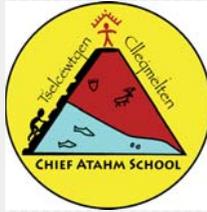


## Collective Visioning: The Development of a Secwepemc Immersion Education Model in British Columbia



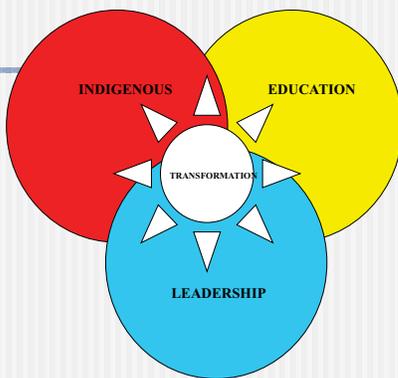
Presented by  
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### Indigenous Education

Chief Atahm School is a Secwepemc  
Immersion School situated on Adams Lake  
Reserve near Chase, B.C.

- Language Nest started in 1987
- School started in 1991
- Now has over 75 students attending  
between the ages of 6 months old and 12  
years old.



It is estimated that 90% of languages will be extinct within this generation (Krauss, 1992).

### What does indigenous mean?



- Land
- Language
- Community
- History

## Indian Educational Policy

- Industrial Schools based on U.S. model late 1800's
- Amendments to Indian Act in 1951 made public school attendance legal
- Compulsory school attendance, 1920
- Government policies of integration and assimilation: By 1969 61% of school aged children were attending public schools.
- Residential Schooling; Kamloops and Williams Lake (1920's to 1980's)

## Indigenous Identity

- Making the connection with my past experiences with my role within Chief Atahm School today
- Overt messages to aspire to be non-Indian
- saturated with images of "white", English as the language of power

## We just about got this colonization

My husband and I thought we were doing the best for our children. We were hoping for university and everything...they would never need the language. And now, when I think back, the joy I have in knowing the language, in using it, and knowing who I am, I guess I could say I almost feel guilty. I wonder why I did that. I think I didn't put thought into it. And I say, "holy cow, somebody just about won. We just about got this colonization. They just about succeeded. The government just about succeeded. (Michel, 2005, p.72)

## Education



- No term for 'education' in Secwepemc language
- Education has been used as a colonizing tool
- We can use education to regain what we have lost

Roughly 1/3 of the world's population has English as its mother tongue. 75% of the world's mail is in English. (library.thinkquest.org)

## The Invisible Secwepemc

- No representation of the Secwepemc in any text or curriculum throughout my entire public schooling
- Bourdieu, a French sociologist's theory of "cultural capital": whose culture holds the power?

## The Challenge

- Chief Atahm School has accepted the challenge of establishing an educational system that privileges Secwepemc language and knowledge



## Chief Atahm School Successes

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- 1st Language Nest in B.C. established 1987
- 1st aboriginal immersion school in Western Canada, established 1991
- Educational Programs for all ages based on Secwepemc pedagogy
- Capacity building: 18 Secwepemc staff members employed of all ages
- Have established annual conference and language teaching programs for other language groups

## Leadership:

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“The values carried by generations of our people are passed on through the language, customs and knowledge that we practice in our daily lives”

Okanagan-Shuswap Declaration  
Chiefs N'kwala, A'tum, N'hum chin, Chil heetza

## Indigenous Principles

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- Kaupapa Maori and Eber Hampton's Model for Indian Education describe the value of interrelationship as foundational to indigenous education
- Hawaiian Immersion Model and the Alaska Native Knowledge Network sites of indigenous education development

## Transformation

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## Elements of Transformation

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- Understanding of indigenous
- Socio-political context of education - need to find synergy, compromise
- Secwepemc education model
- Develop leadership, collective models of decision-making

## Chief Atahm School Vision

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“We have a vision of a Secwepemc speaking community  
living in balance with nature”

Chief Atahm School is grounded on the belief that knowledge of the language, traditional practices and beliefs of the Secwepemc will establish and maintain a healthy and balanced living environment. Individuals will be prepared for today's world and help to protect the earth for future generations.

## Foundational Belief

In the spirit of *etsxe*, or vision quest, we believe that:

- Everyone has a gift
- The family, school and community all have a responsibility to foster and develop each child's gift
- An individual must train to develop their potential. It is an individual responsibility to maintain hard work and discipline necessary for growth

## Principles

1. K'wseltknews: We Are All Related
2. Knucwestsut.s: Help Yourself, Be Strong
3. Mellelc: Take Time for Yourself and Each Other
4. Slexlexs: Develop Wisdom
5. Qweqwetsin: Honour Your Connection to the Spiritual

## K'wseltknews

- We are all related: a Secwepemc principle
- Collective versus individual
- Leadership seen through structures at Chief Atahm School: Tek'wemiple, Melqwilc, Staffing

(Artifact #5: Chief Atahm School Vision, Principles, and Practices)

## Knucwestsut.s: Help Yourself

- Strengthen individual gifts to support the collective
- Master-Apprentice pedagogy
- Individualized programs as necessary
- Curriculum based on problem-solving and survival skills

## Mellelc: Take Time to Rest and Relax

- The value of maintaining balance in our lives
- The celebration of the Secwepemc Arts and Dance
- Whole school social gatherings
- Campouts and food gathering trips
- Physical Education, nature hikes, etc..

## Slexlexs: Developing Wisdom

- Gather knowledge, hone your mind
- Core subject areas: math, language arts, R Tmicw (Our natural world)
- High expectations for achievement in all areas including academic courses
- Ongoing home support through mini-workshops, tutoring, and take home programs.



## For more information:

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