Foundation for Mi’kmaw/Miigmao Language Curriculum
This symbol means L’nu, which is Mi’kmaw/Miigm ao for “the people.”

**Note:** Mi’kmaw/Mi’kmaq is the Smith-Francis orthography.
Miigmao/Miigmag is the Pacifique orthography.
Mi’kmaw/Miigm ao is used as an adjective.
Mi’kmaq/Miigmag is used as a noun and can be singular or plural.
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Vision

*Foundation for the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao Language Curriculum* is shaped by a vision of promoting the growth and development of students’ communicative skills to enable them to engage in the preservation of the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language and cultural identity by choosing to speak Mi’kmaw/Miigmao.
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Introduction

Background of the Document

This foundation document grew out of the collaborative work of Mi’kmaw/Miigmag educators, Department of Education personnel, and university researchers. In 1998, the first conference of L’nui’sultinej was held in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, and drew community members, educators, and Mi’kmaw/Miigmag speakers together to work on issues of language reclamation. This conference served as an important forum to bring together the many individual acts of language reclamation that were occurring throughout the Mi’kmaw/Miigmag nation. It helped create a sense of synergy regarding the revitalization of the language.

In June 2000, the L’nui’sultinej Conference Committee held a symposium in Eskasoni during which the work of this foundation document was begun. Mi’kmaw/Miigmag language teachers from each of the Atlantic provinces, representatives of the Nova Scotia Department of Education, and university personnel began developing the framework for this document over a three-day period. The material from the L’nui’sultinej Symposium was later compiled and brought back to smaller, representative groups for validation, verification, and revisions. At the May 2001 L’nui’sultinej Conference, symposium members were invited to give feedback on the revised document.

In the spring of 2002, the document was distributed more widely to Mi’kmaw/Miigmag communities for further input. The final document therefore represents the individual and collective participation of many experienced educators.

Purpose of the Document

The Mi’kmaq/Miigmag see the danger of the extinction of their language as one of the most critical problems facing them today. Since the 1950s, there has been a decline in the number of people who speak the Mi’kmaw/Miigmag language. The power of the English language has greatly influenced the erosion and diminishment of the language almost to extinction. The Mi’kmaw/ Miigmag language has undergone changes like any other language, but the major change has taken place since formal education was introduced with English as the language of instruction. The Mi’kmaw/Miigmag community recognizes the need to reclaim and strengthen its language—in homes, communities, and in schools. It is only through the pervasive use of the language that it will continue to live.

The document provides the vision and structure for all subsequent Mi’kmaw/Miigmag language curriculum development.
The curriculum has as its focus the achievement of full literacy by students. This document views language in its fullest and richest sense. It views literacy as being built on the traditional skills of listening, viewing, speaking, reading, and writing, which are essential for language proficiency. Notions of literacy envisioned in this document go beyond a functional view of literacy. This curriculum extends literacy into issues of identity and consciousness and names literacy as a vehicle through which communities are created.

Key Features of the Curriculum

- **This curriculum is defined in terms of outcomes.**
  The identification of Mi’kmaw language curriculum outcomes clarifies for students, teachers, parents, and administrators expectations of what students in Nova Scotia should know, be able to do, and value at key stages in the learning curriculum.

- **This curriculum is designed to respect the reciprocal importance of culture to language and language to culture within the community of learners.**
  Language does not develop without a context. Culture is the context within which a language develops and has meaning. It is through the interplay between culture and language that worldview develops. The uniqueness of a culture’s worldview is explored through communication in a variety of modes including art, music, and literature. The inclusion of Mi’kmaw consciousness and identity as an organizing strand of the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language curriculum supports the contextualizing of language development and the appreciation of the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao worldview.

- **This curriculum is designed to nurture the literacy development of all students.**
  This curriculum recognizes that students develop and learn at different rates and in different ways and that the time frame for literacy development will vary.
  In recognizing and valuing the diversity of students, the education system must allow for a range of learning styles, teaching styles, instructional strategies, and resources. Learning contexts should be adapted to meet the needs of students with different backgrounds, interests, and abilities and to provide ongoing opportunities for all students to engage in new learning, based on their prior successes.
This curriculum emphasizes the importance of students’ active participation in all aspects of their learning.

Learning experiences and interactions should immerse students in real communication situations, both within the classroom and in broader contexts.

This curriculum provides a basis for assessing student achievement.

The learning outcomes framework provides reference points for teachers to inform their instructional practice as they monitor student progress and assess what students can and cannot do, what they know, and what they need to know.

Assessment involves more than a judgment made about performance after learning has taken place. As a continuous, co-operative, collaborative, comprehensive process, assessment can be a powerful tool to enhance students’ learning when it is an integral part of their learning process.

This curriculum requires the use of a broad range of formal and informal assessment strategies and practices to ensure that curriculum and assessment work together to support student learning.
Curriculum Outcomes

Essential Graduation Learnings

Essential graduation learnings are statements describing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes expected of all students who graduate from high school. The Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language curriculum is designed to support the acquisition of the essential graduation learnings described in Public School Programs.

Graduates with a Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language background will be able to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the following essential graduation learnings.

Graduates will be able to respond with critical awareness to various forms of the arts and be able to express themselves through the arts.

Graduates will be expected, for example, to

- use various Mi’kmaw/Miigmao art forms as a means of formulating and expressing ideas, perceptions, and feelings
- demonstrate understanding of the contribution of the arts to daily life, cultural identity and diversity, and the economy
- interpret perceptions and feelings of others as expressed in various art forms
- demonstrate understanding of the significance of cultural resources and events such as theatres, museums, galleries, pow wows, Mi’kmaw/Miigmao resource centres, and St. Ann’s Mission.
Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language curriculum involves the exploration of arts and crafts. To enable students to learn all aspects of the language, it is essential to include arts and crafts. The students will also enhance their language by learning the vocabulary used in arts and crafts. Mi’kmaw/Miigmao artists are important resources for this curriculum, including poets, authors, playwrights, and craftspeople. These artists are excellent role models for students and can enhance their awareness of the different Mi’kmaw/Miigmao art forms. As well, since art reflects an artist’s worldview, the exploration of art and art forms will foster not only language development but also personal identity, consciousness, and self-image.

Citizenship

Graduates will be able to assess social, cultural, economic, and environmental interdependence in a local and global context.

Graduates will be expected, for example, to

- demonstrate an understanding of sustainable development as a traditional Mi’kmaw/Miigmao concept
- demonstrate an understanding of the Mi’kmaq Grand Council and recognize that such a political system existed prior to the Europeans’ arrival
- demonstrate an understanding of the social, political, and economic forces that have shaped the past and present and apply those understandings in planning for the future
- examine human rights issues and recognize forms of discrimination
- demonstrate an understanding of the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao cultural heritage and cultural identity and of the contributions of the Mi’kmaq/Miigmag to Canadian society and the world

Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language learning will extend students’ understanding of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao culture and Mi’kmaw/Miigmao identity. It is important for students to develop their own senses of identity and worth that reflect the bonds they share with the rest of humanity. Through their study of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao culture, students will be able to see that a balance exists between their lives and their environment. Learning experiences will help students to develop an understanding of the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao worldview of sharing and helping others in time of need. The Mi’kmaq/Miigmag did not come into this world alone and need never be alone; there is always someone there to help them. A Mi’kmaw/Miigmao person can always rely on his/her extended family in the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao community.
Communication

Graduates will be able to use the listening, viewing, speaking, reading, and writing modes of language as well as mathematical and scientific concepts and symbols to think, learn, and communicate effectively.

Graduates will be expected, for example, to

- recognize and acknowledge the need for the survival of the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language and culture
- explore, reflect upon, and express their own ideas, learnings, perceptions, and feelings
- participate in conversations and discussions in both learning and social contexts
- access, process, evaluate, and share information
- interpret, evaluate, and respond to literature and other texts in everyday Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language
- critically reflect on and interpret ideas presented through group work and presentations
- explore the ways in which language contributes to and expresses cultural identity
- share information with one another and show empathy to others in time of need.

Communicating with others in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao is very important in the preservation of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao culture. The Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language curriculum will build students’ awareness of the skills, strategies, and processes they use to learn language and to extend their awareness, understanding, and knowledge of other aspects of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao culture. Learning experiences in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language will expand and extend students’ abilities to use language effectively in a wide variety of communication situations and offer students multiple opportunities to use language effectively in formal as well as informal learning situations. These include planned activities in social situations that demand certain types of language and build students’ skills in social language use.

The curriculum emphasizes spoken, written, and visual communication. The ability to communicate clearly and effectively involves the correct and appropriate use of language conventions and mechanics. Learning about these elements will enable students to become increasingly competent in their ability to communicate with confidence.
Personal Development

Graduates will be able to continue to learn and to pursue an active, healthy lifestyle.

*Graduates will be expected, for example, to*

- demonstrate preparedness for further learning of the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language
- demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between health and lifestyle
- demonstrate coping, management, and interpersonal skills
- demonstrate intellectual curiosity and initiative
- reflect critically on ethical issues

The Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language curriculum encourages students to develop into lifelong learners and active proponents of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language and culture. Students need a solid foundation in language to enable them to function in society. For Mi’kmaw/Miigmao speakers, language fluency not only serves to sustain the language but it also forms the basis for healthy relationships in the larger community. These relationships are fostered by positive self-concepts and through the recognition and valuing of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language and culture.

Problem Solving

Graduates will be able to use the strategies and processes needed to solve a wide variety of problems, including those requiring language and mathematical and scientific concepts.

*Graduates will be expected, for example, to*

- acquire, process, and interpret information critically to make informed decisions and/or solve problems
- use a variety of strategies and perspectives with flexibility and creativity for solving problems
- formulate tentative ideas and question their own assumptions and those of others
- solve problems individually and collaboratively
- ask questions, observe relationships, make inferences, and draw conclusions
- identify, describe, and interpret different points of view and distinguish fact from opinion.

The Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language curriculum explores certain aspects of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao culture from historical traditions to contemporary issues. Students are encouraged to think critically and creatively. Through group work, students will make decisions collaboratively and contribute facts and opinions to the
decision-making process. Students are also encouraged to make decisions independently. All language processes are essentially problem-solving processes in which students apply knowledge, meaning-making strategies, and prior experiences. Students also develop problem-solving skills through their experiences in using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies to gain, manage, evaluate, and produce information.

**Technological Competence**

Graduates will be able to use a variety of technologies, demonstrate an understanding of technological applications, and apply appropriate technologies for solving problems.

*Graduates will be expected, for example, to*

- locate, evaluate, adapt, create, and share information using a variety of sources and technologies
- demonstrate understanding of and use existing and developing technologies
- demonstrate understanding of the impact of technology on society
- demonstrate understanding of ethical issues related to the use of technology in a local and global context

Computer technologies continue to advance at a very fast pace. The Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language is also advancing with the use of computers. Students can use technology available to them such as the Internet and CD-ROMs to access information on First Nations people across Canada and to communicate with others. This curriculum offers students opportunities to use current technological resources available to them not only as a tool to develop authentic and personal responses but also as a medium of communication. Technological competence is an essential aspect of life in this century.

**The Nature of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao Language**

The Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language is an ancient language that has developed over the centuries in Mi’kmawki/Miigmaagi. It is considered by many to be a sacred language, given to the people by the Creator. The Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language is the vehicle through which Mi’kmaw/Miigmao values, customs, beliefs, and attitudes are passed on from generation to generation. To learn the language, therefore, is to deepen one’s understanding of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao consciousness and identity.
Mi’kmaw/Miigmao is predominately an oral language. The Mi’kmag/Miigmag used hieroglyphs (non-alphabetic writing systems) to record ideas. Then, as they came in contact with the Mi’kmag/Miigmag, missionaries developed writing systems for Mi’kmaw/Miigmao. Several different orthographies (representations of the sounds of a language using written or printed symbols) have been developed over time for Mi’kmaw/Miigmao communities: LeClerq, Rand, Pacifique, and Smith-Francis. In Nova Scotia, the Smith-Francis orthography has been adopted provincially, whereas the other orthographies may be used in other areas of Mi’kma’ki/Miigmaagi.

Mi’kmaw/Miigmao has several characteristics that distinguish it from Indo-European languages. Firstly, the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language is a verb-oriented language. This means that all words in a clause centre around the verb and not, as in English, around the subject. Unlike in French, there is no gender in the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language, but there is a clear distinction between animate and inanimate objects. Secondly, the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language has free word order; there is no predetermined syntax to follow, so generally word order will not change the meaning being conveyed. Since the language is largely oral, change in meaning is most often conveyed through changes in vocal intonation and through agglutination of terms—words are sometimes ‘glued’ together to form new meanings.

The Learning Continuum

The Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language curriculum has been divided into developmental stages as well as grade levels. The rationale for this is that Mi’kmaw/Miigmao can be introduced for the first time at any grade level and not only during the elementary years of schooling. The developmental stages used in this document are emerging, developing, extending, and specializing. These stages are used in other curricula as well as Aboriginal language documents across Canada.

This curriculum is meant to be inclusive and to help all learners reach their potential through a variety of learning experiences. The curriculum recognizes that students have equal entitlement to learning opportunities. The development of student literacy is shaped by factors including gender, social and cultural backgrounds, and the extent to which individual needs are met. In designing learning experiences for students, teachers should consider the learning needs, experiences, interests, and values of all students.
The curriculum outcome statements in this guide are considered important for all learners and provide a framework for a range of learning experiences for all students, including students who require individual program plans.

Mi’kmaw/Miigmao students who do not speak the language will be learning the language as a second language. Learners will include students who have no prior knowledge of the culture or language. Some students may have exposure to the language but be non-speakers. Others may be speakers of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao. All students should work toward the same curriculum outcomes. The diversity of the learning needs of all students must be met at all times.

Teachers, when planning their instruction, will want to focus on ways to meet students’ diverse learning needs by

- building on the prior knowledge of language
- expanding their knowledge base of language processes
- extending the language strategies each student can use in a range of communication contexts
- providing a consistent challenge to students to develop their current level of language skills

To this end the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language curriculum accommodates all levels and varieties of learners from diverse backgrounds. This is the goal and the vision of the reclamation of the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language.

**Organizing Strands**

*Listening and Speaking*

All language learners need to develop the ability to understand the sounds of the language being learned. Also, they need to develop the ability to communicate orally. It is particularly important to recognize these arts when considering the central importance of the oral tradition in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao society. It is through the reciprocal processes of listening and speaking that thoughts, feelings, and experiences are explored, extended, clarified, and considered. Listening and speaking also provide a context for learning social and cultural protocols fostering respect and sensitivity.
Reading and Viewing

These language arts focus upon meaning making. This meaning making process involves the interaction of the learner’s prior experience, the text, and the context of the situation. It is important for learners to develop skills, abilities, and strategies for accessing texts that enable students to transfer their meaning-making abilities into other curriculum areas and other contexts. The development of critical reading and viewing skills and abilities encourages students to question their world, enhancing further refinements in their understanding of their world.

Writing and Other Forms of Representing, including Oration

These language arts convey meaning constructed through the interaction of all the language arts. Writing and other forms of representing are expressive arts and implicitly infer development processes. These development processes may be collaborative or individual and include exploring, extending, and constructing meaning in addition to clarifying and reflecting upon thoughts, feelings, and experiences. The resultant communication may be formal or informal and may represent a wide range of text forms and genres.

Mi’kmaw Consciousness and Identity

The recognition that every language is set within a cultural context is of central importance to the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language curriculum. The inclusion of this section encourages students to explore Mi’kmaw/Miigmao culture and values. Through this exploration, understanding and appreciation for the depth and breadth of the Mi’kmaw worldview is promoted, developed, and extended.

Curriculum Outcomes for Mi’kmaw Language

Vision: Foundation for the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao Language Curriculum is shaped by a vision of promoting the growth and development of students’ communicative skills to enable them to engage in the preservation of the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language and cultural identity by choosing to speak Mi’kmaw/Miigmao.
General Curriculum Outcomes (GCOs)

General curriculum outcomes are statements that identify what students are expected to know, to be able to do, and value through studying Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language. These statements provide the organizational structure for the development of the key-stage curriculum outcomes in this document and for the development of specific curriculum outcomes designated for each grade level/proficiency level in curriculum guides.

Key-Stage Curriculum Outcomes

Key-stage curriculum outcomes are statements that identify what students are expected to know and be able to do at the end of the four identified developmental levels, as a result of their cumulative learning experiences in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language.
Outcomes at the four key stages reflect a continuum of learning. While there may appear to be similarities in outcomes at different key stages, teachers will recognize the increase in expectations for students at the various key stages according to:

- the developmental nature of learning language processes
- students’ maturity of thinking and interests
- students’ increasing independence as learners
- the complexity and sophistication of ideas, texts, and tasks
- the level or depth of students’ engagement with ideas, texts, and tasks
- the range of language experiences and the repertoire of strategies and skills students apply to those experiences

For each key stage, the ordering of outcomes is not intended to suggest any priority, hierarchy, or instructional sequence. While these outcomes provide a framework on which educators may base decisions concerning instruction and assessment, they are not intended to limit the scope of learning experiences in any key stage. Although it is expected that most students will be able to attain the key-stage curriculum outcomes, some students’ needs and performance will range across key stages. Teachers should take this variation into consideration as they plan learning experiences and assess students’ achievement of the various outcomes. Students’ attitudes, experiences, knowledge, abilities, and engagement in learning will also influence their ability to achieve the key-stage curriculum outcomes.
Curriculum Outcomes for Mi’kmaw/Miigmao Language Curriculum
Listening and Speaking

GCO 1: Students will be expected to express respect for the persons addressing them.

By the end of the emerging stage, students will be expected to

- use simple greetings to address others
- practise protocol such as taking turns, polite listening, and showing respect for others
- participate co-operatively in large and small groups

By the end of the developing stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging stage and will also be expected to

- address persons using the proper Mi’kmaw/Miigmao protocol
- use listening to understand the meaning of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language
- use Mi’kmaw/Miigmao protocol in a variety of situations within the classroom
Listening and Speaking

GCO 1: Students will be expected to express respect for the persons addressing them.

By the end of the extending stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging and developing stages and will also be expected to

- perform a talking circle using proper Mi’kmaw/Miigmao protocol
- address others with respect, use appropriate language, and attend to the speakers with appropriate body language
- use protocol within the classroom and while at school with peers, school staff, and Elders

By the end of the specializing stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging, developing, and extending stages and will also be expected to

- initiate and perform a talking circle using proper Mi’kmaw/Miigmao protocol
- respect their own and others’ ideas and accept differences
- demonstrate maturity of thought in cultural protocol and respond appropriately to various audiences in different situations
## Listening and Speaking

GCO 2: Students will be expected to communicate ideas and information in the Mi'kmaw/Miigmao language by exploring, extending, clarifying, and reflecting on their own and others’ thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By the end of the emerging stage, students will be expected to</th>
<th>By the end of the developing stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging stage and will also be expected to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• use Mi'kmaw/Miigmao to bring meaning to what they observe, feel, and hear through questions and discussion</td>
<td>• converse with others, respond, and ask questions in small- and large-group discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ask and respond to basic questions and directions</td>
<td>• describe and share thoughts with increasingly complex word phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• use basic phrases to communicate needs, information, and opinions</td>
<td>• convey meaning orally and with confidence in Mi'kmaw/Miigmao to adults, Elders, and peers in various situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• demonstrate respectful listening behaviours</td>
<td>• discuss a limited number of topics using Mi'kmaw/Miigmao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• participate in storytelling circles by listening and offering comments</td>
<td>• share their tastes, preferences, interests, and feelings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Listening and Speaking

GCO 2: Students will be expected to communicate ideas and information in the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language by exploring, extending, clarifying, and reflecting on their own and others’ thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences.

By the end of the extending stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging and developing stages and will also be expected to:

- converse in a variety of informal and some formal settings using a variety of forms
- conduct peer mediation in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao
- participate in and contribute to small- and large-group discussions using a variety of vocabulary and sentence complexity
- express and justify a preference, opinion, or feeling

By the end of the specializing stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging, developing, and extending stages and will also be expected to:

- speak with fluency when communicating with others
- discuss, in depth, more complex topics
- read sophisticated texts with fluency
- converse in both informal and formal settings for various purposes while responding to the needs of the audience
- use Mi’kmaw/Miigmao to express and justify understandings, opinions, and points of view
Reading and Viewing

GCO 3: Students will be expected to select, read, and respond personally and critically to a range of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao texts.

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**By the end of the emerging stage, students will be expected to**

- display reading like behaviours
- use graphophonic cueing systems to construct meaning
- recognize own name in print
- recognize some personally significant words in context
- select books to read for pleasure
- express enjoyment by joining in and responding personally to familiar oral text
- recognize the patterns, sounds, and intonations of the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language through interactive experiences

**By the end of the developing stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging stage and will also be expected to**

- identify and talk about a range of different text forms such as letters, lists, recipes, stories, and newspaper and magazine articles
- use cueing systems to increase fluency and comprehension
- discuss favourite texts
- express interest in interpreting symbols and print in their environment
- demonstrate curiosity about and interest in print by participating in independent and shared reading and writing activities
Reading and Viewing

GCO 3: Students will be expected to select, read and respond personally and critically to a range of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao texts.

By the end of the extending stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging and developing stages and will also be expected to

- show an ability to construct meaning by integrating knowledge of cueing systems, text structure, text organization, language features, and subject-specific language
- recognize stereotyping in a text
- select appropriate material and adjust reading strategies for different texts and different purposes
- respond personally to a variety of texts
- demonstrate confidence when reading new text
- interpret symbols, sounds, and intonations of words through reading and conversing

By the end of the specializing stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging, developing, and extending stages and will also be expected to

- recognize and discuss the elements and purposes of different text structures
- read and comprehend text that is abstract and removed from personal experience
- make inferences based on implicit information drawn from text and provide justification for these inferences
- return purposefully to make connections between widely separated sections of a text
- make critical comparisons between texts and justify opinions
- use reading to infer beyond personal experience
- demonstrate an ability to communicate fluently in the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language
Reading and Viewing

GCO 4: Students will be expected to interpret, select, and combine information in Mi’kmaw/ Miigmao using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies.

By the end of the emerging stage, students will be expected to

- present projects to the class
- learn and use vocabulary terms in areas such as counting, seasons, directions, colours, months, days of the week, and general verbs
- create pictures and captions for class or school newspapers

By the end of the developing stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging stage and will also be expected to

- read and present work orally
- orally translate Mi’kmaw/Miigmao texts
Reading and Viewing

GCO 4: Students will be expected to interpret, select, and combine information in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies.

By the end of the extending stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging and developing stages and will also be expected to

- develop presentations for a variety of purposes such as science fairs or heritage fairs
- translate Mi’kmaw/Miigmao text into writing with the aid of technology

By the end of the specializing stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging, developing, and extending stages and will also be expected to

- make presentations using technology
- translate oral and written work: Mi’kmaw/Miigmao to English, English to Mi’kmaw/Miigmao
- study oral traditions with the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language and culture using proper research methodology
- create, develop, summarize, analyse, synthesize, and critique their work
Writing and Other Ways of Representing, including Oration

GCO 5: Students will be expected to create text and oration collaboratively and independently using a variety of forms.

By the end of the emerging stage, students will be expected to

- demonstrate some awareness of purpose and audience
- create written text in a variety of forms
- express ideas, thoughts, and feelings in writing for self and others
- begin to write simple sentences

By the end of the developing stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging stage and will also be expected to

- consider audience when writing text
- express ideas, thoughts, and feelings in writing for self and others
- participate in storytelling circles by contributing increasingly complex sentences
- create and share a variety of texts (both narrative and informational) adhering to the grammatical rules of Smith-Francis/Pacifique orthography
Writing and Other Ways of Representing, including Oration

GCO 5: Students will be expected to create text and oration collaboratively and independently using a variety of forms.

By the end of the extending stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging and developing stages and will also be expected to

- retell stories to younger students
- participate in storytelling circles by telling short oral stories with basic abstraction
- apply grammatical rules of Smith-Francis/Pacifique orthography in peer editing, notetaking, and dictation
- create and share a variety of texts of increasing complexity including such forms as plays, newsletters, reports, research projects, and oral book reports
- use the 14 tenses and be aware of their importance in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao

By the end of the specializing stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging, developing, and extending stages and will also be expected to

- craft a text for presentation by collaborating with peers
- initiate storytelling circles and tell stories with abstraction and metaphors
- create and publish a variety of texts including such forms as poetry, stories, songs, and school or community newsletters
Writing and Other Ways of Representing, including Oration

GCO 6: Students will be expected to use a range of strategies to develop effective communications for a range of audiences and purposes.

By the end of the emerging stage, students will be expected to

- use repetition, patterns, songs, and rhymes to enhance listening, speaking, and writing skills
- experiment with process writing such as prewriting, drafting, revising, proofreading, and presentation strategies
- create a resource book containing vocabulary and expressions

By the end of the developing stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging stage and will also be expected to

- demonstrate understanding that writing is a process focused upon conveying meaning to self and others
- use process writing (prewriting, drafting, revising, proofreading, and presenting) in all its forms
- continue to develop a resource book containing vocabulary, expressions, and important values of the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language
Writing and Other Ways of Representing, including Oration

GCO 6: Students will be expected to use a range of strategies to develop effective communications for a range of audiences and purposes.

By the end of the extending stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging and developing stages and will also be expected to
- conduct research and present their findings in a research paper
- take effective notes in a variety of settings
- use elements of basic story writing
- develop dictionaries of dialects and origins of words

By the end of the specializing stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging, developing, and extending stages and will also be expected to
- create texts utilizing technology and other available resources
- take effective notes for class and research work
- write extensive research papers
- publish dictionaries including vocabulary, grammar, and expressions and their origins
### Mi’kmaw Consciousness and Identity

GCO 7: Students will be expected to articulate, examine, appreciate, and practise ways in which worldviews are connected to language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By the end of the emerging stage, students will be expected to</th>
<th>By the end of the developing stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging stage and will also be expected to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• develop an understanding and appreciation of the value of having a healthy, holistic identity</td>
<td>• show responsibility for their actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• express sensitivity towards others</td>
<td>• practise proper Mi’kmaw/Miigmao protocol through communication with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• express pride in the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao culture</td>
<td>• express respect for cultural protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• develop an understanding of the importance of language in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao protocol</td>
<td>• demonstrate awareness of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao medicines</td>
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<tr>
<td>• sing songs, recite poems, and dance to Mi’kmaw/Miigmao chants</td>
<td>• express respect for one’s own culture and the cultures, lifestyles, and experiences of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• examine the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao world</td>
<td>• respect the ideas, language dialects and communication styles of others and respond with sensitivity and thoughtfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• demonstrate respect for self, Elders, parents, all living things, and the surroundings by participating in activities working toward a healthy, holistic identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Mi’kmaw Consciousness and Identity

GCO 7: Students will be expected to articulate, examine, appreciate, and practise ways in which worldviews are connected to language.

By the end of the extending stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging and developing stages and will also be expected to:

- participate in creating a healthy, holistic identity
- demonstrate awareness of and respect the range of cultures, human behaviours, experiences, emotions, and ideas conveyed through speech, interactions, literature, and various media
- express and interpret Mi’kmaw/Miigmao identity and worldview through fine arts
- analyse Mi’kmaw/Miigmao traditional and modern governments
- examine Mi’kmaw/Miigmao worldview along with those of diverse groups in Canada through the study of historical events

By the end of the specializing stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging, developing, and extending stages and will also be expected to:

- examine wellness and health using leadership skills
- share with an audience of younger students their impressions of their Mi’kmaw/Miigmao identity and worldview through the fine arts
- examine self-determination through communal sense (tribal networking)
- discuss current events with peers, Elders, and adults in a critical and analytic manner
- analyse and demonstrate respect to other worldviews through the study of Canada and the world
Mi’kmaw Consciousness and Identity

GCO 8: Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of Mi’kmaw/Miigmag values and culture.

By the end of the emerging stage, students will be expected to

- practise Mi’kmaw/Miigmag protocol in the classroom
- describe the contemporary and traditional lifestyles and cultural protocol of the Mi’kmaq/Miigmag
- describe the traditions of the Mi’kmaw/Miigmag culture

By the end of the developing stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging stage and will also be expected to

- practise Mi’kmaw/Miigmag protocol in class and in the school
- compare and contrast the contemporary and traditional lifestyles of the Mi’kmaq/Miigmag
- describe Mi’kmaw/Miigmag history, customs, values, and traditions
Mi’kmaw Consciousness and Identity

GCO 8: Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao values and culture.

By the end of the extending stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging and developing stages and will also be expected to

- write reports on various speakers addressing key and current events and issues in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao history
- respond with confidence in culturally appropriate ways to various audiences and situations

By the end of the specializing stage, students will have achieved the outcomes for the emerging, developing, and extending stages and will also be expected to

- examine Mi’kmaw/Miigmao cultural values in terms of culture, history, creativity, and spirituality
- practise and promote Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language and culture to all members of the school
Contexts for Learning and Teaching

Guiding Principles Underlying Mi’kmaw/Miigmao Language Curriculum

Six major principles underlie Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language curriculum. Planning, teaching, and assessing in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language education should be deeply rooted in these six principles.

- Consciousness and identity are at the heart of the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language. Therefore, it is important that students understand and express a Mi’kmaw/Miigmao worldview through the use of language.

- The language is the backbone of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao culture. Intertwined with and learned through language are the students’ cultural values such as respect for all living things and balance and harmony.

- Learning the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language encourages students’ self-esteem by valuing the uniqueness of the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language and its contributions to human diversity. Students will develop an awareness of dialect within the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language and thus gain a deeper appreciation of these differences.

- The preservation of oral language and Mi’kmaw/Miigmao literacy promotes language learning in meaningful contexts and develops additive bilingualism in students. By developing language fluency and proficiency in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao, students will gain the ability to communicate with others, allowing them to deepen and enrich their own learning.

- Community support is integral to Mi’kmaw/Miigmao education. As Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language usage is threatened, the community has an obligation to support its revitalization, enhancement, promotion, and development.

- Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language education is holistic in nature and unifies language, knowledge, and culture.

- Through this learning process, students take responsibility for their own learning and become critical thinkers as they intertwine Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language with culture.
The Learning Environment

Introduction

Students need an environment rich in opportunities to use Mi’kmaw/Miigmao in an ever-widening variety of school and community contexts. For students living in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao communities, they continue a process at school that begins naturally and informally at home. The wider community offers students multiple opportunities to construct meaning, to communicate in public contexts for a range of purposes and audiences, and to use knowledge from different sources. For students not living in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao communities, the richness of their language opportunities begins at school in their Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language classroom and extends outward into the wider community.

Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language classrooms provide special places that may build on natural learning experiences outside of the school. They provide a supportive environment where risk taking is recognized as integral to learning, and experimentation and approximation are treated as signs of growth and indicators of students’ changing ideas about Mi’kmaw/Miigmao and Mi’kmawi’simk/Miigmawiisimg. They provide an inviting environment where discussion and sharing of ideas are common and valued experiences. They provide a literate environment, which immerses learners in the widest possible range of texts, including engaging and exemplary models of literature, language, and media. Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language learning environments are characterized by an emphasis on inquiry, interaction, and collaboration and by balanced, challenging learning experiences supported by a wide range of resources, including technology.

Balance, Coherence, and Connectedness

When planning learning experiences, it is important that teachers consider appropriate emphasis on specific aspects of the curriculum, including

- oral activities that provide the scaffolding for growth in reading and writing
- opportunities for students to use talk for different purposes, including the use of exploratory talk to explore and shape their ideas
- opportunities for teacher talk and student talk
- access to information texts, literature, media texts, and technological texts
• reading experiences appropriate to the developmental needs of the students; these experiences should include, at all levels, reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading
• involvement in individual, paired, small-group, and large-group activities
• experiences designed, selected, or directed by the teacher and experiences designed, selected, or directed by the student
• writing for different purposes and audiences, including themselves
• assessment procedures that gather information on all areas of Mi’kmaw/Miigmaw language at each level of proficiency: emerging, developing, extending, and specializing.

Challenge

Experiences that challenge learners are essential to language development. Students need to experiment with language and try out new ideas. If they are at the limits of their knowledge and abilities, they will make mistakes. In a supportive environment, students will take risks and learn without anxiety.

Within an inviting and stimulating environment, all Mi’kmaw/Miigmaw language students must be continually challenged to

• expand their knowledge base (including their capability and ease of use of vocabulary, syntax, punctuation, structure, rhetorical techniques/stylistic devices)
• develop increasing facility with a range of strategies for speaking, listening, reading, writing, representing, and viewing (including inferring, adapting, substituting regrouping, synthesizing, assessing, judging, and exploring)
• create and respond to texts of increasing complexity
• use and respond to Mi’kmaw/Miigmaw texts from progressively more sophisticated perspectives
• develop increasing confidence with Mi’kmaw/Miigmaw (including level of comfort, willingness to risk and extend, adaptability, flexibility, valuing, and appreciating)
Inquiry

Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language classrooms need to be centres of inquiry where students and teachers investigate their own language learning, both individually and as a learning community. They should be places where students learn to reflect, in a focussed way, on the powers and limitations of language use and usages.

At all levels, students need to reflect on their own language use and on the ways in which others use Mi’kmaw/Miigmao. They need to grapple with the problems of understanding how Mi’kmaw /Miigmao works, what effects certain language has, and why. This sort of inquiry challenges their thinking about culture and language. Such critical and self-critical perspectives become accessible to students in the classrooms where they know their own words are heard and respected and where teachers are critically aware of and reflective about their own language use. Under these circumstances, students can become sufficiently self-critical to improve their work and to adapt what they know to a variety of situations. Critical perspectives also enable students to recognise when others use Mi’kmaw/Miigmao powerfully and eloquently to influence and manipulate them as well as to engage and inspire them.

Informed Teaching

Effective teaching practice is grounded in sound theory about teaching and learning. Research has, in recent years, significantly increased what we know about how learning occurs. This research provides key information for curriculum development and delivery in the arts disciplines. It is suggested that there are many ways of processing information, many ways of knowing, understanding, and making sense of our environment.

Traditional language teaching often focussed on teaching from part to whole or strictly on the mechanics of the language. Learners often learned little pieces of language in very controlled settings. There was often an overemphasis on grammar and syntax to the exclusion of using language for real purposes. Recent research in language teaching has demonstrated that language is learned best in highly supportive environments where there are real purposes for communicating. Language is learned holistically. Students learn language in context rather than in isolation.
Resource-Based Learning

Resource-based learning actively involves students, teachers, and technology in the effective use of non-print and human resources. Resource-based learning focuses on the development of individual students by accommodating their varied interests, experiences, learning styles, needs, and ability levels. Students who use a wide range of resources in various media for learning have the opportunity to approach a theme, issue or topic of study in ways that allow for a range of learning styles and access to the theme or topic via cognitive and affective appeals.

When students engage in their own problem-solving or research processes with appropriate teacher support and supervision, they are more likely to take responsibility for their learning and retain the information they gather for themselves.

In a resource-based learning environment, teachers encourage students to use a wide variety of resources to seek information and solve problems. Students and teachers make decisions about appropriate sources of information and tools for learning and how to access them. They may use:

- a range of print resources such as textbooks, novels, magazines, First Nations Help Desk, and materials produced by the Centre of Excellence
- multimedia technologies such as videotape recordings and software tools (Mi’kmaw/Miigmao on-line dictionary)
- teacher- and/or student-made materials
- primary documents such as historical records, original manuscripts
- computer networking and telecommunications for both data access and participation in learning communities
- school library/resource/media centres to locate and use many of these resources
- local communities for the rich supply of materials, human resources, and information provided by Elders, Chief and Council, and community members
- the mass media—cable and network television, radio broadcasts, and international print and electronic services

It is necessary that administrators, teachers, teacher librarians, other library/resource/media centre staff, parents, and community agencies collaborate to ensure students’ access to available resources to support resource-based teaching and learning. Such resources do not replace qualified teachers, but support and enhance student learning.
The Use of Technology

The explosion of technology has contributed to the revised concept of “literacy,” which encompasses print literacy, visual literacy, media literacy, and all of the other “literacies” needed to use the emerging technologies of our culture.

Thoughtful, creative use of technology can greatly enhance language reclamation work by connecting students to communities of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language speakers who might be quite far away geographically. Preserving the language and knowledge of the Elders and of language speakers can be done effectively using a variety of technologies.

Given available technologies, the curriculum at every level should include experiences that build students’ confidence and competence in using a range of information-retrieval and information-processing technologies to meet their own information needs. Such experiences should involve students in

- using a word processor to develop a piece of writing
- using on-line language support such as Mi’gmaq Online (The Talking Dictionary)
- constructing simple databases and spreadsheets as ways to organize information
- exploring the application of interactive CD-ROM software and laser discs
- using graphic communication software
- using multimedia
- producing a variety of desktop published texts, particularly in the area of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao literature
- using e-mail to communicate with other Mi’kmaw/Miigmao speakers from other communities
- using listservers, newsgroups, file transfer, electronic bulletin boards, and Web browsers
- using appropriate technologies to organize and create complex information with multiple text and graphic sources
- distinguishing sources that are central, reliable, and relevant among the vast number of choices offered by technologies
**Interactive Learning**

Learning Mi’kmaw/Miigramo language is both personal and social—language is social in origin and in purpose. Teachers should use a variety of social interactions such as instructional contexts including pairs, small-group, whole-class and cross-age groupings, to take advantage of different language and learning possibilities.

Growth in Mi’kmaw/Miigramo is fostered in situations that invite students to interact and collaborate with one another and with the teacher and other adults in the community. Such interactions allow students to explore their own ideas, get feedback, build on the insights of others, and construct knowledge collaboratively.

This curriculum emphasizes interactive learning in an environment that fosters development of the abilities to communicate effectively and to think critically about, within, and beyond the classroom.

**Homework**

Research studies show a strong correlation between homework and academic achievement. Meaningful and positive homework experiences can

- contribute to personal growth, self-discipline, and learning responsibility
- reinforce the ideas and processes students have learned or developed at school
- enhance students’ development as lifelong learners who know how to extend their learning and apply it to other situations
- develop students’ confidence in their ability to work without the help of others
- provide opportunities for students to reflect on what they are learning and how well they are learning it
- help parents/guardians/caregivers to understand what their children are learning
- clarify the role of parents/guardians/caregivers in supporting their children’s learning
Learning experiences and tasks judiciously assigned for completion outside the classroom should help students to:

- recognize that learning occurs in many places, not only in school
- integrate literacy strategies and skills into their daily lives outside the school
- make decisions about when, where, and how they can attend to homework in balance with their other activities outside the school
- organize, consolidate, and reinforce their understandings
- integrate new learning with what they already know
- activate prior knowledge and provide a focus in preparation for future learning

It is important that Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language teachers design experiences that each student can understand in terms of requirements, criteria, and expectations and can approach with confidence. Activities and tasks should:

- be developmentally appropriate
- draw on students’ abilities and provide challenge
- be manageable without home support or access to resources to ensure that students retain ownership of their learning

**Equity and Diversity**

The Mi’kmaw/Miigmao Language Curriculum is designed to meet the needs and interests of all students. The document provides for the inclusion of the interests, values, experiences, and language of each student and of the many groups within our local, regional, national, and global communities.

Our society, like all of Canada, is linguistically, racially, culturally, and socially diverse, reflecting differences in race, ethnicity, gender, ability, values, lifestyles, and languages. Schools should foster the understanding of such diversity. Efforts to promote and enhance Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language education foster equity by valuing, appreciating, and accepting the diverse, multicultural, and multiracial nature of society, acknowledging the inequities that exist in Canadian society, as well as by fostering awareness and critical analysis of individual and systemic discrimination. This curriculum gives voice to students who have previously been marginalized in schools that focussed exclusively on English and/or French language acquisition.
All students are entitled to an education that affirms their uniqueness, gender, and racial, ethnic, and cultural identity. The educational system should promote the development of positive self-image that includes pride in one’s identity. As issues of language and identity are inextricably linked, enhancing Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language education will enhance Mi’kmaw/Miigmao identity.

Educators should ensure that class practices and resources positively reflect diverse perspectives and reject prejudices and discriminatory behaviours. The communicative, interactive nature of language learning speaks directly to these issues.

In order to contribute to the achievement of equity and the support of diversity in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language curriculum, programs need to

- reflect the race, ethnicity, and gender of students
- reflect students’ abilities, needs, interests, and learning styles
- provide materials and strategies that reflect the reality of diversity within Mi’kmaw/Miigmao communities and that foster an understanding of multiple perspectives
- promote the concept that all people should have equal access to opportunity
- establish the expectation that all students will be successful, regardless of gender, racial, ethnocultural, or socio-economic background, lifestyle, linguistic background, or ability

Instructional practices in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language education need to

- foster a learning environment that is free from bias and unfair practices
- promote opportunities to develop positive self-images that will enable students to transcend stereotypes and develop as individuals
- promote communication and understanding among those who differ in attitude, knowledge, points of view, and dialect, as well as among those who are similar
- encourage and enable students to question their own assumptions, and imagine, understand, and appreciate realities other than their own
- promote the equitable sharing of resources, including teacher attention and support
- encourage students to examine and critique materials, resources, and experiences for bias and prejudice
• examine historical and current equity and bias issues
• promote opportunities in non-traditional careers and occupations
• encourage students to challenge prejudice and discrimination
• help students understand the role of colonization within language loss and understand the process of language reclamation that is occurring within the Mi’kmaw/Miigmaw nation

The Nova Scotia Department of Education is committed to using accepted equity principles and practices in developing Mi’kmaw/Miigmaw language curricula and developing and evaluating learning resources.

Roles within Mi’kmaw/Miigmaw Language Education

Language Loss and Language Reclamation

To enable and encourage learners to engage in the processes of Mi’kmaw/Miigmaw language throughout their lives, all partners must assume responsibility for fulfilling their roles in Mi’kmaw/Miigmaw language education. In addition, partners must work collaboratively, in a climate of mutual respect and interdependence in restoring language.

The Mi’kmaw/Miigmaw language has been with Mi’kmaw/Miigmaw people since creation and it flourished for centuries. Communities passed to their children their knowledge, beliefs, and worldview through the language. However, the process of colonization by various waves of Europeans weakened the Mi’kmaw/Miigmaw language and culture. Residential schools, and later provincial schools, played a large role in preventing the language from being passed on to younger generations of Mi’kmag/Miigmag. By the early 1980s, many communities saw the Mi’kmaw/Miigmaw language becoming endangered.

However, the story of language loss is not a story of despair. During the past 20 years many Aboriginal communities have taken steps to reclaim and revitalize languages that were threatened with extinction. Educators, community members, and researchers have done work in reviving languages. The Maori in New Zealand, Aboriginal peoples in Hawaii, and First Nations and Inuit peoples in Canada have demonstrated that language loss can be reversed. Close to home, tremendous hope can be seen from communities such as Conne River in Newfoundland, which has used the school, once a tool of Mi’kmaw/Miigmaw language erosion, as a vehicle, together with their own community and other communities such as Eskasoni, to reclaim the language. Language reclamation is a daunting task, and many groups and institutions need to work together to make it happen.
The Community’s Role

The community includes not only students, parents, and teachers, but also volunteers, service and youth groups, cultural groups, business and media agencies, social service agencies, and other groups. It is important that all of these groups view the education of young people as a shared responsibility. As partners, the school and community promote student growth in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language learners by

- finding ways to involve the school in the community, for example, seeking the school’s help with community projects and making use of school facilities
- sharing and exchanging resources
- providing audiences for and encouraging Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language arts and projects and activities
- promoting the flow and exchange of information
- visiting schools to volunteer in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language classes acting as guest speakers
- providing opportunities for students to volunteer and to participate in community service projects
- creating opportunities for students to explore the workplace
- encouraging students to discover and use the social, recreational, and cultural opportunities to be found in their community
- participating in the ongoing conversation about Mi’kmaw/ Miigmao language education
- creating a variety of opportunities for the community to participate in the schools
- valuing and supporting the unique roles that teachers have in Mi’kmaw /Miigmao language education
- encouraging Mi’kmaw /Miigmao projects, presentations, workshops, and performances, as well as being audiences for them
The Education System’s Role

The structure of the education system includes the Department of Education, universities and community colleges, school boards, and school advisory councils. These organizations and institutions, collectively and individually, have various responsibilities and leadership functions that affect Mi’kmaw / Miigmao learning and teaching. These include decisions about:

- the allocation of personnel, time, and materials, including technology to ensure that all students have access to adequate learning experience and appropriate resources
- provision for professional growth of teachers, administrators, and curriculum personnel at school, school board, district, and department levels, in support of this Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language curriculum
- ways to inform parents about Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language education
- ways to encourage the use of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language in the community
- provision of mechanisms for addressing challenges in terms of controversial issues and texts
- ways to ensure that the program at all levels is anti-discriminatory and reflective of a commitment to redress educational inequities based on class, race, gender, ability, or geography

The Parent’s Role

Parents and other caregivers are important partners in education and have valuable contributions to make to Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language programs. As well as attending to the basic health and safety needs of their children, parents can:

- be active learners by demonstrating that they themselves read, view, and write for various purposes
- encourage their children to take risks as language learners
- assist their children in pursuing their own areas of interest through reading, viewing, writing, investigating, and participating in community activities
- engage their children in conversations using Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language to explore issues and the world around them
- share in their children’s successes
- communicate regularly with classroom teachers/school on their children’s progress
• where possible, act as Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language role models for their children
• share areas of expertise, information, and materials with their children’s teachers/school
• volunteer to assist with various activities around Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language education in their children’s classroom and/or school
• show support for school policies and goals
• participate in decision making by taking an active role in parent/teacher organizations and/or school advisory councils

The Principal’s Role

Principals and other school administrators have the responsibility to support learning and teaching in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao by

• working to ensure that teachers of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language have appropriate support and ongoing opportunities for professional growth
• working with Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language teachers to ensure that the variety of resources and experiences available meets the needs of all learners
• working with teachers to ensure that learning experiences, instructional techniques, assessment strategies, the learning environment, and the use of resources are consistent with those described in this document
• demonstrating that they themselves read, view, and write for various purposes
• ensuring equitable access to school facilities, technology, and other learning opportunities for all
• working collaboratively with teachers to plan, facilitate, and support Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language experiences and related events
• actively pursuing the use of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language
• creating a bilingual school environment in which Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language is prominently displayed visually and is heard in announcements and greetings
The Student’s Role

For students to share responsibility for and have ownership of their learning, they must have choice as well as direction in that learning. Students, as they grow as learners, need to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and should organize their learning tasks by

- making decisions about how they organize their time for language experiences
- selecting from a range of information resources to support their learning (human, material, and electronic)
- making choices about which texts to read and view and choosing modes of response to those texts
- generating and selecting their own writing topics and making decisions about content, style, and form
- exploring different arts and media to seek forms of language and representation that fit their individual learning styles
- planning individual and group learning projects
- exploring areas of individual interest in independent research
- addressing issues and grappling with problems that are important to them
- selecting the medium or activity through which to demonstrate their learning
- reflecting on and evaluating their learning
- making a commitment to speak and use Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language at every opportunity
- identifying and expressing problems, issues, and questions that arise from the learning process

The Mi’kmaw/Miigmao Language Teacher’s Role

Teachers have major responsibilities as decision makers, learners, facilitators, and resources within the classroom community. Teachers are responsible for

- structuring and organizing learning tasks
- selecting teaching strategies from a wide repertoire
- providing appropriate explicit instruction
- providing knowledgeable guidance and support
- ensuring student access to a range of learning resources
- ensuring that students have a wide range of learning opportunities through which language processes are integrated and developed
- monitoring, assessing, evaluating, and reporting student learning
- providing appropriate modelling by using and demonstrating the importance of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language in their own lives
• designing learning experiences that reflect students’ motivations, interests, abilities, and learning styles
• encouraging the use of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao at every opportunity in the school
• reflecting upon their own learning needs and seeking opportunities for professional growth
• creating a climate of respect for learning of language in which risk taking can take place

As members of the classroom learning community, Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language teachers need to model reading, writing and learning to their students, sharing their thinking as the experiences proceed. Modelling includes demonstrating strategies and skills, language and social conventions, and learning tasks—showing students how to do something and talking about it. Modelling also involves demonstrating what it means to be a risk taker, reader, writer, and lifelong learner and consistently displaying the attitudes and values of reflective, articulate literate individuals. Such implicit and explicit demonstrations are essential components of student learning. Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language teachers should

• demonstrate that they read for pleasure and for other purposes
• share their thinking and strategies at various stages in the process of their own writing, reading, or viewing
• share drafts of their writing with their students and seek their responses as readers/listeners
• model lifelong learning and demonstrate the role of risk taking in learning

Support from Other Staff within the School

Staff members who are not Mi’kmaw/Miigmao speakers can nonetheless play important roles in promoting Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language. Staff can

• communicate with students through actions and words that learning Mi’kmaw/Miigmao is an important and worthy activity
• highlight the importance and benefits of being bilingual or even multilingual in today’s world
• reinforce work done by the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language students in other classrooms and throughout the school
• ask Mi’kmaw/Miigmao speaking students to teach them simple phrases
• explore with students issues of language loss in First Nations communities
• make every effort to use Mi’kmaw/Miigmao greetings with students in school and in the community
• integrate topics taught in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language classes with other subject areas
• work with Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language teachers to plan ways to incorporate elements of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language in other content areas

Assessing and Evaluating Student Learning

Assessment is the systematic process of gathering information on student learning.

Evaluation is the process of analysing, reflecting upon, and summarizing assessment information and making judgments or decisions based upon the information gathered.

Assessment and evaluation are essential components of teaching and learning. Without effective assessment and evaluation, it is impossible to know whether students have learned, whether teaching has been effective, or how best to address student learning needs. The quality of the assessment and evaluation in the educational process has a profound and well-established link to student performance. Research consistently shows that regular monitoring and feedback are essential to improving student learning. What is assessed and evaluated, how it is assessed and evaluated, and how results are communicated send clear messages to students and others about what is really valued—what is worth learning, how it should be learned, what elements of quality are considered most important, and how well students are expected to perform.

Teacher-developed assessments and evaluations have a wide variety of uses, such as

• providing feedback to improve student learning
• determining if curriculum outcomes have been achieved
• certifying that students have achieved certain levels of performance
• setting goals for future student learning
• communicating with parents about their children’s learning
• providing information to teachers on the effectiveness of their teaching, the program, and the learning environment
• meeting the needs of guidance and administration personnel
Assessment

To determine how well students are learning, assessment strategies have to be designed to systematically gather information on the achievement of the curriculum outcomes. In planning assessments, teachers should use a broad range of strategies in an appropriate balance to give students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Many types of assessment strategies can be used to gather such information, including

- formal and informal observations
- demonstrations
- exhibitions
- investigations
- interviews
- work samples
- anecdotal records
- conferences
- teacher-made and other tests
- portfolios
- learning journals
- questioning
- performance assessment
- peer- and self-assessment

Evaluation

Evaluation involves teachers and others in analysing and reflecting upon information about student learning gathered in a variety of ways. This process requires

- developing clear criteria and guidelines for assigning marks or grades to student work
- synthesizing information from multiple sources
- using a high level of professional judgment in making decisions based upon that information

Reporting

Reporting on student learning in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language class should focus on the extent to which students have achieved the curriculum outcomes. Reporting involves communicating the summary and interpretation of information about student learning to various audiences who require it. Teachers have a special responsibility to explain accurately what progress students have made in their learning and to respond to parent and student inquiries about learning.
Narrative reports on progress and achievement can provide information on student learning that letter or number grades alone cannot. Such reports might, for example, suggest ways in which students can improve their learning and identify ways in which teachers and parents can best provide support.

Effective communication with parents regarding their children’s progress is essential in fostering successful home-school partnerships. The report card is one means of reporting individual student progress. Other means include the use of conferences, notes, and phone calls.

**Guiding Principles**

In order to provide accurate, useful information about the achievement and instructional needs of students, certain guiding principles for the development, administration, and use of assessments must be followed. *Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada* (1993) articulates five basic assessment principles.

- Assessment strategies should be appropriate for and compatible with the purpose and context of the assessment.
- Students should be provided with sufficient opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviours being assessed.
- Procedures for judging or scoring student performance should be appropriate for the assessment strategy used and be consistently applied and monitored.
- Procedures for summarizing and interpreting assessment results should yield accurate and informative representations of a student’s performance in relation to the curriculum outcomes for the reporting period.
- Assessment reports should be clear, accurate, and of practical value to the audience for whom they are intended.

These principles highlight the need for assessment that ensures that

- the best interests of the student are paramount
- assessment informs teaching and promotes learning
- assessment is an integral and ongoing part of the learning process and is clearly related to the curriculum outcomes
- assessment is fair and equitable to all students and involves multiple sources of information

While assessments may be used for different purposes and audiences, all assessments must give each student optimal opportunity to demonstrate what she/he knows and can do.
Assessing Student Learning in the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao Language Classroom

Performance-based assessment has an important place in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language classrooms. The ability of the student to use the language for real communicative purposes should be the basis of the classroom assessment. In addition to the kinds of assessment tools listed above, the following strategies may be particularly effective in the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language classroom:

- questions and answers related to guest speakers
- project-based learning
- facilitation and participation in group activities
- portfolio of written work
- checklists
- graphic organizers to represent concepts developed in class
- plays and role plays
- oral tests to check comprehension
- self and group assessment
- teacher observations

Using a Variety of Assessment Strategies

Assessment should reflect the full range of student learning and involve the use of a variety of information gathering strategies that allow teachers to address students’ diverse backgrounds, learning styles, and needs and allow students a variety of opportunities to demonstrate their learning.

The variety of assessment strategies should:

- enable teachers to assess and describe student achievement across the Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language curriculum
- provide information about how students learn as well as what they learn
- take into consideration students’ abilities both to learn and to apply their learning
- enable teachers to observe overall performance
- provide multiple indicators of student performance
- reflect curriculum, balance, and emphasis
- reflect that experimentation, risk taking, and creativity are valued
- enable students to discover their own interests, strengths, and challenges
- engage students in assessing, reflecting upon, and improving their own learning
- encourage students to take responsibility for their own growth
- engage students in assessing their own and others’ skills in co-operative and collaborative projects
- allow for description of students’ progress in terms of increased control, depth of understanding, and ability to work independently
Specific Strategies

Anecdotal Records

Observations of students can serve as a record of how and what they are learning. Comments, questions, and observations might be noted in a log or notebook, on index cards, or post-it notes while students are engaged in authentic learning experiences, for example,

- during reading or writing workshops
- as students work in a group on a task that requires collaboration
- when they participate in an oral reading activity such as readers’ theatre
- during interviews and conferences

It is important that teachers take the time necessary and use effective techniques for recording and analysing anecdotal notes. Effective techniques for analysing anecdotal records include making inferences from the notes, looking for developmental trends or patterns, and identifying both strengths and weaknesses in learning and teaching. Anecdotal records should lead to interpretation and explanations of patterns of learning that emerge over time. Gathering, recording, and reflecting on anecdotal comments based on systematic observations of students’ learning and language processes yield rich information for making judgments or decisions.

Checklists

Developing checklists to use in conjunction with other assessment strategies (such as anecdotal comments) gives teachers a useful strategy for

- clarifying precisely what behaviours are indicative of successful learning in a given context
- focusing observations
- recording whether or not a particular characteristic is present
- providing consistency from one observation to the next
- documenting changes over time

Checklists are particularly helpful when they are designed to meet the specific needs of individual students. Student participation in developing checklists helps them to learn what is valued in a particular learning context and to take ownership of their own learning. Such checklists can be developed to provide, for example,

- a list of expectations for Mi’kmaw/Miigmao development
- an overview of reading and viewing interests
- an overview of the processes and strategies students use at various stages in developing a piece of writing or a media product
- a list of specific revising strategies
- a list of specific editing strategies and skills
- information on levels of attainment
- a summary of writing folder information
- a summary of demonstrated skills in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language
- self- and peer-assessment tools

Checklists are also helpful for program evaluation and planning. By providing visual records of students’ learning experiences and achievements, checklists can help teachers to identify

- strengths and deficiencies in the instructional program
- areas to stress in coming weeks
- topics for discussion with other teachers or further professional exploration

**Conferences and Interviews**

Conferences and interviews with students are valuable sources of information on students’ language processes, attitudes, and work habits. Conferences and interviews also provide students with immediate and personal feedback and give teachers an opportunity to recommend new directions, shifts of emphasis, and particular activities, and materials and also to give reasons for those recommendations.

Conferences are an effective strategy for assessing, describing, and commenting on

- reading processes and strategies
- journals and logs
- traits and trends in the student’s writing and other products
- the roles the student takes in groups
- progress to date
- current work
- the student’s goals for future
- work and study habits
- the student’s willingness to take risks in language learning and use

Teachers may find it helpful to use checklists, questions, guides, and/or logs to focus and guide conferences, interviews, and recordkeeping.
**Observation**

Observing students as language learners and users in the classroom and other learning environments provides multiple opportunities for informal assessment. Planning should allow for record keeping on observations of each student in various learning situations throughout the year. Observation is a powerful source of information.

- It is grounded in authentic, contextualized experiences.
- It captures descriptive, longitudinal data to use for comparison over time.
- It can assess developmental characteristics.

Systematic, ongoing observation provides information about students’

- thinking processes
- oral work
- work habits
- persistence
- feelings about themselves as language learners and users
- attitudes toward Mi’kmaw/Miigmaw language and culture
- specific areas of strength and weakness
- preferred learning styles
- social development (e.g., ability to work collaboratively and co-operatively)
- development and understanding of language processes

A variety of record-keeping systems may be used for organizing observations, including anecdotal records and checklists. Careful record keeping is important both for responding to the needs and development of individual students and for communicating with parents. Teachers may find it helpful to supplement observations with audio- and videotapes and to use those tapes for sharing information about a student’s learning with parents.

**Performance Assessment**

Performance assessment allows teachers to observe directly students’ application of what they know and are able to do. Performance assessment in Mi’kmaw/Miigmaw language classes focuses on the process as well as the product. It involves

- presenting students with a task
- observing what students do and say, watching for selected/partial characteristics, making anecdotal records
- interviewing students during or after the task
- developing and applying criteria to assess student performance (using scoring tools such as rubrics, rating scales, task-specific guides, checklists)
• developing criteria for product assessment to provide students with a clear focus on elements of quality to guide their work
• examining what they produce and applying criteria to assess what they actually know and can do
• identifying future instructional and learning needs

A rubric identifies and describes the criteria used to assess student performance.

Observations of a student’s classroom performance and completion of tasks, together with student-teacher reflection on the learning involved, can provide specific information for assessment of progress, which can be used by teachers to design instruction and by students to improve, reinforce, and extend their learning.

Performance assessment gives information about a student’s ability to
• use concepts, skills, and language processes
• raise questions
• reason logically
• think flexibly and creatively, changing strategies when a particular approach does not work
• actively accomplish complex and significant tasks
• use prior knowledge, recent learning, and relevant skills, strategies, and processes
• work with partners or small groups
• persist, concentrate, and work independently

**Questioning**

Effective questioning allows teachers to identify what the student knows and what the student needs to learn. Effective high-level, open-ended questions challenge students to use cognitively complex skills—to think.

The sorts of questions teachers ask send powerful messages about what they really value. Questions and tasks that demand higher-level thinking demonstrate to students that teachers value this type of thinking. Questions and tasks that require students to apply their skill and knowledge to new situations develop higher-order thinking.
Open-ended questions require students to respond to questions for which a variety of successful responses are possible. Open-ended questions give information about a student’s ability to

- organize and interpret information
- make generalizations
- clarify and express their own thinking
- understand concepts
- demonstrate originality/creativity

Questionnaires, Inventories, and Surveys

Well-designed questionnaires, inventories, and surveys reveal students’ feelings and attitudes toward different aspects of Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language. Information gathered through well-designed surveys can, for example, help teachers to

- tap into students’ habits, interests, and attitudes
- build on students’ strengths and expand their interests
- elicit students’ perceptions about their learning

Rating Scales and Analytic Scales

Rating scales indicate a measure of accomplishment and enable teachers and students to assess a wide range of learning experiences by noting the frequency or quality of a particular behaviour. Once the criteria for evaluation have been determined, qualitative judgments can be made about identified aspects of the learning. Rating scales can be developed, for example, to assess

- specific products, such as a piece of writing, a role-playing activity, or a media project
- specific learning outcomes
- participation in and contribution to small-group learning
- writing skills
- reading strategies
- responses to literature and visual texts

It is helpful for students to contribute to the development of rating scales, particularly when the scales are used for self-assessment or peer feedback.

Analytic scales can be used to assess a variety of learning outcomes and products. Analytic scales may be used by teachers to establish and communicate the criteria used for assigning interim or final numerical or letter grades and by students to monitor their own learning.
Developing analytic scales involves

- determining the criteria by which the learning will be assessed
- weighting each criterion to reflect its importance (in terms of what is valued or what has been emphasized in the learning or performance task)
- identifying various levels of achievement or performance for each criterion

It is important that students understand what criteria and weighting will be used to evaluate their work, and it is desirable that they collaborate with the teacher in the process of setting and weighting these criteria.

**Self Assessment**

In the process of learning, students need various forms of feedback about their work, from their teacher and their peers. However, students learn best when they have frequent opportunities to assess their own learning and performance.

Students’ self-assessment promotes the development of

- metacognitive ability (the ability to reflect critically on one’s own reasoning)
- ownership of learning
- independence of thought

Enhancing students’ abilities to assess their own progress is an important goal of assessment in Mi’kmaw Miigmao language classes. Students need frequent opportunities to reflect on what they know and can do and what they need to learn next. When students are engaged in applying criteria for self-assessment (and for peer-assessment), they begin to internalize elements of quality and performance standards that can lead to significant improvements in the quality of their work and learning.

Self-assessment strategies include the use of

- questionnaires, e.g., following a collaborative activity or project to determine how well the group functioned as a team and how well the individual student participated and contributed to the effectiveness of the process/product
- learning logs/journals
- periodic reflective writing or group discussion to identify ways in which students have demonstrated progress toward achievement of learning outcomes
• peer feedback: giving constructive comments on one another’s work helps students develop their sense of standards for their own performance
• student-teacher interviews and conferences
• collaborative planning and goal setting involving students in identifying their own strengths and weaknesses, forming options for future learning experiences, and making decisions about what they will do to meet their learning goals

Teachers can use student self-assessments to determine
• whether there is change and growth in the students’ attitudes, understanding, and achievement
• whether students’ beliefs about their performance correspond to actual performance
• whether the students and the teacher have similar views of expectations and criteria for assessment

Student Folders and Portfolios

Collections and selections of student work represent rich sources of authentic information on
• what strategies the student uses
• the level of skill development
• the best work the student can produce
• the student’s growth as a language learner and user

The process of keeping student folders and selecting from them to assemble portfolios for various purposes and audiences is a valuable education activity.

The student folder is a collection of student work that might include pieces of writing (both early drafts and final versions), drawings, journal and log samples, media products, and other productions or records that establish what the student has been doing. Pieces of writing, for example, should address a range of purposes and audiences and include a variety of formats, such as
• learning logs (e.g., what I did, what I learned, what questions I still have)
• responses to reading and viewing experiences
• a variety of ways to organize and record information (e.g., notes, charts, outlines, semantic maps, summaries)
• explanations of the steps/processes used in performing a language task
• responses to open-ended questions
• pieces crafted in writer’s workshop
The portfolio is a selection of student work. Schools and teachers may do many different things with portfolios, depending on their purpose and the co-ordination of portfolios with other activities for learning, assessment, and evaluation. Portfolios may, for example, be very selective and contain only one kind of work or only certain samples of work. Portfolios may contain items the student and perhaps also the teacher consider representative of the best the student can produce. The process of selection of a student’s best efforts can in itself be a very valuable experience. This process should involve students in reflecting on their progress and achievement in reference to specific learning goals.

In responding to and assessing student writing and media products, teachers should consider appropriate comments and assessment criteria in terms of the nature and requirements of the task, its purpose, and its intended audience.

Aspects of writing to assess/respond to might include

- clarity (of meaning)
- content (ideas, information)
- organization
- use of appropriate form and style (to suit a particular audience or a specific purpose)
- voice
- use of language structures for clear and correct writing (sentence and paragraph construction, spelling, and punctuation)
- presentation

**Tests**

Testing is only one means of collecting assessment data—a test measures achievement at a specific point in time. Tests play a minor role in the total assessment program and should be used in appropriate balance with other assessment practices to ensure that students have frequent and varied opportunities to demonstrate their level of performance in relation to curriculum outcomes.

Tests should be designed to encourage thinking and problem solving rather than memorization and recall of factual information. Test items signal what the teacher considers to be important in the course content. Questions on tests should be framed so that they are relevant, clear and specific. As with other assessment procedures, teachers should refer to curriculum outcomes in developing test items. For example, selected-response formats (multiple choice, true–false, matching)
have limitations in measuring learning outcomes in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language. Instead of assessing the application of skills, strategies and processes in meaningful situations, select-response items tend to assess knowledge of factual information and the application of basic skills in isolated decontextualized ways.
Resources

Introduction

This curriculum envisages a network of material and human resources extending through the school, into the community, and beyond to provincial, national, and global resources through information and communication technologies. The range of resources must

- reflect the diversity of learners’ interests, needs, abilities and experiences
- support the achievement of the curriculum outcomes
- be available to all learners

This curriculum emphasizes the importance of human resources because of the social nature of language learning and because of the critical need for students to interact with Mi’kmaw/Miigmao speakers.

The Development of Resources

It is imperative that teachers and students in Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language programs have access to a variety of material and human resources. A significant commitment of time, money, and effort is necessary to meet the need for these resources. Strong support from Department of Education and school boards is essential. Mi’kmaw/Miigmao language teachers will require professional development on an ongoing basis.

Exciting opportunities to play a role in the development of curriculum exist for students, teachers, and community members. If appropriate technologies such as tape and video recorders, digital cameras, and desk-top publishing facilities are available, the occasion of an Elder’s visit to the school or a special event in the community can be captured and developed into curriculum materials for other students. Working with other teachers in the school around interdisciplinary themes can be a way of collaboratively developing resource material.

As more resources are identified and developed, it will be important that they are evaluated for the purpose of adding them to the Authorized Learning Resources.