



Pathways to Meaningful Action:

Educator Reflection Guide for the National Day
for Truth and Reconciliation and Beyond



The iconography featured on this cover page was developed by Oji-Cree artist Jordan Stranger.

Contributing partners to this resource

Indigo Love of Reading Foundation

Since 2004, the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation has been on a mission to ensure that EVERY child in Canada has the opportunity to become richly literate and achieve their full potential through reading.

Through transformative multi-year grants, responsive community outreach programs, and other core fundraising initiatives, the Foundation reaches for this goal through the revitalization of public elementary school libraries and the delivery of literacy programming and resources to high-needs communities across Canada.

The Critical Thinking Consortium (TC²): Curriculum resource partner

The aim of TC² is to work in sound, sustained ways with educators and related organizations to inspire, support, and advocate for the infusion of critical, creative, and collaborative thinking as an educational goal and as an approach to teaching and learning.

TC²'s goals are to foster in learners:

- enhanced abilities and inclinations to think effectively;
- deeper understanding of the curriculum;
- increased engagement in the world; and
- greater willingness to act in thoughtful, ethically responsible ways.

This educational resource was developed in close consultation with TC² educational consultants and reflects ongoing, sustained, accountable relationships with Mohawk knowledge keepers.

This reflection guide has been reviewed by Indigo's Indigenous Knowledge Consultant Fred Martin.

Introduction to this resource

At the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation we are frequently asked to support students, parents, educators and educational staff in their efforts to promote Truth and Reconciliation through books and literature. Last year on September 30th we partnered with Native Child and Family Services of Toronto to design a resource guide with book recommendations that would support Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities with rich stories on a variety of topics. This year, we wanted to provide a different kind of tool that would focus not only on September 30th but **an entire year of bringing Indigenous voices and texts into the classroom, homes and of course, the library learning commons.**

What if we were to spend time on September 30th, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, to reflect on and plan the journey we might take during the next school year?

The work of Truth and Reconciliation can be challenging because it requires thoughtful and meaningful action, but also because it can challenge educators on the inside—our emotions, our assumptions, and our beliefs about what we know and don't know. This reflection guide is a starting point, intended to help with that work and to provide prompts, ideas and resources to extend the work of one day throughout an entire year.

Beyond the resources found in this guide, The Indigo Love of Reading Foundation **will post monthly prompts containing further learning opportunities with associated book recommendations to support and extend the work of Truth and Reconciliation in your classroom.** These monthly prompts will be posted between October 2023 to June 2024 via the Foundation website, social media channels, and through our various newsletters throughout the school year to our subscribers. We welcome all feedback on this guide and the extension prompts to come—please feel free keep in touch with us at loveofreading@indigo.ca as you embark on your learning journey through these suggested resources.

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Using this resource

This reflection guide includes questions and prompts that can help prepare our minds and hearts for the inner work required for reconciliation. There are many ways that you could start this work:

- You could think about the questions on your own, with a trusted friend, or as part of a school community.
- You could choose a few questions that connect with where you are in your journey to support meaningful truth and reconciliation.
- As you think through your selected questions, consider making commitments to actions that will support your learning and contributions to authentic truth and reconciliation.

We've organized these questions into three categories of the kinds of inner work that are needed to meaningfully engage in and support truth and reconciliation:



1) Identifying and questioning personal identities, beliefs, privileges, and biases



2) Developing personal knowledge and understanding



3) Nurturing personal competencies and practices

Following these questions, you'll find some suggestions for possible next steps or actions. You'll also find links to some thoughtfully selected resources that might be helpful for extending your learning.



Identifying and questioning personal identities, beliefs, privileges, and biases

Below you will find questions and prompts for you to consider grouped by the type of reflective work involved to support your learning journey

HOPES AND FEARS IN APPROACHING THIS WORK

What are the three most significant concerns I have about engaging in this work?

EXPLORING MY EXISTING CONNECTIONS TO TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

What have been the most surprising, uncomfortable, or challenging things I have learned so far about truth and reconciliation?

What are my connections and relationships with Indigenous communities and nations?

ENGAGING + SUPPORTING MY LEARNERS

What are three of my most important reasons for wanting to engage learners in the process of truth and reconciliation?

What are the connections between my reasons and how I might challenge long-standing inequities in policies, structures, and systems that negatively and disproportionately impact Indigenous communities, nations and organizations?

My thoughts and reflections on the questions/prompts above:





Developing personal knowledge and understanding

Below you will find questions and prompts for you to consider grouped by the type of reflective work involved to support your learning journey

HOPES AND FEARS IN APPROACHING THIS WORK

How might my concerns about work of truth and reconciliation make me reluctant to take steps towards meaningful action?

EXPLORING MY EXISTING CONNECTIONS TO TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

What are my current ideas for best supporting learners in thinking about difficult events and issues related to truth and reconciliation?

How well do my approaches to the work of truth and reconciliation align with the needs and perspectives of Indigenous communities, nations, and organizations?

ENGAGING + SUPPORTING MY LEARNERS

What are my most pressing questions about how to support Indigenous learners in my classroom when it comes to truth and reconciliation?

What are the most appropriate, authentic, and respectful ways that I can introduce Indigenous narratives, perspectives and voices in my learning community?

My thoughts and reflections on the questions/prompts above:





Nurturing personal competencies and practices

Below you will find questions and prompts for you to consider grouped by the type of reflective work involved to support your learning journey

HOPES AND FEARS IN APPROACHING THIS WORK

Who can I talk to when I need a critical friend to support my thinking and the work related to truth and reconciliation?

What will I do to keep learning even when it is challenging?

EXPLORING MY EXISTING CONNECTIONS TO TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

What can I do to help me see and learn things that are different from what I currently know and understand?

ENGAGING + SUPPORTING MY LEARNERS

Where can I go to find credible stories, perspectives, and resources that will help me support learners in making meaningful contributions and commitments to truth and reconciliation?

What can I do to help me keep my commitments to the work of truth and reconciliation to best support my learners?

My thoughts and reflections on the questions/prompts above:



Some possible next steps towards deepened understandings and meaningful action:

Building accountability into the practice of reading and teaching Indigenous texts and stories which often contain intensely personal and traumatic stories can be fostered through consultation and engagement with Indigenous communities:

- Find out if a Native Friendship Centre, Indigenous arts center, teaching lodge, or research centre in your community is open to non-Indigenous participation or visitors. How might you participate in their events to better understand diverse perspectives, hear these first-hand and/or support their work?
- Read more books or listen to digital recordings by Indigenous artists, authors, historians, and scholars.
- Consult with Indigenous Knowledge Providers (Elders) and First Nations Historical Societies (i.e. The Mohawk Institute)
- Learn more about Indigenous perspectives on conflicts, events, and issues in your region.
- Seek out Indigenous Artists, cultural institutions, multidisciplinary practitioners, academics, and residential school representatives.

Here are the steps I will take this school year to commit to deepening my understanding and engaging in meaningful action towards reconciliation:





Resources to support your journey

The following seven resources were selected to support educators in including Indigenous issues, histories, and perspectives into their classrooms:

The Deepening Knowledge Project

is a part of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. Led by a group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty, students and staff, the Deepening Knowledge Project provides information about the history and perspectives of First Nations, Métis and Inuit and Native American cultures; information related to the issues of pressing concern to Indigenous peoples and their communities today; as well as curricula for teachers to incorporate into their teaching practice.

Natural Curiosity

addresses a critical link between environmental and Indigenous education, supporting all educators to authentically respond to the calls to action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Natural Curiosity provides professional learning opportunities for educators across Turtle Island (North America), including webinars, workshops, walking tours, and communities of practice, to support them on their journey of centering Indigenous perspectives in children's environmental inquiry.

The Pedagogy of Peace

by Lindsay (Kawennenha:wi) Brant is a collection digital resources that builds upon the three core teachings of the Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace, which are peace, strength, and a good mind. This is for educators who are looking for ways to take a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning, through using compassionate educational frameworks and techniques to lead all learners through their learning journey with integrity, optimism, loving kindness, and support.



Resources to support your journey

Wayi Wah! Indigenous Pedagogies: An Act for Reconciliation and Anti-Racist Education

by Jo Chrona is a powerful and engaging resource for non-Indigenous educators who want to learn more, are new to these conversations, or want to deepen their learning. It explores the following questions: 1) How can Indigenous knowledge systems inform our teaching practices and enhance education? 2) How do we create an education system that embodies an anti-racist approach and equity for all learners?

What Can I Contribute to Meaningful Reconciliation?

is a unit that explores the causes and consequences of residential schools in Canada. Developed in a collaboration by The Critical Thinking Consortium with Grand Erie District School Board, Six Nations of the Grand River's Education Department, and the Mississaugas of New Credit, this resource supports educators and learners in using a critical-inquiry approach to develop deep understandings of some of the complex, challenging, and painful events that have affected the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.

The Woodland Cultural Centre

The Mohawk Institute Indian Residential School operated in Brantford, Ontario from 1828 to 1970. It served as a boarding school for First Nations children from Six Nations, as well as other communities throughout Ontario and Quebec. It served as a key tool in the effort to assimilate First Nations children into European Christian society, and sever the continuity of culture from parent to child. After closing in 1970, it reopened in 1972 as the Woodland Cultural Centre, a non-profit organization that serves to preserve and promote First Nations culture and heritage.



Resources to support your journey

Taking Root:
A resource guide
to exploring
Indigenous Voices
in child and youth
literature from
across Turtle Island

Developed in collaboration between the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation and Native Child and Family Services of Toronto – this resource guide highlights 50 carefully and thoughtfully selected books written and illustrated by Indigenous artists in an effort to help support young people, parents educators in building knowledge and understanding of the richness found within Indigenous cultures from across Turtle Island.

Helpful leaning resources to share with parents and caregivers in your community

The following six resources were selected to help support parents and/or caregivers in including Indigenous issues, histories, and perspectives into their conversations, family life, and personal commitments with the young people in their lives:

Ten Books About Residential Schools to Read with Your Kids

is a collection of ten books that reflect on the residential school experience in different ways. They have all been identified as age-appropriate for children under 12 by reputable organizations.

Indigenous Online MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses)

are free online courses that guide participants through learning modules that deepen their understandings of Indigenous histories and contemporary issues from Indigenous perspectives.

Why our kids need to learn about residential schools

is an article in Today's Parent by Bonnie Schiedel that helps parents and caregivers think about the importance of supporting education for truth and reconciliation in schools.

Treaties with Indigenous Peoples

is a resource collection prepared by the David Suzuki Foundation to support Canadians in better understanding the history of treaties, contemporary issues related to treaties, and the importance of restoring and upholding treaty relationships.



Helpful leaning resources to share with parents and caregivers in your community

What is
reconciliation? by
CBC Kids News

is a short video prepared by youth to support young people's understanding of truth and reconciliation.

Taking Root:
A resource guide
to exploring
Indigenous Voices
in child and youth
literature from
across Turtle Island

Developed in collaboration between the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation and Native Child and Family Services of Toronto — this resource guide highlights 50 carefully and thoughtfully selected books written and illustrated by Indigenous artists in an effort to help support young people, parents educators in building knowledge and understanding of the richness found within Indigenous cultures from across Turtle Island.

