Culturally Responsive: Educator Mindset and Action
Have Deep Knowledge of Students

>> I now know what I do not know. I understand that there are some fundamental differences in a world view. What I’ve come to understand is that there are different relations, different ways of viewing the world. Different approaches to experience. Different senses of collective responsibility, family, healing and place.

>> For a teacher, starting to use culturally responsive pedagogy, I would first and foremost recommend that they know their students. That they understand where they’re coming from. That they listen to their questions, because that will form the basis of exceptionally interesting learning and opportunities for the teacher to facilitate new learning and inquiry, and certainly heighten the interests that the students have in everything that they do, because it will so very much relate to their community and what they know.

>> So as you can see, we’re dedicated to the Mississaugas of the New Credit. It’s a First Nations group that’s, like, related to us in Toronto. To have more experience on what students like is the best thing you could possibly do, to kind of understand how your students feel, and have, like, empathy, or, like, to understand their situation better would be good.

>> As a Chinese person who had experienced racism, teaching indigenous kids in the Okanagan in the 1970s, where I was teaching high school, I thought, well, I’m not white, I’m anti-racist. I know the program. I’ve got an agenda here. I’m right behind these kids in solidarity. I can help them. But I didn’t take the time to learn and know about the place, about its history. I just returned to that place to find out more about the Spallumcheen people, okay, about the place, about the history, about the kin. And to be quite honest with you, I was unable to teach those kids. So if we’re serious about culturally appropriate pedagogy, or culturally responsive pedagogy, we can’t take some model off the shelf, or assume that there are five universal steps that apply to all First Nations kids, or that apply to all migrant kids alike. Those would be the reinvention of a bunch of stereotypes. What we actually would need to do would be to open our eyes and our ears and our hearts to communities, to what they know, to their elders and what they teach, as best as we, as outsiders, can do, and to the strengths and knowledges that kids bring to communities.

>> That sounds like a good plan!