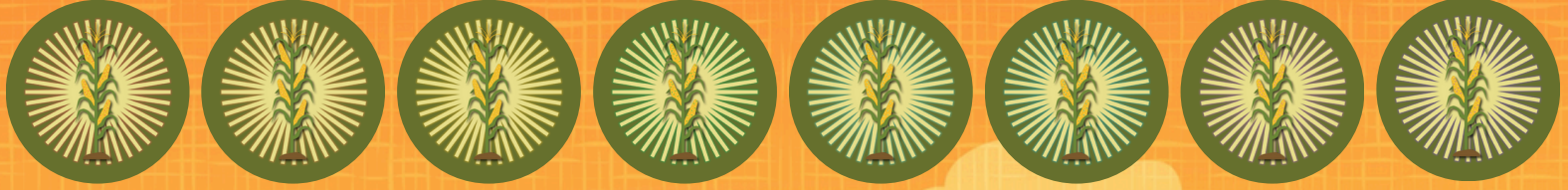
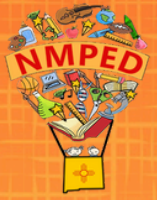


# New Mexico Indigenous Instructional Scope Guidance Tool



## Themes

Indigenous student identity & representation

Connecting tribal communities and schools:  
culture, language, & food

Land-based learning and intergenerational  
learning

Historic trauma & trauma-informed care

Whole indigenous child

Historical, political, & policy contexts

Current day events

Bridging the gap: understanding cultural norms,  
protocols, customs, & prohibitions

Teacher dispositions

School district and charter school internal  
resources & events

## Tenets

Gaps in  
Understanding

Language &  
Stories

Culture &  
Cultural  
Expression

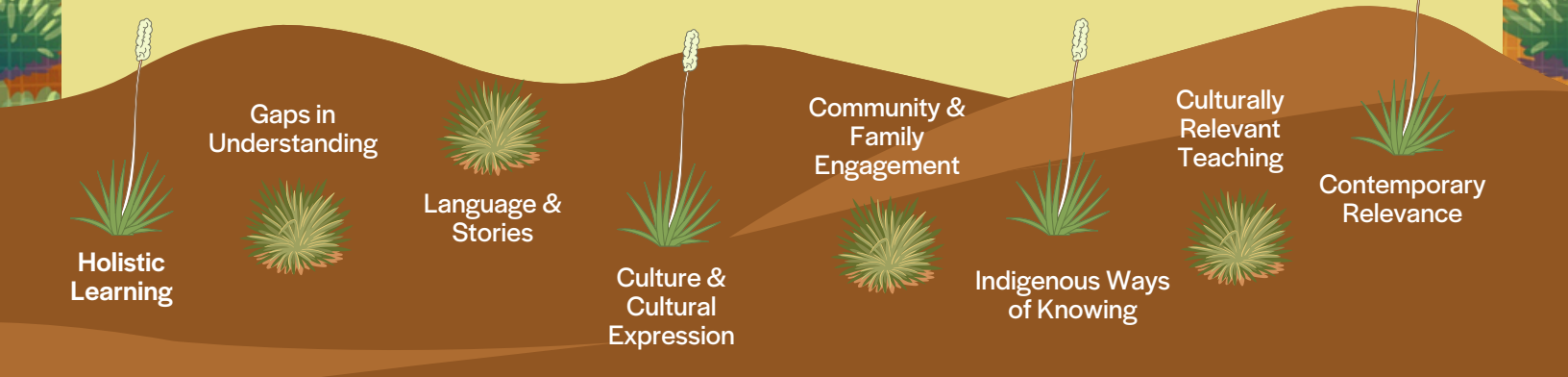
Community &  
Family  
Engagement

Indigenous Ways  
of Knowing

Culturally  
Relevant  
Teaching

Contemporary  
Relevance

Holistic  
Learning



# How to use the Indigenous Scope

The 1.0 or the steering committee of Tribal Representatives created a framework for the Indigenous Instructional Scope which created a set of tenets, elements, and considerations that when combined create a set of themes and strategies that can be used to support educators in providing a culturally and linguistically responsive inspiration for Indigenous students. The 2.0 or educator working group committee suggests guidance on how to weave the tenets into daily instruction.

The 8 tenets are a set of overarching areas to help educators direct their focus as they consider the complex identities and lived realities of their Indigenous students. Each of the 8 tenets is composed of several elements which are actions that should be taken by educators to ensure cultural responsiveness in their schools and classrooms. These actions are driven by considerations which are specific ideas that need to be thought about when planning for instruction.

Using this framework of tenets, elements, and considerations, the committee found themes to focus on in regards to instruction and support for Indigenous students. These themes were used to create specific strategies and provide resources for educators to use. The instructional alignment and practices provide tangible ways to embed the themes into daily instruction within any curricula. The goal of the New Mexico Indigenous Instructional Scope is to provide not only a resource for educators as they seek to improve their practices, but also to provide a bank of resources that can be used in the classroom to positively impact students. It is important to remember that this resource is meant to be a living document that is responsive to the specific needs of the communities in which it is used. That means that it should be used as a guide in partnership with the Indigenous communities that are in our classrooms and in our communities.

## INDIGENOUS INSTRUCTIONAL SCOPE TENETS, STRATEGIES, & RESOURCES

CLICK ON EACH TENET BELOW TO EXPLORE THE DEFINITIONS, ELEMENTS, CONSIDERATIONS, AND RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION



Tenet 1: Holistic Learning



Tenet 2: Gaps In Understanding



Tenet 3: Language And Stories



Tenet 4: Culture And Cultural Expression



Tenet 5: Community And Family Engagement



Tenet 6: Indigenous Ways Of Knowing



Tenet 7: Culturally Relevant Teaching



Tenet 8: Contemporary Relevance

**Tenets** are overarching topics to help educators direct their focus as they consider the complex identities and lived realities of their indigenous students.

Click on any tenet for additional information.



[Website](#)



## TEACHER DEFINITION

Through holistic learning, teachers create a learning environment where students' identities, well-being, and sense of belonging are prioritized. In such a classroom, learning is experiential and centered on the belief that every student has the ability to learn and contribute to their community. Teachers support students in actively sharing, participating in, and reflecting on their cultural practices, language, and traditions as part of their educational journey.

## STUDENT DEFINITION

When I engage in holistic learning, my teacher and peers consider who I am, how I feel, and my role in the community, along with how my culture, language, and traditions connect to my learning to provide opportunities for all of us to succeed together.

**Definitions** are teacher and student friendly descriptions of the tenet created by the 2.0 educator working group.

## ELEMENTS

ACTIONS THAT SHOULD BE TAKEN BY EDUCATORS TO ENSURE CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS IN THEIR SCHOOLS AND CLASSROOMS

- Element 1: Promote the well-being, participation, and engagement of the whole student
- Element 2: Understand identity of Indigenous student: physical, social, mental, spiritual
- Element 3: Expect that all students can succeed in education
- Element 4: Understand the importance of experiential learning and how it can build community
- Element 5: Create a learning space in a holistic, reflective, and relational form of teaching that relates back to community and Indigenous teachings
- Element 6: Create an inclusive learning environment

**Elements** are actions that should be taken by educators to ensure cultural responsiveness in their schools and classrooms.

**Considerations** are specific ideas that need to be thought about when planning for instruction and are meant to drive action.

## CONSIDERATIONS

SPECIFIC IDEAS THAT NEED TO BE THOUGHT ABOUT WHEN PLANNING FOR INSTRUCTION AND ARE MEANT TO DRIVE ACTION

- Consideration 1: Focus on all the senses when student is learning
  - How are all of the senses used by students in while they are learning?
- Consideration 2: Teachers and students are learning with and from one other and this leads to equal presentation and shifts in accountability
  - How do teachers and students learn from one another and share equal time and accountability in a classroom?
- Consideration 3: Creating positive connections with culture and community
  - How do connections with culture and community created within and by the classroom?
  - What way(s) to future planning for preparation for sustainable Indigenous culture?
  - How do we prepare for sustaining Indigenous culture?

**Strategies** are teacher facing guidance to support implementation of the tenets into daily instruction.

## STRATEGIES & RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

CURATED BY THE INDIGENOUS SCOPE TRIBAL REPRESENTATIVES & NEW MEXICO EDUCATORS

### STRATEGIES

- Encourage Indigenous students to incorporate culture into their projects

### CULTURAL RESOURCES

- [IndigNMIdentity](#)
- [The Story of DEAP](#)

### INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

- [WHO AM I graphic.pdf](#)
- [Sharing Circles\\*](#)

**Resources** are the tools curated by the 2.0 educator working group that will support teachers in the implementation of the Indigenous Instructional Scope in their classroom.

Do you have other resources to share?  
Are you looking for something specific?

Reach out to [sathya.costello@ped.nm.gov](mailto:sathya.costello@ped.nm.gov)

# Glossary

Border town	Not on the edge — it's in the middle: of two cultures, two places, two languages, two world views. In this way, a border town does not teeter at the far side of a teeter-totter — rather, it is the center, the fulcrum, allowing both sides to move up and down appropriately, give and take, first you, then me. That a map shows a border town to be on the edge is to misread the map.
Colonialism	Occurs when a new group of people migrates into a territory and begins to control Indigenous groups by taking over the territory . The settlers impose their own cultural values, religions, and laws, seizing land and controlling access to resources and trade.
Community and Family Engagement	A shared effort between families, schools, and community leaders to support the education, health, safety, and well-being of children and youth.
Contemporary Relevance	Contemporary relevance refers to the significance or applicability of an idea, topic, event, or phenomenon in the context of present-day society, culture, or technology. It often addresses how historical or theoretical concepts remain meaningful and impactful in solving current problems or shaping modern discourse. This term is frequently used in discussions about adapting classical theories, practices, or innovations to meet the demands and challenges of today.
Cultural Appropriation	The adoption of elements of one culture by members of another culture without permission and often without understanding the significance of those elements.
Cultural Resilience	The ability of a culture to adapt and thrive in the face of challenges, including colonization and cultural assimilation.
Culturally Responsive	An educational approach that recognizes and incorporates students' cultural backgrounds, experiences, and identities into the learning process. This method aims to create an inclusive environment that validates and respects diverse cultures, fostering engagement and enhancing learning outcomes by making education relevant to all students. Culturally responsive teaching practices include adapting curricula, using culturally relevant materials, and building strong relationships with students and their families and is focused on relationships, cognitive scaffolding, and critical social awareness.
Culture	Culture refers to the social behavior, norms, beliefs, values, and practices that characterize a particular group or society. It encompasses language, art, dance, ceremonies, religion, cuisine, social habits, traditions and customs, influencing how individuals within a community interact and understand their world.
Decolonization	The process of undoing colonial influences and structures in order to restore autonomy, self-determination, and cultural sovereignty to Indigenous peoples and nations. This involves not only the political and economic independence from colonial powers but also the reclamation and revitalization of Indigenous cultures, languages, and identities that have been suppressed or marginalized. Decolonization seeks to challenge and dismantle systemic inequalities and promote social justice.



Elder	An integral role grounded in spiritual and cultural knowledge of an individual in Indigenous communities providing knowledge, wisdom, oral histories and stories, and harmony amongst families, kinship, and communities.
Erasure	Erasure of Native Americans refers to the act of ignoring, denying, or minimizing their cultures, histories, and identities. This can happen through the distortion of history, the suppression of Indigenous languages and traditions, or the refusal to recognize Native peoples' rights and sovereignty. It leads to the invisibility of Native American experiences and contributes to harmful stereotypes.
Experiential Learning	An educational approach that emphasizes learning through direct experience, reflection, and application. This method involves engaging learners in hands-on activities and real-world situations, allowing them to actively participate in the learning process. Experiential learning promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and the development of practical skills, as students reflect on their experiences to gain deeper insights and knowledge.
Feast Day	A time for tribal members to come together, and to renew their culture, language and native religion. These are special days dedicated to cultural, spiritual, and communal celebrations within Native American communities. These days often involve ceremonies, rituals, and shared meals that are meant to honor deities, ancestors, and important events in the tribe's history or seasonal cycles. Feast days can vary widely between tribes, each with its own unique traditions and customs, but they typically serve as times for socializing, spiritual reflection, and reaffirming cultural identity.
Generational Trauma	Generational trauma is trauma that extends from one generation to the next through learned behaviors, coping mechanisms, or possibly genetics. It begins when a group experiences a traumatic event that causes economic, cultural, and familial distress. In response, people belonging to that group develop physical or psychological symptoms.
Governing Bodies	Governing bodies are organizations or institutions that oversee and manage specific sectors, including those related to Indigenous rights, culture, and arts. These bodies can be local, national, or international and may include Indigenous councils, cultural organizations, and government agencies that work to protect and promote Indigenous heritage and rights.
Holistic	An approach or perspective that considers the whole rather than individual pieces, recognizing and connecting by paying attention to children's physical, personal, social and emotion and spiritual wellbeing. A holistic perspective encourages understanding of intersectionality. In a classroom, teachers need to recognize that holistic and intersectionality are closely related.
Holistic Learning	An educational approach that emphasizes the interconnectedness of knowledge, experiences, and personal growth. It involves engaging the whole person—cognitive, emotional, social, and physical—encouraging learners to make connections between different subject areas and real-life applications
Identity	An individual's sense of self defined by a set of physical, psychological, and interpersonal characteristics as well as a range of affiliations and social roles both individually and a citizen of a variety of communities.
Indian Country	A term used to describe lands held by the federal government in trust for Indian Tribes that exist outside of formal reservations and are informal reservations.

Indigenous	Refers to the original inhabitants of a particular region or environment, often characterized by a unique cultural heritage, languages, social structures, and spiritual beliefs that have developed over centuries in harmony with their surroundings. Indigenous peoples typically have a deep connection to their land and traditions, which play a significant role in their identity and way of life.
Indigenous Arts & Crafts	Products created as a result of, or in conjunction with, traditional knowledge transfer and cultural teachings, including a variety of traditional activities including handiwork resulting from sewing, beading, weaving using various materials, artwork such as paintings, or performing arts such as drumming, dancing, songs, storytelling and theatre. Craft may not be a term originally used by Indigenous people themselves but has been increasingly accepted as a way to describe Indigenous traditional crafts, artwork and performing art.
Indigenous Educational Terminology	This refers to concepts, practices, and approaches in education that are aligned with Indigenous worldviews, traditions, and ways of knowing in collaboration with local indigenous communities. The terms emphasize cultural relevance, self-determination, the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems, languages, and values into teaching and learning processes. This includes anything in the natural world such as sun, stars, animals, plants, moon, earth, water etc in that particular student's Indigenous language.
Indigenous Rights	The rights of Indigenous peoples to maintain and develop their identity, language, culture, and land.
Intergenerational Knowledge	Knowledge passed down from one generation to another, often encompassing traditions, stories, and practices within Indigenous communities.
Intersectionality	Various forms of discrimination centered around race, gender, class, disability, sexuality, and other forms of identity, do not work independently but interact to produce particularized forms of social oppression. As such, oppression is the result of intersecting forms of exclusionary practices. It is thus suggested that the study of identity-based discrimination needs to identify and take account of these intersectionalities. This includes the interconnected experiences of identity, oppression, and privilege that Indigenous people navigate, shaped by factors such as tribal affiliation, gender, language, socioeconomic status, historical trauma, and relationships to land.
Knowledge Keepers	Knowledge Keepers are individuals within Indigenous communities who are entrusted with the preservation, protection, and transmission of cultural knowledge, traditions, and practices. These individuals often have a deep understanding of their community's history, spirituality, language, ecological knowledge, and oral traditions. They are respected figures, serving as educators, historians, and spiritual guides, ensuring the survival and continuity of Indigenous cultural heritage.
Land Back Movement	This movement advocates for the return of lands to Indigenous peoples that were taken through colonization, dispossession, and forced treaties. The goals are to restore Indigenous sovereignty, reconnect communities with their ancestral lands, and promote ecological stewardship based on traditional practices. The movement aims to address historical injustices by returning land to Indigenous control and fostering cultural and environmental healing.



Land-based learning	An educational approach that emphasizes the connection between education and the land, focusing on the cultural, spiritual, and ecological relationships that individuals and communities have with their environment. This method incorporates traditional knowledge, practices, and values related to the land, fostering an understanding of the importance of sustainability, stewardship, and respect for nature. Land-based learning often involves hands-on activities such as gardening, foraging, and engaging in traditional ecological practices, allowing learners to gain practical skills while deepening their appreciation for the natural world. Land-based learning is rooted in the Indigenous worldview, which recognizes that knowledge is acquired through a relationship with the land and that learning is most effective when it is grounded in place and experience. This approach not only enhances students' understanding of their local environment but also promotes cultural identity and community ties.
Map of Census During Federal Tribal Recognition	A map of the census during federal tribal recognition refers to cartographic representations that visually display data related to Native American tribes during the periods when they were being federally recognized by the U.S. government. These maps often indicate: Tribal Locations: Geographical distribution of Native American tribes. Recognition Timeline: Areas where tribes achieved federal recognition during specific timeframes. Census Data: Population counts, demographics, and socio-economic information of tribes. Land Status: Changes in land ownership or reservations linked to federal recognition. Federal recognition is a legal designation by the U.S. government that acknowledges a tribe's sovereignty and establishes a government-to-government relationship. This recognition significantly impacts tribal rights, resources, and census representation.
Mexica	The people whom we typically refer to as Aztecs called themselves Mexica or Culhua-Mexica. They were also known as the Tenochca, a name derived from the ancestor Tenoch. In the 15th and early 16th centuries, the Aztecs ruled an extensive empire in what is today central and southern Mexico, and south into Guatemala.
Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women	The crisis of disproportionately high rates of violence, abductions, and murders experienced by Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in Canada, the United States, and other regions. This crisis is rooted in systemic racism, colonialism, and socio-economic inequalities, leaving these cases underreported, unsolved, and ignored by law enforcement and governmental institutions.
Nahuatl	From the fifteenth century to the twenty-first century, the Náhuatl language has held a preeminent position within the Mexican Republic. Even with the Spanish domination of the country from 1521 to 1822, the Aztec tongue continued to play an important role in communicating through nearly all parts of the country. Now, in 2018, it is likely that the Náhuatl language will continue to be the most spoken indigenous language in Mexico for the foreseeable future.
Oral Traditions	Speaking in a storytelling manner to convey a cultural norm, as a way of teaching a cultural way of thinking/being, or share a specific historical understanding about a specific event such as an origin story. It is a way to pass down cultural knowledge from generation to generation.
Outdoor Learning	Nature is the main teacher of Indigenous children. The teachers are animals, stars, plants, the directions, the soil, the wind, and all other natural aspects including the people of their Indigenous community. People learn through their senses, observation, patience, listening, interaction, & reciprocity with the natural world. You do not need to structure or guide the learning, nor do you need to provide toys/tools such as journals. The children will discover their individualized learning from UNČI MAKĀ (Lakota for : grandmother earth) as they use their senses.

Place-Based Learning	An approach to learning that connects learning to the local community, environment, and cultural context. This method encourages students to engage with their surroundings through hands-on experiences, promoting a deeper understanding of their place in the world. Place-based learning fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills by allowing students to explore real-world issues and develop a sense of stewardship for their local environment and community.
Relationality	Referring to Indigenous connections, worldview, existence, and relationships with land, community, family, and culture.
Solidarity	Solidarity is a social principle or practice that emphasizes unity and mutual support among individuals or groups, particularly in the pursuit of common goals or in times of adversity. It involves recognizing shared interests and standing together to promote social justice, equality, and collective well-being.
Sovereignty	The legal recognition in the United States of America law of the inherent sovereignty of American Indian Nations. It is a right for the existence of indigenous people.
Tradition	Tradition refers to the customs, beliefs, practices, and rituals passed down through generations. These can include ceremonies, storytelling, art, language, and ways of life that reflect the values and culture of Indigenous communities.
Traditional Ecological Knowledge	The understanding and insights gained from Indigenous practices regarding the relationship between people and their environment.
Trauma	The profound and lasting impact of experiences that involve exploitation, continual abuse, racism, poverty, sexual violence, eradication attempts, hate crimes, and other stressors that affect a person on multiple levels—mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. It is characterized by a pervasive fear of lack of safety, which keeps the brain in a heightened, chaotic state. This state prevents the nervous system from returning to a place of calm or safety, leaving the individual in a continuous fight-or-flight response. Trauma can be experienced both overtly and covertly, and it often spans across generations. This is known as intergenerational trauma, where the trauma experienced by one generation is passed down, consciously or unconsciously, to the next.
Tribal Self-Determination	A movement that seeks to restore tribal communities, cultural identity, and self-government to Native Americans. The inherent right of Indigenous tribes to govern themselves, make decisions about their internal affairs, and exercise authority over their land, resources, and cultural practices.
Two-Spirit	Indigenous people who identify as both male and female, fulfill traditional ceremonial and social roles, and are often viewed as unique and respected members of their culture and vital to the community's wellbeing.