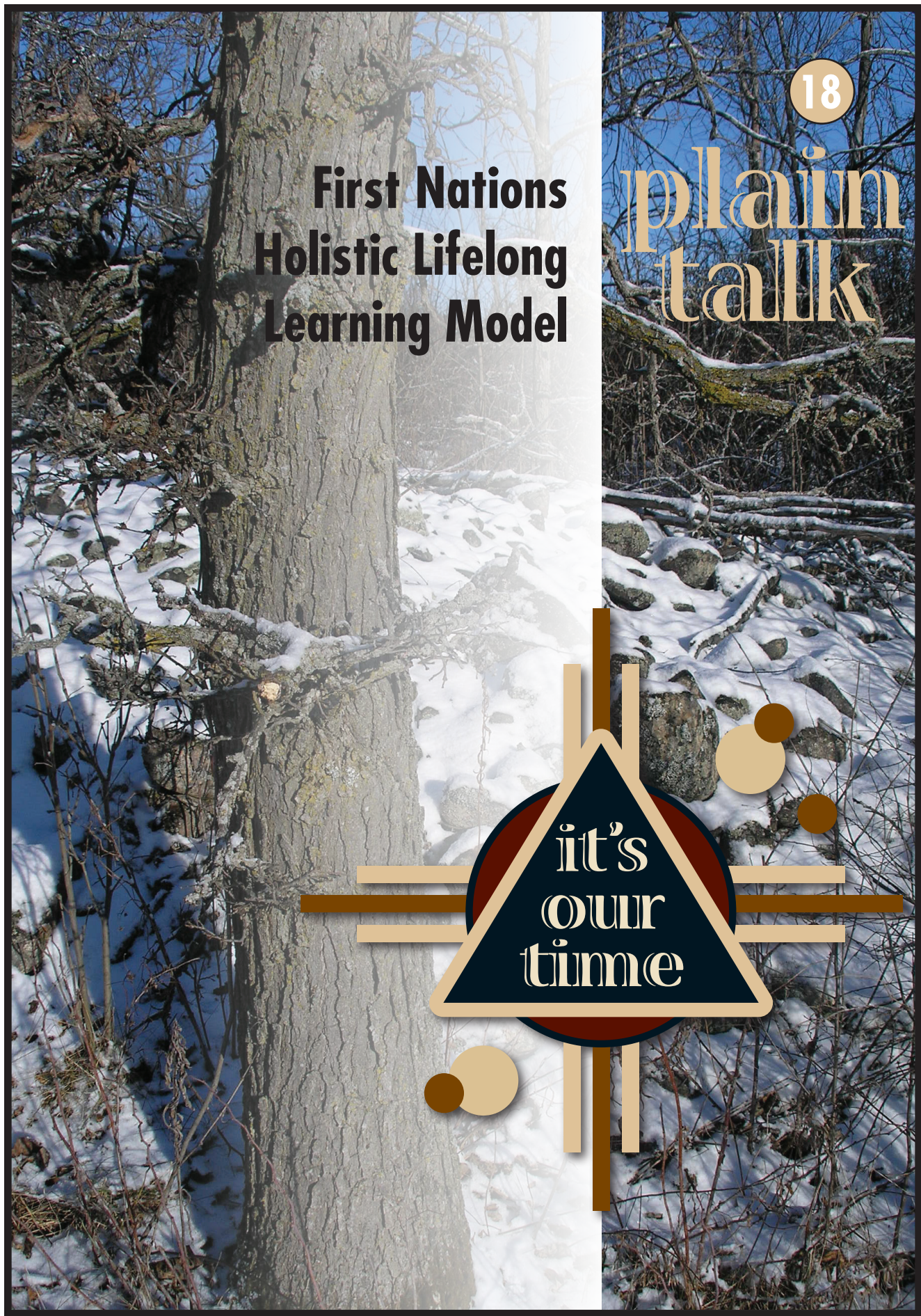


**First Nations
Holistic Lifelong
Learning Model**

plain
talk

it's
our
time

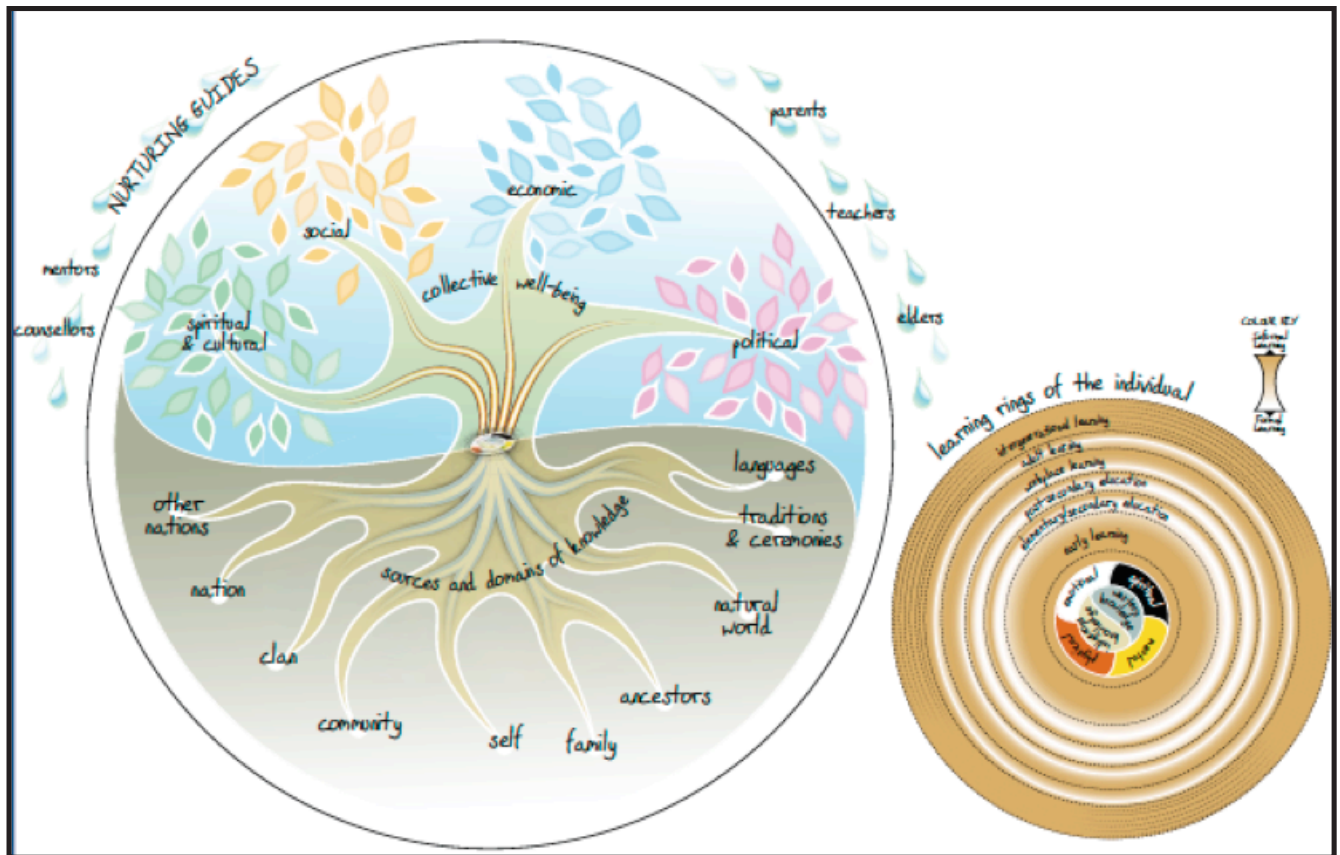


In 2007, the Canadian Council on Learning collaborated with First Nations, Inuit and Métis learning professionals and researchers to explore and articulate the recognition that the world of First Nations learners is one of interconnectedness, in which experiences and relationships are circular, cumulative and holistic. A literature review of First Nations, Inuit and Métis learning processes and concepts identified the following key characteristics of learning from an Aboriginal perspective:

- Learning is holistic;
- Learning is a lifelong process;
- Learning is experiential in nature;
- Learning is rooted in Aboriginal languages and cultures;
- Learning is spiritually oriented;
- Learning is a communal activity, involving family, community and Elders;
- Learning is an integration of Aboriginal and Western knowledge.

This groundbreaking research was reported in a document titled ***Redefining How Success is Measured in First Nations, Inuit and Métis Learning***, and included the **First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model**, graphically illustrated below, and described briefly on the next page. The **First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model** is a “living draft” that will evolve and undergo revision and adaptation depending upon the circumstances.

In 2008, a series of meetings with First Nations communities were held to explore how the **First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model** could help address their learning needs. The outcome of these meetings was reported in the document **Community Dialogues on First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning: Learning as a Community for Renewal and Growth**. It articulated and reinforced the importance of using this holistic approach for community and strategic planning and provides examples of community case studies. This document is included in the USB Drive provided in the Tool Kit.



The **First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model** shows a cross-section of the trunk of a tree, with the rings representing the **learning rings of the individual**.

The centre of the trunk of the tree is the foundation of learning. It is here that both Indigenous and Western viewpoints and formal and informal learning feed into our emotional, spiritual, mental and physical dimensions. The rings of the tree, from the centre out, represent the continuous learning we go through as we grow from infants through childhood and adulthood and into old age.

A diagram of the roots, trunk, branches and leaves displays other key aspects of the **Model**. The **roots** of the tree represent the **sources and domains of knowledge**.

Just as the roots of a tree draw nutrients from the soil, the roots of the tree show that knowledge comes from many different places or sources. A major source comes from different groups of people: ancestors, family, clan, community, nation, and other nations. Other sources of knowledge are yourself, the natural world, traditions and ceremonies, and languages.

The graphic of the tree shows the **branches and leaves** standing for the expression of the sources and domains of knowledge, the **collective well-being**.

Growing from the tree's trunk are its branches and leaves. In the **Model**, the branches and leaves represent how what you learn is expressed, how your learning is shown in your behaviour, in four important areas of life: political, economic, social, and spiritual and cultural.

Just as all life needs water to nurture growth, **water drops** surrounding the tree represent **nurturing guides** that help shape our lives.

Throughout life, as we undergo changes and learn, there are key people who influence our attitudes, our behaviour, our dreams and ambitions, and guide us. These people are parents, Elders, teachers, mentors, and counselors.

References

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Redefining How Success is Measured in First Nations, Inuit and Métis Learning, Report on Learning in Canada. 2007. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Learning.

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