoming and belonging**. (pp 15-16)

Inquiry teams sought to map solutions that came from the life experiences of their students. The primary concerns students had were about feelings of **inclusion, safety and belonging**. (p 51)

**The First Peoples Principles of Learning** drive innovative and creative thinking because they reflect a way of learning that is holistic, shared and collaborative, and that values place, culture, spirituality and community. (p 52)

**Relationships matter**, and matter most. Relationship building is the first, middle and last step in inquiry work. (p 54)

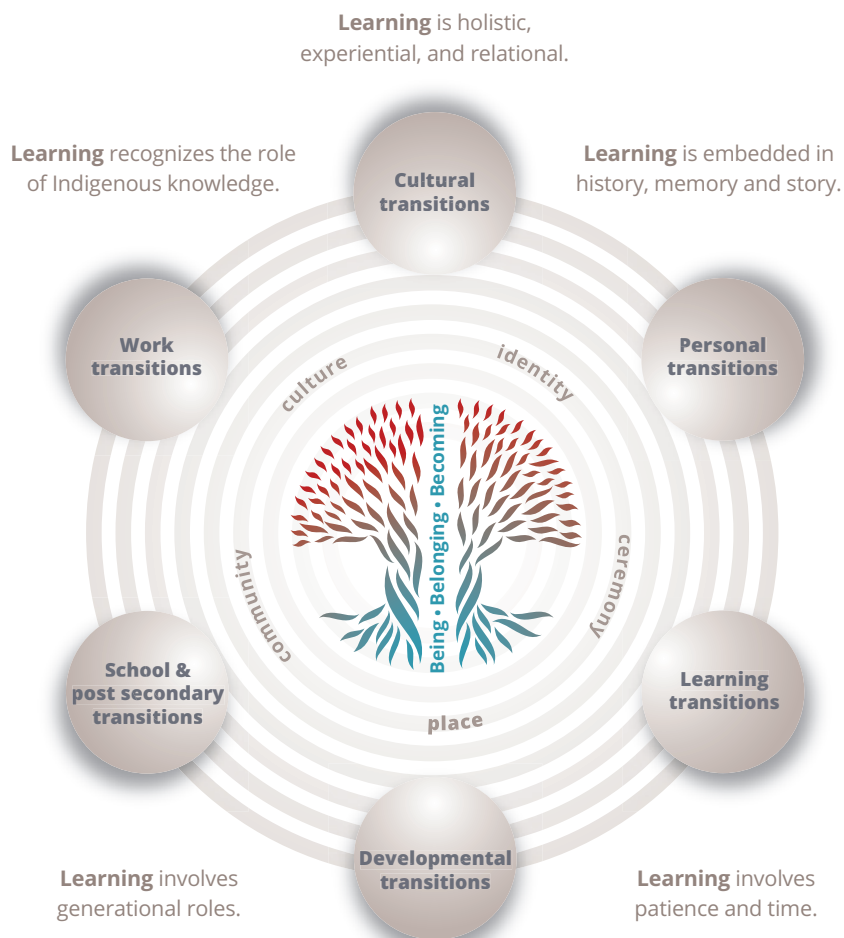
**Question your bias and privilege**. Challenge your assumptions and listen deeply to honour all learners. (p 55)

Read the full report at  
[www.noii.ca/transitions.pdf](http://www.noii.ca/transitions.pdf)



# A learner-centred framework

The learner-centred framework for transition planning and support (p 53) shows a number of things the inquiry teams considered as they designed strategies to support their Indigenous students. The First Peoples Principles of Learning are represented by summary statements surrounding the framework, and by keywords (identity, culture, community, place, ceremony) within it.



# First Peoples Principles of Learning

Here are the principles in full, as developed by the First Nations Education Steering Committee.

- Learning ultimately supports the wellbeing of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.
- Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.
- Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.
- Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.
- Learning involves patience and time.
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity.
- Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.

Learn more at [firstpeoplesprinciplesoflearning.wordpress.com](http://firstpeoplesprinciplesoflearning.wordpress.com)



**Networks of Inquiry and Indigenous Education**  
[www.noii.ca](http://www.noii.ca)

*The Networks of Inquiry and Indigenous Education gratefully acknowledge the support of the Irving K Barber Learner Centre.*

*We would like to acknowledge the Indigenous traditional territories on which these schools reside. We honour the valued shared traditional knowledge that is critical for all student and staff learning.*

# Questions to guide your practice

## Roots

Are you learning from the Elders in your community? Are you strengthening a sense of place through your inquiry? Are you infusing the **First Peoples' Principles of Learning** into everything you do?

## Relationships

Are you ensuring that relationships are nurtured, valued and respected? With your learners? With your colleagues? With your community?

## Learners at the centre

How are you using what you hear directly from your learners to both inform your inquiry and to check that you are making enough of a difference?

## Reaching out

Who are you connecting with outside your school – especially when you are not quite sure what your next steps might be?

## Right-sized actions

Are you encouraging new actions with the right degree of risk for everyone involved?

Are you celebrating small steps? How are you building and sustaining momentum?

## Integrating

Are you building connections across curriculum areas and with your community?

## Assumptions

Are you creating the conditions to test assumptions and explore hunches?

## Vulnerability

Are you open to uncertainty? Are you becoming more comfortable expressing your own doubts and concerns?

## Emotions and motivation

How are you checking in with your team to share feelings about the steps you are taking?

## Stories

Are you sharing stories to build understanding of what you are doing and to create images of a preferred future? How are you doing this? With whom?

## Impact

What difference is your inquiry making to learners? How do you know? Is it enough?



**Big goals • small steps • deep listening**