

Two-Eyed Seeing and Co-Learning

- **presentation by:** Elder Albert Marshall, LLD; Eskasoni community, Mi'kmaq Nation
- **for:** Halifax Regional School Board - Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Symposium: Improving Student Achievement Through Critical Consciousness, Collaborative Action and Community Engagement. Halifax, NS. 11-12 May 2017

Mi'kmaq Elder Dr. Albert Marshall will explain "Two-Eyed Seeing" which is the English phrase he coined many years ago for a guiding principle based in Traditional Mi'kmaq Knowledge. In the Mi'kmaq language this guiding principle is known as "Etuaptmuk" – it encourages the realization that beneficial outcomes are much more likely in any given situation if we are willing to bring two or more perspectives into play. And Canada today has many arenas where this realization is exceedingly relevant including, especially, those of education, health, and environment. Elder Albert will share his passion about bringing into these arenas the perspectives and knowledge of the Mi'kmaq people, of all Indigenous peoples, such that mutually beneficial, inter-cultural, collaborative relationships with mainstream society can be nurtured and grown and new understandings put to work. Thus, Elder Albert will describe Two-Eyed Seeing as: *"learn to see from your one eye with the best or the strengths in the Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing ... and learn to see from your other eye with the best or the strengths in the mainstream (Western or Eurocentric) knowledges and ways of knowing ... but most importantly, learn to see with both these eyes together, for the benefit of all"*. Albert will acknowledge that such work is not easy; he will, therefore, also explain why an on-going journey of co-learning is both required and essential. He will also explain why Indigenous Elders and other Traditional Knowledge Holders must be involved. In regards the latter, Albert will highlight the Eight Recommendations for "Honouring Traditional Knowledge" that Elders in Atlantic Canada put forward in 2011 and that were subsequently reviewed and supported as All Chiefs Resolution #2011-14 of the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs (APCFNC, <http://www.apcfn.ca/images/uploads/ResearchSummary-HonouringTraditionalKnowledgeResearchSummary.pdf>). Finally, Albert will encourage that the guiding principle of "Two-Eyed Seeing" can, if we wish, be inclusive of many different cultures ... becoming three, or four, or ten, or one hundred and fifty-eyed seeing.

As clear evidence for the national significance of Two-Eyed Seeing in Canada today, people might wish to explore how the Canadian Institutes of Health Research – Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health has positioned Two-Eyed Seeing as key within its 2014-2018 strategic plan (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49589.html>) and, secondly, how the expert panel that undertook "Canada's Fundamental Science Review 2017" highlighted Two-Eyed Seeing in the report it submitted to the Government of Canada in April (p. 99; <http://www.sciencereview.ca/eic/site/059.nsf/eng/home>).