

**First Peoples Principles of Learning: Learning Involves Recognizing the Consequences of
One's Actions**

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Growing up in Western culture and society, I often heard the phrase “every action has an equal and opposite reaction.” It instilled in me a sense of understanding that my actions have consequences, but there was no personal ownership over the actions or results involved. I still connect the phrase to guilt from doing something wrong or unwanted, more so than viewing it as a reminder to learn from my actions. On the other side of the same coin is the First Peoples Principle: “Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one’s actions.”. The language used elicits a feeling of personal responsibility expected from the individual as they learn and grow. I initially connected it to the same guilty feelings I associate with its Western counterpart; however, after further thought, I do not believe that is the intent of the principle.

This principle revolves around learning, a pursuit filled with highs and lows, and with our actions resulting in two possible outcomes during the process: positive or negative. The consequences this principle asks learners to recognize and take ownership of may be negative ones. I have spent a day of outdoor, land-based learning, freezing after forgetting a coat after explicitly being told to bring one for that day. I have also failed a test after knowing it was happening but choosing to make other plans instead of studying. I made choices and faced the consequences. On the other hand, I have also spent months connecting teachers from my school with executives from my ski club to bring cross-country skiing in as a gym unit. The reward (or consequence) was enormous as I got to spend school hours on the snow teaching my peers how to ski. A learner must understand that the results of their actions are not always negative; a student’s actions can lead them to incredible and life-changing opportunities. I hope the students I one day teach will experience the highs and lows. Everyone will make a few bad choices

leading to natural negative consequences, and I will do everything in my power to make students feel safe and supported during these times. After learning occurs from these actions, students will hopefully experience the enormous rewards you feel from intentional, thoughtful, positive actions in the classroom and other learning settings throughout life.

A key aspect of practicing this principle is recognition. I never want to highlight negative consequences my learners face due to their actions, as failure is so critical in the learning process, and I hope to create a safe space for it to occur. However, learning only happens when we identify and accept failures. In the same vein, I believe “success” in a classroom is only true success if the student can identify why their assignment (test, project, social interaction, etc.) led to a positive outcome. Reflection of consequences is vital for learning and will play a prominent role in my enforcement of this principle as a teacher.

It seems impossible to discuss one First Peoples Principle of Learning without incorporating the holistic nature of the document. While I have recognized my relationship to the principle of learning involving consequences of one’s actions, I will always strive to include the other eight principles in all my teaching. I felt the need to explicitly include the principle “Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational,” as I could not separate it from my interpretation of recognizing the consequences of one’s actions. I hope to practice all nine principles in the classroom and throughout my life as a means of promoting inclusivity, understanding, and life-long learning.