

# Respecting Cultural Diversity Learning Guide



This learning guide is designed for use by Professional Learning Communities, instructional/learning coaches, teacher-leaders or as a self-paced study to enhance and support instruction, conversation and critical reflection about creating inclusive learning environments. This conversation guide is intended to be used after viewing the video clip entitled **Respecting Cultural Diversity** on this website:  
[http://www.inclusiveeducationpdresources.ca/collaborating\\_with\\_parents.php](http://www.inclusiveeducationpdresources.ca/collaborating_with_parents.php)

### General Synopsis

This video supports the concept of traditional inspiration/cultural perception to strengthen self-esteem, trust and mutual understanding for positive learning supports.

### Key Understandings

- The child is the center of all collaborative efforts.
- Resolving differences involves creating an environment that shares knowledge, supports cooperation, communicates, tolerates, provides positive emotional expression and conflict resolution.
- Collaborative solutions and practices bring out the value of diversity and diverse perspectives as we learn from each other.

### Continuing the Conversation: Questions for Discussion

**Facilitators:** Working in table groups, post these questions before viewing the video so people know what they are watching for/reflecting upon. You may choose some or all of the questions for discussion. A jigsaw strategy could be used to process: each table is given a number and assigned the corresponding question (1-3) to discuss for 10-15 min, then people are moved so that each table now has members who have discussed each of the questions. At this point they can lead/share the discussion that their first group had around their question. Question 4 is a personal response type of question and could be done as a large group activity where volunteers share their thoughts or as an individual writing activity.

1. Which examples of strength-based approaches stood out for you in this video? What did you observe about the ways in which the family collaborated with the school to find solutions to potential learning issues?

2. What are some examples of strength-based approaches that you currently use or have previously used with children that you could share?
3. What processes does your school community have in place to identify a student's strengths and build on them? What new processes could be put into place?
4. *Live in the present. Celebrate successes, big and small. The more we begin to focus on successes, the more we'll experience. Celebrating success has a snowball effect.*

As you reflect upon this statement, think about how you apply this in your own setting. What recent successes have you had that you can share? How did you celebrate them? What activities/practices do you currently have in place for sharing success?

#### **Scene Explanations and Key Messages:**

A teacher is reprimanding a FNMI student for he is making his classroom students laugh. *(illustrating what the student believes as an everyday practice - using his gift to make others feel better by promoting laughter)*

The teacher walks him to the principal's office and calls him a "class clown". *(illustrating teacher misunderstanding to a positive culture/family value. Demonstrates conflict between the cultural teachings she has grown up with and what she has been taught is mainstream approach to classroom management)*

Since this is reoccurring behaviour, the principal decides to call in the parents. *(illustrating family support system and cultural kinship ties, community working together as positive behaviour supports)*

Community Elder is invited to meet with all to provide cultural and spiritual wisdom. He explains that their child has received the ability to make people laugh from the Creator. At home and in other public areas, he is encouraged to use this gift/talent to make people happy. *(illustrating community involvement; respect for sense of humour related to student's way of life)*

Rather than suppress this gift/talent the school/parents problem solve and agree to a solution. *(illustrating building of mutual understanding and using strength-based collaborative approach to problem solving)*

### Further Explanation of Cultural Implications:

Student is not "disciplined" or "punished" in the more traditional sense; rather he is counselled about the proper use of his gift in a good way.

Student shares his perspective when he is called into the office and at home with his family. During the final meeting, he respectfully listens and learns while his extended family advocates on his behalf and the Elder provides him with cultural teachings that will help him use his gifts respectfully.

The young teacher listens to the Elder and is able to reconnect with her earlier cultural teachings. She begins to see how to situate her indigenous view of holistic pedagogy with her work with students in the classroom, blending traditional FNMI teachings about people's gifts with contemporary knowledge about teaching and strength-based approaches.

**Acknowledgement:** *This guide was developed through the leadership of ERLC and is freely provided in support of improved teaching and learning under the following Creative Commons license.*

