musicounts

WÎTASKÎWIN

Thirteen Guiding Principles for Respectful Partnerships with Indigenous Peoples in Canadian Music Classrooms

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Canada

Introduction

This Indigenous-created teacher resource is intended to guide music educators in Canada through the process of understanding Indigenous Peoples and provides steps to consider when inviting and working collaboratively alongside local Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers (also referred to as Culture Bearers and other titles specific to region and territory) in music education and community music programs. Inspired by the Ojibwe teachings of the turtle, symbolizing truth and patience, the thirteen scutes on its shell serve as the foundation for these Thirteen Guiding Principles. This document addresses the history of Indigenous people, impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples, language and culture, and offers current research on Indigenous music and cultural practices. It will provide teachers with helpful and practical approaches to seek and build respectful and meaningful relationships with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers that are necessary to consider and implement when seeking to integrate Indigenous music and knowledge in their classrooms.

Based on the Plains Cree word, wîtaskîwin (pronounced as wee-tuus-kee-win) which generally means "having good relations," this document strives to encourage both emerging and veteran teachers of students from grades K-12 to look beyond "ready-made" or "grab-and-go" Indigenous music resources. It is an introduction on how to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of Indigenous knowledge, while building meaningful partnerships and relationships with your local Indigenous community. This is a worthwhile and timely process that will bring immeasurable benefits to all students. It focuses on the journey of understanding rather than a quick path to the destination.

Understand Terminology

Familiarize yourself with appropriate and acceptable terminology when working with and addressing Indigenous people, including what terminology is now considered outdated, offensive or derogatory. Although the terms "Aboriginal" and "Indian" are still used in historical and legal documents, these terms are rarely used today by First Nations people. Knowing the appropriate terminology will help to avoid "blanket" assumptions and stereotypes that categorize Indigenous people as the same. Acknowledge and learn about the distinct differences in cultural practices, languages, worldviews, and ways of being. For additional information on this, you can consult this online resource.

What does it mean to “decolonize music education?”

European Western art music, pedagogy, resources, repertoire, and teaching styles still dominate music classrooms across Canada. Often, music of marginalized groups in Canada are underrepresented, omitted or othered. When we seek to reflect the musical diaspora of our students, we can begin to de-center European Western art music as ideal or exclusive. Reflecting on problematic and outdated musical practices and by responding appropriately to relevant and current decolonizing changes in music education nationwide, will allow students to engage in an enriched musical experience that honors a

multitude of diverse music pedagogies, perspectives, learning styles, and worldviews. Decolonizing music education in Canada involves Indigenizing music education nationwide as a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action.

This document aims to guide these Calls by encouraging a shift in music teaching practices. It supports teachers' desires and efforts to make significant changes by increasing their understanding of foundational knowledge of Indigenous culture while giving practical advice on building meaningful relationships with local Indigenous people and communities. This shift to a broader teaching approach will also promote empathy, respect, and a deeper understanding for all students in our school communities.

How can I decolonize music education at my school, and what supports are available?

It is important to note that decolonizing music education can take many forms. This resource is intended to support educators in building respectful and meaningful relationships with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers to help understand the thoughtful integration of Indigenous music in music programs. While this is a powerful and significant step to take in decolonizing music education, this may not be a viable or appropriate pathway for all educators and schools at this moment. There may be more preparatory work that needs to be done. When ready, this important process of relationship building takes time and it is essential not to rush.

MusiCounts Resources

Below are some additional resources aimed at supporting Canadian educators in introducing Indigenous music in existing music programs through singing in Indigenous languages and exploring contemporary Indigenous artists. These Indigenous-created resources are free, and offer educators practical activity suggestions and discussion prompts. For teachers who have limited experience integrating Indigenous music into music programs, these resources are an exciting way to begin the process of decolonizing music education at your school.

Singing In Indigenous Languages: A Practical Guide for Educators (2024)

This resource is created to empower educators in school and community contexts to bring Indigenous languages into existing courses and programs through singing. With practical activities, discussion prompts, and repertoire suggestions, this resource is designed to be a starting point for teachers of all grade levels who wish to integrate Indigenous languages into music programs in a way that honours Indigenous ways of knowing and cultural practices in a respectful manner.

Kanata: Contemporary Indigenous Artists and their Music (2021)

This is a learning resource that will support elementary and secondary teachers in bringing Indigenous voices, perspectives, and music into classrooms. This resource will empower music or social studies educators at any grade level to explore and celebrate contemporary Indigenous music in the classroom in a way that is authentic, respectful, and culturally appropriate. Jeremy Dutcher, the Twin Flames and the Snotty Nose Rez Kids, are among the profiled artists in this resource. The resource includes videos of the artists discussing their own music, with lesson plans to support this.

Avoid Pan-Indigenizing Distinct Indigenous Communities

It is important to know that Indigenous Peoples in Canada are diverse, and to avoid pan-Indigenizing communities. In searching for Elders and Knowledge Keepers in your local area, seek the unique skills they have that will enrich your students in the visiting experience and relationship building. Not every Elder and Knowledge Keeper is a drum maker, song maker, storyteller, traditional dancer, or fiddle player.

Using This Resource

For each of the thirteen guiding principles introduced in this resource, you will notice "Please ask yourself" questions; these are meant to guide you in self-assessment of your current knowledge of Indigenous peoples, culture and history. These are also great starting points to facilitate dialogue with your students about the work and thought required in introducing Indigenous music at your school.

As you review the resource, reflect on your current knowledge and where you need more exploration and research. You may have Indigenous students who may want an opportunity to share their cultural knowledge, but be aware that not all Indigenous students will be comfortable sharing and may not want to be singled out. They may be on their own learning journeys and may not yet have a strong foundation in Indigenous knowledge. Creating an atmosphere of shared learning and collaboration in your school community demonstrates your commitment to lifelong learning and action towards reconciliation and decolonizing music education. You are not expected to be the expert but you can facilitate positive Indigenous learning experiences and be the bridge between your local Indigenous and school communities.

Funding to Empower Collaboration with Indigenous Communities

If the principles outlined in this resource is something you are ready to put into practice, but you lack the finances needed to enable this, you may be eligible to receive up to $20,000 from the MusiCounts Slaight Family Foundation Innovation Fund. MusiCounts grants have empowered many educators across Canada to build Indigenous music programs at their schools. If your application is successful, grant funding may be used to compensate Indigenous Elders or Knowledge Keepers to work directly with you and your students, and purchase all the materials required. This funding is offered each year. Typically, applications are accepted in the fall, and funding decisions are made in late winter or early spring.

To learn more about this granting program, click here.

Click here to read about a teacher who has used a MusiCounts grant to create an Indigenous drumming program at her school.

Principle 1: Truth & History

Before respectful, working partnerships can begin, it is important that teachers spend time researching, learning, and reflecting about the impact of colonialism, Residential Schools, the 60s Scoop, and oppressive laws and policies infringed on Indigenous Peoples in Canada that continues today. These truths have likely impacted the Indigenous students you teach and their families. As teachers, we are always learning and growing.

As a starting point, the following questions are meant to prompt you to familiarize yourself with Indigenous history in Canada, to foster reflection, and to encourage personal research to find answers you don't know or are not yet aware of. Be sure to locate credible sources such as government documents, Indigenous-created resources and websites that are educational and highlight Indigenous voices and histories. Be careful of social media platforms and websites that reflect false narratives, biased perspectives, untruths, and racist viewpoints.

Please ask yourself:

- What is colonialism?
- How did colonialism impact Indigenous Peoples?
- What is the Indian Act?
- What are Indian Residential Schools and their legacy?
- What is the 60s Scoop?
- What is Métis Scrip?
- What is the Millennial Scoop?
- What is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada?
- What are the three groups of Indigenous Peoples in Canada? How are they diverse?
- What is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)?

A place to start

- ➔ 21 Things You Might Not Have Known About the Indian Act
- ➔ Indigenous Peoples: A Guide to Terminology
- ➔ Indigenous Foundations terminology
- ➔ Queen's University Terminology Guide
- ➔ Indigenous Initiatives: Indigenous Terminology Guide 2021

Principle 2: Indigenous Worldview

Indigenous people have always held a deep respect and connection with their ancestral land. The land is believed to be living and animate, and considered sacred and spiritual. All living things on this earth are related such as the crawlers, the winged ones, the swimmers, the two-leggeds and the four-leggeds, plants, grasses, and the environment.

Indigenous teachings help to bind kinship ties with community members and families and their collective responsibility to care for the land (e.g. take only what you need and leave the rest). Land is integral to collective identity. The land can be a teacher that shows us how to be in a reciprocal relationship with the land. The land can be a healer that provides roots, plants, and berries to treat the body, mind, and spirit. Land can be a living text and when we are in relationship with the land, it can hold stories of the past, connect us to the present and all living beings within it, and guide us in being stewards and protectors of the land and waters for future generations.

Please ask yourself:

- What is "orality" and how does orality guide the sharing and transmission of cultural knowledge?
- What relationships do Indigenous People have with the land/earth? Why are there "water protectors" (e.g., lobster dispute in Nova Scotia) and "land defenders" (e.g., Wet'suwet'en dispute in British Columbia)?
- In what ways do traditional stories or Indigenous legends teach about natural law and the interconnectedness of land, animals, and humans?
- What visual guides are available for teaching about Indigenous worldview (e.g., the Medicine Wheel, Wampum belt, beadwork)?
- What is a Medicine Wheel and what is taught through it?
- How are ceremonies, storytelling, games, dance, and music interconnected in teaching and reflecting worldview (e.g., Inuit drum dancing to mark important occasions)?

A place to start

- ➔ The Seven Sacred Laws
- ➔ Medicine Wheel Teachings
- ➔ Métis Teaching and Learning
- ➔ Indigenous Teachings
- ➔ What Matters in Indigenous Education

Principle 3: Traditional & Unceded Territory

Knowing who the Indigenous people are and the land they occupied for generations before colonization around you will give a richer understanding of Indigenous culture, language, traditions, their relationship with each other, and their relationship with the land. It is also important to understand each tribe, clan, and nation have distinct understandings of worldviews, oral histories, and stories that reflect their connection to their homeland and territories.

Please ask yourself:

- What are Treaties?
- What are reserves?
- What are Métis Settlements? Where are they located?
- What regions do Inuit primarily live in?
- What does it mean for a land to be "unceded?"
- What Indigenous Peoples occupied the land pre-colonization upon which your school is located?
- What are some traditional place names in your region?
- Is there an Indigenous name for the city, town, community, or ward for the location of your school? (e.g. Tiohtià:ke/Montréal)?
- Who are the Indigenous groups located closest to your school?
- What is the language of these Indigenous groups?
- Does your school have a Land Acknowledgment? Does it need to be created or updated? Is it meaningful and personalized to your school and students?

A place to start

- ➔ Native Land
- ➔ Whose Land (EN)
- ➔ Whose Land (FR)

Principle 4: Provincial Policies & Curriculum

Most school divisions across Canada, also referred to as “Turtle Island,” have mandated that the Canadian music education curriculums incorporate Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into their program of studies. However, some provinces still use outdated curriculums placing Indigenous music as “ethnic” or “other”. This can make it difficult to know how to include Indigenous music into the curriculum honouring its rightful place as part of the Canadian music canon. In this case, there are many other provincial curriculum policies that require educators to weave Indigenous knowledge into their curriculums.

Please ask yourself:

- What are your provincial/territory Teaching Quality Standards or Teacher Certification expectations of foundational knowledge of Indigenous Peoples in Canada?
- What curricular areas address the knowledge and understanding of Indigenous people, histories, cultures, languages, contributions, and perspectives?
- What are your school board/district pillars in relation to Indigenous Peoples and history?
- What are the TRC’s Calls to Action in child welfare, education, culture and languages, and education for reconciliation?

Principle 5: Teaching Resources

There are more and more Indigenous music resources that have been created and made available by Indigenous musicians and educators to encourage the use of appropriate and authentic music in classrooms. These resources may offer an introductory approach and a starting point for teachers. However, in order to avoid a pan-Indigenous approach to Indigenous music, it is important to understand the music of Indigenous groups in Canada is diverse and distinct and should never be categorized as the same. For example, Haida songs differ from Mi'kmaq songs and Inuit songs differ from Blackfoot songs. Reaching out to local Indigenous musicians, educators, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers brings Indigenous music of the region which will elevate your understanding beyond what's written in text, presented in audio or video, or in a website.

Please ask yourself:

- What specific area of Indigenous knowledge do you want to learn about or incorporate into your music classroom (storytelling, dance, singing, drumming, etc.)?
- What is your current knowledge of Indigenous music and music practices?
- How have you engaged in learning about Indigenous music and music practices?
- What professional development opportunities on Indigenous people, histories, and culture have you attended or plan to attend?
- What teaching resources and learning supports have you accessed?
- How are you currently including Indigenous music in your music classroom?

A place to start

- ➔ Kanata: Contemporary Indigenous Artists and their Music
- ➔ Singing In Indigenous Languages: A Practical Guide For Educators
- ➔ The National Arts Centre *Arts Alive* Program
- ➔ Indigenous Education: The National Centre for Collaboration
- ➔ Native Drums
- ➔ Can Geo Education's Indigenous Resources

Principle 6: School Supports for Indigenous Knowledge

Inviting Indigenous community members to work with students requires support from the whole school community. Your school leaders and staff members need to be committed to learn and incorporate new Indigenous knowledge and see the benefits of inviting Indigenous guests to share with students. It must be a priority to the school's initiative to make the learning experience beneficial to all learners that avoids becoming a "checkbox item" and leads to authentic learning that adds longevity to school programming. If your school community does not support this partnership, evaluate if this is the right time or if more advocacy work needs to be done. Set aside school or grant finances to support the costs (presenter fee, materials, protocol, hosting) associated with bringing an Elder/Knowledge Keeper into your school.

Please ask yourself:

- Does your school administration fully support your district or provincial mandates on the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in the classroom?
- Does your school administration fully support your music program and the intention to create a collaborative partnership with members of the Indigenous community?
- How does your school create a welcoming environment for invited Indigenous guests both visually and personally?
- Does your school have a budget for invited guests?
- Do you have parent volunteers to help with larger-scale activities such as drum making, tipi building, etc.?
- How will you ensure shared knowledge is documented and preserved in years to come (e.g., the care and storage of newly-made drums or rattles)?
- How will this new knowledge enhance what you are teaching in the music classroom?
- How will you share this knowledge in the future with all students and teachers that have not been involved in the activity such as appropriate song sharing and drum protocols?

Principle 7: Community Engagement

When seeking Elders and Knowledge Keepers, it is important to know who in your immediate circle can help you find and make connections with these community members. Within your school and your school families you may find that somebody is, or knows Elders and Knowledge Keepers that would be willing to share music with your students. Sometimes you may have someone within your school district that acts as a liaison between schools and Indigenous communities that can help you connect with willing Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Sometimes you may need to find these connections on your own by seeking community events where you can develop relationships before you ask someone to come to your school.

Please ask yourself:

- How have you made connections with members of the Indigenous community nearest to your school?
- What opportunities have you created for yourself to attend Indigenous-led public events?
- What Indigenous organizations exist in your local area that support Indigenous Peoples (e.g. the Canadian Native Friendship Centres)?
- What local Indigenous events or activities are available to schools and the public to attend (e.g. powwows, celebrations)?
- What museums, art galleries, non-profit, or organizations provide opportunities to learn about and showcase Indigenous Peoples and culture?
- What national Indigenous-related events does your school participate in (National Indigenous Peoples Day, National Day of Truth and Reconciliation,Orange Shirt Day, etc.)?

Principle 8: Human Relationships

Good relationships require the investment of time to build trusting relationships. Relationships are long lasting and should not be short-lived and temporary. Not all relationships with Indigenous Peoples result in partnerships but good relationships will not only benefit students, but can benefit the whole school community. Invited Indigenous guests should be treated fairly and equally as all invited school guests but will generally require more care and focused attention as part of cultural protocols, relationship building, and sharing of knowledge.

Please ask yourself:

- Do you have parents, grandparents, and families of Indigenous students in your classroom that you have already established relationships with?
- Do you have First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) consultants, school liaisons, or school staff that you can approach to help you initiate connections with willing Indigenous community guests for potential classroom partnerships?
- Do you have an Indigenous Consultant, school liaisons, etc., that can connect you to willing Indigenous community guests who you could approach to ask for music teachings?
- Are their Indigenous parents or grandparents you have built relationships with that may be willing to share music or introduce to someone from their community?
- Be clear in your ask:
    - When asking Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers to come to your school, do you know what content they will share about without assumptions/biases of what specifics you want them to share? For example, Métis people will likely not talk about powwow music and dance. Not all First Nations women will bring or have a drum.
    - Which Indigenous group does the potential invited Elder or Knowledge Keeper belong to?
    - What is it exactly that you are asking? What are their gifts of Indigenous knowledge? Are they drum makers? Find out before you ask them to make drums!
- What is your budget for invited guest visits? Compensation is necessary and absolutely should not be expected to *volunteer* their time and knowledge.

Principle 9: Cultural Protocol & Practices

Cultural protocol is both an action of respectful practice and is also sacred medicines that are used in ceremony or offered when you ask Elders and Knowledge Keepers to share cultural teachings and knowledge. It is common practice and not a prescribed set of rules that must be considered. If the Elder or Knowledge Keeper accepts your offered protocol, they are essentially committing to sharing knowledge with you and your students. The Elder or Knowledge Keepers can also refuse your offer if they feel it is not the right time or are uncomfortable with your request for any reason. Sacred medicines can be sweetgrass, sage, tobacco, fungus, cedar, pine, or other medicines used by Elders or Knowledge Keepers in your region. Some Elders or Knowledge Keepers do not accept sacred protocol, therefore it is important to ask what they require. To determine which sacred medicines to offer, ask them directly. Tobacco is often offered, but not always.

Cultural protocol will vary from Elder to Elder, Knowledge Keeper to Knowledge Keeper, region to region. Gift giving is also part of cultural protocol practices. They include:

- Honorarium for knowledge and travel (cash)
- A gift (a blanket or other special gift)
- Materials costs they send/bring as part of their presentation to be shared with students prior, during or after

Further information

- Protocols for Engaging with Indigenous Peoples and Communities
- First Nations Protocol on Traditional Territory

Principle 10: Hosting Your Indigenous Guest

When inviting Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers into schools, a regularly scheduled day of school must be flexible and the teachers need to be willing to adjust the day as it unfolds. Timetables are often not important and should not dictate when and how long the Indigenous teachings should take. Time should be fluid and organic and never rushed. Having this flexibility ensures that Indigenous worldview is honored and respected as imposing a strict schedule is a colonial mindset. Stories and teachings take time and do not necessarily happen in a sequential, linear way but rather in circular motion.

Elders and Knowledge Keepers reveal more knowledge naturally when students demonstrate an understanding and they know when students are grasping the concept. This may lead them to reveal more knowledge than expected. If teachers can remain open to this way of learning, especially if it is new to them, they may find the experience to be richer than anticipated and it may reveal new ideas that can foster learning in the classroom after the Elders' and Knowledge Keepers' visit. Hosting should be shared by your whole school team with everyone willing to help when they need to as Elders and Knowledge Keepers may ask anyone available to help them if you are not available.

Please ask yourself:

- How will you welcome and care for your Indigenous guest?
- Do you have a welcoming committee or designated person to receive the guest from the moment they enter to the moment they leave?
    - Timeframe: do not exhaust the visitor, avoid a strict and busy schedule (30 min blocks) where stories cannot happen, flexibility is key, concept of sharing practices (storytelling) may not happen on the clock.
    - Lunch, tea and snacks (attend to their dietary restrictions or food interests).
    - Transportation (may be required especially for Elders and Knowledge Keepers who do not drive themselves).
    - The Elder or Knowledge Keeper may unexpectedly bring a grandchild or relative who often assists their daily activities. Treat them accordingly.

Principle 11: Reciprocity

The act of reciprocity is central to Indigenous worldview. You, the teacher, students and Elder or Knowledge Keeper must consider how this new relationship benefits all parties involved and the knowledge you received must be received with the act of an exchange in mind. Taking this knowledge without reciprocity or sharing with other educators without permission would be considered an extraction of knowledge rather than an exchange.

Please ask yourself:

- How will you acknowledge and give credit about who did the work and why it could be done?
- How do you plan to use this new knowledge respectfully?
- How will this partnership benefit the teacher and students and the Knowledge Keepers as well as the community?
- Do you plan to share this knowledge with others? If so, do you have the rights to do so?
- How do you intend to credit the source of this shared/collaborated activity?

Principle 12: Responsibility

It is important to take time to reflect and determine ways in which the relationship and the teachings will survive after the project is complete. Maintaining a continued relationship with Elders and Knowledge Keepers keeps the door open to further opportunities as well as a way to continue the respectful exchange of knowledge. Keeping open and regular communication with Elders and Knowledge Keepers after the teaching/project demonstrates respect for their knowledge, commitment to use the knowledge you received in a good way, and an opportunity for you or other teachers in your district or school to work together in the future. This practice will serve to be a model to other teachers who may seek your advice on future invitations for their own schools.

Please ask yourself:

- What worked with this partnership? What didn't work? What would you change or alter for the next visit?
- As relationships with Indigenous Peoples are ongoing, how will you maintain this formed relationship with Elders and Knowledge Keepers after your partnership ends?
- How will you communicate gratitude for the opportunity and experience?
- Can you write an article of your experience in your school or district newsletter?
- Is there an opportunity for a continued relationship and other ways to expand partnership activities (storytelling, crafts, Indigenous games, etc.)?

Principle 13: Advocacy & Social Justice

With the knowledge received in this document, as well as the teachings of Elders and Knowledge Keepers, it will be important to learn about wider issues that impact Indigenous Peoples, their families, and communities. There are many ways that you can engage your students in advocacy within your school and community. Gaining deeper knowledge of these issues will empower your students to be agents of change. Indigenous students will see themselves reflected through the teachings that will foster cultural pride in their identity, pave the way to becoming the next generation of Indigenous leaders and change-makers, and to feel more welcomed and included in the school community. For non-Indigenous students, they will learn about the truth of Canada's past and gain an appreciation of Indigenous peoples and issues, as well an appreciation and deeper understanding of Indigenous culture. This new knowledge will better equip them to become allies as they move toward their understanding and confidence to answer the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Please ask yourself:

- How will you use your knowledge and experience to bring awareness to the Indigenous community represented by Elders and Knowledge Keepers?
- What activities can you and your students do to bring awareness to the current issues that Indigenous people experience today, and how can you and your students support these causes?
- How can you support the ongoing work with Elders and Knowledge Keepers and help make connections between other educators within your district?

A Place to Start

- ➔ Young Indigenous Changemakers You Should Know About
- ➔ Project of Heart Social Justice actions
- ➔ Moose Hide Campaign
- ➔ CBC Kids: What is Orange Shirt Day?

Writers

Nicole Schutz is a Métis music educator from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan based in Edmonton, Alberta. With over 20 years of experience as a music specialist with Edmonton Public Schools, she is also an assistant Lecturer of Elementary Music Curriculum and Pedagogy and Orff Levels Movement at the University of Alberta. Nicole holds a Master of Elementary Education in Curriculum and Pedagogy from the University of Alberta, a B.Arts degree, and a B.Ed degree. Nicole holds a Level III Orff certification and a certificate in World Music Pedagogy from the Smithsonian Institute. She is president of the Alberta Orff Chapter and a teacher advisor for MusiCounts Canada. She co-created the Indigenous Music Educator's guide titled "Nithota" for the National Arts Centre's Arts Alive Program. Nicole is passionate about promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in music education and is an active member of the Carl Orff Canada Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee. She is a collaborator with the national research team: Drumming in Indigenous Voices researching indigenizing music education based out of the University of Victoria. She regularly presents across Canada on topics related to Indigenizing and decolonizing music education.

Sherryl Sewepagaham is of Cree-Dene ancestry from the Little Red River Cree Nation in Northern Alberta and is an interdisciplinary Indigenous artist, composer, and educator. She is a 2024 Vanier Scholar and current PhD student in Ethnomusicology at the University of British Columbia and holds degrees of Master of Education (Elementary Education - Curriculum and Instruction), a Bachelor of Education, and a Bachelor of Music Therapy. Sherryl taught K-6 elementary music for nearly two decades focusing on Indigenous music education. Sherryl wrote the music and lyrics for the National Arts Centre's Music Alive Program (MAP) song, "Music Alive" and created/co-created three teacher resources for the program. Sherryl is a collaborator on the national research team, *Drumming in Indigenous Voices*, with Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators and community members led by the University of Victoria and is a former 2nd Vice-President with the Carl Orff Canada's National Board.

Sherryl has been commissioned by national choirs such as ProCoro Canada, the Canadian Chamber Choir, OrKidstra, and Luminous Voices, and many more. Her 2014 debut solo album, *Splashing the Water Loudly* received a 2015 Indigenous Music Awards nomination and was a 23-year member of the retired 2006 JUNO-nominated, Edmonton-based trio Asani, who received numerous awards and nominations for their albums, *Rattle & Drum and Listen*.