

## Things to consider:

1. Avoid setting up the lessons in such a way that it may be interpreted as the Aboriginal content “fits” perfectly into the scientific framework and therefore becomes “acceptable information” to be taught in a science class. I want instructors to be very cautious about this and very clear that the Aboriginal content introduces another worldview that just happens to address the relevant topic of earthquakes and tsunamis through Oral Traditions. I also want the Aboriginal content to speak to its relevancy in modern times, equal weight, and often pivotal role when considering questions about our surroundings. Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is to be respected on its own terms, is to be honoured, and its value is not to be perceived as merely a supplement or additive to scientific discourse. Aboriginal pedagogy is its own “science” or worldview, just as any other academic discipline and it must be respected and acknowledged as is, not compared or contrasted with Western science.
2. Avoid setting up the lessons in such a way that makes the Aboriginal content sound past tense. It is important to acknowledge the past, but to articulate/point out that at present many of the ceremonies, songs, Traditional practices, etc. continue to be practiced in contemporary times. Speaking on the past is a way to illustrate the long history behind Aboriginal practices and to remind students of this. It is also important to stress that Aboriginal values and Oral Traditions are not primitive, dying or, in many cases, extinct. It is important to teach with sensitivity and to be mindful of implicit/explicit undermining, devaluing, mocking, etc. while teaching on this subject.
3. Use of inclusive language. When teaching on these topics it is important to use inclusive language, such as “those of us who are Aboriginal...” versus dichotomization (“us” and “them”). By using language that is non-inclusive, a division is created in the classroom that is counter-productive and contradictory to the lesson at hand. Consciously using inclusive language not only models ethical language skills, but as well it validates the presence of the Aboriginal student body. Inclusive language also helps to diminish the idea/stereotype that Aboriginal values and ways of knowing are a thing of the past.
4. Ask permission to use certain stories, songs, etc. It is imperative that instructors are given permission to use unpublished Aboriginal resources in their classrooms. If there is any uncertainty, refrain from using the materials until one is confident that they have go-ahead to incorporate them into their teaching. Also, it is critical that an instructor is clear about their limited understanding of Aboriginal songs, stories, regalia, ceremonies, etc. and teachers should articulate this to their students. This avoids unintentional misrepresentation of information and misleading transmission of Aboriginal teachings. Finally, it is necessary to orally reference the material and the family/band/nation from which it came. Being specific about the Aboriginal material is proper protocol and by not doing so is analogous to overt plagiarism. Be sure to contact the school’s Aboriginal liaison directly with any questions or concerns.
5. Ask permission to take photos, videos or notes at ceremonies in or out of the long house/big house. Most songs, ceremonies, etc. are owned by families and recording this information is prohibited.
6. Resources for teachers in regards to Aboriginal science. I want to be able to provide for the teachers a website that they may access that addresses the above concerns and other resources that they may need in order to teach this effectively and respectfully. I would also like the teachers to be able to communicate (via email) their concerns and have on-line support as need be (within a reasonable timeframe). It is important that teachers have continuous

resources and that they feel confident and comfortable integrating Indigenous science into their lesson plans.

7. Emotional state of the students. It is clear that teaching on a subject such as megathrust earthquakes (9+) and tsunamis, especially to a diverse student body that is directly affected by the inevitable “big one” (e.g. the Anacla band), may be a terrifying and traumatic learning experience. It is important to consider this and to incorporate into the lessons the emotional objectives and strategies to assist students with anxiety. Ways to alleviate this stress may be to send a detailed letter home to the parents as a “head’s up” of the topic of earthquakes and along with it attach a small earthquake resource package that is relevant to the community at hand. As well, promoting student participation in earthquake/tsunami awareness programs (e.g. holding an information night at the school/long house; publishing a safety brochure; publishing in a local paper/band paper, etc.). As well, making time for student discussions during these lessons, so that any questions or concerns may be addressed and dealt with as they come up. Finally, try to keep these lessons as interactive as possible, so that students are active, empowered, and able to speak when they need to on this potentially frightening topic.