

Inquiry Demonstration Plan

Lesson Title: <u>Medicine Wheel Exploration</u>	Lesson #	PHASE <u>1(TERM 1)</u>	Date:	Phase 1 (Sep-Dec)
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Rationale & Overview

Although modern-day western medicine has moved us great strides towards a “healthier” society, one of the “downfalls of Western medicine is the often siloed approach to health, which looks at the body in sections of individual symptoms and pieces rather than the whole system it really is” (Faletra, 2020, n.p.). Faletra (2020) goes on to explain this is where holistic health shows its true importance- in order to “achieve optimal health and wellness in the physical, mental and spiritual sense, we have to be viewing and supporting the body as the incredible system it is” (Faletra, 2020, n.p.).

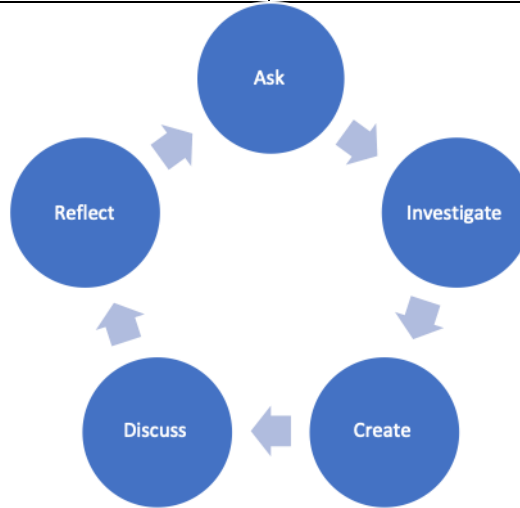
This lesson fits within a much larger picture. The goal of this unit is to enhance the ideas of holistic health and wellness, ensuring students come to understand how aspects of our wellness are interconnected. Through several activities, classroom routines, and reflection students will develop a sense of connectedness to themselves, to others and understand the complicated interwoven aspects of holistic health that they can carry forward in to life. As Heeson Bai explains, this is the “other” type of learning that “prepares a person for the uncertain, ambiguous and unpredictable aspects of life” (p.45).

According to Webster’s New Dictionary College Edition (Doucette et al., 2004, p.2), “health is: physical and mental well-being, soundness; freedom from defect or pain or disease, normality of mental and physical function.” This is where the Aboriginal ways of knowing come in to play with holistic health. Doucette et al. (2004) define health as “the overall well-being of an animate object that includes not only the Physical and Mental aspects, but also the Spiritual and Emotional” (p.2). This particular lesson allows students to explore their own health and wellness, and how it relates to the Aboriginal ways of knowing and being. The Medicine Wheel is a “representation of all things connected within the circle of one’s life” (Teaching Aboriginal Education Blog, 2018). The centre of the medicine wheel is where the teachings come from, and represents ourselves in the moment working on ourselves from the inside out. The medicine wheel is related to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. Both the medicine wheel and Maslow’s Hierarchy recognize the same four key areas of needs- physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being (Aboriginal Education Blog, 2018). Through hands-on activities, discussion and reflection, students are invited to delve into a deeper understanding of their wellness.

Key Questions For Inquiry

Core Question & Supporting Questions for Inquiry Project	Question(s) Addressed in This Lesson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is wellness? How is our wellness interconnected with the health of our community? What makes me feel well? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What makes me feel well? How can we connect the medicine wheel to our own holistic wellness? How do our choices impact our wellness?

- How are the sections of the medicine wheel interconnected?
- How does holistic wellness differ from individual to individual?



Inquiry Approach and Rationale

This framework for learning incorporates Indigenous principles, as well as a deep process of reflective thinking. The method of inquiry is primarily design-thinking, as the project challenges educators to explore or design a classroom that supports holistic wellness. A large part of this project will be exploration, and will be tied in to other disciplines. Students will be encouraged to reflect on their wellness journeys through explicit activities using Aboriginal teachings and story, other concepts of health and wellness, but also during “regular” activities like mathematics. During the last term, students will be asked to improve an area of wellness in their lives. This will be done using the design-thinking process. Ideally, students will have had previous experience throughout the year with design-thinking, either from another discipline, or project in the classroom. Due to the nature of the project, this will be a human-centered approach to design. As mentioned before, there will be emphasis on community wellness along with individual wellness, so the “empathize” stage of the process should come naturally. Students will have already spent time exploring their own needs, strengths, as well as time spent observing and collaborating with others to explore their well-being. According to Plattner (n.d.) “the Empathize mode is the work you do to understand people, within the context of your design challenge. It is your effort to understand the way they do things and why, their physical and emotional needs, how they think about world, and what is meaningful to them” (n.p.).

This project is a framework of suggested routines, lessons and stories to use for educators to create a classroom that supports holistic wellness. Ongoing assessment and reflection is a major contributor to ensuring this unit fits within inquiry-based learning practices. Students will keep a wellness journal, that allows them to track their understanding in regards to their own holistic wellness. Through critical reflection, personal growth and plenty of collaboration, students will answer the question “what does holistic wellness mean to me?” This lesson begins to uncover what it means to be well, and how students are well, incorporating the idea of interconnectedness of all quadrants of the medicine wheel. Lessons will not necessarily be taught on their own, as a specific discipline, but are imbedded within the curriculum and day across the disciplines. Our wellness is something that is embedded in our daily life, and is all around us. “Topics, as they live in the world, do not

necessarily subdivide into the specific curriculum disciplines as outlined in a Program of Studies. Rather, they exist as a network of relations and can only be authentically understood in relation to the world in which they exist” (Friesen & Jardine, 2009, p. 29)” This quote from Friesen and Jardine reminds us that wellness is not a topic in itself, but exists in our daily life. My hope is that these assessment practices will help intertwine reflections about wellness throughout the day-to-day life of students.

Core Principles of Effective Teaching (Sharon Friesen)

<p>Core Principle 1: Effective teaching practice begins with the thoughtful and intentional design of learning that engages students intellectually and academically.</p> <p><i>*What aspects of the inquiry are the most challenging and meaningful for students?</i></p>	<p>The most challenging aspects for students will be sharing, and reflecting among others. Wellness is something that is individual, and therefore there are no right answers in this lesson. Students will be challenged to reflect critically on their current wellness routines, as well as how they benefit the whole self.</p>
<p>Core Principle 2: The work that students are asked to undertake is worthy of their time and attention, is personally relevant, and deeply connected to the world in which they live.</p> <p><i>*What makes this inquiry valuable, meaningful, and “alive” for the students and teachers?</i></p>	<p>How we feel is deeply interconnected with how we live our lives. We are always curious about how we feel, why we feel certain ways and how this pertains to our actions. Our wellness is integrated into everything we do in our lives, and incorporates all aspects of the medicine wheel.</p>
<p>Core Principle 3: Assessment practices are clearly focused on improving student learning and guiding teaching decisions and actions.</p> <p><i>*How do I define learning and success in this inquiry? How is learning expressed and articulated in peer, self and teacher assessments?</i></p>	<p>Students are engaged in hands on learning and critical discussion. Through anecdotal notes, teachers can see student understanding and progress. The use of the wellness journal allows for students to share their learning and reflective capacities, for both formative and summative assessment at a later date.</p>
<p>Core Principle 4: Teachers foster a variety of interdependent relationships in classrooms that promote learning and create a strong culture around learning.</p> <p><i>*How do I connect students with each other, with experts in the field, with larger communities and nature, and across disciplines?</i></p>	<p>By connecting ourselves to Aboriginal ways of knowing and being, and inviting elders in to the classroom, we are expanding our community beyond the school. Students will connect with each other through discussion. Wellness activities will be incorporated across disciplines, and these lessons are not specific to any particular “subject.”</p>
<p>Core Principle 5: Teachers improve their practice in the company of peers.</p> <p><i>*How do I reflect on the inquiry together, and/or collaborate with others?</i></p>	<p>Teachers are connecting with elders on a regular basis. Teachers also participate in self-reflection regularly, while working through their own inquiry question: How do I design a classroom that supports holistic wellness?</p>

BC Curriculum Core Competencies

Communication	Thinking	Personal & Social
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on and assess their experiences, thinking, learning processes, work, and progress in relation to their purposes. • Think critically to develop ideas. • Apply critical, metacognitive, and reflective thinking in given situations, and relate this thinking to other experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness, understanding and appreciation of the factors that contribute to a healthy sense of oneself. • Understanding the connections between personal and social behaviour and well-being
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BC Curriculum Big Ideas (STUDENTS UNDERSTAND)

- Healthy choices influence our physical, emotional, and mental well-being.
- Learning about similarities and differences in individuals and groups influences community health.
- Exploring and sharing multiple perspectives extends our thinking.

BC Curriculum Learning Standards

(STUDENTS DO)

(STUDENTS KNOW)

Learning Standards - Curricular Competencies	Learning Standards - Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange ideas and viewpoints to build shared understanding and extend thinking. • Describe the impacts of personal choices on health and well-being. • Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies and Processes- metacognitive strategies • Physical, emotional and social changes that occur during puberty and adolescence.

(Government of BC, n.d.)

BC Curriculum Indigenous Connections/ First Peoples Principles of Learning

How will I incorporate Indigenous knowledge and principles of learning?

- Story written by Aboriginal Author
- Incorporation of Indigenous knowledge (medicine wheel, sharing circles, connection to the community).
- Ideally, an elder or community member could be involved in this lesson, sharing the story or a similar one, or participating in the activity with the students.

FPPL Connections:

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being 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 requires exploration of one's identity.

(FNESC, n.d.)

Respectful Relations

How will I invite students of all backgrounds, interests and skills into the inquiry?

- Students will be pre-loaded with expectations for behaviour, discussions and confidentiality.
- Groupings of students will support different skills levels, comfort level with sharing, etc.
- Students are invited to draw, sketch and adapt activities as needed.
- Student wellness journals are a living document, and are representative of students skills, desires, and individuality.

Lesson Activities

Time Allotted		Teacher	Students
Invitation	10 minutes	<p>Opens discussion reflecting on previous lessons of the medicine wheel. Reviews each quarter in relation to the four domains of wellness (physical, mental, spiritual, emotional).</p> <p>Walk students through body scan or other type of guided relaxation/meditation to prepare them for learning.</p>	<p>Participate in discussion, using notes from wellness journal where necessary.</p> <p>Participate in meditation.</p>
Inquiry	20 minutes	<p>Discuss the different activities, thoughts, actions, interactions etc. that make you feel well, connected and included in your environment.</p> <p>Explain that students will have approximately 10 minutes to write (or draw) different things that contribute to their wellness (ex: playing soccer, talking with a friend, eating vegetables, getting enough sleep, expressing sadness). Allow students this time to work independently.</p>	<p>Participate in discussion, ask questions where needed.</p> <p>Brainstorm as many things as they can that contribute to their wellness. Students write or draw these contributions on individual pieces of paper, or cue cards. They may also make a running list in their journal if this is easier, or they have many ideas.</p>

		Discuss how these contributions to our wellness have impacts on our well-being. Have students “sort” all of their ideas in small groups. Each group will have 4 hoops, laying on the ground, touching each other. These hoops will represent the medicine wheel, with the 4 wellness domains (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual). Each hoop is one domain, the 4 hoops creating the full medicine wheel. First students are tasked with working as a group to place each wellness activity, or action in to only one domain.	Students bring their ideas to the group on paper/cue cards and begin to sort. This will be challenging for students as they will soon realize each idea or activity likely contributes to or belongs in more than one wellness domain in within the medicine wheel.
Reflection	15 minutes	<p>Have students pause, and ask if they are finding it challenging to place each activity in only one domain. Discuss why they think this is the case. Why is the medicine wheel a circle? Can one domain exist without the others to achieve holistic wellness?</p> <p>Allow students a few more minutes, now letting them place cards in the center of the wheel if the activity reaches all four domains, or on the border between 2 domains.</p> <p>Read the Medicine Wheel: Stories of a Hoop Dancer</p>	<p>Students discuss the challenges of the activity, and ponder why this is challenging.</p> <p>Students work with group to re-adjust their cards, reflecting on why activities may contribute to more than one domain.</p> <p>Listen to story, reflect via teacher-prompted questions (interactive read-aloud).</p>
Discussion	5 minutes & extra time to contribute to wellness journals	<p>Discuss anything that has come up during the reflection and re-sorting period.</p> <p>Have students quickly sketch their medicine wheels into their books, with a few activities in each domain. Have them reflect through writing, labels, or pictures the teachings from this lesson.</p>	Students participate in discussion then contribute to their wellness journals.

Materials and Resources

The Medicine Wheel: Stories of a Hoop Dancer by Teddy Anderson
Cue cards or small pieces of paper
Hula Hoops
Writing Materials
Wellness Journals

Organizational Strategies

- Lesson will be delivered sitting in a circle. Students will work where they are comfortable, and then in small groups (approx. 4 students per group).
- Students should have wellness journals for the duration of the lesson to sketch, add notes etc.

Proactive, Positive Classroom Learning Environment Strategies

- Allow students to draw if written output is challenging.
- Ensure students are aware that they will be collaborating after individual activity, so they are aware their ideas will be shared.

Extensions

- If groups finish sorting early, have them come up with feeling words that are related to their actions (ex: exercise might invoke energy, happiness, relief etc.)
- Students may add to journals if they finish early, sketching their finished hoops.

Reflections (to be completed after the lesson demonstration)

Teaching this lesson virtually to my peers was an excellent experience. Although modifications were made to allow it to be taught to adults, and via a digital platform, I feel as though the main ideas of the lesson were displayed. Due to the nature of my unit involving a variety of frameworks and routines for the classroom, opposed to a distinct set of lessons, I chose one lesson that could actually be taught. In the classroom, this lesson would occur with more background experience and knowledge as a part of phase 1 of the unit. It also would be much more hands on with the use of hula hoops and group collaboration as outlined above.

Strengths of the lesson:

- It was interactive even through a virtual setting. My classmates were able to reflect individually, share ideas to the group, work collaboratively on the jamboard with their peers, as well as learn about the medicine wheel.
- The main idea or teaching from the lesson became evident quickly through the activity. That is that the four quadrants of the medicine wheel are interconnected. Our choices have an impact on all four parts of our being, as well as on others.
- Timing. We were able to get through most of the lesson within the 45 minutes, with exclusion of a story I had as an extension/transition to the next lesson.

Areas of Growth:

- I didn't notice before, but I need to be more explicit with how student growth will be assessed. Jodi suggested creating a sample of the wellness journal, describing how it can be assessed and monitored. I think this is an excellent idea. I also cannot assume that my students will have strong reflective capabilities from the start. I need to incorporate samples for them of what is exemplary as well as explicitly teach some reflective strategies. For each lesson, or journal entry I will try to have some sort of example for the students, so they all have equal

opportunity to progress and document this growth in their journals.

- If I was to teach this lesson again, I would be more transparent of my own wellness journey, sharing examples of my own to the question “What makes me feel well?” As these were adults, they caught on quite quickly and understood the tasks. When doing this with students, I need to ensure I am scaffolding and giving clear instructions or examples before sending them off to collaborate.

Peer Feedback Consideration:

- Gurpreet enjoyed the body scan at the beginning, and found it helpful to focus. I am definitely going to incorporate body scans, quiet time and meditations into the routines in my unit. This is something I practiced before with my class and it has been beneficial. Gurpreet suggested I look in to some practices that involve the “sound of silence” and allowing students to experience how silence feels. When we are forced to sit alone in silence, we begin to pick up on new things and learn how our body responds in these situations.
- Gurpreet also shared that these mindfulness practices throughout the day allow us to connect learning to how we are feeling. I enjoyed this feedback, as that is a focus of my unit. I want students to develop reflective capacities, and begin to understand their bodies feelings in relation to events that are happening. For example, if they have had something difficult to overcome at school, they may feel tired or groggy. Practicing mindfulness can help with these connections.
- Clint suggested I look in to the word *En’owkin* and how it may connect to the medicine wheel, or the idea of connectedness. “The word *En’owkin* comes from the high language of the Okanagan people and has its origin in a philosophy perfected to nurture voluntary cooperation, an essential foundation for everyday living” (Armstrong, 2009, n.p.). This word suggests that the total community must be engaged in order for sustainability to occur. One piece cannot be missing, as all pieces of our communities, and in nature are interconnecte (Armstrong, 2009). I think this connects beautifully to the teachings of holistic wellness, and the medicine wheel. We cannot be whole if a piece is missing, and we must make sure we are nurturing our physical, spiritual, emotional and mental selves equally or as needed. I also think this connects well with the teachings of the Blackfoot nation, and Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. We cannot only focus on individual wellness, but also on the community. I look forward to researching this word and its meaning and incorporate some lessons around it into my unit.

Overall, this lesson was a good experience, and although my peer’s feedback just added more work for me (haha), I am grateful to learn from them and add more depth to my project and design for holistic wellness. I am going to dig deeper, especially around the wellness journal and assessment and ensure my students will be well-prepared to participate in this inquiry. As mentioned before, collaboration, discussion and reflection will be key in this project, and I hope all students are able to see growth throughout the year. “Conversation strengthens student voice, improves communication between students and teachers and challenges students to think critically about their own arguments. Students are regularly expected to explain their thinking orally, learn to develop answers in their entirety without being prompted, and cultivate an ability to make sound judgments about the intellectual quality of their work ” (Bailey, n.d. p.9). Students will develop skills to challenge their own reflection, choose and analyze their best work, and give strong feedback to others through the use of the wellness journal.